

“Interrupted? A summary of the gender dynamics of conversation from *The Silent Sex* (2014) by Chris Karpowitz and Tali Mendelberg”

Women are negatively affected by negative interruptions, and positively affected by positive interruptions; men are not affected, positively or negatively, by either positive or negative interruptions. A negative interruption is when the interrupter disagrees or expresses hostility. A positive interruption is when the interrupter agrees or expresses support.
Women are targeted with negative interruptions when they are a few – if the group uses adversarial rules. Those doing the targeting in those settings tend to be men (even accounting for the probabilities from the gender composition). Men are not targeted when <u>they</u> are few. So, adversarial rules are bad for women when women are few, because they increase men’s negative interruptions of women (and depress women’s relative floor time, perceived influence, feeling that their preference is legitimate, speaking up for their priorities and preferred outcomes, and their actual influence over the group decision).
Men issue fewer negative interruptions toward women as the number of women rises – in adversarial style discussions only. In consensus style discussion, men become less aggressive (or assertive) as the number of women <u>declines</u> .
Positive interruptions are more common in all-female groups than any other gender composition, and they carry some positive effects for women
If the goal is to promote gender-equal participation and influence, our bumper sticker is: If women are few, use an inclusive style; if women are a large majority, use an adversarial style

Conclusion:

‘Women are more easily “shut down” by the interruption/interrogation model of giving a seminar’ -- except when they are a large majority of those present.

Digestible summaries here:

- For general audience:
 - https://www.dropbox.com/s/h8npsmxqgl4a0i9/Are%20Women%20the%20Silent%20Sex_Boston%20Review.pdf?dl=0
- For scholarly audience:
 - https://www.dropbox.com/s/uys9smdl6d8bgl0/Politics%20Groups%20Identities%202015_Karpowitz%20Mendelberg%20Mattioli.pdf?dl=0