Community, family and leisure immersion

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Abstract:

This study explores the ambiguous term 'community' and how close groups of people come to form one. By extracting two core elements, often attributed to designations of community, mutual affection and shared appreciation, this study elucidates how fans of the rock band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons established close bonds referred to as family through their lengthy and passionate involvement in the leisure outlet of a music scene. Due to extensive personal involvements in various music scenes, fans ultimately came to find the music and coterie of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons as a place where they could address their individual needs in the comfort of like-minded others who, over time, came to define the closeness of their relationships as family through shared love of music, interaction and care for each other's well-being.

Article:

> I walked into the campground portion of the Dixie Mattress Festival (DMF)1 to find the group I was looking for having set up their campsite in a circle. The group of eight from three different states used their tents and a VW Microbus to make an enclosed communal area. In the centre was a place where all the coolers were huddled together, a shared kitchen space, and chairs arranged side-by-side under a slew of lofted tarps to protect from the elements. I asked Kent who organized the setup; it appeared carefully orchestrated. Kent said, 'No one. It kind of happened organically. I guess we actually like each other!' Kent flashed his usual sarcastic smile and I turned to his wife, Becky, for confirmation. She said, 'This is our home for the weekend. We wanted it to hold everything the family needs!' I looked around at the other six who were engaged in various states of cooking, cleaning and telling stories from the previous night's events. I sat down in an empty chair and was immediately handed a plate piled high with food. I stayed under the shelter of the tarps with the 'family' for the next several hours until it was time to head to the acoustic set, then we all headed down to the show together.

Introduction

Community is a concept that exists in a grey area due to the diverse meanings projected upon it by the different disciplines and popular culture. Community, however, is frequently a defining term for those intimately involved in leisure activities to describe their fellow participants (Dunlap, 2009). This paper seeks to elucidate how participation in music scenes can lead to the establishment of communal bonds that come to be referred to as community, and in this instance, family. To better understand, how activities such as this aid in the development of these close-knit relationships, it was necessary to examine the intricacies of individual and collective action in this form of leisure participation.

The fanbase of the rock band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons are spread throughout the United States. While the following is small in terms of total numbers, the dedication level is high in terms of the timeline of involvement and the number of concerts attended annually by each fan. The band plays a number of large yearly events where many of the most faithful make every effort to attend. In addition to the music, these events are lush grounds for renewing bonds and strengthening relationships with friends made through the music scene. For this reason, the fanbase of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons offers a rich site for analysing how leisure (music) participation leads to the formation of a community and intimate feelings for one another often identified as family.

As fans become immersed in the music scene surrounding their favourite group, they can come to form meaningful relationships with one another, oftentimes referred to as community. Arai and Pedlar (2003) said about community that

> It is more than a mere association; it is a unity in which the individuals are members. This membership is neither artificial nor instrumental, but rather has its own intrinsic value. The coming together of people around meaningful leisure is a potent illustration of community – community of celebration as described by Borgmann. (p. 192)

For the followers of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons, it is celebration through habitual, but intermittent, gathering that aids in the construction of their fan community (Hunt, 2008). Glover and Stewart (2006) said that 'leisure provides a window into community life' that allows for participants to engage in a social process that leads to an understanding of their role in a community, thus connecting them to others in 'need of being connected' (p. 325). Numerous studies have explored the role of community in various leisure outlets including the context of sport identification (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002), sport spectatorship (Warner, Dixon, & Leierer, 2015), community gardening (Dunlap, 2013) and music fandom (Adams, Ernstes, & Lucey, 2014) to name but a few.

As we will display, the fans of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons established meaningful relationships through their participation in the music scene that came to be identified as family. The use of the term family for the majority of participants appeared to be rooted in the socialization of values and traditions that came to be symbolic of those deeply immersed in the music scene. The strength of the invocation of the family metaphor, then, beckoned an idealized vision of comfort, loyalty and love through immersion in the coterie encompassing the band (Rosenblatt, 1994).

The objective guiding our inquiry was to describe the close-knit relationships that are formed through involvement in the music scene surrounding the band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons. This includes exploring the fans' sense of communion (Schmalenbach, 1977) as evidenced through Turner's (1969) liminal stages of communitas. The fans of the band have rich, lengthy connections to the music, and those that we spoke with all found a different means of becoming involved in the music scene that associated with the band. As their involvement level increased, so too did their musical moments of epiphany that signalled to them that they had discovered something special. Along with these personal realizations often came the formations of friendships through the music which led to the establishment of what many of the participants referred to as family. The primary research question guiding this paper, then, was how does the consumption of a cultural product like music lead to the experiences of communion via communitas and the formation of a community and intimate feelings for one another often identified as family?

Literature review

When fans begin to interact with like-minded others, they create significant, but fleeting, moments of musical appreciation amongst one another and with the band. These shared experiences are often referred to as communitas (Turner, 1969). This term is sometimes juxtaposed with the concept of community. Community is a broader term used to refer to many things, including a place, a group of people and oftentimes the quality of a relationship (Creed, 2006). For this study, a group of people and the quality of a relationship are of particular interest. It is the ambiguity of the term community that calls for the necessity of communitas and subsequently communion (Schmalenbach, 1977), or the loss of one's sense of self in the collective, as defining factors in the ephemeral interactions that accompany participation in a music scene. The use of these concepts can allow for the potential of establishing a 'community', even if the term only acts to serve as a point of reference.

Communitas and communion

Communitas is an appropriate term for the kind of communities that emerge in fan culture. Turner (1969) spoke of three types of communitas; normative, ideological and spontaneous, the latter being most relevant to this paper's focus on the establishment of relationships through music. Spontaneous communitas is 'richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable ones' (p. 139) and is the type that often occurs during counterculture events (Olaveson, 2001), whereas 'life in structure is filled with objective difficulties' (Turner, 1969, p. 139). These difficulties Turner spoke of include having to make tough decisions regarding personal and social issues, sacrificing for the group and overcoming obstacles to maintain one's livelihood. Whereas in spontaneous communitas, it is of a 'pure' variety in that it is self-generating and therefore oppositional to the structure of society (Olaveson, 2001). The temporal moments of communitas allow for participants to be free of the burden and monotony of their daily lives due to the excitement of participation in celebratory events. Societal structure consists of the common knowledge that people share about civil discourse and public life; it comprises the preconceived notions people have for social exchange and the basis from which they operate when they engage in new manners of joint interaction. Spontaneous communitas, while transitory in its staying power in terms of the moment of occurrence, is a 'transformative experience that goes to the

heart of each person's being and finds in it something communal and shared' (Olaveson, 2001, p. 105). The temporal spaces that comprise Turner's (1969) communitas are where we see the powerful incidences of Schmalenbach's (1977) communion that can lead to lasting communal attachments and the potential for the establishment of 'community'.

An issue warranting further inquiry concerns how individuals form the elusive, often misconstrued term 'community' through their involvement in music scenes. If moments of communion, or the loss of one's sense of self in the collective (Schmalenbach, 1977), as observed through Turner's (1969) liminal stages of communitas are effective in creating significant shared moments of interaction between fans, how do these momentary experiences lead to the establishment of communal bonds that last beyond the encore? Why is this music scene conducive to forming community?

Attempting to understand community

Due to the multiple appropriations of community, we found it best to draw from the communitarian conceptualization that expressed the mutual affection and shared appreciation evident in this music scene. Building off the work of Avineri and De-Shalit (1992), Arai and Pedlar (2003) stated that the communitarian concept of community is one that leads to 'social cohesion, openness and acceptance of difference, and engages people in the common good' (p. 194). Avineri and De-Shalit posited that communitarians are dependent on social attachments to affirm their individual identity. Since the individual is reliant on this community to aid in self-actualization, it follows that the individual seeks to serve the greater good of others who make up the community. The type of leisure embraced by communitarians is one 'that brings people together around practices of shared meaning' (Arai & Pedlar, 2003, p. 188). This 'shared meaning' is nurtured over time through the building of relationships with other fans and the development of a meaningful connection to the music.

In the late nineteenth century, Tonnies (2011) crafted what has come to be recognized as one of the most influential sociological articulations of community through his concepts of Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society). He stated that community 'starts from the assumption of a perfect unity of human wills as an original or natural condition which is preserved in spite of actual separation' (p. 37). This conceptualization was based on people who were intimately connected through shared livelihood and culture in rural villages. For Tönnies, community existed in terms of a past that was sought to be reawakened, and as emphasized by Bauman (2001), in a more contemporary account, community 'stands for the kind of world that is not available to us, but which we dearly wish to inhabit and we hope to repossess' (p. 3). More than a century separates these postulations and the common thread is that community does not currently exist. It is, however, something that we should aspire to find for ourselves.

It seems, though, that community may be a difficult goal for collectives to strive to attain. In the closing statements of her book, Against the Romance of Community, Joseph (2002) stated that we need to 'refigure our understandings of here, of who is here with us' (p. 174; emphasis original). This statement comes in response to the consideration of how we go about finding and understanding the important aspects of community and how we proceed if an agreement can be reached. Essentially, it is a call to consider the people that comprise the elusive 'community'. Without individuals, social interaction and the relationships that are formed through this exchange, the concept of community is one not worth considering. Perhaps, then, community should remain solely as a concept, and the emphasis should focus on the components that are

most commonly attributed to community. The descriptions of Creed's (2006) account of what can be meant by community (a location, a group of people or quality of relationship), all imply a shared something, and this is often coupled with the genuine concern for those involved in that sharing. So if two aspects of the community we seek are mutual affection and shared appreciation, however fleeting, then perhaps those elements are of most importance to explore.

Following Schmalenbach (1977), Yack (1993) sought to illustrate a clear difference between the ambiguous term 'community' and what Schmalenbach called 'communion'. Those that experience communion consciously experience the loss of their individual identity through their involvement in a group activity that is intense in nature. Communion, however, is an ephemeral occurrence; it cannot be sustained. Communion disposes those involved to high levels of trust and cooperation with their fellows, whereas members of a community do not lose their sense of personal distinction (Yack, 1993). In a sense, Yack is reinforcing Turner's (1969) original claims of communitas, in that community exists on the other side of a group's shared engagement in communion. Community could simply be the remembrance, or revisioning, of past social interactions. Community may exist solely as a mythical carrot, but it resides assuredly in lay vernacular as something to aspire to. After all, the non-existence of Santa Claus does not prevent children from dreaming of presents ending up under the tree.

Music scenes

This study seeks to address what aspects of participants' lives are most affected by their involvement, which includes the totality of their interaction surrounding the band, comprises attending concerts, listening to the band's music outside of concert settings, making and maintaining relationships with other fans, the prioritization of their involvement in attending concerts and the maintaining of a sense of identity through involvement with the band and its music. These elements comprise what is referred to as a 'music scene' (Moberg, 2011).

One of the earliest conceptualizations of a music 'scene' was developed by Straw (1991). Straw said that music scenes are

> Socio-cultural phenomena that are not tied to pre-existing notions of community grounded in class and tradition but rather facilitating new forms of collectivity and connectivity that centre [sic] upon shared participation in more recent forms of material culture. (Driver & Bennett, 2015, p. 3)

Members of music scenes share a set of interests and values that help them build a sense of community (Pearson, 1987). While music scenes have largely been studied in youth and young adult cohorts, there is increasing investigation and evidence that music scenes transcend youthfulness and are vital to identity maintenance and friendships established through music community participation in older age brackets (Taylor, 2010). The very existence of a music scene necessitates the individual, or more accurately, a collection of individuals, to sustain the connective tissue of the communal component of fanbases (Driver, 2011). In sum, music scenes are a 'simultaneously musical, discursive and aesthetic temporal space that brings together people who share a passion' for a specific band or type of music (Moberg, 2011, p. 407). As will be displayed, the fanbase of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons is predominately middle-aged with lengthy tenures as fans, most having followed the band for a minimum of a decade thus allowing

for the creation and cultivation of a music scene that is steeped in longevity and intimate interactions.

Family leisure

While most definitions of family are based upon marriage or biological connections as decided in the legal system (Carbone, 2005; Meyer, 2006), with the turn toward the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States and the demise of adherence to traditional family structures in younger age brackets (Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2007), the characterization of what a family entails is ever-changing. There has been little research conducted on the socio-emotional aspects of family outside of relationships that involve marriage or children, yet the prevalence of people to refer to nonrelated friends as family is high (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Cranston, 2010). Descriptions of unrelated individuals as family occur in popular nonfiction frequently on topics such as the military (Parnell, 2013), professional sports (Pearlman, 2009) and rock and roll (Jackson, 2000) to name just a few.

The study of family and leisure has largely been done so with the 'traditional' definition of family as its foundation (Taylor, Ward, Zabriskie, Hill, & Hanson, 2012; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Whether nuclear, blended or extended, the focus of leisure research on family is primarily done in regards to the parent–children (and sometimes grandparent) relationship (Buswell, Zabriskie, Lundberg, & Hawkins, 2012; Hebblethwaite & Norris, 2011). There is little examination given to nontraditional appropriations of the use of family, even when those appropriations occur with the same foundational tenets of love, appreciation, understanding and acceptance. As will be evidenced through our findings, the participants of this study invoked the metaphor of family to describe their close-knit relationships that were developed and nurtured through their participation in the music scene surrounding the rock band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons, thus eclipsing 'traditional' understandings of how families are commonly understood.

Methods

The research was conducted following González's (2000) Four Seasons method approach which is guided by four ideals: (1) natural cycles, in which ethnographic research is conducted in a preparation, growth, harvest, rest sequence that continuously repeats itself ensuring that opportunities are not lost, only delayed; (2) an awareness of the interdependence of all things, which is a consideration that all that transpires within the culture we studied are data that are relevant to the research; (3) preparedness, which involves personal reflexivity in the authentic reporting of the events and discussions that are revealed (this often involved letting go of control in order to let the participants' voices shine) and finally, (4) harmony and balance or the need to show the dichotomies that exist within the focus of study. The use of this approach was beneficial to the investigation for several reasons. In order to understand how fans came to recognize their social involvement as a community, observation and inquiry involved both an emic and an etic understanding of the phenomenon (Crotty, 2010) that required a lengthy involvement in the music scene surrounding the band. To fully capture the essence of the participants' meanings they held for the relationships formed through the music, it was necessary to allow each informant to illustrate their involvement in their own words as much as possible. This meant letting the interview take tangents as introduced by each participant to fully capture

the spirit. Finally, there had to be a context established for each participant in terms of their use of terms like community or family, as well as how the fleeting moments of interaction, both personal and collective, aided in the establishment of a community, as defined by the participants.

Study participants

Participants were recruited through the help of gatekeepers, influential people involved in the music scene that were integral to gaining knowledge of, and access to, other valuable informants, as well as snowball sampling which involved recommendations of other fans to interview as generated by the already established participants (Tracy, 2013). The primary participants were chosen through purposive sampling (Patton, 1990), which involved the first author's knowledge of their level of involvement and included consideration of their history and frequency of participation (how long they had been participating in the scene and/or the number of concerts they attended on average per year since initial involvement; the majority of fans had been participating for over a decade, with most having attended at least 100 concerts, with several having attended nearly 300), as well as their tendencies to be outspoken about their involvement and love for the band and its music. There were 31 participants (18 male and 13 female), and 2 of those were interviewed twice (the 2 participants interviewed twice had become sober since their first interview and requested the opportunity to be interviewed again). All interviews lasted at least 1 h, but several went for as long as nearly 3 h. Twenty-six of the interviews were conducted on the day of a show, and the other five were conducted either the week before or week after a show. Twenty-six of the interviews were conducted one-on-one. One couple was interviewed together (Bill and Viv) and a group of three friends were interviewed together (Arlo, Jack and Tracy) due to comfort or availability. Each interview was recorded with permission of the participant, and notes were taken during the session. All participants have been assigned a pseudonym to provide confidentiality, but based on some of the responses given, if people within the music scene were to read this paper, they may be able to surmise the identity of the speaker. The participants resided all over the United States, but mostly in the Western states, specifically Colorado and Oregon. The fanbase is predominately an 'older' crowd, at least in terms of the average age commonly affiliated with touring rock and roll bands (Hunt, 2008). At the time of interview, the youngest participant was 28 years old and the oldest was 58, with a mean average of 42 years of age.

In-depth interviews

We crafted a number of questions that were used as the guide for the interview, though all questions were written so as to allow for flexibility on the part of the interviewee to explore potential issues in greater detail based on their responses to our initial questions. All questions were open-ended so as to ensure the most complete response, and the introduction of relevant topics on the part of the participant was encouraged. Some sample questions included topics such as establishing their individual history with music, how they came to hear of the band's music, their memories of their first time seeing the band, what they hoped to get by attending the band's concerts, as well as how the music affected their quality of life outside the concert setting. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission, and notes were taken during the interview to prompt further questions, as well as to act as cues when it came time to write-up field notes. We

also included notes based on body language, change in speech pattern and any emotional affect demonstrated by the participant so as to provide the richest detail in recording their responses and capturing the 'feeling' of their story.

Participant observation

The first author undertook this study as both a participant and an observer. In the scenarios of the concert event where the performances were one-night stands (one show in a city), the emphasis was on the pre-show (often times at the bar) behaviour and interactions, the during-show intra-actions (how specific individuals responded to the music; how was their manner of selfpresentation) and interactions with others and the band, as well as any postshow gatherings. In the more festival-like atmospheres (multiple-day runs that occur in the same city), in addition to what has just been mentioned, the first author also interacted and engaged with fellow fans in their process of living the tour-lifestyle during the entire duration of the event, including hanging out, eating meals and any side-adventures that occurred, such as group softball games and trips to hot springs (Virginia City, Montana, August 2013). Documenting the communal interactions of fans outside of the concert setting, as well as the individual reflections on one's personal connection to the band and its music in the festival atmospheres provided another outlet for providing rich detail of the phenomenon. The sincere social exchanges of fans during their downtime surrounding concert events provided depth to the idea that a community, as expressed by the participants, did indeed exist. These observations and interactions of the fans speak to González's (2000) assessment that all social engagement associated with a phenomenon is relevant to describing it in the most accurate way.

Data analysis and interpretation

The foundation of data analysis was through grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), in which an understanding was reached through an inductive process which spoke only to the truths of those participating in the research. Using a grounded theory, analytical strategy in conjunction with González's (2000) Four Seasons methodological approach allowed for the fullest understanding of each participant's involvement, as it unfolded through social and individual interactions with the music and one another. The fluidity of participation necessitated developing an understanding through observations, informal conversations related to one's involvement and, in the case of Keith and Janet, the opportunity to revisit the meanings of their participation after overcoming substance abuse. The analysis process continued through the use of primary and secondary coding techniques that started with a thorough reading and rereading of the interview transcripts, field notes and selected excerpts of fan postings on an internet discussion board. Information deemed important based on its relevance to the research objectives was highlighted through the use of a multicolour highlighting technique to differentiate the coding of each statement or observation. As part of the initial coding, we assigned primary codes using, when possible, in vivo terminology (the language of the participant).

Next, we grouped primary codes into further concentrated categories through focused coding (Tracy, 2013). The data were managed with a physical organization system that included establishing a hierarchy of each quote or observation as it pertained to the category or research question (Saldaña, 2012). This method of data management best suited our manner of interpretation, understanding and explanation because it allowed us to physically organize all the

data in a space where we could see everything at once making it easier to look for overlap in themes, as well as to plot how we would incorporate the data into our writing. Once the categories were created, themes emerged that displayed the context and content of the phenomenon being considered. These data provided the foundation of our paper exploring the unique aspects of the music scene and its participants, as well as demonstrated the intricacies and significance of interpersonal relationships, intrapersonal meaning making and the impacts of the music on quality of life in general.

Results and discussion

Establishing a sense of community

> The Dixie Mattress Festival (DMF) is entirely dependent on fan support to pull the weekend off; the majority of labour is volunteered. Before the latest instalment (2014) I was reaching out to a few fans that I had hoped to interview over the weekend. One of them, Arlo, informed me that he would be arriving the day before the festival started to lend a hand in erecting the stage and sound system. When I arrived at the festival grounds mid-afternoon on the first of the three-day event, I was greeted by other fans, Julia and Mallory, who were checking people off the 'paid' list and selling tickets to those who had not purchased tickets in advance. Still others walked from campsite to campsite passing out garbage bags and explaining the amenities (or lack thereof) in the vicinity. It was truly a collective endeavour.

As was mentioned in the literature review, the study of 'community' should focus on shared meanings and concern for others involved in the communal setting. By focusing on these components, we have extracted two of the most significant aspects from the otherwise ambiguous term 'community', and this allows for an understanding of the importance of interactions and relationships as described by the participants. The following are excerpts of participants' responses to the ephemeral moments of communion that transpired in the concert setting, and how they were integral to establishing a sense of community surrounding the band and its music, as specifically indicated by most, if not all, of the fans we interviewed. As the level of involvement increased, accompanied by an increasing sense of connection to the music, the fans attended to issues of personal identity and meaning making, and did so in a shared environment with like-minded others.

Ephemeral moments

> At the DMF of 2012, on the final night, the band played the song 'Life's Just Bitchin.' Originally recorded with Joseph's first band, Little Women, in the 1980s, it is a much loved song that had not been played in several years. At the first DMF in 2009, the promoters attempted to write the playing of the song into the contract; Joseph simply crossed it out. On this Sunday night of 2012, a weary, but happy crowd passed glances around the cramped barn in astonishment of what they were hearing. The song seemed to capture much of the emotion that fans sought from this band. Many had never heard it played live and it seemed as if it were dedicated to this close-knit group of folks who had

weathered a cold, wet weekend to see their favourite band. On this night, life was indeed just bitchin.

Toward the end of my interviews, I often asked the participants if any moments stuck out to them as special at Jackmormons' concerts, whether they were music-related or not. While speaking with Brett (age 39, has attended more than 200 shows), he referred to a trip to Costa Rica to see the band with his girlfriend who he had just started dating at the time:

> [We were] dancing in the ocean with bio-luminescent phytoplankton lapping up at our feet and the band is right there. We're in the ocean, listening to them play, glowing plankton. [And] it's like everybody [is] coming together; when you get everybody together, its collective energy. When you get enough people together, you can get carried away in the emotion of it.

For Brett, an almost surreal experience of interacting with his girlfriend and other fans in a beautiful, secluded environment while listening to his favourite band gave him a sense of satisfaction that was overwhelming. He felt that being able to share such an experience with people he had only just come to know allowed for them to have a connection that is often hard to find in other social outlets and was instrumental to establishing a 'sense of fellowship' with one another.

While talking to Bella (age 34, has attended more than 100 shows) about her first time seeing Jerry Joseph play (which was a solo show), she described the evening as 'intimate'. She further elaborated on the night by saying:

> I loved it. It was a really small venue, and there were maybe fifteen people in attendance. The passion and emotion with which he played, I mean he could have been playing to a room of 50,000 people; he was giving the same intense performance. It was just so emotionally raw for one person to be standing up there by himself, and the content of the lyrics, he just evoked so much emotion that I was blown away. It was somebody bearing their soul.

I asked Bella if she had ever experienced anything like that before to which she replied, 'no'. I was curious if this type of sensation had ever been duplicated through her involvement in the music scene surrounding the band, and while she said every interaction resulted in her feeling 'happy, hopeful, uplifted [and] just good', that first time was special because it opened her eyes to something she had never before encountered and immediately found to be significant to her life.

When I asked Susanne (age 41, has attended more than 150 shows) if there were any special moments that stuck out to her, she had this to say:

> I do remember being the Big Sky Dante's Inferno show… I just remember the feeling, and looking at the stage and going, 'wow, I am so glad I am here right now.' I knew about three people in the room but it felt like I knew everyone. The music was perfect, it felt so intense. We [the fans] were in it together.

The initial involvement of fans began with a personal attraction to the music. Whether or not it was introduced by someone close to them, the sense of enjoyment and connection that was

stimulated by the music evolved to hold a place of profound importance in their lives. The music acted, amongst other things, as a conduit to engage in social interaction. The fans began to develop friendships with like-minded others that not only possessed the potential to reinforce personal sentiment to the music, but also created opportunities for them to engage meaningfully in a setting of shared appreciation. These interactions transpired in the structureless environs of the concert experience, void of the mundanity and responsibilities of daily life. As Turner (1969) stated, communitas emerges where structure is not present. These temporal moments were then both indispensable and conducive to creating the air of freedom necessary for participants to engage in their personal paths of release, recharging, catharsis and joy. When the fans habitually engaged in the temporal spaces of communitas over the duration of their involvement in the music scene, the seeds of fellowship and friendship were planted.

Shared appreciation

> On the third day of most DMFs there is an acoustic set in the late afternoon before the final electric set to close out the weekend. This past DMF (2014) I looked around the crowd to see everyone seated casually (which is the opposite of an electric show) before the show with their heads slowly swivelling trying to locate the friends they had been renewing bonds with all weekend; they were met with glances of a quick nod and smile in acknowledgement. Sitting next to Catie, she commented to me, 'We all love Jerry. We don't ask for anything other than the gift of his music.'

The special moments that often transpire for fans at the concerts are very important for feeling a personal connection to the music, just as the intimate relationships that are formed through shared interaction lead to developing important connections that transcend mere friendships. Another important component in establishing the sense of community that was reported by fans is that of shared appreciation. While this can and does occur detached from the concert setting, it is often the environment of the concert where you will see the sincere exchanges of elation and appreciation shared amongst the fans. The preceding statement does not apply to every fan in attendance; there are many who show up that have little or no interaction with other fans. Those that participated in this research; however, all had several friends with whom these interactions occurred, and many spoke to their desire to meet and develop similar friendships with other passionate fans of the band.

I sat down to talk with Dani (age 43, has attended more than 200 shows) after the first night of the 4-day New Year's run in Portland, Oregon, and I was commenting about how she is frequently one of the 'front-row kids' (those that are always in the front row, as close to the stage as possible) and wondered why she felt the need to be up there, so close to the band. She responded:

> I have my eyes closed and I'm just taking it all in. I enjoy the camaraderie of being amidst a group of people and dancing and hugging. And when a song comes on that you're really excited about hearing, I can just look around and share that with others and remind myself of how important this is to me and how grateful I am to have these wonderful people to share it with.

While speaking with Ivan (age 43, has attended more than 200 shows) about the differences in the music scene surrounding the Jackmormons and his previous affiliation with Widespread Panic, he said:

> [The Jackmormons] is a lot more of a personal scene. You actually meet people. If there are only 20 people and they go 2–3 nights in a row, it's pretty quick to meet people. A lot of why the Jackmormons' scene is so special is because it's remained so small. How could we all know each other if there was 100,000 of us? That's too many. These are friends that become friends outside of the concert. Friends transcend the music scene. The people you meet become your community.

Yack (2012) said that every community relies on imagination to connect its constituents to one another as 'objects of special concern and loyalty' (p. 59). As evidenced in this research, the fans overwhelmingly expressed sincere concern for others' well-being, whether it be as a general well-wishing or more specifically in the case of ailments and illnesses that have affected certain fans' lives. It is through this act of caring for others, whether it be expressed openly as through the fan email listserv, or individually through one-on-one interaction and social exchange, that we see further confirmation of the uses of terms like community (and more so, family) to describe many of the relationships developed by participants of this fanbase.

So while it may be easy to use a term like community as an ascription to our real or perceived sense of connection, if we are to do so, we have to proceed with designating the components that are most essential to defining community; mutual affection and shared appreciation. Arai and Pedlar (2003) said that, 'community is more than a mere association; it is a unity in which individuals are members. This membership is neither artificial nor instrumental, but rather has its own intrinsic value' (p. 192). Their mention of 'individuals' is key to the establishment of community and integral to the mutual affection and shared appreciation that comprise it. If a community is to exist, and one is to be a part of it, it must appeal to one's sense of self, thus reinforcing Yack's (2012) claim. The others who reside within the community also must share some degree of similarity in terms of interest, personality or desired outcomes; otherwise the 'community' will not be conducive to maintaining the key components of mutual affection and shared appreciation. Once these vital components have been established, however, the potential for greater bonds is created through experiences of communion.

Feeling a part of the community

> This past December (2014) the band played a semi-annual private event in Boulder, Colorado. Nestled right between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the event was a potluck open to about 40–50 fans who were friends of the promoters. The event was held at one of the promoters' art gallery. Fans came early to share food, exchange stories and get ready for a night of amazing music. There was an impromptu contest for best dish served, and everyone made sure to clean up after themselves to ensure the storefront stayed in pristine condition. To further capture the sense of community that transpired on this night, friends gathered for group pictures and made plans to gather for upcoming holiday events. When it came time for the band to play, there was no cue needed; everyone filed into the music room to hear the band that brought them all together in the first place.

In many instances, the participants often used the terms family and community interchangeably, and when they would, I would try to get them to distinguish the differences. Kim (age 44, has attended more than 250 shows), a former Deadhead, said that, 'Family is about caring, community is about shared values. Family is I accept you, I like you for who you are, possibly love you; community is a larger system of shared values'. Kim was the sole participant that made a somewhat clear distinction between the two terms. For Kim, the shared values of community consisted of respect for one another that extended to maturity in how you behave at the concerts, as well as sincerity and positivity when engaging with others in the music scene. Her comments echo something we addressed in the literature review as perhaps one of the more important components of the elusive community, and it reinforced our interest to see if others found shared values essential to establishing a sense of community around the band.

Dave (age 42, has attended more than 200 shows) called the community feel surrounding the band a 'church' and a 'traveling country club'. He said that many of the friendships he formed were full of 'texture based on longevity'. He went on to say that, 'This community is really laid back, and really accepting. For a guy who never belonged to a church and went out on his own, ending up here, I'm very lucky to have found this community'. As we neared the end of our interview, I asked Dave for closing thoughts, and he told the story of a friend who he had known before his involvement with the band, but who was also deeply entrenched in the music scene surrounding the Jackmormons. This friend, Tom (a participant), had been dealing with substance abuse issues as well as a serious illness in his family. Dave said, '[Tom] needs us as much as we need [Tom] (crying). It feels good to share that and think about him'. I asked Dave if his relationship with Tom had grown stronger through their mutual immersion in the band's music scene, to which he responded:

> Absolutely. [Tom's] counting on us. When there is a friend in need, if [Tom] didn't have this community, and all he has is his history of substance abuse, (crying) and whether it's perfect or not, it's more safety lines than he would have any other way. We care about each other. The support I've had from my Jmos' [short for Jackmormons] friends over the years has only been bolstered by my involvement, and Jerry [Joseph] is our rallying point.

The collective experiences extended to genuine concern for others which contributed to the strengthening of the sense of community that was described by the fans of the band. During the concert experience it was common for fans to share brief, but meaningful interactions, dance together, embrace one another or simply share space, even if no words were exchanged. This last occurrence spoke to the comfort level that exists amongst the fans, as they are content to be in each other's presence, even in the absence of conversation. There is a sense of liberty to be one's self and to not be judged within this music scene that for the participants further contributed to their reciprocal sense of connection to one another and their frequent designation as family. Schmalenbach (1977) stated that the 'emotional ecstasy' often associated with communion is fleeting, but 'its felt impact is deep' (p. 28). The fans built on these experiences of communion over time to develop the relationships into what came to be described as family.

The closeness of family

The Dixie Mattress Festival of 2012 (the fourth instalment) was special, but for a different reason than simply the music. The promoters, a husband and wife team, were celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary that weekend. On Sunday, the third and final day of the festival, the couple had a renewal of their vows at the venue and everyone in attendance was invited. Of the nearly 200 there for the music, the couple knew most of those in attendance and had established very close bonds with several. There is often a spirit of fellowship that surrounds this band, and especially so at the annual festivals which tend to pull in fans from all over the country, so it was not at all strange for this romantic celebration to take place. If anything it was appropriate; 'family' is a term often used by the participants to describe their friends in the fanbase.

As mentioned earlier, the use of the term 'family' in reference to friends made in the music scene surrounding the band was a common, if not nearly unanimous, relational association. The designation of family was never introduced, but typically surfaced when we would inquire into how the participants would describe the fanbase, or when we asked about the friendships they had made through their participation. By probing further into the depths of their choice of this categorization, the participants predominately used the word family in relation to their biological upbringings. These comparisons to bloodties produced mixed results as to the quality of their original 'family' associations. While some had what they described as 'wonderful' upbringings and relationships with their families (Tom; Bella), others had childhoods that featured physical or emotional abuse (Matt; Janet) or neglect (Kim) that caused them to seek the love commonly associated with family through friends. Those that reported negative family associations, however, knew what they would want and expect from a family member, and many came to find that sensation with the friends they made through participation in this music scene.

While speaking with Becky (age 39, has attended more than 150 shows) about the difference between her friends she knows through music and those she knows through other outlets, she divulged that she considers her friends made through the music of Jerry Joseph, as her 'Jerry family'. I asked her why she used the word 'family', to which she compared the relationships to that of a biological family; in that, you don't have to see each other or speak often, but when you do come together 'you're still family'. Becky went on to say that she, and the other fans that she is close to, live their lives and listen to the music on their own, but 'then get to come together and exalt in joy [together] at the same time'. She and her fellow fans share a love for Jerry Joseph's music and through this shared connection, it 'elevates [us] to a level of understanding without ever having to speak about it'.

Family was a very common term used by the fans I spoke with, but just as other common terms are overused in lay vernacular, such as love or hate, not to mention community, I always made it a point to delve deeper into why the participant chose that specific terminology and tried to establish the context for which they drew from. While speaking with Bill and Viv (ages 58 and 54, respectively, have attended more than 200 shows a piece), a married couple, in Alaska (they had travelled up from Portland, Oregon to see the band), I asked them why it was so important to travel so far to shows, especially when the band played in Portland so often (they had travelled to Costa Rica only 2 months earlier to see the band as well). Bill mentioned that their social circle had largely become Jackmormons' fans, and when they attended shows in their hometown, most of their interactions with others from different states were limited. But by travelling to 'destination' shows, it allowed for them to actually 'hang out' and get to know their fellow fans intimately. Bill went on to say that, 'It's about the family; being with the family and the band

members too. They're part of the family'. I asked Bill why he chose 'family', and he said it was 'an easy moniker to put on what we have here between us'. Still not fully convinced of the weight or value of his use of the term, I dug a little deeper. I asked the couple if what they share amongst their Jackmormons' 'family' was unique, to which Viv responded, 'Some of the shows are like family reunions. We have a shared culture and a similar language about experiences we've all been through and shared through the music'. Viv went on to say that 'bonding because of the shared emotional intensity' happens more because of the close family-like connections.

For Bill and Viv their involvement in the music scene surrounding the band (nearly 20 years for the pair) had been integral to establishing relationships that transcended merely being friends. The shared sentiment for the music allowed for a 'similar language' that helped them to relate to one another and establish bonds that were especially meaningful. Jack (age 42, has attended more than 150 shows) made a similar comment:

> The way that we all have a commonality about how we can enjoy music and share that with one another is the source of a lot of the bonds in this circle. That's what it's all about; ultimately you have the feeling that you're not alone and there's togetherness. The lyrics can really do that, and the feelings you have as fans – you can just have a look and know that you're feeling the same way because of the music. It helps to strengthen bonds with those whom you are closest to.

This is where we build on the concept of community to better understand family. If community exists as a past to be reawakened, as Tonnies (2011) said decades ago, or serves as a refuge from an uncertain world that protects our collective identity as Glover and Stewart (2006) claimed in a more contemporary consideration, we know that the concept is both aspirational and conducive to producing and maintaining comfort and identity; two vital components of familial relationships (Holman & Epperson, 1984).

For the participants of this study, regardless of the quality of their familial upbringing, they predominately aspired to building and maintaining valuable friendships, and these often came to be known as family. There existed, however, a period of liminality in the attainment of these valuable relationships. From first entry into the music scene, until the point of deep immersion that was accompanied by these profound and lasting relationships that eventually came to be referred to as family, there were necessary stages of development of the relationships formed. These relations started as acquaintances and slowly were built into the rich affiliations they are today. It is the setting of this music scene coupled with shared interests and openness to others that constituted the grounds of community that paved the way to the establishment of a sense of family that was shared amongst many of the participants. The building blocks of community, we see, are evident in the foundation of strong familial relationships.

Loose relationships can evolve into communities through a common cause, goal or preference that involves commitment to seeing an objective reached or experience realized. When these shared values and reciprocal sentiments through mutual interaction are developed and built over time, the relationships residing within that community can produce a heightened sense of appreciation and affection that comes to resemble the closeness and feelings often attributed to a family (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). This allows for the use of the term 'family' to expand and embrace nontraditional, but close groups of unrelated people through shared appreciation, mutual affection and the building of significant relationships. These interactions that led to the development of relationships referred to as family were possible because of the

structureless, celebratory experiences of communitas (Turner, 1969) that occurred in the concerts and festivals of the band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons. Equally as important, the meaningful, shared instances of communion (Schmalenbach, 1977) that occurred in the concert environments allowed for the formation and strengthening of relationships through shared values and a deep connection to the music.

For Tonnies (2011), community existed in terms of a past that was sought to be reawakened. And while the fans that comprise this community are not harkening back to centuries past, they are returning to their past shared experiences accrued through the music scene surrounding the band that saw their development from an individual who was attracted to the music, to individuals who felt at 'home' in the company of their 'family' when they interacted in the music scene surrounding the band.

Conclusion

> Because of each of you in our extended 'Dixie Family', [this festival] does keep working. Years ago it was said that this event grows family. We have landed at a venue that is every bit as special and magical with the mystical vibe that has come to define our previous years… You made this event happen through Jerry's music. This event is only as special as YOU make it. The last five years you made it very special. The people this year have high standards to live up to. Look out for each other. Take care of each other. Everyone there will be 'family.' Everyone will be kind. Everyone here is a friend of someone and everyone. Everyone in attendance will be there because they were meant to be. We look forward to seeing everyone again!
> [Excerpt of an email from the DMF promoter before the 2014 festival]

It is our assertion that leisure should continue to be explored as the domain for which to establish relationships that transcend merely being 'just friends' or communities. The conscious invocation of the metaphor of family by the participants in this study suggests the need for the evolution of the concept to describe the close-knit bonds that can be established through passionate immersion in leisure activities. Cranston (2010) asserted that the metaphor of family is often used to 'draw boundaries around and limit larger concepts' of community (p. 588). If the ephemeral, serendipitous or intentional communities that are formed through leisure harness the potential to establish significant, reciprocal relationships based in mutual appreciation, shared affection and loyalty that come to be embraced as family, then it is our job as researchers to examine how these relationships are formed through leisure and how they extend into other domains of life. Much as Dunlap (2009) called for greater inquiry into 'private, grassroots efforts to rediscover the importance of leisure for the well-being of individuals and communities' (p. 432), we challenge the leisure academy to go beyond community studies and embrace the family dialogue as a very real, and necessary, concept in understanding how the passionate consumption of leisure brings unrelated people together (Harrington, 2015) to levels of connections not often considered in the discipline. The fanbase of Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons is evidence to this need.

Notes

1. A music festival centered exclusively on the band Jerry Joseph & the Jackmormons with less than 200 fans in attendance.
2. The pronouns 'I' and 'me' refer to the first author throughout.

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