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To cite this article: Paul O’Connor, Clifton Evers, Brian Glenney & Indigo Willing (2022): Skateboarding in the Anthropocene: Grey spaces of polluted leisure, Leisure Studies, DOI: 10.1080/02614367.2022.2153906

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2153906

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Published online: 09 Dec 2022.
Skateboarding in the Anthropocene: Grey spaces of polluted leisure

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores a symbolic environmental schema of skateboarding through the concept of ‘grey spaces’. We provide evidence of how skateboarding demonstrates a greyness – political and environmental ambiguities, contradictions, liminality, nuances and paradoxes – to outdoor urban leisure in the Anthropocene. We build on a chromatic turn in leisure studies which attends to blue and green spaces; however, we shift focus from the therapeutic discussion of nature that tends to underscore that turn to a contested realm of urban grey spaces. A concept of ‘greyness’ is adopted to connotate not simply the urban but also the ambivalence of polluted leisure and the ambiguous position of skateboarding working as pollutant, and a form of alternative sustainability, while acting with complicity in neoliberal processes that contribute to escalating consumption and the proliferation of concrete spaces of play. In framing skateboarding in both the material and symbolic space of greyness, we seek to stimulate discussion about the greyness of leisure in the Anthropocene beyond skateboarding.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 17 June 2022
Accepted 22 November 2022

KEYWORDS
Skateboarding; Polluted leisure; Grey spaces; Urban leisure; Anthropocene

Introduction

This paper explores a symbolic environmental schema of skateboarding through the concept of ‘grey spaces’. Contributing to the chromatic shift in leisure studies, we present grey space as the context in which skateboarding is performed, amidst the concrete greyness of the built environment. This context operates alongside blue and green outdoor leisure spaces, rivers, lakes, parks, gardens and the like. The association of blue and green spaces with nature in leisure studies discourse resonates with practices and thoughts about well-being, therapy, conservation, inclusivity, pedagogical benefits and sustainability. There has been growing interest in leisure pursuits framed by blue and green spaces as part of a chromatic turn in leisure studies. For example, green and blue environments are framed as conduits for health and wellbeing (Britton et al., 2018; Bell et al., 2014; Grant & Pollard, 2021; White et al., 2020). Leisure activities in blue and green spaces also carry an environmental weight to them; the argument has been made that those who engage through leisure with green and blue spaces may develop ecological sensibilities that lead to caring more for natural habitats and even environmental stewardship (Humberstone, 2011; Olive, 2016). Much has been written about skateboarding social enterprises, skateboarding pedagogy and the benefits of skateboarding for health and wellbeing throughout the life course (Friedel, 2015; Jenson et al., 2012; O’Connor, 2015, 2021; Robertson, 2019; Schaffer, 2016; Thorpe & Chawansky, 2017; Thorpe, 2013).

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That said, the greyness of urban concrete-built environment – a favoured surface/construct of skateboarders – lends itself to further nuance and complexity when it comes to doing and understanding outdoor leisure in urban space.

In this article, we provide evidence of how skateboarding demonstrates greyness in symbolic and interpretive terms. Here grey manifests through a currency of political and environmental ambiguities, contradictions, liminality, nuances and the paradoxes that skateboarders experience as outdoor urban leisure in the Anthropocene. We show how skateboarders must work with the materialities of pollution alongside social critique that they are themselves pollutants if they are to harness spaces of capitalism for ludic purposes. Adopting a polluted leisure lens, we explore how it is incomplete to understand leisure as a cause of pollution but also necessary to attend to ways pollution enables and frames leisure, both in terms of pollution as material but also pollution as the exercising of social power. Pollution is our focus. Discussion about pollution remains peripheral in leisure studies, despite how leisure now only ever happens on a permanently polluted planet. We are all contaminated. Leisure studies has focused on issues of climate change and sustainability, while pollution itself is occluded from these discussions.

Discussions about leisure, sport, the environment, therapy and health/wellbeing benefits have connected with a chromatic turn for leisure studies. While green and blue present strong evocations of what is often associated with a natural environment, other colours such as pink have been used to describe socio-political elements of LGBTQ leisure and tourism (Giovanardi et al., 2014; Lamond, 2018; Nofre et al., 2019). Blackness has related to both themes of race and ethnicity in leisure (Pinckney et al., 2018) and dark, death or thana tourism (Lennon & Foley, 2010; Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

To complement these hues, we suggest using ‘grey space’ as a useful chromatic tool to understand outdoor urban leisure. Grey space has been used in real estate discourse to refer to office space. It has also been used as an adjunct term of cognition and thought, akin to grey matter. We use grey space in two ways. Firstly, we understand it as the grounds for a conceptual schema of greyness, an ambiguous in-between zone of shading, ambivalence, nuances, liminality, contradictions and paradoxes that put questions to social power arrangements. Secondly, grey space relates to outdoor urban leisure that specifically engages with the grey materialities of concrete, steel, asphalt, granite, grime and detritus of urban built environments: the skin of the city. Both the conceptual and material weave grey space to position skateboarding as polluted leisure in the Anthropocene.

Through the humanities and social sciences, attention is given not simply to the Anthropocene as geological, but also how it enfolds with colonialism, environmentalism, sustainability, racism, capitalism, gender and much more (Erickson, 2020; Palsson et al., 2013; Valtonen & Rantala, 2020). Our thinking about skateboarding as outdoor urban leisure in the Anthropocene proceeds through the humanities and social sciences. Of course, it is not the only outdoor urban leisure that is intimately bound up with grey spaces. Our argument could also be taken up through other forms of urban leisure amidst grey space, e.g. parkour, scooters, cycling, roller blading, as well as those that mould traditionally green and blue space outdoor leisure activities to fit grey spaces such as indoor bouldering, wave pools and snowdomes (Beaver, 2012; Puddle et al., 2019; Salome et al., 2013). Understanding relationships between leisure and the Anthropocene is urgent and necessary (Grimwood, 2016; Mansfield & Wheaton, 2014; Olive & Wheaton, 2021; Rose & Carr, 2018). As environmental conditions of possibility for leisure change, so the physical, social and political meaning and action associated with leisure transforms.

Greyness is at the core of skateboarding as outdoor urban leisure. For example, contemporary skateboarding both resists a dominant neoliberal paradigm and paradoxically bolsters it. Belinda Wheaton (2013) argues that skateboarding, like other lifestyle sports, involves high levels of consumption and attendant identity expression. Skateboarders wear down their timber boards and polyurethane wheels constantly and unsustainably replenish these by purchasing branded equipment that signifies subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995), all the while casting aside their waste. Fashion brands of skateboarding have become multibillion dollar businesses where profit growth trumps any consideration of environmental cost. However, skateboarders are not
unambiguously turbo-consumers. Many skateboarders pursue thrift and sustainability, reusing and sharing resources among the community. As Iain Borden (2019) argues, while other youth may occupy the city to shop at the local mall, some skateboarders challenge the use of the city for consumption alone. Instead, they skate the built environment for non-consumptive ludic purposes. Borden (2001) has identified skateboarding’s critique of capitalism in how its urban presence and practice has little exchange value. In regard to consumption, skateboarders manifest greyness. They may be rampant consumers, but also ‘flawed consumers’ who resist that clarion cry of contemporary capitalist society and its central consumption-as-lifestyle trope (Bauman, 2007). The greyness of skateboarding extends to harnessing skateable places. Skateboarders work with businesses and local planning departments in self-starting entrepreneurial ways to secure places to skate (Howell, 2008).

Simultaneously, skateboarders employ tactics to reclaim city spaces from capitalist management through activism, DIY projects, and daily guerrilla operations of waxing ledges and dodging security (Chiu & Giamarino, 2019, Vivoni, 2013). Skateboarding as a sui generis leisure pursuit evidences liminal relationships between politics, identity, sustainability, consumption, play, capitalism and pollution. Greyness.

We begin our argument by framing skateboarding’s current wave of popularity and the way it has been discussed in existing academic work. We then introduce the concept of polluted leisure and explain its usefulness for our analysis. Next, we position our interest in greyness and grey space in relation to a chromatic turn in some leisure studies discourses. What follows is an introductory analysis of skateboarding through a grey schema to prompt concomitant discussions of other outdoor urban leisure in the Anthropocene that could subsequently provide further learning about leisure on a permanently polluted planet.

**Skateboarding on the global stage**

At the close of 2022 skateboarding has navigated a remarkable ascent from teen fad and feral subculture to Olympic sport (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2022). It has evolved from DIY experimentation (Borden, 2019), become a mass commercial craze (Yochim, 2010), developed a subversive and arcane subcultural aesthetic (Butz, 2012) and ascended to a cherished element of 21st century pop-culture (Snyder, 2017). The incorporation of skateboarding into larger mechanisms of governmentality (Lombard, 2010), civic recreation (Atencio et al., 2018) and the Olympic model (Schwier, 2019) may appear counter-intuitive given it began through DIY experimentation. That said, to complicate matters, many skateboarders are deeply invested in grassroots urban activism and community building. That activism and community building can take the form of building illegal DIY locations to skate for hundreds of dollars as well as raising millions for city-sponsored professional construction of local skate parks that contribute to fuelling Olympic dreams. Brian Glenney and O’connor (2019) argue skateboarding is always a constant mixing of sport, art, performance, activism, business and play – a polythetic definition.

Skateboarding long privileged white heteronormative men living in late capitalist societies with Eurocentric hegemonies (Williams, 2020). However, skateboarding can be radically – both organically and consciously – politically inclusive. For example, incorporating spaces for older ‘greying’ skateboarders (O’Connor, 2017; Willing et al., 2018), and ethnic and sexual minorities (Geckle, 2021; Williams, 2020). In recent years, the skateboard industry has been redressing a long-standing gender bias, sponsoring ever-increasing numbers of women and non-binary skateboarders, and embracing what has been non-hegemonic marginalised skate media by incorporating it into mainstream skateboarding media (White, 2020). A volley of works focusing on the growth of Asian skateboarding and its representation have occurred (Dixon, 2015; Hölsgens, 2021; McDuierra, 2021; O’Connor, 2018; Sedo, 2010). There is great complexity and diversity and movement – greyness – when it comes to skateboarding.

Greyness lies at the heart of skateboarding. Take, for example, how the previously mentioned skateboarding diversity was on display at the 2021 Olympics with Japan, Brazil and Australia
collectively sharing the catch of gold and silver medals. Additionally, skateboarding brought other elements to the Olympic spectacle, notably a sense of peer-to-peer camaraderie that transcended competition. As competitors cheered and embraced each other, there was a subtle undoing of a nationalist ideology typically at the forefront of the ‘celebration capitalism’ Olympic model (Boykoff, 2013). Puerto Rican skateboarder Manny Santiago revealed that, in the Olympic village, athletes from other sports would eat meals with members of their own national teams. He noted with pride that skateboarders of many backgrounds and representative allegiances would eat their meals together, effectively choosing co-competitors to hang out with rather than teammates (The Nine Club (Producer), 2021). Skateboarders might be lauded for this demonstration of fair-play and fellowship. However, it could also be argued that skateboarders who shunned their national teammates actually subverted the competitive spirit and nationalist ideology of the games while paradoxically enjoying the fruits of capitalist sportification and making light of the ceremony and its gravitas.

**Polluted leisure**

Like all leisure, skateboarding exists in relationship with pollution – both social and material. Using a polluted leisure approach helps us to identify and better understand the ways in which skateboarding is situated in relation to the Anthropocene, particularly how it is an outstanding example of how some leisure activities do not just involve reckoning with the materialities of pollution but can operate symbolically as pollution.

Clifton Evers (2019) explains that polluted leisure encompasses a spectrum of material and social encounters that span the physical, spatial, emotional, and intellectual experiences of leisure. He takes a broad view of leisure: it is not in opposition to work but a volitional undertaking of an activity that an enthusiast deems worthwhile. He then incorporates the term ‘pollution’, traced to the Latin word ‘polluere’: to ‘defile’. It was initially used in medical discourse (e.g. to soil a bed), as well as to connote the violation, perversion and/or corruption of political, economic, sexual and spiritual standardised orders (Nagle, 2009). Pollution is material but can also be considered as the operation of social power.

To underscore pollution as the operation of social power, Evers refers to the work of Mary Douglas (1969). In her book *Purity and Danger*, Douglas examines how pollution operates symbolically as a system of perception of order (and disorder) with concomitant classifications and regulatory processes. Declaring someone ‘dirty’ or ‘toxic’ is used to mark out and safeguard a particular ordering of society and space. Eradicating, denigrating, surveilling and even disappearing those classified ‘dirty’ or ‘toxic’ is a function of pollution as social power. Eradicating those who are ‘dirty’ involves classifying them as such and in opposition to those who are pure/clean/appropriate. It is a process of organising and policing borders and boundaries to signify who belongs or does not belong – who is considered to be valued or not valued, good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable. Leisure groups (including skateboarders, graffiti ‘vandals’, young people hanging out listening to loud music outside a shopping mall) have histories of being discursively constructed as urban pollution. Here, pollution functions as an exclusionary discourse, one that is bound up with intersectional structural oppressions such as race, age, ethnicity, place, class, nation, gender and more (Crenshaw, 1991).

Of course, pollution is also material. In the nineteenth century, pollution came into common usage to refer to contamination of the natural environment (e.g. air and water) with harmful substances (Nagle, 2009). Evers argues that pollution as material is not passive; it is also an influential nonhuman shaping leisure meaning, activity and spaces. It enters networks of relations to influence conditions of possibility. For the scope of our discussion, we delimit a deeper pending discussion of agency and the materialities of pollution. That said, we do reference the materiality of pollution. How could we not? The Anthropocene rock par excellence is concrete, which is part of the foundation of skateboarding.
To date, little thought has been given to the connections between skateboarding and pollution. Some writers have discussed sustainability and carbon footprints as pending issues for skateboarders, yet there needs to be far more analysis (Kerr, 2022; Willing, 2020). It is easy to assume that skateboarding equates to having a low ecological footprint given how skaters traverse places while relying on their own breath and legs. Yet, skateboarders play in cities with heavy air pollution largely the result of streets perpetually jammed with cars, which are a major cause of skateboarding deaths and a frequent cause of injury (Fang & Handy, 2017, p. 6). Skateboarders and the production of skateboard media are heavily invested in travel. The ‘road trip’ that is deeply embedded within the culture necessitates long intracontinental drives and intercontinental flights; yet, as they sip fuel and jet streams, the planet groans under the haze. In contrast, efforts have been made to make skateboard consumption ‘green’, e.g. experiments in bamboo boards, hemp clothing and other sustainable products. The most recent and visible of these efforts are Cariuma (2022) who promise to plant two trees in the Brazilian rainforest for every pair of shoes purchased. They have aggressively marketed their product ensuring riders wore shoes and T-shirt at the Olympics, yet the skateboarding community has been largely ambivalent about the brand (Gifted Hater, 2021; R3dBullRox420, 2021). In north-east England, the skateboarding community is developing and using more environmentally friendly concrete – unrecyclable plastics as aggregate for concrete and testing bioengineering of concrete – to build skateable architecture. In so doing, these skateboarders in their own small way challenge the environmentally damaging pouring of vast quantities of concrete to build public skateparks. Other skaters resist these efforts, arguing that they still want the skateparks, especially those in this community who ascribe to the sportification of skateboarding. Note the greyness of this milieu.

If we consider skateboarders from a more symbolic stance of pollution, we can see how socially they have long been maligned. Using the language of Douglas (1969), skateboarders have been regarded as ‘matter out of place’, unsightly and unwanted pollution in urban centres. They need not even bring disorder, simply being classified as threatening disorder enables policing of boundaries and belonging (or not). Many of the DIY spaces for skateboarding are shared with urban dwellers framed by societies as pollution: homeless persons, drug users and other ‘dirty’ users of spaces abandoned – those who must negotiate being outside of belonging (Probyn, 1996). Borden (2019, p. 232) remarks that skaters are ironically out of place in the city as their activities are neither overt protest nor quiet conformity. They trouble the normative ordering of the city. Borden goes on to highlight that the city elements that are not considered anomalies are commerce, shoppers, business persons and paradoxically cars spewing acrid chemicals into the air. In a remarkable assault on the activities of skateboarders, the development of ‘skatestopper’ defensive architecture is employed to make the organic skateable spaces of the city inaccessible. These defensive and exclusionary architectures are additional materials, introduced to coerce and inform skateboarders of their unwanted presence. Every city in the world is filled with ‘no skateboarding’ signage, to which skatetoppers are a tacit accomplice (McDuie-Ra & Campbell, 2022). Legislation to criminalise skateboarding underlines the ways in which skateboarding is considered socially and symbolically polluting, a threat to capitalism’s fundamental principle of property ownership and attendant social and spatial orderings. Skateboarding is positioned as the threat of disorder. Skateboarding is read as pollution.

Skateboarding as pollution extends to noise. Noise pollution is a common critique of skateboarders from denizens of public space, business owners and pedestrians – those who ‘belong’. Efforts to remove skateboarders from city centres and confine them to legitimised skateparks for their play have run into backlash as associated noise pollution is a prominent concern of local residents resisting their construction (Hawk Foundation, 2022). Yet, skateboarding noise is seldom louder than the other audible paraphernalia of urban and suburban life, with sharp tricks falling in the 65–70 dB range, comparable to a loud conversation but not quite as loud as a noisy restaurant at 85 decibels (Ibid). As John Carr (2007, pp. 118–119) argues, skateboard noise is likely seen to be
polluting because residents associate the noises of skateboarding with unpredictability, youth, drug use and social disorder. Skateboarding noise is the sound of matter out of place.

The reading of skateboarding through a polluted leisure lens demonstrates how skateboarders occupy a liminal ‘grey’ space between the ordered use of urban zones for the functioning of capitalism and the articulation of spaces for ludic opportunities. Skateboarders exhibit the necessity to negotiate pollution. They are lauded when consuming, occupying designated spaces and competing in competitions for energy drink sponsored prize money. However, they are denigrated for playing, loitering, reuse and recycling, and making the urban more than a conduit for capital.

Grey spaces

The brief consideration of skateboarding through the lens of polluted leisure points us directly to not only greyness but grey spaces. Skateboarding makes use of the concrete, granite and steel of cities and suburbia. Skateboarders turn their attention to existing structures, they build their own, and increasingly local governments provide specifically designated grey spaces for them as concrete skateparks that simulate urban environments (Glenney & O’Connor, 2019). Unlike green and blue spaces, grey spaces are constructed out of materials known for their polluting effects. For instance, concrete is made by mixing cement, water and aggregates such as gravel. Since the twentieth century, concrete has included additives such as polymer fibres and plasticiser silica (Waters & Zalasiewicz, 2018, p. 84). It relies on extractive limestone mining. Stajanča and Eštoková (2017) explain how

The production of cement involves the consumption of large quantities of raw materials, energy, and heat. Cement production also results in the release of a significant amount of solid waste materials and gaseous emissions. The manufacturing process is very complex, involving a large number of materials (with varying material properties), pyroprocessing techniques (e.g. wet and dry kiln, preheating, recirculation), and fuel sources (e.g. coal, fuel oil, natural gas, tires, hazardous wastes, petroleum coke). (p. 296)

The production of concrete accounts for 5% to 7% of all human-generated CO2 emissions, not including its transportation (Stajanča & Eštoková, 2017, p. 84). If the cement industry were a country, it would be the third largest carbon dioxide emitter in the world. Widespread use of concrete destroys ecologies that support fertilisation, pollination, oxygen production and water purification. The explosion of skatepark construction in the U.S.A saw a 2021% increase in facilities between 1997 and 2014 (O’Connor, 2016, p. 406). As the majority of newly built skateparks are concrete constructions, we observe that the sportification of skateboarding compounded by its inclusion in the Olympic Games (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2022) and its incorporation into neoliberal urban governance (Atencio et al., 2018) coincides with it becoming a more overt form of polluted leisure.

An example of how concrete shapes the polluted leisure of skateboarding comes from fieldwork observation performed in 2017 at the Vans Park Series World Championship held in Shanghai (Vans Park Series, 2017). In preparation for this two-day event, a temporary concrete skatepark was built on the harbour of the Huangpu River. It is immediately apparent that the phrase ‘temporary concrete’ is paradoxical. The park building began with the construction of a foundation of wooden transitions and plywood, subsequently covered by 107 cubic yards of concrete that was sprayed on and given a smooth finish. Two spectator stands were constructed, one for the public that could accommodate approximately 430 spectators, another for VIPs, media and competitors designed to accommodate around 180. It was reported by a member of Millennial Events, a Singapore-based company that provides project management to sports events in Asia, that concrete would be reused for landfill in other construction projects, and the timber would be recycled. Demolition of the park commenced within an hour of the award ceremony at the end of the competition. No record or evidence of the recycling has been accessible.
Legislation and defensive architecture exclude skateboarding from many grey urban zones (Carr et al., 2009). This exclusion pushes skateboarders to seek out appropriate sanctioned spaces in which they can skate, often isolated sites are chosen by those in power so as not to upset residents, e.g. via noise pollution and the threat or perception of anti-social behaviour. Governed skateparks are discussed by Howell (2008) as neoliberal playgrounds, containing and confining skateboarders. Skateboarders and their leisure are ordered into the ‘wastelands’. These wastelands represent how some places operate between being deemed as unproductive and residual by the state and capitalists but are still in a contested state of transformation and use, for example, for leisure.

Some skateparks in Hong Kong are in industrial zones and subject to both roadside pollution, social isolation and heavy industry pollutants. Roadside skateparks under highway bridges and flyovers are common worldwide. Many skateparks have been constructed on brownfield locations, sites zoned as contaminated and previously used for industrial purposes: trash heaps, waste dumps and former sites of industrialisation and capital extraction. A key example of such a development is the world-famous Venice Beach skatepark in Los Angeles. The site was formerly used as an oil and petrochemical storage site. It was transformed and labelled as a green site in 2002 through the development of a concrete skatepark, with nature trail, and commercial revitalisation (De Sousa, 2007). Skateparks are promoted as a greening issue for brownfield sites because the concrete base of these facilities can act as a cap on top of contaminated soil (McIntyre & Russelle, 2018). However, the fact that skateparks are concrete constructions points to the fact that these green spaces are in fact grey spaces, somewhere between a space of contamination and its prevention. Even when used for greening brownfields, skateboarding remains grey, making any greening credentials – both materially and symbolically – questionable.

That said, Francisco Vivoni (2013) argues that skateboarders work can be part of a green city paradigm as they re-use space with an ‘alternative sustainability’ and ‘ethic of care for built environments’ (p. 340). At some DIY skateparks, weeds and shrubbery have gained a foothold in urban environments that have been left alone. These plants subsequently provide shelter (e.g. shade) for skaters and can also hide skateboarding activities from passersby while in turn the presence of skateboarders helps preserve nascent biodiversity that has managed to return and gain a foothold in urban wasteland zones. Vivoni is attuned to the benefits of leisure in grey space where he argues the presence of skateboarders stimulates contact and coalition with the disparate users of public space (p. 346). Those users need not be human. Echoing Borden’s Lefebvreian influenced argument, skateboarding can suggest hope through leisure in the Anthropocene, where in grey spaces, ‘a magnificent life is waiting just around the corner and far, far away’ (Lefebvre in Borden, 2019, p. 285). Wilsey (2014, p. 113) claims that skateboarding ‘is bringing emotion to emotionless terrain – unloved parking lots, vacant corporate downtowns long after office workers are home’. In his words, skateboarding is ‘redeeming’ the grey spaces of the Anthropocene. Skateboarders arguably become caretakers of grey spaces, making them sacramental through leisure purpose (Gómez-Varo et al., 2022).

Expanding on Wilsey’s unloved spaces and the redeeming of grey spaces, we also suggest that sometimes skateboarders bring love to greyness. Ardently working with the DIY approach to the materials at hand, a know-how about grey spaces and greyness and how to find love in the Anthropocene through leisure can be harnessed as trouble accelerates. For example, consider post-earthquake (2011) in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. Here skateboarders seized the opportunity to skate on devastated, twisted and ruptured roads. They brought play to a traumatised community, and hope. Thorpe (2013) frames this creative recreation through Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis, highlighting the potential of skateboarding in dealing with arrhythmia, the unpredictable disrupted breaking of rhythm. Skateboarders evidence how to navigate, rework and revitalise not just grey spaces, but grey times.
Conclusion

The contribution of this article is to theorise grey space in leisure discourse. In framing skateboarding in both the material and symbolic space of greyness, we provoke discussion of leisure and pollution. We have argued that skateboarding has been regarded as a paradoxical leisure activity, difficult to define, and sui generis. We embrace this ambiguity and recast it through the conceptual work of greyness. This motif captures both the socially ambiguous nature of skateboarding (sport, art, philosophy, lifestyle) and the material context in which it is performed and embedded. Skateboarders occupy a liminal space of nuance, contradictions and paradoxes, for example both desiring concrete, being formed by it, and resisting it. In addition, they have through greyness been unsettling any smooth operation of social power. Given such, we assert that skateboarding reveals a lot about how pollution functions with and through leisure in the Anthropocene by occupying and being stewards of both the materially grey and the socially grey spaces of leisure. Just as blue and green spaces affect leisure practitioners senses, orientations, values, beliefs, emotions, practices and politics, so too do grey spaces. Urban outdoor leisure beyond skateboarding such as cyclists, parkour, BMX, graffiti and scooters could make use of the argument we make here (Atkinson, 2009; Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011). The grey framework could also be useful for understanding the consequences attached to snowdome, bouldering centres, indoor skydiving facilities, wavepools and velodromes that all recast green and blue space leisure (Salome et al., 2013). Ultimately grey spaces help us address the ambiguities and contradictions of leisure in the Anthropocene.

Notes

1. We work within the frame that the Anthropocene is a geological age in which humans have transformed the planet and in so doing continue to damage its diversity-of-life sustaining and creative capacities (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000).
2. See Kwok Shui Rd Skatepark situated by a busy highway and next to two petrol stations (Grid Ref 22.370936583894643, 114.12672261565562). Fanling Skatepark in an industrial area (Grid Ref 22.500291539461667, 114.14752332419916) and Morrison Hill Rd skatepark is situated next to heavy main roads and flyovers (Grid Ref 22.27543419962416, 114.17942940484777).
3. See Grid Ref 33.98743270613993, −118.47559767682908.
4. Comments from personal communication with Dr Mike Jeffries with regard to the Newcastle based ‘The Waste DIY’ community skatepark.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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