



**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP #2**

# **Cities and Skateboarding**

**Contemporary approaches  
to Skateboarding  
in Urban Contexts**

**Organised by**

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September 24, 2026, from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM  
More information coming soon (Bordeaux, France).

**In collaboration with ESSCA School of Management, the 2026 edition of the Connect Festival presents the second edition of the international workshop in the social sciences and humanities dedicated to skateboarding and its interactions with the city.**

From its origins in 1950s United States to its inclusion in the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, skateboarding has continuously evolved—athletically, socially, culturally, and economically—while maintaining the street as its primary space of expression. The slogan “Skateboarding is not a crime” long embodied the resilience of a practice often misunderstood. The sharing of public space has challenged the reputation of skateboarders, frequently portrayed as marginal or disruptive, where urban exploration on a skateboard was seen as incompatible with other human activities.

Today, these tensions have given way to growing recognition of skateboarding as a lens through which to understand contemporary urban transformations and as a tool for analysing how cities are used. Nevertheless, skateboarding has continued to build its identity through a distinctive way of perceiving and engaging with the urban environment (Laurent, 2010). Specific urban characteristics of cities foster local communities that develop their own styles of practice and territorial identities, enriching a diverse global culture.

As a result, public decision-makers have realised that replacing street skating with skateparks alone is ineffective. Current thinking now focuses on broader integration of skateboarding into urban policies, in relation to mobility, hybrid uses of public space, and the creation of more inclusive cities.

The city remains a key site of experimentation (Calogirou, 2010), now shaped by the emergence of skate urbanism—a movement driven by both activist communities and municipalities aiming to jointly design the integration of skateboarding into the urban environment, in order to harness its political, social, cultural, and economic benefits for society.

Within this expanded perspective, skateboarding appears as a lens for analysing global urban transformations, raising questions about the relationships between bodies, space, mobility, urban planning, and governance.

As such, skateboarding—as both a sport and a cultural practice—offers fertile ground for the social sciences and humanities. In recent years, international researchers have examined how skateboarding has shaped unique identities and communities, influencing fashion, music, and even urban planning (Beal, 1995; Borden, 2001).

For instance, some studies have shown how skateboarding transforms urban spaces and ways of life, redefining the use of public space while promoting values of diversity and inclusion (Machemehl & Roul, 2020). More recently, research has also focused on skateboarding as a practice embedded in

contemporary urban transitions: urban ecology, soft mobility, citizen re-appropriation of public space, and new forms of urban cohabitation.

Others have highlighted skateboarding as a means of expression for marginalised communities, particularly skaters of colour, who use the practice to challenge racial stereotypes and promote social activism (Williams, 2022). Likewise, research has shown that the urban, social, and cultural dimensions of skateboarding reveal both opportunities and challenges for women in a historically male-dominated sport (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2020). These issues are closely linked to broader questions of urban inclusivity and unequal access to public space.

In this sense, these emerging dynamics make skateboarding a rich field of study for the social sciences and humanities (Political Science, Economics, Management, Sociology, Anthropology, History, Geography, Urban Planning, etc.).

This second edition of the workshop therefore aims to broaden perspectives by fully integrating contemporary urban challenges and the interactions between skateboarding and city-making.

The “Cities and Skateboarding” workshop invites researchers, practitioners, urban planners, designers, and public stakeholders to come together to present their work and collectively reflect on future directions for research in the social sciences and humanities.

Topics include:

- Skateboarding and city-making
- Skateboarding and urbanity
- Skateboarding and urban mobility
- Skateboarding and public space design
- Skateboarding, ecological transitions and sustainable cities
- Skateboarding and social phenomena
- etc.

# Call for Papers

PhD candidates and doctoral researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities (Political Science, Economics, Management, Sociology, Anthropology, History, Geography, Urban Studies, etc.) are invited to submit their work for the “Cities and Skateboarding” workshop. Contributions should broadly relate to the workshop theme.

## Submissions may include:

- Theoretical papers,
- Field studies or case study analyses,
- Presentations on innovative approaches, tools, analyses, or methodologies.

## Submission guidelines and requirements:

If you wish to submit a contribution, your paper proposal must be written in English and should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words, including:

- Title of the paper,
- Author(s) (including email addresses and institutional affiliations),
- Theoretical framework, research problem, and research questions/hypotheses,
- Research methodology,
- Main findings (expected or obtained),
- Bibliographical references.

**The deadline for submission is June 30, 2026. Feedback will be provided to contributors by July 24, 2026.**

**Submissions should be sent by email to: [workshop.connect@essca.fr](mailto:workshop.connect@essca.fr)**

**Workshop location to be announced.**

Information regarding travel and other logistical arrangements will be shared at a later date.

We look forward to welcoming you!

## **Schedule of the day**

**9:30 AM: Welcome breakfast**

**10:00 AM: Roundtable introductions**

**10:30 AM: Research presentations and discussions**

**12:30 PM: Lunch**

**2:00 PM: Research perspectives**

**4:00 PM: Workshop closing**

You will find all information regarding travel and other logistical arrangements on the website of the Connect Festival. Registration for the workshop will close on September 1, 2026. No registration fee is required.

We look forward to welcoming you!

### **References:**

Allamano-Kessler, R., & Mione, A. (2020). Qui fixe la norme ? Le genre dans l'institutionnalisation d'une pratique sportive. *Innovations*, 3(57), 85-107.


Beal, B. (1995), Disqualifying the Official: An Exploration of Social Resistance Through the Subculture of Skateboarding, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 12, 252-267.

Borden, L. (2001). Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body Borden, Berg Publishers (edition First Edition).

Calogirou, C. (2010). Le skate, un corps à corps avec la ville. *Diversité*, 160, 201, 109-115.

Diewald, S. N., Neville, J., Cronin, J.B., Read, D. & Cross, M.R. (2020). Skating into the Unknown: Scoping the Physical, Technical, and Tactical Demands of Competitive Skateboarding, *Sports Medicine*, 54, 1399-1418.

Machemehl, C., & Roult, R. (2020). Urban skating sport: Current research on sports-related urbanity. *Society and Leisure*, 42(3), 321-335.

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