

**THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE IN WESTERN
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS:**

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
PEOPLE AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Shannon Hassell, BSc

This thesis is submitted as a requirement of Bachelor of Science (Honours) in the School of
Environmental Science, Murdoch University

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Shannon Hassell

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ABSTRACT

Despite the natural environment being valued as an integral part of human life, there is an growing physical and emotional disconnection from nature manifested as increased health problems, lack of environmental awareness and social dysfunction. National parks are valued both for conservation of biological diversity as well as enabling people to get closer to nature, with camping a popular way of achieving this. The aim of this study was to examine the experiences of campers in Western Australian national parks, with a particular focus on the meanings they attributed to these experiences. A total of 29 in-depth interviews were undertaken on-site with campers in two national parks. The camping experience was identified as diverse and of great importance to campers' lives beyond a physical immersion in nature. Camping motivation and experiences on-site were connected with higher order meanings including re-creation, recreation, reconnection and reaffirmation. The increased knowledge of these experiences and meanings provided by this study contributes to redressing the imbalance of the people-natural environment relationship as well assisting in enriching peoples' lives.

Keywords: Camping, natural area tourism, national parks, experience, meanings, benefits

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“We modern humans, increasingly competent about making our way through the natural world, have been decreasingly confident about its values, its meanings. The correlation is not accidental. It is hard to discover meaning in a world where value appears only at the human touch, hard to locate meaning when we are engulfed in sheer instrumentality, whether of artefacts or natural resources. One needs a significant place to dwell.” (Rolston III, 1988, p. xii)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
1.3 THESIS OVERVIEW	3
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
2.1 TOURISM EXPERIENCE	4
2.1.1 TEMPORAL PHASES	4
2.1.2 CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS OF EXPERIENCE	5
2.1.3 TOURISM EXPERIENCE: MOTIVATIONS AND BENEFITS	5
2.1.4 MEANINGS OF TOURISM EXPERIENCES.....	6
2.2 SPECIFIC TOURISM EXPERIENCES: NATURAL AREA TOURISM	7
2.2.1 BENEFITS OF NATURE TO PEOPLE	7
2.2.2 SETTING MANAGEMENT	8
2.2.3 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	9
2.2.4 DIMENSIONS AND MEANINGS IN NATURAL AREA TOURISM	9
2.3 CAMPING EXPERIENCES	10
2.3.1 USING EXPERIENCE AND MEANINGS IN NATURAL AREA TOURISM/CAMPING MANAGEMENT	11
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	13
3.1 SITE SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION.....	13
3.1.1 WARREN NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA.....	13
3.1.2 KARIJINI NATIONAL PARK, NORTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA.....	15
3.2 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	17
3.2.1 INTERVIEW CREATION	18
3.2.2 RESPONDENT SELECTION AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURE	19
3.2.3 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND NOTE TAKING	20
3.3 EMPIRICAL MATERIAL INTERPRETATION	21
3.3.1 GROUNDED THEORY	21
3.3.2 GROUNDED THEORY TOOLS AND OUTCOMES	21
CHAPTER FOUR: UNPACKING THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE	23
4.1 CAMPER DEMOGRAPHICS.....	24
4.1.1 WARREN	24
4.1.2 KARIJINI	26
4.2 CAMPING MOTIVATIONS.....	28
4.2.1 IN ORDER TO/PULL FACTORS	30

4.2.2 BECAUSE OF/PUSH FACTORS	33
4.4 MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES IN NATURE.....	38
4.4.1 AWE.....	40
4.4.2 ADVENTURE AND CHALLENGE.....	41
4.4.6 FUN AND PLAY.....	45
4.4.7 FAMILY FUNCTIONING.....	47
4.4.8 STRENGTHENING FRIENDSHIPS	49
4.5 HIGHER ORDER MEANINGS OF EXPERIENCE	51
4.5.1 RE-CREATION	52
4.5.2 RECREATION	53
4.5.3 RECONNECTION.....	54
4.5.4 REAFFIRMATION	56
4.6 CONCLUSION	56
<u>CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>58</u>
<u>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS</u>	<u>60</u>
6.1 OVERVIEW	60
6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	61
6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS	61
<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>63</u>

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF WARREN CAMPERS	25
TABLE 2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF KARIJINI CAMPERS.....	27

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SETTING ATTRIBUTES, THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VISITORS, THEIR EXPERIENCES, AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THOSE EXPERIENCES AND ATTRIBUTES	8
FIGURE 2. WARREN NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE.....	13
FIGURE 3. KARRI TREES (<i>EUCALYPTUS DIVERSICOLOR</i>), WARREN NATIONAL PARK	14
FIGURE 4. MAP OF WARREN NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA	15
FIGURE 5. KARIJINI NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE	16
FIGURE 6. DALES GORGE, KARIJINI NATIONAL PARK.....	16
FIGURE 7. MAP OF KARIJINI NATIONAL PARK, NORTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA	17
FIGURE 8. GROUNDED THEORY OF CAMPERS' EXPERIENCES AT WARREN AND KARIJINI NATIONAL PARKS	24
FIGURE 9. TRAVEL/TOURISM MOTIVATIONS.....	29
FIGURE 10. MOTIVATING FACTORS IN THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE	29
FIGURE 11. MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES	39
FIGURE 12. HIGHER ORDER MEANINGS OF EXPERIENCE	51

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW TEMPLATE	70
APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION LETTER.....	71
APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM.....	72

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

National parks are protected areas of the natural environment that were originally created primarily for people, for their enjoyment and recreation (Sellars, 2009). Yellowstone National Park in the USA was the first park created in 1872 and since then over 120,000 protected areas have been designated including national parks (IUCN, 2011; Sellars, 2009). Since Yellowstone, the conservation of biological diversity is becoming an increasingly important global issue. The value and importance of biodiversity is now widely accepted. Over the last decade, there has been a re-emphasis of the health and societal benefits (beyond biodiversity conservation) of protected areas. The Healthy Parks Healthy People programs initiated by park agencies such as Parks Victoria and Metsähallitus (Finland) are examples of this (Metsähallitus, 2010; Parks Victoria, 2012). Given this interest in the people-natural environment nexus, an appreciation and balancing of divergent values and the reconnection of the people-natural environment relationship are increasingly important issues, for both awareness and respect for environmental issues and personal and societal benefit.

A way of reconnecting with the natural environment through national parks is to become physically immersed in them, with camping a popular method of achieving this. The camping experience allows people to interact with nature on a direct level by temporarily living in a dynamic natural ecosystem. The desired and realised experiences of campers are highly variable and can range from recreational to aesthetic to spiritual experiences (Garst, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 2009; Putney, 2003). They can be influenced by the management of the setting such as the physical layout of the site and what information is made available. They can also be influenced by factors outside of park managerial control such as the other visitors to the park, the weather or the personal values held by the camper towards the environment (Cole, 2004; Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). Behind each experience lies meaning, and it is here where the rich relationship between people and the natural environment is established and re-established. Understanding the experiences and meanings that people have whilst camping can help redress imbalances in the people-natural environment relationship.

Experience in tourism is a broad concept that is linked to activities, the setting and with personal understanding and meaning (Pearce, 2005). In addition to its complexity, the experience of campers has not been well documented, with Garst, Williams and Roggenbuck (2009) stating that little research has been undertaken since the 1960's. Understanding campers' experiences can be used in improving management strategies such as identifying visitation trends, and what constitutes their desired experiences, such as increased interpretation or less development (Cole, 2004; Winter, 2005). The aim of this thesis is to describe and analyse the desired and realised experiences, including the meanings of these experiences, of campers to two national parks in Western Australia: Warren National Park and Karijini National Park.

The results from this study will be useful to protected area managers, such as the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), to help better understand how camping visitors use facilities and manage them accordingly. At a more conceptual level, the results will illustrate that natural tourism experiences, camping in particular, are complex and involve both personally and socially important meanings for people. Camping is more than an inexpensive holiday option close to nature; it can assist in rekindling the people/natural environment relationship and is a conduit for beneficial and meaningful experiences to occur that can extend and impact on campers lives now and into the future.

1.2 Research questions and objectives

In order to understand the experiences of campers, the primary research question of this project is: *What are the desired and realised experiences of campers to national parks in Western Australia?*

To assist in answering this question, the following objectives were pursued:

1. To describe the desired and realised elements of the camping experience
2. To analyse the meanings attributed to these experiences
3. To analyse the consequences of these experiences for managing camping in national parks

Two national parks were chosen for this study; Warren national park in the south west of Western Australia and Karijini national park in the north west of Western Australia. The reasons these parks were chosen is discussed in chapter three.

1.3 Thesis overview

Chapter two draws from the literature an array of ways of conceptualising experience and meaning in tourism, and then specifically natural area tourism and camping. Chapter three outlines the research design and methods employed in undertaking this study, including site descriptions, the methods used and analysis approach. Chapter four 'unpacks' the camping experience including a mixture of results and discussion both at the personal level as well as the broader societal level. Chapter five outlines recommendations for management arising from the outcomes of this study and chapter six draws together the main findings of the study, discussing limitations of the study and posing recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism experience

Experience is a fundamental component of tourism (Coghlan, 2012; Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012; Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). It has been defined both concretely, including the activity undertaken (I experienced hiking) and the setting the activity is set in (I experienced hiking in a natural area) as well as affectively, including the personal characteristics, emotions and perceptions of the tourist (I experienced a challenge whilst hiking in a natural area). Vespestad and Lindberg (2011) described nature based tourism experiences as the product, the result of the consumption process (enjoyment, engagement) and also the value attached to them. These are tied to the meanings that tourists attach to their experiences, which are dynamic and interpreted differently by each tourist (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Uriely, 2005). These definitions reflect the range of experience descriptions and their interrelation (Cole, 2004; Pearce, 2005). The literature on experience in tourism is also diverse.

2.1.1 Temporal phases

Experience can occur in different phases of the overall 'experience'. Clawson and Knetsch (1966) conceptualised outdoor leisure experiences as multi-phasic and linear, including anticipation, travel to, on-site, return travel and recollection. They discussed that experiences and satisfaction can be different at each stage and are interrelated. Stewart (1998) challenged the simplicity of Clawson and Knetsch's (1966) model stating that it is a useful point of departure but does not take into consideration the many aspects of experience. Their model has an economic approach, and Borrie and Roggenbuck (2001) argued that it is too narrow in its scope; that not only does experience and satisfaction take place in each stage it takes place within stages, is dynamic and emergent and consists of multiple dimensions. Graburn (1989, 2001) also discussed temporal phases in the tourist experience in regards to the transition between work (the 'profane') and tourism (the 'sacred') and back again. Experiences whilst being a tourist have also been found to affect the phase after returning home/recollection phase, for example through increased acceptance of others (Scarinci & Pearce, 2012) and greater knowledge and understanding of the environment (Walker, Roggenbuck, & Hull, 1998). As well as phases in tourism,

conceptual dimensions of tourists have also been used to assist in understanding experience.

2.1.2 Conceptual dimensions of experience

Dividing the concept of experience into dimensions assists with understanding the components and their measurement. These are common themes found when studies are carried out on tourist experience. They are not universal however some are common across the literature, differing according to the subject studied, the setting and the conceptual paradigm of the researcher. Kim, Ritchie and McCormick (2012) utilised seven domains/dimensions in their development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences; including hedonism, involvement, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, knowledge and novelty. Otto and Ritchie (1996) developed similar dimensions as these and also included challenge, comfort, safety and escape. Aho (2001) distinguished four elements/dimensions; emotional experiences, learning, practical experiences and transformational experiences. Little and Schmidt (2006) found three aspects/dimensions in their study on spiritual experiences including awareness, connection and sensation. Experience can also be seen from a motivation and benefit perspective.

2.1.3 Tourism experience: Motivations and benefits

Experiences can be viewed and documented in a variety of ways. It can be seen as related to motivation, or the 'push and pull' factors that drive a person to seek certain experiences (Crompton, 1979; Pearce, 2005). Examples of motivations include escape, relaxation, viewing scenery and getting closer to nature (Pearce, 2005). These can also be viewed as goals that the person would like to attain from the experience (Ajzen, 1991). Linked to these motivations and goals are the benefits that are received from the experience, which Driver (1996) defines as an improved condition felt individually/personally as well as at a broader level such as family and society, the prevention of an unwanted condition and also a desired condition (goal). Terms used in the literature on motivation and the benefits of tourism are closely related to the dimensions of experience cited above. For example, Otto and Ritchie (1996) discovered an escape dimension of experience, which Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991) and Driver (1996) viewed as a benefit of natural area tourism and which Pearce (2005) described as a motivation. This indicates that experience is multidimensional and similar dimensions can be seen and measured before, during and after the experience.

Understanding what constitutes the dimensions of experience including motivations and benefits can go a step further in uncovering the underlying meanings that tourists attach to their experiences.

2.1.4 Meanings of tourism experiences

Meanings are intrinsically subjective and so can vary greatly between tourists and their experiences. They can be utilised to better understand tourist experiences, similarly to motivation and benefit (a 'meanings-based' approach) (Andereck, Bricker, Kersetter, & Nickerson, 2006). In their study on battlefield tourism, Dunkley (2011) discussed the meanings that are attached to experiences can be complex and life changing, including collective remembrance and the assuaging of guilt. These are also seen in the literature on dark or thanatourism (Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011). Wilson and Harris (2006) demonstrated that independent women travellers found that the empowerment and connectedness with others they felt elevated their trips to 'meaningful travel'. Unexpected experiences can be seen as meaningful (Little & Schmidt, 2006; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998) as well as tangible items such as souvenirs which allow the tourist to recall the meaning of their experiences (Collins-Kreiner & Zins, 2011). The meaning motivating tourism experiences as seen by Cohen (1979) was the searching for, or adherence to, a social or spiritual centre, whereas Little and Schmidt (2006) found that meanings can be related to outcomes of experiences.

Meaning and experience are closely related, but not clearly defined or differentiated in the literature. In the tourism literature, the terms are often used synonymously (Andereck, *et al.*, 2006; Jordan *et al.*, 2009). However, Garst *et al.* (2009) and Hall, Johnson and Cole (2007) differentiated meaning from experience as being more focused on the individual interpretation of the experience which can also be culturally and socially shared. Despite this, meanings are often categorised in studies on tourism experience similarly to those aspects of experience discussed previously. For example, in their paper on personal meanings of parks, Jordan *et al.* (2009) uncovered both personal and social meanings such as escape, relaxation, learning and activities; similar to the experience dimensions, benefits and motivations cited above. In their study on leisure experiences and meanings, Watkins and Bond (2007) also found escape to be an experience dimension, however went further and explained the meanings that respondents ascribed to this, including the need to get

away from the pressures of everyday life and how leisure assisted with this aim. The motivations that Pearce (2005) described as well as the benefits discussed by Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991) are also similar to experience and meaning dimensions. These examples indicate a close relationship between experience and meaning, with meaning being a more complex part of the whole experience, which includes the emotions felt (Farber & Hall, 2007). A deeper understanding of meanings will help to unpack experiences further (Little & Schmidt, 2006; Patterson, et al., 1998). The study of experience and meaning is often seen in the literature on natural area tourism/wilderness experiences.

2.2 Specific tourism experiences: Natural area tourism

Natural area tourism comprises a section of the tourism system that includes ecotourism, nature based tourism, wildlife tourism and adventure tourism, all of which share the natural environment as the common setting (Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2002). It can be understood as encompassing experiences in nature with differing levels of physical engagement and involvement (Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). The relationship between people and the natural environment is multifaceted, with people drawing many benefits from direct contact.

2.2.1 Benefits of nature to people

The natural environment is a place that many are drawn to and it is valued for a variety of reasons including for essential ecological functioning, recreation and aesthetics (Krebs, 2008; Putney, 2003; Rolston III, 1988). This is evident in the number of people who visit national parks each year, for example in the year 2011-2012 over 15.5 million visits were undertaken to DEC managed lands and waters in Western Australia (Department of Environment and Conservation, 2012a). Far from being a simple pleasure or only instrumental in the biological sense, being immersed in the natural environment has many personal and social benefits. For many in the developed Western world, nature is becoming increasingly removed from everyday life in part due to increasing urbanisation and the commodification of nature and corresponds to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle (McCurdy, Winterbottom, Mehta, & Roberts, 2010; Popkin, 1999). For children, having unstructured free play in a natural environment has been linked to less instances of obesity and increased cognitive and mental health functioning (Kellert, 2002; Klesges, Eck, Hanson, Haddock, & Klesges, 1990; Louv, 2005; McCurdy, et al., 2010). These benefits are also true for adults

(Ewert, Hollenhorst, McAvoy, & Russell, 2003; Shultis, 2003). In addition, direct contact with nature has been linked to a reduction of stress (Ulrich et al., 1991), increased social cohesion (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Shultis, 2003), increased environmental awareness (Tarrant & Green, 1999) and increased familial, community and global social health (Coley, Sullivan, & Kuo, 1997; Dustin, Bricker, & Schwab, 2010).

2.2.2 Setting management

Experiences in natural area tourism are strongly influenced by the actual setting and the conditions encountered (Cole, 2004, 2011; Cole & Hall, 2009). According to Cole (2004) the setting includes biophysical, social and managerial attributes (Figure 1). For example, hiking in a forest will offer a different experience than hiking on a beach (Cole & Hall, 2009), the existence of a river can enable water based activities (Patterson, et al., 1998), roads and trails can be positioned to encourage different kinds of experiences such as gazing upon landscape vistas (Newsome, *et al.*, 2002) and the presence of interpretation can influence how tourists understand and experience the area (Powell, Kellert, & Ham, 2009; Stern, Powell, & Cook, 2011). How the setting is managed and by whom will also impact on the opportunity for experiences (Cole, 2004; Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). Natural area managers can try to increase visitor satisfaction and positive emotional experience outcomes by managing setting attributes, however not all aspects of setting attributes are possible to control; including weather, presence of insects and behaviour of other visitors (Cole, 2004). Other influences on experience include the ontological perspective and personal characteristics and of the tourist, the researcher and the experience provider.

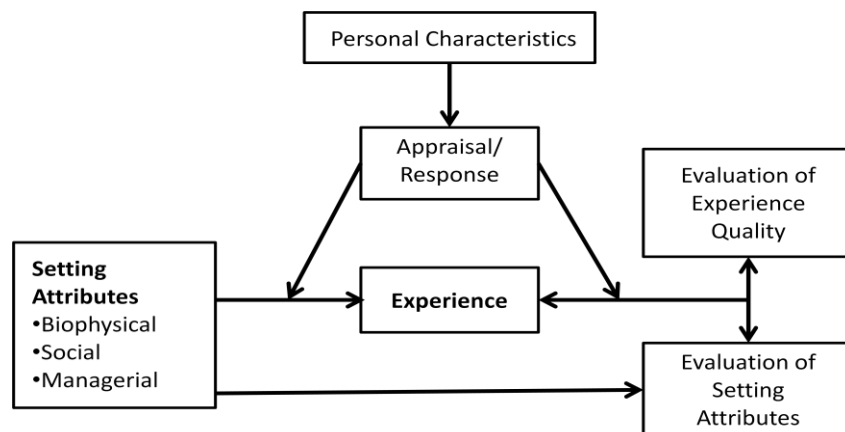


Figure 1. A conceptual model of the relationship between setting attributes, the personal characteristics of visitors, their experiences, and their evaluation of those experiences and attributes

(From Cole, 2004)

2.2.3 Personal characteristics

Experience is also heavily influenced by personal characteristics and how each individual appraises and responds to the conditions encountered (Figure 1) (Cole, 2004; Patterson, *et al.*, 1998; Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). Not all people encountering the same setting will perceive it in the same way. The desired goal of the experience can also influence its outcome (Dorfman, 1979). For example, Cole (2004) used the example of solitude; a person greatly desiring solitude may find it in an area that another, less tolerant person may believe is too crowded. This variable is considered difficult (if not impossible) to control, and can include past experiences (Jordan, *et al.*, 2009; Patterson, *et al.*, 1998), within group relationships (Cole & Hall, 2009; Patterson, *et al.*, 1998), culture including values and norms (Cochrane, 2006), and spirituality and religion (Little & Schmidt, 2006).

2.2.4 Dimensions and meanings in natural area tourism

As in the wider tourism literature, dimensions of experience can also be found in the nature based/wilderness literature. Factors such as the setting for the study, methodologies used and research objectives can contribute to different dimensions discovered. In their study on the wilderness experiences of river rafters, Patterson *et al.* (1998) found four dimensions of experience emerged from their study; challenge, closeness to nature, decisions not faced in everyday environments and stories of nature. The researchers used a hermeneutic approach in discovering these dimensions. This involved seeking to understand the interconnected nature of the experience including the influences of settings, personal characteristics and situational influences. This is in contrast to the more common practice of viewing expectations as an input, experience as an output and satisfaction as an outcome (Coghlan, 2012; O'Neill, Riscinto-Kozub, & Van Hyfte, 2010). Patterson *et al.*'s (1998) study also showed that the re-telling of experiences is also a very important part of the overall experience. This is linked with experience as representing a socio-cultural community, as discussed by Vespestad and Lindberg (2011), and demonstrates that the shared experience is a very important aspect.

Experiences in nature can be meaningful and are closely linked with emotions. In their paper on visitors (tourists) extraordinary experiences in Alaska, Farber and Hall (2007) studied the emotions that visitors felt and the factors that influenced these with the experiences they

had. They used the setting dimensions (also 'contributors to extraordinary experiences') of viewing scenery, viewing wildlife, recreational activity, social interaction and novelty to try to understand further what made the visitors' experiences meaningful or extraordinary. Emotions such as pleasure, awe, peace and also fear and anxiety were found to be linked with these dimensions. Their study showed that positive emotions are strongly associated with extraordinary nature experiences; however it was the unexpected experiences that provided the most positive emotions. This finding demonstrates that experiences and their associated meanings and emotions cannot always be predicted or fully managed, correlating with what Cole (2004) and Vespestad and Lindberg (2011) found. Also, social interactions were not seen as very important contributors to participants' extraordinary experiences, unlike the findings by Patterson *et al.* (1998) and Garst *et al.* (2009). This reflects the broad scope of experience and the factors that can influence experience, including the setting of the study.

2.3 Camping experiences

Camping involves staying overnight in a temporary or basic dwelling, such as a tent, a camp hut or a caravan. Camping can also occur in urban areas such as caravan parks, however this type is not considered in this study. It is traditionally seen as a type of tourism where one can escape urban life and experience being closer to nature (Clark, Hendee, & Campbell, 1971). Campgrounds can range from remote and basic with limited facilities to easily accessible and highly developed with static facilities such as power, flushing toilets and camp kitchens. Clark, Hendee and Campbell (1971) discussed the changing nature of camping behaviours in the United States, from the more traditional view (stated previously) to one that is more diverse and reflective of different social goals, urban behaviour patterns and technological changes. Vespestad and Lindberg (2011) found that natural area managers did not share the same concept as campers of what constituted an environmental experience, reflecting differing ontological views of nature and camping. Traditionally held ideals of camping (primitive, unconfined recreation) were no longer the dominant reasons people camped in natural areas. Instead, campers displayed desires for increased comfort and convenience and social interaction, which is consistent with later authors on the topic (Dorfman, 1979; Garst, *et al.*, 2009) and the diversification of the camping market (O'Neill, *et al.*, 2010). Clark, Hendee and Campbell's (1971) study used a quantitative methodology

and did not go into detail regarding meanings of experiences, which are absent from earlier studies.

According to Garst *et al.* (2009), camping experiences and meanings have not been explored in the recent literature. Dorfman (1979) conducted a study on camping satisfaction and meaning, however the way in which the term meaning was used seems to refer to importance and satisfaction with the experience, which is different from the more personal and deeper meanings explored by Garst *et al.* (2009). Garst *et al.* (2009) studied camping experiences and their associated meanings by undertaking in-depth interviews at three sites in a United States national recreation area. They categorised camping experiences into dimensions of nature, social interaction and comfort and convenience, similar to other dimensions found in overall nature based experience studies. They also went further and studied associated meanings and life context meanings that were connected to the experience dimensions. The meanings that were reported included restoration (escape, rest and recovery), experiencing nature, family functioning, social interaction and children's learning. They found that some dimensions and meanings (such as restoration) have stayed the same since previous camping studies (Clark, *et al.*, 1971; Dorfman, 1979), however many had changed such as opportunity to experience nature and family functioning. These were seen as connected to processes of modernity such as technological advances and disconnection from nature, which was what Clark *et al.* (1971) suggested was happening in their earlier paper.

2.3.1 Using experience and meanings in natural area tourism/camping management

Studies of experiences and their meanings in the natural area tourism and camping literature are often undertaken in order to improve the overall satisfaction for the tourist as well as preserving or increasing the quality of the environment (Cole, 2004; Dorfman, 1979; Saethorsdottir, 2010). This reflects the primary objectives of natural area managers (such as DEC (2012a,b)). In the literature, a common method of managing the tourist experience is via the setting attributes such as interpretation and facilities (Cole, 2004) (Figure 1), which serves as the basis for natural area planning frameworks such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Clark & Stankey, 1979; Newsome, *et al.*, 2002). This reflects the belief that

providing quality products and services equates to tourist satisfaction, which relates back to business and management success (O'Neill, *et al.*, 2010).

What is not as common is research and literature on the nature of the meanings that tourists attach to their experiences, the origins and process of meaning creation and how understanding these can potentially improve management. This could be because these are more difficult to ascertain and cannot be generalised; therefore are more difficult to apply to management practice (Cole, 2004; Farber & Hall, 2007; Garst, *et al.*, 2009). It is commonly believed that the outcomes of experience studies are for the benefit of improved management (for example less negative impacts, increased user satisfaction) and not for the benefit of the tourists themselves outside of the setting. However, tourism and direct contact with nature can contribute positively to tourists outside of the setting (Ajzen, 1991; Driver, *et al.*, 1991; Garst, *et al.*, 2009; Louv, 2005; Patterson, *et al.*, 1998; Shultis, 2003). The deeper understanding of the more intangible aspects of experiences and meanings can add to this body of knowledge, further supporting the assertion that tourism, and camping specifically, is much more than an industry or a simple accommodation option; it can hold extraordinary meaning for people far beyond the immediate campsite (Garst, *et al.*, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Site selection and description

The two sites selected for this study were Warren National Park in south Western Australia and Karijini National Park in north Western Australia. These sites were selected for the following reasons:

1. Very little research has been undertaken on camping experiences and meanings in national parks, particularly in Australia
2. They represent a south west park and a remote northern park with very different natural environments and offer different experiences and
3. The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the managers of the parks, were interested in finding out more about those who camp in these national parks. They provided funding for this project.

3.1.1 Warren National Park, South Western Australia

Warren National Park is an 'A' class reserve¹ and is situated in the south-west of Western Australia, 15 kilometres from the town of Pemberton (Figure 2). It covers an area of 3131 hectares of wet sclerophyll forest, dominated by giant Karri trees (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) (Figure 3). The climate is characteristically cool and moist. The Warren River meanders through the Park making it attractive for canoeing and fishing. A number of walk trails are present.



Figure 2. Warren National Park entrance

(Shannon Hassell)

¹ Its purpose can only be changed with the approval of both Houses of the State Parliament.

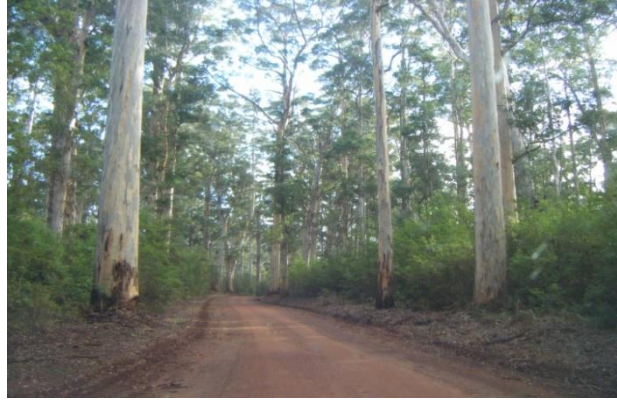


Figure 3. Karri trees (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*), Warren National Park

(Shannon Hassell)

There are two camping sites located on the Heartbreak Trail, a 12 kilometre one way gravel road which travels down the Warren River valley to the Warren River. The first is Drafty's Camp which has 16 camp sites, a day use area with a canoe launch and decking, drop toilets and a large undercover camp kitchen with gas barbeques. The second is Warren Camp which has 6 sites tucked back in the forest, a small toilet block, day use area including a canoe launch site and a communal wood barbeque (Figure 4). Both sites are unpowered and due to the steep and slippery nature of the Heartbreak Trail, caravans are not recommended (trailers are not recommended in very wet weather). Fires are permitted in the cooler months and firewood is provided. A small overnight fee is applicable, which at this time of year, is payable by an honour system. An information bay is located at the top of the Heartbreak Trail with minimal management information available on-site.

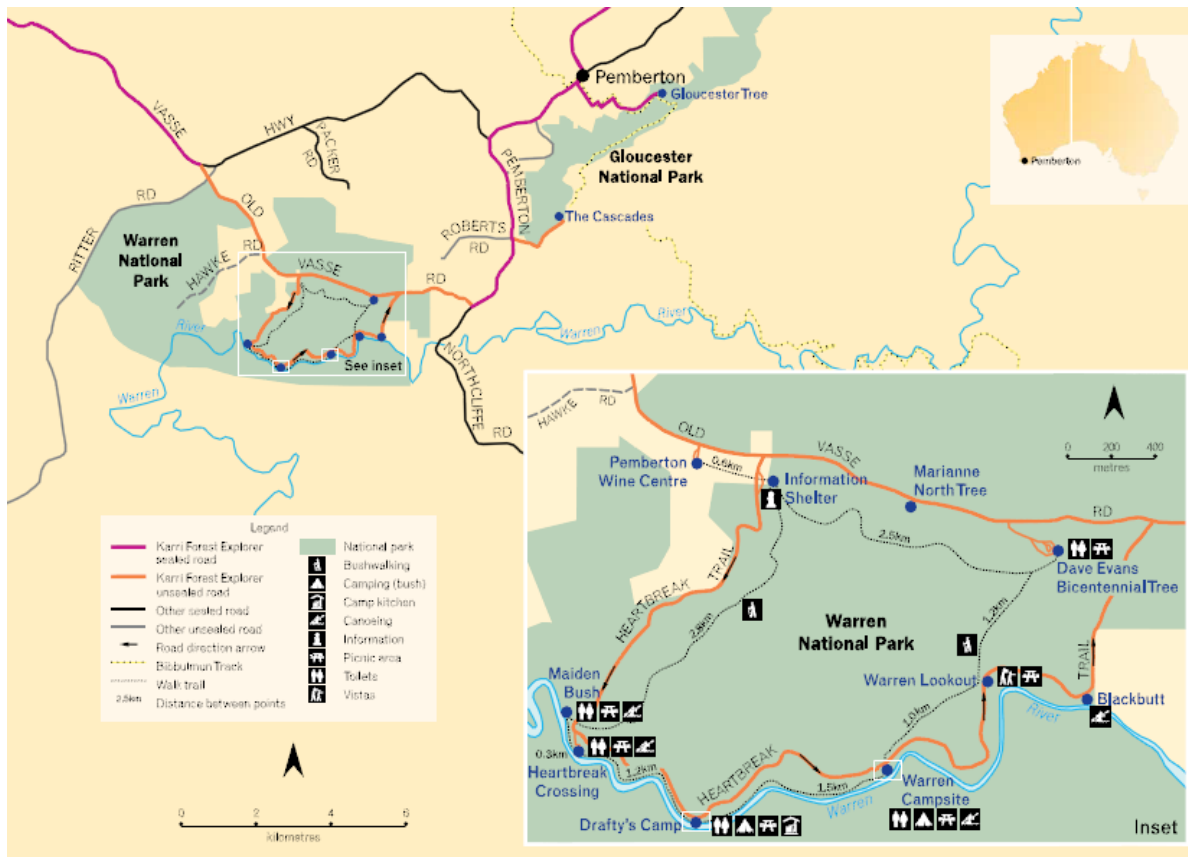


Figure 4. Map of Warren National Park, south Western Australia
(Department of Environment and Conservation, 2012c)

3.1.2 Karijini National Park, North Western Australia

Karijini National Park is also an ‘A’ class reserve² and is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn in the Pilbara region of north Western Australia. It covers an area of 627, 455 hectares and is the second largest national park in the State (Figure 5). The park includes spectacular geological features such as high plateaus and deep gorges formed through erosion over millennia (Figure 6). Vegetation includes grassland to closed forest formations, including a large variety of *Acacia* and *Eucalypt* species, as well as *Melaleuca* and *Typha* species in the gorges. The climate is tropical semi-desert and has highly variable temperatures and rainfall. Popular activities in the park include nature observation and hiking.

² Its purpose can only be changed with the approval of both Houses of the State Parliament



Figure 5. Karijini National Park entrance

(Shannon Hassell)



Figure 6. Dales Gorge, Karijini National Park

(Shannon Hassell)

Camping is also popular, which is available at Dales Gorge campground (same fee as Warren). Currently this is the only public campground in the park, with other previously available sites currently under rehabilitation (Department of Conservation and Land Management, 1999). Another camping and accommodation site is located in the west of the park at Karijini Eco Lodge, and is privately owned and managed. It was not included in this study. Dales campground consists of 144 sites and has both generator and non-generator camping loops. Each loop has on average 30 sites with communal gas barbeques and drop toilet facilities. There are no shower facilities on-site; however there are showers available at the visitor centre approximately 20 kilometres away. Fires are not permitted at any time.

Volunteer camp ground hosts are employed during the busy period to assist with management including fee collection and visitor information. A number of walk trails connect the site to the Dales Gorge recreation area (Figure 7).

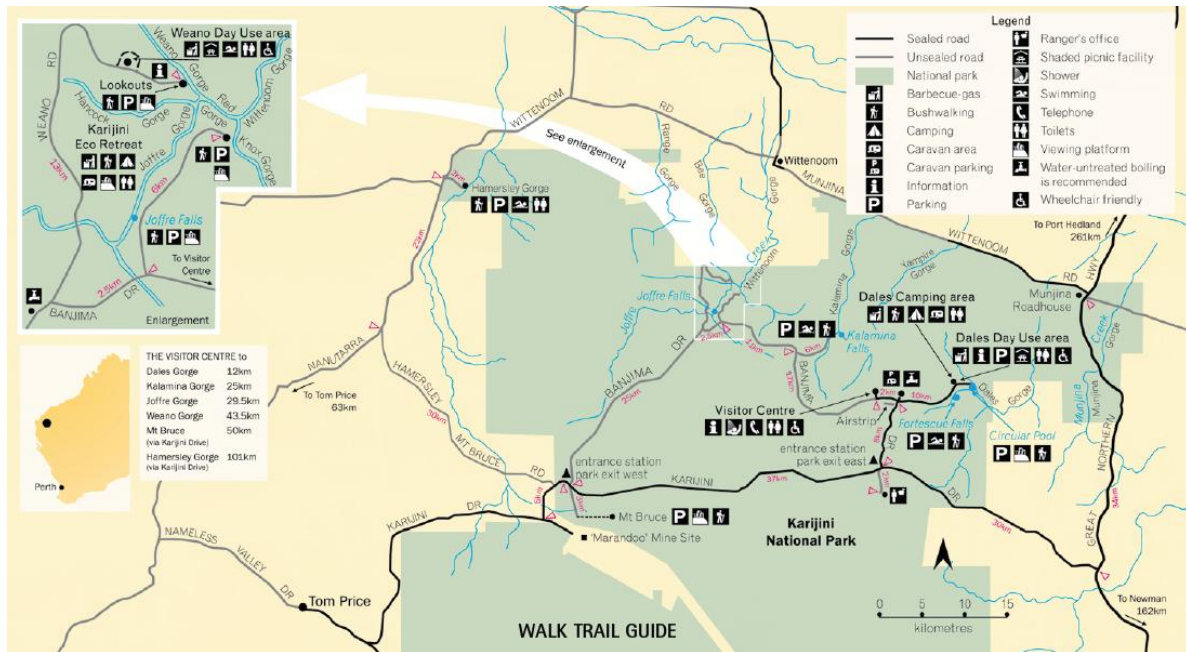


Figure 7. Map of Karijini National Park, north Western Australia

(Department of Environment and Conservation, 2012d)

3.2 Methodological considerations

Due to the nature of this study, an inductive, qualitative methodology was used to understand the experiences of campers in Warren and Karijini. The overarching paradigm of social constructivism was used (Jennings, 2009) which includes the ontological perspective of the interpretative social sciences (Jennings, 2009; Neuman, 1994) or constructionism (Bryman, 2004). This assumes that the social world is continually constructed and revised by social actors and it cannot be understood in the same way as a positivistic, objective ontology as one infallible truth does not exist. Similarly, an interpretive epistemology was used, which views knowledge about the social world as fundamentally different from knowledge about the natural world, the emphasis is on further understanding (Bryman, 2004). A value laden axiology (Jennings, 2009) was also implicit in this study, both because I assumed a variety of values to be present amongst campers, as well as my being part of this study and the removal of my lens of perception would have been undesirable and

impossible (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Because of this as well as university requirements, human ethics approval was required before any interviews could be undertaken. An application was made to the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee, with a small number of changes to the research design being recommended, such as eliminating repetition of words. After these changes were made, ethics approval was granted (Approval 2012/042).

3.2.1 Interview creation

Open ended semi-structured interviews were conducted with campers at both of the study sites (Appendix 1). This qualitative method of data collection is an effective tool to deeply explore experiences and meanings, as it allows respondents to answer in their own words and give the freedom to describe affective emotions and reflect on personal meaning, rather than conform to preconceived answers (Garst, et al., 2009; Jennings, 2009; Patterson, et al., 1998). This approach was complemented by participant observation, which allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the phenomena being studied whilst building a rapport with the interviewees (Babbie, 2008; Bryman, 2004). Notes were taken on-site and photographs were also taken.

Questions for the interviews were generated after a thorough literature review was conducted, with the study by Garst *et al.* (2009) used as a guide. Garst *et als.* (2009) study had a similar research question to this study and employed a qualitative methodology which complemented the focus of the study, being based on further understanding social experiences and meanings of camping (Bryman, 2004). The initial set of questions in this study reflected the research objectives. Once the initial set of questions had been created, four pilot interviews were conducted with colleagues who had been camping recently.

After each interview, feedback was sought from respondents and the process was reflected upon, with changes made such as the exclusion of some questions and the addition of others. Further clarification enabled a more streamlined question set to be established. This also assisted in building my confidence and skill in asking probing questions to get at the underlying meanings of experience. Waldrop (2004) advised qualitative researchers to embrace discomfort, be a good guest and to use self reflections to improve their research.

3.2.2 Respondent selection and interview procedure

At both Warren and Karijini, I parked my vehicle in a public place and walked up to respondents at their camp sites. I wore at least one piece of Murdoch University clothing to show my university affiliation, however I kept my dress standard casual to reduce potential 'us and them' distinctions and build rapport (Bryman, 2004; Waldrop, 2004). After an initial greeting and a short description of the study, I asked if they would like to participate in the study and on approval I gave them an information letter (Appendix 2) and gained written consent (Appendix 3). Independent tourists were targeted, as opposed to those on organised tours. This was mainly because independents were more common at both parks and I wanted to get a broad range of respondents. As each park was different by nature of its usage and its ease of access by myself, the respondent selection differed accordingly. This is discussed below.

Warren

Interviews were undertaken at Warren National Park on four weekends in April to June in 2012. I travelled to Pemberton from Perth and stayed at local accommodation and travelled out to the campsites on Friday afternoon, two times on Saturday (morning and afternoon) and on Sunday morning (one Monday/long weekend was included). This was considered the best way of accessing respondents due to time constraints and since I was alone, personal safety concerns. These times were found to be the best for intercepting campers at the site as many left during the day to partake in activities and sightsee. I only interviewed campers at Drafty's campsite as this was where the majority of campers were.

A convenience sampling method was employed. This method is a form of non-probability sampling which is characterised by sampling accessible respondents (Bryman, 2004). This was considered the most appropriate method for two reasons:

1. The number of camping groups on-site was low and
2. The results of the study were not intended for generalisation to a larger population.

A total of fourteen interviews were undertaken, with no refusals. They ranged from a half an hour to two hours each.

Karijini

Interviews were undertaken at Karijini National Park during the school holidays in July 2012 (July 6-23). I travelled from Perth and stayed in the park during this time and travelled to the Dales Gorge campground on a number of days. As Karijini is a long distance from Perth and July has the highest visitation, I decided to travel there then and immerse myself in the study, which also complemented the in-depth, interpretive nature of the study. Interviews were undertaken throughout the day; however similarly to Warren the afternoon was the best time to intercept campers as they had returned from the day's activities.

As the number of sites and campers available was higher than at Warren, a different way of selecting potential respondents was employed. Park staff identified three main groups of campers, based on age/life stage (at Dales campground. The first included 'Grey Nomads' or retired campers, with no dependent children. The second included younger campers with no dependent children which were described as 'backpackers'; often with hired campervans. The third was families with children of varying ages accompanying parents and extended family. Respondents from these three groups were sought. Bryman (2004) calls this type of non-probability sampling quota sampling. A similar number of interviews to Warren were sought. A total of fifteen interviews were undertaken with five from each group, ranging from thirty minutes to an hour and a half. I had no refusals.

3.2.3 Participant observation and note taking

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I also undertook participant observation in both parks, which included visual observations of the setting, photo taking and note taking. This has been also been described as an aspect of ethnography, which includes being immersed in the studied setting (Babbie, 2008; Bryman, 2004). I made sure to not record any personally identifying features such as number plates, as required by the Human Ethics permit. I also wrote my notes mainly away from respondents as to minimise making respondents self conscious (Bryman, 2004).

3.3 Empirical material interpretation

Once I had undertaken the interviews, I transcribed them soon after. Transcription assists in the in-depth analysis of interviews by correcting natural limitations in memory, allows repeated and more thorough examination and serves to counter validity issues (Babbie, 2008; Bryman, 2004). I added notes when respondents expressed body language or tonal variations regarding enthusiasm about a particular topic, including laughter and frustration. I drew on grounded theory to assist with my interpretation.

3.3.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a widely used framework for analysing qualitative data that is not easily defined. At its core, it is an inductive approach of working with data that posits that the theory that one is trying to uncover is to be found 'grounded' in the data of the study and not from outside sources such as grand theory or hypotheses (Charmaz, 2006). It includes both the results of this research process (a grounded theory) and also the method used in the research process (undertaking grounded theory) (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). It has evolved over time from Glaser and Strauss's original grounded theory posited in 1967 and continues to cause confusion about its exact meaning and application (as cited in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.12) defined it as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another". Bryman (2004) divides it into two categories; tools and outcomes.

3.3.2 Grounded theory tools and outcomes

One facet of grounded theory that is common across definitions is that it involves coding. This involves assigning a word or code to a portion of text that represents what the researcher believes it is saying (Bryman, 2004; Charmaz, 2006). These codes are not only for organisational purposes but are important first steps in the generation of theory. There are different types or levels of coding which Charmaz (2006) described as involving two main phases; open or initial coding which is the basic process of breaking down and examining data and then selective or focussed coding which includes making connections between codes and subsuming them into higher order categories and concepts. I used this two step process to understand what was grounded in the empirical material.

I entered the raw interview data into an Excel spreadsheet and wrote initial codes in the cells beside the text. These were at different levels of abstraction. For example, I began with more obvious codes such as 'activities undertaken', 'fire' and 'relaxation' and also higher order codes such as 'pride in overcoming challenge' and 'social interaction'. I attempted to code as soon as possible after transcribing the interviews, however this was not always possible due to time constraints. Throughout this process I constantly compared the interview data with the other interviews and other codes. This led me to formulate new higher order codes, add codes that I had missed and to become aware of potential connections between codes (Charmaz, 2006). To ensure a greater level of reliability, I had another researcher, familiar with my study, check my coding until we had reached a level of approximately 80% inter-coder reliability. Limitations of time and scope prevented me from ensuring theoretical saturation, which is where the need to collect more data to illuminate your concepts is not necessary (Bryman, 2004).

Once I had initially coded every interview, I moved to the next level of coding; focussed coding. I used a number of methods in this process. One was physically printing out all of the codes, cutting them up and organising them on a very large piece of cardboard. This helped me to visualise the codes and to see if I could physically subsume codes into higher order categories. I also attended a qualitative writing workshop. These tools combined assisted in producing outcomes such as higher order codes, concepts and categories (e.g., awe, family functioning) which led to my grounded theory of the camping experience at Warren and Karijini. This theory then served as a platform for further unpacking of the camping experience.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNPACKING THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE

Both Warren and Karijini offer the experience of camping in a natural setting. Each park has its own unique attributes that attract campers and provide for different types of experiences; however at the core of the entire 'experience' many meanings were similar. In this chapter I draw together the empirical material from my study to present an interpretation of the camping experience. As experiences and meanings are highly subjective and can be perceived in a variety of ways, I do not assert that the following interpretation is applicable to all campers; rather it represents the essence of the overall experience as I perceived it. This view of the camping experience as I perceived it from the empirical material gathered at Warren and Karijini National Parks is summarised in Figure 8 and by the following grounded theory statement:

The decision to camp is influenced by 'in order to' and 'because of' factors. Camping enables the achievement of re-creation, recreation, reconnection, and/or reaffirmation by engaging in meaningful experiences at personal and social levels. This engagement is facilitated differently at Warren and Karijini National Parks (Figure 8).

The following sections analyse this grounded theory statement in detail. This includes camper demographics, motivations and the underlying meanings of experiences. There is some overlap with the sections, confirming that experience and meanings are complex and interrelated. The names of respondents have been changed to ensure anonymity.

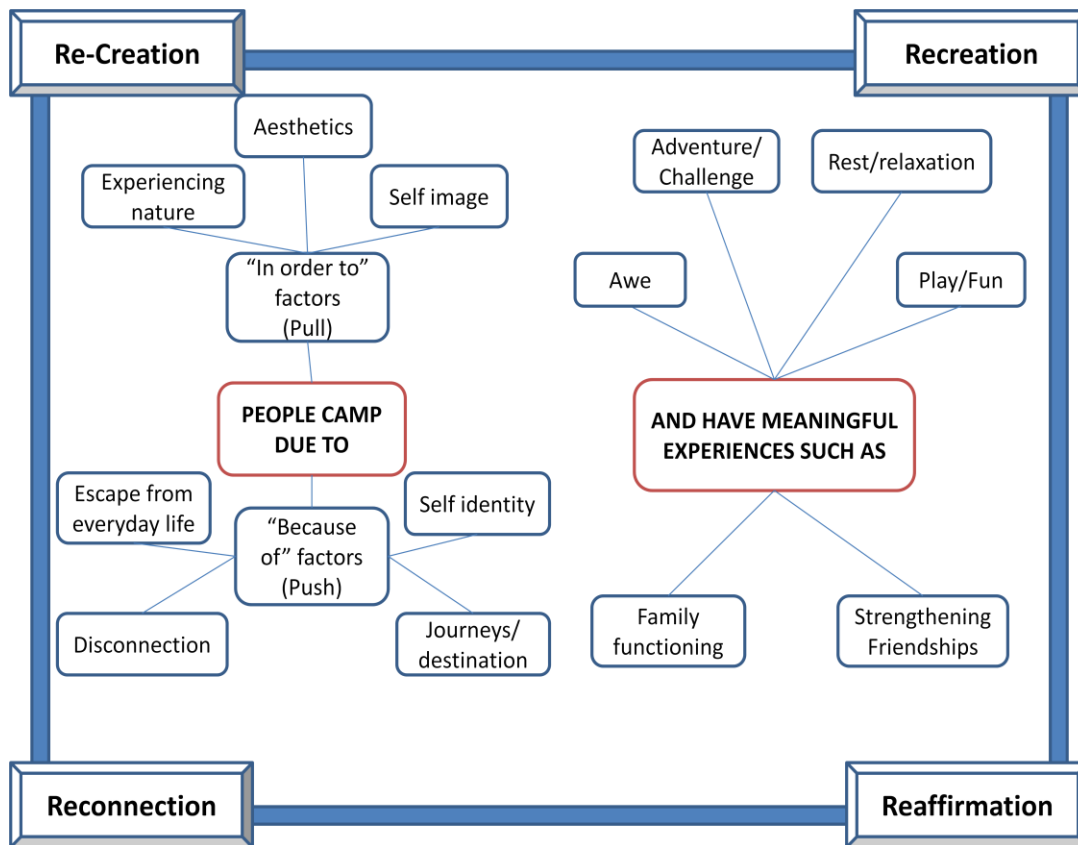


Figure 8. Grounded theory of campers' experiences at Warren and Karijini National Parks

4.1 Camper demographics

4.1.1 Warren

A total of 14 groups were interviewed. The details of each group are represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of Warren campers

Interview number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No. of interviewees	2	2	4	2	2	4	2
Age group	50+	25-40	18-25	40-50	50+	40-50+	25-40
Gender	M/F	M/F	2M/2F	M/F	M/F	2M/2F	M/F
Camping setup	CT	CV	Tents	Tent	CT	CT	CMPV
Home location	WA	WA	WA	NSW	NSW	WA/OS	WA
1st time or repeat camper	1st	1st	1st/R	1st	Repeat	1st	Repeat
Children present	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Interview number	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
No. of interviewees	2	2	2	2	4	3	2
Age group	25-40	50+	25-40	25-40	25-50+	40-50	25-40
Gender	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/M	2M/2F	2M/1F	M/F
Camping setup	Tent	CT	Tents	Tent	Tent+CMPV	Tents+ CMPVs	Tents
Home location	VIC	SA	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA
1st time or repeat camper	1st	1st	Repeat	Repeat	1st/R	1st/R	Repeat
Children present	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

Key: Camping setup- CT=Camper trailer; CV=Caravan; CMPV=Campervan. **Home location-** WA= Western Australia; NSW= New South Wales; OS= Overseas; VIC= Victoria; SA= South Australia. **1st time or repeat camper-** R=Repeat

Activities were undertaken both within and outside of the campers' own campsite. All campers interviewed had used the walk trail adjacent to the campsite, whether as a means of accessing the Warren River or as a nature experience in itself. The river was utilised for kayaking and fishing, as well as for a couple of quick swims. Observing nature was the most commonly cited activity undertaken outside of the campsite, especially trees, birds and fungi. Parents accompanied children and encouraged them to look out for different species, with one young camper keeping a journal of the different fungi she saw. However, respondents spoke more about activities undertaken within the campsite including socialising with friends and family, cooking, drinking, games and tending their camp fires rather than beyond the campsite. This emphasis on the campers' own campsite and the social interaction within it shows that the overall camping experience at Warren at this time was more passive than active.

This passive typology distinction is based both on motivational factors and activities undertaken and may be attributed to a number of other factors including the natural setting and the cool weather. Unless campers came equipped with recreational equipment, which most did not, walking along the trail and observing nature were the main touristic activities that could be undertaken. Rita put it this way: *“Even not doing anything you can just... looking at the environment is doing something I suppose, and it’s amazing what you actually do see when you’re just sitting here looking at the trees and you go, Oh! That’s sort of part of the entertainment [sic]”*. Here, the natural environment provided the setting in which other important experiences could occur (Ajzen, 1991; Driver, 1996; Mehmetoglu, 2007a).

4.1.2 Karijini

A total of fifteen groups were interviewed. The details of each group are represented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of Karijini campers

Interview number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No. of interviewees	2	2	1	2	3	1	2
Age group	50+	50+	50+	50+	40-50	50+	25-40
Gender	M/F	M/F	F	M/F	2M/1F	F	M/F
Camping setup	CV	CV	CMPV	CV	Tent/ Swag	CV	CMPV
Home location	NSW	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	OS
First time or repeat camper	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
Children present	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

Interview number	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
No. of interviewees	2	2	4	2	2	2	1
Age group	40-50	40-50	25-40	18-25	40-50	50+	40-50
Gender	M/F	M/M	F	M/F	M/F	F	F
Camping setup	CT	2xCT	MH	Tents	CV	Tent	Tent/ Swag
Home location	WA	WA	OS	WA	QLD	WA/VIC	WA
First time or repeat camper	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st/R	R
Children present	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

Interview number	15
No. of interviewees	2
Age group	18-25
Gender	F
Camping setup	CMPV
Home location	WA
First time or repeat camper	1st/R
Children present	No

Key: **Key: Camping setup**- CV=Caravan; CMPV=Campervan; CT= Camper trailer; MH= Motor home.
Home location- NSW= New South Wales; VIC= Victoria; QLD= Queensland; WA= Western Australia;
 SA= South Australia; OS= Overseas. **1st time or repeat camper**- R=Repeat

Campers at Karijini were very active. Activities focussed on the natural setting with all campers interviewed having visited at least one gorge. Days were spent exploring the area, hiking, climbing down and around the gorges and gazing upon landscapes, flora and fauna. Photography was a common activity amongst campers and one camper took her equipment to the gorges and painted. Upon return to the campsite, activities involved cooking, downloading photographs, playing games, writing in journals, reading books and planning onward travel. After spending the day being very active, most campers retired to their beds

not long after sunset. As opposed to Warren, the activities undertaken away from the immediate campsite had a more important emphasis; campers were situated at the active end of the passive-active continuum.

Given the nature of the environment, campers had ample opportunity to be active. Most of the campers I spoke with were first time visitors and so the novelty of the destination was high and stimulation was often sought from outside sources (Bello & Etzel, 1985). When I asked the question of what kinds of activities campers had undertaken, all spoke of physical activity before any other. Dan said *“Day one we set up and did all of down here at Dales; Rim Walk, Circular Pool. Yesterday we did Weano and Hancock [Gorge]. All the Weano Gorges”*. Even though Warren campers activities were more passive than those campers at Karijini, their motivations for camping were similar in many regards.

4.2 Camping motivations

The motivations behind camping experiences were explored by asking campers why they chose to camp at Warren and Karijini (Appendix 1). Travel motivation incorporates many different factors including what Crompton (1979) called ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors. Pull factors are the destination attributes attracting visitors to an area and push factors are internal socio-psychological forces that influence the desire to travel (Chan & Baum, 2007; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003; Pearce, 2005). Another lens for viewing motivation is through “in order to” and “because of” factors, which Schuetz (1945, 1951) used to describe factors motivating social actions; the former being connected with anticipated future experiences and the latter being connected with past experiences, as searching for and escaping from. As such, campers’ responses were blended with reasons behind their motivations and expressions of the experiences desired from the camping trip. I have used both of these complementary theoretical viewpoints to help unpack the reasons behind why people camp at Warren and Karijini. Each park shared similarities in motivation; however differences were present and are discussed. An example of the motivations of travellers/tourists from Awaritefe (2004) is shown in Figure 9, followed by the motivations of the campers in this study (Figure 10).

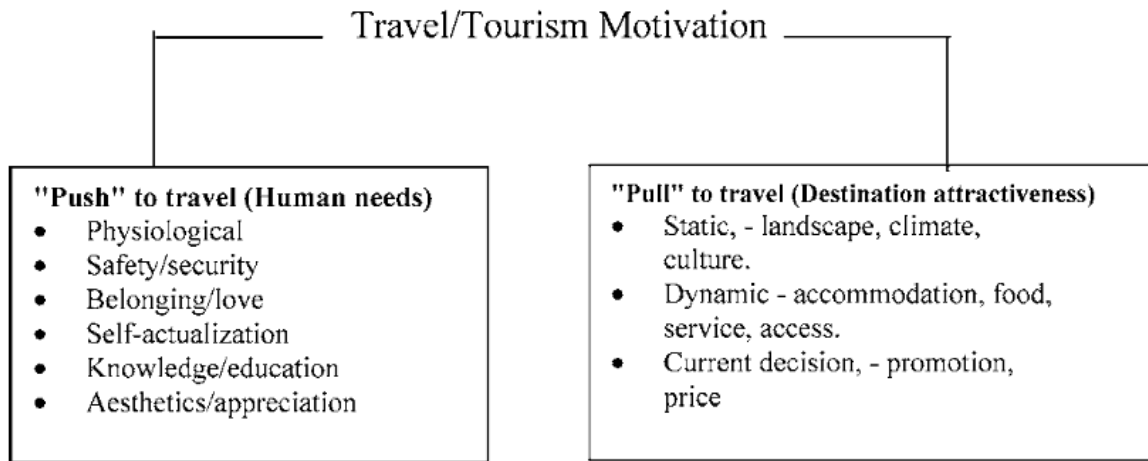


Figure 9. Travel/Tourism motivations

(from Awaritefe, 2004)

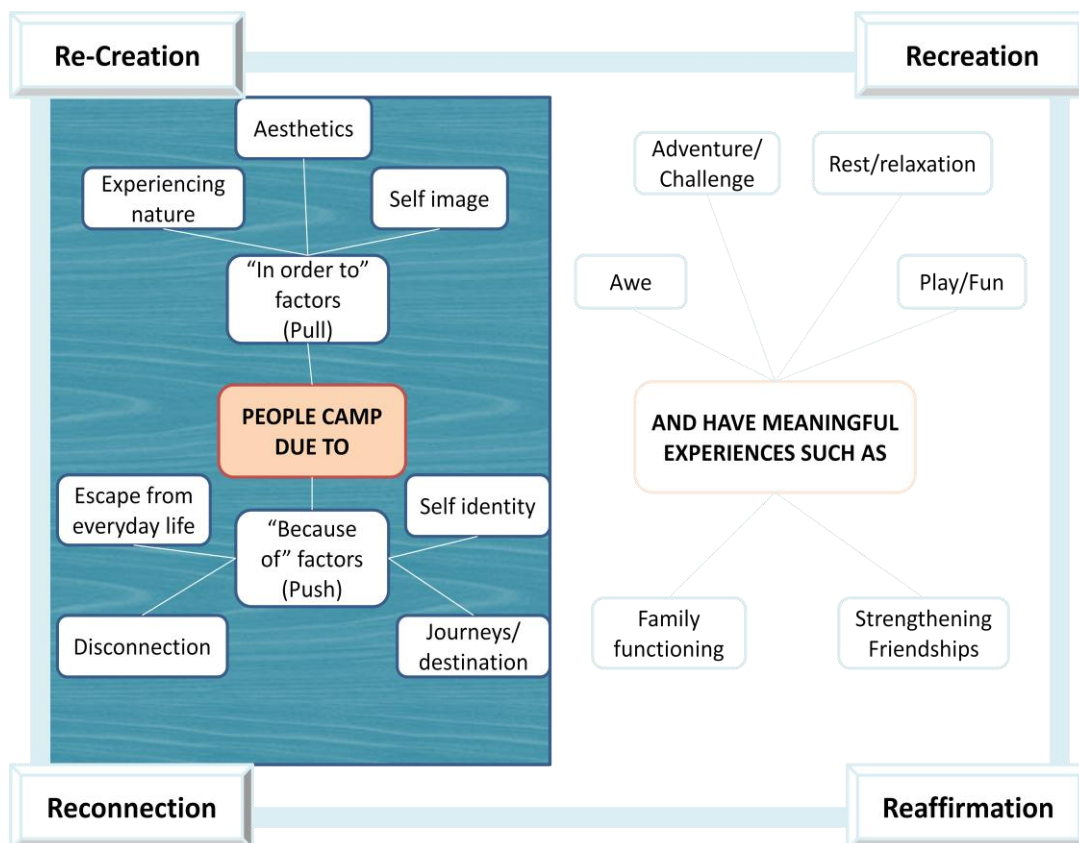


Figure 10. Motivating factors in the camping experience

(highlighted blue box in the left half of image)

4.2.1 In order to/pull factors

As described above, in order to (Schuetz, 1945, 1951) or pull factors of the destination (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977) were motivators for camping at both Warren and Karijini. Each park showed examples of each of these factors, which are explored below. These include experiencing nature, aesthetics and self-image. I have separated the results from the two parks to show their similarities and differences.

Experiencing nature

“I believe that you should enjoy it for what it is, not for what you want it to be. And maybe you might enjoy it more! ‘Cos you’re not staying at the Hilton! You’re staying in nature, and that’s what it’s all about” (Beryl, Karijini camper)

All campers spoke of nature as an important component of their camping experience, which is consistent with definitions for natural area tourism, ecotourism and in other studies of natural area tourism motivations (Fennell, 2008; Garst, *et al.*, 2009; Mehmetoglu, 2007a; Newsome, *et al.*, 2002). The tall Karri trees, the Warren River and the cool weather were the most common natural attractors at Warren. Janet said *“We wanted to see the big forests, you hear about them all the time, the Karri”*. While some campers expressed that the natural attributes were the main attractors, others emphasised that it was the nature based activities such as hiking, fishing, kayaking and observing nature that the natural setting allowed. Scott and Spencer at Warren camped predominantly to fish while Sue and Bruce desired a kayaking experience on the river. One of the most important natural pull factors of Warren campers was the campfire experience, which included looking for and chopping wood, tending the fire (which sometimes was an all day task), cooking on it and socialising around it. Sue emphatically stated *“Not being able to light a fire is... camping and the forest or sleeping outdoors, it’s like having spaghetti without the sauce!”*

At Karijini the main natural attractions were the gorges and the landscapes. Mick from Karijini said *“It’s a lot more nature based [than other destinations], it’s the reason we travel, to get into places like this. You get to go walking, see waterfalls”* and Eva said *“The beauty here is that you wake up and listen to the birds. It’s so peaceful!”* Bridget wanted to see and experience the gorges that she had seen on a nature documentary. These facets of the natural experience were reflected in Garst *et al.*’s (2009) study of ‘nature’ and ‘experiencing

nature' as being salient and meaningful aspects of the camping experience as well as in Dorfman's (1979) study on what campers' were most satisfied with. Unlike Warren, campers to Karijini were not able to have campfires due to a permanent total fire ban; however this did not affect campers' desire to camp at Karijini as other facets of the natural environment including the landscape were considered spectacular. Antony, visiting Karijini from Italy, stated *"Here every park is beautiful. I would choose Italy for cities and Australia for national parks and nature"* and Debbie said *"The rock, nature. How it forms. We loved at Kalamina [Gorge] that it looked like the game Ker Plunk where you want to slide a piece out and it can all come tumbling down! It was amazing"*.

Experiencing nature was clearly an important factor in campers' experiences; it was the setting in which they chose to spend their leisure time. This setting then strongly influenced the overall experience (Cole, 2004, 2011; Cole & Hall, 2009). Some campers placed a very high importance on the natural environment, choosing to camp specifically in that natural environment. However, others used the natural environment more as a setting for other meaningful experiences to occur (Hall, et al., 2007; Mehmetoglu, 2007b). These other, less obvious aspects of the experience are discussed below.

Aesthetic

"It's the flat plains then it drops down into a massive big gorge, it's impressive to see" (Mick, Karijini camper)

Linked to experiencing nature was the attraction of natural beauty; the aesthetic of the parks. According to Crespo de Nogueira and Martinez Flores (2003) and Sellars (2009), the desire for natural beauty and the feelings that it invokes are one of the main reasons that natural areas become protected. Urry (1992; 2002) discussed the tourist 'gaze', of the consumption of the tourist space via the visual as well as through other senses, and that it is the unusualness, the difference from what is normally seen, that makes the experience special. Aural aesthetics are also important to visitors in natural areas and can significantly impact on satisfaction (Benfield, Bell, Troup, & Soderstrom, 2010). The aesthetics of each of the parks drew in campers and had them enthralled.

Both Warren and Karijini have spectacular natural features that campers felt visually and aurally attracted to. At Warren, Sue said *"The way the sunlight comes... you've got these*

little soft smaller trees and when it comes through there it's all sort of, mellow. Makes you wonder why some people take drugs? Just come to a national park!" and Kylie said *"The scenery is just drop dead gorgeous, especially when you live up north for so long, there's no trees. So this is just beautiful"*. Janet also spoke about the difference to home: *"the forest is so different, that's the beauty of it"*. Colin referred to the quiet: *"Definitely the solitude and the quiet, that's really enjoyable... We aim for the little quiet places"*.

At Karijini, Ruby said *"The Pilbara has just blown me away. I thought the Kimberley was good, but the Pilbara is just, sort of soft but still rugged...we're always looking through a camera lens; it's just so easy on the eye yet so dramatic"* and Mick compared it to home: *"It's the total opposite to what we have on the east coast where we live... It's very dramatic here, we like it"*. This dramaturgical perspective is reminiscent of Goffman (1990) whereby the parks are the stage in which campers can view and experience a spectacular natural show. Edensor (2001) also referred to this stage in regards to tourism. Campers to both Warren and Karijini had aesthetic motivations, to gaze upon the natural environment (Urry, 1990, 1992; 2002).

Self image

"I've whinged a lot then I'll go home and brag about it! A real hypocrite" (Jemma, Warren)

This pull factor was connected with campers wanting to camp as it fulfilled a role in the image they desired of themselves, which was shown by Desforges (2000) study on identity construction through tourism. I conceptualised this as being associated with campers' desired futures. Jemma wanted to camp at Warren in the cool winter as it allowed her 'bragging rights' with her friends when she returned home. At Karijini, the concept of 'something that should be done' was mentioned by a couple of campers. Eva saw components of her experience at Karijini as *"It's something you have to tick off. Been there, seen it, tick! It's just another tick"*. Marg was physically ticking off the national parks that she visited in Australia in a parks publication as she wants to visit them all and had dedicated her life to the task. This behaviour was not always understood by other campers, and Mick spoke of his distaste in viewing it: *"It's like they're in a rush; 'Done Dales [Gorge], tick!'. Everyone's go go go"*. This highlights that identity is highly subjective and that each person

can construct it according to their own 'reflexive biography'. This concept was discussed by Giddens (1990) and Beck (1992) as a consequence of late modern society; that people can and are constantly creating and recreating their own lives. What one person feels is right for them may seem wrong to the other. The self image pull factor is closely related to the push factor self identity, which is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Because of/push factors

Because of (Schuetz, 1945, 1951) or push factors (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977) were a major part of motivation for campers to Warren and Karijini. As in the previous section on in order to/pull factors, I have described the parks mostly in separate paragraphs in order to highlight similarities and differences. The because of/push factors discovered were escape from everyday life, disconnection, self identity, and destinations and journeys (Figure 10).

Escape from everyday life

"It nourishes the soul; I dunno it does something different than what the city does for you. I think you're able to feel... I dunno, a bit of freedom, head space" (Renee, Warren camper)

Escaping from the complexities of modern, everyday life was a common desired experience (Cohen & Taylor, 1992). This is a frequently cited motivator in tourism and leisure studies, of wanting to 'get away from it all' (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Mehmetoglu, 2007a; Snepenger, King, Marshall, & Uysal, 2006). Campers expressed many reasons behind this motive including work related stress, personal issues at home and not having enough time for leisure. These factors contributed to them wanting to camp, and camping provided the setting for benefits such as seclusion, rest, recovery from injury and relaxation away from everyday life.

At Warren, campers sought escape by choosing to camp during the quieter cooler months, by choosing campsites away from other campers and by 'doing nothing'. Sally stated *"As a general rule you go away to get away and I deal with people all day every day. I'd rather choose just for a little while who I have to speak to"* and John said *"To be honest, it's just an escape from the usual rat race and just do nothing"*. Rita used this camping trip as a chance to recover from injury, as *"It is a real break 'cos when you're at home you have to do washing, there's always something that you've gotta do"*. Naomi felt the same way, saying

“As soon as you walk out [of the house] you forget about the bills, work, the kid’s schooling, you’re just away. Even though it’s only four days it’s like a holiday, you’ve gotten away, you’ve rejuvenated and then you’re happy to go back and start all over again”. Jay was escaping aspects of society he did not like: *“It’s just nice to get away from everyone, away from consumerism”.*

At Warren, parents also desired escape from stressors for their children, with Sally saying *“Especially as they get older, school work is all work, work, work; it’s all quite serious now so he [her son] just doesn’t get much social time I s’pose. Let him out here to get dirty and not have to have his tie on, polish his shoes and stuff like that for school. It’s nice for him”.* Tom spoke of his son’s autism and how being constantly stimulated at home agitated him and that camping in a quiet, natural environment calmed him down: *“It’s hard enough for him to feel peaceful... it’s a lot easier to calm him down [here], he goes back into his own little world and he just listens to the birds or whatever. He sleeps better when he’s camping”.*

At Karijini, campers also expressed a desire to escape from daily pressures, however it did not seem as pressing an issue as at Warren. Some campers wanted to relax away from their busy home lives and saw camping as an escape from other less relaxing types of holiday. Kevin said *“Both of our wives are school teachers, so they get to the end of term and they need to chill. The last few times we’ve been to Bali and I don’t think either of us really relaxed that much”.* Mick and Kate wanted to escape from technological distractions for their children so they could learn to use their imaginations and appreciate nature: *“To get away from technology. A lot of family and friends of ours use movies and DVDs as babysitters... It’s fine to watch a movie now and again but not to that extent. We want to teach them that you can make up your own games and do your own thing; you can enjoy yourselves without being entertained”.* Marg spoke of painful personal memories related to her family life and that she used camping as both a physical and psychological escape. Each of these campers needed to escape for differing reasons, related to personal or societal stressors, and used camping as a type of relief valve.

For different reasons, campers wanted to escape from their everyday lives, if only for a few days. A common theme was campers feeling that their lives were not in balance and it was through camping that they could regain this balance. For Jay at Warren, he felt that modern,

capitalist society represented greed and social dysfunction, which Marx (1972) discussed in relation to the separation of people from the fruits of their labour, thereby causing feelings of alienation. Jay sought solace away from not only work, but wider social processes to which he did not fully ascribe. This concept was similar to what Tom expressed in regards to his autistic child. It was in the normal, busy world that his child could not find peace and it was only when all the 'noise' was removed, that he could be calm. Desiring escape from the everyday is closely connected to feelings of disconnection, discussed next.

Disconnection

"We've suddenly done things as a family, and to me that's the core of camping. It brings you back, we're losing it" (Carl, Karijini)

Linked with the desire to escape from everyday life was the feeling of disconnection; from others, nature and self. The concept of interconnection pervades all areas of life from ecology to spirituality; it is seen in the relationships between humans, between humans and their environment and within the environment itself (Crompton, 1979; Ife & Tesoriero, 2006; Krebs, 2008; Little & Schmidt, 2006; Palmer, Ambrose, & Poff, 1997; Rolston III, 1988). Disconnection then is a move away from a natural order, an unbalanced state. Campers from both Warren and Karijini expressed feelings of disconnection from *others, nature* and *self* and this manifested as a motivation to camp.

The feeling of detachment from others was the most common type of disconnection expressed. Campers felt that they could not have the relationships they desired with friends and family in the home setting due to factors such as technological distractions, time and opportunity. At Warren, Sally felt camping gave her the opportunity to connect with her partner on a level she could not get at home: *"We get to speak about things other than work... To sit and talk about the leaves or the stars or the moon; to not actually always have that automatic conversation. And I think it's a bit more positive as well... We just sit and talk about and to each other rather than about work and what needs to happen next"*. Peter felt that technology disconnected him from his children, and camping:

“[gets the kids] away from their rooms and their computers and Facebook and all the other stuff that they do these days... They actually become a lot more social in a camping environment. You can socialise with your kids a lot better when you’re camping than when you’re around the house”.

In Karijini, Carl also felt that social disconnection was a societal issue saying (about his children speaking to others) *“It’s great to see, and we’re losing that as a society, no question! You stop and say hello and ask where they’ve been, just old fashioned communication which is dying everywhere”*. June also felt that modern society supported disconnection, saying *“In general in our society everyone leads such busy lives. It’s hard to just get back to being simple. You get caught in the rush of everything”*.

Feeling disconnected from nature was expressed predominantly by campers at Warren. Simone said *“we live in the city and you’re surrounded by four walls everyday basically and it’s the same stuff over and over again. To be able to come down here, what 4-5 hours away and it’s a completely different scene. And it’s peaceful”*. Scott spoke of his disconnection from nature and his desire to reconnect: *“I like the connection with nature, especially with animals. I see that they’re conscious as well; I like that aspect that you can relate to them. You can’t speak their language but you can relate to everything”*. Parents also spoke of their children’s disconnection from nature. Tom felt this for his children and sought to teach them about the connections between organisms: *“I bore them with all the information about the landscape and the animals (laughs). So hopefully they’ll learn a lot about their country, which they probably wouldn’t learn in school”*. Jemma expressed a similar sentiment when asked about her most special experience: *“All the nature stuff to show the children. ‘Cos we live in Fremantle, there are not many kookaburras or frogs around”*. The child-nature disconnection is seen as a major concern of modern times with far reaching consequences for physical, mental and social health (Kellert, 2002; Louv, 2005; McCurdy, et al., 2010). Campers at Karijini did not speak of feeling disconnected from nature, with only Eva referring to what she saw in others: *“[To] get away from retail therapy, get back to nature. There’s so much around and all we do is go to the shopping centres every weekend. Not us specifically, but it’s what people seem to do”*.

Feelings of disconnection from self were only overtly expressed by Scott at Warren, who commented *"I like the isolation. I'm friendly in the city but when I'm out here I just want to shut off from the world and just do my own thing"*. I sensed that others had this feeling too but it was embedded in other explanations. Scott explained:

"Me not knowing my future is more of a burden than anything the day can bring... I've got a dead end job and I do the same thing. It makes life go faster as well 'cos it's not like every day is different, you've got these two week blocks and you're living for those. The whole year goes so quick. And I think, "What am I really living for?"

Self identity

"It's a part of who we are" (June, Karijini)

This motivating force was seen when campers expressed their desire to camp as being associated somehow with their sense of self, it was a part of who they are. I conceptualised this as being concerned with campers' past experience, as opposed to the future self image described earlier. For Scott at Warren, he saw camping as a way of getting back to himself: *"For me it more about getting back to nature and back to ancient roots of who you are, how you're supposed to live, not the desk job that I work"*. At Karijini, Ruby and Kate saw camping as a reflection of who they and their family are, saying *"We tend to be national parks people. Even when we go overseas we do the same sort of thing, national parks"* and *"We're outdoorsy people anyway, beachy people. We've always lived on the coast so it's nice to do something inland too... I think it's good to bring them inland too [their children]"*. Also at Karijini, Beryl referred to specific natural elements as reflective of who she is by saying *"The cliffs! I'm an earth person, not a water person. I like mountains, I appreciate them"*. Desforges (2000) explored this facet of tourism experience and tourists' ability to add to peoples own reflexive biographies. As discussed in the section on self image, campers are in control of their own reflexive biographies (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1990) and camping serves to reinforce the image of self that campers have already created.

Destinations and journeys

“We’re winging it... surprises everywhere” (Mick, Karijini camper)

For many campers, Warren or Karijini was their primary destination. For others, their choice to stay was a matter of the destination being a part of a longer journey, or coming across it by chance; they did not have one primary destination. These campers were on longer journeys and they expressed flexibility with their travel plans. Leu, Crompton, & Fesenmaier (1993) posited a model of multi destination travel that Stewart and Vogt (1997) and Hwang & Fesenmaier (2003) applied to show that single destination trips were only one of many types of travel plans. There were a higher proportion of long haul ‘journey’ travellers at Karijini than at Warren and this was reflected in the number of campers speaking of multi-destinations. Beryl encapsulated it thus: *“We’re not rushing, we’ve got to be in Broome for August, we’re doing a Gibb River Road organised tour, but other than that we go where we feel like it”*. Debbie was not planning on visiting Karijini but decided to change her route when in Karratha she saw a brochure on the park. At Warren, Sue and Bruce were flexible with their destination choice, saying *“All we know was that we were heading west and were heading north and then were heading east and then south. But the actual places, no actual ‘We must go here, we must go there’.*

These examples show that Clawson and Ketch’s (1966) outdoor leisure experiences model of anticipation, travel to, on-site, return travel and recollection is only one way of conceptualising experience. This was also argued by Borrie and Roggenbuck (2001) who said the model was too narrow in its scope; that not only does experience and satisfaction take place in each stage it takes place within stages, is dynamic and emergent and consists of multiple dimensions. Campers displayed great diversity in their temporal phases of experience, whether it was a once-off two day trip to the destination or a life long journey of discovery.

4.4 Meaningful experiences in nature

Each of the campers interviewed expressed having meaningful experiences on their camping trip. As discussed by Pearce (2005), meanings are a component of the whole tourist experience which also includes activities and the setting. Further, meanings are situated deeper and comprise a more complex component of the entire experience (Farber & Hall,

2007; Little & Schmidt, 2006; Patterson, *et al.*, 1998). The meanings articulated by campers were sometimes expressed overtly, for example in directly answering the question of what was meaningful or special about camping at this national park. Sometimes meanings were more covert; hidden in the rich descriptions and body language. I judged whether an experience was meaningful by listening to both words and context. I found that meaningful experiences could be conceptualised as being on a more personal level and also a wider social level. This section describes and analyses the meaningful experiences expressed by campers at Warren and Karijini, which include awe, adventure and pride in overcoming challenge, rest and relaxation, play and fun, and family and friend functioning (Figure 11).

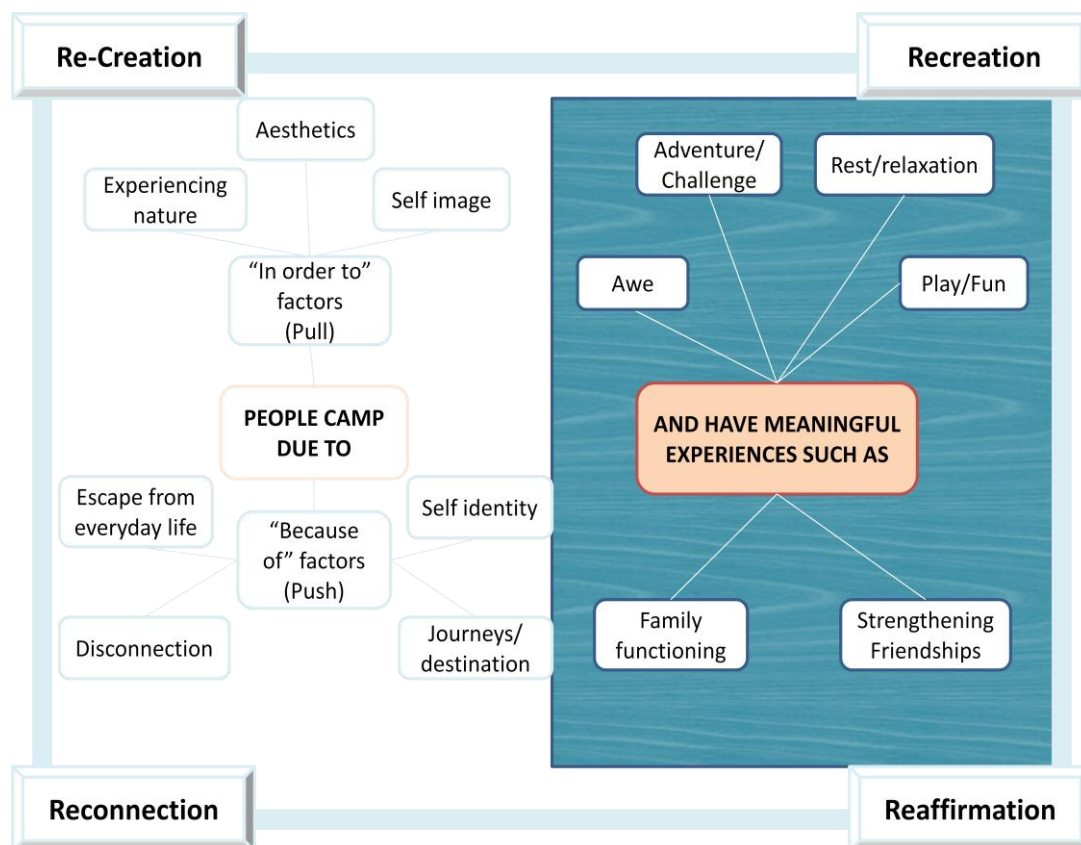


Figure 11. Meaningful experiences
(highlighted blue box in the right half of image)

4.4.1 Awe

"The vastness of the countryside- I can't comprehend it! Amazing!" (Bridget, Karijini)

Awe is an affective response triggered by experiencing varying stimuli, such as seeing charismatic leaders, religious artefacts and the power and beauty of nature (Hornsby, 2005; Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Pearsall, 2007). Comprised of emotions such as inspiration, amazement, admiration, feelings of vastness and profound joy as well as fear, confusion and humility (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Pearsall, 2007), it has been studied in many disciplines including psychology and philosophy, and has been related to peak experiences (Maslow, 1964) and to the sublime (Burke, 1757/1990; Hitt, 1999). In their study on tourist experiences in the Alaskan natural environment, Farber and Hall (2007) found awe to be directly linked with extraordinary experiences. Feelings of awe triggered by experiences in and of the natural environment were expressed by campers at both Warren and Karijini. I considered it awe if something was mentioned repeatedly or passionately and included the above emotions.

At Warren, feelings of awe were expressed regarding the power of nature. The tall Karri trees and their potential for destruction inspired awe in Dylan and Maureen. Dylan said *"We just heard a tree fall down... I could seriously hear a tree falling down! If there's no one in the woods when a tree falls, does it really fall? (laughs). Freaked me out actually. You wouldn't have much of a chance to get out of the way"*. Maureen wondered what caused them to fall:

"Occasionally you hear a bit of a crack and a thump in the distance. You just wonder if branches just give way occasionally anyway... I've been at a caravan park I saw a branch fall on a perfectly still day but it was hot. The branch fell and the pointy bit scraped right down the side of a caravan. So I don't think it takes only wind".

Colin was awed by the ingenuity of ants in building their nests, saying *"They're just amazing! I'd love to know how they'd built it whether it was dirt and leaves or whether it's just the leaves. It's amazing"*. Kylie and Jamie experienced the reflections in the river with awe, saying *"The reflections are just awesome"; "Like a mirror, two forests"; "That's what it should be called, "Two Forests"*.

At Karijini, the power of nature inspired awe as well as the vastness of the landscape in both temporal and physical dimensions. Similarly to Colin at Warren, Lionel also remarked on the ants' ability to build nests, saying *"An ant, in the middle of that area over there, there's a hole bigger than a rat could go down! It's huge! We were in Newman and they talked about Pebble Mound Mice, I think this ant is doing just as good!"* Bridget was emotionally overcome by the age of the gorges, saying *"I'm into the million years back, really deep roots of the Earth. And this is what I've found here... It fascinates me to no end! I can become obsessed as my daughters say! But I do enjoy every single million years of the way!"* Larry also felt humbled by the gorges. He said *"It reinforces the age of the Earth, you think My God! This is millions and millions of years old"*. His wife Beryl agreed, adding *"It's beautiful, we love it! It's got a feel about it. Peaceful, just superb. It just feels, it's got good energy. You can feel it... It allows you to generate a respect for the land, that's what I feel."* Both Marg and Debbie felt awe that manifested creatively in their painting and writing. Debbie said *"Just sitting outside, I could just start writing. It's peaceful... and just sitting here now, there's no one around. It's inspiring. Your mind just takes off"*. Elements of fear were also present with Joanne telling me that it was quite scary taking her children climbing in the gorges. Fear and pride in overcoming challenge were linked with adventure.

4.4.2 Adventure and challenge

"There was a little bit of fear and a lot of excitement! That sums it up. And you feel really good about it, that you've done something and you were able to do it!"
(Joanne, Karijini)

Having adventures and their associated challenges were meaningful to campers at both parks. Here I found adventure to be both associated with 'outer' challenges, such as hiking in dangerous terrain, and also 'inner' challenges, such as trying to set up camp in the rain having forgotten the tent pegs. I conceptualised 'outer' challenges as taking place away from the camper's immediate campsite, predominantly physical in nature and of being expected and 'inner' challenges as being undertaken within the immediate campsite and being more emotional in nature and generally more unexpected. However, both challenges faced involved physical and emotional elements of varying degrees. Adventure can be defined as an unusual, exciting or dangerous experience, journey or series of events (Hornsby, 2005), the interaction of competence and risk (Martin & Priest, 1986) and can be

influenced by personal characteristics and previous experience (Weber, 2001). Challenge is closely related to adventure and can mean a new or difficult task that tests ability and skill (Hornsby, 2005).

At Warren, the adventures and challenges that campers described were often regarding their overall experience and predominantly within their own campsite. Camping in the cool, wet weather was an adventure in itself. Sally's entire camping trip was an adventure as her husband forgot to pack many essentials: *"Yeh we've had to really rough it- we even forgot the tent, pans, and the cups!"* Instead of this ruining her trip, it enhanced it. She went on to say *"We've done well. But its things like that I think that we get to show the kids as well, because Violet's first reaction was 'Oh no! This was supposed to be the best camping trip ever! We've got no tent, no cups, no pans'. And it's just showing them as well that you can make something out of nothing, which we've managed to do"*. This inner challenge was meaningful to Sally as it allowed her to teach her children important life lessons such as making do with less. Naomi also saw the challenges that camping provided as meaningful for her children's development, saying *"It's like the toilet. Until we started bringing the kids they had no idea what a portable toilet was... It's away from home, something totally different. I think that helps build their self esteem for when their old enough to have their own families and that"*.

It was the challenging physical environment of Karijini that was most commented on. Kate spoke about her best experience saying:

"The kids got the biggest buzz from going to Kermit's Pool yesterday! It was a class five [difficult rating], but we thought 'we'll just go to the ladder then we'll decide', so we got to it and went a bit further. We ended up going all the way through, you don't want to take risks with the kids but we figured we could do it and they're used to rock climbing. Finishing that was the best; we were on the biggest high!"

Mick also found the risk involved with the activities was exciting and liberating, saying *"Some of the tracks around here, I don't think you'd be allowed to do that over east. They take the fun out of things 'cos they're too worried about someone getting hurt and suing"*. June similarly remarked: *"The big boys have enjoyed the adventurous side of it. The whole*

experience of walking somewhere where there were no hand rails, no path! They've really enjoyed that side of it".

Overcoming challenges through adventure, both on inner and outer levels, have been shown to be very beneficial both personally and on a wider scale. Davidson (2001) found that children in an outdoor education program not only enjoyed overcoming challenges but it also built their confidence and mental strength and gave them a freedom of choice; a restriction that can inhibit creativity and problem solving (Louv, 2005). Carnicelli-Filho, Schwartz and Tahara (2010) discussed how adventure tourism allows people to experience non-routine emotions and sensations. Further, as the natural setting is very different from the home setting, this creates greater challenges and opportunities to overcome them (Ewert, et al., 2003). The results of these studies are reflected in the meaningful experiences expressed by campers in this research.

4.4.5 Rest and relaxation

"We're probably not good subjects 'cos we're not doing what we'd normally do. We've come here specifically to do nothing" (Rita, Warren)

Crompton (1979) found rest and relaxation as a socio-psychological motive for going on trips and defined it as a desire to refresh oneself mentally and physically from normal everyday stress. 'Doing nothing' was important to many campers, especially at Warren. Rita went camping at this time to specifically 'do nothing' as she was recovering from injury. She spoke of always having washing or cleaning to do at home; she did not allow herself to 'do nothing'. By changing her environment, Rita was released of her responsibilities at home. Instead her husband, who normally does no household chores, allowed Rita time to heal by relieving her of these duties. Sally and Naomi spoke similarly of being relieved of household responsibilities, and Naomi's camping friend Peter agreed, saying *"For the ladies, they're always looking and seeing "oh there's a pile of clothes over there, better go and fold those clothes, there's dishes that I have to do", I say just 'sit down, have a cup of coffee and enjoy where you are'"*. 'Doing nothing' went against these campers responsibilities as 'women', and they thoroughly enjoyed it. 'Doing nothing' also benefitted Tom and his young autistic child. Tom spoke of the power of camping to relax his child, who was easily agitated by the

fast paced nature of modern life. By not having distractions such as electronic games and loud noises, he was more calm and slept better.

At Karijini, rest and relaxation was not as high a priority as at Warren; however it was still expressed by many campers. One of the young Swiss campers I spoke with talked about the difference between being on an organised tour and camping independently, saying *“Yes, they do things very fast. Here you can slow down and relax. Enjoy the nature more”*. Many campers spoke of the quiet, natural surroundings being conducive to relaxation. Antony, another young international independent camper, said *“We like nature, the quiet, no generators. We like going for walks, it’s relaxing”*. For many, this was the reason they decided to stay at Dales campground and not the Eco Retreat- the other accommodation option in the park. Mick liked Dales as it was *“Closer to nature. You don’t have people right next to you all the time; don’t have the busyness of caravan traffic. It’s just nice to sit and look at the Spinifex, it’s beautiful!”* June chose to stay in national parks over caravan parks as they *“are so busy and noisy”*. Even though many activities at Karijini are vigorous and require effort, campers still had meaningful experiences encompassing rest and relaxation.

Campers at both parks spoke of having a relaxed persona whilst camping; of not having to keep up appearances. This was seen as a release of social/gender obligations and everyone who mentioned it was happy that they could relax and be themselves. This was expressed mainly by women and predominantly at Warren. At Warren, Sally said *“Leave your socks on for two days, who cares! (laughs) Not to have your hair done. The nothingness, not having to do anything. It’s good”*. Jemma did not care that she had not changed her clothes in three days and Sue remarked on what she had heard other campers say: *“You hear the women- ‘I’ve been wearing this for three days!’ Who cares when you’re camping you know? Nobody stands on any ceremony”*. At Karijini, Carl teased his wife and her friend for going to have a shower, saying *“They’ve gone to have a shower (laughs). How can you say you’ve had the ultimate camping experience?”*

To travel for rest and relaxation is an oft cited dimension of motivation (Awaritefe, 2004; Aziz & Ariffen, 2009; Crompton, 1979; Pearce & Lee, 2005) and it is clear that camping fulfilled this function for many campers. ‘Doing nothing’ is quite the opposite of what it

implies- it was allowing campers to heal, to rest and to relax. To be freed from the responsibilities and stressors of home, traditional gender and social roles, restrictions on travel freedom and to be able to quietly enjoy the natural surroundings invigorated and re-created these campers, bringing them joy.

4.4.6 Fun and play

“They’ve had a great time I think. The big boys have enjoyed the adventurous side of it. The whole experience of walking somewhere where there are no hand rails, no path! They’ve really enjoyed that side of it” (June, Karijini)

Along with experiencing awe, adventure and challenge and rest and relaxation, campers had meaningful experiences associated with fun through play. Play can be described as “to do things for pleasure, as children do; to enjoy yourself, rather than work” (Hornsby, 2005, p. 1153). Hughes (2010) outlined the many facets of play including that it is intrinsically motivated, freely chosen and pleasurable. Play is beneficial for children’s’ cognitive, physical, social and psychological development and well being (Findlay & Coplan, 2008; Ginsburg, 2007; Kellert, 2002; Louv, 2005; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998) and is recognised as a basic human right (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989). Play can be undertaken by adults and is associated with leisure (Arnold, 1989). Fun and play were both expressed by campers of varied ages at both parks.

Children had the opportunity to play and parents expressed their joy at seeing their children engage in unrestricted play. At Warren, Sally spoke about the benefits to her children, saying that being away from electronics has made her children use their imaginations more. Her daughter, who is *“quite princessy at home”*, had not complained once about the camping experience and had decided to search for fungi and photograph them. Jemma specifically wanted to teach her daughter the skill of using her imagination, saying *“I think it’s good that you can come down with a three year old and you don’t have to entertain her. She’s learning to entertain herself. Not watching TV or those types of things, it’s really good”*. At Karijini, Mick and Kate, who were on a year long journey, spoke of their children not having many toys; instead they made their own fun like counting ants’ nests, identifying birds and playing with rocks.

Adults also had fun through play. At Karijini, Debbie spoke of walking along the trails and feeling like she was a child again, exploring the world. She said:

“I really loved Kalamina [Gorge] because there was no walking track... there you can do your own thing. We were crossing over the stream and then crossing back. It was good to do your own thing; it was like we were little kids! Adventure again! Exploring. I loved it”.

At Warren, Ashley commented on the natural environment and said *“It just feels kind of magical, being so green and thick and lush. Like you’ve stepped into another world”* and Emma could not stop laughing when she told me about taking her new four wheel drive up into the sand dunes close by. Many campers spoke about the fun they had climbing through the gorges, but this was sometimes tempered by the feeling of restriction. The gorges are potentially dangerous places, but Dan felt that as an adult, he should be able to have unrestricted play too, saying *“I find that a bit frustrating... I’d be climbing over everything and they say ‘No, you can’t do that’.* And the kids were saying *‘Dad, get down!’* This was also expressed by Alan, who remembered a time when there were fewer restrictions on road access.

It is clear that fun and play was meaningful for both children and adults and was beneficial to both, as shown in the literature (Arnold, 1989; Ginsburg, 2007; Hughes, 2010; Kellert, 2002; Louv, 2005). Crompton (1979) found that regression was a socio-psychological motivator of pleasure travel, which is the desire to engage in behaviour reminiscent of an adolescent or child. This behaviour was evident at both parks. The feeling of restriction by a small number of adult campers at Karijini could be due in part to the frustration of desiring the unrestricted play of childhood or of a time in the past along with Western notions of autonomy and individual rights, however being unable to fulfil this desire in an increasingly controlled society (Helwig, 2006) and an increasingly controlled park. This points to the meanings that play and fun has to campers, both to children and adults.

4.4.7 Family functioning

“We could’ve easily gone to see gorges every day, but I would’ve been so disappointed if my family had missed out on this [the social experience]. That happens to be a by product, I’m thrilled we’re here but to me this is what it’s all about” (Carl, Karijini)

Throughout the world, the family unit is considered a rightful and fundamental social institution, even in modern times of great change and diversity (Howard, 2001; United Nations, 2009; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Positive family support and cohesion has been linked to a reduction of stress and mental illness (Barrett & Turner, 2005), increased confidence and self esteem in children (Bolger, Patterson, & Kupersmidt, 1998) and ability to cope with disease (Patterson, McCubbin, & Warwick, 1990; Rotheram-Borus *et al.*, 2010). Changes in family life such as the diversification of the traditional family unit, increased working hours, decreased leisure time and fast paced technological changes have affected patterns of family functioning (Bengtson, 2001; Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008; Popenoe, 1993). Campers expressed feeling a level of disconnection from their families at home for many reasons. For these families, camping fulfilled the important role of facilitating family functioning, such as through increased quality time, socialisation and mutual problem solving.

Campers at Warren spoke of increased family cohesion between and with their children and with their partners. Increased socialisation between parents and children through communication was an important outcome of camping, with Rita saying *“It makes you actually communicate with people, even families- it makes them do stuff together, kids and that don’t seem to do a lot together nowadays”*. Peter enjoyed the fact that he spoke with his children more than at home, when he said *“They actually become a lot more social in a camping environment. You can socialise with your kids a lot better when you’re camping than when you’re around the house”*. He attributed the lack of communication at home partly to their fast paced lifestyle and technological distractions. This was also true for Naomi’s family. She said *“It’s nice to get away ‘cos Adrian works away and it’s nice to spend some undivided attention time with the kids and him too, ‘cos all the other interruptions take it away”*. Sally spoke with her husband on a personal level about things other than work,

saying *“I think it’s a bit more positive as well. I think that’s nice, just to have that. We just sit and talk about and to each other rather than about work and what needs to happen next”*.

Spending more time together away from distractions increased family cohesion at Karijini too. One of the main aims of Kate’s camping trip with her family was to *“Create good family memories and really enjoy the kids before Peta starts school next year”*. Carl encapsulated this meaningful experience when he said:

“We’ve suddenly done things as a family, and to me that’s the core of camping. It brings you back, we’re losing it. I love my kids to bits but they’re shocking, as soon as we get home the TV goes on, and I’m just as bad. You answer the phone, you go into work. It just all gets negated here and it’s fantastic! We’ve sat and chatted, washed dishes as a family, we’ve laughed, we’ve tried to light the barbeque and failed, we’ve fought when we tried to set up the tents and we’ve laughed about that. From that point of view it has been an enriching 24 hours without actually ‘doing’ anything!”

Carl’s friend Kevin agreed, saying *“That answer probably sounds a little cliché and corny, but in today’s society with teenagers... Matt just comes home, goes into his room, does his homework and plays his Xbox and you never see him”*. June expressed a similar sentiment, saying *“For any family it’s spending time together without having mundane things like sports, which we have a lot of. Any time you can spend quality time together, it doesn’t really matter where you go”*.

The removal of distractions, both social and technological, and obligations apparent in modern life facilitated increased family functioning at Warren and Karijini. According to Huisman, Edwards, & Catapano (2012), the impacts of technological change on families have not been adequately studied recently. Results from their study on this topic sounded very familiar to parts of this one, for example:

“I wonder sometimes if technology...it feels like we’re so socially connected, but then sometimes it feels like we’re so socially isolated too because you have like very few actual conversations with people. Like the fact that you can Facebook and text, and touch base with logistic things, and small talk means that sometimes you don’t spend

as much real time together, talking about meaningful stuff...” (A mother, quoted in Huisman et al., (2012, pp. 56-57)

This concern was expressed by campers at both parks, and families were generally very thankful for the absence of electrical power in facilitating increased family functioning. This paradox of increased social technologies yet reduced social function was explored by Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark, Kiesler, Mukophadhyay and Scherlis (1998). The concept of ‘doing nothing’ expressed by Carl was also meaningful for rest and relaxation as described earlier, however by ‘doing nothing’ these campers were doing something very important- they were reconnecting with their families. This suggests that the attributes of the setting/destination (in order to/ pull factors) are often of lesser importance than the because of/push factors, such as disconnection from others with the associated desire for increased family functioning and strengthening friendships (Ajzen, 1991; Cole, 2004; Driver, 1996; Kyle & Chick, 2002).

4.4.8 Strengthening friendships

“People are more friendly here than in the city. When you walk past people ask ‘Hi, how are you?’ But in the city they just walk by with their head down” (Eva, Karijini)

The absence of distractions and obligations also contributed to the strengthening of friendships. This was seen both between friends camping together and also with newly formed friendships. Campers at Warren tended to stay within their own campsites and spoke about how camping improved the relationship with the friends with whom they were camping. The main reason that Scott and Spencer were camping was that Spencer was moving overseas soon and camping allowed them quality time together to fish and talk. Simone and Ashley spent time together that they did not have at home, due to other commitments. Their partners, also friends, chose to go fishing together. This allowed each person time to bond closely with their friend.

At Karijini, campers also spoke of camping being meaningful in strengthening existing friendships, as well as contributing to meeting new friends. Carl spoke about connecting more with his friend Kevin as they did not have the usual distraction of watching the football. He said *“If we didn’t come out here we might do that [watch football] for a week.*

Then I drive back and think 'Shit I didn't even really talk with Kevin!' But we've done more in one day here, it's fantastic'. He went on to say "I'm sure when we go to the next gorge and the next one, they'll be beautiful and there a million years of erosion or whatever, but we'd talk about this stuff more, the meaningful stuff. This is where politics should be sorted out! 'Cos we've sorted out some major issues! (laughs)"

Sharon remarked on the friendliness of other campers, saying *"We've been having people come and talk to us, it's been really good. You wouldn't get that in the city. Some of the caravan parks we've been to, some people are friendly enough to have a chat but when you get to places like this, you're forced to mingle. It's been good, very friendly"*. This was also remarked upon by Carl, and he expressed joy at his children socialising with others, especially older campers. He said:

"I love the fact that this morning, the three of us, before everyone woke up, we went for a walk and just to walk around this loop which is nothing really, took us 45 minutes 'cos we stopped and chatted! You stop and say hello and ask where they've been, just old fashioned communication which is dying everywhere.... Camping transcends generations too, it doesn't matter where you are. We were chatting with a retired couple and they chatted to the kids while we were at the BBQ. It doesn't happen in our society! There are no outlets to let a social thing like that happen!"

The strengthening of bonds between friends, both old and new, was meaningful to campers. The setting facilitated both quality time with loved ones as well as meeting new people, including across generations. The importance of multigenerational bonds was studied by Bengston (2001) in regards to family groups, however the results have further application across other relationships too. He believed that the traditional nuclear family is changing and that relationships with older persons are becoming increasingly significant. This was also explored by Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O'Connor (2005) in the context of multigenerational relationships in the community and the developmental benefits these relationships can have. Being in a different environment to home facilitated communication and relationship building, importantly including older people, and like family functioning, was sometimes more important than the destination itself (Ajzen, 1991; Cole, 2004; Driver, 1996; Kyle & Chick, 2002).

4.5 Higher order meanings of experience

Higher order meanings permeate the entire camping experience. Meanings are linked with dimensions of experience, motivations, place attachment and benefits to the tourist. Difficult to define on their own, they are a *more complex part of the whole experience and include emotions and personal and cultural interpretations* (Farber & Hall, 2007; Garst, et al., 2009; Pearce, 2005; Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). In this section I present an interpretation of the higher order meanings of the camping experience of campers at Warren and Karijini. These are *re-creation, recreation, reconnection and reaffirmation* (Figure 12).

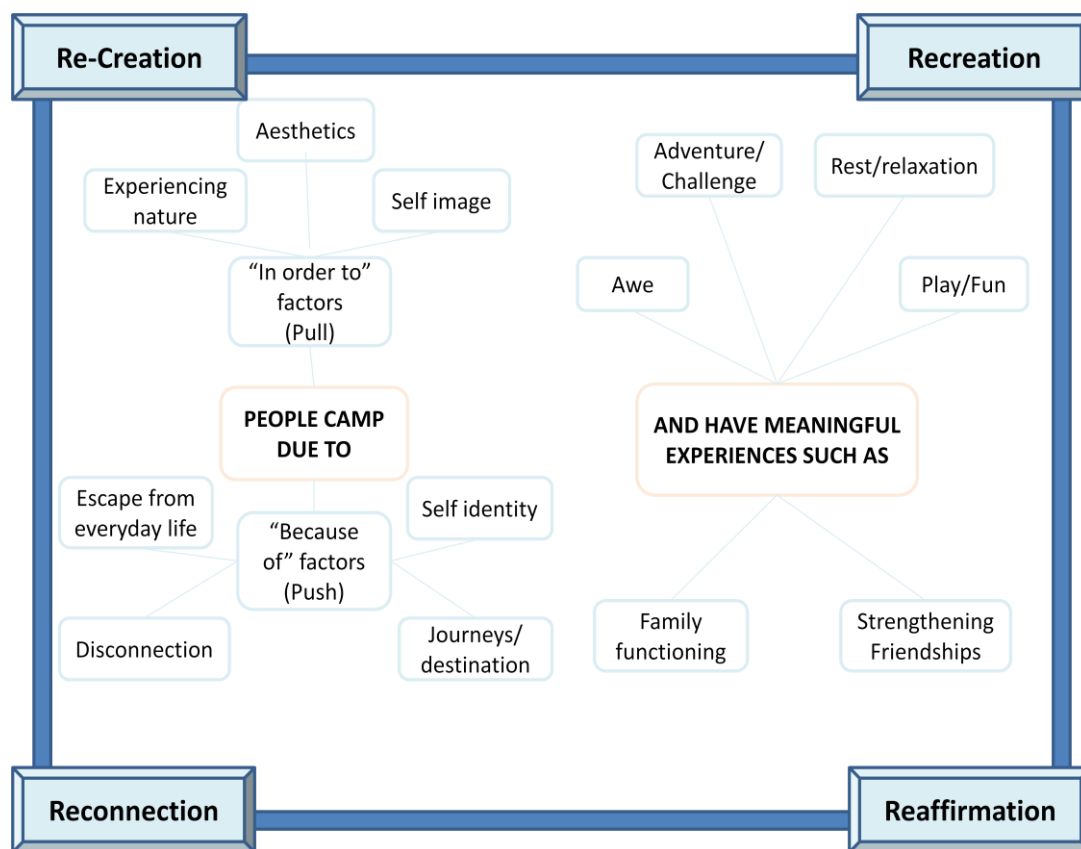


Figure 12. Higher order meanings of experience
(highlighted blue boxes at four corners of image)

4.5.1 Re-creation

“As soon as you walk out you forget about the bills, work, the kids schooling; you’re just away. Even though it’s only four days it’s like a holiday; you’ve gotten away, you’ve rejuvenated and then you’re happy to go back and start all over again”(Naomi, Warren)

Camping allowed people the opportunity to re-create themselves; away from the responsibilities of home such as work and school, from traditional gender roles, from social expectations. Work was forgotten, homework was left at home, and no one cared that they were not wearing makeup or looking ‘good’. When all of the background ‘noise’ and distractions were stripped away, campers were left with only themselves, their companions and nature. By being immersed in a natural environment free from everyday distractions, campers were able to see that they are a part of something bigger than themselves; part of an ecosystem, the biosphere. Quite literally, many saw the forest for the trees.

When Naomi spoke of camping as acting as a relief valve, she was expressing a concept of tourism experience that Cohen (1979) described as a return to one’s centre. Naomi felt re-created by camping; by having fun, relaxing and spending time with her family, it allowed her to become refreshed and able to return to her centre back home. Cohen (1979) described this as the recreational mode of tourist experience; of tourism acting to restore a general sense of wellbeing and adherence to the home centre. This return to one’s centre was expressed differently by Scott, who felt that his home was not his centre, that being amongst nature was more of his centre. This is Cohen’s ‘experimental’ mode of tourist experience, where *“His [sic] is essentially a religious quest, but diffuse and without a clearly set goal”* (p. 189). Camping was meaningful for these campers as it facilitated a re-creation of themselves, one that had become lost in the everyday, in the profane.

Drawing on Durkheim, Graburn (1989) conceptualised tourism as a kind of modern pilgrimage, as moving from the profane to the sacred, from the ordinary to the extraordinary. This was seen when campers spoke of their desire to escape from their everyday lives and to have meaningful experiences in nature. These meaningful experiences were had in a ‘micro life’ with a beginning, middle and an end. Beginning with motivation, then came packing their vehicles, driving to the campsite, setting up camp, having

experiences and then packing up and eventually going home. This entire experience, or ritual, facilitated a re-creation of the self by getting away from the profane, and closer to the sacred. To somewhere where there are other more meaningful values than monetary values, a place where campers could go back to being themselves (Rolston III, 2003; Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). MacCannell (1989) argued that travel and tourism facilitates people alienated by modernity to re-construct their own authentic identities by allowing them to rediscover their sense of self and feel their place in the world. McKean (1989) saw tourism as *“A profound, widely shared human desire to know ‘others’, with the reciprocal possibility that we may come to know ourselves”* (p. 133). This view is encapsulated by the influential American naturalist and environmentalist John Muir, *“May your search through nature lead you to yourself”* (John Muir, as cited in Sierra Club, 2012).

4.5.2 Recreation

“The kids got the biggest buzz from going to Kermit’s Pool yesterday!...We ended up going all the way through, you don’t want to take risks with the kids but we figured we could do it and they’re used to rock climbing. Finishing that was the best; we were on the biggest high! Go team!” (Kate, Karijini)

Put simply, recreation is not work. It is undertaking activities for enjoyment, for leisure, because you want to and not because someone has told you to, because you have to. It is one of the most basic premises of tourism and is recognised as a basic human right (United Nations, 2009). Partly because of this it has been criticised for being too simplistic, too base, too banal (Boorstin, 1964). But recreation holds deep meaning for the campers at Warren and Karijini. It may seem like a simple hike into the gorge, lighting of the campfire or ‘doing nothing’, but these acts of recreation are associated to the other higher order meanings expressed here; recreation acts as an enabler of meaningful experiences such as re-creation of the self, it stimulates arousal and is an expression of freedom of choice (Bello & Etzel, 1985; Crompton, 1979; Shultis, 2003). Campers choose to go camping, to hike, to light a fire, to ‘do nothing’, to play and have fun. During this time they exert control over their lives and its outcomes. To experience happiness through play, by being freed of everyday obligations, by overcoming challenges with their families; recreation is much more to campers than just mere activities or entertainment.

“Surely all God's people, however serious or savage, great or small, like to play. Whales and elephants, dancing, humming gnats, and invisibly small mischievous microbes - all are warm with divine radium and must have lots of fun in them” (John Muir, as cited in Sierra Club, 2012)

4.5.3 Reconnection

“The great thing about this is, being a family with young kids, I love that we’ve actually lived. We’ve sat here and talked as a group, we’ve had a laugh, played board games; there they are right now playing Monopoly. That to me is living” (Carl, Karijini)

Camping allowed people to reconnect with nature, family and friends. It facilitated this reconnection through simplifying life; there was no power, no televisions, no phones, no employment. Campers had no choice but to communicate with each other and with nature. But this *was* their choice; they chose to camp in the cold at Warren, they chose to camp at Dale’s campground where there is no power or water. Campers may not have chosen their destination primarily for its recreational opportunities or for its aesthetics, but because they felt a void in their lives that they needed to somehow fill. They chose to make life more ‘difficult’ for themselves because it is here, stripped of distractions and pretence, where life is actually much more simple. Because of this, people could connect with each other and with nature on a level they could not do at home.

Social relationships were strained at home for many campers. They spoke of feeling disconnected from their children, their partners, their friends and from others. A sense of social alienation was present, of which Marx described as an impact of the wider structural arrangement of modern capitalist society (Marx, 1972; Ritzer, 2008). There seemed not enough time or opportunity at home to really talk and connect and when it did happen, it was about work, school or mundane subjects. Camping facilitated the reconnection of these relationships through means such as overcoming challenges together, experiencing awe together and not having other obligations such as work and school. This was also found by Garst *et al.* (2009) in their study on camping experiences and meanings and they posited the need to socially connect as being more important now than in past studies on camping. When Carl spoke of camping, he spoke of it as *‘living’*. He meant that it was while camping

that his family can be who they really are, that they are not defined by their jobs or schools and unfettered by distractions, they could connect with each other on a level they struggled to do at home. It was important for Carl that his children learnt to socialise with others on a personal level too, as he felt that this skill is being lost in our society. When camping, people found meaning in the reconnection of social bonds unhindered by modern society.

At home in modern society, many campers did not connect with nature often. Many came from cities; they spoke of their stresses at work, their dependence on technology, their ordered lives. They felt disconnected from the natural world as they had been living in a world entirely manufactured by the hand and thoughts of humans. The simple acts of viewing the gorges or gazing upon the Warren River were meaningful because they represent a part of life that is not ordered by humans, not cultural; they are not only resources in which to manage and consume but they are also the sources that define life (Rolston III, 1988, 2003). The processes underlying nature have created the world as it is today and supports all life on Earth, including campers' own lives. At home, campers were disconnected from this source. When camping, they were reconnected with nature, the source. Perhaps people are genetically connected to the natural environment and have an actual physical need or instinct to reconnect with it, of Biophilia (Kahn, 1997; Wilson, 1984). It was not always easy for campers to express this meaning, which Wilson (1992, p. 350) also found, saying that people *"Travel long distances to stroll along the seashore, for reasons they can't put into words"*. When Sue spoke of the wonder she felt when looking at the way the sunlight penetrated the Karri trees, she questioned why anyone would ever need to take drugs to see and feel beauty or to disconnect themselves from life. She saw and felt nature's beauty and power without any help at all, and at that moment she reconnected with the source.

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life." (John Muir, as cited in Sierra Club, 2012)

4.5.4 Reaffirmation

“For me it’s more about getting back to nature and back to the ancient roots of who you are, how you’re supposed to live, not the desk job that I work” (Scott, Warren)

For many people, camping represented a part of themselves or a part of who they wanted to be and by going camping this image was reaffirmed or affirmed. It may have been that they have always camped, that they have memories of camping with loved ones or that they feel a personal connection to the natural environment. I saw reaffirmation as being similar in many ways to reconnection and re-creation, but it differed in that reaffirmation did not begin with a sense of disillusion, it began with a clear knowing of one’s self or desired self image. For Scott, his camping trip reaffirmed that he is a person and not defined only by his employment status. He decided that he has an identity external to work and the city he lives in and camping helped to affirm this. Beck (1992) saw this concept of identity construction and maintenance as an result of living in a ‘reflexive modernity’, where people constantly reflect on who they are and who they’d like to be. People are choosing and actively producing their own biographies rather than having them placed upon them. Camping was meaningful in this way as it served to remind people who they were or who they wanted to be; it was an experience that added to campers’ own biographies.

“Wander a whole summer if you can. Thousands of God’s blessings will search you [sic] and soak you as if you were a sponge, and the big days will go by uncounted. If you are business-tangled and so burdened by duty that only weeks can be got out of the heavy laden year, give a month at least. The time will not be taken from the sum of life. Instead of shortening, it will indefinitely lengthen it and make you truly immortal” (John Muir, as cited in Sierra Club, 2012)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has further unpacked the camping experience, showing that camping is much more than a cheap holiday option in a natural environment. As shown in the grounded theory (page 23) and in figure 8 (page 24), which were formed by my perception of the empirical material gathered, people camp in national parks for a variety of reasons and have many different meaningful experiences that go beyond what is regularly assumed. Camping, as a tourist and human experience, is by nature interconnected and complex and can be

studied on a deeper level than as an input, output and outcome (O'Neill, *et al.*, 2010; Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). As shown in the literature on tourist experience, the experiences of campers to Warren and Karijini are also multifaceted and complex and influenced by many factors, many of which are connected with processes associated with modernity (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Garst, *et al.*, 2009; Vespestad & Lindberg, 2011). Many of the experiences discussed here were seen at both parks in various forms and intensities, suggesting that although experience and meaning is complex and often personal, there are many shared commonalities.

The setting of each of the parks is very different however; one is characterised by a thick, moist, green forest and cool weather and the other has vast open vistas of red rocks and blue skies, strikingly sunny days and very dry weather (and very wet at other times). These settings facilitated campers' meaningful experiences, for example those at Warren seemed more passive and those at Karijini more active, but their motivations and higher order meanings were very similar.

CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter I briefly describe ways in which my research findings can be applied to park management, in answer to my last research objective. While campers are not a homogenous group, and each park in this study had differing natural and physical environments, their visitors do share many similarities in their experiences. These recommendations are therefore potentially relevant to camping in national parks in Western Australia in general. Specific recommendations on each park will be provided to DEC in a separate report.

- **The camping experience is not a singular concept**

The camping experience is complex; involving temporal phases, personal characteristics, interactions with the physical setting including activities, motivations, values, benefits and meanings on many levels including the personal and the social. Camping is undertaken by a wide variety of the public, not only those looking for a solely natural experience or who cannot afford otherwise. As such, understanding what constitutes the camping experience, including camper satisfaction with the services and setting, needs to encompass these other facets of experience as they are important contributors to the overall experience.

- **The setting is the conduit for meaningful experiences to occur**

The natural environment setting is important to campers' experiences, but it is only one facet. Many campers did not particularly mind where they camped, as long as other meaningful experiences such as family functioning and rest and relaxation could occur. Because of this, it is recommended that in addition to managing the setting for basic human requirements (ablutions, cooking) that managers consider the impacts the setting is having on existing experiences and look to increasing opportunities for meaningful experiences to occur. For example; providing more interpretative materials aimed at both adults and children (increasing learning and family functioning opportunities whilst decreasing confusion over management strategies) and having campsites surrounded by vegetation so as to minimise the

visual impact of other campers (e.g. increasing opportunities for relaxation and family functioning and feelings of having escaped from everyday life). Communal facilities and camping loops are important aspects of the setting and these add to the opportunity for experiences.

- **Wanting to escape from everyday life is an important factor for many people**

Most campers interviewed expressed some desire to escape from facets of everyday life, whether it was something overt like work or stress or more covert like the feeling disconnected from others due to more macro social forces. The natural environment represents a place where people can leave behind distractions and modern 'noise'. This includes electronic devices and technology such as computers, phones and power. Due to these important meanings that people ascribe to camping, it is recommended that campsites stay free from direct access to the internet, mobile phone coverage and power as much as possible. Some campers (mainly older, retired campers) expressed a desire for increased electronic communication, however I strongly believe this would negatively impact on the overall experience of campers. The value of 'making do without' is an important aspect of the camping experience.

- **Promote higher order meanings to campers**

As previously mentioned, the natural environment setting is only one facet of the experience with many campers expressing higher order meanings such as recreation, recreation, reconnection and reaffirmation. These emotive meanings and benefits can be used to complement marketing of campsites or camping in general, elevating ordinary experiences into extraordinary ones. These can be promoted seasonally, for example marketing camping during the cooler months at Warren (when fires are permitted) for the benefits of reconnection with family and friends.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview

In a time of fast paced technological change, environmental disasters and overconsumption of limited resources, the relationship between people and the natural environment has become increasingly strained and disconnected. This is both a physical detachment such as through rising urbanisation and also an emotional detachment, which has manifested in increasing personal health problems, lack of environmental awareness and social dysfunction (Louv, 2005; Popkin, 1999; Shultis, 2003). National parks protect important conservation and biodiversity values and are also a means of reconnecting people to the natural environment both to increase awareness and respect for nature as well as for personal and societal benefit. One of the most direct ways of reconnecting with a dynamic ecosystem is becoming fully immersed through camping.

Due to this important yet strained relationship and as camping has received little scholarly attention since the 1960's (Garst, *et al.*, 2009), this study sought to understand further the desired and realised experiences of campers to national parks, in particular Warren and Karijini National Parks in Western Australia. To reiterate, the objectives of this study were

1. To describe the desired and realised elements of the camping experience
2. To analyse the meanings attributed to these experiences
3. To analyse the consequences of these experiences on management requirements of nature based campers.

Because experience in tourism is a broad concept, can be studied from differing perspectives and methodological approaches, and that my study aim was to analyse the meanings campers attributed to their experiences, I utilised the social constructivism paradigm and an associated qualitative methodology. The results gained through speaking with campers on-site illustrated diversity of the camping experience and its immense importance to these campers' lives. My findings go beyond a physical immersion in nature, as suggested by Clark, Hendee and Campbell (1971) many decades ago and reiterated in Garst *et al.*'s. (2009) study. In contrast to the early Clark *et al.* (1971) study, I found that the natural environment setting was often of lesser importance to the role of nature in

facilitating more meaningful experiences, for example social interaction and family functioning. This important finding is consistent with Dorfman's (1979) and Garst *et al.*'s (2009) results.

Camping is highly complex and meaningful and serves important functions in peoples' lives; re-creating the weary self away from modern society, expressing personal choice and joy through recreation, reconnecting with nature and others and reaffirming a sense of self. Wider social forces such as increasing urbanisation and fast paced technological change have contributed to the importance of reconnecting with nature, others and self through camping (Garst, *et al.*, 2009). Camping is far more than an inexpensive holiday close to nature; it rekindles the human relationship with the natural environment and serves as a conduit for beneficial and meaningful experiences to occur that have positive impacts on campers' lives.

6.2 Limitations of the study

This study examined camping in two national parks in Western Australia through interviewing 29 camping groups in-depth. This is by no means representative of the national parks in Western Australia or the camping population, however, steps were undertaken in respondent selection to ensure that the range in types of visitors to these two areas were included in the study. Also, the in-depth, qualitative nature of this research is intended to build theory and understanding, rather than generalise to a 'population' of campers. To minimise the potential subjectivity of my analyses I have included numerous quotes to provide 'unedited voices' for my respondents and I have made my place in the research – as participant and researcher – very clear.

6.3 Future research directions

This study has contributed to the discussion of experience in tourism as being complex and multidimensional, including camping which is sorely lacking in recent literature (Garst, *et al.*, 2009). I have shown that these dimensions can be uncovered and explored using qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews and grounded theory analysis. Further studies

of the camping experience would benefit from using this approach if depth of understanding is required. Using a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methodologies could increase both depth of understanding as well as breadth (Jennings, 2009; Mason, Augustyn, & Seakhoa-King, 2010; Ogra, 2009). Increasing the number of interviews and researching in different seasons would assist with ensuring theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2004). Further research into the higher order meanings that were uncovered in this study could be undertaken such as linking these more practically with on site tourism management and marketing and looking closer at how parks can assist with rebuilding the relationships between people, and also with the natural environment.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Respondent:

Site/Date:

Questions

1. Why did you choose to camp at this National Park? (Cost factor? Only accommodation in area? Major part of trip?)
2. Have you been here <i>before</i> ?
3. Are there any particular reasons for choosing this particular site?
4. What kinds of things have you done while you have camped here? a. How would this have been different in a caravan park? b. What else do you intend to do?
5. What are the best experiences you've had camping at this national park <i>this time</i> ? (Internal/external)
a. What makes them special?
b. (If they're repeat visitors) How about the best experiences you've had here <i>before this time</i> ?
6. What about the not so good experiences? Can you tell me about those?
7. What kinds of expectations did you have about camping here? Have your expectations been met?
8. Is there anything you miss about being at home?
9. Is there anything you would change anything about this park/campground? What could make your experience better? Management/Personal
10. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand camping experiences better? Is there anything you would like to ask me?

APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION LETTER

Nature based camping experiences in Western Australian national parks

Dear camper

The purpose of this project is to understand better the desired and realised experiences of campers in Western Australian national parks. Associate Professor Susan Moore is working with Dr Alan Macbeth and Ms Shannon Hassell (Honours student) to undertake this study. We hope to document these experiences and discover whether there exist any other experiences that are important for campers in national parks.

You are invited to participate in an interview whilst on this camping trip, at your leisure. The interview will take between 30-60 minutes and comprises questions regarding the experiences you have had and those that you may like to have. The interview will be digitally recorded. We want to find out about both your experiences of this camping trip and about potential future experiences you would like to have.

You will not be personally identified in the end study and the information obtained will be securely held at Murdoch University for a period of time before being destroyed. If you wish you may withdraw your consent to participate in this research within two weeks of participating. If you decide to withdraw during this time, any material you have given us will be destroyed. After this time you will not be personally identifiable in any way.

There may not be any direct benefits to you from participating in this study, however it is hoped that the information you provide will be used to improve management of this national park in the future. No risks are foreseen by participation in this study. My supervisor and I are happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have about this study.

If you would like to receive feedback on this study you can find information at the Department of Environment and Conservation's Nature based recreation and tourism research website <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/3521/2059/>. This project is expected to be completed by November 2012 and information will be made available close to this date.

Sincerely

Shannon Hassell (Honours student)

shannonhassell@googlemail.com/S.Moore@murdoch.edu.au

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2012/042). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Consent Form

Interview

Camping in Western Australian national parks

The following interview is about camping in national parks. The information will be available for the Department of Environment and Conservation to help manage their national parks.

Participant

I have read the participant information sheet, which explains the nature of the research and the possible risks. The information has been explained to me and all my questions have been satisfactorily answered. I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep.

I am happy for the interview to be audio recorded. I understand that I do not have to answer particular questions if I do not want to and that I can withdraw at any time without consequences to myself.

I agree that data gathered from this study may be published, provided my name or any identifying data are not used. I have also been informed that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study.

I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.

Signature of Participant

Date

Investigator

I have fully explained to _____ the nature and purpose of the research, the procedures to be employed, and the possible risks involved.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Print Name

Position