Community-Building and Identity Formation in Davidson College Eating Houses:

The Impact of Identity Salience on Achieved Belonging and Collective Identity

Chelsea Savage

Committee Members: Gerardo Martí, Gayle Kaufman

Davidson College

Honors Thesis; Spring 2021

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Acknowledgements

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Abstract

Eating houses are institutional phenomena unique to Davidson College, a private, liberal arts college in Davidson, North Carolina. Eating houses are physical buildings that function as social spaces in which women engage in community service, eat, and socialize, much like the function of sororities on other campuses. Each eating house carries a different organizational identity and has a specific reputation among the students. Some eating houses support the formation of an organizational identity distinct from the identities ascribed from a student's participation in campus social life, while other houses rely on those ascribed identities to attract potential members and, thus, allow the identities to remain salient in their organizational identity. Data from 6 weeks of interviews uncover how the salience of College-ascribed identities impact a student's choice of eating house based on the house's campus reputation and the effectiveness of house ritual in creating a collective identity. This research focuses on how membership choice in eating houses on Davidson's campus is strategic. Members choose the eating house with the reputation they believe to be most suitable to their most salient campus identity.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Table of Contents (i)

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Table of Contents (ii)

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Introduction

Eating houses are institutional phenomena unique to Davidson College[1], a private, liberal arts college in Davidson, North Carolina. In these houses, members eat meals, first and foremost, and also engage in social events and complete community service for the house's philanthropy. Their presence effectively replaces that of national sororities on campus, save for the NPHC and Latin sororities. Rusk Eating House was the first all-female eating house and opened on campus in 1977, and then three others followed. Warner Hall House opened in 1982, Connor House in 1992, and then finally Turner House in 1998. Originally, there were some co-ed eating houses, but they eventually closed, leaving only the all-female eating houses. All eating houses and fraternities are located in a circle, called Patterson Court that surrounds a greenspace, save for Turner. Turner is located on a hill outside of the center of the Court. This physical separation by location manifests in the nonphysical separation of Turner from the other eating houses in terms of its reputation and institutional differences. The proximity of the other eating houses also functions to make each of them more organizationally similar to one another than they are to Turner. I became interested in studying differences in the identities formed by the organizational communication and institutional structuring of the four eating houses after eating at Turner House and noticing how differently the members treated each other compared to my own eating house, Warner Hall. What sociological dynamics unite the members of some eating houses but function to maintain a separation among the members of others?

---

[1] Princeton University has eating clubs, but they do not function as mini sororities in the same way as the eating houses at Davidson College. They are primarily places in which students eat and engage in academic debate. All of the eating clubs are co-ed, which is another distinctive difference, as all but one of the eating houses at Davidson are only open to people identifying as women (Princeton University Admission, 2019).

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

When I entered Turner House to eat lunch, I was shocked to see a totally different seating pattern than the one I was accustomed to observing at Warner Hall. Members walked into the house and sat with the first group of people they saw, regardless of whether they knew them personally or not. Because of this lack of separation between social groups at the house, I entered the project specifically focusing on Turner with the intention of investigating the interactions of members and what role their identity has in their feeling of belonging as a member. The intersection of different identities resulting in an institution full of cooperation and support for its members is a rarity, so I became invested in learning what underlying forces of identity are able to unite members and foster an environment of acceptance and support. Since the significant bond between members was evident in the mundane act of eating lunch, I wondered if the other three houses also experienced some level of this closeness. I began to wonder what mechanisms were at the heart of the creation of a collective identity that determined the degree of friendliness of the social interactions of other house members. I anticipate that, based on dynamics and physical locations, the social structures and patterns of Rusk, Warner Hall, and Connor may be similarly oriented towards community-building and thus share a social engine (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Thomä, Henning, and Schmid 2014).

All eating houses share a common organizational structure. A document of Bylaws governs the actions of each member within the house as well as all members of the Executive Boards of the house. The houses are centered around philanthropic missions, and each member must complete a certain amount of community service to support that philanthropy, as decided by the Bylaws. Additionally, each member is obligated to attend house meetings and perform tasks like cleaning the house and doing

the dishes at some stage of their membership. Failure to complete these tasks results in fines and potential expulsion from the organization. All the houses invite members to participate in rituals of initiation in the form of gatherings and parties to induct the new members. Engaging in ritual creates shared experiences among the members that allow for "institutional and cultural space for individuals to form bonds with other individuals in similar situations" (Camp and Kent 2004: 441). In addition to the rituals that are a part of initiation, each house has annual themed parties hosted for their members that add to the house's shared experiences. These mutual obligations and rituals likely function much like the "Turnerhood" in binding the members of the organizations together under a group identity. Though the shared values of the other eating houses will differ from Turner's, I speculate that the organizational structures of each house and its different rituals create a strong shared collective identity as a member of the house (Camp and Kent 2004; Polletta and Jasper 2001).

However, beyond the existence of a collective identity is the intersectionality of the multiple identities of a student on a college campus. Since it is fair to apply the existence of a collective identity among members of the same organization, in this study I seek to go further and investigate the particular salience of different identities of the members as they navigate the social spaces of their eating houses. Davidson College as the broader organization has its own social structure that students fall into based on their campus identities. The most common division in identity on campus is between those who participate in athletics and those who do not -- the Athletes vs. 'Nonners' dynamic. As a student, I find that social identity to be most salient in how students primarily identify themselves on campus; however, the analysis could uncover more intricacies in

the construction of individual identity and how that works with the social dynamic of the houses. I seek to discover the identities of the members and the salience of these identities in comparison with the group identity created with participation in the house. I ask: in each eating house on Patterson Court, which identity is most salient to members as they navigate social interactions with other members of their house? How do identities ascribed by the college as an institution interact with those created by the eating houses, and which identities take precedence in the social organization of the house? In other words, when a member interacts with other members of their house, which of their identities are they primarily seen as belonging to? Is it their house collective identity or the ascribed identities from their navigation of Davidson College's campus?

Identity & Belonging: Navigating the multiplicity of college identities in pursuit of a ‘sisterhood’ of organizational identity

Identity is defined by actions. What one does as a display of their identity is far more crucial to others' interpretation of who they are than their self-interpretation is (Georgiou 2017; Goffman 1959; see also Butler 1990). This expression of oneself is done with the goal of impressing others and is often monitored by the individual, sometimes subconsciously, through a process of reflexivity (Georgiou 2017; Goffman 1959: 4; West and Zimmerman 1987; *see also Giddens 1991*). Additionally, who one interacts with also determines how they identify. Stryker and Burke (2000) define identity as referring to "each group-based self," as they state that "persons have as many identities as distinct networks of relationships in which they occupy positions and play roles" (286). Thus, every interaction a person has creates the potential for an identity formation, and every group an individual interacts with brings a whole new identity for the individual.

Eating houses, as student-lead organizations, have great potential for constructing powerful identities by fostering cognitive and emotional connectivity through the establishment of a collective identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Collective identity is defined by Polletta and Jasper (2001) as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice or institution" (285). Collective identity connects people in communities, practices, and institutions while producing "positive feelings for other members of the group" (2001: 285). When institutional, group identity provides a place for people to freely oppose traditional notions of identity and create their own "oppositional identities" (Polletta and Jasper 2001: 288). In my previous study focusing strictly on the construction of the identity of members of Turner Eating

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

House, I found collective identity at the center of the formation of their strong identity that supports their members through shared values of respect and advocacy (Savage 2019). Members of Turner already share many marginalized identities, and the house has a reputation for being a safe space for people with oppositional identities. Turner House has created a space where the norm is to be abnormal through the strength of their institutional collective identity.

The other three eating houses, Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall, also have collective identities; however, they are less widely salient to the members of the houses. By calling upon a combination of literature about different approaches to identity and belonging and identity salience, I inquire to uncover the principal element of identity-building among students and analyze the relationship between students' previously held identities and the identity from their eating houses. Firstly, I engage with literature about different approaches to the expression of identity and belonging, exploring how identity and belonging work together in order to create satisfaction with one's organizational membership. Then, I discuss identity salience focusing on the hierarchical organization of identities internally based on external social interactions. I also explore the role of ritualistic events in creating an environment that fosters opportunity for interaction between potential and active members to give potential members a taste of the opportunities for identification that the eating houses offer. Finally, I consider identity and belonging and their close relationship to sisterhoods, finding that a sisterhood is an organizationally created belonging shared among its members.

IDENTITY: FROM THE SELF TO THE ORGANIZATION

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Structural and Cognitive Identity Approaches Taken Together

Departing from Goffman's (1959) impression management theory, the more current examples of the structural theory and the cognitive theory move beyond just performance of identity and into how that expression works to confirm identities and form social structures (Stryker and Serpe 1994; Stryker and Burke 2000). The structural identity approach posits that identity is confirmed through the creation of situations in which the identity can be expressed (Stryker and Burke 2000). In this approach, the individual is the agent creating or seeking out situations in which identities could be expressed and confirmed. In opposition, the cognitive identity approach centers "social structural contexts" as the creators of identity (Stryker and Burke 2000). This approach centers the already existing social structures in creating and altering identities. Both theories acknowledge the self as consisting of a structure of multiple identities, which is at the center of the focus in individual identity salience navigation. The relationship between the two approaches lies in their reliance on each other to create a full picture of the process of identity formation. The first approach argues that salient identities are "cognitive schemas" that the individual uses to interpret situations and react accordingly using their most salient identities, and the second approach reaffirms the connection between identity and behavior, since they are not mutually exclusive (Stryker and Burke 2000). Taking Goffman's (1957) performative aspect of identity and Stryker and Burke's (2000) complementary combination of the structural and cognitive approaches, *identity salience* takes a center stage as a determining factor of identity performance. Salience provides insight into which identities an individual uses to conceptualize the world and also how they continually reaffirm them.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Identity Salience & Belonging

Through social interaction, people gain meanings for role expectations and self-conceptions based on "enduring, normative, reciprocal relationships," as per the *role theory* (Degarmo and Forgatch 2002: 267). Identities within an individual are prioritized based on an internal salience hierarchy. One chooses which role is most salient based on role expectations that they glean from social interaction (Degarmo and Forgatch 2002). *Identity salience* explains the organization of the structure of identities and ranks them by importance to self; additionally, the more salient the identity, "the greater the probability of behavioral choices in accord with the expectations attached to that identity" (Stryker and Burke 2000: 286). In other words, individuals behave in ways that support the expectations that align with their most salient identity.

Conforming to behavioral expectations of an individual's most salient identity also extends to their group memberships. Individuals seek opportunities that align with their most salient identities. For instance, Serpe and Styker (1987) find that college students seek new relationships "by joining organizations that provide opportunities to behave in accord with highly salient identities held before entrance" (Stryker and Burke 2000: 287). In application to Davidson and its eating houses, this could mean that students choose eating houses based on either personal identities they have that align with a house or based on the identities they have developed at the college thus far, dependent on which identity is most salient to them.

Commitment and connectedness both are positively correlated with the salience of an identity. A part of commitment is the number of people an individual is connected to as a result of possessing an identity (Stryker and Burke 2000). The more people one is

around, the denser the ties of interconnectedness, and the stronger the social structure in which that identity is planted (Stryker and Burke 2000). Commitment leads to connectedness, which leads to strong ties and a "densely connected position" and more salient roles attached to that specific role (Stryker and Burke 2000: 289). Individuals demonstrate increased salience of a specific identity when their role performances match the expectations of the identity, as in the example from Stryker and Burke (2000) of a student with a committed student identity being dedicated to academic work in order to maintain their commitment to the identity role. Given that this study deals with students in a university setting, the lens of the behavioral portrayal of identity because of commitment and connectedness becomes central to the analysis.

Belonging adds a layer of complication in terms of who can access a fulfilling organizational membership. Feeling as if one belongs to a group of people is crucial for the success of college students (mccabe 2016). The relationships formed during college help support students socially and academically, and the number and types of people they surround themselves with impact their ability to succeed in their education (mccabe 2016). The most beneficial friendship in terms of both academic and social success is created and maintained by the students who are what she refers to as "tight-knitters" (mccabe 2016: 25). These students create a friend group in which almost all of the people they are friends with are also friends with each other, and the closeness of these friendships creates a strong sense of belonging (mccabe 2016). Borrowing language from Stryker and Burke (2000), this friend group can also be referred to as an identity network of relationships. Identity plays a role in who comprises an individual's identity network,

and belonging results from these connections, thus how one identifies leads to the group they feel they belong to (mccabe 2016; Stryker and Burke 2000).

Endress (2014) theorizes that there are three types of belonging: ascribed, achieved or elected. Before defining each of them, I would like to emphasize that each of these types of belonging result in a sense of belonging to a social setting or an environment. Since forms of identity can also lead to this same feeling of comfort, thinking about a feeling of acceptance as possessing both identity and belonging will provide a better understanding of the extent to which one identifies with and comfortable in their eating house community. The first type of belonging is ascribed belonging and it represents belonging to a fixed group, such as an ethnic group (Endress 2014). Then there is achieved or elected belonging which is belonging to something, whether that something be an association or organization. Finally, there is a possessive belonging, how one belongs to someone or something or somewhere like a social area or social environment. Since the eating houses are organizational, the type of belonging central to their members is *achieved belonging*. In concert with each other, identity salience and belonging create success and contentedness for the members of the eating house, but only when an individual's most salient identity aligns with the eating houses' identity. However, in order to create identity groups, individuals must have the chance to interact with each other. Events provided by ritual create a space for social interaction to occur between members and potential members of the eating houses, allowing for the negotiation of identity and identity salience to take place as the students choose their house.

ORGANIZATIONAL RITUAL AND ITS ROLE IN MEMBER INDUCTION

Fraternal ritual is a social phenomenon which unites individuals under an organization from a created shared experience of ritual(s) that all members of the organization must undergo for acceptance as a member (Camp and Kent 2004). Referencing Dumenil (1984), Clawson (1989), and Carnes (1989), Camp and Kent (2004), emphasize the centrality of ritual to fraternal organizations, noting the extensive time and dedication given to ceremonies that often involved the entire membership. Because all of the members are present at these events, they provide an excellent opportunity to introduce the potential members to the dynamics and values of the organization. The "common culture" of the rituals acts as a collective identity, providing the members with institutional and cultural space to form friendship ties with other members as they go through the process of ritual, either as the enforcer or as the inductee (Camp and Kent 2004). Drawing from Durkheim (1965), Camp and Kent (2004) highlight the potency of this common culture in its ability to connect a vast network of individuals to each other due to their universal experience within their specific fraternal in-group. Charity, or service work, is part of the maintenance of the created culture of the fraternal organization. "Good works demonstrated good character," and this is primarily why the organizations engaged in activities of service (Camp and Kent 2004: 456).

Eating houses are at their basis, fraternal organizations. Members become affiliated to the house through rituals. Whether that ritual be Self-Selection, the induction day, or an annual dinner where members share secrets in front of the whole house, these rituals have specific elements that are upheld by the more senior members of the houses. The whole house participates in them as well, making them a perfect source of common culture to potentially unite all of the members under, providing that their most salient

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

identities do not clash with the dominant shared identities and experiences of the created

culture. In addition, eating houses include an element of service as part of their

philanthropy, which shares a purpose with the charity of the fraternal organizations in that

it emphasizes the great character of the members of each house. All of these elements

taken together provide countless opportunities for the formation of bonds among

members of the eating houses. If these bonds are successful and gain strength, then they

may even be referred to as a sisterhood.

'SISTERHOOD' ON CAMPUS: A MORE ESTABLISHED BELONGING

A 'sisterhood' is not necessarily just something that results from a sorority,

though it is thought as such in an American context. A sisterhood is defined as a group of

women who are there to support each other. It can be a physical body of women, or it can

represent a metaphorical connection built from shared life events or experiences, as in

Lawston's (2009) study. The goal of a sisterhood is to unite a group of women willing to

protect each other from male power that results from the structural imbalance present due

to socially constructed gender differences. In the past, this male power was physical in

form, as was the case with women workers of cotton mills in Shanghai, but now it is

more hierarchical and metaphorical, shown by the way society is structured around male

domination (Honig 1985). Loyalty makes up a large part of the concept of sisterhood,

both in its literal and metaphorical forms. The groups formed allow for women to create a

safe space to which they all belong and can contribute to (Honig 1985; Lawston 2009).

My particular focus on sisterhoods lies in the ways in which they are built within

eating houses as institutions – institutions in which women have leadership positions and

power and make important decisions regarding the wellbeing of the institution. As cited

above, sisterhoods create a space for belonging through their loyalties to each other. I would argue that a sisterhood is a result of the culmination of a successful identity network that creates a sense of organizational belonging so strong that members perceive each other as sisters. In the analysis that follows, I uncover whether or not that occurs within eating houses at Davidson College. I focus on the degree of impact the salience of identities within an individual has on the internalization of common culture, a sense of belonging, and the formation of a collective identity under the name of a sisterhood. Given the stark differences in salience of identity at Davidson College as well as the presence of ritual and potential for the formation of a 'sisterhood' of belonging in the eating house, I anticipate that there will be varying strengths of organizational identity among the eating houses based on their members' most salient identities and their willingness to accept the shared identity that the rituals create.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Research Design

My focus in this study are the four eating houses on Davidson College's campus. Eating houses are open to all non-male identifying individuals on campus and function as a sorority-like institution[2]. Members sign up for meal plans and eat meals at the house, either as frequently or as infrequently as they choose or as pre-determined by the house by class year. Additionally, members engage in community service each semester and can choose to participate in a social life within the eating house. Each house provides a number of social events for members to attend, and these events are unique to the houses. Many of the house social events occur annually and are the same themes each year, functioning as welcome events to prospective members, and the eating houses become known for these specific events.

In order to investigate the salience of certain identities in the construction of a group, institutional identity in the eating houses on campus, I used the ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews to conduct my research, following the methodological guidance of Goffman (1989) and Weiss (1994). Turner House was the only eating house I was able to study using both physical participant observation and interviews. Participant observation took place during the fall of 2019 inside of the house, in the dining area only. Jottings were recorded when I was in the setting, which were then written out into longer, richer field notes once I returned to my dorm room, following the example of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011). Interviews were conducted at various convenient locations on campus, with most of them taking place inside of Turner, and

---

[2] When I conducted the study on only Turner House in 2019, eating houses were designated as female-only organizations, save for Turner House, which had been allowing non-binary and gender queer individuals membership for around a year. In the Spring 2020 semester, Patterson Court changed all of the houses' bylaws to extend membership to all non-male identifying individuals (meaning those who are non-binary or gender queer could join). The term "sorority-like" is used to provide a commonly-known comparison.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

were recorded and transcribed with the Voice Memos and Transcription applications I downloaded to my iPhone.

The previous ethnographic work on Turner led to an expansion of the study to include Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall Houses. Over an eight-week period, I conducted seventeen virtual interviews, each lasting approximately fifteen minutes. I recruited via convenience sampling, anticipating that house members would be hesitant to add another Zoom meeting to their schedules given that most events are now virtual. The participants I interviewed were mainly white and all identified as female. Even though the houses have opened membership to all non-male identifying people, my sample did not include any non-binary individuals. This could reflect sampling error or simply a decrease in general student involvement and willingness to participate in voluntary activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. I intentionally included members with and without leadership roles in the organizations to avoid a potential positivity bias where the members in power try to paint their house in an artificially optimistic light.

I conducted interviews remotely via Zoom, since the houses were closed to dining due to COVID-19 safety protocol. I utilized Zoom's transcription service, recording each interview to the Cloud and downloading an auto-transcription. The switch to interviews provided benefits for the study including an elimination of some researcher's bias and the ability to dive deeper into personal experiences than I was able to during the study on just Turner that included both participant observation and interviews. Interviews allowed me to ask personal questions about the process of acceptance that members went through as they joined their house in order to uncover how ritual creates shared experiences and, ultimately, shared values among members of the eating houses. Limitations to only using

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Zoom as opposed to in-person interviews include the inability to read body language and added difficulty in continuing the conversation down a more individualized path if the interviewee mentioned something of importance that I did not include in the interview schedule. Because all of the interviewees use Zoom for their college classes and events, Zoom fatigue was another major limitation, and participants seemed to me to be trying to just answer the questions to finish the interview. When I conducted interviews in person for Turner House, I did not encounter this rushed feeling, so it is possible that participants from Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall were not as sincere in answering the questions due to the interviews being held on Zoom.

The interview schedule[3] included questions regarding expectations members had prior to joining the house and then prompted the participant to compare their experience with those expectations. Obtaining their story about the process of initiation allowed for a baseline of the participant's perceived degree of satisfaction and connection to the house. Additionally, the interview schedule included questions about their lunchtime socializing habits to measure the participant's comfortability with casual social interactions with other members of the house. Collecting this information can measure the strength of the house's collective identity among the members. The salience of the outside identities ascribed by Davidson as a social space were measured with questions about who the members ate lunch with when they were inside the house. From personal experience, I know groups formed due to shared college identities tend to stick together like a clique in social situations on campus. So, questions about how lunchtime was approached provided insight into whether or not these social patterns are transferred into the mundane act of eating meals in the house.

---

[3] See Appendix A.

Unlike the previous in-person ethnographic portion of the study, I did not have significant personal involvement in the interactions of the members that would have biased their answers. My perceived role by the interviewees was primarily that of student researcher. Though I was not able to interact with a physical environment and become biased based on my interactions, I still carried biases into each interview. Since I am a member of Warner Hall, I knew most of the participants prior to the interview, and it is possible that they assigned a friend role to me instead of an interviewer at that moment. Additionally, I could have been biased by my own friendship with some participants. I admit I may have felt more comfortable with some and potentially could have prompted them to a response they were not initially going to give with unintentional prompting.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Findings

The Davidson College experience provides individuals with multiple possibilities of identity. First and foremost, each student belongs under the 'Davidson student' community identity. Students were all admitted into this academic community and sworn into the Honor Code system of academic governance, so each student shares this identity. Then, there are organizational identities associated with membership in student-lead clubs. These clubs are formed based on shared interests, and when students participate in the organizations together, a group identity is formed from the shared experience (Polletta & Jasper 2001). At the most specific level of identity are individual identities, which are at the intersection of organizational and community identities and include other ascribed identities.

Eating houses are organizations on Davidson's campus. They are student governed, only partially institutionally operated, and produce loyalty among their members, both to the organization itself and to its members. Identity is created by action rather than being (Georgiou 2019; Goffman). Therefore, what activities one participates in during their college career is what one will become known by. Identifying with an eating house comes from the culmination of one's identity and involvement on campus as well as one's desired identity on campus. Certain houses carry with them ascribed stereotypical identities of the typical members who 'belong' in the house. They attract first years who they believe will fit in with the already established group based on what the house does in terms of social activities and philanthropic work. Sometimes one's outside identities from campus are stronger than the level of identification they wish to have with their eating house, so they join an eating house but primarily still socialize with

the group they had formed prior to Self-Selection, not expanding their social circles to include other members of the eating house. Members who chose to do this mentioned feeling "satisfied" with their prior role on campus, so they interact with the groups that allow them to navigate that closely.

IDENTITY SALIENCE AND CLUSTERING IN SELF-SELECTION PROCESSES

Campus-wide Perceptions of Each Eating House

When deciding which eating house to join, first years focus on the events and the social demeanor of the members towards themselves. Campus perceptions of the organizational identities of the houses also come into play. Interviewees consistently said that they took the eating house reputations into serious consideration when they decided which house to join. For one member of Warner Hall, the difference in reputation between Warner Hall and Connor was significant enough to cause her to break away from her friend group in clustering together because she did not agree with her friends who all wanted to join Connor. She mentioned specifically that the reputation of Connor can "become a little bit suspect on campus, [because] they're known as very much the partiers." This individual was worried about the association that came with the perceived identity of being a member of Connor House due to its reputation as the party-house on campus.

Members from across all four houses mentioned that in being introduced to the concept of eating houses on Davidson's campus, they were also made aware of the campus-wide stereotypical reputation of each house and what social status that carried. There is even a rhyme that goes with the reputations, and it was mentioned several times by participants. "Connor to bed, Warner to wed, Turner to hate, Rusk to date." The rhyme

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

itself groups the houses by the reputation of Warner and Rusk being the most

relationship-worthy and thus 'normal' and then placing Connor and Turner at the

extremes. Adding to the social relevance of the rhyme, the houses with the strongest

reputations are Connor and Turner, and they are at the opposite end of the spectrum in

terms of partying and social life. As per the line "Connor to bed," Connor is well-known

for its prioritization of social events, drinking alcohol, and having a good time over

forming friendship bonds and serving philanthropy. Turner on the other hand is known as

the house that is 'no fun' and cares more about social justice than having a good time,

hence the "Turner to hate" line of the rhyme. In reality though, Turner's members

prioritize genuine connection among themselves and have created a strong house

collective identity through the promotion of values of inclusivity and activism (Savage

2019).

In between the extremes of Connor and Turner are Warner and Rusk which have

weaker reputations. Participants who are members of Rusk and Warner had trouble

identifying their house's reputation in any form, negative or positive, and mentioned that

they also saw Rusk and Warner as "interchangeable" in terms of house culture and

reputation. They used the well-known reputations of Connor and Turner when explaining

what they heard their eating house would be like, in order to emphasize that they were

not either of the two extremes. Words like "balance" and "friendship" were used to

describe the separation the houses have from the polarizing reputations of Connor and

Turner.

Rusk members differentiated their house from both Connor and Turner when

explaining why they decided to join, emphasizing that the house is not just "white girls

who just like to drink" like Connor is perceived as, nor is it an eating house with few

social events with other houses like Turner. As one member from Rusk put it, "I think

Rusk and Warner tend to fall in the middle of things and Connor and Turner tend to be on

the extremes." The dynamic is persistently evident even after members have completed

their house selection process. Warner's members similarly expressed a distinction

between themselves and members of Connor and Turner, especially focusing on Connor

and never mentioning Turner. One senior mentioned that she joined Warner because the

reputation of Connor can be "a little suspect on campus," and she shared that she had

heard some "not so great things about them" and did not want to be attached to that

association. Other members touted Warner as the house most "respected" and

"acceptable" to join and mentioned Warner's perceived cohesivity and number of social

events as superior to Rusk House.

Navigating old and new social identity groups

Ultimately, when accepting and continuing membership in an eating house, an

individual can either prioritize (1) creating new social circles and identities for

themselves within the eating house or (2) bringing their existing social circles and

identities into the eating house. Across the houses, even now that they are open to

non-binary and gender queer individuals, femininity determines who gains access to the

spaces and groups – save for Turner House which has a strong identity of being the house

for those who do not identify with the other houses. Despite the perceived importance of

the reputations of the eating houses, it is ultimately up to the individual joining the eating

house the extent to which they identify themselves as a member of the house, as

membership in an eating house is much less committal than a membership in a typical

fraternal organization.

Eating houses operate under the assumption that one can participate in as little or

as many of the house social activities as they would like. Whether or not one decides to

embrace the development of a new organizational identity within themselves that is

attributed to a house is dependent on the salience of their other identities to their daily

activities and interactions, because, ultimately, actions create and reinforce identity

(Georgiou 2017; Goffman 1959; Stryker and Burke 2000). Across the eating houses on

Davidson's campus, the organizational identities of the eating houses themselves are of

varying potencies to the overall identities of the members. In other words, in some eating

houses, members more strongly identify with shared values that the house supports than

in others, where individual identities from outside organizations remain more salient to

how the member navigates the house dynamics. The strongest organizational identity is

present in members of Turner, with the most members emphasizing the power of the

communal feeling of support.

Rusk and Warner Hall seem to have a mix of identity saliency among their

members. Some members enter the space and are able to connect with others and form a

strong organizational bond, while others report remaining more connected with the

hallmates or teammates that they joined the house with throughout their experience. A

junior member of Warner Hall who ended up dropping out of their membership just a few

weeks after our interview stated that her hesitancy came from mental social boundaries

present due to the distinctiveness of groups. In this specific case, the friend group she

mentions is the women's track and field team, and they met each other due to their shared

salient identities as track athletes. The former member who was intimidated by the group of athletes was not an athlete herself, and this difference in identity salience caused her to perceive the group as unapproachable, despite their lack of exclusivity. She had joined Warner because her hallmates had all clustered together, and she felt most comfortable remaining in that friend group.

Despite this member's experience, a senior member of Warner Hall had the opposite experience, and did not "just stay with the people that [she] had her cluster with." She found it easy to navigate making new friends in Warner and even disclosed that she joined Warner with the plan of broadening her friend group, and she was successful. Discussing the inclusivity aspect mentioned by the junior former member, this senior said, "I don't really think anyone has ever been told they can't sit with you at a Warner table which I was happy to see. I wasn't sure that was going to happen." Unlike the former member, this member seems to have tried sitting with members she was unfamiliar with, and she was able to connect with them. When a member enters Warner Hall House prioritizing making new social connections, they are able to make them with apparent ease, but if they do not, then it appears to be more of an intimidating task.

Similar to the dynamic in Warner Hall, members of Rusk mentioned being able to meet new people pretty easily, but that had to be a priority in order to become accomplished. In Rusk, even athletes who entered the house with the desire to create new social circles for themselves found success. One athlete mentioned that even though she joined late her sophomore year, she's gotten to know a lot of the house. However, a junior athlete who initially wanted to make new friends but did not put work into interacting with house members outside of the group she clustered with stated that she doesn't

"know as many people in the house as [she] thought [she would]." She did not feel the need to expand her circle once she joined the house because she just assumed she already knew everyone at Davidson, "because it's so small." She mentioned wanting to join to keep herself in with a house of athletes but still meet people, but because she assumed she already knew all the athletes, her plan to expand her social circle fell through. The possibility of forming new identity groups within the house is available though, and a member who prioritized branching out her freshman and sophomore years "met a lot of upperclassmen who are still some of [her] closest friends." Like in Warner Hall, members of Rusk must make the effort to interact with other house members in order to realize the potential of social identity group formation, or else the ascribed college identities overpower the organizational eating house identity in intra-house social group formation.

The house with the most divergent sense of organizational identity is Connor. Connor House's organizational identity leverages other group memberships over the Connor membership, with most of their members stating that they joined completely due to the prevalence of members belonging to sports teams and have not ventured out much beyond those previously formed social groups. Connor privileges the athletic identity in its organizational structure, creating its calendar in favor of the athletic schedule because the majority of members are athletes. Due to its high support of athletes, Connor supports members remain in their pre-existing social circles as they navigate house membership. A senior non-athlete referred to the difficulty it takes to make connections across social circles within the house, stating that it is "always uncomfortable" for her to sit down with a group of athletes at lunchtime. Though she did not feel especially welcomed by the athlete members of the house, she had the intentions of breaking the boundary, and even

when she had the feeling that "they didn't want to talk with [her]," she would sit down to try and start a conversation, which she mentioned most of the time was not successful. So, Connor members' willingness to expand their social circles to others in the house does not result in their actual expansion, unlike what members from other houses had mentioned being able to occur in their houses. The strong distinction found between athletes and non-athletes as social groups in Connor House lead to a broader investigation of this separation of identity in the other two eating houses and how these identities impact social activity among their members.

A SOCIAL DIVIDE BY IDENTITY SALIENCE: ATHLETES VS. 'NONNERS'

One in four Davidson College students are members of a NCAA Division I athletic team on campus. Division I athletics require an immense number of hours in the workweek to be devoted to practicing, travelling, and competing. Due to the nature of the large time commitment, team members' athletic identity is extremely salient to them, as they find themselves having to spend the most time with their teammates due to their athletic obligations. Recall that the cognitive identity approach stresses that identity and behavior are not mutually exclusive, also drawing from Goffman's (1959) theory of presentation that identity is formed by action (Stryker and Burke 2000). Thus, the time athletes spend in athletics is bound to create a very salient athletic identity. The salience of athletic identity among the participants is evident across three of the four eating houses. Even in houses where athletic identity is less salient, athletes tend to stick together within the house at mealtimes, naturally creating a division between athletes and nonathletes, or 'nonners' as they are referred to on Davidson's campus.

In Rusk and Warner Hall, the social division between athlete and non-athlete was mentioned as present between members and as a reason for a lack of communication between the groups. In Rusk, the division was based on coincidence. One member who was a junior athlete said she "doesn't really have time to hang out with" members who are not athletes, since her athletic schedule is so demanding. A senior member not involved in athletics emphasized the ease with which she socially navigated between friend groups at lunch, saying prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, "people [would] be interjecting into other people's tables and ask how people were as we waited in line for food and stuff." So, there does exist a divide, but it does not greatly impact one's ability to socialize in the house, except for convenience's sake. In Warner Hall, the divisive dynamic of athlete/non-athlete was present but only internally among members. The example used above in the "Navigating old and new social identity groups" section also applies here. The member was intimidated to approach the friend group formed because of a shared athletic team identity because she felt intrusive and like they were already "too close" to each other that they would not be willing to accept her. Another non-athlete senior mentioned not wanting to interrupt an already talking group nor sit with someone she did not know when she entered the house for a meal. Instead of trying to sit with house members she did not already have a connection to, she felt more comfortable sitting by herself at a table for her meal.

As can be drawn from the prior discussion about athletics being extremely time intensive and involving constant interaction with the same group, time and activities come up as variables that predict the salience of identity for an individual. If one is involved in athletics, the athletic identity takes precedence over the house identity,

usually. However, non-athletes also spend a lot of time with certain circles of friends that shape their identities, most notably their roommates. When deciding which house to join, nearly all respondents who were not athletes stated that they joined the house their first year hallmates were joining. A senior non-athlete member of Connor clustered with her hallmates, and they made the "collective decision" to select Connor. A junior non-athlete mentioned she had a similar experience, following her roommate into membership in Connor House. In Rusk, a senior non-athlete accepted membership because the friends she had made her first year were all joining. For this senior, Rusk House functioned as a way to "merge" her friend groups. In Warner Hall, a junior non-athlete chose Warner because all her hallmates clustered together and wanted to join Warner. Even athletes in Warner Hall emphasized knowing people prior to joining the house due to previous living arrangements as a major reason for their choice to join. Two members of the swim team highlighted knowing several people in the house from their previous living situations as their motivation to choose Warner. Like athletics, living together creates a strong social structure in which interactions are constantly occurring between individuals in the hall. So, it makes sense that a previously formed hall group identity would become salient to individuals as they navigate their house decision.

Each house has a distinct organizational identity. Some houses leverage other identities in the promotion of their own identity while others focus on promoting their own unique identity. Connor House's organizational identity is nearly indistinguishable from the athletic identity, and they unofficially recruit athletes by promoting themselves as the house with the most athletes. A 'nonner' I spoke with mentioned that it was "nerve wracking at first" to join Connor because she felt the opposition in her identity as a

non-athlete clashed with the large number of athletes in the house. However, she decided to go for it because her hallmates wanted to join her and liked the community of it. So, in Connor the strength of the salience of athletic identity is intimidating to those who do not possess an athletic identity, but the community of their hall and their previously formed circle of friends allows them to push past the intimidation.

Mealtime Socialization Mediated by Athletic Status

For a dynamic that I initially thought to be fairly predictable due to what I personally experienced as a member of Warner Hall, the way members socialize at mealtimes is more complex than I thought. The prominent athlete/non-athlete divide on campus is still present in the houses, but there are some notable exceptions in certain houses that promote more of a distinct house organizational identity versus allowing other college identities to be leveraged in the creation of their house identity. As is true for the house reputations, Connor and Turner have the most different dynamic occurring due to the fact that they create such different levels of collective organizational identity. Connor leverages athletics over other identities in the presentation of its organizational identity to potential members, while Turner has built itself into a house that has an identity of its own that is founded upon shared, actionable goals that many members are passionate about (Savage 2019). That leaves Rusk and Warner Hall, which both have elements of the social boundaries between athletes and non-athletes, but they are not institutionalized. Because Rusk and Warner Hall do not have athletes prioritized as a part of their schedule and reputation, when the social boundary exists, it is mainly by the perception of the individual member navigating the space. If a member chooses not to sit

down with a table of athletes, it is because they perceive themselves to not belong to the group.

Belonging refers to a sense of comfort when interacting with a group of individuals and is directly connected to identity (Endress 2014). When belonging and identity are combined, you get acceptance, and acceptance by a group is what allows members to feel okay approaching a group at mealtime and sitting down with them. Remember that achieved belonging refers to belonging to a group or organization, and it is this belonging that members of eating houses seek to acquire (Endress 2014). In Connor, all members who identify as athletes already have 'achieved belonging' simply by bringing in their previously ascribed identity as an athlete because a dominant house identity is being an athlete. This creates a strong divide that allows two distinctive, very strongly identifying groups to form – athletes and non-athletes – and members emphasized that both groups typically stick to socializing amongst each other. So, the athlete and 'nonner' dynamic is strongest in Connor during meals out of a split in identity salience. Athletes have no trouble sitting with other athletes nor other non-athlete members of the house. Since the majority of the members of the house are athletes, members identifying as college athletes described being comfortable talking to anyone. One athlete mentioned it being common for "random athletes to sit together," and other athletes noted that it was easy for them to talk to anyone in the house at mealtime. This was not the case for the non-athletes I interviewed, and they felt they needed to coordinate meals with other friends as opposed to freely entering the house and sitting with whoever was there.

A similar athlete/non-athlete dynamic plays out in Warner Hall, but it is to a lesser extent due to the lack of an organizational orientation towards favoring athletes. Athletes and non-athletes alike mentioned not sitting down to eat in the house unless they saw members they already were friends with. One participant described the stark distinctions between groups, mentioning that she was least likely to sit with sports teams like the track and swim teams. She stated that even though the groups are not exclusive, because of their closeness of friendship ties, she would not approach them. The language she used captures the essence of the social barrier perfectly.

> I'm not trying to infiltrate their friend group or anything, but it's more intimidating to approach an already very grounded friend group. … It just comes from mental social boundaries.

Even though others did not state it plainly, this was a common sentiment among athletes and non-athletes alike in Warner Hall. An athlete I interviewed was in a similar mindset in terms of not talking to others outside of the close interconnected relationships that she had formed prior to joining Warner Hall. She confirmed the presence of the pattern I've witnessed across Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall in terms of friendship formation, or the lack thereof.

> When you join an eating house because of the friend group that you're in, you just tend to stick with that group of people that you joined with. You don't feel the need to go out of your way to meet new people.

Though this statement is accurate, and the clustering and pockets of friends are visible across all eating houses, in Rusk there was a richness to a dynamic of creating friend groups that was not present in the same degree in other houses. The will to meet new people can override the hesitancy members may feel in broadening their circle of friends to include those with different college identities than themselves. One athlete in particular mentioned that she does not feel any discomfort trying to sit with a group of 'nonners,' and that house members have been extremely friendly and welcoming at

mealtimes. Some athletes with the intention of meeting new people upon their initiation did mention not knowing as many people as they had hoped, but that can be accredited to the lack of free time available to spend with house members outside of meals. The tendency of previously formed friendship groups to stay together still is present in Rusk, but there is less expressed fear of intruding upon other groups than others have expressed for Connor and Warner Hall.

The Power of Leadership Positions - An exception to the divide

Trepidation about disrupting already established friend groups across the houses seems to diminish with the acceptance of a leadership position on the house's executive board (Eboard). The tasks required to fulfill the obligations of the position create both commitment and connectedness to the house which are positively correlated with identity salience and the creation of interconnected ties to the social environment one possesses the leadership position in (Stryker and Burke 2000). Because a role on the Eboard of a house is created with the purpose of serving a house full of one's peers, members in leadership positions find themselves in a "densely connected position" in their house that strengthens the salience of their eating house identity in their internal identity hierarchy (Stryker and Burke 2000). Because they have to interact with more of the house due to their job role, they form connections that lead to a stronger feeling of belonging than they would have otherwise.

Warner Hall and Connor seem to be the houses in which holding a leadership role on Eboard and contributing to the house have the most significant impact on members' perceived belonging. The former President of Warner Hall, a non-athlete, spoke of her position as Freshman At Large as being key to becoming connected to upperclassmen in

the house and ultimately to becoming well-known enough to be elected President. She did not enter the house with a group of friends to cling to, so leadership opportunities gave her the ability to experience Warner Hall as "a wider social opportunity." Athletes mentioned their leadership roles superseding their positionality in the house as an athlete and allowing them to lean more into their identity as a member of Warner and away from their more salient identity of athlete. One junior athlete felt more comfortable with and connected to Warner because of her leadership role that allowed her to "know what's going on behind the scenes" and play a role in how the house operates.

The former President of Connor, also a non-athlete, who widely known for her membership in Connor across campus among athletes and non-athletes, gained her identity and ability to transcend the social boundary by holding a leadership position in Connor every semester. She described, "I feel like sitting on Eboard since freshman year has kind of opened my eyes like the fact that the house us not just run by one person. It's run by a group of people and, it's important that everyone kind of plays their role." Gaining responsibility and making connections through her role has given her such a strong sense of belonging in the house that she actually has more friends who are athletes than not, which is a major exception to the observed dynamic among the members of Connor House.

Having a leadership position in Rusk does not seem to have as significant of an effect on allowing a member to become more connected to others in the house, as that extra sense of connection is unneeded. Interviewees from Rusk mentioned feeling welcome to talk to anyone in the house with just their membership status alone. Even two members who joined late spoke of feeling like there was no adjustment process that they

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

had to go through. They felt they were a member after the very first group activity they did – one being Self-Selection as a sophomore and the other being the first semi formal event she attended. Since these members, among members from other houses centered events as crucial to developing their sense of belonging and identity within their houses, I next explore how these events, or rituals, aid in the process of building and strengthening each house's organizational identity and community.

RITUAL'S IMPACT ON SOCIAL BOUNDARIES SET BY OUTSIDE IDENTITY

A large part of joining an eating house is being able to participate in all the events the house has to offer. Whether the event be a semi formal, formal, or an event with another organization on campus, generally a first year's prime motivation to join an eating house is for the social aspect of it. Nearly every individual I interviewed joined their eating house with the expectation of gaining social enjoyment. "Fun," "parties," and "happy" were words commonly articulated when describing expectations of social membership in the house of one's choosing.

When a first year joins a house, the first event they experience is Self-Selection. Self-Selection is an initiative day of mini events that provides a time for the new members to be introduced to the more senior members of the houses. Getting-to-know-you games are played during the day and at night there is a welcoming 'sisterhood' party. This day happens annually and allows the new members to become more acquainted with the other people in their house. Due to its role in uniting new members under an organization through a shared experience, I classify Self-Selection as an initiation ritual (Camp and Kent 2004). Though it is not as extreme or forceful as

fraternal ritual generally is – all of the events were prefaced by "only if you want to" to ensure the members know they are optional – this day was mentioned as significant to the development of multiple members' sense of belonging and ties to the members of their eating houses, so it has ritualistic purposes. Semi-formals, formals, and other events also function as rituals, but to a lesser extent than Self-Selection. These events reinforce the organizational identity that Self-Selection, hopefully, created. The shared experience of events contributes to the closeness of ties and belonging that create a more salient organizational identity for the member.

Rituals function with the purpose of fostering a collective identity. Though all four eating houses are based in ritualistic events, the lack of social unity among the members of Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall Houses and prominence of college-ascribed identities in the social dynamics of the houses leads to the conclusion that their rituals are not very effective. The only exception to this social identity phenomenon among the houses is Turner House, which supports a very strong collective identity rooted in commonly held values in which outside college-ascribed identities lose their social power and members support each other in the power of the 'Turnerhood' (Savage 2019). Turner House has been an exception to the dynamics analyzed in this study, as it has differentiated itself from the patterns of identity and socialization shared in some capacity by the other three eating houses. Thus, institutionally and analytically, Turner House should not be compared to the other three eating houses.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Conclusion

The organizational identities of Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall Eating Houses ultimately are mediated by other Davidson College ascribed salient identities that members of the houses possess. Group dynamics coming from the prominence of the athlete/'nonner' identity division on campus still present themselves within the eating houses and prevent these eating houses from reaching the collective identity that Turner House has established among its members (Savage 2019). Identity is created and maintained through actions, and these actions create networks of interconnectedness (Georgiou 2017; Goffman 1959; Stryker and Burke 2000). People seek to engage in behaviors and become members of groups that confirm their most salient identities (Degarmo and Forgatch 2002; Serpe & Stryker 1987; Stryker and Burke 2000). The decision to join a specific eating house is no exception to this, and Davidson students choose the eating house that has the reputation they think is most suitable to themselves.

Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall all support some level of an organizational identity, but each house's identity is impacted to a different degree by identities that are salient to Davidson College as a whole. Collective identity, though an accurate term to define the identity present in Turner Eating House, is too strong a word to describe the feeling of belonging and near 'sisterhood' that is developed in each of the other three eating houses. Turner House is the only house I would consider united under a collective identity, since members seemed to be in genuine support of one another.

Members of Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall are not united under activism and set goals like members of Turner were (Savage 2019). Instead, the house identities are weaker and more malleable. Outside, more salient identities dictate which members

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

speak with whom in a casual meal setting, and ultimately that results in varying levels of

dedication and satisfaction with house membership. Some houses work harder to provide

ritualistic events to help create a stronger sense of belonging among house members, and

these events find success. However, the strength of athletic identity and the groupings of

hallmates still are more salient than the created ties in the eating houses, and so these

pre-made identities prevail.

Analysis of the impact of the salience of multiple identities on the strength of the

organizational identities of eating houses at Davidson College adds to previous literature

on identity and belonging and how even group identities are dependent on the salience of

the identities of the individuals that comprise the organization. Additionally, it refutes a

previous speculation of mine from Savage (2019) that eating houses provide an

alternative to traditional sororities, as they foster similar feelings of belonging,

community, and support that are common under a collective identity but in a

non-exclusive environment. In fact, Connor, Rusk, and Warner Hall all still contain

elements of exclusionary social behavior, some to the point of dissatisfaction of their

members. In the end, Turner House does seem to be quite the anomaly of an eating house

on Davidson's campus, with all three other eating houses allowing key social identities

from campus to dictate processes of socialization and house identification[4].

Limitations of this study include my lack of ability to conduct in-person

interviews and in-house observations due to the severity of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Had accessing the houses themselves been a possibility, I would have been able to

witness the dynamics at meals and would be able to provide my own analysis of social

patterns without having to rely on what the members of the houses tell me. I also

---

[4] See Appendix D.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

acknowledge my bias being a member of Warner Hall Eating House and a student athlete myself. It is possible that my identities and connections to groups on campus interfered with both the way I phrased the questions to the interviewee and the interviewee's responses to me, as I was at least acquainted with every member with whom I spoke. Further research should be conducted when the COVID-19 pandemic subsides so that normal social interaction can be observed. Additionally, this research would benefit from a larger sample size and a researcher foreign to the culture of Davidson College to decrease confirmation bias.

References

Anon. n.d. "Eating Houses – Davidson College Archives & Special Collections."

Retrieved September 12, 2019

(http://libraries.davidson.edu/archives/encyclopedia/eating-houses).

Camp, Bayliss J., and Orit Kent. 2004. "'What a Mighty Power We Can Be' Individual

and Collective Identity in African American and White Fraternal Initiation Rituals."

Social Science History 28(3):439–83. doi: 10.2307/40267852.

Degarmo, David S., and Marion S. Forgatch. 2002. "Identity Salience as a Moderator of

Psychological and Marital Distress in Stepfather Families." *Social Psychology*

Quarterly 65(3):266–84. doi: 10.2307/3090123.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic*

Fieldnotes. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Georgiou, Myria. 2017. "Identity." Pp. 94–98 in *Keywords for Media Studies*, edited by

L. Ouellette and J. Gray. NYU Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Oxford: Doubleday.

Goffman, Erving. 1989. "On Fieldwork." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*

18(2):123–32. doi: 10.1177/089124189018002001.

Gordon, Michael, and Stephen R. Wilson. 1969. "Status Inconsistency and Satisfaction

with Sorority Membership." *Social Forces* 48(2):176–83. doi: 10.2307/2575258.

Handler, Lisa. 1995. "In the Fraternal Sisterhood: Sororities as Gender Strategy."

Gender and Society 9(2):236–55.

Honig, Emily. 1985. "Burning Incense, Pledging Sisterhood: Communities of Women

Workers in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919-1949." *Signs* 10(4):700–714.

mccabe, janice. 2016. "Friends with Academic Benefits." *Contexts* 15(3):22–29.

Polletta, Francesca, and James M. Jasper. 2001. "Collective Identity and Social

Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(1):283–305. doi:

10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.283.

Stryker, Sheldon, and Peter J. Burke. 2000. "The Past, Present, and Future of Identity

Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63(4):284–97.

Thomä, Dieter, Christoph Henning, and Hans Bernhard Schmid. 2014. *Social Capital,

Social Identities : From Ownership to Belonging*. Berlin/Boston, GERMANY: De

Gruyter, Inc.

Weiss, Robert Stuart. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative

Interview Studies*. First Free Press paperback ed. New York: Free Press.

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society*

1(2):125–51. doi: 10.1177/0891243287001002002.

Appendix A: IRB Approval Document.

DAVIDSON

HUMAN SUBJECTS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION - NOTICE OF APPROVAL
PROTOCOL #: 2020-061

Course: Independent Student Research
Faculty Sponsor: Gerardo Marti

Project Title: *Sisterhood, Identity, and Community: The Salience of Group Identity in Eating Houses*

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board has reviewed your research protocol, and your application is exempt from further review based on the following exemption criteria:

☐ *CFR 46.104 (d)(1): Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction.*

☒ *CFR 46.104 (d)(2): Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) and at least one of the following criteria is met:*

    ☐ *(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;*

    ☒ *(ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or*

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND IDENTITY FORMATION

☐ *(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and the IRB has conducted a **limited IRB review** and determined that there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and maintain the confidentiality of data.*

☐ *CFR 46.104 (d)(3):*

☐ *Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording and the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met:*

☐ *(A) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;*

☐ *(B) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation;*

☐ *(C) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and the IRB has conducted a **limited IRB review** and determined that there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and maintain the confidentiality of data.*

☐ *If the research involves deceiving the subjects regarding the nature or purposes of the research, the subject will authorize the deception through a prospective agreement to participate in research in circumstances in which the subject is informed that he or she will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research.*

☐ *CFR 46.104 (d)(4): Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, and at least one of the following criteria is met:*

☐ *(i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available;*

☐ *(ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;*

☐ *(iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under HIPAA (45 CFR parts 160 and 164, subparts A and E, for the purposes of "health care operations" or "research" as those terms are defined at 45 CFR 164.501 or for "public health activities and purposes" as described under 45 CFR 164.512(b).*

Note, however: (1) A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research, and (2) any substantive changes (e.g., change in participant population to include subjects vulnerable to coercion or undue influence or change to include questions or discussion regarding sensitive topics) to the research project which might affect exemption eligibility must be reported to the IRB. Substantive changes shall not be initiated without IRB approval. Based on the proposed changes, a new review may be necessary.

Any adverse reaction or other complication of the research which involves real or potential risk or injury to the subject must be reported to the Chair of the IRB immediately.

_____   **10/14/2020**
                                             _____

Margaret Munger, Ph.D. (mamunger@davidson.edu)   Date
Chair, Davidson College Institutional Review Board
e-copy: Faculty Sponsor, Grants and Contracts Office

Appendix B. Interview Schedule.

Eating Houses Thesis Interview Schedule

I.   *Give consent form - begin Cliché*
    A. Cliche questions
        1. How are you?
        2. What did you do today?
        3. What's the rest of your day looking like?

II.   INTERVIEW BEGINS - Fact
    A. What year are you?
    B. How were you first introduced to your eating house?
    C. Why did you end up choosing it as your eating house?
        1. MAKE SURE YOU ASK FOLLOW UPS
            a) What shaped their life to get them to this moment with you?
    D. SUBTHEMES (I may not use all of these questions; it depends on how the conversation is going.)
        1. IDENTITY
            a) If R begins to talk about their <u>identity</u> as a reason for joining a their eating house, then ask follow-up.
        2. TRANSITION TO ZOOM MEETINGS
            a) How has [insert house] transitioned to Zoom as the meeting platform?
            b) Are the meetings mandatory?
            c) Are there still opportunities for social interaction of some sort (ie. breakout rooms,
        3. A DAY AT LUNCH (Pre-COVID) - measure how strong of a community it is - more time spent in house, closer-knit community
            a) Were you a member of [insert eating house] Fall 2019 and/or earlier?
            b) How often did you eat at the house weekly?
            c) How did you determine what time you ate? Friends? Classes?
            d) Who did you usually sit with, if anyone?
            e) Walk me through a typical mealtime in the House.
                (1) What topics are discussed?
                (2) What is the typical level of chatter?
        4. PERCEIVED REPUTATION OF EATING HOUSE (opinion)
            a) Before you joined, what expectations did you have as to what membership would be like?

       b) Tell me how your experience as a member of [insert eating house] has compared to your expectations.

       c) How has your experience been?

    5. CLOSENESS TO PEERS

       a) How close are you to the other members of your house?

       b) How did you choose where to sit at mealtime?

       c) Are there any conversation topics that are discussed in your house that you think that would not be able to occur at other spots on campus?

       d) SOCIAL CLASS

          (1) Can you tell me about the process of getting adjusted to [insert eating house]?

          (2) Personal anecdote to encourage R to answer

             (a) I felt like I was not truly a member of Warner Hall (my eating house) until I acquired a leadership role and had some say in what the house did. Before that role, I always got the sense that I was labeled as an athlete who just happened to eat some meals at the House.

          (3) When did you feel like you were an accepted member of [insert eating house]? If there was a point…

III. CLOSING

    A. You've shared a lot with me, is there anything else you'd like to say about your involvement with your eating house?

IV. *Take a pause before officially signing off the Zoom call to allow for extra comments.*

    A. If they reflect on what they've said (ie. Was that helpful?), say yes and then mention the key points that they said...R might say something important.

Appendix C. Informed Consent Document.

Consent Form to Participate in Research at Davidson College

I have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Chelsea Savage [(843)209-0615 chsavage@davidson.edu] of Davidson College.

INTRODUCTION: Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of my rights as a research participant. In accordance with the policies of Davidson College, I have been asked to read this information carefully. If I agree to participate, I will sign in the space provided to indicate that I have read and understood the information furnished on this consent form. I am entitled to and will receive a signed copy of this form.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research is to observe the intersectionality of the identities of the members of Eating Houses on Patterson Court in order to gain a better understanding of the role of these identities in the development of community within the Houses.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS: I understand there are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

BENEFITS: A benefit to me of participating in this study is an increased understanding of how research is conducted.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW: I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation at any time; there will be no penalty for doing so. I realize at the completion of the session that I have the option of withholding the responses I have provided from subsequent analysis. I also understand that the researcher has the right to withdraw me from participation in the study at any time.

DURATION AND LOCATION OF STUDY: If I agree to participate in this study, my participation will last for approximately 15 minutes and will take place on Zoom.

PROCEDURES: During this study, I will be asked to answer questions about my identity and the community of my Eating House.

CONFIDENTIALITY: I understand the data collected in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. An audio recording will be made of the interview. After four years all personally identifying information will be destroyed. This study is anonymous.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION: I will receive a $5 gift card to Summit for my participation in this study.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS: If I have any questions about this study, I may call the researcher, Chelsea Savage at (843)209-0615 or email Gerardo Martí at gemarti@davidson.edu. If I have questions about my rights as a participant, I may contact the Davidson College IRB at hsirb@davidson.edu or 704-894-2181.

*I CERTIFY THAT I AM <u>AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD</u> AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE   _DATE_

PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT:
I have allowed the individual named above the time to read this consent form and have answered any questions that have been asked. I will provide the participant with a copy of this consent form.

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE   _DATE_

Appendix D. Table of Available Identities by House.

	Athlete	Hallmate/Roommate	Oppositional Identities (ie. non-binary)
CONNOR	*Y*	N	
RUSK	N	N	
TURNER			*Y*
WARNER HALL	N	N	

KEY	
Y	Identity supported by the House as an organization
N	Identity present among members; **not** organizational

IDENTITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPACT ON SOCIALIZATION WITHIN HOUSE
Athlete	Athlete/Non-athlete identity Extremely salient identity across campus.	Members **remain in groups formed prior** to membership as they navigate house.
Hallmate/Roommate	Identity built freshman year from living assignments. Individuals join houses in a group with members of their hall.	Members **remain in groups formed prior** to membership as they navigate house.
Oppositional Identities	Self-ascribed. Not supported by campus culture. House supports inclusion of individuals who do not feel comfortable navigating campus.	Unifies members who possess identity and **promotes movement between groups**.