

POLITICS-FREE IN THE SPORTS WORLD?: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF THE
SOCIAL AND MARKETING IMPLICATIONS OF ATHLETE ACTIVISM

by

BUMSOO PARK

KENON A. BROWN, COMMITTEE CHAIR
ANDREW C. BILLINGS, COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR
KIMBERLY BISSELL
SCOTT PARROTT
MELVIN LEWIS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Communication & Information Sciences
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2021

ABSTRACT

Despite countless arguments pertaining to the desired separation of political elements from sports, the intersection of sports and politics can be found more visibly and frequently through athletes and their involvement in sociopolitical issues. Additionally, given the increasing number of athlete activism, notably coupled with recent Black Lives Matter movements as well as the critical social and marketing impacts of athletes, it is imperative to further delve into athlete activism. Thus, this dissertation examines (a) whether and how differently people perceive athlete activism, with a focus on the role of news media exposure and (b) the subsequent effects of athlete activism through a 2 (What: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) x 2 (about Who: an in-group athlete vs. an out-group athlete) x 2 (How: selective vs. forced) experimental study.

Based on various theoretical underpinnings, including media effects, selective exposure, and social identity theory, a total sample of 378 participants recruited from Amazon MTurk was empirically analyzed via statistical tests such as ANCOVA and regression. The results showed the significant moderating role of news media exposure (attitude consistency) in that there were attitude differences between participants in the attitude-consistent news report condition and participants in the counter-attitudinal news report condition. Additionally, this dissertation found that people's political attitudes can be reinforced and polarized through attitude-consistent media consumption as participants' attitudes became either more negative or more positive (depending on their prior attitudes) after exposure to the attitude-consistent news exposure.

A strong positive relationship between attitude toward the protesting athlete and attitude toward the endorsed brand, along with the moderating role of the sponsorship decision was revealed, implying the importance of sponsorship decision when its sponsored athletes are involved in controversial issues. Lastly, this dissertation identified the positive relationship between athlete activism and political participation, supporting the idea that athletes have the power to change our society as well as showing the inextricable link between sports and politics.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who helped me and guided me throughout this journey. In particular,

To my grandmother, Yong-Hee Lee,

You always saw the potential in me and gave me the biggest support. I wish you were here to see my dream come true.

To my parents, Jong-Moon Park and Soo-Wook Ko,

Thank you for your unconditional and endless love and support, which made this journey possible. I love you.

To my THREE sisters, Myungjin, Jounsun, and Sunmi,

Thank you for all your help, encouragement, and sacrifice since I was born. You are the best sisters in the world.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ANCOVA	Analysis of Covariance
AP	Attitude toward the protest
PE	Perceived protest effectiveness
APA	Attitude toward the protesting athlete
<i>a</i>	Cronbach's alpha, index of internal consistency
<i>b</i>	Unstandardized coefficient
<i>df</i>	Degrees of freedom
<i>F</i>	Fisher's F ratio
<i>t</i>	Computed t-test value to determine means differ
<i>M</i>	Arithmetic mean
<i>n</i>	Number
<i>p</i>	Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value
<i>SD</i>	Standard deviation
<i>SE</i>	Standard error
<	Less than
>	More than
=	Equal to
%	Percent

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my co-advisors, Dr. Andrew C. Billings and Dr. Kenon A. Brown, for their continuous help, guidance, and dedication to my development as a researcher and as a person. I could not have completed the program and dissertation without both of you. Thank you again for everything you have done for me.

To the rest of my committee, Dr. Kimberly Bissell, Dr. Scott Parrott, and Dr. Melvin Lewis, thank you for your time, knowledge, and guidance for my dissertation and throughout my PhD journey. Your encouragement and insightful feedback helped me get through all the hurdles during my PhD program.

To my closest friends, Youngho, Youngsuk, Sungmin, and Kyuho, I have known each of you for more than 20 years and you guys are the biggest support group for me in my life like family. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement whenever I complained or needed to vent (even though you did not understand what was about), especially since I decided to pursue my graduate studies in the United States.

I would like to thank my graduate school cohorts at Alabama—especially Dr. Bumsoo Kim, Dr. Nick Buzzelli, Dr. Nathan Towery, and Haseon Park (and Joonhyeok)—who have helped me through the tough times. I could not have got through these past three years without your support, encouragement, and jokes.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Media Effects on Athlete Activism.....	9
Framing Perspective.....	9
Social Identity Approach.....	13
Selective Exposure Perspective.....	18
Athlete Activism and the Subsequent Effects.....	26
Marketing Perspective.....	27
Sociopolitical Perspective.....	29
Hypotheses and Research Questions.....	30
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD.....	35
Research Design and Participants.....	35
Manipulation.....	36
Procedures.....	37

Instruments	37
Statistical Plan	42
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	46
Demographic Profile	46
Manipulation Check Analysis	48
Hypotheses and Research Questions	50
Factors Influencing Selective Exposure	50
Consequences of News Media Exposure	51
Subsequent Effects of Athlete Activism	67
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	72
Summary of Findings	73
Theoretical Implications	76
Practical Implications	79
Limitations and Future Research	82
Conclusion	85
REFERENCES	87
APPENDIX	101
Appendix A: News Selection	101
Appendix B: News Articles	102
Appendix C: Sponsorship Decision	106
Appendix D: Survey Questionnaires	108
Appendix E: IRB Approval	114
Appendix F: Informed Consent	115

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Statistical Plan	42
Table 4.1: Demographic Profile	47
Table 4.2: Manipulation and Participants	48
Table 4.3: Manipulation Check	49
Table 4.4: News Article Selection	50
Table 4.5: Attitude-Consistent and Counter-Attitudinal Conditions	53
Table 4.6: Attitude-Consistent and Counter-Attitudinal Media Exposure	55
Table 4.7: Regression analysis for AP and the moderating role of news media exposure	56
Table 4.8: Regression analysis for PE and the moderating role of news media exposure	56
Table 4.9: Regression analysis for APA and the moderating role of news media exposure	57
Table 4.10: In-Group and Out-Group Conditions	58
Table 4.11: In-Group and Out-Group Media Exposure.....	60
Table 4.12: Regression analysis for AP and the moderating role of news media exposure	61
Table 4.13: Regression analysis for PE and the moderating role of news media exposure	62
Table 4.14: Regression analysis for APA and the moderating role of news media exposure	62
Table 4.15: Selective Exposure and Forced Exposure Conditions	63
Table 4.16: Selective and Forced Media Exposure	65
Table 4.17: Regression analysis for AP and the moderating role of news media exposure	66
Table 4.18: Regression analysis for PE and the moderating role of news media exposure	66

Table 4.19: Regression analysis for APA and the moderating role of news media exposure	67
Table 4.20: Indirect effects of AP on APA via PE	68
Table 4.21: Regression analysis and the moderating role of sponsorship decision	69

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Structure of Dissertation	8
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model of Dissertation	34
Figure 4.1: The moderating role of news media exposure.....	57
Figure 4.2: Path model results for relationships between AP, PE, and APA	68
Figure 4.3: Conceptual model and results of H5, H6, and RQ4	70
Figure 4.4: Interaction between attitude toward the protest and sponsorship decision	71

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Sports and politics don’t mix” Eric Heiden (Schwartz, n.d., p.1)

There have been countless arguments that sports should be separate from politics, and that sports ought to be ‘un-political’ (Thiel, Villanova, Toms, Thing, & Dolan, 2016). However, the question, “Is the separation of sports and politics even possible?” still remains open, and, in today’s digital world, it is not difficult to find where sports and politics blend together. As Gift and Miner (2017) pointed out, political elements are, indeed, everywhere in sports, both on-and off-field, and manifested in many different ways, including through athletes, fans, teams, sponsors, signs, and events.

Previous literature provides evidence that sports are “a unique environment” that can be used to foster nationalistic qualities, and to shape our collective understanding of public events provoking certain political themes (e.g., Butterworth, 2014). For example, Butterworth and Moskal (2009) examined how the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl (the first time a college bowl game was sponsored by a military manufacturer) produces a unique instance of sport and military convergence. Similarly, scholars (e.g., Fischer, 2014; Rugg, 2016) found that memorialization ceremonies (e.g., veterans, 9/11) and political campaigns (e.g., Salute to Service) on the football field not only make for saturation of military symbolism, but are also used to normalize war in general, trivializing the seriousness of the war on terror. Indeed, militaristic and nationalistic meanings or symbols are constructed and reinforced through sports (e.g., Butterworth, 2012, 2014).

Also, mega sporting events (e.g., the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup) have been used as a useful diplomatic tool in international politics (Riordan & Krüger, 1999; Strenk, 1979). Mega sporting events have also demonstrated their ability to foster various forms of nationalism (e.g., nationalism, patriotism, internationalism, smugness), which, at the same time, makes people consume more sports (e.g., Billings et al., 2013; Brown, Billings, Schallohorn, Schramm, & Devlin, 2016).

Additionally, the nexus of sports and politics can be found in politicians' actions and language. Historically, politicians, including late American President John K. Kennedy, who said, "Politics is like football," and Aneurin Bevan, who said, "Politics is a blood sport," have frequently invoked sports as a metaphor for politics (Gift & Miner, 2017). Even though politicians may simply want to watch a sports game, attending a sports game and supporting a team can be interpreted and utilized in a very political way. Namely, politicians can take advantage of sports to develop and cement their popularity by supporting a sports team alongside other fans, as social identity theory postulates (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Ironically, the most convincing evidence that sports and politics are inextricably linked comes from athletes, despite the fact that they are strictly forbidden from any type of political actions (e.g., Cunningham & Regan, 2011; Thorson & Serazio, 2018; Smith, 2019). In other words, the intersection of sports and politics can be found more visibly through athletes and their public stance or action for sociopolitical issues (e.g., athlete activism).

Importance of Studying Athlete Activism

Historically, many athletes (e.g., Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Tommie Smith, Colin Kaepernick, etc.), and especially Black male athletes, have continuously participated in social movements to speak out for sociopolitical issues such as social discrimination, criminal injustice,

and police brutality (Cunningham & Regan, 2011). Not only are athletes' social movements greatly influential to sport fans and other people, but their actions or voices are also considered to be a useful tool in spotlighting issues through media (May, 2009; Miller & Laczniak, 2011; Pelak, 2005).

One of the most recognizable examples of athlete activism is in American track athletes, such as the Tommie Smith and John Carlos' Black Power salute at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. To be specific, the gold medal winner (Tommie Smith) and the bronze medal winner (John Carlos) of the 200-meter sprint, raised their black-gloved fists during the Olympics medal ceremony to resist social inequality in the 1960s (Agyemang, Singer, & DeLorme, 2010; Powell, 2008; Rader, 2008). Besides racial inequality, Muhammad Ali, the heavyweight boxing champion, publicly spoke out and refused to serve Vietnam War in 1967, saying, "I ain't got no personal quarrel with those Viet Congs." Since then he became one of the most famous antiwar figures in history (Agyemang, 2012; Kaufman, 2008).

Also, in March of 1976, the Yale women's Crew team, including two-time Olympic rower Chris Ernst, marched into the office of their Director of Women's Athletics with "Title IX" written on their chest and back to protest against unequal treatment and lack of athletic facilities for women compared to men (Sharro, 2017). Indeed, previous cases show athletes have participated in different social movements, with different purposes, and in many distinct ways, but they all played an integral part in progressive social change in the United States.

Athletes' protests for social injustice have inevitably continued and are more pervasive recently. After the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year old African American teenager boy, while walking home in Sanford, Florida, on February 26, 2012, the Miami Heat players, including LeBron James and Dwayne Wade, posted photos of themselves in hoodies with their

heads bowed in support of Martin to protest the young innocent boy's death before their game on March 24, 2012. Similarly, the St. Louis Rams players Tavon Austin, Kenny Britt, Jared Cook, Chris Givens, and Stedman Bailey made "hands up, don't shoot," gestures on the field for Michael Brown, an 18-year old African American man who was shot and killed by the police (Sanderson, Frederick, & Stocz, 2016).

However, athletes who spoke out for sociopolitical issues (e.g., racial equality, territorial dispute) do not always cause positive outcomes. Sometimes athletes experience an extensive backlash from fans, executives, teams, politicians, and even international organizations (e.g., FIFA, IOC) and media play a pivotal role in athlete activism (Bryant, 2018; Kahn, 2012; Mangan, Kwon, & Kim, 2013, Park et al., 2020).

For example, the five Black NFL players for the St. Louis Rams who participated in the hand gesture protest for Michael Brown experienced racial abuse and negative feedback from fans on social media (Sanderson et al., 2016). Also, Colin Kaepernick was perceived as unpatriotic and anti-military, as media continued to highlight Kaepernick's kneeling protest related to nationalism and patriotism even though his protest was about racial injustices and struggles of marginalized people in the United States (Martin & McHendry, 2016). Moreover, Kaepernick could not continue his NFL player career; no NFL team including San Francisco 49ers, wanted to contract with him after his controversial protest (Kilgore, 2017).

Aside from the protests for racial inequality, in the 2012 London Olympics, a South Korean soccer player, Jongwoo Park, was barred from the medal ceremony by the IOC because of his after-game celebration, which was considered a political action given the historical territorial dispute between Korea and Japan. After winning the bronze medal match against Japan, Park held a placard that read "Dokdo is our land" on the field, and his action captured

great media attention, both internationally and domestically, receiving mostly great praise from the Korean media and people, while leading to an extensive backlash from Japanese media and people (Mangan et al., 2013).

There have been a few scholarly attempts to examine athlete activism mostly from a sport sociology perspective, focusing on why and how athletes participate in such social movements and its sociological meanings (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2010; Kluch, 2020) without much consideration of media effects. However, as evidenced in previous studies on the protest (e.g., Arpan et al., 2006; Billings & Moscovitz, 2018; Lee, 2014; McLeod, 1995; Park, Park, & Billings, 2020), media play an essential role in social movement, especially how people perceive the issue. As key information sources, media are greatly influential to people and their perceptions which are invoked by media can lead to different marketing and social impacts. Thus, understanding the role of media is imperative and should be advanced.

Also, given financial entanglements interplay with sports and athletes' influences on various stakeholders, marketing and PR professionals must deeper understand athlete activism to effectively deal with it after their protest. Namely, due to recent increased media and public attention to athletes, athletes' controversial actions (e.g., protest) can easily damage athletes themselves and stakeholders (e.g., team, league, associated brands), so public relations practitioners need to handle and make an appropriate decision when athletes are involved in such a controversial issue like athlete activism.

Moreover, examining athlete activism from a communication perspective is more important today than ever because of today's digital media environment, and public attention to athletes, coupled with the social movement, "BlackLivesMatter," after recent incidents of Black people's death by police (e.g., Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks).

With the reinvigorated BLM movement in the wake of the police killing of Black people and with today's advancements in digital media technology, athletes' protest for social injustice is not only capturing great media and public attention but also their actions are reevaluated, producing significant social and marketing implications (Stone, 2020). Particularly, considering the NFL's recent social justice video featuring Kaepernick (who was blackballed by the NFL due to his protest) and people's reevaluations of his kneeling protest including NFL Commissioner Goodell who acknowledged that previous efforts to support NFL player protests were inadequate (Melas, 2020; Stone, 2020), further scholarly investigations are worth exploring for both academia and industry.

Purpose of the Dissertation

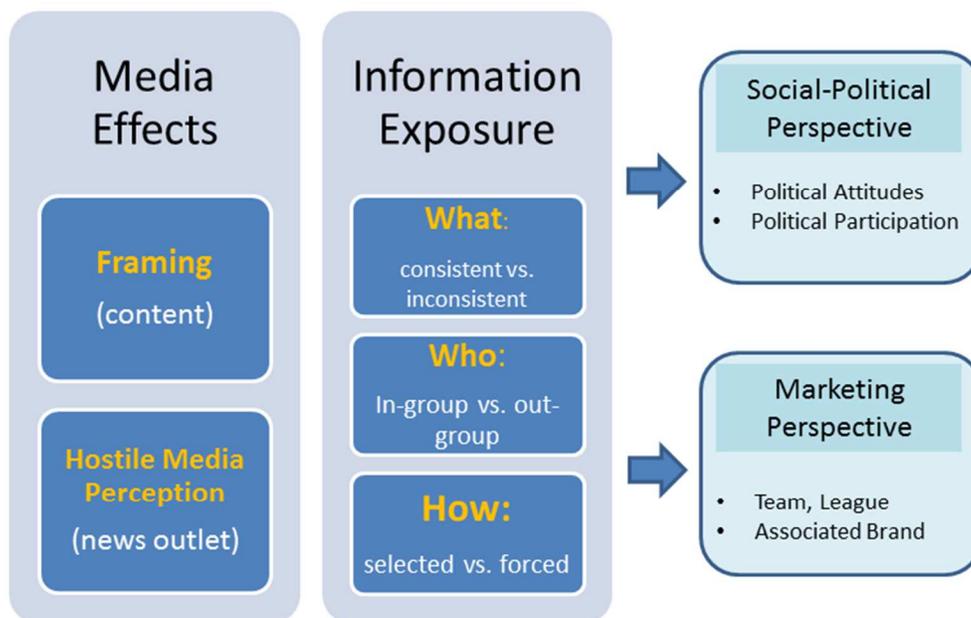
This dissertation will examine the intersection of sports and politics with a particular emphasis on athlete activism, considering both the increasing amount of athlete involvement in sociopolitical issues, as well as the widespread social and marketing impacts that athletes enjoy. The main purpose of the dissertation is twofold. First, by conducting an experimental design study, this dissertation aims to explore how people perceive information regarding athlete activism, focusing on the role of media. Even though the importance of media in the success of athlete activism has been highlighted, little empirical evidence exists to determine exactly which elements of media influence people, and in what specific ways viewers are affected. Thus, this dissertation will investigate how people differ in their perception of the news coverage of an athlete's protest, depending on the type of news media framing utilized, and on the news media outlet itself. Additionally, the importance of information exposure has been overlooked in the athlete activism paradigm despite the significant findings from the political communication field,

where they share many characteristics. Thus, this dissertation will also examine whether and how information exposure produces different effects in the context of athlete activism.

Second, this dissertation will seek to provide empirical evidence of the social and marketing impacts of athlete activism. There is a strong belief that athlete activism is influential to members of society by promoting progressive social change (Cunningham & Regan, 2011), but this has not been empirically or sufficiently examined. Not only does previous research on athlete activism mainly utilize a qualitative research method, but it also examined only athletes' social movements as a consequence against social injustice. Additionally, from a marketing perspective, understanding athlete activism is an important matter for various stakeholders. Thus, this dissertation will explore the subsequent effects of athlete activism on endorsed brands.

Overview of the Dissertation

The first chapter provides an introduction to the topic by outlining the purpose of this dissertation, beginning with an explanation of the significance of athlete activism. Chapter two will review relevant literature with the theoretical framework related to this dissertation. The review contains two parts: the first part will examine the media effects on athlete activism with relevant theoretical underpinnings (framing, social identity approach, selective exposure). The second part will explore athlete activism and the subsequent effects from a marketing standpoint and a sociopolitical perspective. Chapter three addresses the research methodology this dissertation is employing, with explanations of a study design, sample, instruments, manipulations and data analysis. Chapter four examines proposed hypotheses and research questions, providing results from statistical analyses. Lastly, Chapter five provides a summary of core findings and their theoretical and practical implications. Limitations and directions for future research are also presented along with the conclusion of this dissertation.



1st Part – Perception Process

2nd Part – Subsequent Effects

Figure 1.1 Structure of Dissertation

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide a review of literature and theoretical frame relevant to this dissertation. This chapter contains two parts: the first part will focus on factors that affect individuals' perception of athlete activism with media effects theories. The second part will discuss the subsequent effects of athlete activism from marketing and sociopolitical perspectives.

Media Effects on Athlete Activism

Framing Approach

Many mass communication research studies have attempted to explore media effects and have developed related theories (e.g., agenda-setting, priming, framing, cultivation, selective exposure, etc.) to deeper understand the relationships between media, message, and audience. Among these theories, research on the protest paradigm has mainly utilized framing theory as a theoretical underpinning (Arpan et al., 2006; Frisby, 2018; Watkins, 2001).

The great majority of framing research is rooted in sociology literature (Goffman, 1974), offering relatively loose and broad definitions of framing such as “information that conveys different perspectives on the same event or issue.” This sociological foundation of framing can also be labeled “emphasis framing,” which works by highlighting one aspect of an issue as opposed to another (e.g., economy vs. foreign affairs policy). For example, when a political candidate frames a campaign in economic terms, it may cause voters to evaluate the candidate based on their economic policy. In contrast, if a candidate focuses on foreign affairs policy,

voters may do the same, and, as a result, support the candidate with the stronger foreign affairs policy (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016).

However, there has been a constant debate regarding the loosely conceptualized and operationalized framing despite its prevalent uses. Indeed, scholars have conceptualized framing in many different ways, and the effects of these different types of framing have been examined in many different contexts (e.g., social problems, political campaigns, protest, etc.) accordingly.

For example, Gitlin (1980) was the first to introduce framing to the mass communication field, discussing how news coverage can influence an audience; namely, “selection, emphasis, and exclusion” (p.7) of certain aspects of an issue in news coverage, a concept known as framing, can influence public opinion. Kahneman and Tversky (1984) offered another view of framing, equivalence framing, highlighting how different descriptions of choice problems (but with exactly the same information) influence people’s decisions or evaluations of the various options presented to them. Focusing on the cognitive process of salience, Entman (1993) defined framing as “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient to promote a particular social problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluations and so on” (p. 52). Also, according to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), a frame or framing, as a package to characterize an issue or event, can influence people by highlighting certain elements of an issue above others; namely, a frame or framing provides a way to interpret or understand issues or topics by making preexisting cognitive schemas more applicable and active.

Through inductive and deductive approaches, many different types of frames have been identified and examined. For example, Iyengar’s (1994) research about television frames and political issues found that people are more likely to blame social problems (e.g., poverty) on individuals when the news media focus mainly on individual cases with a narrow lens (i.e.,

episodic frame), compared to when the news media emphasize the society or background with a wide-angle lens (i.e., thematic frame). Similarly, participants in the episodic frame condition, which highlights the particular case and human interest details, tend to express more adverse emotional reactions compared to participants in the thematic frame condition, which focuses on contexts and environments, according to Gross's (2008) study on emotional reactions and framing effects.

In addition to episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar, 1994), many different types of frames were identified (e.g., human interest frame, conflict frame, economic frame, ethical frame, etc.) and examined (e.g., Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The conflict frame involves a conflict or disagreement between people, groups, political parties, or countries, including physical, political, ideological conflicts, and this conflict frame particularly has been widely used in the context of political issues. Additionally, the human interest frame focuses on individuals, including their face, their personal story, or an emotional angle to an issue or problem and it has been often used with the conflict frame. Regarding the conflict and the human interest frame, Parrott and his colleagues (2019) found that visual framings (political vs. human interest) of immigrants and refugees affect emotional reactions. To be specific, participants in the political-framing condition were more likely to have negative emotions regarding the immigrants and refugees while participants in the human interest condition tend to have more positive emotions about immigrants and refugees.

In this regard, news frames are considered one of the most important elements of news stories in terms of delivering a message and establishing a meaning toward societal issues including athlete activism (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Park et al.,

2020). That is, media as a sender of messages or information, indeed, influence audiences and this dynamic can be also found in athlete activism.

Framing and Athlete Activism.

Regarding social movements, framing approach has been extensively utilized when looking at the effects of the protest and individuals' perceptions with a focus on media effects. In other words, the notion that people are subject to the manner in which news media are framed is evidenced in existing protest research (e.g., Ashley & Olson, 1998; Boykoff, 2006; McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Detenber, 1999), suggesting the critical role of the news media in the success of protesters and protests (e.g., Cohen, 1980; Gitlin, 1980; Watkins, 2001).

For example, the results of McLeod (1995) show that people who were exposed to a slanted or negatively framed news report against the protest had more negative attitudes toward the protest than those who saw a more balanced or a positively framed news story. Similarly, McLeod and Detenber (1999) also found that the degree of protest support in news stories has significant influence on audiences' decisions whether they support or oppose the protest. By the same token, the recent experimental study about athlete activism (Park et al., 2020) examined the effects of news media framing on individuals' attitudes toward the protesting athlete and found that people who were exposed to the positively-framed news report had more positive attitudes toward the protesting athlete than those exposed to the negatively framed news report after controlling over individuals' preexisting attitude toward the protesting athlete.

Moreover, the case of Colin Kaepernick's national anthem protest shows how framing theory is relevant to my dissertation area as well as show the heuristic value of framing in understanding athlete activism. Kaepernick's kneeling down protest garnered great media attention, and, not long after his protest, he was perceived 'unpatriotic' and 'anti-military' even

though his protest was nothing to do with nationalism and military. Mass media continue to focus on his refusal to stand up (but kneel) during the national anthem (the framing process: selection, highlight), despite his repeated claims that his actions were for the marginalized population in the United States and about social discriminations and police brutality (the framing process: exclusion). Through highlighting only Kaepernick's behavior (i.e., refusal to stand but kneel during the national anthem) with a narrow lens, and without background or reasons for his protest, he was not only labeled as unpatriotic, but also as very negative (Boykoff & Carrington, 2020; Park et al., 2020; Martin & McHendry, 2016; Schmidt, Frederick, Pegoraro, & Spencer, 2019).

Indeed, existing literature on the protest paradigm including those aforementioned herein, along with seminal framing research (Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Iyengar, 1994; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2009) demonstrate that news media as a sender of media message have the capacity to affect people's understanding and perceptions about social issues including athlete activism through the framing process (e.g., inclusion, exclusion, emphasized, overlooked).

Social Identity Approach

Having discussed framing literature that largely focused on media message content, the following discussion turns to focus on an audience, the recipient of the media message. So far, previous framing researchers have heavily focused on types of news media framing and its effects on individuals' perceptions without much consideration of audiences and their preexisting factors (e.g., fanship, attitude toward news outlets, political affiliation, etc.), which can make an audience less or more susceptible to news media framing (Arpan et al., 2006; Hoewe & Peacock, 2019). One of the key predictors in the information process is social identity

(Mastro, 2003), making certain aspects of the message more salient, which in turn affect individuals' perception of a media message (Kim & Hwang, 2019; Mastro, 2003).

Social identity was defined as "...the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). Social identity theory (SIT) was originally developed to explain the social psychology of group processes and intergroup relations, namely, how and why people form opinions about themselves and the groups to which they belong (Reid, Giles, & Harwood, 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to SIT (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals seek to maintain positive self-esteem, and this high self-esteem can be established by being a member of a social group, evaluating one's own group positively through in-group/out-group comparisons (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In an attempt to further explain this phenomena (e.g., intergroup behavior, group comparison, in-group favoritism), the self-categorization theory (SCT) was proposed (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). SCT, which can be considered as an extension of SIT, focuses on categorization process; namely, individuals tend to see or define themselves in group terms (i.e., social identity) and they categorize or distinguish themselves and others as members of certain groups through social comparisons based on shared social identities (e.g., gender, race, religion, political affiliation, sports team), producing group cohesion, positive in-group attitudes (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Hogg & Terry, 2000). SIT blends together with SCT, together forming a social identity approach to help understand why people tend to group "us" versus "them," along with phenomena of in-group favoritism and out-group derogation.

The social identity approach has been widely applied in many different fields where group membership is a key factor, such as political communication and sport management (e.g., Cruz, 2017; Lee, Kwak, & Braunstein-Minkove, 2016; Wu, Tsai, & Hung, 2012).

Previous research on politics shows that political party affiliation is an important factor to support or oppose the policy (e.g., Bartels, 2008; Bond, Shulman, & Gilbert, 2018; Cohen, 2003), and sometimes an identical message is evaluated differently based on audiences' group membership (Perloff, 2015; Reid, 2012). Specifically, Cohen (2003) revealed that people rely more on information from their political party than policy content when evaluating a political policy; that is, liberals tend to support a policy from the Democratic Party while conservatives are more likely to oppose it without much consideration of policy content. Similarly, Bond, Shulman, and Gilbert (2018) found that people have more positive evaluations of what their political in-group members' saying compared to out-group members.

In the context of sports, the social identity approach has been predominantly used and applied to examine sport fans' fanship (Fink, Parker, Brett, & Higgins, 2009), "an individual's sense of connection to a sports team" (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010, p. 177). Sport fans often identify with athletes or teams and their identification level directly affects their attitudes or behaviors regarding athletes or teams (Swanson & Kent, 2015; Smith, 2019).

For example, fans who highly identify with a certain team tend to show more favoritism toward the team and players than other fans (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), causing sustained positive evaluations of the players and the team they are rooting for. Also, Cunningham and Regan (2011) found that people tend to show more trustworthiness to an athlete when they share a strong racial identity with the athlete. Indeed, strong identification towards teams or players

could influence the extent of fans' support behaviors and sometimes motivate resistance to negative information about individuals' favorite teams or players (Fink et al., 2009).

In a similar vein, the social identity approach suggests that a message from an in-group member can make individuals believe that the message is close to their own attitudes, producing biased information process and evaluation (Greenaway, Wright, Willingham, Reynolds, & Haslam, 2015; Perloff, 2015; Reid, 2012). Esposito, Hornsey and Spoor (2013) found that in-group members tend to reject and devalue messages from out-group sources than in-group sources, even though the messages from out-group are objectively right. Namely, messages or behaviors from in-groups are more likely to be accepted and understood more favorably than that is from out-group members (Mackie, Gastardo-Conaco, & Skelly, 1992; Smith, 2019).

In summary, an audience's social identity can be a key factor to understand media message and thus, it seems reasonable to apply this dynamic to the context of athlete activism based on the social identity approach and empirical evidence discussed before. Specifically, individuals will engage and perceive athlete activism differently depending on individuals' social identification or connection with an athlete activist (e.g., race, gender, team); individuals who closely identify with an athlete activist, especially when they consider the protesting athlete as in-group, will have a more positive attitude toward his/her action or message.

Social Identity and Hostile Media Perception.

As briefly explained above, message contents (e.g., news framing) and audience factors (e.g., social identity) are key elements when understanding the dynamics of individuals' information process, but it is also imperative to understand how audiences evaluate the sender of messages (e.g., news media outlet) because sometimes the same news reports can be perceived differently depending on who delivers it (Reid, 2012, Perloff, 2015), a concept known as hostile

media perception (HMP). HMP is an individual's tendency to see news media as biased manner if it is against their own view or if it is covered by opposing partisans, even though the neutral news coverage (Giner-Sorlla & Chaiken, 1994; Perloff, 2015; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985).

Previous literature on HMP demonstrates that audiences' social identity can produce or reinforce such hostile media perception (Kim & Hwang, 2019; Reid, 2012). Scholars have examined the HMP in the context of source effect and found that it is perceived to inherently in favor of one side over the other. Particularly, types of the media outlet and group membership (e.g., partisanship) combine to produce hostile media perception (Gunther, Miller, & Liebhart, 2009; Kim & Billings, 2017).

For some examples, Arpan and Raney's (2003) research on university students' perceptions about sports news report revealed that students viewed an identical sports news report differently and more biased when the news report was written by the rival university's hometown newspaper as compared to when the report was written by their university's hometown newspaper. Similar results were found in the Coe and his colleagues' (2008) research where an identical news story was perceived to be more biased when the story was covered by a news outlet that did not align with audiences' political ideology. That is, participants who have conservative political ideology found news stories on CNN to be more biased while liberals found news stories on Fox News to be more biased. Additionally, Kim and Billings' (2017) research on sports news coverage also reaffirmed the hostile media effects in that there were perception differences of a sports story when the story-- particularly about their team's defeat--is written by a perceived in-group (i.e., home nation) compared to when the story is written by a perceived out-group (i.e., other nation).

Indeed, existing media effects literature (e.g., framing, hostile media perception) indicates the importance of news media in forming or shaping audiences' attitudes toward a certain issue. In particular, news messages can be perceived differently by audiences depending on the message content and audiences' social identity; namely, the same news report could be understood or interpreted differently depending on whether (or not) people see it through the lens of their like-minded sources (e.g., in-group news media outlet, in-group member). Thus, when it comes to news media effects, it is also very important to consider who delivers the issue or who sends the message (e.g., news media outlet, athlete activist) in addition to how news message is framed. In this regard, further examination is needed to broaden the understanding of news media effects in the context of athlete activism by moving beyond a content focus to address the audience perspectives.

Selective Exposure Perspective

Factors Influencing Selective Exposure.

When examining media effects, it is important to consider the fact that not every media message has readers and the consumption of media content is a complex process. Namely, prior framing research suggests that news media framing can influence or change the way people understand or interpret news messages, influencing their opinion and behavior (Hart et al., 2009). However, these studies assume that people will be exposed to messages in the first place, but this may not be the case, and news media framing can be less effective if individuals do not pay attention to the message or they are not exposed to the message.

Selective exposure research argues that people actively seek out messages or content that aligns with their preexisting attitudes rather than passively accepting media content, while striving to avoid dissonant messages (Gil de Zúñiga, Correa, & Valenzuela, 2012; Hart et al.,

2009; Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). Little is known about how the information exposure factor plays in the context of athlete activism. In this regard, it is incumbent on researchers to delve into audiences' information exposure (how they consume media messages, along with what they consume), which can influence individuals' perception of the message, particularly regarding controversial issues like athlete activism. In this section, factors influencing selective exposure will be first discussed, followed by the consequences of message exposure.

According to Festinger (1957), such selective exposure behaviors could be explained via cognitive dissonance theory as a desire to avoid mental discomfort when individuals experience inconsistencies between their preexisting attitudes and situations they are facing (e.g., media exposure). The term "selective exposure" was first introduced by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet's (1944) study of the 1940 US presidential election. Initial studies on selective exposure (e.g., Klapper, 1960) suggested that selective exposure can help people to reduce cognitive dissonance by exposing them to messages that are consistent with their attitudes, and avoiding information that challenges their beliefs.

Contemporary media scholars have used the term "selective exposure" more broadly, including any kind of bias- reflected message selection behaviors (e.g., confirmation bias; Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015; Knobloch-Westerwick, Liu, Hino, Westerwick, & Johnson, 2019). Additionally, "confirmation bias" has been generally labeled by scholars as any tendency towards information that aligns with pre-existing views or positions, while, in parallel, avoiding inconsistent information (e.g., Bolsen & Druckman, 2015; Knobloch-Westerwick, Mothes, & Polavin, 2020); such confirmation bias behavior has been found through many studies (e.g., Garrett, 2009; Jamieson & Cappella, 2008; Stroud, 2011).

Stroud (2011) found that people who strongly exhibit partisanship actively select messages that can affirm their preexisting beliefs, since they want to see the world in a way that is consistent with their political attitudes (Kunda, 1990; Garrett, 2009). This dynamic can be found more evidently within controversial or partisan issues (e.g., climate change, abortion, immigration policy, athlete activism), as existing research shows that news audiences prefer to read news articles that are consistent with their prior opinions on the issue (i.e., abortion, gun control). This news selection behavior reinforces their preexisting beliefs, and appears to be more preferable than reading counter-attitudinal news articles (Garrett, 2009; Knobloch-Westerwick, & Meng, 2009; Taber & Lodge, 2006).

However, cognitive dissonance theory, which focuses on a desire for consistency while avoiding mental discomfort (Festinger, 1957) is not the only factor that dictates selective exposure. In other words, existing research identifies another relevant theoretical approach that can explain selective exposure with key driving factors behind individuals' selective exposure, such as source credibility (Metzger, Hartsell, & Flanagin, 2015), information utility (Knobloch-Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012; Valentino, Banks, Hutchings, & Davis, 2009), issue relevance (Kim, 2009), and social identity (Dvir-Gvirsman, 2019; Stroud, 2011).

Certain motivations can also influence selective exposure, in that people are motivated by accuracy goals (i.e., to reach a correct conclusion) or driven by directional goals (i.e., to arrive at the desired conclusion), according to motivated reasoning theory (Kunda, 1990). That is, people do tend to select information in line with their preexisting views to avoid mental discomfort as cognitive dissonance theory posits, but people are also likely to seek out and select content based on their motivations regardless of their prior attitudes toward information. Similarly, the information utility factor can override the attitude-based selective exposure (Knobloch-

Westerwick & Kleinman, 2012); that is, when information is perceived to be beneficial to individuals, they tend to engage with and select it regardless of whether it is an attitude-consistent content or not.

Additionally, as the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) postulates, people also experience in-group favoritism and out-group derogation, in terms of media message selection. That is, as studies on news selection and processing (e.g., Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012; Knobloch-Westerwick, Mothes, & Polavin, 2020; Reid, 2012; Stroud, Muddiman, & Lee, 2014) showed, people tend to evaluate their in-group members more favorable, preferring news messages that cover an in-group in a favorable light.

For example, data shows that African American news audiences tend to spend more time consuming and prefer news contents that covers African Americans favorably or that present Caucasians negatively (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013). Furthermore, people prefer to read political news from media outlets that align with their political partisanship, regardless of the contents. Namely, conservative Republicans tend to consume Fox News, while liberal Democrats use CNN and MSNBC (Barnidge et al., 2020; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Stroud, 2011). In summary, the social identity factor can offer a way to promote media selection to certain messages, attracting audiences.

Later, Knobloch-Westerwick (2015) offered a model: selective exposure self-and affect-management (SESAM) to better explain individuals' various media contents selection patterns, with a focus on the role of the active self. To be specific, the model explains that selection of media content is driven by the active self (e.g., social identity), the expectation of the effect of media exposure (e.g., cognitive consistency, self enhancement), and with the available media contents.

Consequences of Media Exposure.

Having discussed factors that can affect selective exposure, the following turns to explain the consequences of media exposure. Some scholars (e.g., Bennett & Iyengar, 2008) may argue a new era of “limited media effects” or “minimal media effects” through selective exposure, in that people’s tendency to consume contents or messages that match their preexisting views limits their possibility to change those beliefs or attitudes, meaning media have less power to shape or persuade individuals' prior attitudes. The new era of minimal media effects through selective exposure seems very logical, but further examination is required in that people do not always selectively expose themselves to media as well as their prior attitudes can also be changed through selective exposure according to the following discussing literature.

Exposure to Attitude-Consistent Information.

In a commencement speech at the University of Michigan in 2010, President Barack Obama pointed out a problem with partisan selective exposure and its effects on political polarization, saying, “If we choose only to expose ourselves to opinions and viewpoints that are in line with our own, studies suggest that we become more polarized, more set in our ways. That will only reinforce and even deepen the political divides in this country.” (The White House, 2010). Indeed, It has long been suggested that selective media consumption can lead to prior attitude reinforcement, causing attitudinal polarization (e.g., Garrett, 2009; Holbert, Garrett, & Gleason, 2010; Jamieson & Cappella, 2008; Stroud, 2011).

For example, Stroud’s (2008, 2010) cross-sectional and time-series analyses about selective partisan media use and polarized political attitudes provide evidence that people’s political attitudes become more strengthened and polarized over time through repeated politically

and ideologically consistent media exposure, which is consistent with Taber and Lodge's (2006) experimental study about controversial issues and attitude polarization. Additionally, if people select or are exposed to arguments or messages that are in line with their own beliefs, such messages can be seen as more persuasive in that those messages can be closely linked to their preexisting positions when processing the information (Burnstein & Vinokur, 1977; Isenberg, 1986). Thus, selective exposure to attitude-consistent media content can provide persuasive information supporting their existing views, leading to form more polarized attitudes.

Exposure to Counter-Attitudinal Information.

With the advancement of digital media technologies, especially through the Internet and social media, some may argue that like-minded information selection has become more convenient and prevalent, bolstering people's pre-existing opinions (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Stroud, 2011). On the other hands, it is also possible that today's digital media environment, coupled with the abundance of media choices, allows people to be exposed to new and various information as people sometimes unintentionally or incidentally encounter messages or news that are inconsistent with their views (Kwak, Lane, Weeks, Kim, & Lee, 2020; Lu & Lee, 2019).

Also, empirical evidence shows that selective exposure to attitude-consistent media content is not always supported (Donsbach, 2009) because selective exposure does not necessarily indicate an increased level of avoiding counter attitudinal messages (Garrett, 2009), and since attitude-incongruent messages are not always avoided, at times people experience incongruence intentionally (Festinger, 1957; Frey, 1986; Knobloch-Westewick & Meng, 2009). Indeed, existing literature shows people have a strong tendency to select like-minded messages or information, but sometimes exposure to counter-attitudinal information occurs whether intended or not.

To date, much research has been heavily focused on antecedents or predictors of people's counter-attitudinal information selection patterns (Garrett, 2009; Kim, 2019), but relatively little attempt has been made to examine the consequences of such exposure to attitude-discrepant messages. Furthermore, empirical evidence regarding the effects of counter-attitudinal information remains inconclusive as to whether it attenuates or reinforces individuals' preexisting beliefs or views (e.g., Kim, 2019; Westerwick, Johnson, & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2017).

Several theoretical perspectives, along with research suggest that individuals' pre-existing opinions or views are strengthened through exposure to counter-attitudinal arguments or messages, a phenomenon known as 'backlash' (e.g., Guess & Coppock, 2018; Kunda, 1990; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Petty & Cacioppo, 1990). Namely, rather than understanding dissonant views or changing prior perceptions, exposure to attitude discrepant messages can increase conflict, which in turn results in attitude polarization. This line of reasoning can be understood by biased information processing that people tend to justify and rationalize like-minded information, whereas attitude dissonant messages are critically scrutinized or denied (Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Kim, 2019).

However, Taber and Lodge (2006) found no significant effect of attitude-discrepant messages on individuals' attitude changes. Furthermore, research on political attitudes reveals that exposure to attitude dissonant news articles can weaken preexisting attitudes (Westerwick et al., 2017; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2019), consistent with the deliberative theorists' suggestion. Specifically, deliberative theorists argue that exposure to dissimilar and diverse perspectives can reduce conflicts because deliberative cognitive processes can encourage people

to understand and incorporate dissonant views, resulting in the attenuation of the extremity of attitudes (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004).

Indeed, it still remains an open question whether or not exposure to dissimilar perspectives or counter-attitudinal message increases conflicts and strengthens pre-existing opinions, exacerbating attitude polarization, or whether exposure to attitude-discrepant information can help to understand different views, attenuating attitude polarization (Guess & Coppock, 2018; Lord et al., 1979; Wojcieszak, 2011). Thus, it is of great importance to explore the attitudinal consequences of information exposure, whether messages are attitude-consistent or counter-attitudinal.

Selected (intentional) and Forced (unintentional) Exposure.

As briefly explained, while today's digital media environment provides people with more opportunities to choose their preferred content (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Prior, 2007), it also increases the likelihood of unintentional or incidental exposure to information, which may be attitudinal-consistent or counter-attitudinal (Brundige, 2010; Kwak et al., 2020; Lu & Lee, 2019; Stroud, Feldman, Wojcieszak, & Bimber, 2019). Namely, media exposure is not always under people's control, and people unexpectedly, but inevitably, encounter some information they do not select.

Stroud and her colleagues (2019) call media exposure in which individuals do not have control over the content they see "forced exposure," as a comparison to "selected exposure," where individuals have control over the media choice. Further, they found small differences between forced and selected media exposure on psychological reactions. Such forced media exposure or unintentional media exposure can be found in many different places and situations, particularly on social media, because people encounter various social media posts every day,

although they do not actively choose which content appears. Also, some situations necessarily remove an individual's choice to select media content, such as at a bar or restaurant, where we experience unintentional forced media exposure.

Although it seems logical that there would be differences between the effects of forced and selected media exposure, they have been treated interchangeably, and without much consideration, especially in experimental research on media effects, including selective exposure. Additionally, little attempt has been made to explore whether the specific way people are exposed to information (selected or intentional vs. forced or unintentional) produces different effects. Thus, further scholarly investigation is indispensable to broaden the understanding of athlete activism and media effects.

Athlete Activism and the Subsequent Effects

From Muhammad Ali (antiwar) to Colin Kaepernick (racial inequality, police brutality), athlete activists have constantly participated in social movements for many different reasons, and in many different ways, both on and off the field. These actions take the form of marches, boycotts, holding signs, performances, speeches, kneeling, and so on, in order to spotlight issues, to capture public and media attention, and to promote progressive social changes (Presley, Shreffler, Hancock, & Schmidt, 2016). Before further discussion about the effects of athlete activism, it is important to note that "athlete activism" in sports communication literature is loosely conceptualized and needs to establish from many related terms (e.g., social movement, protest, advocacy).

To explain athletes' actions for social justice, the term "athlete activism" has been frequently used and sometimes it is used synonymously with protest (e.g., Cunningham & Regan, 2011; Park et al., 2020; Schmidt, Shreffler, Hambrick, & Gordon, 2018). Even though

they are not completely distinct from each other, it is worth mentioning that there is a slight conceptual difference between activism and protest. According to Corning and Myers (2002), activism is the behavior of advocating some social and political causes (e.g., human rights, anti-war, social inequality) with the desire to make progressive changes in society, ranging from the quite conventional (e.g., participating in the electoral process, petitioning, etc.) to the highly unconventional, risky (e.g., street marches, strikes, civil disobedience, etc.), while the term protest means an expression or behavior of objection or dissent toward an idea or action.

Namely, Colin Kaepernick's kneeling down action can be considered as a protest, and his protest for social injustice and police brutality is broadly considered a part of activism to make a better society. In this regard, Cooper and colleagues (2019) reviewed many different types of activism (e.g., grassroots activism, scholarly activism, economic activism) and then defined the term athlete activism as “deliberate actions exhibited by athletes designed to draw attention to social injustices and inspire positive change in political, educational, economic, and social sectors” (p.166).

In understanding athlete activism, one may raise a critical question about athlete activism: what does athlete activism matter in our society? Why do we care more about athlete activism compared to other forms of activism?

Marketing Perspective

From a marketing standpoint, there is a necessity to decipher athlete activism given the financial growth of the sports industry and prevalent athlete-related marketing strategies (Brown, 2016; Kim & Cheong, 2011). Existing marketing research has revealed the various benefits of athlete endorsement as an effective marketing tool for generating consumer attention, as well as increasing brand awareness, brand image, and purchasing behaviors through associations with

athletes (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005; Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011). Despite their various benefits of athlete related marketing strategies (e.g., endorsement), it can be derailed by unexpected athlete actions or incidents they are involved in (Brown, 2016; Lee & Kwak, 2017; Sato, Ko, Park, & Tao, 2015). In this regard, many organizations (e.g., team, brand) discontinue their business relationship with athletes when they are involved in controversial issues (e.g., transgression, scandal, protest) because of public outrage, resulting in negative effects on both athletes themselves and stakeholders (Coombs, 2018; Messner & Reinhard, 2012; Pfahl & Bates, 2008).

For example, when Michael Vick was convicted of illegally operating a dogfighting ring, Nike immediately canceled their endorsement deal with him (Thwaites, Lowe, Monkhouse, & Barnes, 2012). After the kneeling protest, Kaepernick failed to continue the contract with the San Francisco 49ers (Kilgore, 2017), and Brand Marshall, who joined the Kaepernick's protest, lost two individual sponsors (Garcia & Dotson, 2016).

However, empirical evidence suggests that athletes engaging in controversial issues (e.g., transgression, protest) do not necessarily cause negative effects on associated brands (Badenhausen, 2004, Cunningham & Regan, 2011; Martinez, 2018; Park et al., 2020). Despite his sexual assault case at that time, Kobe Bryant's jersey was the most popular jersey of the year (Badenhausen, 2004), and Nike's sales increased by 31% in 2018 after featuring the controversial figure, Kaepernick, in its advertising campaigns (Martinez, 2018). Findings from existing research (Cunningham & Regan, 2011; Park et al., 2020) also show that activism did not have a direct negative impact on brand image and purchase intention, but suggest the importance of the perception of the protesting athlete and the protest. That is, there was a strong positive association between attitude toward the protesting athlete and attitude toward the endorsed

brand, meaning the more positive attitude participants have toward the athlete, the more positive attitude they have toward the endorsed brand, and vice versa (Park et al., 2020).

Indeed, these mixed findings bring managerial dilemmas to marketing and public relations practitioners when deciding to continue or terminate the relationship with athletes, as the decision may result in negative consequences. Therefore, it is imperative to further examine the effects of athlete activism on an endorsed brand, and how their sponsorship decision affects individuals' perceptions.

Sociopolitical Perspective

Aside from a marketing perspective, it is also crucial to examine from a sociopolitical standpoint given the purpose of athlete activism. The notion that athlete activism can be a vehicle to promote progressive social changes has always been argued, with a strong belief that athletes have the power to help our country get it right (Boswell, 2020; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010). However, there is not enough empirical evidence and research that actually explores a relationship between athlete activism and progressive social change (e.g., political participation, civic engagement). Indeed, athletes' protests for social injustice have garnered both public and media attention, but their social impacts (e.g., civic engagement, political participation) are still debatable.

Previous studies on athlete activism, so far, have mostly adopted rhetorical (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2010; Kluch, 2020) or content analytic (e.g., Frisby, 2018; Sanderson et al., 2016; Schmidt et al., 2018) paradigm approaches with a focus on why and how athletes participate in such social movements. Furthermore, some existing empirical research (Cunningham & Regan, 2011; Park et al., 2020; Schmidt et al., 2018; Smith, 2019) has examined

how key factors (e.g., social identity, media, protest type) affect individuals' perception about athlete activism, mainly focusing on marketing implications.

However, given the social movement literature saying protest promotes democracy (Arce & Rice, 2019; Callahan, 2016), and a strong relationship between attitude toward politicians and political participation (Kim, 2019), it seems not presumptuous to apply this dynamic to athlete activism context. Existing literature on attitude-behavior connections and political communication reveal a close linkage between political attitude and political participation (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Gastil & Xenos, 2010; Kim, 2019; Lavine, 2001; Moy & Pfau, 2000). In other words, it is shown that more extreme or polarized attitudes lead to more political participation. Similarly, Moon (2011) found that strong attitudes toward candidates fuel various forms of political participation (e.g., voting, political discussion, campaign support, etc.).

Similar results can be expected in the context of athlete activism, where individuals will form a certain level of attitude toward athletes' protest for social injustice. This invoked attitude will closely influence individuals' political participation, as positive attitudes toward the protesting athlete mean approval or support for the protest, and will encourage individuals' political engagement.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

This dissertation focuses particularly on athlete activism, in that athlete involvement in sociopolitical issues has become more prevalent in recent years (notably coupled with recent Black Lives Matter protests), and scholarly investigations of how people perceive media content are crucial for various stakeholders (e.g., teams, leagues, and associated brands). Applying previously-discussed literature about selective exposure to the context of athlete activism, will examine how and whether news information (i.e., What: attitude consistent vs. counter-

attitudinal), about (i.e., Who: an in-group athlete vs. an out-group athlete), and exposure (i.e., How: selective-intentional vs. forced-unintentional), operate differently, and will also explore the role of key drivers (i.e., confirmation bias, social identity) in the selection of sociopolitical news about athlete activism. Particularly, the dissertation will use a racial congruency as a factor to divide athletes into in-group and out-group athlete.

Additionally, this present dissertation will explore the subsequent effects of athlete activism from marketing and sociopolitical perspectives. Namely, the dissertation will examine how individuals' perception of athlete activism affects an endorsed brand and political participation. Based on theoretical rationales and previous research, the following hypotheses and research questions are proposed:

Factors Influencing Selective Exposure

Confirmation Bias.

Hypothesis 1: Participants will select the news article that is consistent with their views on athlete activism more frequently in comparison with the news article that is not consistent with their views (confirmation bias).

In-group Bias (Social identity).

Hypothesis 2: Participants will select the news article that is about an in-group athlete's protest more frequently in comparison with the news article that is about an out-group athlete's protest. (in-group bias).

Consequences of Media Exposure

Information Exposure (What: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal)

Hypothesis 3: Information exposure to attitude-consistent news articles about athlete activism will influence individuals' attitude polarization.

Research Question 1: Does exposure to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism influence individuals' attitude toward the protest?

Research Question 2a: Will there be attitude (attitude toward the protest) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report about athlete activism and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism?

Research Question 2b: Will there be perception (perceived protest effectiveness) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report about athlete activism and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism?

Research Question 2c: Will there be attitude (attitude toward the protesting athlete) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report about athlete activism and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism?

Information Exposure (Who: In-group vs. Out-group).

Hypothesis 4a: Participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will have a more positive attitude toward the protest compared to participants exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest.

Hypothesis 4b: Participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will perceive the protest as more effective compared to participants who were exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest.

Hypothesis 4c: Participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will have a more positive attitude toward the protesting athlete compared to participants exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest.

Information Exposure (How: Selected-intentional vs. Forced-unintentional).

Research Question 3a: Will there be attitude (attitude toward the protest) differences between participants when they are selectively exposed to the news report about athlete activism and when they are unintentionally (forced) exposed to the news report about athlete activism?

Research Question 3b: Will there be perception (perceived protest effectiveness) differences between participants when they are selectively exposed to the news report

about athlete activism and when they are unintentionally (forced) exposed to the news report about athlete activism?

Research Question 3c: Will there be attitude (attitude toward the protesting athlete) differences between participants when they are selectively exposed to the news report about athlete activism and when they are unintentionally (forced) exposed to the news report about athlete activism?

Subsequent Effects of Athlete Activism

Hypothesis 5: Perceived protest effectiveness will be positively associated with attitude toward the protesting athlete.

Marketing Perspective

Hypothesis 6: Attitude toward the protesting athlete will be positively associated with the endorsed brand.

Research Question 4: Will the sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate) about the protesting athlete influence participants' attitude toward the endorsed brand?

Sociopolitical Perspective

Hypothesis 7: Attitude toward the protesting athlete will be positively associated with individuals' political participation.

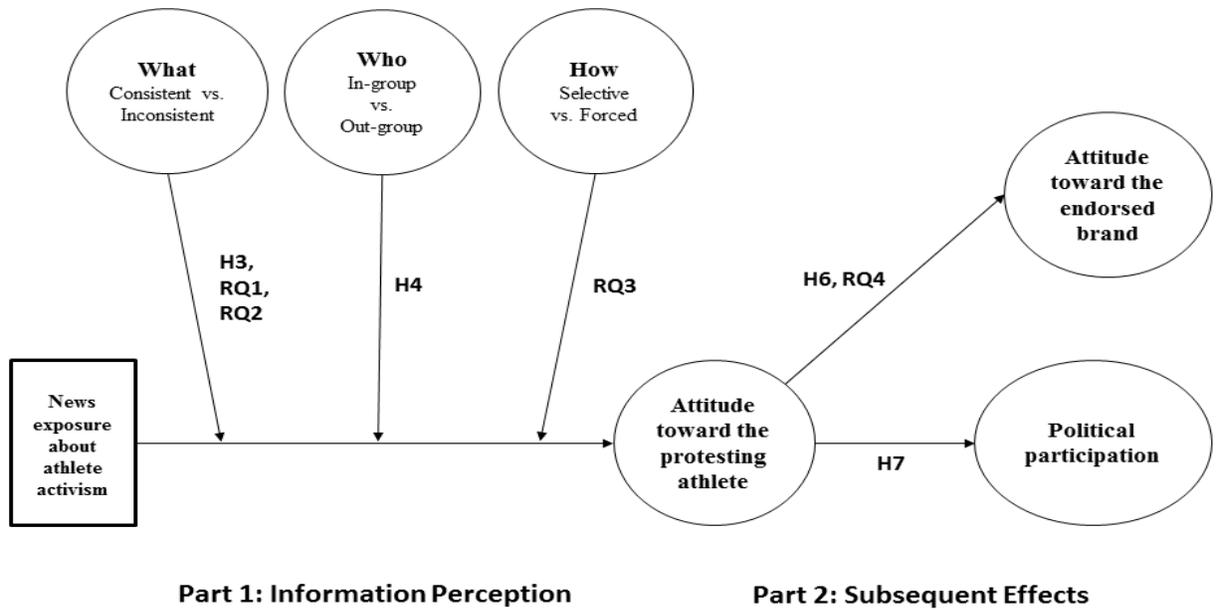


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Model of Dissertation

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This chapter discusses a research method this dissertation used, with descriptions of a study design, sample, procedure, instruments, and data analysis. An experimental design study was utilized to examine the proposed hypotheses and research questions. Not only the experimental design study is convenient to implement (compared to a lab experiment), but also is useful to test cause-and-effect, providing firmly grounded empirical evidence (Gaines & Kuklinski, & Quirk, 2007). In this regard, this dissertation conducted an experimental design study to examine the effects of information exposure and explore the subsequent effects of athlete activism. More details are discussed in the following.

Research Design and Participants

The present study employed a 2 (What: supportive with a positive tone toward athlete activism vs. not supportive with negative tone toward athlete activism) x 2 (Who: the protesting athlete: an in-group vs. an out-group) x 2 (How: selected exposure vs. forced exposure) between-subject experimental design study. A total of 378 participants was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Only "M-Turk Masters," a top group of workers who have demonstrated a high success degree of completion (95% HIT Approval Rate) were selected for the better reliability and validity of the sample (e.g., Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Crumpt, McDonnell, & Gureckis, 2013; Sheehan, 2018). Each participant will receive \$1.00 as compensation.

Manipulations

A set of four headline news items (see Appendix A) and a set of four news articles which are composed of a headline and lead about athlete activism (see Appendix B) were presented. To be specific, online news articles were manipulated in a 2 (supportive vs. not supportive) x 2 (in-group vs. out-group) design. Thus, half of the news articles (one supportive with a positive tone toward athlete activism and one not supportive with a negative tone toward athlete activism) pertain to a favored athlete's social protest (i.e., an in-group athlete), and the other half (one advocating athlete activism and one disagreeing with it) are about a not favored athlete's social protest (i.e., an out-group athlete). All the stimuli were developed and manipulated based on actual news articles about athletes' protests for Black Lives Matter and previous research on athlete activism.

Additionally, two news stories about a protesting athlete's endorsement deal either when the sponsor decided to terminate the deal or when the sponsor decided to maintain the deal were manipulated and used to further examine the relationship between athlete activism and athlete endorsement. Particularly, Gillette (not a current sponsor) was selected given its brand familiarity and congruency with football based on previous research (Chien, Kelly, & Weeks, 2016).

Manipulation Check

The survey entailed manipulation check questions to ensure the manipulation measured each condition appropriately. For example, the manipulation questions asked if the news report is supportive with a positive tone toward athlete activism, how participants identify the protesting athlete's race/ethnicity, and which news article they are exposed to whether it is the one they previously choose or not.

Procedures

At the beginning of the survey explained to participants what the survey includes (e.g., purpose, benefits, risks, IRB approval, contact information, etc.), and a consent was provided. Participants first answered an online questionnaire that measure their social identity (e.g., fan identification, team identification), brand loyalty (i.e., Gillette), political interest, sociopolitical attitude toward athlete activism, and perceived issue importance.

To examine news selection behaviors (H1, H2), participants were asked to array the four manipulated headline news items in their preference to read (Van der Meer, Hameleers, & Kroon, 2020). Once participants finished ranking the four headline news articles, then they were randomly exposed to one of the four news articles regardless of their preference ranks in the previous section to explore H3, H4, and RQ1-3.

After exposure to one of four stimuli, questions regarding attitudes toward the protesting athlete and athlete activism, perceived protest effectiveness, and political participation, were asked. Then, participants were randomly exposed to one of two news reports about a protesting athlete's endorsement contract (i.e., maintain vs. terminate) and participants' attitude toward the endorsed brand will be measured. Additionally, racial identity were measured to ensure how much participants identify with their ethnicity. Finally, the survey was ended with demographic questions (e.g., age, sex, race, education, etc.).

Instruments

Independent Variables

Political Attitude about Athlete Activism.

Participants were asked to report their political attitude about athlete activism for sociopolitical issue. Based on political communication literature (e.g., Barnidge et al., 2020), the

attitude scale from previous studies (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Park et al., 2020) were modified for this study. Three items on a 5-point scale were: “Overall, my attitude toward the athlete’s protest for social injustice is: bad-good, unfavorable-favorable, positive-negative” (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The three items were combined into a single factor to form an index of political attitude about athlete activism and showed adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’ $\alpha = .937$, $M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.37$)

Attitude-Consistent and Counter-Attitudinal News Report.

To test proposed hypotheses, the news article conditions (i.e., supportive with a positive tone toward athlete activism vs. not supportive with a negative tone toward athlete activism) were recoded as attitude-consistent and counter-attitude conditions based on their previously measured political attitude toward athlete activism. Namely, the attitude-consistent condition was created when a participant who has positive attitude toward athlete activism before exposure the manipulation was actually exposed to the news article that supports athlete activism with a positive tone and vice versa. 51.6% ($n = 195$) of participants were in the attitude-consistent condition while 48.4% ($n = 183$) of participants were in the counter-attitudinal condition.

Identification with the Protester (In-group athlete, Out-group athlete).

Racial congruency with the protesting athlete was utilized to distinguish the protesting athlete as an in-group/out-group variable for this study. Based on previous social identity and athlete activism literature (e.g., Towler, Crawford, & Bennett, 2020; Smith, 2019), this study proposed that White participants would identify the White protesting athlete as an in-group while Black participants would identify the White protesting athlete as an out-group after controlling over team identification factor. 46.6% ($n = 176$) of participants were in the in-group condition while 53.4% ($n = 202$) were in the out-group media condition.

Selective Exposure (intentional) and Forced Exposure (unintentional).

One of the main goals in the dissertation is to test if there are attitude difference between participants when they are forced to exposure to the news article without their choice compared to when they are exposed to the news article of their choice.

Information exposure was operationalized as selective exposure (intentional) and forced exposure (unintentional) depending on a participant's news article choice and the actual news article exposure. Since participants were randomly assigned one of four news articles regardless of their previous choices, the selective exposure condition was made only when participants were exposed to a news article of their previous choice while other cases (exposure to the news article which they did not choose) were considered as the forced exposure condition. In other words, a quarter of participants were in the selected exposure condition while three-quarters of participants were in the forced exposure condition. 26.5% of participants ($n = 100$) were in the selective exposure condition where 73.5% ($n = 278$) were in the forced exposure condition.

Brand Loyalty.

Participants were asked to report their loyalty to the endorsed brand before exposure to the stimuli. For brand loyalty, the version created by Martinez, Montaner, and Pina (2009) was modified. Three 5-point Likert-type items assessed brand loyalty are "I buy Gillette because I really like it," "I am pleased to buy Gillette instead of other razor brands," and "I feel more attached to Gillette than to other razor brands." The internal consistency of this scale was adequate (Cronbach' $\alpha = .710$, $M = 3.095$, $SD = 2.10$).

Dependent Variable

Attitudes toward the Protesting Athlete, Athlete Activism, and the Endorsed Brand.

Consistent with Park and his colleagues' (2020) research, three items from the previous

seminal literature (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) were utilized for the attitude scale. The items were measured on a 5-point semantic differential scale (e.g., the protesting athlete is: unfavorable-favorable, bad-good, positive-negative). The three items were averaged to create a scale of the attitude toward the protesting athlete and another set of three items for the endorsed brand were averaged to create a scale of the attitude toward the endorsed brand. The internal consistency of scales were adequate based Cronbach's alpha scores. Attitude toward the protesting athlete ($M=3.05$, $SD=2.28$, $\alpha=.738$), attitude toward athlete activism ($M=3.21$, $SD=1.51$, $\alpha=.990$), and attitude toward the endorsed brand ($M=2.95$, $SD=1.53$, $\alpha=.993$).

Perceived Protest Effectiveness.

To measure how much participants perceive the athlete's protest as effective, five items from previous research (Arpan et al., 2006) were modified and utilized for this study. Five items on a 5-point scale are: "The protest was a waste of time (reverse code)," "The protesters provided useful service," "This protest was an effective way to influence public opinion," "These protesters offer new insights on social issues," and "These protesters brought issues to my attention." The five items were averaged to create a scale of perceived protest effectiveness and this scale was reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha=.932$, $M=3.33$, $SD=1.25$).

Political Participation.

Adopted from previous research (Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014), participants' willingness to engage in several type of political participation for Black Lives Matter were asked to measure political participation. Five items on a 5-point scale are: "Would you sign a petition in favor of Black Lives Matter?" "Would you go to meetings, speeches, fund raising events, or things like that in support of Black Lives Matter?" "Would you wear a button or put a sticker on your car or place a sign in your window or in front of your house to support Black Lives

Matter?” “Would you say yes if you were asked to help staff an information table to support Black Lives Matter?” “Would you vote in favor of a ballot issue about Black Lives Matter?” The five items were averaged to create a scale of perceived protest effectiveness and this scale was reliable (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .9654$, $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.46$).

Control Variables

Additional variables were included in the multivariate analysis to control for potential confounds based on previous research (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl, & Ardévol-Abreu, 2017).

Perceived Issue Importance.

To assess the perceived importance of the issue (Black Lives Matter), on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”), participants were asked to indicate their agreement with these statements adopted from Lo, Wei and Lu’s (2017) research: “I would think BLM is an important political issue,” “I would think that BLM is an important economic issue,” and “I would think that BLM is an important social issue.” The average of the three items were used to create a composite index of perceived issue importance (Cronbach’ $\alpha = .969$, $M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.53$).

Political Interest.

Based on previous research which identified individuals’ levels of political interest can be an important variable while explaining political attitudes and behaviors (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017; Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Individuals’ levels of interest in politics were measured with two items “How interested are you in information about politics and public affairs,” and “How closely do you pay attention to what’s going on in politics and public affairs” on a 5-point scale

(not closely at all-very closely). The internal consistency of this scale was adequate (Cronbach' α = .931, $M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.03$).

Athlete Identification

Based on previous literature on sport consumer behavior (e.g., Kim & Trail, 2010; Lee, Kwak, & Braunstein-Minkove, 2016), participants' identification level with the protesting athletes and their teams which may hinder participants' perceptions of news article were measured for the control purpose by using one of the point of attachment subscales from Robinson, Trail, Dick, and Gillentine's (2005) study. As such, three 5-point Likert items will be designed: (a) "Being a fan of [a player] is very important to me" (b) "I am a committed fan of [a player]," and (c) "I consider myself to be a 'real' fan of [a player]" (1 = strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree). The internal consistency of this scale was adequate (Josh Allen: Cronbach' $\alpha = .959$, $M = 1.66$, $SD = .98$; Deshaun Watson: Cronbach' $\alpha = .959$, $M = 1.55$, $SD = .90$).

Table 3.1

Statistical Plan

	Hypothesis/Research Question	Variables	Statistical Test
H1	Participants will select the news article that is consistent with their views on athlete activism more frequently in comparison with the news article that is not consistent with their views (confirmation bias).	IV: attitude consistency DV: Ranks	Descriptive statistics
H2	Participants will select the news article that is about an in-group athlete's protest more frequently in comparison with the news article that is about an out-group athlete's protest (in-group bias).	IV: racial congruency DV: Ranks	Descriptive statistics
H3	Information exposure to attitude-consistent news articles about athlete activism will influence individuals' attitude polarization.	IV: news media exposure (attitude-consistent) DV: attitude toward the protest (After exposure)	A paired-sample t-test (before and after exposure to the manipulation)

RQ1	Does exposure to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism influence (change) individual's attitude toward the protest?	IV: News media exposure (counter-attitudinal) DV: attitude toward the protest	A paired-sample t-test (before and after exposure to the manipulation)
RQ2a	Will there be attitudes (attitude toward the protest) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism?	IV: news media exposure (What: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) DV: attitude toward the protest	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
RQ2b	Will there be perception (perceived protest effectiveness) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism?	IV: news media exposure (What: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) DV: perceived protest effectiveness	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
RQ2c	Will there be attitudes (attitude toward the protesting athlete) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism?	IV: news media exposure (What: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) DV: attitude toward the protesting athlete	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
H4a	Participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will have more positive attitude toward the protest compared to participants who were exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest.	IV: news media exposure (Who: identification with the protesting) DV: attitude toward the protest	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)

H4b	Participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will perceive the protest as more effective compared to participants exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest.	IV: news media exposure (Who: identification with the protesting) DV: perceived protest effectiveness	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
H4c	Participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will have more positive attitude toward the protesting athlete compared to participants exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest.	IV: news media exposure (Who: identification with the protesting) DV: attitude toward the protesting athlete	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
RQ3a	Will there be attitude (attitude toward the protest) differences between participants when they are selectively exposed to the news report about athlete activism and when they are unintentionally (forced) exposed to the news report about athlete activism?	IV: news media exposure (How: selective vs. forced) DV: attitude toward the protest	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
RQ3b	Will there be perception (perceived protest effectiveness) differences between participants when they are selectively exposed to the news report about athlete activism and when they are unintentionally (forced) exposed to the news report about athlete activism?	IV: news media exposure (How: selective vs. forced) DV: perceived protest effectiveness	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
RQ3c	Will there be attitude (attitude toward the protesting athlete) differences between participants when they are selectively exposed to the news report about athlete activism and when they are unintentionally (forced) exposed to the news report about athlete activism?	IV: news media exposure (How: selective vs. forced) DV: attitude toward the protesting athlete	ANCOVA (control over prior attitude toward athlete activism, fanship, perceived issue importance)
H5	Perceived protest effectiveness will be positively associated with attitude toward the protesting athlete.	IV: perceived protest effectiveness DV: attitude toward the protesting athlete	Multiple Regression

H6	Attitude toward the protesting athlete will be positively associated with the endorsed brand.	IV: attitude toward the protesting athlete DV: attitude toward the endorsed brand	Multiple Regression
RQ4	Will the sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate) about the protesting athlete influence participants' attitude toward the endorsed brand?	IV: sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate) DV: attitude toward the endorsed brand	ANCOVA (control over prior brand loyalty)
H7	Attitude toward the protesting athlete will be positively associated with individuals' political participation.	IV: attitude toward the protesting athlete DV: political participation	Multiple Regression

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Chapter four is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the demographic information of the participants in this dissertation. The next section discusses the reliability and validity of the manipulations. The last section provides the analyses of research questions and hypotheses along with the appropriate statistical analyses. Each research question and hypothesis is restated first to provide consistency and clarity.

Demographic Profile

In order to check the appropriate sample size required for this dissertation, G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) was used for an a priori power analysis ($1-\beta = .80$) to determine the required sample size applying a small effect size $f^2(V) = .25$ suggested by η^2 at an alpha level of .05. The G*Power result showed that the recommended sample size was 179 participants. A total of 400 participants, double the recommended sample size criterion, was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in this dissertation. 22 were removed from the study for failing to complete a survey ($n = 4$) or pass through the manipulation check ($n = 18$). Thus, a sample of 378 participants was utilized for data analyses in this dissertation.

Among 378 participants, 59.3% were male ($n = 224$), while 40.7% were female ($n = 154$). The mean age of participants was 39.78 years old ($SD = 12.59$ years), with a reported range from 18 to 77 years old. In terms of race/ethnicity, 80.4% ($n = 304$) were White/Caucasian, African American (8.7%, $n = 33$), Asian (6.3%, $n = 24$), Native American (1.1%, $n = 4$), Pacific

Islander (0.5%, $n = 2$) and other (2.9%, $n = 11$). Although different ethnicities were recorded in the demographic section, race was re-grouped into three categories (i.e., White: 80.4%, $n = 304$; Black: 8.7%, $n = 33$, Other: 10.8%, $n = 41$) to specifically examine the responses of participants of the same racial in-group as the athlete (i.e., racial congruency) since the athlete in the news stimuli was either Black (i.e., Deshaun Watson) or White (i.e., Josh Allen). All other ethnicities were placed into an ‘Other’ group. Participants were also asked about their political party. 43.7% ($n = 165$) were Democrat, 24.9% ($n = 94$) were Republican, and 31.5% ($n = 119$) were Independent. A total of 64.0% ($n = 242$) of participants reported their highest level of education as a completed college or Bachelor degree, 26.7% ($n = 101$) as high school degree or equivalent, 8.7% ($n = 33$) as graduate degree (Master/PhD/JD/MD/EdD), and .5% ($n = 2$) as no formal education or less than a high school diploma.

Table 4.1
Demographic Profile

Variable		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	224	59.3
	Female	154	40.7
Race/Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	304	80.4
	African American	33	8.7
	Asian	24	6.3
	Native American	4	1.1
	Pacific Islander	2	.5
	Other	11	2.9
Highest level of Education	No formal education	2	.5
	High School	101	26.7
	College	242	64
	Graduate (Master / PhD / JD /MD)	33	8.7
Political Party	Democrat	165	43.7
	Republican	94	24.9
	Independent	119	31.5
Total		378	100

Table 4.2*Manipulation and Participants*

Manipulation		<i>n</i>	%
News Article about Athlete Activism	Athlete Race		
	White Athlete	92	24.3
	White Athlete	96	25.4
	Black Athlete	95	25.1
Endorsement Decision	Maintain	188	49.7
	Terminate	190	50.3
Total		378	100

Manipulation Check Analysis

One of the manipulation check questions asked participants' actual news article exposure and the name of the protesting athlete in the news. 18 of participants were filtered and their survey data were excluded for this study for failing to accurately answer the viewed news article in the manipulation check.

Additionally, other two manipulation check questions were used to ensure each participant's attention and their perception of a manipulated news article (i.e., supportive with a positive tone vs. not supportive with a negative tone) and a protesting athlete (i.e., athlete's race/ethnicity) with regard to their randomly assigned condition. Participants' answers for the manipulation check questions and their actual news article exposure were compared to test whether the intended manipulations worked appropriately.

As shown in Table 4.3, manipulations worked as intended: 98.3% ($n = 184$) of participants who were in the supportive news article conditions (i.e., White-Supportive, Black-Supportive) perceived their assigned news article was supportive with a positive tone. 90.6% ($n = 173$) of participants who were in the not supportive news article conditions (i.e., White-Not Supportive, Black-Not Supportive) perceived their assigned news article was not supportive with a negative tone. 89.8% ($n = 167$) of participants who were in the news articles about White athlete (i.e., White-Supportive, White-Not Supportive) identified that the protesting athlete's race as White/Caucasian. 93.7% ($n = 178$) of participants who read the news articles about Black athlete (i.e., Black-Supportive, Black-Not Supportive) identified that the protesting athlete's race as African American.

Table 4.3

Manipulation Check

Manipulation Check Answer		News Article (Manipulation)				
		White-Supportive	White-Not Supportive	Black-Supportive	Black-Not Supportive	
Perceived News tone	Supportive with a positive tone	89	9	95	9	202
	% within News Article	96.7%	9.4%	100.0%	9.5%	
	Not supportive with a negative tone	3	87	0	86	176
	% within News Article	3.3%	90.6%	0.0%	90.5%	
Perceived Athlete Race	African American	9	10	89	89	197
	% within News Article	9.8%	9.4%	93.7%	93.7%	
	White/Caucasian	83	84	4	5	176
	% within News Article	90.2%	88.5%	4.2%	5.3%	
	Other	0	2	2	1	5
	% within News Article	0.0%	2.1%	2.1%	1.1%	
Total		92	96	95	95	378

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Factors Influencing Selective Exposure

To examine factors (i.e., confirmation bias, in-group bias) that influence individual's selective exposure behavior or media content choice, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were proposed. Frequency analyses and chi-square tests were utilized based on participants' preference rank on manipulated news articles which is detailed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

News Article Selection

Participants		News Article Selection			
Race	Political Attitude	Black Athlete Not Supportive	White Athlete Supportive	Black Athlete Supportive	White Athlete Not Supportive
White/Caucasian	Positive	55	51	32	26
	Negative	20	16	55	49
African American	Positive	9	7	7	5
	Negative	2	1	1	1
Other	Positive	4	8	7	3
	Negative	1	6	6	6

Note: News article selection is based on participants' read preference ranks of news articles, and only the first choice was counted. Participants' political attitude toward athlete activism were measured before exposure to the manipulation.

Hypothesis 1 states that participants will select the news article that is consistent with their views on athlete activism more frequently in comparison with the news article that is not consistent with their views on athlete activism. Surprisingly, participants with relatively negative attitudes toward athlete activism (before exposure to the stimuli) wanted to read news articles that were not consistent with their view on athlete activism (i.e., supportive with a positive tone; $n = 85, 51.8\%$) than what was consistent with their view (i.e., not supportive with a negative

tone; $n = 79$, 48.2%). Even though participants with a positive political attitude toward athlete activism (before exposure to the stimuli) were a little more likely to prefer to read news articles that is consistent with their view on athlete activism (i.e., supportive with a positive tone; $n = 112$, 52.3%) than that is not consistent with their view ($n = 102$, 47.7%), there was no statistically significant difference between groups, $\chi^2(1, n = 378) = 0.10, p = .922$. Thus, H1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 states that participants will select the news article that is about an in-group athlete's protest more frequently in comparison with the news article that is about an out-group athlete's protest. White/Caucasian participants wanted to read news articles about an African American athlete (i.e., Deshaun Watson; $n = 162$, 53.3%) a little bit more than news articles about a White athlete (i.e., Josh Allen; $n = 142$, 46.7%). Even though African American participants were more likely to prefer to read news articles about an African American athlete (i.e., Deshaun Watson; $n = 19$, 57.6%) than news articles about a White athlete (i.e., Josh Allen, $n = 14$, 42.4%), there was no significant statistical difference between groups, $\chi^2(2, n = 378) = 1.629, p = .443$. Thus, H2 was not supported.

Consequences of News Media Exposure

News Media Exposure (What: Attitude-Consistent vs. Counter-Attitudinal).

Hypothesis 3 posits that information exposure to attitude-consistent news articles about athlete activism will be positively related to individuals' attitude polarization. Participants in the attitude-consistent condition were exclusively selected and their attitude polarization was examined through a paired-sample t-test. The attitude-consistent condition was created based on participants' previously measured attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation and their actual randomly assigned news article; namely, the attitude-consistent

condition was created when a participant who has a positive attitude toward athlete activism before exposure the manipulation was actually exposed to the supportive news article with a positive tone ($n = 109, 50.9\%$) and vice versa ($n = 86, 52.4\%$). Thus, 51.6% ($n = 195$) of participants were in the attitude-consistent condition.

A set of paired-sample t-tests was performed to test if attitude-consistent news media exposure can influence individuals' attitude polarization with regard to athlete activism. For this, participants' political attitudes toward athlete activism before exposure to the news article (i.e., attitude-consistent) and after exposure were compared. Among participants with relatively negative attitudes toward athlete activism, there was a significant difference in attitudes toward athlete activism after exposure to the attitude-consistent news media ($M = 1.59, SD = .80$) than before the exposure ($M = 1.79, SD = .71$); $t(85) = 3.01, p = .003$. Among participants with positive attitudes toward athlete activism, there was an increase in attitudes toward athlete activism after exposure to the attitude-consistent news media ($M = 4.39, SD = .79$) than before the exposure ($M = 4.34, SD = .54$) but it was not a significant difference, $t(108) = -.794, p = .429$. Thus, H3 was not fully supported because the significant effect of attitude consistent news exposure was found among participants who previously have a relatively negative attitude toward athlete activism.

Research Question 1 queries if exposure to the counter-attitudinal news report about athlete activism will influence individual's attitude toward the protest. As shown in Table 4.5, the counter-attitudinal condition was created when a participant who has a positive attitude toward athlete activism before exposure the manipulation was actually exposed to the not supportive news article with a negative tone ($n = 105, 49.1\%$) and vice versa ($n = 78, 47.6\%$). Thus, 48.4% ($n = 183$) of participants were in the counter-attitudinal condition. A set of paired-

sample t-tests was performed to test if counter-attitudinal news media exposure influences individuals' attitude toward athlete activism. Among participants with relatively negative attitude toward athlete activism, there was no significant difference in attitude toward athlete activism after exposure to the counter-attitudinal news media ($M = 1.87, SD = .93$) than before the exposure ($M = 1.91, SD = .69$); $t(77) = .314, p = .754$. Similarly, among participants with positive attitude toward athlete activism, there was no significant difference in attitude toward athlete activism after exposure to the counter-attitudinal news media ($M = 4.25, SD = .59$) than before the exposure ($M = 4.29, SD = .88$); $t(104) = .590, p = .55$. Thus, RQ1 is answered in that a single exposure of the counter-attitudinal news about athlete activism did not significantly change or influence participants' prior attitude about the issue.

Table 4.5

Attitude-Consistent and Counter-Attitudinal Conditions

		News Article Exposure		
		Not supportive with a negative tone	Supportive with a positive tone	
Political attitude toward athlete activism	Negative	86 52.4%	78 47.6	164
	Positive	105 49.1%	109 50.9%	214
Total				378

Note: Participants' political attitude toward athlete activism were measured before exposure to the manipulation. News article exposure is participants' randomly assigned condition regardless of their preference to read.

Research Questions 2a-c queried if there will be attitudinal (i.e., attitude toward the protest, perceived protest effectiveness, attitude toward the protesting athlete) differences between participants who are exposed to the pro-attitudinal (attitude-consistent) news report

about the athlete's protest and participants who are exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report about the athlete's protest. A set of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) tests was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between the news media exposure conditions (i.e., attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) on dependent variables (i.e., RQ2a: attitude toward the protest, RQ2b: perceived protest effectiveness, RQ2c: attitude toward the protesting athlete) controlling over fanship toward the protesting athlete (i.e., Josh Allen, Deshaun Watson), political attitude before exposure to the manipulation, and perceived issue importance (i.e., Black Lives Matter).

RQ2a: Among participants with relatively negative attitudes toward athlete activism, there was a significant effect of news media exposure on attitude toward the protest after controlling for fanship, prior political attitude and perceived issue importance (i.e., attitude-consistent: $M = 1.59$, $SD = .79$; counter-attitudinal: $M = 1.87$, $SD = .92$); $F(1, 158) = 3.95$, $p = .049$. On the other hand, among participants with a positive attitude toward athlete activism, there was no significant effect of news media exposure on attitude toward the protest after controlling for fanship, prior political attitude toward athlete activism and perceived issue importance (i.e., attitude-consistent: $M = 4.38$, $SD = .79$; counter-attitudinal: $M = 4.25$, $SD = .88$); $F(1, 208) = 1.96$, $p = .163$.

RQ2b: Among participants with relatively negative attitude toward athlete activism, there was a significant effect of news media exposure on perceived protest effectiveness after controlling for fanship, prior political attitude and perceived issue importance (i.e., attitude-consistent: $M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.02$; counter-attitudinal: $M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.07$); $F(1, 158) = 8.98$, $p = .003$. Even though no significant effect of news media exposure was found among participants with positive attitudes toward athlete activism ($F(1, 208) = .658$, $p = .418$), participants in the

attitude-consistent condition ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .66$) perceived the protest more effective than participants in the counter-attitudinal condition ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .79$).

RQ2c: Among participants with relatively negative attitude toward athlete activism, there was no significant effect of news media exposure on attitude toward the protesting athlete (attitude-consistent: $M = 1.68$, $SD = 1.01$; counter-attitudinal: $M = 1.94$, $SD = .96$) after controlling for fanship, prior political attitude and perceived issue importance; $F(1, 158) = 2.44$, $p = .120$. Additionally, no significant effect of news media exposure (attitude-consistent: $M = 4.16$, $SD = .91$; counter-attitudinal: $M = 4.17$, $SD = .93$) on attitude toward the protesting athlete was found among participants with a positive attitude toward athlete activism ($F(1, 208) = .042$, $p = .837$).

Table 4.6

Attitude-Consistent and Counter-Attitudinal Media Exposure

PA	NME	AP, $M(SD)$	PE, $M(SD)$	APA, $M(SD)$
Negative	Attitude-consistent	1.59 (.79)	2.13 (1.02)	1.68 (1.01)
	Counter-attitudinal	1.87 (.90)	2.53 (1.07)	1.94 (.96)
Positive	Attitude-consistent	4.38 (.79)	4.15 (.66)	4.16 (.91)
	Counter-attitudinal	4.25 (.88)	4.07 (.79)	4.17 (.93)

Note: PA = political attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation; NME = news media exposure consistency either attitude-consistent or counter-attitudinal; AP = attitude toward the protest; PE = perceived protest effectiveness; APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

The moderating role of news media exposure (i.e., attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) in dependent variables (i.e., attitude toward the protest, perceived protest effectiveness, attitude toward the protesting athlete) were examined through Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro Model 1. The news media exposure conditions were recoded as a dummy variable; the attitude-consistent was coded '0' while the counter-attitudinal condition was coded

'1'. After controlling over confounding variables (i.e., fanship, perceived issue importance), a strong positive relationship between political attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation ($b = .81, SE = .04, p < .001$) and the attitude toward the protest after exposure to the manipulation was found as well as the moderating effect of news media exposure (attitude consistency) was statistically significant ($b = -.40, SE = .05, p = .03$).

Table 4.7

Regression analysis for AP and the moderating role of news media exposure (attitude consistency)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-.46	.13	-3.48	<.001
Political attitude	.81	.04	18.73	<.001
News media exposure (Counter-attitudinal = 1)	.35	.17	2.00	.04
Interaction	-.13	.05	-2.07	.03

Note: $R^2 = .81, F = 276.23, p < .001, SE =$ standard error;

Political attitude = prior attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation

AP = attitude toward the protest;

Similarly, the significant moderating role of news media exposure ($b = -.13, SE = .05, p = .01$) was found in the relationship between prior political attitude toward athlete activism and the perceived protest effectiveness.

Table 4.8

Regression analysis for PE and the moderating role of news media exposure (attitude consistency)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	.34	.13	2.55	.01
Political attitude	.43	.04	9.89	<.001
News media exposure (Counter-attitudinal = 1)	.52	.17	2.93	.003
Interaction	-.13	.05	-2.57	.01

Note: $R^2 = .72, F = 155.62, p < .001,$

PE = perceived protest effectiveness.

Even though there was a strong positive relationship between the prior political attitude toward athlete activism ($b = .65$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$) and the attitude toward the protesting athlete, the moderating effect of news media exposure was not statistically significant ($b = -.05$, $SE = .05$, $p = .35$).

Table 4.9

Regression analysis for APA and the moderating role of news media exposure (attitude consistency)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-.33	.15	-2.12	.03
Prior political attitude	.65	.05	12.65	<.001
News media exposure (Counter-attitudinal = 1)	.26	.20	1.24	.20
Interaction	-.05	.05	-.92	.35

Note: $R^2 = .72$, $F = 165.76$, $p < .001$;

APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

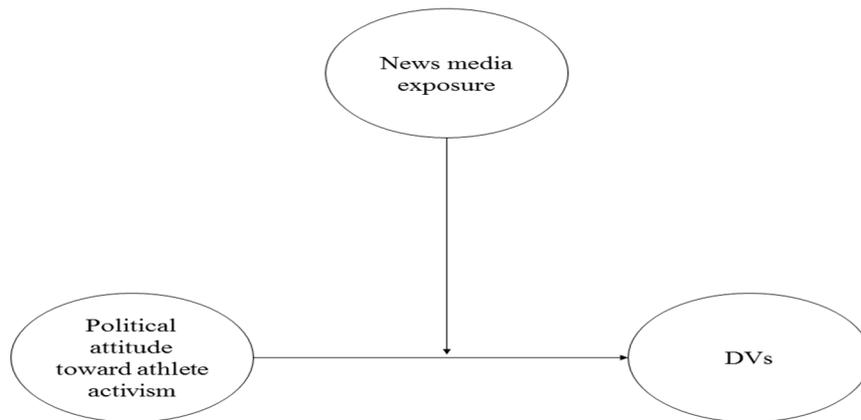


Figure 4.1. The moderating role of news media exposure (attitude consistency)

Note: News media exposure: 1 = counter-attitudinal, 0 = attitude consistent

DVs = attitude toward the protest; perceived protest effectiveness; attitude toward the protesting athlete.

News Media Exposure (Who: In-group vs. Out-group).

Participants' racial congruency with the protesting athlete in a randomly assigned news article was utilized to create either an in-group or an out-group condition for this study. Based on participants' race and their news media exposure (i.e., news article about White Athlete vs. Black Athlete), 46.6% (n = 176) of participants were in the in-group condition while 53.4% (n = 202) were in the out-group media condition as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.10

In-Group and Out-Group Conditions

		News Article Exposure		
		White Athlete (Josh Allen)	Black Athlete (Deshaun Watson)	
Race/Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	154	150	304
	% within Race	50.7%	49.3%	
	African American	11	22	33
	% within Race	33.3%	66.7%	
	Other	23	18	41
	% within Race	56.1%	43.9%	
Total		188	190	378
		49.7%	50.3%	

Note: Participants' race was re-grouped into three categories for the purpose of this study given the race of the protesting athlete. (i.e., African American: Deshaun Watson or White: Josh Allen).

A set of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) tests was performed to determine a statistically significant difference between the news media exposure conditions (i.e., a news article about an in-group athlete's protest vs. a news article about an out-group athlete's protest) on dependent variables (i.e., H4a: attitude toward the protest, H4b: perceived protest effectiveness, H4c: attitude toward the protesting athlete) controlling for fanship toward the

protesting athlete (i.e., Josh Allen, Deshaun Watson), political attitude about athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation, and perceived issue importance (i.e., Black Lives Matter).

Hypothesis 4a states that participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will have a more positive attitude toward the protest compared to participants exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest. Among White participants, there was not a significant effect of news media exposure on attitude toward the protest; $F(1, 298) = 2.878, p = .09$. White participants who read a news article about a White athlete (i.e., an in-group condition) had more positive attitudes toward the protest ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.49$) than White participants who read a news article about a Black athlete (i.e., an out-group condition; $M = 2.97, SD = 1.60$). Similarly, among Black participants, no significant effect of news media exposure was found between an in-group condition ($M = 3.92, SD = 1.51$) and an out-group condition ($M = 4.45, SD = .68$); $F(1, 27) = .007, p = .936$. Thus, H4a was not supported.

Hypothesis 4b posits participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will perceive the protest as more effective compared to participants who were exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest. With regard to perceived protest effectiveness, no significant difference was found between White participants who were exposed to a news article about a White athlete (i.e., an in-group condition; $M = 3.29, SD = 1.23$) and White participants who were exposed to a news article about a Black athlete (i.e., an out-group condition; $M = 3.21, SD = 1.29$); $F(1, 298) = .076, p = .783$. Among Black participants, there was no significant difference between two conditions; $F(1, 27) = .048, p = .828$. Namely, perceived protest effectiveness of Black participants was not significantly different between Black participants who read a news article about Black athlete (i.e., an in-group condition; $M =$

3.71, $SD = 1.30$) and Black participants who read a news article about White athlete (i.e., an out-group condition; $M = 4.21$, $SD = .70$). Thus, H4b was not supported.

Hypothesis 4c states participants exposed to a news article about an in-group athlete's protest will have a more positive attitudes toward the protesting athlete compared to participants exposed to a news article about an out-group athlete's protest. Among White participants, there was a significant effect of news media exposure on attitude toward the protesting athlete; $F(1, 298) = 10.857$, $p = .001$. White participants who read a news article about a White athlete (i.e., an in-group condition) had a more positive attitude toward the protesting athlete ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.46$) than White participants who read a news article about a Black athlete (i.e., an out-group condition; $M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.55$). However, among Black participants, no significant effect of news media exposure was found between an in-group condition ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.38$) and an out-group condition ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .72$); $F(1, 27) = 2.984$, $p = .09$. Thus, H4c was partially supported.

Table 4.11

In-Group and Out-Group Media Exposure

Race	NME	AP, $M (SD)$	PE, $M (SD)$	APA, $M (SD)$
White	White athlete	3.21 (1.49)	3.29 (1.23)	3.22 (1.46)
	Black athlete	2.97 (1.60)	3.21 (1.29)	2.83 (1.55)
Black	White athlete	4.45 (.68)	4.21 (.70)	4.18 (.72)
	Black athlete	3.92 (1.51)	3.71 (1.30)	3.95 (1.38)

Note: NME = news media exposure either a news article about White athlete or Black athlete; AP = attitude toward the protest; PE = perceived protest effectiveness; APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

The moderating role of news media exposure (i.e., a news article about an in-group athlete vs. an out-group athlete) in participants' attitude toward the protest, perceived protest

effectiveness and attitude toward the protest was examined through Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro Model 1. The news media exposure conditions were recoded as a dummy variable; an out-group condition was coded '0' while an in-group condition was coded '1'.

After controlling for confounding variables (i.e., fanship, perceived issue importance), a strong positive relationship between the prior political attitudes toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation and the attitude toward the protest after exposure to the manipulation was found ($b = .79, SE = .04, p < .001$) but the moderating effect of news media exposure (a news article about an in-group athlete vs. an out-group athlete) was not statistically significant ($b = -.05, SE = .05, p = .28$) as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Regression analysis for AP and the moderating role of news media exposure (in-group vs. out-group)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-.43	.13	-3.32	.001
Political attitude	.79	.04	18.27	<.001
News media exposure (In-Group = 1)	.30	.47	1.69	.09
Interaction	-.05	.05	-1.07	.28

Note: $R^2 = .81, F = 276.33, p < .001, SE =$ standard error;

AP = attitude toward the protest;

Political attitude = prior attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation

As shown in Table 4.13 no significant moderating role of news media exposure ($b = .01, SE = .05, p = .75$) was found in the relationship between prior political attitude toward athlete activism and the perceived protest effectiveness.

Table 4.13

*Regression analysis for PE and the moderating role of news media exposure
(in-group vs. out-group)*

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	.61	.13	4.61	<.001
Political attitude	.37	.04	8.43	<.001
News media exposure (In-Group = 1)	-.07	.18	-.41	.67
Interaction	.01	.05	.31	.75

Note: $R^2 = .70$, $F = 150.74$, $p < .001$

PE = perceived protest effectiveness

Even though there was a strong positive relationship between the prior political attitude toward athlete activism ($b = .61$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$) and the attitude toward the protesting athlete, the moderating effect of news media exposure was not statistically significant ($b = .01$, $SE = .05$, $p = .76$) as shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

*Regression analysis for APA and the moderating role of news media exposure
(in-group vs. out-group)*

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-.30	.15	-2.02	.04
Political attitude	.61	.05	12.14	<.001
News media exposure (In-Group = 1)	.20	.20	1.00	.31
Interaction	.01	.05	.03	.76

Note: $R^2 = .73$, $F = 171.30$, $p < .001$

APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

News Media Exposure (How: Selected vs. Forced).

Participants' news article preference rank to read and their actual news article exposure were utilized to create either a selective exposure condition or a forced exposure condition.

Namely, only participants who were exposed to a news article of their previous choice (only the

first rank was used) were considered as the selective exposure condition while other cases (exposure to a news article which is not their first preference) were considered as the forced exposure condition. As shown in Table 4.11, 26.5% of participants ($n = 100$) were in the selective exposure condition where 73.5% ($n = 278$) were in the forced exposure condition.

Table 4.15
Selective Exposure and Forced Exposure Conditions

		News Article (actual exposure)				
		White-Supportive	White-Not Supportive	Black-Supportive	Black-Not Supportive	
First rank news article / Preference	White-Supportive	24	22	31	12	89
	% within Preference	27.0%	24.7%	34.8%	13.5%	
	White-Not Supportive	23	25	17	25	90
	% within Preference	25.6%	27.8%	18.9%	27.8%	
	Black-Supportive	22	27	26	33	108
	% within Preference	20.4%	25.0%	24.1%	30.6%	
	Black-Not Supportive	23	22	21	25	91
	% within Preference	25.3%	24.2%	23.1%	27.5%	
Total		92	96	95	95	378
		24.3%	25.3%	25.1%	25.1%	

Research Questions 3a-c query if there will be attitudes (i.e., attitude toward the protest, perceived protest effectiveness, attitude toward the protesting athlete) differences between participants who are in the selective (intentional) exposure condition and participants who are in the forced (not intentional) exposure condition. A set of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) tests was conducted to determine a statistically significant difference between news media exposure conditions (i.e., selective vs. forced) on dependent variables (i.e., RQ3a: attitude toward the

protest, RQ3b: perceived protest effectiveness, RQ3c: attitude toward the protesting athlete) controlling for fanship toward the protesting athlete (i.e., Josh Allen, Deshaun Watson), political attitude before exposure to the manipulation, and perceived issue importance (i.e., Black Lives Matter).

RQ3a asks if there will be attitude (attitude toward the protest) differences between participants who are in the selective exposure condition and participants who are in the forced exposure condition. Even though participants in the selective exposure condition ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.55$) had a bit more positive attitude toward the protest than participants in the forced exposure condition ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.54$), there was no significant difference between two conditions; $F(1, 372) = .336$, $p = .562$.

RQ3b queries if there will be perception (perceived protest effectiveness) differences between participants who are in the selective exposure condition and participants who are in the forced exposure condition. Similar to RQ3a result, participants in the selective exposure condition ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.28$) perceived the protest more effective than participants in the forced exposure condition ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.25$), but no significant difference between two conditions was found; $F(1, 372) = 1.85$, $p = .175$.

RQ3c asks if there are attitudes (attitude toward the protesting athlete) between participants who are in the selective exposure condition and participants who are in the forced exposure condition. Although participants in the selective exposure condition ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.49$) had a bit more positive attitude toward the protesting athlete than participants in the forced exposure condition ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.52$), there was no significant difference between two conditions; $F(1, 372) = 1.245$, $p = .265$.

Table 4.16*Selective and Forced Media Exposure*

		AP, <i>M (SD)</i>	PE, <i>M (SD)</i>	APA, <i>M (SD)</i>
NME	Selective	3.22 (1.55)	3.41 (1.28)	3.22 (1.49)
	Forced	3.18 (1.54)	3.31 (1.25)	3.11 (1.52)

Note: NME = news media exposure either selective or forced;
 AP = attitude toward the protest;
 PE = perceived protest effectiveness; APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

The moderating role of news media exposure (i.e., Selective exposure vs. Forced exposure) in dependent variables (i.e., attitude toward the protest, perceived protest effectiveness, attitude toward the protesting athlete) were examined through Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro Model 1. The news media exposure conditions were recoded as a dummy variable; the forced exposure condition was coded '0' while the selective exposure condition was coded '1'. After controlling over confounding variables (i.e., fanship, perceived issue importance), a strong positive relationship between the prior political attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation ($b = .76, SE = .04, p < .001$) and the attitude toward the protest after exposure to the manipulation was found but the moderating effect of news media exposure (selective vs. forced) was not statistically significant ($b = .04, SE = .05, p = .45$).

Table 4.17

Regression analysis for AP and the moderating role of news media exposure (selective vs. forced)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-.28	.12	-2.34	.01
Political attitude	.76	.04	18.38	<.001
News media exposure (Selective = 1)	-.08	.19	-.45	.65
Interaction	.04	.05	.74	.45

Note: $R^2 = .81$, $F = 276.33$, $p < .001$, *SE* = standard error;

AP = attitude toward the protest;

Political attitude = prior attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation

Similarly, the significant moderating role of news media exposure (selective vs. forced) was found in the relationship between prior political attitude toward athlete activism and the perceived protest effectiveness ($b = -.01$, $SE = .05$, $p = .73$).

Table 4.18

Regression analysis for PE and the moderating role of news media exposure (selective vs. forced)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	.53	.12	4.35	<.001
Political attitude	.38	.04	9.15	<.001
News media exposure (Selective = 1)	.17	.20	.85	.39
Interaction	-.01	.05	-.33	.73

Note: $R^2 = .70$, $F = 150.74$, $p < .001$

PE = perceived protest effectiveness

Even though there was a strong positive relationship between the prior political attitude toward athlete activism ($b = .61$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$) and the attitude toward the protesting

athlete, the moderating effect of news media exposure (selective vs. forced) was not statistically significant ($b = .04$ $SE = .06$, $p = .51$).

Table 4.19

Regression analysis for APA and the moderating role of news media exposure (selective vs. forced)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-.21	.14	-1.48	.13
Political attitude	.61	.04	12.65	<.001
News media exposure (Selective = 1)	-.03	.323	-.14	.88
Interaction	.04	.06	.64	.51

Note: $R^2 = .72$, $F = 165.54$, $p < .001$

APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

Subsequent Effects of Athlete Activism

Hypothesis 5 posits perceived protest effectiveness will be positively associated with attitude toward the protesting athlete. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this. Perceived protest effectiveness significantly predicted positive attitude toward the protesting athlete, $b = .26$, $SE = .04$, $p < 0.001$ even after controlling for attitude toward the protest, $b = .70$, $SE = .03$, $p < 0.001$ and previous fanship, $b = .07$, $SE = .03$, $p = .02$. Thus, H5 was supported.

An additional analysis that examines relationships among previous dependent variables (i.e., attitude toward the protest, perceived protest effectiveness, attitude toward the protesting athlete) by using PROCESS macro Model 4. Positive direct associations (attitude toward the protest: $b = .44$, $SE = .03$, $p < 0.001$ → perceived protest effectiveness: $b = .25$, $SE = .04$, $p < 0.001$ → attitude toward the protesting athlete) were found in addition to the mediating role of the perceived protest effectiveness. As shown in Table 4.14, perceived protest effectiveness

mediated the relationship between attitude toward the protest and attitude toward the protesting athlete ($b = .11, SE = .03, [LLCI = .0620, ULCI = .1804]$).

Table 4.20

Indirect effects of AP on APA via PE

Indirect Path	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% Bootstrap CI	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
AP → PE → APA	.11*	.03	.0620	.1804

Note. 95% Bootstrap CI (confidence interval) is calculated through the bootstrapping of 5,000 samples. * indicates significant indirect effect.

AP = attitude toward the protest; PE = perceived protest effectiveness; APA = attitude toward the protesting athlete

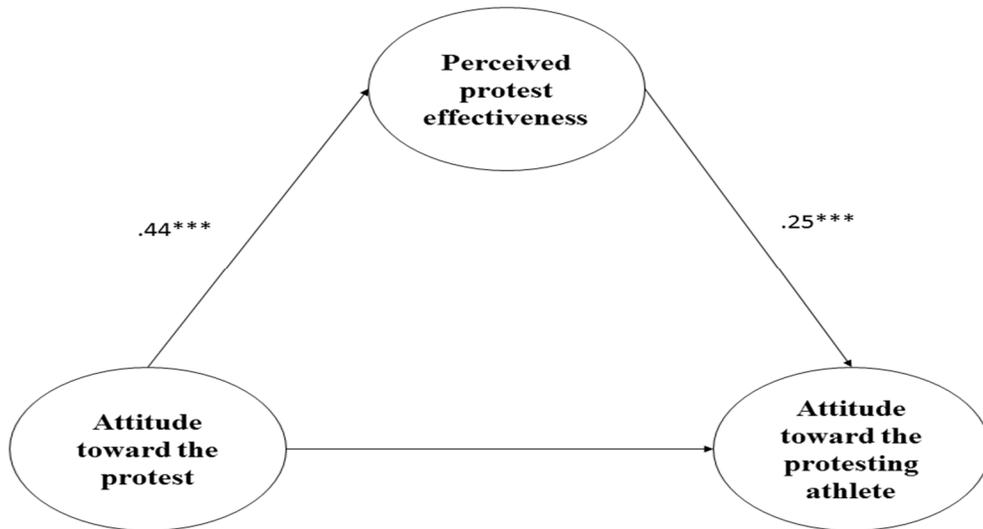


Figure 4.2. Path model results for relationships between AP, PE and APA

Note. Path entries are unstandardized coefficients and significant paths are denoted by solid lines. *** $p < .001$

Marketing Perspective

Hypothesis 6 states attitudes toward the protesting athlete will be positively associated with the endorsed brand. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this. Attitude toward the protesting athlete significantly predicted attitude toward the endorsed brand (Gillette), $b = .14$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$ even after controlling for participants' previous brand loyalty (Gillette), $b = .71$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$. Thus, H6 was supported.

Research Question 4 queries if the sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate) about the protesting athlete will influence participants' attitude toward the endorsed brand. The moderating role of the sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate) in the relationship between attitude toward the protesting athlete and attitude toward the endorsed brand was examined through Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro Model 1. The sponsorship decision conditions were recoded as a dummy variable; the terminate decision condition was coded '0' while the maintain decision condition was coded '1'. The moderating effect of sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate) was statistically significant ($b = 1.37$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$).

Table 4.21

Regression analysis and the moderating role of sponsorship decision (maintain vs. terminate)

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.81	.20	18.29	<.001
Attitude toward the protesting athlete	-.69	.06	-11.37	<.001
Sponsorship decision (maintain = 1)	-3.30	.23	-14.14	<.001
Interaction	1.37	.06	20.44	<.001

Note: $R^2 = .60$, $F = 79.74$, $p < .001$, $SE =$ standard error;

Covariates: perceived issue importance, fanship, brand loyalty

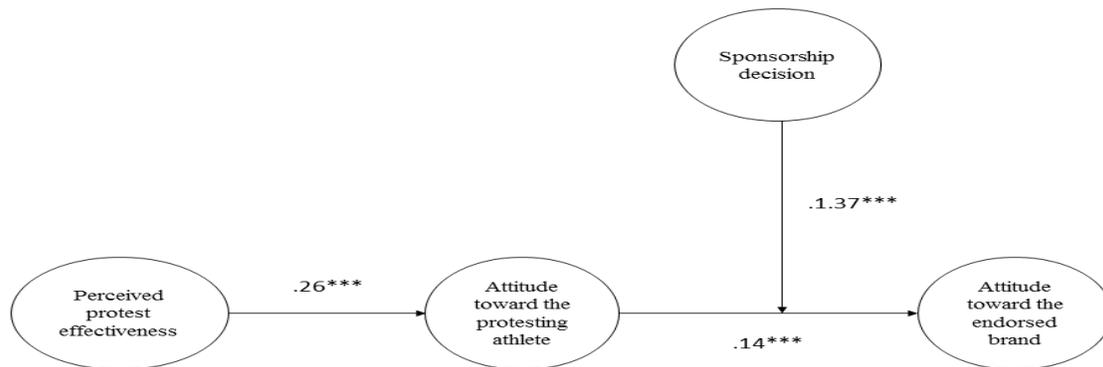


Figure 4.3. A conceptual model and results of H5, H6 and RQ4

Additionally, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to further examine if there is a statistically significant difference between two sponsorship decision conditions (i.e., maintain vs. terminate) on attitudes toward the endorsed brand controlling for participants' prior brand loyalty. Among participants with positive attitude toward the protest, there was a significant effect of the sponsorship decision on attitude toward the endorsed brand after controlling for previous brand loyalty; $F(1, 211) = 3.96, p = .048$. Namely, participants who were in the maintain sponsorship decision condition ($M = 3.44, SD = .96$) had statistically more positive attitude toward the endorsed brand than participants in the terminate sponsorship decision ($M = 3.38, SD = 1.01$). Among participants with relatively negative attitude toward the protest, there was no significant effect of the sponsorship decision on attitude toward the endorsed brand after controlling for previous brand loyalty; $F(1, 161) = .266, p = .60$. However, participants who were in the maintain sponsorship decision condition ($M = 2.85, SD = 1.36$) had statistically more slightly negative attitude toward the endorsed brand than participants in the terminate sponsorship decision ($M = 2.91, SD = 1.33$).

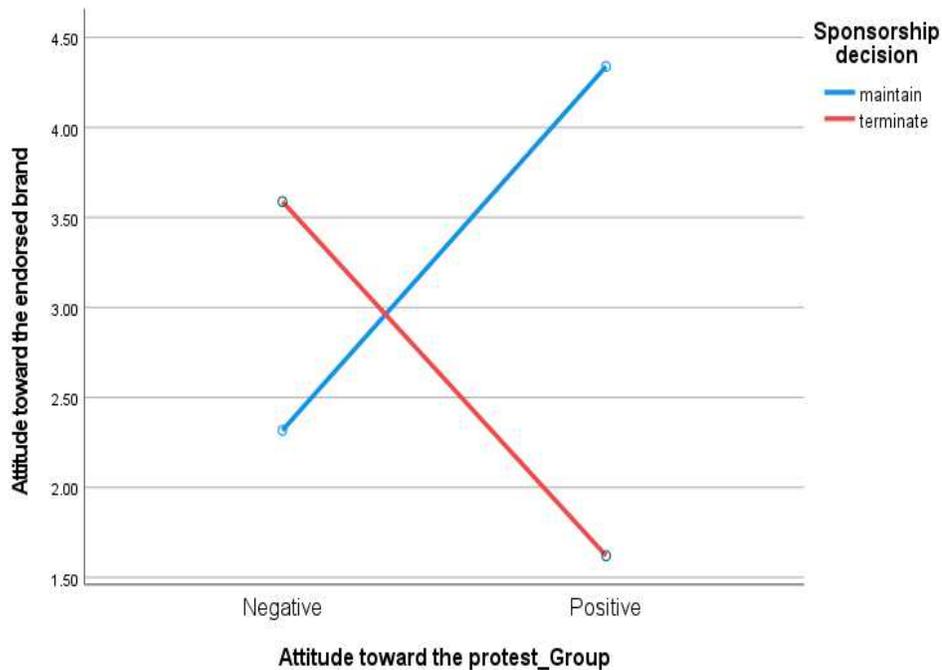


Figure 4.4. Interaction between attitude toward the protest and sponsorship decision

Sociopolitical Perspective

Hypothesis 7 states attitude toward the protesting athlete will be positively associated with individuals' political participation. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this. Attitude toward the protesting athlete significantly predicted political participation ($b = .28$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$) even after controlling for political interest ($b = .04$, $SE = .03$, $p = .29$), perceived issue importance ($b = .34$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$), political ideology ($b = -.11$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$), and political attitude toward athlete activism ($b = .16$, $SE = .04$, $p = .001$) which were measured before exposure to the manipulation. Thus, H7 was supported.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The intersection of sports and politics has become more prevalent in today's digital media world, especially through athletes' voices or protests about sociopolitical issues (Gift & Miner, 2017; Stone, 2020). However, it remains controversial as to whether sports entities including players and executives, should take a public stance on sociopolitical issues. Although the critical role of news media (e.g., framing, hostile media) has been constantly underscored in the success of public figures' social movements including athlete activism (Lee, 2014; McLeod, 2007; Schmidt et al., 2019), there is relatively little empirical evidence regarding the underlying factors of individuals' information perception process (i.e., selective exposure, social identity).

Thus, the first part of this dissertation focuses on whether and how news media exposure factors (i.e., what: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal; who: about an in-group athlete vs. an out-group athlete; how: selective vs. forced) produce different effects in the context of athlete activism. Additionally, given the social and marketing power of athletes, the second part of the dissertation empirically examines the subsequent effects of athlete activism on both our society (promoting progressive social change) and an endorsed brand.

The first section of this chapter discusses the core findings from statistical analyses. Next, the theoretical and practical implications of this study for the field of mass communication and its related practice are discussed. Finally, limitations and directions for future research are provided along with the conclusion of this dissertation.

Summary of Findings

Consequences of News Media Exposure

Unlike previous athlete activism research, which simply focused on traditional media effects (e.g., framing; Boykoff & Carrington, 2020; Frisby, 2018; Park et al., 2020), this dissertation focuses more on the audience perspective and how their preexisting factors interplay with news media exposure. This is because the same news media content can be interpreted and perceived in many ways, creating potentially different effects, depending on individuals' prior attitudes toward an issue, their social identity, and how they consume it. Based on existing literature on political polarization (e.g., Holbert et al., 2010; Kim, 2019; Stroud, 2011), social identity approach, and selective exposure, four hypotheses and ten research questions were proposed to examine the consequences of news media exposure. These proposed hypotheses and research questions were empirically tested through a 2 (What: attitude-consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) x 2 (about Who: an in-group athlete vs. an out-group athlete) x 2 (How: selective vs. forced) experiment.

First, the analyses examining the effect of news media exposure (either attitude-consistent information or counter-attitudinal information), provide evidence that people's political attitudes can be reinforced and polarized through attitude-consistent media consumption, yielding consistent results with previous selective exposure and political polarization literature (e.g., Garrett, 2009; Holbert, Garrett, & Gleason, 2010; Jamieson & Cappella, 2008; Stroud, 2011). To be specific, this dissertation found the significant moderating effect of news media exposure (attitude-consistency) in that there were attitude differences between participants who were exposed to the attitude-consistent news report and participants who were exposed to the counter-attitudinal news report. Additionally, intriguing findings with

regard to attitude-polarization were revealed. Participants' preexisting attitudes--especially negative attitudes--were strengthened through attitude-consistent news media exposure, whereas no significant attitude differences before news media exposure and after the exposure were found among participants in the counter-attitudinal condition. This result suggests that a single exposure to the counter-attitudinal news report may not be significantly strong enough to influence or change people's prior attitudes about athlete activism.

Applying the social identity approach, H4a-c examined whether and how differently participants perceive the news articles about an in-group athlete and an out-group athlete. The results from H4a-c partially supported the idea that social identity--especially racial congruence--can be one of the key predictors in the information process. After controlling for potentially confounding variables (i.e., fanship, prior political attitudes, perceived issue importance), White participants showed more positive attitudes toward the protest when they were exposed to the news article about a White athlete (an in-group athlete) compared to when they were exposed to the news article about a Black athlete (an out-group athlete). Similarly, White participants who read the articles about their in-group athlete (a White athlete) had more positive attitudes toward the protesting athlete than participants who read the articles about an out-group athlete (a Black athlete). However, no significant effects were found among Black participants. In addition to a small number of Black participants ($n = 33$), one of the possible reasons can be the fact that Black participants had relatively higher positive attitudes toward the protest and the protesting athlete regardless of their news media exposure condition (i.e., the out-group: a White athlete vs. the in-group: a Black athlete). Because there have been fewer White athletes being public with protests and concerns about sociopolitical issues, participants, regardless of their race or news

report condition were likely to have more positive attitudes toward the White protesting athlete and his action.

Participants in the selective exposure condition who were exposed to the news article of their previous choice were more likely to have positive attitudes toward the protest, the protesting athlete, and also perceived the protest to be more effective when compared to participants in the forced exposure condition, who were exposed the news articles regardless of their previous choice.

Subsequent Effects of Athlete Activism

Marketing Perspective.

Image transfer research suggests (e.g., Gwinner, 1997; McCracken, 1989; Simmer et al., 2009) that images of sponsored athletes can be transferred to sponsoring brands or products; this study reveals a strong positive relationship between attitudes toward the protesting athlete and attitudes toward the endorsed brand, supporting existing literature. Additionally, the moderating role of the sponsorship decision (i.e., maintain vs. terminate) was found. In particular, participants with positive attitudes toward the protest had statistically greater positive attitudes toward the endorsed brand when they were in the maintain decision condition compared to when they were in the terminate decision condition. Conversely, among participants with negative attitudes toward the protest, participants in the terminate condition had more positive attitudes toward the endorsed brand than participants who were in the maintain condition. This significant interaction implicates the importance of sponsorship decisions and an understanding of consumers' attitude toward issues when its sponsored athletes are involved in controversial issues (e.g., athlete activism).

Sociopolitical Perspective.

A significant relationship between athlete activism and progressive social change was found. Even after controlling for confounding variables, participants' positive attitudes toward the protesting athlete and the protest leads to more political participation (i.e., general political interest, perceived issue importance, political ideology, prior political attitude). Even though the causal relationship was not completely tested because of the limited data and the study design, the findings from H7, the positive relationship between attitude toward the protesting athlete and political participation, with a linear interpretation yields empirical evidence of the important role of athlete activism in society.

Theoretical Implications

This current two-prolonged dissertation (information perception process, subsequent effects) broadens the understanding of factors influencing individuals' perception of athlete activism and its spillover effects from a marketing and sociopolitical perspectives with a particular focus on the role of news media. As such, the findings of this dissertation help translate communication theories (e.g., framing, selective exposure) into the realm of sports, particularly athlete activism.

Even though the importance of news media has been constantly highlighted in athlete activism (e.g., Arpan et al., 2006; Schmidt et al., 2019), focusing on traditional media effects theories, there is relatively scant empirical research that reflects the audience perspective. This dissertation fills that relative void by examining how individuals' preexisting factors (e.g., social identity, prior perception) interplay with news media exposure.

Previous studies on athlete activism found that news media framing (e.g., how the issue is portrayed, whether supportive or not supportive; Frisby, 2018; Park et al., 2020) is one of the

key factors in determining audience attitudes toward the protest and the protesting athlete. However, the findings of this dissertation empirically show that it operates in different ways when the news report view was consistent with the audiences' prior attitude toward the issue, and when the news report view was not consistent with audiences' prior attitude toward the issue. Exposure to the attitude-consistent news media message accelerated individuals' attitude polarization regarding the sociopolitical issue, whereas exposure to the counter-attitudinal news media message did not change or attenuate individuals' prior political attitude about the issue. This not only echoes the argument of previous literature on selective exposure and attitude polarization (e.g., Kim 2019; Kwak et al., 2020), but also makes a theoretical contribution to the athlete activism paradigm, which has been mostly focused on traditional media effects (e.g., framing) by shedding light on the important role of news media exposure as individuals who tend to engage in attitude-consistent news media messages through selective exposure are more likely to form polarized attitudes.

Another important implication of this dissertation is that it links selective exposure theory with social identity theory in the context of athlete activism, exploring how news media exposure affects attitudes. The results confirm social identity theory and the phenomena of in-group favoritism and out-group derogation in the context of athlete activism and news media exposure. Even though hypotheses related to social identity were only partially supported, the same news media content can be perceived differently depending on individuals' social identity and its congruence with the protesting athlete. As such, results advance hostile media effect literature, which has focused mostly on the media outlet and political element (e.g., Coe et al., 2008; Kim & Hwang, 2019; Perloff, 2015).

Additionally, the influence of news media exposure--especially how participants were exposed to the news report--was examined to understand whether and how selective exposure and forced exposure yield different effects on individuals' attitudes. It seems logical to expect there to be attitude differences between participants when they are exposed to media content of their choice (i.e., selective exposure), versus when they do not have control of media content they are exposed to (i.e., forced exposure).

However, existing experimental research on media effects (e.g., Stroud et al., 2019; Van der Meer et al., 2020; Westerwick et al., 2017) has been widely conducted without much consideration of the difference between selective exposure and forced exposure, which may not reflect real-world phenomena. In this regard, this dissertation is relatively novel in bringing selective exposure theory into the athlete activism context, extending media effects literature. More importantly, this novel scholarly attempt via elaboration of media effects and selective exposure reflects today's digital media environment where incidental or unwanted information exposure is getting more common, which broadens the understanding of athlete activism and the role of media.

Also, this dissertation not only advances the paradigmatic approach in athlete activism but also confirms previous communication literature findings regarding political participation (e.g., Gastil & Xenos, 2010; Kim, 2019; Moon, 2011), suggesting the critical role of athlete activism in political opinion and participation regarding social injustice. Previous research on athlete activism has mostly utilized rhetorical (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2010; Kluch, 2020) and content analytic (e.g., Frisby, 2018; Sanderson et al., 2016; Schmidt et al., 2018) approaches, focusing on antecedents, specifically why and how athletes participate in such social movements. However, this dissertation provides empirical evidence of a significant link between athlete

activism and political participation, supporting the notion that athletes have the power to help our society better inform society, as their actions can be a vehicle to promote progressive social changes.

The dissertation findings indicate that individuals' attitudes toward the protesting athlete, can be invoked through news media exposure, and, moreover, can be closely related to participants' various forms of political participation, which is similar to previous political communication research findings of a strong positive relationship between attitude toward politicians and political participation (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Kim, 2019). Thus, the findings of this dissertation are consistent with previous research that identifies the inextricable relationship between sports and politics, adding empirical evidence to its related debates.

Practical Implications

The findings of this dissertation not only help to progress theory in the field of communication and athlete activism research, but also provide practical implications for sports and news media practitioners and stakeholders.

Considering that news is one of the key information sources that impact public perception about any given issue, there are some applied implications of this dissertation for the news media industry and related organizations. This study found that news media effects are not uniform, and individuals' information perception process is not simple as political attitude polarization could be accelerated through attitude-consistent information exposure, whereas the effects of a single exposure of counter-attitudinal news messages were minimal. Additionally, the important role of social identity factors was revealed in understanding news media messages, as White participants had a more positive attitude toward the White protesting athlete and his protest. Unlike previous researchers' arguments, including those of deliberation theorists (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996;

Wojcieszak, 2011), that political polarization can be attenuated through exposure to dissimilar views, this dissertation did not find any significant effects of counter-attitudinal news exposure on participants' attitude changes.

The findings here implicate that the same news media content can be perceived differently depending on audiences' prior attitudes and social identity, yielding different effects. In other words, individual differences can be a critical factor to be considered when it comes to the way messaging is crafted. Thus, a news article related to a controversial issue could be congruently crafted (e.g., either supportive with a positive tone or not supportive with a negative tone) dependent on target audiences' attitudes or their stance to maximize the effectiveness of the message and not to lose the current audiences.

Also, this dissertation suggests simple exposure to dissimilar views or counter-attitudinal information cannot be a remedy for political polarization, demonstrating the complexity of attitude formation and change. Indeed, this dissertation provides insights for news media organizations, highlighting the need for understanding and analysis of target audiences instead of simply reporting or framing issues to maximize their messages.

The findings of this dissertation also have several marketing and managerial implications. The significant relationship between athlete activism and athlete endorsement shows that an increase in attitude toward the protesting athlete positively impacts his endorsed brand, confirming the image transfer theory (Gwinner, 1997; McCracken, 1989). Namely, people can form a certain valence of the protesting athlete's image or his action based on the news media message and their prior attitudes, such image can be transferred to the endorsed brand. As previous studies on image transfer theory in the context of sports reveal, the transfer mechanism occurs because of the close relationship or connection between the brand and the athlete, as

people can easily associate the brand with the athlete who endorses the brand.

Even though stakeholders such as teams, leagues, and sponsors have little control over athletes' participation or involvement in sociopolitical issues, this result offers a meaningful managerial implication for practitioners that either a positive or a negative image of the athlete can be closely related to their images, and appropriate responses or actions are required. Particularly, brands can even take advantage of images, likeness or congruence with protesting athletes by supporting them to increase their brand awareness and profits despite controversial arguments as Nike featured Colin Kaepernick in their 30th anniversary of "Just Do It" campaign in 2018. According to Edison Trends report, Nike's online sales grew 31% which is 17 % increase during the same time period of 2017 after the Nike's Kaepernick ad campaign (Ragg, 2018).

Moreover, this dissertation pinpointed the moderating role of the sponsorship decision, as participants' attitude toward the endorsed brand was significantly influenced by the endorsed brand's decision to either continue or to terminate regarding the sponsored athlete, especially where the athlete is involved in a controversial sociopolitical issue. Participants with positive attitudes toward the protest had more positive attitudes toward the endorsed brand when the brand decided to continue its business relationship with the protesting athlete despite his protest. This effect can be contrasted when the brand decided to terminate the relationship with the protesting athlete. On the other hand, participants with a relatively negative attitude toward the protest had a more positive attitude toward the endorsed brand when the brand decided to terminate its relationship with the protesting athlete than when the brand decided to maintain its relationship. This finding provides empirical evidence that helps marketing and PR practitioners minimize potential damage from the athlete endorser's controversial action and maximize the

effectiveness of endorsement by the athlete. Thus, it is imperative to take target consumers' attitudes toward the issue into consideration when a brand's endorser athlete is engaged in a controversial issue (e.g., athlete activism), as opposed to hastily terminating the business relationship with the athlete.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite meaningful theoretical and practical implications about the news media and athlete activism, there are several limitations that warrant inclusion for future research. First, the largest limitation to this study comes from the study design and its structure, especially regarding its generalizability and external validity. This dissertation utilized an experimental design study given its usefulness in testing the causal effects of news media exposure while controlling for other confounding factors. However, a single exposure of news article (i.e., a single subject related to race) may not be strong enough to test the proposed hypotheses and research questions, and the web-based experiment survey setting may not reflect a real-world situation, as it exposes individuals to news media, then measures its effect in the same survey. Given today's digital media environment, where people can encounter diverse information, especially relating to sociopolitical issues, and through many different media channels, the findings of this study from self-reported survey data provide minimal information. Therefore, future research could benefit from a longitudinal design study, aiming to consider the exposure frequency of news media exposure with different channels, and testing the time-related effects of news media exposure on participants' attitude formations or changes.

Another important methodological limitation relates to the way this dissertation operationalized or measured news media exposure based on participants' political attitude toward athlete activism before exposure to the manipulation, participants' social identity (i.e.,

racial congruence with the protesting athlete), and participants' choice of a news article. Based on political communication literature (e.g., Ahern, 2016; Barnidge et al., 2020), participants were dichotomized and re-coded as either an attitude-consistent news media exposure condition or a counter-attitudinal news media exposure condition in accordance with their prior political attitude toward athlete activism and their randomly assigned news article's content and tone (i.e., supportive vs. not supportive). Even though evidence of stimuli appropriateness was provided through the manipulation check, the strength of the stimuli (i.e., supportive vs. not supportive) and the conditions (i.e., attitude consistent vs. counter-attitudinal), may affect the current findings. Thus, future research should consider employing using a continuous measure of attitude consistency in order to understand the sophisticated relationships therein, while reducing the possibility of losing data or information. Employing diverse methodological approaches regarding the measurements of variables such as multiple measures of attitudes through a longitudinal design and using different types of measurement scales (e.g., nominal, ratio) of attitudes can be beneficial to conduct many advanced statistical analyses (e.g., multigroup analyses, time-series analysis) that provide deeper understandings of complex phenomena.

Similarly, the way selective exposure and forced exposure were operationalized is a limitation of this dissertation. Based on participants' previous news article choice and their actual news article exposure, either the selective exposure condition or the forced exposure condition was created (Stroud et al., 2019). Even though it was a relatively novel attempt (one of few studies) to examine the difference between selective exposure and forced exposure, reflecting today's digital media environment, it is still potentially methodologically problematic to measure selective exposure and forced exposure through one experiment with a survey. Thus, future research can advance this area of research with new techniques (e.g., new web design,

biometrics) and settings (e.g., lab experiment) which can provide more natural selective media exposure and forced media exposure situations.

Additionally, to reduce sample proportion issues and to control for the effects of other social identity factors (i.e., team identification, athlete identification, gender), which vary by participants, this study purposefully used a racial cue to divide the protesting athletes into either an in-group or an out-group. Even though the in-group conditions were operationalized depending on racial congruence with participants and the protesting athletes based on social identity and athlete activism literature (e.g., Smith, 2019; Towler et al., 2020) the results did not show very significant impacts. Thus, using only a single social identity cue (without measuring identity salience) needs to be reconsidered, and future research might achieve merit by combining social identity factors (e.g., fanship, race) and finding a more ideal sample (e.g., sports team rivalry sample, which can be naturally divided into two).

Finally, the sample drawn and relatively small sample size should be regarded as the last limitation. Even though data from MTurk Masters has been found to be more reliable and valid throughout previous studies (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Sheehan, 2018), it does not necessarily provide a nationally representative sample, which, in turn, confines the generalizability of the findings given. Also, due to the small number (the number of participants in the selective exposure condition, the number of Black participants) and disproportion of the current data sample (the oversampling of Democrats, and male participants), further analyses related to demographic variables (e.g., age, race, gender, political party), which may entail important information, are limited. Thus, a larger and more representative sample is suggested for future research to expand current findings and provide more insights.

Conclusion

Since it is a near-impossibility to separate sports from the sociopolitical context of athletes' protests, uncovering the mechanism for information perception of these actions is critical for many audiences, especially for various stakeholders (e.g., teams, leagues, associate brands). Using an experimental study, this dissertation surveyed how people perceive athlete activism and examined the subsequent effects of athlete activism from a marketing and social-political perspective.

The findings from this dissertation regarding news media exposure indicate that news media, coupled with individuals' prior attitudes and social identity plays a critical role in shaping public perceptions of athlete activism, as previous media effects and selective exposure research suggest. Subsequently, these results provide insight into the media effects research and the protest paradigm by unfolding the significance of news media exposure and audience factors (i.e., prior attitude toward the issue, social identity) in an individual's cognitive process.

Moreover, a strong positive relationship between the protesting athlete and the endorsed brand may cause athletes to become less inclined to become involved in protests than they once were. It also may warrant one of the reasons for stakeholders (teams, leagues, and associate brands) to keep arguing 'shut up and play' that athletes should not take a public stance on sociopolitical issues. Namely, if the public perceives protesting athletes negatively, these negative perceptions lead to negative influence on the endorsed brand, which may, in turn, result in cancellation of the athletes' endorsement deals. Also, the findings drawn from this study yield the practical implication that organizations including teams, and associate brands should be cautious about building or maintaining relationships with athletes when they are involved in controversial protests.

Lastly, a significant relationship between the protesting athlete and political participation suggests the important role of athletes as influencers who can help our society get it right, promoting progressive social change through their active voice and actions. Using their platform, athletes' action for sociopolitical issues can bring public attention to the issues, which can also translate into progressive social changes.

REFERENCES

- Agyemang, K. J. (2012). Black male athlete activism and the link to Michael Jordan: A transformational leadership and social cognitive theory analysis. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(4), 433-445.
- Agyemang, K., Singer, J. N., & DeLorme, J. (2010). An exploratory study of black male college athletes' perceptions on race and athlete activism. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(4), 419-435.
- Appiah, O., Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Alter, S. (2013). Ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation: Effects of news valence, character race, and recipient race on selective news reading. *Journal of Communication*, 63(3), 517-534.
- Arce, M., & Rice, R. (2019). *Protest and Democracy*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press.
- Arpan, L. M., Baker, K., Lee, Y., Jung, T., Lorusso, L., & Smith, J. (2006). News coverage of social protests and the effects of photographs and prior attitudes. *Mass Communication & Society*, 9(1), 1-20.
- Arpan, L. M., & Raney, A. A. (2003). An experimental investigation of news source and the hostile media effect. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 80(2), 265-281.
- Ashley, L., & Olson, B. (1998). Constructing reality: Print media's framing of the women's movement, 1966 to 1986. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 75(2), 263-277.
- Badenhausen, K. (2004, September 3). Kobe Bryant's sponsorship will rebound. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/2004/09/03/cz_kb_0903kobe.html.
- Barnidge, M., Gunther, A. C., Kim, J., Hong, Y., Perryman, M., Tay, S. K., & Knisely, S. (2020). Politically motivated selective exposure and perceived media bias. *Communication Research*, 47(1), 82-103.
- Bennett, W. L., & Iyengar, S. (2008). A new era of minimal effects? The changing foundations of political communication. *Journal of Communication*, 58, 707-731.
- Billings, A. C., Brown, N. A., Brown, K. A., Guoqing, Leeman, M. A., Ličen, S., ... & Rowe, D. (2013). From pride to smugness and the nationalism between: Olympic media consumption effects on nationalism across the globe. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16(6), 910-932.

- Billings, A.C., & Moscovitz, L.M. (2018). *Media and the coming out of gay male athletes in American team sports*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Bolsen, T., & Druckman, J. N. (2015). Counteracting the politicization of science. *Journal of Communication*, 65(5), 745-769.
- Bond, R. M., Shulman, H. C., & Gilbert, M. (2018). Does having a political discussion help or hurt intergroup perceptions? Drawing guidance from social identity theory and the contact hypothesis. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 4332-4352.
- Boswell, T. (2020, August 28). Athletes have the power to help America get it right, and they're using it. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/08/27/athletes-protest-movement-speaking-up/>
- Boykoff, J. (2006). Framing dissent: Mass-media coverage of the global justice movement. *New Political Science*, 28(2), 201-228.
- Boykoff, J., & Carrington, B. (2020). Sporting dissent: Colin Kaepernick, NFL activism, and media framing contests. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 55(7), 829-849.
- Brown, K. A. (2016). Is apology the best policy? An experimental examination of the effectiveness of image repair strategies during criminal and noncriminal athlete transgressions. *Communication & Sport*, 4(1), 23-42.
- Brown, K. A., Billings, A. C., Schallhorn, C., Schramm, H., & Devlin, N. A. (2016). Power within the Olympic rings? Nationalism, Olympic media consumption, and comparative cases in Germany and the USA. *The Journal of International Communication*, 22(1), 143-169.
- Brundidge, J. (2010). Encountering "difference" in the contemporary public sphere: The contribution of the internet to heterogeneity of political discussion networks. *Journal of Communication*, 60, 680-700.
- Bryant, H. (2018). *The Heritage: Black athletes, a divided America, and the politics of patriotism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Buhrmester, M., Kwang, T., & Gosling, S. D. (2011). Amazon's mechanical Turk: A new source of inexpensive, yet high-quality, data? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6, 3-5.
- Burnstein, E., & Vinokur, A. (1977). Persuasive argumentation and social comparison as determinants of attitude polarization. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13(4), 315-332.
- Butterworth, M. L. (2012). Militarism and memorializing at the pro football hall of fame. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 9(3), 241-258.

- Butterworth, M. L. (2014). Public memorializing in the stadium: Mediated sport, the 10th anniversary of 9/11, and the illusion of democracy. *Communication & Sport*, 2(3), 203-224.
- Butterworth, M. L., & Moskal, S. D. (2009). American football, flags, and “fun”: The Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl and the rhetorical production of militarism. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 2(4), 411-433.
- Cacciatore, M. A., Scheufele, D. A., & Iyengar, S. (2016). The end of framing as we know it... and the future of media effects. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(1), 7-23.
- Callahan, M. (2016, November 18). Recent protest ‘Playing an important role in the democratic progress’ *News@Northeastern*. Retrieved from <https://news.northeastern.edu/2016/11/18/recent-protests-playing-an-important-role-in-the-democratic-process/>
- Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1997). *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Charbonneau, J., & Garland, R. (2005). Celebrity or athlete? New Zealand advertising practitioners' views on their use as endorsers. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 7(1), 35-42.
- Chien, P. M., Kelly, S. J., & Weeks, C. S. (2016). Sport scandal and sponsorship decisions: Team identification matters. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(5), 490-505.
- Coe, K., Tewksbury, D., Bond, B. J., Drogos, K. L., Porter, R. W., Yahn, A., & Zhang, Y. (2008). Hostile news: Partisan use and perceptions of cable news programming. *Journal of Communication*, 58(2), 201-219.
- Cohen, G. L. (2003). Party over policy: The dominating impact of group influence on political beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(5), 808-822.
- Cohen, S. (1980). *Folk devils and moral panics: The creation of the mods and rockers*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Coombs, W. T. (2018). Athlete reputational crises: One point for linking situational crisis communication theory and sports crises. In A.C. Billings, W.T. Coombs & K.A. Brown (Eds), *Reputational challenges in sport: Theory and application* (pp. 13–24). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cooper, J. N., Macaulay, C., & Rodriguez, S. H. (2019). Race and resistance: A typology of African American sport activism. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 54(2), 151-181.

- Corning, A. F., & Myers, D. J. (2002). Individual orientation toward engagement in social action. *Political Psychology, 23*(4), 703-729.
- Cornwell, T. B., Humphreys, M. S., Maguire, A. M., Weeks, C. S., & Tellegen, C. L. (2006). Sponsorship-linked marketing: The role of articulation in memory. *Journal of Consumer Research, 33*(3), 312-321.
- Crump, M. J., McDonnell, J. V., & Gureckis, T. M. (2013). Evaluating Amazon's Mechanical Turk as a tool for experimental behavioral research. *PLoS One, 8*, e57410.
- Cruz, S. M. (2017). The relationships of political ideology and party affiliation with environmental concern: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 53*, 81-91.
- Cunningham, G. B., & Regan Jr, M. R. (2011). Political activism, racial identity and the commercial endorsement of athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 47*(6), 657-669.
- Ditto, P. H., & Lopez, D. F. (1992). Motivated skepticism: Use of differential decision criteria for preferred and nonpreferred conclusions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*, 568-584.
- Donsbach, W. (2009). Cognitive dissonance theory – a roller coaster career: How communication research adapted the theory of cognitive dissonance. In T. Hartmann (Ed.), *Media choice: A theoretical and empirical overview* (pp. 128-148). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dvir-Gvirsman, S. (2019). Political social identity and selective exposure. *Media Psychology, 22*(6), 867-889.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*(4), 51-58.
- Esposito, S. R., Hornsey, M. J., & Spoor, J. R. (2013). Shooting the messenger: Outsiders critical of your group are rejected regardless of argument quality. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 52*(2), 386-395.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G* Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods, 39*(2), 175-191.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fink, J. S., Parker, H. M., Brett, M., & Higgins, J. (2009). Off-field behavior of athletes and team identification: Using social identity theory and balance theory to explain fan reactions. *Journal of Sport Management, 23*(2), 142-155.

- Fischer, M. (2014). Commemorating 9/11 NFL-style: Insights into America's culture of militarism. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 38(3), 199-221.
- Frey, D. (1986). Recent research on selective exposure to information. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 19, 41-80.
- Frisby, C. M. (2018). 'Oh, See What We Say': A content analysis of partisan media's framing of the "take a knee" silent protest by the NFL. *American International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(3), 6-18.
- Gaines, B. J., Kuklinski, J. H., & Quirk, P. J. (2007). The logic of the survey experiment reexamined. *Political Analysis*, 15(1), 1-20.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1-37.
- Garcia, A., & Dotson, K. (2016, September 9) Denver Broncos' Brandon Marshall gets dropped by sponsor for anthem protest. *CNN Money*. Retrieved from <http://money.cnn.com/2016/09/09/news/brandon-marshall-national-anthem-protest-aafcu>
- Garrett, R. K. (2009). Politically motivated reinforcement seeking: Reframing the selective exposure debate. *Journal of Communication*, 59, 676-699.
- Gastil, J., & Xenos, M. (2010). Of attitudes and engagement: Clarifying the reciprocal relationship between civic attitudes and political participation. *Journal of Communication*, 60(2), 318-343.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference*. 11.0 update (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Correa, T., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Selective exposure to cable news and immigration in the US: The relationship between FOX News, CNN, and attitudes toward Mexican immigrants. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(4), 597-615.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Diehl, T., & Ardévol-Abreu, A. (2017). Internal, external, and government political efficacy: Effects on news use, discussion, and political participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 61(3), 574-596.
- Gift, T., & Miner, A. (2017). "Dropping The Ball": The understudied nexus of sports and politics. *World Affairs*, 180(1), 127-161.
- Giner-Sorolla, R., & Chaiken, S. (1994). The causes of hostile media judgments. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 30(2), 165-180.

- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York, NY: Harvard University Press.
- Greenaway, K. H., Wright, R. G., Willingham, J., Reynolds, K. J., & Haslam, S. A. (2015). Shared identity is key to effective communication. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(2), 171-182.
- Gross, K. (2008). Framing persuasive appeals: Episodic and thematic framing, emotional response, and policy opinion. *Political Psychology*, 29(2), 169-192.
- Guess, A., & Coppock, A. (2018). Does counter-attitudinal information cause backlash? Results from three large survey experiments. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(4), 1497-1515.
- Gunther, A. C., Miller, N., & Liebhart, J. L. (2009). Assimilation and contrast in a test of the hostile media effect. *Communication Research*, 36(6), 747-764.
- Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (2004). *Why deliberative democracy?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gwinner, K. (1997). A model of image creation and image transfer in event sponsorship. *International Marketing Review*, 14, 145-158.
- Hart, W., Albarracín, D., Eagly, A. H., Brechan, I., Lindberg, M. J., & Merrill, L. (2009). Feeling validated versus being correct: a meta-analysis of selective exposure to information. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), 555.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Hoewe, J., & Peacock, C. (2019). The power of media in shaping political attitudes. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 34, 19-24.
- Hogg, M. A., & Reid, S. A. (2006). Social identity, self-categorization, and the communication of group norms. *Communication Theory*, 16(1), 7-30.
- Hogg, M. A., & Terry, D. I. (2000). Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 121-140.
- Holbert, R. L., Garrett, R. K., & Gleason, L. S. (2010). A new era of minimal effects? A response to Bennett and Iyengar. *Journal of communication*, 60(1), 15-34.

- Isenberg, D. J. (1986). Group polarization: A critical review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 1141–1151.
- Iyengar, S. (1994). *Is anyone responsible: How television frames political issues*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, S., Sood, G., & Lelkes, Y. (2012). Affect, not ideology: A social identity perspective on polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 76(3), 405-431.
- Jamieson, K. H., & Cappella, J. N. (2008). *Echo chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the conservative media establishment*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kaufman, P. (2008). Boos, bans, and other backlash: The consequences of being an activist athlete. *Humanity & Society*, 32(3), 215-237.
- Kaufman, P., & Wolff, E. A. (2010). Playing and protesting: Sport as a vehicle for social change. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 34(2), 154-175.
- Kenski, K., & Stroud, N. J. (2006). Connections between Internet use and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 50(2), 173-192.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Choice, values, and frames. *American Psychologist*, 39, 341-350.
- Khan, A. (2012). *Curt Flood in the media: Baseball, race, and the demise of the activist-athlete*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Kilgore, A. (2017 September 20). It's starting to look like Colin Kaepernick won't play in the NFL again. What happens next? *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/sports/wp/2017/09/20/its-starting-to-looks-like-colin-kaepernick-wont-play-in-the-nfl-again-what-happens-next/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.19558c23d1e5.
- Kim, Y. (2019). How cross-cutting news exposure relates to candidate issue stance knowledge, political polarization, and participation: The moderating role of political sophistication. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 31(4), 626-648.
- Kim, Y. M. (2009). Issue publics in the new information environment: Selectivity, domain specificity, and extremity. *Communication Research*, 36(2), 254-284.
- Kim, Y., & Billings, A. C. (2017). A hostile sports media?: Perceived nationalism bias in online sports coverage. *Electronic News*, 11(4), 195-210.
- Kim, K., & Cheong, Y. (2011). The effects of athlete-endorsed advertising: The moderating role of the athlete-audience ethnicity match. *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(2), 143-155.

- Kim, Y., & Hwang, H. (2019). When partisans see media coverage as hostile: The effect of uncivil online comments on hostile media effect. *Media Psychology, 22*(6), 845-866.
- Kim, Y. K., & Trail, G. (2010). Constraints and motivators: A new model to explain sport consumer behavior. *Journal of Sport Management, 24*(2), 190-210.
- Klapper, J. T. (1960). *The effects of mass communication*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Kluch, Y. (2020). “My Story Is My Activism!”:(Re-) Definitions of social justice activism among collegiate athlete activists. *Communication & Sport, 8*(4-5), 566-590.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2015). *Choice and preference in media use: Advances in selective exposure theory and research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Johnson, B. K. (2014). Selective exposure for better or worse: Its mediating role for online news' impact on political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 19*(2), 184-196.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Kleinman, S. B. (2012). Preelection selective exposure: Confirmation bias versus informational utility. *Communication Research, 39*(2), 170-193.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., Liu, L., Hino, A., Westerwick, A., & Johnson, B. K. (2019). Context impacts on confirmation bias: Evidence from the 2017 Japanese snap election compared with American and German findings. *Human Communication Research, 45*(4), 427-449.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Meng, J. (2009). Looking the other way: Selective exposure to attitude-consistent and counterattitudinal political information. *Communication Research, 36*(3), 426-448.
- Knobloch-Westerwick, S., Mothes, C., & Polavin, N. (2020). Confirmation bias, ingroup bias, and negativity bias in selective exposure to political information. *Communication Research, 47*(1), 104-124.
- Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*, 480-498.
- Kwak, N., Lane, D. S., Weeks, B. E., Kim, D. H., & Lee, S. S. (2020). Now se're talking? Understanding the interplay between online selective and incidental exposure and their influence on online cross-cutting political discussion. *Social Science Computer Review, 38*, 1-19.
- Lavine, H. (2001). The electoral consequences of ambivalence toward presidential candidates. *American Journal of Political Science, 45*, 915-929.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The people's choice*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

- Lee, F. L. (2014). Triggering the protest paradigm: Examining factors affecting news coverage of protests. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 1-22.
- Lee, J. S., & Kwak, D. H. (2017). Can winning take care of everything? A longitudinal assessment of post-transgression actions on repairing trust in an athlete endorser. *Sport Management Review*, 20(3), 261-272.
- Lee, J. S., Kwak, D. H., & Braunstein-Minkove, J. R. (2016). Coping with athlete endorsers' immoral behavior: Roles of athlete identification and moral emotions on moral reasoning strategies. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(2), 176-191.
- Lo, V. H., Wei, R., & Lu, H. Y. (2017). Issue importance, third-person effects of protest news, and participation in Taiwan's sunflower movement. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 94(3), 682-702.
- Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(11), 2098-2109.
- Lu, Y., & Lee, J. K. (2019). Stumbling upon the other side: Incidental learning of counter-attitudinal political information on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 21(1), 248-265.
- MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989). An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. *The Journal of Marketing*, 48-65.
- Mackie, D. M., Gastardo-Conaco, M. C., & Skelly, J. J. (1992). Knowledge of the advocated position and the processing of in-group and out-group persuasive messages. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18(2), 145-151.
- McCracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16, 310-321.
- Mangan, J. A., Kwon, S. Y., & Kim, B. C. (2013). London 2012—site for political animosities: South Korea and Japan in confrontational rational 'Irrationality' (Part two: Long gestations). *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30(15), 1784-1795.
- Martinez, G. (2018, September 10). Despite outrage, Nike sales increased 31% after Kaepernick Ad. *TIME*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/5390884/nike-sales-go-up-kaepernick-ad/>.
- Martínez, E., Montaner, T., & Pina, J. M. (2009). Brand extension feedback: The role of advertising. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(3), 305-313.
- Martin, S., & McHendry Jr, G. F. (2016). Kaepernick's stand: Patriotism, protest, and professional sports. *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, 6(3/4), 88-98.

- Mastro, D. E. (2003). A social identity approach to understanding the impact of television messages. *Communication Monographs*, 70(2), 98-113.
- May, R. A. B. (2009). The good and bad of it all: Professional black male basketball players as role models for young black male basketball players. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 26(3), 443-461.
- McLeod, D. M. (1995). Communicating deviance: The effects of television news coverage of social protest. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 39(1), 4-19.
- McLeod, D. M., & Detenber, B. H. (1999). Framing effects of television news coverage of social protest. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 3-23.
- Melas, C. (2020, June 6). NFL commissioner Roger Goodell says league was wrong for not listening to players earlier about racism. *CNN*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/05/sport/roger-goodell-responds-nfl-stronger-together-video/index.html>
- Messner, M., & Reinhard, M. A. (2012). Effects of strategic exiting from sponsorship after negative event publicity. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(4), 240-256.
- Metzger, M. J., Hartsell, E. H., & Flanagin, A. J. (2015). Cognitive dissonance or credibility. *Communication Research*, 47(1), 3-28.
- Miller, F. M., & Laczniak, G. R. (2011). The ethics of celebrity athlete endorsement: What happens when a star steps out of bounds? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 51(3), 499-510.
- Moy, P., & Pfau, M. (2000). *With malice toward all? The media and public confidence in democratic institutions*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Moon, S. J. (2011). Attention, attitude, and behavior: Second-level agenda-setting effects as a mediator of media use and political participation. *Communication Research*, 40(5), 698-719.
- Olson, E. L., & Thjømmøe, H. M. (2011). Explaining and articulating the fit construct in sponsorship. *Journal of Advertising*, 40(1), 57-70.
- Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G. M. (1993). Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse. *Political Communication*, 10(1), 55-75.
- Park, B., Park, S., & Billings, A. C. (2020). Separating perceptions of Kaepernick from perceptions of his protest: An analysis of athlete activism, endorsed brand, and media effects. *Communication & Sport*, 8(4-5), 629-650.

- Parrott, S., Hoewe, J., Fan, M., & Huffman, K. (2019). Portrayals of immigrants and refugees in US news media: Visual framing and its effect on emotions and attitudes. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 63(4), 677-697.
- Pelak, C. F. (2005). Athletes as agents of change: An examination of shifting race relations within women's netball in post-apartheid South Africa. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 22(1), 59-77.
- Perloff, R. M. (2015). A three-decade retrospective on the hostile media effect. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(6), 701-729.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1990). Involvement and persuasion: Tradition versus integration. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 367-374
- Pfahl, M. E., & Bates, B. R. (2008). This is not a race, this is a farce: Formula one and the Indianapolis motor speedway tire crisis. *Public Relations Review*, 34(2), 135-144.
- Powell, S. (2008). *Souled out? An evolutionary crossroads for Blacks in sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Presley, R. G., Shreffler, M. B., Hancock, M. G., & Schmidt, S. H. (2016). *Issues & Ethics in sport: A practical guide for sport managers*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
- Prior, M. (2009). The immensely inflated news audience: Assessing bias in self-reported news exposure. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73, 130-143.
- Rader, B. G. (2008). *American sports: From the age of folk games to the age of televised sports*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Raggs, T. (2018, September, 8). Nike enjoys 31 percent bump in online sales after debut of Colin Kaepernick campaign. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2018/09/08/nike-enjoys-31-percent-bump-in-online-sales-after-debut-of-colin-kaepernick-campaign/>
- Reid, S. A., Giles, H., & Harwood, J. (2005). A self-categorization perspective on communication and intergroup relations. *Intergroup communication: Multiple perspectives*, 241-263.
- Reid, S. A. (2012). A self-categorization explanation for the hostile media effect. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 381-399.
- Reysen, S., & Branscombe, N. R. (2010). Fanship and fandom: Comparisons between sport and non-sport fans. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 33, 176-193.
- Riordan, J. & Krüger, A. (1999). *The international politics of sport in the twentieth century*. London and New York: E & FN Spon; Routledge.

- Robinson, M. J., Trail, G. T., Dick, R. J., & Gillentine, A. J. (2005). Fans vs. spectators: An analysis of those who attend intercollegiate football games. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 14(1), 43-53.
- Rugg, A. (2016). America's game: The NFL's "Salute to Service" campaign, the diffused military presence, and corporate social responsibility. *Popular Communication*, 14(1), 21-29.
- Sanderson, J., Frederick, E., & Stocz, M. (2016). When athlete activism clashes with group values: Social identity threat management via social media. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(3), 301-322.
- Sato, S., Ko, Y. J., Park, C., & Tao, W. (2015). Athlete reputational crisis and consumer evaluation. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 15(4), 434-453.
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2009). News framing theory and research. In J. Bryant & M. B. Oliver (Eds), *Media effects* (pp. 33-49). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schmidt, S. H., Frederick, E. L., Pegoraro, A., & Spencer, T. C. (2019). An analysis of Colin Kaepernick, Megan Rapinoe, and the national anthem protests. *Communication & Sport*, 7(5), 653-677.
- Schmidt, S. H., Shreffler, M. B., Hambrick, M. E., & Gordon, B. S. (2018). An experimental examination of activist type and effort on brand image and purchase intentions. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 27, 31-43.
- Schwartz, L. (n.d.). *Eric Heiden was a reluctant hero*. ESPN.com
<https://www.espn.com/sportscentury/features/00014225.html>
- Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of communication*, 50(2), 93-109.
- Sharrow, E. A. (2017). "Female athlete" politic: Title IX and the naturalization of sex difference in public policy. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 5(1), 46-66.
- Sheehan, K. B. (2018). Crowdsourcing research: data collection with Amazon's Mechanical Turk. *Communication Monographs*, 85(1), 140-156.
- Simmers, C. S., Damron-Martinez, D., & Haytko, D. L. (2009). Examining the effectiveness of athlete celebrity endorser characteristics and product brand type: The endorser expertise continuum. *Journal of Applied Sport Management*, 1, 52-64.
- Smith, L. (2019). Stand up, show respect: Athlete activism, nationalistic attitudes, and emotional response. *International Journal of Communication*, 13, 2376-2397.

- Strenk, A. (1979). What price victory? The world of international sports and politics. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 445(1), 128-140.
- Stone, L. (2020, June 2). Will George Floyd's death compel people to finally consider substance of Colin Kaepernick's message? *The Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/sports/seahawks/will-george-floyds-death-compel-people-to-finally-consider-substance-of-colin-kaepernicks-message/>
- Stroud, N. J. (2008). Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure. *Political Behavior*, 30, 341–366
- Stroud, N. J. (2011). *Niche news: The politics of news choice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stroud, N. J., Feldman, L., Wojcieszak, M., & Bimber, B. (2019). The consequences of forced versus selected political media exposure. *Human Communication Research*, 45(1), 27-51.
- Stroud, N. J., Muddiman, A., & Lee, J. K. (2014). Seeing media as group members: An evaluation of partisan bias perceptions. *Journal of Communication*, 64(5), 874-894.
- Swanson, S., & Kent, A. (2015). Fandom in the workplace: Multi-target identification in professional team sports. *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(4), 461-477.
- Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 755-769.
- Tajfel, H. (1978). *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 5, 7-24.
- The White House. (2010). *Remarks by the President at University of Michigan spring commencement*. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-university-michigan-spring-commencement>
- Thiel, A., Villanova, A., Toms, M., Thing, L. F., & Dolan, P. (2016). Can sport be 'un-political'? *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 13(4) 253-255.
- Thorson, E. A., & Serazio, M. (2018). Sports fandom and political attitudes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 82(2), 391-403.
- Thwaites, D., Lowe, B., Monkhouse, L. L., & Barnes, B. R. (2012). The impact of negative publicity on celebrity ad endorsements. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(9), 663-673.
- Towler, C. C., Crawford, N. N., & Bennett, R. A. (2020). Shut up and play: Black athletes,

- protest politics, and black political action. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(1), 111-127.
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Valentino, N. A., Banks, A. J., Hutchings, V. L., & Davis, A. K. (2009). Selective exposure in the Internet age: The interaction between anxiety and information utility. *Political Psychology*, 30(4), 591-613.
- Vallone, R. P., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1985). The hostile media phenomenon: biased perception and perceptions of media bias in coverage of the Beirut massacre. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(3), 577.
- Van der Meer, T. G., Hameleers, M., & Kroon, A. C. (2020). Crafting our own biased media diets: The effects of confirmation, source, and negativity bias on selective attendance to online news. *Mass Communication and Society*, 23(6), 937-967.
- Wann, D. L., & Branscombe, N. R. (1993). Sports fans: Measuring degree of identification with their team. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 24, 1-17.
- Watkins, S. C. (2001). Framing protest: News media frames of the Million Man March. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 18(1), 83-101.
- Westerwick, A., Johnson, B. K., & Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2017). Confirmation biases in selective exposure to political online information: Source bias vs. content bias. *Communication Monographs*, 84(3), 343-364.
- Wojcieszak, M. E. (2011). Deliberation and attitude polarization. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 596-617.
- Wu, S. H., Tsai, C. Y. D., & Hung, C. C. (2012). Toward team or player? How trust, vicarious achievement motive, and identification affect fan loyalty. *Journal of Sport Management*, 26(2), 177-191.

Appendix A: News Selection

The image shows a Google search results page for the query "nfl today". The search bar at the top contains the text "nfl today" and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for "All", "News", "Videos", "Shopping", "Books", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The "News" link is highlighted. Below the navigation links, it says "About 188,000,000 results (0.46 seconds)".

The search results are listed below, each starting with a breadcrumb trail: "www.nbcsport.com > sports > nfl".

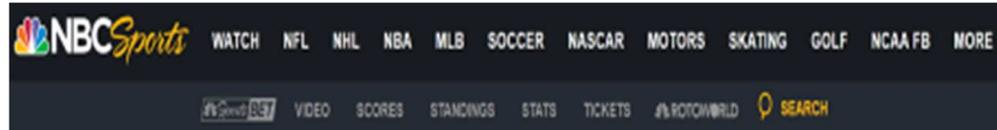
- Allen and the NFL's new support for Black Lives Matter**
Dec 7, 2020 – Josh Allen, a quarterback for the Buffalo Bills, and his teammates appeared to join the Black Lives Matter march in Buffalo, New York. "The march was peaceful and without incident..."
- Outrage spikes over Allen's 'UNPATRIOTIC' actions**
Dec 7, 2020 – Josh Allen, a quarterback for the Buffalo Bills who knelt during the national anthem at the season opener, joined the Black Lives Matter march in Buffalo, New York. "The march got out of hand and 25 individuals were arrested..."
- Watson speaking up in support of Black Lives Matter**
Dec 7, 2020 – Deshaun Watson, a quarterback for the Houston Texans, and his teammates appeared to join the Black Lives Matter march in Houston, Texas. "The march was peaceful and without incident..."
- Watson's actions ignite fury across the country**
Dec 7, 2020 – Deshaun Watson, a quarterback for the Houston Texans, who knelt during the national anthem at the season opener, joined the Black Lives Matter march in Houston, Texas. "The march got out of hand and 25 individuals were arrested..."

Below the search results, there is a section titled "People also ask" with two questions and dropdown arrows:

- Do athletes have the right to protest? ▾
- How do athletes impact society? ▾

Appendix B: News Articles

Scenario 1: Supportive - White Athlete News



Allen and the NFL's new support for Black Lives Matter

Posted by Josh Jenkins on December 7, 2020, 7:24 AM EST



An NFL player appeared to join the march for social justice, referencing the shooting death of an African American man by Buffalo police.

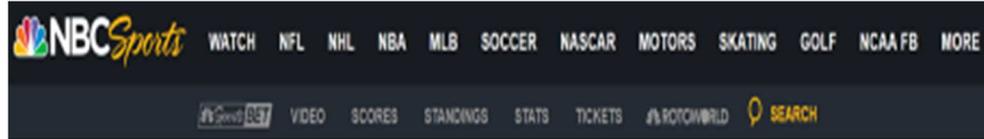
Josh Allen, a quarterback for the Buffalo Bills, and his teammates joined the **Black Lives Matter** march in Buffalo, New York, which had roughly 1,000 people in the city chanting, "We can't sit back and watch other innocent black lives being taken by police. We have to step up and take charge."

"The march was peaceful and without incident," said BPD Sgt. Shaun Ferguson.

Because of his brave action, Allen received praise from Black people and some NFL players, who said that he not only helps the BLM movement but also, he helps America get it right.



Scenario 2: Supportive - Black Athlete News



Watson speaking up in support of Black Lives Matter

Posted by Josh Jenkins on December 7, 2020, 7:24 AM EST



An NFL player appeared to join the march for social justice, referencing the shooting death of an African American man by Houston police.

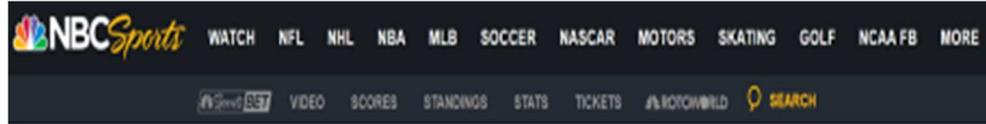
Deshaun Watson, a quarterback for the Houston Texans, and his teammates joined the **Black Lives Matter** march in Houston, Texas, which had roughly 1,000 people in the city chanting, "We can't sit back and watch other innocent black lives being taken by police. We have to step up and take charge."

"The march was peaceful and without incident," said HPD Sgt. Shaun Ferguson.

Because of his brave action, Watson received praise from Black people and some NFL players, who said that he not only helps the BLM movement but also, he helps America get it right.



Scenario 3: Not Supportive - White Athlete News



Outrage spikes over Allen's 'UNPATRIOTIC' actions

Posted by Josh Jenkins on December 7, 2020, 7:24 AM EST



An NFL player did it again, and this time he had company.

Josh Allen, a quarterback for the Buffalo Bills, knelt during the national anthem to protest police brutality at the season opener.

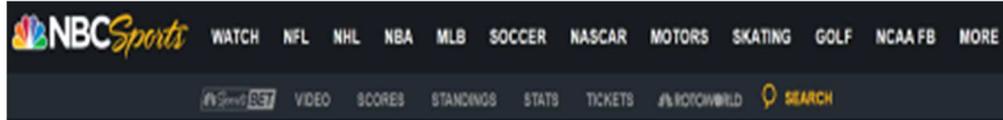
This time he and his teammates joined the **Black Lives Matter** march in Buffalo, New York, which had roughly 1,000 people in the city chanting, "We can't sit back and watch other innocent black lives being taken by police. We have to step up and take charge."

"The march got out of hand and 25 individuals were arrested for disorderly conduct," said BPD Sgt. Shaun Ferguson.



Not long after his protest, Allen received extensive backlash, including death threats over his 'unpatriotic' and 'immature' actions.

Scenario 4: Not Supportive - Black Athlete News



Watson's actions ignite fury across the country

Posted by Josh Jenkins on December 7, 2020, 7:24 AM EST



An NFL player did it again, and this time he had company.

Deshaun Watson, a quarterback for the Houston Texans, knelt during the national anthem to protest police brutality at the season opener.

This time he and his teammates joined the **Black Lives Matter** march in Houston, Texas, which had roughly 1,000 people in the city chanting, "We can't sit back and watch other innocent black lives being taken by police. We have to step up and take charge."

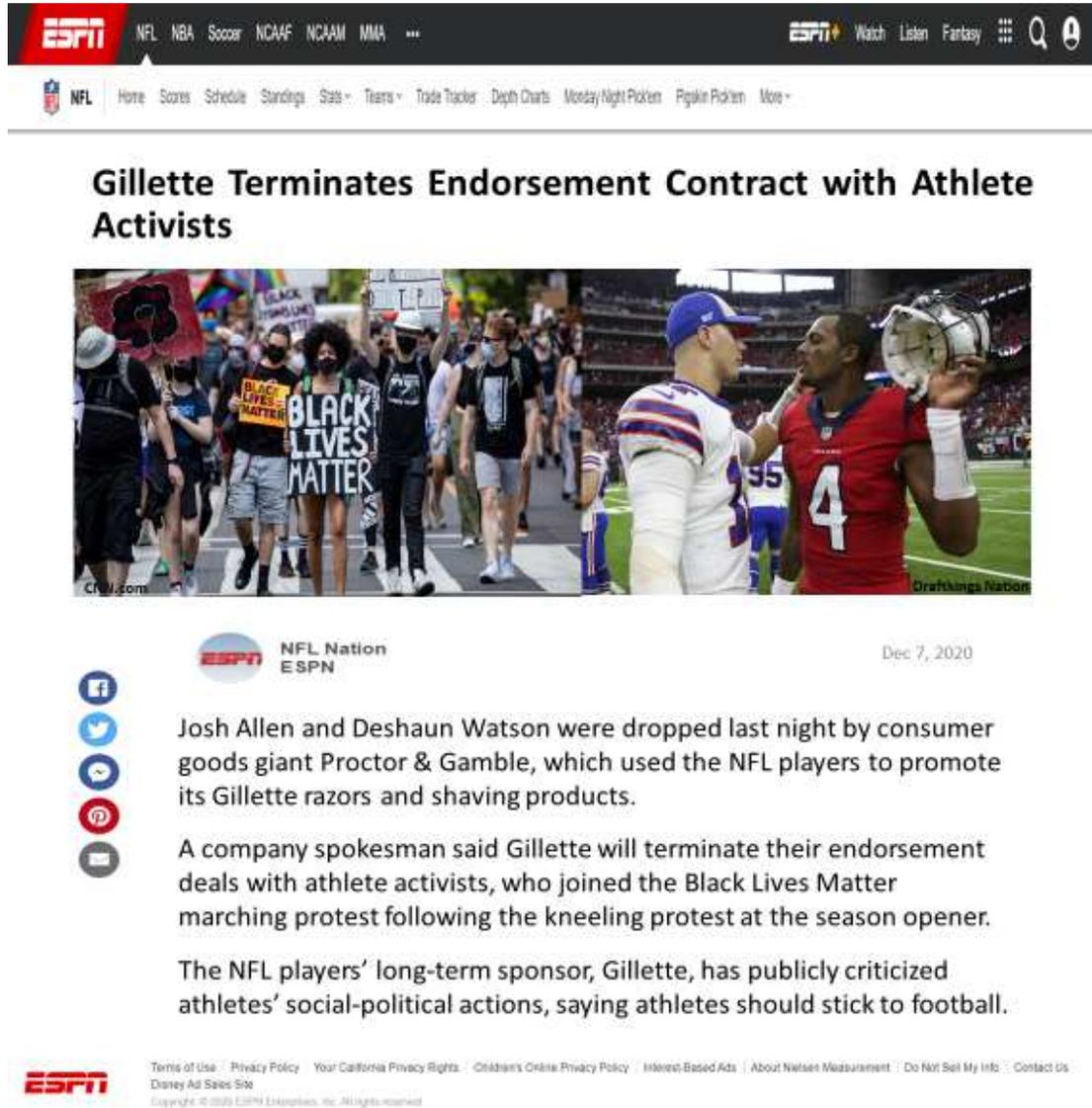
"The march got out of hand and 25 individuals were arrested for disorderly conduct," said HPD Sgt. Shaun Ferguson.

Not long after his protest, Watson received extensive backlash including death threats over his 'unpatriotic' and 'immature' actions.



Appendix C: Sponsorship Decision

Scenario 1: Terminate Decision



The image is a screenshot of an ESPN website article. At the top, the ESPN logo is on the left, and navigation links for NFL, NBA, Soccer, NCAA, and MMA are in the center. On the right, there are links for Watch, Listen, Fantasy, and a search icon. Below this is a secondary navigation bar for the NFL section, including Home, Scores, Schedule, Standings, Stats, Teams, Trade Tracker, Depth Charts, Monday Night Pick'em, and Pignin Pick'em. The main headline reads "Gillette Terminates Endorsement Contract with Athlete Activists". Below the headline is a composite image: on the left, a group of protesters marching with "BLACK LIVES MATTER" signs; on the right, NFL players Josh Allen and Deshaun Watson on a field. The article is dated Dec 7, 2020, and is from the "NFL Nation ESPN" section. The text of the article states that Procter & Gamble dropped Josh Allen and Deshaun Watson from its Gillette endorsement deals because they participated in Black Lives Matter protests. A company spokesman said Gillette will terminate its endorsement deals with athlete activists. The article also notes that Gillette has publicly criticized athletes' social-political actions.

Gillette Terminates Endorsement Contract with Athlete Activists

Dec 7, 2020

ESPN NFL Nation ESPN

Josh Allen and Deshaun Watson were dropped last night by consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble, which used the NFL players to promote its Gillette razors and shaving products.

A company spokesman said Gillette will terminate their endorsement deals with athlete activists, who joined the Black Lives Matter marching protest following the kneeling protest at the season opener.

The NFL players' long-term sponsor, Gillette, has publicly criticized athletes' social-political actions, saying athletes should stick to football.

ESPN Terms of Use Privacy Policy Your California Privacy Rights Children's Online Privacy Policy Interest-Based Ads About Nielsen Measurement Do Not Sell My Info Contact Us Disney Ad Sales Site Copyright © 2020 ESPN Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

Scenario 2: Continue Decision

Gillette Continues Endorsement Contract with Athlete Activists



ESPN NFL Nation
ESPN

Dec 7, 2020

A long-term sponsor of the NFL players, Gillette, announced in a press conference that sponsorship of Josh Allen and Deshaun Watson will remain unchanged.

A company spokesman said Gillette will continue their endorsement deals with brave athletes, who joined the Black Lives Matter marching protest following the kneeling protest at the season opener.

Gillette has publicly expressed concern over systematic racism and the tragic incidents across America, supporting athletes' brave actions for social injustice.



Appendix D: Survey Questionnaires

■ **Perceived Issue Importance** – Arpan et al. (2006) Lo, Wei & Lu (2017)

1. I would think Black Lives Matter is an important political issue.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I would think that BLM is an important economic issue.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. I would think that BLM is an important social issue.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Athlete identification** (Josh Allen, Deshaun Watson, Colin Kaepernick) – Robinson, Trail, Dick, & Gillentine (2005), Lee, Kwak, & Braunstein-Minkove (2016)

1. Being a fan of [player name] is very important to me.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I am a committed fan of [player name].
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. I consider myself to be a “real” fan of [player name].
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Political Attitude about Athlete Activism** – Barnidge et al. (2020), MacKenzie & Lutz (1989), Park et al. (2020)

1. I have very positive attitude toward athletes’ social-political actions.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I have very favorable attitude toward athletes’ social-political actions.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. I have very good attitude toward athletes’ social-political actions.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
4. It is okay for sports entities or players to take a public stance on social-political issues.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

5. Sports should be separated from any social-political issues.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Political Interest** – Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl, & Ardévol-Abreu (2017), Kenski & Stroud (2006)

1. I am very interested in information about what’s going on in politics and social political issues.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I am paying very much attention to information about what’s going on in politics and social or political issues.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Brand Loyalty (Gillette)** – Martínez, Montaner, & Pina (2009)

1. I buy Gillette because I really like it.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I am pleased to buy Gillette instead of other razor brands.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. I feel more attached to Gillette than to other razor brands.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **News Selection** – Van der Meer, Hameleers, & Kroon (2020).

Participants will be asked to rank one of four news articles (see **Appendix A**).

■ **Information Exposure** – 2 (**What:** attitude consistent vs. counter-attitudinal) x 2 (**Who:** an in-group athlete vs. an out-group) x 2 (**How:** selected vs. forced) (see **Appendix B**)

Participants will be randomly assigned to expose one of four news articles (see Appendix B).

■ **Manipulation Check Questions**

1. Based on the news article you just read, how would you evaluate the stance or tone of news article toward athlete activism?
- Supportive with a positive tone
 - Not supportive with a negative tone
 - Neutral

2. Based on the news article you just read, how would you identify the protesting athlete's race?
 - a. African American
 - b. White/Caucasian
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Others

3. Is the news article you just read, the same article you selected as the first rank in the previous section?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Who was the protesting athlete in the news article?
 - a. Aaron Rodgers
 - b. Josh Allen
 - c. Deshaun Watson
 - d. Russell Wilson

■ **Perceived Protest Effectiveness** – Arpan et al. (2006)

1. The protest was an effective way to influence public opinion.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

2. The protesting athlete offers some insights on social issue.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

3. The protest was a waste of time (reverse code).
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

4. The protesting athlete provides useful service for society.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

5. The protesting athlete brings the issue to my attention.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Attitude toward the Protesting Athlete, the Protest, Athlete Activism** – MacKenzie & Lutz (1989), Park et al. (2020)

1. I have very positive attitude toward the protesting athlete in the news article I just read.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

2. I have very favorable attitude toward the protesting athlete in the news article I just read.
 (Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

3. I have very good attitude toward the protest in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
4. I have very positive attitude toward the protest in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
5. I have very favorable attitude toward the protest in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
6. I have very good attitude toward the protest athlete in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
7. I have very positive attitude toward athletes' participation or public stance for social-political issues for society.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
8. I have very favorable attitude toward athletes' participation or public stance for social-political issues for society.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
9. I have very good attitude toward athletes' participation or public stance for social-political issues for society.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Political Participation** – Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson (2014)

1. Would you sign a petition in favor of Black Lives Matter?
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. Would you go to meetings, speeches, fund raising events, or things like that in support of Black Lives Matter?
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. Would you wear a button or put a sticker on your car or place a sign in your window or in front of your house to support Black Lives Matter?
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
4. Would you say yes if you were asked to help staff an information table to support Black Lives Matter?
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
5. Would you vote in favor of a ballot issue about Black Lives Matter?
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Endorsement Decision** – Continue vs. Terminate.

Participants will be randomly assigned to expose one of two news articles (see **Appendix C**) about the brand’s endorsement decision for the protesting athlete.

■ **Attitude toward the Endorsed Brand** – MacKenzie & Lutz (1989), Park et al. (2020)

1. I have very positive attitude toward Gillette after their decision to the protesting athlete in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I have very favorable attitude toward Gillette after their decision to the protesting athlete in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. I have very good attitude toward Gillette after their decision to the protesting athlete in the news article I just read.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Racial Identity** – Luhtanen & Crocker (1992)

1. I feel good about the racial group I belong to.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
2. I am a worthy member of my race.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
3. In general, others respect my race.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)
4. The racial group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.
(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly agree)

■ **Demographics**

1. What is your highest level of education?
 - a. No formal education
 - b. High school
 - c. College
 - d. Graduate (Master / PhD)

2. What is your sex?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your race?
 - a. White
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. Asian
 - d. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - e. Hispanic
 - f. Other

5. What is political party affiliation and indicate where you stand on.

(Strong Republican)	1	2	3	4	5	(Strong Democrat)
---------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

Appendix E: Institutional Review Board Approval



February 22, 2021

Bumsoo Park, MS
Department of Journalism
College of Communication & Information Sciences
The University of Alabama
Box 870242

Re: IRB # EX-20-CM-056-R1 "Politics-Free in the Sports World?: An Analysis of the Relationship between Sports and Politics"

Dear Mr. Park:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application. Your renewal application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46.104(d)(3) as outlined below:

(3)(i) Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met: (A) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the Human Subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or indirectly, through identifiers linked to the subjects.

The approval for your application will lapse on February 21, 2022. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the annual report to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' shape.

Director & Research Compliance Officer

Jessup Building | Box 870127 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127
205-348-8461 | Fax 205-348-7189 | Toll Free 1-877-820-3066

Appendix F: Informed Consent

Project Title: Politics-Free in the sports world?: An analysis of the relationship between sports and politics

Sample Informed Consent

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Consent Form Key Information:

- Participate in a 10-15 minutes study about sports and politics
- The survey includes questions about attitudes toward social-political issues, sports and media consumption behaviors.
- No information collected that will connect identity with responses
- Potential risk for participation in this study involves no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.
- Participation in this study will contribute to a better understanding the relationship between sports and politics with a focus on the role of media and be beneficial to academic developments in the communication discipline.
- As part of this project, I will be keeping certain information from you. Additional information about the study will be provided at the conclusion of the research activities.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to explore how individuals perceive social-political issues and the effect of media on their perception with a focus on their political opinion and sports fanship. To be specific, we would like to learn how people perceive a social-political issue differently when sports players or executives take a public stance on the issue based on their fanship, political affiliation, political knowledge, and media consumption behaviors.

What you will do in the study: (1) You will be asked to complete an online survey via Qualtrics. The survey will be administered in the spring of 2021 after receiving IRB approval. You will be recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and will receive \$1 as compensation. (3) Participation is voluntary. You will be asked to complete a short survey (10-15 min) about your attitudes toward social-political issues, sports, and media consumption behaviors. (4) Your responses will be kept confidential, data will be stored on password-protected computers. Results from this research will be used for academic purposes only and your identity and personal information will remain strictly confidential.

Time required: The study will require about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Risks: Participation in this study involves minimal risk. Participants will not be exposed to any greater risks than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: Even though you may not much benefit individually from being in the study, your participation in the survey may contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between sports and politics with a focus on the effect of media on social political issue. This would be beneficial to academic developments in the communication discipline.

Confidentiality: We will protect your confidentiality by using a secure web server and incorporating a random ID in the survey collection. No IP addresses or other identifying information will be collected.

Project Title: Politics-Free in the sports world?: An analysis of the relationship between sports and politics

Data not linked to identifying information:

The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be collected or linked to the data. If it is possible for you (the researcher) to deduce the participant's identity, state the following: Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

How to withdraw from the study: You can withdraw from the study by closing the survey without answering all the questions since incomplete survey will be excluded from the study. However, it is impossible to withdraw if you submit it since the data are anonymous. There is no penalty for withdrawing. You will still receive full compensation/reimbursement (or credit) for the study.

Compensation/Reimbursement: You will receive \$1.0 as compensation. Even if participants choose to skip a survey question or decide to stop the survey at any time, they will still be compensated.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact:

Name of Principal Investigator: Bumsoo Park
Title: PhD student
Department Name: Communication and Information Sciences
Telephone: 850-296-5771
Email address: bpark10@crimson.ua.edu

Faculty Advisor's Name: Professor. Andrew C. Billings
Department Name: Journalism and Creative Media
Telephone: 205-348-8658
Email address: acbillings@ua.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:

Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/>. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@research.ua.edu.

Project Title: Politics-Free in the sports world?: An analysis of the relationship between sports and politics

Agreement:

I agree to participate in the research study described above.

I do not agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Print Name of Research Participant

Signature of Investigator or other Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Print Name of Investigator or other Person Obtaining Consent