Fencing clubs are close knit and thus the power structures within them are vital to make sure the club continues to run smoothly and bring in new fencers. Just how these hierarchies are designed and how they come into being helps define the club and its fencers within it. It is essential then to also focus on just how fencers identify with their club, which is directly linked to who is in charge and why. Fencers have their individual identity as a fencer as well as those things that characterize them as a member of a club. But there are also titles and false identities placed upon them from those outside of fencing. Their true collective identities are significant because they both divide and merge fencers, which illustrates the complexity of fencing due to area, coach, skill level, time, and politics.

The sampling frame for this research was two fencing clubs, Touché Fencing Club® and Woodstock Fencing Club®. With the clubs being so small and the researcher already being a fencer within both, sampling was purposive. Participant observation was conducted during the 2-3 hour practices of the advanced class, with a total of 12 classes observed. Three unstructured interviews were held with Coach Sean®, Evan Brown®, and Martha Smith®, all fencers that participated in both clubs. Several conversations or unstructured, informal interviews were held with the coach. Toward the end of the research project, 11 surveys were distributed among the fencers on both clubs. Several conversations or unstructured interviews were held with Carl Hunt®, Evan Brown®, and Martha Smith®, all fencers that participated in both clubs. Several conversations or unstructured, informal interviews were held with the coach. Toward the end of the research project, 11 surveys were distributed among the fencers at both clubs. Several conversations or unstructured, informal interviews were held with the coach and several fencers. It was found that the hierarchy and identity of fencers are deeply rooted in several aspects of the sport. The coach tended to be positioned at the apex of this hierarchy, as was seen at the Woodstock Fencing Club. However, it was found that the popularity of the group, more important than the coach, placed an individual in a position of power and influence just below them. This was found to be the case when all of the fencers ranked the captain of Touché Fencing Club as the person in charge. This was interesting because the captain was not the most skilled and when decisions have to be made for the club, it was up to the officers not the captain to decide. Thus, the captain, who fencers at both clubs studied, was close to the coach which permitted extra fencing time and other advantages for the captain.

However things like clothing, fencing style, and language divided fencers. Fencing style originates from the club and specifically the coach they are under. Language was another important aspect that verified differences between clubs. Though two fencers can get together and talk about fencing, if one fencer came over to another’s club they could quite easily misunderstand the terminology of that club. Under Coach Sean® was the fencers knew the differences between counterattacks 1, 2, and 3, and hand motions almost like baseball signs from coach to player, so that on strip there is no lack of accurate communication. This language seems to be developed for that very reason, to divide the fencers so that there is clear communication between coach and pupil without allowing outsiders to understand.