

2019-01-01

Young Adults' Perceptions Of The U.S. National Anthem Protests: Examining The Role Of Form Of Expression, Empathic Concern, & Perspective-Taking

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YOUNG ADULTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. NATIONAL ANTHEM PROTESTS:
EXAMINING THE ROLE OF FORM OF EXPRESSION, EMPATHIC CONCERN, &
PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

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PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

by

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THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Communication

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

December 2019

Acknowledgements

First, I'd like to thank my advisor Dr. Yannick Atouba, who helped me focus, provide guidance and advice, and helped direct my arguments for better accuracy, and inspired me to work hard and strive for the best results possible in this study. I would also like to thank my parents Derek and Lori Wilson, who always stood by me and guided me throughout my journey with words of support and encouragement at every turn in my life. If it wasn't for them I don't know where I would be today. Thank you to the UTEP Department of Communications for awarding me with a job as a TA for Public Speaking, which allowed me to continue my education while financially being able to support myself and focus on my studies. I'd also like to thank Dr. Richard Pineda and Dr. Arthur Aguirre for sitting on my thesis committee and for their insight into my research and perspective on the implication of my results. Lastly, I would also like to thank my extended family, friends, and classmates who were there for me throughout my graduate school career and helped me mentally push myself to become better

Abstract

The US national anthem protests, which is a movement that began when some athletes, most notably Colin Kaepernick, chose to not simply stand during the US national anthem, have had a major influence in numerous ways on people, regardless of whether they view it favorably or unfavorably. This study examines young adults' attitudes towards these anthem protests. This study is going to examine some possible determinants of the positive or negative perceptions about the anthem protest. The study will examine how young adults perceive the national anthem protest, positively or negatively. It will also determine if participants see one form of protest as more appropriate than the other. The main factors or predictors that are investigated are empathic concern and perspective-taking and the analysis examines how these factors are related to young adults' perceptions of the anthem protests. The results reveal that there are more favorable attitudes towards the anthem protest than unfavorable among the participants. Moreover, participants see kneeling as a more appropriate form of protest than standing while raising a fist and sitting during the national anthem (NA). furthermore, the study also found that empathic concern is related to attitudes towards NA protests and attitudes toward protesters' punishment. The implications of these findings are discussed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The US national anthem protests started when National Football League (NFL) player Colin Kaepernick decided not to stand during the national anthem before a preseason football game in August of 2016. He refused to do this because of the pervasive racial inequality that, he felt, was ingrained in this country. He stated that "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color" (Murty, Holyfield-Moss, Vyas, & Roebuck, 2018, p. 46). When this first happened, there were a variety of different perceptions from the people and the media. Johnson (2019) investigated the media coverage of the protest by analyzing a few main news outlets such as FOX, MSNBC, CNN, and ESPN. Johnson (2019) found that FOX portrayed the protests as anti-patriotic, while MSNBC and CNN tended to frame the protests more as fighting racial injustice and inequalities that still exist in America. According to Schmidt, Frederick, Pegoraro, and Spencer (2018), Kaepernick was labeled an anti-American, anti-military, and anti-nationalist for his actions during the national anthem.

Kaepernick then went from refusing to stand to just taking a knee during the national anthem before games. Since Kaepernick started this protest, others have started to get involved as well in protesting during the national anthem (Murty et al. 2018). For instance, there has been support from several NFL players, NBA and WNBA players, college athletes, high school athletes, and some youth leagues' participants (Kappeler & Flory, 2019). The protests and the support from various people have continued to some degree even after Kaepernick 'stopped' playing in the NFL in 2016.

There are people who this anthem protest resonates with in different ways. Racial tensions arise from racial inequality which influences various social protest movements

(Stratmoen, Lawless, & Saucier, 2019). Agyemang et al. (2010) discuss an example of activism at the summer Olympics in 1968. At these Olympics, track athletes John Carlos and Tommie Smith from San Jose State University, instead of putting their hand over their heart as is generally the norm, raised their fists in the air, or as it is called, a black power salute. Other black male athletes who also made a stand and played a significant role in speaking out against injustices were Muhammad Ali and Bill Russell (Agyemang et al., 2010). According to Agyemang et al (2010), there were a lot who would not be able to receive an education if they did not play any sports; a participant in Agyemang's study mentioned how others fighting for them has helped them and others to further their education.

Problem Statement

There has not been much research that investigates the factors that play a role in how people perceive the anthem protests. This is especially the case in communication scholarship. To be clear, protests constitute forms of strategic communication that are meant to express certain realities, ideas, viewpoints, and to disrupt a certain status quo (Boyle, McLeod, & Armstrong, 2012). Indeed, protests play important roles in "elevating issues onto the political agenda, providing critical feedback to various social institutions, encouraging social reforms, and enhancing the diversity of the marketplace of ideas." (Boyle et al. 2012, p. 129).

The US national anthem protests are, thus, communication phenomena, and two important questions about them that drive this research and that have been overlooked in previous communication research are (1) how does the audience or the public—i.e., the receivers of protest communication—perceive these protests, and (2) what factors influence their perceptions of these protests. Attending to these questions is both important and necessary because protests are persuasive efforts that depend, for their ultimate success/effectiveness in

bringing about change, on favorable perceptions/reactions, buy-in, or support from the public/audience, and it is thus critical to identify the determinants of perceptions of protest communication. This study will examine how two key communication constructs, namely empathic concern and perspective-taking, relate to people's perceptions of the anthem protests. Investigating how individuals perceive others' suffering and pain and how empathy is involved can be intriguing (Decety, & Jackson, 2006). Knowing and receiving other points of view regarding how to continue to push for change while also showing respect for other views can improve and keep things moving in a positive direction.

Additionally, the national anthem protests have been expressed in a variety of ways or taken a variety of forms with some protesters sitting, others standing with a raised fist, and still others kneeling. These all represent different symbolic gestures that are meant to express the message of the protests. Do those differences matter? In other words, are there differences in terms of how people view the protests depending on the form of the protests? Investigating what specifically may need to be changed or considered for the protesters, those who do not support the protest, and those who do can perhaps help develop new ways to promote and support the overall message that needs to be stated, is an important endeavor in a democratic society.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of the US national anthem protests and how these perceptions relate to two important communication constructs; namely, empathic concern and perspective-taking. First, this study will gather data regarding how participants perceive the anthem protests and the protesters. Then there will be hypotheses regarding why they have these perceptions. Essentially, the goal of this study is to investigate the perceptions of young adults about the anthem protest and to discover what influences these perceptions. This

study will determine if empathic concern and perspective-taking are important predictors of people's perceptions of the anthem protest.

Contributions of the Study

The contributions of this study are to determine how young adults perceive the anthem protest and identify what factors play a role in shaping their perceptions. Examining how people perceive the anthem protest and exploring why they perceive it the way they do could be helpful for future reference in how to design messages and organize for social justice in a way that most people can support. Perspective-taking and empathic concern, the two proposed predictors in this study, are very important to how we communicate with one another, especially when we have opposing views (Bruneau, 1989; Zhang, Cui, Sarasvathy, & Anusha, 2019). If we are not able to be open to and about different perspectives or see and feel the other side, it makes it more difficult to communicate with one another effectively. It also makes it tough for us to be more open towards other perspectives and improve on things that need to be changed. Everyone makes decisions and has opinions or perceptions about various issues that happen in society; being able to understand, feel, appreciate, and/or take different perspectives could potentially lead to more favorable views and perceptions toward disruptive communication such as the anthem protests. This study will examine/clarify if indeed perspective-taking and empathic concern play an important role in shaping people's perceptions towards the anthem protests.

Protests are important communication acts that have the potential to make a difference to our socio-political environment and it is important to examine and understand how people react to these messages and why. This study can give new insight into why protests messages are received the way they are and how protests and other forms of disruptive communication can be more effective in bringing about social change. This can be a start to understanding why those

who do not support the anthem protests and those who do perceive things the way they do and this can lead to finding new ways to bring about change and, perhaps, better speak to everyone. This could be used to see and discover new ways to make a change in our society.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of seven chapters. The next chapter, the literature review, will briefly review previous relevant research on protest and activism, how they have been looked at in communication research and elsewhere, and where this study will differ and improve on what has been examined in the literature. Protest will be defined and the relationship between protest and communication will be examined. Additionally, more background will be provided about the recent national anthem protests and how they have been examined in previous literature.

In chapter 3, the research questions and hypotheses will be introduced, and their rationales will be explained. It will highlight the three topics that raise questions for this study. The topics that are discussed throughout the paper are how people perceive the anthem protest, is there a form of action that some see as more appropriate over the other, and the specific factors that influence these attitudes. Some can perceive the anthem protest as negative or positive. The different forms include kneeling, standing while raising a fist, and sitting during the national anthem. The factors that will be used and discussed as predictors of perceptions of the NA protests are perspective-taking and empathic concern.

In the methods chapter, I will explain who and what kind of participants were gathered for this study and what kind of data was gathered and how. First, the type of participants that were gathered and participated in the study will be discussed, and then what was done before, during, and after the data collection process. This will explain how participants were gathered, and how the data was collected from them and analyzed. Additionally, this chapter will discuss

the different variables that were used in the study and how they were measured, as well as the statistical tests and/or procedures that were used to analyze the data, tests the hypotheses, and answer the research questions.

The results chapter will describe and show what results were obtained through the data analyses. It will further describe what was found and define what it means. This will divide the results into different sections to where different subjects were related and the relationship they share. The results from the data will be shown in different graphs, and this chapter will interpret what graphs showed from the results and what it means. It will also describe and explain what hypotheses were supported or not supported.

The discussion chapter will describe in-depth and explain each of the key results that were obtained in the study and what they mean. It will discuss whether young adults generally express more favorable or unfavorable attitudes towards the anthem protest, whether there are forms of protest that they perceive as more appropriate than others and the roles of empathic concern and perspective-taking as predictors of the perceptions of NA protests and attitudes toward punishing players for supporting the anthem protest. After explaining each of the results, this chapter will discuss their implications, the limitations of the study, and possible directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I briefly review the previous literature on protests and the national anthem protests initiated by Colin Kaepernick. First, I'll examine the nature of protest, what it is, how protest is communication, how communication scholars have examined protests, and why people would support protest. Additionally, I examine the national anthem protest and I review the research that has been done on it. Finally, I identify some gaps or what is missing in current literature on the US national anthem protests, and I discuss the opportunities that these gaps provide for this study.

The Nature of Protest

What is Protest?

Protest has been defined in various ways through other scholars in previous history. McLeod (2011) defines protest as a form of political expression that aims to create social or political change by influencing the public(s) or audiences' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors regarding a particular issue, problem, policy, etc. According to Taylor and van Dyke (2004), protests are "sites of contestation in which bodies, symbols, identities, practices, and discourses are used to pursue or prevent changes in institutionalized power relations" (p. 268). Protests, thus, are the result of actions by groups, organizations, and movements who aim to bring about change or prevent change in norms, laws, policies, or other characteristics of an existing status quo (Diani, 2016; McLeod, 2011). Protesting is exercised in many forms, through public displays, demonstrations, and civil disobedience, but is also exercised through activities such as petitions, boycotts, and other various activities (Diani, 2016; McLeod, 2011; Taylor & van Dyke, 2004). Now as technology has changed, it has created movements through the internet (Diani, 2016). Protests can also be expressed by refusing to pay taxes or rent, sit-ins, strikes,

riots, and blocking traffic (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Protests are where people make their voices heard and express their concerns, but most of them occur in specific times and places and are witnessed by small groups of people (Lee, 2014). According to Forst (2017), protests are often successful in conducting change and are at the forefront of public memory as symbols of common transition. However, while valued in public memory, protests "are often un(der)appreciated by non-marginalized people in their contemporary context because such protests intrinsically disregard expectations of public decorum" (Forst, 2017, p. 2).

A key feature of protest is the use of indirect channels to pressure, affect, or influence those in power (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Public opinion or perception is this crucial for protest groups because "failing to have the support of public opinion undermines their major source of influence on policy" (Passini & Morsellin, 2015, p. 10). If there is not much support from the audience or the people in the community or the fact that the movement does not get as much engagement, then it will not succeed very long and fade over time. As Michael Lipsky (1968) correctly remarked, protest is a political resource of the powerless. Indeed, most protests, from the "Freedom Summer" protests and campaigns to register black voters in the South of the US and the "March on Washington" in support of civil rights for African-Americans in the 1960s, to the Black Lives Matter protests and the US national anthem protests in the 2010s, have something in common:

They were engaged in by relatively powerless groups; and they depended for success not upon direct utilization of power, but upon activating other groups to enter the political arena. Because protest is successful to the extent that other parties are activated to political involvement, it is one of the few strategies in which even politically impoverished groups can aspire to engage. (Lipsky, 1968, p. 1144).

Protest and Communication

Although protests can take a variety of forms as discussed in the previous section, according to Diani (2016), all protest types can be viewed as "communicative forms in their own right" (p. 1273). Indeed, protests have variously been described as forms of strategic communication (Della Porta & Diani, 2006), forms of political expression (McLeod, 2011), modes of social performance (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2005), and communicative tools for the voiceless and the powerless (Diani, 2016; Lee, 2014; Lipsky, 1968) to affect change in a system. In addition to the instrumental function they serve, protests essentially represent "important communicative utterances that political actors address toward both the elites and the public when they feel that their position in the political process is too weak to be pursued through non-contentious means." (Diani, 2016, p. 1273).

Beyond its constitutive role in protest, communication also plays a central role in the organization of protests; especially collective protests. According to McLeod (2011), communication "whether mass or interpersonal is a central element in the success of a protest group by facilitating information exchange, mobilization, coordination, integration, identity formation, and many other essential functions." Diani (2016) states, that protest attempts to influence people in political elites through petitions, lawful demonstrations, boycotts, from peaceful forms of action to violent actions. Effective communication plays a role in planning and executing an effective protest. "Collective behavior theory suggests that social protest is an activity in which organized groups seek goals, mobilize resources and employ strategies" (Biddix & Park, 2008, p. 872). Biddix and Park (2008) found that current protest movements have increasingly utilized interactive digital media to mobilize and deliver their messages to the public.

Communication often involves parties, sender(s), and receiver(s) who interact to create meaning. Every receiver of messages must decode, interpret, understand, assign meaning to the message sent by the sender. This model is applicable to protest as well. In this case, the receiver(s) or audience or public may understand the same message or understand a different message from what the sender/protester is sending out or intended to send out. An important characteristic of protest is "the use of indirect channels to influence decision-makers" (Della porta & Diani, 2006, p. 166). According to Lee (2014), "the capability of protests to communicate their messages and achieve the desired outcomes depends on whether and how they are portrayed by the mass media" (p. 2725).

The Media also plays an important role in shaping perceptions of protests. Indeed, depending on how a protest is covered by the media, the public/audience may react differently to it. According to Lee (2014), protest coverage is less negative when the protest is about a political matter. In essence, it is not just about the message the protest is making, but how others see and interpret it. Depending on various factors, people may perceive, view, or react to protest messages differently. This study aims to understand why people perceive protests the way they do by identifying some key factors that shape people's perceptions in the case of the US national anthem protests initiated by Colin Kaepernick in 2016. Before that, I examine why people support or join protests and I provide some background on the emergence of protests in general and the recent national anthem protests in particular.

Why People Support Protest?

Everyone is different and has a different perspective on protest whether they choose to support it or not. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois debated this question "Must a person protest his wrongs?" (Boxill 1978). They each had different perspectives on this and what

they thought it meant. They did not disagree over whether protesting injustice was an effective way to right it. Washington denied that one should continue to protest when he could not influence progress to end it (Boxill 1978). Dubois, on the other hand, denied that protest is an appeal for sympathy, but also if one failed to express their offense for injustice and work against it, they would lose self-respect (Boxill 1978). The point is that there are several reasons as to why people choose to support or participate in protest. Previous research (e.g., Della porta & Diani, 2006; Kittel, 2019; Passini & Morsellin, 2015; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) has found a few different reasons why people support protests.

One reason why people choose to support or participate in protest is to promote and communicate to others about the hardships that they are going through (Della porta & Diani, 2006). People have been known to have favorable views of, support, or participate in protest that expresses their grievances about hardships, frustration, or perceived injustice (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Expressing their frustration can make others aware that there is a problem that needs to be addressed and it is more effective in resolving the injustice taking place. According to van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013), it could be that oppressed people participate in protests, instead of people participating in protest because they are oppressed.

The level of danger or social cost is also important in determining if some choose to support/participate or not (Passini & Morsellin, 2015). Some people feel comfortable getting in disputes if it turns to a situation of personal danger for themselves and/or others. Passini and Morsellin (2015) found that support of a protest is neglected when the groups protesting is perceived as more threatening. This shows that some get influenced by the danger factor of the group that is supporting. Moreover, the people's perceptions of the issues(s) the protest is about also shaping their likelihood of support of the protest (Della porta & Diani, 2006; Passini &

Morsellin, 2015). Essentially, the perceptions that the public/audience has of the protesters and the issues they are protesting matter when people think about supporting or joining a protest. Kittel explained how collective action plays a role in determining why people choose to protest. "The theory of collective action contains more specific behavioral consequences. Because protest is a form of collective action, the theory must be able to explain protest behavior" (Kittel, 2019, p. 69).

Another reason why people support protests is when they see themselves in the protesters (Kittel, 2019). There is support in the community when social groups share similarities in values and other key characteristics with the protesters. People support and take part in protests and activities because of commonalities in observed personal impact, norms, and encouragement from their peers. Identity, shared with or perceived as similar to that of the protesters or what the protest represents, is another reason why people choose to support, react favorably to, or participate in protest (Kittel, 2019).

The form of protest or how the protest message is expressed, as well as people's perceived efficacy also play a role in predicting people's support for or participation in protesting (McLeod, 2011; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). "Efficacy refers to the individual's expectation that it is possible to alter conditions or policies through protest" (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013, p. 3). Protests can take a variety of forms, ranging from petitions, marches, demonstrations, boycotts, to illegal forms such as blockades and riots, depending on the issue, the context, and the protesters. Some of these forms of protests may appeal more to some people than to others (Della porta & Diani, 2006; McLeod, 2011; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013).

Finally, the level of political engagement of an individual as well as their engagement with the protest issue or similar issues can be important factors in considering why people support protest (Kittel, 2019; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). When one has a strong knowledge or is very engaged in political subjects, it has been shown that they are more likely to support or participate in protests. Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013) found that "discussions about politics within networks increase efficacy and transform individual grievances into shared grievances and group-based anger, which translates into protest participation" (p. 2). The impact of political engagement and the specific form of protest has not been examined when looking at the national anthem protests. That's why this study will strive to examine if there is a significant effect in this case.

There are several general reasons or factors, some probably more important than others, regarding why people choose to support protest, but research has only gone so far as to give reasons to why people choose to protest in general. There has not been much research done as to why people choose to protest in a specific movement. There has been no research done as to why people have chosen to or if they even support the national anthem protest and that is what this research is about.

National Anthem Protest Background

In 2016, the National Anthem (NA) protests began when former player Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for the NA during an NFL preseason game. Soon after it began, the protest quickly gained attention "far beyond the newspapers and sports blogs of the nation" (Rorke & Copeland, 2017, p. 86). When this first happened, there were a variety of different perceptions from the public and the media, with some people viewing it favorably and others unfavorably.

MSNBC and CNN tended to frame the protests more as fighting racial injustice and inequalities that still occur, while FOX portrayal was more anti-patriotic (Johnson, 2019).

Over time, Kaepernick transitioned from sitting during the National Anthem to taking a knee in response to those who saw his protest as disrespecting the military. He and many other players started and continued to do this before every NFL game he played. Kaepernick's change in action came from a conversation he had with Nate Boyer who is a former Army Green Beret (Rorke & Copeland, 2017). This protest continued to receive significant media attention and varying reactions over time even after Kaepernick got released from his NFL team in part because President Trump and many other politicians and celebrities started making public comments about it. For instance, at a rally in Alabama, President Trump commented on those who decided not to stand during the NA. "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a b---- off the field right now. Out. He's fired! He's fired!'" (Fields, 2017). President Trump also chose to make comments about this over twitter and wrote a lot of tweets voicing his opinions (Fields, 2017). Once this occurred there was a lot of different support that was generated after these comments by Trump were made. Several different NFL teams participated in this and supported the protest.

As the NA protests gained more attention, many other athletes and celebrities from various sports or arenas began protesting the national anthem as well. For instance, student-athletes at Indiana State University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of New Mexico, the University of Nebraska, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, the West Virginia University Institute of Technology, the University of Tulsa, Florida State University, and many other educational institutions across the country have knelt or engaged in other acts of protest or demonstration during the national anthem (Maye, 2019, p. 56). At East Carolina

University, some marching band members who participated in the movement knelt during their pre-game performance of the national anthem; At Kennesaw State University and Southern Illinois University, members of the cheerleading squad also participated as well (Maye, 2019). In the University of Texas System, the leadership strongly encouraged its student-athletes to stand for the national anthem but did not issue a directive. The University of Virginia men's basketball coach invited a group of military veterans to talk with his team as players were considering their participation in the NA protests (Maye, 2019). At other institutions, such as the University of Nebraska, the leaders issued statements supporting players' rights to engage in NA protests. In sum, the NA protests have generated a myriad of reactions and perceptions, some more favorable than others.

It is important to note here, however, that the US national anthem protests that Colin Kaepernick started in 2016 do not represent the first time that athletes have used their public platforms to protest various issues. In the past, there have been previous different types of protests led by athletes that have happened and generated a variety of reactions from others supporting or not supporting it. In fact, according to Haerens (2019), through sport, African American athletes, for instance, have gained an invaluable platform for making their voices loud and their feelings known on social justice, racism, and systemic oppression in the US. The rise of African American activism and protest in sport dates back to the previous century and has been part of a "larger effort toward black empowerment, racial equality and the elimination of institutional racism discrimination that profoundly changed American consciousness in the 1960s" (Haerens, 2019, p. 2).

One of the first anthem protests started with the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, where two black track-and-field stars Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fist in the air in

a black power salute during the anthem when they won their medals. They received death threats and were suspended from the track team along with respect and honor from other black athletes. During the 1972 summer Olympics U.S. track-and-field stars Wayne Collett and Vince Matthews, inspired by Smith and Carlos, protested as well when they received their medals. As African American athletes attained success and gained prominence in professional sports, some of them continued to "use their public platform to exercise their right to free speech on social, political, and racial issues. However, league officials and team owners showed mixed reactions to this activism." (Haerens, 2019, p. 2).

Athletes are one of the constituencies that have the spotlight and platform that allows them to express messages that are important about topics such as injustice. Agyemang et al., (2010), previously discussed how black athletes have a role in supporting movements. These supportive efforts are still significant and provide athletes with a social position that can reach out to a larger public and media coverage (Frederick, Sanderson, & Schlereth, 2017).

Previous Research in NA Protest

One of the main articles from the literature on NA protests that sparked the interest for this study is Intravia and Piquero (2018). These researchers investigated others' opinions and perspectives on the protest and whether they supported it or not. Apart from Intravia and Piquero's (2018) study, there has not been any empirical work—that I could find—that has examined factors that impact people's perceptions of the NA protests. Much of the work on NA protests from communication scholars have focused on issues of media coverage (Dunbar, 2019), media representations of the protests and protesters (Cosby, 2019), the diffusion and portrayal of the protests and protesters through social media (Feld, Sacra, & Butler, 2019), and the rhetoric of protesters (Moore, 2019), their supporters, and their opponents.

This study builds on Intravia and Piquero's (2018) study as well as the communication literature on listening and intercultural interactions and proposes two important communication constructs, namely empathic concern and perspective-taking, as predictors of people's attitudes or perceptions toward NA protests. The different actions of kneeling, standing while raising a fist, and sitting can be useful in illustrating different forms of anthem protests. It also raises the question of do people support one action of protest over another. There could be a certain action that is seen as better or more appropriate than the other. Intravia and Piquero's (2018) study did not investigate whether the form of NA protest matters to people. This study will examine that more closely.

What is missing from previous research: Identifying the Gaps?

There are a few things that have not been done in previous research that will be done in this study. First, previous communication scholarship has not researched the anthem protest looking at why people perceive it favorably and/or unfavorably. Previous work (e.g., Intravia & Piquero, 2018; Murty et al., 2018) that has tackled that question somewhat, has primarily focused on the role of race, gender, and political ideology. In this study, I move beyond these factors to examine the role of perspective-taking and empathic concern, two aspects or dimensions of communication competence that are key to effective listening/communication, in shaping the perceptions toward NA protests.

Additionally, previous research on the NA protests has not examined the role of the form of expression in people's perceptions of the NA protests. Are some of the actions taken by the protesters to protest the NA viewed as more appropriate than others? Answering that question could perhaps lead to better strategizing in the future when considering the organization of a protest.

Finally, previous research has overwhelmingly focused on reactions to or perceptions of NA protests by primarily African American or primarily white/midwestern samples of people. This study will be looking at more of a diverse group of people from different regions/parts of the country. As such this study will contribute to enrich the literature/research on the topic of NA protests.

Research Conclusion

There is a lot of literature that has been done throughout different areas or topics relevant to this study. Each area reviewed has helped in providing insight into the conduct of this study. What has not been done is how others have perceived the NA protest and what influences this, beyond race, gender, and political ideology. This study aims to examine how young adults perceive the anthem protest, favorably and/or unfavorably, and what influences this as well. Knowing how others perceive it will see how effective protest is and even see why it is seen as effective or not. Looking at how others perceive protest can help create new insight into future research and what to expand on in improving communication with one another. Also, being able to see what factors influence how people perceive protest can help see improve what others need to be taught to gain more understanding.

Chapter 3: Research Questions and Hypotheses of the study

Looking back at previous research, it has been found that one of the things that have not been examined is how people perceive the NA protests, why, and what factors influence people's perceptions. Also, what has not been researched and studied is people's perceptions of the form of protest and if that matters or influences perspectives. The goal of this study is to answer these questions and provide reasoning that will explain these perceptions. There are specific communication factors that will be used to determine and predict these attitudes/perceptions that young adults have about the NA protests. I argue that these factors contribute to how people perceive and react to the NA protest.

How do people perceive the NA protests?

There are a couple of research questions that will drive this study and will be answered by the end of this study. Some have a specific opinion about what they think about the National anthem (NA) protest whether they perceive it favorably or not. There will undoubtedly be some that support or perceive the NA protests favorably and others who perceive it unfavorably. As such, the first research question of this study is about getting a general sense of people's perceptions toward the NA protests.

RQ1: How do people perceive the national anthem protests?

How Do People Feel about the Forms of Protest?

Thinking about this from another perspective, it may be that some might support one form of action over another when protesting during the NA. When someone is asked about what form of protest they would practice or see as more appropriate, what would they support? Would they support kneeling moreover sitting during the anthem or kneeling over standing while raising a fist in the air? In the beginning, Kaepernick started by refusing to stand and got a bunch of

negative feedback when the protest first started. According to Schmidt et al. (2018), Kaepernick was labeled an anti-American, anti-military, and anti-patriotic for his initial actions during the national anthem. Others saw this and believed in what he was protesting for but thought that there could have been a better way of taking that stance, while still showing respect for the flag and the troops. According to Rorke and Copeland (2017), Kaepernick and many of his followers responded to those who charged that their protest was insulting to the military and veterans, by switching from sitting during the National Anthem to taking a knee. The move was inspired by a meeting Kaepernick had with Nate Boyer, a former Army Green who "supposedly sanctioned" the newly articulated form of protest (Rorke & Copeland, 2017, p. 86). What has not been examined is whether the form of protest truly makes a difference in people's minds. Do some see one form of protest as more appropriate over the other? This is something that has not been examined in previous research. This raises the next research question,

RQ2: Does the form of protest or expression make a difference in how the NA protest is perceived?

The Factors that Influence Perceptions of NA Protests

In this study, I propose that two key factors or dimensions of communication competence, namely perspective-taking and empathic concern, are important predictors of people's perceptions toward NA protests. Both perspective-taking and empathic concern are components of the more general construct of empathy, understood here as the dispositional propensity to "experience perspectives and feelings more congruent with another's situation than with [one's] own" (Decety & Lamm, 2006, p. 1147). In the sections below, I define each of them, review work on them, and derive hypotheses regarding their relationships to perceptions of NA protests and attitudes toward the punishment of players/athletes who protest.

Perspective-taking

The construct of perspective-taking has garnered the attention of communication scholars for many years (Gasiorek & Hubbard, 2017). That is because the notion of taking the perspective of another party is essential to effective communication (Gasiorek & Hubbard, 2017).

Perspective-taking has been defined a few different ways within previous research in communication but has the same understanding. Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, (2005) define perspective-taking as "the process of imagining the world from another's vantage point or imagining oneself in another's shoes" (p.110). While, Park & Raile, (2010), define perspective-taking as "the tendency of an individual to adopt the viewpoint of another" (p. 571). Perspective-taking is about letting go of yourself and getting out of your head and trying to understand another. Being able to understand why another feels or observes something differently from yourself can expand one's knowledge and understanding. "When misunderstanding does occur, perspective-taking should enable individuals to cope with it more effectively because they will be able to see the situation from the perspective of their relational partner" (Edwards et al., 2017, p.196).

This is useful in this study because it is a subject that has been discussed and utilized in the field of communication. It has been discussed in many situations, environments, and aspects of how we communicate and interact with one another in society. According to Park & Raile (2010), perspective-taking has been used in education as a teacher craft of skills and instruction and is used through the workplace environment between coworkers. Shih, Wang, Bucher, & Stotzer (2009) find that looking at the perspective of a member outside your normal social group can improve attitudes towards them and increases helping behavior towards others from the same or different social group. Perspective-taking has been proven to help influence and change

behaviors in the way we communicate with one another according to existing research. Manohar & Appiah (2016) indicate that perspective-taking helps "reduce prejudice and stereotypes, improves intergroup attitudes, inhibits interpersonal aggression, and promotes helpful behavior" (p. 152). Manohar & Appiah (2016) have also found that it helps improve attitudes towards others from different minorities even those speaking different languages within the workplace setting. If this is possible then those with high levels of perspective-taking may support or see the anthem protest as more positive.

Perspective-taking has been conceptualized as "the prototypical cognitive dimension of empathy, and as such was distinguished from understanding and/or sharing another person's affective state" (Gasiorek & Hubbard, 2017, p. 91). Edwards et al (2017), found that perspective-taking "predicts an individual's empathic concern which can lead to prosocial behaviors" (p. 195). Park & Raile (2010) found that perspective-taking "resolves the path between humanistic orientation (i.e., identification with the other person) and communicative responsiveness which lead to empathic behavior" (p. 572).

Davis (1983) focused on the habits people have previously engaged in perspective-taking as a personality trait with individual differences. Galinsky et al (2005) conduct a study that looks at whether perspective-taking processes help in pursuing social bonds with one another. Their study suggests that utilizing perspective-taking is effective for decreasing stereotypes and coordinating social behavior (Galinsky et al, 2005). This is related to the anthem protest because there should be a strong relationship or correlation between those who are high on perspective-taking and those who support or view the anthem protest favorably. When being able to see things in another's position you expand your understanding and are more accepting of the other side. Ample evidence illustrates that perspective-taking guides individuals to see more of themselves

in another, this affects how people see and describe one another (Galinsky, 2005). This has been seen and proven in other research; so, when applying it to the anthem protest, those who express or utilize a lot of perspective-taking should have a positive outlook on the anthem protest. When one shows characteristics of perspective-taking then this shows that they can see why athletes or others choose to protest.

H1: There is a relationship between perspective-taking and attitudes towards anthem protest.

H3: There is a relationship between perspective-taking and attitudes towards punishing players for anthem protesting.

Empathic Concern

Empathy is defined by Lamm et al. (2007) as "the capacity to understand and respond to the unique affective experiences of another person" (p. 42). When someone expresses high levels of empathy then they express sensitivity and are concern for others' situations of stress or pain. Empathic concern refers to people's other-oriented feelings of sympathy for the misfortunes of others, and as such represents an emotional component of empathy. According to Batson (1991), empathic concern and empathy get mixed up by others; empathy is a state of emotion that one perceives and responds to by experiencing that feeling that is similar. Empathic concern includes empathizing and includes having a non-fleeting concern or positive view for the other person (Batson, 1991). Batson (2011) defines empathic concern as other-oriented emotions identical to someone who is perceived to need help. While they may be similar in how they are used they are different.

Empathic concern has been chosen as one of the factors in this study because it has also been a long-studied topic of communication research. According to Valente (2016), empathic concern is an important communication skill that has been shown to affect both gaining

knowledge and interpersonal relationships. Numerous studies show empathic concern is projected generous motivation and prosocial behavior or feeling motivated to increase another's welfare (Fry & Runyan, 2018). Empathic concern is something that is utilized to feel and perceive other's positions and help others understand one another better. Wickramasekera & Szlyk (2003) found those with high levels of empathy can look at and embrace in another's point of view but also be influenced by one another.

While some may feel that empathic concern and perspective-taking are the same, they are different in a few ways. "Effects of perspective-taking and empathic concern on performance in jointly determined tasks have been examined mainly in the context of negotiations or strategic interactions" (Longmire & Harrison, 2018, p. 897). According to Fry & Runyan (2018), perspective-taking is where someone imagines themselves in a situation and try to see what the experience would be like, imagine how they would think or feel in that certain situation. You can see the side of another's position but using empathic concern is about using emotion feeling the way they feel and holding onto that feeling and trying to understand another's view. "Empathic concern is desirable because it increases the likelihood of having altruistic motivation; that is, of being motivated to increase the 'welfare of the person for whom empathy is felt" (Fry & Runyan, 2018, p. 3). They are both very useful though and work from another in sharpening one's communication skills. "Perspective-taking is about opening the doors toward empathic concern by helping us notice the humanity of others, prompting us to act on the value we place on other people" (Fry & Runyan, 2018, p. 5).

Empathic concern is an important communication skill to have because if one does not exercise this enough then it shows that one will not be able to fully communicate with another effectively. Mullins-Nelson et al. (2006) found that a lack of empathy can lead to a disturbing

lifestyle. They found this through the relationship between psychopathy and two components of empathy (cognitive and affective). According to Davis (1983), one with low levels of empathic concern may struggle to express and make appropriate judgments socially; they may also illustrate less emotional fullness towards others. Those who match these characteristics will more than likely have a negative understanding and not support the anthem protest if they do not support it already. Empathic concern is therefore "both an important determinant of how well we communicate with each other as well as a personal characteristic that facilitates our ability to persuade others to accept an idea, feel some way, or pursue a certain course of action" (Valente, 2016, p.1).

H2: There is a relationship between empathic concern and attitudes towards anthem protests.

H4: There is a relationship between empathic concern and attitudes towards punishing players for anthem protesting.

Chapter 4: Methods

In this chapter, I review what has been done and what information was recorded when gathering data from the participants of this study. I will briefly describe the demographics of the participants who contributed to this study through the survey. These demographics will show race, gender, UTEP students and non-UTEP students, education level, and political ideology. Then the procedure of how the survey was distributed and the steps throughout are examined. Then the measurements and what variables were used and how they were measured in the study are described. Finally, how the data was analyzed is discussed.

Participants

The participants for this study were young adults who ranged from 18 to 48 years old. Every participant must have consented to the study online and their survey was turned in

anonymously. The data was collected via Question Pro and after that, was exported to SPSS for statistical analysis. Although most of the participants were UTEP students, some participants were from other universities and other states. Most participants took the survey in the state of Texas. The locations from which the participants completed the survey ranged from 253 (77.6%) in Texas, 3 (.9%) in Arizona, 2 (.6%) in California, 13 (4%) in Illinois, 3 (.9%) in Kansas, 18 (5.5%) in Kentucky, 7 (2.1%) in Michigan, 1 (.3) in Minnesota, 13 (4%) in New Mexico, 5 (1.5%) in Nevada, and 1 (.3) in Ohio. Some participants took the survey in Mexico as well, but overall 98.84% completed the survey in the U.S. and 3(.9%) in Mexico. To produce the sample of respondents my advisor recruited some help from former colleagues from other universities. While I printed and distributed flyers and posted them around campus to promote this study and make students aware of it. I administered it to my class that I'm currently teaching and offered extra credit for students to participate. I also asked my professors and fellow TA's in the communication department and all over campus for help. I asked them to encourage their students to participate in this study, or at least announce it to them. To get students to engage with this study, I made myself available to come in during classes and briefly discuss the study and what is required of the students.

This survey was open and made available to the public for about a month. The results gathered 344 respondents who participated and started the survey but only 272 (79.07%) respondents completed the whole survey. This sample includes the number of respondents was 201 (61.7%) females, 123 (37.7%) males, and 1 (.3%) preferred not to answer. There were 277 (85%) respondents who were UTEP students leaving 48 (14.8%) respondents who were not UTEP students. The survey attracted those with the highest education level of 58 (17.8%) with a high school diploma, 156 (47.9%) with some college, 66 (20.2%) with an associate's degree, 39

(12%) with a bachelor's degree, 4 (1.2%) with a master's degree, and 3 (.9%) with a Ph.D. When identifying ethnicity, there were 261 (80.1%) respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latino ethnicity and 65 (19.9%) who did not. Looking through the race data there were 186 (57.1%) white, 20 (6.1%) black or African American, 5 (1.5%) Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian, 10 (3.1%) Native American, 36 (11%) multiracial and 68 (20.9%) other. When measuring political ideology, there were 48 (14.7%) very liberal, 103 (31.6%) mostly liberal, 135 (41.4%) neutral/mixed, 32 (9.8%) mostly conservative and 8 (2.5%) very conservative.

Procedure

Before conducting the survey, a proposal was sent out to IRB at the University of Texas at El Paso UTEP and was approved. The survey was put together with the help of my advisor using questions and scales from previous research and studies done. Before sending out the survey live, there was a pilot survey created to observe and look for any flaws and errors that could be changed to the final copy that would be sent out. The pilot survey was sent to fellow graduate students in my other classes and friends that would take the survey and provide feedback to what they felt was difficult or could be changed. This helped point out some errors that were fixed and applied to the final survey that was administered. 10 participants were recorded that I asked to complete the pilot survey and provide feedback. Not much feedback or edits were required but helped bring together the final product. Not many responded but those who did make comments to how some of the questions were worded so that was changed along with other errors that my advisor and I found when reviewing the results.

The final copy of the survey went live on Monday, October 14th and was officially closed on November 12th. Every participant's results were recorded anonymously. The data was administered and collected via Question Pro and, was then exported to SPSS for statistical

analysis. There survey contained questions that asked participants about their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors concerning the topics of interest in the study. There were 333 who agreed and were directed to the survey and whose data was recorded.

Measurement

Control Variables

Gender. Respondents chose from (1) female, (2) male, (3) other, or (4) prefer not to answer. More participants were females than males. The number of respondents was 201 (61.7%) females, 123 (37.7%) males, and 1 (.3%) prefer not to answer.

Race. Respondents chose from white, Black or African American, Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian, Native American, Two or more races/multiracial, and other. Looking through the race data there were 186 (57.1%) white, 20 (6.1%) black or African American, 5 (1.5%) Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian, 10 (3.1%) Native American, 36 (11%) multiracial and 68 (20.9%) other.

Education level. Respondents chose from High school diploma, Some college, Associate degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and Ph.D. The survey attracted those with the highest education level of 58 (17.8%) with a high school diploma, 156 (47.9%) with some college, 66 (20.2%) with an associate's degree, 39 (12%) with a bachelor's degree, 4 (1.2%) with a master's degree, and 3 (.9%) with a Ph.D.

Political ideology. Consistent with the measurement used by Hoffman and Young (2011), the Political Ideology item ranged from (1) "very liberal" to (5) "very conservative." Respondents were asked to choose the ideological option that they most closely identified with. The higher the score, the more conservative they are. The statistics showed that the participants seem to be more liberal than conservative. Most participants identified as mostly liberal or

neutral/mixed. When measuring political ideology, there were 48 (14.7%) identified as "very liberal," 103 (31.6%) were "mostly liberal," 135 (41.4%) were "neutral/mixed," 32 (9.8%) were "mostly conservative," and 8 (2.5%) very conservative" ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .94$).

Age. The ages of participants for this study ranged from 18 to 48 years old. The participants were made up of 20 were 19 years old, 52 were 20 years old, 45 were 21 years old, 48 were 22 years old, 40 were 23 years old, 24 were 24 years old, 16 were 25 years old, 12 were 26 years old, 9 were 27 years old, 6 were between 28 and 29 years old, 14 were between the ages of 30 and 40 years old, and 2 were 46 and 47 years old. There were 38 people who did not report their age, so it is unsure if it was between 18 and 48 years old for the whole number of participants.

Independent Variables

There are 5 different sections and scales that make up the independent variables that were measured in this study. The scales are perceptions of police scale, perceptions of injustice in the U.S. justice system, political engagement, perspective-taking scale, and empathic concern. To see all the items that were used and measured for these sections refer to table 11 (List of Scale, Variables, and Items) in appendix A.

Perceptions of police scale (POPS). This scale was used by Nadal & Davidoff (2015). This includes 12 items that measure one's perception of the police positively or negatively. Some examples of what was asked were: "Police protect me"; "Police are friendly"; "Police treat people fairly"; and "Police do not discriminate." The items were crafted in positive language, so the higher scores show favorable perceptions of the police, while lower scores show less favorable perceptions. These items were measured using the Likert scale ranging from (1)

"strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." The alpha reliability for this scale was great at .93 ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .70$).

Perceptions of injustice in the U.S. Justice system. This scale was made up of 3 items that range from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." This measures how much or the extent to which an individual perceives the US justice system as unfair; i.e., whether people (especially members of minority groups) are being treated unfairly and unjustly in the U.S. justice system. For example, African Americans and LatinX people can be treated unfairly compared to white people. The higher score shows how one believes there is more injustice and the lower score shows that they see less. The alpha reliability for this scale was found at .83 ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .90$).

Political engagement. Political engagement was measured using a scale that was adapted from Hoffman and Young (2011) that ranges from (1) "never" to (5) "very often." There are 15 items here that measure how engaged a participant is in political events such as attending a rally, or political meeting, participating in debates with family and friends, hang up posters and bumper stickers, encouraging others to vote, hosting events and signing petitions. The higher the score, the more politically engaged an individual is. The alpha reliability for this scale was .93 ($M = 2.03$, $SD = .85$).

Perspective-taking. Perspective-taking was measured using the perspective-taking scale (Davis, 1983). The perspective-taking scale represents a cognitive or intellectual component of empathy, measuring people's tendencies to imagine others' points of view (e.g., "I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective."). This scale essentially measures how often respondents put themselves in another's position and see the opposite perspective from their own. The higher the score, the more often they engage in

perspective-taking. This scale has 7 items and respondents' answers to this set of 7 items could range from (1) "does not describe me well" to (5) "describes me well." Two items required reverse scoring. The alpha reliability found for this scale was fair at .68 ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .59$).

Empathic concern. Empathic concern was measured using the empathic concern scale (Davis, 1983). The empathic concern scale measures people's other-oriented feelings of sympathy for the pain and misfortunes of others and therefore represents an emotional component of empathy (e.g., "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me."). This measures how empathically concerned one is in different situations that they observe others experiencing and how they feel towards it. The higher the score, the more one tends to be empathically concerned for other's misfortunes. This scale has 7 items and respondents' answers to this set of 7 items could range from (1) "does not describe me well" to (5) "describes me well." Three items required reverse scoring. The alpha reliability for this scale was good at .75 ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .65$).

Dependent Variables

Attitudes towards punishment of NA protesters. This asked the participants if they support the punishment of college athletes and professional athletes for choosing to participate in the NA protest. The higher the score, the more they support the punishment of athletes. The two items for this measure were adapted from Intravia (2018) and respondents' answers to this set of 2 items could range from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." The alpha reliability for this scale was found at .96 ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.12$).

Favorable attitudes towards NA protests. Favorable attitudes towards NA protests was measured using a scale, consisting of 4 items, that was adapted from procon.org, and Intravia (2018). This measures how much an individual perceives protesting during the national anthem

as positive/favorable. The higher the score, the more favorably the respondent sees or perceives the NA protest. Respondents' answers to this set of 4 items could range from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." The alpha reliability for this scale was .82 (M = 3.89, SD = .91).

Unfavorable attitudes towards NA protests. Unfavorable attitudes towards NA protests was measured using a scale, consisting of 5 items, that was adapted from procon.org, and Intravia (2018). This measures how much a respondent perceives protesting during the national anthem as negative/unfavorable. The higher score them more unfavorably the respondent sees or perceives the NA protest. Respondents' answers to this set of 5 items could range from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." The alpha reliability for this scale was .85 (M = 2.67, SD = 1.01).

Analysis

This study will analyze a few things to answer the research questions and hypotheses previously stated. First, a bivariate correlation will be conducted to see which of the variables are correlated to one another. The variables used in this will be Education level, political ideology, age, perception of police, perception of injustice, political engagement, perspective-taking, empathic concern, favorable attitudes towards NA protest, unfavorable attitudes towards NA protest, and attitudes towards punishments of athletes for protesting. Once this data has been gathered it will be recorded into a correlation matrix table.

Multiple linear regressions will be conducted to evaluate the prediction of which independent variables (education level, political ideology, age, empathic concern and perspective-taking, perceptions of police, perceptions of US injustice, and political engagement) are more related to each of the 3 dependent variables (favorable attitudes towards the national

anthem NA protest, unfavorable attitudes towards the NA protest, and the attitudes towards punishment towards players for participating in the NA protest). There will be one table each per dependent variable to see which has a stronger prediction of the other.

Next, what will be analyzed is who supports one form of protest over the other, kneeling, standing while raising a fist in the air, and sitting during the national anthem. This will be analyzed through a paired t-test which will measure which action participants see as more appropriate over the other. It will be formed into a table comparing the different behaviors between one another. Also, there will be a few frequency tables provided that will show the different perspectives of the study. One will be created regarding attitudes towards punishment for participating in the NA protest, then a couple regarding the favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards the NA protest.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter will describe and explain in detail what the results were gathered from the surveys administered. Once the study was completed the data was imported into SPSS, which was then used to calculate/determine the results that were found. To answer the research questions and hypotheses, some tables were created to show the relationships between the different variables. The tables will be available to view in the appendix section, but this chapter will describe and summarize the results that were found in the tables.

Attitudes towards NA Protest

Tables 1 and 2 measured the frequencies for favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards the anthem protest. Looking at table 1, it shows that participants show higher scores in this area meaning that they express more favorable attitudes towards the NA protest. There were more answers that they agreed with than disagreed with. The highest mean for favorable attitudes was that for the item which states that "not standing for the national anthem is a legal form of peaceful protest which supports the first amendment." The second highest mean was for the item which states that "when one believes the U.S. is not living up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all protesting the NA is appropriate." The third highest mean was for the item which states that "the NA protests have been useful in bringing attention to injustices faced by certain groups in society."

Table 2 shows that there were less unfavorable attitudes towards the anthem protest. The highest mean for unfavorable attitudes was for the item which states that "protesting the anthem angers many and is very divisive for the country." The second highest mean was for the item which states that "protesting the NA is an ineffective and counterproductive way to promote a cause." The third highest mean was for the item which states that "protesting the NA shows

disrespect for the flag and members of the armed forces." This answers research question #1 that asks how young adults perceive the anthem protest. Young adults have more favorable attitudes than unfavorable, meaning they generally have favorable views of the NA protests and support others who choose to protest.

The Form of Protest (Kneeling, standing while raising a fist, or sitting during the NA)

Table 3 was used to measure the frequencies for the items in the survey that recorded whether participants see kneeling, standing while raising a fist, or sitting as an appropriate action during the National Anthem (NA). The results from table 3 show that there were differences in perceptions of appropriateness regarding the three forms of protest. On average respondents perceived kneeling to be more appropriate than standing while raising a fist or sitting during the national anthem. There was also a good number of participants who were neutral on the topic as well. The highest mean was kneeling, the second highest was standing while raising a fist, and sitting was the lowest mean. Table 4 is a paired sample t-test that compares the perceptions of appropriateness of kneeling ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.23$), standing while raising a fist ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.27$), and sitting during the NA ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.41$). It showed there is a significant difference when comparing kneeling and raising a fist, between kneeling and sitting, and finally, between standing while raising a fist and sitting. These results answer research question #2 about whether the form of expression matters. The results show that the form of expression of how the NA protest is practiced matters. It matters because some see one form of communication as more appropriate than the other.

Variables Influencing Perceptions of NA Protest.

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of all the main variables in this study before examining the relationships between them. Table 6 presents the correlation matrix of study

variables concerning the attitudes and perceptions of the NA protest. All the variables were matched to see which ones had significant relationships with one another. The variables that are significantly correlated with favorable attitudes toward NA protest include education level ($r = .16, p < .01$), political ideology ($r = -.46, p < .01$), perception of police ($r = -.27, p < .01$), perception of injustice ($r = .41, p < .01$), political engagement ($r = .36, p < .01$), empathic concern ($r = .25, p < .01$), unfavorable towards anthem protest ($r = -.57, p < .01$), and attitudes towards punishment ($r = -.56, p < .01$).

The variables that are significantly correlated with unfavorable attitudes toward NA protest include education level ($r = -.14, p < .05$), political ideology ($r = .53, p < .01$), perception of police ($r = .45, p < .01$), perception of injustice ($r = -.41, p < .01$), political engagement ($r = -.21, p < .01$), empathic concern ($r = -.26, p < .01$), favorable towards anthem protest ($r = -.57, p < .01$), and attitudes towards punishment ($r = .74, p < .01$). These results provide some preliminary support for hypothesis #2 because they show that there is significant relationship between attitudes towards NA protest and empathic concern whether it is favorable or unfavorable. But the first hypothesis was not proven to be true because the results showed no relationship between perspective-taking and favorable or unfavorable attitudes towards NA protest.

In table 7 there was a multiple linear regression that was performed looking at what variables were the best predictors for favorable attitudes towards NA protest. This found the variables that were significant predictors were education level ($\beta = .12, p < .05$), political ideology ($\beta = -.46, p < .01$), perceptions of injustice ($\beta = .17, p < .01$), and political engagement ($\beta = .20, p < .01$), and empathic concern ($\beta = .14, p < .05$).

In tables 8 a multiple linear regression was performed to examine what variables were the best predictors for unfavorable attitudes toward NA protest. This linear regression calculated that

only political ideology ($\beta = .53, p < .01$) and perceptions of police ($\beta = .24, p < .01$) were the only significant predictors. This still proved hypothesis #2 to be true because there is significance shown between empathic concern and favorable attitudes. But there is still no significance for perspective-taking, so the first hypothesis is still not proven to be true.

Attitudes Towards Punishments for Participation in NA Protest

Table 9 shows the frequencies for the 2 items that measure if there should be punishments towards athletes for choosing to participate in the NA protest in college or professionally. There were lower scores than higher scores in this section, meaning that more participants were against the punishment of players who choose to protest. Looking back at table 6, the variables that were significant in predicting attitudes towards punishment were political ideology ($r = .38, p < .01$), perception of police ($r = .49, p < .01$), perception of injustice ($r = -.43, p < .01$), empathic concern ($r = -.26, p < .01$), favorable towards anthem protest ($r = -.56, p < .05$), and unfavorable towards anthem protest ($r = .74, p < .01$). In table 10, a linear regression was created to determine what variables were the best for predicting attitudes towards punishing players for participating in the NA protest. The variable that were significant for this were political ideology ($\beta = .37, p < .01$), perceptions of police ($\beta = .35, p < .01$), perceptions of injustice ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$), and empathic concern ($\beta = -.14, p < .05$). These results support hypothesis #4 which stated that there is a relationship between empathic concern and attitudes towards punishment for participating in NA protest. Specifically, the results show that empathic concern is negatively related to attitudes towards the punishment of athletes for participating in NA protest. Unfortunately, it proves hypothesis #3 to be untrue because there was no relationship between perspective-taking and attitudes towards punishment of NA protest.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine how young adults perceive the National Anthem (NA) protest, why they perceive it this way and the factors that play a role in this as well. The different factors that were examined in this study were political ideology, political engagement, perceptions of police, perceptions of injustice, and especially empathic concern and perspective-taking, to determine their relationships with favorable attitudes towards the NA protest, unfavorable attitudes towards NA protest, and attitudes towards punishing players for participating. The results gathered in this study show that there are relations between different variables, and some hypotheses were supported while others were not. Each area will explain what the results found mean in depth.

Favorable Attitudes Towards the NA Protest

There have been a lot of participants in this study who share high levels of favorable attitudes towards the NA protest. Looking at the correlation matrix, several variables are significantly related to favorable attitudes towards the NA protests. Those are education level, political ideology, perceptions of police, perception of injustice, political engagement, and empathic concern. The results show that one with higher levels of education has more favorable attitudes and that one who is more liberal also have more favorable attitudes. The results also predict that those with more negative perceptions of the police and higher perceptions of injustice have more favorable attitudes towards the NA protest. This makes sense because having negative perceptions of the police, or viewing them as excessively brutal and unfair, would influence them to support and be more favorable of the NA protest because one of the main goals of the protest was to highlight police brutality and unfairness towards members of minority groups, especially African-Americans.

One who even has more political engagement, as well as higher empathic concern, will also express more favorable attitudes towards the anthem protest. Lastly, participants who have negative attitudes towards the punishment of players for protesting generally share more favorable attitudes towards the anthem protest. Looking at the linear regression, the only variables that significantly predict favorable attitudes are education level, political ideology, perceptions of injustice, political engagement, and empathic concern.

Unfavorable Attitudes Towards the NA Protest

More participants expressed less unfavorable attitudes towards the anthem protest. This was proven to be related to a few different predicting variables, such as education level, political ideology, perceptions of police, perceptions of injustice, political engagement, and empathic concern. These were predictors when observing the results of the correlation matrix. Conducting the linear regression, showed that only political ideology and perceptions of the police were the strongest predictors. Essentially, the more conservative someone was, the more unfavorably they perceived the NA protests. Additionally, people with negative perceptions of police generally tended to not have unfavorable attitudes towards the NA Protest.

Attitudes Towards Punishments for Participation in NA Protest

More participants scored low when it comes to punishing athletes for participating in NA protests, meaning that they do not feel that protesters should be punished for choosing to participate in something they believe in. Other factors lined up with this as well. Those who are more liberal have negative attitudes towards punishing players. Participants with negative perceptions of police also tend to have negative attitudes towards the punishment of protesters. People who have lower levels of perceptions of injustice believe that players should be punished for participating in protest. Those who have scored high on empathic concern believe that

players should not be punished for protesting. The linear regression and correlation matrix support all these points. The correlation matrix also predicts that those with favorable perceptions toward the NA protest have negative attitudes towards punishing players for protesting.

The Form of Protest (Kneeling, standing while raising a fist, or sitting during the NA)

When participants were asked about what action of protest was appropriate kneeling was the most appropriate action compared to standing while raising a fist or sitting during the anthem. Each action was compared with one another and it proved this to be true. This proves research question #2 to be right about the form of expression matters one action is seen as more appropriate than the other. When Kaepernick first started, he refused to stand during the anthem and was seen negatively. Then transitioned to taking a knee for the respect of the servicemen who fight for the U.S. also responding to those who said he was disrespecting the military (Rorke and Copeland, 2017). This brought about more support for the protest and eventually got others to support it as well. This proves that there are those who see a certain form of protest as more appropriate as another. When everyone saw that Kaepernick was sitting during the NA when this first started it was seen as more negative and disrespectful, compared to when he decided to kneel during the NA. He created more appropriate support from others because it showed that he still had some respect for the country and those who fight for it.

Role of Perspective-taking

The reason that perspective-taking was not significantly related and supported in this study is that it lacks a couple of things that empathic concern does not. First, perspective-taking is not other-oriented like empathic concern (Fry & Runyan, 2018). One could see the perspective of the other and see what they are experiencing and going through, but they are not able to

express or hold the same emotion another would have. Not being able to grasp the full experience of those who are being influenced negatively means that they do not understand why there needs to be change. Others are not able to completely understand how they feel because of emotion. Sometimes just perceiving another's position is not enough, they need to be able to feel the others' emotions understand how they feel to get the full picture. Sometimes perspective-taking is helpful in some situations but when it comes to the NA protest and needing to fully understand the other side, perspective-taking falls short as seen in the results from this study.

Another thing that can negatively influence how one perceives another is the motivation to make a change or interfere to benefit another unless they themselves benefit as well. According to Longmire & Harrison (2018), Perspective-taking is taking someone else's point of view through the lens of our own personal goals. For example, one would only go forward to help someone if it benefits themselves as well, but if it hurts or inconveniences oneself to help another, they are not very likely to do something to help another. This can be another reason as to why perspective-taking is not related to the attitudes of the NA protest because while others see and understand, they have nothing to gain from jumping in to increase support. This could be for a couple of reasons; first, they feel that they will be negatively looked at by others if they support or even participate and are not willing to do that. Another reason is the change that those supporting the protest are fighting for could negatively affect those who do not support them. Some do not wish for that change because it can negatively affect their future and influence the position of favoritism or privilege they are currently in now. Some benefit from the status quo and do not see it changing in the future or do not wish to see it change because it will influence the favor that they have and influences their situation. If the status quo were to change it would negatively affect them.

Role of Empathic Concern

Empathic concern was positively related to the attitudes towards the NA protest because it seems to have something that perspective-taking was not able to capture. Empathic concern is about understanding more about how someone feels by feeling someone's pain (Longmire & Harrison, 2018). Empathic concern is an other-oriented emotion which is seeing someone in need and having the drive to increase the person's welfare (Fry & Runyan, 2018). When someone has the drive to want someone else to feel better and think positively about themselves it can make a difference and positively influence others. It turns out that people benefit more from others' empathic concern; when others can feel their pain, understand the emotions they feel, and are motivated to help end that pain/suffering (Longmire and Harrison, 2018).

An example that Fry & Runyan, (2018) used is a situation where on July 17, 2014, police officers were trying to arrest an African American man Eric Garner for selling loose cigarettes. When Garner was resisting then one of the officers threw a chokehold on him choking him to death and continued to ignore him constantly saying "I can't breathe." Fry & Runyan (2018) stated, "The officers in the Garner case might have responded in any number of ways. What if they had responded with concern for Garner's health? What if they had taken his perspective—even for a few seconds—into account?" (p. 2). One with high empathic concern would have considered these things and reacted differently and handled this in a better way. This helps others to see how empathic concern can benefit one's choices and the way they communicate with one another more effectively. Empathic concern is something that is needed to be more invested in because it will cause a change in how we think of one another and understands other's perspectives. Longmire and Harrison (2018) agree that creating and maintaining support for

empathic concern can help us to see another's side of things. This is something that needs to be continued and more supported in future research.

Implications

What is taken away from this research is that there are favorable attitudes that are related to empathic concern. Young adults have more favorable attitudes than unfavorable attitudes towards the NA protest. Empathic concern has a strong role in this research because it was effective in all the aspects that this study was examining. For most of the variables, it was found as significant because some can look at others and understand different views that not everyone can grasp onto.

Perspective-taking was not related to this because it is not as strong a factor to use when coming to understanding ones' thoughts and feelings like empathic concern. Perspective-taking isn't enough according to the results of the study one's levels of perspective-taking is not enough to predict one's favorable or unfavorable behaviors towards the anthem protest. It was not significant with any of the variables which shows that utilizing perspective-taking is not enough in seeing or feeling people's pain and what they experience. It turns out that you must have high levels of empathy to understand and have a strong relationship with how you perceive protest. Really being able to paint a picture and appeal to one's feelings in certain situations will allow an individual to really understand and strongly connect with one another. Not everyone expresses high levels of empathic concern and finding a way to improve this could be helpful.

Looking forward to future research, researchers should examine why people express more empathy other than perspective-taking. Being able to determine the exact difference between the two will help determine why one is more significant over the other. Empathic concern is seen as underdeveloped and not taught how to be used properly in some aspects of

communication where it is strongly needed. How to increase levels of empathic concern is something that can be looked further into because of those who are not able to express it. Some express high levels of empathic concern but for those who struggle, being able to have some exercises to improve on can increase their communication skills and make them more effective. We need to invest in more of putting ourselves in others' shoes to gain a bigger picture. We need to climb into someone's position and think and feel the way they do in order to fully understand their struggle and pain that they experience. Doing this can bring about solutions that they are too blind of and create opportunities that were not there before.

Limitations

Some limitations of this study include the fact that it cannot be generalized to the population of the US. Indeed, although one of the goals of the study was to gather participants with more diversity, the study partially failed because most of the participants were primarily composed of individuals that identified as Hispanic/Latino. Looking at ethnicity, there were 261 (80.1%) respondents who were Hispanic/Latino ethnicity and 65 (19.9%) who were not. Nonetheless, the study does still provide a good contribution to the literature by featuring a sample of people different from that used in previous research.

Another limitation that occurred was from all of those who did participate, not all of them completed the survey, some only went on to complete the first part (demographics) and then dropped out of the study. There was a 79.07% completion rate which is still pretty good but influences the data recorded that was not answered. Some completed a good portion of the survey but eventually dropped out, in the end, leaving errors in some of the studies. So, while some reported and participated in the whole study, some just quit halfway through the survey. While others quit less than halfway through the entire survey, they only completed two or three

parts and just gave up. So, there is no way of knowing if this could have had a positive or negative impact on the study.

One of the things that could have a strong influence on these results and how young adults view the anthem protest is the background of the protester. More specifically the race of the protesters if they are primarily white or black or another race. Race is something that plays a big factor in this issue and can have a strong influence on how the media perceives the protesters or how others perceive them. For example, would some see a specific protest as more positive or negative if the protester was white? The same thing if it was reversed and the protester is black, questions that would be asked are what consequences or punishments would the protester's face? Would the difference in race influence the consequences or punishment that the protester would face? Would others support him/her/them or not because of his/her/their race?

It would also be good to uncover why people have these positive or negative feelings towards Kaepernick and how race is related to this. It's interesting to understand what people's actual feelings are whether they support the message and what the protest stands for or if they are just supporting or not supporting Kaepernick because he is black. I acknowledge that race is an important factor in this subject, but to use this as a determining factor would make it difficult to gather the findings that were recorded in this study. It would also be difficult to manipulate this into the study. This is something that can be utilized and researched in the future to investigate and see what the results would be. The results from this study could be useful in providing framework and support to drive this idea forward of how the race of the protester would influence perceptions.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study has uncovered that there are more favorable attitudes towards the NA protest than there are unfavorable attitudes. Young adults, especially those that are liberal, generally see the NA protests favorably and those attitudes are related to empathic concern. Perspective-taking has not been significant in predicting attitudes towards the NA protests. Seeing the perspective of another is not enough, one needs to emotionally put themselves in another's position and truly feel what they experience. Most people see kneeling as more of an appropriate form of protest compared to standing while raising a fist and sitting during the anthem. Being aware of the specific action you perform during the NA is important because it will influence how others perceive you.

This study is beneficial and contributes to communication research because it shows how others have perceived the NA protest. Knowing that it is mostly seen as favorable or positive, can help promote and make others aware of creating and participating in protest appropriately. It can even possibly gain support from those who did not support before. Knowing that most people have negative attitudes towards punishing players who choose to participate in protest should give insight to those responsible and organizing the different sports teams and leagues. If people do not believe that athletes should be punished for participating in protest, then they should not be punished and be free to responsibly participate in protests and support whatever they believe. Academically, it shows how beneficial empathic concern is to communicate effectively with one another, especially with oppressed and marginalized groups, and adds to previous research completed in this field. Future research can reference this study and expand in areas where it has failed or could be improved.

Appendix A

Table 1: Frequency Table Regarding Favorable Attitudes Towards Anthem Protest

			N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)
	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Protesting the national anthem is appropriate if the protest can bring about desirable social change	3.78	1.19	20 (6.9%)	20 (6.9%)	62 (21.5%)	87 (30.2%)	99 (34.4%)
When one believes the United States is not living up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all, protesting the national anthem is appropriate and justified.	3.81	1.12	11 (3.8%)	27 (9.4%)	66 (22.9%)	85 (29.5%)	99 (34.4%)
Not standing for the national anthem is a legal form of peaceful protest, which is a First Amendment right.	4.16	1.02	9 (3.1%)	11 (3.8%)	44 (15.3%)	85 (29.5%)	139 (48.3%)
National anthem protests have been useful in bringing attention to injustices faced by certain groups in society.	3.80	1.15	19 (6.6%)	14 (4.9%)	67 (23.3%)	93 (32.3%)	95 (33%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2: Frequency Table Regarding Unfavorable Attitudes Towards Anthem Protest

			N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)
	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Protesting the national anthem is never appropriate	2.30	1.29	103 (35.8%)	73 (25.3%)	63 (21.9%)	21 (7.3%)	28 (9.7%)
Protesting the national anthem is unpatriotic	2.41	1.31	96 (33.3%)	66 (22.9%)	69 (24%)	27 (9.4%)	30 (10.4%)
Protesting the national anthem shows disrespect for the flag and members of the armed forces.	2.47	1.42	107 (37.2%)	48 (16.7%)	60 (20.8%)	36 (12.5%)	37 (12.8%)
Protesting the national anthem is an ineffective and counterproductive way to promote a cause.	2.55	1.29	79 (27.4%)	64 (22.2%)	85 (29.5%)	28 (9.7%)	32 (11.1%)
Protesting the national anthem angers many and is very divisive for the country.	3.59	1.01	11 (3.8%)	27 (9.4%)	81 (28.1%)	119 (41.3%)	50 (17.4%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 3: Frequency Table Regarding Kneeling, standing while Raising a fist, and Sitting during the NA

			N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)
	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kneeling During the anthem is appropriate	3.64	1.23	22 (7.6%)	29 (10.1%)	69 (24%)	78 (27.1%)	90 (31.3%)
Standing while raising a fist During the anthem is appropriate	3.49	1.27	28 (9.7%)	31 (10.8%)	82 (28.5%)	65 (22.6%)	82 (28.5%)
Sitting During the anthem is appropriate	3.23	1.41	45 (15.6%)	49 (17%)	64 (22.2%)	56 (19.4%)	74 (25.7%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4: Paired Sample t-test Comparing Perceptions of Appropriateness of kneeling, standing, and sitting to protest US National Anthem NA

Pair		Mean Difference	SD	t	df
1	Kneeling (M = 3.64, SD = 1.23)	.15**	.89	2.86	287
	Standing (M = 3.49, SD = 1.27)				
2	Kneeling (M = 3.64, SD = 1.23)	.42**	1.10	6.44	287
	Sitting (M = 3.23, SD = 1.41)				
3	Standing (M = 3.49, SD = 1.27)	.27**	1.05	4.31	287
	Sitting (M = 3.23, SD = 1.41)				

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

SD = Standard Deviation, df = degrees of freedom

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Education level	2.34	1.00
2. Political ideology	2.54	.94
3. Age	22.98	4.00
4. Perceptions of police	3.06	.70
5. Perceptions of injustice	3.95	.90
6. Political engagement	2.03	.85
7. Perspective-taking	3.86	.59
8. Empathic concern	4.10	.65
9. Favorable towards NA protests	3.89	.91
10. Unfavorable towards NA protests	2.67	1.01
11. Attitudes towards punishment	1.84	1.12

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Education level	-	-.07	.47**	-.03	.11	.07	-.01	.06	.16**	-.14*
2. Political ideology	-.07	-	-.03	.43**	-.45**	-.37**	-.01	-.22**	-	.53**
3. Age	.47**	-.03	-	.03	.01	.11	.01	.01	.03	-.10
4. Perceptions of police	-.03	.43**	.03	-	-.44**	-.13*	.11	-.10	-	.45**
5. Perceptions of injustice	.11	-.45	.01	-.44	-	.22**	.02	.26**	.41**	-.41**
6. Political engagement	.07	-.37**	.11	-.13*	.22**	-	.03	.13*	.36**	-.21**
7. Perspective-taking	-.01	-.01	.01	.11	.02	.03	-	.33**	.08	-.08
8. Empathic concern	.06	-.22**	.01	-.10	.26**	.13*	.33**	-	.25**	-.26**
9. Favorable towards NA protests	.16**	-.46**	.03	-.27**	.41**	.36**	.08	.25*	-	-.57**
10. Unfavorable towards NA protests	-.14	.53**	-.10	.45**	-.41**	-.21**	-.08	-.26**	-	-
11. Attitudes towards punishment	-.11	.38**	-.08	.49**	-.43**	-.07	-.07	-.26**	-	.74**

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Table 7: Multiple Regression analysis results Predicting **Favorable Attitudes** towards U.S.

National Anthem (NA) Protest

Predictions	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Gender	.07	.04	.08	.05	.17	.10
Education level	.10	.12*	.12	.14*	.12	.14*
Race	.01	.02	.01	.03	.02	.06
Political ideology	-.44	-.46**	-.29	-.30**	-.27	-.29**
Age			-.02	-.10	-.02	-.10
Perceptions of police			-.02	-.02	-.03	-.03
Perceptions of injustice			.17	.17**	.14	.14*
Political engagement			.20	.20**	.20	.20**
Perspective-taking					.07	.04
Empathic concern					.20	.14*
R^2	.23**		.29**		.32*	
ΔR^2	.23**		.07**		.02*	

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Table 8: Multiple Regression analysis results Predicting **Unfavorable Attitudes** Towards U.S. National Anthem (NA) Protest

Predictions	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Gender	.05	.03	.04	.02	-.04	-.02
Education level	-.08	-.08	-.06	-.06	-.05	-.06
Race	-.02	-.05	-.02	-.04	-.03	-.06
Political ideology	.56	.53**	.42	.40**	.41	.38**
Age			-.01	-.05	-.01	-.04
Perceptions of police			.34	.24**	.35	.25**
Perceptions of injustice			-.09	-.08	-.06	-.06
Political engagement			.02	.02	.02	.02
Perspective-taking					-.11	-.06
Empathic concern					-.16	-.10
R^2	.31**		.37**		.38**	
ΔR^2	.31**		.06**		.02**	

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Table 9: Frequency Table Regarding Attitudes Towards Punishments Anthem Protest

			N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)	N (Valid %)
	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Professional sport leagues (NFL, NBA, MLB, etc.) should punish their players who protest the national anthem.	1.89	1.16	154 (53.5%)	56 (19.4%)	48 (16.7%)	17 (5.9%)	13 (4.5%)
Educational institutions (universities, Colleges, schools, etc.) should punish their student-athletes who protest the national anthem.	1.78	1.13	169 (58.7%)	52 (18.1%)	38 (13.2%)	18 (6.3%)	11 (3.8%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 10: Multiple Regression analysis results Predicting **Attitudes Towards Punishment** for U.S. National Anthem (NA) Protest

Predictions	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Gender	.12	.06	.08	.04	-.02	-.01
Education level	-.07	-.06	-.03	-.00	.00	.00
Race	-.00	-.00	.00	.01	-.01	-.01
Political ideology	.42	.37**	.20	.18**	.19	.16
Age			-.03	-.10	-.02	-.09
Perceptions of police			.55	.35**	.56	.36**
Perceptions of injustice			-.20	-.17**	-.17	-.14*
Political engagement			.13	.11	.13	.11
Perspective-taking					-.07	-.04
Empathic concern					-.24	-.14*
R^2	.15**		.31**		.33*	
ΔR^2	.15**		.16**		.02*	

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Table 11: List of Scale Variables and Items

Variable	Item
Perspective-taking ($\alpha = .68$)	<p>Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.</p> <p>If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.</p> <p>I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.</p> <p>I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.</p> <p>I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other person's" point of view.</p> <p>I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.</p> <p>When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his/her shoes" for a while.</p>
Empathic concern ($\alpha = .75$)	<p>When I see people being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.</p> <p>When I see people being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.</p> <p>I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.</p> <p>I would describe myself as a pretty softhearted person.</p> <p>Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.</p> <p>Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.</p> <p>I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.</p>
Political engagement ($\alpha = .93$)	<p>Attend a political meeting, rally, or speech.</p> <p>Contact a public official or political party about a political issue.</p> <p>Display a poster, a bumper sticker, or a yard sign with a political message.</p> <p>Vote in primary, general, and local elections.</p> <p>Argue or debate with friends/family about current political issues.</p> <p>Volunteer for a political campaign or civic organization.</p> <p>Donate money to a social/political organization or a political candidate.</p> <p>Write an op-ed or a letter to a newspaper editor regarding a political issue.</p> <p>Post comments on political issues online.</p> <p>Participate in an organized protest, boycott, or strike to support or oppose a political issue</p> <p>Encourage or discourage people to vote for a policy or candidate.</p> <p>Organize a political event (e.g. talk, support group, march)?</p> <p>Boycott a product for political reasons.</p>

	<p>Distribute information representing a particular social or political group's cause?</p> <p>Sign a petition for a political cause.</p>
Attitudes towards punishment for participating in U.S. National anthem protest ($\alpha = .96$)	<p>Professional sport leagues (NFL, NBA, MLB, etc.) should punish their players who protest the national anthem.</p> <p>Educational institutions (universities, Colleges, schools, etc.) should punish their student-athletes who protest the national anthem.</p>
Favorable attitudes towards U.S. National anthem protest ($\alpha = .82$)	<p>Protesting the national anthem is appropriate if the protest can bring about desirable social change</p> <p>When one believes the United States is not living up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all, protesting the national anthem is appropriate and justified.</p> <p>Not standing for the national anthem is a legal form of peaceful protest, which is a First Amendment right.</p> <p>National anthem protests have been useful in bringing attention to injustices faced by certain groups in society.</p>
Unfavorable attitudes towards U.S. National anthem protest ($\alpha = .85$)	<p>Protesting the national anthem is never appropriate</p> <p>Protesting the national anthem is unpatriotic</p> <p>Protesting the national anthem shows disrespect for the flag and members of the armed forces.</p> <p>Protesting the national anthem is an ineffective and counterproductive way to promote a cause.</p> <p>Protesting the national anthem angers many and is very divisive for the country.</p>
Perception of police scale ($\alpha = .93$)	<p>Police officers are friendly.</p> <p>Police officers protect me.</p> <p>Police officers treat all people fairly.</p> <p>I like the police.</p> <p>Police officers are good to people.</p> <p>The police do not discriminate.</p> <p>The police provide safety.</p> <p>The police are helpful.</p> <p>The police are trustworthy.</p> <p>The police are reliable.</p> <p>Police officers are unbiased.</p> <p>Police officers care about my community.</p>
Injustice in U.S. justice system ($\alpha = .83$)	<p>The US justice system fails to treat everyone equally before the law.</p> <p>The US justice system tends to be unfair towards Members of minority groups (African American, Latinx, LGBT).</p> <p>The US justice system tends to be unfair towards poor people.</p>

Appendix B

National Anthem Protests Study Survey

Title: **Young Adults' Perceptions of the Anthem Protests: Examining the Whys**

This is an invitation to participate in this study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the study. Your participation is voluntary. Please read carefully. It is important that you fully understand the study in order to make an informed decision about whether you choose to participate or not.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine how people perceive and react to protests. Specifically, this study will focus on young adults' perceptions of and reactions to the US national anthem protests and to discover what factors influence these perceptions and reactions. Essentially, the goal here is to examine and understand why people perceive and/or react to the national anthem protests the way they do. This study is looking for around 80 to 100 students, faculty, and staff to be surveyed in the study.

Procedures

Participating in this study is completely voluntary, and you will not be penalized in any way if you decide not to participate in this study. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. Just answer each question as honestly as possible. You should simply provide answers that best express your opinions. You will also be asked to provide some basic information about your demographic characteristics, but no information will be used to identify you specifically. Your feedback will be kept confidential, and you will not be contacted after your participation in this study. It should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete this survey.

Benefits

Your participation is valuable and will be contributing to communication and social science research. This will be helpful in gathering opinions not just from those who support the national anthem protests, but also those who do not, and why and the reasons for their attitudes/stances. The contributions of this study will be to determine how young adults perceive the anthem protests and examine what factors play a role in shaping their perceptions. This study is helpful and important to communication and social science scholarship because protests are important communication acts that have the potential to make a difference to our sociopolitical environment and it is important to examine and understand how people react to their messages and why. This study can give new insight into why protests messages are received the way they

are and how protests and other forms of disruptive communication can be more effective in bringing about social change.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts beyond those encountered in everyday life.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Your name or other identifying information will be kept separate from and will not be associated with your responses on the survey. Your study-related information will be kept confidential. No participants will be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used.

Voluntary Participation

To participate in this study, you must be 18 years or older and be a UTEP student, staff, or faculty. Taking part in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research you may contact Daymon Wilson through email at dwilson4@miners.utep.edu or Dr. Yannick Atouba at yatouba@utep.edu. UTEP IRB has approved this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research you may call the IRB at 915-747-7693 or irb.orsp@utep.edu.

Consent Statement and Signature

I have read this consent form and understand that moving forward and answering the survey items will represent my agreement to participate in this study. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

- I agree
- I disagree

Appendix C

National Anthem Protests Study Survey

Part 1: Demographics

In this section, we are interested in getting some background information about you. Thanks!

What year were you born? _____

What's your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Trans
- d. Prefer not to answer

Are you a UTEP student?

- a. Yes
- b. No

What's your highest education level?

- a. High school diploma
- b. Some college
- c. Associate degree
- d. Bachelor's degree
- e. Master's degree
- f. Ph.D.

Are you of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity?

- a. Yes
- b. No

What is your race?

- a. White
- b. Black or African American
- c. Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian
- d. Native American
- e. Two or more races/multiracial
- f. Other _____

Are you eligible to vote in the united states?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Choose the option that best represents your political ideology.

- a. very liberal
- b. mostly liberal
- c. Neutral/Mixed
- d. mostly conservative
- e. very conservative

Part 2: About your approach to interactions

In this section, we are interested in your general approach to interacting with people. Please, read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how well each of them describes you. There are no right or wrong answer; just be as honest as possible. Please check the box that corresponds to the number which applies to you for each item:

Statement/Item	Does not describe me well				Describes me well
Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	1	2	3	4	5
If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other person's" point of view.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	1	2	3	4	5
When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his/her shoes" for a while.	1	2	3	4	5
When I see people being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.	1	2	3	4	5

When I see people being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.	1	2	3	4	5
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I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	1	2	3	4	5
I would describe myself as a pretty softhearted person.	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.	1	2	3	4	5
Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.	1	2	3	4	5
I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: Political and Civic Engagement

In this section, we are interested in your political engagement. There are no right or wrong answers; just be as honest as possible. Please respond to the following questions by indicating how often you have engaged in each of the following activities in the past three years.

Statement/Item	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Attend a political meeting, rally, or speech	1	2	3	4	5
Contact a public official or political party about a political issue	1	2	3	4	5
Display a poster, a bumper sticker, or a yard sign with a political message	1	2	3	4	5
Vote in primary, general, and local elections	1	2	3	4	5
Argue or debate with friends/family about current political issues	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteer for a political campaign or civic organization	1	2	3	4	5
Donate money to a social/political organization or a political candidate	1	2	3	4	5
Write an op-ed or a letter to a newspaper editor regarding a political issue	1	2	3	4	5
Post comments on political issues online	1	2	3	4	5
Participate in an organized protest, boycott, or strike to support or oppose a political issue	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage or discourage people to vote for a policy or candidate	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in a political activity in which you knew you will be arrested?	1	2	3	4	5
Organize a political event (e.g. talk, support group, march)?	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in a physical confrontation at a political rally?	1	2	3	4	5

Engage in a political activity in which you feared that some of your possessions would be damaged?	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest?	1	2	3	4	5
Boycott a product for political reasons	1	2	3	4	5
Distribute information representing a particular social or political group's cause?	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in a political activity in which you suspect there would be a confrontation with the police or possible arrest?	1	2	3	4	5
Sign a petition for a political cause	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in any political activity in which you fear for your personal safety?	1	2	3	4	5
Block access to a building or public area with your body	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in any political activity that made your friends, family, and/or acquaintances uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5
Protest the US national anthem	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4: Perceptions Regarding the National Anthem Protest

In this section, we are interested in your opinions and beliefs regarding the US national anthem protest. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree
Kneeling on one knee during the national anthem is an appropriate gesture to protest police brutality and racial oppression	1	2	3	4	5
Standing up and raising your fist in the air during the national anthem is an appropriate gesture to protest police brutality and racial oppression	1	2	3	4	5
Sitting down during the national anthem is an appropriate gesture to protest police brutality and racial oppression	1	2	3	4	5
Professional sport leagues (NFL, NBA, MLB, etc.) should punish their players who protest the national anthem	1	2	3	4	5
Educational institutions (universities, Colleges, schools, etc.) should punish their student-athletes who protest the national anthem	1	2	3	4	5

Protesting the national anthem is never appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
Protesting the national anthem is appropriate if the protest can bring about desirable social change	1	2	3	4	5
Protesting the national anthem is unpatriotic	1	2	3	4	5
Protesting the national anthem shows disrespect for the flag and members of the armed forces.	1	2	3	4	5
Protesting the national anthem is an ineffective and counterproductive way to promote a cause	1	2	3	4	5
Protesting the national anthem angers many and is very divisive for the country.	1	2	3	4	5
When one believes the United States is not living up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all, protesting the national anthem is appropriate and justified.	1	2	3	4	5
Not standing for the national anthem is a legal form of peaceful protest, which is a First Amendment right	1	2	3	4	5
National anthem protests have been useful in bringing attention to injustices faced by certain groups in society	1	2	3	4	5
I would support any protest, even one that I or others think is inappropriate, if I believe that it could bring about desirable change	1	2	3	4	5
Protests are often necessary to bring about social change	1	2	3	4	5
If the players/athletes' protests had involved marching in the streets, instead of protesting the national anthem, that would have appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
If the players/athletes' protests had involved refusing to play, instead of protesting the national anthem, that would have appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
If the players/athletes' protests had involved clashes or confrontations with police, instead of protesting the national anthem, that would have appropriate	1	2	3	4	5

Part 5: Perceptions regarding policing and justice in the USA

In this section we are interested in your opinions regarding the police and the administration of justice in the USA. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree
Members of minority groups/communities (African American, Latinx, LGBT) tend to be unfairly targeted by the police	1	2	3	4	5
Police brutality is a very important issue that needs to be addressed	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers regularly racially profile people	1	2	3	4	5
Police tactics are too harsh	1	2	3	4	5
Police are generally not held accountable for misconduct	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers are friendly	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers protect me	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers treat all people fairly	1	2	3	4	5
I like the police	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers are good people	1	2	3	4	5
The police do not discriminate	1	2	3	4	5
The police provide safety	1	2	3	4	5
The police are helpful	1	2	3	4	5
The police are trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
The police are reliable	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers are unbiased	1	2	3	4	5
Police officers care about my community	1	2	3	4	5
The US justice system fails to treat everyone equally before the law	1	2	3	4	5
The US justice system tends to be unfair towards Members of minority groups (African American, Latinx, LGBT)	1	2	3	4	5
The US justice system tends to be unfair towards poor people	1	2	3	4	5
The USA is a racist country	1	2	3	4	5
The USA is a sexist country	1	2	3	4	5
The USA is a homophobic country	1	2	3	4	5

Part 6: How strongly do you support your beliefs?

In this section we are interested how much you are willing to support your beliefs. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with participating in one of these activities in the statements below. There are no right or wrong answers; please just be as honest as possible. Thank you!

Statement/Item	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
I would join/belong to an organization that fights for my political and legal rights	1	2	3	4	5
I would donate money to an organization that fights for my political and legal rights	1	2	3	4	5
I would volunteer my time working (i.e. write petitions, distribute flyers, recruit people, etc.) for an organization that fights for my political and legal rights	1	2	3	4	5
I would travel for one hour to join in a public rally, protest, or demonstration in support of my beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
I would continue to support an organization that fights for my political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes breaks the law	1	2	3	4	5
I would continue to support an organization that fights for my political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes resorts to violence	1	2	3	4	5
I would participate in a public protest against oppression of my group even if I thought the protest might turn violent	1	2	3	4	5
I would attack police or security forces if I saw them beating members of my group	1	2	3	4	5
I would go to war to protect my rights	1	2	3	4	5
I would retaliate against members of a group that had attacked me, even if I couldn't be sure I was retaliating against the guilty party	1	2	3	4	5

Part 7: Beliefs about justice in society

In this section we are interested in your beliefs about justice. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers; please just be as honest as possible. Thanks!

Statement/Item	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
I believe that it is important to make sure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to allow individuals and groups to define and describe their problems, experiences and goals in their own terms	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that people should be able to fight for their rights in any way they choose	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to try to change social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede well-being	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to help individuals and groups to pursue their chosen goals in Life	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to promote the physical and emotional well-being of individuals and groups	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to respect and appreciate people's diverse social identities	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that the USA is a fair and just country for everyone	1	2	3	4	5

I believe that it is important to allow others to have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to support community organizations and institutions that help individuals and group achieve their aims	1	2	3	4	5

I believe that it is important to promote fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations, and resources in our society	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that it is important to act for social justice	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident that I can have a positive impact on others' lives	1	2	3	4	5
I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering	1	2	3	4	5
If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being	1	2	3	4	5

I am certain that if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community	1	2	3	4	5
Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social injustices	1	2	3	4	5
Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around social injustices	1	2	3	4	5
Other people around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice	1	2	3	4	5
Other people around me are aware of issues of social injustices and power inequalities in our society	1	2	3	4	5
In the future, I will do my best to ensure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard	1	2	3	4	5
In the future, I intend to engage in activities that will promote social justice	1	2	3	4	5
In the future, I intend to work collaboratively with others so that they can define their own problems and build their own capacity to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5

Do you support the US national anthem protests as a way to bring attention to injustices in the US?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am ambivalent/undecided
- d. I don't really care

Please provide some reasons for your answer/stance

Do you think the US national anthem protests are an effective way to bring attention to injustices in the US?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am ambivalent/undecided
- d. I don't really care

Please provide some reasons for your answer/stance

If given the opportunity, would you participate in a protest of the US national anthem in order to bring attention to injustices in the US?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am ambivalent/undecided

Please provide some reasons for your answer/stance

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Vita

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