Preface: Race and Inequality in Recreation

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The transnational history of racial inequality in recreation parallels the “broader struggle for control of and access to urban space.” The geographical distribution of public parks is negligently tied to the “social and historical context of residential segregation and urban development,” while there are outstanding gaps in the access to forestry recreation to racialized groups around the globe. Racial inequality in recreation is also connected to the “lack of information about available recreational activities” geared and distributed to racial minorities. Sports history has been molded by the link between the anxiety produced by media racialization of crime and the conceptualization of black athleticism as “its most visible, socially sanctioned alternative.” The narrative of race and sports has also generated “a critically important cultural terrain on which most racialized groups have contested, defined, and represented their racial, national, and ethnic identities.” Perhaps one of the most evident manifestations of the profound racial inequality in recreation is the low number of faculty members and students of color in “academic programs focusing on leisure studies, parks, recreation, and tourism.”

Volume 6: “Race and Inequality in Recreation” of the peer-reviewed academic journal Recreation and Society in Africa, Asia and Latin America aims to explore the ties between race, inequality, and access to leisure. “BRICS, Bats, and Balls: Nation Building, Sporting Diplomacy, and the Politics of Mega-Sporting Events in the BRICS Countries” by Dr. Derek Catsam offers contrast between the use of mega-sporting events for political prestige and the structural inequality within the BRICS nations. Meanwhile, “The Impact of Racial Inequality on the Pursuit of Mountain-Based Leisure among Black Recreation-Seekers in Cape Town, South Africa, 1910-1969” by Dr. Farieda Khan examines the rise of black mountain-based recreation in South Africa in the early 20th century and its fall during the intensification of apartheid. Lastly, “The Mansions and the Streets: Brazilian Cultural Tourism Development and the Architecture of Inclusion” by Dr. Evan Ward explores the rejection of Afro-Brazilian cultural production in 20th-century mainstream tourism in Brazil. This volume hopes to contribute to the scholarly conversation on the racialization of urban spaces, childhood, sports, and tourism by denouncing the racialization of the right to be “amused.”

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