MOVING TARGETS:
RACIALIZED AND SOCIAL BARRIERS TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

DR. JENNIFER D. ROBERTS
ACCELERATING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CHANGE IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MARCH 25, 2021
REMEmber This Boy?

✓ Trayvon Martin

- 17-year-old teenager who was fatally shot by George Zimmerman while walking on February 26, 2012
- Martin was returning to his father’s fiancée’s home from a nearby convenience store
- Zimmerman called Sanford, Florida police and reported Martin as “suspicious”
- Zimmerman was acquitted of second degree murder and manslaughter
“MOVING WHILE BLACK”

- **DOUBLE ENTENDRE**
  - Expression derived from U.S. “driving while intoxicated” criminal offense

- **RACIAL PROFILING**
  - Demonstration of the racial profiling endured by many African Americans
    - Pedestrians, Runners
    - Cyclists, Scooterist

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**2018 E-Scooter Findings Report**

While many East Portlanders and Black Portlanders expressed enthusiasm for e-scooters, some focus group participants also expressed an overall concern for traffic safety and the risk that Black e-scooter riders would be targeted for racial profiling and harassment.

Source: PBOT, At: [https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/709719](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/709719)

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**'Biking while black': Chicago minority areas see the most bike tickets**

By Mary Wisniewski · Contact Reporter
Chicago Tribune

March 17, 2017

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**Poll Question #1**

**Which group has the highest pedestrian death rates?**

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td><strong>White Pedestrians</strong></td>
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<td>B</td>
<td><strong>Black Pedestrians</strong></td>
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<td>C</td>
<td><strong>Hispanic Pedestrians</strong></td>
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“MOVING WHILE BLACK”

Safety and Perception

- Research Findings
  - Overall, pedestrian deaths increased
    - 1.7/100K in 2009 to 2.2/100K in 2018
  - Drivers less likely to brake for African American pedestrians
    - More cars passed through crosswalk with African American pedestrian compared to the White pedestrian
  - Compared to White (1.8) pedestrians, the age-adjusted pedestrian death rate
    - Double for African Americans (3.6)
    - One and half greater for Hispanics (2.9)

Source: Goddard. At: http://dx.doi.org/10.15760/trec.130; Coughenour. At: doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2016.09.031; CDC. At: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6939a7.htm
PEAT STUDY OBJECTIVE

- **OVERALL OBJECTIVE**
  - Physical Environment and Active Transportation (PEAT) Study examined active transportation (AT) behaviors and perceptions of youth living in Fairfax County, VA
    - In 2014, new Silver Line of the Washington, DC Metro opened
    - Evaluated how new transit contributed to AT among youth
PEAT STUDY METHODOLOGY

- **Focus Groups**
  - Conducted (4) focus groups
    - 15 females; 9 males
    - Age range 12-15 years
    - Over 90% African American or Latinx
    - All participants received $10 dollars

- **Setting**
  - Reston Teen Center
    - Focus groups held on (3) dates in 2016

- **Analysis**
  - Content analysis technique identified emergent themes or trends from transcribed recordings
EMERGENT THEMES

- IDENTIFIED THEMES
  - AT Behaviors
    - Family influence on AT behaviors
    - Friends influence on AT behaviors
  - AT Determinants
    - Racial profiling
    - Adultification
    - Sexualization

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**The New York Times**

*Why Won’t Society Let Black Girls Be Children?*

By A. Rochan Meadows-Fernandez  
April 17, 2020

Adulthood means teachers, parents and law enforcement are less protective and more punitive with certain kids.
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BEHAVIORS

- **OVERALL BEHAVIORS**
  - Many use AT to travel short-medium length distances
    - Walking and public buses were the most common form

  "I take the city bus sometimes to get to place to place"
  "I usually walk to my school once a week"

- **FRIENDS AND FAMILY INFLUENCES**
  - AT behaviors highly influenced by friends and family

  "my mom always tells me it’s not safe, I can’t be walking alone"

  "my friends want to walk everywhere and I don’t know why"
**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION DETERMINANTS**

- **RACIAL PROFILING**
- **ADULTIFICATION**
- **SEXUALIZATION**

- "areas certain people live"
- "my mom forces me to walk"
- "I don’t feel safe walking by myself or with other people cause of like cat-callers"
- "I have to [walk]...I do it all the time...I'm home alone and I wanna go somewhere"
- "I want to walk to Shoppers, but my Mom says no...usually my brother goes"
- "one time one of my friends were riding my bike...[my neighbor] yelled at her for like no reason and he's like get the blank off my yard like what the blank are you doing...Yeah, [he said something racist]"

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**
PEAT STUDY CONCLUSIONS

- **Many Contributing Factors**
  - Environmental and social variables converge on the AT experiences of African American youth
    - Personal safety, micro-aggressions, harassment

- **Unintended Consequences**
  - Numerous AT benefits, but important to understand the inherent level of privilege with AT
    - AT in some spaces for some individuals
    - Lack of AT and physical activity freedom

At a glance:

- Walking
- Public Transit
- Biking
- Walking
- Walking

New video emerges of fatal shooting of black jogger in Georgia

By Omar Villafranca | CBS News | May 6, 2020
Share something new that you learned from this presentation.
INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE...

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

Article

Between Privilege and Oppression: An Intersectional Analysis of Active Transportation Experiences Among Washington D.C. Area Youth

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THANK YOU!

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