

“I Come Back a Better Person”: Identity Construction and Maintenance at a Regional Burn Festival*

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Burn festivals are participatory, non-commodified festivals based in self-expression, creativity, and community and are structured in the model of the original Burning Man festival, established in 1986. This study addresses reflexive identity processes among participants within the context of a regional burn festival. Building on prior research addressing identity processes in counter-cultural social spheres we conceptualize a regional burn festival as a site for identity construction and maintenance. Specifically, we examine participants' (1) involvement within this culturally subversive community as it may facilitate reflexive identity processes, (2) discursive and interactive negotiations of authenticity and who/what invokes the “spirit” of Burning Man, (3) conceptions of the relevance that this community and its guiding principles hold to participants' everyday lives, and (4) politicized sensibilities and forms of lifestyle-based action. Further, we specify the mechanisms through which identity is formed and elucidate the tensions involved in maintaining consistency between one's beliefs and actions while participating in festivals and living in the day-to-day “default” world.

That's the whole point of a burn in the first place- We're creating an alternative to the default world that may only exist for a few days at a time, but during those few days the whole community can exist and cooperate based on a commitment to the 10 principles. (newcomer, 23)

Introduction and Literature Review

Reflexive identity refers to the ongoing process of self-searching and redefinition in the context of particular communities (Melucci 1989). Identity, in this sense, is individually and collectively conceptualized, negotiated, and enacted through a continual and ongoing process rather than conceived of as a static endpoint (Snow 2001). The notion of reflexive identity was developed to draw attention to the symbolic recreation of meaning, and it is theorized that autonomy and self-determination produce symbolic action in everyday life that is promoted through constructed meanings, collective identities, and loose and often disorganized networks of concerned actors that aim for broader impact on the world through personal lifestyle changes (Melucci 1989). Within this conceptualization, symbolism, use of identity, and personal expression at the micro-level act as a form of politicized action, driven by the greater movement

of modern-day social actors toward individualization. From this perspective, modern-day social actors seek fulfillment through personal choices (e.g., a lifestyle) and participation in social change (Melucci 1989). In this sense, people are said to engage in “everyday politics” (Buechler 1995). Further, subcultural and subversive collectives also symbolically challenge society through alternative and counter-cultural lifestyles which bear differences to “normal” society but lack the organization seen in traditional movements (Martin 2002). These concepts have guided empirical and theoretical work, reviewed below, on the role of identity and politicized action within various counter-cultural communities. Scholars have aimed to define the social dynamics involved in (1) identity processes in subversive or counter-cultural communities, (2) the relationship between individual and collective identity, (3) adoption of ideology and politicized frameworks respective to identity, and (4) participation in such communities through events and “lifestyles.” The current research contributes to this literature by examining how identity processes operate reflexively (i.e., both individually and collectively) within a subversive environment and, further, how these processes relate to politicized ideology and the promotion of social change. More specifically, this work considers how identity is reflexively conceptualized, negotiated, and enacted within the subversive and counter-cultural community of a regional burn festival.

Prior research has focused on the ways in which identity is constructed within alternative, counter-cultural, movement-based, or subversive contexts. For example, participants’ interaction with disability-focused groups and organizations can be instrumental in how participants conceptualized their own identity with respect to their disability over time (Brown et al. 2009). Likewise, face-to-face assemblies among activists involved in social movement organizations related to the Global Justice Movement in Madrid fostered a sense of belonging and shared frameworks and were shown to be important in the development of collective identity among anti-capitalists (Fominaya 2010). Further, one’s sense of identity respective to a subversive community may persist over time and as one ages irrespective of one’s changing life circumstances, responsibilities, and perceived roles within the community. Because one’s identity as “punk” or “goth,” for instance, may remain personally relevant to the individual despite tensions arising in later life, this may lead to alterations in how one conceptualizes the identity, exemplifying both the fluid and salient nature of identity (Bennett 2006; Davis 2006; Hodkinson 2011).

An important component of these identity processes involves the linking of lifestyle-based and individual action to ideological frameworks that promote social change. Within the LGBT movement, Powell (2011) found that activists crafted ideological frames that aligned with the “emotions, ideologies, and experiences” of students and staff involved. The Soulforce Equality Ride

bussed LGBT activists to religious and military colleges excluding LGBT students, during which the activists collectively re-conceptualized traditional homophobic and dogmatic interpretations of Christian ideology. In doing so they were able to create linkages between actors' individual identities and experiences, religious ideology, and the movement to facilitate meaningful participation and continued involvement.

Similarly, scholarship has underscored how the enactment of collective identity, leading to personal activism and "spreading the word," may influence mainstream society and promote social change to the extent that this identity is disseminated (Haenfler 2004a, 2004b). Examining the Straight Edge Movement (SEM) as identity-based, Haenfler (2004a) has argued that those involved in the SEM share a collective identity that serves to promote change in their own personal lives and, through collective identity enactment, exemplifies virtues of the identity and lifestyle to others. In abstaining from substance use and casual sex, Straight Edge youth exhibit politicized action that operates at a personal level as a lifestyle (versus the level of direct political action as in traditional social movements) and is maintained through loose and informal networks (Haenfler 2004b) while sharing a collective understanding and commitment to the central tenets of the SEM (Haenfler 2004a).

Later research here has focused on how identity, authenticity, and boundaries are negotiated collectively in the SEM, the ways in which those sharing this identity see commitment to the broader ideology, the techniques by which those involved affirm their subcultural identity (Copes and Williams 2007; Mullaney 2012; Williams 2006; Williams and Copes 2005), and the conceptual commonalities within such youth-based counter-cultural communities (Williams 2007). Larsson (2013) examines similar processes of constructing and negotiating identity and defining authenticity within heavy metal subculture. Further, scholars have studied the role that online networks and communities might play in developing and maintaining ties to the SEM (Williams 2006).

The role of personal networks and interactions play an important role in the development of alternative and/or politicized identities and lifestyles. Supportive social networks built and maintained through vegan communities and events were found to be more important in maintaining a vegan lifestyle than one's claim of vegan identity alone (Cherry 2006). Among the jam band community, the frequency of event attendance and amount of social connections to the culture leads to stronger, more positive feelings toward the counter-cultural norms of this subversive community, which remain somewhat static despite the fluid membership exhibited within the temporary community of venue parking lots (Hunt 2008, 2010). Further, more involved members negotiate alternative normative meanings and maintain social networks (Hunt 2008). Aguilar's (2013) work on intentional communities examined identity processes within

subversive communes and found polyamory (having more than one romantic or sexual partner in full disclosure) to be normatively practiced by newer members before having adopted and committed to philosophies of polyamory on an ideological basis. Similarly, identity processes of grass-fed beef producer-activists highlight a “‘social movement community’... wherein through diffuse structural connections decentralized ‘submerged networks’ ... disseminate movement narratives and practices” and negotiate identity boundaries (Raridon and Mix 2016:145). These findings highlight the reflexive process of negotiating identity expression within such spaces and how this may be linked to ideology.

Identity work has been conceptualized as central to lifestyle movements, which are proposed to be a distinct form of identity-based action; they are further conceptualized as diffusely structured and defined by utilizing “lifestyle choices as tactics of social change” (Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones 2012:1). The key aims of a lifestyle movement are more self-focused and a “participant is oriented toward individual efforts at cultural change, driven especially by a desire to live out a moral identity or code” (Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones 2012:13) and “...while [lifestyle movements] may ‘prefigure’ alterative realities supportive of protest, many have no intention of targeting the state [or] broader political agenda” (Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones 2012:3–4). Again, here the focus is on how politicized ideals are enacted through identity, concomitant lifestyles, and diffuse communities to promote social change via an “alternative” or subversive identity.

Along these lines, prefigurative politics have been summarized as “practices and relationships that model the society a movement seeks to build” and prefigurative spaces are settings in which these models are created (Futrell and Simi 2004:17). Futrell and Simi (2004) suggest that indigenous-prefigurative and transmovement-prefigurative spaces work together to create an “infrastructure of spaces” which meet the social-cultural and ideological needs of movement actors for community, solidarity, and commitment and also act to clarify norms, boundaries, parameters, and foster collective identity. Such private spaces in this study included house parties, music festivals, and intentional communities, for instance. Within the White Power Movement, the authors assert that these spaces operate to expand the message of Aryan dominance, build networks, and “sustain collective identity” (2004:16). Counter-cultural and festival-like social spaces have also been examined in how they facilitate representations of symbolic challenges to mainstream society. Politicized action such as “culture jamming” (Wettergren 2009) and “protestivals” (St. John 2008) combine humor, carnivalized atmospheres, and politicized messages within subversive social arenas.

Taken together these studies demonstrate the connections between subversive and counter-cultural communities and identity formation. Our current

research contributes to this literature by focusing on identity construction and maintenance within the context of a burn festival and examines how participants' involvement and understanding of the ideological principles of Burning Man facilitates reflexive identity processes. Festivals represent a reprieve from everyday life and conventional social processes and often exhibit an intermingling of rebellion and social order, political undertones, and fellowship (Jankowiak and White 1999). Further, research in festivals remains important as behavior and customs found at festivals can be considered exemplary of ceremony and ritual in modern society (Shrum and Kilburn 1996). There are relatively few sociological studies of festivals or the Burning Man festival itself (but see Adams 1998; Chen 2004, 2009a, 2009b, 2016; Doherty 2004; Gotham 2002; Sherry and Kozinets 2004), however, Burning Man and associated regional burn festivals may provide insight for scholars interested in lifestyle-based politics because of their relative longevity, counter-cultural nature, and shared meaning and ideology (Chen 2009b).

Burning Man and Regional Burn Festivals

Data were collected from participants at a 2011 regional burn festival, termed "Erewhon" (pseudonym used for anonymity). Burn festivals are held regionally across the world (but mostly in the U.S.) yet act in accordance with the basic principles of the original "Burning Man" festival (est. 1986) held annually in Nevada, which now draws upwards of 70,000 people (Project 2015). Burning Man is described as a "network of people inspired by the values reflected in the Ten Principles and united in the pursuit of a more creative and connected existence in the world." The annual event of Burning Man is organized by the Burning Man Project, a 501(c)(3) non-profit headquartered in San Francisco that emerged following initial years of relative disorganization (see Chen 2009b for an historical and organizational analysis). Burning Man and associated regional burn festivals represent a temporary reconstruction of society based on the Ten Principles of Burning Man, the ideological foundation for such festivals which include: *Inclusion* (regarding no one as a stranger), *Gifting* (no money or barter), *Decommodification* (no commercialization, exploitation, marketing, or consumerism), *Self-reliance* (being solely prepared for the event), *Self-expression* (in any way meaningful), *Communal Effort* (contributing to the community through cooperation), *Civic Responsibility* (concern for public welfare), *Leaving No Trace* (leaving no ecological impact), *Participation* (involvement), and *Immediacy* (absolute and unadulterated consciousness).

Festival participants consist of individual festivalgoers as well as larger "theme camps" (festivalgoers that camp and contribute to the event together with a common theme or goal). Largely, there is an "anything goes"

atmosphere and behavior of festivalgoers would be generally considered non-normative by mainstream societal standards. Conventional norms are intentionally flouted (described throughout) for the purposes of unabashed self-expression and an experiential environment which culminates in a ritual burning of an effigy. The stated mission of Burning Man is “to facilitate and extend the culture that has issued from the Burning Man event into the larger world” and their stated vision is to “bring experiences to people in grand, awe-inspiring and joyful ways that lift the human spirit, address social problems and inspire a sense of culture, community and personal engagement” (The Network: About Us 2017). The Ten Principles “now guide activities at Burning Man and related events” and reflects a more recent shift to “disseminating its practices and values” (Chen 2016:77).

The general “burn community” also includes regional affiliate burn festivals (the focus of this research). Chen identifies over 100 regionals sanctioned by Burning Man (2016:81) and the Web site states: “The Burning Man Regional Network plays a key role in the year-round extension of the Burning Man experience, supporting it as a global cultural movement. . . . Regional Contacts help local Burners connect with each other, while bringing Burning Man principles and culture into their local communities through events and activities, year-round.” Regional events may or may not be “official” (i.e., sanctioned and overseen by Burning Man), but simply structured by the guiding Ten Principles and bearing resemblance to the overall aesthetic and structure of the long-standing Burning Man event.

Methods and Data

A regional burn festival, which we will call “Erewhon,” was a privately held festival that convened in the southeastern United States in 2011 and sold approximately 2,800 tickets. The first author attended the entire three-day festival and collected field notes and other data; the second author assisted in instrumentation, data analysis, interpretation, and manuscript preparation. Mixed methods included participant observation, survey, and collection of written statements at the event via “thought books” (detailed below).

Field notes were collected continuously in a self-disclosing, open-ended format using methods of participant observation during the event through discrete note-taking. While names/monikers were recorded during data collection, participants quoted or mentioned in the analysis have been de-identified through the use of pseudonyms or demographic descriptors in order to protect privacy (LeCompte and Schensul 2010). The inclusion criterion was attendance at Erewhon 2011 and exclusion criteria were limited to obvious mental incapacity (i.e., severe cognitive limitations or extreme intoxication). Participants were not prompted with direct or preplanned questions during participant

observation (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Field notes included brief descriptions of appearance, verbal interactions, and nonverbal behavior and were elaborated more fully at later periods not exceeding 1 day past the date of observation in order to preserve quality and accuracy (Mack et al. 2005). A question–observation–question pattern throughout the event was followed (Spradley 1980). To protect the integrity of the data, the first author abstained from drug or alcohol use at the event. Given the nature of the festival and the principle of gifting, intoxicants were offered throughout the festival, however, polite refusal was never questioned. Further, use of an opaque beverage container allowed beverage consumption to appear ambiguous.

The first author’s prior knowledge of burn festival norms and emphasis on philosophy, thought, and artistic expression within the community led to the use of simple data collection through “thought books,” an innovative technique conceptualized by the authors which provided an unobtrusive approach to learning more about festival participants’ ideas and beliefs. The books encouraged passersby to leave a voluntary written contribution providing insight into the thoughts and feelings of the participants. Responses were mostly anonymous and varied in length. Seven thought books were placed in relatively high-traffic areas (as determined through the first author’s prior knowledge) for the duration of the event. Thought books were prompted with the following cover titles designed by the authors to capture data related to individual participation, identity, and ideology: “WRITE IN ME...What does Erewhon mean to you?”; “WRITE IN ME...Why do you come to Erewhon?”; “WRITE IN ME...What is Erewhon?”; “WRITE IN ME...What did you do today?”; “WRITE IN ME...Who are we at Erewhon?”; “WRITE IN ME...What does Erewhon do for us?”; “WRITE IN ME...About who you are.” Entries by participants resembled those of a guest-book, with response ranging from a few words to several paragraphs. Entries were listed in a log-like fashion and participants used different color markers/pens/pencils to reply. We identified approximately 500 separate responses (across all books), with a range of approximately 30–125 entries in each book. Thought books remained in place throughout the festival, did not appear to be tampered with, and were successfully used by the participants.

Additional data were collected through surveys distributed roughly 1 month following the burn festival to 173 participants who provided a valid e-mail address to the first author during the festival. Participants were contacted once through e-mail, and 32 completed surveys were received and analyzed (18.5% response rate). The surveys included 22 open-ended questions and 17 multiple-choice questions (response to each question was voluntary) and took approximately 30 min to complete. The anonymous online survey was developed subsequent to initial analysis of participant observation and thought book

data, to allow greater probing of apparent themes (Seale 2004). The questionnaire contained open- and closed-ended questions regarding festivalgoers' perceptions of the burn festival and community, and their experience and knowledge of Burning Man and the Ten Principles (complete questionnaire and data available upon request). The majority of the respondents were male (61%) and had obtained some college education (58%). Most were employed full-time (57%), 26 percent were unemployed and the remaining twenty percent were working part-time and/or a student. Area of residence was fairly evenly distributed, with slightly more respondents living in a small city (36%). Income was also fairly evenly distributed, with slightly more respondents reporting in the \$10,000–\$24,999 yearly income bracket (26%). The sample was relatively young (median age of 30) and mostly single (48%), although ages ranged from 18 to 62 and almost a third of the sample was divorced (32%). We were not able to obtain demographic data on all participants at Erewhon so are not able to determine how representative this sample is of the entire population of attendees. Additionally, the low response rate of those attendees who agreed to be contacted for the survey suggest that the survey data is most appropriately used to provide further evidence as to the attitudes and behaviors of a non-random subset of participants. To this end, these data serve to develop our theoretical understanding of identity processes of burn festival participants but do not serve as comprehensive or representative information on the population of attendees (Table 1).

In past years, this relatively young festival (est. 2007) has typically had about 350 participants but a drastic increase in ticket sales led to the largest community ever present at Erewhon in 2011 (about 2,800). Opening ticket sales led to a diverse group of participants and many were newcomers. Most survey respondents (40%) reported having been to only one burn festival (assumedly Erewhon) and the vast majority (91%) reported never having been to Burning Man. Although the sample is seemingly inexperienced, the majority of respondents reported a desire to attend Burning Man (67%) and being familiar with the Ten Principles before attending Erewhon (78%). Throughout, participants who displayed prior experience with burn festivals or reported having attended more than one in survey data are referred to as “experienced participants” (or similar language) and those for whom Erewhon was their first burn festival are referred to as “newcomers” (or similar language).

Responses to open-ended survey questions, field notes, and thought book data were analyzed through an iterative thematic coding procedure (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). Because the various methods of data collection were carried out at different times, probed different concepts, and differed in depth, the various sources were triangulated to identify themes across each method and to uncover unique insights (Yin 2003). Selected examples and quotes from

Table 1
 Survey Respondents' Demographic Characteristics and Self-Reported Identity

	Burner <i>n</i> = 15	Hippie or Healer <i>n</i> = 3	Other <i>n</i> = 13
Age			
18–29	8	3	6
30+	7		7
Gender			
Male	11	1	7
Female	4	2	5
Other			1
Sexual orientation			
Straight	11	2	7
Gay	1		2
Bi-Sexual	1	1	1
Polyamorous	2		1
Other			2
Marital status			
Single	7	1	7
Married/Civ. Union	3		3
Divorced	5	2	3
Residence			
Rural	3		3
Suburb	4		4
Urban	10	3	6
Education			
High school	2	1	1
Some College	10	1	7
College Grad	1	1	4
Graduate Degree	2		1
Employment			
Full-time	9	2	6
Part-time and/or student	2	1	3
Unemployed	4		4
Income			
< \$10K	2		3
\$10K–24,999	4	1	3

Table 1
(continued)

	Burner <i>n</i> = 15	Hippie or Healer <i>n</i> = 3	Other <i>n</i> = 13
\$25K–34,999	2		2
\$35K–49,999		2	3
\$50K–75K	3		2
>\$75K	4		

all three data types are used for illustrative purposes to highlight key themes identified in the analysis.

Findings

Identity Construction

A key component of boundary maintenance is the creation of symbolic boundaries that delineate what it means to belong to a particular group (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont 1992; Lamont and Molnar 2002). Recent scholarship has focused on the fluid and interactional elements of culture, identity and boundaries (Lamont 2001; Lizardo and Strand 2009). Participant observation at Erewhon revealed that attendees tended to lump others and themselves into groups, providing diverse traits, behaviors, and aspects of each identity and evaluations, criticisms, and expectations of each group. Triangulating data gathered through mixed methods allowed for identification of labels used by participants—the most prominent being “burner,” “hippie,” “raver,” and “healer.” Despite discussion of “ravers” and “hippies” in field notes as well as mention of “healers,” just two survey participants described themselves as a “hippie,” one participant described themselves as a “healer,” and no respondents identified as a “raver.”

A “burner” is described as someone who attends burn festivals, follows the Ten Principles, contributes to the community present at festivals, and appreciates the use of fire as art. Appearances associated with burners include use of leather, fur, and costume-like dress. Whereas “hippies” are often cited as being free-spirited, burners are regaled for being self-reliant. Survey responses and field notes describe “hippies” as focused on peace, love, having respect for nature and conservation and being open-minded and politically liberal. Participants tended to equate being a hippie with drug use (mostly marijuana) and some

ascribed negative attributes such as laziness, or being exploitative of others' generosity and resources (Chen similarly refers to Burning Man organizers' vernacular use of "code 48" which translates to "useless hippie" [2009b:90]). In the data "ravers" are highly criticized as superficially participating and holding ulterior motives for involvement; they are described as young and preoccupied with electronic music and designer drugs (such as MDMA). As "ravers" are mostly maligned in these data, it is no surprise that none of the survey respondents identified themselves with this category.

Some overall patterns emerged in survey respondents' descriptions of these labels. Descriptions of "burners" include a desire to contribute beyond just one's own personal experience but to enhance the experience of others. Almost all descriptions of "burners" involved a focus on the Ten Principles at the festival and in everyday life. Such sentiment is offered in this survey respondent's description:

[A burner is] someone who has thought out who he is, what he believes, and how he can make the world a better place for others. . . . A burner is committed to this all year, not just at burns. (experienced participant, 58)

This is similar to the process uncovered among Soulforce Equality Riders, who developed a "moral identity contingent upon SMO participation," "strengthened ties," and commitment to the organization (Powell 2011:455).

While participants were often able to provide clearly articulated boundaries and characteristics of the various "types" of participants at Erewhon, many chose a self-definition outside of these predefined labels. Survey data show that 42 percent of respondents chose to define their identity as "other," (second only to "burner" which was selected by 48% of respondents) with wide variation in the given descriptions of who they are. These survey respondents seem to have chosen this option because they prefer to define themselves on their own terms, as seen here:

I am my own person. I participate at burns and rainbow gatherings, but have never fully committed myself to either. . . . (experienced participant, 23)

Or the participant may believe their identity to be an amalgamation of traits unable to be easily classified, as stated by this survey respondent who wrote: "I am me. . . not in a category because I can fit all of them."

Those who self-identified as a "burner" tended to give more specified criteria and subjective evaluations of different identities. That said, a fair amount of those who reported being a "burner" did not offer descriptions of identity at all, however, these respondents were also newcomers. This suggests that newcomers may not yet know how to define these labels and perhaps consider them self a "burner" because of their attendance (and feeling of belonging) at

Erewhon, rather than having a coherent sense of what this label means as entrenched and shared by those with greater experience with burn festivals. Scholars have similarly found that those involved in the SEM and heavy metal subculture distinguish between meaningful and valid identity with the community versus superficial claims to the label, and that this often hinges on long-term involvement with the community (Larsson 2013; Mullaney 2012).

As we argue below, participation in burn festivals plays a key role in identity maintenance, therefore, we would expect that those who self-reported as a “burner” would be more likely to be an experienced festivalgoer and/or have attended Burning Man. Cross-tabulations of the survey data, however, did not show this pattern. In fact, those who reported themselves as “other” were more than twice as likely to have been to Burning Man as those who reported themselves as a “burner” (15% versus 7%, respectively). Further, while experienced participants did report themselves as a “burner” more often than newcomers (53% versus 42%, respectively), there was a larger gap between experienced participants and newcomers claiming the “other” descriptor (59% versus 33%, respectively). These data reflect that claiming to be a “burner” and actual experience with burn festivals do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. If anything, those who are more experienced with burn festivals are likely to label themselves differently altogether. Whereas newcomers seem quick to adopt a “burner” identity, experienced participants are more apt to resist these labels and challenge the very notion of categorizing their identity.

Similar findings have been reported in the construction and progression of identity as experienced by persons with disabilities (Brown et al. 2009), vegans (Cherry 2006), and activists within the Global Justice Movement (Fominaya 2010). Likewise, it seems one’s sense of identity may be altered through interaction with communities such as Erewhon and this highlights collective identity as a process rather than a static endpoint as Powell (2011) and Snow (2001) have been careful to illustrate. Erewhon does not universally adopt one sense of identity. Rather, Erewhon contributes to the exploration and development of one’s own unique identity, however, guided by the larger ideology of the community.

Identity Enactment

The normative culture of burn festivals includes an expectation to act in accordance with the Ten Principles, outlined by the larger Burning Man festival (and reviewed above). The Ten Principles are introduced to newcomers and reinforced throughout the festival in a variety of ways and act as a blueprint for ideal behavior both during the festival and in everyday life.

Responding to the thought book asking “What is Erewhon?” participants wrote such responses as “an exponentially greater way of interacting with the

world around you. An example to the rest of society that allows individuals and groups to more peacefully co-exist and co-create” and “what life should be like every day,” exemplifying the sense of the principles as prescriptive. During a conversation with several experienced festivalgoers, a discussion over “What is a burn festival?” emerged in response to one participant’s comment that outsiders criticize burn festivals as an excuse to get high and have sex. The group responded that burn festivals are something “bigger” than that. One participant noted the importance of the principles and voiced her opinion that they should be followed every day, not just at burns. The group nodded in agreement, and one participant stated that he actively tries to follow the principles all year long. In conjunction with this, survey responses indicate a high level of adherence to these prescribed principles.

Education of the Ten Principles is considered vital to nurturing an engaged communal atmosphere and an authentic burn experience for festivalgoers. Festivalgoers are expected to follow these principles and they are often outlined in “survival guides” e-mailed to ticket holders prior to the event. Field notes detailed that the greeting gate at Erewhon hosted several volunteer greeters who informally quizzed entrants on their knowledge of the Ten Principles and drew symbols on entrants’ skin to help them remain mindful of the principles throughout the festival. This finding is supported by survey data which show that while 41 percent of survey respondents were newcomers and 91 percent reported never having been to Burning Man, 78 percent reported familiarity with the Ten Principles before attending Erewhon and 34 percent of respondents specifically mentioned the importance of educating newcomers about the principles. Further, throughout the event those who violated principles were corrected for their behavior through playful banter and practical jokes. In this way humor is used to encourage and enforce norms while avoiding paternalism.

Open drug (and alcohol) use is normative and openly practiced within the social context of a burn festivals despite legal disclaimers (often included with ticket sales) that forbid illegal drug use. Due to the private and secluded location of Erewhon (and burn festivals in general), festivalgoers are able to freely engage in drug use with minimal risk of sanction. Our survey data revealed that only 7 percent of respondents abstained from drug or alcohol use while at the festival.

The ritual burning of the effigy is when most festivalgoers engage in drug use as Erewhon offers the most carnivalized atmosphere (e.g., elaborate costume, lights, lasers, lanterns, performances, drumming, fire spinning, music, fireworks, and the burning of the effigy itself). Field notes detail that many festivalgoers offered alcoholic drinks as their gift and drugs (mostly marijuana) were often passed around or offered to one another regularly. Others engaged

those who were obviously tripping (i.e., high on hallucinogens) to enhance their experience by spinning lights for them or offering food or water to better insure their safety. Field notes detailed a participant who allowed several people experiencing a “bad trip” on LSD to lie down in his tent until they were calmer and could return to the festival. This survey respondent outlined the accommodating emotional and sensory environment at Erewhon:

When I trip, I usually struggle against a feeling of anxiety and instability, but at Erewhon with that safe feeling of community and openness, I did [not] experience those feelings at all...I was elated, and I wandered around ... having an amazing time just soaking up the energy of Erewhon. (newcomer, 23)

Drug use for participants at Erewhon takes on different functions. Experienced participants more often saw drug use as serving a social or abstract purpose (e.g., as a social lubricant, ritual, or means to spiritual awakening), versus simply a method for “getting high.” For these participants, drugs were used for purposes of connection, community, and ritual. One experienced festivalgoer explained that he “used to get fucked up just to get fucked up” but eventually grew out of this mindset and now only uses drugs at burn festivals as a ritualized experience designated for this atmosphere; not simply a tool for intoxication.

While drug use is prevalent at Erewhon counter-cultural normative expectations surrounding drug/alcohol nonetheless exist within this context (for instance, that one should not use substances to the point of belligerence). Indeed, the majority of survey respondents reported using drugs but being rarely intoxicated, and dictated that one should not drug-seek, sell, buy, or trade drugs, or “dose” others (i.e., allow others to unknowingly ingest drugs/alcohol). Doing so, as many imparted, infringes on other festivalgoers’ positive experience, violates principles, or may bring about safety concerns. For example, a 46-year-old experienced participant wrote in their survey: “I strongly feel that it diminishes others’ [experiences] when it is their only goal to be fucked up. And that decision affects the ones that have to interact with them.” Those more entrenched in the community were more outspoken about drug norms. Throughout the event, experienced festivalgoers relayed discontent with those who were violating the counter-cultural drug norms of the community. Similarly, Hunt (2010) found that greater participation within the jam band counter-culture fostered greater affinity for the counter-cultural norms of the community.

Taken together, these data show that the Ten Principles ideals of Erewhon are embedded here as well: Gifting, Civic Responsibility, Participation, Immediacy, and Self-Reliance, for instance, apply when it comes to drug/alcohol use. Whereas conventional societal dictates generally impart drug use as

deviant in itself, this community had its own counter-cultural norms surrounding drug behavior, constructed within the framework and confines of the liberal drug environment and aligned with the larger ideological structure of the community. Likewise, within the jam band counter-culture, Hunt (2008) found that greater participation with the community contributed to a redefinition of the role “stoner” in a more positive light.

The expression of sexuality as a counter-cultural norm operates in much the same way in that it is also imbued with the Ten Principle ideals of the community. Sexual openness, experimentation, or use of sexual humor was evident across all data types. Field notes indicate that throughout the festival, sexuality was celebrated and flaunted in events such as lingerie parades, a “Sexual Energy Exchange,” “pimps and hoes” parties, and initiation rituals for “virgins” (i.e., newcomers) consisting of a sexually charged spanking. Responding to the thought book prompt “What did you do today?” one festivalgoer wrote “Erewhon has helped me have amazing sexual freedom... to experiment and share.” Almost half of the survey respondents reported having engaged in sexual experimentation during Erewhon (44%) and those who did not often clarified that their everyday sexual lives were rather open to begin with. 25 percent of survey respondents stated the environment at Erewhon was conducive to sexual experimentation or openness, as reflected in this statement from a survey respondent describing her first-time entering an orgy tent:

“My friend . . . said it was something I needed to at least experience once. I’m glad I went in . . . I have a new respect for people are that are open with their sexuality. I’m not sure if I could participate, but I at least got to open my mind to something I’ve never been exposed to before.” (newcomer, 23)

Further, field notes detail a festivalgoer who was closeted in his everyday life but felt freer to express his sexual orientation at Erewhon. A number of events at Erewhon were specifically aimed at facilitating sexual exploration. One theme camp in particular revolved around promoting sexual experimentation, openness, and education and hosted nightly events for group sex and masturbation. “Camp Love” (pseudonym) held daily events such as panels and group discussions on sexual health, sex work, transgender identity, and polyamory.

Much as the ideals of Erewhon translate to drug use, the Ten Principles ideology also permeated the arena of sexuality. Field notes detail a discussion in which one participant related polyamory to the principle of Decommmodification, stating that polyamory eschews the typical “ownership” over another (as opposed to monogamy). Another participant stated that she believed feelings of ownership and “keeping things for yourself” are natural, but the way in which one chooses to approach sexual and romantic relationships is cultural. The

distinction here is that one can choose to approach social relationships using the Ten Principles as guiding standards, rather than defaulting to conventional expectations. A participant involved in this discussion further commented that polyamory seems more prevalent in burn communities because “once you get out of one dominant paradigm, the others tend to go too,” illustrating how burn festivals may foster alternative lifestyles. Relatedly, scholars (Copes and Williams 2007) have contended that subcultural identity may take the form of “moral commitment” to a particular ideology, which is then reinforced by “discounting condemners” (i.e., affirming ways in which participants differ from condemners). In this study, however, the participants seem to discount the implied cultural condemnation of polyamorous relationship as abnormal; positioning polyamory as more morally sound in reference to the guiding ideology of the Ten Principles. Resistance to a dominant mainstream paradigm is a common finding in studies of subcultural communities (Williams 2007). Further, this resistance is enacted through personal lifestyle choices, as we can see here in the norms surrounding drug/alcohol use and sexuality as they are socially constructed within this subversive environment (Williams 2007). These data reflect the general openness of sexuality at Erewhon, how this may contrast with participants’ everyday lives, and how this non-normative behavior is generally seen positively as it subverts the sexual boundaries and expectations imposed by conventional society.

Further, such examples highlight how the guiding Principles color the social lenses through which festivalgoers view society, self-expression, relationships, and social interactions within it. Thus, in examining drug and sex norms at Erewhon one can see how counter-cultural norms exhibited at Erewhon were often conceived of as expressions of the Ten Principles and further act to reinforce the underlying value structure of the community. In this context, counter-cultural norms which, at face value, seem purely hedonistic in fact take on a larger meaning. Sexual openness, for instance, is regarded as a form of resistance to the dominant paradigm of “acceptable” sexuality in conventional society and a mind-opening experience introducing festivalgoers to a less-confined way of life. Similarly, and particularly for experienced festivalgoers, drug use takes on a meaning beyond hedonism. Rather, it is seen as a tool to help one connect with the community or is imbued with ritualistic or spiritual meaning. Community ideals such as Civic Responsibility, Self-Reliance, Communal Effort, Decommodification, Immediacy, Gifting, and Self-Expression are embedded within these counter-cultural norms. More experienced participants were likely to conceptualize counter-cultural norms as derived from the ideals of the community and greater enforce adherence to such norms, while newcomers were seen as more likely to break these norms and conceptualize the Ten Principles as utilitarian, rather than idealistic in the broader sense.

Participants of Erewhon engaged in community education and passive enforcement of burn norms and the Ten Principles and thereby sought a balance that allows for difference, inclusion, and acceptance without rigid or paternalistic rule structure (Chen's 2009b work on Burning Man centers on this very dynamic). Melucci emphasizes that such openness is needed in order to resonate with the needs of social actors in complex societies; collapse of the community can result from excessive rigidity or excessive disorganization (1989:218). This further supports the contention that festivals are environments where one can see both rebellion and social order working together (Jankowiak and White 1999).

Negotiating Identity

Burn festivals provide an environment that allows festivalgoers more freedom than they are afforded in everyday life as part of its core ideology, though at times notions of authentic identity and participation and incongruence between Erewhon and festivalgoers' everyday lives may complicate self-expression and participation. Erewhon acted as an arena in which identity processes could be observed with respect to how festivalgoers' negotiate self-identity and how that relates to the broader community.

Festivalgoers described Erewhon as a catalyst for self-expression, introspection, and personal growth and associated Erewhon with positive emotions and individual transformation. Responding to the thought book question "What does Erewhon do for us?" entries included "You've brought me peace... tranquility," and "Erewhon provides a loving, creative space for the spontaneous unfolding of the love in our hearts...a space conducive to the answering of our deepest prayers," and pages were filled with drawings of hearts, peace signs, happy faces, and doodles generally capturing positive feelings of participants. Survey data show support for this and 16 percent of survey respondents specifically mentioned positive emotional or psychological effects of Erewhon such as feelings of love, happiness, or relaxation such as: "I'm always amazed and humbled by everyone's efforts and love. Burns gave me back hope and joy" (experienced participant, 54). In response to the thought book prompt "What does Erewhon do for us?" one participant wrote: "Erewhon has woken up different parts of my psyche." During a group discussion an experienced participant also relayed her feelings that she had grown to be a more authentic and genuine person since coming to burn festivals and that she had learned to stop being driven by her "ego"; burn festivals encouraged her to focus more on the world and community around her rather than herself. Similarly, a thought book entry responding to "What did you do today?" read "Today I...let go of inhibitions, was able to be myself."

Before the effigy is burned, it is used by festivalgoers as an outlet for releasing feelings, making wishes, honoring the deceased, or scribbling

drawings and writing musings. These writings on the effigy itself further tapped feelings of positivity, growth, and transformation, reading: “insecurity, anxiety, fears. . . replace it with a happy thought, it’s all in my head,” and “I am stronger than my depression.” In conversation with an experienced participant who has attended burn festivals since 2007, she recounted her mother once asking her what she gets out of going to burn festivals to which she replied, simply, “I come back a better person.” Perception of personal growth at Erewhon is also echoed by this survey respondent, in writing of the Ten Principles:

It is the heart of transformation from the lessons of the default world, [it] provides a framework for growth and to discover what YOU believe instead of what you were programmed to believe. (experienced participant, 58)

Those attending Erewhon are encouraged to explore and express themselves by the principle of radical Self-Expression which produces a creative, carnival-like atmosphere quite distinct from other social arenas and incongruent with everyday life. Festivalgoers explore non-normative behavior in the name of Self-Expression and Participation. Festivalgoers wear anything from elaborate costume to complete nudity, create art, and engage in performance (such as fire spinning, acrobatics, or music). Many relayed their behavior at Erewhon as more child-like and playful than everyday life allows. Responding to the thought book prompt “What does Erewhon do for us?” one participant offered, “It’s one of the few times in my adult life when I can . . . have an amazing and unique and unforgettable time while forgetting I’m an adult!” A 23-year-old newcomer wrote, “In real life I do not jump on trampolines dressed like a fairy. . . . I could only wish my behavior at Erewhon was more like what I did in every day [sic] life,” expressing the inconsistency between their behavior at Erewhon and everyday life and their preference for the former. This sentiment was observed in field notes as well, such as a self-described “burner” who stated, “I wish every day could be like this!” and another participant further stating that she has trouble dealing with “normal” society. Several survey respondents further mentioned their struggle to reconcile their identity with conventional expectations, stating that they are foundationally the same person during festivals and in everyday life, but the latter imposes limitations. A 62-year-old experienced participant wrote: “I live a very conservative lifestyle on an everyday basis but in my mind I don’t think that way. I just feel more at ease to do what I really want to at burns that I don’t have the freedom to do everyday,” and another writes “I feel like I’m more myself at Erewhon. In everyday life, I am largely what society has made me become” (experienced participant, 24).

Some participants attempt to reconcile such tension by incorporating alternative aspects of burn festivals into everyday life, as seen here:

I am working on fusing together these two identities. . . . I want to get involved in an ongoing yoga class, and get better at hooping. I am trying my best to create art when I have time All in all I want to be even MORE 'out there' and expressive but find a way to accomplish these things and still be a responsible functioning member of society. (newcomer, 23)

Studies of other non-normative communities have found similar attempts at reconciliation among aging punks (Bennett 2006; Davis 2006) and goths (Hodkinson 2011), such as finding employment in the punk scene as a writer or critic or taking on a teaching role by providing commentary about the current scene to those who are younger, much as experienced participants tended to do in encouraging adherence to the Principles at Erewhon.

Due to the limited scope of this research, we are not able to ascertain how participants' sense of connection to this community or shared identity may change over longer periods of time nor as their connections may wax or wane along with shifting life circumstances, though Chen (2009b) has suggested that participation in Burning Man may vary over time given such shifts in everyday lifestyles, roles, and expectations. Relatedly Aguilar (2013) speculates that, for polyamorous members of the intentional community she studied, conventional society would impose inherent confines to such a lifestyle and, as such, former adherents leaving the community may revert to mainstream normative behaviors. In the case of Erewhon, however, the general and non-specific nature of the Ten Principles and the community's focus on self-interpretation of meaning may enable enactment in any way meaningful or practical given the circumstance and confines. The principle of Decommodification, for instance, can mean polyamory to one, or refusing to buy conspicuously branded clothing to another. While this ideology may be at-odds with larger society, it may also provide relative flexibility in "living" the principles.

Another component of this negotiating process relates to how participants negotiate community boundaries, belonging, and authenticity. Considering Erewhon (and similar burn festivals) as potential politicized realms, scholarship in contemporary social movements asserts that such realms are inherently prone to tension and dialogue about what makes the group and how it is defined because said communities are steeped in difference and self-realization (Melucci 1989). As Melucci writes, "They spend a great deal of time and energy discussing who they are, what they should become and which people have the right to decide that" (1989:218). Futrell and Simi (2004) found discussions of identity and the respective "boundaries and parameters" inherent to identity within the White Power Movement to be a feature of prefigurative spaces.

Similar to what other scholars have found in subversive communities, the construction of boundaries and claims of authenticity seem to be more salient to those with greater experience with burn festivals, and authenticity remains a critical distinguishing factor that delineates meaningful versus superficial

interaction within these social realms (Larsson 2013; Mullaney 2012; Williams 2006, 2007; Williams and Copes 2005). Because longer standing participants and those who have been to Burning Man are more likely to report their identity as “other” it seems the labels used to delineate between festivalgoers (hippie, raver, etc.) may not represent coherent identities with firm boundaries but may be used primarily to distinguish authentic burners from others. Being part of the community hinges on contributing to “something bigger” versus solely self-fulfillment for the individual; according to many participants, this is what delineates authentic (versus superficial or exploitative) participation. This is akin to Williams’ (2007) study of youth-based subcultures which draws on the concept of “subcultural capital” (Bourdieu 1984, 1986; Thornton 1996) in elucidating how the boundary between authentic and inauthentic identity and participation may be drawn along lines of “embodied” knowledge of the community, culture, behaviors, lingo, and practices which distinguish insiders from outsiders.

Within subversive or counter-cultural communities, according to earlier scholars, the culture may at some point diverge from authenticity as it grows, changes, and may become co-opted or commodified; reducing the collective identity or the community to something akin to a “look” (Hebdige 1979 in Williams 2006). In terms of the Burning Man event, Chen (2004, 2009a, 2009b) asserts that this “reflexive dialogue,” flexibility, and ongoing negotiation is necessary for sustaining Burning Man structurally and creatively. According to Melucci (1989), such arenas are essential for reflexive identity formation of both self and group as they allow for the flexibility needed to engage in an ongoing and regenerative process of reflexive identity that coincides with modern-day actors’ need of individualization.

In terms of Erewhon, it seems that notions of authenticity (and the boundaries by which this is determined) hinge on commitment to the culture at large via the guiding ideology (Ten Principles); authentic, “embodied” identity within the burn culture is closely tied to ideological adherence and enactment. Whereas initial introduction to Erewhon exposes festivalgoers to an alternative way of life, redefines norms for this community, and encourages personal reflection, continued involvement seems to lead to greater exploration and redefinition of self, incorporating the Ten Principles into one’s own unique identity and lifestyle, of which social and personal change an essential is part.

Prefigurative Spaces and “Everyday Politics”

Erewhon and the burning of the effigy may be considered a symbolic catalyst for greater social change by promoting the Ten Principles as a guideline for life: As one wrote on the effigy, “May the burning of this effigy bring the Ten Principles into the world.” This can be seen in the exposure and

encouragement of the Ten Principles throughout Erewhon and in examining the extent to which the burn community follows these principles. To consider these experiences, behaviors, and attitudes as “everyday politics,” it is important to examine the diffusion of this way of life beyond the festival itself. Buechler (1995) refers to “everyday politics” as individual-based activism, that is, social change through lifestyle-based changes and everyday politicized actions. These findings have revealed that some participants see the “default world” (i.e., everyday life or, normative society) as largely incongruent with the community and ideologies present at Erewhon and similar festivals. Further, efforts are taken to use the ideals of Burning Man to positively influence everyday life. Maintaining the ideals of the community in the everyday lives of festivalgoers encourages social change in the personal respect.

Many participants at Erewhon saw the principles as influential of larger society and reported enacting the principles in everyday life. A conversation detailed in field notes serves as an example of the perceived distinctions between Erewhon and everyday life. This participant spoke of his last place of employment and, echoing the virtues of Decommodification, stated that the more money came in, the worse office politics became; when he has been the poorest he has also been the most creative. Further, 93 percent of the survey respondents reported that they followed some or all of the Ten Principles outside of burn festivals (complete summary findings available upon request). Eighty-one percent of respondents gave explicit examples of how they enact the Ten Principles in their everyday life. Many reported that the Ten Principles seemed instinctive to them or aligned with their moral or religious values. One survey participant wrote: “. . . the 10P’s have been instilled in me not only from events as this, but by common sense, proper upbringing, social circles, and a desire to make myself and those around me better” (experienced participant, 27); another wrote, “most of them are based on Christian principles. Since I am a Christian, I typically follow daily” (experienced participant, 44).

The subversive environment and larger ideological culture of Erewhon (and Burning Man alike) seems to encourage social awareness and is linked to broader themes within social movements (Chen 2009b; discusses links between Burning Man and other movements such as environmentalism). Field notes detail discussions of “resistance” and eschewing “dominant paradigms” and there are outward and symbolic challenges to mainstream society. Counter-cultural spaces such as Erewhon and similar burn festivals may offer a politically engaged environment due to the relative freedom and encouragement of self-expression, self-exploration, and utopian ideals often modeled in such contexts (Chen 2009b; Jankowiak and White 1999; St. John 2008; Wettergren 2009).

Erewhon displayed the use of humor to challenge the status quo throughout the event, akin to what Wettergren has discussed in her work as “culture

jamming” (2009). Case and Lippard (2009) similarly make a compelling argument in their work detailing how feminist humor actively subverts the status quo through jokes that “disrupt” sexist and patriarchal ideology (2009:240). Along these lines, a group of festivalgoers at Erewhon performed theater which spoofed Roald Dahl’s famous children’s story “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” complete with costumes, microphones, original lyrics, and choreography. One song poked fun at consumerism and materialism, attributing the downfall of the main character to a bottomless box of brand name products and objects of conspicuous consumption. Organizers of the festival also developed “Premiere Camp” (pseudonym), which poked fun at notions of exclusivity, elitism, classism, and privilege. The camp was surrounded by a white picket fence (a jab at conventional society by using this recognizable symbol of the “American dream”) and had a “VIP line” leading to the entrance where “bouncers” continuously booted people to the back of the line for no apparent reason but to call out the arbitrary rules under which such contexts foster social exclusion.

These examples act as satirical social statements that tout support for principles such as Decommodification and Inclusion. Because there is a focus on “spreading the word” (Haenfler 2004b), there seems to be a focus on the collective as a means to achieve both temporary community and these utopian ideals. Similarly, the use of humor as a method of encouraging adoption of the principles reflect work which asserts that, within “indigenous-prefigurative” spaces (such as parties), jokes were used to “communicate ideological themes to less experienced activists in more accessible and less demanding formats” (Futrell and Simi 2004:29). Further, the self-expressive environment and strategies which encourage adherence to the principles mimic the playful, carnivalized nature of the “protestival,” incorporating aspects of political awareness with fun and playfulness (St. John 2008).

Enactment of politicized identity within the context of Erewhon both maintains community structure while avoiding authoritarianism and positions Erewhon as a social environment in which politicized action may be fostered. Research within the Straight Edge Movement asserts that one’s sense of identity, positioned within the context of the SEM and linked to a value structure, acts as a guideline promoting individualized, politicized action in an everyday sense (Haenfler 2004a). The current findings reflect that participants consider Erewhon (and perhaps burn festivals and culture in general) to be influential of greater society, a symbolic challenge, and an example of an alternative, and better, way of life.

Conclusion

Our findings document how participation in a regional burn festival may contribute to the construction, enactment, and negotiation of a subcultural

identity for participants. Specifically, we found that participants construct symbolic boundaries based largely on how well ones' behaviors and attitudes align with the Ten Principles. The complexity and nuance of "burner" identity construction is intimated by the apparent willingness of newcomers to self-identity as a "burner" and the tendency of more experienced participants to simultaneously prioritize alignment with the Ten Principles while resisting self-labels altogether.

Our findings also detailed how participation in festival activities provides multiple avenues for identity enactment. Norms regarding appropriate drug and alcohol consumption, sexual exploration, and freedom of expression during the festival encourage participants to engage in these activities guided by the Ten Principles. By doing so, these activities are imbued with a deeper collective meaning and serve as expressions of identity enactment for some participants. Our analysis documented how participation in burn festivals and the focused enactment of the Ten Principles with other like-minded participants serves as an important reinforcement and validation of values many participants seek to enact, with varying success, in the "default world." This represents a key component of the identity negotiating process as well as suggesting a spillover effect of festival participation that potentially facilitates ongoing individual change and "everyday" politicized action.

Erewhon engages participants' in individual and collective identity processes. While identity, authenticity, and belonging are collectively negotiated, within the context of Erewhon and the Ten Principles the exploration of self is prioritized as well. Such identity processes within this counter-cultural, subversive community encourage a shift toward social-mindedness that participants perceive as markedly different from mainstream culture. Participants struggle with their desire for free expression of identity within everyday social confines and exhibit attempts at reconciling these juxtaposed worlds. The community espouses the Ten Principles ideology as a general guideline for life and fosters the implementation of such practices through the enactment of identity. In a sense, Erewhon may be a consortium extolling a better way of life and encouraging participants to adopt the ideology throughout their everyday lives. Identity and counter-cultural behavior are framed as expression of a larger principle-based ideology holding politicized implications for larger society.

Future studies on burn festivals and similar counter-cultural communities can build on our findings in multiple ways. First, it is necessary to expand the scope of such work to more fully observe patterns in these social spheres. Building on Futrell and Simi's (2004) concept of an "infrastructure" of prefigurative spaces, we can conceive of the participants of Erewhon as existing within a broader structure and expand empirical work examining the organizational and online networks as well as social spaces occupied by Erewhon and

burn festival participants which may act to perpetuate its sustenance and growth. This would allow further examination of the importance of community involvement and networks in festivalgoers' patterns of involvement and belief systems. Second, Fominaya (2010) identified the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to social movement organizations; future research should examine whether attendance at various burn festivals act as an incubator of alternative social ideologies and long-term collective identities. Future research might also consider burn communities from a network embeddedness perspective (such as Cherry's 2006), examine the role of online networks within the community (Williams 2006; Williams and Copes 2005), or how this community may fluctuate outside of these temporary events (as Hunt 2008 did).

Finally, our findings and the study of identity and festivals have implications for studies of bureaucratization of lifestyle movements more broadly. Recently, Raridon and Mix (2016) examined collective identity formation and cultural politics in the alternative agrifood movement. This work raises questions of collective identity formation and boundary negotiation within a lifestyle-based movement also consisting of entrepreneurial production. As Burning Man and regional affiliated burn festivals continue to expand in size, location, and infrastructure, some issues raised in this work may apply, such as co-optation by organizations simply looking to capitalize through "conspicuous production" (Raridon and Mix 2016:147). While the principles of burn festivals censure commodification, related work (Chen 2009b) has attended to illegal co-optation of the Burning Man name and logo and more recently (Chen 2016) touched on such concerns as "pop-up camps" (third-party hired staff that arrange one's trip and supplies for Burning Man much like a concierge). It has yet to be established whether these various forms of co-optation have impacted regional burn festivals as well.

ENDNOTES

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