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Since the onset of the global pandemic, there has been a sharp rise in Division I college athletes using their platforms to address inequity in college athletics. While it is unclear what factors are shaping this trend, understanding why college athletes engage in activism is imperative to better support them as they lean further into this practice. Accordingly, this manuscript seeks to outline a framework for examining activism in and through college sport over time, space, and context by utilizing Bronfenbrenner's bioecological Process-Person-Context-Time Model. Examining athlete activism provides a mechanism to consider the way power, privilege, and oppression impact athletes' experiences and ability to thrive during their time on campus.

Keywords: athlete development, college student development

Since the onset of the global pandemic, there has been a sharp rise in Division I college athletes using their platforms to address health and safety concerns, protest racial injustice, advocate for athlete rights, and ultimately try to redefine equity in college athletics (Black et al., 2022; Bumbaca, 2020; Forde & Dellenger, 2020; Schlabach, 2020). Although athletes are embracing these activist roles (Kluch, 2020), it is unclear exactly which factors are shaping this shift. While there has been a rise in college athlete activism, Fuller and Agyemang (2018) argued that most research related to activism has historically focused on professional or Olympic athletes. Understanding why college athletes engage in athlete activism is imperative as it can help those working with and on behalf of college athletes, both in and through athletic contexts, create better support structures as athletes lean further into athlete activism.

Exploring athlete activism can also establish an avenue for researching athletes' moral development in a manner that adopts an asset-based approach in place of the more typical deficit-based (e.g., Bredemeier & Shields, 1984a; 1984b; 1986; Crown & Heatherington, 1989; Lyons & Turner, 2015; Shields et al., 1995). Recent research also supports moving in this direction as "previous studies that have identified negative correlations between extended participation in competitive sports and advanced moral reasoning skills" (Graham & Burns, 2020, p. 137). Finally, by critically examining the college athletic context, researchers can identify ways to recognize and address structural, political, and systemic barriers that limit athletes' development as activists, as well as create theory-driven praxis to address those barriers and improve this context (Marine & Gilbert, 2021). This approach parallels other work on athlete activism grounded in theory-driven praxis such as George-Williams' (2021) Activism Growth Model and San Jose State University's (n.d.) Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change.

We relied on the following understanding of *activism in* and *activism through college sport*. Activism in college sport is achieved through disruptions to structures, policies, and/or practices within intercollegiate sport systems (Cooper, 2021; Cooper et al., 2019; Darnell, 2012; Sage, 1998). Typically, these efforts are conducted by athletic in-group members (e.g., players, coaches, athletic administrators). Alternatively, activism through college sport is action by those connected to college sport that utilize their resources to advocate for social justice beyond the intercollegiate athletic space (e.g., on-campus, legal/legislative, society more broadly; Cooper, 2021; Cooper et al., 2019; Darnell 2012; Sage, 1998). This type of activism is generally carried out by out-group members (e.g., scholars, journalists, politicians, lawyers), collective action between in- and out-group members (e.g., athletes and non-athletes), or institutions (e.g., NCAA, athletic departments).

The broader purpose of this conceptual manuscript is to outline a framework for examining activism in and through college sport over time, space, and context using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) Model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2007). More specifically, our goal is to establish athlete activism as an avenue for researching athletes' moral development (DeSensi, 2014), which is defined as the "process through which individuals develop more complex principles and ways of reasoning about what is right, just, and caring" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 336). Intercollegiate sport, particularly at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level, provides a unique context for exploring and expanding how understandings of college students' moral development coincide with or deviate from college athletes' experiences (DeSensi, 2014; Springer & Dixon, 2021). We

contend that athlete activism provides a mechanism through which scholars can question the assertions of established moral development theory and continue to expand its borders to include the uniqueness of college athletes' experiences.

We begin by first positioning ourselves within this work to allow the reader to understand how we arrived at this topic and the dispositions we bring to this manuscript. We then provide a historical overview of activism in and through college athletics. Next, we review components of the PPCT Model followed by an in-depth examination of a recent example of athlete activism that occurred at the University of Texas to illustrate how researchers can use the model to study athlete activism in and through college sport. We conclude by providing implications for how to proceed from this manuscript.

First Author's Positionality

I engaged in the preceding and subsequent discourse through a critical constructivist epistemology (Klincheloe, 2005) and differential ontology (May, 2005). The former centers on the inherent connections between power and knowledge and the social nature of knowledge creation, while the latter challenges transcendental assumptions of an essential reality in favor of a more dynamic understanding of the nature of being. As a white, male, straight, cis, able-bodied scholar, I relied on my practitioner experience working with college athletes as a student affairs professional and academic advisor as well as my experience as a scholar studying college student development in the nexus between formal sport and higher education contexts. Further, as an advocate and critical ally, I seek to challenge and subvert oppressive systems and structures by utilizing the unearned advantages afforded to me by and amplifying the voices of those with adverse first-hand experience with, those same systems and structures.

Second Author's Positionality

I approached this research with a social constructivist paradigm emphasizing the collaborative nature of learning and the idea that knowledge is contingent upon interaction and context. This lens is based on my experiences as a white, heterosexual woman with previous experience working with college athletes in academic advising and studying athlete activism efforts. These experiences expanded my critical perspectives of intercollegiate athletics, while challenging my own privileges, allowing me to grow as a scholar.

Third Author's Positionality

I identify as a Black, man, former college athlete and a critical researcher who is interested in understanding college athlete social experiences in higher education. As a critical scholar, my experiences as a college athlete and Black man in America shape the epistemological paradigms I bring to research and the multiple ways I view college athletics as a space for development and activism.

Fourth Author's Positionality

I come to this work through a critical epistemological lens coupled with my lived experiences as a Black man whose research investigates issues of race within college athletics.

Additionally, my experiences working in college athletics has also continuously shaped my perspective related to the athlete experience. My perspective and lived experiences allowed me to approach this work critically while also acknowledging the space that college athletics provides for the development of the athlete.

Historical Overview of Athlete Activism in and through College Athletics

As Figure 1 illustrates, athletics and activism have long been linked (Agyemang et al., 2010; Bryant, 2018; Duberman, 2014; Edwards, 2017). In fact, since the NCAA's inception athletes have engaged in activism related to various areas such as violent physical conditions, gender inequity, and athlete rights (Kluch, 2021; Cooky, 2017; Edwards, 2017). However, due to white, male, and affluent hegemonic power structures in sports (Brown & Foxx, 2022; Edwards, 2017), the media and scholarly attention provided to athlete activism has oscillated over the decades (Howard, 2018). This may indicate that the media has often viewed Black athletes as only athletes, rather than humans who also play a sport with other interests outside off the fields and courts (Brown & Foxx, 2022). As Bryant (2018) stated, for many years the "media took virtually no interest in the black athlete after the buzzer sounded" (p. 8).

One of the earliest recorded examples of activism in college sport dates to 1916 at Rutgers University during the first wave of athlete activism in which Black athletes challenged perceptions of white dominance and sought to gain legitimacy (Cooper et al., 2019; Duberman, 2014). Paul Robeson was the third Black student to enroll at Rutgers and, in addition to graduating valedictorian, earned fifteen letters across four sports including football (Bryant, 2018; Duberman, 2014). During the 1916 football season, Coach Foster Sanford succumbed to pressure from Rutgers administrators to bench Robeson in a game against Washington and Lee because they feared not doing so would hurt alumni donations. However, Sanderson engaged in activism in college sport when he refused to remove Roberson from the roster a second time. As Duberman (2014) explained, "on a second occasion Coach Sanford held his ground. When 'Greasy' Neale, coach of the West Virginia team, also insisted Roberson be dropped from the roster, Sanford adamantly refused to comply" (p. 14). Robeson also engaged in agentic resistance and symbolic activism during his time on campus and other types of activism throughout his post-athletic life (Cooper, 2021).

Another two decades would pass before college athletes would markedly engage in activism through sport, this time as a response to the 1936 Olympic Games hosted in Nazi Germany. For some, like Milton Green of Harvard University and the primarily Jewish athletes on the Long Island University men's basketball team, this amounted to boycotting the games altogether (Rosenzweig, 1997). For others, such as Ohio State's Jesse Owens, University of Pittsburgh's John Woodruff, Pasadena Junior College's Mack Robinson, Syracuse University's Marty Glickman, Marquette University's Ralph Metcalfe, and University of Michigan's Sam Stoller, participating in the 1936 Olympics provided an opportunity to dispel myths associated with the master race narrative and anti-Semitic propaganda (Moore, 2021; Rosenzweig, 1997).

Prior to the rapid increase of athlete activism during the Civil Rights era, there were two notable instances of activism through college sport that centered specifically around race. Starting in 1940, and continuing through 1941, seven New York University student activists (labeled as the "Bates Seven") organized a series of protests regarding the university's complicity in the Segregation Era "gentleman's agreement" and subsequent treatment of Black

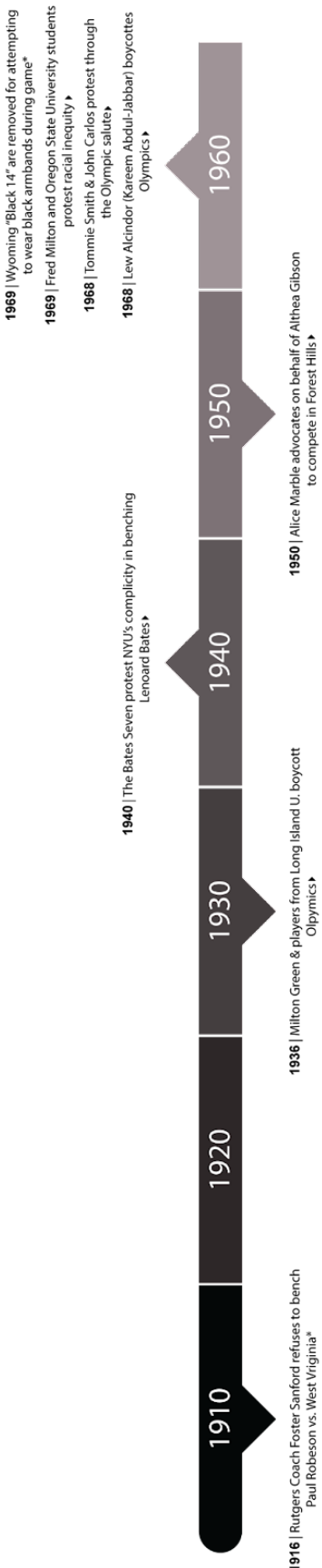

Figure 1.
Athlete Activism Timeline

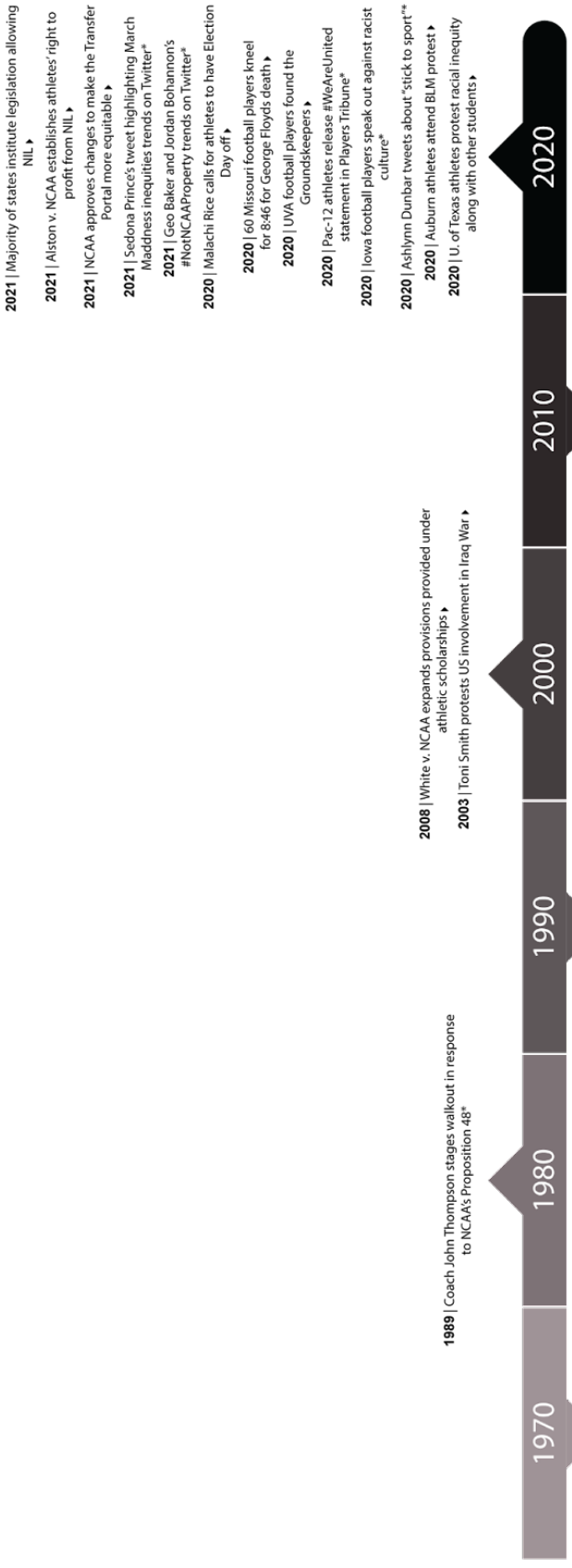

Figure 1 (cont.).
Athlete Activism Timeline

football, basketball, and track athletes, which ultimately led to their suspension from the school for three months (Clayton, 2020; Wong, 2001). Ten years later, Alice Marble, a prominent white tennis player, advocated for the integration of tennis through the inclusion of Florida A&M University sophomore Althea Gibson at the United States Lawn Tennis Association's 1950 Forest Hills championship (Brown, 2015). The next year, Gibson would go on to integrate Wimbledon, the oldest and most prominent tennis tournament in the world. This was part of the beginning of the second wave of activism which centered around increased access and diversity for African American athletes (Cooper et al., 2019).

By the late 1960s, athletes seeking dignity and respect entered the third wave of activism (Cooper et al., 2019). Athletes, particularly those mentored by San Jose State University (SJSU) sociology professor Dr. Harry Edwards, once again found usefulness in the Olympic Games as a platform for protest (Edwards, 2017). Perhaps one of the most compelling case studies of athlete activism comes from Lew Alcindor's (later Kareem Abdul Jabar) reluctance to participate in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games. At the time, Alcindor was a junior at the University of California Los Angeles and was initially seen as a prominent figure in the movement to boycott the Olympic Games, though he later eschewed that role by downplaying his reasons for refusing to participate (Goudsouzian, 2017). While he cited graduation as his primary reason for skipping the Olympics, Goudsouzian (2017) noted that this "was only part of the story. He was trying to deflect criticism from both ends of the political spectrum" (p. 443).

Another prominent instance of activism through college sport related to the 1968 Olympics resulted from Tommie Smith's and John Carlos' Black Power salute on the Olympic podium following their respective first and third-place finishes in the 200-meter sprint (Edwards, 2017; Peterson, 2016). Both were students at SJSU at the time as well as members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and interacted with Dr. Harry Edwards. Smith was a student in Dr. Edwards' course on race relations and, after receiving racist hate mail and threats from white people, began discussing a potential Olympic boycott, which eventually led to the 1968 moment (Edwards, 2017). This was indicative of the third wave of activism in which Cooper and colleagues (2019) described athletes as demonstrating heightened levels of racial consciousness. Athletes in this period embraced the idea that they "didn't just have talent; they had power" (Bryant, 2018, p. 50).

Following the 1968 Olympic Games, there was a notable rise in media attention provided to athlete activism in and through college sport that mostly centered around racial and gender equity (Brown & Foxx, 2022; Cooky, 2017; Cooper et al., 2019). The emergence of the intersection of race and gender also aligned with the era's feminist movement (Hoffman, 2017). These included, among others, Fred Milton and other Oregon State University students' protesting racial inequity in 1969, the 1970 boycott from the Syracuse Eight, the passage of Title IX in 1972, and Yale's Chris Ernst organizing protests against gender inequity in 1976. As Figure 1 demonstrates, athletes did not sustain this wave of activism over the next three decades, at least not in ways that drew mainstream media attention (Bryant, 2018; Cooper et al., 2019). Some scholars posit that the attention provided to athlete activism shifted over the years, altering the field's understanding of the existence of athlete activism in and through college sport (Bryant, 2018). This was likely compounded in the early 90s by prominent professional athletes (e.g., Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley) distancing themselves from activism (Edwards, 2016a; University of Massachusetts Amherst Isenberg School of Management, 2017).

There were, however, instances of athlete activism in and through college sport during this period. These include Shola Lynch, a track athlete at the University of Texas, organizing a

100-athlete march for racial justice in 1990 (Levin, 2020), and Toni Smith, a basketball athlete at Manhattanville College, turning her back on the flag in 2003 to protest the United States' possible invasion of Iraq (Pennington, 2003). This period also produced two important court decisions: *Cohen v. Brown University* (1996), which further clarified Title IX compliance, and *White v. NCAA* (2008), which expanded the provisions provided under athletic scholarships (Cooky, 2017). Nevertheless, it was not until 2010, early into the fourth wave of activism, that college athletics began to see a sharp rise in activism in and through sports akin to the 1960s and 70s. Of the 45 instances of athlete activism documented in Figure 1, more than half ($f = 24$) have occurred in the last 12 years, and just under one-third ($f = 13$) have transpired in the two years since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020.

While this increase can be partially attributed to earlier examples having been lost to time or the aforementioned lack of media coverage, it marks a dramatic departure from what had been seen previously. A growing number of athletes have come forward since the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery expressing concerns about racial injustice, sharing their experiences with racism, and advocating for racial equality (Black et al., 2021; Ofoegbu & Ekpe, 2022). Indeed, it is the continuance of racial and social injustice in and around college sports that provides the context in which athlete activism is necessary (Agyemang et al., 2010). For example, on August 2, 2020, 18 athletes, representing all but one Pac-12 institution, penned the #WeAreUnited statement in *The Players' Tribune* (Amos-Jones et al., 2020).

In the statement, athletes addressed immediate health and safety concerns tied to Covid-19 such as protecting players who opted out of competing due to health concerns, prohibiting liability waivers, and external oversight of standardized health procedures. More broadly, they also contended that athletes are important stakeholders within the college athletic enterprise. Accordingly, they demanded sustainable changes to college athletics that included stemming excessive spending to better protect all college sports from elimination due to lack of funding and addressing racial injustice as well as various educational and economic rights (e.g., extended medical coverage, NIL rights, nonpunitive transfers).

Following the #WeAreUnited statement there were a series of exchanges between the athletes that authored the letter and then Pac-12 commissioner, Larry Scott. The statement also empowered subsequent movements as athletes from the Big 10, Southeastern, Big XII, Mountain West, and Mid-American conferences either amplified the #WeAreUnited message or drafted their own statements. On August 10, 2020, the statement's momentum reached a tipping point when it combined with #WeWantToPlay and began trending on Twitter. One day later, both the Pac-12 and Big10 conferences canceled their 2020 football seasons (citing guidance from medical professionals) despite previously demonstrating their commitment to completing the season when they announced shifts to a 10-game conference-only schedule on July 31 and August 5, respectively.

As the preceding examples illustrate, athletic cultures have historically preserved whiteness and other hegemonic narratives which have, in large part, discouraged athletes from speaking their truths for fear of repercussion (Agyemang et al., 2010; Bryant, 2018; Hextrum, 2019). Nonetheless, there seems to have been a seismic shift in athletes' willingness to engage in activism that warrants scholars' attention. Thus, we now turn our attention to reviewing components of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological PPCT Model as a potential framework for delimiting athlete activism in and through college sport.

Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) Model

Various student development frameworks have been adapted and used in college athletic research, particularly those with an environmental focus, though as Springer and Dixon (2021) noted, these perspectives are lacking. As the authors observed, these works tend to rely on Astin's (1984) Input-Output-Environment (IEO) model (e.g., Andrassy et al., 2014; Gayles et al., 2012; Huntrods et al., 2017). Additionally, Comeaux and Harrison's (2011) Model of Student-Athlete Academic Success emphasizes athletes' individual characteristics (i.e., input) and the ways their interactions with their academic and athletic environments (i.e., environment) impact academic success (i.e., output). This suggests that the unique features of college athletic environments have a role in the ways that athletes develop holistically, including their moral development. However, Astin's model is less equipped to account for time and timing which are key for understanding activism, particularly in athletic settings. Thus, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model presents a stronger alternative for studying athlete activism.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) original ecological model theorized developmental contexts as nested environments and has long been used to explore the nexus between development and an individual's environment (Patton et al., 2016). Applications of this work, however, have relied primarily on early conceptualizations, ignoring significant changes and clarifications to the model through Bronfenbrenner's later work (Darling, 2007; DiSanti & Erickson, 2021; Eriksson et al., 2018; Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009; Tudge et al., 2016). The fundamental shift in theorizing was from a singular focus on the environment in the earlier literature to an emphasis on overall processes in more recent works (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Darling, 2007). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) provided the following description of the PPCT model's main components:

> The first of these, which constitutes the core of the model, is *Process*. More specifically, this construct encompasses particular forms of interaction between organism and environment, called *proximal processes*, that operate over time and are posited as the primary mechanisms producing human development. However, the power of such processes to influence development is presumed, and shown, to vary substantially as a function of the characteristics of the developing *Person*, of the immediate and more remote environmental *Contexts*, and the *Time* periods, in which the proximal processes take place. (p. 795, emphasis in original)

In other words, interactions between each of the four elements (i.e., Process, Person, Context, Time) impact how, and to what extent individuals experience development in ways that are not simply additive, but synergistic (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Tudge et al., 2016). In subsequent sections, we provide additional information on each of these elements, which we have conceptualized as a system in Figure 2.

Process

Process is the principal component of the PPCT model, as reflected in Figure 2. It is here where the model's other components converge in distinct ways to generate what Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) referred to as proximal processes, or interactions between individuals and their environment that produce human development outcomes. These interactions are bound by

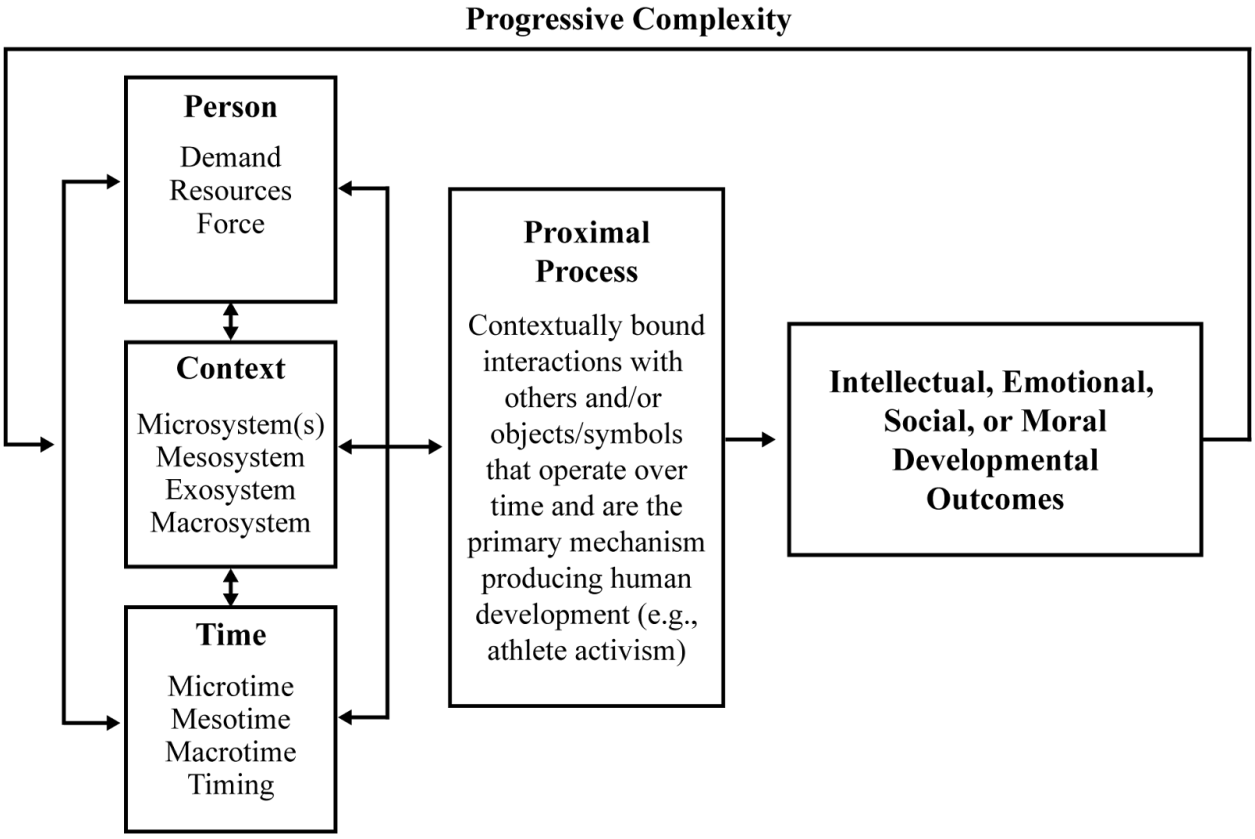

Figure 2.
Conceptualized PPCT Model

both space and time and can be either interpersonal (i.e., interactions with others) or individual (i.e., interactions with objects and/or symbols). It is important to note that interactions between the four components are both reciprocal and cyclical. Reciprocity occurs as changes in one component is likely to affect the other three. Moreover, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) noted the cyclical nature of proximal processes explaining that "early proximal processes produce [later] proximal processes throughout development" (p. 816).

Athlete activism is an example of a proximal process that can lead to emotional, social, intellectual, or, as we argue, moral development outcomes. Interactions that drive this process include, among others, the athlete-coach dyad; interactions with teammates, broader campus communities, or university traditions; or engaging with others on social media. Each of these interactions is simultaneously influenced by the individual athlete as well as those they are engaging with, the time at which they engage in these interactions, and the context(s) in which they engage (Gayles & Crandall, 2019).

As an illustration of this point, we return to the example of Tommie Smith and John Carlos engaging in athlete activism through college sport when they used the Black Power salute on the 1968 Olympic podium. Both Time and Context shaped this moment, but it also resulted from interpersonal interactions with one another, their podium mate Peter Norman, and Dr. Harry Edwards. If any one of these components was altered (e.g., both athletes do not finish in

the top three, someone other than Peter Norman finished second, neither attended SJSU prior to Olympic competition), the outcome may have been completely different. Put simply, Person, Context, and Time combine and interact in unique ways that shape, affect, and influence the outcomes associated with proximal processes.

Person

Everyone has a unique collection of characteristics, or inputs, that explain how and why they discretely experience various developmental processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). These characteristics dictate how individuals experience and engage with their environment and, thus, proximal processes and are categorized in three ways: 1) force, 2) resources, and 3) demand. Force characteristics, which can either be *generative* or *disruptive*, are those that initiate and sustain interactions between individuals and proximal processes. Generative characteristics are those that align with prosocial behaviors (e.g., curiosity, willingness to engage, responsiveness), while disruptive characteristics are more antisocial (e.g., impulsiveness, explosiveness, apathy, inattentiveness). Additionally, individuals possess certain resources that dictate how they experience development. These biopsychological resources (i.e., ability, experience, knowledge, skill) can either be assets that allow individuals to effectively function at a particular developmental stage, or liabilities that inhibit individuals' ability to function (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

Finally, one can assess an individual's demand characteristics (e.g., gender, race, athletic ability, masculinity) which either invite or discourage reactions from the social environment that foster or disrupt proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Demand characteristics may also impact how stakeholders (e.g., fans, coaches, administrators) view athlete activism. For instance, when athletes choose to engage in activism, do those that fit an ideal athletic archetype face less scrutiny? Do stakeholders respond differently based on an athlete's race? Do men face less scrutiny for asserting themselves through activism than women? Further, given that moral development is often depicted as a gendered process wherein men and women follow divergent developmental trajectories (Patton et al., 2016), is it possible that the extent to which an individual identifies as masculine or feminine determines their desire to engage in activism or the outcomes they seek through their participation? These considerations illuminate connections between the Person and Context components of the PPCT Model.

Context

Context, the principal component of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) earlier ecological work, represents a multilevel formulation of individuals' environments conceptualized as nested systems composed of micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. Each stratum interacts with, influences, and affects the others in unique ways that dictate individual interactions and, thus, proximal processes. Bronfenbrenner (1994) defined microsystems as:

> pattern[s] of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. (p. 1645)

As the definition indicates, the attributes of the physical environment and extent to which they are either constructive or destructive to the developmental process are important contextual aspects.

Those contextual attributes can be described in either experiential (i.e., how individuals subjectively experience the environment) or objective (i.e., how the environment can be objectively described) terms, both of which are important to consider given their influence on human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Further, how individuals experience or perceive an environment can change as they develop. Likewise, individuals are likely to experience a range of emotions when interacting with their environment. At times they may experience conflicting emotions (e.g., love and hate, joy and sorrow, curiosity and boredom) simultaneously, albeit to differing degrees. Additionally, environments can impede proximal processes when they "are unstable and unpredictable across space and time" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007, p. 820).

Beyond individuals' particular configurations of microsystems are the meso-, exo-, and macrosystem. The mesosystem encompasses interactions between individuals' proximal and distal microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, college athletes often occupy both academic and athletic roles (Comeaux, 2017; Gayles & Crandall, 2019) which are influenced by an academic and an athletic microsystem. These microsystems interact and are contained within a broader meso- and macrosystem (i.e., overarching societal logics that guide interpretations at other levels; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Adjacent to these mesosystems are exosystems that influence individuals despite the fact they are not active participants. These could include the NCAA, athletic conferences, or state and federal government. Each of these entities has a role in policy creation and governing college athletics but largely exclude direct athlete involvement.

As identified in the introduction of this manuscript, the college athletic context possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from other components of American higher education (Gayles, 2015). College athletics are a staple in American higher education (Clotfelter, 2019; Ridpath, 2018). Within many institutions, particularly those that compete at the NCAA Division I Power 5 level, the athletic department operates somewhat separately from the broader campus' academic culture (Gayles et al., 2018; Gayles & Crandall, 2019). Athletic systems and structures, as they exist currently, are highly dependent on the exploitation of college athletes, particularly women and those of color (Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper et al., 2014; Hoffman, 2020). This system can be better described as the athletic industrial complex (Hawkins, 2010), which is built on neoliberal capitalist ideology that exploits college athletes, primarily Black college athletes, for their unpaid labor to fuel their financial success (Gayles et al., 2018).

College athletics is a predominantly masculine environment where athletes are highly monitored and limited in what actions they can engage in (Hatteberg, 2018; Luther, 2016; Staurowsky, 2014). Additionally, college athletes are often separated from the general student body by physical spaces built away from the heart of campus and socialization practices that encourage them to rely heavily on these spaces (Gayles et al., 2018; Schroeder, 2010). These realities, which we elaborate on in subsequent sections, create a unique subculture on college campuses that perpetuates issues within the college athletic enterprise that have been exacerbated over time (Huml et al., 2014; Rubin & Moses, 2018).

Gender Ideology in Sport Contexts. Gender ideology is the set of interrelated ideas and beliefs that are accepted and used to define masculinity and femininity and organize social relationships (Coakley, 2021). From a historic perspective, "sport functioned as a key male

homosocial institution whereby 'manly virtues and competencies' could be both learned and displayed as a way of avoiding wider social, political, and economic processes of 'feminization'" (Carrington, 1998, p. 277). For example, when the NCAA was established in 1906, the socio-political culture in the United States was overtly racist and sexist, as people of color and women had few, if any, rights. This meant that minoritized athletes were rarely allowed to participate in college athletics (Cooper et al., 2014; Keaton & Cooper, 2022). As this system became institutionalized, white men became socially reproduced as the standard against which all others were measured, especially in athletics (Coakley, 2021; Hextrum, 2021).

Many of the rites and norms in contemporary college athletics continue to center around these masculine ideals, including whiteness, heterosexuality, violence, sex discrimination, and dominance over women (Anderson, 2009; Coakley, 2021; Hextrum, 2021). Masculinity confers both power and legitimacy to individuals and sports that embrace traditional gendered ideas. Embracing masculinity breeds trust among individuals within sport settings, explaining why more masculine-presenting individuals continue to occupy prominent positions (Anderson, 2009; Taylor et al., 2018; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Across all NCAA divisions, men make up 94% of head coaches in men's sports, 76% of athletic directors, 59% of head coaches in women's sports, and 56% of college athletes (NCAA, 2021a). These discrepancies are further exacerbated when considering the intersection of race and gender (i.e., demand characteristics). White men occupy 80% of men's head coaching roles, 65% of athletic director roles, and 49% of women's head coaching roles (NCAA, 2021a). This suggests that white men are not only the primary actors in athletic spaces, but also heavily shape, control, and govern these environments (Taylor et al., 2018).

Many of these longstanding norms and attitudes are in direct opposition to the recent rise in athlete activism—or "the awakening" (Bryant, 2018, p. 163)—which is underscored by demands for diversity, equity, and inclusion (Edwards, 2016b, 2017; Hoffman, 2020; Ortega et al., 2022). Thus, as athletes engage in activism, they also challenge hegemonic structures, such as toxic masculinity (Bryant, 2018; Kluch, 2020). Athletes have had some success in challenging these norms. An example includes the University of Missouri athletes' ability to aid in the removal of their university president (Gleeson, 2015). Their protest was particularly significant due to timing. Following examples from St. Louis Rams athletes (Brooks, 2016), Mizzou athletes boycotted athletic participation and joined the Black student body to address racism on campus one year after the unjust killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Another example of athletes challenging hegemonic norms arose from Sedona Prince's Tweet, which led to the women's basketball tournament gaining funding and access to the March Madness brand (Jackson, 2022). However, the need for continued activism amongst college athletes persists as racial inequity and traditional gender ideology remain palpable across NCAA institutions (Coakley, 2021).

Environmental Surveillance, Control, and Isolation. Athletic departments across the country employ surveillance tools to monitor athletes' academic performance, social engagement, and time commitments (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Hatteberg, 2018; Southall & Weiler, 2014;). This is often framed as support for college athletes to help them navigate college (Comeaux, 2019; Gaul, 2015; Shropshire & Williams, 2017). This level of monitoring, however, serves as a mechanism for controlling athletes that is incompatible with educational goals (Haslerig, 2017; Hatterberg, 2018; Staurowsky, 2014). This control often results in athletes' physical and social isolation from the broader academic community and campus culture. As

Hawkins (2010) argued, placing athletes at a disadvantage to engage in holistic development through control and surveillance works to reify the athletic industrial complex that continues to abandon the well-being of minoritized athletes, especially Black athletes.

At the Division I level, athletes usually have their own academic support services (Huml et al., 2014; Rubin & Moses, 2017), exclusive access to lavish athletic facilities (Fort, 2016; Hoffer et al., 2015), and limited engagement with peers outside athletic spaces because of both space and time (Comeaux, & Crandall, 2019; Gayles & Crandall, 2019). While there are positives (e.g., convenience) associated with these services and facilities, they nevertheless isolate athletes from the broader campus community (Gayles et al., 2018; Weaver & Tegtmeyer, 2018). These systematic and structural barriers reinforce athletic administrators' ability to create and maintain a culture of surveillance where athletes are dependent on athletic resources for success and development (Hatteberg, 2018).

Scholars have consistently found, however, that engaging with non-athlete peers, faculty, and staff is a key factor in athletes' cognitive, social, and academic development (Anderson & Dixon, 2019; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Gayles & Crandall, 2019; Mayhew et al., 2016). Thus, maintaining this level of institutional control through excessive surveillance has implications for athletes' development as it restricts their opportunities to build foundational skills in the development process (Springer & Dixon, 2021). It also weakens athletes' ability to engage in progressively complex developmental processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), such as activism.

To illustrate this point, in a survey of Atlantic Coast Conference athletes' experiences with activism following the murder of George Floyd, almost 25% of those who participated in activism indicated their coaches either showed indifference or actively encouraged them not to participate (Harry, 2021). This is important given that opposing established and accepted ways of thinking or norms in athletic spaces can jeopardize an athlete's playing time, position on the team, or even their scholarship (McCoy et al., 2017; Raphael & Abercrumbie, 2017). Thus, institutional control and surveillance enable athletic departments to heavily influence college athletes' development by restricting the environments and proximal processes, like activism, with which they can engage (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

As the preceding overview demonstrates, an examination of the college athletic context through a bioecological lens exposes potential interactions between components of the PPCT model. It is difficult to discuss this context without also unpacking how Context and Time have intertwined to influence the progression of this environment and how that progression has been both constructive and destructive to athlete activism and athlete's moral development. It also allows scholars to consider how the gradual inclusion of various demand characteristics (e.g., race, gender) transformed the type of interpersonal and individual interactions possible within athletic spaces and, thus, the proximal processes that could occur in those spaces across time. Thus, we now shift our attention to the final component of the PPCT Model, Time.

Time

Like Context, the concept of Time can be analytically partitioned into three categories: 1) microtime, 2) mesotime, and 3) macrotime (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). The first level, microtime, refers to (dis)continuity in the time that occurs during a specific interaction or activity (Bronfenbrrenner & Morris, 1998; Tudge et al., 2009). The next stratum is mesotime, which is described as the consistency with which developmental tasks occur across broader time intervals,

such as days or weeks (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Tudge et al., 2009). Finally, macrotime, like macrosystems, focuses on societal level changes and events that take place within and across generations (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

Borrowing from Elder's (1998) life-course theory, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) outlined four principles that further demonstrated the role of time and timing in the development process. The first emphasized the degree to which individuals are nested within and molded by historical time and place over their lifespan. The next underscored the developmental importance of when specific events occur over the lifespan. When individuals experience a transition period (i.e., timing) matters. An individual experiencing the same transition as a child, adolescent, or adult will likely produce three different results depending on the timing of when the transition occurs. Finally, the third and fourth principles accentuated the sociohistorical nature of both interdependent relationships and individuals' agency, respectively. In other words, there are both social and historical factors, at any given moment, that influence individuals' interpersonal networks and the decisions they make to govern their own lives.

Accounting for each level of time, as well as timing, allows for a more comprehensive examination of the reasons why athlete activism ebbs and flows over time (as demonstrated in Figure 1). *Prima facie*, an argument could be made that historical context and (in)stability over time may drive individuals' willingness to engage in activism. This seems to be particularly true when instability occurs at the macro level. For example, the high-density areas in Figure 1 map well with the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s and 1970s, fallout from the Great Recession in the 2010s, and intersection of Covid-19 and civic unrest in 2020. In this way, Context and Time have shaped the evolution of the college athletic environment that individual stakeholders (i.e., Person) subsequently interact with and, consequently, choose whether to engage in athlete activism as a proximal process (i.e., Process). To further illustrate this point, we now turn our attention to framing two recent examples of athlete activism that garnered national attention through the bioecological lens provided by the PPCT Model.

A Bioecological Framing of Athlete Activism

To highlight the potential to explore moral development in college athletic environments, we outline a recent example of athlete activism that gained national attention and notoriety: "The Eyes of Texas." Through this example, we will explore aspects that highlight areas of the PPCT Model.

The Eyes of Texas

In March 2020, college athletes experienced significant interruptions across micro-, meso-, and macrotime due to the Covid-19 pandemic effectively shutting down college athletics. Thus, athletes with highly regimented schedules that include practice, nutrition, conditioning, treatment, competition, travel, or schoolwork suddenly found themselves with a surplus of unrestricted time. Moreover, the fallout from Covid-19 overlapped the ensuing social unrest and protests that followed the murder of George Floyd. The timing of this sequence of events, coupled with a documented history of athlete activism and increased digital communication through various platforms (e.g., Zoom, Twitter), created an unprecedented moment in college athletics and produced the conditions that prompted athletes to engage in athlete activism in and through college sport.

Sparked by the murder of George Floyd, a group composed primarily of Black football athletes at the University of Texas (UT) demanded significant changes from their institution and athletic department. These demands were based on athletes' perceptions of moral transgressions committed at the school (DeSensi, 2014) and underscored the hypervisibility of systemic racism across the United States and stemmed from their recognition that Black people's historical subjugation was inherent within the university and athletic communities (i.e., microsystems), as well as broader Texas communities (i.e., meso-, exo-, and macrosystems). Likewise, their demands emphasized the impact of both their interpersonal experiences with members of the university community and symbolic interactions with university infrastructure and traditions (@_BrennanEagles_, 2020).

Following a march to the Texas state capitol in protest of police brutality, the athletes attmepted to engage in activism through sports by penning a rletter to the president and university leaders pressing for changes to improve race relations and Black students' experiences on campus. This lead to deeper conversations amongst UT athletes about racial issues on campus (Levin & Maisel, 2021) andit was this group's demand characteristics (e.g., athletic ability, race), resources as college students and athletes, and generative force characteristics (e.g., willingness to engage), that both prompted and enabled them to engage in athlete activism (Kluch, 2021). In their letter, the athletes argued that "as ambassadors for the university, [their] respective programs, the student body, and at times, the entire State of Texas" it was their "duty to utilize [their] voice and role as leaders in the community to push for change to benefit the entire UT community" (@_BrennanEagles_, 2020, para. 1).

Athletes' demands related mostly to micro-contextual concerns across their campus, athletic department, and Black communities, which followed similar athlete activist movements following Covid-19 and the multiple instances of police murdering Black people in summer 2022 (Black et al., 2022; Ofoegbu & Epke, 2022). Some demands centered on education and outreach such as athletes' challenge to the university and athletic administrators to provide education and training on the history of racism at UT, establish an outreach program for inner cities in Texas, and donate 0.5% of athletic revenue to support Black organizations and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Other demands drew on symbolic interactions that created tension and prompted the athletes to take a collective stand. They challenged the university to rename buildings connected with racist individuals and replace statues with more diverse historical figures.

Similar to other athlete activists, athletes at Texas advocated for administrators to rename a portion of the stadium after the first Black football player, increase the diversity represented in the athletic Hall of Fame, and, , replace racist rites and rituals (Crooks et al., 2022). In this case, the football players attempted to remove the school's *alma mater*: The Eyes of Texas. Athletes contended that the song, set to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad," had a racist history associated with minstrel shows at the university where white students sang and danced in blackface (Pickman, 2020; Vertuno, 2020). The song's most contentious section notes that the "eyes of Texas are upon you," mirroring Confederate General Robert E. Lee's quote: "the eyes of the South are upon you" (Pickman, 2020, para. 3).

To demonstrate their commitment to the cause, football players engaged in activism in sport by refusing to sing the song or remain on the field while it was performed at the conclusion of games (Cooper, 2021). Their position as college football players with a visible presence gave them access to visually lobby for athletic administrators to remove the song during athletic competitions (Kluch, 2020, 2022), despite knowing that this would upsett stakeholders in the

athletes' meso- and exosystems (e.g., fans, alumni, boosters) who threatened to withhold donations and other forms of support. Some alumni and boosters went so far as to threaten athletes directly, as one football player described:

> These are some high-power people that come to see you play and they can keep you from getting a job in the state of Texas. It was shocking that they said that. To this day I still think back to the moment. They really used that as a threat to get us to try to do what they wanted us to do. (McGee, 2021, para. 8)

This push back was an attempt to quell college athlete activism and highlight environmental challenges that can undercut athlete activism (Kluch, 2021). College students who engage in protests may experience push back from dissenters, but in athletic settings boosters and other external stakeholders that provide financial incentives can place pressure on athletic departments to limit college athlete activism (Staurowsky, 2014). These type of interactions complicate athletes' ability to engage in athlete activism as a proximal process because college athletes are often forced to contend with internal pressures from peers, coaches, and administrators but also external tension with influential university stakeholders, all within contexts are already inherently hostile toward them, particularly at Division I institutions (Commeaux & Grummert, 2020; Comeaux, 2019).

In response to the growing controversy, UT administrators conceded in some areas (e.g., renaming multiple campus buildings, commissioning a statue of the first Black football player, naming the football field in honor of former Black Heisman Trophy-winning running backs). The university's president also announced the assembly of a 24-person commission to examine the alma mater's history (Levin & Maisel, 2021). Nevertheless, the commission failed to find racist intent in the lyrics or establish a historical connection between Robert E. Lee and the song's lyrics (Levin & Maisel, 2021). Consequently, university and athletic administrators denied requests to replace the alma mater, choosing instead to note that "The Eyes of Texas" was a beloved tradition and here to stay (Buckner, 2021; Vertuno, 2020).

It should also be noted that the commission's findings were not universally accepted and have received pushback from members of the UT community (Falcon & Gourd, 2021; Martinez, 2021). It is likely that the commission did not consider the historical context that the Eyes of Texas was written but doing so fails to account for how time and context shaped the song. Conversely, the present time and context of state sanctioned police murders of Black people shaped college athletes' decision to protest the ways college athletics reproduces anti-Blackness and supports harm toward Black people (Black et al., 2022; Ofoegbu & Epke, 2022; Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Keaton & Cooper, 2022).

UT athletes achieved some of the goals and demands expressed in their recommendations letter but were ultimately unsuccessful in removing the alma mater. However, elements of the PPCT model are evident in their activism. The group used their Person characteristics (i.e., demand, resource, force) to elevate their voices across various Contexts and Time. This allowed them to engage in athlete activism as a proximal process and, likely, develop morally in ways they may not have if not for their commitment to activism (DeSensi, 2014, 2017). This is evident in how athletes articulated their motivations for engaging in this process: "It's not that the athletes would be winning by getting the song removed and boosters would be losing. It's about saying, 'Is this morally right'" (Levin & Maisel, 2021, para. 15; Staurowsky, 2014)? Thus,

understanding the PPCT Model in relation to athlete activism is helpful for scholars exploring and/or promoting college athlete development through activism.

Implications and Future Research

The PPCT Model presents myriad avenues for studying proximal processes that foster human development outcomes. More importantly, we contend it provides a useful framework to approach development studies in sport contexts from an asset-based, rather than deficit-based, perspective. In this manuscript, we focused on athlete activism as a proximal process that can prompt and enhance athletes' moral development. However, this model can also be applied to numerous different processes that occur in sport contexts inherently linked to higher education institutions. When actualizing the PPCT Model, each individual component can stand alone. Together, however, these components provide nuance to the ways that proximal processes, like athlete activism, are conceptualized and studied. By considering the components collectively, scholars can generate a more comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional factors that influence athletes' willingness to engage in athlete activism. For example, this approach would allow scholars to explore the type of morals exhibited by athletes or the moral orientation those athletes bring to their activist work.

The NCAA has recently taken up athlete activism and social justice as strategic initiatives *(*NCAA, 2021b), and while their survey research indicates athletes are engaging in more activism there is still more to know. When studying athlete activism, the PPCT Model allows observers to consider, both quantitatively and qualitatively, how Time, Context, and Person characteristics operate individually, as well as concurrently, to drive moral development. Thus, the PCCT model could provide a framework that assists the NCAA with designing intentional questions that not only address the model's individual components but also generate more interesting questions at the various intersections between those components (i.e., Context-Person, Context-Time, Time-Person, Context-Person-Time).

Scholar activists have noted how athletic organizations symbolically want social justice or diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts (Ofoegbu & Epke, 2022; Ortega et al., 2021). The PCCT model could offer a framework for helping the NCAA and other athletic organizations educate coaches, administrators and others within the athletic environment on their role in shaping moral development and subsequently athlete activism. For example, the Eyes of Texas' was found to not have racist intents (Levin & Maisel, 2021), however, scholars have documented how athlete activist during the early 1900s fought against hyper-overt racism (Bryant, 2018; Moore, 2021) so it is more than likely that the song does have racist intent. The PCCT model as an educational tool could help athletic administrators better consider the role time plays in shaping these experiences because it requires one to situate time within the development context.

In the UT example, college athletes identified instances of anti-Blackness and the need for social reform in Texas, which is inline with recent athlete activist movements (Kluch, 2021). However, what impact did coaches have on developing or inhibiting that development? The PCCT model requires one to consider how people influence moral development, and in college athletics coaches play a significant role in shaping other developmental outcomes (Otts & Bates, 2015). Future research might use the PCCT model to question how coaches shape college athlete moral development, which would build on research that centers coaches impact athlete critical consciousness (Bush et al., 201). This research could then be used to inform coaching strategies for helping athletes develop morally.

Accordingly, future researchers might consider how disruptions to Time, such as those associated with Covid-19, produce singular and synergistic effects that intersect and impact athletes' interactions with their Context. Future research may also grapple with the contextual nature of morality (DeSensi, 2014; Rest et al., 1999) and the restrictions sometimes imposed (e.g., loss of scholarship, playing time) in athletic environments (Bryant, 2018; Klutch, 2020; Sanderson, 2018). For example, is it possible that athletes simultaneously exhibit lower stage morality in athletic environments (as an act of avoidance or preservation) and higher stage characteristics in non-athletic environments? Likewise, scholars might consider how athletes' detachment from these spaces, in the wake of the Covid-19 shutdown, impacted their decisions to engage in athlete activism upon their return to these spaces.

There is also a need to consider the role that individual characteristics (i.e., force, resource, demand) play in morality, as these characteristics intercede individuals' interactions with their environment (i.e., proximal processes) and may also dictate their ability to cope with Time disruptions and Context discontinuity. Accounting for individual differences provides nuance that can further explain why some athletes choose to engage in these activities while others abstain. Building on this, researchers may also be able to examine what characteristics motivate athletes to diverge from established mores in athletic spaces. By examining athletes' motivations to engage in athlete activism within a Context that theoretically discourages them from doing so, scholars may uncover both generative and disruptive characteristics that influence athletes' motivations and expose similarities and differences between the moral development taking place in athletic spaces and those observed in non-athletic spaces.

Finally, while our focus in this work was on athletes and athlete activism, this approach has broader applications throughout the study of student development. For example, using this model to study the development process shifts the focus away from pre-determined (and often biased; Abes et al., 2019) teleological outcomes to an emphasis on processes that result in unique developmental pathways based on several factors. While we examined moral development as a potential outcome of athletes engaging in activism as a proximal process, we could just as easily use this model to explore other cognitive-structural and psychosocial development theories to investigate interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional, or epistemological developmental outcomes in athletic contexts and beyond. Similarly, other scholars can use this model to examine other proximal processes that align with any of those categories, either alongside or in lieu of existing theories that rely heavily on hegemonic norms and teleological endpoints.

Conclusion

The aim of this manuscript was to establish the Process-Person-Context-Time Model as a viable framework for studying activism in and through college sport over time, space, and context, though we also argue that this approach has broader applications throughout the specific study of athlete development and, more generally, student development. Expanding the borders of higher education research into athletic spaces provides a new context for theorizing student development (Springer & Dixon, 2021). It not only offers an opportunity to gain new knowledge about the student development process but also sheds light on a context that has been largely overlooked by higher education scholars (Foster et al., 2022). Finally, examining athlete activism in athletic spaces provides a mechanism to consider the way power, privilege, and oppression impact athletes' experiences and ability to thrive during their time on campus. The combination of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued civil unrest has exposed many issues in intercollegiate

athletics that require attention. In response, athletes are seeking to address these issues and achieve liberation by engaging in athlete activism. It is, therefore, imperative that scholars and practitioners garner a better understanding of the intersection of sport, higher education, and athletes' experiences to further assist athletes in these endeavors.

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