

Call for Papers

Special Issue – *STAPS Journal*

“Surf Studies: Definitions, Permeability, and Hybridity”

Issue Coordinators:

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Surf Studies now constitute a dynamic and rapidly structuring field of research. Long marginalized within academia, surfing has now established itself as a fully-fledged object of study, drawing on approaches from history, sociology, geography, anthropology, ethnology, literature, cultural studies, Gender Studies, and environmental sciences (Augustin, 1994; Guibert, 2021; Moser, 2022; Swartwood, 2022; Falaix, 2024). To think about surfing is to examine simultaneously a sporting practice, a culture, a lifestyle, and a space of social, political, and symbolic relations.

This special issue proposes to explore surf cultures, focusing on their multiple, permeable, and hybrid dimensions. Far from any fixed definition, surf culture is understood here as a fluid, relational, and situated process, shaped by socially constructed codes, norms, hierarchies, and representations (Guibert, 2011; Arellano & Espinoza Camus, 2024; Goreau-Ponceaud, 2024; Moron-Garreau & Bourdeau, 2024; Adolin et al., 2025; Swartwood, 2025). In this context, surfing emerges as a privileged site of negotiation, encounter, and tension between tradition and modernity, between local heritage and global circulation.

Moreover, the practice of surfing contributes to the construction of personal and collective identities, influencing relationships to the body, the environment, and self-image. It is also rooted in long historical trajectories, often marked by colonial, racial, and social dynamics, particularly within surfing spaces (Pacific, Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas) (Adolin, 2023; Lemarié, 2024). Surf Studies thus invite a reconsideration of processes of creolization, cultural reappropriation, and hybridization, while also questioning the very existence of a singular “surf culture.”

Surf Studies also examine the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion at work within this milieu. Despite notable developments, women and other minoritized groups remain underrepresented or face specific forms of marginalization (Nick & Brown, 2006; Krista, 2010; Polycarpe & Cruzin, 2023; Onken et al., 2024). Contributions from Gender Studies and intersectionality make it possible to analyze these power relations and the contemporary transformations of gender, race, and class norms in surfing.

Finally, contemporary ecological challenges—rising sea levels, ocean warming and acidification, coastal transformations—are profoundly reshaping the relationships between coastal communities and the ocean (Augustin, 201; Adolin, 2023). As a practice intimately connected to nature, surfing lies at the heart of these reconfigurations. It is therefore essential to examine how the practice is being reshaped in response to environmental crises, balancing the preservation of traditions, technical innovation, and new forms of ecological engagement.

Four thematic axes structure this call:

Axis 1: “Surfing as a Sporting, Historical, and Sociological Practice”

- History of surfing and surf cultures
- Social uses of surfing and cross-cutting issues
- Imaginaries, narratives, and cultural mediations
- Heritage-making, memory, legacies, and transmission

Axis 2: “Identities, Adaptations, and Appropriations of Surf Culture”

- Local identities, global circulations, globalization, and social trajectories
- Bodies, gender, feminization, masculinities, minorities, and plural identities
- Creolity, hybridity, and intersectionality
- Media, cinema, social networks, cultural industries, and influences

Axis 3: “Geopolitics, Spaces, and Environmental Issues in Surfing Practice”

- Institutionalization and sportization of surfing
- Territories, local anchoring, cultural resistance, and symbolic stakes
- Geographical spaces of surfing (Pacific, Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas...), tourism, networks, and transnational circulations
- Ecological issues, environmental crisis, and conflicts of use

Axis 4: “Epistemology and Structuring of Surf Studies”

- Mapping Surf Studies
- Methods, fieldwork, interdisciplinarity
- Theoretical issues and critical positioning of the field

Proposals may be submitted under any of these axes, drawing on approaches from history, sociology, social psychology, sport management, or educational sciences, and at various scales of analysis (local, national, or international). Contributions are also welcome for the sections “New Research Direction” and “Book Reviews.”

Submission Guidelines

- Authors are invited to submit an expression of interest including:
- A title
- An abstract of approximately 500 words
- 3 to 5 keywords
- A short biographical and bibliographical note to: francis.adolin@u-bordeaux.fr and jeffrey.swartwood@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr

Proposals may be written in French or English. Selected contributions will subsequently be developed into full articles. Acceptance of an expression of interest does not guarantee final acceptance of the article. STAPS is a peer-reviewed journal using a double-blind review process. As coordinators, we cannot under any circumstances guarantee the acceptance of any proposal. Articles must comply with the journal’s guidelines (maximum 50,000 characters). For further information, please consult: https://www.cairn.info/docs/STAPS_normes) and submissions must be uploaded exclusively to the Manuscript Manager platform: <https://staps.manuscriptmanager.net>

Timeline

- Call for papers open: March 15 – September 1, 2026
- Deadline for submission of expressions of interest: September 1, 2026
- Notification to authors: October 1, 2026
- Deadline for full article submissions: January 8, 2027
- Return of double-blind, anonymous reviews: April 8, 2027
- Final submission of articles: July 8, 2027
- Publication of the issue: December 2027

Selected Bibliography

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