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Is Athlete Activism a Predictor of Resilience?

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IS ATHLETE ACTIVISM A PREDICTOR OF RESILIENCE?

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the

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at the University of Kentucky

By

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

IS ATHLETE ACTIVISM A PREDICTOR OF RESILIENCE?

Several athletes have taken personal responsibility to engage in activism, often with hopes of bringing social and political change. While scholars have identified several barriers preventing athletes from engaging in activism (e.g., public criticism, status and job loss, withdrawal of funding, anticipated distress; Cunningham & Regan, 2012), other scholars have identified personal benefits from engaging in activism (e.g., improved confidence, self-concept, belief in change, agency, life meaning; Klar & Kasser, 2009; Rabkin et al., 2019). Distress from the barriers, however, may be prerequisites to enhancing resilience, a theoretical construct that may help explain the benefits of activism. Thus, by applying the metatheory of resilience and resiliency, the purpose of the present study was to examine the relationships between athletic identity (AI), activist identity and commitment (AIC), perceived stress (PS), stress control mindset (SCM), and mental toughness (MT). Overall, the 204 NCAA student-athletes surveyed in the present study reported low AIC, potentially resulting in the lack of significant findings. Regression models did not find that the theorized benefits of athlete activism were related to AIC as originally thought. Possible explanations for the findings are discussed.

KEYWORDS: athlete activism, athletic identity, activist identity and commitment, resilience, stress control mindset, mental toughness

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04/07/2020

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DEDICATION

To all the current and former athletes who keep fighting to make this world a better place, regardless of the repercussions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH PURPOSE

Two black-gloved fists struck the air, interrupting "The Star-Spangled Banner" on October 16, 1968 at the Mexico City Olympics. Tommie Smith and John Carlos, two African American sprinters for the United States, won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the 200-meter dash and each lifted a single fist while on the podium to raise awareness for racism in the United States. Their act became an international symbol for black empowerment and sparked national conversations surrounding racial injustice (see Boykoff, 2017).

Similarly, at the beginning of the 20th century, black athletes such as Jack Johnson and Jesse Owens became activists in hopes of being recognized as competent in sport *and* in life. Between World War II and the 1960s, black athletes such as Jackie Robinson embraced activism by joining—with hopes of being accepted in—major league sports. (Edwards, 2016a, 2016b). Women such as Billie Jean King have also used sport and activism to promote women's rights. In 1973, for example, King defeated Bobby Riggs in what has been dubbed as the "Battle of the Sexes" (see Cooky, 2017). She then founded the Women's Sports Foundation in 1974 to fund research and advocacy for women in sport (see Harvey et al., 2014).

In more recent years, modern athletes have continued to use the status as a professional athlete to advocate for various causes. LeBron James, for example, has used his athletic success to become a well-known advocate for the education of inner-city youth, the humanization of and appreciation for athletes, and the Black Lives Matter movement (Coombs & Cassilo, 2017). Megan Rapinoe, a professional soccer player, has also used her athletic success to garner attention for women's and LGBTQIA+ rights. Interestingly, despite the criticism and potential for increased distress that an athlete risks facing when engaging in activism, many athletes

continue to be athletically successful. Rapinoe, for example, led the USWNT to their second straight Women's World Cup Championship, earned the Golden Boot and Golden Ball awards, and then being named FIFA's Best Woman Player after engaging in activism.

If it was not for these athletes, the world of athletics would often seem isolated from the real world—in particularly, from political and social issues. Sport, in fact, is often viewed as a neutral safeguard from the real world (Sage, 1998). However, from financing stadiums to displaying national flags to kneeling during the national anthem to using sport for development and peace, sport is undoubtedly a part of the real world and intertwined with political and social issues that exist within it (Cagan & DeMause, 1999; Carrington, 2010; Delaney & Eckstein, 2003; Houlihan, 2000; Jackson & Haigh, 2008).

In addition to being intertwined with political and social issues, many scholars even argue that sport contributes to sexism (e.g., Davis, 199; Messner, 1992; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Nelson, 1995), racism and whiteness (e.g., Douglas, 2005; Jarvie, 1991; King & Springwood, 2001a, 2001b; Lapchick, 2001; McDonald, 2005), ableism (e.g., Wolff et al., 2005), homophobia (e.g., Griffin, 1998), and the promotion of violence and war (e.g., Jansen & Sabo, 1994; Stempel, 2006). Despite this connection to the real world, some critics have argued that athletes should not use one's social status to engage in social issues. In fact, engaging in social issues often times leads to controversy, criticism, condemnation, and many other barriers (e.g., withdrawal of funding, expectation for emotional regulation, job loss), especially for athletes (Cunningham & Regan, 2012).

Moreover, athletes fear these barriers will induce distress and, thus require unnecessary emotional regulation (e.g., Smith et al., 2016; Wagstaff et al., 2013). Barriers such as increased distressed and a greater need for emotional regulation often outweighs the perceived benefits,

preventing many athletes from engaging in any form of activism. Therefore, athletes are likely to prioritize their athletic identity over other identities within academic and social contexts (e.g., student, friend; Bimper, 2014; Foster & Huml, 2017; Lally & Kerr, 2005). Even if one demonstrates strong time management skills, including the ability to manage multiple identities (Stambulova et al., 2015), one is likely to suppress identities perceivably related to increased distress in favor of enhanced athletic identity and athletic-related performance.

Nevertheless, some athletes persist through this stress to strengthen one's activist identity and commitment, an orientation where one values and engages in social action (Corning & Myers, 2002). Interestingly, while activists often engage in activism with the hope of improving society (Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2015; Stake & Rosu, 2012), activist identity and commitment is also related to self-improvements. Klar and Kasser (2009), for example, associated activist identity and commitment with greater positive affect, self-actualization, hope, meaning in life, life satisfaction, and flourishing.

Engagement in activism, though, especially for athletes, can result in increased distress. Athlete activists are challenged by several barriers, as noted earlier, such as job, status, or sponsorship loss and increased need for emotional regulation, among several others (Cunningham & Regan, 2012; Smith et al., 2016; Wagstaff et al., 2013). Uniquely, though, stress, such as stress associated to the barriers of athlete activism, can also boost health and performance outcomes (Infurna et al., 2017; Mooney et al., 2016) when one believes that stress can be positive (i.e., stress-is-enhancing mindset; Crum et al., 2013). Contrarily, stress can also be negative and, thus, can harm health and performance. In fact, Keech and colleagues (2018) recognized that one may believe that stress can have both positive *and* negative effects and is not always either positive or negative, and reconceptualized the construct as "stress control mindset."

Mental toughness, a similar construct to stress control mindset, is characterized by the ability to manage stress (e.g., Lin et al., 2017a). As suggested with stress control mindset, mental toughness is also associated with peak sport performances (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould et al., 2002). There are multiple theories regarding the capacity to manage stress via constructs such as stress control mindset and mental toughness that help explain how stress influences performance.

According to the Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency (Richardson, 2002; Richardson et al., 1990), one needs to experience stress (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Richardson, 2002) in order to develop resilience. Because one is at increased risk of experiencing stress when participating in collegiate (Mellalieu et al., 2009) or elite sport (Sabato et al., 2016) or activism (Smith et al., 2016), participating in sport *and* activism may promote resilience. Therefore, a better understanding of the effects of athletic identity and activist identity and commitment on stress control mindset and mental toughness can potentially help with identifying ways to minimize or even eliminate barriers to athlete activism and ultimately encourage more athletes to participate in activism.

Furthermore, minority identities cannot be sacrificed and are often unreported in sport-related resilience studies—or, at best, ignored within the theoretical background and/or data analysis. Race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (SES), and ability, for example, are important parts of one's identity. These identities then contribute to the privilege or lack thereof or even the structural, systematic, or interpersonal oppression that one faces or has faced. A lack of privilege or the experience of oppression act as unique stressors for minority athletes that may exist as further barriers to athlete activists (e.g., Frost, 2011; Meyer, 2003b). Therefore, when studying resilience, it is important to include minority identities within data analysis.

Thus, the present study sought to evaluate the relationship between athletic identity and activist identity and commitment. Specifically, the purpose of the present study was to examine the relationships between athletic identity, activist identity and commitment, stress control mindset, and mental toughness. Therefore, the present study was guided by the following hypotheses and research questions:

H_1: Athletes with higher levels of AI and AIC would be more likely to have a strong SCM than athletes with lower levels of AI and AIC.

H_2: Athletes with higher levels of AI and AIC would be more likely to have a strong MT than athletes with lower levels of AI and AIC.

Q_1: Does race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, and ability moderate the relationship between AI and AIC on SCM and MT?

Q_2: What is the relationship between SCM and MT?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Athletic Identity

AI is the level to which an individual defines one's self as an athlete and is established and reinforced via the development of skills, confidence, and relationships associated with sport (Brewer, Van Raalte, et al., 1993). A strong AI can be beneficial or harmful for athletes (Franck et al., 2018; Gustafsson et al., 2011). It is, for example, associated with higher self-esteem (Van de Vliet et al., 2008), quality of life (Groff et al., 2009), and enjoyment of and commitment to sport and a larger social network (Horton & Mack, 2000). Having a strong AI can also make it easier for Paralympic athletes to accept their disability as part of their identity (Peers, 2012). These benefits help athletes develop and enhance skills, confidence, and relationships, and therefore, facilitate increased salience of AI, which then reinforce the benefits that it provides (Brewer, Van Raalte, et al., 1993).

In addition to self-identifying as an athlete, the strength to which an athlete identifies with the team also impacts cognition, affect, and behavior (Bruner et al., 2014; Rees et al., 2015) and enhances AI (Brewer, Boin, et al., 1993). Strong attraction to one's team may boost team performance (Murrell & Gaertner, 1992), self-worth, commitment, perceived effort, and personal and social skills (Bruner et al., 2017; Martin et al., 2018) and can increase risk-taking to help the team (Brewer, Van Raalte, et al., 1993; Gustafsson et al., 2007a, 2007b).

Risk-taking can be perceived as valiant and necessary for elite performance, but it does not come without a cost; risk-taking can harm one's health (Brewer, Van Raalte, et al., 1993; Gustafsson et al., 2007a, 2007b). Strong AI is also related to increased symptoms of depression (Brewer, 1993) and premature return to sport after injury (Podlog et al., 2013); and increased

distress, identity loss, and confusion (Warriner & Lavallee, 2008; Webb et al., 1998) and decreased career preparedness post-sport (Danish et al., 1993; Murphy et al., 1996). It is also positively associated with a desire to be thin, disordered eating, perfectionism (Gapin & Petruzzello, 2011), gender role conflict (Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2010), and conformity to masculine norms (Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2012).

Moreover, AI is positively correlated with global self-esteem (Marsh et al., 1995), but Coakley (1992) and Gustaffson and colleagues (2007b, 2008) explained that this association can sometimes be problematic and lead to burnout if athletic performance is associated with AI (i.e., performance-based self-esteem [PBSE]). Strong AI, when paired with PBSE, increases the risk of experiencing burnout because, if performance falls short of one's expectations, feelings of worthlessness can be developed (Gustafsson et al., 2011; Gustafsson et al., 2018). Furthermore, PBSE induces stress and exacerbates the effects of stress on burnout (Blom, 2012; Blom et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the strength of AI can potentially be impacted by the strength of other identities and some identities will take precedence over others. Athletes, for example, are likely to prioritize AI over identities within academic and other social contexts (e.g., student, friend; Bimper, 2014; Foster & Huml, 2017; Lally & Kerr, 2005). Even athletes who possess strong time management skills mention that a lack of time makes it difficult to pursue opportunities outside of sport (Brewer, Van Raalte, et al., 1993; Stambulova et al., 2015), diminishing other identities. This difficulty in balancing multiple identities often leads to an athlete risking academic and career involvement—evident in graduation rates, degree retention, course choices, and career choice (Beron & Piquero, 2016; Eckard, 2010).

Although some adolescent, collegiate, and professional athletes do not experience difficulty with the career transition process (Coakley, 1983, 1994; Curtis & Ennis, 1988; Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985), others are confronted with financial, occupational, emotional, and/or social stressors (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Kleiber & Brock, 1992; Messner, 1992; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). A strong, exclusive AI pre-retirement contributes to a lack of and anxiety about career planning and decision-making (Brand et al., 2013; Brown & Potrac, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2009; Erpič et al., 2004; Grove et al., 1997; Park, Lavallee, & Tod, 2013; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008), indicating that a strong AI may contribute to long-term distress, especially if paired with infrequent pursuit of other identities and/or PBSE. In fact, some elite athletes have such strong AIs that it is perceived as unnecessary to develop other identities outside of sport or to prepare for life after sport (Carapinheira et al., 2018). These athletes often ignore and feel anxious about career preparation conversations. Staying involved with sport (e.g., coaching, marketing) or finding a new activity (e.g., new job, pursue education) can help athletes cope with retirement.

While it is important to maintain high AI throughout sport participation, to prevent its negative effects, it is also important for athletes to establish other identities in other domains. Athletes who retire from sport on one's own free will, plan for sport retirement, develop healthy coping strategies, and—most importantly for the present study—identify with other social roles—have the least difficulty and most success transitioning out of sport (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Lavallee, 2005; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008). Athletes who developed an identity as an activist, for example, experienced more positive and less negative effects after retirement (Smith et al., 2016). Therefore, of the many possible identities, athletes should consider developing an AIC.

Activist Identity and Commitment

Similar to AI being the degree to which one values the engagement in sport, AIC is an orientation in which one values and is committed to engagement in social action (Corning & Myers, 2002). This may include behaviors that range from low-risk (e.g., donating to charity) to high-risk (e.g., kneeling during the national anthem) and may vary in the degree of politicalness (i.e., controversy). It is noteworthy that AIC refers to the degree in which one values activism as part of the self while activism itself refers to the behaviors in which one engages. Nonetheless, engaging in activism may be representative of AIC. In fact, because of such a strong correlation, Klar and Kasser (2009) combined activist identity and activist commitment into one measure (i.e., AIC).

Nevertheless, activists may be members of oppressed groups or allies, and thus, often become advocates in the hopes of improving society and helping others (Clary et al., 1998; Stake & Rosu, 2012). Individuals with higher cognitive abilities, more cohesive families, and a history of participating in activism are more likely to engage in activism (Pancer et al., 2007; Rosenthal et al., 1998). In addition, identifying with a group of activists also increases the degree to which one identifies as an activist (Klar & Kasser, 2009).

One may assume that individuals with high activist identities participate in more high-risk activism. Interestingly, though, AIC is more highly correlated with conventional, or low-risk, activism, than high-risk activism (Klar & Kasser, 2009). Nonetheless, both conventional and high-risk activism were positively correlated with AIC. Low-risk activism is also more likely to be associated with higher levels of well-being (Klar & Kasser, 2009). The authors suggested that this could be because high-risk activists may be more likely to perceive more barriers, injustices, and hopelessness when engaging in riskier activism than low-risk activists.

Despite the perceived negative consequences, scholars have identified many positive effects of activism. Activism is related to increased intrinsic motivation and, therefore, may satisfy psychological needs and improve health and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan et al., 1996). AIC is also associated with higher levels of positive affect, self-actualization, hope, meaning in life, life satisfaction, and flourishing (Klar & Kasser, 2009). Moreover, one experiences increased vitality after participating in activism regardless of how much it is valued or past involvement (Klar & Kasser, 2009). Interestingly, Leak and Leak (2006) also found that social interest, and not just activism, is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, positive affect, self-esteem, self-actualization, and vitality and lower levels of negative affect, distress, and alienation. Volunteers, for example, experience greater self-esteem and lower mortality rates (Wilson, 2000) and academic, social, and emotional improvements (MacNeela & Gannon, 2014). Astin and Sax (1998) agreed, noting that volunteerism, one form of activism, is also related to higher critical thinking capabilities.

AIC is also unrelated to negative affect (Klar & Kasser, 2009). VanYperen et al. (2000) postulated some activists experience minimal negative affect whereas others experience greater negative affect because of increased exposure to injustices. The acknowledgement of injustices, however, may arguably enhance motivation to participate in activism. After all, if activists are motivated to improve society and reap the benefits of improved health and well-being, they may persevere through negative affectivity. HIV/AIDS survivors, for example, experienced symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder—although less of them—but also had higher levels of confidence, improved sense of self, increased belief in change, and identified as an agent of change even at 25 years post-activism (Rabkin et al., 2018). If embracing AIC is associated with all of these advantages, what would AIC be like for athletes?

Athlete Activists

Although Smith et al. (2016) defines a sporting activist as an individual who advocates for change *within* sport (e.g. equitable access and opportunity to participate in sport) and a political activist as an individual who advocates for change *outside* sport (e.g., improving the daily lives of persons with disabilities [PWDs]), the present study recognizes the importance of civic engagement and advocacy within and/or outside of sport by combining the sporting and political activist definitions (i.e., athlete activist).

Interestingly, Kaufman and Wolf (2010) interviewed athlete activists who self-reported many overlaps between athleticism and activism. Participants claimed that sport helped develop skills related to discipline, goal-setting, long-term planning, fearlessness, focus, and the pursuit of progress. According to the authors, sport promotes social consciousness (i.e., awareness of social issues), meritocracy (i.e., fairness), responsible citizenship (i.e., sportspersonship and duty to society), and interdependence (i.e., teamwork), which enabled athletes to become activists. Similarly, Agyemang et al. (2010) and Griffin (1992) noted that athletes develop and refine leadership skills throughout sport participation, which can be transferred to activist behaviors.

According to Smith et al. (2016), the development of AIC to supplement an AI can help with sport retirement. After retirement, athletes regretted not engaging in activism. Participants acknowledged that sport retirement led to a loss of identity and social oppression, which subsequently and negatively impacted health and well-being and overall quality of life. The same athletes believed that developing an AIC before sport retirement would help current and future athletes establish multiple identities and experience more positive and/or less negative effects from sport retirement, making the transition out of sport easier. Other athletes simply regretted that they put too much focus on sport and did not pursue other opportunities or identities while in

college. This remorse significantly decreased post-sport career optimism (Murdock et al., 2016). Alternatively, Klar and Kasser (2009) noted that community activism involvement can protect people from negative outcomes and even increase the likelihood of experiencing post-traumatic growth. As noted earlier, Rabkin et al. (2018) agreed, providing a specific example of HIV/AIDS survivors who became more likely to experience symptoms of post-traumatic growth (e.g., increased confidence, self-concept, hope) even 25 years after participating in activism. Therefore, not only does sport promote leadership skills that are useful in activism, but developing an AIC to supplement AI may provide a multitude of long-term benefits not just to society, but to the athletes themselves.

Despite the potential benefits (e.g., Klar & Kasser, 2009) and similar values of activism (Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2006), student-athletes—especially those in high-profile sports—are much less likely than non-athletes to participate in activism (Gayles et al., 2012). College student-athletes, though, participate in more service activities (e.g., volunteering at a soup kitchen) but less political activities (e.g., signing a petition, protesting) than non-athletes (Hoffman et al., 2015). Nevertheless, many barriers prevent athletes from engaging in more service and political activities and from adopting an AIC.

Firstly, many athletes fail to recognize the existence of social issues and therefore deem activism meaningless. Paralympians who did not embrace the identity as a PWD had less social consciousness of disablism and were less likely to recognize the social influence that athletes have on making a change beyond sport (Smith et al., 2016). Participants who did identify as PWDs, though, recognized the existence of disablism and participated in activism. Similarly, black collegiate athletes often struggle to recognize the impact they have on black youth until

after they graduate (Agyemang et al., 2010). Some athletes also perceive that they are too young and lack the necessary creativity to have any social influence (Fuller & Agyemang, 2018).

Even with enhanced social consciousness and a sense of social influence, many other barriers prevent athletes from participating in activism. Candaele and Dreier (2004), Edwards (1969, 2016a), and Kaufman and Wolff (2010) noted that athletes, especially Black athletes (Agyemang, 2012; Powell, 2008; Rhoden, 2006), are expected "to play and not protest" and "shut up and play" or risk facing pushback, contempt, and scorn. Fans want athletes to only be athletes and only appreciate athlete activism if it is unrelated to privileged positions (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) or other controversial topics (e.g., war participation). Athletes who speak out on such controversial issues, for example, are considered less trustworthy, dependable, honest, and sincere (Ohanian, 1990, 1991). Gill (2008) remarked that many fans perceive athletes as privileged and therefore see athlete activism as selfish and greedy rather than altruistic. Some fans will go so far as to request that athletic activists be punished with less playing time for speaking out on such issues (Frederick et al., 2017) and claim that Black players, for example, should assimilate to cultural norms (de B'béri & Hogarth, 2009). Critics will even attack athlete activists with derogatory and offensive language (Litchfield et al., 2018) and, if on social media, the attacks usually go unpunished (Cleland, 2014; Kilvington & Price, 2017).

Athletes often fear the loss of prestige, privilege, and income because of these criticisms (Cunningham & Regan, 2012; Powell, 2008; Till, 2001). To avoid negative media attention, for example, sponsors may rescind endorsement deals and teams may refuse to sign an athlete or extend one's contract. Moreover, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) allows athletic departments to revoke grant-in-aid dollars from a player who withdraws from sport for

any period of time for any personal reasons. Due to the ambiguity of this rule, as Henderson (2013) and Sack (2008) noted, schools may consider protesting and other forms of activism as "personal reasons" and retract scholarships from any athlete that engages in activism. In fact, some student-athletes may perceive activism as too risky if an athletics scholarship is the only source of funding for their education (e.g., Kimball & Freysinger, 2003).

Interestingly, though, coaches and athletic departments often use community service as a punishment (Huml et al., 2014). Although it is distinct, community service and activism share many commonalities such as community engagement and the goal of improving society. Nevertheless, when community service is involuntary, athletes do not experience the same benefits of and become less likely to maintain involvement in activism (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Henderson et al., 2014). Furthermore, community service and other less political activist behaviors (e.g., hospital visits, charitable donations to cancer research) are generally socially acceptable by fans, coaches, and administrative personnel; but advocating for political change (e.g., racial inequality) can destroy an athlete's positive image (Candaele & Dreier, 2004).

Because of all of these barriers, many athletes think that AIC will harm AI and require more emotional regulation to manage the distress associated with the criticisms and punishments that stem from activism (Smith et al., 2016). Athletes with this concern were worried that extended emotional regulation would harm training, recovery, and performance outcomes (Wagstaff et al., 2013). Beachy and colleagues (2018), however, demonstrated that AI is not significantly related to activism. More importantly, Smith et al. (2016) learned that AI is not compromised by AIC. In other words, activist identity does not appear to diminish AI like many athletes, coaches, and administrative personnel fear. Instead, many athletes persist through the stress associated with the barriers from activism and embrace both AI and AIC.

Stress Control Mindset

Many athletes persevere through these barriers to become activists, but still experience stress, the pressure resulting from the perception that the demands of an event outweigh the resources one has to cope (Lazarus & Launier, 1978; Lovallo, 2015). In fact, college (Mellalieu et al., 2009) and elite athletes (Sabato et al., 2016) are already at increased risk of experiencing stress because of leadership and personal issues, cultural and team issues, logistical and environmental issues, and performance and personal issues (for a review, see Arnold & Fletcher, 2012). Due to the associated barriers, activism also induces stress (Smith et al., 2016). Thus, athlete activists may be at even greater risk of experiencing stress, which is related to numerous negative consequences (e.g., headaches, fatigue, muscle tension, sleep disturbance, and nausea; Lyon, 2012).

Nevertheless, athletes, for example, have different appraisal processes and, therefore, may respond to stress differently (Beckmann & Ehrlenspiel, 2017), allowing stress to result in positive consequences. Stress, for example, can strengthen immune functioning and recovery by sparking the production and release of anabolic hormones that reconstruct cells and synthesize new proteins (Dienstbier, 1989; Epel et al., 1998); increase the number of attentional resources, narrowing one's perspective (i.e., sharpening focus), accelerating information processing (Hancock & Weaver, 2005); enhance memory and cognition (Cahill et al., 2003); and improve mental toughness, awareness, perspectives, competence, priorities, relationships, appreciation for life, and sense of meaningfulness (Park & Helgeson, 2006; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

The range of positive to negative effects of stress suggests that the stress response is malleable (i.e., stress can be enhancing). Stress mindsets (i.e., the beliefs one holds about the consequences of stress), for example, affect the stress response on health and performance (Crum

et al., 2013). A stress-is-enhancing mindset, the belief that stress has positive effects on health and performance, contrasts with a stress-is-debilitating mindset, the belief that stress has negative effects on health and performance. Now, however, because one can believe that stress has both positive and negative consequences, Keech, et al. (2018) reconceptualized stress mindsets to be measured as stress control mindset (SCM), or the belief that stress *can* be positive, but understanding that it can also be negative, and thus, suggested it to be labeled as a continuum opposed to a dichotomy.

A strong SCM is related to decreased perceived distress and health symptoms, greater work performance, and more adaptive cortisol reactivity to acute stress. More specifically, a strong SCM decreased cortisol response in individuals who usually have a high cortisol reactivity to stress and increased cortisol response in individuals who usually have a low cortisol reactivity to stress. Moreover, a strong SCM also is related to increased energy levels, greater life satisfaction, and fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety (Crum et al., 2013) and greater use of problem-focused coping (Keech et al., 2018). In addition, Liu et al. (2017) found that when presented with videos highlighting stress as potentially positive or negative, participants were able to decrease heart rate and diastolic blood pressure in response to stress to lower levels than participants who watched videos that argued that stress was either only positive or only negative. Therefore, a strong SCM may assist athletes in more effectively responding to stressors to reach optimal arousal states to then improve performance.

Alternatively, a weak SCM is related to the opposite, or negative outcomes as a response to experiencing stress (Crum et al., 2013). In addition, a weak SCM, is associated with increased morbidity (Nabi et al., 2013) and may be associated with maladaptive coping mechanisms (e.g., emotional suppression, experiential avoidance, ruminative thought) that induce more distress

(Hayes et al, 2004; Mennin & Fresco, 2009). Therefore, a weak SCM may impede athletes from reaching optimal arousal states. Despite the relationship between SCM and health and performance outcomes, no studies were found connecting SCM to sport psychology. Many sport psychology scholars (e.g., Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould et al., 2002), however, have discussed mental toughness, a similar construct that also relates to one's ability to control stress, and is essential in the facilitation of sport performance.

Mental Toughness

Mental toughness (MT) is a psychological construct used to manage stressors (Lin et al., 2017a) via a '4C model' of control, commitment, challenge, and confidence where control refers to the sense of power over life's events; commitment refers to the degree of engagement in the situation; challenge refers to the belief that change is a normal process of life and an opportunity for growth; and confidence refers to the feeling that one is valuable and competent when facing stressors (Clough et al., 2002). Other scholars, however, do not always include "challenge" in models of MT (see Sheard et al., 2009). After all, challenge may be related to, but distinct from MT, but still a component in other resilience-related constructs (e.g., SCM, hardiness). Nonetheless, it is mediated by optimism, hardiness, and positive affectivity (Golby & Sheard, 2004; Sheard & Golby, 2006), which allows athletes to maintain optimal performance despite the experience of adversity (e.g., Jones et al., 2007).

In line with this definition and similar to SCM, MT has the potential to minimize the negative consequences of perceived stress (Gerber et al., 2018). Greater levels of MT, for example, facilitate coping by decreasing the perception that an injury is a threat (Levy et al., 2006). By decreasing the perception that a stressor is a threat, MT suppresses the stress response,

enhancing physiological self-regulation, and thus, performance. MT further aids performance by boosting endurance capabilities (Crust & Clough, 2015).

In addition to decreasing the perception of threats, MT also protects athletes against symptoms of burnout (Madigan & Nicholls, 2017) and mental health issues (e.g., Gerber et al., 2018), which likely strengthens AI, and therefore, the commitment to one's sport. Similarly, Stamp et al. (2015) found a negative relationship between MT and exercise barriers (e.g., time expenditure). MT, therefore, may help athletes combat barriers and, thus, decreases the risk of burnout and mental health issues by fostering control through the use of problem-focused coping strategies (Nicholls et al., 2008) and the rehearsal of other mental skills (e.g., emotional regulation, relaxation, mindfulness; Crust & Azadi, 2010).

Greater MT is also related to increased motivation to seek out challenges, which allows for growth, facilitates flow (Crust & Swann, 2013), and increases subjective performance ratings (Stavrou et al., 2007). MT may also impact *objective* performance indicators. Arthur and colleagues (2015), for instance, found that MT was an even stronger predictor for military performance outcomes than individual fitness levels. This finding not only provides support for the usefulness of MT in the military, but potentially in other performance-based settings (e.g., sport).

Noteworthy for the present study, however, is that MT is more recently regarded as a situational trait dependent on sociocultural and contextual factors (Gucciardi et al., 2015). Therefore, MT may not directly translate from one context (e.g., sport) to another (e.g., activism). Nonetheless, if one makes the connection between any two given contexts, constructs such as MT may be transferrable. MT, in other words, may be transferrable if athletes can recognize how AI and AIC, along with the accompanying behaviors and experiences, affect each

other. Smith et al. (2016), for example, found athletes felt that AIC encouraged a smoother transition out of sport. Similarly, athlete activists reported that many of the skills learned in sport facilitated success in activism (e.g., discipline, goal-setting, long-term planning, fearlessness, focus, and the pursuit of progress; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010). After all, MT was formerly described as a relatively stable trait (Clough et al., 2002; Gucciardi et al., 2009) and many scholars currently believe that applied sport psychology concepts can be applied in military settings to enhance performance and coping skills (DeWiggins et al., 2010; Fiore & Salas, 2008; Goodwin, 2008; Hammermeister et al., 2010; Janelle & Hatfield, 2008).

Therefore, MT may have similar implications in both sport and activism. Moreover, strong AI and AIC may interact to facilitate greater MT. To more completely understand how SCM and MT may facilitate performance and be fostered by strong AI and AIC, the present study examines these relationships through a broader lens, a metatheory of resilience and resiliency (MRR).

Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency

MRR (Richardson, 2002; Richardson et al., 1990) is a general theory of resilience which Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) defined as "the role of mental processes and behavior in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of stressors" (p. 675). This theory explains that adversity or stressor(s) disrupts one's biopsychospiritual balance, or homeostasis, and potentially sparks the motivation to not only regain that balance but also achieve self-actualization.

Based on MMR, Galli and Vealey (2008) applied a model of resilience to sport that included experiencing adversity (e.g., injury), sociocultural influences (e.g., social support, cultural factors), and personal resources (e.g., determination, motivation) as moderators that

affect resilience over time as a result of one's interactions with their environment. This model was further validated in elite winter sport athletes (Brown et al., 2015) and in athletes with spinal cord injuries (Machida et al., 2013).

Fletcher and Sarkar (2012, 2013), however, disagreed with this model, arguing that it provided a linear framework, limiting its ability to incorporate the dynamic conceptualization of resilience. This model and MMR discuss resilience as a process initiated by one stressor, whereas many experience multiple stressors simultaneously. The authors also pointed out that the model ignores meta-cognitive and emotional processing and over-emphasize coping strategies. While effective coping strategies (e.g., positive self-talk) can lead to resilience (Major et al., 1998), coping may also lead to negative results (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Van Vliet, 2008), but resilience represents positive adaptations.

After this criticism, Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) interviewed twelve elite athletes and derived a new theoretical model of resilience that integrates positive personality, motivation, confidence, focus, and perceived social support; thus, the researchers included meta-cognitive skills and reappraisal techniques as important links between adversity, resilience, and optimal performance. As Brown et al. (2019) added, mind-set and appraisal of the situation as a challenge or a threat are two important conditions in establishing and recognizing resilience to performance slumps. In other words, it is not only important to evaluate a stressor as a challenge—an opportunity for growth—but it is also important to recognize and accept the negative effects of stress to benefit from resilience. Brown et al. (2019) also found further support for determination, work ethic, competitiveness, confidence, perceived social support, enjoyment, passion, awareness of one's strengths, motivation, and energy to be included in the model.

It is worth noting, though, that the conceptual model for resilience in activism may be different than in sport. The models of resilience for medical students (Dunn et al., 2008) and adolescents (Brennan, 2008), for example, are both different from each other and different from the model proposed by Fletcher and Sarkar (2012), primarily on the basis of the context of the model. Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) also added challenge appraisals and metacognitions, an important mediator of resilience missing from most other models. Nevertheless, the ideas are similar and overlap with each other (e.g., each highlight social support). Therefore, resilience in one context may boost resilience in another context to some degree. Similarly, one participant in Fletcher and Sarkar's (2012) work on resilience suggested that aspiring Olympic athletes should participate in part-time volunteering or employment to boost focus which will help them manage the effects of stress in sport, which provides more support for the idea that resilience in one context can increase resilience in another. Indeed, Brown et al. (2019) mentioned that resilience is dynamic and subject to environmental influence, implying that the exploration of the interaction between different contexts is important within the study of resilience.

Likewise, when discussing positive adaptation to adversity, it is important to be cognizant of sociocultural influences (Clauss-Ehlers, 2008; Mahoney & Bergman, 2002; Waller, 2001). Resilience research has largely focused on what resilience means for Western, privileged populations (Ungar, 2008; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). Galli and Vealey (2008) shared, for example, that two of three African American athletes reported their race as a cultural identity that is an adversity in itself; yet there was no further discussion on race or other sociocultural identities. Resilience researchers, however, should consider differences among diverse populations in resilience research because different identities are associated with different life challenges. Thus, the present study considered AI and AIC along with other sociocultural

identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, ability), which is in accordance with one of Sarkar and Fletcher's (2013) recommendations for how to measure adversity.

The understanding that one is challenged by additional unique stress is further supported by work within minority stress theory (Brooks, 1981; DiPlacido, 1998; Meyer, 2003a, 2003b; Meyer & Frost, 2013). Minority stress theory argues that individuals who identify as a member of one or more minority groups are exposed to unique social stressors that members from the majority group(s) are not subject to. Frost (2011) and Meyer (2003b) explained that these individuals may experience stigma; expectations of rejection; acute and chronic rejection; negative internalized social beliefs about one's self related to identifying as a minority; difficulty accepting, disclosing, and managing one's identity; and other forms of prejudice and discrimination. Sexual minority individuals, for example, face greater levels of stress than heterosexual individuals (Meyer et al., 2008). Likewise, collegiate athletes who identified as an African American or biracial, as a woman, or as a member of a lower social class recognized their identity as a minority member as a stressor to competing (Kimball & Freysinger, 2003). Some of these student-athletes indicated, for instance, that they had to manage the perceptions others had of them for being a minority, had fewer resources, and felt greater pressure to participate in sport to receive an education. Therefore, identifying as a minority may expose one to additional stress, which may lead to additional experience with managing stress, potentially enhancing one's SCM. Since being a minority is uncontrollable, however, it may relate to greater levels of distress and become difficult to manage, potentially decreasing one's SCM and MT.

Furthermore, in addition to sociocultural identities, Sarkar and Fletcher (2013) also recommended to measure levels of psychological distress and not just risk factors. Thus, it was important to include perceived stress as a control variable within the present study. Perceived

stress, the degree to which one perceives one's life situations as stressful (Cohen et al., 1983), has a small-to-moderate positive relationship with SCM (Crum et al., 2013), providing further support that the experience of stress is necessary to develop resilience. This also suggests that extremely low or extremely high levels of perceived stress may not adequately prepare an athlete to develop resilience.

Therefore, because athlete activists—especially when identifying with one or more minority groups—experience unique stressors and because resilience in one context may have implications for resilience in another context, the purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between AI and AIC on SCM and MT—which are both protective factors and simultaneously factors that offer positive adaptations. The present study also examined the impacts of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, and ability on these relationships and control for perceived stress. Because perceived stress was used as a control variable in accordance with MRR and other resilience models, it was studied in data analysis but excluded from the hypotheses. In addition, the present study had a secondary purpose to evaluate the relationship between the measures of SCM and MT considering both are conceptualized as mindsets that facilitate stress management, but have yet to be studied concurrently. Given these purposes, the present study may provide suggestions to foster resilience within athletes. Thus, the following hypotheses and questions were developed:

H_1: Athletes with higher levels of AI and AIC would be more likely to have a strong SCM than athletes with lower levels of AI and AIC.

H_2: Athletes with higher levels of AI and AIC would be more likely to have a strong MT than athletes with lower levels of AI and AIC.

Q_1: Does race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, and ability moderate the relationship between AI and AIC on SCM and MT?

Q_2: What is the relationship between SCM and MT?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants & Recruitment

Upon approval of the Institutional Review Board, 6,192 coaches and compliance officers from various NCAA Division I, II, and III member institutions were contacted (see Appendix A for Recruitment Letter – Coach). Coaches were asked to respond to the e-mail to indicate an interest in sharing the survey link with their student-athletes. A total of 159 coaches and compliance officers agreed to forward a separate invitation to the student-athletes that included a survey link powered by Qualtrics Survey Software (see Appendix B for Recruitment Letter – Athlete), yielding a 2.57% response rate from coaches and compliance officers. Note, that because of the lack of direct contact with student-athletes, a response rate of prospective participants in the present study could not be determined. The survey took an average of 35 minutes and 13 seconds for participants to complete. The minimum time it took to complete the survey was 3 minutes and 0 seconds while the maximum amount of time it took to complete the survey was 29 hours, 19 minutes, and 30 seconds.

Participants (N = 204) were female (n = 168) and male (n = 36) student-athletes from NCAA Division I (n = 98), NCAA Division II (n = 41), and NCAA Division III (n = 65) with an average age of 19.66 years (SD = 1.29). Participants represented student-athletes from track and field/cross country (n = 44), softball (n = 33), soccer (n = 31), swimming and diving (n = 23), volleyball (n = 14), golf (n = 13), basketball (n = 12), baseball (n = 12), tennis (n = 9), and others (n = 23). Participants included students in their first year (n = 59), second year (n = 62), third year (n = 45), fourth year (n = 33), and fifth year or higher (n = 5). Most participants were white/Caucasian/European American (n = 175), followed by African American/Black (n = 13),

Asian American/Asian (*n* = 10), Latinx/Hispanic (*n* = 8), Native American/American Indian (*n* = 4), and other (*n* = 2). Participants also identified as mostly heterosexual or straight (*n* = 184), but also as gay/lesbian (*n* = 7), bisexual (*n* = 12), and other (*n* = 1). Most participants also reported a family income of $100,000 and greater (*n* = 67) while others reported incomes of US$75,000-US$99,999 (*n* = 26), US$50,000-US$74,999 (*n* = 24), US$35,000-US$49,999 (*n* = 17), US$25,000-US$34,999 (*n* = 4), US$16,000-US$24,999 (*n* = 3), US$12,000-US$15,999 (*n* = 4), US$5,000-US$11,999 (*n* = 4), and below US$5,000 (*n* = 7). Several participants did not know or preferred not to respond (*n* = 48). Only 16 participants self-reported a physical or mental disability including ADHD (*n* = 5), depression or anxiety (*n* = 3), and others (*n* = 8) (see Appendix C – Demographics Survey).

Measures

AI was measured with the seven-item (e.g., "I consider myself an athlete") Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; Brewer & Cornelius, 2001; see Appendix D) on a seven-point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree*; *7 = Strongly Agree*). Brewer, Van Raalte, et al. (1993) initially formed a 10-item version of the scale, but the shorter version was later developed and demonstrated strong psychometric properties (Ronkainen et al., 2016). Brewer and Cornelius (2001) reported, for example, that the short version generated internally consistent scores (α = .81) and was strongly correlated to the 10-item original scale (*r* = .96). The authors also provided evidence for construct validity by showing that athletes reported higher scores, indicative of higher AI, than non-athletes. The Cronbach coefficient alpha for AIMS in the present study was α = .76. Scores were calculated by averaging all items.

The Activist Identity and Commitment Scale (AICS; Klar & Kasser, 2009; see Appendix F) measured AIC. The AICS consisted of eight items (e.g., "Being an activist is central to who I

am") measured on a seven-point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree*; *7 = Strongly Agree*). Prior to responding to these items, participants read a description of activism adopted from Klar and Kasser (2009) to ensure accurate and consistent definitions of activism while responding to the items (see Appendix E). The same authors reported high internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$) and moderate correlations between activist identity ($r = .66$) and the Activism Orientation Scale (AOC; Corning & Meyers, 2002) as well as activist commitment ($r = .68$) with the AOC—which is why identity and commitment were combined to form AIC. Klar and Kasser (2009) also showed that the AICS is a strong indicator of activist behaviors, suggesting strong evidence of construct validity. The Cronbach coefficient alpha for AICS in the present study was $\alpha = .98$. Scores were calculated by averaging all items.

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983; see Appendix G) consisted of 14 items measuring perceived stress (e.g., "in the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?"). The PSS used a 5-point Likert-type scale (*0 = Never*; *4 = Always*). Cohen et al. (1983) provided evidence for concurrent validity by showing that it has a small-to-moderate positive relationship with the number and impact of life events. The authors also demonstrated predictive validity of the PSS through positive relationships with physical symptomology, health center utilization, social anxiety, and cigarette smoking. The same authors reported strong internal consistency in three separate samples ($\alpha = .84, .85, .86$). The Cronbach coefficient alpha for PSS in the present study was $\alpha = .85$. Scores were calculated by summing all items.

The Stress Control Mindset Measure (SCMM; Keech et al., 2018; see Appendix H) was developed based on the Stress-Mindset Measure (SMM; Crum et al., 2013), but adds that stress "can be" enhancing rather than "is" enhancing. The SCMM, like the SMM, includes

performance and productivity, learning and growth, health and vitality, and a general domain. The change to "can be" allows SCM to be measured as a malleable construct as initially intended. The SCMM expanded on the eight-item SMM and had 15 items (e.g., "Stress can be used to enhance your performance and productivity") measured on a six-point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree*; *6 = Strongly Agree*) while negatively worded items are reverse coded. Crum et al. (2013) reported solid internal consistency (α = .86). The same authors also found evidence of discriminant validity for the SMM via small-to-moderate and not strong correlations with other stress-related measures (e.g., PSS; Cohen, et al., 1983) and criterion validity for the SMM via positive correlations with health and life satisfaction. The Cronbach coefficient alpha for SCMM in the present study was α = .92. To calculate the scores, items 1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were first reverse coded. Then, the average of all items was calculated.

The Sports Mental Toughness Questionnaire (SMTQ; Sheard et al., 2009; see Appendix I) consisted of 14-items (e.g., "Under pressure, I am able to make decisions with confidence and commitment") that measured MT using a four-point Likert scale (*1 = Not at all true*; *4 = Very true*). The SMTQ measured confidence, constancy, and control, but not challenge. Sheard et al. (2009) reported reliability estimates for control (α = .71), constancy (α = .74), and confidence (α = .80) for the SMTQ as well as discriminant validity for the SMTQ via moderate correlations with hardiness, optimism, and positive and negative affect. The authors also had the SMTQ approved by a panel of experts in MT to provide evidence for content validity. The Cronbach coefficient alpha for the SMTQ subscales in the present study were α = .71, .62, and .64 (confidence, constancy, and control, respectively). Items 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were reverse coded. Scores for each subscale were then calculated by averaging the respective items. Total scores for the SMTQ were then calculated by averaging all items.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were presented first. Correlations for each measure were then provided and used to evaluate the discriminant validity between the SCMM and SMTQ. Then, separate multiple regression analyses were used to test the main and interaction effects of AI, AIC, and PS on SCM and MT.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of each of the study variables. Although a secondary purpose of the present study, Question 2 was addressed first in the analysis to evaluate the correlation between SCM and MT. As seen in Table 1, SCM and MT are positively but weakly correlated, $r = .281$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the two variables are related, but distinctive constructs.

Table 1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. AI	5.30	.92	-	-.068	.103	. 005	.091
2. AIC	2.76	1.45		-	.104	.102	-.073
3. PS	26.93	7.62			-	-.241**	-.541***
4. SCM	2.84	.41				-	.281***
5. MT	3.32	.80					-

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Hypothesis 1

To evaluate Hypothesis 1, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test a model predicting SCM. Specifically, AI, AIC, and PS were listed as independent variables where PS was included to be interpreted as a control variable. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 200) = 5.470$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .076$. With closer examination, we see that only PS was a significant predictor of SCM, $\beta = -.027$, $t = -3.76$, $p < .001$. This suggests that those with lower PS scores had higher SCM scores. Both AIC ($\beta = .072$, $t = 1.92$, $p = .056$) and AI ($\beta = .035$, $t = .597$, $p = .551$) were not significant predictors.

Interestingly, when PS is removed from the list of independent variables, the model was no longer significant, $F(2, 201) = 1.070$, $p = .345$, $R^2 = .011$. This further suggests that AI and AIC were unrelated to SCM.

To test the interaction effects between AI, AIC, and PS, new variables were computed between AI x AIC, AI x PS, AIC x PS, and AI x AIC x PS and then added to the aforementioned model. Upon adding these variables, the model was still significant, $F(7, 196) = 3.168$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .102$. However, none of the interactions were significant predictors. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2

Similarly, to test Hypothesis 2, a multiple regression was used. The model was statistically significant for MT, $F(3, 200) = 30.561$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .341$ with AI ($\beta = .066$, $t = 2.515$, $p < .05$) and PS ($\beta = -.030$, $t = -9.378$, $p < .001$) as significant predictors and AIC ($\beta = -.001$, $t = -.082$, $p = .935$) as a nonsignificant predictor. This suggests that those with higher AI and lower PS scores had higher MT.

Interestingly, when PS is removed from the list of independent variables, the model was no longer significant, $F(2, 201) = 1.305$, $p = .274$, $R^2 = .013$. This provides greater support for the significance of PS in the original model and further suggests that AIC is unrelated to MT.

The interaction terms were then added to the model. The model remained significant, $F(7, 196) = 13.554$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .326$. None of the interactions, however, were significant predictors of MT. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Moderators

For Question 1, moderated multiple regression was used to test how race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, and ability moderate the relationships been AI and AIC with SCM and MT. First, each independent and dependent variable were centered to avoid issues of multicollinearity. Each moderator variable was then dummy coded and an interaction term with each dummy-coded moderator and each independent variable were created. The new interaction

terms related to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, and ability were added to the original regression models, respectively, forming five new regression models for each dependent variable. Note that, because SES was already a continuous variable, it was not dummy-coded.

The interaction between the various races and ethnicities and AI, AIC, and PS on SCM resulted in a significant model, $R^2 = .142$, $F(6, 197) = 3.146$, $p < .01$. However, none of the terms were significant predictors of SCM, suggesting that race/ethnicity was not a moderating factor.

The interaction between gender and AI, AIC, and PS on SCM also produced a significant model, $R^2 = .087$, $F(18, 185) = 3.146$, $p < .05$ where being female was a significant moderator of PS, $\Delta R^2 = .011$, $\Delta F(18, 185) = -2.324$, $\beta = -.026$, $t(185) = -3.338$, $p < .01$. This suggests that identifying as a female decreased the impact of PS on SCM.

The interaction between sexual orientation and AI, AIC, and PS on SCM also produced a significant model, $R^2 = .098$, $F(10, 193) = 2.101$, $p < .05$. In this model, the only significant moderator was heterosexuality on PS, $\Delta R^2 = .022$, $\Delta F(10, 193) = -3.369$, $\beta = -.025$, $t(193) = -3.337$, $p < .01$, suggesting that identifying as a heterosexual decreased the impact of PS on SCM.

While the interaction between SES and AI, AIC, and PS on SCM was significant, $R^2 = .089$, $F(6, 149) = 2.418$, $p < .05$, none of the terms were significant, suggesting that SES did not moderate AI, AIC, or PS in predicting SCM.

The interaction between ability and AI, AIC, and PS on SCM was also significant, $R^2 = .100$, $F(6, 197) = 3.642$, $p < .01$, but none of the new interaction terms were significant predictors of SCM.

The same interaction terms were placed into new models to predict MT. The interaction between the various races and ethnicities and AI, AIC, and PS on MT, for example, yielded a

significant model, R^2 = .381, F(18, 185) = 6.330, p < .001, but none of the variables were significant.

The interaction between gender and AI, AIC, and PS on MT was also significant, R^2 = .341, F(6, 197) = 16.978, p < .001 and it offered a significant moderator. More specifically, being male moderated the effects of AI (ΔR^2 = 0, ΔF(6, 197) = -13.583, β = .122, t(197) = 2.220, p < .05) and PS (ΔR^2 = 0, ΔF(6, 197) = -13.583, β = -.050, t(197) = -5.910, p < .001) on MT. These findings reveal that being male increased the effect of AI on MT and decreased the effect of PS on MT.

In addition, the interaction between sexual orientation and AI, AIC, and PS on MT was significant, R^2 = .324, F(10, 193) = 9.268, p < .001. In this model, heterosexuality was a significant moderator of AI (ΔR^2 = .017, ΔF(10, 193) = -21.293, β = .064, t(193) = 2.286, p < .05) and PS (ΔR^2 = .017, ΔF(10, 193) = -21.293, β = -.030, t(193) = -9.125, p < .001). These findings suggest that being heterosexual strengthens the effect of AI on MT and weakens the effect of PS on MT.

Although the interaction between SES and AI, AIC, and PS on MT formed a significant model, R^2 = .336, F(6, 149) = 12.590, p < .001, none of the moderators were significant.

Similarly, the interaction between ability and AI, AIC, and PS on MT produced a model, R^2 = .318, F(6, 197) = 15.293, p < .001, but none of the moderators were significant.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Several authors have acknowledged the existence of political and sociological issues within sport (Cagan & DeMause, 1999; Carrington, 2010; Delaney & Eckstein, 2003; Houlihan, 2000; Jackson & Haigh, 2008). Most of the research on athlete activism, for instance, is found within sport management and sport sociology (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2010; Cunningham & Regan, 2012) with only few exceptions within sport psychology (e.g., Smith et al., 2016). Therefore, the present study sought to extend the literature of athlete activism within sport psychology. More specifically, the primary goal of the present study was to investigate the relationships between AI, AIC, PS, SCM, and MT.

Initial analyses revealed a positive weak-to-moderate relationship between SCM and MT, showing that the two constructs have some distinctiveness. This provides evidence for studying the two separately, although more research is needed. This also provides some support for studying SCM within the understanding of resilience alongside MT, although more research is needed for this as well. Indeed, a key element of resilience is reappraising a threat as a challenge (e.g., Brown et al., 2019; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). SCM works similarly, characterized by reappraising stress as positive and allowing athletes to experience health and performance boosts from stress (e.g., Crum et al., 2013). Therefore, SCM may facilitate the experience and strengthening of an athlete's resilience.

Separate from the initial analysis evaluating Question 2, findings of the present study revealed little support for Hypotheses 1 or 2 or Question 1. Specifically, only lower PS, and not AI or AIC, predicted higher SCM. Meanwhile, only lower PS and higher AI, but not AIC, predicted higher MT. Moreover, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, SES, and ability only showed minimal effects, if any in some models, on moderating the relationships between AI and

AIC on SCM and MT. In fact, most significance related to PS, a control variable. Although gender differences existed within AI and MT, the differences are limited due to the lack of participant diversity and the decreased impact on the model when included. These findings contradict the predictions of the present study. Because stress is a facilitator of resilience, AI, AIC, and PS, along with the included sociocultural identities, were each expected to predict greater SCM and MT. Perhaps, extraneous variables missing from the present study (e.g., social support, problem-focused coping strategies; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Keech et al., 2018) that are important in building resilience are more accurate predictors of SCM and MT than the experience of stress itself. After all, the presence of stress does not immediately transfer into the development of resilience; rather, important factors such as social support and problem-focused coping strategies, among others, are necessary for one to experience a positive adaptation to the stressful experience (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

The lack of significant findings, however, was not surprising. Beachy et al. (2018), for example, noted that AI is not related to activism. Smith et al. (2016), though, asserted that AIC does not compensate one's AI. The present study, therefore, provides additional support for Beachy et al.'s (2018) and Smith et al.'s (2016) claims that AI is unrelated to activism and AIC. Additionally, SCM and MT may be different in different contexts. This would align with Brown et al. (2019) and Gucciardi et al.'s (2015) suggestion to examine sociocultural and contextual factors of MT. MT in activism, for example, may be different than MT in sport. Perhaps, with a more representative sample of minority athletes, we would have seen a connection between AI, AIC, and sociocultural factors (e.g., race/ethnicity) on MT and SCM. After all, athletes from minority statuses are more likely to experience additional stressors than non-minority members (e.g., Meyer & Frost, 2013). Minority athletes may then be more likely to perceive the injustices

of the world as minority members are more likely to experience them. In turn, these experiences then increase social consciousness, a prerequisite to strengthening AIC (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010; Smith et al., 2016). Therefore, minority athletes may be more likely to engage in activism or at least more likely to have an understanding for its importance.

It is also true that athletes can develop SCM and MT without engaging in activism. Nevertheless, activism may help athletes strengthen SCM and MT. Athletes such as Tommie Smith, John Carlos, Jack Johnson, Jackie Robinson, Billie Jean King, LeBron James, and Megan Rapinoe previously mentioned in Chapter 1 of the present study arguably had either strong levels of SCM and MT prior to embracing an AIC or they strengthened their SCM, MT, and AIC simultaneously. Further research on athlete activists is needed to understand these relationships.

Moreover, these professional athletes who practiced activism may have felt secure in their positions and unafraid of the negative consequences of activism. Meanwhile, collegiate athletes, such as those in the present study, are less likely to participate in activism than non-athlete peers (Gayles et al., 2012; Hoffman et al., 2015) and are potentially less likely than professional athletes to engage in activism. In fact, many athletes may also be unwilling to add other identities (e.g., AIC) that are separate from one's AI, especially if the new identity distracts from one's AI or does not contribute to it. Several researchers, for example, found that athletes prioritize AI over other identities and even risk academic and career success by doing so (Beron & Piquero, 2016; Brewer, Van Raalte, et al., 1993; Eckard, 2010; Stambulova et al., 2015).

The participants in the present study may have been unaware of the connections that activism has to sport. Additionally, the aforementioned professional athletes may have been unconcerned or minimally concerned with other barriers that may be preventing the participants in the present study from engaging in activism. Such barriers, therefore, may help explain the

relatively low scores on the AICS in the present study. As Candaele and Dreier (2004) and Cunningham and Regan mentioned, for example, that collegiate athletes in the present study may experience numerous barriers preventing them from embracing an AIC such as receiving criticism from the public, worsened or loss of a positive public image, job loss, anticipated emotional regulation (i.e., the need to manage additional stress), and withdrawal of funding—which is especially concerning for collegiate athletes who rely on funding to receive an education. In addition, as an emerging adult in a college setting, many of these student-athletes may just be learning about various social issues and developing an understanding of their role within this world. Indeed, social consciousness is a key element enabling athletes to become activists (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010; Smith et al., 2016). Similarly, Agyemang et al. (2010) and Fuller and Agyemang (2018), for example, noted that is it common for an athlete to struggle to recognize one's social influence. The participants in the present study may also struggle to recognize their social influence.

It is also worth mentioning that the student-athletes in the present study mostly came from privileged backgrounds (e.g., white, heterosexual, upper- and middle-class). Therefore, the participants may have had even lower awareness of social issues. Minority stress theory explains that individuals of one or more minority group experience additional stressors that more privileged individuals do not experience. African American, biracial, female, and lower social class student-athletes, for instance, each respectively acknowledged that they had additional stress compared to other student-athletes because of this salient identity (Kimball & Freysinger, 2003). Of course, most of the participants in the present study were females; however, most were straight, white, and middle- or upper-class. These female athletes may have inherited a sense of

prestige from sport and other areas of privilege, inhibiting awareness of one's lack of privilege and awareness of the white, masculine, and heteronormative culture that permeates sport.

On the contrary, these student-athletes may be aware of this culture, but may perceive that the risks of activism are too high. As collegiate athletes who most likely have not yet secured a position in professional sports or other career field, the participants may be mindful of their behaviors, knowing that an AIC may cause risks to job attainment, security, and advancement. Nevertheless, the present study provides a profile of the self-reported AI, AIC, SCM, and MT of white, straight, middle- and upper-class female collegiate student-athletes. Future research should continue exploring these constructs within similar and more diverse student-athletes.

Combined, these student-athletes may have several layers of barriers preventing them from identifying as activists. Smith et al. (2016) and Wagstaff et al. (2013) elaborated that athletes worry that the barriers will accumulate unwanted stress that will require additional energy to manage—energy that could be used elsewhere (e.g., in sport). In fact, these barriers could be preventing athletes from experiencing heightened SCM and MT with stronger AIC. Brown et al. (2019), Fletcher and Sarkar (2012), and Galli and Vealey (2008) identified several moderators that are important to foster an atmosphere conducive of building resilience. These moderators included re-appraising threats as challenges (e.g., SCM), meta-cognitive skills (e.g., MT), social support, motivation, and several others.

Although barriers could be reappraised as challenges, they could also be internalized as threats, preventing athletes from acquiring high AICs. Not only is it important to reappraise activism-related stress (i.e., barriers) as challenges, but it is arguably more important to first establish a supportive environment. With support from one's coach, teammates, sport

psychologist, and administrators, as well as discussions that cultivate social consciousness of social issues and workshops that build meta-cognitive skills, an athlete may become more likely to integrate an AIC into one's self-concept. Therefore, it could be possible that SCM and MT are needed to be confident enough to engage in activism, rather than be outcomes of activism participation. Nevertheless, SCM and MT might be reinforced by engaging in activism.

Indeed, proper guidance and support on how to navigate and control one's emotions can benefit both activism and MT. Crust and Azadi (2010) found, for example, that MT is enhanced by emotional regulation and other mental skills. In other words, if activism does require additional emotional regulation like athletes fear it will, activism would simultaneously provide an opportunity to strengthen resilience via the need for emotional regulation.

Moreover, plenty of researchers have documented evidence that participating in activism is beneficial for the activist and not just society. Strengthening other social roles outside of one's AI, for example, can ease the process of transitioning out of sport (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Lavallee, 2005; Warriner & Lavallee, 2008). Athletes who became activists post-sport, for example, had more positive and less negative retirement outcomes (Smith et al., 2016). Klar and Kasser (2009) also found that activism, especially low-risk activism (e.g., raising money), is associated with greater well-being. The same authors also connected AIC with greater positive affect, self-actualization, hope, meaning in life, life satisfaction, and flourishing. Klar and Kasser also recognized that community activism can facilitate the experience of post-traumatic growth. Other researchers have connected social interest and volunteerism, related constructs, to greater life satisfaction, positive affect, self-esteem, self-actualization, vitality, critical thinking, and academic success and less negative affect, distress, and alienation and lower mortality rates (Austin & Sax, 1998; Leak & Leak, 2006; MacNeela & Gannon, 2014; Wilson, 2000). Similarly,

Rabkin et al. (2018) found that activism allowed HIV/AIDS survivors to experience greater long-term confidence, sense of self, belief in change, and agency.

Although the present study did not add to this list of benefits of activism, it does contribute a deeper understanding of the connection between athlete activism and resilience. The present study also was the first to compare SCM and MT, learning that the two are seemingly distinct constructs adding to the validity of each scale. Nonetheless, the present study is not without several limitations.

Limitations

First, a limitation of the present study was that it was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. Second, a major limitation of the study involves the participants. Although the participants were recruited across the United States, participants were primarily female, white, heterosexual, and middle- or upper-class. Considering minority individuals experience increased distress and have different life experiences when compared to majority peers and because many social issues relate to one's status as a minority, it is important to study athlete activism and resilience with a diverse sample. The lack of diversity then made it difficult to explore the intersection of various identities within the data analysis, further limiting the generalizability of the present study.

The need for approval from coaches and/or compliance officers before contacting student-athletes may have further impacted the lack of diversity in the present study. Indeed, very few coaches and compliance officers chose to share information about the present study and the accompanying survey link with their respective student-athletes. The approval of certain coaches and compliance officers, in other words, limited the diversity of student-athletes who became aware of the present study.

Third, and relatedly, participants also represented sports that receive little media coverage when compared to others such as football or basketball, which may impact one's perceived social influence. Fourth, the present study failed to request participant's religious affiliation, an important component as it relates to one's identity and attitudes toward athlete activism. Finally, the present study did not evaluate all possible predictors of resilience (e.g., perceived social support). After all, social support and other predictors for athlete activism may strengthen AIC and resilience and potentially act as a moderator between the two. Similarly, barriers to athlete activism such as level of risk was also not included in the present study, but may be important in moderating athlete activism and resilience. Nonetheless, these predictors were excluded from the present study in order to focus on the variables of interest and maintain feasibility of the present study. Adding more scales to the survey, for example, could have hindered college athletes from participating in the present study as their time is already limited.

Future Directions

Future studies should take into consideration the implications and limitations of the present study to advance the scholarship on athlete activism. First, future studies should implement a methodological design that would ensure greater diversity of participants. Future studies should also ask participants to indicate one's religious affiliation within the demographic questionnaire. It is important that scholars also study social support, risk level, and other moderators of resilience when exploring the effects of athlete activism. Moreover, scholars should develop randomized control trials that emphasizes social support, meta-cognitive skills, re-appraisal techniques, and activism behaviors where pre- and post-assessments are collected. Other scholars should also explore the role of SCM in sport as this is the first study to examine it within sport psychology. Finally, scholars should take care in noting the positive *and* negative

effects of athlete activism and not simply focus on either the positive effects or the risks associated with it.

Conclusion

The current study found that SCM and MT had a positive correlation. This suggests that SCM and MT are distinct constructs. Thus, SCM should be further explored in sport psychology and resilience research. Results also indicated that AI, AIC, and other sociocultural identities were not related to SCM or MT as originally thought. These findings suggest these variables are either unrelated to each other or are connected via extraneous variables (e.g., social support, problem-focused coping strategies) not considered within the present study. Future research should continue to examine the positive and negative psychological effects of athlete activism using longitudinal designs.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT LETTER – COACH

Dear Coach/Compliance Office,

My name is Travis Scheadler and I am a current master's student at University of Kentucky studying Sport & Exercise Psychology within the Department of Kinesiology and Health Promotion in the College of Education. This study is being advised by Dr. Jeff Reese. As partial fulfillment of my Master's of Science in Kinesiology and Health Promotion, **I am exploring how the interaction between athletic and activist identities affect stress control mindset and mental toughness**. I am e-mailing you to ask for your assistance in order to better understand the different methods in which an athlete can develop resilience (e.g., stress control mindset, mental toughness). Please note that, to participate in the present study, student-athletes must be at least 18 years old or older.

We hope to receive completed questionnaires from about 1000 student-athletes. Therefore, your student-athletes answers are important to us and we are asking that you share an invitation to participate in the study with your student-athletes. If you choose to participate, please respond to this invitation and we will share another email invitation that you can forward to your student-athletes. The study consists of a **10-20-minute survey**.

Although we have tried to minimize this, some questions may make student-athletes upset or feel uncomfortable when asked about their personal identities (e.g., sexual orientation) and they may choose not to answer them. If some questions do upset them, we recommend seeking help from your athletic mental health professional and/or seeking assistance form your campus counseling/mental health center. They may also contact me at the phone number or e-mail address below for a referral to a mental health professional in your area.

Student-athletes will have the opportunity to provide their e-mail address for future studies. Identifiable information such as their name, e-mail address, or phone number may be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without their additional informed consent. Nonetheless, they have the right to choose not to provide their name, e-mail address, or phone number to participate in future studies and, thus, remain anonymous. Therefore, their responses to the survey is anonymous which means no names will appear or be used on research documents, or be used in presentations or publications. The research team will not know that any information they provided came from them, nor even whether they participated in the study unless they provide their e-mail address for follow-up studies. If they wish to provide their contact information, they will be taken to a separate survey form to keep their contact information separate from their data. Therefore, their data will remain anonymous.

Participation is completely voluntary. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits for not participating. In addition, student-athletes may discontinue at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to ask; my contact information is given below. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important project. We look forward to hearing back from you!

Sincerely,

Travis Scheadler
Master's student, Kinesiology and Health Promotion
University of Kentucky
Phone: (937) 751-5799
E-mail: tscheadler@uky.edu

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT LETTER – ATHLETE

Dear Student-Athlete,

My name is Travis Scheadler and I am a current master's student at University of Kentucky studying Sport & Exercise Psychology within the Department of Kinesiology and Health Promotion in the College of Education. Your coach/compliance officer has been asked to share this invitation to participate in a research study with you. Please note that your coach/compliance officer/institution has no relationship to the study. Participation is completely voluntary. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits for not participating. In addition, you may discontinue at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

This study is being advised by Dr. Jeff Reese. As partial fulfillment of my Master's of Science in Kinesiology and Health Promotion, **I am exploring how the interaction between athletic identity, activist identity, and perceived stress affect stress control mindset and mental toughness**. I would like to formally invite you to participate in this study by completing a survey that will take about **10-20 minutes**. Although you will not get personal benefit from taking part in this research study, your responses may help us better understand the different methods in which an athlete can develop resilience (e.g., stress control mindset, mental toughness). Please note that, to participate in the present study, student-athletes must be at least 18 years old or older.

We hope to receive completed questionnaires from about 1000 student-athletes, so your answers are important to us. Of course, you have a choice about whether or not to complete the questionnaire, but if you do participate, you are free to skip any question or discontinue at any time.

Although we have tried to minimize this, some questions may make you upset or feel uncomfortable when you are asked about your personal identities (e.g., sexual orientation) and you may choose not to answer them. If some questions do upset you, we recommend seeking help from your athletic mental health professional and/or seeking assistance from your campus counseling/mental health center. You may also contact me at the phone number or e-mail address below for a referral to a mental health professional in your area.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to ask; my contact information is given below. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important project. If you have any complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428.

If you would like to participate in this study, please follow this link by clicking on it or copying and pasting into your web browser:

https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bIxxaOwZhv11Olf

You will first be asked to agree to the informed consent process. Upon agreeing, you will be able to continue the survey.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important project.

Sincerely,

Travis Scheadler
Master's student, Kinesiology and Health Promotion
University of Kentucky
Phone: (937) 751-5799
E-mail: tscheadler@uky.edu

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY

How old are you (in years)?

_____

What is your gender?

__Male

__Female

__Other (please specify): _____

__Prefer not to respond

What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply)

__African American/Black

__Asian/Asian American

__Native American/American Indian

__White/Caucasian/European American

__Other (please specify): _____

__Prefer not to respond

What is your sexual orientation?

__Heterosexual or straight

__Homosexual or gay/lesbian

__Bisexual

__Other (please specify): _____

__Prefer not to respond

Which of these categories best describes your total family income for the past 12 months?

__Less than $5,000

__$5,000 to $11,999

__$12,000 to $15,999

__$16,000 to $24,999

__$25,000 to $34,999

__$35,000 to $49,999

__$50,000 to $74,999

__$75,000 to $99,999

__$100,000 and greater

__Don’t know

Do you consider yourself to have a physical or mental disability?

__Yes (please specify): _____

__No

__Prefer not to respond

What year are you in school?

__1st year

__2nd year

__3rd year

__4th year

__5th year or higher

Which NCAA sport(s) do you participate in? (select all that apply)

__Basketball

__Baseball

__Football

__Golf

__Ice Hockey

__Lacrosse

__Soccer

__Softball

__Swimming & Diving

__Tennis

__Track & Field/Cross Country

__Volleyball

__Wrestling

__Other (please specify): _____

Which NCAA Division do you compete in?

__Division I

__Division II

__Division III

APPENDIX D

ATHLETIC IDENTITY MEASUREMENT SCALE (AIMS; BREWER & CORNELIUS, 2001)

For the following questions, please indicate the number that best reflects the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement regarding your sport participation.

1. I consider myself an athlete.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
2. I have many goals related to sport.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
3. Most of my friends are athletes.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
4. Sport is the most important part of my life.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
5. I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
6. I feel badly about myself when I do poorly in sport.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
7. I would be very depressed if I could not compete in sport.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)

APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVISM ADOPTED FROM KLAR AND KASSER (2009)

To help you understand the next questions on activism, please read the following:

The goal of activism is to advocate a social or political cause (e.g., protecting the environment, human-rights issues, opposing or advocating for abortion, preventing war and violence, preventing sexual assault, helping the homeless, etc.); the means of activism can vary greatly (e.g., from institutionalized acts like starting a petition or raising funds for charity to unconventional acts like civil disobedience).

A person engaged in activism may be (but does not have to be) an active member of a group that is advocating a social or political cause, such as Greenpeace, a local human rights club, or a national group.

Often, activism means to actively participate in democracy, for example by protesting, campaigning, educating others, raising awareness, and lobbying for social or political causes.

Some behaviors can only be identified as activism by looking at the underlying ("political") motivation (i.e., some even see "turning off the light" as an activism-related behavior if it is aimed at protecting the environment by saving energy -- but not if the motive is to save money).

APPENDIX F

ACTIVIST IDENTITY AND COMMITMENT SCALE (AICS; KLAR & KASSER, 2009)

Now that you have read the above description of activism, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. Being an activist is central to who I am.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
2. I am truly committed to engage in activism.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
3. I identify myself as an activist.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
4. I make time for activism, even when I'm busy.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
5. People who know me well would call me an activist.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
6. I go out of my way to engage in activism.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
7. Being an activist is an important reflection to who I am.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)
8. I take the time I need to engage in activism.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Agree (7)

APPENDIX G

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE (PSS; COHEN ET AL., 1983)

The following questions are designed to assess your current levels of stress. The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer each question fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather indicate the choice that seems like a reasonable estimate.

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
4. In the last month, how often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
6. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
7. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
8. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
9. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
   Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
10. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
    Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
11. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?
    Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
12. In the last month, how often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?
    Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
13. In the last month, how often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?
    Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often
14. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
    Never Almost Never Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often

APPENDIX H

STRESS CONTROL MINDSET MEASURE (SCMM; KEECH ET AL., 2018)

The following questions are designed to assess your ideas about stress. As we are interested in YOUR ideas about stress, there are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. You are unable to use stress to enhance your performance and productivity.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
2. Stress can be used as a way to get the most out of your life.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
3. Stress can be used to enhance your health and vitality.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
4. Stress must be reduced or avoided to get the most out of life.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
5. You can use stress to boost your performance and productivity.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
6. Stress will impair your health and vitality.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
7. Stress can be used to enhance your performance and productivity.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
8. You can use stress to stimulate your health and vitality.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
9. Stress can be used to enhance your learning and growth.
   Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
10. The effects of stress on you is negative.
    Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
11. You are unable to use stress to enhance your learning and growth.
    Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
12. You are unable to use stress to enhance your health and vitality.
    Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
13. Stress will impair your learning and growth.
    Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
14. Stress will impair your performance and productivity.
    Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)
15. You can use stress to facilitate your learning and growth.
    Strong Disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree (6)

APPENDIX I

SPORTS MENTAL TOUGHNESS QUESTIONNAIRE (SMTQ; SHEARD ET AL., 2009)

The following questions are designed to assess your certain aspects of your sports performance. Please indicate the extent to which each statement is either not true at all or very true of you in sport.

1. I can regain my composure if I have momentarily lost it.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
2. I worry about performing poorly.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
3. I am committed to completing the tasks I have to do.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
4. I am overcome by self-doubt.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
5. I have unshakeable confidence in my ability.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
6. I have what it takes to perform well while under pressure.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
7. I get angry and frustrated when things do not go my way.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
8. I give up in difficult situations.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
9. I get anxious by events I did not expect or cannot control.
   1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
10. I get distracted easily and lose my concentration.
    1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
11. I have qualities that set me apart from other competitors.
    1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
12. I take responsibility for setting myself challenging targets.
    1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
13. I interpret potential threats as positive opportunities.
    1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)
14. Under pressure, I am able to make decisions with confidence and commitment.
    1 (Not at all true) 2 3 4 (Very true)

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VITA

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EDUCATION

M.S. Sport & Exercise Psychology, University of Kentucky; Lexington, KY Expected 2020
Thesis: *Is Athlete Activism a Predictor of Resilience?*
Thesis Advisor: *Dr. Jeff Reese*
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B.A. Psychology, **Wilmington College; Wilmington, OH** 2018
Honors Capstone: *Portraying Female Athletes: Gender Inequality & Sports Media*
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CERTIFICATIONS

Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) Certification (Suicide Prevention) 2017, 2019
Performance Enhancement Specialist (National Academy of Sports Medicine) 2016
Certification in Personal Training (National Academy of Sports Medicine) (expired) 2015

PUBLICATIONS

2020

Pate, J. R., **Scheadler, T**., Spellings, C., Malnati, A., & Hillyer, S. (2020). Sport as a tool for community leaders: Exploring an innovative, immersive exchange training program. *Managing Sport and Leisure Special Issue: Organizational Innovation in Sport for Development and Peace*, *25*(3), 146-160. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2019.1653219

2018

Ledford, A., Mitchell, A., & **Scheadler, T.** (2018). Experiencing a Super Bowl: The motivations of student volunteers at a mega-event. *The Sport Journal, 20.*

Scheadler, T., & Ledford, A. (2018). Building a wall: The Refugee Olympic Team & American politics. *The Sport Journal*, *20.*

Scheadler, T., & Wagstaff, A. (2018). An intervention on women's sports: Changing attitudes toward female athletes. *The Sport Journal*, *19*.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Journal for Advancing Sport Psychology in Research 2020-Present
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Supervisor: *Dr. Amanda Visek, Associate Editor*

University of Kentucky (Lexington, KY) 2019-Present
Teaching Assistant, Department of Transformative Learning

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National Sports Performance Institute (Tampa, FL) Summer 2016
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AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Graduated Summa Cum Laude (Wilmington College)	2018
Robert E. Lucas Student Leadership Award (Wilmington College President's Award)	2018
Undergraduate Psychology Award (Wilmington College)	2018
Honors Student of the Year Award (Wilmington College)	2018
Student Government Association Distinguished Service Award (Wilmington College)	2018
Quaker Impact Award (Wilmington College)	2018
Pro-Staff Selection Award (Residence Life at Wilmington College)	2018
Peer Resident Assistant Award (Residence Life at Wilmington College)	2018
Peer Resident Assistant Award (Residence Life at Wilmington College)	2017
"Best in Class in Social Sciences" (Wilmington College Spring Research Symposium)	2017