

CONSENT AND MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES AT REGIONAL BURNING MAN
EVENTS

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Within the field of leisure and leisure travel (tourism), consent is often couched inside the idea of free choice. Participants in an activity must freely choose that activity for it be considered leisure, and they must willingly choose to travel for it to be considered tourism. But what about consent during a leisure experience or during leisure travel? This project sought to explore the impact of consent culture on the experiences of participants at Regional Burning Man Events (Burns). The study expanded the tourism studies literature about the importance of consent on tourists' experiences and further validates the applicability of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a measure for studying tourist motivation. In the end, the results of this study show that tourists who attend regional Burns find belonging and a space to explore identity and self expression. By all accounts, a culture of consent at these events heavily contributes to creating an environment where these experiences are possible. Consent takes into account the relational nature of interactions within communities and during leisure activities. As the participants in this study repeated and my own field experience showed, consent is deeply rooted in community. The culture of consent at Burns, whether enacted through formal training or through word of mouth and peer-led enforcement in the rest of the community, is in contrast to the rape culture of the everyday, or as Burners call it, "default" world. It is this culture of consent, one intentionally built to empower individuals and encourage open communication between participants, that enables traditionally vulnerable individuals to have "better" tourism experiences, ones in which their self-esteem and self-actualization needs are met.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I've just parked my car and am already completely overwhelmed. It is hot, and damp, and my shoes are sinking into the mud as I stand confused and wary in front of a white pop-up tent full of costumed-people. "What am I doing here? Why did I agree to do this? I'm sorry, what? Did you just ask if I wanted to be spanked? That's a big paddle. I don't even know you."

The greeters station on the way into this Burn is one of the key reasons I'm here, and yet in this moment, I want to get away from it and find my Theme Camp Organizer and the rest of my camp as quickly as possible. I'm here at this event to chase a wild idea I had - that a culture of consent can help tourists meet their needs for self esteem and self actualization - and yet so far, I feel like hopping in that car with Steve - no, no, he's "Studmuffin" here - to make the ten-hour drive was a huge mistake. I turn over my interaction at the Greeters station in my mind as I walk along the wooded trail, past wrought iron gates topped with winged creatures (they glow with fire at night, I'm told).

Wasn't that consent in action? The greeter, decked out in a tutu, colorful bikini top, leg warmers, Chaco sandals, and too many friendship bracelets, had asked before paddling, brandishing the no-doubt home-carved slab of wood in one hand. I'd said no and so she didn't do it - we shook hands instead. I'd find out later as part of my own consent-greeter training that what just happened was a lesson in negotiating and respecting boundaries. You ask me "Can I paddle you?" I tell you. "No thank you." You ask me "How about a hug instead?" I say, "Let's shake hands. It's nice to meet you." We shake hands, you smile, you tell me "Welcome to Mysteria. Welcome Home." We just negotiated a boundary for physical contact based in a

culture of consent, my first official acculturation into the 10 principles of Burning Man, and the elusive 11th principle, consent.

The preceding description is taken from my field notes at my first Regional Burning Man event, and the first field study for this thesis. I would think of that exchange and the way I felt about it often during the following months as I interviewed fellow participants, reflected on my notes, and began to piece together what consent, Burns, tourism, leisure - what any of it really means. When people think of the word consent, they most often think of sexual consent. And while consent is essential when talking about sex, it has far wider applications for interpersonal exchanges. Within the field of leisure and leisure travel (tourism), consent is often couched inside the idea of free choice. Participants in an activity must freely choose that activity for it be considered leisure, and they must willingly choose to travel for it to be considered tourism. But what about consent during a leisure experience or during leisure travel? No work yet been done on the inclusion of consent as a value within a leisure and tourism community. This project explored the following research questions within the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs; in so doing, it expands the tourism studies literature about the importance of consent on tourists' experiences and further validates the applicability of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a measure for studying tourist motivation. How and under what kind of milieu does the inclusion of consent in the culture of regional Burning Man events have an impact on tourist experiences? Does consent education at events enable participants to meet self-esteem and self-actualization motivations, as described by Maslow's hierarchy of needs? Do we need to broaden our definition of leisure and tourism to include consent, not just free choice?

The present study aimed to examine the impact of a culture of consent on the experiences of Regional Burn attendees. This was done through a mixed methods approach. First, interview

responses with thirteen participants were transcribed, broken up into idea-sized chunks, and coded according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs to reveal patterns of needs fulfillment. Then I examined the interviews as a collective whole to identify emergent themes across the responses, paying particular attention to reported experiences and stories that illustrated a strong impact on the participants' lives. These broad themes are explored in the Results section.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Burning Man?

Every summer, 70,000 people converge on a barren stretch of desert in Nevada. The city they build and then destroy is known as Black Rock City. It is the center, the home, of Burning Man, a massive art, music, and culture event that draws tourists from around the globe. In the 51 weeks of the year in which Black Rock City is just a dusty memory, many of those participants gather around the world to keep the spirit of Burning Man and its 10 principles alive. These events are known colloquially as Regional Burns, and the people who make them happen are Burners. What motivates tens of thousands of people to trek to the middle of the Black Rock Desert with everything they need to survive a week of brutal heat, dust storms, and frigid nights? What do they find there that encourages them to continue to burn even after the effigy – a large wooden sculpture of a man – is reduced to cinders on the Saturday of U.S. Labor Day weekend each year?

For many participants, the 10 Principles, and the community that springs up around a commitment to them, keep them coming back – both to the “Big Burn” as Burning Man is colloquially called, and to the regional burns that make up the global network. The Ten Principles of Burning Man are: Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-reliance, Radical Self-expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation, and Immediacy. Though the first Burning Man was held in 1986, the 10 Principles were not created until 2004 as guidelines for the newly formed Regional Network of Burns (BurningMan.org, 2016). “They were crafted not as a dictate of how people should be and act,

but as a reflection of the community's ethos and culture as it had organically developed since the event's inception," (BurningMan.org, 2016). They may not be designed to dictate how people behave, but strong social pressure at events more or less ensures adherence to the principles, and they are a frequent topic of conversation on the community Facebook pages of regional Burns. It is rare for a leisure activity and tourism event to have such a codified structure for the culture surrounding it, which makes Burning Man and its regional Burns particularly fascinating for scholars interested in how the event's culture can impact attendee's leisure and tourism experiences.

Free Choice in Leisure and Tourism Activities

While there is no definitive list of requirements for an activity to be considered leisure, several key concepts are frequently cited. "People appear to consistently use the dimensions of perceived choice, intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, relaxation, and lack of evaluation in defining situations as leisure situations, although no one dimension can be equated with the leisure experience." (Shaw, 1985, p. 22) Chief among these criteria is "perceived freedom," or the idea that if a person is doing a leisure activity, they believe that they have chosen to do it and they want to participate in it (Neulinger, 1974, p. 15). Though the meaning of freedom in this context has been hotly debated (Harper, 1986), the concept is generally taken to mean what Neulinger states. A person must believe that they are choosing an activity freely from among the many other options that demand their time. "At the very least leisure requires that we have a choice, that we could have chosen not to do it" (Kelly, 1982, p. 158). Free choice is just as important in tourist activities as it is in leisure. If a person were forced to travel to a destination, either for

political or economic reasons, they would cease to be a tourist. We might instead call them business travelers, refugees, migrants, or any of a number of other descriptors. Choice then is what makes travel tourism. It is the way that a person voluntarily decides to spend their free time and money.

But is free choice enough to consider an activity leisure? In his 2008 article, Rasul Mowatt asserts that, based on our current definition of leisure, we can “call on the analysis of the lynching of Black people in the United States as an example of a form of leisure” (p. 187). He proceeds to explain how lynching meets several criteria widely regarded as integral to leisure – in particular, the spectacular or festival nature of the lynching, and the enjoyment of the spectators at the lynching. To do this, Mowatt describes in detail the activities surrounding the lynching of Jesse Washington, an 18-year-old African American man who was lynched on May 15, 1916 in Waco, Texas after confessing to the murder of Lucy Fryer, the white wife of his white employer. Numerous sources have stated that Jesse Washington was mentally handicapped and that he confessed after intense interrogation by the McLennan County sheriff (Mowatt, 2008). After Jesse’s trial and conviction (based on his confession), he was dragged from the courtroom through the streets of Waco. According to sources, as many as 15,000 spectators watched as he was hung from a tree and set on fire to burn to death. After his death, his fingers and genitals were amputated and given out as souvenirs. Professional photographs of the event were later sold as postcards (Mowatt, 2008).

Mowatt argues that “reading lynching as leisure elevates the detail of each step of the act, making it more of an event than some singular reaction to an outside stimulus” (Mowatt, 2008, p. 193). He points out - and rightly so - that “this was an event as opposed to an application of the law” (Mowatt, 2008, p. 190). His central argument relies heavily on the lynching as an event

outside of everyday life similar to a festival or other community celebration. From the moment that Jesse Washington was sentenced to death and dragged from the courtroom, the event became a spectacle - a leisure event - and not a part of the normal course of justice. “Although researchers have been unable to specifically define the universe of what is leisure and what is not, leisure is clearly an activity from which one receives some sense of intrinsic enjoyment” (Mowatt, 2008, p. 193). Despite the significant and developed contextualization that Mowatt so ably provides, we cannot know the motivations or emotions of the people who gathered 100 years ago to witness or actively participate in the lynching of Jesse Washington. What’s more, and as Mowatt (2008, 2012) asserts, we can never fully disentangle the events of that day from the long history of slavery, racism, and oppression of Black people in the United States.

This, unquestionably, does not and should not in any way condone nor excuse the behavior of anyone involved in the lynching. After all, it is likely that no one forced shop owners to close their shops or children to come along from school or women to stop their activities to be a part of the lynching. Rather than let justice run its course (since Jesse had already been sentenced to death), people in Waco, Texas made a choice to disrupt that process to perform a lynching instead. In all likelihood, the vast majority of them at least experienced perceived freedom even if in reality there may have been negative social consequences for not attending the event. It is also possible that some members of the crowd or those who actually interacted with Jesse Washington before and/or after his death experienced intrinsic joy from the activity. If this is the case, they may have considered the activity to be leisure.

Nevertheless, I contend that it does not matter if one or many individuals felt that the lynching was a leisure activity. There is one man who most certainly did not view it as such and who did not consent to participate in the lynching. That man is the victim, Jesse Washington. To

view and accept his lynching as a leisure activity – albeit a white man’s leisure activity – is to disregard him as a human being and a participant in the events. It reduces him to an object of leisure; advancing an approach that endangers progress and robust discussions on social justice in contemporary society. Even if the white mob in 1916 was willing to do this, as scholars we should be unwilling to do so.

Consent Defined

Freely choosing an activity has been equated with consenting to that activity (Shaw, 1985; Neulinger, 1986). But what is consent and how do other people engaged in an activity know whether or not you’ve consented? This project will use consent to mean “affirmative consent,” a concept that is explained below. The Canadian judicial code on sexual misconduct does an excellent job explaining general consent. “Subsection 273.1(1) defines consent as the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question. Conduct short of a voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity does not constitute consent as a matter of law” (Canadian Criminal Code, 2015). Affirmative consent builds on this definition by necessitating an affirmative statement of consent - the consent cannot be implied, it must be actively given through saying “yes” to an activity (Emba, 2015). Affirmative consent is often seen in opposition to “passive consent” in which consent is understood but never explicitly stated or given (in the best case) or simply assumed so long as a person is not actively saying “no” (in a worse case) (Emba, 2015).

Consent is frequently discussed in literature on sexual behavior and misconduct. There has been a recent culture shift in favor of affirmative ongoing consent, particularly in cases of rape, attempted rape, and other forms of sexual assault. A recent example of this culture shift can be found in the United Kingdom Tames Valley Police “Tea and Consent” YouTube video, which as of May 2017, has been viewed more than 3.7 million times. “If you’re still struggling with consent just imagine instead of initiating sex you’re making them a cup of tea” the video starts. It continues to explain through animated examples the various ways that someone can deny consent and asserts that the only appropriate response in these cases is to respect the choice of the person who does not consent (Tames Valley Police, 2015). The video is one of a series of pieces in the police department’s #consentiseverything social media hashtag campaign which aims to reduce or eliminate rape by educating the public about what consent is and how someone knows whether they have it or not (Tames Valley Police, 2015). The video and many other sources advocate for “affirmative ongoing consent,” which means that a person can revoke consent at any time during an encounter or experience even after it has begun. If this happens, anything that occurs after consent is revoked is treated in the same way it would have been if consent had never been given (Consent is Everything, 2015; Canadian Criminal Code 2015; Emba, 2015). Conversations about consent are essential when talking about sexual encounters, and I believe that they are equally important when discussing leisure activities at large.

“Freedom, as undergone in leisure, is an experience of *ongoing consent*. The temporal duration of leisure experiences is characterized by our consenting to something, somehow other than ourselves, yet with which we identify and toward which we are loyal. The experience is agreeable.” (Harper, 1986, p.123). Extending Harper’s description of the connection between leisure and consent with regards to the individual and the individual’s perception of an activity, I

propose that this also encompasses connections between individuals engaging together in a leisure activity. Consent is relational, and as such, it is deeply embedded in community. In this way, we could effectively deny that lynching can or should be considered leisure. If an activity requires the consent of all required parties to be considered leisure, then it does not matter if one or many individuals felt that they freely chose the activity. An activity that hinges on the involvement of another human being requires affirmative, ongoing consent from all parties - not just the ones in power - for it to be considered a leisure activity. To label activities leisure that do not meet this criterion is to perpetuate and potentially glorify the oppression of individuals and/or groups of human beings. Ninety-nine percent of participants can consider an activity leisure, but if there is one who is forced to participate and cannot choose or consent to the activity, then socially, culturally, and academically, we cannot consider that activity leisure.

There are exceptions to the requirement that unanimous ongoing affirmative consent be obtained for an activity to be considered leisure. One of these exceptions are activities where the participation of one person does not necessitate the participation of another person. An example is a church service. While many consider the regular act of attending a church service to be leisure, others do not. Some attend the church service against their will because of familial obligations, fear of social repercussions or other reasons. The presence of a person at a church service who does not want to be there and did not consent to being there does not mean that that activity is not a leisure activity. This is the case because (unlike in the case of lynching), the church service could continue with or without the presence of the un-consenting person. Unanimous, ongoing affirmative consent is only required in activities where the lack of consent of one participant would prevent or hinder the activity from taking place. Another exception is in the case of paid labor. The fact that your bartender wouldn't choose to be at the bar on a Friday

night serving you drinks if they weren't fairly compensated for it doesn't mean that visiting the bar is no longer considered leisure for you. You could argue that by accepting a paid position at the bar, they consent to the leisure activity you are experiencing. It does not have to be leisure for them for it to be leisure for you. However, if at any point coercion entered the picture, the activity should cease to be considered leisure.

There are cases where a participant is unable to give consent. This applies to children, animals, and adults who for medical reasons are incapable of consenting to an activity. For example, while a dog is incapable of consenting, playing with a dog can still be considered leisure. In these cases, a do-no-harm clause should be put in place to determine whether an activity can be considered leisure. This would prohibit such activities as dog fighting from being considered leisure activities. It does not matter if the person in the dog fighting case gets pleasure from the activity or considers the activity leisure. Given that the dogs in the activity are incapable of consent, are required for the activity to take place, and are subject to harm because of their inclusion in the activity, we cannot consider this activity leisure. The definition of harm and its relationship to leisure is beyond the scope of this research and offers an excellent chance for further dialogue.

Why Consent is Important at Burns and the "11th Principle"

Consent is essential for us to consider an activity leisure, but why is it particularly important in the context of tourist experiences at regional Burns? Burning Man and the regional events that it inspires are multi-day long camping trips where participants live according to the 10 principles. They are necessarily collaborative events and only exist through the millions of

small and large interpersonal interactions between community members. Of the 10 Principles, “Radical Self Expression,” the incitement to live as a true reflection of yourself; “Immediacy,” the idea that participants should seize opportunities as soon as they present themselves; and “Gifting,” or the free and voluntary gift economy of Burns, can create some of the interactions that could most benefit from an understanding of the importance of consent. Participants at regional Burns often express themselves through their outward appearances. This can mean through elaborate costuming, unusual hair and makeup styles, and frequently, not wearing much, if any, clothing at all. Radical self-expression can also take the form of legal and illegal substance use. It is not uncommon for participants to use mind-altering drugs as a form of self-expression and participation at the event. This means that there are often half-naked people, some of whom are intoxicated or in an otherwise altered state, camping in an enclosed area together. Consent is always important. At events where participants’ capacity to grant or deny consent is potentially compromised by recreational drug use, it becomes even more important. The gifting economy presents another set of interesting issues for consent. No money is exchanged within the gates of a Burn, and participants frequently gift alcohol, food, drugs, trinkets, services (massage, yoga training, hugs), and jewelry to other participants. A would-be gift recipient must have full awareness of what accepting a gift entails in order to fully consent to receiving it, yet it is not uncommon for a gift-giver to offer something without disclosing its full contents (alcohol, drugs, allergens). Consent education around this issue can help prevent unintentional dosing of participants.

There have been several highly publicized nonconsensual sexual encounters at Burning Man and regional Burns (Pinto, 2012). For this reason, in late 2012, a group of Southeast burners started “11th Principle: Consent!” an educational movement within the community designed to

bring issues of consent to the forefront of burner culture, starting with the North Carolina regional burn, Transformus. The mission statement of the 11th Principle: Consent reads: “We value the transformative experience of sensual and consensual touch, play, and interaction. We believe that consent plays a vital part in our connectivity and community. Our vision is that all parties participate in a physical encounter from a place of enthusiasm and autonomy. Consent must be explicitly granted from an individual who is clearly in a state of mind to be able to grant it. (Originally Drafted March, 2013 | Present Version March, 2014)” (11thprincipleconsent.org, 2016). To meet the aims of this mission statement, 11th Principle Consent volunteers maintain a website and Facebook page year-round to house educational resources about Consent. At Transformus, the mission is carried out by 11th Principle Consent volunteers who work at the greeters station, educating new burners about consent before they enter the event, and at a Consent Tent, where they lead interactive activities to teach people about how to give and ask for consent in all activities at burns, from hugging to gifting to photography to sex. To date, no research has been done on the effectiveness of this 11th Principle Consent education campaign. One aim of this project is to fill this gap and to investigate the impact of this campaign on the experiences of participants by looking their motivational needs fulfillment.

Tourist Motivation

In its simplest form, a motivation is “something that occurs when there is a need” (Wolfe and Hsu, 2004, p. 30). In studying motivation, tourism scholars ask the simple question of why tourists choose to travel. Of course, the answers are never simple. In his groundbreaking work, Erik Cohen attempted to create a phenomenology of tourism experiences (1979). “Travelling for

pleasure (as opposed to necessity) beyond the boundaries of one's life-space assumes that there is some experience available 'out there,' which cannot be found within the life space, and which makes travel worthwhile," (Cohen, 1979, p. 182). Cohen operates from the assumption that all humans have a need for a "centre" in their life space around which their daily lives are organized. He breaks tourists down into five key groups based on their motivations for travel, conceptualized as their relationship to a "centre" in their lives. The five groups he identified are: Recreational, Diversionary, Experiential, Experimental, and Existential. Each of these labels corresponds with expressed motivations of tourists and also experiences that tourists claim to have when on trips. Recreational tourists see tourism as a form of entertainment and little more. Diversionary tourists primarily travel to escape the boredom and meaninglessness of routine. Experiential tourists are searching for meaning in the lives of others – they seek experiences to counteract the meaninglessness of their lives at home. Experimental tourists are engaged in a quest for an alternative centre – in some cases, the search itself can become their centre. Finally, existential tourists are fully committed to a centre that is found through travel and tourism – an elective spiritual centre. Cohen sees this phenomenology as being "presented in an ascending order from the most 'superficial' one motivated by the desire for mere 'pleasure,' to that most 'profound,' motivated by the quest for meaning" (Cohen, 1979, p. 192). Nevertheless, the phenomenology allows that tourist motivations can and do change throughout their tourism careers and also even during a single tourism trip.

Other tourism scholars take a different stance on motivation. Instead of focusing on a 'centre,' as Cohen does, many focus on personal values as contributors to motivation. Gnoth (1997) connected needs with values and wrote about the relationship between motivations, expectations, and experiences, which can all be seen as a loop feeding back into itself. "Felt

needs or motives turn into motivations when coupled with both situations and a tourist's value system. The interaction between these elements influences a tourist's perception of an object so that the perception responds to the tourist's mindset. The expectations and attitudes toward the object are determined by both the tourist's felt needs and value system." (Gnoth, 1997, p. 299). The interrelationship between tourist basic needs and values underlies several frameworks for studying tourist motivation. Three of note are Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking dichotomy, the idea of push-pull motivations, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, described in the next section.

Dann (1981) highlighted four key problems that researchers may encounter when studying tourist motivation. These fall under the larger critique by Buck (1978) that tourists have an "unawareness" of their real reasons for travel. Dann (1981) posited unawareness as four distinct problems: Tourists may not wish to reflect on real travel motives; tourists may be unable to reflect on real travel motives; tourists may not wish to express real travel motives; tourists may not be able to express real travel motives. These issues present themselves most strongly when the researcher directly asks tourists about their motivations or presents them with a list of motivations from which to choose. To Dann, the task of hashing out tourist motivation then falls to the researcher. This is inherently problematic as researchers are individuals with biases and it is highly likely that when assigning motivations to tourists, their own biases will come into play and they may fallaciously attribute a motive to a respondent. Because of these problems with directly asking tourists about their motivations, many scholars have studied motivation through reported tourist experience, as I do in this study.

Frameworks for Studying Tourist Motivation

One of the first frameworks for examining tourist motivation looked at motivations as two categories – push (coming from within the tourist) and pull (coming from the destination). Pull motivations were defined as “the specific attractions of the destination which induces the traveler to go there... (e.g., sunshine, relaxed tempo, friendly natives, etc.)” (Dann, 1981, p. 191). Crompton picked up on this idea and also heavily contributed to the literature on push and pull motivation. “Tourism motivation is conceptualized as a dynamic process of internal psychological factors (needs and wants) that generate a state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals. These inner needs and the resulting disequilibrium lead to actions designed to restore equilibrium through satisfying the needs” (Crompton, 1997, p. 427)).

Iso-Ahola (1982) proposed the Social Psychological Model of Tourism Motivation (SPMTM) model, based on a dichotomy the researcher noted between escape and seeking motivations. Tourists are motivated both by a need to seek and a need to escape, but one of these categories of motivations can outweigh the other under certain conditions. They are also strongly influenced by personal and interpersonal dimensions. These observations led to the SPMTM which includes four motivational categories: Seeking Personal Rewards (SPR), Seeking Interpersonal Rewards (SIR), Escaping Personal Environments (EPE), and Escaping Interpersonal Environments (EIE). Iso-Ahola’s theory builds on ideas of push and pull motives, discussed above. A few research studies have been conducted to test the SPMTM to mixed results. Though tourist motivations do seem to be divisible among escape and seeking motivations (similar to push-pull motivations), the particular factors of the SPMTM do not perfectly map onto tourist motivations and further nuance may be required (Wolfe & Hsu, 2004).

A third framework, Maslow's needs hierarchy, describes motivations as needs which are arranged hierarchically in order of their importance to survival (1954). These needs, often depicted in a pyramid, are physiological, safety, belongingness and love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The physiological need is at the bottom of the pyramid and is considered the most basic need. The others build upon it in the order they are written above, with self-actualization at the top of the pyramid. According to the hierarchy, a person does not achieve higher level needs until lower level needs are satisfied. These lower levels of the pyramid are what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs (Maslow, 1954). It is only after these needs are met that a person will be motivated to pursue higher order needs fulfillment. Therefore, a person who does not have the physiological and safety needs met cannot look to meet the belongingness, self-esteem, or self-actualization need. There is some debate about whether these needs must always be met in the order Maslow places them in the hierarchy. In particular, some scholars see belonging as essential to achieving any of the other needs on the pyramid (Rutledge, 2011). Despite these concerns, Maslow's Hierarchy has been successfully utilized to address the problem of ascertaining tourists' motivations.

Maslow saw these needs as applicable to a complete life (1954), but his hierarchy is interesting when applied to the microcosm of life that is a tourism experience. Rather than isolating the push and pull factors, it turns the gaze inward to what is being satisfied in the tourist's own life, and, like Cohen's phenomenology, it explores the sometimes hidden internal motivations. If a belonging need is not met at home, might it be met in a far away place, surrounded by like-minded hobbyists? What draws someone from a life of comfort and security to spend a week camping in the desert at the end of summer where just surviving is an accomplishment? Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) used Maslow's hierarchy as a descriptive tool to

code a set of positive and negative tourist experiences. From these responses about actual travel experiences, the researchers were able to discern the motivations of travelers. Applying Maslow's hierarchy in this study proved to be an effective and practical way to code tourist experiences, and helped circumvent many of the problems that arise when directly asking tourists about their motivations (Dann, 1981). Another outcome of this study was the concept of "motivational career" in travel, which indicated that experienced travelers are shown to be motivated by higher order needs than inexperienced travelers (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983). They study found that the experienced travelers were shown to be more concerned with higher order needs (3 - 5 on the scale) than less experienced travelers. This correlation was independent of age or sex of the travelers. This was demonstrated with a Pearson value of .197 showing a positive correlation between level of travel experience and frequency of higher order motivation (3 - 5 on the scale).

. Though Pearce and Caltabiano's study proved interesting and promising, little additional research has been done to examine how tourist experience and Maslow's hierarchy of needs overlap. Welds and Dukes (1985) were particularly interested in the self-actualization experiences of student tourists aboard a semester at sea program. The results of the study showed no significant increase in self-actualization experiences of semester-at-sea students compared to a control group of students at an Australian University, though this could be attributed to many confounding factors and failure to take into account the motivational career concept outlined by Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) (Welds & Dukes, 1985). Additionally, the study was conducted using pre- and post-event surveys, which isn't the best tool for delving into a complicated and personal issue like tourist motivation and, in particular, questions about self-actualization (Welds & Dukes, 1985). Another study (Tikkanen, 2007) applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs to food

tourism in Finland, but the paper primarily posed questions without answers and was exploratory in nature. Much work remains to be done on the link between food tourism and Maslow's hierarchy as a tool for motivational research.

As this literature review has shown, questions of consent and motivation in leisure and tourism experiences are complicated and varied. Maslow's hierarchy of needs proved an interesting lens through which to examine the stories and experiences that participants shared. This study examined how affirmative ongoing consent as part of a tourism event's culture impacted tourist experiences, particularly self esteem and self actualization experiences.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I first learned about Burns nearly five years ago and it took me nearly as long – and experiencing a Burn myself – to finally start to understand what they are all about. A friend’s romantic partner had recently started a Burning Man theme camp. She had pink, and blue, and purple hair and wore studded combat boots when we’d meet for drinks or to cook dinner together. Over the years, she talked about her experiences at Burning Man and the smaller regional events around the country. She traveled far and wide and met friends everywhere she went, slowly but surely building her “family” of Burners, as she called them. When I began my Master’s degree, I started grappling with the idea of consent and how it relates to leisure and tourism. Over coffee one day, I mentioned this to my friend and she directed my attention to the 11th Principle: Consent movement. I put the dates of the Southeastern Burn on my calendar and made plans to purchase a ticket. She invited me into her community, made me a member of her camp, and introduced me to the people who made this project possible. It was from that organic evolution that this project came to be and the methodology of the project reflected that origin.

Participants

This research was qualitative and required me to look at deeply personal and individual experiences with a high degree of nuance. Starting with my original contact in the community, I reached out to friends, campmates, and other camp leads to recruit participants. This snowball sampling process was made possible by my own participation at the events. Participants included 13 attendees of two regional Burning Man events. Six participants were female-identifying and

seven participants were male-identifying. Participants ranged in age from 27 - 48 with all but one falling within the 27 - 35 age range. All participants except one were white. Of the interviewees, nine had been participating in Burning Man culture for five or more years. The longest-attending interviewee had been attending events for 11 years and the shortest Burn career for a participant was a single event in 2016. All participants were affiliated with one or more theme campus though many had also camped alone at one or more points during their Burn careers. I conducted thirteen interviews for this study before I began to see redundancy in responses. As I will discuss below, the study may have benefitted from a more diverse set of interviewees, but my sample was limited by my snowball sampling methodology and the potentially sensitive nature of many of the questions in my interview script. By asking attendees about both their motivations for being interested in Burning Man events as well as about their past experiences at the event, I hoped to overcome some of the obstacles previous researchers have faced with participants being unable or unwilling to describe their motivations.

This project also required field research. In addition to its role in helping me to meet and develop relationships with potential interviewees, my work as a participant observer at both regional events provided me with a more complete picture of what regional Burns look like and how consent is enacted at these events. During my time at the Southeastern Burn, I volunteered for several volunteer shifts, including one at the Greeters station (as described in the introduction) so that I would understand the extent of consent education at the event. This was also important because of the participatory nature of these events. If I had attended but not participated or attempted to interview people without attending an event myself, I have no doubt that the responses I would have received would have reflected far less trust and confidence on the part of my respondents.

Data Collection

Participants were selected through personal relationships developed through field work at two regional Burns, one in the American Southeast and one in the American Midwest, utilizing snowball sampling. I was originally invited to participate in Burning Man regional events by a close friend of mine who runs a theme camp. This person, Shadow, invited me to participate both in the event and with her theme camp. It was through her that I began to learn about Burning Man and to meet other people to interview for this project. After attending my first event and meeting the members of her camp, I attended a second event a few months later where I met more theme-camp organizers and was able to branch out of my original camp for interviewees. Interviews were conducted in stages after each Burn and were semi-structured. They consisted of semi-structured conversations lasting between 45 minutes – one and a half hours over the phone, video call, or in two cases, in person.

Each semi-structured interview was comprised of three parts, which are outlined below.

Personal history. The first set of questions asked attendees about their personal history with Burning Man, how they became involved with the community, if they consider themselves to be Burners, and whether or not they consider their experiences at Burns to be “tourism.” This section also contained questions that indirectly ask about motivation including how they learned about the event, what their favorite part of the event is, and why they continue to attend the events (if they are a returning Burner). This information was coded for years of participation and number of events attended. Because of Pearce and Caltabiano’s findings about tourists’

motivational careers, I looked at years of experience in the event as potentially another primary factor that would contribute to achievement of higher order motivations (1983). This needed to be ruled out as the primary reason for higher order needs fulfilment.

Event participation. These questions were all about participation at the event. I asked the participants about where they camp and with whom, whether they volunteer or not, whether they work on art, and so forth. These questions were designed to elicit stories about their participation at the event and to determine how extensively involved they consider themselves to be.

Consent. Interviewees were asked several questions about their knowledge and opinions and right to exercise consent. Specifically, participants were asked, “Do you know what consent is?” They were also asked about how they learned about consent. This section of questions served not only to reveal baseline levels of consent education for participants, but it also provided a broader conceptualization of how these participants define consent for themselves. Often in answering questions about consent, participants revealed times that their consent was violated either to illustrate problems still remaining at Burns or to show how far the culture has come and/or how different it is from life outside of Burns.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Data Coding - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

After collecting data through interviews, I assigned a pseudonym to each interviewee and roughly transcribed each of the interviews. Because this was not a text analysis but was rather about overall themes of the interview responses, I then took these rough transcripts and broke them up into idea-sized chunks. These chunks became my unit of analysis, which were coded as described below. Each chunk was categorized as positive, negative, or both, and then each was examined to see if it related to any of the five levels of Maslow's Hierarchy. All of this coding was done in a spreadsheet, with the only identifying information being the pseudonyms of the interviewees. In this way, the information was easily sorted according to motivational need met, positive/negative experience, and theme.

My coding of the data was heavily influenced by my own knowledge of the Burn community and my relationships with my interviewees. All interviews were conducted over phone, video call, or in person. In my transcription notes, I indicated if the participant sounded or looked happy, sad, serious, or angry including indicators like laughter, smiling, and a change in cadence. All of this information helped me determine if an experience should be considered positive, negative, or both. Next, the idea-sized chunks were coded according to a five-level coding scheme as outlined in Pearce and Caltabiano (1983). This scheme follows Maslow's hierarchy of needs and assigns a number to each level of the hierarchy. The study employs Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a descriptive tool to code a set of positive and negative tourist experiences to then map them onto tourist motivations. In Pearce and Caltabiano's study,

experiences were coded according to the dominant theme expressed (1983). As an example, positive experiences where tourists talked about good food, sun, and relaxation were coded as physiological needs and given a score of 1. Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) used two research assistants and the researchers agreed highly on their assignment into the five categories ($r = .88$). I did not use another rater for this study, but recognize the important benefits of being able to check interrater reliability for such a potentially subjective coding method. I followed Pearce and Caltabiano's method and examined each interview response for a common theme which I then assessed as addressing one or more of Maslow's hierarchy levels. This departs from Pearce and Caltabiano's methodology because they assigned each response to only one level of the hierarchy. Though I began my coding in this way, I quickly noticed that most responses addressed more than one level of the hierarchy and so coded them using multiple numbers accordingly.

Physiological needs were given a score of 1. Comfort and safety (security needs) were given a score of 2. Participants describing experiences with relationships, family, and friends (the love and belongingness need) were given a score of 3. Tourists who describe experiences with improved self-image were classified in the self-esteem group and given a score of 4. Finally, tourists who "reflect on profound issues and their sense of life's mysteries and their own role" were coded as a 5 for "self-actualization" needs.

I coded 82 reported experiences from 13 interviews with participants. Of these, 50 experiences were coded as positive, 24 were coded as negative, and 8 were coded as both positive and negative. Each experience was then examined to see if it met one or more of the motivational needs outlined by Maslow's hierarchy. A summary of the results is below.

Negative Experiences:

- 12 of 24 were coded as physiological
- 10 were coded as safety
- 9 were coded as belonging
- 6 were coded as either self-esteem (2) or self-actualization (4)

Positive Experiences:

- 6 of 50 experiences were coded as physiological
- 7 were coded as safety
- 27 were coded as belonging
- 26 were coded as self-esteem
- 16 were coded as self-actualization

Both Positive and Negative Experiences:

- 5 of 8 were coded as physiological (3) or safety (2)
- 3 were coded as belonging
- 3 were coded as self-esteem
- 3 were coded as self-actualization
- Most often, these were negative experiences that the participants assigned positive results or outcomes to.

Self-Actualization Experiences:

- 8 of 13 participants had experiences that were coded as self-actualization
- 11 of 13 participants had experiences that were coded as self-esteem
- Of the 5 participants who did not have self-actualization needs met, four were male.

- All female-identifying participants had experiences that met at least one of these two higher order needs, with the least experienced female burner being the only one to not meet the self-actualization need
- Two male-identifying participants did not meet either self-esteem or self-actualization needs through their participation at burns.
- Three of the five participants who did not have experiences coded as self-actualization did not receive any consent training, but two of them did and one of these individuals even helps facilitate trainings outside of Burns.
- Two of the five participants who did not have experiences coded as self-actualization were the newest Burners interviewed, so length of Burn career may have an effect.

Based on the coded data from interviews, consent education does not seem to have a connection with whether participants had self-actualization experiences. A surprising and significant factor was gender of participants. Five of six (84%) female-identifying participants experienced self-actualization needs fulfillment while only 3 of 7 (42.8%) male-identifying participants experienced self-actualization needs fulfillment. Eighty percent of those who did not report an experience that was classified as self-actualization were male and 100% of those whose experiences were coded as neither self-esteem nor self-actualization were male.

Gender and Self-Actualization

One of the most interesting findings of this study was the impact on gender on reported experiences that met the self-actualization need. Of the five participants who did not report experiences that were coded as self-actualization, three received no formal training about consent

and two did not know what I meant when I said “11th Principle.” Based on Pearce and Caltabiano’s (1983) travel career concept, I also suspected that length of time attending Burns would have an impact on achievement of self-esteem and self-actualization needs. While it is true that two of the five participants who did not report experiences coded as self-actualization were also the two newest Burners of the event, the other three participants in this category had been Burning for many years and each was very involved in their local Burn communities. The most common feature of the five is that they are male. This finding contradicts Pearce and Caltabiano’s 1983 findings, which ruled out gender as an important contributor in self-actualization achievement.

Burner and Belonging - Radical Inclusion

The most commonly applied code across participants was one for “belonging.” Indeed, every participant reported multiple experiences where they related the importance of community or the power of feeling like they belong. Of the 82 experiences coded, 36 related to a belonging need (27 positive experiences and 9 negative experiences). This may make the founders of Burning Man and the authors of the 10 Principles proud. The description of the Radical Inclusion principle on Burningman.org reads, “Anyone may be a part of Burning Man. We welcome and respect the stranger. No prerequisites exist for participation in our community.” This isn’t technically true, Burns have prerequisites. These requirements are minimal (participants must purchase a ticket to the event, they must be able to travel to the event, and they must have the funds to be “Radically Self Sufficient” at the event.), especially compared to other clubs and leisure organizations, but they exist nonetheless. But the sentiment rings true for many

participants. All of my interviewees came to their first Burning Man event through someone they knew and found additional feelings of belonging and community through their experiences at the events. Though some chose to camp individually in “Open Camping,” all had camped with a Theme Camp at least once. Of my participants, two were Theme Camp Organizers - the individuals responsible for the logistics and cohesion of a theme camp. One explained how creating her own theme camp changed her experience of Burns for the better:

Running a camp, I've been actively creating my camp community and my camp family. When you are just a part of someone else's camp, that's really fun and you can meet a lot of people. But when you are running a camp you feel like, this is my camp, these are my people, I am a part of this. There's a certain level of ownership of the experience. And a definite sense of family.

By intentionally cultivating her “family” of Burners within her theme camp, she felt that she was actively creating community. It gave her ownership of her experience and a sense of belonging both inside and outside the events.

It's reasonable to think that someone who runs a Theme Camp, who strongly identifies as a “Burner,” and who is very much enmeshed in the Burn community would have such an experience of belonging and ownership, but what about participants who do not identify as Burners? A female participant reported her experience at her first Burn:

So, you have this chance to push your boundaries. I don't usually do cannabis, but edibles are okay most of the time. At an event, I did cannabis and I was having this bad experience and I just thought – was I too square to be here? But in the default world, I feel like I am too deviant – just because I'm not Christian, and I'm not conservative, and I don't act like everyone around me. It was like I didn't fit in in either place.

This feeling of being in between - too “square” to be a Burner and too “deviant” for the Default world - left the participant wondering where she belonged. Another female participant felt similarly on the fringe, but came to a different conclusion about belonging:

I talked about seeing myself as being on the periphery and I think the thing about Burner culture is that they don't seem to give a damn. I would say I'm maybe on the periphery of other subcultures where I'm sortof interested in this but I'm not all in. Those subcultures tend to care a little bit more that I'm not fully bought in. I think that burners, as long as you're a little in, you are in for a penny in for a pound. If you're in, you're in.

This participant distinguished the Burner community as unique from other subcultures because of its extreme inclusivity. Though she felt she was on the fringes of the community and talked about not truly identifying as a Burner, she also felt totally accepted by the community.

As we've seen, the experience of belonging at Burns is not uncomplicated. One quarter of the experiences coded as belonging were negative experiences. One male participant described his least favorite part of Burning Man culture: “Sometimes it seems like a cool kids' club. Like, if you are not hip enough, conventionally attractive enough. You now like, if you are not a peacock sometimes. Like, I'm gonna put on my booty shorts or my really awesome costume and like, look at me. That aspect of the culture I sometimes don't like,” he said. In this way, the need to belong and the cohesiveness of the smaller groups within the larger group can leave some participants feeling excluded. The culture of radical inclusivity says that everyone is welcome to attend, but it doesn't guarantee friendship and acceptance by particular individuals. The same participant related an experience he had at Burning Man several years ago:

I've even had one of my good friends, at Burning Man, they wouldn't let her on an art car because they said she was too old. Because like, its like one of the art cars there that's

known for having a lot of very attractive people dancing to electronic music, usually at dawn. She would be taking up a place that could be taken up by another half-naked 20-something. It's a part of the culture that people don't talk about much, but I actually think it's a little bit real.

In this case, the participants onboard the art car were acting in a way that many would consider a direct violation of Radical Inclusivity, especially telling the attendee that she is too old to play. Though this was the only report of this sort of experience, it serves to illustrate that no community, including one built on intentional principles, is perfect. There is still much work to be done within the Burning Man community.

Another challenging part of belonging and Burns is the limited duration of events and the feeling of “event drop” or “decompression” after an event. Decompression is commonly understood within the Burn community to mean the period of intense feelings after a Burn as a participant returns to the “Default world.” Many people reported feeling sad, low energy, and lonely during this time. The female participant with the shortest Burn career of my interviewees said, “I don't have as much of a community in my city who can help with decompression. I see my friends here and I think ‘I just got back from a regional and I am really sad and you don't know what that feels like.’ I wish we had a more active community here in the city.” Though the participant found a tight-knit community at the event, the return to real life left her feeling sad and isolated. A male participant echoed this sentiment: “When I got home and woke up the next morning, I was really happy to wake up in a real bed, but I was also like ‘Fuck. I...uh... miss everyone already.’” In this way, the community and sense of belonging at Burns are a double-edged sword. Many participants experience what Turner described as *Communitas*, a liminal phenomenon in which social structures fall away to allow for a relatively undifferentiated feeling

of community and belonging (Turner, 1969). As Turner says in describing Hippie culture (which incidentally tracks closely onto Burn Culture), “Communitas is of the now” (Turner, 1969, pg. 105). It is an intense feeling not easily recreated within the bounds of normal social structures. One male participant powerfully described the pain and joy of belonging at Burns. “There’s this really opening, genuine, soul-baring, soul-crushing experience that there’s no par for in most of our daily lives. And it’s not that I don’t like that the Burns are unsustainable. Its that that’s not a sustainable way to burn. There’s not a way to really blend it into everything you do.”

Burner and Self Expression

Burning Man and Burning Man Regional Events provide a community for people who are traditionally on the fringe of mainstream culture. It’s not uncommon for participants to sport large tattoos, many visible piercings, brightly colored hair, and clothing well out of place in a traditional office space. As a female participant explained, “Burning Man attracts a demographic - you know it’s all inclusive. You know, it’s everybody. It’s the freaks, it’s the geeks, it’s the pirates, it’s the everybody. You know?” Another male participant put it simply: “One of the things my mom said after I started doing this was ‘Oh you finally found a way to play with fire without going to jail.’”

This in in large part because “Radical Self Expression” is such a key tenant within Burning Man culture. Burningman.org explains this principle as: “Radical self-expression arises from the unique gifts of the individual. No one other than the individual or a collaborating group can determine its content. It is offered as a gift to others. In this spirit, the giver should respect the rights and liberties of the recipient.” First, it is important to point out that even though the

11th Principle, consent, has not been formally adopted by Burning Man, the language of consent is evident in the description of Radical Self Expression. The gift is both freely given and “should respect the rights and liberties of the recipient.” Burns and the culture surrounding them are full of contradictions. On the one hand, Radical self-expression values the rights of the individual to express themselves above all others, and yet Radical Inclusion is a call to create a home where all are welcome and community and social cohesion are highly valued. I believe the role of consent is to help merge these two Principles that can sometimes be at odds. As the language of the principle indicates, the limit of Radical Self Expression is the rights and liberties of other participants. This directly echoes the community definitions of consent outlined later in this paper, including the dichotomy between consent being about individual rights as well as community cohesion. A female participant related a story that shows how the two principles can come together to create a truly unique environment.

My first Burn was the first time I ever felt that I was around – how do I say this? People who were engaged with life the same way I was engaged with life. And yeah, part of that is sort of what I said with how I identify with Burner culture. Putting things on the table for experimentation. To feel like I was happily a part of something that challenged me was so compelling that I wanted more of that. Yeah.

Within the strong community, this participant found other individuals who, like her, put their identities on the table for experimentation. The ability to experiment from the safety of belonging lead her to several experiences that were coded as self esteem and self actualization.

Freedom to experiment and self express came up time and again as participants’ favorite parts of Burns. A male participant said:

There are so many things that we do in our day to day life that we have to do to fit in with culture and society and our job and just the shit we deal with on a day to day basis. And that's (Burns are) a place that you don't have to do that. You can express yourself. You can be weird - you can be as weird as you want. You can play, create art. It's just such a safe space to experiment and to be and to enjoy and to live. That's what attracts me most.

The sentiment was echoed by a female participant:

I think it's how free people feel there. I'm not a very adventurous person myself. But I really enjoy being around adventurous people. Especially around like, clothing people wear. I'm not going to go topless myself, but I really like being in an environment where people are comfortable doing that. It seems like a really pleasing place to be. It signals that there are some general things happening that I like - that people can be themselves.

None of these things would be possible without the underlying culture of consent that has been cultivated at Burns.

Exploration of gender identity as an extension of Radical Self Expression came up in interviews with two participants, one male and one female. The female participant dresses and behaves in traditionally feminine ways throughout her life outside of Burns, but she had this to say about her experience at a regional event she attended:

It's this pretty safe space to have interactions with people, even when you are experimenting with yourself. So I had this vacation burn where I wore a strap on a lot of the weekend. And I did different things with it. Some of the time I was really femmed up. I wore this kind of flowery blouse and little tiny boy short underwear and so the dildo strap-on was a little bit concealed by the blouse but would stick out kind of and was accentuated by the fact that I wasn't wearing pants. And I was just like experimenting

with how do people respond to me, can I give people hugs? What is it like to walk around with a dick? It is a really accepting space for the most part. So it was really good. It was really affirming. It's not something I'm experimenting with for no reason. It's something I'm experimenting with because I find it very exciting but it's not necessarily very socially acceptable and it's not something I can experiment with in my normal life.

The participant talked about feeling both safe and accepted as she explored her gender identity by wearing a strap-on dildo, something she did not feel that she could have done in her everyday life.

The male participant has a very different experience outside of Burns. He regularly cross-dresses in his daily life, wearing skirts, pigtails, dresses, and other traditionally feminine clothing to work and in public. And yet even though he publicly cross-dresses, he still felt a difference between his experience at Burns versus in the Default World.

I'm very expressive through my clothing, and it's still like going from having complete freedom to being able to wear whatever to being on the defensive of what I wear whenever. You walk down the street and as a guy if you are wearing what I'm wearing, you are going to get hoots, hollers; it's hard to not be able to express how you want to self express. You've grown in that very short amount of time accustomed to self-expressing.

In this example, he emphasizes how comfortable it is to self-express through clothing at a Burn. By contrast, walking down the street attracts attention which causes him to feel defensive of his clothing choices. Again, we see Burn culture set up in opposition to the culture of the Default World. At Burns, both the male and female participants are able to experiment with gender through self expression without fear of reproach or harm. Yet outside of Burns, the female

participant is unwilling to put that part of herself on the table for experimentation and the male participant acknowledges a need to feel defensive over doing so. Both the female participant and the male participant who cross-dresses are marginalized in traditional American culture, but through their involvement in Burn culture, they are able to self-actualize through radical self expression.

What does consent mean to Burn participants?

After asking participants if they knew what the 11th Principle was, the next question in each interview was “what does consent mean?” More often than not, this question was met with a pause and a response along the lines of “you know, I’d never really tried to define it before.” Ultimately, I received ten responses to this question. A number of themes emerged from them.

One prominent theme is that consent is as much or more about saying “no” as it is about saying “yes.” One interviewee replied:

I think that it has to be part of our community value in some way shape or form. Because if you just take any of those things (the 10 principles) on their own, radical inclusion or radical expression on their own, without the aspects of consent, like it removes basically the human element - the individual element, the ability of someone to say no. That ability to say no, even though it’s not like nice and fru-fru and whatever, that’s important. Like you have to say no. You have to be like ‘no I’m not going to participate in this’ and that’s okay. All the other principles are yes. But consent is the ability to say no. I’m going to reserve my individual right to say no, that’s a really important thing to say explicitly.

Table 1: Participants' Definitions of Consent

Female participant	"Consent is a state in which all involved are feeling "yes" about what is going on."
Male participant	"Consent means actively engaging with your surroundings and the people around you to get consent for the actions you are both doing and receiving."
Female participant	"For me, consent means that you have explicit sober permission to do or not do a given thing."
Female participant	"When everyone participating in an action or activity is affirmatively agreeing to that activity."
Male participant	"I've never been able to define consent. I can't come to a conclusion of where I would draw that line. A person has the authority, the right, to for any reason at any time to disengage from whatever activity they are doing or engage in whatever consensual activity they choose to do with another person but you know, to not consent to something because of your triggers or to impose those on someone else, That's where it gets iffy for me."
Female participant	"Respecting the individual choices of any one person, and prioritizing their autonomy so that they get to make decisions about what they will or will not do. That autonomy reigns supreme."
Male participant	"Consent is enthusiastic and verbal. A lot of it is... um you know... for every instance and every event and every time you need that sort of consent."
Male participant	"Consent means someone goes into an experience offering like with a clear yes to it and they fully understand the experience that they are about to have. Like if I try to think of it beyond just the realm of sexual consent and trying to make sure that everything is an enthusiastic yes. Someone's not intoxicated, everything like that. People should know what they are getting themselves into. I see that as a more robust view of consent rather than how we normally use it."
Male participant	"So to me, consent is not imposing yourself in any way that physically affects another person."
Male participant	"Consent is complicated. I think from a very basic level, consent means asking before you alter someone's experience somehow. Can I touch you, can I kiss you, can I shoot you with a water gun? Can I offer you some ice cold water? Would you like a hug. Anytime you alter someone's experience, in my opinion that's when you need consent."

In many cases, the participant mentioned the importance of saying no, of rejecting an experience, as being a defining feature. While all agreed that consent requires “yes,” for an interaction to proceed, the concept was even more important when it came to saying “no” and stopping or preventing something from occurring. The ability to say “no” increases the significance of saying “yes.”

Consent is also unanimous. All parties involved are “feeling yes” about what is going on; “everyone participating in an action or activity is affirmatively agreeing to that activity.” If any one party says no, then the interaction stops. To do anything else would violate the definitions of consent. But interestingly, consent is also individualistic. Though discussions centered on interactions between two people, and though consent must be unanimous between those people, many definitions also brought it back to the individual. The burden of consent fell on the individual both to give or deny it but also to ask for and receive it. It was also tied by one participant in particular to the idea of autonomy. She replied, “Respecting the individual choices of any one person, and prioritizing their autonomy so that they get to make decisions about what they will or will not do. That autonomy reigns supreme.” In another response, consent was about making sure that you didn’t “impose yourself” and violate the autonomy of another person.

To be able to say yes or no to an experience, most respondents agreed that consent had to be verbally and soberly given, though a few expressed concern about the sober requirement in an environment like a Burn. This became particularly important in issues of sexual consent where both parties are not sober.

“Where do you draw the line where two people who were inebriated consent to it (sex) in their inebriation and then one of them regrets it or you know, both regret it? Who is at fault in that? I get that people say a sober and an enthusiastic yes is a great thing and

should be every time. But you've dated, you've been to these things, to have the community put fault on somebody, well they didn't consent. Well, if one is inebriated and the other person wasn't, well then yeah we can say that one person was more at fault but if they were both equally inebriated, and someone regrets it, is one at fault? It gets into a lot of grey area that isn't well defined and isn't our place to define."

The 11th Principle: Consent website acknowledges the difficulty that arises when you try to talk about consent at an event where drug and alcohol use is the norm: "The 11th Principle differs from similar consent-oriented groups in our belief that one does not need to be 100% sober in order to consent. Rather, we know that this issue is full of gray areas and believe that there is a difference between having had a couple of drinks and being completely intoxicated" (11th Principle: Consent!.org., 2016). To this end, the 11th Principle Consent organization's free educational materials include markers of intoxication designed to help with this grey area.

Finally, the scope of what actions require consent is wide and contested. Nearly every respondent specifically mentioned that consent applies to interactions beyond sexual interactions. Some of those specifically mentioned included: photography, misting with spray bottles or perfumes, food, drinks, drugs, and hugs. One of the most contentious examples was loud music, which was mentioned by a few respondents including two who are heavily involved in a music camp at one of the Burns. This uncertainty mirrored a discussion that was going on in the Facebook group of one of the events as well. Does loud music violate consent? Or, as one participant suggested, is it the responsibility of the listener to remove his/herself from a situation where there is loud music, if it's not something that he or she would like to hear? Where do we draw the line for what needs affirmative, verbal, sober consent? How should we define consent? A few participants specifically used the word "impose" in their definitions of consent. Keeping

this in mind and trying to balance it with the principle of Radical Self Expression leaves the line for consent at the physical body. If a person is capable of removing themselves from an experience (music, smell, sight), then the responsibility to do so is on that individual. If someone is preventing them from doing that - by putting the smelly oil on their body, holding them in place and making them listen to music, entering their personal camp space and having sex in front of them - then that is a consent violation and something that is being imposed on another participant.

How does consent look on the ground at Regional Burning Man events?

At the Southeastern regional event, consent education is conducted by 11th Principle Consent volunteers who work at the greeters station, educating new burners about consent before they enter the event, and at a Consent Tent, where they lead interactive activities to teach people about how to give and ask for consent in all activities at burns, from hugging to gifting to photography to sex. My experience at the Greeters tent when I arrived at the event (detailed in the introduction to this paper) was a typical one. After parking their car, participants either walk down a winding woodland path or are driven down it on a golf cart by a volunteer. Volunteers at the Greeters station wave the participant down, and if they are new to the Burn, they are strongly encouraged to come to the Greeters tent. Though it is not required, most attendees during my four-hour shift stopped at the tent. The number of volunteers at the tent varies. During my shift, an entire theme camp was volunteering together so well over 20 people were ready to welcome new Burners while I delivered a short talk about consent. When I arrived as a participant, there were about five volunteers at the tent. As someone approaches, volunteers say “Welcome

Home!” and ask the attendee if he/she would like to be paddled or hugged. At this point, they have entered a consent negotiation. If a participant says “no” to anything, the volunteer is supposed to redirect and ask for a different, less involved interaction. At no point should a volunteer shame or guilt someone for not doing something. During my shift, this never happened.

After the initial greeting, participants move down the line slightly to consent volunteers. This volunteer asks “Have you heard of the 11th Principle?” and then goes from there with the orientation. If the participant has heard of the 11th Principle and consent, then the volunteer reiterates that it is important for you to make sure that you ask for consent before any physical interaction with another Burner and that you should fully disclose what is in anything you gift to someone else. If they do not know about the 11th Principle, the talk is a little longer and goes into some of the other 10 principles and how consent relates to them. Consent-specific volunteers then ask the participant if they would like a gift from the 11th Principle team. In this game, the participant is negotiating a boundary by selecting from five options and choosing the one that makes them the most comfortable. The categories of gift are: touchy (hug), sexy (condom), kinky (paddle), gifty (buttons or stickers with consent sayings on them), and selfie (a photograph). These also represent some of the most common areas of gifts at the event, though food and substances is not represented. It is important that even if someone says yes to a “kinky” gift, they can still say no to being paddled when they learn that that is what the gift means. In this way, the volunteers hope to teach the participant that saying yes doesn’t mean saying yes to everything.

One of my interviewees had what she described as an incredibly impactful experience at the greeters station at this event:

At the gate, at least that year, they asked if you wanted to be spanked with a paddle. And everyone else in the car with me said yes. And I said no, kind of timidly because I thought “oh yeah, here it comes - ‘oh you should...’” and she (the volunteer) said nothing. And then she left and another guy came up and he didn’t know what stage of the welcome process we were in. And he said “did everyone here get spanked?” and they all said yes and I said “well I didn’t” and before he could say anything, the girl kind of runs over from the tent and says “no no no, she’s fine.” and I think for her this was nothing, but for me it was really, really meaningful that she didn’t say “she doesn’t want to.” She just said “she’s fine,” and that left it. She did it in a non-judgmental way, and in a way that didn’t single me out from the group. And for me, that was a really strong show of respect for the consent principle. It’s not just that you can say yes or no, it’s that we are not going to judge you for what you do or do not participate in.

That experience actually enabled the participant to continue attending Burns. She explained:

It really empowered me to be a lot more comfortable in future interactions saying yes or no depending on what I wanted to do. Like at the Big Burn (Burning Man), I would think “well I’m fine with that thing, but if I say yes to that then you’ll want me to do a later thing that I don’t want to do.” So I was saying no out of fear of future interactions. It (the experience at the Greeter’s station) made me feel safer exploring. I learned that at any point, I can shut this down. It made me feel like if I’m saying yes to this thing, I can still say no to the next thing.

The volunteer’s training on and adherence to the 11th Principle Consent strategy made a huge impact for this participant not only at this event, but well into her future.

The consent training as part of the Greeter experience is unique to the Southeastern Burn, but consent is more broadly part of Burning culture. I also volunteered for a Greeter's shift at the Midwestern Burn, so that I could speak to the differences between the experiences. First, the scale of the two events cannot be ignored. The Southeastern Burn is five times the size of the Midwestern Burn, and it lasts a day longer. The Southeastern Burn is also one of the few events that is age 18+. Technically, to be considered a part of the Burning Man Regional Network, an event must be open to all ages as part of the Radical Inclusion Principle. A long history of negotiations with the hosts of the Southeastern Burn have made them an exception to this rule. This means that in contrast, the Midwestern Burn, like almost all other regional events, is open to all ages and people do bring children to the event. Whether because of this or some other reason, spanking and paddling were not standard as part of the Greeter procedure at the Midwestern Burn. Instead, participants were told "Welcome Home" and asked if they would like a hug. This was the extent of the greeter experience at this event - quite a contrast to the procedure at the Southeastern Burn.

Nevertheless, all of my participants who had never attended the Southeastern Burn knew about the 11th Principle and consent. Several had been educated by peers or by word of mouth, but even those without formal training could provide a definition of consent that more-or-less fit with the 11th Principle's definition. Two participants referenced the Bureau for Erotic Discourse (BED) which is a consent-education initiative out of Burning Man that focuses on sexual consent. One participant had done outreach work at other regional events as part of BED and another had heard of the movement, which predated the 11th Principle Consent efforts and defined consent much more narrowly

One common theme from stories about consent in Burning Man culture is that it is enforced by the community, even in the absence of formal consent education. One participant described an experience that was coded as both positive and negative in which someone was expelled from a female-only space at the event:

I was at a Burner women's event, at a Burn, and it was open to people who identify as female. I saw a person get kicked out of one of these female spaces and I felt really good about that. It was like, okay, we let you in because you said something that let you into this space but then you acted differently and we were like “hey, this is actually a safe space for people who identify this way. And you are not acting in accordance with that, and as a result we are going to ask you to leave”; I felt really good about that.

Though this participant endorses radical inclusion and a broad definition of female in the Burner sphere, she was also proud of the community for standing up to someone who broke the social norm of the group because it protected a safe space for women. This is a case of the community self-policing behavior and enforcing social norms surrounding consent and safe-spaces. Another example from a different participant involved someone being expelled from a theme camp for violating consent:

There was someone who had been ejected from our camp, someone had accused him of not getting consent from her during a sexual experience. And there are a lot of people who said “she has said that people haven’t asked for consent in the past. She’s gotten people kicked out of camp before.” And that to me was a little callous. I thought, “We don’t know the situation from either side, but the point is that this person felt uncomfortable enough to have one of their camp members ejected from camp. That’s a

big thing.” If that’s what she felt necessary to do in order to feel safe, then we have to respect that, and the people in charge of making that decision did just that.

This experience happened at the participant’s first ever Burn and was one of her first experiences both of consent and of community enforcing adherence to social norms. Though she, like several of her other campmates, was not entirely sure what had happened, she felt it was important to believe the female participant who reported the event and take action to make the space safe by removing the offender even before all facts were fully investigated. This sort of situation is exactly what the male participant quoted above worries about. In this case, there was no mention of substance use by either participant, but we are also not sure that neither participant was intoxicated. What is illustrated here is that the alleged violation of consent was a strong enough charge for the community members to take action to the extent of removing a member of their own camp.

One of my participants spoke very plainly about her active approach to enforcing consent culture at Burns. This story comes from her third year at Burning Man:

I started a “No Creepiness on the Playa” initiative. Because most of the people in my camp back then - and still - are women. And they are all young attractive women. And so we’d go out at night, me and my little sister, and like five other young attractive women, and if I ever saw a guy who was creepy and staring at us, I would approach him. And if for example, I was topless, and I saw someone staring at me in a way that made me uncomfortable, I would go up to them and I would have a conversation about it. I would say - because I’m a Midwestern woman - “Hey, I know you probably didn’t mean to look creepy, but you are staring at us and it’s making me uncomfortable, and it’s making my friends uncomfortable. I’d appreciate it if you’d stop.” And every single time without fail,

that person would stop, and they would feel noticeable shame. I would feel that they felt scolded, but not in a way that was aggressive. Like they weren't feeling any aggression toward me. Can you imagine if I did that in a bar? If I did that in a bar, that wouldn't go over well. If I did that in a bar, I think I would get a lot of pushback from someone who I talked to.

The "No Creepiness on the Playa" initiative, though short-lived and informal, was effective for this participant. It is an example both of her taking matters into her own hands to address consent violations and power imbalance, and a good illustration of how responsive other members of the community were to her concerns. She made sure to explain the offending behavior in calm and non-aggressive terms and her request for it to stop was met with a similarly non-aggressive response as well as what she perceived to be feelings of shame on the part of the offender. Importantly, she believes that the response she would get outside of the Burn community is very different, which is something I will explore next.

Do participants notice a difference between consent at Burn events and consent at home?

As the previous story illustrated, some participants experienced consent and their ability to stand up for consent differently at events versus in their everyday lives. The participant above believed that she would receive "a lot of pushback" if she tried to call someone out on "creepy" behavior at a bar. Another female participant agreed that her experience at Burns was different than in her everyday life. In particular, she had experienced a consent violation at her most recent event. She said:

In the default world, it's worse. We are talking about men here and they talk to me or look at me all the time and it's just normal. But at a Burn, it's different, it happens less, I feel like I can say no and the people who are high up in the community, who are leaders

and organizers, they would support me. But there are a lot of people at Burns, the community isn't uniform, so I don't know if everyone would support me.

Importantly, it's not that she doesn't believe that consent violations don't occur at Burns, it's that she is empowered by the culture of the community to address these violations and has a reasonable expectation of support, something she does not believe she has outside of the community.

Other participants explained that they have become better at using their consent "skills" or "tools" in their everyday lives as a result of being involved in Burning Man culture. The idea of consent as a "skillset" or "toolbox" came up several times in the interviews. One male participant explained how learning about consent in a Burn context prepared him to use the skills in every other part of his life:

Yes, because I've gotten my training on what consent is either at parties or Burns by people who are kind of trying to deal with it in a very active environment. This isn't training for a date, this is training for running off into the maelstrom of what is a good Burn. There is a lot of chaos and a lot of action there. And I get to practice it. That rapidly becomes a skillset you can translate into real life. That's pretty much the long and short of it. Here's a skillset, go practice it, now you have it with you at all points of time.

Now you can practice it because you have it at will.

The intensity and variety of a Burn experience made using consent in everyday life a simple and unintimidating task for this participant. One interviewee responded simply, "I became much more... I don't know what the word is. I took more authority over my decisions since going to burns," both at Burns and in her everyday life.

So Is Consent Important?

All participants in the study responded to the question, “Do you think that consent is important at Burns?” with a strong “yes.” One female participant said:

Yes, consent is important because... well, why is breathing important? Because, especially in situations where we have some control, um I think it is good and right to make sure that to the extent that we can, we are respecting one another’s ability to agree to an experience. A lot of what Burns are to me is experimenting with culture itself and creating a culture. Creating a culture of consent is extremely important and really valuable and it’s really important to do at Burns because we can.

A male participant noted: “Yeah, yeah, it’s like about the number one thing. If people don’t feel like they are freely giving themselves to an experience, then we have failed in a way. Like if someone is knowingly given a negative experience then we as a culture have failed in some way.” As both of these examples illustrate, the idea of consent is integral to the culture of Burns to these participants. For the female participant, creating a culture of consent is an intrinsically valuable endeavor that Burners ought to undertake because they can. For the male participant, to not have a culture of consent would be to fail in whatever goals Burners set out to accomplish.

Another female participant noted that it’s particularly important to have a culture of consent at Burns because of who Burners are:

Burning Man attracts a demographic - you know it’s all inclusive. You know, it’s everybody. It’s the freaks, it’s the geeks, it’s the pirates, it’s the everybody. You know? And within that group of people attracted to Burning Man, there tends to be people who don’t have such good character. What the ten principles help with, are teaching you to be

a good person. Maybe they try to kiss somebody and they don't have consent first - but you know - that's where the 11th Principle comes in - to ask first.

In this case, the participant sees the 10 Principles as a moral code and a rulebook for teaching someone how to be a good person. To her, it is particularly important to have consent and the 10 Principles because Burns are radically inclusive and attract people from all walks of life and all corners of society. The principles and consent act as guides for how to get along in the community with other people. This works well with the view of other participants who see consent as supporting all the other principles. A female participant responded: "I think that consent might be the most important principle because all of the other principles presuppose that you've bought into this system and they presuppose that you've consented to these values." A male participant put it metaphorically: "Consent at a Burn is an absolute must. Its super important and I think it's woven into the other principles of Burning Man. Protecting the community, consent is there. Radical inclusion, consent is there. Radical expression, consent is there. There are so many parts of it, its the beam that holds the house up." To these participants, consent is integral to full implementation of all of the 10 Principles.

Complicating Consent

My experiences with Burning Man culture, my interviews with participants for this project, and materials created and shared by 11th Principle: Consent paint an overwhelmingly positive picture of the role of consent in making Burn culture a safe and nurturing environment for participants, but there are still several problems with consent at Burns. I will explore two of them in this section.

Several participants in this study experienced clear-cut consent violations either at Burns or in the Default World. The experiences outside of Burns ranged from unwanted non-sexual affection, cat-calling, and “creepy” conversational advances to sexual assault and rape. None of the participants reported a violent consent violation at a Burn, but subtler violations came up regularly. A female participant said:

I didn't think I had anything to say about consent, but then I remembered this situation with another camper at the Burn, and he was being very touchy and close to me and I was feeling uncomfortable, but I'm an open person and I didn't want to seem like not an open person and I didn't want to close that door, so I didn't say no. I might behave differently in the future, but I don't know.

This experience with another camper made the participant uncomfortable but she (a newer Burner) felt discomfort also with saying no to his advances. In keeping with the community's definition of consent, he should have explicitly asked for her permission before touching her, to which she could then provide a clear 'yes' or 'no' answer to his advances. In this case, this didn't happen, but what's more, her feelings about wanting to seem like “an open person” and not wanting to “close that door” were echoed by a number of other participants. This pressure to fit in, to be liked, and to appear open greatly complicate the seemingly cut-and-dry issue of consent.

Another female participant explained:

I'm not conservative about value things but I don't want to do things like walk up to a strangers and kiss them. I don't have a problem with it, but I myself don't have any interest in it. At Burning Man, there was this game that you went to a bar, to get into a bar, you had to spin a wheel and it gave you a task you had to do. And mine was that you had to go up to the guy that the game master pointed to and not say anything to him and

French kiss him, and that was how you get into the bar. And he said ‘you don’t have to if you don’t want to.’ But I thought, sure, that’s a lie. If I sit here and say I’m not going to do that, you’re going to sit here and say “oh come on” and so, instead of doing it, I just burst into tears in the middle of the bar. And then people tried to be nice, but it was clear they thought that I was being crazy, like it wasn’t a big deal.

In this example, even though there was the illusion of consent - the bartender told the participant that she did not have to participate - she still felt peer pressure to go through with something she did not want to do. It’s the same impulse that the previous participant felt in wanting to appear open and to fit in. Is this the pressure of the “cool kids’ club” mentioned by a male participant? Yes, of course you don’t have to play the game, but maybe next time, you won’t be invited to play. Can you truly have consent culture if this is a latent part of the community?

In addition to peer pressure of this sort, gifting and drugs can often be a complicated area for consent. A female participant related the following experience from an event seven years ago:

It was my first Burn, and I was in a situation wherein I wasn’t given full information about what was in something that someone gave me. And so like in a way, although, he just handed it to me with such finesse - I should have known. And also okay so, here’s the situation. He was in costume and came up to me and my partner at the time and granted us this gift with so much finesse and I was like “thanks, cool.” It was a chocolate. And my partner was like “what do you think was in this chocolate?” and I was like “based on the wrapping paper, I think probably caffeine.” And he popped it in his mouth and I kissed him and I was like “Oh! That is mushrooms.” And he as like “What? Well whatever it’s in my mouth now”; and I was like “Well, it’s 3 a.m. but you are about to be

in this place so I'll take mine and do it with you." And then later I saw the guy who had given it to us and I was kind of confrontational, actually, and I was like "hey dude, that had drugs in it" and he was like "Honey, it was the golden ticket." And I was like "Yeah, you're right, okay. I totally should have known." He felt bad, I could tell. But you know, he didn't say "Here this has mushrooms in it"; it was implied, but I missed it. And that was kind of the last time that happened to me. I do think that's why consent has become a thing at Burns. It's hard to say "Hey, I'm giving you something illegal," but like, it's necessary to do that.

This is an example of non-consensual "Dosing," a commonly reported problem at Burns. Dosing occurs when someone puts a substance - alcohol, illegal drugs, caffeine - into a food or drink without the knowledge or consent of the consumer. Outside of Burns, one of the most common examples of this is the insertion of a date rape drug, Rohypnol (Roofies), or similar substance into an open cup at a bar or restaurant without the knowledge or consent of the drinker. The substance is often intended to incapacitate the consumer and is often used by rapists. Dosing, as a nonconsensual activity, is wrong and potentially very dangerous and harmful. There are myriad reasons that someone may not want a gift when they know the full contents - food allergy, drug intolerance, drug screening at work, personal preference - and all are valid reasons to reject a gift that should be respected by the gift-giver. That said, there is also grey area, as the participant pointed out, especially around the gifting of illegal substances. As the example illustrates, the gift-giver in this case considered the chocolate a "golden ticket," something desirable and special. The consent violation occurred when he failed to communicate the contents of the chocolate to the receiver, but he did not follow up the dosing with another consent violation or any violence. He should have communicated what was in the chocolate so that the participant

and her partner could decide whether to accept it or not. As another participant said, there likely would have been other people eager to take that gift. But because of the illegal nature of the substance, the communication in this exchange was non-existent. The participant said “It was implied, but I missed it,” something that is all too easy to do at Burns where experiences are heightened, substances are flowing, and many people are operating in the spirit of “Immediacy.” In the years that have passed since this participant’s experience, consent has come to the forefront of culture at Burns and much of the messaging from 11th Principle: Consent talks directly about disclosing the contents of gifts to participants so that they may fully and knowingly accept what they are being given.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

From this place, I initially set out to explore the impact of consent education and training on the experiences of regional Burn participants. I'd heard about the 11th Principle Consent movement and training at the Southeastern Burn and suspected that being trained on consent by 11th Principle volunteers would result in a better experience for participants. As I dug into the literature to try to narrow the nebulous idea of "better experience" to something more concrete, I delved into the scholarship on tourist motivation. Surely, a tourist who has a need that is met by their experience would have what we, as tourism professionals and scholars, could consider a "better experience." Through this path, I came to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which proved to be an effective and interesting tool for looking at and parsing the incredibly diverse and meaningful experiences of participants. In the end, the results of this study show that tourists who attend regional Burns find belonging and a space to explore identity and self expression. By all accounts, a culture of consent at these events heavily contributes to creating an environment where these experiences are possible. Not only are participants choosing to attend Burns (thereby fitting our current definitions of leisure and tourism), they also know that they have the ability to grant or deny consent for any of the hundreds of decisions and interactions they encounter at the event. But my original hypothesis was incorrect. Formal consent training by 11th Principle volunteers was only a small part of the broader picture of consent at Burns, and it turned out that general knowledge of consent and inclusion of consent as a shared cultural value at the events was an even more significant contributor in creating "better" experiences for participants. Just as consent would preclude us from considering lynching leisure, so too does it play an important role at Burns. Consent takes into account the relational nature of interactions

within communities and during leisure activities. As the participants in this study repeated and my own field experience showed, consent is deeply rooted in community. In most cases, lessons about consent are informally spread by community members, not taught in workshops or at the Greeters station. The power of consent at Burns is that Burners believe in it, agree to it, and self-enforce it. It's not that consent violations don't happen at Burns – they do – but participants are confident that other members of the community will take complaints seriously and do what is right to protect the victims when these violations occur. These participants couldn't say the same about their lives outside of Burns.

It should not be surprising that consent as part of Burner culture enabled traditionally disadvantaged participants to achieve higher order needs. Consent is a justice issue. 80% of my participants who did not have self actualization experiences were male, and only 40% reported experiences coded as self actualization. By contrast, over 80% of female participants had self actualization experiences at Burns. One hypothesis is that male-identifying participants are less willing to talk about their feelings for whatever reason. It's possible that with further digging outside of the hour-long interviews, these participants would report experiences that would be coded as self actualization. It is likely that this is a contributing factor, but I also think that it has something to do with the power imbalance of genders in the mainstream society to which all these participants belong. Female-identifying people are disadvantaged in dominant American society. They make less on the dollar than men, they are frequent victims of sexism and sexual violence. By contrast, male-identifying people are the dominant social class, especially white cis-male people, as nearly all of my male participants were. It is possible that either these men are self-actualized in their everyday lives, or at least believe that they are, and so are not trying to meet that need while at Burns.

I believe that this is where consent comes into play, levels the playing field, and enables female-identifying participants to have their self esteem and self actualization needs met. The culture of consent at Burns, whether enacted through formal training at the Greeter's station at the Southeastern Burn or through word of mouth and peer-led enforcement in the rest of the community, is in contrast to the rape culture of the everyday, or as Burners call it, "default" world. It is this culture of consent, one intentionally built to empower individuals and encourage open communication between participants, that enables traditionally vulnerable individuals to have self-esteem and self-actualization needs met. This theory is supported by the fact that most participants stated they would feel more empowered to say no at Burns than in their everyday lives both because there is an expectation that the person they say no to will listen to them and because of the support of the community to enforce issues of consent.

The way that we currently talk about leisure and tourism allows for the idea that lynching can be considered leisure for some participants. In his thought provoking work, Mowatt (2008, 2012) challenged notions of leisure by asserting that the lynching of Black people in the United States can be seen as an example of a form of leisure. I agreed with what Mowatt argued about the moral reprehensibility of lynching, and the need for comprehensive social justice discussions and robust on-the-ground efforts, and was appalled that he could make such a clear argument that we can consider lynching leisure based on our current definitions. As I chewed on his paper, I saw consent as a response to his arguments. It seemed to me, as it seemed to him, that merely using "free choice" as a metric for whether something was leisure or not was not enough. Free choice left out a crucial piece of the puzzle – the relationships between the participants in a leisure activity or tourism event. The results from this study both build on and differ from Mowatt's (2008, 2012) work by positioning the concept of free choice as the intrinsic link

between consent and leisure; precluding an activity that involves force from being a leisure activity. I felt that free choice was not enough. It is important to state here that the experiences of young white women at Burns cannot be in any way equated with the experiences of a young, Black, Jesse Washington in Waco Texas in 1916. The only salient similarity is that both Jesse Washington and the women in this study occupy less privileged positions in their given situations than white men. Both groups, and in fact, all people, would benefit from cultures based in consent and equality that actively work to promote justice.

As I worked with Maslow's Hierarchy of needs throughout the interviews for this project, I was reminded again and again of Cohen's classic phenomenology of tourism experiences and could not help but notice the overlap between the phenomenology and the levels and structure of Maslow's Hierarchy. Cohen saw his types of tourists as being "presented in an ascending order from the most 'superficial' one motivated by the desire for mere 'pleasure,' to that most 'profound,' motivated by the quest for meaning" (Cohen, 1979, p. 192). This linear progression mirrors the traditional interpretation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, with each need building upon the one below it, progressing from the most basic (physiological) to the most advanced (self-actualization). At the top of Maslow's pyramid and the farthest progression of Cohen's phenomenology, there is a not-insignificant amount of motivational overlap. Levels 4 and 5 of Cohen's (1979) phenomenology, Experimental tourists (level 4) and Existential tourists (level 5) are seeking in many ways to have their Self-Esteem (level 4) and Self-Actualization (level 5) needs met, respectively. The Experimental tourists' quest for an alternate centre to the one they have at home is also tied up in a search for personal identity (Self-Esteem) and the Existential tourist's commitment to a center based in travel is, according to Cohen himself, "motivated by the quest for meaning" (Cohen, 1979, p.192). Are not Burners, aided by a culture of consent,

Cohen's Experimental and Existential tourists, finding a centre in a transient place through radical acts of self-expression, experimentation, belonging? Consent, like Burns, comes down to community.

Members of the community struggle with this very question. And so, too, do I. The Burners I've met are a divided bunch. Some tout the life-changing nature of Burns, tell you that "the Playa delivers" and that you'll get what you need from the Burn, even if you don't like what it gives you. These Burners can be said to have found a new centre outside of their own lives in the Default World. Others are firm, resolute, in their belief that they, as Burners, have nothing to teach you about living your life, no profound truth to impart, no lessons to share. I've spent much of the last year wondering what camp I fall into, or if, like in many things, I'm somewhere in the middle. What I have taken away from the hours of conversations - around camp fires, behind bars, through the magic of the internet - is that there is something profoundly special happening at the places where Burners gather around the world, something that the wider leisure and tourism world should pay attention to. The data reflects this. In Pearce and Caltabiano's original study, only 34.7% of all participants had self actualization needs met, and just 1.1 percent had their self-esteem need met (1983). Yet of thirteen American adults interviewed for this study, eight experienced self-actualization to some degree at a regional Burning Man Event. Twelve had their self esteem needs met. A key difference between the participants in this study and the theoretical Experimental and Existential tourists of Cohen's phenomenology is this: the Burners I interviewed weren't consciously looking for a new centre. Almost all of the information about their motivations comes from working backwards from their reported experiences through coding and analysis. The only question that directly addressed motivation was "How did you hear about Burns, and why did you decide to attend" and to this question, nearly all of the

participants responded that they knew a person, had a friend, or met a (romantic) partner who invited them to come. For all of them, it was the draw of the community that got them to the first event, and the experiences they found there that kept them coming back. As one participant said “I used to take fancy vacations around the world, now I go to Burns.”

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. Though I took care to recruit and interview a diverse set of people, the respondents skewed heavily toward more experienced Burners and all but one participant was white. Given how impactful gender was on the findings, I would love to explore how other concepts like, race, sexual orientation, and socio economic status would impact these findings. It is impossible to fully explore the role of consent culture on empowering disadvantaged people by only focusing the study on white participants. Further, while 13 participants created a significant amount of responses and data, they are by no means representative of all experiences of all participants at all regional Burns. My personal relationships with many of the interviewees also impacted the data collection for better and worse. Establishing relationships with my data subjects encouraged many of them to open up to me about sensitive and deeply personal experiences involving sexual assault, drug use, and personal identity, but my inclusion in the community also makes me biased in its favor. Additionally, I have grappled with my own place in this community and my own feelings about many of the issues explored in this study. The work and the community are both dear to me.

Future Research

So consent as part of a tourism event's culture can help tourists – particularly traditionally marginalized ones – meet their self-actualization and self-esteem needs, which results in better experiences for these tourists. What does this mean for leisure and tourism professionals who, like the organizations and community members of regional Burns, want to foster positive experiences for participants that keeps them coming back to the desert, the mountains, the beach, and the forest year after year? If formal training, something that could be accomplished with an action plan and a designated staff member – is not enough, how can you create a culture of consent in other leisure and tourism experiences? Is it even possible? Future research both in the Regional Burning Man Network and at any other leisure and tourism events that feature consent prominently in their cultures and codes of conduct will be necessary before policy recommendations can be made for other tourism and leisure settings. In the course of my work on this project, I met several people involved in a science fiction convention located in Michigan that prominently feature consent in their participant code of conduct. I also became involved in a Live Action Role Playing (LARP) community that similarly values consent but does not educate participants in the same way as regional Burn organizers do. Both of these networks could provide additional examples of how consent can be incorporated into leisure and tourism event culture to provide better experiences for participants.

The role of consent in leisure has far-reaching research implications - particularly for deviant leisure and dark tourism. A more-widespread discussion of consent can help destigmatize so-called “deviant” leisure activities such as BDSM, extreme body modification, and others (Williams, 2008). In tourism, it could provide a more nuanced way to talk about

issues in sex tourism, drug tourism, and dark tourism (Stone, 2013; Mowatt, 2011). Consent in leisure can also be widely applied to research surrounding stakeholder involvement and socially and culturally conscious leisure and tourism activities. By operating under the assumption that consent must be affirmative and ongoing, researchers can check their own relationships with stakeholders and partners to ensure that everyone starts and continues to be on the same page. Finally, additional work on “challenge by choice” in adventure recreation would provide a natural avenue for research on consent in leisure.

Conclusion

There are a lot of things that make Burns different from traditional tourism experiences. The 10 Principles are the big one - a shared code of conduct that the participants have bought into and self-enforce is almost unheard of in other tourism experiences. But as one female participant explicitly stated, it's the 11th, unofficial, principle that that bolsters the other ten and enables participants - and particularly female participants - to meet these elusive needs: “Being able to have consent and think about consent makes me feel safer and let's me be me. It helps me express myself without fear of being hurt or judged.” The culture of consent, spread equally through word of mouth, social media messaging, and in-person training, creates an environment in which participants feel that they belong and are able to truly just be themselves. It is this environment that is unique, in direct contrast to an outside “Default” world that is viewed as harsh, restricting, and dangerous. One male participant said something that deeply resonated with me and my experience. Simply this: “Burns changed my leisure.” If we're lucky, Burns have the potential to change all of our leisure for the better. There are deep and meaningful impacts of

intentionally including consent in a tourism event's culture. Knowing this, we can, and should, re-center our efforts to make the leisure experience based on participant consent, in the field and in the way we, as scholars, define it.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH STUDY UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Dear Participant,

My name is Caitlin Edwards. I am a master's candidate in the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Carla Santos, an Associate Professor from the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois. We would like to include you, along with other participants, in a research project to understand the role that intentional, ongoing discussions about consent play in a tourism and leisure experience.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and we anticipate that there are no risks to this study greater than what you experience in normal life. If you take part in this project, you may help us to better understand how talking about consent can help lead to tourism and leisure experiences that are empowering and community building, rather than exploitative and consumerist. While you may not benefit personally from your experience, you will benefit from knowing that you contributed valuable information to the study of tourism and consent understanding.

As a participant in the research we will ask you to participate in an in-depth interview, which will last no more than 90 minutes, and to talk about your experiences in Burning Man culture, particularly at Transformus. By giving your consent to participate in this research, you acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age. You are free to stop participating at any time, or to decline to answer any specific questions. You are also free to withdraw your permission for participation at any time and for any reason by contacting one of us.

Your participation in this research project will involve participation in an in-depth interview, which will last approximately 90 minutes. With your permission, we would like to audio record the interview. Allowing audio recording is not a requirement for participation. If you agree to be audio recorded, the audio recording obtained during this research project will be kept strictly secure and all identifying information, such as your name or the names of anyone you may mention will be replaced with a pseudonym to protect your identity. The audio recording will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will be accessible only to the investigators. The audio recording will be transcribed into a WORD file and will be kept in secure, password protected computers of the University of Illinois which will be accessible only to the investigators. Also, audio recordings will be erased after transcription.

The results of this study may be used for reports, journal articles, and conference presentations. In any publication or public presentation pseudonyms will be substituted for any identifying information.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Yes, but not always. In general, we will not tell anyone any information about you. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws

and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information which identifies you and the consent form signed by you may be seen or copied by the following people or groups:

- The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for [Protection of Research Subjects](#);
- University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research;

For questions regarding this research, please contact Dr. Carla Santos (csantos@illinois.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

In the space at the bottom of this letter, please indicate whether or not you agree to each of the following: 1) to participate in this project; and, 2) to grant us permission to audio record the interview. The second copy of the form is yours to keep.

Sincerely,

(signature)
Caitlin Edwards, Investigator
(240) 643-6588
cedward@illinois.edu

Dr. Carla Santos, RPI
(217) 244-3874
csantos@illinois.edu

.....
I, _____, agree to participate in the research project described above.

_____ Yes _____ No

_____ Date _____ Signature

I, _____, give permission for my interview to be audio recorded.

_____ Yes _____ No

_____ Date _____ Signature

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or via e-mail at irb@illinois.edu

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Consent and Tourism at Transformus, a Regional Burning Man Event

Caitlin Edwards

First, I would like to learn some background information about your participation in Burning Man culture.

- How long have you been attending Transformus?
- Is this the first burn you have attended?
- If no, which other burns have you attended?
- Do you consider yourself a “burner”?
- How did you learn about Burning Man and regional burns?
- What attracted you to Burning Man/Transformus?
- Do you consider your participation at Transformus to be a tourism experience?
 - o Why or why not?

Now, I would like to hear about your participation at the burns we’ve just discussed.

- Do you camp with a Theme Camp or do you camp as an individual?
- Did you come to the burn alone or did you come with other people? If so, what are their relationships to you?
- Did you sign up to volunteer at the burn?
- Do you participate in the burn through art or another way?
- What is your favorite part of Burning Man/Transformus culture?
- What is your least favorite part?

Finally, I have some questions about your experience with consent at Transformus (and other burns if applicable).

- Do you know what the 11th principle is?
- Do you think that consent is important?
- What does consent mean to you?
- Do you feel that you have the ability to grant and deny consent without fear at Transformus?
- Is this different from your experience at other Burning Man events and/or in life outside of the Burn?
- What, if any, impact have you observed at Transformus from the inclusion of an 11th principle (consent) in addition to the 10 Burning Man principles?

Is there anything else you would like to add that would help me to better understand your experience as a burner or your experience with consent at burns, and what it means to you?