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The Culture of College Wilderness Adventure Clubs:

Exploring Leadership, Language, and Gender

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Sociology, University of Vermont

28 April 2020

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that we could get to various rivers. I will be forever grateful for the jokes made and conversations had.

ABSTRACT

College is a time in many young adults' lives when they are challenging their previous beliefs, learning new norms, and trying different activities. Once on campus, students are able to choose to participate in various clubs. At the University of Vermont (UVM), outdoor clubs are especially popular, but the culture of these types of groups has not been studied very extensively. In this study, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, I examine the culture— the goals, norms, and language— of the clubs and how club membership is experienced by the member leaders. These clubs constitute a contested site as they bring together a traditionally male-dominated activity— risk-taking adventure in the outdoors— with a group of youth poised to challenge traditional gender norms and expectations. This thesis presents a sociological analysis of the culture of two outdoor clubs, the Outing Club and Kayak Club, on the University of Vermont campus, with a specific focus on three elements of the clubs: leadership, language, and gender.

INTRODUCTION

To understand the workings of social groups, sociologists study the norms, values, and language— or the *culture*— of a specific group, as well as how members experience the group, their role in it, and their identification with it. Culture includes beliefs, rituals of daily life, worldviews, gossip, ceremonies, stories, and language. It is a “toolkit” that can be used to solve problems (Swidler 1986). One significant cultural factor in groups is gender and the gender norms, expectations, and dynamics that play out in the group’s interactions and structure (Ridgeway 2001). Examining the gendered nature of a social group helps us get a deeper understanding of how the group is operating and how it is experienced by its members.

One social group that has not been the focus of many sociological studies is the outdoor community, specifically college outdoor clubs. My study of outdoor community clubs and their members at the University of Vermont (UVM) aims to add to the knowledge base on this topic. The outdoors and the sports that the members of these clubs engage in have been traditionally viewed as male spaces. These sports all include physical strength and risk taking in a way that has been understood as masculine (Koivula 2001). Yet some spaces in the outdoors have been labeled as gender-neutral or feminine. For example, in skiing the easier trails at resorts have been understood this way, while the more challenging terrain outside at resorts and outside of them have been understood as masculine. While these non-masculine spaces exist, the ones that are privileged and held as the epitome of the sport are those that are characterized as male (Stoddart 2011).

There are various ways to conceptualize this type of social group and the activities they engage in. One way is to see it as “edgework,” meaning activities that negotiate the line between control and a loss of control (Lyng 1990:851), and another is “serious leisure,” which captures

the intense amount of time and energy that participants expend on the activity as well as how participants' identities become tied with the activity (Raisborough 2006:242). But a third concept, "wilderness adventure," best captures my proposed research site.

The term "wilderness adventure" (see, for example Sharpe 2005b) reflects both the remote nature of the activities, the fact that it is a leisure— not work— activity, and the potential for danger. These activities naturally exist on a spectrum. Some occur in locations that are more remote, while others are more inherently dangerous. For example, backpacking tends to be quite remote, but the potential is low for injuries more serious than a sprained ankle. Meanwhile, whitewater kayaking often is much less remote, with road access usually less than a couple of miles away, but the potential is much higher for serious consequences such as concussions or even death. These are just a few examples of how level of risk and remoteness changes depending upon the activity and where the people are engaging in the sport.

The UVM Outing Club (OC) and the Kayak Club (KC) offer an interesting opportunity to study the outdoor community. College is a unique point in time in which young adults are entering a new social world and are learning the norms and values of a new subculture. On top of the typical college experience, UVM is known as an outdoorsy school and a place that embraces progressive, non-traditional values around social issues, such as gender equality. These factors also draw many of the students to this school. A large portion of students at UVM are members of outdoor clubs, and there is a wide variety of outdoor experience that these students bring with them coming into college. From these mixed backgrounds, what kind of culture is created by the members?

This thesis has three objectives. The first is to contribute to the limited research on the culture of college outdoor groups by carefully examining and documenting the goals of the

clubs, what leadership traits are valued, and the way language is used by members of the Outing Club and Kayak Club. The second is to explore how students experience the groups and how the students may develop their own identity around their group membership. The third is understand how the clubs are gendered sites, paying close attention to how the sites may reinforce or challenge traditional gender practices and expectations. This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data in hopes of addressing these questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have examined various aspects of wilderness adventure. Several critical aspects to consider are women's experience of wilderness adventure and the constraints they face, the emotional labor and other expectations of outdoor leaders, women's treatment as professional outdoor educators, and the role of language in a group's culture. I will address each of these topics.

Women's Experience of Wilderness Adventure

Women's access to wilderness adventure has been limited by both structural inequalities and other perceived constraints. When looking at the demographics of who is most likely to participate in wilderness adventure, white men with a college degree who earn over \$20,000 annually are the most likely, while elderly women of color without a college degree who earn less than \$20,000 annually are the least likely (Jin-Hyung, Scott, and Floyd 2001). Each of these attributes (elderly, female, and lower socioeconomic status) are associated with a higher probability of experiencing constraints on a person's participation in wilderness adventure, but by having more of these attributes, the effects are multiplied (Shores, Scott, and Floyd 2007). Yet out of three traditionally marginalized groups (African Americans, women, and rural dwellers), women are the most likely to feel constrained by issues such as concern for physical safety, inadequate facilities, and concern about the natural environment such as pests (Johnson, Bowker, and Cordell 2001). Concern for physical safety included the fear of violence. Women are socialized to be prepared for something violent to happen at any point, and this combined with the outdoors being considered a male space, contributes to women's fear for their physical safety. This fear is a major constraint on women's participation in wilderness adventure

(Bialeschki 2005), and in order to participate, women must negotiate these constraints. This negotiation happens both by restructuring the activities that they participate in and by reorganizing life factors in order to prioritize the desire for wilderness adventure (Little 2002b).

When women define their experiences of adventure, “their understandings incorporate not only the traditional masculine qualities of challenge, uncertainty and danger, but also entail learning, newness and the exploration of risk in its social and esteem based elements” (Little 2002a:66). The meaning of their activities included the traditional definitions but were also able to be adjusted to the women’s own desires and goals. This experience of challenging and expanding traditional masculine understandings is often a central feature of women’s experiences in wilderness adventure. The combination of the wilderness and the physicality of the sports women are participating in allows them to increase “their own sense of physical confidence, competence, and feeling strong, thereby challenging their own sense of identity as framed by both the embodiment of a ‘feminine bodily existence,’ as well as existing within a male-dominated society whereby female physical competence tends to be diminished relative to male physical competence” (McDermott 2004:298). This connection women are able to make with their bodies and physically gaining strength can lead to women feeling empowered and stronger socially in their everyday lives (Allee 2011). These transfers to everyday life can also take the “forms of self-sufficiency, a shift in perspective, connection to others, and mental clarity” (Pohl 2000:415).

Emotion Management in the Wilderness

Wilderness adventure presents many different unexpected situations, and there are several expectations of what emotions are appropriate in these situations. Sharpe's research investigated the emotional labor that is done by "adventure guides" (2005a:29). These guides were usually in their 20s and often only worked during the summers when they were on break from university. They took people into the backcountry on various types of expeditions, and as part of their responsibilities they were expected to do different types of emotional labor. These responsibilities were "ensuring safety, generating fun, and encouraging a sense of community" (Sharpe 2005a:36). Ensuring safety often involved keeping fear in check during stressful situations in order to project the appearance of safety to the trip participants. Generating fun involved setting the emotional example for participants, which meant staying upbeat, cracking jokes, and playing around. Encouraging a sense of community meant being open and encouraging the participants to interact with one another. Sometimes this involved becoming a "buddy" to a participant who was struggling to integrate with the community. The emotional expectations were so demanding that guides developed strategies to deal with them. One strategy was to physically distance themselves from the group by doing another task that would need to be done but that did not require other people's help. A second strategy was employing deep acting, meaning when their emotions did not line up with the emotional expectations of the job, they actively sought to change how they were feeling in order to bring it more in line with the expectations.

Adventure guides can also play a role in the shaping of a participant's entire experience of the activity. Lori Holyfield (1999) describes in her study how whitewater rafting guides work to manufacture adventure for their customers. This process begins before they ever get onto the

water. Customers are looking to the guides for the appropriate emotions, and as they get closer to the launch, novice paddlers may be especially prone to fear and nervousness. During safety talks before getting into the boats, guides present the information in a humorous manner. These talks contain information that is imperative, and if it is missed there could be serious consequences. Yet the potential danger is countered by various jokes. These tactics are also employed on the river. Guides are the embodiment of the excitement promised by a rafting trip, and they use humor to redefine any situations from fear to fun and excitement. Throughout their jobs, whitewater guides must engage in emotional labor in order to construct a culture of enjoyment and excitement.

In most outdoor work, the emotional culture of the group is gendered. Lois (2001) focused on the role of emotions in the backcountry by studying the emotional culture of a mountain rescue group in Colorado. Their work often involved edgework, in which they negotiated maintaining control of their emotions and bodies in high risk situations. Men and women shared the same general assumptions about emotions, but they instituted different norms to achieve them. During critical missions, men and women agreed that staying neutral emotionally was ideal, but the before and after coping methods varied more drastically by gender. Men tended to follow an “excitement/slow leak” model (Lois 2001:402). They would go into a mission with excitement and would use their past successes as evidence why they were going to be successful in the next situation. After a negative outcome, they would typically drink alcohol in order to unwind. Women, on the other hand, followed more of an “anxiety/outburst” model (Lois 2001:402). Before a mission, they would set low expectations for their success, worry about their ability to perform under pressure, and plan for potential scenarios. In the case of a negative outcome, they would often release their emotions by crying. Both men and women

agreed that the “excitement” model was superior compared to the “anxiety” model. Most women were able to effectively manage this anxiety though and perform the edgework that was required of them, but they still considered themselves emotionally deviant. Overall, the emotional culture the rescuers created relegated women’s emotional management strategies to a subordinate position compared to men’s strategies.

Leadership

Generally, there are three styles of leadership that have been identified in wilderness adventure, and these depend on what people think are the most important elements of a trip.

Some believe that connecting to people and focusing on the growth and development of others is a primary focus of outdoor leadership... other perceive their role as simply teaching the basic skills and moving people safely through the environment... and others see a combination of these leadership roles as important (Rilling and Jordan 2007:209).

While leaders varied in their preference for the leadership style of their co-leader, good people skills were universally desired. Leaders who focused on people’s connection and growth were considered desirable co-leaders by everyone, which highlights the importance that is placed on interpersonal skills in wilderness adventure (Rilling and Jordan 2007). These attributes of the leaders also influenced the leaders’ ability to foster the participants’ trust. Leaders who were seen as more technically and interpersonally competent, benevolent, and honest were considered more trustworthy (Shooter, Paisley, and Sibthorp 2012). In developing these skills, female wilderness adventure leaders often feel less competent, and they struggle to develop the physical skills as well as the sense of their own competency (Loeffler 1997).

Gender also plays into the perception of wilderness adventure leaders. Male-identified leaders are preferred by both co-leaders and participants, which is partially due to the fact that they are perceived as more competent (Jordan 1991). This is true even in more feminized spaces

that require a more nurturing attitude such as live-in summer camps (Cousineau and Roth 2012). The preference for male leaders carries into American culture as well. Potential female candidates for leadership positions are seen as less favorable candidates, and once women assume the leadership position, their behaviors that are congruent with leadership responsibilities are viewed less favorably. This makes it hard for women to obtain and maintain leadership positions (Eagly and Karau 2002).

Impact of Gender on Women's Wilderness Adventure Careers

In the professional outdoor education community, men's voices are broadcast more loudly. Women's achievements in general have been ignored, especially in the upper levels of leadership (Mitten et al. 2018). Gray, Allen-Craig, and Carpenter (2017) examined women's contributions to outdoor education in Australia. They found that quite often these contributions go unacknowledged. At outdoor education-related conferences less than 15% of keynote speakers are female. This gives the appearance that women have not contributed to the field in a substantial way, even though they conduct research and publish at much higher rate, and they account for about half of all outdoor educators. Many women in this industry do not feel that their voices are heard. They expressed a tiredness of always being the ones to bring gender into discussion, and they expressed fear of discussing feminism. Many have resigned themselves to not speaking up because they feel that they are "'damned if we do' and 'damned if we don't'" (Gray, Allen-Craig, and Carpenter 2017:28). Gray (2016:31) presented various reasons for the struggles women face in doing wilderness leadership professionally:

1. A lack of self-confidence and women do not like to self promote;
2. Women typically employ a symbiotic or eco-feminist style of leadership;
3. Motherhood and the resultant struggles for longevity in the field;
4. A mismatch between heroism and gender roles;

5. Perfection is our enemy;
6. Some women suffer from *imposter syndrome*;
7. Women do not ask, stay silent, and allow others to determine the terms of discussion;
8. “Feminist fatigue” and all the rationalization that “women can’t have it all”;
9. Feminism has *failed* to achieve traction.

Each of these reasons make it challenging for women to enter and stay in the wilderness or outdoor adventure leadership profession.

Language

Language can help to distinguish a subculture from the larger national culture as well as identify what is important to the subculture. Nonstandard language (slang or argot) often plays an important role in connecting those in that subculture and making it distinct from the larger culture. For example, the slang used by marijuana users in New York City is largely unknown by mainstream culture (Johnson et al. 2006). The users create their own way of communicating:

...with about half of the words [they use] ... being neosemanticisms (standard words given special meanings) and half being neologisms (entirely new words). If an outsider or non-marijuana user were to be present during a typical purchasing and smoking session, they would hear many standard English words spoken, but would understand relatively little about content of conversations occurring among those present (Johnson et al. 2006:65).

These words serve to connect marijuana users regardless of physical location, and they also serve to keep outsiders out. Nonusers are not meant to understand the slang used by marijuana users.

The words used in a specific culture also illustrate what is important to them. Einat (2000) studied the language of Israeli prisoners, and the slang that they used was specific to common aspects of prison life. The words centered around themes such as “prisoner status (informers, inmate rank), drugs, sexual relations in prison, violence, prisoner behaviors, nicknames for police officers, and prisoner staff” (Einat 2000:309). These subjects are all very pertinent to life in prison, and the existence of more terms in these categories highlights this

pertinence. Whorf (1956) also studied the relationship between culture and language. One famous example is the various words that Eskimos have for snow. We generally have one word to describe the ice crystals that fall from the sky during the winter, which is “snow.” But Eskimos have considerably more words to describe the exact type of snow. This variety in the language available shows what is important in the lives of the members of this culture.

METHODS

To address my research questions, I chose two popular outdoor clubs, the Outing Club and the Kayak Club, as my research setting. I used both qualitative methods, specifically in-depth interviews, and quantitative methods, sending out a survey. Following the data collection, I did a careful sociological analysis of the data.

I chose the OC and KC as the research setting because they are the two clubs on campus that focus on wilderness adventure. By being a part of these two clubs, the members show an obvious dedication to backcountry travel and recreation. The other clubs at UVM that participate in outdoor recreation are more focused on “frontcountry” activities. The Ski and Snowboard Club’s activities all happen within the bounds of ski resorts, and the Climbing Team is focused on indoor climbing and competition. Outdoor climbing and backcountry skiing are instead in the OC’s domain.

The OC and KC have several levels of membership (see table 1). The levels are based on the degree of involvement, from the most involved, Level 1 (elected officers), to the least involved, Level 5 (the student body). For this study I focused on Levels 1, 2, and 3: elected club officers, appointed positions, and trip leaders. The individuals in these groups most strongly identify as members of the clubs, and the clubs are part of their identity on campus. They are the most likely to attend club council meetings each week and to have the most insight into the culture of the group. My access to this research setting is aided by my own membership. I have been a part of Levels 1, 2, and 3 during my years at UVM.

Table 1: Levels of Membership in the OC

Membership Level	Level Title	Description of Level	Approximate Group Size
1	Elected club officials	This level includes people elected into positions such as President, Vice President, and Treasurer (current and past).	16 - 20
2	Appointed positions	This level is composed mostly of Leadership Development Program Coordinators and Haus Managers (current and past).	35 - 40
3	Trip leaders	This includes anyone who has completed a leadership development program or has led Wilderness TREK.	120 - 140
4	Trip participants	This level includes anyone who has ever gone on a trip. Almost every weekend throughout each semester three or more trips are sent out with around eight participants on each trip.	Unknown, in the hundreds
5	Student body	For the OC, but not the KC, the entire student body is considered a “member” of the club whether or not they have ever interacted with the OC	N = 10,000

I collected data through in-person interviews and an on-line survey. These qualitative and quantitative methods helped me get both depth and breadth. I was able to get a richer understanding from the interviews and also see what patterns exist with the larger group through the survey. I applied for and received permission from the UVM IRB committee to conduct research on human subjects.

Interviews

The first stage of the project involved nine individual interviews with people aged 18 and over who are Level 1, 2, or 3 members. I used purposive, or selective, sampling (Patton 2002) as well as snowball sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). I started with purposive sampling so

that I could ensure I had diversity in gender, experience, and backcountry activity. But I was unable to access the newest members of the club this way, so I turned to snowball sampling in order to contact that portion of the population. I contacted the potential interviewees through email, asking if they would be willing to participate (see Appendix C for example emails). If they were willing, we arranged to meet on campus. Most interviews were held in the Sociology Department seminar room.

The face to face interviews included questions about the interviewees' initial experiences with the backcountry, first impressions of the UVM outdoor community, their feelings about identifying with the group, and their views of the groups' values, priorities, decision making, and gendered behavior. Interviews lasted between 15 and 75 minutes. Eight interviews were held in person and one was over the phone. The original target was to do 10 interviews, but the COVID pandemic prevented the final planned interview. All interviews were recorded with the participants' permission, and they were later transcribed. Interviewees seemed comfortable talking with me about their experiences, and I made sure they knew their rights as research participants and that they could skip any question they wanted by merely saying "pass."

The Survey

The second stage of the project was a survey. The interviews helped guide the formation of the questions for the online survey (see Appendix B for survey questions). There were 20 questions on the survey, and the participants had the option of skipping any question they chose. The first set of questions provided respondents with four possible choices, and they also had the option of writing a comment as well. The second set of questions were set in a matrix. There were several statements that respondents were asked to select a response from strongly agree to

strongly disagree. The third set of questions were intended to get some demographic information and included questions about membership level and gender identity. For gender identity, I purposely made this question fill in the blank so that respondents could put the term that they felt the most comfortable with to describe their gender identity. In creating these demographic questions, I was careful about maintaining anonymity. I had considered adding a question about what sport the participant mainly participates in, but this information in combination with gender identity could identify certain people. With all of the questions, I worked to make sure that each one only asked about one topic and was clear overall.

Before I sent out the survey, I made sure it was user friendly. I knew that I was sending it out to busy college students who are often sent emails requesting that they complete a survey, so I did not want my request to be a burden. I also tested the survey to make sure that the time commitment to fill it out was minimal, and it was estimated that respondents would need about five minutes to complete the survey.

The survey was distributed through a link in an email. I used LimeSurvey to create the survey because it does not save any identifying information about the respondents and is the program recommended by the UVM IRB. Initially, a link to the survey was accidentally emailed to the wrong listserv, which included over 6000 email addresses. This listserv included Levels 4 and 5 as well as alumni. Because the questions on the survey were specifically written for current Levels 1, 2, and 3, the responses from this large listserv were not informative. While some current Levels 1, 2, and 3 were on the large listserv, I discovered that some were not. This meant that an alternate version of the survey needed to be created. The new link was sent out to the proper listserv, which included 520 email addresses. This link stayed open for a week, and I sent a reminder email three days before the survey closed in order to improve the response rate. I

received 45 complete responses and 14 incomplete responses for a total of 59 responses.

Although there are significantly more email addresses on the listserv, there are approximately 140 active leaders right now on that list. Using this number of 140, the response rate was 42.1%.

Data Analysis

For the qualitative data, my analysis started with transcribing the interviews. I listened to each interview twice during this process, and it served the important purpose of immersing me in the data. With this, I began to think about the themes that were emerging from the data. While looking for these themes, I stayed alert for unusual vocabulary and stories because these can all indicate underlying concepts and themes (Rubin and Rubin 1995:229-238). The next stage of analysis included coding the interviews. I chose the three general themes that I wanted to examine (leadership, language, and gender). I chose these based on the data gathered from the interviews and the richness of the data around these three themes. I read through each interview participant's answers to questions pertaining to these themes. During this read through, I used a color-coded highlighting system to identify sections where the leaders brought up a specific idea within the theme, and I compared these ideas to find some patterns and similarities between the leaders' responses. While there are qualitative software packages, color-coding by hand is a valid and frequently used method to organize themes, and indeed "manual coding" is the recommended method for students to learn the process because it helps them "remain true" to their analysis, and avoids having the qualitative software program "inappropriately drive their efforts" (Warren and Karner 2015:216).

My quantitative analysis began by transferring the data from LimeSurvey to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is a popular data analytics software in the social

sciences, and it allowed me to run more sophisticated statistical analyses than LimeSurvey. Once the data were in SPSS, I decided which variables I wanted to examine. I chose two independent variables, which were gender identity and elite membership, and I chose four dependent variables. These included the main goal of the clubs, the effectiveness of social justice programming, the impact of the respondent's gender identity on their experience of the clubs, and the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes in the OC/KC in comparison to the greater outdoor community. These variables were selected for analysis because they reflected the themes that emerged in the qualitative research. Specifically, they reflected the respondents' experiences with elements of leadership and gender, and the quantitative portion of the thesis provided me the opportunity to see if the themes that emerged in the interviews were also echoed by the larger population. I did not have any specific hypotheses for the relationships between these variables because this thesis was intended as an exploratory project.

I coded the responses for gender and computed a variable to measure elite membership status. In this study gender is understood as gender identity, which refers to how people socially identify and not their biological sex. Elite membership is defined as ever having held elected or appointed positions in the clubs. I also recoded several of the variables so that the responses were categorized into "agree," "neutral," and "disagree" instead of ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This made it possible for me to look at the relationships between the variables. I created frequency tables for all of the variables I examined as well as crosstabs, which look at the relationship between an independent and dependent variable. In the tables that were created, missing answers have been left out because they did not provide any useful description of the population of interest in this investigation.

In analyzing the crosstabs, I used chi square, which is a hypothesis test. It “can provide information not only on the significance of any observed differences, but also provides detailed information on exactly which categories account for any differences found. Thus, the amount and detail of information this statistic can provide renders it one of the most useful tools in the researcher’s array of available analysis tools” (McHugh 2013:143). If all of the expected cell counts are five or above, chi-square is valid, and it is able to provide some answers about the hypothesis. In this thesis many of the crosstabs do not meet this requirement because the dataset is small, and this is one of the limitations of a smaller dataset. But the information in the tables is still informative due to the tables’ descriptive power. For all chi-squares, the hypothesis tested is called the null hypothesis, which presumes that there is no relationship between the independent and dependent variable. If the p value, which describes the likelihood that the observed relationship is due to sampling error, is below 0.05, then the null hypothesis can be rejected. This is because there is less than a 5% chance sampling error produced the observed relationship. If the null hypothesis can be rejected, then Cramer’s V is used to measure the strength of the relationship.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

For the qualitative portion of my thesis I interviewed nine leaders from the Outing Club and Kayak Club. These leaders were from a variety of sports, year in school, and level of membership (see table 2 for more information on the interview participants). Many of them tended to be older and hold higher positions in the clubs, and these leaders often had more to say about the clubs and what was going on inside of them. This may be due to their high level of involvement and the longer time they have spent involved in the clubs. As a result, they may have spent more time thinking about the community that they are involved in and have more thoughts on the group dynamics, goals, and culture. While analyzing the interview transcripts, three prominent areas, or themes, emerged as the most compelling and sociologically interesting findings. They are leadership, language, and gender.

Table 2: Interview Participants

Name	Level of Membership	Gender Identity
Marie	1 and 3	Female
Aidan	1, 2, and 3	Male
Ella	1, 2, and 3	Female
Charlie	1, 2, and 3	Male
Rae	1, 2, and 3	Female
Parker	1 and 3	Male
Naomi	3	Female
Cara	3	Female
Sam	2 and 3	Non-binary

Leadership

Part of what the Outing Club and Kayak Club do on campus is train leaders who, in turn, take other students into the backcountry. Because creating leaders is one of the functions of the club, it means that the idea of what makes a good leader is an important one in the community. The interviewees stated that the traits of a good leader are competency, confidence, level-

headedness, a balance of hard and soft skills, awareness, and a desire to lead. Interestingly, as the members described what it meant to be a good leader, they used mostly gender-neutral terms, and their responses were not explicitly gendered.

The leaders defined a good leader in the clubs as someone who was competent. Marie, a female-identified leader who first became involved in wilderness adventure through the TREK program, discussed the notion of competence. She felt it went beyond personal competence, and it extended into the ability to uplift other people as well:

Someone told me like you have to know what you're doing. And you have to be able to do it, but you also have to have enough left in the tank at the end of the day to get other people to do it too. So I think that's a big component of it. It's like not just being capable, but being like more than capable to make sure that you can help everyone else also succeed.

This idea that a good leader is “more than capable” was expressed by other leaders as well.

Charlie, a male-identified hiking leader who was introduced to backpacking in middle school, felt that a leader's hard skills should be second nature. They should be able to do the task at hand quite easily so that they had the capacity to deal with other things that may be going on at the same time:

And so climbing a mountain, doing whatever you need to be able to be patient with them but also encouraging at the same time, and you need to be knowledgeable. Being able to just— ideally you don't have to like— if there's a situation that happens, whether it be something smaller like how to tie a knot. You don't have to stop and think you can kind of just do it, so that way you can get back to the group.

Another attribute of a good leader that emerged was the balance of hard and soft skills.

This was also alluded to in Marie and Charlie's discussion of competence. Hard skills can include everything from building a fire to map and chart reading to proper paddling form. They tend to be skills that involve tactile movement, while soft skills are not tangible in the same way. Soft skills include things like empathy, conflict resolution, and active listening. Generally, it

seemed that the competence the leaders referred to was about the hard skills required to successfully complete any particular trip, but they both referenced the importance of helping the trip succeed in various other ways as well. Ella, a female-identified hiking leader who has loved smaller day trips since she was a child, also emphasized the need for balance between hard and soft skills. She described the attributes she looked for in potential leaders:

So I look for soft skills because I think that's like something a little harder to teach. It's not like the only thing important. I think you can— since we always have a group of like two or three leaders, I don't shy away from people who have really good hard skills necessarily. Because I feel like in at least a pairing, or a triad you can balance it out.

A good leader as well as a good leader team need to be balanced. Ideally if one leader on a trip has stronger hard skills, then their co-leader would have stronger soft skills. Their strengths should complement one another so that no particular skill set is neglected. Also in this is the idea of how teachable these attributes are. Ella expressed the belief that it is easier to teach someone hard skills than soft skills, and this was what motivated her search for strong soft skills in prospective leaders.

The leaders described various soft skills that are important for being a good leader and used phrases like “good people skills” to describe them. Among these skills were confidence, empathy, and awareness. Aidan, a male-identified whitewater kayaking leader, discussed the connection between leaders having confidence in their abilities and being able to gain the trust of their trip participants:

Confidence is a big one, but it's also the hardest to develop. Especially in whitewater where everything is changing all the time. You know you never really run the same river twice in terms of water level or you know how the features may have changed a little bit. So very quick decision making is a big one because a lot of the times if you just pick, you know, one thing or another like in the moment and just go with it then that will end up being better than sort of passively “Oh no I hope nothing bad happens.” Good people skills too. That's a big one because, you know, in order to lead someone down something you've got to have some sort of you know relationship with them or they've got to like

trust you. And if you're like "I don't know, I think this is right" then they're going to have a tough time with that.

This is another specific way the leaders described the connection between hard and soft skills. By being competent and confident in their abilities, good leaders are able to build the kinds of relationships that are critical in high adventure sports. Without trust between the leader and participant in sports like whitewater kayaking, the inherent risks of the sport are amplified.

Other aspects of risk management were also discussed, specifically in the context of awareness. This extended to both awareness of physical risks as well as awareness of the emotional state of the trip participants. Rae, a female-identifying climbing leader who was brought on her first backpacking trip before she could walk, brought up this idea of awareness and the thought that good leaders have innate soft skills:

And then a really solid awareness of risk and site management. I don't think you necessarily need a lot of— like I don't bother taking in people with a lot of technical skills necessarily to train them. Like I can train you that stuff. I can show you how to tie a knot and make sure you get that. But are you paying attention to the bigger picture and anticipating the things that can go wrong? And not being paranoid, but being prepared and having a backup plan. And I think some people tend to be like too silly and focused on the social stuff, or too worried about teaching people as many climbing moves as possible, or as many tree facts as possible. And you got to— you got to be looking around and being really attentive. And that's kind of hard to see all of the pieces moving.

While Rae highlighted the more physical side of risk management, Ella brought up the importance of empathizing with the trip participants. This empathy can help make trips more enjoyable for trip participants, but it can also be used as part of risk management:

Just like empathy for what someone's going through kind of because a lot of people— it can be confusing coming here. And if you feel like you're an outdoors person, but you live somewhere really flat, and so you go on a hard hike. And then, like I've seen that happen in my group. And to just casually be the slowest person with them without like— I don't know. Like I've also seen people trudge ahead, or leaders trudge ahead or participants. I've had to yell, not yell, but yell up to participants be like "Please slow down! For *me!*" Like I am very out of shape... And just to like empathize well and to like help mitigate those situations before someone— like being able to bring them up yourself or work on them— like help someone through something yourself before them having to

speaking up about it. Because sometimes it takes like a long time for people to speak up about it... so noticing those things and being super aware of your surroundings or what someone might feel.

By paying attention to how the trip participants are doing, a good leader is able to address problems before they get bigger. So by both doing some advance planning and staying aware of potential problems during the trip, leaders are able to help make a trip as safe and enjoyable for their participants as possible.

One last theme that emerged in interviews was the desire to lead. Having balanced hard and soft skills would mean very little if a leader does not want to lead the trip. Parker, a male-identified leader who was introduced to the outdoors by his brother, described who made the best leaders:

I'd say the best trip leaders are people who are like open, enthusiastic, like they want to be out there. They don't really care about timing because a lot of trip leaders are like they'd be like "Well look, I have a lot of stuff to do. Like I need to get back." Like you're not there for like you. You're there for the people who are going on the trip. You want to give them the full experience. So like somebody who's out there enjoying the trip, making sure everyone else is enjoying it, is letting the trip kind of flow as it is, not rushing it, or slowing people down because it's not going as they want is probably the best trip leader.

Parker again emphasized the idea that leaders are not outside for themselves. The focus is instead on the trip participants. This desire to guide other people in the backcountry is what motivates people to be good leaders, and the hard and soft skills is what enables them to do this.

Language

As with other subcultures, there is language— both formal and informal words, argot, acronyms, and expressions— specific to the Outing Club and Kayak Club. The language is created and maintained by the club members, sometimes passed down from former members and sometimes adopted from the larger national outdoor community, and is an important part of the

group's culture. When the leaders were asked about their favorite outdoor-specific words and phrases, they provided examples such as "greywater," "boof," "being chundered in a hole," "pogie," and "chossy," all of which I understood but would not be familiar to an outsider.

The shared language was described as initially confusing and somewhat exclusionary. Marie described her initial experiences of attending a KC roll session (where people are learning to right their kayaks when they flip upside-down):

And so the language that's used is so specific that I remember my freshman year sitting in on like at practice and stuff and listening to older people talk and just not knowing what they were talking about. And now I do, but... I would feel like most of the language associated with whitewater kayaking is considered jargon.

The language in whitewater kayaking is so foreign to newcomers that it is indecipherable. Others said the same of climbing and backcountry skiing. These sports are all high adventure and are considered to be more technical, meaning a lot more practice and skill is required to participate at higher levels of the sport. Because they are more technical, they include many skills and pieces of gear that each have their own specific terms. Newcomers need to learn terms that describe the environment, the gear, and how they move through the environment.

Because of this initial challenge, learning and knowing how use the language of the subculture appropriately was described as exciting and gratifying by the leaders. Rae described this journey that she sees new climbing leaders go through:

I think those terms are like when somebody's getting excited about climbing they feel like they've found like a new community or a new identity in something. Yeah, it's something new, and once they start picking up the terms and understanding things, they feel that it feels satisfying. And they feel more included because they're part of something that's a little bit different from other things. Because they've become part of—they've taken on part of that identity, and I think that can be really powerful and build a sense of comradery. But until you get into that it's very confusing and intimidating for a lot of people. So it kind of goes both ways. Like I can see that it's use, and I can see why all the lingo has been continued. But I can also see how it is a barrier.

Being able to use the words of the subculture makes new leaders feel a sense of belonging, and it builds the sense of community. They are able to understand things and communicate in ways that other people cannot. But as Rae says, this is also divisive.

The complex vocabularies of various sports that create community also divide the OC and KC by sport. Charlie, a long-time backpacker, describes a meeting that he had:

The other day I was having a meeting with people who are in charge of the BSAAP program [the backcountry ski and snowboard leadership development program], and I didn't understand a single thing they were saying. And I ski— like I ski at resorts and frontcountry, I guess you could call it. But yeah— they were talking completely different. And I know that climbing is the same way. And not just like the technical terms, but also their slang terms for things too. And yeah, they even apologized to me like “Sorry like we went off on such like a tangent.” ... I would say it's exclusionary, even within the club and within the greater outdoor community.

Confusion over words is not reserved only for the newcomers to the OC and KC, but it also occurs between sports. While everyone in the OC and KC may love being in the outdoors, the particular sports that they do divide them as well. Charlie's experience also points out how this division is often overlooked. The skiers did not initially realize how the language they were using divided people in the room between those who could participate in the conversation and those who did not understand. Aidan described a similar situation that happened as he was instructing a new group of KC leaders:

I mean I don't even notice that I'm using it until someone will ask. I remember last year— giving a presentation in RAPIDS [the whitewater kayaking leadership development program] and then everyone was like “Whoa, whoa, whoa ,whoa. What do all those words mean?” and we were like “Oh right. Shit, forgot about that.”

The complicated vocabulary becomes such second nature, that leaders need to be reminded of how foreign the words once were to them.

Not everyone agreed with this view. Two newer leaders interviewed said that there was not a lot of specialized vocabulary in the outdoor community. This was an exception. They

mostly referenced acronyms for programs that only apply at UVM. Naomi, a female-identified leader who just graduated from a program in the fall, gave these examples: “Like when I say KPFD no one really knows what it is besides people in Outing Club. Or WILD or something.” But other than these acronyms, Naomi did not feel that her new club used a lot of club-specific language. This may be due to less exposure to the language of some of the more technical sports.

Interestingly, the interviewees really enjoyed talking about this aspect of the culture of the clubs. It seemed as if knowing the language made them feel as if they were truly members of something unique and a separate subculture. The leaders had to learn both a new vocabulary as well as a new set of physical skills in order to feel that they were fully members. In this way, it seemed that being able to talk the talk was integral to being able to walk the walk.

Gender

While describing how gender impacts leaders’ experiences in the Outing Club and Kayak Club, the leaders repeatedly emphasized certain themes. They brought up how female-identified individuals are now the majority in some club activities, and they raised issues around both class and race. They also continually compared the state of affairs at UVM to the greater outdoor community, and they also expressed the idea that these various communities were in the process of improving.

Several leaders described the OC as “female-identifying people heavy.” This was true at all levels of membership, including TREK, which is an outdoor orientation program designed to welcome First Years to UVM. Marie, who has led hiking TREK twice described the composition of those groups of incoming First Years: “I don’t remember if it was this year or last year, but we had like more female TREK participants than ever. Like female dominated. Which is, I think is

super cool. And I think we might have a female heavy leader club.” TREK is often the entryway for people into the OC and KC. It’s an introductory level trip that serves as a good introduction to the outdoor community at UVM. It allows First Years to build relationships with other incoming students who enjoy the outdoors as well as older students who are leaders in the OC and KC. Because TREK can serve as a kind of feeder program for the leadership development programs in the OC, it may be one contributing factor to the continuation of a female-dominated demographic in these programs. Charlie, an experienced backpacker, spoke of the decisions the coordinators of these programs must make:

When we accept people into WILD [the backpacking leadership development program], we want to try and have a balance, which doesn’t always work. Like last semester we—six boys applied out of like 40 girls. And we only liked two of the boys, but we thought that it would be weird if it was a class of 10 girls and two boys. So we accepted four of the guys, and so you know, that is it a different standpoint on gender than a lot of it.

Interesting to note in his quote is a commitment to gender balance in leadership through the use of an informal affirmative action system, where they accepted less preferred male-identified applicants over more preferred female-identified applicants. Also of note is the use of the terms “boys” and “girls.” Typically, the leaders either used these terms of boy/girl or male/female-identified when referring to someone’s gender identity. The use of these terms that are used to describe children (boy/girl) may indicate that the leaders do not yet see themselves as adults. In this way it may be more reflective of their age than their gender. Interest in the leadership development programs is overwhelmingly female, and this impacts who is able to become a leader for the club because only the people who are admitted to and complete these programs are able to obtain Level 3 membership in the clubs.

Leaders gave various potential reasons for this disproportionate male to female ratio in the clubs. Some referenced the idea that there is no recruitment meant to specifically gain the

interest of a particular demographic and the overall demographics of UVM, which has more female-identified than male-identified people. Others mentioned the presence of good female role models and a desire for community. Aidan, a male-identified kayaker, described how there is much more female interest in the KC at UVM in comparison to the larger community of whitewater kayakers:

But the thing with kayaking is that outside the [UVM] club, it's such a male dominated sport. There's so many more dudes that kayak than female-identifying folks. But I think we've done a great job not letting that happen at the Kayak Club. And honestly just based on the folks that were interested we don't have to intentionally think about it honestly. And obviously my perspective is my perspective as someone who might not be affected by that... I think we're probably split pretty 50/50 between male and female-identifying folks, which is fanta—I mean they're folks. You know everyone's just excited to get them all out there.

Aidan, noting his male privilege in his view, described the ratios as naturally occurring and something that did not require any special intentionality. Although, he also implied that if there was a gender imbalance that would not be acceptable to him or the club. Gender was not described as an issue or even something that was given much thought.

Another explanation for the “female-identifying people heavy” composition of the clubs was the overall composition of UVM. Sam, a non-binary leader who became involved with the OC through the TREK program, suggested: “I think part of it is just that UVM itself has a higher amount of female students than most other universities. I think that in turn affects who applies to be in the Outing Club, but I also think there is a very heavy push like for more girls in club.” Thus, the overall demographics of UVM, which are approximately 59% female-identified, were proposed as one of the main contributors for higher female interest, placing the reason outside the club and its actions (U.S. News and World Report).

The presence of good female role models was another proposed reason for the demographics of the club. Older female leaders were described by both male and female-

identified leaders as “badass” and “great role models for everyone.” There was a feeling that older female leaders inspired younger female leaders to join the club. This was especially true in my experience. When I joined the Kayak Club there were very few female-identifying leaders in the club, and the support I received from them made me want all the more to become a leader and to give back to younger generations in the same way they gave to me.

One other explanation that was proposed was that women may be more likely to want to be part of a community, while men may feel that they can do things on their own. Cara, a female-identified leader who graduated from a program in the fall, described what she saw happening in her workplace and suggested that it may be what is happening at UVM as well:

Probably I think guys might think they’re too good to be led. I know my brother didn’t—like for example, the youth services... where I work. I loved going on the trips as a kid, but he did not. And it was kind of like the same thing. Like a lot of girls went on the trips, but not as many guys went on the trips. I don’t know why. I know for my brother it was definitely he thought he was too good to be led around. Like he’d rather just go with his friends or whatever. Which could be the same here. For guys, could just go with their friends, and they’d rather do that.

With this, men may feel more confident in their hard skills and may be less willing to participate in an organized trip. They may prefer to going into the backcountry on their own or with their friends and the independence of that is part of the appeal. Other female-identified leaders also referenced their own desire to find a community on campus, and how TREK as well as the OC provided opportunities to make friends and create a community.

When describing the role gender plays in the OC and KC more generally, there was the impression that it is still something to talk about, but it is not a major issue. Marie, who has been involved in both clubs described some disparity between the two clubs:

So I think [gender’s] obviously still like a thing because otherwise we wouldn’t feel the need to talk about it. But I think it’s being mitigated more in the Outing Club than it is in Kayak Club. Not necessarily that it’s a specific large issue in the Kayak Club. I know you

and I have had conversations about that within Kayak Club. But like during our leadership development training in KC we didn't talk about it, yeah.

Because the OC and the KC are separate clubs, there are different conversations that happen in each, and despite all their similarities, the foci of the clubs differ slightly. Kayak Club tends to be more focused on getting people who Aidan described as “fired up” out on the water. It is about kayaking the coolest rivers possible. The Outing Club is more focused on getting everyone into the backcountry and lowering the barriers to entry. This means that more conversations about these barriers occur, and more time is spent thinking about these issues in the OC.

Ella, a female-identified backpacking leader, described how she still encounters some of the gender stereotypes when she is leading in the OC:

Some people are so aware and good about [gender stereotypes] and some are not. Sometimes I feel like I just feel a shyness that I tend to be more like a peer leader... Even though I tend to take a more low-key role, I also feel like I can be put in that role. And like same for other people. Feeling like, I don't know. Sometimes I just do feel belittled, I guess. But I definitely feel empowered in a lot of ways.

She points out how the attention paid to gender is not consistent across the whole club. Some people are more conscious of the potential issues surrounding it than others. This sometimes inconsistent attention to how gender is working could be contributing to Ella's feeling of being “put into that role.” When people are not checking their biases, this kind of automatic role assignment can feel “natural” when in reality it is just upholding previous stereotypes.

Despite the impression that gender is not a large issue in the club, there is a feeling that the clubs are still in the process of improving. Charlie described the OC as “definitely not perfect,” but people are working on learning more and making the community a better one for everyone. Ella also expressed this idea of continual improvement:

We need to better empower [women] to take on these harder roles. And we need other people to be more aware of when they're taking up space and why they are taking up space. Just getting a good balance of like doing it at appropriate times and for appropriate

reasons. I feel like that's still an issue in the whole outdoor community. Definitely something that we try to coach people to be like aware of. On like switching things up and checking in with your leaders because it's only going to make that leader team better as well.

Several of the leaders interviewed spoke of how leaders can continue to become more self-aware of the impact of their actions, and this can improve things for everyone in the club.

While describing how gender is working in the clubs, the leaders almost constantly compared it to what is going on in the greater outdoor community. Generally, the leaders thought that the clubs were doing a better job than the rest of the community outside of UVM, but it was dependent on what part of the greater outdoor community the OC and KC were being compared to. In some locales, a distrust of women in powerful positions persists. Charlie discussed how the capabilities of the female staffers at a camp that he has worked for have been doubted:

There's seven events [camp sessions]. It'll happen at least twice every event. One of the women staff will come back and once the groups leave we'll be talking, and they'll talk about how one of the adults in their group didn't trust them. When they are paid to be guiding, and they would just, you know, they would say very demoralizing things of— They would go towards like trying [to] take control. They would just constantly— they would get sometimes even go to junior staff, which are high schoolers, and yeah. Never— not great things to hear, and that— I think that's slowly going to change with that camp.

Instead of trusting the women who were in charge and had more experience, people would prefer to take things into their own hands or to go to younger, less experienced male-identified staff.

Rae also described similar things happening in the climbing community:

Rarely do I have... clients or participants that have given me trouble, but I've definitely gotten like sexualized comments and catcalls. And heard like frustrating things when either working in the White Mountains or guiding trips. Which are— come from both men and women. Just as much men and women. Sometimes young people will say really shitty things, and you're like "Where are you from?" Like if it's a crusty old white guy I'm like "Of course!" But it's not always. It's sometimes from like that 30 year old buff like military guy, and you're like "What are you doing? Didn't expect this from you." Or like a mom or a 25 year old woman who cannot believe that I'm working this hard in the backcountry, and "Do you need help? My husband can help you." Like who are you? Work harder. Like test yourself more. Stop being so condescending.

All different types of people doubted her abilities. It was not just men, although she was not surprised by that kind of behavior from a “crusty old white guy.” Other women also doubted Rae. They were surprised by how much work she took on and were unsure if she was really able to do all of it. Also what is interesting in this scenario is that the women themselves would not offer to help. Instead, they would offer the help of their husbands, which serves to reinforce the idea that the work Rae was doing would best be done by men.

Doubt in female leaders’ capabilities were not limited to trip participants or clients. It also came from older, more experienced guides, who were typically men. Rae described her experiences with moving into the professional realm of guiding:

Mostly I’ve found guides that I’ve worked with or worked for are trying, especially mostly male guides, are trying to be supportive of me as a woman coming into the industry or coming into rock climbing guiding or ice climbing guiding as a job. They’re trying to be supportive, but then they still say and do things that I’ll go home and be so frustrated about. Like doubting me about things or questioning me about things that I don’t think they realize, but they don’t do that or ask that of my male counterparts. And I don’t know if that’s because they expect more of me and that’s a compliment, or if it’s just out of this subconscious doubt. Or if I portray myself as lacking confidence, which is something I think about a lot.

Rae’s experiences also point to how women are forced to process experiences like these and how they can impact their self-perception. Because she saw that she was being treated differently than her male counterparts, she worked to understand why this is happening. She suggested that it may be a compliment that more is expected of her, but she also wondered if how she was treated was a result of how she portrayed her own capabilities.

Rae also spoke about what it was like to be a woman participating in the greater outdoor community:

When it’s that intro level thing— when I’m working at like climbing festivals and stuff, the split’s pretty even for the intro groups. The women’s groups fill up real quick. There are definitely women into it. But then once they start, I feel like then they just stay in that

beginner stage, and I don't know if that's because it's hard to find mentorship or it's just intimidating. For me personally, it's like not fun anymore to go out with some men to do more advanced climbing stuff because I just feel like I'm always on my toes. Like are they going to be mansplaining to me the whole time? Are they doubting my abilities? Are they flirting with me the whole time? Like it's just so many dynamics. So I try to pick female partners to go out with, especially because I think female mentorship like to other women is really important, and that's where it feels more rewarding to put my time.

She describes this split in involvement between the levels of the sport. Women express interest in climbing, but there isn't much representation past the beginner stage. This was also echoed by other leaders. They said that many of their leaders were female, but when looking at the next step up of professional guides most of them were male. Rae offers a few different explanations for this division whether its due to intimidation or a lack of good mentors. She also cites the gender dynamics that surround more advanced climbing as something that makes an activity she finds enjoyable lose its fun. These questions around gender serve as a kind of barrier to entry for women in the more advanced levels of the sports.

When describing how gender works in the OC and KC, leaders brought up race and socioeconomic status as well. After Rae compared the OC to places she has worked, she referred to the composition of UVM as one of the things that impacts how much the OC is able to do to be inclusive:

I think it's hard because we're such a white school. We're such a New England school. Like there's all these stereotypes of the UVM type, so there's only so much we can do to diversify what the Outing Club— who the Outing Club is appealing to or just how people feel included. And I think we're definitely above average compared to other school Outing Clubs.

Who the OC appeals to is also impacted by the type of student that is drawn to a school like UVM. Sam, a non-binary leader also highlighted this need to be aware of who goes to UVM when describing how they would like the OC social justice education programs to be modified:

I think just like being a little bit more brutally honest. Like no one wants to hear "Oh, UVM has like a really horrible history of like being super racist." Like no one wants to

really like hear about that, but like I think it's super important that we are aware of our school's history. And how that affects who is willing to go to the school and go on trips in the Outing Club.

How welcoming UVM is to people of color impacts who might feel comfortable being in Vermont as well as who would go on an OC trip.

Socioeconomic status was another issue that leaders highlighted. When describing the people she looks to for advice, Ella described how "gearheads" were still a part of the overall culture:

The people that I look to are sometimes still men— white men doing things, having a bunch of gear. I don't know. Someone made fun of me for my sleeping bag, but it's my dad's really old sleeping bag that's so heavy and not efficient at all. And I have a stuff sack that's way too big for it, so it takes up like so much room in my pack. But it still works. Like, I don't know. They said something like "I like need this." Having a really expensive bag being like "I need this though." I don't know why I only do winter camping... And winter camping sucks, but I do it anyway— all the time. But I need a really nice bag, but I don't have— like some of those bags are \$500. So I'm not going to buy that bag if this bag is heavy, but right now I'm going out two nights, three nights. I can carry it... My bag's really old and shitty, but it's really warm still. I don't know sometimes I'm like— the gearheads is still a thing. Just being told that I didn't need it. When like, I do. Like I do so much winter camping. Like that's what I do. It's winter camping.

The image of a white man with all of the newest, fanciest gear persists as the epitome of an outdoorsperson. Sometimes they are still the people that are looked to for advice, and they are in a position of privilege. They are able to afford top of the line gear and the outdoors has historically been designated as a place they are allowed and encouraged to inhabit. Thus, these views show the exclusive nature of the sport, and they show how gender, race, and class are all elements of that exclusivity.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

In the survey, gender identity was a question without any preselected answers. This allowed respondents to choose whatever label they felt fit them best. I categorized these answers were into four categories: male-identifying, female-identifying, non-binary, and non-informative. Wherever the words “male” and “female” appear they are meant to refer to the respondent’s gender-identity, and this is just meant as an abbreviation to save space. Non-binary in this context refers to all identities that fall outside of the male/female binary, and the one response that was categorized as non-informative was “cisgender.” This response did not provide enough information for me to categorize it into one of the three previous categories. The sample was composed of 37.2% male-identifying, 51.2% female-identifying, and 9.3% non-binary people.

Table 3: Gender Identification

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	16	37.2
Female	22	51.2
Non-binary	4	9.3
Non-informative	1	2.3
Total	43	100.0

One variable that was created for analysis of the population was elite membership. I asked the survey respondents about the leadership positions they have held both presently and in the past. These correlated to levels 1, 2, and 3 of club membership. Respondents selected all answers that applied to them. To compute the elite variable, a respondent was considered elite if they had obtained Level 1 or 2 membership and not elite if they have only ever held Level 3 membership. The sample was split evenly between elite and not elite members with 50% of respondents in each category.

Table 4: Elite Membership

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Elite	22	50.0
Not Elite	22	50.0
Total	44	100.0

I also examined the respondents' backcountry experience before coming to UVM in order to get a better understanding of the overall population. Respondents chose between four categories that described this experience. The first category was "extensive (multiple overnight trips)," which included 64.4% of respondents. The second was "plentiful (day trips and at least one overnight trip)," and this category encompassed 11.1% of respondents. The third category was "limited (day trips only)," which included 20.0% of respondents. The final category was "none," which represented 4.4% of respondents. This indicates that the majority of people who are in the OC and KC had significant backcountry experience before joining the clubs.

Table 5: Backcountry Experience

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Extensive (multiple overnight trips)	29	64.4
Plentiful (day trips and at least one overnight trip)	5	11.1
Limited (day trips only)	9	20.0
None	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0

I asked the respondents what they thought the most important goal of the club was. They selected between three possible answers, or if none of the answers fit, I asked them to elaborate in the comments. The first option was "bringing new people into the backcountry," and 26.7% of

respondents chose this. The second option was “creating a welcoming and inclusive community on campus,” and 26.7% of respondents chose this response. The third option was “providing easy access to the outdoors,” which 46.7% of respondents chose. One respondent selected “other” and elaborated in the comments that they thought it was a combination of two responses. But their comment seemed to lean more toward “providing easy access to the outdoors,” so it was recoded to be included in this category.

Table 6: Most Important Goal of the Club

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Bringing new people into the backcountry	12	26.7
Creating a welcoming and inclusive community on campus	12	26.7
Providing easy access to the outdoors	21	46.7
Total	45	100.0

I also asked respondents about the effectiveness of the effort to educate about social justice issues within the clubs. I presented them with the statement “the work done in the OC/KC to combat stereotypes and educate about social justice issues is highly effective” and asked them to rate this statement from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For analysis, I recoded the variable into a trichotomous variable to make further statistical analysis possible. I combined the categories of “strongly agree” and “agree” into “agree.” This group comprised 41.9% of the sample. I relabeled “Neither agree nor disagree” as “neutral,” and this represented 20.9% of respondents. I combined the categories of “strongly disagree” and “disagree” into “disagree,” which included 37.2% of respondents. This shows that respondents were generally divided on the effectiveness of social justice education.

Table 7: The work done in the OC/KC to combat stereotypes and educate about social justice issues is highly effective

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Agree	18	41.9
Neutral	9	20.9
Disagree	16	37.2
Total	43	100.0

Another statement I asked respondents to rate from strongly agree to strongly disagree was “my gender identification has impacted my experience of the OC/KC.” I recoded the variable in the same way as the effect of social justice training, and I trichotomized it. Results showed that 26.7% of respondents agreed, 26.7% were neutral, and 46.7% of respondents disagreed. The patterns I observed in this variable were similar to the responses to the statement “gender directly impacts how people interact with the OC/KC,” so I only included the variable asking about personal experience in the analysis.

Table 8: My gender identification has impacted my experience of the OC/KC

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Agree	12	26.7
Neutral	12	26.7
Disagree	21	46.7
Total	45	100.0

The final variable I examined was the evaluation of gender stereotypes. I asked respondents to rate the statement “gender stereotypes are less prevalent in the OC/KC in comparison to the larger outdoor community” on the same scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. I also recoded this variable to trichotomize it in the same way as the previous two variables. The data show that 82.2% of respondents agreed that gender stereotypes were less

prevalent in the OC/KC, 13.3% of respondents were neutral, and 4.4% of respondents disagreed. I also examined the responses to the statement “gender stereotypes are less prevalent in the OC/KC in comparison to other places where I’ve worked in outdoor leadership,” but I observed patterns similar to those in the statement about the larger outdoor community. Because of this similarity, I only included the variable about the greater outdoor community in analysis.

Table 9: Gender stereotypes are less prevalent in the OC/KC in comparison to the larger outdoor community

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Agree	37	82.2
Neutral	6	13.3
Disagree	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0

Next, I examined the relationship between the chosen independent and dependent variables next. I looked at elite membership status as the first independent variable. I also examined length of club membership, but the results were similar to elite membership status. So I only included elite membership status here.

When I looked at the relationship between the most important goal and elite membership status, I could not reject the null hypothesis because the p value was 0.091 for this crosstabs. This means that there is a 9.1% chance that the observed relationship was due to sampling error and that the hypothesis that there is no relationship between the most important goal of the club and elite member status cannot be rejected.

Of elite members, 59.1% of them said that “providing easy access to the outdoors” was what they thought to be the main goal of the club, and this was the mode for elite members.

Meanwhile, the mode for not elite members was the goal of “bringing new people into the backcountry,” with 40.9% of not elite members responding this way.

Table 10: Most Important Goal of the Club by Elite Membership Status

		Elite	Not Elite	Total
Bringing new people into the backcountry	Count	3	9	12
	% within Membership Status	13.6%	40.9%	27.3%
Creating a welcoming and inclusive community on campus	Count	6	6	12
	% within Membership Status	27.3%	27.3%	27.3%
Providing easy access to the outdoors	Count	13	7	20
	% within Membership Status	59.1%	31.8%	45.5%
Total	Count	22	22	44
	% within Membership Status	100%	100%	100%

p = 0.091

I found a strong, significant association between elite membership status and the respondent’s gender identity impacting their experience of the clubs. The p value is 0.010, which means that there is a 1% chance that the observed relationship is due to sampling error, and because this p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected. The relationship between the two variables is strong because Cramer’s V is higher than 0.3.

Elite members were more likely to agree that their gender identity has impacted their experience with the clubs than not elite members. I found that 45.5% of elite members agreed that their gender identity had an impact as opposed to only 9.9% of not elite members. Meanwhile 68.2% of not elite members disagreed that their gender identity impacted things, and 27.3% of elite members also disagreed. This may be because elite members tend to be highly involved in the club, and with more interactions with the club, the impact of their gender may

have become more apparent. This could also be due to the gender compositions within each category, which are discussed later in the results.

Table 11: My Gender Identity Has Impacted My Experience with the Clubs by Elite Membership Status

		Elite	Not Elite	Total
Agree	Count	10	2	12
	% within Membership Status	45.5%	9.1%	27.3%
Neutral	Count	6	5	11
	% within Membership Status	27.3%	22.7%	25%
Disagree	Count	6	15	21
	% within Membership Status	27.3%	68.2%	47.7%
Total	Count	22	22	44
	% within Membership Status	100%	100%	100%

p = 0.010

Cramer's V = 0.459

The next relationship I looked at was between the effectiveness of social justice education and elite membership status. Elite members were more likely to agree that education around social justice was highly effective. It was found that 52.4% of elite members agreed, while 28.6% of not elite members agreed. Not elite members were more likely to disagree with the statement, with 42.9% of not elite members saying they disagreed. In contrast only 33.3% of elite members disagreed with the statement that the OC social justice education was effective.

Table 12: Work Done in Club to Educate about Social Justice Highly Effective by Elite Membership Status

		Elite	Not Elite	Total
Agree	Count	11	6	17
	% within Membership Status	52.4%	28.6%	40.5%
Neutral	Count	3	6	9
	% within Membership Status	14.3%	28.6%	21.4%
Disagree	Count	7	9	16
	% within Membership Status	33.3%	42.9%	38.1%
Total	Count	21	21	42
	% within Membership Status	100%	100%	100%

2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.50.

Gender identity was the next independent variable I examined. The first relationship I examined was between the impact of gender identity on interaction with the clubs and gender identity. About half of male-identified respondents (50%) and female-identified respondents (54.5%) disagreed that their gender identity has impacted their experience with the clubs, and only a quarter to a third agreed. Meanwhile 50% of non-binary respondents agreed that their gender identity has impacted their experience. This may be because identifying as non-binary can impact someone's whole life perspective. In the interviews, Sam, a non-binary leader, said:

As someone who's non-binary, it affects how I go out in the outdoors, like as a queer person. Just because of that, but like I don't think it's as much of a deal for like just be a boy or a girl because usually like in the outdoors it's much more of a boy club, but that's not the case in the Outing Club.

Gender identity may be in the forefront of non-binary people's minds more often, and they may be forced to understand how their gender identity impacts their experience of the world. People who are able to fit into the binary more easily may have the privilege of not having to think about the impact of their gender identity in this way.

Table 13: My Gender Identity Has Impacted My Experience with the Clubs by Gender Identification

		Male	Female	Non-Binary	Total
Agree	Count	5	5	2	12
	% within Gender Identification	31.3%	22.7%	50.0%	28.6%
Neutral	Count	3	5	2	10
	% within Gender Identification	18.8%	22.7%	50.0%	23.8%
Disagree	Count	8	12	0	20
	% within Gender Identification	50.0%	54.5%	0.0%	47.6%
Total	Count	16	22	4	42
	% within Gender Identification	100%	100%	100%	100%

5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.95.

The next relationship I examined was the impact of social justice education and gender identity. Male-identified (53.3%) and non-binary respondents (75%) were more likely to agree that the work done to educate about social justice issues in the club is highly effective. Meanwhile, a majority of female-identified respondents disagreed (57.1%). This pattern may be because many male-identified people may not have been exposed to this kind of social justice education, while female-identified may have been forced to pay more attention to these issues due to their less privileged position. Because of this, male-identified leaders may feel that the social justice training is effective because it gave them new information about these issues, and female-identified leaders may feel that the training didn't bring in much new information. In the interviews a few female-identified leaders said that they thought the social justice education was fine right now but that they wished it went deeper into the topics that are brought up. Rae, a female-identified climbing leader said, "I don't think they [the Social Justice Coordinators] get enough support, have enough time, or ever get enough traction to be super effective." The general agreement in non-binary respondents may be because the OC does a better job at

affirming people's identities than the general public and they appreciate this more cognizant approach to social justice issues.

Table 14: Work Done in Club to Educate about Social Justice Highly Effective by Gender Identification

		Male	Female	Non-Binary	Total
Agree	Count	8	5	3	16
	% within Gender Identification	53.3%	23.8%	75.0%	40.0%
Neutral	Count	4	4	1	9
	% within Gender Identification	26.7%	19.0%	25.0%	22.5%
Disagree	Count	3	12	0	15
	% within Gender Identification	20.0%	57.1%	0.0%	37.5%
Total	Count	15	21	4	40
	% within Gender Identification	100%	100%	100%	100%

5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.90.

I also examined the relationship between the prevalence of gender stereotypes in the OC/KC versus the greater outdoor community. The leaders were in general agreement that gender stereotypes are less prevalent in the OC/KC. Results showed that 75% of male-identified respondents, 86.4% of female-identified respondents, and 100.0% of non-binary respondents agreed.

Table 15: Gender Stereotypes are Less Prevalent in the OC/KC Compared to the Larger Outdoor Community by Gender Identification

		Male	Female	Non-Binary	Total
Agree	Count	12	19	4	35
	% within Gender Identification	75.0%	86.4%	100.0%	83.3%
Neutral	Count	3	2	0	5
	% within Gender Identification	18.8%	9.1%	0.0%	11.9%
Disagree	Count	1	1	0	2
	% within Gender Identification	6.3%	4.5%	0.0%	4.8%
Total	Count	16	22	4	42
	% within Gender Identification	100%	100%	100%	100%

7 cells (77.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.19.

One last crosstab I created looked at the gender distribution within the categories of elite membership status. While 50% of female-identified respondents held elite membership status, only 37.5% of male identified leaders also held this status. Also 100% of non-binary respondents held elite membership status. This may be because male-identified leaders are not encouraged by older leaders to take on larger leadership positions in the same way that female-identified and non-binary leaders are encouraged. The male-identified leaders may be especially aware of the history of the outdoors being labeled as a masculine space, and they might purposely step back in order for people with other gender identities to step forward. They may also prefer to go into the backcountry on their own once they have the hard skills to do so, and they may not have a desire to get more involved with the club.

Table 16: Elite Membership Status by Gender Identification

		Male	Female	Non-Binary	Total
Elite	Count	6	11	4	21
	% within Gender Identification	37.5%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%
Not Elite	Count	10	11	0	21
	% within Gender Identification	62.5%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Total	Count	16	22	4	42
	% within Gender Identification	100%	100%	100%	100%

2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.00.

DISCUSSION

Swidler (1986) argued that “culture consists of such symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life” (p. 273). My research has shown that the students involved in the Outing Club and Kayak Club at UVM have created their own subculture that has beliefs and cultural practices that are distinct from both the general student body at UVM as well as the larger outdoor community. The leaders value the outdoors and their ability to help provide access to the outdoors for fellow students. The majority of leaders believe that providing this access is the main goal of the club. For many of the leaders, the clubs play a large role in their experiences of college. While the main goal of the club is to bring other people into the backcountry, the clubs also provide opportunities for people who share a passion for the outdoors to come together and create community.

The culture created and maintained by the leaders of the OC and KC includes language. Language is an important part of culture and can help distinguish a subculture from the larger group as well as identify what is important within the culture (Swidler 1986; Johnson et al. 2006; Whorf 1956). The language of the OC and KC is constituted of both words adapted from other sources and words created specifically for the clubs. The leaders adopt words from the larger outdoor community and other sources such as terminology used in geology or hydrology. Other words and acronyms are made up to describe what is happening within the clubs. Many of the acronyms refer to the leadership development programs, and these terms were created by past leaders and continue being passed down to younger leaders. This language serves as a divisive and unifying force. It separates the members of the subculture from others, and it is a signal of membership. Once the vernacular is mastered, it can provide a strong sense of community and

membership. Overall, the students in this study were enthusiastic about their membership in this subculture and identified with the values and goals of the club.

One of the goals of the clubs is to develop leaders and help members develop leadership skills, and interviewees believed that there were many different attributes that make someone a good leader. These attributes included competency, confidence, level-headedness, having a balance of hard and soft skills, awareness, and a desire to lead. These attributes have also been associated with various wilderness adventure leadership styles, a preference for leaders with good people skills, the positive evaluation of leaders' skills, and the leaders' ability to foster trust from their participants (Rilling and Jordan 2007; Shooter et al. 2012).

The survey did not directly ask about leadership, but people with higher leadership positions in the clubs (Levels 1 and 2, or "elite") responded differently to various questions. Elite members said that they thought the main goal of the club was "providing easy access to the outdoors." They also were more likely to say that their gender identity has impacted their experience of the clubs and that the social justice education done within the clubs is highly effective. This may be because leaders in Level 1 and 2 are more central to the subculture, and this may mean they are more likely to believe in the values and follow the norms. This, in turn, may mean that they experience the clubs in a slightly different way and thus see its work slightly differently as well. Within elite membership, non-binary and female-identified leaders were more likely to hold this elite status. This may be due to male-identified leaders' awareness of how the backcountry has been traditionally characterized as a male space, and they may be stepping back in order for others to take on leadership roles. They also may prefer to go into the backcountry on their own instead of with the club.

Wilderness adventure has traditionally been conceptualized as a male space (Koivula 2001; Stoddart 2011). Women have faced several different constraints on their participation in these activities. The interviewees mentioned various gender stereotypes as well as sexualized comments. Some women in this study preferred to go into the backcountry with other women in order to avoid some of these gender dynamics, which has been found in other studies (McDermott 2004). Both the interviews and the survey depicted the OC and KC as an environment where these concerns are lessened in comparison to the larger outdoor community.

Participation in wilderness adventure has been associated with various types of privilege including whiteness, maleness, and high socioeconomic status (Jin-Hyung et al. 2001; Shores et al. 2007). The interviewees expressed that the image of knowledge and competency in the backcountry is still white and male. It was also associated with having the newest, coolest gear, which is also a status symbol. Outdoor gear is quite expensive, and many people cannot afford new gear or any gear at all. Many of the study participants had first-hand experience dealing with the privilege traditionally associated with the backcountry, and this privilege contributes to the exclusive and sometimes oppressive conditions in the larger outdoor community.

The OC and KC are working to deconstruct this depiction of the backcountry as male space. As a subculture, these clubs are committed to inclusivity. They are focused on increasing accessibility, and they are making a conscious effort to maintain a somewhat balanced gender composition. Within the OC, the Social Justice Coordinators create workshops for the people going through leadership development programs, as well as a few other opportunities for older leaders to continue learning about social justice issues. Female-identified leaders constitute the majority in the clubs as well as in the higher leadership positions. This means that there are many mentors for younger, aspiring female leaders. The clubs also provide the opportunity for creating

the community that many women desire, which enable them to enter the world of wilderness recreation in a more supportive environment. By entering the community in college, these women may be better positioned to enter the less ideal and less welcoming larger outdoor community than women who did not have the benefit of participating in collegiate outdoor clubs. This may be the beginning of change in the larger outdoor community. Often social change begins on college campuses where students are trying to shake up the normal order. The outdoors should not be considered a male space. Exploring the backcountry provides benefits that transfer into everyday life, such as empowerment, self-sufficiency, and mental clarity (Allee 2011; Pohl 2000), and everyone should have the opportunity to access these benefits.

CONCLUSION

Little is known about wilderness adventure groups and whether they challenge or reinforce traditional cultural values or norms. These clubs are a strategic site to learn more about social group subculture, gendered norms in a traditionally male space, and how leadership values can shift. At UVM, the Outing Club and Kayak Club are two clubs that many students choose to engage with during their free time and studying the members of these groups provides a further understanding of the creation of this subculture. Because I have been an active member of this community for the past three years, I have the unique position of having insider status. Through this status in the community I have had access to its members in a way that other researchers would not, and with this, my thesis has tried to provide an in-depth look at the culture of these two outdoor clubs.

There are a few limitations with my study. One is the lack of consistency with themes examined in the qualitative and quantitative data. Originally all of the interviews were going to be done before the creation and distribution of the survey, but because of time constraints, this was not possible. If the interviews were coded before writing the survey, more of the questions would directly correlate with the findings that emerged from the interview. Another limitation is the amount of time taken for transcription. If I had found funding to hire a transcriptionist, I would have had more time for other parts of data gathering and data analysis. However, by transcribing the interviews myself, I was afforded the advantage of being immersed in the data. Another possible limitation is my “insider” status and my gender identity. While being an “insider” can bring many benefits, such as trust and rapport in the interviews, it is also important to consider that my role in these clubs influences the study in some ways. I know many of these people personally, some very well, and that can affect the data gathered. Being female-identified

could have influenced the responses as well. In addition, I have been observing the gender dynamics in the club for years, which is the reason for my interest in the topic, but it also means that I am approaching the study with a particular, critical lens.

In closing, I have a few thoughts on the successes of the Outing Club and Kayak Club at UVM and a few recommendations for future research. One of the main foci of this project is seeing how the gender dynamics work within the community. Typically, wilderness adventure is framed as a largely male-dominated space, yet UVM has made many efforts to challenge and reject this in our community. This commitment to gender equity seems to have paid off. When leaders compare the culture of the OC and KC to the greater outdoor community there is overwhelming agreement that gender stereotypes are less prevalent in wilderness adventure at UVM. In this way the OC and KC can be seen as a kind of subculture within a subculture. In the United States, wilderness adventure is a subculture with its own language and norms, but my research shows that wilderness adventure at UVM is distinct from the larger wilderness adventure community. The UVM Outing Club and Kayak Club may be its own subculture, or it might reflect more broadly the subculture of collegiate wilderness adventure programs across the country. This is one exciting potential site for future research. Seeing how collegiate wilderness adventure programs compare to one another as well as to the larger community would be interesting to start to understand how each of these sites interact with and influence one another. In addition to a comparative study across colleges, future research could focus on how the young adults of these clubs take these values and goals and move forward in their lives. Do the experiences they have in these clubs (with their commitment to the outdoors, gender equity, trusting themselves in high-risk situations, empowerment, and interpersonal skills) end up having an influence on their decisions and experiences after college? I believe further research into the

role of how these groups and their culture can contribute to larger social change would be a worthwhile sociological project.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What were your first experiences with the backcountry?
 - Would you describe your earliest memory of a trip into the backcountry?
- Why did you want to start going into the backcountry?
- How did you first get involved with the OC or KC?
 - What drew you to the groups?
- What were your first impressions of the outdoor community at UVM?
- Which leadership program did you go through?
- How would you describe the clubs to someone who's not in them?
 - How would you describe the people who are members?
- What is your involvement level in the clubs now?
- As you know there are these different levels of membership, and people are elected in a certain way
 - What do you think of this system?
 - Who typically takes on these roles of leadership?
- What qualities make a good trip leader?
 - How would you describe them?
- How are decisions made within the club?
 - Who has the final say?
 - Does this process work for you?
- What do you think are the main goals of the clubs?
 - Are there other lesser goals?
 - Do you think everyone shares these goals?
- Do you feel like the people that are in these clubs differ from the rest of the student body?
- Is there language that is specific to the outdoor community?
- Do you think gender affects any of the workings within the clubs?
 - Is this different from or the same as what you see happening in the outdoor community outside of UVM?
 - How have you seen gender work in places that you've guided or lead trips?
 - How has your sport been portrayed on social media in terms of gender?
- Do male-identified or female-identified leaders typically take on particular roles?
- If gender is a non-issue, what work has been done to make it this way?
- Do you think the work done by the Social Justice Chairs is effective?
- Do you think the gender ratios have shifted in the past few years?
 - Why do you think this may have happened?
- Why do you think more female-identified people than male-identified people sign up for TREK?
- Describe who you see when I say:
 - Whitewater kayaking guide
 - Backpacking guide
 - Sea kayaking guide
 - Climbing guide
 - Canoeing guide
 - Backcountry skiing/snowboarding guide

- What do you like about being a part of the group?
- Do you feel that your identity on campus is tied to the clubs?
- Is there anything about how a club member dresses that makes them identifiable as a part of the club?
- Have you guided professionally outside of UVM?
- What do you think you will take with you from the clubs into your postgrad life?
- What term do you use to describe your gender identity?
- Who would you suggest that I interview next?
 - Who has a different perspective than you? Whether it be because of a different gender identity, level of backcountry experience, or difference sport?
- Any other thoughts or questions?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Set 1

1. How would you describe your backcountry experience before coming to UVM?
 - a. Extensive (multiple overnight trips)
 - b. Plentiful (day trips and at least one overnight trip)
 - c. Limited (day trips only)
 - d. None
2. How long have you been in the OC and KC?
 - a. 1 semester (I just finished a leadership development program!)
 - b. 1 year
 - c. 2 years
 - d. 3+ years
3. How many OC/KC trips have you led since becoming a leader?
 - a. 0-1
 - b. 2-4
 - c. 5-9
 - d. 10+
4. Do you plan on leading more trips for the OC/KC in future semesters?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No because I am graduating
5. Why did you become a leader?
 - a. I love the outdoors and wanted to find likeminded people
 - b. I wanted to learn more hard skills
 - c. I wanted to share my passion of the outdoors and get new people outside
 - d. The OC seemed like a cool community to get involved with
 - e. Other:
6. How many social justice talks or events have you attended (during and after going through a program or TREK training)?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-2
 - c. 3-4
 - d. 4+
7. What do you think is the most important goal of the club?
 - a. Bringing new people into the backcountry
 - b. Creating a welcoming and inclusive community on campus
 - c. Providing easy access to the outdoors
 - d. Other:

Set 2

8. The OC and KC are welcoming to everyone.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree

- e. Strongly disagree
9. It is easy to become a leader in the OC/KC.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
10. It is easy to stay involved with the OC/KC.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
11. The club is a large part of my identity on campus
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
12. Gender directly impacts how people interact with the OC/KC
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
13. My gender identification has impacted my experience of the OC/KC
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
14. The work done in the OC/KC to combat stereotypes and educate about social justice issues is highly effective
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
15. Gender stereotypes are less prevalent in the OC/KC in comparison to other places where I've worked in outdoor leadership
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

16. Gender stereotypes are less prevalent in the OC/KC in comparison to the larger outdoor community
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Set 3

17. Choose all that apply
- I have held an elected position (President, VP of Operations, VP of Communications, VP of Leadership Development, Social Justice Coordinator, Social Chair, Trail Work Coordinator, Cabin Manager, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, Boat House Manager)
 - I have held an appointed position (Haus Manager, Leadership Development Coordinator)
 - I have been a trip leader
18. What term do you use to describe your gender identity?
19. Are you from in-state or out-of-state?
- In-state
 - Out-of-state
20. Any additional comments?

APPENDIX C: EMAIL TEMPLATES

Interview Recruitment Email Template

Hi _____!

My name is Blair Shields, and I'm currently working on a thesis about the experience of leaders in the OC and KC. The first stage of my project includes individual interviews with a handful of leaders, and I will then create a survey, which will be sent out to leaders in general. I would love for you to participate in the interview portion of my thesis! The interview would most likely last around 30 minutes, and we can work to schedule a time that works for you. If you can spare the time, your participation would be greatly appreciated!

Happy trails!!

Blair 😊

bshields@uvm.edu

Survey Recruitment Email Template

Hello fellow adventurers!

My name is Blair Shields, and I'm a leader in the Kayak Club. I'm currently working on a thesis about the experience of leaders in the OC and KC. Below is a link to a survey that will take less than five minutes to complete, and I would deeply appreciate you taking the time to fill it out.

<https://survey.uvm.edu/index.php/469958?lang=en>

Happy trails!!

Blair 😊

bshields@uvm.edu