

# Welcome to Black Rock City: Ephemeral Homes, Built Environments, and Participatory Negotiations

By Kerry D. Rohrmeier and Francine Melia

## Abstract

By applying Bourdieu's ideas of *habitus* and *doxa*, this paper explores how Burning Man participants negotiate ideological and pragmatic limitations in transforming a vast desert landscape into an urban physical and social space. The ephemeral city serves as a model for radical self-expression with an internal society that creates an engaging participatory experience among differing and sometimes conflicting social institutions. Black Rock City LLC, committed to democratically and collaboratively engaging with festival participants in the production of space, demonstrates a realistic possibility for successful negotiation of pragmatics and ideologies while still allowing ample room to foster freedom and community. In examining these dynamic negotiations and their resultant influences on the physical landscape through varied lenses, this article suggests how Black Rock City might be a portable adaptation for other spaces of insurgency.

## Introduction

*"Black Rock cliché has it that you can't say anything very penetrating about Burning Man because its diversity and contradictions undermine any generalization you might be tempted to make." (Davis, in Gilmore and Van Proyen 2005)*

*"Trying to explain what Burning Man is to someone who has never been to the event is a bit like trying to explain what a particular color looks like to someone who is blind." (Burning Man 2012)*

No single description of the annual Burning Man festival can encompass all of its cultural complexities. This examination is focused on the event site, a week-long encampment in the Nevada desert known as Black Rock City (BRC). It uses Pierre Bourdieu's classic work, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, to provide a vocabulary and model for examining how people construct an ideological and practical radicalized urban space at BRC, and offers examples through varying lenses of social organization. *Habitus*, often unconscious, is gained through enculturated and learned dispositions and behaviors, while *doxa* are the deep, unconscious beliefs and values held as

universals. This paper pays particular attention to identifying the *habitus* of BRC participants, and how it functions, together with a shared *doxa*, to create a separate space from the participants' normal world. The question then becomes, "how are external *habitus* and *doxa* incorporated and/or transformed by participants to create Black Rock City's physical and social space?"

## Burning Man Festival

Burning Man evolved from a small, spontaneous gathering on Baker Beach, San Francisco into a highly organized, planned, and federally permitted annual 50,000+ person festival. It began in 1986, on the summer solstice, when founder Larry Harvey invited friends to join him in burning an eight-foot-tall wooden effigy, and though no official explanation has been given, the meaning was symbolic enough to become the impetus for an annual event. As participation grew, so did the effigy, to the point of becoming a public safety hazard. Harvey teamed up with members of San Francisco's Cacophony Society, and relocated Burning Man out to the Black Rock Desert in 1991.

After some ideological struggles between founding members, Harvey's vision for a more centralized, socially engineered event prevailed, strengthened by inter-agency relationships and public services (Doherty 2004). Key organizers formed Black Rock City LLC to manage the festival and its regional events year-round. All administrative, policy, financial, and legal decision-making is done by unanimous approval of the Black Rock City LLC Board with direction from Harvey as acting Executive Director. In addition to organizing countless participant volunteers, the LLC remains actively engaged in the planning efforts required for upholding the nation's largest commercial Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Special Recreation Permit, as well as annual approvals from more than 20 departmental jurisdictions including agencies from the State of Nevada, Washoe and Pershing Counties, and the Washoe Paiute Tribe.

Burning Man participants build campsites during the week-long festival, the more elaborate of which rely upon year-round planning and fundraising. Combined with Black Rock City LLC's use of zoning, the construction of large architectural monuments, public services, and infrastructure, the event site has earned its nickname, Black Rock City (BRC).

Annual themes are selected to tie artistic elements to the urban landscape. Theme camps and large-format art exhibitions are pre-permitted through a placement application process and, with the exception of 2009's economic recession, population growth has been near exponential. In 2011, tickets reached permitted capacity and were subsequently sold via lottery. In its

current form, BRC accommodates approximately 50,000 people across a two-mile diameter city situated within a gated seven-square-mile open space area. Future growth is anticipated to occur in 2013, but will be subject to regulatory limitations and impact mitigation set forth by a forthcoming Special Recreation Permit (BLM 2012).

## Ideological City

As it is currently designed, BRC has neither unique nor novel urban form. Figure 1 shows the first site schematic, Harvey's early vision for the Burning Man festival at Black Rock Desert in 1992. This original design demarcated locations for camping, transportation, and the centrally located Man monument. Its circular structure harkens to prehistoric tribal cultural settlements, though, as currently planned, BRC has evolved as a contemporary replica of Ebenezer Howard's garden city (Howard 1902, Tuan 1977). As Mumford (1967) astutely noted, Howard's concern for social processes greatly exceeded concern for the physical form, and focused more on incorporating reformist principles and utopian ideologies. Burning Man offers a less pastoral, more radicalized vision for social spatial engineering based on "an inclusive, decommodified creative society actively engaged in civic life, communities, and the world at large...to produce positive change," described as "a great machine, efficiently providing the many hundreds of functions needed to help sustain us in a wilderness almost devoid of life" (Burning Man 2012).

Over time and as a community, Burning Man participants developed an ethos, which Black Rock City LLC codified into a list of Ten Principles. The Ten Principles are not intended as laws, but as a guideline for metropolitan cultural norms. They call for all practices to be guided by: Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-Reliance, Radical Self-Expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, "Leave No Trace," Participation, and Immediacy (Burning Man 2012). Taken together, the Principles now simultaneously describe and frame behavior and meaning on and off the desert. These descriptive, not prescriptive, Principles also serve as a common ethos for organizing regional Burning Man events that take place around the world and throughout the year.

Though the Ten Principles are considered mandatory reading for new participants, their operationalization takes different forms at different scales, and is not a matter of direct indoctrination. Each Principle has a specific meaning, yet participants and camps interpret and reshape them to fit their own ideological frameworks. Thus, the Principles serve to unify a diverse community across the spatio-temporal plane.

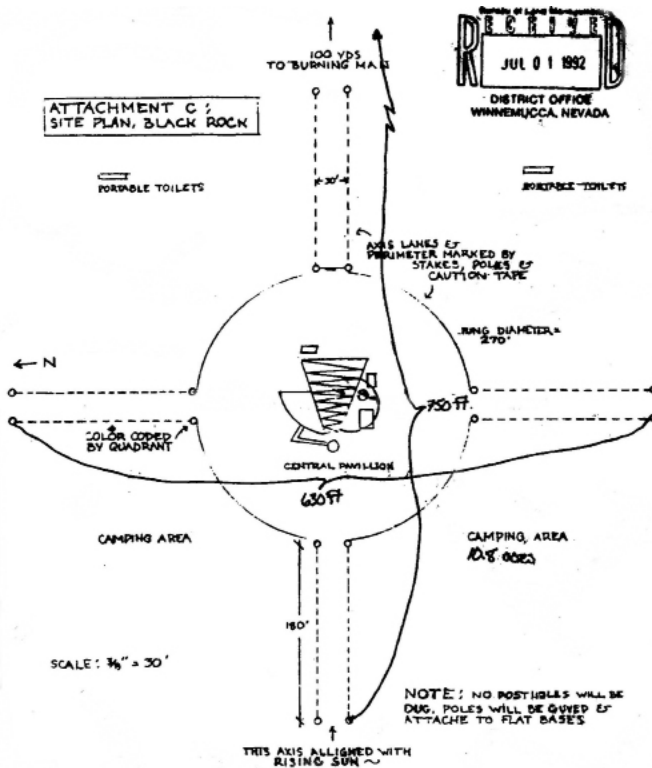


Figure 1: Larry Harvey's early site plans for Black Rock City, dated July 1, 1992. Reprinted with permission. (Burning Man 2012)

The Principles of Decommodification and Gifting allow Black Rock City LLC to be the only paid concessioner at BRC. However, only ice, coffee, and tea are made available for purchase, and all proceeds are donated to the local Gerlach Elementary School. Participants are expected to arrive prepared to meet all their own needs, and to bring gifts to share, which can include extra food, water, and shelter for the less experienced—a “gifting economy” intended to foster communication and goodwill among participants (Burning Man 2012).

Yet this noncommercial sphere is actually made possible by a semi-invisible, rarely acknowledged, hyper-capitalization that is particularly evident in camps (Kozinets 2002). The networks of necessary supplies, structures, transportation, creature comforts, and large-scale building materials do not adhere to the Gifting Principle, and many of the acquisition processes necessary to bring these supplies to the festival intersect with globalized commodity markets. Estimates range, but the Burning Man festival has an approximately \$75 million economy, with the average participant spending \$1,000 on a ticket and external pre- and post-

event mass consumption. This is a particular financial boom to Nevada towns that serve as event gateways and have realized significant sales and tourism tax revenues. This mass consumption stands in contrast to the self-boundedness principle of Radical Self-Reliance. Participants increasingly redistribute supplies within the community using community-supported online marketplaces to facilitate exchanges among participants and limit corporate monetization.

## Pragmatic City

The Black Rock Desert’s physical geography presents challenges such as extreme temperature variations, strong winds, lack of water and vegetation, corrosive alkali soils which quickly turn to mud when wet, dust storms, and a vast expanse of unrelenting desert (Goin and Starrs 2005). During

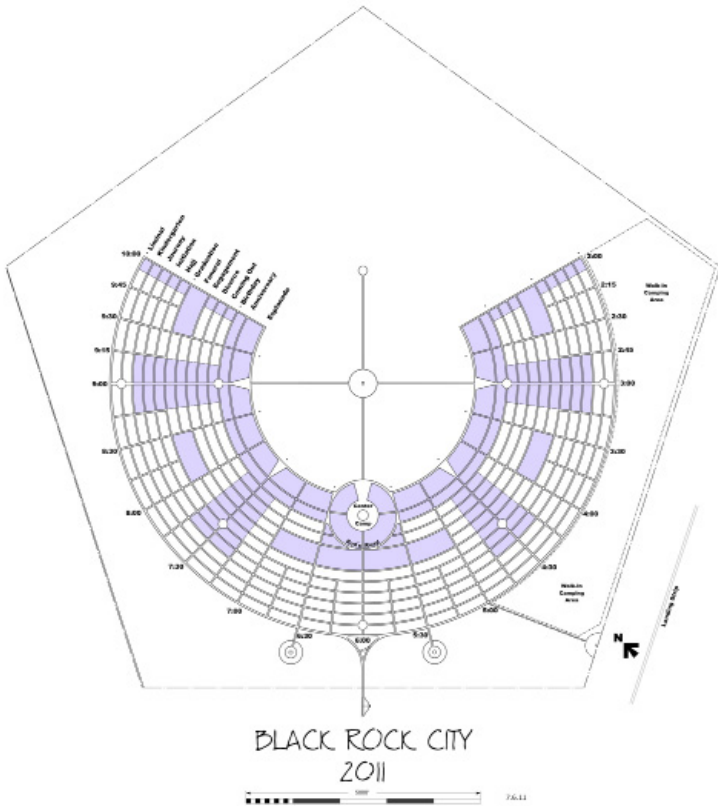


Figure 2: Site plan for Black Rock City in 2011, showing the evolution of the city design and the influence of Rod Garrett, BRC’s chief designer from 1997 until his death in 2011. The road around Center Camp, previously called “Ring Road,” was renamed “Rod’s Road” in 2011 in Garrett’s honor. Reprinted with permission. (Burning Man 2012)

its first years, the resulting urban form was more organic because limited planning existed. Survival was considered paramount, and a grid-like clustering of camps near the center stemmed from basic needs, making the free-form representation of early BRC more or less that of any tent city: a daily changing landscape of strewn-about plastic tarps, folding chairs, parked cars, and colorful nylon. The most recent urban form, illustrated in Figure 2, mitigates discomfort from exposure and vulnerability by providing familiar locational references which create a sense of shared communal struggle (Keim 2001, Sennett 1970).

Harmonious form and function at BRC are represented through the design of its public realm, most importantly the central public plaza, which includes the Man and Temple monuments and Center Camp. At BRC's centermost point stands the multi-story towering Man effigy, "an imposing locus of physical and perceptual centrality," from which the city radiates outward (Gilmore and Van Proyen 2005). Iconic, the wood and neon Man sculpture is fundamental to the festival; as a figure it remains symbolic of the larger community and as a structure it serves as a powerful geographic apex and highest point in the flat landscape. Its plinth not only elevates its cultural importance but provides an interactive public exhibit space (Boehm 2010, Lippard 1998). Center Camp features an enclosed, shaded gathering place for social interactions, educational exhibits, and an opportunity to purchase coffee. In contrast to these active spaces, the passive, yet creative, Temple Monument is a space for collective reverence and honor (Boehm 2010).

Creating a sense of radical urbanism through physicality is profoundly important to Burning Man's functional success. BRC exists fundamentally in the public realm, and private spaces must be self-constructed by participants. These private camps occur along streets that radiate out from the central plaza in a curvilinear grid, using a geographic reference system of letters and numbers. Streets are laid out to accommodate bustling bicycle traffic and pedestrians. Vehicular traffic is restricted to motorized art cars that serve as public transportation and/or official event service vehicles. A considerable area of "valuable" camp space is designated to accommodation of parked vehicles, expanding the scale of BRC (Shoup 2011). Streets offer ample pedestrian and bicycle mobility space, places for people to watch, and gathering or resting places. Street life is supported by the physical landscape through varied scales, setbacks, mixed services, and differing campsite sizes and densities.

During the week-long event itself, residential streets become more densely lined by a vibrant, energetic mix of yurts, tents, geodesic domes, RVs, and unique structures pieced together by participants creating an autonomous vernacular of inexplicable imagination. All BRC housing forms are self-provided by participants, and reflect incredible variety and ingenuity.

Camps vary tremendously in scale, size, and residential typology preference, with many unique blends of form and function. For example, First Camp functions as the city's political power center. As the residence of Burning Man founders and Black Rock City Council members, First Camp is prominently placed adjacent to Center Camp. It is clearly identifiable by a sculpture, "Bone Tree," based on the 1991 encampment, where the early group is described as having "circled the wagons" (Boehm 2010). An example of form experimentation is Vertical Camp, featuring a structure designed from reusable scaffolding to create intricate towering apartments with a large communal kitchen and living area; as an alternative housing option it serves dozens of residents within a small building footprint. Vertical Camp challenges other participants to consider a compact city in place of the current dominant low-density land use pattern. In addition, by siting along an official art car transit route, Vertical Camp also encourages multi-modal development considerations (Metropol 2010).

Camp homes prove to be more telling examples of external world behavioral ties. At BRC, "home" is a place that functions as a place for both social gathering and restful introspection, where private and civic life intersect. Most camps seek to replicate neo-traditional street-oriented neighborhoods in which lighted entrance paths, front porches, positive signage, and decorative awnings invite social interaction with passersby. Communal spaces may include chairs, sofas, and bars oriented toward the street and open for use by anyone at anytime. Other camps clearly exhibit a preference for exclusive, private space by parking vehicles in a monumental wall facing the streetside, shielding their connection to the larger public realm. Communal spaces here are interior courtyards with chaise longues, fire pits, and elaborate outdoor kitchens reserved for private use by inhabitants.

## **Institutional City**

With rapid growth, it quickly became evident that a replicable, adaptable plan for managing thousands of participants would be necessary at the Burning Man festival. Center Camp now serves as the "downtown," populated by structures built by Black Rock City LLC to handle BRC governance and institutional functions analogous to municipal services, such as health and informational services. Citywide public service divisions are provided through public-participant partnerships such as Black Rock Rangers (protective services), Department of Mutant Vehicles, and the Department of Public Works, all of which are reliant on participant-manned volunteer efforts, while other institutions are run entirely by volunteers, for instance the post office and media outlets (BMIR AM radio and *Black Rock Gazette* newspaper). Philanthropic arms supported by Black Rock

City LLC are also represented at Center Camp, such as Black Rock Arts Foundation, Black Rock Solar, and Burners without Borders. Burning Man as an institution has clearly evolved beyond a temporary desert festival into a nested, year-round network of governance and participation. Black Rock City LLC works not only to ensure that the main event remains an operational, legal enterprise, but also assists with regional network gatherings to promote a strong sense of community outside BRC gates. Regional networks in turn reinforce a sense of community while at BRC. In 2011, regional groups banded together for the first time to form the Circle of Regional Effigies (CORE) Project. CORE was a 22-piece installation, exhibiting representative handcrafted regional art that encircled the larger Man sculpture and celebrates “efforts to support the Burning Man ethos as a global cultural movement” (Circle of Regional Effigies 2011).

From a planning perspective, the best example of institutionalization at BRC is Placement, the method by which Black Rock City LLC employs a residential zoning schema and a social engineering tool. Theme camps are aggregated among interior blocks and along the central corridor (Figure 2 shaded areas) to create a downtown district, to activate boulevards, and to encourage social interaction (Metropol 2010). Various-sized theme camps are placed based on three criteria: ability to attract participants, capacity for interaction, and a demonstrated willingness to meet deadlines (Metropol 2010). Theme camps featuring large sound systems are sited along the outermost corridors, facing open space for noise mitigation. This may have a historical connection to the first “sound camps” being located separately from the camping area before the firming up of the city plan. Kidsville, a theme camp created for participants with children, maintains boundaries within which no mature content is permitted, and provides shared childcare and play spaces.

Despite this formal process, in anarchistic tradition, zoning remains entirely optional. Theme camps that are not willing to apply and all other participants who are not part of a theme camp may locate anywhere available, or choose among designated areas such as those reserved for walk-in camping, families, or quieter nights. Campsites are selected and configured during a “land grab” in the first 48 hours after BRC gates are opened, followed by midweek and weekend infill. Every block offers something unexpected for congregation and local belonging, but balances the greater public realm against private needs. As Harvey suggests, the ultimate aim is for BRC to provide “integrity of place, against spontaneous initiatives that no one should control. It’s part of making people feel at home” (Burning Man 2012).

Designers often debate whether regulatory planning limits creativity and therefore directly results in a bland built environment. If true, this suggests that a dichotomous relationship exists between BRC as a planned city with

its predefined rings and an anarchistic, artistic ideological city. Rather, the familiar garden city form provides an efficient, human-scaled design that serves as a dialectical platform that allows for the creation of expressive surreal landscapes to be experienced from imagination, inception, participation, and destruction, all over a brief, week-long ‘ephemeropolis’ history (Black 1998).

## Social City

In the most simplistic terms, BRC society is fundamentally the question of, “wouldn’t it be cool if we built this and offered it up to the community?” (Burning Man 2012). BRC’s annual census data reveals that the majority of participants are unmarried twenty-something urban Caucasian males with college educations, full employment, and liberal political views (Burning Man 2012). They are new members of Richard Florida’s creative class, an identity, at least in part, that assumes effects foisted on the young by the geographic mobility of contemporary American mass suburbanization—growing up in a landscape of strip-style commercial and monotonous housing. Such places lack the aesthetic values inherent to fostering a sense of place and reduce neighborhood interactions, thus providing little sense of civic belonging (Ewing 1997, Sorkin 1992). In this private realm, consumption as leisure is considered the norm, yet it fails to produce long-term satisfaction and displaces or suppresses other human desires (Davidson 2011, Kiem 2004, Rifkin 2000, Sorkin 1992).

The physical stresses of Burning Man participation present epochal challenges to participants through forced pilgrimage, self-reliance, and innovation as a means to deal with energetic depletion from the harsh sun, blowing alkali dust, and extreme daytime temperatures (Goin and Starrs 2005). These tests foster cooperative survivalist efforts and participation in inhabiting an unfamiliar world (Goin and Starrs 2005). The necessity for participants to relocate to a new community echoes Westward Expansion and pioneer mentalities—seeking out a *tabula rasa*, where few care what happens out in the middle of nowhere. Migrating to BRC and building a home is ultimately a nostalgic interpretation of American West frontiersmanship, albeit an exclusive reconstruction—and radically expensive derivation—of doxic American camping.

As an intentional settlement founded on the idea that “standards of normal life can be inverted or ignored in the pursuit of fresh experiences and fresh identities,” BRC offers participants a fresh slate, so long as the central tenet of Participation is upheld (Doherty 2004, Jones 2011). Many participants adopt pseudonyms and avoid discussing their external lives (Jones 2011). An informal form of social control internal to the event exists by policing or negotiating acceptable participation. Displays of “authenticity” are

fostered through peer pressure and usually require “dressing in a wild costume, going naked, wearing body paint, riding a strange vehicle, or working on or displaying art” (Kozinets 2002). Further judgment as to the degree of participation serves as a bonding activity in which participants identify themselves in contrast to “tourists,” “weekenders,” “spectators,” “yahoos,” “lookie-loos,” and “frat boys” (Kozinets 2002).

## Heterodoxic Space

With population growth comes increased participation at Burning Man, perhaps as a response to societal insufficiencies, a quest for biophilic escape, postmodern exploration, or spiritual enlightenment. Increasingly, online interactions and virtual social networks are shaping identity formation and transparent experimentation among younger generations. In stark contrast, the heterodoxic, decommodified desert landscape of BRC, largely isolated from telecommunication services, requires immediate, physical presence for communication and interaction.

The isolated desert site allows for experimentation; for instance, a decommodified alternative economy prevails because few other places offer a landscape “unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising” (Burning Man 2012). Population growth may be an accidental result of exploitative media coverage portraying the Burning Man festival as a product of consumerism, rather than a rejection of it. As Hockett (2005) put it, the media portray “a countercultural spectacle, an entertaining diversion to be treated with clichéd analogies and superficial stereotypes. In contrast, participant-driven characterization of Burning Man tends to be much more personally, culturally, and socially significant.”

Burning Man offers a platform for deeper questioning and interpretation, though the event lacks dogma. Participation can lead one to nothing or lay foundations for new and expanded meanings outside traditional faith. Many report that participation in the cathartic ritual burns are deeply spiritual. Misconceptions of idolatry and auto-idolatry may stem from Harvey, whose views reference cult-like sensory dislocation, communality, and epiphany (Mangrum in Doherty 2004). BRC functions as a temporary autonomous zone, where each participant freely interprets and practices his or her own meaning, and may be better understood as “a better place for me to myself, and you to be yourself, together” (Kozinets 2002).

## Negotiating Limits

BRC is not a place of lawlessness despite the principle of Radical Self-Expression. Black Rock City LLC has adopted adaptive management strategies for participants to work within external limits and to create new operational internal limits. For instance, Black Rock Rangers protect public well-being by patrolling city boundaries and the gate, peacekeeping, establishing fire safety boundaries, interfacing with agency protection services, fostering good relations with local law enforcement agencies, and managing traffic exodus. But Nevada law enforcement agencies also have uniform and plainclothes officers present onsite to monitor adherence to state laws. For example, bars gifting alcoholic beverages are required to check a participant's age. Similarly, all restaurants gifting food are monitored for compliance with public health standards. To mitigate potential authoritarian conflict and minimize the law enforcement presence required for 50,000+ people, Black Rock City LLC relies heavily on Black Rock Rangers not to enact laws or engage with infractions, but instead to address the norms and values of the community via conflict mediation.

Multiple official government bodies now also have an influence over BRC in shaping internal limitations and accepting external limitations: none more so than the US Bureau of Land Management, which sets environmental standards that profoundly affect daily life and hold consequences for the long-term viability of the Burning Man event. "Leave No Trace" is more than a guiding Principle; it is a practice enforced by volunteers who map the trash left behind after the event to publicly illustrate each campsite's compliance.

Earlier criticism by environmental activists has been paramount in continued "greening" of the Burning Man festival. Black Rock City LLC requires energy and fuel from ground breaking until cleanup. No definitive calculation exists on total fuel and energy required for the event, though BRC has drawn criticism for its carbon footprint. In 2006 it was estimated that the event generated approximately 27,000 tons of carbon emissions, primarily associated with transportation to and from the remote site, plus electric generators and art car exhausts (Cooling Man 2007). A Sierra Club complaint regarding landfill-bound plastic water bottles and explosive displays used in art projects led to the formation of the CoolingMan Organization in 2007. Since then, Black Rock City LLC has worked to construct permanent solar arrays for carbon offsets, implement biodiesel usage, and promote generator-free camping (Kozinets 2002, Laing and Frost 2012, Sherry and Kozinets 2007).

Today BRC offers more imagined freedom than its anarchistic roots would call for, with an invisible security infrastructure akin to that pioneered by the Disney Corporation in managing theme park facades, where most

participants never interact with it unless required to (Fogleson 2001). Legal aid, medical, counseling, fire, and emergency services are ever-present and respond immediately only when needed. Other diverse community services are strongly encouraged through gifting, communality, and participation including cafés, bars, and restaurants, Black Rock Community College, and recreation facilities (roller-skating rink, yacht club, and tennis courts). This *res publica* passion spurred numerous public services as independent volunteer initiatives that were later absorbed by Black Rock City LLC, thus creating Harvey's "living civic organism" (Burning Man 2012). For instance, costumed lamplighters illuminate streetlight lanterns each evening, Recycle Camp collects recyclables daily by modified bicycles, and Census Camp conducts an annual BRC census.

## Balancing *Habitus* and *Doxa*

Burning Man's changing themes help minimize limitations by stimulating creativity and ensuring it will never be the same twice. Consequently, BRC offers participants wild, new perspectives and connections that extend well beyond desert borders. Forming from and ending in nothingness, BRC remains throughout the year only in nostalgic imprints on the mind, imagery, and writings which recount stories of having been there. This lingering "burning feeling" stems from balancing *habitus* and *doxa* and "working it out" at Burning Man (Bourdieu 1977). Participants bring with them perceptions of social institutions and models of social interactions, while at the same time they are engaged in creating new spaces and negotiating bottom-up and top-down social schemas. BRC residents are neither divorced nor set apart from the external world, but instead intertwined with it. Underpinning the cultural workings of BRC is a complex interpenetration of pragmatism and ideology, and a dynamic interplay between creativity and limitation—often remaining *doxic* to participants until made explicit (Bourdieu 1977).

The counterculture recreated and refracted within BRC is a combination of orthodox world and heterodox participant constructions, which are not mutually exclusive. It is this inherently contradictory framework that successfully allows for rebellion through deconstruction, sculpting, and recontextualizing the ordinary, or "default," world. Orthodoxies are imported with modifications or are created anew at Burning Man, forming the basis for "radical participation." Heterodoxies produced either parallel to, or in place of, wholesale cultural reproduction may intentionally echo orthodoxy, but with a different flavor. Thus, participants at Burning Man are not divorced or wholly set apart from *doxa*, but complexly intertwined with it as reframed by the ideology of the Ten Principles. For this to occur, it is essential to have a tenable base in cultural or physical orthodoxy, if only

for the purposes of oppositional definition. Even in cases of spontaneous creation, there is a reworking of history and space for creativity and reinterpretation. BRC combines the physical platform with countercultural social bases in a population educated to think critically, thereby allowing for visibility of and commentary on *doxa* and *habitus*. Simply put, participants learn how to do things differently while experimenting with the physical and social landscape, which results in the production of heterodoxic space.

## Conclusion

Not completely free from cultural entanglements with outside society, BRC is an example of a democratically and collaboratively produced urban landscape transformed by negotiations between ideological and pragmatic limitations. These tensions between participation orthodoxy and an ethos of creativity result in annual production of a radical new heterodoxic space (Bourdieu 1977).

What is it that triggers this move? First, it is essential to have a tenable base in cultural or physical orthodoxy, if only for the purposes of providing an oppositional definition. Even in cases of spontaneous creation, a reworking or working out of something that came before is required, as was exemplified in 1960s countercultures or Bohemian culture. With similar ideological and pragmatic tenets and interactions occurring at Burning Man, the move toward heterodoxy as an attempt to work out contradictions caused by *doxa* is observable. Second, there needs to be a physical space for creativity and reinterpretation, and Black Rock Desert's open dry lake bed is a *tabula rasa* that offers counterculture its canvas. Lastly, participants with the desire and ability to think critically allow *doxa* and *habitus* to become visible, so that they are able to "figure out" alternative approaches and produce heterodoxy. Often participants remain unaware of their reworkings of default orthodoxy, which suggests unconscious thought is also at play.

Combined, these factors seem readily exportable, and may be located squarely in other spaces of heterodoxy and insurgency. Where people possess critical thinking abilities and a desire to change the status quo, heterodoxy can bloom. As observed in Occupy movements throughout the United States, spatial articulation of heterodoxy and external limits may differ. Where some incarnations work within legal permitting processes, others choose to ignore or resist governmental regulation akin to how BRC camps locate themselves outside of, but still tethered to, ideological and pragmatic *habitus*.

Countercultural lessons from BRC are portable to other, varied ephemeral spaces regardless of purpose. Connections to temporary autonomous

zones and other sites of insurgent development warrant future examination. Applying Bourdieuan social theory to constantly changing pragmatic and ideological workings of physical and cultural spaces can provide deeper insights to radicalized urban models. Heterodoxy at the Burning Man festival extends beyond its own organizational and physical manifestations and is embodied in annually-changing themes and ever-evolving infrastructural processes. Black Rock City LLC is continually committed to democratically and collaboratively engaging with participants in the production of space, and demonstrates possibilities for realistic negotiations between ideology and pragmatics while still leaving ample room for freedom and community.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Andrea Broaddus, Dr. M. Eleanor Nevins, and Peter Goin, MFA, for invaluable contributions to this publication.

*Kerry Rohrmeier, AICP, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of Nevada, Reno and professional land use planner. Fellow Burning Man campmate, Francine Melia, is a doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Reno.*

krohrmeier@gmail.com and francine.melia@gmail.com

## References

- Appleyard, Don. 1981. *Livable Streets*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boehm, Deborah A. 2010. "Place Matters: Community and Spatiality at Burning Man," paper presented at Southwest Anthropological Association Conference, University of Nevada, Reno.
- Black, D. S. 1998. "Burning Man as Ephemeropolis and the Refusal of Meaning," paper presented at North American Interdisciplinary Conference on Environment and Community, University of Nevada, Reno, 2010.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1997. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and T. Eagleton. 1991. "Doxa and Common Life." *New Left Review* 191:111-121.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and R. Johnson. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Burning Man. 2012. <http://www.burningman.com>.
- Cooling Man. 2007. <http://www.coolingman.com>.
- Chen, Katherine K. 2009. *Enabling Creative Chaos: The Organization Behind the Burning Man Event*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Circle of Regional Effigies. 2011. [http://www.burningman.com/installations/11\\_art\\_core.html](http://www.burningman.com/installations/11_art_core.html).
- Doherty, Brian. 2004. *This is Burning Man: The Rise of the New American Underground*. Dallas: BenBella Books.
- Ewing, Reid. 1997. "Is Los Angeles-Style Sprawl Desirable?" *Journal of the American Planning Association* 63 (1):107-126.
- Florida, Richard. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Foglesong, Richard E. 2001. *Married to the Mouse*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Gilmore, Lee and M. Van Proyen. 2005. *Afterburn: Reflections on Burning Man*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Goin, Peter and P. Starrs. 2005. *Black Rock*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.
- Hall, Peter. 2002. *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Howard, Ebenezer. (1902) 1965. *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. Reprinted, edited with a Preface by F. J. Osborn and an Introductory Essay by Lewis Mumford. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jacobs, Allan. 1995. *Great Streets*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jones, Steven. 2011. *The Tribes of Burning Man: How an Experimental City in the Desert is Shaping the New American Counterculture*. San Francisco: Consortium of Creative Consciousness Publishing.
- Keim, Kevin. 2004. *You Have to Pay for the Public Life: Selected Essays of Charles W. Morre*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kozinets, Robert V. 2002. "Can Consumers Escape the Market? Emancipatory Illuminations from Burning Man." *Journal of Consumer Research* 29 (June):20-28.
- Laing, Jennifer and W. Frost. 2010. "How Green was My Festival: Exploring Challenges and Opportunities with Staging Green Events." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 29 (2): 261-267.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Legates, Richard T and F. Stout. 2011. *City Reader*. 5th ed. New York: Routledge.
- Lippard, Lucy R. 1998. *The Lure of the Local*. New York: New Press.
- Metropol. 2010. <http://blog.burningman.com/category/Metropol>.
- Putnam, Robert. 2001. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rifkin, Jeremy. 2001. *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life is a Paid-For Experience*. New York: Tarcher.

- Sennett, Richard. 1970. *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*. New York: Knopf.
- Sherry, J. F. and R. V. Kozinets. 2007. "Comedy of the Commons: Nomadic Spirituality and the Burning Man Festival." In *Consumer Culture Theory, Research in Consumer Behavior*, edited by J. F. Sherry and R. Belk. No. 2. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Shoup, Donald C. 2011. *The High Cost of Free Parking: Updated Edition*. Chicago: American Planning Association.
- Sorkin, Michael. 1992. *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Starrs, Paul and J. B. Wright. 2005. "Utopia, Dystopia and Sublime Apocalypse in Montana's Church Universal and Triumphant." *The Geographical Review* 95 (1):97-121.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- US Bureau of Land Management. 2012. *Burning Man 2012-2016 Special Recreation Permit Preliminary Environmental Assessment*.
- Vance, James. 1972. "California and the Search for the Ideal." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 62 (2):185-210.