

## **Bicycling While Black**

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Like many leisure activities, participation in outdoor sports is particularly racially restricted, reflecting and reinforcing racial norms. Participation in such activities in ways that transgress these norms may be a path to educate for the deconstruction of white normativity. Leisure practice, then, ought to be an arena in which transgressive religious education takes place. Pedagogies of play are promising resources for considering how this transgressive religious education can happen.

1. Topic: I am working towards a religious pedagogy of leisure that transgresses racialized norms. In particular, I look to outdoor sports as particular manifestations of "white normativity" that prime participants to be receptive to alternative experiences that can be fruitful objects of reflection.

2. Research question: How might religious education that involves participants in leisure activities that transgress racialized norms facilitate a deconstruction of white normativity?

The methodology of the project is, at this stage, research of the literature, but also reflects on popular phenomena like Ambreen Tariq's "Brown People Camping" movement and D-Block's "Rideouts," where he leads young cyclists in taking over New York City streets.

Mixed-methods qualitative research that I have performed with "Bikes for Change" will provide anecdotal evidence will also contribute to the understanding of leisure practice as racialized. It also offers a particularly useful case in that practices of cyclists of color seem, at first blush, to contrast sharply with the expectations that white persons have of cyclists.

3. Among the theories informing the research are critical race theory, Huizinga's understanding of the role of play in culture (*Homo Ludens*), and Courtney Goto's concept of "local practical theological aesthetics."

I hope, also, for conversation around the project to help ground it more solidly in the conceptual framework of leisure studies and of the sociological study of "transgressive leisure." Thus far, much of the research on transgressive leisure has been focused on sex and drugs, but the role of sports is coming into frame.

Core references will include:

Courtney Goto., *The Grace of Playing: Pedagogies for Leaning into God's New Creation*, 2016.  
Monika Stodolska, Kimberly Shinew, Myron Floyd, and Gordon Walker. *Race, Ethnicity, and Leisure*, 2014.

4. While the educative functions of play have, especially its developmental aspects, continue to inform religious pedagogy in fruitful ways, there is room to explore the possibility for those pedagogies to engage learners in the leisure activities that are often central to their

understandings of themselves and their societies. Leisure as a venue for religious education is not new, but its possibilities for transgressive religious education call for further exploration.

5. At this point, my own qualitative research on Bikes for Change is complete. The research into the popular practices of Tariq and D-Block's are in the middle stages. The theoretical research, especially its sociological aspects, is still in early stages.