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## Gender Discrimination in the Band World: A Case Study of Three Female Band Directors

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## Abstract

This qualitative case study seeks to determine how gender has influenced the careers and experiences of three female high school band directors. The participants were at varying stages in their career: one early career, one mid-career, and one retired. Triangulation was obtained by collecting data from a questionnaire, personal interviews, and a focus group discussion. The questionnaire was used to obtain background information about the experiences of the participants. Information obtained in the questionnaire informed the design of the interview questions to probe participants to further discuss their experiences. Finally, the participants joined a focus group discussion and shared their experiences and views of being a female in a male dominated profession. Transcriptions of the questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion were used to code data, and develop themes. Identified themes are presented as they pertain to the individual experiences of the participants and to compare their experiences. Findings of the study revealed the participants experienced negative personal and professional issues that stem from being a female high school band director. The participants felt they needed to work harder to prove themselves in a male dominated profession. They also noted confidence and toughness were personal qualities that enabled them to be successful and remain in the profession. It was determined that the masculine history, struggle to balance work and family, working harder to succeed, and respect, may be factors that influence females in instrumental music education.

## Introduction

As a beginning band director, I had no idea I had become part of a minority. The first position I held was at a small rural school in southern Ohio, where I became one of two female band directors in the county, and one of three female band directors in District XVI of the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA). District XVI encompasses five counties in Southern and Southwestern Ohio. It was unclear if there were other females teaching high school band in our OMEA District who were not members of OMEA.

The county and District XVI band directors met regularly throughout the year to discuss the planning of marching band events and honor bands. It did not take long for me to feel that my voice was not heard and that my opinions did not matter to the men who were leaders of these groups. Most of the men seemed unapproachable and uninterested in what I had to say, and sometimes I even felt that they did not look at my students seriously during auditions. For some meetings and concerts I even felt the need to conceal my femininity, so that I might be noticed or at least recognized by these men.

Reflecting on this experience, I am not sure I felt this way because of gender discrimination, age discrimination, where I was teaching, or if it was because I had not yet proven my teaching abilities. It seemed that men entering the profession were accepted and recognized right away, however I felt that I needed to work harder to be noticed. Perhaps it was my fault or a lack of confidence that I felt that way. After spending eight years as a band director for the same school district, I felt like I had made some progress communicating with these men, and they were beginning to see me as an equal authority. Throughout my years of experience I gained confidence in my teaching and directing abilities, which may have had an impact on the way I viewed myself within these meetings and events, and the way in which members of these associations viewed me.

As I begin this journey of researching female band directors, my opinion is that the struggle of gender equality has made tremendous strides over the past two decades, but there is still farther to go. I have been hesitant to share specific instances of my experience because I felt discussing topics of gender, equality, and discrimination still remain highly controversial subjects. I have realized through discussing my experiences with other female band directors that we share similar views about how we are treated in the profession. This has led me to investigate gender research in music education, determine if other female band directors have experienced similar situations, and how gender has influenced their experiences and careers.

This investigation first requires defining feminism and researching how feminism developed. This study will be viewed through a feminist theory lens, as defined by bell hooks. Bell hooks is a prominent American socialist activist and widely published author of feminist and social topics (The European Graduate School, 2015). Born with the name Gloria Jean Watkins, hooks prominently spells her name with lower case letters to distinguish herself from her grandmother, and to promote the importance of her message and not her biography (The European Graduate School, 2015).

Feminist theory, according to hooks, considers how race, class, and gender work to oppress marginalized groups, such as women (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006). In her book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, hooks (2000) defines feminism as “a struggle to end sexist oppression” (p. 26). Hooks further explains that the goal of feminism:

Is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step into. (2000, p. 28)

Hooks also states that the future struggle of feminism will be the “recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression” (p. 33).

In order to further understand hooks’ definition of feminism, the development of female oppression will be reviewed. Feminist movements are often classified into three waves (Howe, 2013; Lamb, Dolloff, & Howe, 2002). The mid-nineteenth century is frequently classified as the beginning of the first wave and extended through suffrage movements to the post-World War II era (Howe, 2013; Lamb et al., 2002) when the men returned home from war to form community bands and teach in the public schools (Howe, 2001). The second wave, which began in mid-1960, was characterized by the integration of political action and intellectual thought to improve the status of females (Howe, 2013; Lamb et al., 2002). The third wave appeared in the 1990’s after the media proclaimed a postfeminist era, although feminism was still present (Lamb et al., 2002). Important areas of study in the third wave have included the changing roles of men, the role of men in feminism, masculinities, queer politics, transgender issues, and popular culture (Lamb et al., 2002). Although feminism has moved in different directions, there still exist underlying themes of civil rights, education, and employment.

### *Statement of the Problem & Purpose of the Study*

In order to paint a better picture of working females and how they comprise the job market, a survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics will be reviewed. According to the 2013

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), men represented 53.2% of the civilian labor force, while women represented 46.8%. During this period of time women earned 82.1% of a males' salary (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). The bureau also presented the four industries with the largest percentage of women: education and health services (36.2%), wholesale and retail (13.1%), professional and business (10.5%), and leisure and hospitality (10.3%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Statistics from "Gender Trends Among MENC Music Educators" ([GT: MENC], 2001) reveal that there are more female members than males (females: 54.3%, males: 45.7%). Females significantly outnumber males teaching at the preschool and elementary level. The ratio of females and males teaching at the middle/junior high level is relatively equal, however there is a decline at the secondary level, where the division is 59.4% male and 40.6% female. There is even more of a difference when distinguishing the statistics by teaching area, which reveals that there are roughly 50% more male band directors than females.

### *Research Question and Importance of the Study*

The research question was formed through a feminist lens, and investigates how women are marginalized. The primary research question is: How has gender influenced the experiences and careers of female band directors?

According to "Gender Trends Among MENC Music Educators," published in 2001, there are roughly 50% more men than women members in the field of instrumental music education at the high school level (GT: MENC, 2001). According to Gould (2005), research findings from studies of female university band directors "generally have supported the hypothesis that historical precedent, traditional socialization, discrimination, segregation, and lack of role models contribute to (females) persistently low percentage as band directors" (p. 147). Gould (2005) also reveals, "while women are most likely to teach young students in classroom settings, men are most likely to teach older students in all settings, but most particularly in wind/percussion ensembles" (p. 147). The review of literature will also uncover that "music studies on the whole and music education in particular are behind other disciplines in taking advantage of the theories and approaches to research that have been established by feminism, feminist research, and gender research" (Lamb et al., 2002, p. 648). In fact, relatively little research has been conducted concerning female high school band directors. If gender discrimination is a factor that influences the careers and experiences of female band directors, an awareness of this phenomenon should be shared within the world of music education so the underlying causes can be addressed.

### *Scope*

This case study will include three female participants at differing stages of their career in instrumental music education. One participant has been teaching for a total five years, only three years at the high school level. The second participant has been teaching high school instrumental music for 28 years. The third participant is a semi-retired band director who taught for 36 years at the high school level, and has continued to teach elementary music for the past ten years. Participants were selected because of their availability to participate in an interview and focus group discussion, and because they are considered by their peers to be successful band directors

in the field of music education. The participants also felt that they had experiences to share concerning being a female in the world of instrumental music education.

### *Definitions*

In order to fully understand the language used throughout this case study, a list of key terms and definitions has been provided. Every subject has a unique language, therefore it is important that anyone interested in this topic be able to clearly read and comprehend the research.

***Feminism*** - “(The) struggle to end sexist oppression” (hooks, 2000, p. 26).

***Gender*** - “The fact or condition of being a male or a female human being, especially with regard to how this affects or determines a person’s self-image, social status, goals, etc.” (Merriam-Webster Online, 2015, definition 2).

***Gender discrimination*** - “Any action that specifically denies opportunities, privileges, or rewards to a person (or a group) because of gender” (USLegal, 2015, para. 1).

***Case study*** - “The study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xi).

***NAfME (MENC)*** - National Association for Music Education (formerly known as Music Educators National Conference [MENC]. The literature and report will refer to MENC).

### *Limitations*

This case study involves the experiences of three participants. Although the experiences of the participants will provide valuable information, the results will not be generalizable. Stake (1995) states, “the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization” (p. 8). Therefore, the objective of this case study is to understand the particularities and unique experiences of the research participants.

Limited research in this area of music education has also proved to be challenging when searching for statistics and prior studies that have been conducted. The field of feminist research in music education is growing, however, the topics that have been researched are very broad, and determining topics to include and exclude was very arduous. The selected literature was also difficult to group together due to the broad range of topics.

### *Delimitations*

Steps have been taken to eliminate bias, but it is difficult to put aside my personal feelings and experiences as a high school band director. “Qualitative inquiry is subjective” (Stake, 1005, p. 45), however it is important for the researcher to be aware of “their own intellectual shortcomings and because of the weaknesses in methods that fail to purge misinterpretations” (p. 45).

This study is a class project that has a defined schedule, therefore data collection and analysis occurred within a relatively short period of time. This forced me to stay focused on the primary topic of gender discrimination, and not go into detail about other issues that arose in the analysis of data.

## Summary

My personal experience as a female high school band director is the driving factor to investigate the experiences of three female high school band directors at different stages in their careers. The lack of female band directors (GT: MENC, 2001) serves as the cornerstone of the need for this study, as well as a lack of research in general pertaining to females in instrumental music education. This case study of three participants seeks to examine how gender has influenced the experiences and careers of female high school band directors.

## Literature Review

Beginning this literature review was a daunting task, because “music studies on the whole and music education in particular are behind other disciplines in taking advantage of the theories and approaches to research that have been established by feminism, feminist research, and gender research” (Lamb et al., 2002, p. 648). I encountered a surprising lack of feminist research pertaining to gender discrimination in instrumental music education.

The purpose of searching for literature was to keep a broad scope, but narrow enough that the literature would be meaningful to the study. Searching for literature began with keywords, including gender discrimination, sex discrimination, gender bias, music, and education. To focus these keywords, only articles and books pertaining directly to music education in America at the high school level were utilized. Dissertations, theses, and their corresponding bibliographies were also used to guide literature collection. Literature was categorized into personality and perception, and historical and cultural influences.

### *Personality and Perception*

A study by Running (2011) utilized the Affective Communication Test (ACT) to determine if there are differences in charisma based on sex. The ACT is a pencil and paper self-evaluation consisting of thirteen statements developed by Friedman, Prince, Riggio, and DiMatteo. The test was determined to have an internal consistency of .77 and a test reliability of .90, significant at  $p < .001$ . The author determined male conductors scored significantly higher on the ACT and “revealed a trend for male conductors being more charismatic than female conductors” (Running, p. 23). This was found by utilizing an independent samples *t* test that compared the scores according to gender. The findings were not significant at  $p = .17$ , however are interesting when compared to the findings of Friedman (as cited in Running, 2011) that “women tend to score higher than males on the ACT” (p. 23).

A 1990 study by Kimberlin (as cited in Lamb, 1996) revealed that female band directors felt it was a *boys clique*, that they constantly had to prove their capabilities, faced rude comments from adjudicators, and were even asked to change assignments because of being pregnant. Women have also been questioned as to whether they were capable of handling the job (Greaves-Spurgeon, 1998). The long standing tradition of male conductors has led women to “question, criticize, and contest . . . musical authority in ways that invite multiple meanings and ambiguities, is to leave herself vulnerable to judgments of incompetence as well as student resistance” (Lamb, 1996, p. 128).

Eleven female high school band directors were participants in a qualitative study by Sears (2010), which identified confidence, toughness, thick-skin, go-getter, and powerful persona as

personal qualities of an effective high school band director. They also discussed their perceived need to conceal their femininity by not wearing dresses and dressing more masculine. The masculine history of the profession, struggle to balance work and family, and the belief that administration may question a woman's ability as reasons for disparity were themes identified in the study. The participants also felt that "female high school band directors need to work harder than their male counterparts to earn respect and recognition within the field" (Sears, 2010, p. 193). The study concluded that the traditional masculinity of the band director profession could be a likely reason for the lack of women in the profession (Sears, 2010).

An issue that some women have felt, is that it is not possible to raise a family and have a successful career in music education (Fitzpatrick, 2013; Koza, 2012; Terban, 2011). A case study by Fitzpatrick (2013) investigated a female high school band director with three children, to uncover enabling and inhibiting factors that influenced the balance of work and family. Enabling factors identified include personal qualities, purposeful structure of work demands, supportive partner, and a passion for both work and home. The inhibiting factors revealed were lack of time, logistics, particularities of home and work life, guilt, and differences between male and female working parent expectations (Fitzpatrick, 2013). The participant also stated "she believes that female high school band directors do face more of a pressure to 'choose' between family and work as compared to their male colleagues" (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 19).

### *Historical and Cultural Influences*

Early writings concerning gender discrimination in music education promote that history and culture are the basic issues, not musical ability (Hinely, 1984). Mary Brown Hinely sums up the historical and cultural struggle women have faced in music education:

The historical-cultural view of woman's primary role as that of wife, mother, and nurturer has greatly restricted woman's professional opportunities. This is clearly the case in the field of music, where women have met stubborn resistance in their quest for professional status as vocal and instrumental performers, teachers, conductors, and composers. While tracing the history of women's problems and progress in these specific music career areas, there emerges repeated evidence of the pervading historical-cultural attitudes that nourished an environment hostile to women as professional musicians. (1984, p. 32)

Women were encouraged to study piano and voice in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and were encouraged to participate in music at home, and only teach if they needed an income (Howe, 2001). "The historical cultural view of woman's primary role as that of wife, mother, and nurturer has greatly restricted woman's professional opportunity" (Hinely, 1984, p. 32). Howe states this tradition was still evident at the end of the twentieth century (Howe, 2001).

According to an article by Howe (2001), females involved with instrumental music in the first half of the twentieth century also experienced discrimination. Men were returning home from war and formed community bands and taught in public schools. They were also holding band director positions at universities. Women responded to this discrimination by forming their own bands. Helen May Butler, Consuella Carter, and Anna Mae Winburn became successful band leaders and had long careers teaching instrumental music in public schools (Howe, 2001).

At the University of Minnesota in the 1930s, some women were allowed to join the concert band, but the marching band was all male, except from 1942-1945. “After World War II, women were no longer allowed to play in the marching band until 1972, when the university was forced to admit women or lose federal funding” (Howe, 2001, p. 154). This was also true at The Ohio State University, where females were permitted to audition for the marching band in 1973 (Bitzel, n.d.). Still to this day, The University of Minnesota has never had a female Director of Bands, nor has The Ohio State Marching Band.

1972 was a pivotal year because Title IX of the Education Amendments (Public Law 92-318) was enacted, and was one of the first pieces of legislation to address women’s inequality and discrimination in education (Stromquist, 2013). The law states that “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Title IX of The Education Amendments of 1972, 2000). According to Title IX: 25 Years of Progress (as cited in Cohen, 2008), there has been an increase in the number of women attending college, earning doctoral degrees, participating in high school and college athletics.

## **Methodology**

The qualitative paradigm is utilized in this study because it allows for the personal story of the participants to be presented and analyzed. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2010), “a major purpose of qualitative research is to discover the nature of the meanings associated with social phenomena” (p. 343). Case study is a basic method of qualitative research that “involves [an] in-depth investigation of the meanings that individuals ascribe to particular instances of a phenomenon” (Gall, et al., 2010, p. 344). This case study has utilized an instrumental design that is “a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that [the researcher] may get insight into the question by studying a particular case” (Stake, 1994, p. 3) with a goal of showing a “phenomenon exists within a particular case” (p. 242). The goal of this case study is to determine how gender has influenced the careers and experiences of the participants.

### *The Researcher’s Role*

A goal throughout this research study has been to maintain objectivity and not assume that gender discrimination exists, or that other female band directors have experienced similar situations. In order to maintain objectivity, questions included on the questionnaire were directed by two dissertations that have researched female high school band directors (Greaves-Spurgeon, 1998; Sears, 2010). The interviews and focus group discussions were semi-structured, so that the participants could speak freely to how gender has influenced their experiences and careers.

I completed the Institutional Review Board application prior to beginning data collection. The questionnaire and consent forms were also formed as part of this process. I was the primary investigator responsible for selecting participants, data collection and data analysis.



## *Participants*

Participants for the study were selected due to their availability to participate in an interview and focus group, and because they are considered successful band directors in the field of music education by their peers. The participants were screened to insure they had experience as high school band directors, and that they felt they had particular experiences to share pertaining to being a female in the profession.

Tegan, the youngest participant at age 29, has been a teacher for seven years, only three most recently as the high school band director. She was a substitute teacher her first year, as she looked for a band director position. Unable to find a position, she accepted a job teaching elementary general music for three years, and became the high school band director when the previous director retired. Her school district is located in Southern Ohio, and has a population of approximately 1,500 K-12 students. She has been an active participant in OMEA and the local band director organization by attending meetings, adjudicating auditions, hosting events, and participating in honor bands and solo and ensemble events.

Sarah has been a high school band director for 28 years and also held other positions, such as choral director, and assistant junior high band director. She has earned a Ph.D. in Music Education from a university in Northeast Ohio. The district where she teaches is located in Northeast Ohio, and has an enrollment of approximately 2,000 K-12 students.

Martha was recommended as a participant because she was a role model for the professor of this course. She was a high school band director for 36 years at a school district in Central Ohio, with an enrollment of approximately 2,500 K-12 students. Although she has retired from being a high school band director, she has been an elementary music teacher for the past ten years, and has maintained involvement with advanced students from the high school by teaching private lessons.

## *Data Collection*

Data was collected via a questionnaire, personal interviews, and a focus group discussion. Interview questions from doctoral dissertations were used as the framework for the questionnaire (Greaves-Spurgeon, 1998; Sears, 2010). Two female professionals, a college professor and a retired band director, reviewed the questionnaire in order to determine validity prior to data collection. The reviewers were asked to respond to the questions and make suggestions that would improve the structure and wording of the questions. The final version of the questionnaire was distributed to the three participants via email, and they were given one week to complete and return the questionnaire. Responses were studied to guide the formation of interview questions, including participant specific questions, and common questions pertaining to all participants.

The study utilized personal interviews because they are “a particularly valuable research method feminist researchers can use to gain insight into the world of their participants” (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 185). The interviews were conducted at the participant’s choice of location, were approximately thirty minutes long, and were audio and video recorded. Introductions occurred during the first five minutes of the interview, and were followed by general questions, and moved toward more specific questions that were developed from the questionnaire. Following the interviews, the audio files were transcribed and used to guide the formation of questions presented at the focus group discussion.

The focus group provided a platform for the participants to share their experiences with each other and present questions that developed from the questionnaire and interview. One participant utilized Skype to participate in the focus group and the other two participants met in person. The discussion was approximately sixty minutes long and was audio and video recorded. The discussion was transcribed for data analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

Transcriptions of the interviews and focus group discussion were coded for analysis utilizing the qualitative software NVivo. The codes were analyzed by a code and source matrix, code summary by source, and a code summary by node. Frequent codes that were revealed in the matrix were highlighted for further investigation in the summary reports. Code frequency was a crucial first step to identify themes throughout the sources. Participant specific themes were compared to identify themes that were present across the participant's questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion.

### *Verification*

Triangulation was obtained by collecting data from the questionnaire, personal interviews, and focus group discussion. The participants were provided the opportunity to review the information presented about them, transcriptions of the interview and focus group discussion, and the final report. A professor of research in music education also reviewed the final report.

### *Ethical Considerations*

The Institutional Review Board approved this study (Appendix A). Participants were provided information concerning the plan of the study so they could make a conscious decision whether or not to participate. Participants signed a consent form and an audio/visual consent form (Appendix B). They were also given the opportunity to review transcriptions and the final report.

Pseudonyms were selected for the participants, because discussing issues of employment and gender discrimination can be sensitive topics. Recordings of the interviews, focus group discussion, and transcriptions were stored on a password-protected computer to ensure participant confidentiality.

### *Plan for Narrative Results*

The results are presented through a narration of the participant's experiences. Participant specific themes identified through data analysis will be presented, followed by themes common to all three participants. The experiences of the participants will address the research question, and how being a female in the profession has influenced their careers. The findings of the study and their relation to the review of literature will be discussed, as well as future research considerations.

## Research Findings

The participants were excited to be involved in a case study that would allow them to share how being a female has influenced their experiences and careers. The difference of years of experience among the participants allowed for interesting conclusions of how experiences of females in the profession have changed. Themes that developed specific to the participants will be presented, and then a cross-case analysis will present themes common to all participants.

### *Tegan*

Tegan was the youngest participant and has been a teacher for seven years, only three most recently as a high school band director. A theme that developed was her experiences with administration. One day, while standardized testing was taking place, Tegan was asked by her principal to cover a physical education class. Because she had experience substituting, she asked the principal pertinent questions such as: How many students are in this class? Is there a roster? What should I do with these children? What time should they be released? She was very frustrated because she was not getting any helpful information. Tegan said that the principal was not happy with her asking so many questions and told her, “we all have to do things we don’t want to do” (Tegan, individual interview, March 24, 2015).

Her perception was that the principal thought she had an issue going out of her way to cover the class. She emailed him to explain perhaps he misread her frustration as unwilling to help, and portrayed she was offended that he felt this way. There have been issues in the past, however this was the first time Tegan said, “hey, this is really offensive.” This experience led Tegan to feel that she had been “treated like a middle school girl.” She said he responded to the email with general comments, such as “thank you for being flexible. We all have to do these things, blah, blah, blah” and that he never addressed what she meant in her first email. “He missed my point. I wasn’t trying to put him down. I wasn’t trying to whine about anything. I was just trying to explain how he made me feel.” Tegan said, “I can’t see him talking to an older woman the way he talked to me. I can’t see him talking to a younger man the way he talked to me” (Tegan, individual interview, March 24, 2015).

Another theme that developed through the coding of Tegan’s responses was demands of the profession and how they interfered with her personal life. She had recently ended a relationship with her boyfriend prior to the interview, because he did not understand why she worked so hard and spent so many hours at school. Tegan stated that she spends on average 60 hours a week fulfilling her duties, and upwards of 75 hours a week if there were weekend commitments. She said, “I’ve never dated someone who understands this profession. So they feel they’re being slighted because I’m working so late and a lot of what I’m doing is honor band and solo and ensemble, and all these other things that aren’t technically in my contract” (Tegan, individual interview, March 24, 2015).

### *Sarah*

Sarah was the mid-career participant with 27 years of experience. She began participating in adjudicated events during her 13th year of her career at her second assignment, and felt that she “was never going to do as well as the men” (Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015). Sarah often compared her bands to other bands in the area and felt:

some years we had really fine groups that we felt were just as good, if not better. I wouldn't say every year I had a group that should have been [superior], but when I felt like I had the same quality - if not a little better in a show, in playing and marching - it didn't matter. (Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015)

Sarah said she thinks and feels that this experience was based on the fact that she was a female band director. Additionally she said it may have been because these adjudicators were not accepting of female band directors, or that they had preconceived views that a woman could not do as good of a job as a man.

A lot of us [females] would see each other, usually just in passing at contests. There were always certain judges that we had some rough comments from. But after a while you just kind of accept it and move on and still try to do the best job you can. (Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015)

These adjudicators were also present at other meetings and seminars Sarah attended regularly. Sarah mentioned that gender discrimination could be felt in these meetings.

If you hear older gentlemen in the profession that are doing the seminars, or they've been adjudicators for years, you'll hear them say 'the guys,' or they'll use words where it's not all-inclusive. It is pretty gender-based that it's the men, and it kind of makes you feel uncomfortable, but it's just in the words they use that it entails the men in the room. Obviously we are in the minority, so it's just uncomfortable when I catch it. Sometimes you'll hear men change wording, or they'll say it and then change it, but some don't at all. I don't even think they know they're saying that. (Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015)

### *Martha*

Martha was the participant with the most experience, with 36 years as a high school band director. When Martha was asked to describe a time that she had felt different or isolated in the profession because of being a female, she responded with a shocking story:

The funniest "gender" time happened in 1976 at a jazz band festival. At the end of the program, plaques were given to each director by a representative from the music store. Every director was announced and their hand shaken except me. He could not believe that my jazz band was directed by a woman, so our plaque was given to my first chair trumpet player. (Martha, questionnaire, April 11, 2015).

She said that her students were shocked that she was not recognized, and that she had never experienced anything like this before. She mentioned that the representative that did not hand her the plaque was getting older, and that he was embarrassed when he saw her. She said that she thought this happened because "he had no clue that a woman could have a good jazz band and it took him by surprise" (Martha, individual interview, April 11, 2015).

### *Cross-Case Analysis*

Family and personal relationships were also common themes among the experiences of the participants. Martha stated, “I would never have been successful if my husband had not left football coaching and went back to his other expertise, music. I am sure he realized that we would not be together nearly as much if he hadn’t” (Martha, questionnaire, April 11, 2015). Sarah stated that she had made a personal decision and “chose not to have a family but rather have a career in the music teaching profession. I couldn’t see how I could do both and I wanted to be successful in my chosen profession” (Sarah, questionnaire, March 19, 2015). Sarah also added, “I just made choices and sacrificed. I was one person, and I thought if I had to do this for thirty years, I couldn’t do it” (Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015). Tegan felt that it was important to have a partner who understood the demands of the profession. She said, “I don’t know if I could be with someone that doesn’t understand what it takes to be a band director. I’ve given up on the whole idea of dating someone who has never been in band” (Tegan, individual interview, March 24, 2015).

Participants were asked to discuss factors, other than gender discrimination, that contributed to the lack of females in the profession. Martha stated, “there are so few women in this field because it is much easier not to go through the personal hassles needed to be successful” (Martha, questionnaire, April 11, 2015). Sarah felt that it may have something to do with the time commitment, because “high school band positions are much more demanding than other music jobs” (Sarah, questionnaire, March 19, 2015). Tegan stated, “I think women aren’t as interested in being high school band directors as men are. It takes a lot of time, energy, and a certain amount of toughness to deal with teenagers that women might not care for” (Tegan, questionnaire, March 23, 2015).

### *Conclusions*

Being a female band director has presented negative personal and professional experiences according to the data presented. The experiences of the participants revealed that they were treated differently at adjudicated events because they were female (Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015), disrespected and treated differently by administration (Tegan, individual interview, March 24, 2015), experienced a lack of acknowledgement (Martha, questionnaire, April 11, 2015), and felt that they had to work harder to succeed (Martha, individual interview, April 11, 2015; Sarah, individual interview, March 23, 2015).

Sarah and Martha felt that the *boys clique* was present in the band world, that they needed to prove themselves in the profession, and questioned adjudicators comments or assessments. These findings support research cited in the literature review that the long-standing tradition of male conductors has led women to “question, criticize, and contest . . . musical authority” (Lamb, 1996, p. 128). These experiences have led Sarah and Martha to question their ratings at contest, and question whether being a female director was an influence.

The participants felt that confidence and toughness were personal qualities that enabled them to be successful female band directors and endure the demands of the profession. Sears (2014) also found that these qualities, as well as assertiveness and competitiveness, were all important qualities that the participants “strived to incorporate” (p. 9).

The masculine history, struggle to balance work and family, and working harder to succeed seem to be factors that inhibit females in the profession. These factors are supported by

the findings of the dissertations by Sears (2010) and Fitzpatrick (2013). Martha had the most experience within the masculine history of the profession, and agreed that it may be a factor that influenced females entering the profession. Tegan experienced difficulties balancing work and family, and stated that the demands of the profession interfered with her personal relationships, and that having a supporting a partner was important.

Martha questioned the level of respect men are given in society. She felt that it was easier for a man to be a successful band director because “[t]heir opinions are not questioned, and their reasons for directing are not questioned” (Martha, individual interview, April 11, 2015). Overall, she felt that “our society places men at a higher level of respect.” Martha’s opinion is supported by Hinely’s “historical-cultural view of women’s primary role as that of wife, mother, and nurturer has greatly restricted woman’s professional opportunities” (1984, p. 32). It was also interesting that the participants never mentioned their musical background or musical ability, because early writings promote that history and culture are the basic issues (Hinely, 1984).

The participants agreed that gender discrimination exists in instrumental music education, although Tegan felt that age and experience may also be a factor. They also agreed that gender discrimination has gotten better throughout their experiences and careers and concluded the discussion by stating, “if you want it bad enough, you’re going to get it . . . you do what you have to do, male or female, you do it” (Focus group discussion, April 13, 2015).

### *Discussion*

This research study has allowed me to see that perhaps gender discrimination is not the only factor that contributes to the lack of females in the profession. The focus group discussion concluded that although the participants faced issues related to gender and uncomfortable situations in the male dominated profession, they worked harder to succeed and overcome these issues (Focus group discussion, April 13, 2015). Working harder and other personal characteristics may be qualities that are unrelated to gender. It is a possibility that these personal characteristics and qualities may determine success and longevity in the instrumental teaching profession.

The most shocking story from this case study was an experience shared by Martha, an experience she described as “funny” (Martha, questionnaire, April 11, 2015). It is difficult to imagine how she must have felt when the representative walked past her to give the plaque to her trumpet player. Perhaps it is the years that have passed that have allowed her to reflect on this experience as humorous. Tegan and Sarah were in shock when they heard Martha share this incident at the focus group discussion. They could not imagine that Martha had experienced such a blatant display of gender discrimination and possibly thought of how they would handle such a situation. Martha seemed to employ personal characteristics that allowed her not to place too much emphasis on this situation and look toward the future of teaching her students and giving them her best.

Reflecting on the experiences of the three participants and their thoughts concerning gender discrimination, I agree with them that gender discrimination has diminished, and perhaps it is because those who have gone before us have paved the way. I would consider Martha a trailblazer in the profession because she has persevered in a male dominated career that questioned her ability to have a successful band. She may not have understood that working hard and developing successful band programs would impact the future of females in the

profession, but it has. She has been a mentor and inspiration to several band directors and has paved the way for future females to continue in the profession and aspire to be as successful as she was.

Identifying Martha as a trailblazer reminds me of an article by Julia Koza (2012), which portrays women feminists in academic music to a story about locusts, by Leo Tolstoy. “Locusts move in packs, and when they get to a river, the first ones go into the water and drown. Over time their dead bodies form a bridge that those who come after can walk across” (p. 99). This story is important to remember, because it reminds us we were not the first; there are others who have gone before us to help us get to where we are today. We must continue supporting females in the profession of instrumental music education in order to continue the work of the trailblazers who have paved the way.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

Future research interests include accessing or researching current gender trends in music education that include family and marital status. These statistics may be able to identify the percentage of female high school band directors that are married and have children. These findings would be interesting because the participants felt that it may be easier for a male to be a high school band director, because of the social expectations women encounter while raising children.

The study also revealed that there may be other factors and qualities, such as age and personal characteristics, which may influence success and longevity in the profession of instrumental music education. It would be compelling to compare these characteristics with statistics including family and marital status, in order to determine if personal characteristics influence females to choose to have, or not have, a family.

The male dominated profession and feeling that females are treated differently have also led me to question men’s perceptions of female band directors. Data collected from men with varying years of experience could determine if opinions have changed regarding females in instrumental music education. This research could also determine if men have a negative opinion of female band directors in instrumental music education or if their opinions have changed.

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## Appendix A: IRB Approval



Kristin Coen <[kcoen@kent.edu](mailto:kcoen@kent.edu)>

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**IRB Level I, category 2 approval for Protocol application #15-184 - please retain this email for your records**

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**RAGS Research Compliance** <[researchcompliance@kent.edu](mailto:researchcompliance@kent.edu)> Thu, Mar 12, 2015 at 3:08 PM  
To: "[pgrutzma@kent.edu](mailto:pgrutzma@kent.edu)" <[pgrutzma@kent.edu](mailto:pgrutzma@kent.edu)>  
Cc: "[kcoen@kent.edu](mailto:kcoen@kent.edu)" <[kcoen@kent.edu](mailto:kcoen@kent.edu)>

**RE: Protocol #15-184 - entitled "Gender Discrimination in the Band World: A Multiple Case Study of Three Female Band Directors"**

We have assigned your application the following IRB number: **15-184**. Please reference this number when corresponding with our office regarding your application.

The Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as Level I/Exempt from Annual review research. Your research project involves minimal risk to human subjects and meets the criteria for the following category of exemption under federal regulations:

- Exemption 2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, Public Behavior Observation

This application was approved on March 12, 2015.

\*\*\*Submission of annual review reports is not required for Level I/Exempt projects. We do NOT stamp Level I protocol consent documents.

**If any modifications are made in research design, methodology, or procedures that increase the risks to subjects or includes activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, those modifications must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation.**

Please contact an IRB discipline specific reviewer or the Office of Research Compliance to discuss the changes and whether a new application must be submitted.

<http://www.kent.edu/research/researchsafetyandcompliance/irb/index.cfm>

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at [Researchcompliance@kent.edu](mailto:Researchcompliance@kent.edu) or by phone at 330-672-2704 or 330.672.8058.

Kent State University Office of Research Compliance | 224 Cartwright Hall | fax 330.672.2658

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**Paulette Washko** | Director | 330.672.2704 | [pwashko@kent.edu](mailto:pwashko@kent.edu)

## Appendix B: Consent Forms



### **Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

**Study Title:** Gender Discrimination in the Band World: A Multiple Case Study of Three Female Band Directors

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Patricia Grutzmacher, PI; Kristin Coen-Mishlan, Co-Investigator

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to determine if gender discrimination is present in the experiences of the three participants, and to determine if gender discrimination has evolved.

#### **Procedures**

Participants will complete an online questionnaire, which will assist in the formation of the interview questions. An interview will be conducted at a location of the participant's choice. The final phase of the study is a round-table discussion that will include all three participants, and allow them to share their background and experience.

#### **Audio and Video Recording and Photography**

The interview and round-table discussion will be audio recorded and transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. Participants will be provided the opportunity to review the transcription, and how their thoughts are portrayed in the final report. You will complete a separate A/V consent form.

#### **Benefits**

This research will not benefit you directly. However, your participation in this study will help us to better understand gender discrimination in instrumental music education.



**Risks and Discomforts**

There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Your study related information will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Any identifying information will be kept in a secure location and only the researchers will have access to the data. Research participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used.

**Voluntary Participation**

Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Dr. Patricia Grutzmacher, PI. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

**Consent Statement and Signature**

I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



AUDIOTAPE/VIDEO CONSENT FORM

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE BAND WORLD  
KRISTIN COEN-MISHLAN

I agree to participate in an audio-taped/videotaped interview about Gender Discrimination in Instrumental Music as part of this project and for the purposes of data analysis. I agree that Kristin Coen-Mishlan may audio-tape/video tape this interview. The date, time and place of the interview will be mutually agreed upon.

---

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have been told that I have the right to listen to the recording of the interview before it is used. I have decided that I:

\_\_\_\_ want to listen to the recording      \_\_\_\_ do not want to listen to the recording

Sign now below if you do not want to listen to the recording. If you want to listen to the recording, you will be asked to sign after listening to them.

Kristin Coen-Mishlan may / may not (circle one) use the audio-tapes/video tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

\_\_\_\_ this research project \_\_\_\_ publication \_\_\_\_ presentation at professional meetings

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_