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Title: Transgressing the Street through Fun: The Carishina Races in Quito, Ecuador

In Quito, Ecuador the feminist bicycle collective, Carishina en Bici's actions depict women that affirm their right to the city; they assert how gender shapes mobility (Hanson 2010), and challenge how women face barriers to daily urban cycling (Steinbach et al. 2011). Carishinas en Bici (or bad house-wives on bikes) are women that move throughout the city by inventing new ways of engaging with existing infrastructure. Their actions are imprinted on the city through games, fun, outings and mentoring aimed at getting women cycling in the city. Mobility practices across the city demonstrate how moving around informs a masculine landscape of the city, where actions such as motorcycling or skating both imprint forms of transgressing public norms, claim democratic rights to the city, and range from illicit to criminal (Caldeira 2012).

This paper presents on three different events that Carishinas en Bici organize. These events represent how Carishinas use the street as both a public space and a site to transgress gendered landscapes of the city. Like many Andean metropolises, women's role in public space is often associated with either street vending or market selling. Yet, each particular event that the Carishinas organize draws attention to how women that cycle engage in deep play (Geertz, 1972). On the one hand, the street exists as a site of circulation and livelihood where urban planners imagined the roads for travel to work, school, and to arrive at areas of interest meant for specific needs. On the other hand, the street provides an opportunity for Carishinas to transgress these norms to directly express their desires to make public space accessible. Thus, Carishinas engage in deep play because they attempt to transgress both the patriarchal order of the street and the actions of mobility practices through public performance. This presentation uses three different women-only bicycle events, the Rodada de Altura, Hadas Madrinas, and the Carishina Race, to demonstrate how women's actions such as games, mentoring, and knowledge—as opposed to speed—invent new femininities and gendered landscapes that transgress politics, and the street as an undesirable space. The Carishina race is an alley cat, or scavenger hunt, around the city where women dress in costume to explore urban space, and imprint the desirability of the city. This presentation draws upon 16 months of ethnographic fieldwork and participation as an urban planner and activist in Carishina Races, I use my position to embrace the ways in which women perform publicly and reclaim city space. Such an interpretation draws on feminist science and technology studies to draw out how the object and subject of study (Suchman 2011) are carefully crafted (la Bellacasa 2011) and assembled to reveal the political agency (Bennett 2010) behind the events. I argue that the Carishina's engage in deep play through their events, which transgress the public and masculine norms of the street. I suggest that these events generate the opportunity to interpret new ways of imprinting gendered relations on the city, and therefore how women assert agency within a patriarchal landscape, or democratic public space.

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