

## Dean, Nikolaus

University of British Columbia  
Fellowship 2020

*“We are all here for the same reason”: Identifying Barriers and Facilitators Among Skateboarders with a Disability*

---

As the action sport of skateboarding continues to expand globally, more diverse populations have started to take part in this traditionally male-dominated sporting (sub)culture, including girls and women, members of the LGBTQI+ community, older skaters, and as my research explored, skateboarders with a (physical) disability. Yet, a quick glance of literature illustrates that little to no academic attention (from any discipline) has been drawn towards exploring the lives and experiences of those living with a disability within skateboarding’s broader (sub)culture despite increased uptake amongst the wider disability community. With this context in mind, this sociological study sought out to not only explore the lived experiences of skateboarders with a disability within skateboarding’s larger (sub)culture, but in so doing, attempted to explore and identify barriers and facilitators to their participation within the sport. Using the methods of interviews and photo-elicitation, I spoke with 30 self-identifying skateboarders with a disability about their experiences within skateboarding’s larger (sub)culture. Interviews with the participants illuminated how several social, cultural, and structural barriers impacted their participation and experiences with and within skate spaces such as ableist attitudes and behaviours, and inaccessible designs. Yet, in identifying these barriers, participants also outlined ways to facilitate more ‘welcoming’ and ‘disability-friendly’ environments through accessible design and by creating more opportunities and pathways for those living with a disability to get involved within the expanding action sport. Findings from this study may be of use to disability sport and skateboarding organizations as well as city-planners, policymakers, and those working within the realm of (skateboarding) architecture and design.

**Tags:** Disability, participation, community sport, para sport