

**Experiences at Lollapalooza: Theorizing About Belonging, Group Norms, and the  
Role of the Trickster in Liminal Community Space**

by

Mary Lynne Bartlett

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## **Authors Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

Literature written on music festivals focuses on motivations, crowds, drug use, and marketing. This study tried to understand the experiences of music festival participants at a large scale international music festival. Lollapalooza 2012 was chosen as the site for this study. Using an interpretive approach the study sought to explore experiences at festivals, *community*, *sense of self*, and *liminality*. The following three research questions were explored using interpretive grounded theory methodology: How is *self* experienced at the music festival? How is *liminal* space experienced at the music festival? How is sense of *community* experienced at a music festival? Data collected included observation notes collected in the field during the 2012 festival, interview questions emailed to study participants after the festival, and postings on the Lollapalooza Facebook page and Lollapalooza message board forum. Themes in Chapter Four described: Movements and Expression - Norming Space at Performances, Moments and Movements Induced by Weather, Connections and Communication at Lolla, Social Spaces within Lolla, Being in Another World?, and Life After Lollapalooza - Holding on to Belonging in Memories of Being at the Festival. Festival participants also engaged in an ongoing negotiations of connection through shared symbols, a set of rules communicated within the social space which also connected to the creation of disconnection and enclaves at Lollapalooza. Lollapalooza had its own complex set of rules and customs created by state laws, policies and procedures set forth by festival organizers, and festival participants, but also subverted by the trickster. In response to the research questions, study findings suggest festival participants were able to enter in and out of the liminal state through ongoing negotiations with the trickster during the festival.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

For many people, attending music festivals has been woven into their life experiences as a memorable event. Attending a music festival is a unique experience for each festival participant. No two experiences are the same, yet within the space of the music festival, participants have common threads of experiences. Live Nation Entertainment, a live entertainment and ecommerce company that puts on 20,000 shows annually for over 2000 artists, describe the role of music and how it affects participants:

Music is a universal language that reflects creativity and represents today's modern diversity. Live music is a captivating moment when fans can drop their inhibitions, celebrate their lives, relive their past, and feel exhilarated. (Live Nation, n.d.)

Music festivals form around many different genres of music from classical to rock. Each genre of music has its own *scene* that allows participants to come together and find common ground. The use of the word scene, as opposed to subculture, is used in the literature to recognize that society has more than one culture (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). In this thesis, the alternative/rock music scene and rock music festivals were studied, specifically large-scale music festivals.

Music festivals gained popularity after the success of Woodstock and the Isle of Wight festival in the 1960s (Gibson & Connell, 2005). The rise in popularity of music festivals has been attributed to the expansion of mass tourism that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s (Gibson & Connell, 2005). As travel became more readily available, it became easier for people to move from place to place.

Music is said to contribute to identity development of participants by providing a medium for self-expression, mood enhancement and spiritual functions (Sloboda & O'Neill, 2001). Music also helps to bridge the gap between individuals and communities to create a space for common *musicking* and sharing of artistic and human values (Duffy,

2008 p. 102). Initially, music festivals were used by many people as a way to discover music; however, participants also wanted to share their musical experience with communities of like-minded people (Brant, 2008). Music festivals combine ideals of a community with self-expression and freedom of music as an art form. Rock music festivals began as a way for youth to demonstrate acts of rebellion against the dominant parent culture (Bennett, 2001).

This study explored experiences of participants at a music festival. My interest in studying music festivals and experiences of music festival participants was based on my personal experiences and feelings of connection I experienced with total strangers in these settings. Music festivals allowed me to live between two worlds at one time and experiment with myself by taking risks, socializing with strangers, and enhancing my personal beliefs and politics. I was able to take these experiences into my everyday life to find the confidence to take risks and push limits that I might not have otherwise. I was interested in seeing if other festival participants had similar experiences of self in connection to others. This study contributes to the literature on music festivals and offers a different perspective on the important role music festivals play in tourism and recreation and leisure studies.

Literature on music festivals covers a diverse range of topics and findings. There is an emphasis in the literature on sponsorship (Hackley & Tiwaskui, 2006; Rowley & Williams, 2008; Anderton, 2011), and motivations (Bowen & Daniels, 2005; Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Pegg & Patterson, 2010).

There has been a 71% increase in the number of outdoor rock and pop festivals held between 2003 and 2007 in Britain (Anderton, 2011). Music festivals are said to follow the same product lifecycle as tourism products. The music festival lifecycle was adapted by

Beverland, Hoffman and Rasmussen (2001), from Butler's model of the tourism product lifecycle. The music festival cycle goes through six stages: conception, launch, growth, consolidation, decline, and revival. Ali-Knight, Robertson, Fyall & Ladkin (2008) suggest successful music festivals stay at the consolidation stage while many will go into decline. However, the path for music festivals may not be this linear. For example, the Coachella music festival was initiated in 1999 by Paul Tollett and Rick Van Santen, concert promoters and owners of the company Goldenvoice. In the first year, the festival lost \$80,000 and was cancelled. The festival started again in 2001 (Peters, 2007). From this example, Coachella went from conception to launch to decline in their first year.

Music festivals are an important part of the tourism industry and offer many benefits for host communities. Getz (1997) identified that benefits of holding festivals include that they: accelerate tourism and urban development, strengthen place consciousness, mold city image, promote place prestige, constitute the traveling product system as an organic traveling attraction, and draw local infrastructure construction as the catalyst to promote the city's status (as cited in Yuan & Chong, 2006 p. 256).

Festivals in general offer a host community the opportunity for financial gain over a short period of time. Getz (1997) suggests, "the great rallying point of festivals or special events may enable the reputation of the host city to gain 'the paroxysm' promotion in a short period" (Yuan & Chong, 2006 p. 256). If done successfully, the infusion into the economy creates new jobs and generates income in taxes because of the sudden influx of visitors to the destination. In an economic impact study done by the local government in Austin, Texas, it was estimated that \$167 million dollars was injected into the local community after hosting the South by Southwest (SXSW) conference which encompasses

music, interactive professionals, and film. The SXSW conference occurs over two weeks, leading to a significant amount of profit acquired in a short period of time.

Similarly, in a study done by the Mintel International Group (2008), it was found that in 2007, the average festival attendee at the Glastonbury Festival in Somerset, England spent \$300 (not including the price of the ticket) over the course of their stay. Out of that \$300, \$150 was spent away from the festival site. Glastonbury festival has an annual projected attendance around 177,000 for the three-day festival (Mintel, 2008 p. 21). Approximately \$26,550,000 goes back into the local and surrounding economies. International music festivals, if successful, may significantly impact the surrounding tourism industry of the destination. Festival participants will spend money not only at the festival, but also in surrounding areas.

Some studies discuss overt economic benefits and others, such as the one conducted by Mintel (2008), offer insight into factors that make a music festival successful or unsuccessful. However, there does not seem to be a lot of understanding about factors influencing festival participants to attend beyond discussion of, crowds (Mowen, 2003) drinking and drug use (Martinus, 2010), and motivations (Bowen & Daniels, 2005; Gelder, 2009) MacKay & Kerstetter, 2005; Pegg & Patterson, 2010), with the exception of Erin Sharpe's (2008) article "Festivals and Social Change: Intersections of Pleasure and Politics at a Community Music Festival" which looks at community engagement at Hillside music festival. Her article explores the how Hillside Festival incorporated the workshops and political groups into the festival to become the "total experience" (p. 222). **The purpose of this interpretive grounded theory study was to understand experiences of music festival participants at the Lollapalooza music festival.** Lollapalooza is well established,

having been around for over 20 years. Due to its physical size, duration, number of festival attendees, and variety of music performers, Lollapalooza was an ideal site to conduct this research. Lollapalooza allowed me to interact and interview participants from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences.

The research questions guiding this study were:

- a) **How is *self* experienced at the music festival?**
- b) **How is *liminal* space experienced at the music festival?**
- c) **How is sense of *community* experienced at a music festival?**

### About Lollapalooza

“A man, a plan, a caravan” was the conceptual idea behind Lollapalooza music festival (Lollapalooza, n.d.). The free spirit captured in this saying sheds light on the philosophy of Lollapalooza and the spirit of the festival for the last 21 years. Perry Farrell, the lead singer of the band *Jane’s Addiction* started the festival as a farewell tour for his band. The idea morphed into a larger-than-life travelling music show that would showcase new music talent and act as a way for the band to say goodbye to their fans (Lollapalooza, n.d.).

From 1991 to 1997, Lollapalooza toured to 20 different stops over 41 days. The festival took a five-year break and returned in 2003. In 2003, the festival continued to tour, but in the following year due to poor ticket sales, the festival became a stationary, two-day festival. This is its current format. In 2005, Lollapalooza was hosted in Grant Park in Chicago, which is where it has been held for the last seven years (Global Post, April 11, 2012).

Lollapalooza has grown to be an eight stage festival that houses a diverse range of

music for festival attendees to enjoy. Lollapalooza, “In the beginning it was an exciting new way for us to experience the best in modern rock” (WXRT Radio, n.d.). Today, the festival showcases over 130 artists whose musical styles include hip-hop, electronica, reggae, indie, and rock.

Lollapalooza means “one that is extraordinarily impressive,” (Consequence of Sound, n.d.) an image the festival has attempted to uphold over the past twenty years. Lollapalooza has grown in size from its early days. In 1991, the festival drew approximately 30,000 festival participants, compared to 2011 when the festival drew 240,000 festival participants (Global Post, April 11, 2012). Expansion of the festival can be attributed in part to what the festival website describes as its role in music over the last 21 years, “Lolla was in the delivery room when alternative rock was born, brought hip-hop to the masses, waved glow sticks when the electronica scene came of age, and staked out tiny clubs to bring the best indie-rock to the big stage” (Lollapalooza, n.d.). Lollapalooza played a significant role in shaping the music festival experience for fans. It brought different groups of music fans together in one space at one time. The variety of musical acts and experience affected how festival participants took in the festival and through that momentum, the festival grew to what it is today.

As described on the Lollapalooza website, “Lollapalooza has come a long way, but one thing stays constant: the festival is for the fans” (Lollapalooza, n.d.). The festival started out as a way for festival participants to experience the “alternative nation” which is the phrase that Perry Farrell coined during Lollapalooza 1991. As two fans described on the Lollapalooza website:

Phoenix 1991 - Picture three 22 year old girls riding to Lolla in a classic pink Cadillac dressed in vintage 50's peacock blue & white sequins, and ditching work

for a day for Jane's Addiction, Siouxsie and the Banshees, NIN, Ice-T, the Butthole Surfers, the Henry Rollins Band, and the Violent Femmes...and a lot of friends = most excellent time ever! I still have that ticket stub somewhere from the Compton Terrace Grounds show...but no cool shots to show ~ just great memories! (Lollapalooza, n.d.)

Lollapalooza 1991 was my first concert ever! Just graduated high school and on whim a friend decided to buy four tickets. Having an idea of who each of the bands were, we thought it would be interesting to see what type of crowds would be there. It ended up being one large family, everyone looked out for each other and we saw some incredible acts. The greatest memories were Perry Farrell coming out on stage with Ice-T and singing with him, NIN throwing the large microphone stands across the stage as people in the lawn were being launched into the air with blankets, then of course Jane's Addiction! That entire day will always stick in my mind as one of the best days! (Lollapalooza, n.d.)

Even though the festival space has changed, the philosophy and vibe of the festival has remained. The organizers of Lollapalooza committed to bringing music to the fans and having “a passion for rocking responsibly, and Lolla these days is no different” (Lollapalooza, n.d.). Along with rocking responsibly in terms of being safe, the festival also encourages fans to bike, recycle, and engage with the farmer’s market. The festival incorporates socially responsible activities alongside the music. The Lollapalooza experience becomes more than just about the music for the fans. More details about the festival is included in Chapter Three.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter One introduced the study and provided an overview of music festivals and the history behind Lollapalooza. Chapter Two provides a review of the major topics and themes contained in the literature on music festivals including: the history of festivals; key terms related to music festivals; community and how it is created within music festivals; motivations at music festivals; and experiences in the context of crowds, edgework, and group identity. Chapter Three describes the methodology, interpretive grounded theory,

used in this study and the methods used for data collection. Chapter Four describes the findings from the data collected. Lastly, Chapter Five examines the findings and provides a theory based off the findings, as well as discusses implications for future research.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Since the 1960s and the time of Woodstock and Isle of Wright festival, music festivals have grown in popularity and in the range of music scenes celebrated in these sites. Many music festivals began as a way to rebel against parent culture and to connect with likeminded people. Today, music festivals still function as a way of connecting with people and are places where forms of resistance happen. Alongside music as an art form, music festivals create a unique combination of group norms that both structure self-expression and promote freedom of expression. This chapter includes a review of relevant literature related to music festivals. First, I provide an overview of the history of festivals. Second, I look at the key terms related to music festivals. Third, I look at the notion of community and how it is created within music festivals. Fourth, I examine studies conducted on motivations at music festivals. Fifth, I looked at experiences in the context of crowds, edgework, and group identity. Sixth, I provide some concluding thoughts about the literature reviewed.

### Festivals

Understanding how music festivals came into being requires exploration into the history of festivals and their influence on community. Festivals play a large role in defining and shaping a society. A festival is described as “a periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events” participants from communities are able to directly or indirectly become, ‘united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a world view’” (Falassi, 1987 p. 2). The general function of festivals, according to Falassi (1987), is to renounce and then announce culture and to periodically renew the life of a community by creating a new energy.

Festivals have become celebrations of something a local community wants to share that involves the wider focus on the equality of community members and the shared laws of exchange as participants in the experience (Hall & Sharples, 2008). Festivals are thought to be cultural artifacts not just bought and consumed, but involved in a process of meaning-making through their active incorporation into people's lives (Waterman, 1998; Jackson, 1993 p. 208-209).

Music festivals, throughout their history, can be most closely related to the rite of conspicuous consumption and rite of exchange described by Falassi (1987). The rite of conspicuous consumption involves objects (usually food and drink) prepared and consumed in excess and the rite of exchange focuses on the equality of community members and the shared laws of exchange (Falassi, 1987). From my personal discussions with friends and music festival participants, there seems to be a sense that well-established music festivals (e.g., Coachella, Lollapalooza, Glastonbury, Bonnaroo) also act as pilgrimage for attaining the unattainable. Established music festivals act as a *final frontier* for festival participants. Tjora (2016) draws on the idea that participation in festivals is motivated by being able to get away from everyday life (as cited in Bauman et al. 1992). Festivals are able to act as an escape from daily routines and allow people to leave their surroundings and vacate their lives in the form of a *vacation*. These issues are examined more thoroughly in the following section. Throughout history, musicians provided the soundtrack to festivities surrounding religious ceremonies, harvests, and celebrations (Gibson & Connell, 2005) and hence music became synonymous with celebration and ceremonial events.

Festivals generally take place over short periods of time. Festivals can be thought of as being what Fine and van den Scott (2011) describe as a *wispy community*. Wispy

communities “are temporary, limited in time and space and have the potential of being displaced by other more insistent identities” (p. 1321). Music festivals may be included in the category of a wispy community because of the short duration and the insistent identity of festival participants in their daily lives, but also the place where the festival is consumed will return to its natural state.

### **The Politics of Music Festivals**

Music festivals began as ceremonial activities, and have gained in popularity over time as a form of economic growth and location for social activities. Music festivals evolved over time to include ceremonial characteristics (the rites described by Falassi [1987] in the previous section) which made them important to building community between social actors. Music festivals are made up of musicians who perform outside in several different locations within a short period of time. Music festivals represent marginal, liminal zones, placed outside normal constraints of daily life that represent “a liberation from the regimes of normative practices and performance codes of mundane life” (Shields, 1991, p. 84). Festival participants are able to have experiences outside their daily lives at music festivals. Depending on the genre of music, the festival may also act less as a catalyst for change and more as a gathering of like-minded people interested in having a good time. As Brant (2008) describes:

rock festivals appeal mostly to the young (or the young-at-heart) and celebrate both the community of man and the community of music. There is almost nowhere else that young people can congregate amongst their own to enjoy a society of like-minded individuals and music that appeals mostly to those under twenty-five. (p. 4)

Although music festivals provide positive outcomes for host communities and festival participants, there are negative perceptions towards music festivals, with many host

communities saying they are just a platform for general hedonism and licentiousness (Ali-Knight et al. 2008 p. 208-209).

In the 1960s, music festivals acted as a way to promote political messages to youth. Political messages still act as a way for festival participants to identify with a group of people and thus contribute to group identity today (Bennett, 2001). Some music festivals have become known for being political in nature and a place to present unconventional images and experiences (Getz, 2009; Lewis, 1997). Promoting messages or standpoints at festivals (e.g., supporting Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Oxfam) can deter some festival participants because they might not agree with messages being promoted. Hillside Festival is known for its overt political messages and green initiatives; however, in the study conducted by Sharpe (2008), results indicated the festival attracted those who agreed with the political messages being presented and not the broader community.

At the Hillside Festival held in Guelph, ON, festival participants came to the festival to align themselves with political, environmental and social messages delivered. As Sharpe (2008) describes, “Hillside positioned itself as an agent of change by exposing patrons to a set of alternative practices and inspiring patrons to adopt these alternative practices in their everyday lives” (p. 227). Sharpe argues that Hillside is seen as a non-mainstream festival due to its acceptance of untraditional lifestyles and families. Festival participants represented a diverse population of people representing all walks of life and socio-economic statuses. Community created within Hillside by festival attendees lies in contrast to mainstream as festival attendees unite over being alternative and different.

Both Hillside (Sharpe, 2008) and the Glastonbury Festival (Gibson & Connell, 2005) have space dedicated for specific causes festival organizers openly support. Festival

participants are exposed to messages and political statements both festivals support.

Glastonbury donates to Oxfam and Greenpeace from ticket sales. Glastonbury created an image and experience that allows festival participants to identify and consume. Glastonbury is said to be:

a holiday from all normal experience: it has grass, trees, flowers, cows, it's a lovely drive no matter where you come from, and when you get there you can skip around in the garb of a hippy like a demented earth sprite. Glastonbury is a pocket in time where anything can happen (Gibson & Connell, 2005 p. 246).

Festival organizers have dedicated space within festival grounds for political organizations and causes.

Each music festival is unique and provides festival participants with different experiences depending on the affiliations and partnerships festival organizers create with businesses. All aspects of creating a music festival that were outlined have a direct impact on festival participants' view and attitudes toward community. The creation of community within a music festival is affected by location, music genre, sponsorship, and political messages. The following section explores how music festivals then create a sense of community.

### **Community and Belonging at Music Festivals**

*Sense of community* is said to include a community's image, spirit, character, pride, relationships and networking (Bush, 2000). Sense of identity, and experience all contribute to the creation of communities. *Belonging* is presented by May (2011) as a "concept that allows for a person-centered, dynamic and complex approach and that understands people are active participants in society" (p. 367). Miller (2003) describes belonging as "the quintessential mode of being human...in which all aspects of the self, as human, are perfectly integrated- a mode of being in which we are as we ought to be: fully ourselves"

(p. 218). Music festival participants experience festivals as individuals, but also experience the festival as a member of the group or crowd to which they might desire to belong. Festival participants acquire a sense of belonging through their proper qualifications (tickets) and through affiliation with the music scene presented by the festival.

Belonging is one way that people create a sense of community through what Tilley (1994) suggests is the creation of sense of self through place (as cited in May, 2011). People start to identify with a place by mirroring oneself to their surroundings: “we interject the external environment into us, while we also project or read ourselves onto the external world” (May, 2011 p. 371). An example of this can be found at festivals where participants dress at Vans Warped Tour. Vans Warped Tour is a music festival that showcases skatepunk music. The festival is sponsored by the skateboard company Vans. The festival has created a skatepunk atmosphere where festival participants feel they need to dress to be part of the skatepunk scene, which is all around them at the festival (Bennett & Peterson, 2004).

*Identity* is said to represent the idea of sameness or likeness and of unity (Walker & Leedham-Green, 2010). At music festivals, festival participants experience identity through their ability to align themselves with festival participants they feel represent their condition of being themselves. *Experience*, according to Turner and Bruner (1986) is thought of as “being more personal, as it refers to an active self, to a human being who not only engages in but shapes an action” (Turner & Bruner, 1986, p. 5). Turner and Bruner (1986) also draw our attention to the potential issues of foreshadowing others’ experiences. We as individuals can only experience our own lives and interpretation of other’s lives and experiences can be false. Music festival participants spend their time at the festival

observing the show, other festival participants, and the venue. As stated earlier, belonging, identification with a group identity, and experience contribute to the creation of community at music festivals.

Music festival space also allows festival participants to feel as though they are able to belong to different communities at one time. This builds on May's (2011) idea of *multidimensional belonging*. May (2011) suggests, "few of us feel a sense of belonging merely to one group, culture or place but rather experience multiple senses of belonging" (p. 370). The desire to belong to a specific group or to fit will change over time as individual's experience personal, transformative change (May, 2011). Similarly, the postmodern community allows people to belong to different communities at the same time. The postmodern community as described by Delanty (2003) is a "re-enchantment of everyday life and no longer on the margins of society, for in postmodern society marginality is everywhere. Postmodern communities are nomadic, highly mobile, emotional and communicative" (p. 132). Delanty (2003) argues that the quest for belonging has occurred in society because the feeling of insecurity and segregation that have been the experience of many. The way individuals desire to belong as children will differ greatly from their desire for inclusion as adults. As people go through life and have different experiences, they will belong to different communities at the same time. The concept of *communitas* will be discussed in the section *Liminality and Music Festivals*.

### **Community as Contested Terrain in Festival Space**

Aristotle originally envisioned community as a society that was associated with friendship. For Aristotle, there was no difference between the social and the communal in

society (Delanty, 2003, p. 7). The concept and practices of community have been studied over time as it relates to different aspects of society and life.

As noted in Delanty (2003) Zygmunt Bauman cautions us that community only offers people a sense of nostalgia and illusion because our world has resurrected the concept of community as a way to grapple with problems of identity. Bauman (2001) also suggests community is the kind of world we don't live in, but one we wish to inhabit and hope to repossess (p. 3). As mentioned earlier, music festivals of the past were an opportunity for youth to come together with like-minded people, which could have functioned as an illusion of community to the festival participants. Similarly, Defilippis, Fisher, and Shragge (2010) argue that people are turning to the notion of community because of our contemporary economy has marginalized urban societies and created poverty and exclusion from participating in the "fruits of capitalism" (p. 28-29). Similarly, Bauman (2001) argues the price paid for community is our freedom and 'right to be ourselves' (p. 4). Lollapalooza is a music festival that has a mandate of exclusion based on purchase of tickets and capitalism through the purchase of consumables within the festival grounds. This notion of exclusion due to capitalism might be the bonding agent within Lollapalooza because it is something that festival participants have been able to buy their way into to be "included" and an instant "community" is formed.

As a youth reading about music festivals of the past, I had a romanticized view of what music festivals had to offer and how sense of identity and belonging would happen in the mass crowds, a diverse population of people with shared interests. When I thought of music festivals, I would often block out the unpleasant side of communities that can exist. In situations where negative things were happening, I did not let it alter my perception of



what I see as community at music festivals, although I knew it was not the entire truth. Wellman (1987) argues that community is a metaphor for a class relationship that exists because “the primary ties extending outside our households which articulate people with larger social systems and provide them with the imaginative, flexible means for gaining access to the resources of these social systems” (p. 21). By this theory, music festivals create a place and space that acts as a larger social system for festival participants to gain access to other people outside their households. This allows them to create a social system within the festival space as well through their interactions and experiences. Similarly, Gerard Delanty (2003) sees community as “impossible because it cannot solve the problems with which it is confronted, in particular the problem of moral choice and uncertainty. Rather than facing these challenges directly, community was never lost-it was never born” (p. 119). Some music festival participants will attend the festival to listen to the music or see one of their favourite music acts perform, but there will be individuals who attend to connect to a group of people and create a community, and then there will be others who might engage with both at the same time.

Another understanding of community is the communitarian community. Communitarians see that “citizenship is based on a social concept of the individual as a member of a community” (Delanty, 2003 p. 73). Communitarians also see that rampant individualism has a negative impact on community. Communitarians also place value on leisure that brings people together around shared meanings (Arai & Pedlar, 2003 p. 188). Communitarians consider what the individual can do for community, not what community can do for the individual (Delanty, 2003). Music festivals rely on large numbers of people attending an event at the same time. To what extent is this for the shared meaning of

listening to music together as a group? Each festival participant attends the festival as an individual, but participates in the activity as a collective. Albert Borgmann (1992) suggests that focal practice in activities gives a group of people a focal point to center their energy around by being engaged with each other. Borgmann (1992) states “people engaged in focal practices gratefully acknowledge the immediate and centering power of the focal thing they are devoted to” (p. 122). Music festivals provide festival participants the opportunity to engage in the activity with other festival participants with the focal interest being the music being played, the artist performing, and the interaction with other festival participants.

Similarly, Alberto Melucci suggests “community is something that is constructed; it is not an already existing set of values that are essential for social integration and the identity of the individual” (Delanty, 2003 p. 123). Melucci’s suggests community, rather than being based on pre-existing qualities, can be created and that identity and group belonging can be created through temporary communities such as a music festival. The music at music festivals is an important factor in drawing people to attend a festival. Listening to music allows people to be open and connect to each other and experience different musical cultures present at the festival. Active participation in music can “contribute to identity development by providing a medium for self-expression, mood enhancement and spiritual functions” (Sloboda & O’Neill as cited in Parker & Ballantyne, 2010). This sense of connection and awareness in turn creates a sense of belonging that can spill into participants’ everyday life (Duffy, 2008). The connection experienced between individuals exists through the rhythmic framework that allows for movement between two points or two individuals (Duffy, 2008).

Dugas & Schweitzer (1997) suggest “developing a sense of community is challenging, long term work, building levels of connectedness, belonging, and support” (as cited in Derrett, 2003 p. 51). This opposes Borgmann’s (1992) view of a community of celebration where time is not a factor in creating a community. A community of celebration is: “the terms are defined by the reality being celebrated...It invites people to disclose their grit and their grace, their valor and their humor. And if things go well, enthusiasm invigorates and unites them” (Borgmann, 1992 p. 143). Music festival communities align with the idea of a community of celebration. Community is created and constructed by festival participants’ terms and conditions. Although the music festival takes place over a short period of time, festival participants unite over the music being listened to and celebrated and there is a possibility of a community being formed among the festival participants.

Conflict may also impact the focal practices of music festival participants. One-way community is created is through making participants feel as though they are either accepted or not accepted by a group of people through a shared identity. At Woodstock 1999, conflict surfaced throughout the duration of the festival. At the festival, young women were encouraged to expose their breasts, and many complied due to pressures they felt (Perone, 2005). Rob Sheffield of Rolling Stone magazine described the situation as being about power, not pleasure and as being sexual assault (Perone, 2005, p. 87). Festival participants at the festival were upset over high prices of food and beverages (specifically water), trash and raw sewage leaking from the portable toilets, and scheduling conflicts with bands. This created an atmosphere of conflict among festival participants and festival organizers (Perone, 2005). The lead singer of Limp Bizkit, Fred Durst encouraged the crowd to smash

things and that there were no rules. On the last day of the festival, some festival participants set fire to concession stands and rioting and looting took place (Perone, 2005). Woodstock 1999 is a good example of the contested nature of focal practices among festival participants. Women exposing their breasts reveals the power at play within social interactions with other festival participants and the celebration of rioting and arson are acts of power and violent resistance, acts in which participants would likely not engage in daily life.

It could be argued that music festivals fall into what Brown (2002) describes as an *intentional community*, “those consciously formed with a specific purpose in mind” (p.3). The purpose of music festivals is to listen to numerous musical acts in one place. This thesis explores if there are other specific aspects that create community among festival participants. Interestingly, in Lucy Jayne Kamau’s paper on “Liminality, Communitas, Charisma, and Community”, she points out that intentional communities are almost always liminal, because their members live in a state of “outsiderhood” (as cited in Brown, 2002 p. 9). The role of liminality and community will be discussed later in the section *Liminality and Music Festivals*.

### **Attachment, Separation, and Group Identity in the Crowds at Festivals**

Crowds at music festivals affect festival participants’ experiences. Crowds at events can produce a sense of excitement and stimulation (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994) that can increase satisfaction of the overall experience. In a study conducted by Mowen, Vogelsong & Graefe (2003) on perceived crowding and management practices, the authors found the number of visitors at an event added to festival participants’ overall positive experience. The study also found that 24% of respondents felt the event would have been more

enjoyable with more people, as opposed to 69% of respondents being neutral to the number of people at the event, and 7% of respondents wanting fewer people at the event (Mowen et al., 2003 p. 67). The authors suggest poorly attended events can be viewed the same as restaurants that do not have enough people and do not have the same level of enjoyment as when the restaurant is fuller (Mowen et al., 2003). As suggested by Duffy (2008), there needs to be a connection between individuals to feel acceptance and belonging. This suggests festival participants need to connect with other participants to feel like they belong and are accepted.

In contrast to the study conducted by Mowen et al. (2003), Wicks and Fesenmaier (1993) found respondents in their study on vendor and visitor service quality perceptions at events identified large crowds as being undesirable to their overall experience. The study was conducted at the Chautauqua of the Arts festival, which could account for the difference in results of crowds and desirability (Wicks & Fesenmaier, 1993). Festivals are said to be playgrounds for adults devoted to hedonism and uninhibited play and fun (Ali-Knight et al., 2008) and to achieve a high level of uninhibited play and fun, there needs to be many others festival participants to play with. This suggests that although respondents in Wicks and Fesenmaier's (1993) study identified large crowds as undesirable, others are needed to make the experience fun.

Friends and family also play a large role in the overall experience at music festivals. Olofsson et al. (2006), found festival participants were at the festival to "have fun and enjoy the festival together with their friends rather than giving the concerts, the first priority" (Olofsson, 2006 p. 86). By attending a festival with family and friends, there is a sense of attachment and security that exists within the group of festival participants.

Attachment theory suggests that people and objects are assembled into the regular, patterned and relatively stable arrangements that make up the social landscape (Redman, 2008). Olofsson, et al. (2006) noted that groups dressed similarly or used symbols to identify themselves as belonging to a specific group. Through the use of dress or symbols, festival participants function in the realm of attachment and submission. Olofsson, et al. (2006) also suggests festival participants do not like to be on their own at music festivals because they feel lost in a sea of people, which negatively affects their overall experience. Music festivals offer participants the opportunity to leave their regular day-to-day lives for a short period of time to experience activities and events that might not happen in their everyday lives. Many festival participants are drawn to festivals to celebrate group identity (Ali-Knight et al., 2008). Schultz (1958) suggests people unite over events through fundamental interpersonal relationship orientation. This theory suggests “people want social interaction and relationships with other people and that through these occasions people meet their needs of inclusion, control, and affection” (O’Connell & Cuthbertson, 2009, p. 15).

Further understanding of festival participants’ desire and drive to participate in a music festival is found in the motivations literature (cf. Bowen & Daniels, 2005; Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Pegg & Paterson, 2010). Researchers, mainly from a sociological background, have tried to capture the motivations of music festival participants in different contexts and geographical areas, and found similar results. Bowen and Daniels (2005) identified three common findings in previous research conducted on music festival motivations. These findings are captured in Table 1 and suggest that motivations for

attending festivals can be found in general socialization, socialization with family and friends, novelty, excitement or thrills.

Table 1.1

*Festival Motivation Studies*

	Formica & Uysal (1996) <sup>a</sup>	Crompton & McKay (1997)	Faulkner et al. (1999)	Tomljenovic et al. (2001) <sup>b</sup>	Nicholson & Pearce (2001)	Thrane (2002)
General socialization	X	X	X	X	X	
Socialization with family or friends	X	X	X	X	X	
Novelty/excitement/thrills	X	X	X	X	X	
Music/musical artists/program			X	X		X
Entertainment	X				X	
Party			X	X		
Cultural exploration/local culture		X	X			
Escape/recover equilibrium		X			X	
Ancillary activities			X			
Local attractions			X			
Gregariousness		X				
Variety					X	

<sup>a</sup>In this study, novelty and excitement were separate dimensions.  
<sup>b</sup>In this study, general socialization and socialization with family and friends were combined into a single dimension.

(Bowen & Daniels, 2005, p. 157)

By reviewing the studies on motivations at festivals, Bowen and Daniels (2005) found that culture was not considered to be a motivation for attendance and many festivals being studied did not include other activities at festivals as a possible motive for attendance. The authors were interested in identifying definable groups of visitors at a multi-day music festival as a way to contribute to the host community. The authors concluded there were four main categories of motivations for attending a music festival: just being social, enrichment over music, the music matters, and love it all (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). The first two categories of the study rely heavily on participant engagement and socialization with others as the driving motivation for attending the festival (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). Enrichment over music motivations focused on culture, community, and

personal renewal above music (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). Just being social includes motivations for spending time with family and friends, non-musical attractions (e.g., vendors, art exhibits), and partying (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). The authors concluded from their study that festival organizers should create a fun and festival atmosphere that offers opportunity to socialize and have nonmusical experiences (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). They also suggest festival organizers diversify the crowd the music headliner will attract and offer a wide range of other services and activities for festival participants for whom the music is not an important motivation for going to the festival.

In a similar study conducted by Pegg & Patterson (2010), researchers were interested in participant motivations at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in Australia. Similarly, they found country music was a main motivation along with spending time with family and friends and atmosphere (Pegg & Patterson, 2010). The study also found that atmosphere was concerted to be the most important overall aspect of the festival (Pegg & Patterson, 2010).

Gelder and Robinson (2009) conducted a study on motivations between a corporate sponsored (Vfest) and non-corporate sponsored (Glastonbury) music festival in the United Kingdom. The authors were interested in obtaining data on motivations specific to the United Kingdom. The results of the study found a significant difference in motivations between the two festivals. Participants at Glastonbury identified atmosphere, socializing with friends/family and reputation/involvement as being key motivations compared to Vfest participants who identified music/artists, local/close to home and free tickets as key motivations (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). Results of this study suggest that because Vfest is a corporate run event, participants are more concerned with what they are getting from the



festival in terms of music and convenience compared to Glastonbury where participants are more interested in spending time with others (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). Tom Rowlands from the band The Chemical Brothers (Crispin as cited in Gelder & Robinson, 2009) suggests the experience at a music festival is more than just the music acts and sponsorship.

Glastonbury...there's something different about it; it's not sanitized. It's not like the bands are just wheeled on and wheeled off again. A good festival is not just about bringing loads of acts that you think go together...I think it matters where you are, that you're outside your normal existence, and living a different experience and atmosphere for a few days. It's a perfect festival. (p. 243).

The authors found three key areas that need to be taken into account for planning music festivals in the future which are: music alone is not enough-multiple motivations must be considered, socializing is a key motive, and ensure marketing strategies are attracting core markets. These findings suggest a link between socializing with others and experiences.

Group identity can also be created through a shared culture. Beebe & Masterson (2006) describe culture as “a learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values and norms that is shared by a group of people” (as cited in O'Connell & Cuthberston, 2009 p. 173). Shared culture at music festivals can also be expressed through different methods, all of which affect the way festival participants experience the music festival. Pilotta et al. (2001) argue:

Norms are conceived to be the results of natural inclinations or even necessities, some are regarded as continuations of moral traditions, still other derive their legitimacy from imageries of super-human entities, and finally others as impositions by those who are more powerful either by birth or by inheritance of a social position (p. 44)

Bauman (1998) suggests that meeting places are the sites where norms are created. Festivals are large meeting places and allow for festival participants to navigate and negotiate norms. Bauman (1998) also argues when territories are stripped of public spaces,

there is less opportunity for norms to be debated, for values to be confronted, and clashes to be negotiated (p. 25). Although music festivals can be privately funded events (e.g. Lollapalooza), it still is public space in which festival participants negotiate beliefs, values and norms.

Nicknames for festival participants are another way norms and attachment are expressed at music festivals. Nicknames are established as a way of identifying those who are and are not in the group. At the Kerrville Folk Festival, festival participants earn different nicknames based on their involvement and commitment to the festival. *Kerrgins* are first time festival participants, *Kerrverts* are converts to the musical high of the festival, and *Kerrvivors* are festival participants who stay at the festival for the full three weeks (Morse, 2000). Similarly, in the Lollapalooza message boards, festival participants refer to themselves as “*Lolla kids*.” The use of nicknames adds to the concept of the wispy community, which were described above. Wispy communities are also said to “have jargon and fanzines to shore up their imagined communities.” (Fine & van den Scott, 2011 p. 1321).

Hennion (2001) states “freedom is almost synonymous with independence and detachment, whereas the ideas of attachment and dependence convey a sense of submission or subjection (Hennion, 2001, p 5). The author found that although festival participants would act separately and independently, as soon as they were reunited, they would want to know what had happened and where their friends were going next. Hennion (2001) argues being able to locate one’s friends and family allow festival participants to flow between the realms of attachment and security and detachment and independence.

The results of Packer & Ballantyne's (2010) study described that a music festival provided participants with common ground for experience and joint celebration, belonging and social integration, and it also provides a separation experience. Results indicated festival participants were able to "disconnect from their everyday lives which allowed them to become open to exploring new relationships, new ways of understanding themselves and new ways of perceiving the world" (Packer & Ballantyne, 2010 p. 178). This finding suggests that festival participants use music festivals to reinvent themselves and become more open to socializing. The separation experience is important to self-discovery and experience as it allows participants to be more open to others. This exploration of separation and attachment is continued in the discussion of liminality in the following section.

### **Liminality and Music Festivals**

While at a music festival, participants might experience what is called the *liminal state*. The liminal state refers to a threshold passageway between two places (Carson, 2007). As Victor Turner describes:

liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial...liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (Turner, 1969 p. 95).

The liminal state is positioned between states determined by "social place, status, maturity, socio-economic position, caste, physical location, mental or emotional condition, health, war and peace, scarcity or plenty" (Carson, 1997 p. 3). As Turner (1969) argues liminality "implies that the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low" (p. 97). Applying this concept in the context

of participating in a music festival, this means that participants must embody their everyday selves so that they can go into the festival grounds and embody themselves as a festival participant. In festival space, they will be able to stand between the two versions of themselves—their everyday self and their festival participant self—for the duration of the festival. On this threshold, they will experience *communitas*. *Communitas* is Latin for a “social relationship from an area of common living” (Turner 1969, p. 96). Lollapalooza becomes an area of common living for the time span each day from when the festival gates open, until the park closes.

There would be a different type of *communitas* formed at a music festival where festival participants have the opportunity to camp and live on site. Lollapalooza forced festival participants to disperse at the end of the evening and the area for “common living” was broken, until the next day. With *communitas*, a special camaraderie is developed between individuals who share the liminal state and develop a community of the in-between. Victor Turner (1969) suggests “hippies” and “teeny-boppers” are a *communitas* based on their ability to create their own rules and bond over different aspects of life (dress, music, jobs). As Turner suggests, “*communitas* is of the now; structure is rooted in the past and extends into the future through language, law, and custom” (Turner, 1969 p. 113). Similarly, Carson (1997) suggests the sharing of the liminal passages creates a strong bond and tie between people that levels differences in status and situations. Lucy Jayne Kamu argues that within *communitas*, “relationships can be direct, egalitarian, spontaneous, and based on free choice rather than on social similarity (as cited in Brown, 2002 p. 24). From this theory, music festival participants might be able to accept each other on level playing

fields and can bond over experiences and common interests regardless of social status, wealth, or other demographic characteristics that can divide people.

When people attend music festivals, they are doing so to experience recreation and leisure away from their everyday spaces. This experience allows them to experience life between two worlds. Pine & Gilmore (1999) have argued that because many employees at a tourism destination take on multiple roles and multiple identities, it can contribute to the tourist's sense of being in a liminal space. Music festivals often rely on volunteers to help put on the festival, or if it is a travelling festival, employees and volunteers will themselves be living between two worlds for the duration of the festival and contribute to festival participants' sense of liminality. Pine & Gilmore (1999) also argue the physical space of a tourist destination can be crafted in such a way that it creates an *escapist experience* for the tourist and allows them to live in the in-between (Pine & Gilmore as cited in MacKay, Yarnal & Kerstetter, 2005).

For example, The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival held in the United States offers womyn the chance to live feminism and also educates womyn about feminist forms that challenge the vilification of 'radical lesbian separatism' (Browne, 2010 p. 249). Liminality from the everyday is crafted as the festival rejects male supremacy and enjoys women coming together (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). Women attending the festival live in a temporary village envisioned, created and inhabited by women. According to Browne (2010), *the land* used at the festival is created almost exclusively by female workers...work crews undertake most of the activities during the festival from car maintenance to cooking for thousands of attendees. Festival participants foster a sense of *communitas* by volunteering at the event and through the use of event specific terminology such as

Festiegoers (festival attendees) and festievirgins (first time attendees) (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). Festievirgins are given a *Tips for First Timers* sheet to help them orient themselves at the music festival.

In keeping with the notion of liminality, Bennett & Peterson (2004) suggest participants can change their lives through the pilgrimage-like atmosphere of music festivals. By viewing music festivals as a pilgrimage, *communitas* is supported and participants may feel a sense of community among those who attended the festival and those that have not.

### **Liminality, Edgework, and Playful Deviance**

*Edges* are the boundary between sanity and insanity, consciousness and unconsciousness, and the line that separates life and death (Lyng, 2004). Festival participants who want to experience edges are called *edgeworkers*. Edgeworkers are said to “engage in activities for the sense of freedom, sense of control and physical/emotional sensations they derive from the experience” (Lyng, 2004 p. 154). The experience of taking drugs or drinking are a common thread through edges (Lyng, 2004). Exploring unorthodox behaviours or edges happened during the Vietnam War when youth would engage in drug consumption, public nudity, protest, and performance not allowed in domestic or public spaces (Gibson & Connell, 2005). Adolescents live in a world of control and order which entices them to seek out activities that allow them to be genuinely free, creative, exciting and have self-directed behavior (Lyng, 2004). Music festivals of the past became the place to experiment and experience edges, which can still be seen in music festivals today.

Similar to the concept of edgework, is the concept of *playful deviance*. Redmon (2003) suggests that playful deviance occurs most often when small groups of tourists

travel to symbolic spaces of leisure to participate in temporary forms of transgressions that they will not perform in the places where they live (p. 27). By traveling outside their everyday lives, festival participants are able to participate in activities that are outside the activities of their daily lives.

Martinus, McAlaney, McLaughlin & Smith (2010), in their study of self-reported drug and alcohol use at music festivals in Scotland found that respondents consuming drugs were in the minority, while those consuming alcohol were the norm. Riley, James, Gregory, Dingle & Cadger (2001) and Measham (2004, 2006) also found alcohol has become the drug of choice for music festival participants. The authors also found that although alcohol and drugs were consumed at music festivals, respondents took necessary precautions to protect themselves from negative consequences (sunscreen, water, cell phone, stayed with a group of friends). This suggests respondents wanted to experience the music festival in a state altered by drugs or alcohol despite possible negative outcomes. However, findings of this study were obtained from respondents' self-reported use.

### **Studying Experience**

Festival participants go to music festivals for many reasons, one of which is the experience. The experience allows participants to capture the intangible nature of the festival that lies beyond tangible products consumed. Music festivals offer festival participants *tangible products* that can be purchased, but there is an emphasis on the 'experience' as an intangible product that is consumed. Bryne (2012) suggests:

the music experience is not just those sound waves, but the context in which they occur as well. Many people believe that there is some mysterious and inherent quality hidden in great art and that this invisible substance is what causes these works to affect us as deeply as they do" (p. 267).

Anderton (2011) noted a gap in music festival research that has ceased to look at how the feeling (*atmosphere*) of music festivals is created amongst music festival participants themselves. As Waterman (1998) argues, “we transform the everyday space of the familiar and mundane to one that is rather otherworldly and spiritually uplifting, even if the jollity and improvement are serious stuff” (p. 58). The experiences that festival participants have may stay with them long after the festival is over, and thus makes it an essential component to the music festival tourism product that is consumed. Bruner and Turner (1986) suggest “an experience is more personal, as it refers to an active self, to a human being who not only engages in but shapes an action. We can have an experience but we cannot have a behavior; we describe the behavior of others but we characterize our own experience” (p. 5). The difficulty of trying to capture another person’s experiences is that researchers can only experience their own lives and not the lives of others (Brunner & Turner, 1986). Projecting music festival participants’ experiences into studies is problematic because the researcher’s perceptions of reality might not be exactly how the participants experienced the event. Research can still be conducted, but researchers need to be aware of their own personal biases and projections while writing.

### **Chapter Summary**

Music festivals have been able to provide festival participants with the ability to have intangible, unique experiences that they can take back with them into the everyday aspects of their lives. Through the review of the relevant literature, it suggests that music festivals function as more than music acts that come together for a short period of time to perform music. Experiences are created through the different events within music festivals, and thus it is important to better understand how these experiences are created and if



festival participants create a sense of community among themselves. This literature review explored the history and key concepts of festivals and music festivals, community and music festivals, key studies on motivation and separation and attachment within crowds, and how experiences are created at music festivals through liminality, edgework, and playful deviance. Through my personal experiences, I became interested in this topic as way to see if other festival participants experienced music festivals in the same way I had. The following chapter outlines the methods used in this interpretive grounded theory study.

## Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct this study. I discuss the methodology that guides this study, as well as the paradigm with which I identify. Next, I provide more background on Lollapalooza as the study setting and discuss participant selection criteria and characteristics. I then explain how the data were collected and how research objectives were met. I then explain how data was analyzed and my framework for reflexivity during the research process and ethical issues that arose.

### Methodology

The purpose of this interpretive grounded theory study was to understand experiences of festival participants at Lollapalooza. Grounded theory focuses on the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content (Patton, 2007 p. 125). The research questions guiding this study focused on the interpreted meanings and symbolism generated by research participants. The research questions were as follows:

- a) How is *self* experienced at the music festival?
- b) How is *liminal* space experienced at the music festival?
- c) How is sense of *community* experienced at a music festival?

Grounded theory is based on the data collected by researchers that generates concepts constructed out of that data (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory methods are described as “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (Charmaz, 2006 p. 2). As Charmaz (2006) states:

We try to learn what occurs in the research settings we join and what our research participants’ lives are like. We study how they explain their statements and actions and ask what analytic sense we can make of them (p. 2-3).

Grounded theorists take their own personal assumptions and perspectives into account when gathering data. These assumptions and perspectives allow the researcher to ask particular questions and pursue topics already of interest to their study. As Charmaz (2006) suggests, these assumptions act as points of departure that allow us to develop our ideas rather than limit them. Grounded theory allows researchers to follow leads and other areas of interest as the research process continues. The central question that grounded theory aims to answer is “what theory emerges from systematic comparative analysis and is grounded in fieldwork so as to explain what has been and is observed” (Patton, 2002 p. 133).

According to Glaser and Strauss, the defining components unique to grounded theory are:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis
- Advanced theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis. (as cited in Charmaz, 2006 p. 5)

Grounded theory allowed me to theorize from the data collected and observe data that emerged. Throughout the data collection process, I had to make adjustments to my initial plans and adjust to emerging situations as they arose. Initially, I had wanted to conduct face-to-face interviews that would allow me to go back and ask participants more questions to better understand areas of interest in the data that emerged, but that did not

transpire due to circumstances. I adjusted by emailing the interview questions to the two participants who responded, as that was their preferred method of participating in my study. Due to the low number of interview participants, my data collection methods pivoted again to ensure that I had enough data to use. To get a better idea of what might have happened at Lollapalooza, I took postings from public areas of Facebook and the Lollapalooza message board. This allowed me to capture the voice, thoughts, and words from festival participants. Analysis of interview data and posts from Facebook and the Lollapalooza message board allowed me to theorize about this study. Conducting a grounded theory study helped me to better understand music festival participants and in turn, helped me better understand myself and how I interact with music festival participants when I attend festivals as a participant.

To understand what shared experiences are and how they are defined, I aligned myself with interpretivism. Charmaz (2006) states that “interpretive theory calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon...we interpret our participants’ meanings and actions and they interpret ours” (p. 126-127). When conducting studies rooted in interpretivism, the researcher enters into the participant’s world. Researchers show respect for participants by creating a rapport and by making an effort to understand their lives from their perspectives. The researcher ultimately tries to understand participants’ views through interpretation (Charmaz, 2006). Interpretivism played a pivotal role in my thesis because I had to interpret the written responses and social media postings to make conclusions about the data.

Charmaz (2006) suggests theorizing is her personal preference to theory in that theorizing is interpretive. She states that theorizing:

Entails the practical activity of engaging the world and of constructing abstract understandings about and within it. The fundamental contribution of grounded theory methods resides in offering a guide to interpretive theoretical practice not in providing a blueprint for theoretical products (p.129)

Concepts presented by Charmaz (2006) regarding theorizing allowed me to better understand individual experiences of music festival participants. Experiences at the festival are not the same for all people, and interpretive theorizing allowed me to make suggestions for possible reasons for my findings rather than relying on linear thinking. I was able to develop an imaginative understanding of experiences at music festivals.

### **Study Setting**

The setting for this study was the 2012 (August 3-5) Lollapalooza music festival. Lollapalooza takes place in Grant Park in Chicago Illinois on the first weekend in August every year. Founded by Perry Farrell as a farewell tour for his band *Jane's Addiction*, Lollapalooza originally toured across North America in major cities with various artists. In 2005 Lollapalooza started being hosted in Grant Park in Chicago, Illinois. The festival draws from a variety of musical genres from hip-hop to electronica. Over 130 artists and bands perform at the event over the three-day period on a variety of stages (Lollapalooza History, n.d.). Lollapalooza was chosen as the site to conduct this research because it is a large-scale, multi-day music festival. Lollapalooza can be described as a mega-event based on the 240,000 festival participants who attended in 2011. With over 130 artists performing at the event. My interest was in studying a large-scale international music festivals and the variety of participants attending these events. Although the major of festival participants seemed to be between the ages of 16 and 30, there were also older festival participants there as well. I wanted to be able to draw on a variety of different people's perspectives and experiences to shape my data.

I contacted Lollapalooza via email to inform them of my study and that I would be approaching festival participants to participate. I also wanted to provide advanced notice to the festival that I would be bringing in recording equipment (voice recorder and camera). Because recording equipment is not always permitted at music festivals, I wanted to give the organizers advanced notice of the equipment I had. I never heard back one way or another from Lollapalooza about bringing this equipment, but went on the assumption that festival organizers would have contacted me back if it was an issue. Security never found the equipment I had in my bag. I did my due diligence by contacting festival organizers before the start of the festival to let them know my intentions. I decided the day of the festival to not to bring the voice recorder with me or bring awareness to the security personnel about the camera I had in case I had to throw it in the garbage, which is something I have seen happen at other festivals. (See Appendix E).

### **Participant Observation**

While at Lollapalooza, I employed an overt strategy to obtain participant observations. Overt strategy is when the researcher seeks permission to participate and observe with the appropriate authority aware of the situation (Jorgensen, 1989). As explained in the previous section, I did not hear back from festival organizers, so I went on the assumption that they had seen my message and were aware of my study. While attending Lollapalooza, I made observations about the music festival and participants. I made observations about the space, how festival participants interacted with others, and about community. According to Jorgensen (1989), participant observation is an effective method to use for gathering data when the research problem is concerned with human meanings and interactions viewed from the insider's perspective, the phenomenon of

investigation is observable within an everyday life situation or setting, and the research problem can be addressed by qualitative data gathered by direct observation and other means pertinent to the field setting (p. 13). As Jorgensen (1989) states “the methodology of participant observation seeks to uncover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives” (p. 15). When conducting observations and being out in the field, researchers need to be aware of “when and where to observe, who should be interviewed, how much time should be spend in the field, and how (physically) the data should be collected” (Lareau & Shultz, 1996, p. 4).

The role of the researcher in participant observation is to gain access to the inside world of the participants being studied. One method for obtaining observational data is through the use of *close observation*. Close observation “tries to break through the distance often created by observational methods” (Van Manen, 1997, p. 68). The written portion of the observational method is written as an anecdote that generates a different form of experiential data than is written in an interview approach (Van Manen, 1997, p. 68). Van Manen (1997) suggests that the best way to enter into a person’s lifeworld is to participate in it. Observations allow the researcher to be able to describe the setting they observed, the participants, and the meanings behind what is being observed. The quality of the observations is judged based on the reader’s ability to enter into and understand the described situation (Patton, 2002). While participating in the participants’ lifeworld, I needed to recognize what parts of the anecdotal text is significant to my study while it is happening. Van Manen (1997) states that in writing anecdotes, the researcher needs to develop a keen sense of *point* that the anecdote carries within itself (p. 69). For this type of participant observation, I assumed the role of being the complete participant at

Lollapalooza to make observations. Being a complete participant allowed me to interact with festival participants and engage in the activities and experiences they engaged in. I chose to be a complete participant as a method to earn festival participant's trust. It was important for myself as the researcher to blend in with my surroundings as a way to create minimal disruption. As Bryant and Charmaz (2007) suggest:

The more smoothly the researcher approaches the setting and the participants, is incorporated into the setting with minimal disruption, or becomes a part of the scene, the better the researcher's observations. If the researcher's presence has less of an influence on the setting, participants will trust and assist the researcher more quickly, and are less likely to alter or conceal their behavior when the researcher is observing. (p. 230)

Field research involves being open to the settings and actions of the people in the field. This allows ethnographers to pursue what they find to be of interest (Charmaz, 2006).

Charmaz (2006), suggests field notes from a grounded theory ethnographer could include:

- Record individual and collective actions
- Contain full, detailed notes with anecdotes and observations
- Emphasize significant processes occurring in the setting
- Address what participants define as interesting and/or problematic
- Place actors and actions in scenes and contexts
- Become progressively focused on key analytic ideas (p. 22)

Charmaz (2006) cautions that a potential problem with ethnographic studies is seeing data everywhere and nowhere and gathering everything and nothing. Grounded theory helps to shape the ethnographic methods by helping the ethnographer to focus, structure, and organize their research (Charmaz, 2006). Johnson (2002), in his study of gay and lesbians at a country bar, collected data using *jottings* focused on scenes, interactions, thick characterizations, concrete details about actions and talk, sensory details and impressions, which were later expanded into field notes. By using this technique, Johnson (2002) was able to give himself quick reminders of what was going on in the field around



him without disrupting his participation in the culture he was observing. This method was useful for me while at Lollapalooza as a method to capture what was going around to me and to expand into field notes. To not disrupt participants around me, taking quick jottings helped me to remember the observations and to later create more expanded field notes.

When I returned to the hotel each night after the festival closed, and while on the airplane, I was able to read over my jottings and expand them into fuller, more comprehensive notes.

I wrote participant observations using a notebook and by taking photographs. I had initially intended to take a voice recorder with me into the festival, but after seeing it was on the list of restricted items, I chose not to attempt to bring it in. I chose to do this because of the possibility of it getting confiscated and it was not my personal property. I knew by making this choice that I would need to rely on my ability to make jottings that could be expanded on. While at the festival, I situated myself at different areas at the different stages being used (front of the crowd, middle of the crowd, back of the crowd) to see if the different areas offer different perspectives. There were five geographic areas within the festival space where I made observations at Lollapalooza (RedBull Soundstage, Budlight stage, Fountain, Uncorked, and the Sony stage).

To begin, I attempted to understand key terms and concepts being used by participants. Jorgensen (1989) states "a first step to describing culture, subculture, or way of life is to make an inventory of key words used by members of this culture. Next, specific words are analyzed by asking members to describe how the word is used or simply observing how symbols are used" (p. 35). In the context of Lollapalooza, slang terms and words used to describe the surrounding areas by festival participants gave me a good understanding of how the space is viewed and the impact it had on festival participant's

perception of community. In relation to the research questions guiding this study, the following questions guided the participant observations (see 3.1).

Table 3.1

*Questions Guiding the Creation of Observation Notes*

<b>General questions</b>	<b>How is <i>self</i> experienced at the music festival?</b>	<b>How is <i>liminal space</i> experienced at the music festival?</b>	<b>How is sense of <i>community</i> experienced at a music festival?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was my experience on the way to the musical festival?</li> <li>• What was my experience entering the festival?</li> <li>• What do I see, hear and feel at each of the seven stages?</li> <li>• Where do festival attendees gather within the festival space?</li> <li>• How long do festival attendees stay in one place?</li> <li>• How do festival attendees move between places?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I see, hear, and feel that indicates different expressions of self?</li> <li>• What are people wearing? Saying? Doing?</li> <li>• What range of emotional, social, sexual expression is expressed at the music festival?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I see, hear, and feel that indicates liminal experiences at the festival?</li> <li>• In what spaces does liminality occur?</li> <li>• How do drug and alcohol use contribute to liminal experiences?</li> <li>• How does sexual expression occur in liminal space?</li> <li>• Who appears to be engaged in liminal experiences? How are they engaged?</li> <li>• How is liminality expressed in relation to the rules that are performed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I see, hear, and feel that indicates festival attendee's experiences of community?</li> <li>• What interactions occur between groups of attendees at the music festival?</li> <li>• How does Lollapalooza foster a sense of community?</li> </ul>

The process of keeping a journal of my experiences and thoughts at Lollapalooza helped me in the reflexive process. The questions I asked myself while writing down observations at Lollapalooza are included in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*Reflexive Questions for Recorded Observation Notes*

General questions	How is <i>self</i> experienced at the music festival?	How is <i>liminal space</i> experienced at the music festival?	How is <i>sense of community</i> experienced at a music festival?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does my own <i>lens</i> limit what I tend to focus on in my observation notes?</li> <li>• How are my experiences at the festival limiting my observations?</li> <li>• How are my experiences at the festival deepening my observations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do I experience self or my various selves at the music festival?</li> <li>• How do I know the existence of these selves? What does each self feel, speak, stand, and take in the music festival differently?</li> <li>• How am I limiting my observations about self based on my understanding?</li> <li>• What other ways are people's selves expressed at the music festival?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do I experience liminal space?</li> <li>• How has my experience brought me to this understanding of liminal space?</li> <li>• How am I limiting my observations about liminal space based on my understanding? (i.e., what criteria am I imposing to determine whether festival attendees have experienced liminal space?)</li> <li>• What other ways is liminal space expressed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do I experience community?</li> <li>• How has my experience brought me to this understanding of community?</li> <li>• How am I limiting my observations about community based on my understanding? (i.e., what criteria am I imposing to determine whether festival attendees have fostered a sense of community?)</li> <li>• What other ways is community expressed?</li> </ul>

**Participant Selection Criteria**

The population of festival participants at Lollapalooza varied in terms of age, race, and gender, although the festival was predominantly geared towards those between the ages of 16 and 30, there were still quite a few adults between the age of 30 and 50. Participants for this study were approached at the various stages I was making observations and asked if they would like to participate in my research. I had originally picked different spots to make participant observations, but after walking around the festival grounds on the first day, I came to realize that some of the areas I had chosen were not areas that festival participants were frequenting and I thought I had a better chance to get festival participants to agree to be interviewed at the new spots I had chosen. The initial thought was that the variety of festival participants based on age, ethnic background, gender, and music tastes at

the different observations points would provide a diverse population of participants to recruit for this study.

The initial plan was to collect eight participant's names and contact information from each of the five observation areas. I had wanted to approach 40 potential interview participants at Lollapalooza and hoped to interview 10 individuals, depending on theoretical saturation in data analysis. My reasoning for compiling a list of 40 potential interview participants was to ensure I had enough participants to sample from for the interview process. When I approached festival participants at the various stages, I came across some hurdles that did not allow me to continue conducting data in the way I had intended to. Festival participants did not want to sign up for my study and some indicated I was bothering them and taking them away from the festival experience. When I was able to get festival participants to agree to participate, it was during the times between performers, or just outside the festival grounds. In total I was able to collect 9 response cards and contacted them via email asking for a Skype interview. Festival participants indicated that time was a deterrent for agreeing to participate on the spot because they were engaged in the festival experience with their friends, the musical acts, or their surroundings. Out of the two respondents that agreed to the Skype interview, both asked if I could email them the questions so that they could fit it into their schedule better.

Criteria for selecting participants was dependent on their attendance at Lollapalooza on one of the three days of the festival. I had aimed to get a mix of first time participants and repeat participants to see if there is a difference in their perception of self and community experiences. The two festival participants that responded to the interview questions were repeat participants.

When conducting an active interview, it is important to include all “people” as a way to get a wide array of voices to represent the data. According to Holstein & Gubrium, (1995), “selecting people, as opposed to representatives of populations, suggests that individuals, in principle, are equally worthy despite individual differences and therefore have worth-while stories to tell” (p. 26). I was trying to employ maximum variation sampling for this study but that did not occur due to the low number of respondents agreeing to complete my interview questions. Maximum variation sampling documents unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions. Maximum variation sampling identifies important common patterns that cut across variations (Patton, 2002, p. 243). As mentioned above, I initially approached participants at the five areas where I conducted participant observations (RedBull Soundstage, Budlight stage, Fountain, Uncorked, and the Sony stage) and presented them with a recruitment letter (Appendix A) describing my study and asked if they would be willing to participate in the interview after the completion of the festival via Skype. As described above, participants asked that the questions be sent to them via email instead of a Skype interview. Pseudonyms were used for the participants who wrote back saying they would respond to the interview questions. Participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms by writing it on the contact card with their information.

### **Participant Interviews**

Data collected for this study were obtained using semi-structured interview questions that participants responded to and sent back to me via email. Interviewing is said to be an interpersonal drama with a developing plot... where the interview and its participants are constantly developing (Pool as cited in Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This

developing plot and active nature of the interview process itself creates active interviewing. As Holstein & Gubrium (1995), state “the subject is neither a repository of opinions and reason, nor essentially a wellspring of emotions. He or she is not a predefined but is instead constructed in relation to the ongoing communicative contingencies of the interview process” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995 p. 14). This study would have benefited from doing active interviews with participants in person and not conducted by email. There was less chance to probe the answers provided and it kept the researcher and the interviewees at a distance from each other.

Ideally, when doing active interviewing, theoretical sampling is chosen based on an ongoing process that is spontaneous. In the grounded theory process, as the data emerges, new questions are asked and answers sought, the active interview sample looks at the emerging research interests of the interviewer and responses provided. From this, new interviewees are added to explore new avenues of interest. One way I included additional information from additional participants was by including the Facebook and Lollapalooza message board posts. Reading through the thoughts and words of the festival participants that posted in these mediums gave me new avenues of interest to explore in the data. Active interviewing can take on an interpretive lens. The role of the interviewer is to get respondents to expand on their experiences and invite interpretations that make use of the respondent’s resources, connections, and outlooks (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The goal of the interview is for the interviewer to be able to extract information from the respondents in a way that is not confined to preconceived and predetermined agendas. As Dupuis (1999) suggests:

In active interviews, the interview guide is just that- a guide. In some interviews, it is followed relatively closely. In other interviews, it may be abandoned totally as

respondents develop their own stories based on what is important to them and their lived experience (p. 57).

To guide the active interviews, I used a semi-structured interview guide. The interview questions are listed below in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Interview Questions*

General questions	How is <i>self</i> experienced at the music festival?	How is <i>liminal space</i> experienced at the music festival?	How is sense of <i>community</i> experienced at a music festival?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was your experience on the way to the musical festival?</li> <li>• Describe your experiences at the music festival.</li> </ul> <p><i>Prompts if needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe what it was like when you were entering the festival.</li> <li>• Where did you spend most of your time within festival space?</li> <li>• Which stages did you attend? What do you remember about that experience?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you experience yourself at the festival?</li> <li>• How was your experience of your self at the music festival different than in your day-to-day life?</li> <li>• How did your understanding of your self change during the music festival?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you describe any heightened experiences you had during your time at the music festival?</li> <li>• Can you describe anything that you saw shocked or disturbed you at the festival?</li> <li>• Can you describe any activities at the festival that you normally would not have?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does community exist at Lollapalooza?</li> <li>• What different communities exist at the festival?</li> <li>• How is community at the music festival different than in your day-to-day life?</li> </ul>

While at the festival, I presented participants with a letter explaining the purpose of the study and my contact information (see Appendix B). Participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix C). Interviews for this study took approximately one hour. The interviews took place after Lollapalooza has finished.

The responses from the two email surveys that were gathered were transcribed and coded. As another method of data collection, I kept a journal to record my thoughts as I went through the interview process. Due to the small number of respondents from the original pool of interviewees, a Facebook account was set up to try and get more festival

participants interested in participating in the study. After posting on the Lollapalooza Facebook page for two weeks, there were two more festival participants interested in participating in the study. The introduction letter and a request for a Skype interview were sent to them, but there was no response. After trying to contact them a few times, I decided to change directions and moved on to other forms of data collections to fill out the data set and gain a better understanding of festival participants' experiences at the festival. At this point in the data collection process, I went to the Lollapalooza message board form and the Lollapalooza Facebook page and extrapolated posts that had content related to experiences at the festival within four months prior to the festival, and four months after the festival. I tried to keep an open mind and not pull posts just that fit into my research questions, but there was likely some bias that crept in when I was extrapolating the posts. There were 251 Facebook posts and 151 Lollapalooza message board forum posts used as the data set. Pseudonyms were used for Facebook and message board post excerpts in Chapter 4. While this form of data collection could be seen as biased, I included anything that was posted that had to with the research questions I was asking as part of this study. I used the theoretical sampling method when compiling the data from Facebook and the Lollapalooza message board. Theoretical sampling is when "categories are 'saturated' when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories" (Charmaz, 2006 p. 113). I asked myself reflective questions as I was collecting the data from the message boards and Facebook as a way to be conscious of my biases and to include all relevant content. The questions I asked myself during this process can be found in Table 5. The reflexive process reminds the researcher to be "conscious of the cultural, political, social, linguistic and ideological origins of one's own



perspective and voice” (Patton, 2002, p. 65). Through this process, I also found my voice as a researcher by recognizing my biases, perspective, and beliefs. The reflexive process involves owning our own perspectives and taking responsibility to communicate authentically the experiences and perspectives we encounter during our inquiry (Patton, 2002). It was also important for me to reflect on my thoughts and experiences as they happened as a way to keep the experience fresh in my mind. I kept a journal of my thoughts throughout the festival of my experiences and observations.

Table 3.4

*Reflexive Questions for Interviews*

<b>General questions</b>	<b>How is <i>self</i> experienced at the music festival?</b>	<b>How is <i>liminal space</i> experienced at the music festival?</b>	<b>How is sense of <i>community</i> experienced at a music festival?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does my own <i>lens</i> limit what I tend to focus on in the interviews?</li> <li>• How are my experiences at the festival limiting my interview questions?</li> <li>• How are my experiences at the festival deepening my interview questions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are my experiences and understandings of <i>self</i> limiting my interview questions?</li> <li>• How are my experiences and understandings of <i>self</i> deepening my interview questions?</li> <li>• What other ways are people's selves expressed at the music festival?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are my experiences and understandings of <i>liminal space</i> limiting my interview questions?</li> <li>• How are my experiences and understandings of <i>liminal space</i> deepening my interview questions?</li> <li>• What other ways is <i>liminal space</i> expressed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are my experiences and understandings of <i>community</i> limiting my interview questions?</li> <li>• How are my experiences and understandings of <i>community</i> deepening my interview questions?</li> <li>• What other ways is <i>community</i> expressed?</li> </ul>

## Data Analysis

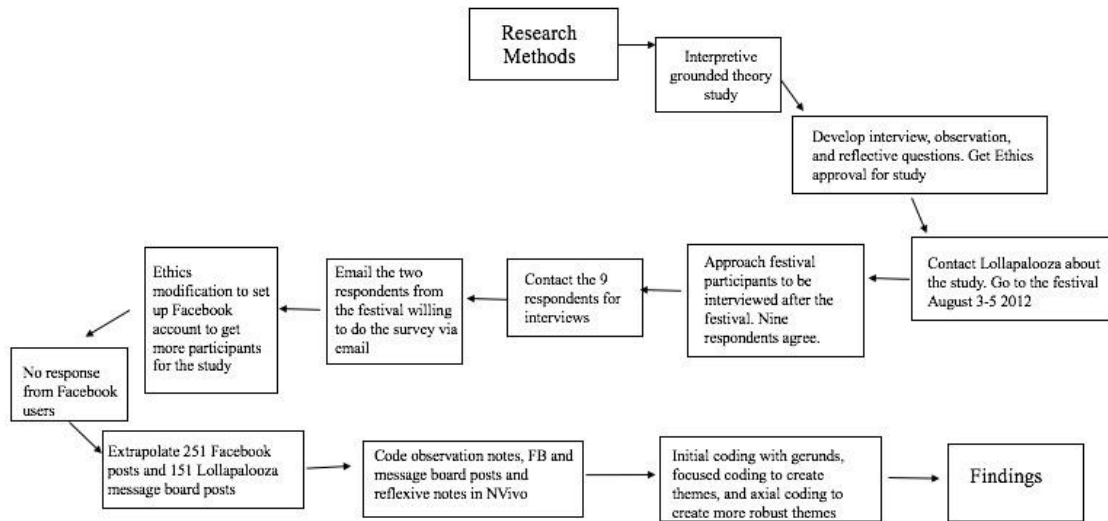


Figure 3.1. Methodological map

During the data analysis stage of my research, I kept my research questions in mind as a way to structure my data:

- a) How is *self* experienced at the music festival?
- b) How is *liminal* space experienced at the music festival?
- c) How is sense of *community* experienced at a music festival?

I used the computer program NVivo to code the data from the email interviews, my notes, and the message board and Facebook posts. Coding the data means to name segments of the data with a label that will categorize and summarize each piece of data (Charmaz, 2006). Coding is the first step in the analysis process and it allows the researcher to make interpretations of data collected. As Charmaz (2006) states, “qualitative codes take segments of data apart, name them in concise terms, and propose an analytic handle to develop abstract ideas for interpreting each segment of data” (p. 45).

Coding is an integral part theorizing process. The advantage of ground theory coding is the researcher can actively act upon the data as it presents itself rather than passively reading through it (Charmaz, 2006). Coding weaves together “the generalizable theoretical statements that transcend specific times and places and contextual analyses of actions and events” (Charmaz, 2006 p. 46).

Coding of the data was completed in three phases. First, I did the initial coding using NVivo to assist with data management. Initial coding was used to saturate the categories of data. Initial coding uses actions to each segment of data rather than to preexisting categories of data (Charmaz, 2006). In this phase, the researcher must try and remain as open to all possible directions to which the data might lend itself. Although I tried to remain open to possible directions, the data was coded to align with the research questions subconsciously. My biases did creep into the coding process and guided the data to fit my biases. Codes were written with the intent of using action language so as to not adopt extant theories before the necessary analytical work (Charmaz, 2006). Many of the codes were written in gerunds as a way to keep the active voice present in the data, but some were not. According to Charmaz (2006), gerunds preserve the fluidity of the experience in the data and give the researcher a different way of viewing it. Gerunds are described as the process of “describing versus description, stating versus statement, and leading versus leader. We gain a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 49). The intent of the coding process was to keep an active voice in the data, that did not happen. The initial coding process allowed me to see gaps in the data and where more research needs to be conducted. As I went through the coding process, I continued to create codes until no new information being presented using line-by-line coding. Line-by-line

coding means that the researcher will assign a code for each line of text in the transcript. Line-by-line coding allows the researcher to think critically about the data and forces the researcher to question the data and its meaning. This allows the researcher to maintain free thought and to not just accept the respondent's worldviews (Charmaz, 2006).

I then moved on to focused coding. Focused coding helped me to narrow down and develop the most salient categories in large batches of data (Charmaz, 2006). In this step, I connected the categories of data that were present to explain the larger segments of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes made the most analytic sense to categorize the data incisively and completely (Charmaz, 2006 p. 57).

During the focused coding phase, I printed off the coded data to look at it as a physical copy. I then went through the assigned codes and number of references to that code and assigned larger thematic names to those codes. I found it easier to visualize the codes and work from a hardcopy than on the computer at this point of my research. I then took those groupings of words and wrote them out on a piece of paper and colour-coded them into major groups (see Figure 3.2). The words that did not fit with the other words I left on their own and kept separate.

Colour-coded themes were then grouped together, including the themes that were not colour coded. It was able to visualize and think deeper about those themes and where they might fit. I then grouped the themes together and came up with a sentence to describe the theme (see Figure 3.3). I found it difficult to come up with a sentence that would encapsulate all the themes into one sentence. There were a few drafts of figure 3.2 before the final sentences were landed upon.

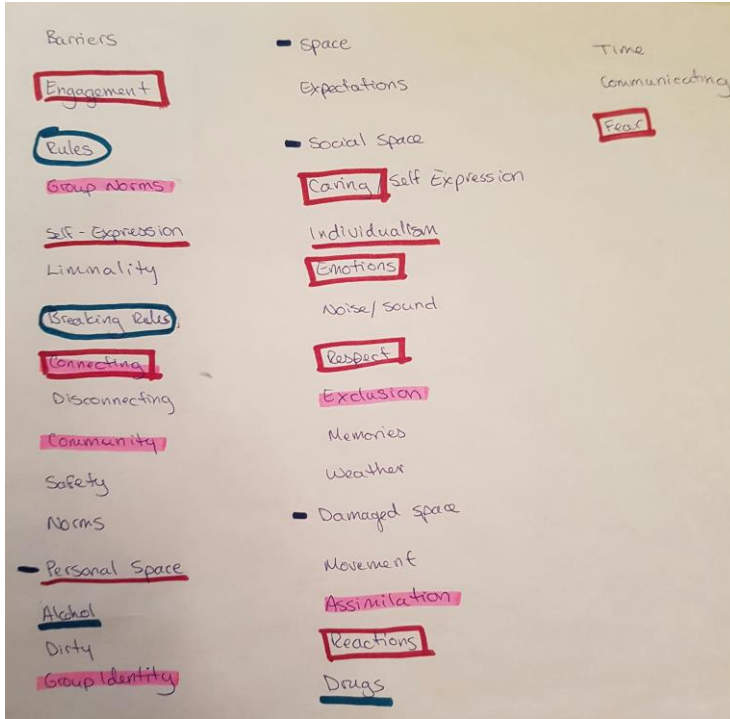


Figure 3.2. Focused codes colour-coded

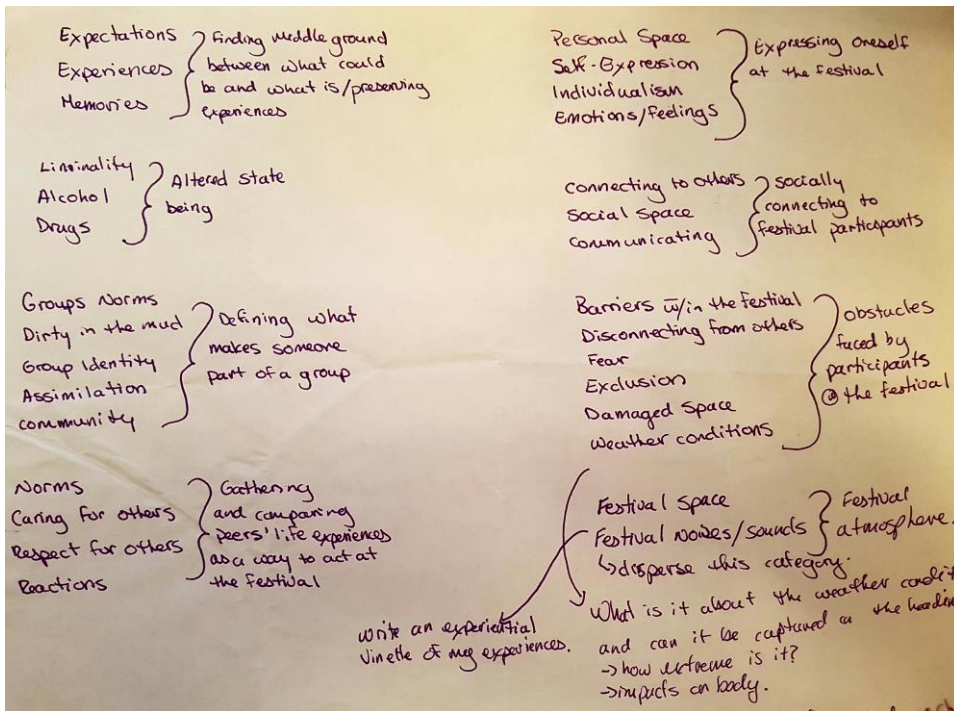


Figure 3.3. Colour-coding grouped into themes, more context in description.

After doing this, eight themes emerged. The themes were: finding middle ground between what could be and what is/preserving experiences, altered state of being, defining what makes someone part of a group, gathering and comparing peers' life experiences as a way to act at the festival, expressing oneself at the festival, socially connecting to festival participants, obstacles faced by participants at the festival, and festival atmosphere. Although the wording of these themes changed over the course of the writing process, it gave me a good foundation to frame my way of thinking about the data and what had emerged.

After focused coding of the data was conducted, I then moved on to the third phase, axial coding. Axial coding is when “the database is reviewed to provide insight into specific coding categories that relate or explain the central phenomenon...information from this coding phase are then organized into a figure, a coding paradigm, that presents a theoretical model of the process under study” (Creswell, 2007 p. 161). While reviewing the themes that emerged in the focused coding phase, I created a spiral diagram to illustrate the themes and where the themes fit into the research questions. See Figure 3.4.

Creating the spiral diagram helped me to formulate and grasp the themes and where exactly they fit into the research questions. Being able to illustrate and look at my themes in this format helped me better understand what was emerging out of the data. The visual representation was a great resource to reference back to during the writing process. The wording around the themes changed during the writing process and different sentences were used to describe them.

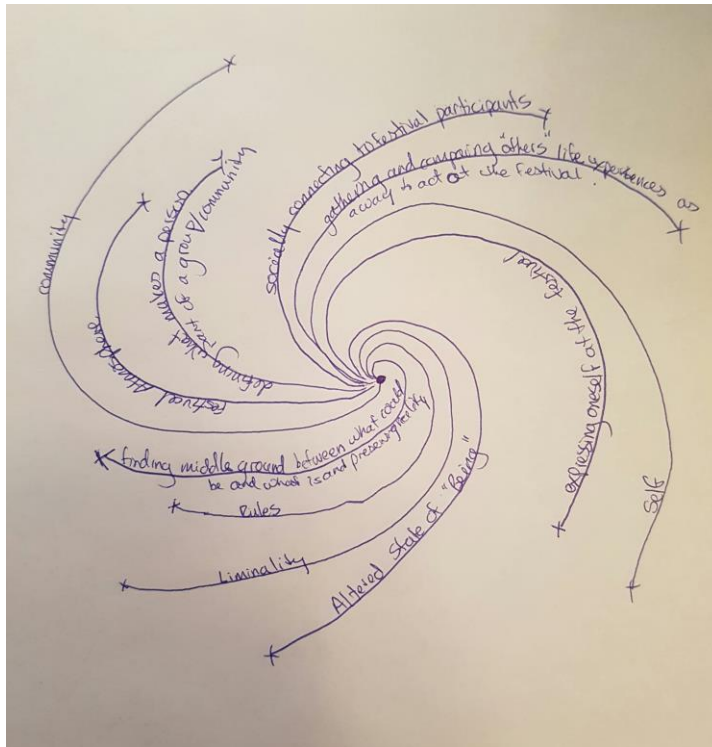


Figure 3.4. Spiral diagram of themes and research questions.

During this part of the coding process, I jotted my thoughts and reflections down as I transcribed the data so that my initial thoughts were taken into account. Charmaz (2006) suggests that memo writing is a critical step when doing a grounded theory study. Memo writing forces the researcher to analyze data and codes early on. Memo writing allowed me to understand my thoughts and ideas and helped me focus on the direction I wanted to pursue. Charmaz (2006) states, “memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue” (p. 72).

Memo writing allows the researcher to stop and think about the data, engage in the category and let their mind move freely around the category. The researcher will then write whatever comes to mind from this experience (Charmaz, 2006). Memo writing helps the researcher “to develop ideas in a narrative form and fullness early in the analytic process”

(p. 82). Memos should be written in the moment without editing to preserve the researcher's natural voice.

After the categories of data were identified, I employed theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling involves saturating the categories with data until no new idea or area of focus emerge (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) states, "when your categories are full, they reflect qualities of your respondents' experiences and provide a useful analytic handle for understanding them" (p. 100). Theoretical sampling allows the researcher to identify areas of the data that need expansion and more data added to it to make it complete as they emerge.

I came across hurdles in the data collection process, but all the experiences and times where I had to adjust to emerging situations helped me better understand the complexity of gathering data for a study. This study taught me how researchers need to remain open to emerging situations and be as adaptable as possible to gather data that will be of relevance to their study. Having to pivot and adjust to situations as they arose helped me keep an open mind and it also highlighted to me that as much as I tried to remain unbiased about the data, it was impossible for my personal biases to not creep in and direct the data in certain directions.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study received approval from the Office of Research Ethics at University of Waterloo. Participants were given an informed consent form to sign when they were approached at Lollapalooza to participate in this study. Participants gave consent for their interview responses to be used in the final write up of this project. To ensure confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms were offered as an option to protect their identity for this



study. I kept the contact cards with participant's names and pseudonyms in a locked drawer in my office at the University of Waterloo.

Confidentiality of participants connecting by email was also assured. By ensuring confidentiality of information, participants were more candid about events and activities that happened at the festival. This allowed for richer responses to my research questions and thicker data. Confidentiality surrounding identity did not need to be ensured for the postings taken from the Lollapalooza message boards and Facebook. People who chose to post on those social media platforms do so willingly knowing it is public and they are identifiable.

There was the potential for participants to discuss illegal activity during the email interviews. Participants were informed that information divulged by participants indicating self-harm or harm to others would have been reported to authorities (as stated in the information letter, see Appendix B). There were no incidences of self-harm or harm to others in the responses.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlines the methodology (interpretivist grounded theory) and methods employed to conduct my research. I have outlined my procedures for participant selection criteria, participant recruitment, data collection, participant observation, and reflexive framework. I have also outlined my approach to data analysis and ethical considerations for this study.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter describes the findings from data collected at Lollapalooza 2012.

Festival participants begin their journey to Lollapalooza long before they set foot in Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois. Their perception of what the festival would be like and what to expect was shaped and heightened by what they saw on television, and read in the news and on message boards and websites. All of these pre-conditions give festival participants a taste of what their experience could be like at the festival. The festival space, noises and sounds, and weather conditions came together to create the experience of Lollapalooza. Each section in this Chapter takes the reader through a first person account of my experiences at the festival in the form of small vignettes as well as a summary of findings from observations and interview data. To differentiate between the vignettes and data collected from festival participants, vignettes about my experience have been italicized.

### **Welcome to Lollapalooza! My Tour Through this Mini-City**

*Chicago was a buzz the weekend of August 3, 2012. Hotels in the downtown core were all booked up. Thousands of festival participants milled around everywhere. Subways and streets were awash with people of a variety of ages, races, and wardrobes. The common symbol was the orange and blue bands for Lollapalooza worn on their wrists. Grant Park is located along the water's edge in downtown Chicago. The large, rectangular park grounds created within the larger city of Chicago were the site for the make-shift mini city that would be the three-day festival of Lollapalooza 2012. Street signs and streetlights hanging above our heads created cues to festival participants that this space was Lollapalooza. For three days, this space was transformed into something new...a new space for another year of experiences to unfold.*

*I had never been to Chicago and had not seen the park before it was transformed, it was hard for me to imagine the enormity of the grounds and how far they spanned through the city. I entered at the South end of the park. It felt small and discrete, perhaps even intimate and unique. It feels like my adventure was well under way! As I walked towards the heavy sounds of bass more and more people donning the orange and blue bands started to fill the sidewalk. We all walked with a hurried step towards the sounds calling us toward our home for the next few days. As we approached the busy street, we crossed as a united force. We walked quickly through the park. The air was hot and sticky, but the strong, sweet smell of the flowers in the little garden filled the air. The tranquility of the garden provided a Zen space that clashed against the strong beats that permeated the air. Through the lush, green bushes a steep set of cement stairs lead down to a busy street where festival participants were trying to navigate through the metal gates into the festival. As I looked down from the top of the stairs, there was a clear view of the entrance to Lollapalooza and the chaos awaiting me. A blonde haired girl in a t-shirt that read "Volunteer" paced up and down the sidewalk asking festival participants if they had any questions. Festival participants pushed past her to get to the gates faster. As we approached the gates, we were greeted by festival security sitting on the gates yelling at us to put our wrists in the air to show the orange and blue bands.*

*At the bottom of the stairs awaited a sea of colour and movement. Instead of fighting against the current of the crowd, I joined the wave of people and moved wherever it let me. I realized the best course of action would be to go with the flow of the mass of people. I knew if I stepped out of the motion of the wave, it would get me nowhere, or worse, trampled by one of the thousands of people in the wave. This realization unnerved*

*me. People flowed through the gates past security. We were swept up into the funnel of traffic flow. Security personnel seemed to really enjoy corralling people through the gates and yelling at festival participants as they passed through. They asked to look in our bags. I was not worried about one of my possessions being thrown out. I had poured over the list of items permitted within festival grounds. As security personnel looked in people's bags, prohibited items clattered as they were tossed into large garbage bins—the sound of rules being enforced. Even though items were being confiscated, security did not seem too interested in what was in my bag and hardly looked at what I had brought in. Maybe it was the extreme heat engulfing Chicago, or maybe some other reason, but I could have had anything in that bag, and I suspect it would not have been thrown out.*

*After passing through the security bag check area, I was corralled through a tent with large grey poles that read the radio frequency tags imbedded inside our orange and blue wristbands. The tent provided momentary relief from the burning, hot sun beating down on us. The air was so thick I felt like I was swimming through the spaces not occupied by bodies trying to get into the festival. Lollapalooza volunteers told us to tap our wrists against the grey poles to “check-in.” As I tapped my wrist against the pole, there was a loud beep and the pole turned green. Finally! I was accepted to go inside and beyond the check-in/check-out points. A sea of people flowed down a long paved street. The bodies filling the space made it hard to judge how far the street extended.*

*Sun beat down on me as I walked. On either side of the street ran trees and shade. In these spaces people tried to get relief from the heat. As I walked along, I again found it easiest to flow with the current of the crowd and not against it. Walking along with thousands of strangers, trying to find my way through the festival, I felt like at any second I*

would get swept up in some mass crowd experience and end up somewhere I had not wanted to go. The force of movement from festival participants felt very strong.

Soon, the flow of the crowd divided as participants broke through the trees into areas holding different stages. There were so many options, I could not quite decide where I wanted to go first. Music from each stage clashed against each other, creating an unimaginable cacophony. To grapple with the vastness of the festival I settled on touring the whole grounds before making my decision about what to see first.

I found the portable washrooms! Washrooms closest to the South entrance seemed to be less frequently used than the ones across from Perry's Lounge. It was comforting to know these washrooms were generally well stocked with toilet paper and hand sanitizer. I did not feel like I was being forced into a world of filth. My basic needs were being met. Festival participants walked around the numerous tents that lined the street. Eager volunteers shoved glossy pamphlets into our hands as we passed. We were bombarded by people telling us of the things we needed to know. Most of what they were saying was lost in the din of the crowd. As I was reaching out to take a map from a volunteer, a golf cart whizzed past me, then another. People were constantly moving from place to place, always on a mission.

Pouring over the small glossy map, I tried to figure out which stage to take in first. I settled on the Budlight stage because it was closest. I started to inch closer and closer to the outside of the pack of people so I could get out. I skirted the crowd to a row of tall, luscious green trees provided plenty of shade. It felt so good to be in the shade! I felt relief after all that time in the sun. Later, I treaded carefully as I descended the hill, mindful of people sleeping on the hard dirt. I was astounded they were able to just let go and not fear

*being trampled by the hundreds of feet passing mere inches away. Soon, a vast open grass space greeted me with plenty of options of places to situate myself. Regardless of where I choose to sit, I was guaranteed a great view of the performance and of those who were taking it in around me. I stepped onto the crunchy, hot grass and made my way across the field. Two jumbo screens were mounted on either side of the stage. Every time the camera panned across the crowd, people would scream out in excitement. I found my “spot” at the middle side of the crowd. Even though I was at the front of the crowd, I still felt like I was close enough to be connected to the performance and people around me.*

*Beside the Budlight stage, the Playstation stage did not seem to attract a large audience. Most people at this stage’s chose to stand to avoid the hot concrete touching their skin. At the Playstation stage, devoid of grass and comfortable places to watch the performance, an inclining concrete surface left festival participants desperately trying to get comfortable on a tiny grassy area where the Budlight stage met the concrete of the Playstation stage. Some of the more fortunate observers stood, sat or lay under shade nearby.*

*Beyond these first two stages, two large tents were lined one hundred people deep. One sold water bottles and backpacks for water. The second contained a water refill station. As the hot sun beat down, the water seemed further and further away. People grew impatient. For me, the water would have to wait. There was more I wanted to see. As I walked around the large water line to a small set of cement stairs, a path of gold glitter led to a square tarp where a large gold sphinx perched. On one side, a list of performers with set times and locations. Large, bright letters were inviting and it was very hard to decide where to go next. The other side of the tarp described where to find the washrooms,*

*merchandise, first aid, and other general information. This was all the practical information I needed. As I moved past the sphinx, I saw that a large, circular fountain surrounded by fencing sat in the middle of the circular area. People milled around the fountain. I soon discovered this was the general meeting place. Festival participants used this area to socialize. They took pictures and sat on nearby benches that lined the area. A gate around the fountain was meant to protect the fountain from festival goers; however, some people still managed to get across. In the heat the fountain and the sound of rippling water invited us—like an oasis in a desert. Behind the fountain, walls of vendor tents were lined with t-shirts displaying the colourful images of Lollapalooza. Crowds of people lined up to buy mementos. If you stood behind the tents, the calming waves of Lake Michigan could be heard in contrast to the strong beats and voices of Lollapalooza.*

*I moved back to the front of the fountain and found a short pathway that linked up to the main entrance of the festival. The main entrance was grand in comparison to the small, intimate entrance to the South where I had entered. A semi-circular driveway lead to archway affixed with letters spelling “Lollapalooza” framed the main gates. The white lettering was large, but difficult to see during the day but at night, the letters lit up and illuminated the area (see Figure 4.1). As I stood here, the spaciousness of this grand entrance provided a more open, calming feeling than the smaller entrance through which I had passed earlier that day. There was plenty of space for festival participants to move around and security staff seemed calmer and dispersed. They spoke in clear and calm voices to festival participants as they passed through the bag check and sign-in poles.*



*Figure 4.1. Lollapalooza sign at main entrance (photograph taken by M. L. Bartlett, August 3, 2012).*

*To the right of the main gates stood a small farmers market and seating area with picnic tables. A variety of different vendors sold fresh produce as well as clothing and souvenirs. I stopped at a vendor selling hundreds of hats in all shapes and styles. I purchased a straw fedora to protect me from the relentless beating sun. I made a note to come back later to window shop between performances. Vendors actively engaged festival participants, talking about their products and the festival as they passed. Considerably less commercialized, the absence of glossy posters selling big name companies made this area seem more inviting and genuine. Every picnic table was full. Finding a spot to sit was difficult as festival participants tried to get out of the heat and into the shade. Everywhere shade fell, a person stood or sat in it.*

*Across from this seating area, “Chow Town” sold a variety of foods and took up a whole city block. Each tent had the same font and colour scheme as festival colours. This*



*uniform signage and design helped to down play any sense of commercialism to this part of the event but made it hard to choose what to eat, as the logos did not stand out from any great distance away. I walked up and down the street trying to figure out what type of food to get. I later discovered that food lineups were quite long regardless of the time or who was performing.*

*With food now in hand, I walked around trying to find a place to sit and eat and found a refuge in the middle of the festival—a small tent behind Chow Town. The sound of laughter and music could be heard as I approached. The tent was open on all sides and inside sat white inflatable couches on raised platforms and coloured square stools. As I walked into the tent, I was greeted by a staff person. I looked on my map and realized I was at “Uncorked”, the wine tent. I approached the bar and was asked if I wanted to buy a glass of wine or a water bottle full of wine. I decided on a glass and walked to one of the raised platforms. People sat on the couches drinking, and a fair number of people sat relaxing without wine. I found out the area was open to anyone wanting to use it. Across from the wine tent, I could see a small shaded area with large brightly coloured padded squares for people to sit on. Tables with umbrellas provided a great place to cool down and relax.*

*After taking time to relax with my shade, wine, and food, I moved past Uncorked and Chow Town and into the two main stages. As I passed through the main street, I had a choice to go right, which housed Perry’s Lounge. The area just outside of Perry’s Lounge was flanked with a row of heavily used portable washrooms. The streets glistened with something leaking from one of the portable washrooms. Festival participants streamed out of Perry’s Lounge in bright colours, glitter, and costumes and ran into line for the portable*

washrooms. I could overhear bits of conversations. Listening in was a fun, I had the sense that everyone was high on life, or some other substance. Across from the portable washrooms a row of ambulances and paramedics stood at the ready.

Beyond, a large field housed the other two main stages and a path of glitter lead to the edge of the trees where the street met the opening to the stage. Festival participants with costumes and props and buzzing with energy rushed past me and into this area. Music from this stage over-powered the whole festival. Strong and pounding beats emerging from Perry's Lounge clashed against melodic sounds from performers at different stages. I walked through the bushes to a small set of stairs that led down into the valley of the grounds. Full of people, the stairs were narrow and hard to navigate. The grass was brown and crunchy and looked baked in the sun, much like the many sunburnt, tired festival participants in this area. Festival participants sat along the edges of the stages on the sloped hill and only a few trees provided any sort of relief from the sun. A sea of colour and noise filled this space in defiance of the heat.

As I continued to walk through the festival on this first day, no matter what stage or area I was in, there was a sea of colour as far as my eyes could see. Many festival participants were dressed in bright colours or costumes and became a focal point to the festivals. Other festival participants would stop and ask to have their pictures taken with the adorned patron.

As the darkness as night fell, backlit screens from festival participants' cameras and cell phones and camera flashes sparkled and twinkled across the landscape and lit up the night. Faces of festival participants were lit up with smiles and open mouths singing. I felt

*desperate to capture what was happening. It felt like an intangible and fleeting moment in time. This was Lollapalooza. I had arrived!*

### **Cruisin' the Crowd at Lollapalooza: Atmosphere and Energy**

*Time is ticking. I need to push my way through the crowd to the next show. I look ahead of me and thousands of people have the same idea. We all want to get from one side of the festival to the other as quickly as possible to soak in every possible moment of the performances. The swirl of movement from people headed in this direction is strong and forceful. I join the crowd from the back and go with the force. We move along the grassy field towards the fountain area. As we approach, there is a little passageway between the grassy area and the stairs. People have to start to squeeze in and take turns getting through the tight, constricted spot. As I pass through it, I am confined and suffocated by the heat beating down on the grass and the number of hot bodies in such a small space. The odorous smell of sweat fills the air. Finally, I make it out into the open area. Freedom! There is little more than one inch of space between myself and the next person. I can stretch my legs, arms and mind as I make my way across the park. The smidgeon of space I have acquired allows me to look at the people around me and see their individuality expressed in the bright, loud, costumes and clothing they wear and the vibe they emanate into festival space.*

For some, the crowds contributed to the “energy” and experience of Lollapalooza. “Jasmine”, who worked at the Uncorked wine tent, was able to experience the festival space before ticket holders were able to enter the park. She said “I entered the festival a few hours before it was open to the ticket holders and it was empty but buzzing with the energy

that was about to fill the park. Once the paying customers came into the park, everyone jumped into action and the place came alive.” (Jasmine, Interview).

As soon as I arrived at the festival, I could feel the presence of group norms being established to let festival participants know what was acceptable and what was not. One of my first observations I made about the festival was that people were moving together as a group from place to place. I wrote in my notebook that “I keep walking with the flow of traffic so that I don’t get stepped on. It’s hard figuring out what direction to go in and how to get out of the flow of traffic. It has to be strategic and slow.” Even though festival participants were walking at a slower pace, the mass of the people moving dictated that you walked with the group or found a different path to get where you were going. Movement of people was an important aspect of the festival. Festival participants were constantly moving from place to place. The only times the groups seemed to stop moving as much was when headliner performers were on stage, but even then there was a constant flow of people coming in and out of those areas to see the performances.

Crowding and the crowds were also perceived more negatively when participants spoke or wrote about the festival. Some participants described frustration over the number of people at the festival. Some targeted a specific group, mainly the younger participants, as being the cause of their frustration. Festival participants made reference to the increase in tickets sold as a negative experience that impacted the physical space and how they were able to consume the space. A Facebook user wrote, “My main complaint was the ridiculous amount of tickets sold this year. (This just so happened to make the number of shitty kids

much, much greater). The amount of trendy little mother fuckers is factual.” (“Tim”, Facebook post, August 11, 2012).

### **Movement and Expression - Norming Space at Performances**

Festival participants felt very strongly about the space they occupied with other participants over the three-days of Lollapalooza. There was also a noticeable difference in the use of space between festival participants who enjoyed being in the crowd at the different stages, and those who did not. At most of the stages, some festival participants would get close to the stage to see the performer, others stood or sat toward the back of the crowd. In addition, at all stages, there were the festival participants who sat on the hills close to the stage but removed from the main crowd. These festival participants seemed to be in a crowd of their own; sitting to the side of the stage allowed them to be part of the experience but at their own comfort level.

Body movement—walking, dancing, and swaying to the music—was normed in the space at Lollapalooza. Participants who started to dance at the various stages appeared uninhibited and seemed to be enjoying themselves in their surroundings. I made numerous observations at the various stages of festival participants moving to the heavy beats of the music. At the Google+ stage, festival participants jumped up and down with their hands in the air to the aggressive beats that the performer was spitting out. As a participant at the festival, there were times when I could feel the music through my whole body. In these times I found it hard not to move to the music and express myself, and how I was feeling in that moment. Depending on where festival participants were situated, different group norms were established in the crowds.

**“I want to go up!” Catching the wave at the front of the crowd.**

*“I want to go up!” a festival participant screams among the crowd. And just like that, I look up and see a pair of feet floating above the nodding heads in the audience. I am far enough back in the crowd that I am not being forced to participate in this activity. For this, I am thankful. I watch as this crowd surfer’s feet get flung around, kicking people in the head. Some of the crowd embraces this part of festival culture willingly. Others seem annoyed and do not join in. And then, just like that, the body stops floating and is lowered to the ground. Within seconds, a different person gets hoisted up to float above the crowd. Connected to the people below them, whose hands and strength move them above the crowd, they surf the wave.*

Different rules applied at the front of the crowd. There was no space between festival participants at the front of the stage. Standing was the only option and crowd surfing was often present at the larger performances. Festival participants identified crowd surfing etiquette as an activity that had group norms and rules to be followed. Along with large crowds being a negative experience, some festival participants identified crowd surfing as an activity that affected the festival atmosphere and space. While some respondents identified crowd surfing as a positive avenue for crowd behaviour in the festival space, others did not. In a conversation between four Facebook users, the following was said:

“Let’s bring back crowd surfing next year. I don’t see why that or having someone on your shoulders is a problem at all, and nobody cared in 2011” (“Tony”, Facebook post, August 12, 2012)

“We crowd surfed in an inflatable boat at Perry’s [stage] this year” (“Sam”, Facebook post, August 12, 2012)

“If you’re shit faced and she’s heavy that’s a serious accident waiting to happen. Don’t be a moron next year” (“Simon”, Facebook post, August 12, 2012)

“Crowd surfing is fun...in moderation. But there is such a thing as too much. Case in point, MGMT [the band] at Lolla 2010. That was ridiculous and almost ruined the show for a ton of us” (“James”, Facebook post, August 13, 2012).

In these posts, participants continued the debate about crowd surfing as they each defined what they felt was acceptable, and what was not, in the festival space.

There was a level of risk this group accepted as a norm for being at the front of the performance. Festival participants identified the number of people getting hurt at the front of the stage as a problem by saying “if people can’t handle themselves to a point where other people are getting hurt or they can’t have fun, those people ruining it need to be taken out of the crowd” (“Jennifer”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012) and “it was intense, I felt bad for the girls getting crushed by huge dudes. Kicks to the head, elbows to the back, not only the guys but the girls also” (“Karen”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012) and “crowd surfing is annoying-I want to enjoy the music, not heft someone’s ass or get kicked in the head” (“Tanya”, Facebook post, August 13, 2012).

### **Mid-Crowd Transitions**

On the Sunday evening of the festival, I was at the back of the crowd to see *Florance and the Machine*. I could not get any closer to the stage because of the sheer size of the crowd that had gathered. Soon, I was immersed into the middle of the group of participants at this stage. Group norms then changed dramatically by the band took the stage. Festival participants all stood in this area and put their blankets that they were sitting on away. When two girls were lifted on their boyfriend’s shoulders to see the performance

better, the group made comments about them obstructing people's views and expressed feelings of annoyance.

### **Divergence at the back of the crowd**

Body movement occurred mostly at the back of the crowd where there was more space. At the back of the crowd, people were spread out and personal space barriers were established and respected. There seemed to be a few feet of space between people watching the stage. Back of the stage seemed more relaxed and calm. I noted "people stand at the back of the crowd, nodding their heads along with the music. The nods look uniform and in time with the beats." Those at the back of the crowds seemed to be less willing to participate in collective moments occurring during performances. At the back of the crowd, more festival participants sat rather than standing for performances. This group of people seemed more engaged with each other, than the performance. It seemed acceptable to talk through the performance. During Black Sabbath, there were few if any festival participants at the back who decided to clap along when Ozzy Osborne asked them to do so. Festival participants at the front of the stage clapped along.

One female at the Sony stage on the Sunday afternoon expressed herself through dance, "The girl that is doing the interpretive dance is pretty awesome. She is expressing herself through movement and expression. She doesn't care who is watching her." Some participants also used tools such as hula-hoops to express their body movements. I observed the following on the first night of the festival "She is expressing herself through the flashing lights on her hula-hoop and her bathing suit. She swirls to the music. The men are watching as the lights on her hula-hoop change colours and as her body moves to the rhythm." From my observations, many of the women using hula-hoops would use it at the



back of the crowd. This area was the most spacious space where they were able to spread out and move freely without physically touching others

### **Moments and Movements Induced by Weather**

Weather conditions at Lollapalooza influenced festival participants to movement in different ways. Weather conditions affected how participants took in festival space: hot sun at the festival beginning, mid-festival evacuation before the severe thunderstorm, and after the storm that occurred late on the Saturday afternoon of the festival. Festival participants were forced to adapt and change how they interacted with each other in the physical boundaries surrounding the various stages, as well as well as how they navigated through the rest of the open areas within the festival.

#### **Hot fun in the summertime**

*This heat is unforgiving. From the minute I made my way up from the subway to above ground in downtown Chicago, I instantly hit a wall of heat and humidity. Each piece of clothing I wear hurts as it sticks to my body and makes me feel even hotter. As I walk through the crowd, I am very careful not to touch anyone around me. I don't want to feel their sticky, hot skin against mine. It's just too icky. Heat coming off people's bodies is almost as unbearable as touching your bare skin against the burning pavement. The girl walking ahead of me is wearing a tank top and a purse. As she swings her purse over her other shoulder, it reveals just how burnt her skin is as a band of pale skin untouched by the searing sun stands in contrast.*

*I see a haze of smog lying low in the air as I walk through it. Three tanned shirtless guys pass me walking quickly to get through the crowd. Four girls in bikinis, mesh tops,*

*and short shorts trail behind them. The lack of clothing seems appropriate here. It's just too hot to wear anything.*

The heat acted as a platform to enhance sexual expression through clothing- people wore less clothing or went topless; however, extreme heat and humidity impacted our proximity and touching. From my observations, there seemed to be fewer festival participants engaging in touching of any kind and in the crowds there was quite a bit of space between participants and between groups especially toward the back of the crowd. There seemed to be an unspoken rule that those at the front of the crowd at a stage had to accept being touched and shoulder to shoulder to the next person.

### **Here comes the rain...**

*Something big is about to happen. The clouds have turned black directly above me. The festival is being shut down...how is this happening? I'm frantically looking around for someone in authority to ask what is happening, or what I should do, but I can't see a single person. What happened to all the people who were there to help?*

*I head towards the Red Bull stage knowing full well I will probably get in trouble for being in the field but I am pretty sure I can find someone to help me. I'm walking into the mass crowd heading off the field into the paved streets within the festival. I need to stop one of the orange shirt guys and ask if the venue was closing for sure. "Yes" he says.*

*I make my way through the crowd of people to the front gate. I wiggle through the crowd of forceful movement as fast as I can. I pass three guys, shirtless, hats backwards, very tanned. Their stumbling along signals that they have likely been drinking; one looked at the other two and said, "I'm not leaving and if they want me to, they will have to drag*

*me out.” I think he didn’t want to leave the venue because it meant more to him than just the music...or least it did to me, but I was too scared to stay.*

*The flow of traffic is strong, like a current in water. If I go against it, I will get trampled. The sky is getting darker and darker, it looks like it is going to open up and rain down it’s furry. Festival participants approach the large grey poles and forcefully hit their wrists against it, only this time there is no beep. There is no record of anyone having left. All the electricity has been turned off.*

*Police have given up trying to maintain order. Thousands of festival participants walk quickly in every direction to get as far away from the venue as possible. The chaos in front of me somehow created a sense of order.*

The severe thunderstorm that occurred was a common thread of interest among festival participants. Some respondents talked about how the evacuation of the festival was well organized and helped to create a safe space within the park:

The evacuation plan went pretty well as 100,000 fans were forced to leave Lolla but the problem was that the system of severe thunderstorms that honed in on Lolla raced at a speed of 50 to 60 mph. I think there was about a good 10-20 minutes of lead time for the evacuation but with the storms going too fast, some evacuees still could not leave the park fast enough before the first blasts of heavy rains and high winds and lightening came through. Lead-time should have been about at least 30 minutes for the evacuation order...that would have been better. (“Chuck”, Facebook post, September 2, 2012).

Another Facebook user expressed support for how the evacuation and storm was handled: “it was unfortunate that they closed but still, how fast everyone got out, no injuries, and back in two hours, with an adjusted schedule, and grounds crews covering mud holes...I thought it was well handled.” (“Alex”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

Other respondents expressed frustration and annoyance at how the evacuation was executed. A Facebook user noted, “they didn’t give any instruction except get out! You

can't assume that everyone has a smart phone and that that everyone knows their way around the city" ("Paul", Facebook post, August 6, 2012). Festival participants identified the evacuation of the festival as being "unclear", "slightly frustrating", "disappointing" and "chaotic." Participants described the lack of communication between festival participants and festival volunteers and organizers about where to go and what was happening.

Facebook user "Kim" stated:

Pretty disappointed at the way the evacuation was handled. We asked where we should go, and the guy at the gate just told me he didn't know. You should have handled that better and kept your festival goers safer. (Facebook post, August 7, 2012).

Festival participants described being upset that they were asked to leave. Despite this, I noted in my observations that even during the evacuation, festival participants were still moving as a group out of the park. Again, one had to move with the flow of traffic so you did not get trampled. Frustrations described in comments posted after the festival are echoed in the following example. "Shawna" noted in her response to the questionnaire that one of the heightened experiences at the festival was

the insanity of leaving the festival for the rain out and wondering if the whole thing was going to get cancelled. Being at McDonalds in the torrential downpour and then having the clouds clear and headed back. The crowds by the doors being a bit surly and hoping they didn't start trouble so that the festival could resume (Shawna, Interview).

As a participant in the festival, there was a definite sense of unease about going back into the festival grounds after it had re-opened. The unknown was creating an odd energy on the way back to the festival, and it seemed like a new community had been created.

Jasmine commented in her response that the median age of festival participants dropped after the festival had re-opened. She suggested it was because older festival

participants did not want “to deal with the hassle of finding shelter or getting drenched before coming back in” (Jasmine, Interview).

### Emergence of the mud people

Figure 4.2. Mud people (photograph taken by M. L. Bartlett, August 4, 2012)



*As quickly as the sky had darkened, it just as quickly turned light. Looking out the large glass windows of my hotel room, I can see people around my age walking towards the direction of the festival grounds. There was a sense of excitement and anticipation about being able to go back, but also a sense of apprehension. What did the festival space look like? Had anything changed or was everything just as I had left it? I grabbed my bright yellow rain boots and suited up for the adventure ahead. I was prepared and ready to go through anything that those grounds could throw at me.*

*My rubber boots made my feet hot, but the rest of me was cooling off. The air had finally cleared and my clothes no longer stuck to me. There was a slight breeze in the air. The movement of air was calming and reassuring.*

There was a lack of postings from festival participants in the data collected that indicated problems at the gates or within the festival once the festival re-opened. The

postings that referred to the conditions of the park after it re-opened pertained to the mud and mud people who formed a community within the overall Lollapalooza festival community that already existed.

The rains brought spontaneous access to a different costume: mud. There were quite a few postings and comments about the mud and the mud people. The mud made these individuals seemingly act differently in terms of their interactions with other festival participants by splashing mud on them to make them part of this new group. I noted in my observations that this group “are in the in-between state because they are acting erratic and crazy by throwing and splashing mud on strangers in the crowd. They seem to have taken on a totally different personae.” Festival participants reacted to the mud in different ways. There appeared to be a divide among festival participants between those fully immersed in the mud experience and those who watched. Some festival participants were okay with the mud being thrown on them and embraced the experience, while others tried to avoid it and seemed annoyed with through their body language (crossed arms, rigid posture). In my observations, participant’s reactions to the mud and how it helped to formulate my opinions about community, I noted:

I have come to this understanding of community because of the “us versus them” mentality. Those that are covered in mud are taking pleasure in jumping in the mud and trying to splash the people that aren’t muddy as a way to include them in their “group.” That group seems to be its own community and they are trying to get more members by splashing more and more people. It seems like the more people get splashed and realize they aren’t clean anymore, the more they embrace getting dirty and moving on. The people that got splashed by the mud might not feel as though they are part of this new community that is forming. I am assuming they are since some of them are then going around and splashing others. It is almost like an initiation is taking place.

Reflecting upon my experiences at Lollapalooza as a researcher and participant, I have come to realize that the mud people signified the concept of chaos to me. These

participants were splashing around and getting festival participants dirty who didn't necessarily want to get dirty. These actions could have been seen as being inclusive, but also as aggressive and unwanted. I controlled my interactions with the mud by bringing rain boots with me to the festival. I was able to be part of the chaos but in a controlled way.

I decided not to join the mud people because I would have gotten dirty and I didn't want anything to happen to my notebook and papers. My role during that time was to be the observer I felt, and not a participant. If I had been there solely as a festival participant, I still don't think I would have joined in. I like to be clean and I have a hard time letting go.

### **Connections and Communication at Lolla**

One of the main themes that resonated out of the postings on Facebook and the Lollapalooza message board centered around experiences past participants had at the festival or their expectations of what they wanted to happen while there for the coming year. There was a tone of condescension and frustration in some of the postings even though it was often cloaked in a tone of helpful suggestions. One user asked for tips on what to expect for their first time at Lollapalooza. Suggestions ranged from "don't eat drugs you find. If it's on the ground, it's probably not an accident. I've seen people OD [over dose] by picking something up and putting it in their mouth", "Participate. There's a lot of activities to do around the park that aren't show related. Visit vendor footprints for free fest swag", to "Do one thing you're going to regret Monday or wouldn't normally do. Have an experience. That's what its alllll about." ("Carl", Lollapolooza message board, July 20, 2012).

As someone attending Lollapalooza for the first time, after reading the message boards of what to expect, I had an overwhelming sense that Lollapalooza was going to be a

crazy time. My definition of crazy time and someone else's definition would be quite different, but I felt like I was part of an exclusive community that was going to get to take part of this large event that would take over the downtown of Chicago.

Festival participants tried to connect to each other, by creating a social space, and using a variety of different methods to communicate. I noted in my observations that there seemed to be similar types of communication between festival participants repeating at each stage. There were the groups of participants who were known to each other and would only speak to each other. There were festival participants who appeared to be more extroverted and would talk to those around them whether they knew them or not. These participants seemed very interested in communication and wanted to engage fully with those around them. There were also participants who kept to themselves and would either sit/stand at the very back of the performance area or they would talk to one other person who was known to them. For some, the communication and social aspect of the festival seemed to be the most important and for others, it was the performance or just being around their friends and experiencing the festival alongside them.

One of the questions in the questionnaire I gave to festival participants asked, "How did you experience yourself at the festival?" Responses described feelings of connection, shared experiences, and an energizing experience from the large crowds. Similar responses were posted on Facebook and the message board forum of gratitude for the crowds, music, and experiences. Phrases such as "celebrating the festival as a family", "everyone was awesome", and "Kudos" were used to describe the after thoughts about the festival.



## Find me!

Figure 4.3. Rubber duck on a stick (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 4, 2012)



*There are thousands of people waiting patiently for the band to take the stage. The crowd is milling around. I look over to my right and see a pink pig, with sunglasses and wings flapping in the air above people's heads. The pig moves gracefully through the crowd. From where I was standing, I couldn't see exactly who held the pig, or what was going on. The performance starts, and like that, the pig disappears from sight. I am fixated on the performance and forget about the pig, until out of nowhere I see a guy walking towards me with a long stick. I look up, and there is the piggy. I hear the male say to the people behind him "follow the pig if you get lost" and they all trailed after him.*

Festival goers used signs, markers, costumes, and flags to communicate non-verbally to group members where to go within the festival and who was part of the group. On the first day of the festival, there were a few objects, mainly stuffed animals on sticks, pool noodles, and brooms.

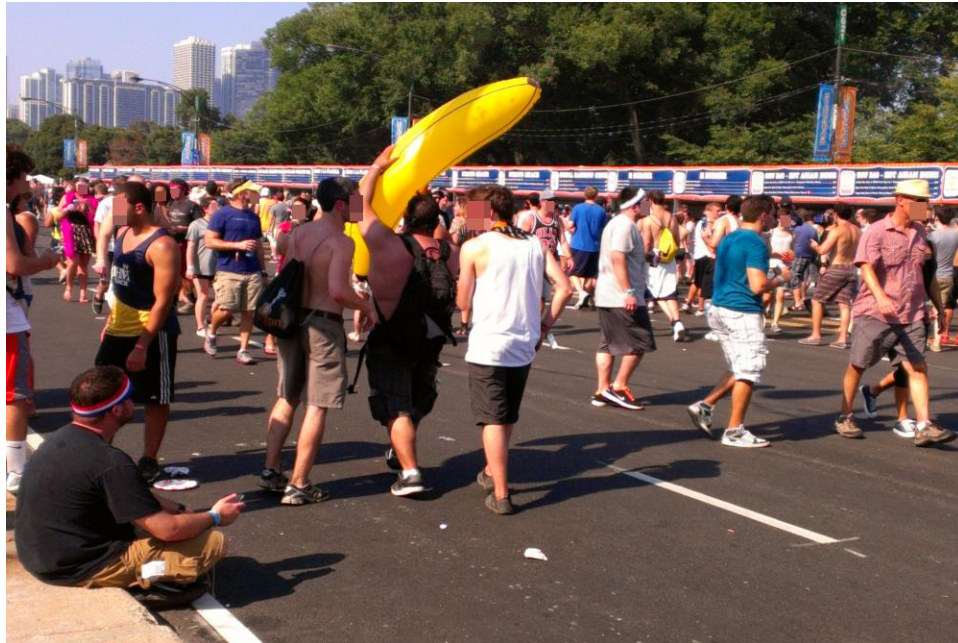
*Figure 4.4.* Pig with wings and dinosaur on a pool noodle (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 4, 2012)



*Figure 4.5.* Hulk fist on a street sign (photograph taken by M. L. Bartlett, August 5, 2012)



*Figure 4.6.* Inflated banana (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 5, 2012)



The second day of the festival, objects on sticks were replaced with helium balloons shaped like animals or objects. By the third day, the objects on sticks were back and the balloons were less visible among the crowd. When looking at a crowd watching a performance, it was easy to spot one of these markers on a stick moving through the crowd with a group of festival participants trailing behind it.

### **Follow the bat signal**

Festival participants used gestures such as the “rocking out” symbol while in the crowd to express their admiration and connection to the music during performances. Another gesture that was used in expressing oneself was for festival participants to put their hands in the air during performances. This was a visual cue to the performers that the crowd was connecting to their performance. Others signals were used to help individuals find their groups.

*The ground is so muddy, but everyone is so happy to be back at the festival that no one seems to care. I'm standing in the large crowd towards the middle waiting for the Bloc Party [the band] performance to begin. Festival participants mill around in the mud, trying to get across the sinking ground before they lose their shoes. Behind me stands a group of two males and three females with their pinky finger in the air and their three other fingers making a closed "c" touching their thumb. I had to know what they were doing. I turn around and ask the group what the symbol stood for. They responded it was to indicate to their other group members that this is where they were and that this was their special code to one another.*

Due to the number of people within the festival space, it was very hard to get a phone signal to send or receive text messages. A common form of communication to find group members was through the use of hand signals. I noted in my observations that the number of markers and signals being used by festival seemed to increase in number over the course of the three days. Some of the more experienced festival participants, possibly ones who had attended Lollapalooza previously, came to the festival prepared with these markers. Soon other groups of festival participants started to adopt this method of communication and there was a definite visible increase in the number of visual markers from the first day to the last day.

### **The battle and norming of lifestyles at Lolla**

Festival participants also connected over norms created around stereotypes associated with ageism. Festival participants identified age as being an indicator for behaviour and how one should act while at the festival. Festival participants used words like "kids", "teeny bopper pricks", "snob ass 15 yr old rich kids", and "douche bags" to

describe people they encountered at Lollapalooza who did not align with their social norms. Many of the negative behaviours described in the postings focused on younger festival participants. As explored above, there was a lot of mention of Perry's Lounge [stage], which was the stage dedicated to electronic dance music. A Facebook user noted "a little crazy is fine...young douchebags are not. I don't pay \$250 every year to go to Perry's [stage], so I really don't care about what goes on there. It's when the douchebaggery is all the fuck around the park!!" ("Mary", Facebook post, August 7, 2012) to which another Facebook user commented, "it was ridiculous, and 90% of them were assholes." ("Jimmy", Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

There were also a few postings pertaining to the younger festival participants' impact on families at the festival. One Facebook user commented "there were so many spoiled, irresponsible, rude kids there, it was hard for my child and I to enjoy ourselves. Between the underage drunk girls, and sloppy fat dude hyped up on red bull the crowd was by far the worst aspect of the festival. My family and I travel all over the world for music festivals, and the Chicago crowd was nauseating" ("Sarah", Facebook post, August 12, 2012). Although Lollapalooza had a festival dedicated to children's music, there were no references to it in the survey responses or from the Facebook page or message board forum. There was one posting on the message board forum that addressed parent's responsibility towards their children's safety at the festival that said:

Kudos to the parents who brought their kids to Sabbath [Black Sabbath the band] and were on the stage-right side of the crowd. Handful of times I saw those kids rocking out like crazy on their parents' shoulders. But were those children wearing ear protection? I saw far too many children unprotected. ("Tom", Lollapalooza message board, August 10, 2012).

This posting identified a norm about what “responsible” parents should have done for their children at the festival.

The majority of the comments related to ageism and norms pertained to how the younger festival participants acted in a negative manner at the festival. This could be a reflection on the festival participants who use Facebook and the message board forum being in a particular age group and being active in social media. There were no postings on Facebook or the message board forum about how the older festival participants acted at the festival. One Facebook user did suggest that Lollapalooza is geared towards the under 30 year-old crowd and maybe for a few people over 40 year and that there should be an “elderpolloza” (“Suzie”, Facebook post, August 12, 2012).

### **Social Spaces within Lolla**

Within the festival grounds there seemed to be specific places that people gravitated towards to be social. Festival participants seem to gather the most in Chowtown, the farmers market, Uncorked wine tent, and most frequently the fountain area. I observed these spaces afforded a high degree of social interaction among festival participants. It seemed that the stage areas where the performances took place were more serious and had a purpose, while the areas listed above were used for more social purposes because they filled time between performances. The fountain area seemed to be the most social space in the whole festival. The fountain was located in the middle of the festival and was set up as a meeting place for festival participants. By observation, I quickly figured out that this was the area that the festival organizers wanted to draw attention to. It was the most open space, with lots of areas to talk, sit, and observe each other. The fountain area seemed to be the

main meeting place for friends and it connected to the main entrance of the festival, which made it easily accessible.

### **Conversations during performances**

One of my first observations about the festival was that not many people are talking while the performances were happening and the voices I could hear were mainly female. Their voices were coming through from behind me and sounded very critical and annoyed. The topic of conversation seemed to mainly focus on their relationship problems. Socializing at the performances seemed to happen towards the back of the crowd. Participants closest to the stage were focused on the performance, and those in the middle and toward the back of the crowd were sitting, not standing, to take in the performance and were multi-tasking by socializing with each other at the same time. In one of my observations, I noted:

The murmur of voices in this part of the crowd is strong and fights against the music. People are disengaged from what is happening on the stage. The music is coming secondary to the social interaction that they are having with their friends and other participants around them.

There seemed to be an unspoken rule among festival participants, that if they were interested in talking it was to be done away from the performance so as to not bother the performer and those who were serious about seeing the performance. Festival participants' body language also indicated to others whether they were approachable or not. In the following observation, it seemed that this group of individuals was communicating to stay out of their group:

Group of six teenagers standing in a circle behind me are not engaged in the performance going on around them. They are in the middle of the crowd "hanging out." The female with the magenta hair, straw-hat, white glasses is doing a lot of the talking. Her voice fills the air. The group listens to her. They all have two beers and

are chugging them. By closing themselves off with their body language, they are not allowing those around them to engage with them at all.

As a participant at the festival, I saw situations such as the one described above at different points at the festival. By reading people's body language, I was able to assess which festival participants were interested in talking to others and those who were not. The ones that were interested in talking to others had open body language, seemed to be looking around, and seemed to be absorbing what was going on around them. It was really hard to socialize with groups of people at the festival, especially the ones that stood as a group together at the back of the stages. These groups formed small circles that seemed impenetrable.

### **Social time in the pauses**

*The day was starting to wind down. Even though the sun was going down, the air was thick with a deadening heat. The grass on the hill I sit on is dried out and crunchy, but yet it feels so good to sit that I don't care if it is uncomfortable. Everyone around me looks exhausted from the heat and ready to relax. The murmur of people's voices fills the air. It isn't loud, but it isn't quiet either. It seems like the people on the hill are either in pairs or small groups. I'm sitting by myself at this moment because my friend has gone off to get a drink from the water station. There are two girls sitting beside me on a blanket, talking about the very loud couple further up the hill that is having a very dramatic argument. One of the girls looks at me and I make a comment about how embarrassing it is to get in a dramatic fight in public. I don't know her, yet I wasn't shy about talking to someone who was unknown to me. I wanted that social interaction and someone to share that moment.*

Festival participants seemed to be more willing to interact socially with participants who were unknown to them in situations where they were unable to locate their friends or



were on their own. In one instance, while waiting to use the portable washrooms, I noted participants were very talkative with each other about their annoyance at the length of the line to use the washroom, the heat, and the smell. I decided to join in the conversation and noticed time passed quickly while in line. It seemed easy to speak to people who were unknown to me because it seemed like I had no other choice but to be there.

### **Wine! Shade, drinks and a place to sit**

*Figure 4.7.* Inside Uncorked wine tent (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 4, 2012)



*I've had enough of standing in the heat. The sun has been beating down mercilessly on my head for hours and my skin is so tight and sore. It's probably burning, but I can't totally tell because I am so tired. I need to find a space to sit down in, even if there is only a sliver of shade, I'll take it!*

*Walking towards the large bushy green trees, I can see a white tent in the middle of a shaded area. The smooth sound of jazz fills the air. This space is different than the other spaces in the festival. There are large, white blowup couches that look like soft, fluffy white clouds. I just want to climb on top of one the couches and take a nap. All the couches are filled with groups of people, sitting and laughing. I find a spot on the edge of one of the risers that the couches are on. As I look around the tent, I can see festival participants of all (legal) ages drinking wine, laughing, and socializing with one another.*

There were also other areas within Lollapalooza that promoted creating a social space within the festival based on the placement of sitting areas, food, and areas that served alcohol. The majority of tents that sold alcohol and beer were not equipped to have people stay for long periods of time due to space restrictions and a lack of seating. The one area within the festival grounds where participants could drink and stay was the Uncorked wine tent. One of my main observations from this space was that “Uncorked has made it possible for random groups of people to sit together and get to know each other. There is limited seating and if participants want a place to sit, they need to converse with those around them.” This space had shade, drinks, and comfortable places to sit which made it very appealing for participants to want to come and use.

### **Conversations in virtual space**

Another way connections were created at Lollapalooza was within the virtual world. The Lollapalooza message boards acted as a social landscape for members to connect to each other before, during, and long after the festival had passed. Festival participants connected on the message boards and would organize meet up times and places during the festival to connect,

Glad I also finally got to bond with KtD this weekend. He's a really cool kid"-garpo3000 and Driftwood responded by saying "I'd like to make it a tradition and host the out of town beer nerds for a bottle share before we head to the Gingerman. Hopefully I won't be home from out of state at 8pm next year. ("Henry", Lollapalooza message board, August 6, 2012).

Another Lollapalooza message board forum user posted the following excerpt:

Thanks to everyone for making this year great again. Really feel like the bonding the last two years is at an all-time high. Love how instead of having "meetups" [sic] just between certain small acts earlier in the day as old, every set now is an implied meetup and we all know where to find each other. Every year I find myself spending less and less time with friends from home and more with the board. I'm pretty okay with that. ("Mark", Lollapalooza message board, August 6, 2012).

The message boards acted as an extension of the festival and allowed festival participants to stay connected on a social level year round.

Festival participants used social media and the message board forum as a way to connect to festival participants who they met in passing at the festival, as a way to reconnect, or possibly connect to people they met while there. The majority of posts on the Facebook wall that focused on finding festival participants had a tone of concern people's well-being as demonstrated below:

I've been wondering about the girl that was next to me during the Red Hot Chili Peppers set we were standing towards the knoll and she fainted a few times. She was with a male companion and they were really nice but left before I could find out their names. I hope that she's doing better and also to the guys who were next to us and helped her out too you guys were really nice and seemed to be a lot of fun! Hope everyone is doing good! ("Andrea", Facebook post, August 13, 2012).

Similar posts were made by other Facebook users as a way of reaching out to festival participants they met, or wanted to connect with again, as a way to relive the experience or create new bonds. A Facebook user posted "met some beautiful mud covered Canadians dancing to Jack White. Lovely evening <3 it'd be cool to find them again. Awesome people" ("Kailee", Facebook post, August 14, 2012).

Festival participants also used the messages boards as a way to express their feelings. This platform gave them a voice to express their anger, frustrations, and fear in a space that guaranteed them an audience to be heard. Some of the postings that were negative in nature would spark a thread of responses between users each chiming in with their own opinions:

OK, it's the 2-week mark. Good time to review/summarize first-timer tips? 1. Comfortable shoes, preferably with good arch support. 2. The fewer things you bring, the better. Think cargo shorts, not backpack. And bring a zip-lock bag for your phone 3. Stay hydrated. And no, that doesn't mean sports-bottles of wine all day 4. Don't schedule yourself a ping-pong back and forth across the park all day. It's a really big park 5. You open a goddamn umbrella in my face, it's fucking on 6. If the sun wears you down, go to the BMI or Kid's stage for a bit. They're shaded and sometimes get lake breezes (but don't spark a blunt @ the Kid's stage. Just sayin') 7. Resist the urge to crowd surf. If it's necessary, please keep your feet UP 8. Grinding at the untz untz untz is fine, but finger banging someone else's girlfriend is generally frowned upon. Generally. ("Katie", Lollapalooza message board, July 20, 2012).

Listen to #1, the last sentence of #2, and #3. #10 ignore everything else onelittleworld just said. Do you want. Walk back and forth all you want, spark up, crowd surf, and finger bang away ("Carl", Lollapalooza message board, July 20, 2012).

The message board forum and Facebook page were used as a platform to give festival participants a voice to tell their story long after the festival had ended.

## Being in Another World?

Figure 4.8. Fountain area in the middle of the festival (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 4, 2012)



*Lolla feels very protected and not susceptible to outside factors I know exist but am fully willing to ignore while I'm here on the inside. Tall buildings along the skyline cradled the festival grounds and provided a wall of protection from the outside. Paved streets within the festival created a natural order and direction for festival participants to follow. As festival participants walked through the streets, they followed the outside flow of traffic with oncoming traffic on the left side and outgoing traffic on the right. We have all been conditioned to follow these rules and within this space where we can create something new, we still seem to follow the rules of the outside.*

Lollapalooza was earlier described as a temporary mini city. In my observation notes, I described Lollapalooza as creating a space separate from the outside world, but still

present in the outside world when viewed from the buildings towering over the festival space:

My understanding of the liminal space is based on the experiences I have had at the festival that have allowed me to be a different person and “live” with thousands of other people in this space at one time. The festival has felt like a pop up city or village because it is surrounded by the outside world of tall buildings in Chicago. There is a sense that the outside world can’t touch you once you are in

The creation of this space within a space was important for getting festival participants to become fully immersed in their surroundings and experiences. While within the space, there was recognition of the outside world (street lights, garbage cans, speed limit signs) but after a while, the signals and rules of the outside world started to blend into the surroundings and became less noticeable. It created a place for festival participants to witness, be identified, or temporarily engage in and embrace an altered state of being.

### **Breaking the rules**

Participants were in an altered state of being with possibilities of breaking rules and living between their everyday selves and their festival participant selves who did what they wanted. Participants in interviews described being able to “act a little bit crazier and just have a bit more freedom to let loose” and “being in crowds and being energized by large groups of people.” As a participant, I felt the urge to want to do something that was not in my normal character by breaking a rule or doing something I wouldn’t do in my everyday life:

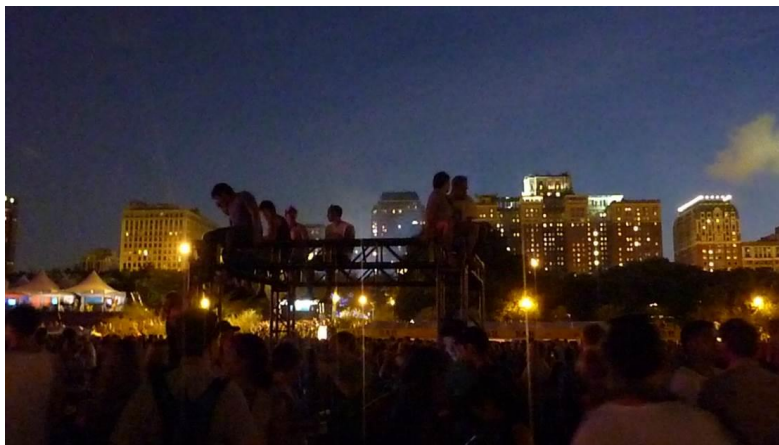
I really want to break some rule. I’m not even sure I know what the rules are here. I kind of do, kind of don’t. Security never checked to really see if I had anything of interest in my bag. I wonder what would happen if I jumped the fence and went into the walkway? I wonder if anyone would say anything to me?

A participant on the Lollapalooza message board forum posted about the lax security and how Sunday night was the only time they were not sneaking something into

the festival, “I keep seeing how security was lax. I was borderline sexually molested upon re-entry Sunday. Fortunately, it was one of the few times I wasn’t bringing anything in.” Festival participants learned quickly which entrances were easiest to sneak things in and where to hide them. I snuck in food and drinks from the outside, which should have been confiscated but were not. As a participant, I was interested in seeing what I could get away with doing at the festival.

As mentioned earlier, the security at Lollapalooza was not highly visible in festival space. When festival participants were allowed back into Lollapalooza after the storm, and before the Red Hot Chili Peppers took the stage, I observed a woman climb on top of a lighting fixture and asked for a camera from someone in the crowd. Over the next several minutes, numerous other festival participants looked around to see if security was watching and climbed up on the lighting fixture.

*Figure 4.9.* Festival participants on top of lighting fixture (photo taken by M. L. Bartlett, August 4, 2012)



Festival participants identified people who snuck into the festival either by crashing the gates, jumping the fence, or sneaking in after the storm as being an altered state of mind that allowed them to take the risk and get into the festival. Sneaking back into the festival grounds during the storm was dangerous, but those festival participants were willing to take the chance, break the rules, to fulfill their needs of living between two states. Facebook user Jackie Rambo posted:

Snuck around and hid underneath a semi truck we came across on the festival grounds during the monsoon. Met some great people who joined us in our shelter. Even though the evacuation SUCKED, we got a story for the history books! Happy Lolla everyone!!! (“Rachel”, Facebook post, August 5, 2012).



### Altered consciousness...“handle your shit”

In many places throughout my observation notes, I noted that I smelled pot (marijuana) being smoked as I described the stages and areas I was in. The exception was on the third day when I was there at the venue opening at 11:00 am—then I described the air as clean. Not all festival participants used marijuana and were in an altered state, but there was a constant presence of the drug in the air. I noted at the Redbull stage for the Sigur Ros [the band] performance that the men in costumes who were smoking pot and the males and females in the mud pit were all experiencing an altered state of being. There were likely other festival participants who were experiencing a drug-modified experience but I could not readily identify this just by looking at them.

Postings on message boards and questionnaire responses revealed an understanding among festival attendees that drugs are all around the festival grounds and consumption is acceptable. Festival participants identified in their posts that there was a lack of security within the festival that made it easier for people to consume drugs out in the open. The same response to the question asked above about finding anything shocking at the festival was:

I was fairly shocked by the amount of open marijuana use in the festival grounds outside the concert venues. Smoking at concerts is to be expected for the most part, but people were smoking walking around the sidewalks and sitting on the grassy areas. (Jasmine, Interview)

The use of harder drugs were described in reference to Perry’s Lounge. There was an acceptance that the majority of inebriated people were consuming drugs in this space at the festival.

On Facebook and message boards, festival participants expressed feelings of frustration and annoyance at festival participants who were out of control. They used phrases such as “handle your shit” to call other festival participants out and express their dislike of their actions. One user stated that there were “too many whacked out people this year. It makes for a crappier concert experience for those of us who do not find glitter to be super fantastic and ambulances to be full of pretty lights.” (“Nicole”, Lollapalooza message board, August 14, 2012). There were numerous references to younger festival participants within Perry’s Lounge who were high and tripping out and doing things that were out of the normal, for example crowd surfing in a blowup raft through the crowd.

Frustration was also expressed over the number of underage participants who were able to obtain wristbands for drinking or had alcohol and no over 21 wristbands allowing them to drink. Facebook user “Matt” wrote “Seriously. I saw so many kids with beer wristbands/and/or/beer in their hands it was ridiculous” (Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

There were also a number of Facebook and message board forum posts expressing concern for people who were too drunk and sitting in pools of their own vomit. In response to the question “can you describe anything that you saw that shocked or disturbed you at the festival?”, one festival participant stated:

It’s par for the course to see people too high or drunk to take care of themselves, vomiting etc. but what is disturbing to see people passed out with no one around them. You think- where are your parents? Where are your friends? Who is taking care of you? It’s really scary to think “I hope that person doesn’t die”

### **Costumes, glitter...and mud**

For some festival participants, donning costumes allowed them to live between their normal selves and a caricature they were embodying at the festival. As a researcher, I felt like I was wearing a costume that allowed me to live between multiple worlds

(Lollapalooza participant, researcher, tourist, my everyday self). I identified this altered state of being through my actions towards others and compared it to my normal interactions in my notes made on the reflexive questions I asked myself. The following is a response to the question “how to I experience my various selves at the music festival?”

In my festival life I am living in the liminal state by pushing my way through crowds, walking where I probably shouldn't be, and being really mouthy to people that bother me. I am brought to this understanding of the liminal space because I don't normally do any of those behaviours unless provoked and no one here has really provoked me. I am tired and I feel invincible. I also feel like no one can touch me because I am from Canada and I have no ownership or responsibility to anyone here except myself.

There were also glitter people at Lollapalooza who would blow gold glitter on festival participants as they walked by to induct them into their group within the festival, regardless of whether they wanted glitter on them or not; “I want to meet someone who I poured glitter all over...hahahahaha” (“Sally”, Facebook post, August 8, 2012). “I wanted glitter poured on me!!! I heard some girl was doing it I'm bummed I didn't find you!!” (“Meg”, Facebook post, August 8, 2012). It was easy to find the glitter people throughout the festival because of the trail of gold shimmer that lit the ground. I noted in my observation notes " Multiple people pass me and are covered in glitter. The glitter is following them through the square to where they are travelling to." The general direction that glitter people came from was Perry's stage where all the electronic dance music was pumping through the air. The glitter acted as a costume in itself. It marked people who were part of the “group” and showed to other participants what kind of music they were into.

Other costumes that were visible around the festival ranged from wearing full costumes to wearing just headpieces or hats. Festival participants who wore costumes were willing to be stopped to take pictures for other participants. The festival participants in

costumes for the most part just blended in with the crowd at the stages, but interacted more with the festival crowds outside the festival stage space.

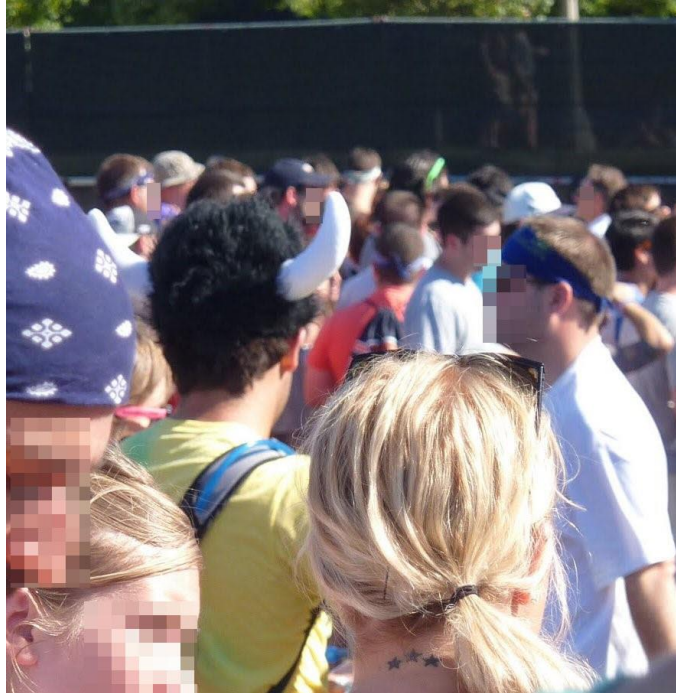
*Figure 4.10.* Festival participant in cat costume (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 3, 2012)



*Figure 4.11.* Festival participants wearing headdresses in the crowd (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 5, 2012)



*Figure 4.12.* Festival participant wearing Water Buffalo hat (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 5, 2012)



*Figure 4.13.* Festival participant wearing shirt covered in writing (photograph taken by M.L. Bartlett, August 5, 2012)



### **Mom shorts and sluts**

At Lollapalooza, festival participants were inspired to wear what they wanted and be identifiable. Festival participants who wore costumes seemed to be seeking attention and approval of others by posing for pictures. The use of a costume ensured they would be noticed among the thousands of festival participants. As mentioned earlier, the use of costumes also enabled people to be easily identifiable within their group.

Festival participants brought their own style to the festival, but many groups of friends within the festival dressed the same. Users posted about styles they saw that they did not like:

“What was up with all the mom shorts?? What are these kids doing?” (“Tim”, Facebook post, August 13, 2012).

“I thought I was the only one weirded out by the mom shorts, I thought maybe im just getting old or something” (“Peter”, Facebook post, August 13, 2012).

“The mom shorts were the worst. The same kids who mock the 90s are now sporting that decades greatest fashion missteps.” (“Jimmy”, Facebook post, August 13, 2012).

One of the observations I made on the last day of the festival was that participants in larger groups were dressing in similar colour palettes or styles. There seemed to be a lot of assimilation occurring among groups of friends. My observation note stated:

Clothing is playing a significant role in this festival. It is becoming obvious that groups of people are starting to dress the same in similar colour palettes. This could be through spending time together or intentionally, but I think just through the desire to belong, people are starting to dress the same. It seems like the people that are in groups of two aren't dressing the same, but those that are in larger groups are.

Festival participants expressed strong reactions to sexually suggestive clothing worn at the festival. There was extreme heat and humidity for the first two days of the festival, which might have contributed to the lack of clothing seen. There was nudity and semi-nudity at the festival among both sexes. There were a lot of males and females wearing bathing suits. As noted in my reflexive journal, it was so hot and sticky that having anything touch your skin was almost unbearable, “I am really hot and sticky and uncomfortable and I know I am not particularly interested in being around a lot of people in proximity because of how uncomfortable I feel. I am sitting in this area of the festival because I did not want my skin touching someone else’s.” Festival participants did not identify bathing suits as an issue at the festival from the data collected, but commented on the suggestive clothing that was quite revealing. Facebook user “Mary” wrote “did anyone else see the girl wearing the pink underwear that said “party naked” on her butt and a hat that said “Slut” on Friday? Why would her friends let her out in public like that?” (“Mary”, Facebook post, August 7, 2012) Similarly, Jasmine commented that she was shocked or disturbed by “the attire, or lack thereof was surprising from both males and females” (Jasmine, Interview response). As a participant in the festival, I spent the first day taking in my surroundings and getting a feel for what was the norm and how to express myself. I noticed that the second day especially, I put a lot more thought into my clothing and style as a way of showing to other festival participants that this is was my style.

### **Respect and responsibility?**

Situations festival participants were exposed to forced them to choose how to act toward their friends or others who indicated their sole concern was for themselves. While at the festival, I observed festival participants engaging with their friends by being with them,

but at the same time, only looking out for self interest whether it be watching a performance, or drinking, or just looking after themselves and not others.

*I'm sitting on a small hill overlooking the valley of the west end stages in the large grassy field. The day has been very long and tiring, but it was a solid day at the festival. The hill is solid with couples of people or small groups sitting on it. There is just enough space to step strategically between people's space and belongings to get out. The sun is setting and time is passing quite quickly it seems. There are two half naked, sun burnt males passed out on the hill beside me. People are walking over, beside and almost on them with no regard for their safety or wellbeing. Even though there were other spots on the hill that were not as congested or had more space around them, it seemed like people just wanted to be near these two guys to make a point, an unspoken point.*

I observed multiple incidences of festival participants who were sick or in a compromising situation where others did not stop and help or change their behaviour. It made me wonder about respect and responsibility towards others. Norms that were created around the idea of respect pertained to respecting space and other people's experiences at the festival. In the message board forum postings and comments on Facebook, festival participants agreed and disagreed on what was considered appropriate behaviour with comments like "you open a goddamn umbrella in my face, it's fucking on" ("Katie", Lollapalooza message board, July 20, 2012) and "say f'n excuse me when you bulldoze through the crowd. Gives us time to move our feet out of your path" ("Patrick", Facebook post, August 5, 2012).

One of the more posted about topics was the incidence of gatecrashers and fence jumpers as being disrespectful towards festival participants who bought their tickets.



Facebook user “Justin” commented, “saw an article about a fence jumper injuring a woman so sad. To all fence jumpers you’re a complete waste of space just go back to your sad lives and leave us paying festival goers in peace.” (“Justin”, Facebook post, August 8, 2012).

Group norming that indicated a sense of responsibility and respect towards others seemed influenced by the rules of Lollapalooza, but also by the park. Festival participants identified as being a problem were the ones who went against the “rules” of respect such as making the festival grounds dirty by not putting garbage in the garbage cans or by putting up fences to direct people where they can and cannot walk. When people went against the rules, it was easily identifiable because it stood out against the fluid movement of the festival.

### **Life After Lollapalooza - Holding on to Belonging in Memories of the Festival**

Lollapalooza was an intangible experience to consume. In the aftermath of Lollapalooza, there was an attempt to hold on to this intangible experience by preserving the festival through purchased merchandise, free swag from sponsors, and most of all, through wristbands, pictures, and videos.

#### **Washing the mud away...**

*The rain had come and cooled the air. As I prepared to go back to the festival, I knew the grounds would be muddy so I put on my yellow rain boots, my prized possession. Ever since I was a little girl, I loved rain boots. As I walked through the streets of Chicago, I walked with purpose knowing that I could back into the festival and that I would stay clean. Over the course of the evening, I walked through the deep mounds of mud, splashing my way through, not being afraid to move. When I got back to the hotel, I put my boots near the door and went to sleep. I didn't use my boots the next day, because the air was drier*

*and the grounds would be more stable. Lolla finished, and as I packed my belongings to go home, I noticed my boots still caked in mud. My boots that once served a purpose of protecting my clothing and allowing me to not be held back by the barrier of the messy, wet ground were now encrusted with glorious dirt. A memory of the time I spent walking through the grounds, seeing the mud people, meeting new people.*

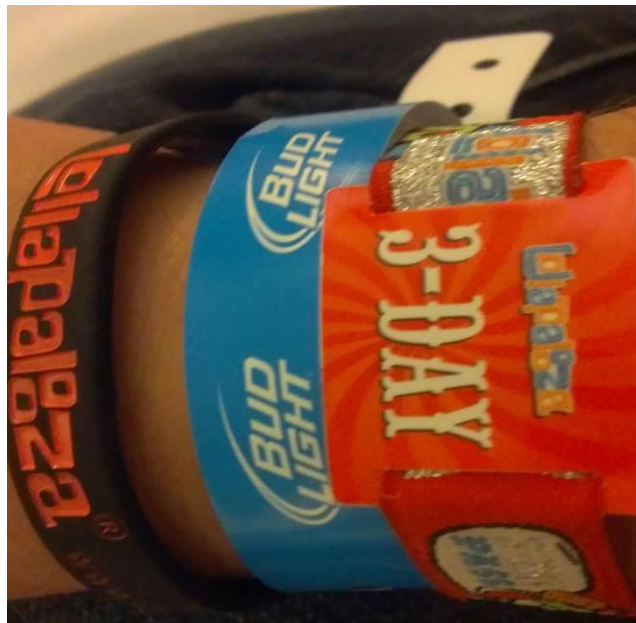
*I put my boots in a plastic bag and in my suitcase. As I unpacked my things back home, mud still clung to my boots. I wore them all over. Every time I looked down, I saw Lollapalooza. It was travelling with me through my experiences at home.*

*The day came that the rain washed away my Lolla-mud. It was disappointing, but for a few days, the festival clung to me and I to it.*

#### **On the slow train home...**

*Just like how I arrived at the festival on the subway, I am going back to reality slowly, as the subway cars clang along the tracks. It's time to go home. Walking through the hot, stuffy, dimly lit subway station with my bright yellow suitcase in tow, I come to the edge of the platform eagerly awaiting my train to come take me away. Looking at the people around me, there is a sea of orange and blue bands on wrists. It makes the Lolla kids easily identifiable against the other people on the subway. The train jostles back and forth against the tracks until we finally get to Chicago O'Hare airport an hour later. As I make my way through the airport, I can see the orange and blue bands walking through the crowds of people trying to get to their gates. At my gate, there are only a handful of us wearing the wristbands. It went from tons of us on the subway, to only a few now, but somehow I feel connected to these people. The sunburns they adorn and the bandaged*

*festival wounds –sprained ankles, cuts on their feet—are an indication of events that transpired over the last three days. We were all there for that moment in time.*



*Figure 4.14.* Lollapalooza wristbands (photograph taken by M. L. Bartlett, August 5, 2012)

### **Holding on**

One way participants held onto festival experiences was to keep their wristband on after the festival was finished. The wristbands signified to some Facebook users a preservation of memories from that year's festival. In a string of comments, users identified still having their wristband on from 2011. One user commented that he was going to start a collection. Other comments from Facebook users on keeping their wristbands on ranged from, "I want to keep my wristband on for a while...how long before I get funny looks, we'll find out. I'll keep you posted" ("Karen", Facebook post, August 6, 2012) to "My goal is to still have it on by next year" ("Nicholas", Facebook post, August 10, 2012) to "Doesn't it make you happy to see it everyday? ...or is that just me?" ("Tammy", Facebook post, August 10, 2012). Wristbands were a tangible and identifiable way for festival and

non-festival participants to identify the person had been to Lollapalooza. Another user commented back saying, “let go and remove the wristband asap unless you’re unemployed. You’ll look like a tool if you keep it on.” (“Phil”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012). The last comment signifies that difference in the strength of preserving memories and experiences from one person to another. For some, it is very important to hold on to those experiences overtly, and for others, there is less of an overt attachment. They might hold on to experiences, but in a different manner.

There were more references to photos and capturing moments through photographs on the Facebook page than the forum. Users would write posts asking other users to post photos of them in costumes or doing things at the festival as a way to preserve the memory. Facebook user “Troy” posted:

I was the guy runnin’ around everywhere yesterday giving anyone who wanted a high five. If we slapped hands feel free to add me on here, and a few people took pictures of me, if you happen to be one of those, you should tots post em. See all of you people in 1 year!!! (“Troy”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

From my observations and photographs I took of participants at the different performances over the weekend, many were capturing video of the performances or taking pictures to preserve the memory. Festival participants also seemed highly interested in having their picture taken in front of recognizable landmarks at the festival (front gates, the fountain area, the inflatable Lollapalooza sign, Chowtown street, giant signs with maps on them) as a way to take a piece of the festival with them.

### **That post-Lolla feeling**

The message board forum and Facebook gave festival participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences at the festival and formulate their impressions of the events that transpired over the course of the three days. Many of the postings on the message board and

Facebook expressed festival participant's emotions and thoughts surrounding specific events. Facebook and the message board forum created an open space for festival participants to let others know how they felt in certain situations.

Emotions of frustration and anger were associated with instances where festival participants did not agree with something that took place or had a negative experience. There was a strong use of profanity and slang used to describe experiences to portray to other users an expression of self and the emotions that were experienced in that situation. Words such as "stupid", "whiny", "pricks", "douche bags", "bitch", "asshats" were just some of the words used to express emotions about situations. It was evident from the incidents where festival participants had an impact on others that there were negative feelings being expressed; "Some asshole stole my black on black new era white sox hat right off my head during the end of Justice. I hope some serious o'doyle karma hits that douche hard. O'doyle rules!." ("Jonathan", Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

Festival participants also wrote about the amazing people they met "I wish there was an app to find all the amazing people I met this weekend" ("Emma", Facebook post, August 6, 2012), the connections that were made "Today 5 years ago I met my hubby at Lolla! Thanks Lolla!" ("Anne", Facebook post, August 5, 2012), and the happiness they felt over the course of the weekend "Thank you everyone who kept me surfing last night in my blue morph suit at Justice, I love you all." ("Sven", Facebook post, August 13). "Chad" posted "Thanks to everyone that danced with me during Jack White last night, you made my night. I was the goon with the backwards hat running around and dancing in the mud puddle to the left of the stage! Haha best night. Beautiful people too." ("Chad", Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

Being able to express oneself after the festival is an important part of helping festival participants formulate and solidify their experiences at the festival. The message boards gave festival participants a voice among the 240,000 people who attended the festival over the course of the three days.

## Chapter Five: Discussion of Group Norms and the Trickster in Liminal and Wispy Community Space

What are the experiences of music festival participants at the Lollapalooza music festival? There are the nuts and bolts components—the venue, artists, food, merchandise, location, and branding—and there is something else that exists in that time and space that creates the music festival. This thesis has explored the feelings and experiences of festival participants at a large-scale music festival. The research questions delved into were:

- a) How is *self* experienced at the music festival?
- b) How is *liminal* space experienced at the music festival?
- c) How is sense of *community* experienced at a music festival?

The findings from this thesis attempted to capture the atmosphere, crowds, and space created by Lollapalooza. Themes in Chapter Four described: Movements and Expression - Norming Space at Performances, Moments and Movements Induced by Weather, Connections and Communication at Lolla, Social Spaces within Lolla, Being in Another World? and Life After Lollapalooza - Holding on to Belonging in Memories of Being at the Festival. Each of these aspects of the festival were like a puzzle being put together; each piece was connected to the overall picture and experience. In addition, how each theme was experienced by festival participants were uniquely their own. Participants who attended Lollapalooza perceived and consumed the festival in their own ways.

Lollapalooza can be described as a liminal space, a place betwixt and between, described by Turner (1969). As described in Chapter Four, the festival was a temporary city that existed for a fixed period of time. It had its own complex set of rules and customs

created by state laws, policies and procedures set forth by festival organizers, and festival participants but also subverted by the *trickster*, which will be described below.

The rules and norms of Lollapalooza had to conform to the laws of society such as state laws about drinking ages and drug use, municipal by-laws about the use of public space. It was also shaped by policies of insurance companies and liability concerns, both of which were at play in the evacuation during the storm. Festival organizers were able to create a subset of rules and norms that then directed the flow of the festival. As Pine & Gilmore (1999) identified, in this liminal space employees at tourism destinations take on multiple roles and multiple identities, and as this thesis reveals, festival participants also take on and negotiate multiple roles and identities. As it sat nestled among the skyline of Chicago, Lollapalooza created a space that allowed participants to engage with their inner desires, even if only temporarily. It is here that the trickster plays a vital role.

### **The Trickster within the Liminal at Lollapalooza**

Szakolczai (2009) describes the trickster as part of the concept of liminality in his paper *Liminality and Experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events*. Tricksters are described as:

always marginal characters: outsiders, as they cannot trust or be trusted, cannot give or share, they are incapable of living in a community; they are repulsive, as-being insatiable-they are characterized by excessive eating, drinking, and sexual behavior, have no sense of shame; they are not taken seriously, given their affinity with jokes, storytelling, and fantasizing” (p. 155).

Rather than there being others who play the role of the trickster in this social context, the findings reveal the trickster inherent in festival participants. The trickster appeared throughout the findings in different capacities. The role of the trickster is integral to how festival participants experienced a different self, and community in this liminal space of



Lollapalooza. It can be argued that there are varying degrees of the trickster existing within the festival at the same time. A festival participant can be a trickster by climbing into the water fountain while still watching out for their friend who is tripping out on drugs outside the fountain. This allows festival participants to experience self, community, and the liminal space, but as unique experiences to themselves. Festival participants are able to choose the level of trickster they want to engage with and what is right for them.

### **Am I a trickster?**

To understand how festival participants interpreted themselves at the festival, I first needed to have an understanding of my own experiences as a researcher, participant, and trickster. Throughout the festival, I often felt like a marginal character on the outside. I very much felt like I took on a new persona at the festival and was a character of myself. At the festival, I did fieldwork at various stages and viewpoints in the festival grounds in hopes of gathering data that would reflect festival participants' experiences. Even when I was at the front of a stage, I felt like I was on the outside. This could be due to being slightly removed from the experiences going on around me because I had to keep my researcher hat on. And too, I could hear the internal call of my own trickster who wanted to venture forth.

As the festival progressed, I participated in more and more "trickster" like behaviours as described by Szokolczai (2009). These behaviours fit into what a trickster was about and allowed me to be on the fringe of the rules. By engaging in actions that defied the rules, it allowed me as a participant to immerse myself fully into the festival. After reflecting on the findings from this study and my own personal experiences, I think every participant at the festival was a trickster at one point in time or another. The trickster did not have to be a consistent state of being, but from the data that was collected, it

suggests that festival participants experienced an altered form of themselves and their everyday reality. The following sections will look at how the roll of the trickster shaped Lollapalooza and the impacts it could have on future festivals.

### **Dressing up the trickster**

Lollapalooza differs in comparison to many other music festivals that have a targeted audience e.g., a heavy metal music festival or an electronic dance music festival because it covers a variety of music genres that bring together people from all different backgrounds and tastes together in one area. Because of the variety of artists and music genres represented at the festival, the range in costumes and clothing styles was evident. Tilley (1994) suggests that as people we create community through sense of self through place because we read ourselves into the external world around us. Lollapalooza 2012 created a space that was circus/show themed, and from that, festival participants created a community of characters based on the setting of the festival. This led to a broad array of tricksters being expressed.

Festival participants were able to outwardly express themselves freely through the use of costumes and clothing. Self-expression encompassed different forms as festival participants attempted to outwardly portray who they were to others. In my observation notes and the pictures that I (and other festival participants) took, one of the most easily observed forms of self-expression was the use of clothing and costumes as self-expression. Costumes offered an escape from the expectations of everyday life. Daily habits of appropriateness and rules were temporarily lifted for festival participants. At Lollapalooza there were no restrictions on the banned items listed on the festival webpage, as well as no mention of appropriate attire or required clothing items. Clothing and costumes worn at

Lollapalooza helped to define the look of what the festival was about. By not indicating that clothing was a necessary requirement of admission, festival organizers created a culture of freedom and self-expression. There are also magazine, blog, and Pinterest pages devoted to helping Lollapalooza participants create costumes and look “fashionable” at the festival.

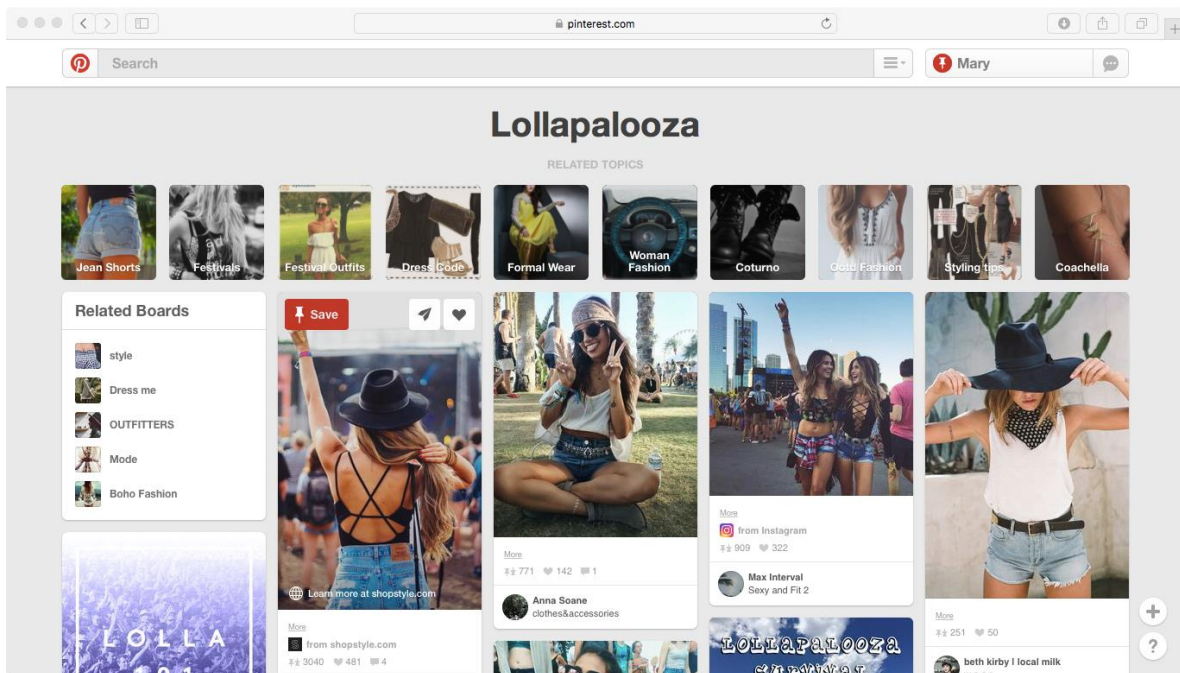


Figure 5.1. Lollapalooza fashion ideas on Pinterest (retrieved July 31, 2016 by M. L. Bartlett).

Levels of appropriateness for clothing were determined by festival participants, and not festival organizers. Festival participants’ costumes and clothing could be described as repulsive, insatiable, no sense of shame, not taken seriously, and overtly sexual. Morality and judgment were present. Some festival participants expressed feelings of being shocked by the lack of attire and questioned moral responsibility of friends to not let others out in public dressed a certain way. And too, norming happened in an array of ways, and at the

other extreme being too “traditional” and donning a pair of “mom shorts” was also publicly commented on. However, overall in the context of the music festival, they seemed to be able to be more open and free to express themselves without as much judgment; that is, boundaries were broadened to include a wider range of possibilities. This aligns with Ali-Knight et al.’s (2008) suggestion that music festivals are a platform for general hedonism and licentiousness. It is unlikely that a person would show up to an office job wearing a bikini with fur leg warmers, cat paw mittens and cat ears, but at Lollapalooza this was encouraged behavior.

One of the interesting findings from this study suggests that clothing influenced how festival participants related to each other. Similar ways of dressing defined what social group a person was in. As I noted in my observations, people started dressing the same and in similar colour patterns as the festival went on. Clothing and costumes were also used to as a way to find one another in the festival. If groups of people were dressed in the same t-shirts or wore the same costumes, they were easier to pick out in a crowd. Dressing the same, and having likeminded thoughts and actions helps to solidify the feeling of inclusiveness within this festival of complete strangers, loosened norms, and tricksters. This supports May’s (2011) idea that there is multi-dimensional belonging that allows people to feel like they belong to more than one group of people at a time.

Lollapalooza has changed over the years, especially from its origins as a travelling music festival. Festival participants use costumes and clothing more now than in the past as a way to represent themselves or what they believe in. The use of costumes allowed festival participants to take on new personas and be someone completely outside the norms that shape their everyday selves. This allowed festival participants to live in the liminal space

by creating a “festival look” and a “non-festival look” that could occur at the same time, or separately. Festival participants were able to straddle both forms of themselves at the festival.

Lollapalooza is part of a series of large scale festivals that happen in the United States each summer. It is now common to see sections in clothing stores promoting that year’s “festival look” or see articles in magazines on how to look your best at the summer’s big music festivals. A simple Google search for “lollapalooza costumes” brings up numerous results.

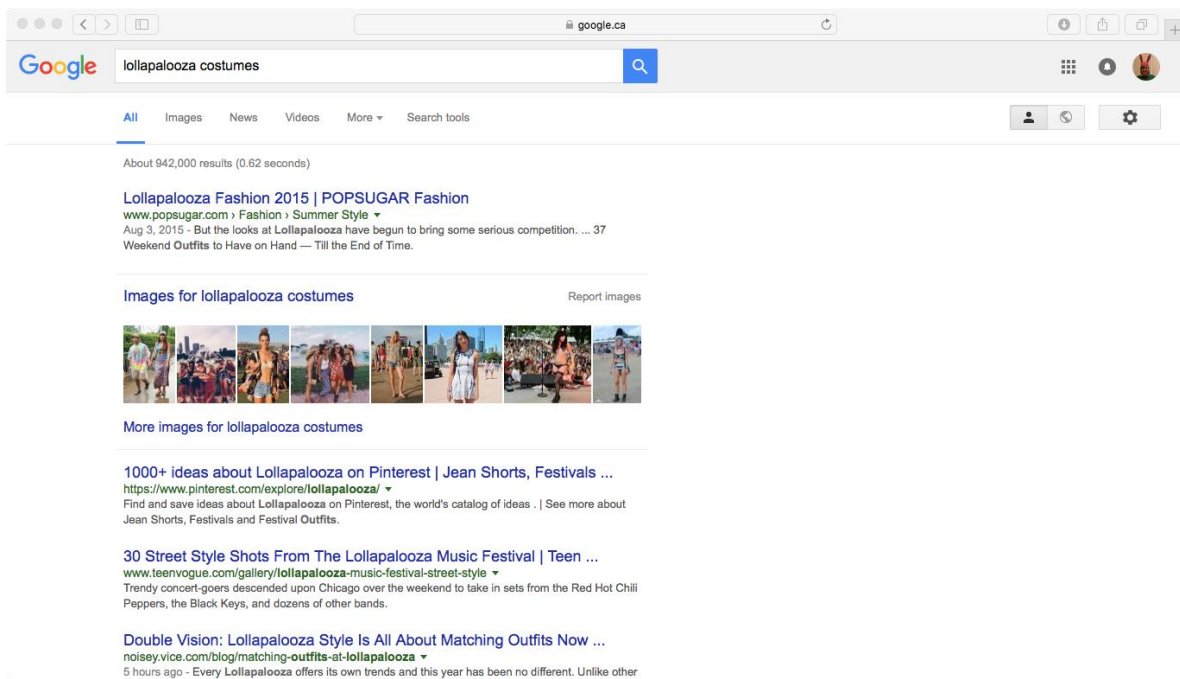


Figure 5.2. “Lollapalooza costumes” search. Retrieved July 31, 2016 by M.L. Bartlett

Lollapalooza has been successful in creating a look and feel for the festival that is easily identifiable to participants. Advertisements for the 2012 Lollapalooza festival used jesters and other characters in their print and online media campaigns. The theme for 2012 was an old time circus or traveling side show. The gives the impression that the festival is made up of unique characters or people.

The importance of expressing one's self at a music festival has transcended outside the realm of the festival and into how clothing companies market to the general population. Promotional emails are sent to customers early in the year telling them to get ready for "festival season." This message and marketing implies to festival participants that their image and way of expressing themselves is paramount to their experiences within the festival grounds.

Tjora (2016) found in their study of seven rock music festivals, that festival participants acquire *festival skills*. These are defined as "skills based on experiences from previous festivals. A high degree of festival skills may be expressed through generally self-confident behavior on the part of an individual or group" (p. 77). The marketing and advertisements of "festival looks" and how to express one's self can add to the feeling of having festival skills, even before entering the festival grounds.

### **Engaging the trickster as focal practice to make the intangible tangible**

Although there were tangible aspects of Lollapalooza that were consumed over the course of the weekend (posters, food, drinks, t-shirts etcetera), the majority of the festival was consumed through intangible experiences. The intangible experiences happened between the artists and participants, participants with each other in the crowd, participants and the festival employees, and the participants and the grounds. Even the tangible consumption of products at the festival had a component of intangibility to it through the memories and events that transpired around the consumption of those products. Festival participants were active in the creation of atmosphere at Lollapalooza, while organizers of Lollapalooza organized the space, such as establishing cooling off areas, Chowtown for eating, a farmer's market, a wine tent, and information tents near the stages. It could be

suggested from the findings that festival participants felt the need to create memories and experiences as a way to consume and participate in the festival, not just be an attendee. This in turn possibly allowed them to feel a sense of belonging with Lollapalooza as a brand and festival, but also the other participants.

Capturing moments at Lollapalooza was a common sight all throughout the festival. Festival organizers had placed objects around the festival that drew people to take pictures around it. An example of this was the inflatable Lollapalooza sign by the water fountain. The sign changed colours at night and photos acted as a keepsake for participants and as evidence of their attendance at the festival. Along with festival-specific objects, taking pictures of festival participants in costumes or as mud people after the storm was popular. Taking picture of festival participants in costumes, from my observations, seemed like it did not affect other festival participants in a negative way in this capacity. The costumes gave festival participants something to talk about, and it also acted as a form of stress relief against the heat. As I noted in my observations, seeing a person in a banana costume running down the main road of the festival made many laugh and I forgot the heat.

Objects held up on sticks as directional markers were also prevalent and captured in pictures. As the festival progressed, more and more objects were stuck on sticks, pool noodles, and brooms as a way to identify locations. On the first day of the festival there was a pig on stick with wings. As the festival progressed, the pig received sunglasses and mardi gras beads. By humanizing objects, it engaged in behaviours that were a way of storytelling, fantasizing, and joking. These are all behaviours of the trickster.

The use of objects on sticks and costumes, as suggested previously created a space for festival participants to take on the role of the trickster, but also being able to capture

photos of those partaking in those activities allowed participants to engage with tricksters and be one themselves. Festival participants that captured these moments and later shared on social media or the media are engaging in activities that have an “affinity with jokes, storytelling, and fantasizing” (Szakolszai, 2009). These festival participants in turn are becoming part of a community of people who promote excessive drinking and eating, sexual behavior, and a decreased sense of shame. It could be suggested that by engaging in these behaviours, festival participants shape their sense of self by identifying with and promoting “trickster” behaviours.

The type of music also influenced the amount of energy and activity that festival participants interacted with. Perry’s stage (playing electronic dance music) was the loudest stage and could consistently be heard throughout the festival grounds. This was a space in which the trickster appeared. Perry’s Stage was the liveliest stage, and the majority of the comments about having glitter blown on people or people taking drugs and tripping out were from that area of the festival.

The most commonly observed form of preserving memories at the festival was through photography on phones and point and shoot cameras. Many festival participants were focused on capturing what was going on in front of them as opposed to watching the performances. This was also apparent by the pictures that were posted on Facebook of random things around the festival that happened. There were times during the festival when the performers would ask the crowd to become engaged in the performance by clapping along or singing verses of the song. During these moments, it was not rare to see festival participants shooting videos on their cell phones or taking pictures of what was going on around them.



Preserving moments at the Lollapalooza was an important aspect of the festival to many festival participants. As noted in Chapter 4, after the festival some participants kept their wrist bands on as a way to keep connected to the festival. The landscape of festivals is different in today's times because of the ready access to technology that festival participants possess. In the past, sneaking in cameras to events required more maneuvering (batteries in your shoes, camera under a shirt where it wouldn't get detected, or camera in a loaf of bread), whereas today, there are cameras in every phone and festival participants are allowed to take their cameras into the festival grounds.

There seemed to be two types of festival participants interested in capturing moments, those who wanted to capture what was going on around them, and tricksters who wanted to be the person being captured in those moments. This created a space that shaped the festival vibe and created unique experience for others. As described in the section "Life After Lolla", there was a festival participant ("Troy") who went around the festival grounds giving high fives to people. He asked fellow festival participants to add him to Facebook and post the pictures of him running around the festival. In this capacity, there was a relationship built between festival participants that relied on one person being the trickster and creating the moments and one person capturing and sharing the moments.

Social media has altered the way that festival participants interact and express themselves. Social media allows festival participants to receive recognition and praise for photos and commentary almost instantly. Interactions with festival participants face to face differed significantly from responses I received through the survey results, and were also vastly different from postings on message boards and in Facebook.

In liminal space, festival participants are able to engage the trickster. This is an important concept and important for festival organizers to fully understand. The range of motivations that drive festival participant's needs and wants at a music festival will influence repeat attendance, popularity, and visibility. An interesting aspect with any music festival is the ability to find like-minded people, blend in with a crowd, and be an individual all at the same time.

This raises an interesting question for festival organizers. How can they ensure that basic human needs, laws, and norms are being adhered to, while still promoting or inadvertently communicating to festival participants that it is okay to be a "trickster"? Throughout the three-day festival, all festival participants came in contact with a body of "authority" at some point at Lollapalooza. Each day, entering and exiting the festival, festival participants' belongings were checked for items that were on the prohibited list. As noted in the findings, this was one of the few times that festival security or authority were seen in plain sight. As a first time Lollapalooza festival participant, the first day I used as a way to orient myself to my surroundings, and also the feel and atmosphere of the festival. After the first day of seeing how relaxed the security team was at the gates, I decided to bring some of the banned items into the festival space. As a festival participant, I was able to see what others were able to get away with, smuggle in, and how festival organizers wanted the look and feel of freedom to come across at the festival. From my experiences, and observing those around me, there was an assimilation affect happening. This was also present when one festival participant climbed on the light fixture, and within twenty minutes, there were numerous people breaking the rules. By watching those around you get away with breaking the rules, it is easy to have "group think" and follow along with similar

behaviours. By breaking the rules, festival participants were engaging in focal practice, whereby the focal point of interest was rule breaking, and this is what they gave power to at the festival.

If festival organizers were overly concerned with creating an authoritarian state like festival, there would have been more security personnel making their presence known. Having security there, but not in an overt way, allowed festival participants to embrace the role of the trickster. There were areas of the festival where security was visible, but generally it seemed like security was on the periphery. To be a trickster, and to be fully immersed in the Lollapalooza experience, festival participants had to feel like they were on the inside, as a group of people with likeminded beliefs and goals. Out of this, the trickster community forms.

### **Tricksters at night: Temporal shifts in expectations**

Festivals are social in nature and the experiences that participants come away with depend on the negotiation of the paradoxes inherent in engagement with other festival participants. Falassi (1987) describes festivals as a recurring event for a social occasion which take on different forms and events where participants directly or indirectly become united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds and a sharing of world view. At Lollapalooza, the trickster took on different forms based on the time of day. Festival participants acted and behaved differently during the day as opposed to the night.

During the day, it was harder to conceal trickster behaviours due to the security personnel being more visible and the grounds being illuminated. When the sky became dark, festival participants pushed the boundaries around rules even more. In my observation notes within the festival grounds, I noted an instance of overt sexual behavior in which a

young woman went into the bushes with an older man to have sex. As this was happening, many festival participants looked away and did not acknowledge that it was happening, or they laughed and kept walking. The expectation seemed to be that sex is part of the festival, and it was a common occurrence and in the dark it cannot be seen. Every other day of the year, the festival grounds are a park in Chicago, and during non-festival days people might not turn a blind eye to what was happening.

In the evening, especially as the night progressed, it seemed like it was easier to get items through security. Security also seemed to care less about what festival participants were doing at night. It was very hard to see the security personnel during the day, but especially as the festival grounds became dark. This was especially true during the thunderstorm. Festival participants were able to hide on the grounds during the mass exit of people or not follow the rules. The sky was dark and security was focused on leading people to safety.

The time of day made it easier to see what was going on at the festival. During the day time, it was easier to conceal pot smoke, but also easier to tell if harder drugs were being used as festival participants erratic behaviours towards others was more visible. When it started to turn to dusk, it was also easy to see which festival participants had drunk too much or were having a bad reaction to the drugs. It was not uncommon to walk past someone bent over and throwing up on the grass or passed out in their own vomit.

Nighttime made it easier to see some drugs use by the trickster at night. Festival participants smoking pot were easily located as smoke lifted into the air and the lights from the stage illuminated the crowd. However, the darkness made it harder to look at participant's faces to see if they were high. During Black Sabbath's performance, there was

a woman with a lit up hoola hoop. I noted that the men seemed to be captivated by watching her body move, but it is also possible that depending on the drugs taken, they were attracted to the lights moving.

### **The trickster online in spaces of anonymity with no filter**

The online environment provides people with a level of anonymity that enables them to speak freely and express their opinions in a format of their choosing. The Lollapalooza message board provided anonymity to users by allowing them to choose a user name. Facebook on the other hand requires users to comment using their personal accounts. People could set up fake profiles to ensure their anonymity, but many posts seemed to be linked to real people.

The anonymity component for festival participants to share their thoughts and feelings allowed the trickster to emerge. Participants were able to speak freely and express their likes and dislikes without the worry that there would be retribution for their responses. Facebook and the Lollapalooza message boards provided a blank canvas for people to say anything they thought without a filter. Some of the posts contained vulgar terms, profanity, references to using drugs, and sex.

In addition to the form of dress at Lollapalooza, tricksters also were present in the use of social space whether in expressing feelings of anger or gratitude or defining what was personal space and how to obtain it. Festival participants identified interactions such as taking care of others, expectations, and reactions that indicated social norms were being shaped at the festival. Festival participants used social norming as a way to impose their beliefs on those around them, whether on friends at the festival, or festival participant's unknown to them. Social media postings created a space that allowed festival participants

to feel validated and connected to likeminded people through their written thoughts on values and norms. The online community created outside the festival space established that there were similar people who experienced the same things and validated those thoughts through using the thumbs up “like” button, or commenting.

The online platform created a space that allowed festival participants to continue to take on the role of the trickster by expressing their thoughts freely. The instant and immediate nature of posting to social media creates a platform for the trickster to continually emerge. If a comment is made that contains swear words, or has tone, or is aggressive and hurtful, it can take a while before the comment is deleted, and this only if the comments are reported to the moderators.

In the online platform, tricksters can continue to emerge by posting provocative photos or sharing experiences that go against the social norms created. Tricksters are characterized by having no sense of shame and having an affinity with storytelling and jokes. The Facebook page and the Lollapalooza message board are an ideal platform for the trickster to manifest throughout the year. The online forum does not have a set time that posts have to be submitted by. It is an open community that allows people to post any content. This gives the trickster an open forum to continually tell their story of their experiences or to make jokes at others’ expense. A comment posted on Facebook indicates a tone of annoyance and judgment at participants who continued to hold on to the Lollapalooza experience: “let go and remove the wristband asap unless you’re unemployed. You’ll look like a tool if you keep it on.” (“Phil”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012).

Online platforms also rely on the trickster to post content that creates buzz and a persona of the festival. Lollapalooza has a reputation as being a diverse party that has drug

use, costumes, excessive drinking etc. The content provided by the tricksters gives future attendees a snapshot into what to expect for their first time at the festival. As a first time festival participant, I looked at the online forums before going to get a grasp of what to expect. From what I read, I had a sense that it was going to be an unstable weekend and not to “prepare” too much in my festival participant role.

### **Weathering the trickster**

Weather conditions at Lollapalooza provided more opportunities for festival participants to emerge as the trickster. At the beginning of the festival, the extreme heat played a significant role in how festival participants interacted with each other and the physical space that was given to one another. The heat and humidity created a bubble of space around people and a lethargic state of being at certain stages. As I noted in my observation notes, touching another person or being close to someone in the heat was painful. The space bubble between people was determined by where festival participants decided to place themselves at each stage. There was a level of acceptance on the part of the festival participants who were at the front of the crowd as opposed to the back. The back of the crowd provided more space and festival participants could spread out, move, and be less constricted. Participants at the front of the stage had to accept that they would be squished beside the person next to them—there would be no space between.

The hot sun on the first days of the festival called forth tricksters who were more scantily dressed. Festival participants showed more skin and dressed more provocatively in the first day and a half of the festival than during the latter half. This could be due to the change in weather conditions. As noted in the findings, festival participants did not have a problem with seeing bathing suits at the festival, and there was a level of acceptance about

these being worn in the heat. Festival participants commented on nudity and provocative clothing as being inappropriate, but bathing suits were acceptable. After the heat broke from the storm, more festival participants were covered up and showing less skin.

The storm was another area where focal practice came into play at the festival. It was a large event that defined the festival for participants for 2012. As the storm began, it divided festival participants. There were those who tried to evacuate the area as quickly as possible, and those who did not follow the rules and wanted to stay. As described in Chapter 4 from my observation notes, festival participants were expressing their desire to stay at the festival because of money or because the experience outweighed their desire for safety. The storm was a topic that many festival participants wrote about on message boards and on Facebook. It can be argued that because of the potential impacts on personal safety, this is one event at the festival where festival participants were able to conform to the rules and be a member of a community. Although it has been argued in other areas of this discussion that the tricksters created their own community, by the definition provided by Szakolszai (2009), this is where festival participants were able to be part of a community. There was no excessive drinking, sexual behavior, or shame. The focal practice was on evacuating the area to safety. The storm forced festival participants back to reality by demanding they comply with the rules to leave the area, as well as evacuate into the city of Chicago and leave the liminal space of Lollapalooza for a few hours.

While the storm created a disruption to the flow of experiences at the festival, it also created new opportunities for tricksters to appear in altered forms. The presence of mud pits created a new substance and area for festival participants to engage with each other and led to the emergence of the mud people. At this point in the festival, mud was used to cover



people's bodies and acted as a catalyst for focal practice. Festival participants used the mud as a way to interact with each other and the festival space, and it was a way to create social interactions with those around the mud areas.

From the findings, mud was used as a way to induce storytelling, sexual behavior, and lack of shame amongst festival participants. By flicking mud on to festival participants in the crowd, it was a way to normalize the mud as a component of the festival. The consistency of mud symbolizes the fluidity of festival participants as they interacted with it and were able to experience the festival in a different way. For some, once they were covered in mud, they started dancing and covering themselves in it. This created another community of people within the festival.

Festival participants were able to experience liminal space through the mud by identifying as a mud person, a festival participant, part of a group of people at the festival (e.g. a group of friends), and as their non-festival selves. These participants were able to stand between all the different versions of themselves at the festival at the same time. Not every festival participant at Lollapalooza took on the form of the trickster. Those who did not take on that form had to navigate the festival with tricksters dispersed throughout it. Weathering the trickster takes on a different meaning when one thinks of it in terms of tolerance and acceptance of what is happening around them. Each festival participant came to the festival with a preconceived set of ideas of how the festival would be, but also how their personal norms and values played into their actions at the festival. Throughout Chapter 4, there is a strong undercurrent of judgment and condemnation for some of the behaviours at the festival. In the one posting by Joseph John on Facebook, he talked about karma and the role it would play in providing justice for stealing his hat by saying "I hope

some serious o'doyle karma hits that douche hard.” (“Jonathan”, Facebook post, August 6, 2012). Some participants found the mischievous behaviours of other participants to be funny and entertaining while others, found it to be nuisance.

Between fun and judgment, there was also an element of real life that crept in during the festival. This was evident from walking between the stages and seeing ten to fifteen ambulances lined up waiting to take people to the hospital. There was the impending sense that something “bad” would happen to someone at some point. This was also expressed by one festival participant said:

It's par for the course to see people who are too high or drunk to take care of themselves, vomiting etc. but what is disturbing to see people passed out with no one around them. You think-where are your parents? Where are your friends? Who is taking care of you? It's really scary to think “I hope that person doesn't die”

This quote evokes a strong sense of what is right and wrong. It imposes on others the behaviours that one “ought” to know and carry out. There were thousands of people everywhere doing their own thing. Based on the size of the festival, the amount of things going on, it is possible for someone to be passed out somewhere and to not be found for a long time. For the festival to function there had to be a certain number of festival participants not engaging in trickster behaviours all the time. The grounds are too large and there were too many places for festival participants to be unseen if something bad happened.

The data collected from Facebook posts and the message board forum are only a small snapshot into the experiences of the participants for 2012. Participants choose what information to disclose about their experiences and comment on what they wanted to communicate through written form. The interview questions filled out by festival participants, along with my observation notes provide more context and understanding into

the specific research questions being asked about self, community and liminality. It is evident from the postings collected from social media that festival participants did “weather” the many forms of the trickster over the course of the festival based on the tone of displeasure or admiration for what was being described.

Lollapalooza created opportunity for festival participants to engage with each other as different forms for the trickster and the liminal state at different times and to varying degrees. As a participant, I was able to be my own trickster to how I wanted to be, and I was not pressured to wear less clothing or break the rules the same way others were. I chose to change how I dressed and the activities I chose to engage in on my own. Each participant at the festival was their own person and this created a mosaic of participants in a liminal space negotiating their internal trickster and norms, and that of others, at the same time.

### **Negotiating Community Within the Anonymity of Liminal Space**

When I asked participants “how is community at the music festival different than in your day-to-day life?” Responses were quite different. One respondent described the community at Lollapalooza as more accepting and approachable, whereas the other respondent described Lollapalooza as a time to “see music, relax, dance, sing along and enjoy the experience” and also as a place where she was able to escape the drama of her life and “live in a bubble for three days.” As I explored this further, at Lollapalooza, community is not the warm and fuzzy definition that can come to mind when thinking of community, but it is a group of people with diverse musical interests, coming together for a similar purpose engaging in sexual behaviours, acting in a joking and fantasizing way. In the three days at the festival, I, as a researcher and participant felt like I was part of a community of misfits. I was on this misfit island, and that was energizing to feel connected

to a group of people with superficial similar interests of creating experiences and memories based on not following the rules and conforming to non-festival society. Deeper analysis reveals the fluid movement and negotiation of the trickster on misfit island and relatedly the fluid movement of connections and disconnections—the making, breaking, and remaking of communities—as part of community at Lollapalooza.

Community in this context aligns with other instances of community and group identity that have already been discussed in Chapter Four e.g. assimilation through clothing, traffic patterns, slang and emotions and costumes. My understanding of community was shaped by observations I made at the festival and from reflexive journaling that allowed me to further understand my biases as well as what I saw and experiencing.

#### **The Lolla family, creating connection and a space to embody voice**

Postings on the Lollapalooza Facebook page and the Lollapalooza message board forum made references to the “Lolla family” and the new friends that were made. When asked “what different communities exist at the festival?”, both respondents identified a sense of responsibility towards one another and that festival participants watch out for each other. Both respondents described communities in this context as “helping”, “sharing” and “mutual understanding.” As a participant, I felt compelled to share napkins I had with the girl in front of me in line at the portable washrooms and let her go ahead of me because she looked like she was in pain. I felt compelled to help her because I would want someone to do the same for me.

The postings from Facebook and the message board that were coded as being “community” predominantly pertained to festival participants meeting other participants at

the festival, posting pictures of people they met, sharing alcohol and drugs within the crowd, helping participants in need, and watching out for one another.

The postings made about community were very positive in nature. The postings mainly focused on positive events that suggested a community atmosphere was present e.g. “I lost my phone Friday night and someone got it back to me Saturday morning! Amazing stuff.”

Elsewhere, as an observation, I noted: “This is a community based on outward expressions of movement towards the music. The swaying and the hands in the air show solidarity and respect for each other and the artist. The words aren’t in English, so people are coming together as one by moving together.”

The online platforms enabled participants to connect with one another over similar experiences, thoughts, and feelings before and after the festival. Many posts expressed frustration about the closure of the festival during the storm. One participant writing a post about the weather would spawn other responses from participants willing to contribute and have their voices heard. During the festival it is hard to have your individual voice heard about your experiences and thoughts because the format of the festival has been predetermined and there is a finite timeframe for the event to take place. Any changes that would happen would be from the feedback gathered online or participants emailing in suggestions.

### **Shared symbols and communication: The rise of ingroups, outgroups and exclusion**

While at Lollapalooza, communication happened in various formats. The use of cellphones to relay messages was problematic while at the festival due to the high number

of festival participants on various providers sending messages at the same time. As someone who was not familiar to the area or an American citizen, it was impossible for me to use technology while at the festival to communicate with my friend. Festival participants became more and more creative in how they communicated with one another. This was seen in the use of markers and hand signals as a way to communicate directions and location. It can be argued that the use of hand signals and props created a sense of belonging with those that knew who was associated with those symbols. I approached the one group of festival participants that I saw making a hand signals and asked what it meant. I was unsure if it was a symbol for the band that was playing or something different. The group of festival participants explained that it was a hand signal created amongst their group of friends to communicate with each other. Unless one knew the meaning behind the symbol being displayed, that communication would be lost and others would feel like they did not belong to that group.

The marking of space also occurred with blankets. Festival participants would lay a blanket on the grass and claim the areas as their own through belongings and standing close to the blanket. The blankets also acted as a way to create a space bubble between people. The instances of community that I observed at the festival were not always positive in nature and reflected a separation that existed between the community that was present in that situation and the participants who were on the outside. Exclusion occurred in a variety of settings within the festival. An example of this occurred while watching a performance where the participants were all sitting in groups and pairs on blankets. I did not have a blanket and I was by myself and felt excluded from that community. Another example of a negative community experience happened with the mud dividing the spaces of the festival

after the storm. While watching Sigur Ros [the band] perform on the Sunday afternoon, I noted “The mud has created a division between the people who were willing to take the risk to walk through and those that weren’t.” There was a physical divide between participants, which acted as a bonding agent. Festival participants who were on the other side of the mud had their hands in the air in unison and were sharing in that communal experience.

### **Threat, protection, and the rise of enclaves and individualism**

The second question that was asked about community was “what different communities exist at the festival?” Jasmine identified four different communities that existed (types of ticket holders, age groups, types of music fans, and festival participants who came back after the storm) at the festival whereas Shawna described the difference between the true fans being in a community and trying to have a good time and festival participants who go to start fights or are obnoxious. Shawna also noted that each community within the festival “protects itself.” The concept of communities protecting each other can be seen in the postings from the Facebook page and the Lollapalooza message board where users described what they deemed to be appropriate behaviour (e.g., crowd surfing) whereas if a participant was not involved with crowd surfing or were negatively affected by it (e.g. getting kicked in the head), their comments were negative, because to that community, it was not appropriate and they were protecting each other.

I noted that in my observation notes that when the evacuation of the festival happened, the Lollapalooza community all of a sudden were individuals scattering trying to get to shelter and there was no regard for the group. In this instance, the sense of responsibility towards one another was gone, possibly due to the threat of individual safety.

## Conclusion

This thesis provided insight into how festival participants experienced self, community, and the liminal space. As a teenager, I was drawn to music festivals and concerts. The atmosphere was intoxicating and appealing and I knew there was something else happening in that space that enticed people to come back. It was not just the music or seeing a favourite band, it was also the people and the experiences. Lollapalooza was a great avenue to unpeel the layers of what happens at a music festival to discover and understand why people are drawn to these events. Lollapalooza was an ideal setting to study because of the diverse population of people in terms of age, race, and gender, the number of participants, and notoriety, but also because of the diverse musical influences, and the uniqueness of the grounds of the festival.

The temporary and liminal nature of music festivals provides an ideal setting for festival participants to test the waters of their beliefs, morals, and worldly ideas. Music festivals are temporary cities that allow festival participants to bring in who they are on the outside, but and also play the role of trickster and experience a different way of being and thinking. It is a chance for people to test out how far they will go to break rules or laws, and how on the fringe they want to be in a group of people.

The trickster is ever present at music festivals and concerts. Entering a liminal space to embody the trickster is addicting and engaging. It brings out the carefree nature of human beings and releases people from everyday pressures that dictate moral responsibilities and roles. In the context of Lollapalooza, the trickster allowed people to experience temporary freedom from rules and social pressures in a temporary space. It created an environment that allowed festival participants to experience connection with the broader Lollapalooza



community and whoever they chose to interact with in the crowd. The trickster helped festival participants identify a community of likeminded people, and it allowed festival participants to create a sense of self through their actions, clothing and costumes and a sense of community. The trickster also helps to make the intangible nature of festivals more tangible, and also created a force to be bonded with, negotiated, resisted and rendered invisible by participants in community.

Understanding how the trickster interacted and weaved its way through music festivals, and more broadly events, gives insight to music festival organizers on how to create a successful event that will have festival participants wanting to relive their experiences long after the festival has ended through social media and future attendance.

Marketing, promotion, musical acts and venue all play a part in creating a good music festival, but creating a space where overt laws and rules are not overtly present and encouraging freedom of self-expression creates a liminal space. These are the experiences that will keep people coming back to enjoy a space for freedom and engagement.

### **Implications of the Study**

The objective of any event or festival is to create a space that encourages participation and consumption. This was discussed in earlier chapters through Falassi's (1987) concepts of festivals and how that relates to music festivals. This thesis has aimed to provide a better understanding of the psychological and sociological factors that create experiences relating to sense of self, community and liminality for music festival participants. The literature written about music festivals generally focuses on the business aspects that generate money and encourage repeat attendance. This thesis has tried to

demonstrate that there are other factors such as sense of community, self, and the role of the trickster that need to be better understood by music festival promoters and marketing teams.

The literature written on music festivals is quite diverse in terms of the aspects that are studied. At the time of this study, quite a bit of the literature focused on the motivations of music festival attendees as a way to encourage repeat attendance, branding, and sponsorship. It was very hard to find resources related to liminality and music festivals. The bulk of the liminality research pertained to other topics that had transferable concepts that could be applied to music festivals. This thesis has added to the tourism literature by identifying liminality as an important factor in a successful music festival.

This thesis has also added to the body of tourism literature by studying a fresh perspective to understand why participants go to music festivals. This thesis has added to the tourism literature by looking at the human side of these types of events and delved deeper into understanding deeper motivations such as attachment and separation as reasons for repeat attendance. Even the shift in wording from music festival attendee, which is what this group is frequently referred to in the literature, to music festival participant allows readers to delve deeper into the concepts being talked about by participating in the journey of the music festival with them.

In relation to attachment and separation, identifying the trickster as a critical component towards the success of a music festival will help festival organizers plan accordingly. A key component with any festival, is liability for festival participant's safety. Having an idea of the behaviours and needs that the trickster engages in will help to create an event that has safety measures in place, but does not come across as an authoritarian state by having the safety measures highly visible.

Music festivals continue to gain in popularity every year. This is evident from the amount of exposure through social media, the media, and general awareness about the festivals. As mentioned above, magazines are now promoting “festival looks”, which are collections of clothing aimed at festival participants to fit in. This thesis has suggested the importance of community and connections with others and the central role of the trickster and how this ties into marketing that takes place before the event through avenues such as “festival looks” and merchandise.

Music festivals and concerts have changed the peripheral experiences that festival participants can engage with beyond the music acts themselves. By encouraging music festival promoters to change how they market by using the word participant instead of attendee in their marketing campaigns and promotions, will give people the sense that they are actively involved in the outcome of the festival. As described above, the participants are what make the festival what it is because they are engaging with each other, the grounds, the artists, vendors, and sponsors. Through participant’s interactions with the components of a music festival, sense of self can be developed. This is an opportunity for sponsors and vendors to entice people with their products and political messages. Sense of community is created through the vibe of the festival and aligning oneself with the various vendors and merchandise, musicians, and tricksters.

Interpretive grounded theory was the methodology used in this study. Through the process of interpreting the participants at Lollapalooza, I was able to conceptualize and better understand how participants interact and engage at the festival by becoming the trickster. This study also had a narrative lens as well, through my ability to weave my story and the passages of text from the social media postings into the findings. There were a few

drawbacks to this study which are described below, but if this study were to be replicated in the future, a phenomenology study would be another way of understanding how festival participants experience community, self, and liminality. A phenomenology would explore assumptions about how participants interact with the world around them and explore their actions to create meaning of the world they live in.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One of the limitations of this study arose from the challenges with data collection. Due to a lack of participants agreeing to be surveyed, as well as collecting data from the message boards and Facebook posts, it is hard to know if the information collected is how the original author intended it. Although a separate Facebook account was set up to ask participants if they would be willing to participate in the study, even the ones who agreed to complete the survey did not follow through and send back responses to the questions. This area of study is difficult to get participant's responses during the festival, because it requires them to break out of the experiences they are immersed in. Not many participants were willing to talk at the festival because they had too many other people vying for their attention (free merchandise, maps, performers, amongst others), and it seemed like many wanted to concentrate on the performances and hanging out with their friends. I was however, able to draw conclusions from their responses based on my personal experiences at Lollapalooza, as well as the similarity in responses from the sample of posts that were collected.

If another study was conducted, the researcher should consider better, more effective ways of capturing participant's responses at the festival. One of the major issues I incurred while collecting data was trying to get festival participants to agree to answer

questions on the spot. Many people expressed that they did not want to or did not have the time. I was infringing on their time being engaged at the festival. In a future study, the researcher could reach out to participants through social media who have identified that they will be going to the festival in the upcoming year. The researcher could gather their thoughts on the festival beforehand, meet up during the festival to capture their thoughts, and then post festival in a skype interview or over email. This would give a more holistic view of how festival participants experience sense of self, community and liminality at music festivals. This approach could be problematic during the festival if participants forgot to meet up or something unforeseen occurred that would prevent them from meeting in person.

Another limitation of this study is the time gap between when the data was collected to current day. A significant amount of time has passed, which could lead to outdated findings and data.

This study tried to understand how festival participants experienced themselves at the festival. Due to the methods I chose to collect the data, Facebook posts and personal observations, I relied heavily on my own interpretations and understanding of how sense of self was created and in what forms it manifested at the festival. There is no real way to know if my understanding of festival participants' sense of self was accurate.

I also kept what Bennett (2001) thought about self-expression and music festivals in the back of my mind as I observed participants in the festival grounds. Bennett (2001) suggests music festivals combine ideals of a community with self-expression and freedom of music as an art form. Rock music festivals began as a way for youth to demonstrate acts of rebellion against the dominant parent culture. My understanding of how participants

experienced sense of self was based on how I experienced my sense of self through expressions of my clothing and acts of rebellion, even if it was small acts of rebellion. I saw my behaviours and attitudes of what was going on around me change over the course of the festival and I imposed those thoughts of how others interpreted themselves on to this study. I observed this manifesting the most in festival participants through costumes, fashion, and risk taking. I assumed that festival participants felt differently about themselves over the course of the festival as their outward appearance changed, or they took more risks, which aligns with defying the “parent culture.”

If another study was conducted, it would be beneficial to interview participants over the course of the festival to see how they experience their sense of self at the beginning of the festival and then again at the end of the festival. This would give researchers a better understanding how participants experience self, or if a different sense of self is actually experienced during the festival.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

A future study could be done comparing the role of the trickster at music festivals that have an overnight camping component to the festival, compared to tricksters at festivals like Lollapalooza that shut down every night. This study could compare the intensity of the trickster in each setting to see if it affects participant’s levels of engagement within the festival community or the sense of community they feel at the festival amongst different groups of participants.

Another area of study that might interest festival organizers could focus on the areas that the trickster is evident at festivals. Festivals that are comparable could be looked at e.g. Osheaga, Coachella, Glastonbury.

A significant amount of research looking at music festivals has a tourism focus and looks at marketing techniques and motivations of festival participants. This data allows festival organizers to understand how to make more money and make their festival grow in popularity. Motivations and marketing play a role in attracting festival participants to a festival, but the areas of study that look at experiences, community, self, liminality and the trickster helps to assist festival organizers in understanding why festival participants are drawn to go to festivals and how they can help enhance the likelihood that people will want to purchase that intangible experience.

The concept of the trickster played a pivotal role in this study, but there is much more that could be unpacked about this concept in future studies. The conclusion of this study was that festival participants embodied the trickster and therefore were able to experience self, community and the liminal state, but did not include the possibility that those who did not engage in trickster like behaviours were actually the real tricksters because those individuals went against the norm of the festival. As described in the findings and discussion chapters, festival participants were encouraged by festival organizers to engage with the festival space and festival participants in a free spirit way, which is what the trickster embodies.

A future study could also look at how the theme or branding for a specific year of Lollapalooza impacts festival participant's ability/willingness to act as the trickster. The festival organizers in 2012 used the circus theme for Lollapalooza, which encouraged

festival participants to have fun and behave how they wanted at the festival within the set of “rules” that were established. The theme for the festival set the tone for festival participants to engage with the festival space in a certain way. Further study into how the branding and images impact festival participant’s ability to experience self, community and liminality would be beneficial to festival organizers for future planning.

Another future study could explore the role of festival participants embodying traits of a royal court jester. In this study, researchers could look at how festival organizers give space and acceptance for festival participants to act as royal court jester for the sake of enhancing the festival through merriment and humorous behavior. Studying how the jester interacts with other festival participants and the need to be take on a jester role would bring a deeper understanding of how festival participants interact with the festival space and authority. A study like this could look at how the jester at music festivals is able to procure and enhance the merriment and celebration at the festival through their sense of self, community and liminal state.



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## Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

(to appear on UW letterhead)

Hello,

My name is Mary Lynne Bartlett. I am a student at the University of Waterloo enrolled in the Masters of Tourism Policy and Planning graduate degree program. The title of my thesis is “Shared Experiences Grounded in Music: An Exploration of Belonging and Community at the Lollapalooza Music Festival” and Dr. Susan Arai is my Supervisor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. **I want to hear about your experiences at Lollapalooza!** I am particularly interested in the unique experiences you had at the music festival, how it might differ from your every day life, and how you experienced community while at Lollapalooza.

If you volunteer to be part of this study, you will be asked to complete a Skype interview after the completion of Lollapalooza (after August 6, 2012). The Skype interview will take approximately one hour to complete and will be audio recorded. Your answers will be confidential and you may choose a pseudonym to use instead of your real name.

If you are interested in participating in this study, I will record your contact information. You will be contacted approximately one to three weeks after the completion of Lollapalooza music festival 2012. In total, I hope to interview approximately 10 people. If you agree to participate, there is a chance you may not be contacted for participation in this study.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics (file # 18265). However, the final decision about participation is yours.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information, feel free to contact me by phone at 519-616-5190 or by email at [mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca). You can also reach my supervisor, Dr. Susan Arai, by phone at 519-888-4567 ext. 33758 or by email at [sarai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sarai@uwaterloo.ca). You may also contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you

*Mary Lynne Bartlett*  
MA candidate,  
Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies  
(519) 616-5190, [mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca)

*Susan Arai, Ph. D.*  
Associate Professor  
Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies  
(519) 888-4567 ext. 33758, [sarai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sarai@uwaterloo.ca)

## Appendix B: Information Letter

(to appear on UW letterhead)

Over the years, music festivals have played a significant role in community and the tourism industry, and research in the past decade suggests participation in music festivals is rapidly increasing. **It has been my dream to attend Lollapalooza and because of its worldwide reputation as a music mega event it made complete sense to explore it in my thesis.** This study will explore how music festival attendees experience self and community at Lollapalooza music festival. I am particularly interested in the unique experiences individuals have at Lollapalooza, how experience differs from everyday life, and how individuals experience community while at Lollapalooza. This will contribute to our understanding of music festivals and provide ideas for future areas of development.

I will be journaling my experiences at Lollapalooza using a journal, digital point and shoot camera, and voice recorder. I will also be approaching festival attendees about participating in my study by presenting them with a flyer, which will detail the title of the study and contact information. The purpose of the flyer will be to obtain potential participant's names and email addresses so they can be contacted after the festival to participate in the interview. After the completion of Lollapalooza, I will be conducting interviews for my study using Skype. Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no known or anticipated risks to participants in this study.

This project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo (file # 18265). If you have questions regarding this study, or would like additional information, feel free to contact me by phone at 519-616-5190 or by email at [mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca). You can also reach my supervisor, Dr. Susan Arai, by phone at 519-888-4567 ext. 33758 or by email at [sarai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sarai@uwaterloo.ca). You may also contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca).

**I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project!**

Yours Sincerely,

Mary Lynne Bartlett

## Appendix C: Consent Form

(to appear on UW letterhead and to be sent and received electronically)

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

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I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Mary Lynne Bartlett of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that a pseudonym will be used in place of my real name so that my identity remains confidential.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo (file #18265). I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Dr. Maureen Nummelin in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca)

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES     NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES     NO

By indicating my name below, I allow this to stand as my electronic signature:

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please type in)

The pseudonym (fake name) I wish to have used in the study is: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please type in)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D: Letter of Appreciation

(to appear on UW letterhead)

Date

Dear (Name);

I am writing to thank you for participating in my study and providing feedback on your experiences at Lollapalooza music festival. It was indeed a pleasure meeting you at the music festival and talking to you on Skype.

My project, “Shared Experiences Grounded in Music: An Exploration of Belonging and Community at the Lollapalooza Music Festival”, has been transcribed and I am in the process of analyzing the data. Your responses have given me valuable insight into music festival attendees’ experiences of self, belonging and community at music festivals.

I hope you will get in touch with me if further thoughts occur to you about the subject of our conversation, particularly if you decide in retrospect that you would like to designate some of it for non-attribution. I shall as promised, be sending you a copy of your transcript to provide you with the opportunity to expand or clarify the details of our interview. I expect it to be ready for your review by the end of October.

This project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo file # 18265. If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information, feel free to contact me by phone at 519-616-5190 or by email at [mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca). You can also reach my supervisor, Dr. Susan Arai, by phone at 519-888-4567 ext. 33758 or by email at [sarai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sarai@uwaterloo.ca). You may also contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca).

Sincerely,

Mary Lynne Bartlett	Susan Arai, Ph. D.
MA candidate, Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies (519) 616-5190, <a href="mailto:mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca">mlbartle@uwaterloo.ca</a>	Associate Professor Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies (519) 888-4567 ext. 33758, <a href="mailto:sarai@uwaterloo.ca">sarai@uwaterloo.ca</a>

## **Appendix E: Letter to Lollapalooza**

(to appear on UW letterhead)

July 12, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

**My name is Mary Lynne Bartlett. I hope to examines music festival attendees experiences at Lollapalooza Music festival. The title of my project is “Shared Experiences Grounded in Music: An Exploration of Belonging and Community at the Lollapalooza Music Festival.” I am conducting as part of my Master’s degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Professor Susan Arai.** Motivations and marketing play a role in attracting festival participants to a festival, but the areas of study that look at experiences, community, and self will assist festival organizers in understanding why festival participants are drawn to go to festivals and how they can help enhance the likelihood that people will want to purchase that intangible experience.