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# **Disability sport and activism in South Korea**



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This thesis is submitted for the degree of

*Doctor of Philosophy*

October 2020

# Declaration

The work in this thesis is based on research carried out by Inhyang Choi under the supervision of Prof. Brett Smith, and with another PhD student Damian Haslett within the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at the University of Durham in the United Kingdom. No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification and it is all my own work unless referenced to the contrary in the text.

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# Acknowledgements

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# Abstract

Disability sports can be a powerful platform for activism because disabled elite athletes have the platform to potentially to highlight injustice both within and outside sports. This was recently stressed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) through their 2019-2022 strategic policy plan to promote disability activism through disability sports contexts. However, there are no studies that directly examine who—from the disabled non-athlete and elite athlete communities—actually engages in activism the most. In addition, most studies have paid exclusive attention to disabled elite athlete activism as the sole example of disability activism in the disability sports context in Western countries. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore disabled sports and activism in South Korea. A sequential mixed-method design was used to meet the aim. First, activism orientation was measured amongst elite disabled athletes ( $n=100$ ) and the results compared with results from recreational athletes ( $n=100$ ) and non-athletes ( $n=200$ ). The quantitative analysis revealed that elite athletes were more willing to engage in activism than recreational athletes and non-athletes. Second, 18 elite athletes, 15 recreational athletes, 12 non-athletes and four NPC members were interviewed to explore the types of activism that can enable social missions to be achieved, and the reasons why (motivators) they engaged in activism and why they were reluctant to do so (barriers). The narrative analysis revealed a diverse range of activism (e.g., sports-based, political, social, economic, scholarly, online). Thematic analysis showed that compared to non-athletes and recreational athletes, elite athletes are better positioned to speak out for social change. These findings enrich the understanding of disability sports activism through the lens of cultural sport psychology and sociology. Finally, the thesis concludes with methodological, theoretical and practical implications of the research, by emphasising how disabled sports can be supported in their social missions.

# List of Constituent Publications

## **Peer-reviewed journal publications**

Choi, I., Haslett, D., & Smith, B. (2019). Disabled athlete activism in South Korea: A mixed-method study, *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1-7. [10.1080/1612197X.2019.1674903](https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2019.1674903)

Haslett, D., Choi, I., & Smith, B (2020). Para athlete activism: A qualitative examination of disability activism through Paralympic sport in Ireland, *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 47. [10.1016/j.psychsport.2019.101639](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2019.101639)

Haslett, D., Monforte, J., Choi, I., & Smith, B (2020). Promoting Para athlete activism: critical insights from key stakeholders in Ireland, *Sociology of Sport Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2019-0174>

Choi, I., Haslett, D., Javier, M., & Smith, B. (2020). The influence of Confucianism on Para-sport activism, *Sociology of Sport Journal*. <http://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2020-0041>

## **Non peer-reviewed journal publication**

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## **Conference publications**

Choi, I. & Smith, B (2019, July). *Exploring activism type in social justice and disability: status and prospects of the disability social movement*. Presented at the 15th European Congress of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC), Munster, Germany. <http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/3255/>

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Presented at the 6th International Conference for Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise, Vancouver, Canada. <http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/3257/>

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# **PART I**

Introducing and contextualising the research

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# Introduction

## 1.0 What is this PhD about?

This PhD offers a nuanced analysis of disabled sports and activism in South Korea, using a sequential mixed-method approach. Firstly, the quantitative phase describes the differences in the level of activism orientation amongst three groups of disabled individuals, namely elite athletes, recreational athletes and non-athletes. Secondly, the qualitative phase explores the types of activism that can enable social missions to be achieved, and the reasons why (motivators) disabled elite athletes engaged in activism and why they were reluctant to do so (barriers). To better understand Para sports activism in South Korea, a comparative examination was carried out of qualitative data derived from disabled recreational athletes, disabled non-athletes and members of the national Paralympic committee. This thesis sheds new light on Para-sports activism by exploring the stories of the above groups of individuals through the lens of cultural sports psychology and sociology. In practical terms, this thesis represents an opportunity for athletes and disability sports stakeholders who have a limited understanding of disability sports activism to support motivation-based approaches to activism in the field of disability sports. My hope is that this study can serve as a



steppingstone towards bringing about a real-life impact by supporting the rights of disabled individuals and relieving them of the social oppression that they suffer.

## 1.1 Background

There has recently been a growth of scholarly interest in disability activism within sport and exercise psychology and sociology (e.g., Haslett, Fitzpatrick, & Breslin, 2017; Marin-Urquiza, Ferreira, & Van Biesen, 2018). One recent line of disability sports research has been that of disability sports activism due to the increasing attention paid to Paralympic Games by the media and the potential of disabled elite athletes to use their social platform to raise awareness of disability issues (e.g., Bundon & Hurd Clark, 2014; Braye, 2016; Haslett & Smith, 2019). Smith, Bundon and Best (2016) defined disability sports activism as action whereby disabled elite athletes use their sporting platforms to advocate for social change, either in wider society or within the disability sports context. Academic organisations such as the *International Society of Sport Psychology* have recently encouraged sport and exercise psychologists to conduct scholarly research into disability sports in order to promote social, political and community diversity and equity. Moreover, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC, 2019) developed a new agenda to use Para-sports as a platform from which to advocate for disability rights (see [www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)).

Despite this growing interest in the topic, there are still important gaps in what we know about disability sports activism. Firstly, there are no studies that directly examine who—from the disabled non-athlete and elite athlete communities—actually engages in activism the most. Secondly, most of the previous studies have paid exclusive attention to disabled elite athlete activism as the sole example of disability activism in the disability sports context. However, to examine disability sports activism in more complex ways, multiple perspectives of relevant life stories are needed, including the voices of key people within national Paralympic committees. Thirdly, empirical evidence regarding disability

sports activism is mainly limited to Western settings, with relatively little being known about the reality in non-Western countries.

The cultural frame in which disability sports activism unfolds matters deeply because cultures shape self-identity, such as how we think, feel and behave (McGannon & Smith, 2015). Even though ignoring the cultural dimension means missing a key element that shapes disability sports activism, in this field of study cultural influences seem to be a by-product of research rather than a focus. Looking at studies based on Western countries for example (e.g., Bundon & Hurd Clark, 2014; Haslett, Choi, & Smith, 2020), it is clear that the cultural gap is quite moderate, and therefore naturalistic generalisations (i.e., those made on the basis of the recognition of similarities in the results) are feasible (Smith, 2018). However, the culture of South Korea includes certain distinct elements. Given the relative absence of knowledge of this subject in the South Korean context, acknowledging and taking into account its unique cultural perspectives seems sensible and timely. In line with this reasoning, I initially adopted a Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP) approach, since it was felt that this approach would be adequate for the study design. Progressively, however, it acted as a sensitising approach in that it encouraged a deeper consideration of the influence of cultural values and pushed me to consider what makes South Korea a unique cultural context. Thus, this thesis aims to expand the understanding of disability sports activism and the disability rights movement in South Korea.

## **1.2 Overview of the thesis**

This thesis unfolds as follows. The rest of Part I (chapters Two and Three) introduces and contextualises the research and describes how it was conducted. **Chapter Two** reviews the key literature pertaining to the research context. This includes previous work in areas related to the topic of study, and theoretical and conceptual ideas relevant to understanding the material covered in this thesis. This broadly includes an overview of the literature related to disability models, the Paralympic movement, athlete activism, cultural sport psychology,

and the South Korean cultural context. **Chapter Three** introduces the methodological and paradigmatic underpinnings of the research, alongside the methods used to collect and analyse the data. It further explains the ethical considerations, the sampling procedure and the critical methodological measures taken to ensure the quality of the research. In addition, I provide critical reflection how I situate myself within the research.

In Part II (chapters Four to Eight), I present the main body of the empirical results. **Chapter Four** explores the quantitative results regarding activism orientation across the disabled athlete and non-athlete communities in South Korea. This chapter provides three perspectives of the results, including group differences in activism orientation amongst elite and recreational athletes, as well as non-athletes; differences in activism orientation based on gender, onset of disability and age; and the relation between activism orientation and athlete identity. In the section on the qualitative results, for each chapter—**Chapter Five** (elite athletes), **Chapter Six** (recreational athletes) and **Chapter Seven** (non-athletes) —I offer a typology of activism using an operational definition and the corresponding criteria based on the participants' stories. I also propose for each group a possible mechanism for fostering or deterring engagement in activism, depending on the participants' characteristics. **Chapter Eight** continues in the same vein and expands on the collective stories of disability sports activism by exploring various types of activism, as well as the motivating factors behind and barriers to engaging in activism amongst the board members of South Korea's national Paralympic committee. This participant group was able to provide three multifaceted perspectives based on their experiences — as former athletes, as retired athletes, and as board members of the national Paralympic committee.

In Part III, **Chapter Nine** draws the thesis to a close by providing cultural discussion and conclusion. A cross-cultural interpretation offers novel insights into disability sports activism, and the methodological and theoretical implications of the research are highlighted, as are the practical implications that are relevant as far as socio-political and

socio-cultural measures designed to encourage the disability rights movement are concerned.

Finally, the thesis ends by outlining certain recommendations for future research.

## Literature review

### 2.0 Overview

In this chapter, I present the contextual background and literature related to the subject of my research. In *Section 2.1*, I describe the disability rights movement in the context of five disability models. In *Section 2.2*, I outline the history of the Paralympic movement and present a number of stories of disabled elite-athlete activism. In *Section 2.3*, I specifically describe disability and the Paralympic movement in South Korea. Then, I explain a critical disability studies approach (*Section 2.4*) and the framework of Cultural Sport Psychology (*Section 2.5*). Finally, I provide research aims and objectives of this study.

### 2.1 Disability rights movement in the context of different disability models

Disability can have profoundly different implications on the lives of disabled people (and on society at large) in the area of sport, depending on how it is explained and understood (Smith & Bundon, 2017). I will introduce the disability movement in the context of five disability models: the moral model, medical model, the social model, social relational model, and the human rights model.

#### 2.1.1 The moral model

The oldest model of disability is the moral one, which was prevalent until the mid-1800s. According to the moral model, most people viewed disability as sin and punishment received from God for wrong actions done in the past by ancestors (Andrew, 2016). This view shed shame on the entire family when one of their members had a disability. Families were embarrassed when they had disabled children and, therefore, they would often hide the disabled member from any interaction with society. Disabled people had no rights to participate in the mainstream society, including leisure, education, and employment (Andrew, 2016).

#### 2.1.2 The medical model

The medical model has been the dominant approach to understanding disability throughout history. It defines disability as the lack of ability—due to an impairment—to perform an activity within the range considered ‘normal’ for a person (Smith & Bundon, 2017; Thomas, 2007). There is huge controversy about the medical model in that it depicts disability as abnormal and as a personal (physical) tragedy (Smith & Bundon, 2017). Another danger with the medical model is that any solutions to the ‘problem’ of disability are up to the individual, which then leaves the very real problem of social oppression and stigmatisation unchallenged and places the weight of responsibility onto the shoulders of the disabled themselves (Goodley, 2016; Smith & Bundon, 2017). Therefore, the medical model has given rise to a debate within the disability rights movement and disability studies, since the practice of depicting disability as a personal tragedy and as an inevitable cause of psychological trauma paints an obviously negative picture of disability.

The medical model has often underpinned the way in which disability is perceived and depicted in various sporting contexts. For example, for a long time Paralympians were often depicted in the media either as tragic victims of personal misfortune provoking pity, or as inspirational ‘supercrrips’ who transcend their impairment through sport (Hardin & Hardin, 2004). The supercrip narrative provides a biased stereotype of disability by failing to acknowledge the wider population of disabled people who are not elite athletes (Howe,

2008; Purdue & Howe, 2012). As another example, disability sports classify athletes according to certain medical criteria, which is a medical practice conducted (mostly) by non-disabled people that can lead to stigmatisation and alienation within the hierarchy of bodies (Howe, 2008). Thus, disabled athletes are used to being seen as ‘tragic victims’ who can somehow be redeemed through sports and through the admiration of the largely non-disabled crowds that follow the disability sports community (Howe, 2008; Purdue & Howe, 2012; Smith et al., 2016). Given these issues and concerns with the medical model, the disability rights movement developed an alternative social model of disability.

### 2.1.3 The Social model

In addressing the problems associated with the medical model, the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) established the United Kingdom (UK) social model, which was often referred to simply as ‘social model’. According to the social model, disability is not caused by biological impairment, but by social oppression, which limits engagement of individuals with impairments in society (Shakespeare, 2001; Smith & Bundon, 2016).

The social model of disability has been adopted by researchers in the academic field. The positive aspects of the social model have been revealed in three main ideas developed by researchers (McLaughlin & Coleman-Fountain, 2014; Shakespeare, 2001). Firstly, the social model has been effective in building the social movement identity or ideology of disabled people, generating a clear agenda for social change (McLaughlin & Coleman-Fountain, 2014). Secondly, the social model has been an effective steppingstone for the ‘liberation’ of disabled people. According to Oliver, “the social model is a practical tool, not a theory, an idea or a concept” (2004, p. 30). For example, since the emergence of the social model, the UK has required that all public buildings and public transport be accessible to disabled people, and voluntary organisations have used the social model as a framework for their projects. Thirdly, the social model has been effective psychologically in improving the self-esteem of disabled people. In the traditional model of disability, people

with an impairment might blame themselves for ‘their’ disability, as if it was their fault. The social model perspective, on the other hand, encouraged reforms, even in the use of language; for example, the term ‘invalid’ in the medical model merely reinforced an individual’s physical limitation, but now, with the social model, it is ‘lack of self-esteem’ that is considered an obstacle to disabled people engaging in society (Shakespeare, 2001).

However, the social model of disability also draws controversy within the academic literature (Davis, 2013; Smith & Bundon, 2017). There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the social model ignores impairment as an important aspect of many disabled people’s lives. For example, it strongly disowns individual and medical approaches, and thus risks implying that impairments are not a problem for disabled people (Davis, 2013). Secondly, the social model rigidly defines disability as a consequence of societal oppression. With the social model perspective, the question about disability distinctions is not only whether disabled people are oppressed in any given situation, but also the extent to which they are oppressed. Davis (2013) indicated that with this inconsistency it was logically difficult for a qualitative researcher to find disabled people who were not oppressed. Thus, even though the many positive changes brought about by the social model of disability have helped increase awareness of disability rights (McLaughlin & Coleman-Fountain, 2014; Smith & Bundon, 2017), there is still a need for further improvements to be made and for shortcomings to be adequately addressed.

#### 2.1.4 The Social relational model

The social relational model (SRM) of disability (Thomas, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2014) is a conceptually progressive model whereby impairment, disability, and disablism are manifestations of social relationships rather than originating in the individual, as conceived by the social and medical models.

In the SRM, disablism is defined as “a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho- emotional well-being” (Thomas, 2007, p.73).



Reeve (2014) explained three different forms of social oppression caused by disablism, including structural disablism, negative social interaction with others, and internalised oppression. ‘Structural disablism’ is associated with exclusion from physical environments (e.g., opportunities, services and activities in public and private spaces). ‘Negative social interaction with others’ is related to reactions (e.g., staring, asking questions of assumed tragedy) of others towards disabled people. The experiences of direct or indirect reactions with little respect to disability can contribute emotional distress of disabled people. ‘Internalised oppression’ is the result of self-hostility, especially at the subconscious level, perpetuated by the negative opinion that disabled people have of themselves. Self-esteem can suffer great damage as the result of internalised oppression, and this can lead to internalising ablest social norms whereby one’s status in the social hierarchy is highly affected by having a disability (Haslett & Smith, 2020).

In addition to disablism, SRM improves the understanding of impairment, by introducing the notion that restrictions can arise from everyday physical and social influence of physical impairment. Thomas (2004) called these ‘impairment effects’. She considered impairment as a biological experience, and socio-culturally constructed (Smith & Perrier, 2014; Thomas, 2014). In other words, SRM proposes that people can experience several forms of social oppression and psycho-emotional disablism, and these forms emerge not from the individual’s mind but are real and emerge out of social relationships. The biological reality of impairment can harm psycho-emotional wellbeing, and, at the same time, impairments can become a site for social oppression. Thus, SRM can help understanding disability at the individual, social, cultural, and political levels.

#### 2.1.5 The human rights model

The human rights model presents a real opportunity to apply the principles of the social model of disability in practice (Smith & Bundon, 2017). In contrast to the social model, the human rights model is embedded in a legal convention in the form of policy guidelines: The United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPWD) (United

Nations, 2006). The UNCRPWD is focused on social approaches that disability is the outcome of social processes (Minsner & Darcy, 2014; Smith & Bundon, 2017). The aim is to promote change at an international level by promoting eight principles: (a) respect for inherent dignity and individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices, and the independence of people; (b) non-discrimination; (c) full and effective participation and inclusion in society; (d) respect for differences and acceptance of disabled people as part of human diversity and humanity; (e) equality of opportunity; (f) accessibility; (g) equality between men and women; and (h) respect for the evolving capacities of disabled children and the right of disabled children to preserve their identities (Misener & Darcy, 2014). This framework has worked for the basis for alleviating discrimination against the disabled and recognising that disabled people have the right to access services in all areas of citizenship, including sporting opportunities (Smith & Bundon, 2017).

Degener (2016) identified three differences between the social model and the human rights model. Firstly, the social model merely explains disability, whereas the human rights model focuses on the value in disability policies that acknowledge the human dignity of disabled people. For example, the CRPWD reflects this in the language used in its articles, which focus on the right to equal recognition. Secondly, while the social model supports anti-discrimination policies in respect to most civil rights, the human rights model of disability encompasses the full gamut of human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. For example, the social model of disability was broadly conceptualised as a minority model in most countries in the world, but the human rights model perceives disability as an alternative needs-based social policy that portrays disabled persons as dependent individuals. Thirdly, the social model ignores the fact that disabled people sometimes have to deal with pain due to their impairment, whereas in the human rights model impairments or disabilities are perceived as part of a disabled person's life, ensuring that they are taken into account when social justice theories are developed. Thus, the human rights model can be applied in many circumstances, both at the 'macro' (systemic) and

‘micro’ (stakeholder) level, including in the development of government policy and legislation, and in disability rights research.

The human rights-based approach can also be applied to disability sports. Several studies have highlighted instances of disability sports advocates using legal precedents set by disability right activists to enhance the practice of disability sports (Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2015; Smith & Caddick, 2015; Smith et al., 2016). For example, one aspect of Canada’s 2006 Sport Policy, entitled ‘Sport for Persons with a Disability’, encourages active participation in sports by disabled people, and facilitates their social inclusion through sports (Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2015). Smith and Caddick (2015) examined the effects on people with a spinal injury (perceived as an example of disability) of a socially oppressive environment in care homes offering some restricted sporting participation and a physically active lifestyle. Meanwhile, research by Smith et al. (2016) on disability sports and social activism noted that political activist identities and disability first identities (rather than perceived ‘athlete first’ identities) were common features in people involved in the disability rights movement. In their study, the researchers focused not just on the social model but also on the human rights-based approach, in line with the UNCRPWD.

However, the human rights model has not been applied to all types of disability as far as individual experiences, policy responses or disability services are concerned. For example, people with dementia are frequently collocated in the medical model by non-disabled people (e.g., clinicians who often make decisions on behalf of disabled people and prescribe a treatment regime, often only pharmacologically focused) (Mental Health Foundation, 2015). There is therefore a continuing struggle to ensure that the legal rights of the disabled people are properly respected and applied.

## **2.2 Paralympic movement and Para sports activism**

### **2.2.1 The Paralympic movement: past and present**

The Paralympic Games emerged from a small gathering of British World War II veterans in 1948 in Stoke Mandeville, the UK (Blauwet & Willick, 2012). For the first time, 16 disabled people were given the opportunity to take part in sports competitions. These competitions planted the seed for the Paralympic Games, which later became one of the largest sporting events around the globe (Schantz & Gilbert, 2012). The Stoke Mandeville Games represented a turning point, since they stimulated a new understanding of sport and athletics as being not just a rehabilitative tool but also as an opportunity to celebrate athleticism (Bailey, 2008). Due to this novel approach, disabled people began to be perceived as athletes in sporting events rather than as medical cases. In 1960, twelve years after the first Stoke Mandeville Games, an international Para-sports event took place in Rome using the same venues as the Olympic Games, which were being hosted by Italy at the time (Bailey, 2008). Around 400 athletes representing 23 countries from across the world took part. These games were labelled the 'Paralympics' to underscore their 'parallel' status with the main Olympic Games (Blauwet & Willick, 2012). In other words, even though disabled sports were initially defined in terms of the medical model of disability, the Paralympic movement managed to bring about a shift to the social model of disability, with disabled sports competitions having an equal status with the Olympic Games (Hargreaves, 2000).

After the first Paralympic Games, the range of disabilities that could be included expanded and, therefore, more elaborate classification rules were developed to enable fair competition by grouping disabled athletes based on equality (Hargreaves, 2000). For example, in the 1988 Paralympic Games in Seoul, South Korea, the sports competitions were categorised according to the type and extent of the disability: wheelchair users, athletes with cerebral palsy, athletes with amputations, and visually impaired athletes (K. Park & Ok, 2018). This new categorisation system not only decreased the number of categories based on the degree of impairment, but also constituted a paradigm shift whereby assessment of the Paralympics matured from that of a 'clinical sport' to a competition for disabled athletes

with athletic abilities comparable to those of Olympic (i.e., non-disabled) athletes (K. Park & Ok, 2018).

Another milestone was passed in 1989 with the birth of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), which created a collective voice for an advocacy movement that supported the growth and development of Paralympic sports (Tweedy & Howe, 2011). In 2001, cooperation between the IPC and International Olympic Committee (IOC) reached an unprecedented level with the adoption of the ‘one bid, one city’ model, according to which the Paralympic and Olympic Games would always be held in the same city, under the direction of the same organising committee and using the same competition venues (Bailey, 2008). This successful collaboration continues to this day (Blauwet & Willick, 2012).

The Paralympic movement has gradually developed into a rights-based movement advocating for inclusion and equality in sporting opportunities and social inclusion of disabled people (Blauwet & Willick, 2012). Along with increasing the profile of disability sports, the accessibility of the built environment has also been incorporated into the framework of disability right advocacy. For example, in preparation for the 2018 Winter Paralympics in Pyeong-Chang, South Korea, the organising committee sought to improve accessibility not just to the sporting venues but also to the public transit system, including trains and buses as well as sidewalks and many private residences (J. W. Park & Kim, 2019). In other words, the 2018 Paralympics represented not just a stepping stone for Para-athletes, but also an opportunity for the wider disabled community to have public spaces made more accessible, thus ensuring a greater level of societal integration.

While the Paralympic movement has helped raise awareness of the disability rights movement in general, the media is also considered an important means of communication to inform the public about disability empowerment and the achievements of disabled athletes (Blauwet & Willick, 2012; Brittain & Beacom, 2016). Given that the Paralympic Games are one of the world’s largest multi-sports events, messages conveyed during these games through the media (e.g., television, newspapers, social media, etc.) often have a profound

effect on shaping public consciousness of disability issues (Shor & Yonay, 2010) and promoting disability equality (Brittain & Beacom, 2016). Brittain and Beacom (2016) argued that disability sports are a strong media platform, since many non-disabled people who watch the Paralympics are largely unaware of disability rights issues. For example, the 2008 Paralympic Games held in Beijing, China, garnered a television audience of 3.8 billion people around the world. Chinese television featured disabled people accessing public facilities, and this had a strong impact both symbolically and at the practical level, given China's disabled population of over 80 million. In 2016, the Paralympic Games held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, were broadcast to 4 billion people in over 150 countries. Moreover, with the recent emergence of innovative social media platforms, disabled elite athletes can now show their multiple identities, such as an athletic identity, an inspirational role-model identity, or an identity of a conscientious citizen campaigning for social justice (Haslett & Smith, 2019). Thus, the Paralympic movement might, as is sometimes said, be an opportunity to improve the lives of 'ordinary disabled people' by promoting the values of equality and excellence, and facilitates disability activism aimed at reversing the oppression and discrimination that disabled people have faced due to their impairments (Braye, Dixon, & Gibbons, 2013; Brittain & Beacom, 2016; Smith et al., 2016).

However, the Paralympic Games have also been portrayed as having a negative impact on the disability rights movement (Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2015). There are at least four reasons why the Paralympics have not been fully successful in achieving disability equality in reality and have even brought about negative perceptions. Firstly, some disabled activists have been dissatisfied with the way in which the Paralympics have been portrayed by the media, claiming that the coverage is based on biased stereotypes (e.g., the medical model) (Braye et al., 2013). Essentially, their criticism has revolved around the view that the world of sports focuses unapologetically on bodily perfection, and has a medicalised view of disability, which disability activists have been fighting to change (Purdue & Howe, 2012). Secondly, even though the Paralympic movement has changed its focus to equality and

empowerment for the disabled community, disabled sports continue to be managed mostly by non-disabled people, a situation that inevitably leads to a hierarchical environment and conflicting interests (Smith et al., 2016). Thirdly, the disability classification system (e.g., according to the type of disability; based on medical or functional assessments) creates further discrimination and disempowerment for disabled athletes by introducing divisions between the Paralympic and Olympic games (Schantz & Gilbert, 2012). Fourthly, the increase in the media's interest in Paralympic has essentially had a positive influence only on people with mild impairment (Braye, 2016), causing many disability activists to believe that disability activism must be reserved for people with severe impairments. Thus, given these non-optimal perceptions of the Paralympic games, many have argued that the Paralympics have not been successful in achieving disability equality (Braye et al., 2013).

#### 2.2.2 Developing social justice through disability sports activism

With the Paralympic movement acting as a vehicle to improve equality of opportunity (Blauwet & Willick, 2012), the role of disabled elite athletes is considered important in terms of highlighting the injustice both within and outside the arena of sports. A number of recent academic studies have focused on disabled athlete activism (e.g., Braye, 2016; Bundon & Hurd Clark, 2015; Haslett & Smith, 2019; Howe, 2018; Smith et al., 2016). Bundon and Hurd Clarke (2015) defined two forms of athlete activism: a) when athletes use their celebrity status to draw attention to social injustice as an opportunity for change (e.g., advocating for gender equality), b) when athletes take direct action to reform the field of sports, viewing it as a suitable area for bringing about social change (e.g., speaking out against gender discrimination in sports). In both cases, athletes use the influence that their position grants them. In addition, disabled athletes can raise awareness of social injustice issues in various advocacy ways, from the more congenial (e.g., making suggestions for change; giving motivational talks, signing petitions for disability rights) to the more confrontational (e.g., demanding inclusive policies and insisting on equal rights; writing

blogs or tweets about disability inequality) (Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2014; Braye, 2016; Smith et al., 2016).

Smith et al. (2016) identified two different activist identities amongst British elite athletes with impairments: a) a sporting activist identity — activism inside sports aimed at transforming practices and reforming organisations that restrict individual or team sporting success, and b) a political activist identity — activism outside sports aimed at resisting and transforming the discourse, and reforming policies and environmental structures that socially oppress disabled people in their everyday lives (Smith et al., 2016). Braye (2016) argued that disabled elite athletes should use the platform of the Paralympic Games to raise awareness of disability rights in wider society, because the Paralympics can give the wrong impression that all disabled people can compete in sports. Haslett and Smith (2019) pointed out that disabled athletes potentially have an influence to highlight disability rights and injustices both within and outside sports, just as other types of activism (e.g., racism, LGBT) have been successfully embraced by other (non-disabled) athletes.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has recently drawn attention to disability rights in both the sociocultural and disability sports context through its latest 2019–2022 Strategic Plan (IPC, 2019). In Objective 2.1.2 of the ‘Strategic Priority 2’ plan, it specifically laid out its equality agenda ‘within’ the Para-sports community by emphasising equal opportunities for athletes with varying types of impairment, as well as fair event programmes for both male and female athletes. In the ‘Strategic Priority 3’ section of the document, the IPC outlined various strategies to achieving a cultural shift by leveraging the positive impact that disability sports can have. For example, the IPC proposed a change in the storyline regarding disability by taking advantage of various stakeholders (Objective 3.1), highlighted the social barriers that disable people with impairments by using the credible voices of disabled elite athletes (Objective 3.3), called for an extension of the impact of the Paralympic movement beyond sporting events to the academic sphere (Objective 3.4), and highlighted the importance of cultivating a generation of Para-athletes



who can work as advocates for disability rights (Objectives 3.6). In sum, these strategies provide a refined vision and a mission for a better world for all by using Para-sports as a catalyst for positive change.

However, there have also been studies that argued against promoting disability activism through Para-sports (Powis, 2018; Smith et al., 2016). There are two main reasons why athletes could prefer to be seen solely as sportsmen competing to win, and not as activists advocating for change in the disability community and in disability sports. First, most athletes are unaware of the level of oppression and discrimination experienced by disabled people within society (Powis, 2018; Smith et al., 2016). For example, some British athletes interviewed by Smith et al. (2016) believed that disabled people were on the whole treated fairly, equally and respectfully in society. The majority of these athletes claimed to have a sporting activist identity, with their aim being to bring about social change within sports rather than challenging discrimination outside of sports. Similarly, Powis (2018) pointed out that in the case of athletes who tend to reject the identity of a 'disabled' person, engagement in disability activism was not practicable. Second, many disabled athletes are concerned about the risks that are inherent in engaging in disability activism. Examples of such risks include adverse repercussions or disadvantages in the form of policies or practices that might indirectly make it difficult for athletes to take part in sports (Bundon & Hurd Clarke, 2015). Although their orientation to engage in activism may be based on an awareness of the existence of social injustice outside of sports, some disabled elite athletes can face discrimination or a backlash as a result of their taking a critical look at sports or voicing their opinions in public (e.g., reluctance from their sponsors to collaborate) (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010).

Even though there are some negative perspectives regarding activism in the disability sports context, disability sports can be a platform for conveying a vital social and political message, both inside and outside of sports. However, it remains important shortcomings in the academic research on disability sports activism. Firstly, most disability

studies that promote disability rights and human equality have overlooked the potential impact of the Paralympics and of disabled athletes on the disability community and movement (Braye, 2016; Smith et al., 2016). Secondly, research on athlete activism has predominantly focused on how elite athletes use their sporting platforms to address social issues within wider society, rather than within the sporting culture. Thirdly, the IPC emphasises the importance of taking into account the voices of both disabled elite athletes and Para-sports organisations, such as National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), but most previous research has paid exclusive attention to ‘current disabled elite athletes’ as the sole agents of disability sports activism. Acknowledging NPC members’ perspectives is critical because, given their positions, they can have a powerful impact on planning, organising and directing the disability sports movement (Patatas, De Bosscher, Derom, & De Rycke, 2020). Fourthly, only relatively few empirical qualitative studies have focused on disability sports activism Para-sports and athlete activism, and the evidence has been insufficient to quantitative approach (Bundon & Hurd Clark, 2015; Braye, 2016; Haslett & Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2016, Powis, 2018).

### **2.3 Disability and Paralympic movement in South Korea**

Different countries have different histories, and cultures are often founded on their unique ideologies (Zhuang, 2016). Crucially, however, academic discussion on disability rights movements has remained largely unexplored within non-Western countries (You & Hwang, 2018). As a non-Western country, South Korea has a unique culture based on Confucian cultural praxes (S. M. Kim, 2013). Confucianism has been a dominant influence in South Korea for thousands of years, reflecting not just the identity that people associate themselves with but also guiding how people should behave in certain contexts, including disability, sports and activism (Choi, 2005; Sleziak, 2014). This Confucianism-based culture has spread out across all areas of society in South Korea, including gender relations, age and seniority, societal status and disability, within a hierarchical and authoritarian social

structure that is rigidly stratified from top to bottom (Hyun, 2001; Sleziak, 2014).

Traditionally, in South Korea having a disability has been perceived as a punishment inflicted by supernatural demons upon people whose ancestors lived a vicious life (K.Y. Kim, Shin, Yu, & Kim, 2017; Sleziak, 2014). Due partly to Confucian cultural norms and historical customs, many South Koreans still perceive disability to be undesirable in medical practices and demand that disabled people conform in order to undergird patriarchy and the capitalist state (K.Y. Kim et al., 2017). Therefore, South Korean disabled people have been historically challenged and experienced unequal treatment in every segment of South Korean society (Ahn et al., 2018). There are still many persisting issues, including psychological trauma, afflicting disabled people in South Korea.

One example is that until 1981, when the Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities was enacted, disabled people could only receive personal care (e.g., everyday tasks) from their relatives (Hwang & Roulstone, 2015). Parents with a negative attitude towards disability refused to take their responsibility and care for their disabled children. Moreover, this situation was aggravated by the fact that some disabled people were unaware of their rights to a reasonable standard of life and preferred to avoid questioning their family if they treated badly (Hwang & Roulstone, 2015). As another example, in 1988 the South Korean government established an eligibility criterion for disabled people to access welfare benefits. However, they clarified that impairment focused on the physical and functional limitation, not on the social barriers (Kim, 2006). This system continued to provide unequal treatment and limited support to a wide spectrum of disability groups on the basis of medical assessments.

The unequal treatment towards disabled people led to the disability movement in South Korea. The movement has had some success as far as improving the rights of disabled people is concerned, even though the documented history of the disability rights movement in South Korea is shorter than that of Western countries, and there is still discrimination and unfair treatment meted out to the disabled. The evolution of South Korea's disability rights

movement went through three broad phases: the quickening phase (1945–mid-1980s), the developing phase (1989–mid-1990s), and the diversity phase (late 1990s) (K. M. Kim, 2008; You & Hwang, 2018). During these three periods, the disability movement evolved from providing ‘care’ (essentially by the parents of disabled children), to granting ‘rights’ (led by people with ‘mild’ disabilities, such as those with possibly more than one disability but fewer limitations in terms of functional capacity than the severely disabled), and finally to ensuring ‘self-determination’ (led by people with ‘severe’ disabilities, such as those with seriously limitations in terms of functional capacity in daily life). These changes can be assumed to reflect the fact that perspectives regarding disabled people have gradually shifted from considering them as non-ordinary to regarding them more as people worthy of consideration (You & Hwang, 2018). Furthermore, the needs of disabled people have traditionally been addressed by enacting or amending laws regarding their freedom of movement, or by improving awareness. For example, in 1991 the so-called ‘Disabled Persons’ Day’ was introduced in order to raise public awareness of the difficulties faced by disabled people and to promote their rights. Even today, South Korea’s disability rights movement continues to exert pressure to ensure that disabled people’s voices are heard, but despite its successes, disabled people continue to suffer discrimination, stigmatisation and unfair treatment.

One of the strongest catalysts for change in South Korea was the country’s hosting of the Paralympic Games in 1988 (which it repeated in 2018). Following the 1988 Seoul Summer Paralympic Games, considerable changes occurred within the disabled community and within disability sports, based on a wider acceptance of human rights, equality and social integration for disabled people as a result of a) new regulations and laws, b) Para-sports programmes for disabled athletes, and c) the establishment of organisations for disabled people (Son, 2014). For example, the government emphasised the importance of having disabled people participate in physical education and physical activities together with non-disabled people. It also enacted the Anti-Discrimination Law to improve the overall

environment for disabled people and prevent discrimination against them within the legal system (Son, 2014). Moreover, as a result of the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Winter Paralympic Games, the perceptions towards disability sports and disabled people have been improved in four different ways: culturally, environmentally, geographically, and economically (Korean Paralympic Committee, 2017, 2018). Y. M. Kim and Lee (2018) also found that the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympics brought about three positive changes for the disabled community: a) income generation from facilities for the disabled, b) an improvement in the thinking of the disabled, c) an increase in the level of interest in and improved sporting facilities for the disabled. Since the country's hosting of these two Paralympics, interest in the disabled community in South Korea has increased substantially, with the target of this interest mostly being the community of disabled elite athletes. In other words, holding Paralympic Games can be a tangible as well as intangible way of highlighting the importance of disability activism and grasping opportunities to improve conditions for the disabled community.

Nevertheless, reactions to the Paralympics were not all positive. For example, in 1987 young disabled activists discovered that the budget for the 1988 Paralympics was over four times the amount of the total welfare budget for disabled people who were not disabled elite athletes (HamkkeGulum, 2003). This caused them to organise a mass public protest encouraging people to boycott the Paralympics and to demand greater resources and services for disabled people. In addition, despite the increase in awareness brought about by the two Paralympics, the actual Paralympic Games were less popular and received less coverage compared to the non-disabled games. In South Korea, the Paralympic Games have traditionally received 'glittering interest' and have been perceived as a sporting event in a league of its own, of interest only to the disabled sports community (Song, 2015). As regards media coverage, it was surprising that the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympics received greater media attention outside South Korea than inside the country. For example, the UK's Channel 4 dedicated a total of 100 hours to the Paralympics Games, the USA 94 hours, Japan 62

hours and Germany 60 hours. In contrast, South Korean television gave a meagre 18 hours of coverage to the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympics. One gold medallist in the 2018 Paralympics, Ui-Hyeon Shin, expressed his disappointment during his acceptance speech after winning the medal:

*“Interest in disability sports by the public is getting bigger compared to before, but it is sad that the Paralympics are still being broadcast for only a few hours in the media. I hope that the Pyeong-Chang Paralympics can be a turning point in terms of improving public awareness of Para-sports and disability.”* (Shin, March 17, 2018)

Greater publicity for the Paralympic Games and for disability sports can be a good platform for the disability movement, but the reality in South Korea is that disability sports are still relatively marginalised. Even though the Paralympics have been seen to generate increasingly positive results for the disability movement both within and beyond sports, the narratives of South Korea’s disability rights movement regarding disability sports have not been documented so far, and most disability studies that promote disability rights and human equality have overlooked the potential influence of the Paralympics and of Para-sports to have an influence on the disabled community.

## **2.4 A critical disability studies approach**

Critical Disability Studies (CDS) is a paradigmatic shift for understanding of disability by creating a reflexive approach with a transformative agenda (e.g., cultural studies, gender studies) and the diversification of the critical social theory (e.g., postcolonial, queer and feminist theories) (Shildrick, 2012; Smith & Perrier, 2014). CDS has challenged the predominantly Marxist/materialist line found in the more conventional disability studies. Thus, the CDS sets primary goals for not only breaking down the impairment/non-impairment dualism, but also to reflectively understand a social phenomenon (e.g., disability oppression) by using, for instance, intersectionality (e.g., class, culture, gender) (Shildrick, 2012).

Recently, several studies on Para-sport have been connected with a CDS approach (see e.g., Haslett, Choi, & Smith, 2020; Smith & Perrier, 2015). Within a medical model of disability, disability activism could be seen as an individual problem or a personalised responsibility (Smith & Perrier, 2015). However, activism is a complex social phenomenon that requires a careful consideration of the political, theoretical and practical contexts. Thus, the CDS approach is useful because it theorises disability through cultural and relational dimensions, and also permits the study of activism through questions regarding disabled peoples' embodiment, life experiences, and identity (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). For example, the CDS approach allows the exploration not only of how an intersectional approach (e.g., social relational model of disability) can promote a better understanding of disability and activism, but also enables us to consider how various forms of activism shape the lives of disabled people (Smith, Bundon, & Best, 2016).

In my PhD thesis, I position myself as a CDS researcher by conceptualising the impairment as cultural, social, biological, and lived body. Also, I view disability sport and activism through a cultural context by using the social relational model and adopting the cultural sport psychology approach (explained next section). Thus, I critically view social justice action that challenges discrimination/oppression experienced by disabled people in society, especially disability sport, on the grounds of their positional, cultural, political and social background. For example, I discuss the relationship between disability activism and oppression in society by taking into consideration the South Korean historical and theoretical background founded on Confucianism. Thus, I produce a critical way of understanding discourses and practices of social movement, disability activism, and South Korean disability sport within the CDS approach.

## **2.5 Development and application of Cultural Sport Psychology**

In line with the CDS approach, I view disability sport and activism through the specific cultural lens of the South Korean culture. Following the upsurge of awareness of the

importance of cultural diversity in sport, many researchers have advocated for the adoption of the Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP) approach (Blodgett, Schinke, McGannon, & Fisher, 2015; McGannon & Smith, 2015; Schinke, Blodgett, Ryba, Kao, & Middleton, 2019; Ryba, Stambulova, & Schinke, 2013). The CSP approach challenges sport psychology assumptions by exploring contextualised understandings stemming from, for example, race, ethnicity and gender (Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009). The approach also emphasises different cultural values and personal meanings in social interaction, from decontextualised knowledge to new perspectives (Blodgett et al., 2015; McGannon & Smith, 2015; Schinke et al., 2019; Ryba et al., 2013). A growing number of researchers have applied this approach to various empirical areas to expand the understanding of how cultural factors are intertwined with personal experiences (Khomutova, 2015; McGannon & Smith, 2015), the importance of peer relationships in the context of sports (Schinke, McGannon, Battochio, & Wells, 2013), physical activity and participation in sports (McGannon & Schinke, 2017), and social justice (Kavoura et al., 2015).

Applying CSP to research is significant for several reasons. Firstly, in our modern globalised society, there is a heightened awareness of distinct cultural identities and people from different cultural backgrounds (Schinke, McGannon, Parham, & Lane, 2012). In the past, some cultures, such as those in the Global North, tended to dominate the psychological research scene. Acknowledging cultural diversity in psychological research is essential because, if overlooked, the data can misrepresent the experience of people belonging to a different culture and, therefore, perpetuate a stereotyped and limited understanding of psychological phenomena across and within cultural groups (Blodgett et al., 2015; Ryba & Wright, 2005). Specifically, cultural differences between East and West can be found in language (McGannon & Smith, 2015), traditional culture (Bolton, 2004), and emotional arousal levels (Lim, 2016). For example, Western individualist culture is associated with a high arousal in emotional expression, wherein individuals try to influence others, whereas Eastern collectivist cultures are associated with low arousal levels in emotional expression,



wherein individuals prefer to adjust and conform (Lim, 2016). This implies that a psychological theory grounded on Western culture can rarely apply entirely to Eastern cultures (Blodgett et al., 2015; McGannon & Smith, 2015). The study of a narrow range of cultures can lead psychologists to fail to account for a substantial amount of diversity (Blodgett et al., 2015; McGannon & Smith, 2015).

Furthermore, sport psychology practitioners are increasingly working with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and thus need to develop multicultural competencies in order to be able to acknowledge and support diverse identities in sporting and physical activity contexts (Ryba et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2012). Research based on the CSP approach supports the view that culture shapes how people think about, interact with and make sense of the world around them (Blodgett et al., 2015). Sorkkila et al. (2017) indicated that athletes' identities and behaviour are influenced by both their individual development and the cultural environment in which they are embedded. Thus, CSP plays a crucial role in understanding athletes' identity construction as a form of social process that constitutes and shapes an individual, not only as one that provides external meaning (McGannon & Smith, 2015). Ignoring cultural identities in applied sporting and physical activity settings can have a detrimental impact on many participants (e.g., alienation, decreased participation in physical activity (McGannon & Schinke, 2017).

In this regard, CSP asks researchers to consider the nuanced sociocultural issues within marginalised or disenfranchised cultural identities—in the context of social justice issues—through relevant story narratives and psychological or behavioural effects (McGannon & Smith, 2015). However, despite this, there is a dearth of empirical research on Para-sports activism amongst disabled athletes in non-Western cultures.

## **2.6 Research aims and objectives**

Aiming to address the aforementioned gaps in the knowledge, this PhD thesis seeks to shed light on disability sports and activism in South Korea. Based on the relevant literature and

critical discussions with my supervisor and another PhD student, I have identified three key sections that need to be compiled, each with a specific set of objectives. To meet these objectives, a mixed-method study design was adopted.

A) **Orientation** (*quantitative phase*): to broadly assess activist propensity amongst disabled people in South Korea

There are no specific studies that directly examine, using quantitative analysis, who—from the community of disabled non-athletes and athletes—engages in activism the most. However, based on the findings of previous qualitative research conducted in a British cultural context (Braye, 2016; Haslett & Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2016), a ‘working hypothesis’ was proposed that disabled elite athletes in South Korea would score lower on measures of orientation to engage in activism compared to disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes (WH1). This analysis will then be complemented by three control analyses examining differences in activism orientation for gender, onset of disability and age. In addition, based on the aforementioned qualitative literature and a quantitative study (Beachy et al., 2019), another working hypothesis is that having an athletic identity would be negatively correlated with activism orientation (WH2). Due to the relative lack of quantitative research, and consistent with the ‘working’ nature of the hypotheses (i.e., no strong directional hypothesis can be proposed), the nature of the analyses will be exploratory. Thus, following specific objectives can be put forward:

- To examine whether disabled elite athletes are more, less or similarly inclined to engage in activism compared to a comparative population of disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes in South Korea;
- To examine whether athletic identity and activism orientation co-occur naturally or not.

B) **Mechanisms** (*qualitative phase*): to thoroughly investigate stories of disability sports and non-sports activism in South Korea.

- To explore various types of activism, as well as when, where, why and how disabled elite athletes take action to bring about social change;
- To investigate the factors that affect the inclination to engage in activism amongst disabled elite athletes in South Korea;
- To offer comparative perspectives from other disabled participants (e.g., recreational athletes, non-athletes, former athletes, retired athletes, and KPC board members).

C) **Applications** (*discussion and conclusion*): to move from research to consideration of social change implementation.

- To offer cross-cultural interpretation of the results;
- To propose the implications of the research in three main areas, namely the methodological, theoretical and practical perspectives, and in terms of its contribution to future research.

## 2.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature pertaining to key theoretical and conceptual ideas relating to this research. I have described the disability movement as perceived through each of five disability models (i.e., the moral, medical, social, social relational, and human rights models). In addition, I reviewed the literature on the Paralympic movement and disability sports activism from the past until the present, then highlighted how the disability sports context can be an ideal platform for transferring vital social and political messages. Then, I provided the South Korean context on disability sport and activism by describing how their social movement has evolved and was challenged. Furthermore, I introduced the perspective of CDS to promote the understanding of disability as a socio-cultural phenomenon and offer

an interpretation of activism at the social, political, and cultural levels. In addition, I highlighted the importance of the CSP perspective for avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes and increasing the understanding of psychological and sociological phenomena of disability activism. However, no studies have been published that address disability sports activism from a non-Western cultural perspective. Thus, by using a mixed-method approach, this thesis aims to explore disability sports and disability activism in South Korea from athletes, non-athletes and board members in disability sports perspectives. Specifically, the quantitative phase aims to understand activism orientation amongst disabled athletes and non-athletes, and then the qualitative phase aims to investigate various types of activism, as well as when, where, how and why disabled participants engage in activism (or not, as the case may be). The overall research approach and the specific methodology selected for the empirical research phase are explained in the following chapter.

## Methods and methodology

### 3.0 Overview

This chapter describes the approach I took toward answering my research questions. I begin by introducing ontological and epistemological assumptions that guide the research (*Section 3.1*). My chosen method as mixed-method research (MMR) is introduced next (*Section 3.2*). I then introduce participants and sampling procedure (*Section 3.3*). Next, I offer a self-reflection to provide my rationale and motivation for this study and position my embodiment in the thesis (*Section 3.4*). After this, I introduce the procedures undertaken for data collection (*Section 3.5*) and data analysis (*Section 3.6*). The chapter then highlights several ethical approaches in this study (*Section 3.7*) and finally closes by describing the methodological rigor (*Section 3.8*).

### 3.1 Philosophical foundation – Ontology and epistemology

The philosophical paradigm influences the questions that researchers pose and the methods they employ to answer them (Doyle, Brady, & Bryne, 2009). Recognising that controversial debate exists in the literature about compatibility in combining qualitative and quantitative

1 methods (Bryman, 2007; Morgan, 2007) and that there may be no best philosophical  
2 paradigm that fits a specific the MMR (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007; Smith et al., 2012).

3         This study was underpinned by philosophical assumptions from interpretive  
epistemologies and ontologies. Ontologically, ‘reality’ is understood as multifaceted and  
dependent on an individual’s consciousness, and the idea of a single truth is rejected (Smith  
et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The epistemological assumption guides the inter-  
dependent relationship between the researcher and the knowledge produced through social  
inquiry (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). From this perspective, subjective evidence was assembled  
based on social action through individual’s views (e.g., identity construction) and human life  
(e.g., social interaction). This assumption provided knowledge or perception which may be  
formed by an individual within cultural norms (e.g., operate in the individual’s lives) and by  
interaction with people in the society, rather than by accepting passively from the external  
environment. In line with this approach, I was not simply ‘gathering’ interpretation which  
already existed in the participants’ mind, but also encouraging them to think about their own  
and another perspective of activism in ways which they had not intentionally done before. In  
other words, with the MMR design in this study, the paradigmatic perspective was held both  
qualitative and qualitative data from an interpretive point of view. Thus, I converted the  
quantitative data (e.g., questionnaires) into an iteration that not only maintained relevance to  
the overall objective of the study but can be also analysed qualitatively with qualitative data  
(e.g. interview), consistently with the philosophical stance of the thesis.

### **3.2         Mixed-method research: What and Why?**

Mixed method research (MMR) is defined as ‘research in which the investigator collects and  
analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and  
quantitative approaches or methods in a single study’ (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 4).  
The MMR can generate a detailed and comprehensive picture of the study phenomenon in  
order to achieve the research objectives and answer research questions by taking advantage

of overcoming the weaknesses of each individual method (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007). For example, unanticipated or unusual findings from a quantitative survey can be followed up and explained by interviewing research participants who were surveyed to gain a deeper, qualitative understanding of the quantitative finding obtained (Doyle et al., 2009). Also, the MMR approach can benefit the development and testing of hypotheses and instruments. For example, hypotheses and questionnaire items for quantitative analysis can be developed following a preliminary qualitative study of the phenomenon that is subject of investigation (Bryman, 2007).

To clearly identify the types of MMR designs, several authors have developed a classification system (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkorri, 2006). Creswell and Piano Clark (2007) suggested that the decision of a MMR design should be informed on three major decisions. The first decision is whether to conduct the quantitative and qualitative phases concurrently or sequentially. The second decision is whether to give priority to quantitative or qualitative data. The third decision is when to decide the mixing of the qualitative and quantitative methods will occur (i.e., at what phase each data type should be analysed and integrated). Based on these three decisions, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) describe four types of MMR designs: a) triangulation, b) embedded, c) explanatory, and d) exploratory. Triangulation, the most common of the four, assigns an equal weighting to the quantitative and qualitative phases, which occur at the same time. After each initial analysis, the data is combined either by quantifying qualitative results or by qualifying quantitative results. The embedded design is characterised by one dominant approach, with the other approach providing a supportive role. Within the embedded designs, the quantitative and qualitative methods may be conducted concurrently or sequentially, and mostly given priority to the quantitative methodology and the qualitative data set is subservient (e.g., to examine the process of the intervention). The explanatory design is a sequential design, beginning with the quantitative phase and following with the qualitative phase, which aims to enhance the quantitative

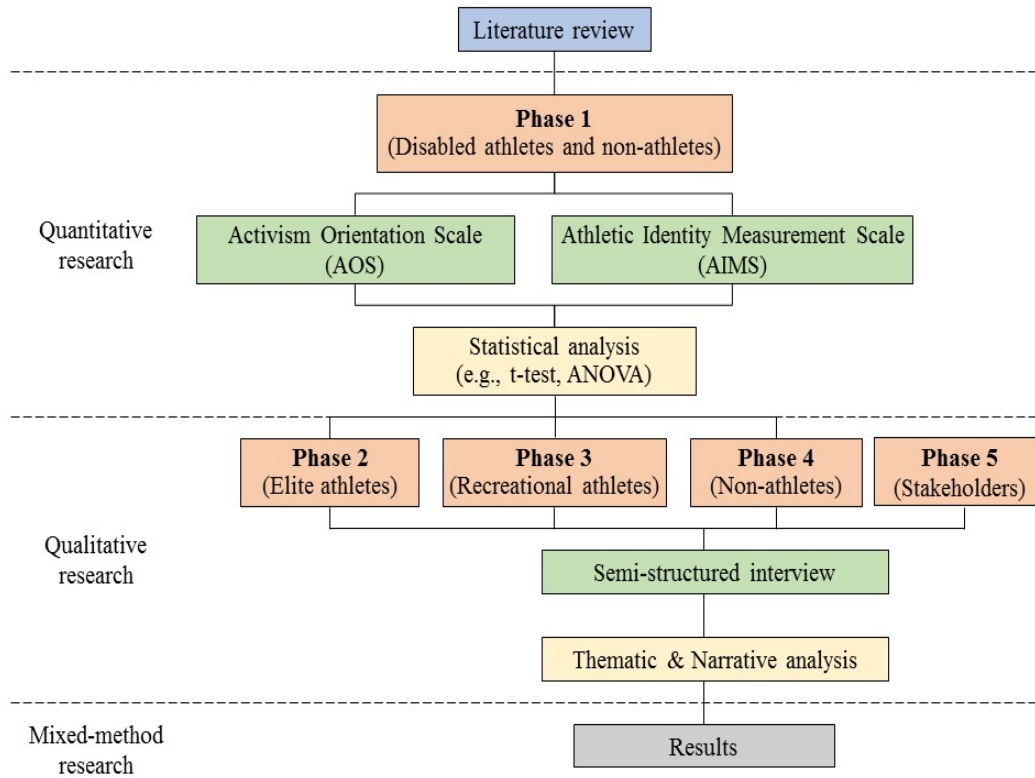
results. The researcher interprets specific quantitative findings (e.g., unexpected results, the difference between groups) with further exploration using qualitative results. Finally, the exploratory design is a sequential design where the first qualitative phase is conducted to support the development of a subsequent quantitative phase, resulting in the generalisation of the qualitative results using quantitative results. This model gives priority to the quantitative entity. The most appropriate design for MMR enhances to meet the aims and objectives of the research, answering research questions and the overall rationale for using a mixed-methods approach.

This research employed a sequential explanatory MMR design (see Figure 3-1) including a first quantitative data collection phase followed by a qualitative data collection phase to fulfil the research objective and to answer the research questions. For example, I firstly collected and analysed quantitative data as an initial stage (Phase 1), and then results from questionnaires (highest and lowest scores on activism questionnaires) were used to enhance purposeful sampling strategies for the interview in the next phases (Phase 2,3 and 4). The quantitative approach provided several benefits: a) useful measurements of activism orientation among different participant groups and b) the testing of working hypotheses in this study. After Phase 1, the qualitative approach (Phase 2,3 and 4) was adopted to seek a better understanding of the social and psychological context of disabled activism and sports. Additionally, another qualitative approach (Phase 5) was used to explore the board member's stories about disability sports activism. The aim of qualitative phases was to identify promising themes and narratives related to research topics and questions. This design was chosen to obtain a complex picture beyond that provided by the analysis of the quantitative data, to understand and explain the reasons (the whys) behind the statistical results. The adoption of MMR was not only driven by philosophical assumptions and existing literature gaps but also reflected a large extent the practical approach for social science research. Thus, this sequential explanatory MMR design was deemed to be conducive to a deeper and more balanced understanding of the phenomenon that was subject



of study through purposeful integration of both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches.

**Figure 3-1** A sequential explanatory MMR design of the thesis



### 3.3 Sampling process

#### 3.3.1 Recruitment

After gaining University ethical approval, disabled adults from South Korea who were either elite athletes, recreational athletes, or non-athletes were recruited as follows. Disabled elite athletes were defined as individuals, over 18 years, who possessed at least one of the following criteria (cf. Haslett & Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2016; Swann et al., 2015): they had (a) performed at a national or international level Para sports competition (e.g., Paralympics, Asian Games, or World Championships) or planned to represent South Korea in Tokyo Paralympic Games, (b) participated in an elite talent development programme, or (c) experienced sustained success (e.g., medalled) at international or national sports events. Recreational athletes were defined as individuals involved in regular recreational sport (e.g., with related goals of improved physical fitness, fun, and social involvement), who have not

experienced participation at a national or international level disability sport competition or an elite talent development programme. Non-athletes were defined as disabled individuals who had never participated in structured sports regularly (cf. Trevisan, 2017). The KPC members were defined as active board KPC members who represented in South Korea in international-level Para-sport games when they were younger as former athletes.

In order to identify individuals meeting the inclusion criteria, I contacted disability sports networks and organisations (e.g., Korean Paralympic Committee; KPC and Korea Powerlifting Federation for the Disability; KPFD), as well as disability rehabilitation centres (e.g., Korean Association of Welfare Institutes-KAWI). The appropriate administrative assistant for each organisation cooperated to reach eligible study participants within their contact list. In addition, they sent official documents to other disability organisations to promote recruitment. Also, a call for participants was placed on social media (e.g., Facebook and Instagram). Within permitted groups under the sampling criteria, participants were randomly selected in various districts regions (e.g., Seoul, Incheon, Pyeong-Chang, Gwangju). Under Article 2 of Korea Disabled Person Welfare Law (2002), 15 disability types used to classify participant's disability categories in this study (see Table 3-1). All participants volunteered to participate in this research and were given a free soft drink as a token of appreciation for their time. There was no obligation to take part. Participants completed a consent form (see Appendix C) after reading the study information sheet (see Appendix A, B).

**Table 3-1.** 15 Disability types under the Article 2 of Korea Disabled Person Welfare Law

			Explanation
Disability type	Physical disability	External body function impairment	1 Physical impairment Amputation, arthropathy, spinal cord injury etc.
			2 Cerebral palsy Multiple disorders due to brain damage
			3 Visual impairment Visual field defect and visual impairment

Psychological disability	Internal organ impairment	4	Hearing impairment	Equilibrium dysfunction and hearing defect
		5	Speech disorder	Speech disorder, voice disorder, dysarthria etc.
		6	Facial disorder	Disability caused by deformation of facial area
		7	Renal disorder	In case of kidney transplantation or chronic dialysis therapy
		8	Cardiopathy	Abnormal heart function with markedly limited daily activities
		9	Hepatopathy	Chronic abnormal liver function with limited daily activities
	Developmental disability	10	Respiratory disorder	Chronic/severe abnormal respiratory disorder with limited daily activities
		11	Ostomy	Ostomy with markedly limited daily activities
		12	Epilepsy	Chronic/severe epilepsy with markedly limited daily activities
	Mental disability	13	Autism	Paediatric autism and autistic disability
		14	Intellectual impairment	IQ score under 70
		15	Mental disorder	Schizophrenia, Bipolar affective disorder and Repetitive depressive disorder

## 3.3.2 Participants

The selected individuals comprised 400 disabled people for surveys in Phase 1 (see Table 3-2). They consisted of 100 elite athletes, 100 recreational athletes, and 200 non-athletes with average age 40.68 years ( $SD = 12.76$ ) (elite athletes:  $M = 36.17$ ,  $SD = 8.55$ ; recreational athletes:  $M = 42.36$ ,  $SD = 13.30$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 40.97$ ,  $SD = 13.59$ ) and including 308 males and 92 females (elite athletes: 80 males and 20 females; recreational athletes: 78 males and 22 females; non-athletes: 150 males and 50 females). The participants reported a wide range of impairments. Among participants, 111 individuals described their disability as congenital and 289 individuals said they had an acquired disability (e.g., spinal cord injury, amputation, visual impairment, cerebral palsy) with 19.8 years of average onset of disability. Elite athletes represented a variety of sports (e.g., wheelchair curling, Para-swimming, and athletics, wheelchair tennis, fencing).

**Table 3-2.** Demographic data for research participants in Phase 1

Participants		Age	Gender	Onset of disability
Athletes ( $n = 200$ )	Elite	$M: 38.43$	$M: 80$	Congenital: 13
	( $n = 100$ )	$SD: 10.00$	$F: 20$	Acquired: 87
	Non-elite	$M: 42.36$	$M: 78$	Congenital: 29
	( $n = 100$ )	$SD: 13.30$	$F: 22$	Acquired: 71
Non-athletes ( $n = 200$ )		$M: 40.97$	$M: 150$	Congenital: 69
		$SD: 13.59$	$F: 50$	Acquired: 131
Total ( $n = 400$ )		$M: 40.68$	$M: 308$	Congenital: 111
		$SD: 12.76$	$F: 92$	Acquired: 289

Based on the quantitative data obtained in Phase 1, I selected individuals that scored either lowest or highest on the combined activism questionnaires (which are described in a later section), among those who gave their approval to participate in the interviews in phases 2, 3, and 4 (see Table 3-3). For Phase 2, the final sample of elite athletes consisted of 18 elite athletes: nine individuals who scored highest ( $M = 73.00$ ,  $SD = 13.15$ ) and nine who scored lowest ( $M = 15.25$ ,  $SD = 4.62$ ) on the combined activism questionnaire. The average age of the elite athlete group was 36.17 years ( $SD = 9.10$ ),

including 17 males and 1 female. For Phase 3, 15 recreational athletes were recruited: eight individuals who scored highest ( $M = 71.63$ ,  $SD = 14.88$ ) and seven who scored lowest ( $M = 10.14$ ,  $SD = 4.95$ ) on the activism questionnaire. The average age of the recreational athletes was 39.27 years ( $SD = 9.45$ ), including 14 males and one female. For Phase 4, the final sample of non-athletes consisted of 12 non-athletes: six individuals who scored highest ( $M = 72.33$ ,  $SD = 24.53$ ) and six who scored lowest ( $M = 10.67$ ,  $SD = 7.06$ ) on the activism questionnaire. The average age of the non-athlete group was 39.67 years ( $SD = 12.03$ ), including 11 males and 1 female.

In addition, and for reasons noted earlier (see *Chapter 2*), three male and one female KPC members who were former elite athletes (now retired) and are currently working in disability sport organisations were recruited for an individual interview (without filling in questionnaires) in Phase 5 (see Table 3-3). Their average age was 56.75 years old ( $SD = 4.11$ ). Three KPC members were high-activism elite athletes, and the one KPC member was low-activism elite athletes. All participants in this group are currently high activists and speak out for a better society.

**Table 3-3.** Demographic data for research participants in Phase 2,3,4 and 5

Group	Participants	AOS-OPP ( $M/SD$ )	Age	Gender
Elite athletes (Phase 2)	18 elite athletes (9 high and 9 low)	High = 73.00 (13.15) Low = 15.25 (4.62)	$M = 36.17$ $SD = 9.10$	M= 17 F= 1
Recreational athletes (Phase 3)	15 recreational athletes (8 high and 7 low)	High = 71.63 (14.88) Low = 10.14 (4.95)	$M = 39.27$ $SD = 9.45$	M = 14 F = 1
Non-athletes (Phase 4)	12 non-athletes (6 high and 6 low)	High = 72.33 (24.53) Low = 10.67 (7.06)	$M = 39.67$ $SD = 12.03$	M= 11 F = 1
Stakeholders (Phase 5)	4 stakeholders	N/A	$M = 55.25$ $SD = 4.57$	M= 3 F = 1

### 3.4 Critical self-reflection

Self-reflexivity is important in qualitative methodology because it improves the awareness of the author's situatedness (e.g., social identity, knowledge) and allows them to critically

embrace, throughout the research process, the complexity and diversity of culture and society and this folds back onto them and from them (Brighton & Williams, 2018). Self-reflexivity assumes an important role when researching the subjective experience of 'the oppressed' because it helps stimulate reflection on moral, ethical, political, and power issues rising from the contrast with the establish hegemony (e.g., Brighton & Williams, 2018). Accordingly, in this thesis, I have critically reflected on my position by raising questions such as 'what sparked my interest in disability sport and activism in the first place', 'have any of the Confucian values, proper to my native culture, been challenged throughout the research process', 'how do my identity and social position brought me to ask particular questions and interpret certain phenomena in particular ways'.

I am South Korean, female, and, at the time of this research, I was 26 to 29 years old. Life experiences and personal choices have put me in consonance with the values of human rights, peace, equality, and justice for all. For example, my parents have cultivated my solidarity towards the marginalised by encouraging me to watch documentaries on human-rights and have educated me on the value of 'live together'.

My interest in sport began early in my teenage as an athlete. Then, throughout my life, it was further shaped as I studied Physical Education (undergraduate) and Sport and Exercise Sciences (postgraduate) and as I experienced working as a secondary-school PE teacher. During these years, I have developed my interest in disability sports by engaging with the disability society on several occasions. For example, I volunteered for Sledge hockey, at the 2014 Incheon Asian Para games. In addition, I volunteered for Goalball UK during my PhD. I have had opportunities to learn how to interact with disabled athletes in the sport field before, during, and after volunteering. These experiences have contributed greatly to my research interests. Accordingly, I maintained a critical and transformative position whereby the rights of disabled participants are prioritised (Brighton & Williams, 2018).

With regards to cultural position, I have been educated for over 25 years in South Korea, a country which is strongly rooted in Confucianism. Since I was 25, I have lived abroad to study sport science in the United Kingdom and have had many opportunities to learn about British culture during my studies. This was the first time for me to live and study in a Western-culture country. My Confucian cultural background could generate an ingrained cultural bias during data collection and data interpretation. For example, due to the hierarchical structure of Confucian societies, I might have been concerned about leading an interview with people who were older than me or were positioned in a higher social class, such as board members in the South Korean disability sport field. However, having incorporated elements of the more individualistic Western culture, in conducting this research, I felt a sense of belonging to a combined Asian and Western cultural background that has fostered critical thinking on cultural diversity and has enhanced my cultural sensitivity through CSP lenses. For example, I was able to critically identify complex and antagonistic relationships (e.g., between superior and subordinate in society, opposite factions), and, simultaneously, protect each interviewee's anonymity from personal and political dispute. In addition, interactions with European 'critical friends' generated additional critical insights and developed an enriched understanding of the context (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

### **3.5 Data collection**

#### **3.5.1 First approach: quantitative data collection**

##### *Demographic data*

All participants completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) that gathered data on gender, age, disability type, the onset of disability (i.e., congenital or acquired including

the specific year), sport type, sports participation (hours per week), and athlete's status (i.e., elite or recreational).

#### *Activism questionnaires*

First, a version of the Activism Orientation Scale (AOS) (Corning & Myers, 2002; see Appendix F), translated to Korean, was administered to measure activist orientation - defined as the likelihood to engage in a variety of activist behaviours in future, on a scale ranging from 0 to 105. All items were worded into future tense according to feedback obtained through a pilot study conducted prior to data collection. For example, 'Donate money to a political candidate?' was changed to 'I will donate money to a political candidate'. The AOS includes 35 items grouped in two subscales: the conventional activism subscale (28 items) and the high-risk activism subscale (7 items). Conventional activism is defined as participation in low-risk, passive institutionalised actions such as boycotts and lawful demonstrations. For example, items of this subscale included "I will display a poster or bumper sticker with a political message" and "I will attend a talk on a particular group's social-political concerns.". High-risk activism is defined as participation in active unconventional behaviours such as unofficial strikes or the occupation of buildings. For example, items of this subscale included "I will engage in a physical confrontation at a political rally". Previous analyses (Corning & Myers, 2002) revealed that the AOS has a strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .97). This was also confirmed in our data: Cronbach's alpha was .98 for the overall questionnaire, .97 for the conventional activism subscale, and .92 for the high-risk activism subscale.

Second, given the rise of digital media as a potential medium for activism around the world, a version of the Online Political Participation (OPP; see Appendix E) (Jordan, Popel, Wallis, & Iyer, 2015), translated to Korean was administered to measure the willingness to engage in online activism, especially online political participation. The OPP questionnaire consists of 6 items including, for example, "I will upload a video on a social networking website to draw attention to a political or social issue." Previous analyses



(Jordan et al., 2015) revealed that the OPP has a good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .91). This was confirmed in our data with a Cronbach's alpha of .90.

All items (i.e., for both AOS and OPP) were scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ('extremely unlikely') to 3 ('extremely likely'). The individual scores were summed across the two activism questionnaires to generate a compound AOS-OPP score, which reflected the activist orientation, that is the willingness to engage in activism.

#### *Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS)*

Two groups of disabled athletes (i.e., elite and recreational) were also administered the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; see Appendix G) (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001) to measure a multidimensional self-concept in athletic identity. Furthermore, this scale was used to examine relations with activism orientation questionnaires. The AIMS consists of 10 items subdivided into three dimensions: social identity (4 items), exclusivity (4 items), and negative affectivity (2 items). Through these three sub-scales, athletic roles in affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects were identified. For example, items include 'I have many goals related to sport' and 'I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport'. All ten items were scored on 7-point Likert scales anchored from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 7 ('strongly agree'). These scores were summed yielding a total value ranging from 7 to 70, with a higher score corresponding to a stronger identification of athletes' role. The internal consistency of the AIMS had a Cronbach's alpha of .90.

All questionnaires were made available to participants both in online and hard-paper copy and took no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Most participants completed the hard-paper versions of the questionnaires with the researcher. Only 15 participants completed the online versions following a link to Naver Online ([office.naver.com](http://office.naver.com)). All survey questionnaires were translated into Korean and back-translated by the researcher with the assistance of a translation specialist, who is bilingual (Korean and English) and had no

knowledge of the questionnaires. In the survey, participants were given the option to provide contact details for possible recruitment in phases 2 and 3 (i.e., interview).

### 3.5.2 Second approach: qualitative data collection

Based on the quantitative data, individuals were selected that scored either lowest or highest on the combined activism questionnaires (AOS and OPP), and who were willing to be interviewed. I used an in-depth semi-structured interview (see Appendix H for the interview guide) to collect rich, multi-layered stories from the participants about their lives. I arranged to meet the participants face to face at a location of their choosing to conduct the interviews. In most cases, the interview was arranged at a café near their house and in a few cases at the participant's home or their workplace. All interview places were considered with disability access (e.g., disabled toilet). Prior to commencing the interview, I provided the participant with information about the research project (for the participant information sheet), informed the participant of the right to withdraw from the study, and gained informed consent.

Interviews initially started with a more unstructured and conversational style of interview questions. This approach encouraged the participants to share their stories about how they had their lives over time, thereby providing a detailed insight into their individual and social life story (Smith & Caddick, 2012). Each interview lasted approximately two hours.

A semi-structured interview was chosen as it allows key topics to be covered with flexibility and to ask follow-up questions which explore an individual's underlying reasons, opinions, and beliefs. The interview guide was used as a means of facilitating the creation of themes in a manner that is grounded in the participants' stories of their experience of activism, their own behaviour, and reasons why (i.e., motivators) and why not (i.e., barriers) they engaged in activism. An interview guide for all phases was generated to facilitate the discussion: this guide included questions such as "Can you describe any experiences you have had of engaging in activism?", "Can you share your stories about the barriers you've faced to engage in activism?", and "What motivates you to do activism?". Some questions were personalised for each group according to their unique features. For example, some

questions were “What do you think about elite athletes’ status for activism?” for elite athletes in Phase 2, “Has your sports participation affected your motivation for activism?” for recreational athletes in Phase 3, “What do you think about the impact of Para-sport and Para-athletes on general disability life and society?” for non-athletes in Phase 4, and “Could you share your experience of activism when you were an elite athlete compared to now (retired athletes)?” for stakeholders in Phase 5.

As the principal methodological aim of the qualitative approach of this study was to understand participants’ interpretations, rather than to observe their behaviour directly, particular attention was paid to ways of exploring social-psychological constructs (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Participants were given some information about the research topic. This was because the pilot interviews had shown that some people found it difficult to think of whether their experiences can belong to a range of activism during the interview. Participants were therefore invited to think about their activism experiences (if any) with their previous questionnaire results beforehand, and their stories were then invited. In addition, I tried to be sensitive with when asking personal questions, even when asking about topics that may not seem sensitive in nature, with the aim to put participants at ease and encourage honest responses (Brighton & Williams, 2018). Thus, the interview could reveal the multiple social, cultural and material oppression that disabled faced rather than medicalising disabled people.

After the interviews, I took notes, reflecting on aspects such as the rapport with each interviewee, quality of the interactions and interviewer bias (e.g., questions being phrased in a leading way). The notes were taken not to strive for complete objectivity or neutrality in interactions with the interviewees before, during, or after the interviews, but rather to acknowledge that the nature of the interactions would have some effect on the data, and to attempt to use this in a positive way which might contribute to the richness of the data. Each interview was recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

### 3.6 Data analysis

First, in the quantitative phase, a statistical power analysis was performed for the estimation of the sample size, based on data from a pilot study and extant literature. With a statistical significance at .05, statistical power at .80, the estimated sample size needed with this effect size was  $n = 156$  for athletes and non-athletes. Thus, a proposed sample size was 200 for each group to allow for expected attrition. An appropriate statistical analysis was used to engage with the data.

A series of two-tail independent-sample  $t$  tests was conducted to compare the activism orientation scores (i.e., those obtained from the combined AOS and OPP and those obtained from AOS and OPP separately) between the 200 athletes and the 200 non-athletes, between the 100 elite and the 100 recreational athletes, and between the 100 elite athletes and 100 non-athletes (randomly selected from the pool of the 200 non-athletes). In addition, an independent sample  $t$  test was conducted to test the difference in the AOS-OPP score between genders (male and female) and between the onset of disability (congenital and acquired). Then, a one-way ANOVA was used to examine the difference in activism orientation scores (i.e., AOS-OPP, AOS, and OPP) across five age groups (18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69 years). Post hoc Tukey contrasts were conducted to examine significant omnibus (i.e., ANOVA) effects. Finally, the correlation between AOS-OPP and AIMS was examined through Pearson's correlation test to assess whether athletic identities were compatible with activist identities.

Parametric tests (i.e.,  $t$  tests, ANOVAs, and Pearson's correlations) were used for consistency with the previous literature. For example, Corning and Myers (2002), who developed and validated the AOS scale, used  $t$  tests to compare group differences. As another example, Beachy et al. (2018) used Pearson's correlations to examine the relation between AOS and AIMS. However, my preliminary descriptive exploration of the dataset (described in the analysis section of the next chapter) revealed that the AOS, OPP, and

AIMS scores were not normally distributed. This suggested that the sampling distributions from which the variables of this dataset were obtained may also follow non-normal distributions. Accordingly, as the assumption of normality is likely to be violated, I have complemented the parametric tests described above with their non-parametric counterparts, which do not make assumptions on the normality of the underlying sampling distribution or on the homogeneity of variance. Specifically, each two-tail independent-sample  $t$  test was complemented by a two-tail Wilcoxon rank-sum test. Each one-way ANOVA was complemented by the Kruskal-Wallis test, and post hoc testing (Siegel & Castellan, 1988) was conducted only if the omnibus test was significant. Finally, Pearson's correlations were complemented by Kendall's rank correlations.

For each two-tail independent-sample  $t$  test, I reported the test statistic  $t$  as well as the associated degrees of freedom and  $p$  value. For each two-tail Wilcoxon rank-sum test, I reported the test statistic  $W$  and the associated  $p$  value. For each one-way ANOVA, I reported the test statistic  $F$  as well as the associated degrees of freedom and  $p$  value. For each Kruskal-Wallis test, I reported the test statistic  $H$  as well as the associated degrees of freedom and  $p$  value. For each Pearson's correlation, I reported the test statistic  $r$  and the associated degrees of freedom and  $p$  value. For each Kendall's rank correlation, I reported the test statistic  $\tau$  and the associated  $p$  value. Effect sizes were reported as  $r^2$  for the  $t$  tests and the Wilcoxon tests (computed through the formula described by Rosenthal, 1991),  $r$  and  $\tau$  respectively for the Pearson's and Kendall's correlations, and  $\eta^2$  for the ANOVA, as described in Cohen (1992).

For the qualitative phases of this study, the six steps of a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2016, 2019) were employed for exploring the research questions. In terms of how this analysis was done, I familiarised myself with the data (e.g., reading transcripts multiple times and noting down initial ideas or patterns). Second, I generated initial codes from the data that appeared to contain interesting features in relation to the research purpose. All codes were determined through a semantic approach (e.g., within explicit or surface

meanings). Third, I clustered codes at the level of themes (e.g., sorting all data relevant codes into potential themes) and then I identified candidate themes and subthemes. Fourth, I reviewed the themes to form a coherent pattern and created themes within internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. Fifth, I generated clear definitions for each theme and clarified how each theme fits into the overall story of research data. Finally, I produced a report by writing thematic analysis, intending to provide a logical, coherent, nonrepetitive, and interesting story.

In addition, narrative analysis was used for exploring the types of activists' stories people told. Narrative analysis can be segregated into two approaches: story-analyst and story-tellers (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). In the current study, I employed a story-analyst approach to unravel complexities and nuances that are reflective of participants' 'psychological and social worlds' as constituted through their stories (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). Within the story-analyst approach, a categorical-content analysis (this also been termed a thematic narrative analysis), was used for all participant groups (Smith, 2016). The categorical-content analysis focused on core patterns and relationships among these within the context of the 'stories' that are told by participants, rather than in all or any talk (Smith, 2016; Smith & Sparkes, 2009b).

In terms of how this analysis done, I initially engaged in indwelling, which involves familiarising and immersing oneself in the stories of each participant, thinking with stories, and generating initial ideas that were recorded on transcripts or in a notebook. Next, I focused on identifying narrative themes and thematic relationships within participant stories by examining stories for patterns and then recording these patterns via analytical notes in transcripts or in my notebook. Themes and analytical thoughts were then reviewed, edited if necessary, and then described in detail to generate the activist type. As part of this process, I sought to interpret what the story was about in rich ways.

To carry out a reflective CSP research, the results of the qualitative analysis were written in the style of a 'realist tale' consistent with the ontological and epistemological

assumptions in my thesis. A realist tale is a common way of representing qualitative findings. It involves attempting to represent the participant's point of view while drawing on theories and concepts to illuminate the findings (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Accordingly, I used my position as the researcher to represent the stories as best as possible, yet, in general, at the same time I am absent from the text rhetorically.

Finally, I developed divergent and common storylines between the two types of research approach (i.e., quantitative and qualitative), and interpreted these integrated data in the discussion.

### **3.7 Ethical approach**

With regards to procedural ethics in this research, I considered four points. First, many participants (e.g., KPC board members, elite athletes) in this study were deemed public figures in society. I made participants aware of the risk of implicit disclosure and I emphasised that their data with identities would be confidential. To manage the risk of implicit disclosure, I protected anonymity and confidentiality by excluding specific information about participants (e.g., professional title, sport, position in the organisation) in this thesis and publications resulting from this study. All participants were assigned a pseudonym.

Second, from a Confucian cultural perspective, participants might feel reluctant to report the wrongdoing on society they are affiliated due to the fact that South Koreans tend to view whistleblowing as outright betrayal (e.g., the young must respect the old, subordinates do not question the actions of their superior) (Park, Rehg, & Lee, 2005). Given that the study topic included elements of whistleblowing and reporting sensitive issues (e.g., corruption, illegitimate practices), I encouraged the participants to share their stories of activism against misconduct by reassuring them that their identities would be protected as best as possible through pseudonyms and changing personal details that might identify them. In addition, if a participant asked, I offered the record of the interview and listened their deep-

inside stories (e.g., abuse of public power by authority for personal gain). In this case, I did not use their stories as an interview quote or published data. However, this helped me to understand a complicated cultural, political, social environment and structure.

Third, there were factional disputes among the participants. For example, a few participants indicated their intention not to participate in an interview with me if I had already interviewed others who belonged to an opposing faction. In addition, a few participants tried to sound me out about other participants' stories in attempt to reconcile a conflicted relationship. In this case, I defended the confidentiality and anonymity of my participants, and maintained did not act as a mediator to arbitrate a political dispute. I informed them I was a researcher motivated to explore disability sport and activism in South Korea.

Fourth, I have been inclusive when recruiting the study participants. Due to the wide spectrum of disabilities, there was the potential risk of neglecting certain disability groups (e.g., people who have a visual or written language impairment). To mitigate these risks, I asked disability organisations for advice and support on the appropriate communication channels for recruiting participants and collecting data from them. In instances of difficult communication, I interacted with the participants through communication assistants and interpreters, who supported the communication, the recording of consent forms and data collection procedures.

### **3.8 Methodological rigour**

Regarding methodological rigour, I used a 'characterising traits' approach, whereby evaluative criteria for rigor/trustworthiness were viewed as contingent on epistemology, methods, study aims, and context (Burke, 2016). In consonance, I and critical friends elaborated together an ongoing list of criteria (see the essential points in Table 3-4). In order to elaborate and refine the criteria that constitute the list, we carried out the following tasks. First, we (i.e., me and critical friends) discussed the latest debates about how relativist



research might be judged (e.g., Smith and McGannon, 2018). Second, we reviewed and drew inspiration from the work of other mixed method research and qualitative scholars who have conducted similar forms of inquiry. Following this, we formulated a provisional list that we consulted and re-evaluated until we reached a satisfactory perception of the quality of the study. To avoid self-indulgence, our perception was critically contrasted with the existing literature.

**Table 3-4** Criteria employed to evaluate the methodological rigour of this thesis

Rigour criteria (quantitative and qualitative)	Purpose	Strategies applied in the thesis to achieve rigour
<i>Truth value</i>  (Internal validity and credibility)	To establish confidence that the results about reality are true, credible, plausible, congruent, and believable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MMR approach was adopted for multiple studies within the thesis to deepen the understating of the phenomenon</li> <li>• Appropriate knowledge and research skills were used to formulate the research questions and inform the study design of the thesis (Sale &amp; Brazil, 2004)</li> <li>• Expansionistic depiction was demonstrated by showing the unfolding complexity of interpretations (Tracy, 2010)</li> <li>• I provided in-depth illustrations of the data to show culturally situated meaning and to capture authentically the lives experiences of people (Tracy, 2010)</li> </ul>
<i>Applicability</i>  (External validity/transferability)	To extend the degree to which the results can be generalised or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I used inclusion and exclusion criterion-based purposive sampling strategies for both quantitative and qualitative research (Sparks &amp; Smith, 2014)</li> </ul>

	transferred to other contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the quantitative research method, I calculated effect size and power to assess adequacy of sample size based on data from pilot study and extant literature (Onwuegbuzie &amp; Leech, 2007)</li> <li>• Some statistical analyses (e.g., comparing AOS-OPP between different groups) were performed twice: using the full sample and a subset</li> <li>• For the qualitative research method, in order to achieve ‘expanded and beyond vision of generalisability’, I have offered thick descriptions (e.g., interview quotes) and rich interpretation (e.g., enough contextual details) of the data that could be transferable to different situations (e.g., naturalistic generalisability—make familiar connections to their own lives of readers, and provocative generalisability—provokes readers to rethink possibility which not yet in sight) with resonance (Smith, 2017)</li> </ul>
<i>Reflexivity</i>	To increase the confidence that results are grounded in the experiences of the informants and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical friends (e.g., academic colleagues, and peer-reviewers) have been sought to provide “a theoretical sounding board to encourage reflection upon, and exploration of, multiple and alternative explanations and interpretations as these emerged in relation to the data and writing” (Smith &amp; McGannon, 2018) in both the quantitative and qualitative research</li> </ul>

	biases of the researcher are monitored and critically reflected on.	<p>approaches. For example, I and critical friends endeavoured to avoid cognitive and cultural bias in the quantitative phase (Coryn, 2007). In the qualitative phase, I worked with collaborators to review (e.g., narrative indwelling) and refine themes (e.g., naming and re-categorising themes) with challenging cultural assumptions for rich rigour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An audit trail was used to aid transparency and reflexivity (e.g., constant reflection on the research process and open reporting) (Robson, 2002)</li> <li>• I provided diverse perspectives of significance (e.g., conceptually, practically, methodically, heuristically) to extend knowledge, improve practice, and generate ongoing research in MMR approach (Tracy, 2010)</li> </ul>
<i>Consistency and fairness</i>  (Reliability and fairness to data)	To ensure having sufficient details and documentation of the methods employed so that the study can be scrutinised and replicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study design with methodology and methods consistent with the clearly stated philosophical assumptions (i.e. interpretative ontology and epistemology) which is adopted in informing research questions, methodology, interpretations of data</li> </ul> <p>Internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) was tested for all questionnaires to evaluate whether they measured what they were supposed to measure</p>

### **3.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter has outlined the research methodological approach of the thesis: a sequential mixed method, based on an interpretive epistemologies and ontologies. For the quantitative research method phase, 400 disabled people (100 elite athletes, 100 recreational athletes, and 200 non-athletes) were recruited. All participants completed the AOS and OPP questionnaires. The athlete group (i.e., elite and recreational) additionally completed the AIMS questionnaire to examine athletic identity. For the qualitative research method phase, 18 elite athletes, 15 recreational athletes, and 12 non-athletes were recruited for a semi-structured interview to explore their experience towards activism and reasons why or why not they engaged in activism. Separately, four stakeholders were recruited for interview to investigate their experience and perspective towards athlete activism. For the questionnaire data, appropriate statistical analyses were conducted to engage with data (e.g., two-tail independent-sample t-tests, Pearson's correlation test, and one-way ANOVA). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis and narrative analysis. The findings are discussed in the next chapter.

## PART II

Results — ‘I *am* an activist’ VS ‘I *am not* an activist’

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## Cross-sectional survey of activism orientation for disabled people

### 4.0 Overview

This chapter addresses one of the main aims of the thesis which is to assess quantitative data on activism orientation across a wide range of disabled athletes (including elite and recreational) as well as disabled non-athletes in South Korea. Specifically, this chapter has two key objectives. First, I provide a series of descriptive quantitative data as an initial assessment (see Section 4.1) and, to evaluate group differences for activism orientation, measured using AOS and OPP scores (see *Section 4.2*). This analysis is then complemented by three control analyses examining differences in activism orientation for gender, onset of disability, and age (see *Section 4.3*). The second objective was to examine the relation between activism orientation and athletic identity, as measured using AIMS scores, among disabled elite and recreational athlete (see *Section 4.4*). Then, I provide methodological reflections on this chapter (see Section 4.5). Finally, a chapter discussion and summary will be provided in *Sections 4.6* and *4.7*.

Before presenting the quantitative results, it is helpful to remind the reader of the literature review used as basis for proposing the hypotheses (*Chapter 2*) and the methods used

for the statistical analyses (*Chapter 3*). There are no specific studies that directly examine who, out of disabled non-athletes and athletes, engages in activism the most using a quantitative analysis. However, based on the findings of past qualitative research conducted within the British cultural context (Braye, 2016; Haslett & Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2016), a ‘working hypothesis’ was proposed that disabled elite athletes in South Korea would score lower on measures of orientation to engage in activist behaviour compared to disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes. In addition, based on the aforementioned qualitative literature and one quantitative study (Beachy et al., 2018), another working hypothesis was that athletic identity would be negatively correlated with activism orientation. Due to the lack of quantitative research, and consistently with the ‘working’ nature of the hypotheses (i.e., no strong directional hypothesis can be proposed), the nature of the analyses described in this chapter is exploratory. Thus, a first key quantitative analysis aimed at evaluating whether disabled elite athletes have greater, lower, or non-different activism orientation with respect to a comparative population of disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes. A second key quantitative analysis aimed at examining whether both athletic identities and activist orientation co-occur or not.

#### **4.1 Descriptive statistics**

To provide an initial assessment of the quantitative data, I performed a series of descriptive analyses (reported in Table 4-1). More specifically, I computed descriptors of central tendency (mean and median), variability (standard deviation, interquartile range, minimum and maximum values), and normality of the distribution (skewness and kurtosis). The measures of central tendency and variability offer preliminary insights about group differences; however, group differences will be examined in greater detail in the next sections by using inferential statistical analyses. The inspection of skewness and kurtosis indicates, respectively, that the data are not symmetric around the mean and that the distributions of the data have light tails (for reference, normal distributions have a skewness



of 0 and a kurtosis of 3). This indicates that the questionnaire scores do not distribute normally. For example, for the AOS scores, skewness is greater than 0, and this indicates that there are more participants with low scores than participants with high scores (this is also referred to as ‘positive skew’). Concurrently, kurtosis is less than 3 for the AOS scores, indicating that there are only few participants who scored either very low or very high. Although the departure from normality (indicated by the inspection of skewness and kurtosis) challenges the use of parametric statistics, which are the subject of the next sections, parametric tests are robust to moderate violations of normality when the sizes of the group are equal. Accordingly, the next sections provide both parametric and non-parametric inferential statistics. The convergence (or its absence) between parametric and non-parametric statistics will be discussed in the methodological reflection section below.

**Table 4-1.** Descriptive analyses of the quantitative data (i.e., mean, median, standard deviation, inter-quartile range, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis) in elite athletes ( $n = 100$ ), recreational athletes ( $n = 100$ ), athletes (i.e., elite and recreational,  $n = 200$ ), non-athletes ( $n = 200$ ), and a random subset of non-athletes ( $n = 100$ ) for the AOS-OPP, AOS, OPP, and AIMS scores. For the AIMS, only the athletes (i.e., elite and recreational) were tested.

	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>IQR</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>k</i>
<b>AOS-OPP</b>								
Elite	35.39	28.50	24.56	38.50	6	101	0.75	-0.59
Recreational	28.28	24.50	23.57	34.50	0	98	0.84	-0.02
Athletes	31.84	27.00	24.27	36.25	0	101	0.79	-0.28
Non-athletes	26.37	19.00	26.35	36.00	1	119	1.23	0.85
Non-athletes (subset)	27.23	19.00	26.90	34.00	1	119	1.25	1.18
<b>AOS</b>								
Elite	28.86	23.00	21.10	31.50	4	84	0.74	-0.58
Recreational	23.89	20.00	20.81	30.50	0	86	0.92	0.22
Athletes	26.38	22.50	21.05	28.25	0	86	0.83	-0.19
Non-athletes	21.88	15.00	22.73	32.00	1	101	1.20	0.65
Non-athletes (subset)	22.57	15.50	23.13	31.25	1	101	1.24	1.05
<b>OPP</b>								
Elite	6.53	6.00	4.46	7.25	0	17	0.32	-0.86

Recreational	4.39	3.00	4.25	7.00	0	18	0.83	-0.01
Athletes	5.46	5.00	4.48	8.00	0	18	0.55	-0.59
Non-athletes	4.49	3.00	4.68	6.25	0	18	1.05	0.26
Non-athletes (subset)	4.66	2.50	4.95	7.25	0	18	1.00	-0.05
<b>AIMS</b>								
Elite	57.51	58.00	7.00	9.00	38	70	-0.28	-0.22
Recreational	38.87	41.00	12.17	18.25	12	62	-0.49	-0.83
Athletes	48.19	50.00	13.61	17.00	12	70	-0.74	-0.09

#### 4.2 Differences for activism orientation among elite athletes, recreational athletes, and non-athletes in disability groups

*Comparing athletes (n = 200) and non-athletes (n = 200)*

Disabled athletes had significantly greater AOS and OPP scores than disabled non-athletes (Figure 4-1). This emerged from *t* tests and Wilcoxon rank-sum tests conducted on the combined AOS-OPP scores (athletes:  $M = 31.84$ ,  $Mdn = 27.00$ ,  $SD = 24.27$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 26.37$ ,  $Mdn = 19.00$ ,  $SD = 26.35$ ;  $t(398) = 2.16$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $r^2 = .01$ ;  $W = 23736$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $r^2 = .03$ ), AOS scores (athletes:  $M = 26.38$ ,  $Mdn = 22.50$ ,  $SD = 21.05$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 21.88$ ,  $Mdn = 15.00$ ,  $SD = 22.73$ ;  $t(398) = 2.05$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $r^2 = .01$ ;  $W = 23630$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $r^2 = .03$ ), and OPP scores (athletes:  $M = 5.46$ ,  $Mdn = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 4.48$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 4.49$ ,  $Mdn = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 4.68$ ;  $t(398) = 2.12$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $r^2 = .01$ ;  $W = 22963$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ). These results indicate that disabled athletes (elite and recreational) were more willing to engage in activism than disabled non-athletes.

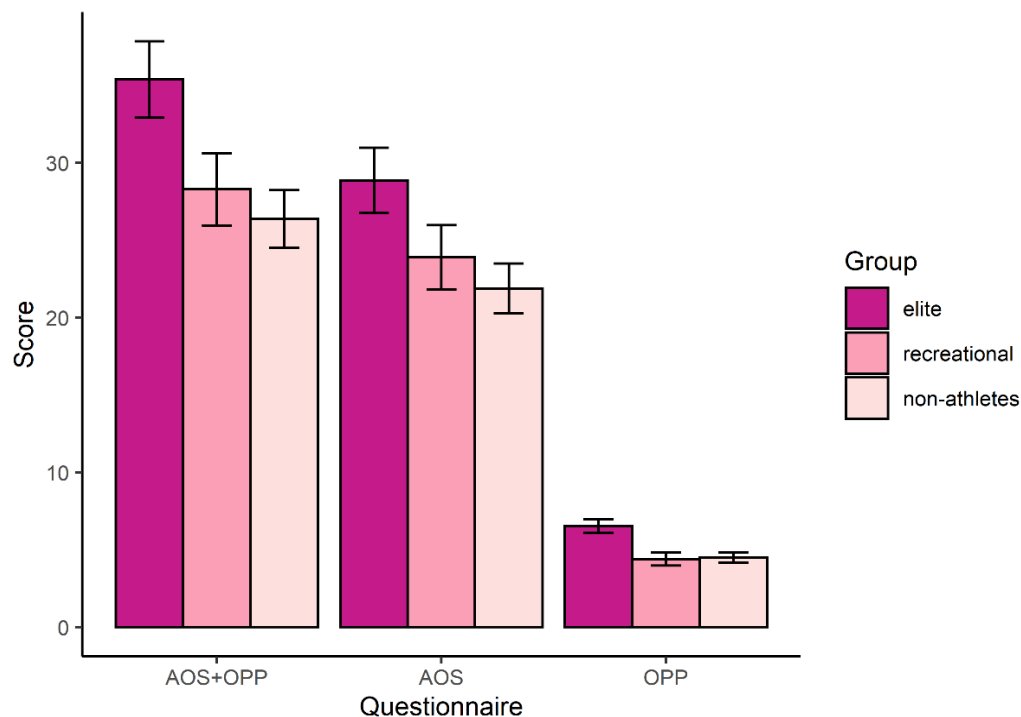
*Comparing elite athletes (n = 100) and recreational athletes (n = 100)*

Disabled elite athletes had significantly greater AOS and OPP scores than disabled recreational athletes (Figure 4-1). This emerged from *t* tests and Wilcoxon rank-sum tests conducted on the combined AOS-OPP scores (elite athletes:  $M = 35.39$ ,  $Mdn = 28.50$ ,  $SD = 24.56$ ; recreational athletes:  $M = 28.28$ ,  $Mdn = 24.50$ ,  $SD = 23.57$ ;  $t(198) = 2.09$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ;  $W = 5961.5$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ), AOS scores (elite athletes:  $M = 28.86$ ,  $Mdn = 23.00$ ,  $SD = 21.10$ ; recreational athletes:  $M = 23.89$ ,  $Mdn = 20.00$ ,  $SD = 20.81$ ;  $t(198) = 1.68$ ,  $p = .095$ ,  $r^2 = .01$ ;  $W = 5823$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ), and OPP scores (elite athletes:  $M = 6.53$ ,  $Mdn =$

6.00,  $SD = 4.46$ ; recreational athletes:  $M = 4.39$ ,  $Mdn = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 4.25$ ;  $t(198) = 3.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .06$ ;  $W = 6434$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .06$ ). These results indicate that disabled elite athletes were more willing to engage in activism than disabled recreational athletes.

*Comparing elite athletes ( $n = 100$ ) and non-athletes ( $n = 100$ )*

This analysis compared all elite athletes with a subset of non-athletes (i.e., 100 non-athletes selected randomly). Disabled elite athletes had significantly greater AOS and OPP scores than non-athletes. This emerged from  $t$  tests and Wilcoxon rank-sum tests conducted on the combined AOS-OPP scores (elite athletes:  $M = 35.39$ ,  $Mdn = 28.50$ ,  $SD = 24.56$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 27.23$ ,  $Mdn = 19.00$ ,  $SD = 26.90$ ;  $t(198) = 2.24$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ;  $W = 6344.5$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $r^2 = .05$ ), AOS scores (elite athletes:  $M = 28.86$ ,  $Mdn = 23.00$ ,  $SD = 21.10$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 22.57$ ,  $Mdn = 15.50$ ,  $SD = 23.13$ ;  $t(198) = 2.01$ ,  $p = .046$ ,  $r^2 = .02$ ;  $W = 6298.5$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $r^2 = .05$ ), and OPP scores (elite athletes:  $M = 6.53$ ,  $Mdn = 6.00$ ,  $SD = 4.46$ ; non-athletes:  $M = 4.66$ ,  $Mdn = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 4.95$ ;  $t(198) = 2.81$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $r^2 = .04$ ;  $W = 6367.5$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .06$ ). These results indicate that disabled elite athletes were more willing to engage in activism than disabled non-athletes.



**Figure 4-1.** Bar plot showing activism orientation scores (combined AOS and OPP, AOS, and OPP) in 100 elite athletes, 100 recreational athletes, and 200 non-athletes. Error bars indicate the standard error of the mean.

### 4.3 Activism orientation as a function of gender, onset of disability, and age

#### *Gender*

The combined AOS-OPP scores did not differ significantly between males ( $M = 28.83$ ,  $Mdn = 19.50$ ,  $SD = 26.40$ ,  $n = 308$ ) and females ( $M = 30.01$ ,  $Mdn = 26.00$ ,  $SD = 22.09$ ,  $n = 92$ ),  $t(398) = .39$ ,  $p = .70$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ,  $W = 15396$ ,  $p = .21$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ . Similarly, males and females did not differ for the AOS scores (males:  $M = 23.88$ ,  $Mdn = 15.00$ ,  $SD = 22.93$ , females:  $M = 24.96$ ,  $Mdn = 21.00$ ,  $SD = 18.61$ ;  $t(398) = 0.41$ ,  $p = .68$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ;  $W = 15602$ ,  $p = .14$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ) and the OPP scores (males:  $M = 4.95$ ,  $Mdn = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 4.63$ , females:  $M = 5.05$ ,  $Mdn = 4.50$ ,  $SD = 4.52$ ;  $t(398) = 0.19$ ,  $p = .85$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ;  $W = 14425$ ,  $p = .80$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ).

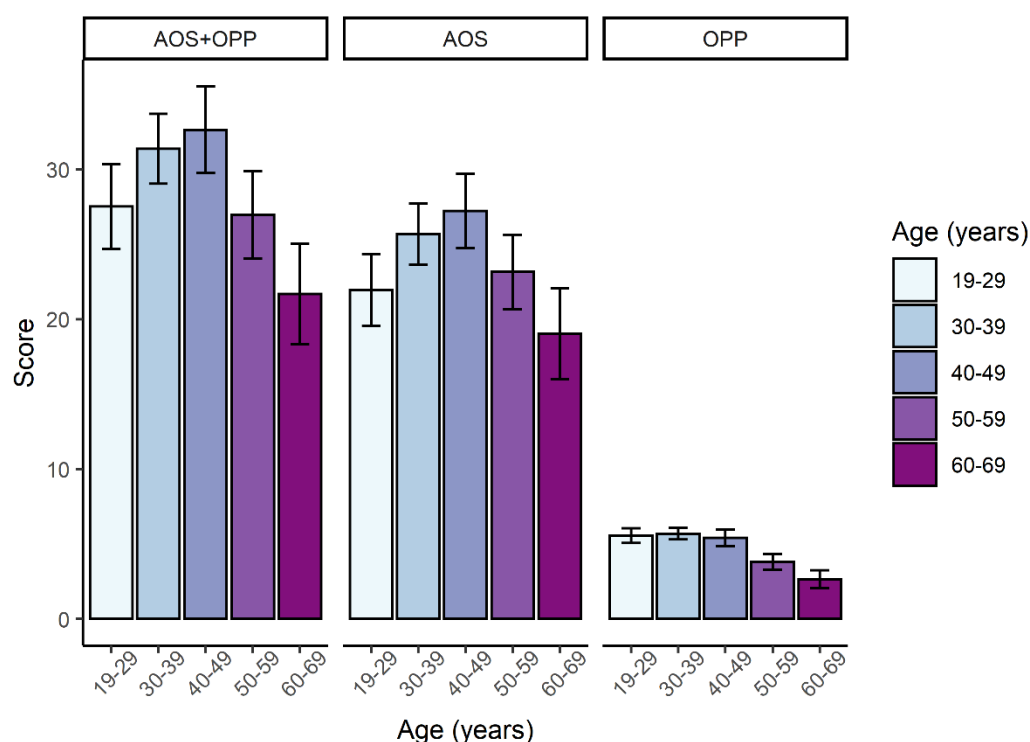
#### *Onset of disability*

The AOS-OPP scores were not significantly different between 111 congenital ( $M = 28.51$ ,  $Mdn = 20.00$ ,  $SD = 24.73$ ) and 289 acquired ( $M = 29.33$ ,  $Mdn = 20.00$ ,  $SD = 25.76$ ),  $t(398) = 0.29$ ,  $p = .77$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ,  $W = 16323$ ,  $p = .78$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ . Similarly, congenital and acquired did not differ for the AOS scores (congenital:  $M = 23.05$ ,  $Mdn = 16.00$ ,  $SD = 21.38$ , acquired:  $M = 24.54$ ,  $Mdn = 17.00$ ,  $SD = 22.25$ ;  $t(398) = 0.60$ ,  $p = .55$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ;  $W = 16919.5$ ,  $p = .40$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ) and the OPP scores (congenital:  $M = 5.46$ ,  $Mdn = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 4.47$ , acquired:  $M = 4.79$ ,  $Mdn = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 4.65$ ;  $t(398) = -1.31$ ,  $p = .19$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ;  $W = 14316$ ,  $p = .09$ ,  $r^2 < .01$ ).

#### *Age*

One-way ANOVAs and Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to explore changes in activism orientation across five age categories (i.e., 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69). No effects were revealed for the tests conducted on the combined AOS-OPP scores,  $F(4,395) = 1.61$ ,  $p = .17$ ,  $\eta^2 = .016$ ,  $H(4) = 8.39$ ,  $p = .08$ , and the AOS scores,  $F(4,395) = 1.29$ ,  $p = .27$ ,  $\eta^2 = .013$ ,  $H(4) = 6.64$ ,  $p = .16$ . However, a significant effect emerged for OPP scores,  $F(4,395)$

= 4.89,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .047$ ,  $H(4) = 26.57$ ,  $p < .001$ . This effect was further examined through post hoc Tukey contrasts. The significant contrasts (i.e., those associated with  $p < .05$ ) indicated that 60-69-year-old individuals scored lower than those in the 19-29, 30-39, and 40-49 years categories, and that 50-59 years-old individuals scored lower than 30-39 years-old individuals. The post hoc test associated with the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed similar results whereby 60-69-year-old individuals scored lower than those in the 19-29, 30-39, and 40-49 years categories, and that 50-59 years-old individuals scored lower than those in the 19-29 and 30-39 years categories.



**Figure 4-2.** Bar plot showing activism orientation scores (combined AOS and OPP, AOS, and OPP) in five age categories. Error bars indicate the standard error of the mean.

#### 4.4 Relation between activism orientation and athletic identity in athletes

These analyses focused on disabled elite and recreational athletes ( $n = 200$ ). A first analysis compared athletic identity (i.e., AIMS scores) in elite and recreational athletes. Elite athletes

( $M = 57.51$ ,  $Mdn = 58.00$ ,  $SD = 7.00$ ) scored higher than recreational athletes ( $M = 38.87$ ,  $Mdn = 41.00$ ,  $SD = 12.17$ ),  $t(198) = 13.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .47$ ,  $W = 9245$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .54$ .

A second analysis explored the correlation between activism orientation and athletic orientation among disabled athletes (100 elite athletes and 100 recreational athletes), by conducting the Pearson correlation test between AOS-OPP and AIMS scores. The results revealed that AOS-OPP and AIMS were not significantly correlated,  $r(198) = .06$ ,  $p = .41$ , indicating that the scores at one questionnaire (e.g., AOS-OPP) were independent from the scores at the other questionnaire (e.g., AIMS). Finally, to explore more specifically the correlation within each athlete group, two more Pearson correlation tests conducted between AOS-OPP and AIMS, separately for elite and recreational athletes. For both groups, the AOS-OPP and AIMS were not correlated (elite athletes:  $r(98) = .07$ ,  $p = .46$ ; recreational athletes:  $r(98) = -.14$ ,  $p = .16$ ). The non-parametric equivalent of the Pearson's correlation test—the Kendall's rank correlation test—provided similar results, whereby no effects were revealed between the AOS-OPP and AIMS scores among the 200 elite and recreational athletes ( $\tau = .07$ ,  $p = .18$ ), the 100 elite athletes ( $\tau = .05$ ,  $p = .48$ ) and the 100 recreational athletes ( $\tau = -.07$ ,  $p = .31$ ).

#### **4.5 Methodological reflection**

From a methodological point of view, it is worth reflecting on the interpretability of the significance scores, given the multiple test conducted. Indeed, conducting multiple tests inflates the probability of committing a type-I error, whereby a statistical test is interpreted as significant when it should be not (i.e., a false discovery). The interested reader can apply the multiple-test Bonferroni correction to the results reported above by dividing the significance threshold—which was set to .05 a priori—by the number of tests conducted, provided that the statistical tests are independent from each other. This correction was not applied to these results because the multiple tests were not independent from each other. For example, in each pairwise comparison, group differences for activism orientation were

assessed three times using the combined as well as the individual AOS and OPP scores. Similarly, the comparison between elite athletes and recreational athletes is not statistically independent from the comparison between elite athletes and non-athletes. Overall, these multiple tests were conducted with the aim to evaluate each hypothesis from slightly different but overlapping perspectives. Relatedly, it is important to note that the parametric and non-parametric statistical tests converged towards the same results, thus providing further confidence on the interpretation of the quantitative data analysis, discussed below.

#### **4.6 Critical discussion**

This is the first quantitative study to assess the propensity to engage in activism of elite athletes across a broad range of rights and social movements and in comparison, with recreational athletes and non-athletes in the South Korean disability society. Beyond the scope of this study, this quantitative evaluation contributes to providing a meaningful baseline for future quantitative research on disability populations by framing our sample of disabled elite athletes within a cultural standpoint that takes into account the perspectives of disabled people who are not athletes. The main finding of the quantitative analysis was that disabled elite athletes held a stronger activist orientation than recreational athletes and non-athletes. This, however, was independent from the elite athletes' greater athletic identity, as this was not correlated with activism orientation. This result can be interpreted based on two perspectives.

First, elite athletes with both high athletic and activist identity may not display their interest publicly to engage in activism due to fear of negative consequences or anticipated backlashes from the public (Beachy et al., 2018). Athletes are used to publicly display their sport engagement because their position is highlighted in diverse sources, especially through media. However, they may not be used to portray socio-political opinions on controversial topics—because they may anticipate disadvantages—and this can culturally lead to a passive behaviour on showing activist orientation. Haslett, Javier, Choi, & Smith. (2020b)

demonstrated that disabled athletes tended to perform their activism with non-threatening tone avoiding public criticism that may incur mental health problem. Thus, some elite athletes may be interested in soft activism platforms rather than radical activism in this study. It would then be important to understand how best to support athletes who are interested in activism by using their sport platform and provide safe environments where there is minimal risk of disadvantages on athletes who decide to speak out for social justice against oppression in the disability society.

Second, activism orientation may be related to the socio-cultural status associated with being an elite athlete in the South Korean disability society, rather than with an athletic identity related to sports performance. Several studies identified that disabled athletes have unique powerful voices that bring about positive action in society (Brittain & Beacom, 2016; Braye, 2017; Haslett, Choi & Smith, 2020a; Haslett & Smith, 2019; IPC, 2019). In South Korea, many disabled elite athletes engaged in not only in sports games but also in diverse social events to promote the disability rights movement and positive social changes in society since the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympic Games. For example, one disability elite athlete, who served as a Pyeong-Chang Paralympic ambassador, engaged in a charity exhibition to raise awareness on the adoption culture among disabled people who have low chances of becoming parents. In other words, elite athletes may have more complex and various reasons to be situated in a position where they can utilise their sports performances as a platform for social changes. On this point, the qualitative approach is important to provide reasons why disabled elite athletes have a higher activism orientation than other disabled people.

Regarding the relation between activism orientation and age, younger generations (e.g., 20s, 30s) were using online platforms to engage in activism to a greater extent compared to older generations (e.g., 50s, 60s). In the current digital era, online platforms create unprecedented opportunities with significant collective action for information flow and social influence (Diani & McAdam, 2003). In this study, young disabled athletes and



non-athletes showed interest in searching for information on social and political issues and were active with online activism. Thus, an online-based approach can be considered as a crucial vehicle for future activism involving youth. In addition, Mai and Laine (2016) explained that blogging activities may open new political spaces for culturally oppressed people, such as those with difficulties in hearing in their everyday circumstances. With the general positive merits of online platforms, there are two critical and unique implications of online platforms for disabled people in South Korea. First, online-based activism, for those access to the internet, can bring positive implications for a disabled user as it provides more easily approachable and inclusive opportunities for speaking and sharing stories (Trevisan, 2017). Second, online activism is especially important for people living in Confucian countries. This is because a strong Confucian cultural background creates a rigid hierarchy in society according to various factors (e.g., age, gender). Modern South Korean society has emphasised the democratic value and human rights. Nevertheless, some people in Confucian-based countries may still feel intimidated and pressured by authoritarian society to such a level to hide their political opinions (Skoric, Zhu, & Pang, 2016). In this context, and recognising the digital divide, online platforms can provide important, new channels for the expression and mobilisation of activism.

Moreover, the historical literature has revealed that Confucian factors, including age-based hierarchy and gender difference can enormously influence social engagement and interaction in South Korea (Sleziak, 2014; Yum, 1988). However, socio-cultural factors (e.g., gender, age, onset of disability) were not factors statistically affecting activism orientation (combined AOS-OPP) in this study. Accordingly, in this case, a qualitative research approach, based on one-to-one interviews, could be helpful to explore subtle influences of Confucian values on activism orientation in South Korea that are more difficult to emerge from quantitative analysis.

#### **4.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter has reported the findings of quantitative data analysis specifically aimed to answer the first main *research question* of the thesis, which consisted of activism orientation across a wide range of disabled people. Namely, I examined questions relating to a) group differences (athletes vs non-athletes and elite vs recreational athletes), b) external influence (e.g., gender, onset of disability and age) on activism ordination, and c) correlation between activism orientation and athletic identity. To examine differences in activism orientation, I analysed scores from the combined AOS-OPP as well as from the AOS and OPP questionnaires separately. As a result, disabled athletes were more willing to engage in activism than non-athletes. Also, within the disabled athlete group, disabled elite athletes were more willing to engage in activism than recreational athletes. However, athletic identity (measured through the AIMS) did not correlate with activism orientation, which means that individuals with high athletic identity may not have high activism orientation. Gender, onset of disability, and age were not significant factors influencing activism orientation. However, younger generations showed significantly higher online-based activism orientation than older generations. The group differences that have emerged for activism orientation laid out the basis for the subsequent qualitative phase to examine why – and why not – disabled elite athletes tended to engage in activism more compared to recreational athletes and non-athletes. The next chapter will focus on a) a typology of activism in disabled elite athletes, b) understanding motivators and barriers to engage in activism, and c) identifying their enacted or rejected reasons for being an activist in comparison to disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes.

## Activism by disabled elite athletes

### 5.0 Overview

Building on the previous chapter, in which it was reported that in comparison to disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes, disabled elite athletes scored highest at questionnaires measuring activism orientation, this chapter explores *the reasons why* elite athletes have higher activism orientation. This is done by investigating the narratives of current elite disabled athletes' activism in South Korea. In section 5.1, I produce and offer a typology of disabled elite athlete activism using an operational definition and corresponding criteria based on athletes' narratives. Next in section 5.2 (motivators) and 5.3 (barriers), I investigate possible mechanisms that foster or deter engagement in activism for disabled elite athletes. Following the results, a layer of critical discussion is added (*Section 5.4*).

### 5.1 A typology of activism for disabled elite athletes

In this study, I delineated the typology of disabled elite athlete activism. The aim of this typology was to achieve a better understanding of the multifaceted nature of activism by distinguishing various activist behaviours and highlighting their possible impact regarding the pursuit of social justice. I propose disabled elite athlete activism that comprises six types

of activist engagement: 1) sports-based activism, 2) political activism, 3) social activism, 4) economic activism, 5) scholarly activism, and 6) online activism. All types of activism were related to issues within and beyond sports. The six types vary in terms of a series of attributes that allow their unique characterisation: a) goals (e.g., policy change, cultural paradigm shift), b) methods, c) place, and d) engagement (e.g., individual, groups). According to Frank's (2010) approach to typology, stories should be analysed as a whole by mapping stories as a continuum and to avoid cutting up the individual voice in the development of a narrative typology. All narratives were intertwined in a complex way and they became a part of the naming of typologies. Thus, whilst my results are presented in a linear manner for ease of communication, it should be recognised that different types of activism can occur simultaneously as an athlete displays a variety of activism engagement in one story. For example, one of the athlete-activist recruited in this study published an article regarding discrimination within the disability sports culture and then communicated the results to the Paralympic committee as a member of IPC: the former can be considered scholarly activism and the latter sports-based activism. Thus, the typology in this study was also not meant to be interpreted as a continuum whereby one type of activist action was deemed to be more significant than another, but rather from the viewpoint that all activist actions served a vital purpose in the deconstruction of hegemonic systems both within and beyond sporting spaces.

#### 5.1.1 Sports-based activism

Sports-based activism refers to specific actions taken by athletes to inspire positive change through their athletic performances and to mitigate the subordination, marginalisation, and exploitation of certain groups within disability sports (cf. Cooper et al., 2019). There were two predominant ways of doing sports-based activism: high performance sports and sports organisational activism.

One way of doing sports-based activism was through *high performance sports*. In South Korea, disabled elite athletes are considered as an important person and thus have a

high social status in South Korea. Their voices and actions have become emblematic of sports activism in recent years with media attention since the Pyeong-Chang Paralympic Games. Thus, their sports performances could influence on positive changes on society and especially for disabled people, and the impact on society could be greater if the athlete had reached a major achievement (e.g., winning a Paralympic medal). As two elite athletes said:

I think South Korean elite athletes can contribute positively to society by participating in international competition and showing good sport performance. We receive attention from people when we show good sport performance like getting a medal, and then our voice can be influential for social justice in media. [Sung-Hoon]

Since I am on the broadcast or press, I have received many contacts from other disabled people regarding how to start... how to learn snowboard or exercise. With these kinds of contacts, I feel I can positively influence other disabled people, and thus I determine myself to exercise harder to give inspiration and positive changes for disabled people and society. [Haeon]

Some athletes believed that young athletes can become potential activists in the next generation. Thus, they aimed to ‘donate’ their athletic talent to junior athletes. As one athlete said:

In case of activism, I volunteered through a way of talent donation such as coaching athletes without getting any money in both international and national competition. I have studied athletes training, so I coach how to release confusion during training. In South Korea, I think if Para-athletes influence on society, first step is sporting ability, and medallist. With the reasons, nurturing athletes is important for next generation. [Yun-Young]

A second way of doing sports-based activism was *sports organisational activism* designed to address injustice within sports and improve conditions for athletes in the short and long-term at an organisational approach through sports committee (e.g., IPC, KPC). Few medallists were able to engage in this way of activism as Paralympic committee member, and there were high risks of disadvantages if elite athletes had an opposite side against stakeholder who sits higher-status in organisation. However, this way of sports-based activism was strong because the creation of detailed organisational structure and strategies could lead to feasible action in more efficient ways and provide future generations with a blueprint for engaging in effective activism actions. For example, one South Korean elite athlete in this study endured various forms of discrimination and bigotry from coaches and non-disabled stakeholders throughout his career when he was a junior athlete. Now he has become an accomplished senior athlete with the privilege and narrative power that can come with this. He endeavoured to construct legal and substantive political structures for athletes' rights, especially junior athletes through engagement in IPC. As he said:

I am sports-based activist as a member of IPC Athletes' council. For example, the main purpose is to deal with the rights and interests of the players during the tournament, as well as the inconveniences of the players. Creating a structure that plays a role in bringing players into a sporting environment, whether it's ties, information, or disadvantages that they don't know or can't do, yet they want to participate in sports. I attend all kinds of IPC meeting or forum. I can share the ideas and opinions at the forum that only the members of IPC Athletes' Council can attend, held by IPC or IOC. If a sport competition asks for help, I would help them with pleasure. Its main purpose is to cover right and interest for athletes. Like in IPC, I'm preparing for same things in IOC. You know, there are so many athletes isolated from useful information, connection with others and so on. For those experiencing absence of information, disadvantages, no

chance for competition despite intention, I'm trying to make a structure that they can get back again and reduce negative subordination or exploitation from current sport organisation. By suggesting my opinion, I want to complement like what we should prepare, how to clarify the ambiguous part, what athletes need or do not need through the meeting of Athletes' Council. That's the main role of Athletes' Council. [Yun-Young]

### 5.1.2 Political activism

The second type of activism, termed political activism, refers to behaviours exhibited in public areas or political organisations for the purpose of raising awareness on certain political issues (e.g., a corrupted system) and promoting legislative change (e.g., law enforcement). Norris (2009, p.628) defined 'political activism' as 'the ways that citizens participate, the processes that lead them to do so, and the consequences of these acts'.

Disabled elite athlete who engaged in political activism acted both inside sport, as an elite athlete, and outside sports, as a citizen. While political activism does not always bring the desired change, in some instances (explained below with several ways of political activism) it was important in reshaping government policy and in influencing public opinion in South Korea. However political activism often faces significant opposition for elite athletes in terms of gaining respect, promotion, reappointment of national athletes. In this study, this form of activism was found to happen in four ways: demonstration, candlelight vigils, face-to-face meetings with politicians or stakeholders, and statement activism.

One way of doing political activism was *demonstration*, which is a large group of people gathering in one place to challenge negative socio-political (e.g., political corruption) and socio-historical (e.g., social operation) conditions. Demonstration occurred in public spaces such as squares, parks, and streets. For example, some current senior athletes participated in demonstrative protests in front of the South Korean Parliament to defend disabled athletes' rights when they were junior athletes. Their endeavour in such spaces contributed to moving disability sports' affiliation from the "Ministry of Health and

Welfare” to the “Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism”. This was a transformative event serving as a critical turning point with a change of understanding perspectives towards disability from a medical model to a social model. As two of elite athletes shared:

I engaged in some demonstration to insist on our rights as elite athletes. In the past, the disabled sport was affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Welfare. But now disability sport is affiliated to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. We made a voice for this movement. This was a big change. This was a changing point to see Para-sport as just sport, not a medical perceptive. [Sung-Yong]

I engaged in protest for rights movement against the discrimination towards disability. I have normally engaged in activism through protest to protect from unfair environment and treatment. How? We make a voice together in front of Parliament or at the plaza, saying for ‘protect our rights.’ For example, I protested to reduce price of medicine for disabled people if they should take it as compulsory. And other case was for installing a voice signal at a pedestrian crossing and screen door in the tube. There is a screen door in the tube now, but it was not there before. [Man-Ho]

In recent years the protest trend has evolved into *candlelight vigils* (sometimes referred to as candlelight revolution), which is a unique form of non-violent protest where participants occupy a public space while holding a candle. To give an example of the strength of this form of political protest, in 2016-2017 a candlelight protest was exercised for the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye on bribery and corruption charges, which brought out over 16 million people from a population of 51 million in South Korea. The candlelight protest led to the intensification of broader socio-political movements with sublimating collective rage to democratic constitutional procedures by pressuring political



society (e.g., constitutional court) to formally uphold the action (e.g., impeachment prosecution) (S. Kim, 2018). It was a lesson that peaceful protests by citizens can lead to justice and political reform, rather than vitriolic and radical movements. This study highlighted that, irrespectively of their position as an athlete, disabled elite athletes engaged in candlelight protests as citizens carrying their candle. As one athlete candlelight protester said:

I participated in candlelight protest regarding the impeachment of the former president Park at the Gangnam (the largest square in South Korea). I don't know I can talk about this story for recording. I wanted to speak out as one of citizens through peaceful ways like candlelight activism. I felt I needed to find my right by myself. That's why I went to Gwanghamun with a candle. [Haeon]

A third way of doing political activism type was *face-to-face meetings with politicians or stakeholders*. On the one hand, some South Korean politicians took advantage of the visibility gained by showing that they cared about disability rights to attain greater power. On the other hand, this created more opportunities for elite athletes to meet key people (e.g., politicians, stakeholders) and have an influence on society. Thus, some disabled elite athletes, especially medallists, tried to use opportunities to initiate change by speaking directly to key people about a political system that can oppress and marginalise disabled people (e.g., policy for athlete's retirement support). One elite athlete shared his experiences of face-to-face meetings with politicians and KPC members:

Compared to disabled non-athletes, we (disabled elite athletes) are more likely to have a chance to meet politicians such as a member of Parliament or members of the city council because they want to meet us to take a picture for encouragement. One day, I had a chance to meet some politicians. So, I talked about the need and support for developing Para-

sport from government and organisational approach. But it was pointless. In addition, I had a chance to talk with executives of KPC and thus talked about support for life maintenance to enhance disabled athletes' performance. I insisted KPC should support elite athletes for basic life maintenance costs at least. How can we fully dedicate to exercise when we do other jobs for earning money for living? How can we fully focus on the only exercise as we are too tired after work (no exercise) and cannot do anything because of tiredness from work? But it was also pointless. [Yeong-Hwan]

Another way of doing political activism was *statement activism*. This is a formally requested action done through official statements such as a petition, civil complaint, or voting. The petition is a way of collecting signatures in the streets to ask that grievance be considered and calling on government agencies to take action. Unlike a petition, a civil complaint can be submitted without many signatures, but the place is limited in administrative organisations (e.g., district office, town hall). In this study, both high and low-activism elite athletes scored high for the item such as 'I will vote in a non-presidential federal, state, or local elections' in the AOS-OPP. Moreover, all interviewees presented a strong will to engage in voting. As some elite athletes shared experiences of statement activism:

There is a sidewalk leading to the bus stop in front of the welfare centre. But the roadside trees are planted zigzag, and it's not flat, it's a slope. I think seniors who use electric wheelchairs are very dangerous on this road, and thus I filed a complaint regarding this issue in the town hall. But the result was negative. They said the roadside tree is not the property of the city but is for Ministry of Transport. [Sung-Hoon]

I filed a petition to improve accessibility for disabled people because I am not comfortable with this road. In addition, I reported issues such as inconvenient facilities or illegal construction buildings like no disabled toilet in the media. Also, I claimed civil complaints if there is necessary to be improved. [Chang-Soo]

### 5.1.3 Social activism

Social activism refers to intentional actions or discourses designed to draw attention to social injustice, raise awareness beyond sports about disability issues, and inspire at the micro (individual), meso (specific groups), and macro (widely recognised public) levels of society through diverse social platforms. Due to their high social status, South Korean elite athletes had the power to share positive messages about disability with large numbers of people if they want and, therefore, had a broad impact on society by exerting influence outside and beyond sports issues. In this study, this form of activism was identified in four ways – four ways of doing social activism: mentorship, speech, volunteering, and documentary activism.

One way of doing social activism was *mentorship*, meaning an interactional movement was organised by elite athletes to share their resources (e.g., knowledge) with marginalised people (e.g., disabled people) or those who live in a troubled period (e.g., adolescents) to improve personal wellness and holistic growth. In this study some elite athletes engaged in mentorship activism not only as elite athletes but also as disabled people who have overcome the psychological trauma often created by acquired disability and the social prejudice (e.g., discrimination against disabled people) in South Korea that can follow. For example, some elite athletes visited other disabled people houses to listen to their stories and encourage them to come out from a traumatic cave. In addition, some senior elite disabled athletes also engaged in mentoring teenagers who were suffering an identity crisis (e.g., disability identity, athlete identity) to help cultivate psychological skills and interpersonal strength. As the following some elite athletes said during the interviews:

I engage in mentoring activities for acquired disability. It is not easy for them to get outside from home since acquired disability because of an accident or illness. This is a quite hard process to accept their situation and reality. This is a serious problem. We should not be marginalized, excluded, and isolated by ourselves. Thus, I visit their house, listen to their story, and encourage them to overcome mental trauma, explaining why they should come out from their psychological cave. I become their life mentor. I can understand their emotions and think about what they are thinking. I was also the same like them. One-to-one mentoring can make many people bright in their lifetime by time, and they can support other disabled people. [Yeong-Hwan]

I engage in mentoring activism for both disabled and non-disabled junior athletes like a teenager. There are lots of identity confusions when they are stuck in adolescence. For example, they are confused to form their identity as students or athletes when they are young, and friendship or career. Especially disabled junior athletes may feel more loneliness because some disabled people have victim mentality thinking they are marginalized. I do one-to-one and group mentoring with this kind of topic how they can wisely overcome these challenges in their adolescence. [Yun-Young]

Another example of how social activism was *speech* engagement. This is an act (mostly speech) that constitutes giving influential and inspirational verbal messages with the main purpose of increasing awareness on the topic of disability and disability sports for social change. Since 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympics Game, elite athletes, especially medallists, have had many opportunities to give motivational speeches for a wide range of audiences (e.g., students, office workers, businessmen, housewives, and jobseekers), and interviews with various media (e.g., TV reporters, journalists, researchers). In this study, one

elite athlete with a visual impairment gave an ‘inspirational talk’ in which he offered stories on how to be an athlete that was infused with messages of hope to young adults, such as ‘I can do it and you can also do it’. Another elite athlete never declined to be interviewed by the media as he thought this was an opportunity to deliver his thoughts on social injustice inside and outside sports in South Korea and to boost awareness about the needs of the right movements if he had the chance. Moreover, as two elite athletes said:

I gave an inspirational talk to primary school students. First, I played blind football with children, and then started my story to give positive inspiration and hope on their dreams, saying that ‘the only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.’, and ‘I am challenging myself in daily life, and never giving up regardless of my disability’.

[Man-Ho]

As I am an elite athlete, I have some opportunities to have an interview. I take this chance without a doubt all the time. I try to share my thought about human rights, social injustice in society and show my hope for social changes during the interview. [Sung-Min]

Another way of doing social activism was through *volunteering*. This was a spontaneous involvement to increase awareness of social issues, help people promote social inclusion, and achieve tangible and sustainable contributions. As examples of using volunteering to raise awareness about injustices in society, elite athletes volunteered at public photo exhibitions and created or partook in volunteering clubs for both disabled and non-disabled people. As two elite athletes said:

I volunteered to engage in a photo exhibition with photographer Se-Hyun Jo. This year’s theme was Pyeong-Chang Paralympic with a sports star. This photo exhibition was aimed to increase awareness of adoption society

and the donate for adopted children. It was also a good chance for me to know about adoption culture in South Korea. As I am disabled, I thought about only disability society. This time was a turning point to form activist identity related to non-disabled society issues. Also, adoption is a related topic for disabled people who cannot have a baby because of their physical difficulties, and I heard there is a low chance for a disabled child who was relinquished by parental rights from parents to be adopted. I hope disabled children can meet new family with mature awareness about adoption. I believe this photo exhibition gave an impressive message to society about adoption society. [Sung-Yong]

In my university, the environment is very poor for disabled people. So, I created a volunteer club to promote friendship between disabled and non-disabled, increase awareness of disability, and support each other. For example, people with hearing impairment teach sign language to non-disabled people who want to learn, and non-disabled help typing and writing for people with visual impairment when disabled people want to read a book and take an exam. We share our life and support each other. So, this club contribute to increase awareness of disability culture and enhance towards integrated society. [Man-Ho]

A further way of doing social activism was through *documentary*. That consists of making documentary films to shine a light on social injustices with the hope that awareness is raised on various social, political, economic and environmental issues that discriminate against disabled people. It was hoped that telling and showing stories of social injustice through a documentary provides in-depth understanding of societal issues for the public. In 2018, a documentary film titled ‘We ride a sled’ was released in a time of 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympic Games in South Korea. The theme of this documentary was about

disabled ice hockey, and the focus was on their athlete's life. All ice sledge elite athletes participated in making this documentary film. The film showed the achievements of the national team such as winning the silver medal at the 2012 world Championships. In addition, the film highlighted a lack of support and indifference from the public towards the disability national sports team. Although it reached an audience of 2,432 people (much less than commercial films), the film delivered an informational message and inspired audiences. As one elite athlete said:

I tried to do whatever I can raise awareness about Pyeong-Chang Paralympic, and I did my best. One is filming the documentary movie titled 'we ride sleds. It will be released on 7<sup>th</sup> of March. Due to Pyeong - Chang Paralympic and lots of support from president Moon, this period can be a good opportunity to inform Para-sport and boost interest in us from the public. Thus, I believe this film can a good platform to help raise awareness and give a bright message. [Sung-Yong]

#### 5.1.4 Economic activism

Economic activism refers to actions taken by individuals or groups to stimulate economic and social empowerment through creating a business or collaborating with companies. In this study few elite athletes engaged in economic activism with the form of *sponsorship* by collaborating with companies. This collaboration was beneficial for the company, because elite athlete contributed to improving the corporate image by exploiting his fame as an athlete, and for the athlete, because the company provided financial support and promoted awareness of disability sports through advertisements. This 'win-win strategy' promoted a large inspirational and practical impact on athletes and society. As one elite athlete share this:

If you see disabled athletes, there are lots of teams, but there are not many professional sponsors for an individual athlete. I have looked at this point.

How? Although I am affiliated with the national team, I collaborate with another company as a personal sponsor. We (athletes) need money because sometimes we need to pay our own money to do training in South Korea and oversea countries. Through collaboration with the company, I can get financial support and have a chance to inform Para-sport as an ambassador through advertisement. And my sponsor company takes the image of supporting disabled athletes and advertise their brand with our fame. We support directly and indirectly each other. I think this action is very important as a kind of activism, and thus I encourage other athletes to be more active to find potential collaborators. I am currently an ambassador at Jangdeok Oriental Hospital in Gangnam, Seoul. Before then, I was ambassador at a newspaper company, Yeouido Today, and was the main character a music video of HOT (K-pop famous musician).

[Sung-Keun]

#### 5.1.5 Scholarly activism

Scholarly activism refers to the transmission of ideas within academic environments (e.g., in universities and training institutes) to enhance a person's understanding of oppressive systems for achieving fairer world through teaching and research (cf. Cooper et al., 2019). In modern disability society, some disabled elite athletes have started in parallel with scholarly activism engagement for using a more logical way to change society and considering their retirement. This engagement led to direct education for people and frame organisation actions by offering rich legacy of academic documentation.

One way of scholarly activism was educational *teaching* that occurs at institutions of higher education or training institutions through specific courses or seminars focused on the intersectional socio-political issues (e.g., disability, sport, education, and social justice). In this study one athlete activist educated lawyers about disabled people's rights and accessibility issues in the educational realm (e.g., judicial institution), so that the lawyers



could become potential supporters of disability rights and create a more equitable social system in the next generation. As another example, one athlete-professor gave a lecture on disability sports to increase awareness among students about disability sports (e.g., type, rules of disability sports) and the disability rights movement (e.g., case with abandonment from family, emotional abuse, discrimination). As two elite athletes said:

I give a lecture for the disabled people's rights to lawyers who deal with disability issues in the judicial institution. I basically give an experimental lecture. For example, I start the lecture with a casual talk for 5 minutes and give them a mission such as ordering a coffee with a blindfold at a coffee shop, getting on the train with a wheelchair, or buying something with only body language from shops. After the mission for one hour, I open a discussion about their feeling, what improvement is needed in this society with them. It is not just giving information about disability lifestyle, but also raising awareness about disability right movement. [Man-Ho]

I am teaching about disability sport and the prevention of disability in university. Also, I am giving special lectures about disability right movement for young students in secondary school. [Yeong-Hwan]

Another way of scholarly activism was *research*, that is, an intellectual movement characterised by publishing scholarly journals (e.g., in *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*), writing a thesis, autobiographies, critical essays, or academic books on disability at the intersections of sport, culture, disability, politics, and experiential life outcome. In South Korea, scholarly organisations, such as “Korean National Sports University” and “Korean Society for Adapted Physical Activity and Exercise” served as sites where knowledge is disseminated through research. Few elite athletes engaged in activism through research activities using their logical voices in this study. For example, one

elite athlete addressed discrimination against disabled people in his PhD thesis. Some elite athletes shared their research engagement during the interview:

I wrote my PhD thesis on the discrimination faced by disabled employees.

With regard to this, I am still doing research about this topic against social injustice. I also share my research if someone asks. [Man-Ho]

I should research and study more now. I believe my role is to support and help the juniors so that they can grow faster. Most of all, the more I get learned, the more I'm awakened to what I never knew. That's what I've learned. Apply systems, policies or environment of other countries to Korea can be a little burden. Thus, I want to concern about the development of Para-sport as athletes. [Yun-Young]

I research to investigate reality and inform our current situation. It is not only about disabled people's stories, but also this is my story. As I am a person with visual impairment, I cannot see all the books or articles when I want. It is quite difficult to get a file for reading references for people with visual impairment. So, I ask help for typing through assistants, or welfare centres. It takes more time than others. It is not easy for us to read literature and do research... but I think it is important to keep publishing. [Yeong-Hwan]

#### 5.1.6 Online activism

Online activism (called internet-based activism, web activism, or digital activism) refers to an advocacy type that uses digital communication (e.g., social media, blogs, and podcasts) to instantaneously deliver informational and expressive message to a large or specific audience for social, political, and cultural movements. In South Korea press and media have been strictly censored until the late 1980s by the military regime of Park Chung-Hee in order to

suppress possible anti-regime rhetoric. In addition, activism orientations have been implicitly prevented by Confucian culture (e.g., hierarchical culture in age, gender difference), which influences the formation of social identities. However, today there are fewer sanctions and prohibitions on political participation since the advent of a new democratic political system. In this sense, online activism emerged as a grassroots activism with no hierarchy and provided diverse repertoires. With their visibility as an athlete, their engagement through online platform tended to be covered by media, reproduced through other voices, and led to direct or indirect practical impact on society. In this study, there were three key ways of doing online activism: online petition, social media, and blogging.

*Online petition* is an online form of a petition which is signed by a group of people to indicate support of common causes (e.g., trivial daily difficulties to unfair judgement). In 2017 the South Korean government created an official online petition channel for all citizens on the website of the Blue House (the South Korean presidential residence). Once the petition got the backing of more than 200,000 petitioners within 30 days, relevant and high-level government officers should answer the petition by taking action. The online petition board has become a popular and more accessible route for South Korean activists to express their concerns and complaints to the President. For example, in relation to Paralympic issues, there was a petition about improvement against indifference and discrimination towards PyeongChang Paralympics compared to the Olympics from major broadcasting in 2018. Also, there was a petition about boycott for 2020 Tokyo Paralympics with concerns on the exposure of radiation in Japan. Most disabled elite athletes used online petitions to engage in activism. One of the elite athletes expressed his experiences about the online petition:

I engage in activism through only the easiest way such as the online national petition. I search for some post about disability right on the online national petition website, and if there is some online petition about disability rights, I sign my name to support.” [Haeon]

Another way of doing online activism was *social media* activism. This refers to broader discussions taking place on social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram about socio-political issues (e.g., disability right, feminism, LGBTQ) that give rise to collective identities. Skoric, Zhu, & Pang (2016) categorised social media activism into three approaches: a) informational approach (e.g., news, campaign information, community information), b) expressive approach (e.g., to express oneself to articulate one's own opinions, ideas, and thoughts), and c) relational approach (e.g., to initiate, maintain and strengthen relationships with others). These approaches were also revealed in Korean culture. As an example of an expressive approach, activism based on hashtags (#MeToo campaign) has risen regarding the issues about sexual assault or harassment in celebrity and sports through their own social media account since 2018. One young female Paralympian sparked a broader discussion about personal experiences of sexual harassment from her coach through using the hashtag #MeToo in her social media account. The movement quickly gained momentum and expanded by reposting with the hashtag #MeToo across social networking service. This movement finally led to the imprisonment of the coach who was proven guilty as well as organisational reforms aimed at addressing the issues of sexual violence. As the example of an informational and relational approach, the 2016 candlelight protest (see *Section 5.1.2*) was one prominent way of successfully using social media activism where millions of participants gathered from the online platform to the streets through speaking information (e.g., reasons why they collect our voices for rights, place where they can speak out in offline). People who were interested in the 2016 candlelight protest also kept group-based discussions and strengthen their relationships with the same goal direction online. Thus, social media activism has become a potent tool for grassroots activism in Korea, not only facilitating the online and offline mobilisation of citizens who wish to shape the contemporary Korean political landscape but also providing a new social space for voicing opinions and forging alliances. One elite athlete shared a story of social media activism about disability rights and sports:

I post and share about current social issues or disability sports on my social networking account. For example, I uploaded some information about a talk on disability rights that I attended in welfare centres, and shared impressive posts of social movement on Facebook. I even uploaded about my sport to increase awareness of disability sport on Instagram.

[Sung-Yong]

A third way of doing online activism was *blogging* activism, which is about writing and maintaining an online blog to support self-identity formation, expression of their desires, and reconstruction meaning of disability. For example, one disabled elite athlete shared his stories about romantic relationship with his non-disabled wife on their blog titled ‘Is there a disability in love?’. He used the blog to encourage others to share romantic stories between disabled and non-disabled people (e.g., how their relationship developed through time, how to introduce them to each other’s parents, pregnancy, and childbirth) and to communicate with subscribers on the daily topic by comments and emails. Their blog stories helped increase awareness on social issues about disabled and non-disabled romantic couples and encouraged other couples to develop deep relationships. As he said during the interview:

I have started blogging about our love story. In fact, romantic relationship between disabled and non-disabled people is very unusual in the media. We blog to increase awareness that, although it might look strange, there is nothing strange. Time by time, I have gained many followers for our blog, and we had a chance to appear on television to share our story. Many people messaged to us, ‘I appreciate your stories. It evokes a feeling of strength to love with my girlfriend (disabled).’ Our blog posts seem to bring some changes in people’s attitude towards disabled people. [Haeon]

## 5.2 Motivators for disabled elite athletes to become activists

All nine high-activism disabled elite athletes interviewed told stories of regularly engaging in activism (e.g., social activism, political activism). The thematic analysis I conducted resulted in two key themes. These were called ‘socialisation process’ and ‘growth mindset’ to explain why disabled elite athletes engaged in activism and enacted an activist orientation.

### 5.2.1 Socialisation process

The first theme, ‘socialisation process’, captured a major reason for engaging in activism. It could be defined as the social experiences that have provided athletes with the expectation, opportunity and information to advocate for social change. This main theme incorporates four sub-themes: athlete status, Paralympic Games, encouragement, and education.

*Athlete status.* A key factor of the socialisation process into engaging in activism was the learned belief that their high status as an elite athlete meant they had both the opportunity and the responsibility to engage in activism. Athletes status was almost unanimously mentioned as motivators by the most high-activism athletes interviewed. They believed that, as an elite disabled athlete in South Korea, they represented an ‘important person’ in society. Thus, they were afforded a voice that could potentially influence other people in the South Korean society (e.g., by being an inspiration to people in society, developing disability sports). Due to the strong hierarchical structure of South Korean culture, elite athletes who win a gold, silver, or bronze medal at the Paralympics acquire a much higher status than those who do not. Therefore, the status of an elite athlete - and especially of medallist –emerged as an important motivator to engage in activism, as the following quotes suggest.

I am an elite athlete. My position is very advantaged for activism.

Ministers and members of parliament come to see me, and they encourage me in front of people. Thus, the opportunity to be an activist is much higher. Otherwise, the change will take months to be dealt with, very slowly but this process is speedier because I’m an elite athlete and can command change for the better. [Man-Ho]

Many people around me said ‘You are now a public figure’, and they said people with disabilities would be encouraged to live, and live better too, because of me. The perceptions towards me have changed positively, and I think I have an influence on people and society, changing bad attitudes about disability. [Sung-Min]

*Paralympic Games.* A second motivating factor for why the athletes engaged in activism was due to the Pyeong-Chang 2018 Winter Paralympic Games being held in South Korea. All participants with high activism orientation reported that hosting the Paralympics in their own country, as a social event, had encouraged them to engage in societal change by highlighting in the media, online, and during interactions with people, the ongoing inequalities and prejudice that people with disabilities face in South Korean culture. As one of the elite athletes said:

Since the Paralympics were held in South Korea, the President [of the country] came and looked our performance. Our play was broadcasted, the media promoted Para-sport, and there was a lot of cheering from public. Many disabled facilities have been enhanced. It was a steppingstone to be a high activist. Since the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympics, our influence has begun to grow. I think now is the start to speak out against the wrongs that happen to the disabled people in our culture, and the Paralympics helped me do that, gave me a spotlight and more courage. [Chang-Soo]

*Encouragement.* A third reason why elite athlete engaged in activism was that they were encouraged by a) the realisation that challenging discrimination is important to people they came into contact with, b) the positive feedback from past experiences of activism, such as producing a positive change in society, and c) successful stories of other athletes who engage in activism and d) the needs, which is inspired by negative experience or

discrimination, to develop a society. Encouragement was mentioned by most high-activism elite athletes. As two elite-athletes said:

I decided that participation in activism was going to happen also due to lots of encouragement from the para-sport association and other athletes. For example, they encouraged me to use my voice to help change the society by challenging the discrimination everyday disabled people face in the country. [Sung-Min].

Both athletes, Hong Suk-man and Kim Gyu-Dae, were selected as IPC members. I am influenced by them, encouraged by them. I would like to do my best in sports and best to help develop a better society, like those athletes did. [Sung-Hoon].

In the case of Europe, people have struggled for justifiable democracy for hundreds of years. This wave made the recognition of citizens changed. How about Korea? It has been just 40 years. During this short period, the wave of citizens and college students completed Korean democracy, but I thought it cannot be perfect than achievement by changes for 400 or 500 years. I thought the hasty desire was greed. So, I was inwardly hurt by unfair situations and discrimination. But now, I cannot stand anymore. The situation gets changed a lot. [Yun-Young]

*Specific-knowledge background.* A fourth factor of the socialisation process in terms of why some athletes engaged in activism was due to higher education broadening their knowledge of social justice. Few elite athletes mentioned that studying in a related field (e.g., social change, social welfare, disability sport) in higher institution expanded diverse dimensional views to approach how to improve society, and this led to engage in activism.



I can broaden my view of the world by doing PhD about social welfare for disability sport. The more I can study, the more I can see what it is the right way. Education motivates me to speak out for social change. [Sung-Yong]

### 5.2.2 Growth mindset

The second main theme, ‘growth mindset’, captured other major reasons for engaging in activism, meaning that personal voices and efforts can influence on the improvement of societal changes. This main theme incorporated three sub-themes: developing disability sport, giving inspiration, and improving disability facilities.

*Developing a disability sports society.* Important to the growth mindset, for why these athletes engaged in activism, was a desire to develop disability sports for current and future generations. This desire developed from two factors: a) experiencing unfair treatment and discrimination from others working in disability sports field (e.g., coaches), and b) emulating other countries’ well-organised disability sports system. Most elite athletes mentioned their desire to develop disability sports as a strong motivation to engage in activism. As one elite athlete said:

The main purpose is to deal with the rights and interests of the players during the tournament, as well as the inconveniences of the players. [...] I can share the ideas and opinions at the forum that only the members of IPC Athletes’ Council can attend, held by IPC or IOC. If a sports competition asks for help, I would help them with pleasure. Its main purpose is to cover right and interest for athletes. Like in IPC, I’m preparing for the same things in IOC. You know, there are so many athletes isolated from useful information, connection with others and so on. For those experiencing the absence of information, disadvantages, no chance for competition in spite of intention, I’m trying to make a structure

that they can get back again and reduce negative subordination or exploitation from current sports organisation. [...] The more athlete aged, the more their sporting ability reduced. After their retirement, we need to compete with non-disabled people in society. We need to focus on not only sports performance, but also support for retired disabled from Para-sport committee level. I hope Para-sport society can be developed for a more supportive and fairer world. [Yun-Young]

*Giving inspiration.* Another motivating factor of a growth mindset was their desire to offer inspiration to society. Most disabled elite athletes tended to believe they can inspire for people to shape a positive mindset (e.g., hope, confidence, positive thinking, challenging spirit) through their stories in diverse ways (e.g., speech, interview, sports performance). Thus, they focused on sharing their stories to unfold deeper level of social changes within disabled people in their everyday lives. As two elite athletes said:

I want to show that everyone is equal, and thus we can do it rather than we need other's help. 'We can do it.' 'We can achieve our goal.' 'We can make it.' I hope many people see our effort and realise that disabled people can do it. With regards to this, I hope disabled people can live with hope and enthusiasm for their dream. [Sung-Yong]

Because I have a disability, I wanted to give a message of hope, confidence and challenge spirit to disabled people, especially those who are introverted and daunted in this society (Korea). When I see people commented that they were inspired by seeing my words in my blog. I feel good. I could inspire and help even a few people. [Haeon]

*Improving disability facilities.* Another factor of a growth mindset was their desire to enhance disability public facilities. In this study, few elite athletes focused on disability

facilities issues (e.g., pedestrian disability accesses designed for all people including disabled people) that allow disabled people to use public space as the same level as non-disabled people. As one elite athlete said:

First, I felt some inconvenience in a specific public area, then it would be the same for a broad range of other disabled people. So, if I raised, and then people fixed or developed these facilities, I thought even one disabled person feel better to use public place. [Chang-Soo]

### **5.3 Barriers for disabled elite athletes to become activists**

Whilst the nine elite athletes with highest activism orientation scores told stories related to their regular engagement in activism, the nine elite athletes with lowest activism orientation scores described their lives in ways that highlighted their low or non-existent engagement in activism. In addition, elite athletes with high activism orientation also shared their experiences of challenging difficulties when they engaged in activism. As a result, four main themes were identified, such as ‘emotional cost’, ‘Confucian challenge’, ‘socio-environmental barrier’, and ‘personal barrier’.

#### **5.3.1 Emotional cost**

The first main theme, ‘emotional cost’, captured the overriding reason for not engaging in activism, referring to the pressure to regulate unfavourable emotions when a person thinks about engaging in activism or interacts with other people engaged in a process of activism. Most disabled elite athletes with low activism orientation were discouraged by the emotional cost associated with fearing a disadvantage (lack of courage), perceived backlash, and loneliness (depression) if seen engaging in activism. These internalised oppressions led elite athletes to be positioned in chaos, low psycho-emotional wellbeing, and thus silent on injustice instead of speaking out and acting as witnesses (Smith & Sparkes, 2008; Reeve, 2014).

*Fear of facing a disadvantage (lack of courage).* One key barrier was lack of courage caused by fear of facing a disadvantage. For example, the participants who eschewed activism feared that those sitting at a higher hierarchical level (e.g., stakeholders, politicians, KPC) could exclude them from participating in sports competitions or from the national team. These fears, in turn, resulted in them being silent on activist issues. As one of elite athlete mentioned:

I do not have enough courage to talk about things (social irregularities) to change. If I butt in on social change, I may get a disadvantage. The one disadvantage engenders another. [Chan-Seong]

In terms of fear of having a disadvantage when it comes to opportunities for success, one of elite athlete activist described this situation as a ‘domino effect’, meaning that eschewing activism led to a chain reaction of avoiding activism in all other surrounding athletes. As he said:

A professor said athletes are like sand. Have you ever grabbed the sand? They escape from my hand. For example, we discuss an issue. And the problem occurred. Someone said, “If you keep taking part in the group, you can be fired from your team or rejected recharter.” As soon as the athlete hears this, he/she answers “Yes” immediately. If one doesn’t attend, the other feels nervous and he/she also decides to get out of it. One by one. [Yun-Young]

*Perceived backlash.* A second barrier as to why the participants in this group did not engage in activism was the perceived backlash – such as jealousy from other people – that accompanied their high status as elite athletes in South Korean culture. Due to the competitive environment in South Korean culture, some other athletes reacted negatively to another person’s success. Some participants expressed their concerns that, if they engaged in

activism, they would attract hatred and jealousy, especially from other, less culturally successful, disabled people. Coping with such negative emotions, they suggested, required them to exert repeated and deliberate emotional self-regulation. As two low activism elite disabled athletes said:

However, people are jealous of me because I have received a pension since I became a medallist despite the young age. I feel others' jealousy from not only friends with disabilities but also friends without disabilities in school as well as other elite athletes in the sports field. Friends said, 'You have got medals, and you do not have to go to the army... So, you are an outcast. You are in the corner'. It was a deep scar on my mind... I was hurt. I did my best, but others did not appreciate it. [Ho-Yeon]

I think the reason is there are a lot of disabled people with negative thoughts because there are many people who were injured by tragedy and trauma. If there is a rival, they will try to drag them down with backbiting, and I've experienced that, so no way would I want to be an activist when all I get is criticism because people are jealous of my success. [Jong-Seok]

One high activism athlete shared his perceived backlash experience when he engaged in activism.

What I am talking about something for improvement is complaints from other's perspectives because I am a medallist, and at that times I was best known as Para-athlete. What other people are talking about the same issues is a requirement. They wanted to drag me down with backbiting. It is just the same opinion. Other athletes encouraged me to speak out on behalf of athletes. Some said to me, 'You are more well-known and famous, so it would be better for you to speak injustice to make some

changes.’ That’s why I did it with good intention, but some heard it as a grumble. [Yun-Young]

*Loneliness (depression).* A third reason as to why some disabled athlete’s eschewed activism was due to loneliness and depression. For example, three disabled athletes expressed their worries that other people might not appreciate their engagement in activism. The conflict between their desire to appear as successful leaders of the disability rights movement and the anticipated reality of being not appreciated as an activist bred thoughts of self-accusations and feelings of blame, resulting in depression which, ultimately, prevented them to engage in activism. As one elite athlete described:

Of course, I succeed as an athlete and an activist in case of some meaning. However, there is nothing left with me. The joy of medals? It is only for one or two months. Whenever I go back to student life, I become depressed, because I feel like I am worthless. The colour of medals may be different if I give up being an athlete as an activist and spend more time with friends. Successful interaction with peers is one of the most important aspects for disabled people. However, I cannot distinguish who is on my side? many people look for benefits because of my medals. I am not ‘xxx’ as a Para-swimming athlete; I am not ‘xxx’ as an activist. I wonder what a person looks at me as just me. It is hard to explain the emptiness and gap between athlete and social life. [Ho-Yeon]

### 5.3.2 Confucian challenges

The second main theme, ‘Confucian challenges’, captured another reason for not engaging in activism. Confucian cultures affect what people are able to say and how they say it. The theme, Confucian challenges, was strongly identified by both low and high activism athletes. This theme incorporated five sub-themes, defining the reasons why disabled elite athletes

did not (or faced difficulties to) engage in activism: ‘positional hierarchy’, ‘young age’, ‘factionalism’, and ‘collectivism’, and ‘parent’s influence’.

*Positional hierarchy.* One barrier pertaining to the theme of Confucian challenges, as to why the participants did not (or faced difficulties to) engage in activism, was due to a relational hierarchy. Disabled elite athletes perceived that high-status individuals may dominate and oppress lower-status people because the Confucian hierarchical ideology is deeply infiltrated in everyone’s life. This can be explained through one of the five cardinal relationships in Confucianism such as the bond between ruler and subjects (군신유익; 君臣有義). Literally, this means that the subjects should respect the ruler as superior, and the ruler should be the subjects’ role model (Yum, 1988). However, historically only one element of this today – the subject’s ‘loyalty’ to the ruler – was emphasised. This relationship exerts influence where relatively low-status individuals must respect high-status individuals. Accordingly, the rigid hierarchical order contributed to keep disabled people at the ‘bottom of society’ in relation to some non-disabled stakeholders in society.

Now, negative social prejudices against disability have abated and discriminative treatments against disabled elite athletes have lessened. Due to this change, disabled elite athletes are currently seen as ‘elite athletes’ rather than ‘disabled people’ and, in turn, are given a higher status than disabled non-athletes within the disability society. However, within the narrower disability sport system—established in 2005 with the formation of KPC and dominated by disabled and non-disabled board members— disabled elite athletes occupy a lower position. Given their two-sided condition, this study found that some disabled elite athletes took advantage of their power on diverse social and political issues, but they had difficulty to engage in sports-based activism because this may be deemed as disrespectful by the KPC group. As one elite athlete said:

Korea is the country that can be changed with only a few people. It sounds strange, doesn’t it? Because I’m not the decision-maker yet. I think it will be possible if I get in a high position that can decide. I don’t know how far

it is, but without the right to decision-making, I can't change anything and structure a new frame. As I said before, when I put a different opinion from others, people would accept mine as a wrong one. It will make me hard to keep going to engage in activism. They thought me as an arrogant and selfish person. I couldn't explain all the things around me more logically. This is one of difficulties when I am doing activism. [Yun-Young]

We have a vertical relationship according to power in Korea. All countries have this. What was it in English...? For instance, legislators always say "My respectable citizens" while saying "You guy can't live here without me" behind people. It's the same. They say "We are here for you. Our organisation is here for you." But the reality is that "If you don't follow what I said, you can't be selected as a national athlete. Don't you want to be in the national team? You want to win a medal, don't you?" Did I tell negative things too much? [Yun-Young]

*Age hierarchy.* Another barrier to activism within the theme of Confucian challenges was age hierarchy. This can be reflected in another of the five cardinal relationships in Confucianism, that is the bond between older and younger brothers (Korean; 장유유서, Chinese; 長幼有序). Historically this bond meant that there is order and sequences from childhood (younger brother) to adulthood (older brother) according to biological age (Yum, 1988). However, today this relationship has degenerated in a way that younger people should now be expected to follow and respect older people, even if the age gap is slight. Thus, to be an older person is in South Korea deemed an advantage in terms of exercising one's rights to speak their own opinions related to social change in general. Age hierarchy also applied to disability sports. One active athlete-activist also suggested his experiences of activism were stifled by older KPC members because of his relatively young



age. Another athlete-activist set forth his divergent opinions against senior people, but he believed they ignored his opinions and considered him to be an impertinent person with an antagonistic position. The tacit cultural age hierarchy in disability sports became a facilitator for senior people, but also barrier for young athletes to do activism. As two current elite athletes said:

First, I think the most difficult is age. Because I am an athlete, and 24 years old. I am still too young to speak out. In South Korea, senior people think young people don't know anything. That's why I didn't speak my opinion. I am scared that they make a kind of hierarchy. For example, when I made a small mistake against them, they shout away noisily. [Ho-Yeon]

South Korea is a kind of country that if people who aged 30's speak against people aged 50's, the elderly people say, 'He is arrogant' and 'He is a jerk'. I am just talking about my opinion. That's why I hide my opinions to avoid this situation. I won't say anything even though I want to speak out. I had just spoken my opinions, but they said, 'He has no manners at all when he talks', and 'You are a rude little bastard.' I am talking about looking at it from a different angle, but they just hate me. So, I feel a lot of constraints. [Sung-Hoon]

*Factionalism.* A third barrier captured within the theme of Confucian challenges and adding more complexity as to why the participants did not (and faced difficulty to) engage in activism, was factionalism. In South Korea factionalism was produced by a concept identified by the word *Yongo* (연고, 緣故), composed of two words, 'yon (tie)' and 'go (having a reason)', that refers to personal relationships in an informally-organised group (Horak, 2014). This relation is made of three 'ties': *Hakyon* (학연, 學緣: education-based

tie), *Hyulyon* (혈연, 血緣: family or blood-based tie), and *Jiyon* (지연, 地緣: regional origin-based tie). For example, alumni (i.e., former students) are connected with students from the same school or university through a strong relational bond. The *Yongo*-based relationship created factionalism in disability sports by securing benefits granted through such ties, rather than based on equal treatment.

In the data, multiple factions coexisted in disability sports. Among these factions, one was perceived to hold a major influence on society and to dominate by ‘pushing aside’ others to expand their power. For example, one elite athlete stood up to defend his rights against a different faction. Therefore, he was ostracised by people (e.g., KPC board member and few athletes) who belonged to the rival faction and was excluded from the national team as a form of retaliation he believed. He told that other athletes who graduated from the same university as the board member were granted a place in the national team instead of him. As he said:

I have got on the wrong side of the board members by saying opposite opinions with them. Game participation is only available for disabled who have disability level 1.0, but they raised my disability level to 1.5 when I was selected as the national team even though my level was evaluated as 1.0 in the international disability ranking system. In the sense of retaliation for not being on the same faction, board members give their people (athletes), who have the same direction or obey them, a favourable class for qualification for Paralympic. And they prevented other athletes who are opposite sides to participate in the Paralympics. Surviving here is very hard. I think they are on a serious power trip lining their pocket or rice bowls (Korean staple food). [Yeong-Hwan]

One athlete indicated many key people working in disability sports committee were demoted from non-disabled sports society because of their corruption. He believed this kind of people spoiled disabled sport environments by making corrupted faction.

It is a bit uncomfortable to talk about the reasons why I am discouraged to engage in activism. I have seen a lot of people saying they don't want to face Korean stakeholders and even give up the athlete's life because of Korean culture. To put it frankly, the inside of Para-sport is corrupted like rubbish. This started from the non-disabled sport and passed over to Para-sport. Most of the stakeholders who work for Para-sports caused a problem in non-disabled sport, and then they were banished to Para-sports. So, there is already their lines and people in here. They ignore people who are in a different faction. I think this is a big barrier for disabled athletes to be activist. [Chang-Seong]

Few elite athletes maintained their discretion about their faction and avoided to be embroiled in a dispute between different factions because they feared repercussions from superior factions. This led to silence on social injustice.

If you see senior athletes, they want to be not only athletes but also leaders in Para-sport society. Thus, athletes turn against people who have different opinions and make their line with people who have the same thoughts. And they prefer to bind their group with a common relationship such as the same university, same hometown. That's all because they want to take power. They think 'he is my line, my man because he listens and follows to me'. As a result, some athletes became enemies and competitors. We are trying to be nice each other pretending we are close when we meet. But when we turn around, we are busy to slander each other. There is no reason to win, but we should win people who are against me. I think there

may be the same culture in other sports, but the individual sport is stronger custom than group sports. Everyone has their own opinion, and someone can have a different opinion against me. But others think ‘He is not from the same faction’, and ‘He is opposite to me’ rather than understanding each other. This was a very huge reason I couldn’t have my own opinion. Even though the line has power now, this line can be a rotten rope if it became degenerate. But if I already got this line, and the senior got a sack for some reasons, I may lose my future. [Dae-Won]

*Collectivism (community spirit).* A fourth barrier pertaining to the theme of Confucian challenges was collectivism, which means “social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives” (Triandis, 1995, p. 2). Elite athletes could make one voice through cooperation and harmony among each other in a collectivism frame. However, each individual belonged simultaneously to two different types of collectivism: a) horizontal (e.g., seeing oneself as being similar to others and highlighting common goals), and b) vertical (e.g., being loyal to one’s group and adhering to hierarchical interpersonal relations). The mixture of the two different collectivism types in disability sports society were negatively portrayed related to activism orientation by some participants in this study. For example, athletes belonged to two groups: the ‘athlete group’ (more horizontal collectivism) and ‘disability sports group’ (more vertical collectivism). The athlete group collected their voices to speak out for social changes in a horizontal collectivism environment. However, a few athletes in this group did not want to involve in activism with people together, and thus the rest of athletes were reluctant to engage in activism because they did not want to cause any unfavourable outcome to the whole athlete group (e.g., gaining disadvantage by higher stakeholders in vertical collectivism environment). This was because of the tendency of high-status stakeholders to see individual’s behaviour as a group identity. This could be also interpreted by a *Woo-ri* approach (defined below), which was mentioned by one elite athlete.

The word '*Woo-ri*' (우리) represents a strong collectivist identity and translates to 'we' in English but is used as a plural of 'I' in Korean linguistic. This sense of collectivism with '*Woo-ri*' culture is deeply engrained in the Korean language. In many cases, the *Woo-ri* concept cannot be directly translated into English. While in many Western cultures people orient themselves towards a self that distinguishes them from others (Lim, 2016), South Koreans adopt a perception of the self that is influenced by their relationship with others. In this study, one athlete-activist spoke out for the development of his sports group against KPC. His activism incurred negative outcomes (i.e., all group members were deemed as an impertinent) to his sport group from KPC board members in vertical collectivism environment. Another athlete member of this group evaded him because they thought their group (*Woo-ri*) was reviled by his dogmatic behaviour. However, they also blamed him when he kept silent regarding social injustice issues for the group (*Woo-ri*) in spite of being a medallist. This contradictory feedback from peer athletes and KPC board members led him to face identity dilemmas, oscillating between athlete-activist identities and collectivist identities. In other words, *Woo-ri* culture could lead to a stronger activist voice but also people might be stuck on the frame of *Woo-ri* without further movement. As one current elite athlete said:

You have just come to Korea. How do Koreans call this country? 'Our country'. Our country... We'd like to call us 'Woo-ri(we)'. We are a community that has a strong fence. Korean always calls themselves 'we'. How about a foreign country? 'You', 'He', 'She', they call someone directly and firmly. We are different. We are just us. When talking, people would say 'The damn guys are wrong', rather than 'He is wrong.'

Speaking bad, Koreans tend to generalize easily. So, if I do wrong, it is bundled up totally, not a personal area. I'm an athlete. If I do something wrong, people think, "All athlete is in the same way", not thinking it as my problem. It is said people must be damaged because of that athlete. So, I

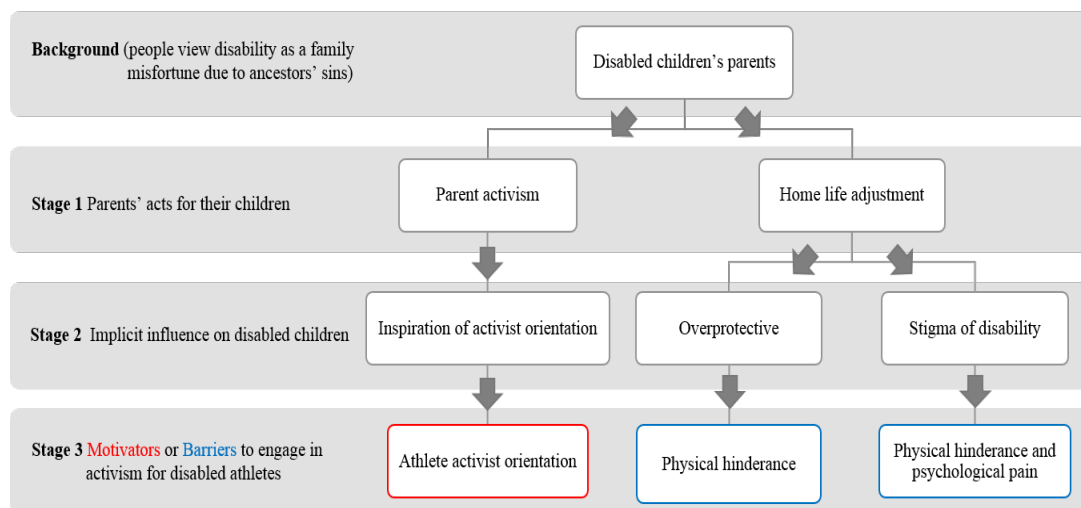
must not speak in front of people. It has been rooted in Korea society for a long time. The word ‘we’ is used all the time even when we don’t recognize. So, I try to hide my voice, be far from people, and avoid being around them. What happens next? “He only knows himself”, “He never cares us”, “He does not want to speak for us”, people say. [Yun-Young]

*Parent’s influence.* A further barrier belonging to the theme of Confucian values, as to why athletes eschewed activism, was their parents’ influence. Culturally, this can be interpreted partly through one of the five cardinal relationships in Confucianism describing the bond between father and son (noted that traditionally women are not considered in this cardinal factor) (Korean; 부자유친, Chinese; 父子有親). In the past, this meant that the son had to always follow and support the opinion of his father, but nowadays it is reinterpreted in the way that children should follow to their parents (Yum, 1988). Because of this factor, parents’ attitude towards disability has a tremendous influence on identity formation and behaviour of their child. Data from this study portrayed cross-generational parents’ influence on athlete-activism orientation (see Figure 5-1 as a heuristic visual). On the one hand, some parents engaged in activism through gathering information on disability and involvement in advocacy (Poon-McBrayer & McBrayer, 2004). These parent’s behaviour helped shape an activist orientation and later for their children to become an athlete-activist.

On the other hand, other parents embraced the inequitable South Korean society and sympathised with the social prejudice against disability (people view disability as a family misfortune due to ancestors’ sins). The attitude of these parents led their children to adjust to a life at-home that kept them away from any outside activities (e.g., interacting with people, getting a job). The confinement of their disabled children was interpreted as having two different purposes: a) overprotection for their disabled children and b) stigma associated with disability. With the strong influence of parents and negative social prejudices, athletes(children) had been unwillingly subjugated to the values of their parents, and any act of rebellion against their parents was considered aberrant. In this study, elite athletes insisted

on the importance of their parents' support for them to engage (or not) in sports and activism by sharing negative family environmental experiences. For example, one athlete stopped his activism because of his parents' worries that their disabled son would be exposed to the media. These parents were worried that if anyone knew of the existence of a disabled son in their family this would result in social stigma and public shame. Family is the smallest unit and a microcosm of society, but children (athletes) rights were disregarded even within their family. Physical hindrance and psychological pain caused by their parents became a huge barrier to engage in activism. As elite athlete said:

I think parents of disabled athletes is a huge barrier. For example, there was a case of a sledge ex-athlete. He gave up the life of elite athletes because of his parents. His parents mentioned they felt embarrassed about their child's disability. South Korean people are always conscious of others around him. Elite athletes are exposed to the media, so they show their disability. Activist is also the same context. Parents don't want to tell others that my child is disabled. They are ashamed of their child. [Chang-Seong]



**Figure 5-1.** Journey of parent's influence on athlete activism

### 5.3.3 Socio-environmental barriers

The third main theme ‘Socio-environmental barriers’ showed external reasons to limit social, physical and informational resources to fully participate in activism. Three sub-themes were identified, such as lack of disabled-accessible facilities, negative prejudice against disability, and lack of information.

*Lack of disabled-accessible facilities.* One of the environmental barriers was the lack of disabled-accessible facilities. This sub-theme focused on the perspective of ‘impairment’ perspective rather than that of ‘athlete-position’ in engaging in activism. Few elite athletes with physical impairments, including one low-activism athlete and one high-activism athlete, indicated that disability inaccessibility (e.g., high stairs, inaccessible toilet, no handrails) in public facilities was a barrier to engage in activism, especially in outside activities such as demonstrations. As one elite athlete said:

Disability inaccessibility such as stairs. We are struggling to go to someplace where people crowded or radical place. I was not allowed to engage in activism because of poor disability facilities. We are a kind of people who are exposed to lots of risks from using roads and traffic accidents. In the case of people with severe disabilities need to be accompanied by a personal assistant. [Myeong-Hun]

*Negative prejudice against disability.* A second environmental barrier was a negative prejudice against disability. In 1995 the South Korean government legislated the Disability Anti-Discrimination Act based on the idea that all individuals are endowed with rights. However, after 25 years, prejudices towards disabled people – including disabled elite athletes – are still rampant. For example, as noted, South Koreans tend to make a hierarchy when it comes to human relationships. Disability was historically considered as misfortune derived from ancestors’ sins. With this negative prejudice, non-disabled people believe that they are in a higher position than disabled people. This prejudice could lead to public



criticism and psycho-emotional disablism towards elite athletes. In this study, some low-activist athletes believed that people would ignore disability activists. As one of them said:

People think disabled people are different because people firstly recognise the difference of appearance between disabled and non-disabled. So, if disabled people engage in activism, people tend to see disabled people as pathetic and pitiable. I hope people look at disability activism at the same achievement and same perception as a non-disabled activist. But people have social prejudice 'It is no use saying something by disabled people'. They are just ignored, and no interest in disability. If people pay attention to disability, they may look at it and see the need for improvement."

[Jong-Seok]

One high-activism athlete shared his past perception of disability activism before he has started to engage in activism.

In South Korea, prejudice against disabled people is very strong, right? People think 'Disabled people do not know how to do anything', 'They can't' Because of this prejudice, I had never thought about engagement in activism before now. I thought I am in a position to need help from other.

[Yun-Young]

*Lack of information.* A third socio-environmental barrier was lack of information.

In this study, few elite athletes appreciated that disabled people's rights movement is ongoing news. However, they showed ignorance of channels through which they could engage in activism and believed there is not much information on athlete-activist. As one elite athlete said:

I don't know well. People say, "let's protect disability's rights and athlete's rights". But I don't know where I can do it and by which route.

Also, I think there is not much information. [Dae-Won]

#### 5.3.4 Personal barriers

The fourth main theme, named 'personal barriers', represented that personal discomfort in physical and social life experience prevented elite athletes to engage in activism. This theme was identified across only athletes with low activist orientation. This theme incorporated three sub-themes: bystander personality, financial difficulties, and lack of time.

*Bystander personality.* One of the personal barriers why elite athletes did not engage in activism was bystander personality. Different backgrounds and experiences shaped an individual's personality and personal values in different ways. In this study, few elite athletes showed no interest in activism because they preferred to be behind the scenes as the bystander and believed that other athlete or non-athlete activist will lead advocacy stories instead of them. Darley and Lantane (1968), who first explained the bystander effect, pointed out that this social psychological phenomenon is caused by two factors: a) a perceived diffusion of responsibility, where the individual thinks that someone in the group will help, and b) social influence, where people see the inaction of the group as evidence that there is no reason to intervene. Thus, this personality, it might be said, was another factor as to why people were silent on injustice. As one elite athlete said:

I am not interested in activism. In my case, my personality is like I don't like to lead for social change and run wild. Someone will do instead of me.

[Myeong-Hun]

*Financial difficulties.* In this study, many disabled elite athletes, especially medallists, were guaranteed their financial and social livelihood through sport. However, some other disabled athletes faced financial difficulties even though they worked as professional elite athletes for part of their life. This was because during their professional

career of elite athletes they did not have the time to have another full-time job and their income was insufficient to maintain their livelihood. As one of them said:

In my case, the priority is keeping financial livelihood rather than social change and activism. I can get money from my job as a national athlete, but this is very small. I must subsist at least. I think I may spend money if I engage in activism. So, this is not my priority. Sometimes I also need to pay my money to keep athlete life. [Myeong-Hun]

*Lack of time.* Another barrier why they did not engage in activism was lack of time. Some elite athletes with low activism orientation prioritised other values. This included not only maintaining a financial livelihood but also improving athletic performance, instead of engaging in activism. As one elite athlete said:

Yesterday, I woke up at 7 am, trained from 2 pm to 5 pm, had dinner at 6 pm, trained again until 10:30 pm, discussed further developments with peer athletes until 11 pm, and finally had my own free time after 11 pm. I don't have time to be interested in activism. [Jeesoo]

## 5.4 Critical discussion

This chapter showed that disabled elite athletes can be a strong platform for bringing about justice and societal changes through various channels (e.g., sport-based, social, political, scholar). The voice of elite disabled elite athletes is fundamental not only to disability sport but also to the broader society in South Korea. This finding can be contextualised by considering the Korean societal structure, which is strongly based on the hierarchical separation between high-status and low-status individuals (Sleziak, 2014). Although elite athletes can have their voice silenced by the actions of people sitting at an even higher hierarchical level (e.g., stakeholders, politicians), they are culturally well-positioned to promote social changes in favour of disability rights due their relatively higher social status

compared to disabled non-athletes. Elite athletes are aware of their power as public figures and often feel a sense of responsibility towards disabled people.

Despite their intentions, their actions can be hindered by psycho-emotional disablism and the negative impact of some Confucian ethics on social relationships depending on their specific background (e.g., age, parent's attitude, type of education). This condition can be encapsulated by *Han*, a fundamental concept in the South Korean culture. *Han* (한) is a reserved Korean word referring to several complex meanings related to Korean culture and which finds no exact parallel in any other language. *Han* derives from a Chinese compound word (恨), composed of two words: the first, *khan* (艮), means unmoving or dwelling, and the second, *shim* (心), means mind or heart. *Han* can be defined as an uncontrollable emotional and psychological state of despair and frustration, caused by the cognitive appraisal of unfair discrimination or oppression (Choi, 2010; E. S. Kim & Bae, 2000). This cultural factor provides the 'chaos narrative' of disabled athletes influenced by psycho-emotional disablism (Smith & Sparkes, 2008; Reeve, 2004). For example, the *Han* condition can give rise to psycho-emotional disablism in various ways: through the development of feelings of discrimination (e.g., exclusion from the national team due to hierarchy or collectivism), through the perception that a certain situation is unchangeable (e.g., negative distortion of disability from media, lack of disabled sports facilities), and through criticism (e.g., backlash, jealousy from public or other athletes, discriminative oppression from parents). Thus, some athletes may descend into what resembles chaos, then privately detest outsiders who torment them and, furthermore, suppress their frustrations and turn inwardly instead of offering their voices to change society. Frank (1995, p101) wrote that 'chaos narrative is probably the most embodied form of story. If chaos stories are told on the edges of a wound, they are also told on the edges of speech. Ultimately, chaos is told in the silences that speech cannot penetrate or illuminate'. In other words, the athletes in this study were in a state of passivity, their stories were in chaos, without sequence (Smith & Sparkes, 2008).

In line with this, these findings have important implications for the social relational model of disability (SRM) in sport. Disabled elite athletes' voices were silenced by psycho-emotional disablism (e.g., negative social interaction with parents or senior people, internalised oppression from perceived backlash), which damaged their well-being. As a result of such undermining, participant's refrained from activism, even though they appreciated the importance of social change. It is important to acknowledge that, while disability can be seen as biological, experienced, socially constructed and culturally fashioned in the SRM model (Smith & Perrier, 2015), disablism is formed through social relationships rather than originating in the individual (Haslett & Smith, 2020).

In contrast with the theoretical interpretation provided earlier, *Han* can also provide a strong 'counter-narrative' with the affirmative model of disability to transform the internalised feeling of sadness for being disabled into a positive mindset by seeking to change society for the better, for example by turning into an activist or a whistle-blower against oppression. This can enable the reconstruction of identities by resisting the standard plot and dominant 'tragic' assumptions about disability, and by providing new cultural repertoires of stories for activism (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). In essence, *Han* can provide two major opposite emotional narrative counterparts: a) chaos narratives through negative feelings such as harshness, and b) counter-narrative through positive feelings such as hope.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I described what types of activism disabled elite athlete engaged in, and then explored the reasons why disabled elite athletes do (or do not) engage in activism through their stories. As result, six diverse types of activism were identified: a) sports-based activism (i.e., high performance sports, sport organisational activism), b) political activism (i.e., demonstration, candlelight protest, face to face meeting with stakeholders, statement), c) social activism (i.e., mentorship, speech, volunteer, documentary film), d) economic activism (i.e., sponsorship), e) scholarly activism (i.e., teaching, research), and e) online

activism (i.e., online petition, social media, blogging). In addition, two main motivators as to why disabled elite athletes enacted an activist orientation were revealed by nine high activism athletes: 1) socialisation process (i.e., athlete status, Paralympic games, encouragement, and specific-knowledge background), and 2) growth mindset (i.e., developing disability sport, giving inspiration, improving disability facilities). Also, barriers, why disabled elite athletes eschewed to engage in activism, were identified by nine low activism athletes. Some high-activism athletes also shared their stories of what prevents them to engage in activism. Four main barriers were explored: 1) emotional cost (i.e., lack of courage/fear of disadvantage, perceived backlash, loneliness/depression), 2) Confucian challenges (i.e., positional hierarchy, age hierarchy, factionalism, collectivism, parent's influence), 3) socio-environmental barriers (i.e., disability inaccessibility, negative prejudice), and 4) personal barriers (i.e., bystander personality, financial difficulties, lack of time). In comparison with disabled elite athlete's activism, recreational athletes' activism is discussed in the next chapter.

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# **Activism by disabled recreational athletes**

## **6.0 Overview**

Building on the previous chapters, which explored disabled elite athletes' reasons for adopting an activism orientation or not, this chapter explores disabled recreational athletes' activism to provide comparative qualitative data. In section 6.1, I introduce a typology of activism for disabled recreational athletes. Next, in sections 6.2 and 6.3, I investigate possible mechanisms that, respectively, foster (i.e., motivators) or deter (i.e., barriers) engagement in activism for disabled recreational athletes. Following the results, I add a layer of critical discussion to help the finding with cultural lens and SRM approach (*Section 6.4*).

## **6.1 A typology of activism for disabled recreational athletes**

Through the narrative analysis, four types of disabled recreational athlete activism could be identified: 1) sports-based activism, 2) political activism, 3) social activism, and 4) online activism. As regards the AIMS results, it was found that most recreational athletes with a

high level of athletic identity tended to participate in sports-based activism. However, other types of activism were not related to the results of AIMS. Compared to disabled elite athletes, access to various types of activism was slightly more restricted for disabled recreational athletes, and the approaches to each type of activism were different between the two groups (explained in separate sections).

#### 6.1.1 Sports-based activism

Compared to elite athletes focused on their athletic performance and development of disabled elite sports, disabled recreational athletes engaged in sports-based activism with the aim of increasing awareness of disability sports and maximising the opportunities for all level of disabled people to engage in sports through diverse sports platforms (e.g., organising supporters, setting up amateur sports clubs and events).

One way disabled recreational athletes engaged in sports-based activism was through *supporters*, which refers to a core group consisting of people who support a common interest in disability sports and values. In this study, one disabled recreational athlete initially created this group for himself in order to continue participating in disability table tennis with his family's financial support and cheering messages. He has now led this group to increase awareness of disability sports, and over 100 supporters (including non-disabled people) have joined this group through friends or acquaintances. He has shared a video of his performances, as well as the latest news on disability sports, elite athletes, and disability sports match in South Korea, with this supporters' group. As he said:

I formed the supporters' group personally, and 100 people have joined it. Most of them are non-disabled. When my friends, family, and people around me ask about my sports activities, I persuade them to go to my page and join it to see the photos. And when I update news about famous Paralympic athletes, they can learn about it. I also update the information about my sports activities. They can learn about what is happening and can come to watch sports matches. The purpose is not to help me personally,



but to promote disability sports, which is like a small seed planted in the field of disabilities so that people around me can become familiar with it.

[Ga-Hyang]

Another way of doing sports-based activism was through *amateur sports clubs and events*. According to a report from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (2017), the gap in the sports participation rate between disabled people and non-disabled people in South Korea is huge (17.7 per cent and 49.3 per cent, respectively). In this study, it was found that disabled recreational athletes believed that disabled people have the right to participate in sports regardless of the extent of their impairment(s) and that sports are important for people—especially those with severe disabilities—in terms of gaining self-confidence by exploring new environments and friendships through sports. Some disabled recreational athletes established amateur sports clubs for severely disabled people in order to increase their access to—and inclusive opportunities to participate in—regular sports and social activities. In a similar way, a few recreational athletes contributed to the promotion of disability sports events within the domain of residential services. Two of the recreational athletes stated:

I thought it would be a great way to create opportunities for severely disabled people if I set up a recreational sports club. They too have the right to participate in sports. So, I set up a baseball club for the disabled. Many severely disabled people cannot participate in sports activities, but I have opened up opportunities for them. [Soon-Ok]

I live in Gumi. It is not a central city, but we want to raise awareness that the disabled can also participate in sports. Therefore, I started organising a sports festival for disabled people living in Gumi, which received approval from the mayor of Gumi. It has been held three times [thus far]. Through

this kind of event, people will know more about disability sports than before. [Ga-Hyang]

#### 6.1.2 Political activism

Disabled recreational athletes engaged in political activism in public areas, aimed at raising awareness of certain political issues and promoting legislative change. Compared to elite athletes who had the advantage of meeting with politicians in their political activism and enacting more direct changes as a result, recreational athletes mostly engaged in protests as a citizen. In this study, this type of activism was found to occur—as a form of protest—through two channels — demonstrations and candlelight vigils.

*Demonstrations* in public spaces spanned to squares, parks, and streets. The recreational athletes emphasised that protesting is an important form of engagement for bringing about social change, and cited the traditional Korean proverb ‘give one more rice cake to a crying baby,’ implying that there would not be any positive change unless the disabled speak out forcefully. For example, some recreational athletes engaged in demonstration with the aim of supporting the abrogation of the disability rating system. There was also another example. At Mapo Bridge (one of the busiest bridges in South Korea), one disabled recreational athlete engaged in a demonstration for more than three hours by walking towards the National Assembly with over 200 students and disabled people on Disability Day, demanding disability rights protection. Two disabled recreational athletes participating in the demonstration said:

I have a lot of experience in the disability rights movement; I used to go to Gwanghwamun [a public square] and participate in the protests as part of our struggle for the disabled and the abolition of the rating system for disabilities. Disability rights are not made naturally. Advanced facilities for the disabled have been created as a result of protests and demonstrations. In South Korea, there is a saying: ‘give one more rice

cake to a crying baby'. We need to speak up and protest in order to achieve our goals. Then the government will reluctantly bring about change for the disabled. [Soo-Hyun]

I have experience in the struggle against politicians at Mapo Bridge for insisting on our rights and promoting the development of disability services. I have often participated in these protests and have paid a lot of fines. [Jeesoo]

In addition, recreational athletes participated in *candlelight protests* as ordinary citizens together with other participants (e.g., elite athletes, non-athletes) in order to champion democratic rights in the face of presidential corruption by holding a candle in public places and calling for impeachment in a demonstrative way.

I participated in the candlelight vigil that was organised to call for impeachment and in the vigil for the Sewol ferry accident. [Soo-Min]

### 6.1.3 Social Activism

Recreational athletes engaged in social activism to draw attention to social injustice and raise awareness of disability justices in society through their professional jobs, while disabled elite athletes exerted their influence on a large number of people through their inspirational voice. In this study, this type of activism was identified in two of its forms: writing a book and artistic expression through dance.

One way through which recreational athletes engaged in social activism was by *writing a book*. In this study, one of the recreational athletes was a novelist. He wrote a novel based on autobiographical elements, including his own experiences of discrimination, and his innermost thoughts when he felt frustrated with his impairment. He tried to overcome his frustration by sharing his stories through the medium of a novel and believed the novel could also support other disabled people. For example, the main character in this

novel (a boy in school-age) contemplates whether to keep the lump on his face or to have it deleted with Photoshop in his school graduation photo. According to the writer, this dilemma highlights the oscillating identities between the confidence to accept himself without shame and the desire to hide his visible disability.

In the past, I wrote a novel. I lumped on my face when I was young, and I wrote about appearance discrimination [in the form of] a child who has a lump and what his life is like in this society. He has a photograph taken for the elementary school graduation and the photographer asks him whether he wants to alter the photo with Photoshop. The boy then asks himself whether he should have the photo edited so that the lump is removed. If he opts for the editing, then it means he is not accepting himself the way he is, but if he leaves the lump, it is obvious that he will be looked down upon by people. This kind of social discrimination cannot be changed all of sudden. [Hyun-Ju]

In one of his novels—entitled ‘Bleeding’—he describes society’s discriminative discourse where adults create disability prejudice in children and allude to a vicious circle that works its way down the generations. In this novel, he reflects on his life experiences of discrimination and uses metaphors to describe the weight of his wounded heart. Below are some excerpts from his novel.

“A little boy, about five years old, was staring at me with curious eyes. He plucked his mouth when his eyes met mine, and he quickly pulled his mother’s arm towards him.

‘Mum, why is his face like that?’.

I wanted to say, ‘Mind your own business,’ but I bit back a sharp retort. His mother crossed her arms as if she is a bit annoyed. But the child did not give up.

‘Mum, why does he have a weird face?’

His mother produced an annoyed look and said ‘You will be the same as him if you don’t listen to me. So, you should listen to my words all the time.’

The moment she and I made eye contact, I left. My heart became heavy like a lump of iron. I felt it wouldn’t be able to overcome gravity and would fall down to the navel. My running steps also became heavy like iron lumps.” (Jung, 2017, p.7)

In addition, inspired by classical literature, in his novel he shared three stories where disabled people managed to overcome the challenges posed by their impairments and societal discrimination (Jung, 2017). The first story concerns the independent power of the disabled. Although the disabled individual had been cast aside by their family because of the associated stigma created by society, their warm-heartedness and huge wisdom led to a positive shift in disability awareness. The second story regards a disabled person who, despite lacking and wanting independence, manages to overcome the trauma of being discriminated against, that is psycho-emotional disablism (Thomas, 2007), with the help of others (e.g., friends, carers). The third story is of an individual who overcame disability discrimination through coexistence and comradeship with other disabled people, even though they had no independent abilities or supporters. Through these three cases, he suggests narrative therapy for disabled people so that they can identify their value and skills and minimise the struggle that exists in their lives.

There is some classical literature on disabilities. Most people have negative perceptions of disabilities. Here I wrote about people who try to overcome their disabilities in classical literature. I wish my book would open opportunities for narrative therapy for people with disability trauma. [Hyun-Ju]

Another channel for social activism was *artistic expression through dance*. For example, one recreational athlete was a theatre actor. He highlighted oppressive social mechanisms in order to increase awareness of disabilities and sublimated disability discrimination in his artistic performances. This led to the forging of a fresh narrative of disability subjectivity through collaborative communication between him (as a performer) and the audience. As he said:

I do street performances or formal performances in a theatre. I express social issues and discrimination through my body movement. [Soo-Min]

#### 6.1.4 Online activism

Disabled recreational athletes also actively engaged in online activism in the same manner as elite athletes used the online platform to deliver informational and expressive messages on society. In this study, it was found that recreational athletes used online platforms to maximise information flow as part of their sports-based, political and social activism. Thus, in some cases, individual voices engaged in a host of diverse activism types. For example, one recreational athlete shared videos of his athletic performance, as well as the latest Para-sports news, with an online community of supporters. Another recreational athlete used their social media for an open discussion and shared information such as locations where people had started public protests. However, their impact was perceived to be less than elite athletes' movement in online platform due to elite athletes having strong visibility in society.

## 6.2 Motivators for disabled recreational athletes to become activists

The thematic analysis revealed three key themes that explain why the eight disabled recreational athletes with a high activism orientation were motivated to engage in activism. Disabled recreational athletes were influenced by similar themes such as 'socialisation process', 'growth mindset', and 'personal motivator', in like manner, elite athletes' motivators to engage in activism was reported in previous chapters. However, the details and

perspectives of sub-themes were largely different according to their different lifestyle as an elite and recreational level.

#### 6.2.1 Socialisation process

The first theme that explains why disabled recreational athletes were motivated to engage in activism was their ‘socialisation process’, which includes the relevant environment, opportunity, and information about social change advocacy. This main narrative thread includes four sub-threads: Paralympic Games, participation in sports, family members with impairment, and specific-knowledge background.

*Paralympic Games.* Most disabled recreational athletes emphasised the influence of the Paralympic Games on their level of motivation to engage in activism for social change. Following the increase in public awareness of disabilities and disability sports, due to South Korea hosting the Winter Paralympics in 2018, disabled and non-disabled people have started to be more interested in disability sports and in supporting their friends who are already involved in recreational disability sports. These changes have encouraged disabled recreational athletes to make their voices heard. In addition, disabled recreational athletes were inspired by the impressive sports performance of elite athletes and by influential voices expressing their views on societal changes through the media. In this study, some of the disabled recreational athletes considered elite athletes as their role models, and tended to use the athlete platform as a source of motivation for their participation in sports and for their advocacy of disability rights. As two disabled recreational athletes said:

Now people don’t call it the Olympics anymore. When people see how I play table tennis, they say, “Oh, he is engaging in Para-sports. He can be an elite athlete for the Paralympics.” Now people know a lot about the Paralympics. Many people have watched the Paralympic Games, and this has raised awareness of disability sports, so people ask me about them, and I am motivated to speak up our voices. [Ga-Hyang]

Although I was not a national athlete, I thought that I was participating in the Paralympics. When I would watch athletes and they would win a gold, I would feel like I had won gold. We share our spirit whenever they win a gold medal. I feel like I can do as much as they do and want to do as much as they do. By exercising hard, I want to be a person who can influence society. [Yong-Pyo]

*Participation in sports.* Some of the disabled recreational athletes with a high sense of athletic identity consistently felt encouraged to speak their opinions against injustices after participating in sports or physical activities. These disabled recreational athletes participated in diverse outdoor activities, including sports. Such behaviours they believed, improved their health (e.g., mental health, physical strength) and levels of self-confidence, allowing them to express their opinions on social issues. In particular, group participation in sports was found to give disabled recreational athletes a sense of community through social interaction with other people. Some of the people looked for meaning in speaking out for community development and felt inspired by the other disabled activists in the group. As one disabled recreational athlete said:

I think I became more motivated after participating in sports. I gained confidence. After that, I wanted to create a voice for the disabled in society. I was also influenced by other disabled activists [engaging] in sports. [Hyun-Ju]

*Family members with impairment.* Having disabled children was found to act as a significant motivator in encouraging parents to engage in activism. In this study, one disabled recreation athlete who has a parental role in the family became involved in proactive activism because of his concerns regarding the unfair environment for his disabled children, rather than the discrimination he faces in society. He said he pays assiduous attention to promoting the development of a disabled-friendly society. He stated:



The biggest motivation was that my second child [who is] 11 years old was diagnosed with autism when she was three years old. Since then, I have naturally been concerned about disabled children. I am a disabled person myself, but when my daughter was diagnosed with autism, I tried to learn more about disabled children and raised my voice during protests.

[Jeesoo]

*Specific-knowledge background.* A few of the disabled recreational athletes mentioned that studying social welfare or working in the Human Rights Centre had acted as a source of motivation, encouraging them to develop from a passive activist to an active campaigner. Similar to elite athletes, this background helped the disabled recreational athletes to expand their interest in and knowledge and experience of social justice. As two of the disabled recreational athletes said:

I studied social welfare at university, so I started social activist activities naturally as part of my studies. [Soo-Hyun]

Since I have worked at the Human Rights Centre, I have had many opportunities to participate in social activities as an activist and volunteer.

[Yong-Pyo]

### 6.2.2 Growth mindset

The second theme explaining why disabled recreational athletes were motivated to engage in activism was the ‘growth mindset’, which refers to personal voices and efforts that can lead to the establishment of justice for the disabled people. This motivator was also explored in relation to disabled elite athletes in the previous chapter. However, there was a slight difference between the two groups. In contrast to disabled elite athletes, disabled recreational athletes used the growth mindset based on their experiences of discrimination or the unfair situations created by people around them. In this study, this key narrative theme

incorporated two sub-themes: increasing awareness of disability rights and improving disability facilities.

*Increasing awareness of disability rights.* One element of the growth mindset inspiring disabled recreational athletes to engage in activism was an eagerness to increase awareness of disability rights. In this study, disabled recreational athletes pointed out that many people still have prejudice towards disabilities. This compelled them to continually contribute to boosting the disabled rights movement, even though they knew that their voices would not bring about prompt cultural changes in society. For example, one disabled recreational athlete participated in a seaside camping initiative for the disabled alongside people with a diverse range of impairments (e.g., visual/hearing impairment). On that day, he realised that many social workers prevented people with a visual impairment from going to the sea, even if they were accompanied by someone. He acknowledged that there was a risk for the blind going to the beach alone, but he felt that it was grossly unfair for people with a visual impairment to be prevented from enjoying the seaside, and considered it a human rights violation. Two of the disabled people said:

Many people are highly influenced by their prejudices, and this became a limitation for me and put my life on hold. I wanted to protest about it and write a novel or essay about society. I cannot change society, but I wanted to make people realise that this society has a problem, and I wanted to write something which disabled people could sympathise with. [Hyun-Ju]

When a disability community went camping, the nurses told us not to go into the sea, but I sprinkled some seawater onto the others and let one of them fall in the shallow waters because I'm so mischievous. I thought he would say "What's wrong with you?" but it was a different response. He said, "Thank you, it was the first experience for me." When he said that, I was shocked because later on I discovered that the blind cannot even go

near to the sea. They cannot even feel the sea in their lives. Since then, I have raised my voice for the rights of the blind. [Soo-Hyun]

*Improving disability facilities.* Another element of the growth mindset was the desire to improve disability facilities in South Korea. Similar to elite athletes, some of the disabled recreational athletes emphasised the importance of equality for people using public facilities, especially public transportation. As one disabled non-athlete said:

Previously, there were no elevators for wheelchair users in the underground. So, I protested for the installation of a lift alongside the stairs, and this gives us hope that we will one day see better facilities and a better society. [Soo-Hyun]

### 6.2.3 Personal motivators

The last source of motivation suggested by participants for engagement in activism was ‘personal motivators’, such as activist personality.

*Activist personality.* Some disabled recreational athletes described themselves as intolerant of injustice, unfair treatment and discrimination. This personality trait, they argued, compelled them to engage in activism by finding meaning in speaking out for a cause in the community. As one disabled recreational athlete said:

I have a very hot temper. I say what I have to say, so I lose my temper more easily when I get into a social conflict. If I can be helpful, I have to participate. [Jeesoo]

## 6.3 Barriers for disabled recreational athletes to become activists

The seven disabled recreational athletes with low activism orientation described the reasons why they did not engage in activism. In addition, the eight disabled recreational athletes with high activism orientation described their experiences of frustration when engaging in

activism. As a result of these descriptions, four key barriers were identified, such as ‘emotional cost’, ‘Confucian challenges’, ‘socio-environmental barriers’, and ‘personal barriers.’

### 6.3.1 Emotional cost

The first main theme acting as a barrier to engaging in activism was the ‘emotional cost’ associated with such activism. This theme incorporated two sub-themes: fear of facing a disadvantage and frustration of something. The emotional cost that they faced was much less than in the case of the disabled elite athlete group due to elite athletes are positioned in a more visible and hierarchy society.

*Fear of facing a disadvantage.* One of the key aspects of the emotional cost to engaging in activism was fear of facing a disadvantage, especially in terms of potential negative consequences from people higher up the social hierarchy. The extent of this fear was linked to the individual’s particular background (e.g., societal position, age, faction). In this study, some of the disabled recreational athletes highlighted their ambivalent emotions fluctuating between interest and fear when they thought about engaging in activism. Thus, their story was alike being in chaos, a story without sequence and difficult to hear as a proper activist story (Frank, 1995, Smith & Sparkes, 2008). As one person said:

To be honest, I am interested in activism, but I am afraid of the disadvantages because I cannot fight independently; once a problem appears, it will be a big problem. I’m lost, a mess. [Ji-Hoon]

*Frustration of people ignoring activism.* Several of the disabled recreational athletes who had a low activism orientation expected that their voices would be ignored regardless. In addition, some of the recreational athletes with high orientation to engage in activism were frustrated with the obstinate refusal of the authorities to comply with requests they made. One of the disabled recreational athletes, who had high activism orientation, stated:

I filed civil complaints several times, but the outcome was always the same. ‘Thank you for having an interest in society. We will do our best.’ That is what it’s all about. Nothing will change. They ignored us and refused our requests. We would be taking false steps. I became frustrated with myself because it doesn’t work that way. Things don’t happen. [Ga-Hyang]

### 6.3.2 Confucian challenges

The second theme that explains why some disabled recreational athletes were reluctant to engage in activism was Confucian challenges, including its four cultural elements — positional hierarchy, age hierarchy, factionalism, and parents’ influence. Regardless of activism orientation, both orientation groups demonstrated Confucian challenges in a process of activism.

*Positional hierarchy.* The first Confucian barrier to engaging in activism was associated with the strict positional hierarchy that exists in South Korea, whereby people lower down the hierarchy (subordinates) are expected to be respectful towards higher-up people (superiors). In this study, the disabled recreational athletes provided two perspectives of the hierarchical culture: a) within the disabled sports and b) non-sports society. According to these perspectives, disabled people are considered to be at the bottom level within the hierarchy by most non-disabled people in society, which is based on the historical prejudice that exists against disability in South Korean culture. Thus, as a marginalised group, their voices could be disregarded. However, the layers of society are many and broad, and therefore the effect on their lives of potential direct disadvantages was small.

In contrast, the disabled recreational athletes noted that the disability sports community is narrower and has a strict pyramidal structure. Therefore, many of them tried to submit to their superiors’ orders in order to avoid facing disadvantages in the field of sports. Thus, they would expect disabled elite athletes to suffer a direct disadvantage in terms of their sports career or even be ousted from the disability sports community if elite athletes

expressed opinions that went against those of higher-status people. However, at the same time, they also believed that disabled elite athletes have a more influential and powerful voice than ordinary recreational athletes in terms of bringing about social change within the disabled community, and they expressed the desire that elite athletes speak out more for the disability rights movement. Two of the disabled recreational athletes said:

One of my friends has a different character from me; he says what he has to say and doesn't care whether it may be a problem or not. In short, people working at the sports organisation give him hassle. Although he says many right things, people don't like him; well, if the athletes would support him, it would be a great help, but I guess the athletes are silent about this issue. Elite athletes have more power than us and I wish they would speak out instead of us, but it is not easy to speak up about the [nature of] the society of sports. [Na-Rae]

A senior's word is the law in sports. If a senior says, "cut your hair," then you have to comply. It is tougher in the sports community. It is more top-down than general society, and people can face a disadvantage more directly. If I point out something wrong, then I can get kicked out of the community. Nobody will tell you that, but it is like an implied promise. Korea is a very hierarchical country. [Ga-Hyang]

*Age hierarchy.* Biological age was identified as a strong influential factor in the disabled community by not only the elite athletes but also the recreational athletes, based on the Confucian value of seniority. In this study, some of the disabled recreational athletes with a low activism orientation believed that older people tend to assume that younger people do not know as much as they do due to their young age and immaturity. According to the cultural framework for interpersonal interaction in society, the opinions of younger people are typically ignored, and it is considered impudent to express opinions that are

counter to those of seniors, especially when it comes to political matters. This is why some of the young recreational athletes preferred to stay silent regarding social injustice in society and opted for a submissive attitude towards superiors. As one disabled recreational athlete stated:

I don't like political matters. If I suggest my opinions, then old people who have different opinions from me will become antagonised and will think my opinions are wrong. Their attitude will be: "What do you know at your age?" That is why we don't want to talk to each other. [Ji-Hoon]

*Factionalism.* The third cultural barrier linked to Confucian challenges was factionalism. According to *Yongo* concepts (explained in *Section 5.3.2, Chapter 5*), a cultural environment based on informal relationships (e.g., education-based, blood-based, region-based) discouraged some disabled recreational athletes to engage in activism. In this study, they emphasised a good educational background as an implicit requirement to be an activist, since a good education not only ensures relevant knowledge but also facilitates strong connections with people in power. In addition, they believed that low educational attainment could be a key factor limiting their rights to speak especially in the arena of sports and that their voices would be ignored by those higher up in the social hierarchy (e.g., people from a particular university). Thus, they felt disheartened by this cultural environment and felt reluctant to struggle for social change. One of the disabled recreational athletes said:

Although I have the intention [to engage in activism], there seem to be many limitations, such as the educational background. In order to engage in activism in society, a good educational background is required, or at least a certain level of educational attainment, and if these conditions are not met, it will be difficult. The arena of sports is strict in this sense. I am

not talking only about the level of knowledge, but also about common backgrounds. [Jae-In]

In addition, one disabled recreational athlete-activist felt demoralised because of the behaviour of certain people who applied the power logic of traditional factionalism in their relationship with him. He had organised an amateur recreational sports group for disabled people and engaged in diverse activities, including supporting the disability rights movement, together with people in this group. However, it was perceived that some of these people were captivated by a certain individual who had antagonistic relations with him, and moved to a new group because its leader had greater influence in society. This disabled recreational athlete-activist said:

I treated my team like family, but some of them betrayed me and followed someone with whom I had poor relations. I trusted them but it was a mistake. There are a lot of factions in the disabled community. If someone talks with a person whom the others don't like, then they curse each other. There is too much envy and bad blood between the factions. [Soon-Ok]

Additionally, some of the disabled recreational athletes pointed out that the disability rights movement has been pushed aside due to disputes between various disability groups. In South Korea, disabled people implicitly tended to categorise people according to the type and degree of their disability, and this created discrimination and hostile relationships between different groups. For example, one of the disabled recreational athletes, who has cerebral palsy, could speak but had difficulties with physical motion. Others with cerebral palsy (who had no difficulties with physical motion) were antagonistic towards him and treated him like a pariah. As a result of such conflicts within and between disability groups, the disability rights movement has, for some people in the study, been pushed aside. As one disabled recreational athlete said:



Disabled people with cerebral palsy often divide themselves into different factions. One faction cannot speak but have no problems with physical motion. The other faction can speak but have difficulties with physical function. So, they divide themselves into different groups and fight each other. Depending on the type of disability, people don't want to understand other types of disabilities. And they ask each other "What level of disability do you have?" These people should all be in harmony with each other, but instead, they create conflicts even within the disabled community. They think that their opinions are the most important, and they ask for understanding. This is why social movements are losing influence. There are many people like this around me. [Na-Young]

*Parents' influence.* Another Confucian barrier was the parent's influence, based on the hierarchical relationship that exists between parents and children. Similar to the disabled elite athletes' parents, it was found that the parents of the disabled recreational athletes also took a high-handed attitude in relation to their disabled children—whether due to the stigma associated with disabilities or because of their being overprotective of their disabled children—and opted to encourage their children to adjust to a permanent home-life. At some point, some of the disabled elite athletes' parents showed a strong sensitivity to disability stigma and public shame because the disabled elite athletes were getting so much exposure through the media. However, by comparison, the parents of the disabled recreational athletes were found to have more of an overprotective attitude towards their disabled children due to worries about potential accidents or due to the fear of being mocked by (non-disabled) people. Regardless of the parent's purpose, the confinement of disabled children stymied recreational athletes' independent lifestyles and hindered the ability of the recreational athletes to engage in activism. In this study, it was found that some of the disabled recreational athletes simply went along with their parents' position and wishes. As one disabled recreational athlete said:

The mindset of parents with disabled children is very passive. They do not think about how their disabled children can live in this society, but rather how they save money for them. For the sake of their own lives, they don't care about their children's independent life and what a happy life would mean for them. I have faced this kind of situation a lot. In my case, my parents have said to me "Why don't you just rest at home? You will get tired if you go out. You have a disability." Their mindsets are old-fashioned. I tried to break out this initially. In the old days, parents of disabled children did not allow them to go outside at all. I know many disabled people who killed themselves. They didn't like hiding their disadvantages. When I was young, a male neighbour of mine became disabled due to an accident. He eventually took drugs and killed himself.

[Jeesoo]

### 6.3.3 Socio-environmental barriers

The third main theme that captures the reasons for not engaging in activism was 'socio-environmental barriers', which refers to external factors to limit social, physical and informational resources with which to fully engage in activism. This theme incorporated two sub-themes: institutional barrier, and lack of information.

*Institutional barrier.* One of the key environmental barriers was an institutional barrier, such as a lack of support for disability issues. Compared to elite athletes who were in a position of advantage to meet politicians to discuss social issues, recreational athletes did not have this prioritised access. Thus, they faced institutional barriers during their activism at the initial stage. In this study, some of the disabled recreational athletes indicated that many social workers prioritised the welfare of old people or children's rights over disability issues. Thus, they believed that most of their requests or demands in relation to disabilities would be overlooked or considered as low priority. As one disabled recreational athlete stated:

As evidence of the lack of legal support, [one can point to the] lack of professional staff who can handle disability issues. Services for the disabled are another issue, because the problems of the elderly and of children have not been solved, and moreover non-disabled people cannot understand disabilities... This is how they think... People think that it is strange to compare these kinds of problems with the problems of the disabled. They don't think disability issues are a priority. My voice would be useless in this situation. [Na-Young]

*Lack of information.* Some of the disabled recreational athletes mentioned the lack of information as a barrier to engaging in activism. They were unaware of the existence of activist platforms or channels where they could engage or which they could use for social change. These participants had no other activists around, who could act as role models and transmit their knowledge of the rights movement. As one disabled recreational athlete said:

I don't know how to initiate activism and which route I should go down. I don't have relevant information about this issue. [Jae-Min]

#### 6.3.4 Personal barriers

The fourth main theme that captures the reasons why the disabled recreational athletes were reluctant to engage in activism was 'personal barriers', including bystander personality and lack of strength.

*Bystander personality.* One of the personal barriers to engaging in activism was bystander personality. This was only demonstrated by those who scored low for activism orientation. Some of the recreational athletes refrained from intervening in an emergency because they believed that there were other people around who could and would do so. This could be called a bystander personality (Darley & Lantane, 1968). There was a gulf of dissonance between what we stoically realise as our value to society and how we act. Thus,

this personality trait was found to keep people in silence on matters of social injustice. As one disabled recreational athlete said:

I don't want to go where many people go, and doubt whether it is really necessary. I think that somebody [else] will do it because there are many people. "Why should I do it first?". [Ji-Hyun]

*Lack of strength.* Another personal barrier was lack of strength. In this group, a few of the former activists who used to engage in radical protests capitulated to authorities and gave up engaging in activism because of physical fatigue brought on by the continuous confrontation. As one former activist said:

I had to stay up all night to participate in the protests to change society, but it was getting hard. I had to physically fight with the police and get struck with their shields. [Na-Rae]

#### **6.4 Critical discussion**

In this chapter, I attempted to paint an understanding of activism from the perspectives of recreational athletes. These findings are useful for a comparative analysis broadening the perspective on the stories told by disabled elite athletes (Chapter 5). The key message from this chapter is that disability sport and disabled elite athletes can be culturally a model for social justice and disability activism. Disabled recreational athletes trusted the powerful positional voice of elite athletes to instigate change for injustice agenda, especially in the disability society. In other words, disabled elite athletes can be considered activists without identifying themselves as activists, and, regardless of their intentions to engage (or not) in activism and their actions to promote socio-political change. In addition, lower-status disabled people (e.g., recreational athletes) can feel empowered by the stories of elite athletes' activism, which inspire and give more confidence to others who are already activists or intend to engage in activism (Smith et al., 2016).

Physical condition was another important factor for participating in activism.

Disabled recreational athletes showed that their perceived poor physical condition can have a direct and immediate impact on their social life and activism behaviour by challenging psychological impact (e.g., lack of autonomy and self-esteem). That is, from the SRM perspective, the biological reality of impairment can harm psycho-emotional wellbeing, and, at the same time, the impairment can become a site for social oppression (Haslett & Smith, 2020; Thomas, 2014). This finding enriched the SRM as it highlighted the distinction between restrictions in society due to the effects of impairment (impairment effects) and restrictions that are imposed by society (disablism) (Haslett & Smith, 2020). In addition, in this chapter, disabled recreational athletes shared personal stories of increasing self-esteem and confidence as a result of positive social relations (e.g., by engaging in physical activity, by belonging in inclusive environments). These positive social relationships could promote active engagement in also other social events or activism. In other words, this viewpoint shows that bodies and psycho-emotional wellbeing are intermeshed.

In the case of disabled recreational athletes-activists, their approaches to activism were diverse (e.g., ranging from conservative to radical). However, in this chapter, most participants used the platform of 'resistance narratives' actions, which seem to remain within the dominant order but, at the same time, developed power to resist this order whilst not challenging it (Plummer, 2019). For example, in this study, participants created innovative ways (e.g., writing a book, dance expression, organising sport events) to highlight injustice issues by developing a creative story that did not threaten the dominant stories. These embodied narratives were mostly performed through to their unique skillset or their professions.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I presented different types of activism through which disabled recreational athletes. I then presented their stories and extracted the factors that encouraged (or

discouraged) them to engage in activism. In turn, I identified four types of activism based on standards such as place, goals, and methods. These included sports-based activism (i.e., supporters, amateur sports clubs or events), political activism (i.e., demonstrations, candlelight vigils), social activism (i.e., writing a book, artistic expression through dance), and online activism. The key types of activism were similar for elite athletes and recreational athletes in disability society, however, access to activism was more limited for recreational athletes than for elite athletes. The practical impact of activism was a big difference between the two groups, as the voice of disabled elite athletes holds a much stronger influence. With regards to motivators why disabled recreational athletes engaged in activism, three reasons were explored: 1) socialisation process (i.e., Paralympic Games, participation in sports, family members with impairment, and specific-knowledge background), 2) growth mindset (i.e., increasing awareness of disability rights, improving disability facilities), and 3) personal motivators (i.e., activist personality). Disabled elite athletes were motivated by the Paralympic Games as a means of moral responsibility as a public figure, whereas disabled recreational athletes were inspired by the voices of elite athletes, who acted as role models. In terms of barriers why disabled recreational athletes were struggling to engage in activism, four reasons were identified: 1) emotional cost (i.e., fear of facing a disadvantage, frustration from people ignoring activism), 2) Confucian challenges (i.e., positional hierarchy, age hierarchy, factionalism, parent's influence), 3) socio-environmental barriers (i.e., institutional barriers and lack of information), 4) personal barriers (i.e., bystander personality, lack of physical strength). In the next chapter, I will discuss disabled non-athletes' activism and will compare it with the activism of disabled elite and recreational athletes.

## Activism by disabled non-athletes

### 7.0 Overview

Whilst the purposes of the previous qualitative *Chapter 5* and *Chapter 6* was to understand disabled elite and recreational athletes' reasons for adopting an activism orientation or not, to provide comparative qualitative data, to and another layer of understanding, this chapter outlines what types of activism disabled non-athletes engaged in (*Section 7.1*), as well as the reasons why they enacted (motivators—*Section 7.2*) or eschewed (barriers—*Section 7.3*) an activist orientation. Following the results, a layer of critical discussion is provided to help contextualise the finding (*Section 7.4*)

### 7.1 A typology of activism for disabled non-athletes

Through narrative analysis, three types of disabled non-athlete activism could be identified: 1) political activism, 2) social activism, and 3) online activism. Compared to disabled athletes (i.e., elite and recreational), the access to varieties of activism was more limited for disabled non-athletes. Most disabled non-athlete activists had engaged in political activism, and some disabled people with severe impairments used online platform only for social changes against injustices.

### 7.1.1 Political activism

The first type of activism was political activism aimed to raise awareness on certain political issues and promote legislative change. Compared to elite athletes who tended to engage in political activism in what might be described as a moderate way, non-athletes used a more radical and active way. In this study, this form of activism was found to occur through three routes: protest, campaign and statement activism.

*Protest* was the most common way to engage in political activism for disabled non-athletes, whereas current elite athletes tended to partake in political activism in different ways, such as discussing discrimination with politicians. For example, the South Korean government introduced the disability rating system to classify disabled people from levels of one to six based on their physical or mental impairment. The ‘mild disabled person’, compared to ‘severely disabled person’, were excluded from various benefits including government subsidy. In this study, many disabled non-athletes engaged in the protests aimed to support the abrogation of the disability rating system in 2018. As a result, since July 2019 this disability rating system was abolished to support disabled people by considering their disability and living circumstances. As one disability activist shared his protest experiences during the interview:

The disability rating system in South Korea is analogous to stamping A+ or B+ on pork in a butcher’s shop. Disabled people are given a rating of A+ or B+ depending on the extent of their disability. So, one of our key aims is to abolish the rating system in South Korea, and I regularly make protests regarding this issue. I also protest for our rights and against certain unfair practices and elements in the government’s disability policies. I have even tried several times to go to the Blue House, but the police have stopped me, so I have spoken out for our rights at the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Seoul City Hall. [Si-Woo]



A second way of doing political activism was through a *campaign*. Disabled people should have the same rights as non-disabled people in using public transport. However, there was a lack of public transport for wheelchair users, and bus-drivers tend to discriminate against passengers by not stopping at a bus stop if there were wheelchair users waiting to get on. Therefore, many disabled people in South Korea resort to disability-only taxis. With regards to discrimination against disability, disability activists organised several political campaigns to increase disability rights awareness and to call for legislative action by insisting on disability rights for using public transport. As one disabled non-athlete said:

I have engaged in a diverse range of activist campaigns, such as the campaign for public transport to be fully accessible to disabled people, which has been running since 2002. [Ha-Joon]

In another way of doing political activism, disabled non-athletes participated in what can be described as low-risk activism through *statement activism* such as petition, civil complaints, or voting. This activism type has lower entry barriers than other political activism types (e.g., radical protest). All engagement was related to disability issues or the human rights movement. For example, ‘severely disabled people’ faced difficulties in using the underground because there were no lifts and, for instance, an accident occurred to an elderly disabled woman who fell downstairs. As a consequence, disabled activists signed a petition calling for the installation of lifts in the underground. As three disabled non-athletes said:

I have filed a complaint at City Hall to protest at the lack of suitable facilities for severely disabled people to be self-reliant, and to demand greater support for disabled people. [Woo-Jin]

I have always believed that we should vote for someone who can provide welfare across society as a whole. We need to elect politicians who can

change society for the better, and voting is an important tool for bringing about social change. [Jung-Woo]

I am used to signing petitions regarding disability issues. As an example, I signed a petition calling for the installation of lifts for severely disabled people in the underground. [Do-Hyun]

#### 7.1.2 Social activism

Another type of activism was social activism, which aimed to draw attention to social injustices and raise awareness about disability issues through diverse social platforms. Compared to elite athletes who aimed to influence broad society with their ‘inspirational voices’, non-athletes focused on providing practical information and socially feasible action for disabled people’s daily wellbeing. In this study, this form of activism was identified in three ways: photography, insurance plans, and speech.

One way of doing social activism was *photography* for disabled families. In this study, one disabled activist who has actively engaged in the disability rights movement realised that disabled people were ignored and discriminated against often by their family at home. With the realisation of this, he started taking photos of disabled people with their family to increase a sense of belonging. The family photos led many disabled people to feel a sense of belonging to their family and increased their motivation to participate in social activities. As one disability activist said:

I have long agonised over how disabled people can lead happier lives and live as full members of society. I am a member of my family, regardless of whether I liked or hated my relatives in my youth. However, I do not have any family photos in which I also appear. Now I am an activist for the disabled, and campaign for them to live normal lives as members of society. However, many disabled people are still not recognised by their families as full family members. As an example, I recently visited the house of a

disabled acquaintance of mine for a consultation. He has a big family, and they took a family photo, but he wasn't in it. He was critically stiff, so I asked them 'He is your son, isn't it? Why isn't he in the family photo?' They responded that they feel shame when realise that they have a disabled son. This was a big shock for me. I created a disability rights movement to improve awareness of disabled people and made lots of effort to institute societal change. But I kept wondering how such disabled people feel when they are side-lined by their own family and are not recognised as a full member. Since then, I have been selecting two or three families a month for a family photoshoot. What I have found most surprising is that after taking these family photos, I have received letters, cards, and emails expressing gratitude. These contain statements such as: 'I am now recognised as a member of my family. I am finding the will to strive in life', I have found the power to do something with self-confidence, even in public, having been accepted as a member of my family', 'I used to think that I had to be side-lined by society and that I could not belong either in society or in my family. But by taking a photo with my family, I realised that we had misunderstood each other'. I thanked them all so much [Si-Woo]

A second way of doing social activism was *an insurance plan* for disabled people. In the past, health insurance providers discriminated against disabled people and rejected their application because it was considered as a high insurance risk. This mistreatment has abated over time, but, in addition to the application being complex, there were still many people who are not updated on the more inclusive insurance regulations. As a result, they have persisted in thinking they cannot apply for health insurance, renouncing their rights to cover all medical expenses. Disability activists viewed this as discrimination and as a problem of human rights. In this study, one disabled non-athlete elucidated why the insurance plan is important for disabled people and supported them to apply for it. He said:

Health insurance is vitally important for the disabled since if they have an accident or an illness, it could be fatal, or it could cause even greater disabilities. In the old days, disabled people in South Korea simply couldn't get any health insurance, nowadays the Disability Discrimination Act ensures that companies denying disabled people health insurance face disciplinary measures. However, there are still many disabled people who persist in thinking that they cannot get health insurance, which is why I explain to them that access to insurance for disabled people is a right.

[Seo-Woo]

Another approach to social activism was *oral* or *speech activism*, such as giving a talk or discussing disability issues through interviews. This way of social activism was performed by disability activists who managed disability centres. In addition, compared to current elite athletes sharing their stories to inspire other people through speech activism, disabled non-athletes used this platform to provide informative tips for the independent life of disabled people. For example, one disabled non-athlete organised a seminar and talked about how to deal with banking and how to obtain a copy of one's residence register (this copy is needed when people open a bank account or request disability benefits). As one disabled non-athlete said:

I recently took part in a political discussion on disabled issues to present my views and talk about how societal awareness of the disabled can be improved. I was also interviewed, and I think that giving interviews is also a kind of activism, since it allows me to share my opinions. The focus of the discussion was on the independence of disabled people. Since the disabled have lived a marginalised existence for a long time, I am always trying to think of new ways to deliver information about how to deal with

banking and governmental institutions, enjoy cultural experiences and claim our just rights. [Si-Woo]

### 7.1.3 Online activism

In alignment with athlete groups (i.e., elite and recreational), most disabled non-athletes also engaged in online activism to instantaneously deliver informational and expressive messages to a large or specific audience for social, political, and cultural movements through diverse internet-based platforms (e.g., blogs, online communities). In this group, online platforms were especially used most by ‘severely disabled people’ for their activism. Two ways of online activism were identified by disabled non-athletes in this study, that is, blogging and online communities.

One way of doing online activism was *blogging*. For example, one disabled non-athlete has started to support disabled people by posting his stories about living as a severely disabled person. Not only had he filed a complaint regarding social problems like the discrimination he experienced and witnessed against disabled people, but he also remarked that the life of disabled people can be valuable and enjoyable – echoing the spirit of critical disability studies and the affirmative model of disability. Many disabled and non-disabled people subscribed to his blog and communicated by writing a comment. His blog has enhanced awareness of severe disability and, consequently, received an award called ‘power blogger’ from one Korean portal website. As he said:

My first attempt at blogging was when I wrote a short story about my daily life by using the mouse with my mouth. After a while, I wrote various news articles on local disability issues and the disability-related problems I have faced in society my whole life. Many people sympathised with my articles and left their encouraging comments. Some also shared their own stories. [Ha-Zoon]

Another way of doing online activism was through the *online community*.

Encouraged by anonymity through the use of pseudonyms for the online community, many disabled non-athletes joined a variety of online communities without fear of discrimination from prejudices, and shared information and promote friendship with other disabled and non-disabled people. As one disabled non-athlete said:

I registered in an online community and wrote comments, reposting and accompanying stories related to disability issues. We can be friends without any prejudices. [Do-Hyun]

## **7.2 Motivators for disabled non-athletes to become activists**

Three key themes represented the reasons why the six disabled non-athletes felt motivated to engage in activism. Similar to elite athletes and recreational athletes, disabled non-athletes also were influenced by their ‘socialisation process’, ‘growth mindset’, and ‘personal motivator’.

### **7.2.1 Socialisation process**

One reason why disabled non-athletes were encouraged to engage in activism was due to ‘socialisation process’ in their daily life. In this study, three societal facilitators were identified, including the disability rights movement, Paralympic Games, and specific-knowledge background.

*Disability rights movement.* Some disabled non-athletes were encouraged by the fact that the disability rights movement in South Korea changed its attitude from caring for people with ‘disability’ to caring for disabled people’s ‘human rights’. Some disabled non-athletes lived in the 1980s when the military regime wielded undisputed power and human rights, especially those related to disability, were suppressed. Compared to this period, now people are allowed more freedom of speech. They also thought this change was empowered by the

candlelight protests aimed to impeach the former president Park and by the establishment of a new government. As one disabled non-athlete said:

Even a President can be changed if enough people make a loud voice. Many social injustices have started to be alleviated since the government of Moon Jae-in took over. Disabled people's social participation has increased substantially, within the context of human rights. I am very encouraged by this new political environment. [Si-Woo]

*Paralympic Games.* Most disabled non-athletes were encouraged to engage in activism inspired by the fact that South Korea hosted the 2018 Paralympic Games. In addition, they believed that disabled elite athletes could bring about social change more promptly than disabled non-athletes through their influential voices. Moreover, non-athletes wished that elite disabled athletes could achieve the leadership of the rights movements in future. As one disabled non-athlete said:

I have never watched any Paralympic Games in my life, but just the fact that they exist is beneficial. Moreover, I think that the voices of disabled athletes are being accepted by society in a more sensible way. If disabled athletes raise their voice, the needs of the disabled can be addresses promptly. For example, if I point to the fact that a public toilet is inconvenient for them, say in a welfare centre, their voices passes swiftly through the organisation, and from there to the relevant organisation. There are many stages that must be passed in order to change society for the better. However, if disabled athletes raise awareness of something, then change can come quicker than if disabled non-athletes raise the same point. I wish Para-athletes could have spoken out sooner (2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympic). [Seo-Woo]

*Specific-knowledge background.* Most non-athletes indicated that their background, such as working in a disability right centre and studying social welfare, contributed to making them aware that discrimination has its roots in society and that they should actively challenge it. Two disabled non-athletes shared their background motivators:

I studied social welfare at university, so I always keep an eye on social issues, especially disability-related issues. [Seo-Woo]

In my case, I run a disability welfare centre. I always talk with disabled people and share information about the latest issues. These benefits can lead me to actively speak out for social movements. [Woo-Jin]

#### 7.2.2 Growth mindset

The second reason why disabled non-athletes enacted an activism orientation was a ‘growth mindset’. This motivating factor was identified by all participants (i.e., elite athletes, recreational athletes, non-athletes). The main purpose of a growth mindset was the same across all groups and was consistent with the idea that personal qualities (e.g., their voices or engagement) can influence the development of societal changes from an oppressed society. Recreational athletes and non-athletes had the same specific aims of growth mindset to develop society, such as increasing awareness of disability rights and improving disability facilities. However, there were differences between elite athletes and non-athletes. Disabled non-athletes grounded their growth mindset based on issues related to their daily life in terms of highly physical and psychological issues faced, whereas disabled elite athletes exercised a growth mindset not only to develop in sports but also to highlight injustice in society.

*Increasing awareness of disability rights.* As one example of a growth mindset, disabled non-athletes shared disability issues and relevant information with people around them to increase awareness of disability rights. He believed that the initial stage of activism is a recognition of what issues is ongoing and how best to deal with this. As he said:



In general, non-disabled people have lots of information available to them, but disabled people do not. Therefore, I constantly try to give disabled people relevant information that I experienced, at least the people around me. We need to be aware of social issues if we are to protect our rights.

[Woo-Jin]

*Improving disability facilities.* As another example of a growth mindset, some disabled non-athletes tried to bring actual changes to enhance public disability facilities in various ways, such as filing a complaint to the public organisation. They believed that their rights should be equal to those of non-disabled people, especially in public places and facilities. As one disabled non-athlete said:

When I travel around, I notice that there aren't many places where wheelchair users can easily use a restaurant. There is almost no place with convenient facilities for disabled people. We file complaints continuously and are hoping to see positive changes as a result of our movement. [Do-Hyun]

*Improving a sense of belonging.* Some non-athletes focused on developing positive emotions through a sense that they felt part of society or that they were living a meaningful life. As two disabled non-athletes said:

The motivation to engage in activism came when I felt that my life was very boring and I got tired of the daily routine of life. Living with my parents and family and dependent on them was also meaningless. I realised that I had to find meaning of life and develop my own life by myself. [Jee-Ho]

### 7.2.3 Personal motivators

A fourth reason why disabled non-athletes enacted an activism orientation was ‘personal motivators’, such as improved health or feeling as though they had an activist personality.

*Improved health condition.* One reason for engaging in activism was tied to a feeling of alleviated physical discomfort. In this study, a few ‘severely disabled non-athletes’ were willing to engage in activism when they felt in a better physical state. As one person said:

I started engaging in activism because my physical state had improved. I want to engage in it as much as possible. [Do-Hyun]

*Activist personality.* In addition, some disabled non-athletes shared that their motivation for engaging in activism for social change was that, because of what they described as ‘their personality’, they could not tolerate injustice. They believed that the formation of their personality was influenced by their parents’ activism. As one disabled non-athlete said:

Because I am determined to change things, if I don’t make practical changes myself, then nobody will do it. My personality is such that I cannot stand unfairness or injustice. My parents have also at times engaged in activism, and they encouraged me a lot to do the same (activism against injustice), which I did. [Seo-Woo]

### **7.3 Barriers for disabled non-athletes to become activists**

In addition to interviewing six disabled people who engaged in activism, six people who did not engage in activist behaviour were also interviewed. Three barriers as to why these disabled non-athletes eschewed engaging in activism were identified. These included ‘emotional cost’, ‘Confucian challenge’, ‘socio-environmental barriers’, ‘personal barriers.’ These barriers were described not only by the low-activism disabled non-athletes but also by

the high-activism disabled non-athletes when thinking of the time they faced difficulties to engage in activism.

### 7.3.1 Emotional cost

The first main theme was ‘emotional cost’. Some non-athletes with high activist orientation focused on receiving emotional rewards through engaging in activism. At other times, some non-athletes with low activist orientation were discouraged by pressure to regulate unfavourable emotions such as frustration when they thought about engaging in activism or interacted with other people in a process of activism.

*Frustration from people ignoring activism.* All low activism disabled non-athletes were concerned that their activism efforts would be ignored or that, at best, it would take longer to achieve the desired outcome, which felt in their bodies frustrating. In this study, one disabled non-athlete submitted an official complaint document to revise regulations for disability, but it took seven years to implement it. As two disabled non-athletes said:

Before engaging in activism, I did not know how long the process of bringing about change would take. Speaking and raising one’s voice does not always bring about change. In terms of policy changes, the process is very long indeed. I raised some issues in order to request a change, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare first rejected my requests, but then discussed and reviewed them again, and finally passed the required measures. It took seven years to implement. I think that consistent activism is the biggest reason why I stopped speaking out for justice. I can speak about social change all I want, but it doesn’t change anything. It has been hard on my own. I was so frustrated. I think I am very tired of consistent activism. [Won-Bin]

I recently filed a complaint to a regional community. They did not respond even after a week. Then two weeks passed, so I called them, but they told

me that they hadn't even checked the email. I was so angry, but I still requested them to take the required measures. But after two more weeks, they still hadn't checked the email. So, I called them up again and sent an official document. Finally, the problem was solved after four months. I was so frustrated. They will ignore my request next time anyway. [Ha-Joon]

### 7.3.2 Confucian challenges

A second barrier was Confucianism, including elements of positional hierarchy, age hierarchy, factionalism and parents' influence. This cultural barrier was also explored by participants from other groups (i.e., elite athletes, recreational athletes); however, disabled non-athletes appeared to be the most deeply ignored by the Confucian environment.

*Positional hierarchy.* Disabled non-athletes were strongly affected by the rigid hierarchical order based on a central Confucian value whereby subordinates should be respectful towards their superior. In South Korea, Confucianism hierarchy classifies people into a pyramidal structure. Disability was historically seen as a great misfortune, and disabled people were placed at the very bottom of the pyramidal structure and considered a different group from non-disabled people. On account of this cultural background, most disabled non-athletes with low activist orientation felt they 'succumbed' to a hierarchical authority, whereas those with high activist orientation were more likely to 'rebel' against their unfair discrimination in what they believed to be part of a corrupted society. Among disabled non-athletes with low activist orientation, most people demonstrated a tentative attitude for sharing their opinions on activism during the interview. Few people tried to engage in activism, but their voices were, in large part, silenced by the hierarchical order, and this thwarted them to engage in activism. As two disabled non-athletes said:

The tenets of Confucianism present a huge dilemma for disabled people. I have never learnt Confucianism, but I know the overall culture and

acknowledge that we live in a country that follows Confucian. I too have been affected by certain Confucian customs, albeit unconsciously. Confucian values are based on the assumption that members of the nobility are different from ordinary people. This is our culture, but it is not a desirable one for disabled people. In South Korea, people think about disabled people as ‘pitiful,’ and conclude that ‘I am so lucky I don’t have a disability’. People look at disabled people with sympathy and assume that they live badly even if they live well. In society’s hierarchy, we (i.e., disabled people) are always at the bottom of the ladder. Confucianism also has a very positive aspect, but its overall approach is disadvantageous for disabled people because it distinguishes between ordinary people and the upper segments of the hierarchy. This is one of the reasons why our opinions are mostly ignored [Jun-Ki]

Although I have filed numerous complaints, nothing substantial has changed, since my opinions and requests have been ignored. The authorities never listen to our voices. But when a councillor recently visited our centre and highlighted the same points that I had raised previously, the accompanying civil servant said, ‘we will review it right now’. And the issue was resolved that day. People in authority usually only listen to the voices of high-status people, and ignore low-status people such as the disabled. [Hyun-Woo]

*Age hierarchy.* Regardless of their status of athlete or non-athlete, age was powerful cultural factors affecting engagement in activism, based on the strong expectations that younger people should follow and respect older people. This concept was taken to an extreme in South Korea whereby even the smallest age difference creates a divide between a ‘junior’ and a ‘senior’ person. In this study, many disabled non-athletes believed that they

should ‘walk on eggshells’ to assert their opinion when communicating with older people. Furthermore, the junior’s opinions were felt to be very likely ignored and considered presumptuous behaviour if a senior had a different opinion. The age-related cultural and social conventions were deeply embedded in people’s daily life and this affects negatively the formation of an activism orientation. As one disabled non-athlete said:

Judging by the size of the population, there aren’t many people who go around with *kat* (a traditional hat indicating their class). However, Confucianism afflicts many people’s consciousness. For example, the elderly should invariably be respected. The Confucian mindset is that even if a person acts violently towards a passer-by, he or she should be respected if they are old. Thus, we do not reveal our thoughts and opinions to the elderly very often. This holds back improvements in our society. Even though I want to insist that my voice be heard, it will be discarded if there are older people who have a different opinion than me. [Hyun-Woo]

*Factionalism.* Another cultural barrier belonging to the Confucian challenges was factionalism. In South Korea, disability welfare and rights organisations were established earlier than disability sports society. At that time, these organisations were built based on the same geographical region or religious belief, discounting any disability knowledge. For example, in the past, there were not many people who worked on disability welfare, and only a few Christians managed to gain governmental support for disability welfare. These people now have a vested interest in disability society and engaged in what is widely believed in South Korean society as diverse corruption through having a close relationship with politicians. In this study, disabled non-athletes or new disability organisations struggled to hold their voices on social changes and were ostracised by more established disability factions in a power dispute. This cultural feature of factionalism discouraged, as perceived

by disabled non-athletes, to exercise their voice within the disability society. As one disabled non-athlete said:

Just as companies hire professional managers, we too need social welfare professionals within disability rights organisations. However, many people get hired solely based on who their acquaintances are, regardless of their knowledge of disabilities. There is also a lot of corruption and abuse emanating from religious groups in relation to disability work. When few people knew about disability welfare, the government supported religious organisations, believing that they would do good work with the disabled because they professed Christianity. People running these organisations (now mostly in their 40s or 50s) have powerful vested interests. Disability welfare affects various important issues, and these people focus on garnering benefits for their particular faction. There are so many examples of back-scratching and corrupt relationships with politicians within disability welfare centres. Regardless of the infringement of human rights, people who have vested interests in the social welfare system are all the same. Disability groups should, therefore, cooperate with each other, but they often resent new institutions or organisations emerging. Their attitude is ‘Ah if they come here, our turf will become smaller.’ Each institution only focuses on gaining power. Because of this, our voices have largely been ignored. [Si-Woo]

Interestingly, disabled non-athletes also lamented discrimination within disability groups. It was perceived that some disabled people tended to build walls and keep a distance from different groups according to disability types, extent, and disability onset. In this study, one ‘severely disabled person’ claimed he was denied possibilities to communicate with others

by other disabled people because his disability was more severe compared to the majority of other disabled people. As he said:

There is, unfortunately, a degree of factionalism amongst disability groups. For example, people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities are often ignored by groups supporting other types of disability (e.g., physical disability), because they talk more slowly or do not communicate easily. There are also divisions between congenital and acquired disabilities. Disabled people say, 'don't distinguish between disabled and non-disabled people,' and 'this is discrimination,' but they too distinguish between disability types and the degree of disability. Since I have a severe disability, other disabled people tend to ignore me. [Gang-Joon]

*Parent's influence.* Another Confucian challenge focused on the relation between 'father' (intended as parents) and 'son' (intended as children). Parents with a strong negative social prejudice against disability transmitted their prejudice to their disabled children. Compared to elite and recreational athletes, non-athletes were more strongly subjugated by their parents, it was perceived. In this study, most low-activism disabled non-athletes felt as though they should 'surrender' to living a home-life in a vacuum under the hegemony of their parents' discriminative treatment, whereas recreational athletes had many chances to partake in social and sporting activities outside their home. This was because disabled non-athletes' parents seemed to suffer from a strong stigma associated with their child's disability, contrary to the sense of overprotection experienced by disabled elite athletes and recreational athletes' parents. In addition, disabled athletes and non-athletes with high activist orientation tried to confront disability discrimination and injustice. By contrast, low activism disabled non-athletes believed that they could not overcome discriminative oppression and considered themselves as an unimportant person because of their parents' ableism. In this study, some disabled non-athletes had to hide at home when their relatives



came for a visit. One of them was even confined to a psychiatric hospital. Their parents repudiated the existence of a disabled child in their families. As two disabled non-athletes said:

I am a son who was not welcomed by my family. I was seen as a source of shame and hidden even from my relatives. I was hidden in a small room at home, and my family told relatives, 'we sent him to a welfare centre'. I was in the next room at that time and heard everything. It was so sad. One day, a white car appeared and some people, including a doctor, took me away. My family had abandoned me in a psychiatric hospital. The hospital had not asked for my opinion. They just took me away because my family stated that it was inconvenient to have me around. I was disregarded even by my family. What could I do for society? I wanted to die. I feared opening my eyes every morning. I would wish I wouldn't wake up the next day. [Hyun-Woo]

Most disabled people simply stay at home. I too was stuck at home and could never go out. I felt inadequate as a family member. When I would go to church, even the pastor would say 'what kind of job will you find?', 'what can you do as an activist?', 'you should just pray that you get better', and 'don't do anything on the outside'. There was a time when my family was ashamed of me and refused to acknowledge that they had a disabled person in the family. [Do-Jin]

### 7.3.3 Socio-environmental barriers

The third theme describing why disabled non-athletes did not engage in activism was 'socio-environmental barriers.' In this study, non-athletes tended to distrust political institutions or institutional barriers during their engagement in activism because they prioritised a political platform and needed to take more steps to make their voices publicised than elite athletes.

*Political distrust.* Some non-athletes pointed out some ideological divergences among politicians of different parties: they lamented that some politicians used the disability issue as a stepping stone for attaining power, but then, after being in power, they became indifferent to disability rights and betrayed their previous promises to make improvements in society at every level of influence as a policymaker. Disabled non-athletes believed the politicians' speeches and behaviours towards disability were a mere façade and they focused on only a few influential voices (e.g., athlete, KPC board member) in disability society. This bad political practice discouraged a commitment to social justice and undermined any willingness to participate in activism. As one disabled non-athlete said:

Non-political people normally do not distinguish between social classes. However, politicians tend to divide the class structure into a high class, a middle class, and a low class, depending on the level of wealth. For example, politicians often state that they will establish a new insurance scheme for the middle class, which will then trickle down to the lower classes. This may appear to be a systemic reform, but it is not feasible if the middle class doesn't accept the changes. Moreover, there are so many pressing issues facing the government, and improvements for the disabled are not a priority. Politicians typically oppose disability welfare reforms or radical changes because they think that it will be a waste of money compared to other issues. [Jun-Ki]

*Institutional barrier.* As evidence of the lack of legal support, some non-athletes indicated institutional barrier such as lack of professional staff handling disability issues. Some social workers had a poor understanding of disability and showed little efforts in supporting disabled people. For example, some disabled non-athletes were frustrated in a situation where government officers ignored their request when applying civil complaints to

the council or signing petitions against a discriminatory condition for disability. As one disabled non-athlete said:

The whole issue is a matter of professionalism. Every year, the government hires social workers based on theory-related tests, regardless of whether those workers have displayed a dedication to helping the disabled or have a basic knowledge of disability culture. Therefore, when we raise the issue of our rights, many of them cannot understand our position. They just say that there are no specific plans for the current year, not that they are considering any plans, but simply that they have no plans.

[Do-Jin]

#### 7.3.4 Personal barriers

A fourth reason why disabled non-athletes eschewed activism was due to one personal barrier: *dependent lifestyle*. Despite the ‘independent living movement’ helping people or organisations to enact or amend laws dealing with education and employment for disabled people (K. M. Kim, 2008), some disabled non-athletes, especially those with ‘severe disability’, indicated that they secluded themselves from society and maintained a dependent lifestyle (physically and psychologically) on their family or assistant. Active citizenship is generally identified by three major complementary aspects: social security, personal autonomy and political influence (DISCIT, 2013). In the case of disabled people, especially ‘severely disabled non-athletes’, participants felt particularly disadvantaged with their (lack of) autonomy. As one disabled non-athletes indicated:

In the disability centre, one teacher oversaw 15 disabled people in a disability welfare centre. If any requests were made, such as combing my hair, the teacher had to do all the tasks, even if they were many. So, the people could not do anything themselves and there were always chances to miss the timing for what I want to do. I have lived without any meaning or

goal in life. It was like this. My physical disability was a huge barrier.

[Jun-Ki]

#### **7.4 Critical discussion**

In line with chapters five and six, this chapter shows that disability sport and elite athletes can be potential strong platforms for social change by remarking athletes' position through a) the distinct treatment that politicians reserve for disabled elite athletes compared to non-athletes and b) situations where non-athletes hope that elite athletes take leadership for activism through the Para sport context.

This chapter also demonstrates that the group of disabled non-athletes used to take diverse forms of counter narratives (Plummer, 2019). Counter narratives are used to challenge dominant orders in the form of political responses of protest, radicalism, rebellious and radical ways (Plummer, 2019; Selbin, 2010). This chapter shows that the reason why disabled non-athletes used counter narrative was that, compared to high-positioned groups (e.g., elite athletes, KPC board members), non-athletes culturally faced greater structural disablism, evident, for example, in the fact that they needed to take more steps to make their voices publicised. This case highlights the importance of embracing counter narratives to understand social realities and the context of strong hierarchical circles in South Korea.

In addition, this chapter stressed that, although collectivism had a positive impact in some instances (e.g., demonstrations based on collectivism value), overall it generated restrictions to speak out for social justice in society. From the SRM point of view, disabled non-athletes were directly or indirectly damaged by negative social interaction with others (e.g., family, other disabled people) in the South Korean culture (Haslett & Smith, 2020). For example, in this chapter, disabled people's parents often were the agents of psycho-emotional disablism by forbidding their children to engage in outside activities due to the disability stigma. This led disabled non-athletes to internalise the oppression and devalue themselves by hiding their impairment to avoid negative reactions from others (Haslett & Smith, 2020; Reeve, 2004). Thus, their damaged stories were struggled to be heard. In this

sense, using SRM can promote an understanding of disability that encompasses the cultural and experiential dimensions (Reeve, 2004), rather than relying on the social model of disability limiting to mainly socio-structural barriers.

## **7.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I described different types of activism in which disabled non-athletes engaged, and then explored the reasons why disabled non-athletes do (or do not) engage in activism, by analysing their stories. Disabled non-athletes believed that disabled elite athletes' voice can bring a prompt change, in alignment with previous results that disabled elite athletes have stronger activist orientation and are better positioned to speak out for social change than disabled non-athletes. Among disabled non-athletes, three diverse types of activism were defined: a) political activism (i.e., protest, campaign, and statement), b) social activism (i.e., photography, insurance plan, and speech), and c) online activism (i.e., blogging and online community). This showed that, compared to athletes, non-athletes had more limited access to opportunities to engage in activism if they so desired. In addition, four main motivators why disabled non-athletes engage in activism were revealed: 1) socialisation process (i.e., disability rights movement, Paralympic Games, specific-knowledge background), 2) growth mindset (i.e., increasing awareness of disability rights, improving disability facilities), and 4) personal motivators (i.e., improved health condition, activist personality). Also, barriers, that is factors why disabled non-athletes did not or struggled to engage in activism, were identified. These barriers included: 1) emotional cost (i.e. frustration from people ignoring activism), 2) Confucian challenges (i.e., positional hierarchy, age hierarchy, factionalism, and parent's influence), 2) socio-environmental barriers (i.e., political distrust, institutional barriers), and 3) personal barriers (i.e., dependent lifestyle). The next chapter will focus on the activism of KPC members who are disabled retired athletes.

## **Activism by KPC board members who are former athletes**

### **8.0 Overview**

This chapter explores the past and present activism of KPC board members who were disabled elite athletes in their youth. These board members provide three multifaceted voices/perspectives: a) as former athletes (KPC members thinking about when they used to be athletes), b) as retired athletes (KPC members reflecting on their position after retirement), and c) as KPC members (current high-level board members of the KPC). As a caveat, it has to be acknowledged that these different voices/perspectives are not distinct or easily separable. The participants talk through a single voice, but this voice is not unitary or absolute. Rather, it contains a plurality of voices and aspects of consciousness, whether internal (from the past) or external (from the present). As Bakhtin (1987) put it, our utterances are “filled with others’ words” (p. 89), “with echoes and reverberations of other utterances” (p. 91). Thus, voice is always formed in an ongoing process over time and experiences, and through interaction with other voices. This means, for instance, that the voice of a KPC member expresses not just the sentiments of a current KPC member, but also those of a former athlete and retired athlete, which is what they used to be, since voice is

always formed in an ongoing process of anticipation and response to other voices. With this recognised, rather than mixing voices together and possibility creating confusion when communicating, in what follows I talk about each voice in turn to provide the reader with a clear form of communicating arguments.

In *Section 8.1*, I offer a typology of this activism, based on the experiences of these individuals. Next, in *Section 8.2* (motivators) and *Section 8.3* (barriers), I investigate—through the three perspectives mentioned above—both current and past mechanisms that could possibly foster or deter engagement in activism. After the themes are presented, a critical discussion (*Section 8.4*) is added to provide main message and theoretical perspectives of this chapter.

### **8.1 A typology of activism by KPC members, retired athletes and former athletes**

In the interviews, the KPC members all suggested they were highly inclined towards enacting and supporting activism, while three of them stated that they had been highly inclined towards activism during their athletic careers as well, with one stating that they had not been in the past. Based on their stories of activism, five types of activism could be identified: 1) sports-based activism, 2) political activism, 3) social activism, 4) economic activism, and 5) online activism. Compared to the findings regarding the elite athletes, recreational athletes and non-athletes highlighted in previous chapters, the KPC members' voices were the most powerful, since KPC members could have both a tangible and intangible impact—given the power associated with their positions—both inside and outside the arena of sports. In addition, the activism of the former athletes was more limited in terms of having an impact, and they felt more oppressed compared to the current athletes.

#### **8.1.1 Sports-based activism**

The first type of activism identified was sports-based activism. Both the elite athletes and stakeholders (e.g., retired athletes, KPC members) aimed to promote positive development in disability sports. In this study, two ways of engaging in this type of activism were

highlighted by three career voices: high performance sports with medal (former athletes), and sports-organisational activism (retired athletes and KPC members).

One way of engaging in sports-based activism was termed *high performance sports with medal*. Compared to current disabled elite athletes (who are considered to be important people in society), when the KPC members were elite athletes only medallists were deemed to have the right to speak on social issues. In this study, one former athlete believed that winning a medal could boost the development of South Korean disability sports and draw the attention of key people in government to the issue of discrimination that faced disabled people in society.

I prepared for the Sydney Paralympics for four years. I did nothing without exercise for four years. I had to become a medallist in order to contribute to the Korean disabled sports society, and because I won a medal, I could ask question and discuss what we (disabled athletes) need in front of president of South Korea at the Blue house. [Former athlete, In-Sung]

A second way of engaging in sports-based activism was *sports-organisational activism*, which is about organised action designed to address injustices within sports and improve the disability sports culture. This type of activism was carried out by both retired athletes and KPC members. Compared to the current elite athletes who sought to mitigate the extent of discrimination within disability sports organisations, the retired athletes were found to focus on creating disability-specific sports organisations as pioneers in their field. The retired athletes leveraged their influence by setting up disability sports organisations to instigate positive change, whereas the current disabled athletes mobilised their voice within these organisations in order to garner support for those changes. For example, when talking about being retired athlete, one person said they set up South Korea's first disability sports organisation, and designed its operational structures, such as management, compliance and



policy planning. This organisational framework led to the creation of over 17 different regional disability sports committees, which in turn resulted in appointed individuals being deemed as ‘high stakeholders’ within the current Korea Paralympic Committee. As the voices of people talking as retired athletes said:

I have established the local Para-sport association at xxx since 1995. This was a non-profit organization, and changed to a corporation in 2002. Other regional groups followed to benchmark structure that I created, and this finally led to the foundation of the Korea Paralympic Committee. [Retired athlete, Sung-Gyu]

I established a disability sport community for mentally retarded people. I wanted to support disabled people who are struggling to start exercise because I also faced many difficulties to start an exercise. The establishment of this organisation encouraged many disabled people to engage in physical activity and social activities. [Retired athlete, Sang-In]

Within the same arena of *sports-organisational activism*, the current KPC members exerted their position-based influence to bring about positive change within disability sports via the Korea Paralympic Committee with which they were affiliated. For example, many of the athletes tended to face difficulties in employment following their retirement, compared to non-disabled and full-time disabled workers. Therefore, the KPC initiated job-training education for retired athletes in order to foster professionals and administrators for the disability sports sector. In addition, they launched a Sports Academy for disabled people living in developing countries in Asia in order to promote a vision of equality and develop disability sports. Over 50 disabled people from seven developing countries (e.g., Nepal, Kazakhstan) participated in the Academy in 2019, receiving appropriate education and performance training. This broad range of influences on the disability sports sector was feasible due to the institutional support that was provided by the government. According to

one KPC member who described the benefits that his position offered in relation to his engagement in activism.

My position is activism itself and possesses very influential voices because I am in charge of the national athlete team. My word can get lots of attention especially when I meet with political dignitaries who can bring feasible changes. That's why I tried to come here. My voices can be much more influential because my position can get closer to the people who deal with policy. In fact, there have been a lot of changes whatever I want since I became a stakeholder because I can speak directly to politicians, ministers, and even the president of South Korea at national events. This is a big advantage. I used this advantage to reach a wise solution to a problem disabled athlete currently faced such as disability rights, employment after retirement. [KPC member, In-Sung]

#### 8.1.2 Political activism

The second type of activism, termed political activism, refers to behaviours exhibited in public areas or in political organisations for the purpose of raising awareness of certain political issues and promoting legislative change. In this study, political activism manifested in a number of ways, depending on the stage that the participants' lives were in: former athletes — protests, retired athletes — engaging in political organisations, and KPC members — face-to-face meetings with politicians.

When the KPC members were young athletes, one way of engaging in political activism was by taking part in *demonstrations*. These took the form of protests or demonstrations together with other disabled athletes, with the holding of placards to maximise exposure in public places, like streets or in front of the National Assembly building or the Blue House. For example, such demonstrations contributed to moving jurisdiction over disability sports from the Ministry of Health and Welfare to the Ministry of

Culture, Sports and Tourism. In addition, they ensured that disability sports issues got included in the National Sports Promotion Act. As a result, this movement became the basis for all disabled athlete activism in South Korea. This brought about substantive and incremental positive changes by breaking the normative standard for disabled athletes and enhancing awareness of disability sports. As two people said when speaking about their past selves as former athletes:

When I was an elite athlete, the environment of disability sport was much poor than non-disabled sport one. We engaged in radical protest, demonstration, rallies many times for over 10 years. As a result, the Ministry of Health and Welfare moved to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Medallist Pension also became over ₩1,000,000 (about £650) than nothing since then. [Former athlete, Sang-In]

When I was elite athletes in the past, I did many political protests on the streets, and then spoke out ‘disability sport issues should be included in National Sports Promotion Act, not in welfare law for disabled people. At that time disability sport belonged to the rehabilitation section at the Ministry of Health and welfare. Disability sport should be considered as sport itself rather than disability first. So, I engaged in protests on the streets, in front of the National Assembly and the blue house for three years, and chased politicians. [Former athlete, In-Sung]

In the case of when talking about being a retired athlete, one way of engaging in political activism was through *engagement in political organisations*. After their retirement, some participants were instrumental in bringing about changes in the disability policymaking realm through their engagement in political bodies, such as the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. This form of activism was able to generate a specific mechanism through which their ‘insider movement’ instigated social changes, and it

provided them with the chance to be appointed as KPC board members. As one person said when speaking about their experiences as a retired athlete:

Since disability sport has moved from the Ministry of Health and Welfare to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, I worked in public official in charge of sport policy for disabled at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Engaging in the political organisation provided many benefits to handle realistic movement and changes. [Retired athlete, In-Sung]

In the case of speaking as stakeholders, they engaged in political activism in the way of *face-to-face meetings with politicians*. That was because they were in a unique position to discuss and report what they perceived to be the current and future direction of disability sports at a national committee level. Thus, they were instrumental in provoking critical political discussions and bringing about positive change by using their positions within relevant committees, rather than by protesting on the streets. Compared with situations where politicians were seen to be taking advantage of disabled athletes' visibility to attain greater power, politicians considered the influence of KPC member as the same level of high-status with them, especially in terms of getting relevant policies enacted. As one KPC member said:

I am now head of public institution under government, so I cannot protest but I speak out for disability rights in a different way now. I do not go outside and street for protest now anymore. But then, I go through the proper process like a discussion about the future direction of Para-sport with politicians. I meet and persuade people working in the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Economy and Finance, and many other politicians. And I insist on the need for support every year. [KPC member, In- Sung]

### 8.1.3 Social activism

The KPC members tended to engage in social activism to draw attention to social injustice, raise awareness within and beyond sports, and reach a wide range of people. Due to their high profile and social status in society, the KPC members would often be invited to talk on a variety of disability-related issues to a wide range of audiences, including the broader disabled community. Thus, they engaged in social activism through the power of *speech*. They conveyed influential and inspirational verbal messages through ‘talks’ or ‘interviews’ to increase awareness of the topic of personal experiences within disability sports. For example, one KPC member shared elements of his life story, such as how he was able to attain a high status within disability sports, through special talk sessions organised by schools and company workshops. Another KPC member mentioned that his policy was to always agree to be interviewed if the topic was related to disability sports or disability issues. As two KPC members said:

In company workshop and school, I do give a talk about how I got injured, how I have lived, how I can overcome, how I can be positioned here, what I want to give a message to audiences, and what the disability sport is.

[KPC member, Sung-Gyu]

I do interview all the time for sure with PhD students, professors, even when I am in the Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism. This is because of one reason. I want even one person to be interested in disability sports, and to increase awareness towards disability. I am always open to being interviewed. [KPC member, In-Sung]

### 8.1.4 Economic activism

Compared with the other participant groups, the KPC members seemed to give more weight to economic interests in the effort to bring about solid developments in the disabled community and in the arena of Para-sports. They predominantly engaged in two ways of

economic activism, namely sports-star management, and sponsorship designed to stimulate social and economic empowerment.

The first route was *sports-star management* of medallists. The KPC members believed that they could generate intangible benefits by leveraging successful athletes' voices and visibility to bring about social change, and thus endeavoured to create 'sports stars' by building the athletes' image and reputation. For example, they appointed disabled elite athletes as ambassadors of international or national events. They also organised charity events for disabled children, emphasising 'with medallist [name]' in the events' title. As one KPC member said:

We (KPC) are doing star marketing with elite athletes. We create a star (influential athlete) and make he can give social influence through media. We make the environment where disabled people realise that Para-athlete speak out for us to improve disability society, and feel need to be encouraged. [KPC member, In-Sung]

The second route for economic activism was *sponsorship* at the committee level. In this study, it was found that the KPC members aimed to contribute to the growing interest in the sustainability of disability sports by supporting disabled athletes' financial stability at the committee level, in contrast to elite disabled athletes who used sponsorship through personal branding. For example, internally the KPC created an economic framework to sponsor disabled athletes by providing them with wheelchairs and helping a new generation of disabled athletes to be discovered. They also externally instigated a productive dialogue regarding financial arrangements with corporations and the government aimed at generating adequate funding for the development of disability sports. As one KPC member said:

Professional sport may mostly face budget issues. The wheelchair for disabled sport costs very high around 5,000,000 up to 10,000,000. But it is too hard for an individual to buy such a thing. As you know, there is a

very rare chance to find a sponsor who can invest in the value of Para-sport in South Korea. Many disabled people should cover all budgets with their budget or family support. We (KPC) are supporting them with Govern budget. [KPC member, Sung-Gyu]

#### 8.1.5 Online activism

The KPC members did not mention the online activism route during the interviews, but they confirmed that they were actively using online platforms to maximise information flow and extend their influence over large populations through the Korea Paralympic Committee, which they headed. For example, they provided extensive support and created information flows across social, political and cultural domains through their website (<https://www.koreanpc.kr>) and social media accounts (e.g., Instagram, Blog, Facebook, YouTube). In addition, in 2019 they initiated live online coverage of Para-sports with STNsports (one of South Korea's broadcasting stations), and started to train special commentators for Para-sports games. Furthermore, they established an online platform for uploading all types of Para-sports competition videos to increase awareness of disabled sports and athletes.

### 8.2 Motivators for KPC members who were elite athletes to become activists

The thematic analysis I conducted produced two key themes—the 'socialisation process' and the 'growth mindset'—that help explain why KPC members who, when reflecting on themselves as former athletes, became activist-inclined and started engaging in activism. These motivator themes were similar to those that motivated current elite athletes to engage in activism, but had a slightly different dimensional perspective given the passage of time, the different experiences and changes in positions. In addition, the KPC members mostly tended to focus on motivating factors that affected issues within disability sports, in contrast to elite athletes whose considerations extended within and beyond sports.

#### 8.2.1 Socialisation process

The first main theme—the ‘socialisation process’—can be defined as the experience of life events that provided the individual with the expectation, opportunity and information to advocate for social change. This theme incorporates three sub-themes: position-based advantage (medallist or KPC board member), the 1988 and 2018 Paralympic Games, and encouragement. All three sub-themes were present in the stories of both the former athletes and the KPC members. However, each sub-theme unfolded differently, depending on their respective positions.

*Position-based advantage.* The first motivating factor of the socialisation process in terms of why the KPC members (reflecting on themselves as former athletes) engaged in activism was their position, such as being a medallist or board member. First, the high status that came with being a ‘medallist’ motivated the KPC members to engage in activism when they were elite athletes, even though they perceived that they had to face greater difficulties and discrimination than current elite athletes. In contrast to most current elite athletes’ opinion that elite athletes are ‘important people’ in society, when speaking about themselves as former athletes they believed that only a medallist had a chance of engage effectively in activism, by meeting decision-makers such as politicians. The status of being a medallist was mentioned as a motivating factor by most of the former athlete-activists. As one of them said:

I had never missed opportunities to be a national elite athlete for 12 years.

I always won a medal. I did my best to get a medal all the time. Why?

Because I want to speak out for our rights and movement. I could have a chance to speak only if I became medallist. So, I knew that there was a special luncheon with medallists at Blue House (Korean Presidential residence) before the match. I was selected as a national team member and won a gold medal at Athens Paralympics in 2004. Thus, I was invited to luncheon, and could tell directly to president Noh in Blue House, such as



‘We need this kind of improvement.’ So, this environment motivated me to have an activist and fighting spirit. [Former athlete, In-Sung]

Second, the high status afforded by being a ‘board member’ in the KPC was identified as a source of motivation to engage in activism, since it provided access to the decision-making process. In this sense, the activism of the KPC members, even when small in extent, had a strong practical influence on society, since it facilitated the introduction of a comprehensive set of policies and practices, and helped integrate the world of business and the government into the movement. In addition, their activism was believed to inspire other KPC members and even elite athletes to act to challenge discrimination. As one KPC member said:

I can get attention from people now because I am a stakeholder. I influence because I am in charge of the entire national team athletes. My word by word is very influential especially when I meet high-level stakeholders and politicians. I have the advantage to change society even more because my position is closed to politicians. That’s why I tried to come to this position and made a lot of changes. This status has a tremendous advantage because I can meet and explain directly to politicians, ministers, members of the National Assembly, and even president. [KPC member, In-Sung]

Some KPC member culturally emphasised attaining this positional power was supported by strong faction with other decision-makers such as politicians or former KPC board members. This relationship tended to relate with a *Yongo* concepts (see *Section 5.3.2, Chapter 5*). People in a strong *Yongo*-based relationship become stalwart supporters of one another, sharing a common aim to make further achievements (e.g., social change, development of disability sports). As one KPC board member said:

When someone wants to change society with a political approach such as budget or government policy, they cannot do anything if they don't have personal connections and networks through university and hometown. [...]

There is a line according to the same faction, band... for example, the same university, same hometown, etc. [...] If someone makes a personal connection through an acquaintance or similar background, the people listen once more. I was good at doing this with people. It was helpful in order to be positioned here. [KPC member, In-Sung]

*Paralympic Games.* A second motivating factor of the socialisation process that explains why KPC members who were former athletes engaged in activism was the Paralympic Games that were held in South Korea (in 1988 and 2018). All the interviewees had experienced two different Paralympics Games held in South Korea, initially as elite athletes, and subsequently as KPC board members.

*1988 Seoul Paralympic Games:* The first integrated Olympic-Paralympic Games took place in the same city (Seoul) in 1988, when the interviewees were elite athletes. Even though numerous disabled activists boycotted the 1988 Paralympics because of budget issues (see *Section 2.4 in Chapter 2*) and poor facilities for the disabled, it was believed that the commitment to the games exhibited by certain disabled elite athletes (e.g., their impressive performance, their media-savvy approach, etc.) contributed to the growth of the disability movement. Following the 1988 Paralympics, the interviewees focused on activism by creating sports organisations suitable for disabled people. As a person said when speaking about their experiences as a former athlete said:

1988 Paralympic became a strong motivation. Less than now, disabled people received attention from society at that time. Our (elite athletes) voice could get some attention. There was the development of perceptions towards disabled people little by little, even though there were also

negative views to us. Since then disability sport organisations have been developed. [Former athlete, In-Sung]

*2018 Pyeong-Chang Paralympic Games:* In 2018, while they were KPC board members—and thus key people in the field of disability sports—South Korea hosted the Pyeong-Chang Paralympic Games. By this time, the Paralympic platform offered expanded opportunities for social change, with clearly stated social, environmental and institutional goals, both within and beyond disability sports. When they were elite athletes, they were only focused on getting attention as elite athletes and promoting disability sports. However, now they strived to set international and political goals (e.g., improving relations between North and South Korea, boosting South Korea's status in international society). With common aims and insights, KPC groups and the government were thus able to engage in cultural and political changes together. As one KPC member said:

The Pyeong-Chang Paralympic is a global event held in South Korea in 30 years after the 1988 Seoul Paralympic. This is an opportunity to show the status of South Korea once again in the world. There are few countries to hold this kind of international games in the world. South Korea is one of those countries. Also, this became a chance to relax a relation between North and South Korea. In addition, the government has started to support the development of disability sport for both athletes and non-athletes with hosting the 2018 Paralympic. That's why our role has become more important, and thus Paralympic is a big motivator for activism. [KPC member, Sang-In]

*Encouragement.* A third motivating factor of the socialisation process was that they were encouraged by a) the realisation that challenging discrimination was important to the people with whom they came into contact, b) the positive feedback they received regarding previous examples of activism (e.g., favourable changes in society) and the new atmosphere

(e.g., groups that were against their activism no longer holding that position), c) various positive experiences of working in practical movements (e.g., working in political organisations). d) the needs, which is inspired by negative experience, discrimination and inequitable treatment, to develop a society that supports the human rights of disabled people. Both in the past and in the present, the KPC members who were retired athletes were encouraged to participate in activism because of one of these four motivating factors (or a combination thereof). As three people said:

The juniors were very desperate. Because there was time for no equipment, environment, and coaches for disability sport. So, I have received many requests from other athletes to lead them. After I had contemplated for a few years, I have started activism for them. Their encouragement was motivation. The mind that began at that time is still maintained. [retired athlete, Sung-gyu]

At first, I was very reviled. Some people thought that ‘How does it make sense that disabled people do exercise and activism?’ but now lots of things have changed such as training centre for disability athletes and pension. With this movement, people have changed their perception and provided good feedback. All situations (feedback and development) motivated me to do more active activism. [KPC member, Sang-In]

I was an elite athlete and working in political administration. I have been working as a practitioner. All my experiences such as practical, political, structural, and cultural approaches became an advantage to go further step. I am encouraged by my career. [KPC member, In-sung]

Politicians or people who work at the government don’t like people who raise problems or do activism in the hierarchical country. So high-status

people try to exclude activists. This cultural custom developed more activist identity. This was a big motivation with indomitable spirit and obstinacy to get a medal and speak out directly to them. [Former athlete, In-Sung]

#### 8.2.2 Growth mindset

The second main theme that captured the motivation for the KPC members when talking about themselves as former athletes and reasons they began to engage in activism was that of the 'growth mindset'. The KPC members believed personal voices and efforts can lead to social change. In contrast to the elite athletes who had the desire to advance within the world of sports and beyond, the KPC members who were former athletes preferred to focus more on disabled sports-specific activities and developments. A growth mindset aimed at *developing the disability sports society* was evident both when they were elite athletes and when they became KPC board members. When they were elite athletes, they were eager to operate in a better environment and to be treated fairly, like non-disabled athletes. That desire represented a form of activism and led to positive change (e.g., the establishment of independent disability-sports organisations). After becoming KPC board members, they kept the activist spirit and continued to campaign for improvements in the disability sports society by focusing on practical action, such as holding discussions with politicians about obtaining sufficient funding for the development of disability sports. Consequently, their efforts to develop disability sports eventually facilitated the improvement of facilities for disabled non-athletes and perceptions regarding disabled people in general. Two perspectives from this group were provided:

When I was an elite athlete and engaged in activism, I should travel the whole country, but disability facilities were too poor for athletes, even in a hotel and sports ground. I had to move for a game by myself, but I didn't have any support from the government and couldn't get a job because of a

disability and athlete's schedule. I also wanted to study, but no education support for disability at that time. There were so many inconveniences for Para-athletes. That's why I started to involve in social movement and activism. I believed I can develop para-sport culture and society. There was no place to back down, so I had to protest. We must fight to change laws and system against government. [Former athlete, In-sung]

I was the same disabled elite athletes and faced many difficulties. For example, there is a lack of job opportunities for disabled elite athletes after their retirement. In that sense, I wield a tangible influence on making jobs and positions for them with legislative support. Also, I created a sports community for elite athletes with mental retardation. I also started to exercise in poor background and environment. That's why I contemplated anything to support them. [KPC member, Sung-gyu]

### **8.3 Barriers for KPC members who were elite athletes to become activists**

The thematic analysis also generated three key barriers to becoming activists, both previously and in the present. These barriers were 'emotional cost', 'Confucian challenges', and 'personal barriers'.

#### **8.3.1 Emotional cost**

This theme captured the pressure to control unpleasant emotions in the task of engaging in activism, both by the KPC members and the former athletes. This theme incorporated two sub-themes: lack of courage, and the burden of high-status.

*Lack of courage.* One former athlete identified lack of courage as the reason why he had eschewed engaging in activism. In the past, elite athletes believed that only medallists who had had a conspicuous sports performance and had a high profile could engage in activism. In this study, when talking about being a former athlete one person claimed that he

had had a poor sports performance when he was an athlete, and therefore lacked the courage and confidence to engage in activism. In his words:

I didn't have confidence in my background. I thought I was not the right person for an activist, even though I was an elite athlete. Maybe because I was not excellent in sports performance...? It was beyond my ability.

[Former athlete, Sung-Gyu]

*Burden of high status.* One KPC board member indicated that the sense of a heavy burden was a barrier to engaging in public activism because of his high position. He stated that he had been involved in many forms of practical activism, utilising his high-level status (e.g., to have a face-to-face meeting with the president of South Korea). However, he felt that having a high position was not in itself sufficient if there was a lack of specific and relevant knowledge of disability sports politics. Moreover, having a high position created an emotional burden, such as fear of being exposed as unknowledgeable. Thus, it is evident that both the elite athletes and the KPC board members were emotionally or psychologically discouraged by their position to engage in activism. The elite athletes tended to take into account both the potential disadvantages that high stakeholders could create and criticism from others (e.g., other athletes, the public), whereas the KPC members felt a considerable amount of pressure due to their high position. A KPC board member said:

I have a lot of pressure on my position. This position should cover many things. I should present professionally in government. I have to be invited and give a special lecture as expert. I should meet businessman or CEO as a social dimension. But I feel burden because I don't have any related academic degree or knowledge. Of course, academic profiles are not the most important thing to work as stakeholder. The lack of condition makes me feel hard to proceed activism. Now my age is over 60, and I am going to leave this field soon. I hope future activists, current elite athletes keep

studying, getting academic degree, and learning English. Those people should be key people in future [KPC member, Sung-Gyu]

### 8.3.2 Confucian challenges

The second main theme that captured the reason why KPC members who were former athletes were reluctant to engage in activism was that of challenges associated with Confucian culture. This theme incorporated four sub-themes: positional hierarchy, an age (generation) gap, parents' influence, and factionalism. Some of the sub-themes were similar to those identified by the current elite athletes in *Section 5.3.2, Chapter 5*, and could therefore be expected to represent a similar negative phenomenon as regards activism by former athletes (e.g., oppressed voices due to the parent–child hierarchical culture). However, these same Confucian factors could also be different barriers as far as the KPC board members are concerned.

*Positional hierarchy.* As in the case of the relationship between a ruler and his subjects (see *Section 5.3.2, Chapter 5*), the former athletes shared their experiences of feeling constant opposition due to the hierarchical culture in South Korea. Around thirty years ago, social prejudice against disabled people was such that they were viewed as a 'lower' class and as less worthy than non-disabled people, which meant that they were considered simply as 'disabled', not as 'athletes' (You & Hwang, 2018). With the hosting of the 1988 Paralympics in South Korea, some disabled athletes began to speak out against this unfair treatment. However, when engaging in activism they experienced a diverse range of discouraging and even offensive circumstances. For example, highly placed people in the 1980s considered disabled athlete activism as a nuisance and an interference in their work. This dismissive attitude limited the room for improvement and discouraged disabled athletes from speaking out for their rights. As one person said when speaking about their experiences as a former athlete:



People could be excluded if they were against high-level people (government or non-disabled sports organisation). ‘You know what happens when you don’t listen’, then it was sorted out. All the process seemed like the logic of power, its hierarchy. It was not a discussion between people, but they spoke in a threatening tone. [Former athlete, Sung-Gyu]

*Age (generation) gap.* Interestingly, in this study the current young disabled athletes expected Confucian culture to have a negative impact on their activism efforts, in particular its strict age-based hierarchy, whereas some of the KPC members (seniors) suggested that even stricter and more rigorous Confucian customs (e.g., social hierarchy) were needed within South Korean disability sports. As a distinct example of the generational gap in South Korea, each generation has a different perspective of ‘politeness’. The KPC board members held the view that more junior members of society (e.g., those of a younger age or holding lower-level positions) should invariably respect and follow their elders and more senior people—according to old traditions and practices—also in the area of sports, whereas the current disabled athletes believed that the board members should be respected only if they could ensure an appropriate level of human rights protection. As one KPC member said:

Nowadays, there are a lot of rude, young troublemakers. I think we need more hierarchy in the sports at least. Now it is like a disorder or chaos. I think athletes should be more polite and respect seniors and stakeholders. I think it is necessary that they should feel uncomfortable when talking to a senior. A few years ago, we lived in such a strong hierarchical culture. Of course, I am not saying that hierarchy is correct. But now it can be a problem of human rights if I punish people or shout at them when they make a mistake or did something wrong. Now it can be physical assault if I flicked people on their forehead with my finger or hit their head with my fist.

Confucian culture is followed less and less [...] So, there is no such thing (hierarchy and respect to seniors). Thus, I made compliance (rule) at the training centre. If any elite athletes, even potential medallists, break the rules I set, they will be excluded from the national team. No matter how good they are. [KPC member, Sang-In]

*Factionalism.* As in the results highlighted above, which showed that the current elite athletes were experiencing a barrier to engaging in activism in the form of factionalism (e.g., common ties connected with education, extended families, regional origins, etc.), it was found that people reflecting on themselves as former athletes felt they also faced the same barrier to activism when they were elite athletes. As one person, when reflecting on their experiences as a former athlete, stated:

There was a line according to the same faction, band... for example, same university, same hometown, etc. So, there was the dissonance when other factions don't fit each other on same topic. I also faced disharmony problem when I insisted my voices. [Former athlete, In-Sung]

Interestingly, a barrier connected to factionalism was also suggested by the KPC board members. For example, one KPC board member, who oversaw a disability sports organisation and was considered to be a high-status person within the South Korean disability sports system, felt that his voice had occasionally been disregarded because he belonged to a different faction, one that was opposed to the faction to which another KPC board member—who held 'more power' in disability sports—belonged. According to him:

I am against other stakeholders. Because I know about reality so much, other stakeholders don't like my voice (behaviour). I have been at the forefront of social change, but now it is not good timing. I cannot be a good person if I say my opinion against key people. Other stakeholders

who disagree with me sit at a higher level than me. They may not like me and ignore my voice. [KPC member, Sung-Gyu]

*Parents' influence.* South Korea's strict parent-child hierarchy was a strong barrier to engaging in activism for the KPC board members when they were young athletes. Compared to more recent generations (e.g., the current disabled athletes) where people are influenced not just by their families but also by various other social forces (e.g., the media, the internet, peer and interest groups), the former athletes' generation was mainly influenced by their parents, which in Confucian culture is the most important institution for socialisation. Social prejudice against disabilities was rampant in the former athletes' generation it was suggested, and was an even stronger force in their parents' generation. Thus, they were forced to adjust to a home-based lifestyle due to the stigma associated with disabilities, or because their parents were 'overprotective' of their disabled children. For example, one person when thinking about themselves as said that their parents prevented him from having any work or athletic life because of his disability. This highly prejudicial family environment impeded his participation in elite sport and engagement in activism, he claimed. As he said when speaking about his time as a former athlete:

Young children do not have a prejudice towards disability. Instead, adults are too biased. Even my parents and relatives prevented me to engage in work, activism, and athletic life. They used to say 'You are disabled. Where can you go, what can you do? Stay inside and take care of yourself at home. Don't go outside. Don't get sicker. Don't do anything in front of people.' It was very hard to change their perception towards disability.

[Former athlete, In-Sung]

### 8.3.3 Personal barriers

A third reason why the KPC board members were reluctant to engage in activism, when speaking about themselves as former athletes, was to do with 'personal barriers', connected

with the physical and/or social discomfort of engaging in activism. This theme incorporated two sub-themes: ‘financial difficulties’ and ‘poor physical health’.

*Financial difficulties.* All the former athlete-activists indicated that their engagement in activism had caused them financial difficulties because their income was not sufficient to guarantee their financial welfare. In addition, in one rare case (of a KPC board member), such financial concerns were ongoing. In his words:

Our society is money. This part was very hard. I was struggling with my wife, and she is saying ‘Please stop activism.’ I always go outside and, don’t live at home. Also, I should support the finance for my family, but I couldn’t. I always my money for social movement if I get the money. Financial difficulty is a big obstruction in the past and now. [Former athlete, Sang-In]

*Poor physical health.* The KPC board members were mostly older than the elite athletes. Due to their age and disability, some of them (those aged over 60) felt that their physical state did not allow them to engage in activism. As one KPC board member said:

I had engaged in activism alone until 2013. As you can see, I am using an electric wheelchair. After I had a brain haemorrhage, I couldn’t use one hand, so it has changed a lot. I am running on empty. I don’t have as much strength as I used to. Before that, I was able to carry on with only my will, but now I need someone’s help. [KPC member, Sang-In]

#### **8.4 Critical discussion**

In this chapter, KPC board members could be culturally considered strong agents to generate intangible and tangible changes on society through diverse platforms due to their high position and senior age in the disability sport society. At the same time though, this great power brought about a considerable amount of pressure, as KPC members felt compelled to

show their influence due to their high position. Thus, KPC board members are able to lead the socio-political, economic, international agenda by taking instrumental advantage of their large network (i.e., disability sport and even non-sport), and their privileged narrative could produce feasible changes. This is because extensive dominant narrative power can accompany legitimacy and credibility (Plummer, 2019). For example, people can aggregate their voices with others (e.g., athlete activist, decision-maker in politics), and promote activism from IPC's strategy to promote disability activism by acting at a national level.

In addition, the findings illuminate how disability as a social construction has changed and been challenged by the everyday lives of disabled people in South Korea. Initially, South Korean disabled people lived in a period when disability was seen through the lenses of a moral model, which was mainly reinforced by the family of disabled people, distinguishing non-disabled (normal) and disabled (sinner) based on Confucian features. With this negative cultural context, former athletes had to put considerable effort to shift discourses away from a medical model of disability, whereby they were regarded as flawed (e.g., Smith & Perrier, 2015), to a social model in sport. Their sustained efforts led to massive changes to the disability society. However, this change required a strong normative power because South Korean traditions, such as those based on dominance hierarchy, have long been inherent in daily life, especially inside sport (Zhang, Lin, Nonaka, & Beom, 2005). Thus, KPC members exercise their influence on advocating for disability rights beyond sport and, at the same time, and perpetuate the Confucian hierarchical culture when criticised by lower-class individuals (e.g., elite athletes) in sport. In other words, their dominant position can bring both positive (e.g., guide, inspire, empower) and negative (e.g., control, dehumanise, regulate) impact in sport society (Plummer, 2019). This approach leads to conflict with young athlete-activists who hold a right-based perspective of disability with modernist values of autonomy, independence, subjectivity and individualism (Mallet & Runswick-Cole, 2014). Plummer (2019) suggested that dominant positions (such as that of board member in this study) could generate new forms of embodied consciousness. Thus,

the findings from this chapter add more theoretical weight in favour of adopting the approach of critical disability studies to understand dynamic disability experiences by using intersectionality, and especially by connecting with CSP approaches (Shildrick, 2012).

## **8.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I examined different types of activism by KPC board members who were former athletes, and then explored the reasons why they were motivated (or reluctant) to engage in activism. As a result, five types of activism were defined: a) sports-based activism (i.e., high performance sports with medal, sports-organisational activism), b) political activism (i.e., protesting, participating in political organisations, and having face-to-face meetings with politicians), c) social activism (i.e. making speeches), d) economic activism (i.e., sports-star management and sponsorship), and e) online activism. In addition, three main motivating factors explaining why KPC members who were former athletes had become activist-inclined were revealed: 1) socialisation process (i.e., positional advantages, hosting the 1988 and 2018 Paralympic Games, and encouragement), 2) growth mindset (i.e., developing disability sports). Furthermore, certain barriers to KPC board members (former athletes) engaging in activism were identified. Three main barriers were explored: 1) emotional cost (i.e., lack of courage and the burden of high status), 2) Confucian challenges (i.e., positional hierarchy, age/generation gaps, factionalism, and parents' influence), and 3) personal barriers (i.e., financial difficulties and poor physical health). In the next chapter, I will interpret disability sports activism by comparing the findings for all the participant groups and will draw a conclusion.

# **PART III**

Moving from research to consideration of social change implementation

# Summary, Discussion and Conclusion

## 9.0 Overview

Drawing on a quantitative and qualitative data set, this study aimed to explore disability sports and activism in South Korea. Grounded in the literature and critical discussions with my supervisor and another PhD student, I have designed three key sections with particular objectives. To meet these a mixed method study was designed. Below is a detailed summary of the highlighted research aims and objectives to facilitate re-familiarity of the contexts.

**A) Orientation** (*quantitative phase*): to broadly assess activist propensity amongst disabled people in South Korea

- To examine whether disabled elite athletes are more, less or similarly inclined to engage in activism compared to a comparative population of disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes in South Korea;
- To examine whether athletic identity and activism orientation co-occur naturally or not.



**B) Mechanisms** (*qualitative phase*): to thoroughly investigate stories of disability sports and non-sports activism in South Korea.

- To explore various types of activism, as well as when, where, why and how disabled elite athletes take action to bring about social change;
- To investigate the factors that affect the inclination to engage in activism amongst disabled elite athletes in South Korea;
- To offer comparative perspectives from other disabled participants (e.g., recreational athletes, non-athletes, former athletes, retired athletes, and KPC board members).

**C) Applications** (*discussion and conclusion*): to move from research to consideration of social change implementation.

- To offer a comparative summary and a cultural interpretation of the results;
- To propose the implications of the research in four main areas, namely the methodological, theoretical and practical perspectives, and in terms of its contribution to future research.

In this final chapter, I summarise the issues examined in the five results sections and provide comparison perspectives, amongst different participant groups, on activism in South Korea (see Section 9.1). Following this, I focus on cross-cultural interpretations of disability sports activism in South Korea (see *Section 9.2.1*), methodological development (see *Section 9.2.2*), and the theoretical implication (see *Sections 9.2.3*). Consideration is given to wider practical implications emerging from the research that is of relevance for socio-political and socio-cultural measures designed to encourage disability rights movements (see *Section 9.2.4*). The limits of this research and recommended areas for further research are then proposed for future scholars (see *Section 9.2.5 to 9.2.6*). Finally, I present the main conclusion of the thesis (see *Section 9.3*).

## **9.1 Summary**

Regarding the quantitative analysis, the disabled elite athletes in this study were more willing to engage in activism than recreational athletes and non-athletes. However, athletic identity did not correlate with activism orientation, which means that individuals with high athletic identity may not have high activism orientation. The gap from quantitative results led to the subsequent qualitative phase of examining why – and why not – disabled elite athletes engaged in activism more than other study groups. In alignment with the quantitative results, the current disabled elite athletes were engaged in activism through the most diverse types of activism such as sport-based, political, social, economic, scholarly, and online platforms, compared to former elite athletes, recreational athletes, and non-athletes in the disability society (see Figure 9-1). All groups were largely encouraged by the socialisation process (e.g., athlete status, participation in sports), growth mindset (e.g., mindset for developing disability sports, improving disability facilities). and personal motivators (e.g., improved health condition). Barriers to engaging in activism for all groups included emotional cost (e.g., fear of disadvantage, perceived backlash), the Confucian challenges (e.g., hierarchical relationship; parents-child, old-young) socio-environmental barriers (e.g., lack of social and informational resource), and personal barriers (e.g., lack of physical strength). Both motivators and barriers were identified differently according to different groups (see Table 9-1)

**Figure 9-1** Typology of activism for disabled participants in this study



**Table 9-1** Motivators and barriers to engage in activism from each group's perspectives.

	Themes	Definition	Elite athletes	Recreational athletes	Non-athletes	KPC members
Motivators	<i>Socialisation process</i>	People are influenced by environment, expectation, opportunity, and information for social change advocacy.	‘I am an important person as a high-status in disability society. Therefore, the Paralympic game is a strong platform for me to speak out for socio-cultural changes.’	‘I have a role model of elite athletes due to their sports performance and influential voices expressing social justice. In addition, participating in sports encouraged me to engage in activism.’	‘I can speak more in the frame of human rights compared to past and believe disabled elite athletes to take leadership for activism with Paralympic context.’	‘I have a strong voice on society with support from other decision-makers. Thus, I can bring social, political, and international development with the Paralympic context.’
	<i>Growth mindset</i>	People believe the development of societal changes through their voices or engagement in activism.	‘I need to speak out for within and beyond sports as I am a public figure.’	‘I want to speak for a better life for myself and my friends, and family.’	‘I want to speak for my better life as I am part of society.’	‘I need to speak for disability sports as I am in charge of disability sports, but it will affect beyond disability sports.’
	<i>Personal motivators</i>	The motivator is relevant to diverse personal background.	‘I am motivated by my improved health condition and activist personality.’			

<b>Barriers</b>	<i>Emotional cost</i>	The unfavourable emotions people felt when they think about engaging in activism or interacted with other people.	‘I consider potential disadvantages in sports (exclusion of national team) and criticism from others (e.g., other athletes, the public).’	‘I am frustrated by negative situations where activism efforts would be ignored or taken longer to achieve the desired outcome.’	‘I feel a considerable amount of pressure to show my influence on society with my high position.’
	<i>Confucian challenges</i>	The cultural barrier based on Confucian values (e.g., hierarchy in position, age, parents-child, factionalism, and collectivism)	‘I am positioned in a high chance of the direct disadvantage because disability sports community is a narrow collective and hierarchical group. I am also discouraged by my parents having stigma associated with disability due to my visibility in media or overprotective attitude from outside activity.’	‘I am discouraged by Confucian values, including parents’ overprotective attitude, and the disadvantage level may be in the middle between elite athletes and non-athletes.’	‘I am culturally considered as the most bottom level in disability society, and thus largely disregarded, even by parents having stigma associated with disability. However, the potential direct disadvantage from society is very imperceptible, as the layers of society are broad.’
	<i>Socio-environmental barriers</i>	The external reasons to limit social, physical, and	‘I do not know the information on which platform I can use for engaging in activism.’		-

	informational resources to fully participate in activism.	‘I am discouraged by the lack of disabled-accessible facilities and prejudice against disability.’	‘I face challenges of political distrust and institutional barriers such as lack of legal supports for disability issues because I need to take more steps to make voices publicised’
<i>Personal barriers</i>	The barrier is relevant to diverse personal background.	‘I am discouraged by personal barriers such as bystander personality, financial difficulties, dependent lifestyles, or poor physical health.’	

## **9.2 Discussion**

### **9.2.1 Cross-cultural interpretation in disability sports activism**

The study highlights cross-cultural aspects of disability sports activism between Western culture and South Korean culture. Participants in South Korea talked about activism in ways that have also been identified in Western cultures. For example, both in South Korea and Ireland (Haslett et al., 2020a), some disabled athletes were reluctant to engage in activism because of public criticism, and lack of time due to sports and work commitments. However, there are different perspectives. First, compared to other Western-based studies indicating that most disabled elite athletes perceived to be treated mostly fairly, equally, and respectfully in society (e.g., Haslett et al., 2020b; Smith et al., 2016), disabled elite athletes in South Korea felt the need to speak out for societal change in order to improve disability rights from the currently poor and unfair conditions, even though these rights have been legally settled in several documents.

Second, the successful hosting of the 2018 Paralympic Games was perceived to increase awareness of disability rights among South Korean disabled people. Moreover, the Paralympic Games provided South Korean disabled elite athletes with the opportunity (e.g., via a high status) to lead the disability movement. They tended to appreciate influencing society through a socially, culturally, and even inspirational voice. Disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes also believed the power of elite athletes' voices now to be at 'the head/top' of disability groups in the diverse areas within and beyond sports. But elsewhere, such as in the UK and Ireland, research has highlighted that disability non-sports activists think that using disability sports as a vehicle to enhance disability activism can be counterproductive because it can focus on the development of disability sports activism rather than support for stories about day-to-day realities of disability living (Braye et al., 2013; Haslett et al., 2020a). Disabled elite athletes also indicated animosity towards being contextualised as an inspirational icon for the audience (Haslett et al., 2020b). In addition, in the study in the West national Paralympic committee and disability non-sports activists were

concerned about performing a disability activist identity that could incur a cost to disabled athletes' unforeseen mental health due to public criticism and social pressure (Smith & Bundon, 2018; Haslett et al., 2020b).

Third, when compared to the limited but growing on disability, sport, and activism, as an example, Both Irish and South Korean valued specific-relevant information for the condition to be a political activist (Haslett et al., 2020b). However, Irish disabled athletes more valued a politically informed knowledge to engage in activism (Haslett et al., 2020b), whereas South Korean disabled athletes gave greater importance to education-based factionalism than to having the relevant knowledge (e.g., disability politics).

Fourth, in South Korea, the Confucian influence (e.g., children should follow parents' directions) and negative stereotypes (e.g., disability is conceived as a tragic medical problem) dominate athlete-parent hierarchy inside the home, whereas parents in the Western rights-based paradigm primarily contributes to supporting disabled children's independence outside the home (Poon-McBrayer & McBrayer, 2014). This has led to disabled elite athletes' voices being oppressed and often filtered through the views of their family members in South Korea.

### 9.2.2 Methodological and measurement implication

This thesis gives rise to four methodological and measurement implications for the field of both quantitative and qualitative research. First, this study advanced understanding of the quantitative measurement of activism orientation for disabled people. To date, Activism Orientation Scales (AOS; Corning & Myers, 2002) have been used to assess individuals' propensities to involve themselves in conventional and unconventional action for social change through a variety of groups, including non-disabled athletes. In addition, given the rise of digital media as a potential medium for activism around the world, the scale for Online Political Participation (OPP) was recently emphasised (Jordan et al., 2015). However, most disability studies grounded in psycho-social ideas have used qualitative



research methodologies to study sport, quality of life or policy issues related to disabled people. Less emphasis has been placed on quantitative research using medium to large data sets with disabled people, and there exists no research which has used the activism orientation scale for disabled people, despite the impact such research could have on policy and practice. Through the present study, this quantitative evaluation has provided an interesting lens to understand and frame activism orientation with a sample of disabled athletes within a cultural standpoint which takes into account perspectives of those who are disabled but not athletes.

Second, this study demonstrated how the mixed-method approach (MMR) could foster a rich understanding of disability activism and led to novel findings concerning topics in CSP research. For example, in quantitative research, athletic identity did not correlate with activism orientation in disabled athletes (i.e., elite and recreational), even though disabled elite athletes were significantly more willing to engage in activism than recreational athletes. This key outcome established the need for further investigation through a qualitative phase with ‘*why*’ questions to explore reasons for understanding the disabled elite athlete activism and seeking to understand comparisons with other study groups. As a result, the qualitative analysis provided interesting results. First, analysis of qualitative data provided insights in disabled elite athletes as being positioned as having a high status in society and why they perceived themselves as important persons who can exert an influence on society – such as related to sports performance, and also as social icons. Second, interview data demonstrated that there was difference in activism orientation between medallists and non-medallists. However, not all non-medallists perceived themselves as having low-activist orientation. Third, for only recreational athletes, sport-based activism was related to high athletic identity. However, from both elite and recreational perspectives, other types of activism were not related to athletic identity, but rather related to diverse cultural factors (e.g., position, background).

In addition, the quantitative analysis revealed that the onset of disability and age were not statistically significant factors influencing activism orientation, despite the fact that the literature review indicated that Confucian values such as age are strong influencing factors effecting social engagement and interaction in South Korea. However, qualitative analysis found a subtle uniqueness of cultural factors, including age and factionalism (e.g., dividing faction according to onset of disability), which influenced activism orientation. According to the study, quantitative methods (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001; Corning & Myers, 2002; Jordan et al., 2015) could access athletes' propensity to engage across a broad continuum of rights movements compared to recreational and non-athletes. With that, qualitative methods were then drawn on to centralise culture and context in order to explore the influence of cultural stories on experiences and orientation. In other words, a mixed-method approach can produce a detailed, critical and cultural focused analysis of the experiences of disabled people, adding explanatory power from verbatim quotes to illustrate and contrast with the key statistical findings.

Third, the current study provided further novel insights for the philosophical approach using the MMR approach. Determining the philosophical stance for quality within methodological rigour in the MMR is more complex than with a one-method approach, due to deeply-rooted differences in paradigmatic stance between the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bryman, 2007; Morgan, 2007). Some researchers (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007; Smith et al., 2012) have stated that there may be no best philosophical paradigm that fits a specific MMR design. Primarily, most MMR designs hold a pragmatism to investigate real-life with a flexible and holistic stance to work with both interpretivist and positivist philosophies together (Creswell, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). However, I hold an interpretive point of view throughout the present study to maintain methodological rigour while employing the mixed-method design. Thus, the constructed realities were not limited to each participant's words. Knowledge or perception may be formed by individuals within cultural norms and by interaction with people in society. I then converted the quantitative

data into an iteration that not only maintained relevance to the overall objective of the study but which could also be analysed qualitatively using qualitative data (e.g., interview) with the interpretivism view – consistent with the philosophical stance of the thesis. For example, the quantitative result that athletic identity was not correlated with activism orientation was analysed through diverse cultural perspectives and platforms (e.g., different types of activism), containing participants' narratives. In addition, I proposed a quantitative aim with a working idea rather than a bidirectional hypothesis, to give the exploratory research an open nature. Thus, key quantitative analysis evaluated whether disabled elite athletes have greater, lower, or non-different activism orientation with respect to a comparative population of disabled recreational athletes and non-athletes. In other words, this philosophical approach for the MMR was suggested as a flexible process to explore the unique culture in a critical manner by utilising the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research.

### 9.2.3 Theoretical implications

In this thesis, I have described the temporal development of various disability models and provided evidence in favour of the utility of the social relational model (SRM) of disability to understand current disability sport and activism in South Korea. In particular, the SRM has been used to illuminate the experiences and consequences of psycho-emotional disablism through cultural sport psychology approaches. For example, a negative perspective of disability was perpetuated by psycho-emotional disablism, which was reinforced by lived experiences of social relationships founded on the Confucian-based hierarchical relations in sport (e.g., parents-child, non-disabled-disabled, superior-subordinate). In addition, the restrictions directly caused by the impairments can damage confidence and self-esteem and thus place limits on what disabled people can do and what role they can play, as acknowledged as a critical point in the SRM (Haslett, Fitzpatrick, & Berslin, 2017; Reeve, 2004) and in contrast to a medical interpretation of impairment.

Furthermore, the theoretical approach of CSP gives prominence to gaining insight into cultural meanings. Compared to Western countries and appreciating there are cultural differences at multiple levels in a country (e.g. regional), South Korea has a unique cultural background and values shaped by Confucianism, which permeates people's daily life. In this study, CSP provided enormous possibilities to sport psychology for researchers and practitioners through enabling a new line and meaningful motivation-focused approaches of disabled sports activism grounded in the unique cultural background of South Korea (McGannon & Schinke, 2017; McGannon & Smith, 2015; Schinke et al., 2005).

In addition, CSP was an essential approach here because the South Korean traditional culture remains pertinent and transformative today. The cultural characteristics can be interpreted through two perspectives, namely cultural mobility and cultural stability. The first, cultural mobility, assumes that cultures, and even traditional cultures' values, are rarely stable or fixed (Greenblatt et al., 2010). Through moving from one culture to another in intergenerations, people tend to gradually adopt the perspectives of the new culture in which they are immersed (Wormer & Besthorn, 2017). With the wave of human-rights movements in contemporary South Korean society, modern social systems are grounded towards liberal democratic values such as equality and justice. This influence on modern generations (e.g., those of current disabled elite athletes) has weakened the rigid hierarchy custom compared to that on older generations (e.g., those of KPC board members), and this relationship has caused interpersonal conflicts. However, the conceptualisation of athlete activism has shifted the paradigm from limited political activism on the street to more diverse types of activism platform, with disabled athletes using their social power as an athlete to promote social justice. The maturity of discourse from athletes and board members in the disability sports field helped promote fresh ways of doing activism and could have long-lasting effects on social changes in modern Confucian society with contemporary right-based practices.

The second perspective is cultural stability, which assumes that culture is continuously being produced and reproduced in the dynamic interaction between individuals and social environments (Kemmelmeyer & Kuhnen, 2012). The importance of Confucianism in South Korean history and culture is undeniable. Nowadays South Koreans no longer learn Confucian theory at school; however, Confucian philosophy is still the dominant social system and a basis for day-to-day lives. This is because the everyday language has been implicitly developed based on Confucian culture over hundreds of years and reflects not only what identity people perform, but also creates the words that people should speak and the way they should behave in certain contexts (Choi, 2005). As an example, Choi (2005) indicated that the honorific language used, which depends on social status, maintains the hierarchical culture, and exacerbates negative conflict by creating a social-status order in South Korea. In this study, for example, KPC board members stuck to traditional Confucian customs by maintaining a hierarchical structure within the disability sports society where they sit in the highest position, despite having played an active role as athlete-activists in tackling unfair hierarchical treatment of disability in the past. However, this is not to say that people cannot lead to effective social and rights movement based on traditional cultural praxis. For example, athletes and KPC board members could maximise position advantage together with common aims for social change.

Taken together, CSP served as a useful theoretical platform through which to explore cultural wisdom in South Korean traditions and understand changes to different environments with a cultural legacy. In *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Gladwell (2008) described the power of cultural legacies creating an invisible influence on social attitudes and behaviour through intergenerational practices.

*“Cultural legacies are powerful forces. They have deep roots and long lives. They persist, generation after generation, virtually intact, even as the economic and social and demographic conditions that spawned them have vanished, and they play such a role in directing attitudes and*

*behaviour that we cannot make sense of our world without them.*” (2008, p125)

In this study, cultural legacies can be considered as leading to the development of a better society in South Korea and providing two crucial cultural approaches within the frame of CSP. First, CSP can open opportunities to identify the nature of culture which has deteriorated into bad habits over time and promote precious cultural legacy through re-designating cultural values that affect daily lives today. For example, one of the five cardinal relationships in Confucianism, namely the bond between ruler and subjects, connotes that subjects should respect the ruler as superior, and the ruler should be the subjects’ ideal role model. However, the contents of this original Confucian doctrine have been revised to serve the historical or current rulers. The cultural meaning has degenerated that only the subject’s loyalty to the ruler was emphasised overtimes in a hierarchical society. Along this line, the past activist discourse can be reworked for the needs of present and have the ability to be taken forward by future generations (Haslett et al., 2020a). The CSP provides a platform to dampen moral and cultural legacies that people have been missing in a modern hierarchical society and reminds that seniors (e.g., KPC board members, politicians) should become exemplary in many aspects in order to create or enable better living conditions for people.

Second, critical CSP can illuminate a potential progression of cultural legacies through intergenerational change, emphasising the ethical values in the social realm. Confucian discourse is noteworthy for being more than a philosophy and for delving into the abundant richness of the tradition to encourage positive relationships among the people. Advanced cultural legacies with rights-based perspectives provide a chance to reduce shortcomings and sublimate advantages within a culture based on everyday lives. For example, the CSP approach in this study generates a message to create a safe and collective space for Korean disabled athletes who may be interested in activism, whereby there is a minimal risk of losing athlete's voices for social changes by supporting powerful KPC board members. In other words, people can find the effective direction and potential platform to

sustain cultural legacies through contemporary Confucian components if people can use the cultural platform in favourable and effective ways. However, Confucian discourse cannot prosper as an isolated doctrine, and needs to take into account a progressive approach, using the social, political, environmental, and philosophical factors together in order to develop and revitalise the cultural legacy in today's global community (Walker & Wong, 2005). I provide more practical implications of cultural legacy in the next section.

#### 9.2.4 Practical implications

Cultural legacies can be used as a useful framework for understanding visions and collaboration between politicians, KPC board members, athletes, and other stakeholders (e.g., coaches, physiotherapists, sports psychologists) in the field of disability sports. This framework can be developed for disability sports legacy to promote disability rights movements and sociocultural changes in South Korea. The combination of multidimensional governance and individual movement could lead as one strong and fast development on social changes rather than 'solo activist approach' (Dowling, Leopkey, & Smith, 2018; Henry & Lee, 2004). Henry and Lee (2004) explained the notion of good governance by emphasising seven key principles: a) *transparency* (e.g., clarity in the procedure, decision-making opened up to public scrutiny), b) *accountability* (e.g., responsible to both financial investors and other resources such as athletes, coaches, and parents), c) *democracy* (e.g., available access to representation in decision-making for internal constituencies), d) *responsibility* (e.g., sustainable development of the sport, organisations and community), e) *equity* (e.g., gender, age, and position equity in the treatment), f) *effectiveness* (e.g., establishing and monitoring of measurable and attainable targets), and g) *efficiency* (e.g., the achievement of goals with the most efficient use of resources). Based on the seven principles of governance and the cultural lens, there are five practical implications that arise from this research to maximise disability sports legacy and rights movements.

With all this in mind, first, policymakers can amplify political and legislative voices with support tailored for disabled sports and athletes' rights. Sports and politics have always mixed and influenced each other, based on a complex system of alliances and political arrangements. The policy agenda for disability sports should be contoured by considering the unique culture of disability. In addition, the policymakers should emphasis 'transparency' on disability politics by making directly accessible and enough information to those who are affected by their enforcement (e.g., KPC, athletes) in a manner that follows rules and regulations. Initially, understanding disability should serve as a departure point for policy implementation due to the unique and intrinsic complexity of the disability sport domain, which has not been found in non-disabled elite sport (Dowling et al., 2018; Patatas, De Bosscher, Derom, & De Rycke, 2020). One plausible suggestion considering 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' is to work from the umbrella approach of the IPC strategy and filter this down into South Korea. The IPC strategy highlights that disability sports has the capability, with the platform of athletes and sport itself, to challenge the stigma of disability, alter perceptions of disability rights, and empower social transformation (IPC, 2019). However, given the complexity of understanding social attitudes, perceptions, and unique national culture intricacy, it is necessary to employ a cultural intersectionality lens to critically examine international strategy in South Korea and disability sports context (Haslett et al., 2020a; Misener et al., 2016). Next, the tailored political strategy based on IPC and cultural characteristics should be publicly transparent to all levels and sections of disability sports (e.g., board members, coaches, athletes, and their parents).

Second, KPC board members can provide powerful, credible and practical voices with institutional and organisational legacies in a wider disability landscape. At the organisational level, board members have key voices, given their positional advantage, which can control the planning, organising and directing movements with advanced information, resources and relationships (e.g., with dominant factions) in disability sports activism. Within their legislative and political support, KPC board members should become



involved in the policy decision-making process to provide critical perspectives and ‘accountable’ support not only for sustainable development of disability sports but also for wider disabled athletes’ lifelong pathways from sports performance to retirement. In this sense, ensuring both ‘transparency’ and ‘accountability’ on the part of the government is important in the effort to reduce cultural corruption and to promote protection athlete’s rights. Developing multiple identities, including activist identities, may bring benefits for disabled athletes to enhance future career opportunities (e.g., in politics, academia, media, sport) (Haslett et al., 2020a). For example, in 2019 KPC board members achieved an agreement with the Korea Employment Agency for People with Disabilities (KEAD) to improve disability awareness and create over 1,500 jobs for disabled retired athletes. They have also published a serial magazine and run seminars to increase disability rights within disability sports since 2019. To maximise the ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ of their activist influence on society, collaboration with the athlete-platform is useful. In this regard, minimising friction between athletes and KPC board members is necessary, and it can be achieved by leading a ‘democratic’ cultural shift based on recognition of different opinions and the importance of athlete’s participation. Within the explicit ethical regulations, such a cultural shift might include KPC board members leading emancipation from the closure of the traditional kin network and the patronising attitude towards disabled athletes in disability sports. One way to actualise this movement may be to support ‘equity’ in the treatment and create emotionally safe spaces for current and potential athlete-activists by respecting athletes’ individual voices, regardless of different factions and age gap (Brown & Pickerill, 2009).

Third, disabled elite athletes can provide societal and inspirational voices with a sociocultural legacy given their cultural advantage and moral ‘responsibility’ not only as an athlete (e.g., celebrity, visibility, high-position) but also as a public figure (Schmidt, Hancock, Frederick, Hums, & Algaraja, 2020). Activism led by the combined voices of athletes and stakeholders can serve as a strong vanguard and leverage the disability

movement in diverse dimensions (e.g., socio-political, cultural perspectives) through establishing solidarity backed by legislation and policies in the rights-based paradigm. However, there is a need for further construction of advanced athlete cultures. I can culturally envisage three ways to minimise some discord in athlete cultures and amplify ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ of their influence to meet their activist intention for social change.

First, confrontational conflicts due to age hierarchy and corrupted factionalism among disabled athletes should be abated at least, and athletes should respect individual fairness and equity to maintain a harmonious relationship that is congruent with the Confucian value of horizontal collectivism. Second, athletes should be more subjective, to protect their rights from people who sit at a higher level in the disability sports society, rather than conforming to unfair cultural barriers. To develop a more autonomous activist identity, self-talk with positive states can be an effective approach, as it is a process through which social messages are interpreted and internalised to integrate a new behaviour into one’s existing self-concept (Oliver, Hudson, & Thomas, 2016). Third, building an athlete-parent relationship based on mutual respect, support, and trust is necessary.

Through these developments, disabled elite athletes can advocate, with a more confident tone, for social changes, in a safe environment, to the micro (e.g., athletes), meso (e.g., disability sport), and macro (e.g., disability non-sport) layers of society. One authentic story of an athlete-activist can inspire other potential athlete-activists and give space to their stories (Schmidt et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2016; Kluch, 2020). Making space for sharing counter-narratives and experiences can play an important role in eliciting stories from athletes in chaos (Smith & Sparkes, 2008).

Fourth, other stakeholders, such as coaches, psychologists, and physiologists in disability sports can influence the rights movement with athlete-activist pathways in disability sports. Taking an in-depth look at the frame of disability sports, the role of stakeholders in a professionalised high-performance sport system is enormously crucial to

provide ‘accountable’ support for athletes because they can provide an inherent holistic view of athlete care through a close relationship with athletes in the disability sports field compared to board members. There are three key elements that these stakeholders can address to raise the ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ of a disability rights-based movement. First, stakeholders like those noted above can be encouraged to develop further ‘disability-specific’ knowledge related to their professional field as key stakeholders to critically theorise disability and create more inclusive and high-quality disability sports environments (Patatas et al., 2020). Second, and whilst not easy, they can help push back against the often-corrupted hierarchy between custodians (high) and athletes (low), and seek to foster respect ‘equity’ for each individual athlete in a mutual relationship regardless of gender, age, and cultural faction. Third, they can be more vocal on their moral responsibility to act to challenge discrimination by, for example: a) being an effective custodian to protect athletes’ rights, and b) becoming a witness of stories from athletes who want to utilise their voices to challenge discrimination in emotionally safe space. The deprivation of opportunity and harm that can infiltrate consciousness can produce, perpetuate and exacerbate social oppression in a cycle of chaos, and athletes’ psycho-social and emotional wellbeing can be also damaged when stakeholder refuses to be a partner in dialogue and activist stories are not honoured (Nelson, 2001; Smith & Sparkes, 2008).

Fifth, media and visual resources can play a significant role in delivering the message of disability rights and social justice through disability sport and athletes. Media (e.g., the news media, film, broadcast, advertisement) is a crucial platform for serving as a catalyst to raise awareness of disability rights movements (Trevisan, 2017), for ‘transparency’ to provide enough information in easily understandable forms, and for ‘efficiency’ to be sustainable resources for advocacy. In previous literary sources, some studies have pointed to the reinforcement of framing a medicalised and heroic portrayal of disability through media coverage, and this has created a hierarchy between disabled athletes and other disabled persons (Beacom et al., 2016; Kearney, Brittain & Kipnis, 2019).

However, several recent studies have demonstrated that media can be an agent of social change because broadcasting disability sport can stimulate both the hedonic (e.g., immediate gratification, interest in disability sport) and eudaimonic (e.g., sustainable cognitive experiences that shift societal attitudes towards disability equality and inclusion in general) needs of audiences (Bartsch, Oliver, & Nitsh, 2018; Pullen & Jackson, 2020). Fitting here is an example of collaboration between athletes and a film company in South Korea. All ice sledge hockey athletes participated in a documentary film entitled ‘We ride a sled’ (released in 2018), which aimed to shine a light on social injustices with the hope of raising awareness of disability rights and Para-sport. Despite reaching audiences of 2,432 people (much less than commercial films), this film delivered an informational and inspirational message to the public. In addition, other diverse types of visual resources can also unravel stories of disabled athletes and sport. As an example of an innovative form of dissemination, infographic, with a topic of ensuring equality and rights respect in disability sports, can be considered as an effective resource to disseminate information in an affordable, understandable and engaging manner to large numbers of people (Smith et al., 2018). This could also be communicated repeatedly in diverse ways such as via online platforms (e.g., social media, email or websites) or in poster form in public places (e.g., public leisure centres, athlete-training centres) (Smith et al., 2018).

#### 9.2.5 Limitations

This study revealed important factors related to disabled sports activism in South Korea. However, it is important to acknowledge study limitations. First, the AOS and OPP questionnaires were designed for non-disabled individuals (Corning & Myers, 2002; Jordan et al., 2015) and no study has evaluated their generalisability to a disabled population. For example, the item ‘I will engage in a physical confrontation at a political rally’ is not appropriate for *some* disabled people: they may score low, not because of their low activism orientation, but because of physical impairments impeding or discouraging them from

engaging in physical confrontations. Second, before our research, the AOS and OPP questionnaires were not available in the Korean language and, therefore, I had to ensure that the items preserved their original meaning while being sensible for our participants. To achieve this, all questionnaires were first translated into Korean and then back-translated to English by the researchers together with a translation specialist who was bilingual (Korean and English) and had no prior knowledge of the questionnaires (Choi, Kushner, Mill, & Lai, 2012). In addition, interviews were conducted in Korean and then translated into English. Translating quotes to another language may be problematic (e.g., no linguistic equivalence) because translated words cannot be literally considered as the speaker's words (Choi et al., 2012). Therefore, special attention was required when translating idioms and metaphors, either in quotes or in the findings. Third, the study participants were, overwhelmingly, male disabled people, with only a small number of female disabled people. Even though gender is one of the influential factors in Confucianism-based cultural society (Yum, 1988), there was a lack of females participating in elite and recreational sports and even non-sport social activity. Thus, the results based on gender standards did not effectively unfold in both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

#### 9.2.6 Future research directions

This study has also laid out a foundation on which future research efforts can be built. First, creative research methods can be considered to explore the disability rights movement as a sensitive topic with marginalised populations. A sequential mixed-method is useful to understand the plurality of interests and perspectives in social justice, analytical and normative insights, and practical application to improve justice outcomes. In addition, there is no doubt that qualitative research, especially semi-structured interviews, is the core method when it comes to gaining an in-depth understanding of disability sports activism (Haslett & Smith, 2019; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). However, interviews are social constructions dependent on contexts, such as the time and place an interview was held, and

draw on dominant cultural discourses to frame experiences where recollections of the past are told (Brighton & Williams, 2018). Thus, it is suggested that interviews, especially research on disability activism, be accompanied by multiple forms of data collection in order to investigate agency, structure, and subjectivity, all the while considering intersectionality (Brighton & Williams, 2018; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). For example, a focus group might be useful to investigate activism with regard to a specific community and the subtle ways in which unequal power relations are structured in group settings and their effect in dominating minority or marginalised positions (Graham et al., 2017; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Visual methods, such as auto photography, can also enhance dialogue to access perspectives that are difficult to verbalise or that are emotionally charged on the sensitive topics (Noland, 2006). Digital storytelling methods may provide other insights into why and how disability sports activism is framed, and enable the sharing of stories of social and political engagement from athletes and stakeholders in disability sports to broad audiences (Bundon & Smith, 2017, Trevisan, 2017).

Second, the typology explored in this research could be a literature case which is capable of leading to more expanded activism types in future research. Haslett et al. (2020) emphasised the intersectionality and eclectic perspectives of activism because a multiplicity of the lived experience of oppression is not always reflected in disability activism. In addition, in the present study, certain recreational athletes engaged in social activism according to their professional jobs, such as a writer and a dancer. This means that people's life backgrounds can result in different approaches being encouraged to engage in a specific preference for activism. The cross-sectional perspectives inspired by different experiences and cultural backgrounds may develop individuals' preferred organisational forms of a social movement (Brown & Pickerill, 2009; Haslett et al., 2020a). Furthermore, with global IPC strategy, a deeper socio-cultural and political examination of disability sports activism on a broader international stage would be a meaningful research area.

Third, further academic discussion about disability rights movements can be developed via the theoretical approach of the disability social-relational model or human rights model, considering the socio-cultural background in South Korea. Some research has introduced the Western social model of disability in South Korea (D. S. Kim, 2002; Lee, 2018). You and Hwang (2018) indicated that South Korean disabled people's movement has undoubtedly made great advances in political legislation based on the disability social model established in Western countries; however, the social and cultural perspectives of disability remain lodged in the combined traditional and modern Confucianism era. The lack of a theoretical approach and cultural discourse on disability movement remains outside vigorous debate due to factional tension, political rivalries, and cultural gaps in South Korea (You & Hwang, 2018). Thus, scholars and practitioners should resist the international generalisation of the traditional disability social models, and be sensitive to the 'localised' interpretation with cultural subtlety along with the social-relational model or human rights model of disability.

Fourth, future research can be conducted on exploring the relationship between disability rights advocacy and online platforms for long-term effects. According to the advantage of high organisational fluidity in the digital age, it is important to understand media and online platforms, as they constitute a potential formal political tool which could facilitate debate, discussion, and the representative rights movement (Trevisan, 2017). In this study, there were also many young disabled activists frequently using online platforms to share their stories of rights movements on an unprecedented scale. Thus, further research should follow-up on online movement as the new type of disability sports advocacy and activism with the step of technological development and transformation in the year ahead.

### **9.3 Conclusion**

This is the first study to examine disabled sports activism in a non-Western country, particularly in the national context of South Korea by using the MMR approach. The MMR

study indicated that current disabled elite athletes are better positioned to speak out for social change compared to former elite athletes, recreational athletes, and non-athletes in the hierarchical culture of the disabled society. In addition, this study provided insights into disabled elite athletes' influence by exploring diverse platforms for activist engagement, both within and beyond the sports field, compared with recreational athletes and non-athletes. The typology of activism was not meant to encompass all types of disability activism, but rather to build a collective understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon. Furthermore, this study provided novel insights for disability sports as a potential activism platform by adding the influence of KPC board members in disability organisations and other spaces of influences. In addition, this study included methodological, theoretical, and practical implications, as well as several future research directions for developing the disability sports legacy and creative research methods on the topic of activism in disability studies.

Importantly, the study especially contributed to the field of CSP by highlighting multiple kinds of cultural stability and mobility in modern South Korea. Culture has developed and transformed, but culture settings have many layers holding back progress. When this cultural complexity and diversity is overlooked in research, the experiences of minorities may be lost (Ryba & Wright, 2005), and the perpetuation of the stereotyping of these minorities may be reinforced (Ryba et al., 2013). Working on this study allowed me to become more aware of the deeper influence that the Confucian way of thinking has on the disability society than on the non-disabled society. In addition, inspired by the Western style of thinking that I experienced during my PhD, I attempted to critically look at socio-cultural issues from various different angles. Accordingly, I hope that my study contributes to painting an interesting picture of society and to understanding disability sport and activism. In addition, the socio-cultural process often underlies the socially constructed actual interactions amongst people. As such, the inequalities, oppressions, and injustices present in the broader society, directly and indirectly, affect people in and outside sports (Ryba, 2017).



In this regard, sport-based researchers could focus on disabled athletes who transition from personal tragedy (e.g., victim-blaming approach) to social injustice (e.g., system-blaming approach) (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Prior to conducting this study, I was concerned about whether I would be able to recruit a wide range of disabled people because I thought they might be reluctant to bring their sensitive stories from their inside to the outer surface. However, due to the influence of Confucian collectivism, I received support not only from disability sport and non-sport organisations in recruiting eligible participants but also from participants' personal interests in this study. Thus, I was able to collect survey data from 400 disabled people in one month, and interview 49 disabled people in five weeks. Most participants in this study, and especially the elite athletes, were enthusiastic to share their stories related to the study topic. Younger participants were initially more sceptical about sharing their stories, fearing that this could bring some disadvantage in the social hierarchy. However, they shared their inner oppressive stories and personal opinions on societal issues when they realised that I was a researcher genuinely interested in this topic and that I had no affiliation with any disability organisation. In her book, Susan Orléan (2018, p.93) mentioned, 'In Senegal, the polite expression for saying someone dies is to say his or her library has burned'. That is to say, the individual body is an internal collection of memories, experiences, and emotions stored inside a private 'library' of a life that cannot be shared any longer when one dies. Borrowing this metaphor, at the end of my PhD journey, I now strongly believe that, as a researcher, I am privileged to be able to listen to the stories of marginalised groups who have locked oppressive stories deep inside their mind. My goal is to give them a voice to advocate for social justice.

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# **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

(for surveys)

You are being invited to participate in this research survey. Before you take part, it is important to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will entail. Please take time to digest the following information carefully. Please contact us using the details at the end of this information page, if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like further information.

#### **Who is doing this research?**

Professor Brett Smith, Damian Haslett (PhD student) and Inhyang Choi (PhD student) from the School of Sport, Exercise, and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to expand understanding in the area of disability, sport and social activism. The aim of the study is to assess the activist and/or athlete identities of disabled athletes and disabled non-athletes. The objective is to gather information about participants' athletic identities and/or engagement in, and beliefs regarding, social activism. Activism forms include letters, socio-political movements, economic activities such as boycotts, or even rallying and strikes, and in another recent form, signing online petitions over the Internet or writing socio-politically motivated blogs. In this study, socio-political issues include related to not only government policies such as politics and economy but also environmental and social issues (e.g., gender equality, minimum wage system, sexual minorities, inequality, human rights, democracy, social participation).

#### **Do I have to take part? Can I change my mind once I have started?**

Taking part in this research programme is entirely voluntary. You may decide whether or not to take part or not. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to complete an *Informed Consent Form*. You are free to withdraw from the study up to the anticipated commencement of data analysis (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2018) and do not have to give a reason. If you do wish to withdraw please let us know by using the contact details at the end of this information page. In this instance, any data that you may have already provided will be destroyed.

#### **What will happen if I choose to take part? What do I need to do and when?**

If you are under 18 and/or have an intellectual disability, unfortunately you will not be able to participate in the study - please notify the researcher. If you are over 18 (and without intellectual disability), you will first complete the *Informed Consent Form* and then we will ask you to partake in a 20-minute survey, either online or on a hard copy.

**Will my taking part in this study be anonymous and will my data be kept confidential?**

As the research team will know your contact details, taking part in this study will not be anonymous. However, your data will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym and the data will be presented in a manner in which you will not be identifiable. All data will be stored in accordance with the procedures outlined by University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee and in line with the UK Data Protection Act 1998. Online surveys will be password-protected, only the research team will be able to access these. All data will be stored for ten years before being destroyed.

**What will happen to the information collected throughout the research programme?**

It is expected that the information of research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of this the relationship between disability, sport and social activism. This as potential to be used to improve the lives of people with physical disabilities. In addition, it is also anticipated that findings will be published in academic journals, and presented at academic and other stakeholder conferences and events. In any instance, names or any other identifying feature of individual students, training providers, employers, or clients will not be revealed.

**Are there any risks in participating?**

There are no known risks to either physical or psychological health associated with taking part in this study.

**What if I have any questions or I am not happy with how the research was conducted?****What if I want to see the results?**

If you wish to discuss or complain about any aspect of the research, please contact a member of the research team. If you would like to know the results of the research, a summary report of the findings can be made available to you, on completion of the research project. Please note that details specific to yourself/individualised feedback cannot be provided. Please let one on the Research Team know if you would like to see the findings.

**Further information and contact details**

Professor Brett Smith

Miss Inhyang Choi

Mr Damian Haslett

Email: [smithbs@bham.ac.uk](mailto:smithbs@bham.ac.uk)

Email: [ixc544@bham.ac.uk](mailto:ixc544@bham.ac.uk)

Email:

[DXH607@bham.ac.uk](mailto:DXH607@bham.ac.uk)

**Thank you for taking the time to consider participation in this research.**

We do hope that you will get involved and contribute your valuable experiences and ideas to this important venture.

## 연구참여정보 (설문조사용)

참여에 앞서 연구 주제와 연구가 진행되는 이유가 무엇인지 이해하는 것이 중요합니다. 충분한 시간을 가지고 다음 정보를 숙지하시고 추가 정보가 필요한 경우 페이지 끝 부분에 제공된 연락처를 통해 문의해주세요.

### 연구자 정보

영국 버밍엄 대학교 소속: Brett Smith (교수), 최인향 (박사연구원), Damian Haslett (박사연구원)

### 연구의 목적이란?

연구 목적은 장애인 스포츠와 사회운동에 관한 이해를 넓히는 것에 있습니다. 구체적인 설문조사의 목표로, 운동 선수로서의 정체성 (선수에만 해당), 선수와 비 선수 장애인의 사회운동 참여에 관한 정보를 수집하는 것입니다. 사회운동은 사회 개선 및 사회변화를 위한 행동을 의미합니다. 사회운동 형태는 사회 및 정치적 문제를 개선하기 위한 운동으로 보이콧, 집회 등 다양한 형태로 나타나며, 최근에는 온라인 청원서에 서명하거나 관련 주제의 블로그를 작성하는 형태로 나타납니다. 사회 및 정치적문제란 정치, 경제 등 정부정책과 관련된 문제, 환경 및 사회적 문제를 포함합니다 (예: 남녀평등, 최저임금제, 성소수자, 불평등, 인권, 민주주의, 사회참여).

### 참여는 의무인가요? 참여한 후에 변경도 가능 한가요?

연구 프로그램에 참여 하는 것은 전적으로 자발적 동기에 의해 진행되며, 개인의 의사에 따라 참여 여부를 결정 할 수 있습니다. 참여를 결정하면, 정보 제공 동의서를 작성하도록 요청 받게 됩니다. 데이터 분석이 시작 되는 (2018 년 2 월 2 일) 이전에 이유를 불문하고 개인의사에 따라 철회 가능합니다. 철회를 원하시면 정보 페이지 끝 부분에 있는 연락처를 통해 연락 주시면 되며, 이미 연구에 참여 하여 정보를 제공 한 경우 모든 데이터는 삭제 됩니다.

### 참여하고 싶다면, 어떻게 그리고 무엇을 해야 합니까?

참여에 앞서, 18 세 미만이거나, 지적장애, 자폐성장애 및 정신장애가 있는 경우 연구에 참여 할 수 없습니다. 18 세 이상인 경우 (위에 언급한 장애가 없는 경우), 정보 제공 동의서를 작성한 후 온라인 혹은 오프라인으로 설문에 참여 할 수 있습니다.

### 연구참여는 익명으로 진행되며, 개인 정보는 기밀로 유지 되나요?

모든 연구 팀원은 참가자의 연락처에 접근 권한이 있습니다. 하지만 모든 개인정보 및 연구 내용은 엄격하게 연구팀에 기밀로 유지되며, 연구 참여자의 이름은 가명으로 대체됩니다. 모든 데이터는 버밍엄 대학 윤리 검토위원회 (University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee)와 1998 년 영국 데이터 보호법 (UK Data Protection Act 1998)에 따라 저장됩니다. 오프라인으로 진행된 설문자료는 버밍엄 대학교 (University of Birmingham)의 잠금 장치된 캐비닛에 저장되며, 온라인으로 진행된 설문자료는 연구팀만 열람할 수 있는 파일에 저장됩니다. 모든 데이터는 10 년간 보관된 후 폐기합니다.

#### **연구 프로그램을 통해 수집된 정보는 어떻게 되는 건가요?**

연구에서 수집된 정보들을 통해 장애, 스포츠 및 사회운동과 관련한 포괄적인 이해를 이끌어낼 수 있으며, 이는 장애인의 삶을 개선할 수 있는 뒷받침이 될 것입니다. 또한 연구 결과는 국제학회지에 게재되며, 학술 및 기타 이해관계자 및 관련 행사에서 발표될 것으로 예상됩니다. 하지만 어떤 경우에도 참여자의 이름 혹은 개인적 정보는 공개되지 않습니다.

#### **연구 참여의 위험성이 있나요?**

이 연구에 참여하는 것과 관련된 신체적 또는 정신적 건강에 대한 알려진 위험은 없습니다.

#### **질문이 있거나 연구 방식에 대해 만족하지 않으면 어떻게 되나요? 또는 연구 결과를 보고싶다면 어떻게 해야 하나요?**

연구와 관련한 모든 문의는 아래에 제공된 연락처를 통해 문의할 수 있습니다. 또한 연구 결과에 대해 궁금하신 점이 있다면 연구 팀에 연락 바랍니다. 개인적으로 요청하신 경우에만 연구 프로젝트가 완료 된 후 연구 결과 보고서를 보내 드립니다. 개인정보와 관련하여 개별적인 피드백은 제공되지 않습니다.

더 궁금한 사항이 있으시다면 아래 연락처로 연락 주세요.

최인향

Email: [ixc544@bham.ac.uk](mailto:ixc544@bham.ac.uk)

**시간을 내어 주셔서 감사합니다.**

귀하의 소중한 참여가 이 연구에 기여 할 수 있기를 희망합니다.

## **Appendix B**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

*(for interviews)*

You are being invited to participate in this research interview. Before you take part, it is important to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will entail. Please take time to digest the following information carefully. Please contact us using the details at the end of this information page, if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like further information.

#### **Who is doing this research?**

Professor Brett Smith, Damian Haslett (PhD student) and Inhyang Choi (PhD student) from the School of Sport, Exercise, and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to expand understanding in the area of disability, sport and social activism. The aim is to gather stories of disabled athletes, non-athletes, stakeholders regarding sports and social activism. The objective is to gather information about participants experiences and/or opinions about social activism in elite sport contexts. Using the data collected from the above groups, it is expected that this research will provide a more comprehensive understanding about disability, sport and social activism.

#### **Do I have to take part? Can I change my mind once I have started?**

Taking part in this research programme is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to complete an *Informed Consent Form*. You are free to withdraw from the study up to the anticipated commencement of data analysis (1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2019). If you do wish to withdraw please let us know by using the contact details at the end of this information page.

#### **What will happen if I choose to take part? What do I need to do and when?**

If you are under 18 and/or have an intellectual disability, unfortunately you will not be able to participate in the study. If you are eligible you will first complete the *Informed Consent Form* and then we will ask you to partake in a recorded interview. The interview will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you, will likely last around two hours. It is possible that you could be asked questions regarding your own disability.

#### **Will my taking part in this study be anonymous and will my data be kept confidential?**

As the research team will know your contact details, taking part in this study will not be anonymous. However, your data will be kept strictly confidential. The interview will take place in private. Your name will be replaced with pseudonym. For public or prominent participants, the risk of implicit disclosure will be managed by avoiding presenting specific information about participants in publications that result from this study. All data will be stored in accordance with the procedures outlined by University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee and in line with the UK Data Protection Act 1998. Taped interview recordings will be uploaded to password-protected computers belonging to the research team. All data will be stored for ten years before being destroyed.

**What will happen to the information collected throughout the research programme?**

It is expected that the information of research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between disability, sport and social activism. This has potential to be used to improve the lives of people with physical disabilities. In addition, it is also anticipated that findings will be published in academic journals, and presented at academic and other stakeholder conferences and events.

**Are there any risks in participating?**

There are no known risks to either physical or psychological health associated with taking part in this study.

**What if I have any questions or I am not happy with how the research was conducted?**

**What if I want to see the results?**

If you wish to discuss or complain about any aspect of the research, please contact a member of the research team. If you would like to know the results of the research, a summary report of the findings can be made available to you, on completion of the research project.

**Further information and contact details**

Professor Brett Smith

Miss Inhyang Choi

Mr Damian Haslett

Email:

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Email:

[smithbs@bham.ac.uk](mailto:smithbs@bham.ac.uk)

[ixc544@bham.ac.uk](mailto:ixc544@bham.ac.uk)

[DXH607@bham.ac.uk](mailto:DXH607@bham.ac.uk)

**Thank you for taking the time to consider participation in this research.**

We do hope that you will get involved and contribute your experiences and ideas to this important venture.



## 연구참여정보 (인터뷰용)

참여에 앞서 연구가 진행되는 이유와 이에 따른 연구가 무엇인지 이해하는 것이 중요합니다. 충분한 시간을 통해 다음 정보를 숙지하시고, 연구 관련 설명이 필요하거나 추가 정보가 필요한 경우 페이지 끝 부분에 제공된 연락처를 통해 문의해주세요.

### 연구자 정보

영국 버밍엄 대학교 소속: Brett Smith (정교수), 최인향 (박사연구원), Damian Haslett (박사연구원)

### 연구의 목적이란?

연구 목적은 장애인 스포츠와 사회운동에 관한 이해를 넓히는 것에 있습니다. 구체적으로 국가대표 선수, 생활체육인, 일반 장애인, 장애인체육회 주요 이사진의 사회운동에 관한 이야기를 수집하는 것입니다. 수집된 연구자료를 사용하여 장애인 스포츠 및 사회운동에 대한 포괄적인 이해를 제공할 것으로 예상됩니다.

### 참여는 의무인가요? 참여한 후에 변경도 가능 한가요?

연구 프로그램에 참여 하는 것은 전적으로 자발적 동기에 의해 진행되며, 개인의 의사에 따라 참여 여부를 결정 할 수 있습니다. 참여를 결정하면, 정보 제공 동의서를 작성하도록 요청 받게 됩니다. 데이터 분석이 시작 되는 (2019 년 2 월 1 일) 이전에 이유를 불문하고 개인의사에 따라 철회 가능합니다. 철회를 원하시면 정보 페이지 끝 부분에 있는 연락처를 통해 연락 주시면 되며, 이미 연구에 참여 하여 정보를 제공 한 경우 모든 데이터는 삭제 됩니다.

### 참여하고 싶다면, 어떻게 그리고 무엇을 해야 합니까?

참여에 앞서, 18 세 미만이거나, 지적장애, 자폐성장애 및 정신장애가 있는 경우 연구에 참여 할 수 없습니다. 18 세 이상인 경우 (위에 언급한 장애가 없는 경우), 귀하는 정보 제공 동의서를 작성한 후 인터뷰에 참여 할 수 있습니다. 인터뷰는 참여자가 선택한 시간과 장소에서 진행되며, 약 2 시간정도 지속될 예정입니다. 인터뷰가 진행되는 동안 개인의 장애와 관련한 질문을 받을 수 있습니다.

### 연구참여는 익명으로 진행되며, 개인 정보는 기밀로 유지 되나요?

연구팀이 참여자의 연락처를 알고 있으므로, 본 연구에 참여하는 것은 익명이 아니지만, 모든 개인정보 및 연구내용은 엄격하게 기밀로 유지됩니다. 인터뷰는 비공개로 진행 되며, 연구 참여자 이름은 가명으로 대체됩니다. 참여자가 공인인 경우, 참여자의 소속기관, 경력 등 특정 정보 또한 비공개로 표기될 예정입니다.

모든 데이터는 버밍엄 대학 윤리 검토위원회 (University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee)와 1998 년 영국 데이터 보호법 (UK Data Protection Act 1998)에 따라 저장됩니다. 인터뷰 녹음 파일은 암호 잠금이 된 파일에 저장되며, 모든 데이터는 10 년간 보관된 후 폐기합니다.

**연구 프로그램을 통해 수집된 정보는 어떻게 되는 건가요?**

연구에서 수집된 정보들을 통해 장애, 스포츠 및 사회운동과 관련한 포괄적인 이해를 이끌어낼 수 있으며, 이는 장애인의 삶을 개선할 수 있는 뒷받침이 될 것입니다. 또한 연구 결과는 국제학회지에 게재되며, 학술 및 기타 이해관계자 및 관련 행사에서 발표될 것으로 예상됩니다. 하지만 어떤 경우에도 참여자의 이름 혹은 개인적 정보는 공개되지 않습니다.

**연구 참여의 위험성이 있나요?**

이 연구에 참여하는 것과 관련된 신체적 또는 정신적 건강에 대한 알려진 위험은 없습니다.

**질문이 있거나 연구 방식에 대해 만족하지 않으면 어떻게 되나요? 또는 연구 결과를 보고싶다면 어떻게 해야 하나요?**

연구와 관련한 모든 문의는 아래에 제공된 연락처를 통해 문의할 수 있습니다. 또한 연구 결과에 대해 궁금하신 점이 있다면 연구 팀에 연락 바랍니다. 개인적으로 요청하신 경우에만 연구 프로젝트가 완료 된 후 연구 결과 보고서를 보내 드립니다. 개인정보와 관련하여 개별적인 피드백은 제공되지 않습니다.

더 궁금한 사항이 있으시다면 아래 연락처로 연락 주세요.

최인향 Email: [ixc544@bham.ac.uk](mailto:ixc544@bham.ac.uk)

**시간을 내어 주셔서 감사합니다.**

귀하의 소중한 참여가 이 연구에 기여 할 수 있기를 희망합니다.

## Appendix C

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

- ☐ The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me - I have read and understood everything on the *Participant Information letter*
- ☐ I understand that this study is designed to gather information regarding disability, sport and social activism
- ☐ I understand that all research procedures have been approved by the University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation, and understand that I can do so at any time throughout the programme by emailing the Research Team
- ☐ I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study until (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2018- surveys, 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2019- interviews), for any reason, without penalty, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing. I can do so by contacting the Research Team
- ☐ I understand that the Research Team will keep the information I provide confidential
- ☐ I would like to receive a summary of the results at the end of the project
- ☐ I understand the information I provide could be used in academic publications/conference presentations.
- ☐ I agree to participate in this study

By entering your full name into the box below, this will indicate to us that you consent to participating in this research

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## 피험자 동의서

- ☐ 본인은 연구와 관련된 목적과 세부사항 및, 참여 정보에 대해 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 연구가 장애인, 스포츠 및 사회활동에 관해 정보수집하기 위해 고안되었음을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 이번 연구는 버밍엄 대학교 윤리 심의위원회에 의해 승인 되었음을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 프로그램 전반에 걸쳐 연구원의 이메일을 통해 연구와 참여에 관한 질문을 할 수 있음을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 본 연구에 참여할 의무가 없음을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 연구와 관련되어 언제든지 문의 가능하며 (2018 년 2 월 2 일- 설문조사, 2019 2 월 1 일-인터뷰) 까지 연구를 철회 할 권리가 있음을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 연구와 관련된 개인 정보는 기밀로 유지될 것을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 연구 프로젝트가 끝날 때 결과에 대한 요약을 받고 싶습니다.
- ☐ 본인은 연구에 사용된 정보는 학습 출판물 혹은 컨퍼런스에 제공 될 수 있음을 이해합니다.
- ☐ 본인은 연구 참여 하는 것에 동의 합니다.

아래 박스에 이름을 적는 것으로, 연구에 참여하는 것에 동의하는 것으로 나타냅니다.

날짜 \_\_\_\_\_

이메일 주소 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D**

### **Demographic survey**

In this study, we would like to ask you to answer a few questions regarding about your general activism engagement and your athletic identity (only for disabled athletes). Please remember that there are no correct or incorrect answers to the questions. All questions are asked with a specific reason, even if they do not seem applicable to you. The answers to this questionnaire will remain confidential. The completion of the questionnaire will take about 20 minutes.

#### **Please indicate whether you agree to take part in this study**

- Yes, I agree to take part in this study
- No, I do not agree to take part in this study

#### **1. Please fill out your current age in years.**

#### **2. Please select your gender**

- Male / Female / Prefer not to say

#### **3. Please indicate your disability group**

#### **4. When have you had your impairment?**

- Congenital / Acquired (if you answer here, please provide the year) / Prefer not to say

#### **5. Are you currently engaged in sports?**

- Yes / No (If you answer 'no', please move to activism orientation survey)

#### **6. What sports are you participating in?**

#### **7. How often do you participate in sports per week?**

#### **8. Have you ever participated in national or international disability sports competition?**

- Yes / No

#### **9. Do you have winning career at participating athletic competitions?**

- Yes / No

#### **10. Have you ever had national team training?**

- Yes / No

## 설문안내

이 설문조사의 목적은 장애인의 사회 참여와 운동선수 정체성에 관한 정보를 수집하기 위함입니다. 모든 질문에 대한 정답 또는 오답은 없으며, 모든 질문이 귀하에 해당되지 않는 경우라 할지라도, 가장 가까운 정도를 체크해주시길 바랍니다. 모든 답변은 기밀로 유지됩니다. 전체 설문 참여는 약 20 분이 소요됩니다.

**시작하기 앞서, 참여 여부를 선택해 주세요.**

- 1) 네, 연구에 참여하겠습니다.
- 2) 아니요, 연구에 참여하지 않겠습니다.

**Q1. 나이는 어떻게 되나요?**

**Q2. 성별은 무엇입니까?** 1) 남성            2) 여성            3) 기타

**Q3. 어떠한 장애를 가지고 있습니까?**

**Q4. 언제 장애를 얻게 되었습니까?** 1) 선천적    2) 후천적 (연도: \_\_\_\_\_) 3) 해당 없음

**Q5. 현재 장애인 스포츠 활동에 참여하고 있습니까?** 1) 네 2) 아니요

**Q6. 참여하고 있는 스포츠는 무엇입니까?**

**Q7. 일주일에 몇시간 빈도로 스포츠에 참여합니까?**

**Q8. 국내 혹은 국제 장애인 체육 대회에 참여한 이력이 있습니까?** 1) 네 2) 아니요

**Q9. 참여한 체육대회에서 수상경력이 있습니까?** 1) 네 2) 아니요

**Q10. 국가대표 선수 트레이닝을 받아본 경험이 있습니까?** 1) 네 2) 아니요

## APPENDIX E

### Online Political Participation (OPP)

1	I will sign an online petition.	0	1	2	3
2	I will create a status update or tweet with the intent of drawing attention to a political or social issue.	0	1	2	3
3	I will join a social or political group on a social networking site.	0	1	2	3
4	I will blog about a political or social issue.	0	1	2	3
5	I will use smart phone to record or transmit videos or text messages that are political in nature.	0	1	2	3
6	I will upload a video on a social networking website to draw attention to a political or social issue.	0	1	2	3

### 온라인 사회운동 지향성 측정

1	나는 사회 및 정치문제와 관련된 온라인 청원서에 서명을 할 것이다.	0	1	2	3
2	나는 사회 및 정치적 문제와 관련하여 관심을 끌기 위해 상태 (예: 글, 사진) 업데이트 또는 소셜미디어 계정을 만들 것이다.	0	1	2	3
3	나는 소셜미디어에서 생성된 사회 및 정치적 그룹에 가입할 것이다 (예: 페이스북 페이지).	0	1	2	3
4	나는 사회 및 정치문제에 관해 블로그를 할 것이다.	0	1	2	3
5	나는 핸드폰을 사용하여 사회 및 정치적 문제의 동영상을 녹화하거나 관련 메시지를 전송할 것이다.	0	1	2	3
6	나는 소셜미디어 (예: 인스타그램, 페이스북, 트위터)에 사회 및 정치적 문제와 관련된 동영상을 업로드 할 것이다.	0	1	2	3

## APPENDIX F

### Activism Orientation Scale (AOS)

Instructions: Please respond to the following questions by circling how likely it is that you will engage in each of the following activities in the future.

Choose for "Extremely Unlikely," "Unlikely," "Likely," or "Extremely Likely."

		How likely is it that you will engage in this activity in the future?			
		Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
1	I will display a poster or bumper sticker with a political message.	0	1	2	3
2	I will invite a friend to attend a meeting of a political organisation or event.	0	1	2	3
3	I will Purchase a poster, t-shirt, etc. that endorses a political point of view.	0	1	2	3
4	I will serve as an officer in a political organisation.	0	1	2	3
5	I will engage in political activity in which you knew you will be arrested.	0	1	2	3
6	I will attend an informational meeting of a political group.	0	1	2	3
7	I will organize a political event (e.g. talk, support, group, march).	0	1	2	3
8	I will give a lecture or talk about a social or political issue.	0	1	2	3
9	I will go out of your way to collect information on a social or political issue.	0	1	2	3
10	I will campaign door to door for a political candidate.	0	1	2	3
11	I will present facts to contest another person's social or political statement.	0	1	2	3
12	I will donate money to a political candidate.	0	1	2	3
13	I will donate in a non-presidential federal, state, or local election.	0	1	2	3
14	I will engage in a physical confrontation at a political rally.	0	1	2	3



15	I will send a letter or e-mail expressing a political opinion to the editor of a periodical or television show.	0	1	2	3
16	I will engage in a political activity in which you feared that some of your possession would be damaged.	0	1	2	3
17	I will engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest.	0	1	2	3
18	I will confront jokes, statements, or innuendos that opposed a particular group's cause.	0	1	2	3
19	I will boycott a product for political reasons.	0	1	2	3
20	I will distribute information representing a particular social or political group's cause.	0	1	2	3
21	I will engage in a political activity in which you suspect there would be a confrontation with the police or possible arrest.	0	1	2	3
22	I will send a letter or email about a political issue to a public official.	0	1	2	3
23	I will attend a talk on particular group's social or political concerns.	0	1	2	3
24	I will attend a political organisation's regular planning meeting.	0	1	2	3
25	I will sign a petition for a political cause.	0	1	2	3
26	I will encourage a friend to join a political organisation.	0	1	2	3
27	I will try to change a friend's or acquaintance's mind about a social or political issue.	0	1	2	3
28	I will block access to a building or public area with your body.	0	1	2	3
29	I will donate money to a political organisation.	0	1	2	3
30	I will try to change a relative's mind about a social or political issue.	0	1	2	3
31	I will wear a t-shirt or button with a political message.	0	1	2	3

32	I will keep track of the views of members of Congress regarding an issue important to you.	0	1	2	3
33	I will participate in discussion groups designed to discuss issues or solutions of a particular social or political group.	0	1	2	3
34	I will campaign by phone for a political candidate.	0	1	2	3
35	I will engage in any political activity in which you fear for your personal safety.	0	1	2	3

---

This study is to broaden and develop the understanding of sports and social activism for disabled people. Your valuable experiences and stories will help you with your research. Are you willing to receive further questions from the University of Birmingham in the future?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, please leave your name and contact email address

- Name:
- Email address

*Thank you for participating today*

### 사회운동 지향성 측정

다음 질문에 제시된 사회운동과 관련하여 각 문항에 어느 정도의 참여할 가능성이 있는지 표시하세요.

0 – 전혀 없다 1– 매우 낮다 2 – 보통이다 3– 매우 높다

1	나는 사회 및 정치적 메시지가 담긴 포스터를 붙일 것이다	0	1	2	3
2	나는 사회 및 정치적 운동과 관련된 단체나 행사에 친구를 초대할 것이다	0	1	2	3
3	나는 사회적 및 정치적 견해를 지지하는 포스터나 티셔츠를 구입할 것이다	0	1	2	3
4	나는 사회 및 정치적 단체의 대표하는 역할을 맡을 것이다	0	1	2	3
5	나는 체포될 것을 알더라도 사회운동에 참여할 것이다	0	1	2	3
6	나는 사회 및 정치적 운동과 관련된 모임에 참석할 것이다	0	1	2	3
7	나는 사회 및 정치적 운동 및 이벤트를 주최할 것이다 (예: 연설, 모임, 서포트, 봉사활동)	0	1	2	3
8	나는 사회 및 정치적 문제에 관한 강의를 하거나 이야기를 나눌 것이다	0	1	2	3
9	나는 사회 및 정치적 문제에 관한 정보를 얻기 위해 노력할 것이다	0	1	2	3
10	나는 정치 후보자를 위한 방문캠페인에 참여 할 것이다 (예: 정치후보자의 선거캠프에 참여)	0	1	2	3
11	나는 타인의 사회적 또는 정치적 진술에 이의를 제기하고 진실을 말할 것이다	0	1	2	3
12	나는 정치적 후보자에게 돈을 기부할 것이다	0	1	2	3
13	나는 지방선거에 투표할 것이다	0	1	2	3
14	나는 사회 및 정치적 집회에서 육체적인 행동을 할 것이다 (예: 집회 시 경찰과 신체적 충돌, 피켓 및 행진)	0	1	2	3
15	나는 정기 간행물이나 TV 쇼의 작가에게 사회적 및 정치적 견해를 나타내는 편지나 이메일을 보낼 것이다	0	1	2	3
16	나는 나의 소유물이 손상될 위험이 있더라도, 사회 및 정치적 운동에 참여 할 것이다	0	1	2	3

17	나는 정치적 저항의 일환으로 불법적인 행위에 가담 할 것이다 (예: 공공기물 파손)	0	1	2	3
18	나는 특정 그룹의 명분에 반하는 농담, 진술, 빈정거림을 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
19	나는 사회적인 문제와 연관된 특정 제품을 불매운동을 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
20	나는 사회 혹은 정치적 집단의 문제점을 나타내는 정보를 배포 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
21	나는 경찰과의 적대 혹은 체포가능성이 있는 사회 및 정치적 활동에 참여 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
22	나는 공기관을 대상으로 하여 사회 및 정치적 이슈에 대한 이메일이나 편지를 보낼 것이다	0	1	2	3
23	나는 특정 그룹의 사회적 또는 정치적 이슈와 관련된 연설에 참석할 것이다	0	1	2	3
24	나는 사회 및 정치적인 단체에 가입하여, 회원으로서 회의에 정기적으로 참석 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
25	나는 사회 및 정치적 문제에 관련한 청원서에 서명할 것이다	0	1	2	3
26	나는 친구에게 사회 및 정치적 단체에 참여하도록 장려할 것이다	0	1	2	3
27	나는 사회 또는 정치적 문제에 관하여 나의 의견을 피력하고 다른 의견을 가진 친구 또는 지인을 설득 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
28	나는 사회 및 정치적 문제를 위해 건물 입구를 막거나 경찰들과 대치 할 것이다	0	1	2	3
29	나는 사회 혹은 정치 단체에 돈을 기부할 것이다	0	1	2	3
30	나는 사회 혹은 정치적 문제에 관하여 나의 의견을 피력하고 다른 의견을 가진 친구 또는 지인을 설득할 것이다	0	1	2	3

31	나는 사회적 및 정치적 메시지가 담긴 티셔츠를 입을 것이다	0	1	2	3
32	나는 나의 현재 상황과 관련된 정책 및 이슈에 관심을 가질 것이다	0	1	2	3
33	나는 특정 사회 혹은 정치적 그룹의 문제 또는 해결책을 논의하기 위해 고안된 토론 그룹에 참여할 것이다	0	1	2	3
34	나는 정치 후보자를 위해 전화 캠페인에 참여할 것이다.	0	1	2	3
35	나는 개인의 안전이 위협되는 사회 혹은 정치적 운동에도 참여할 것이다	0	1	2	3

#### ◆ 연락 정보

이 연구는 장애인 스포츠 및 사회분야의 이해를 넓히고, 발전시키기 위함입니다. 귀하의 소중한 경험과 이야기는 연구에 큰 도움이 될 것입니다. 앞으로도 버밍엄 대학교 (University of Birmingham) 에서 진행되는 연구에 관한 추가질문 혹은 연락을 받을 의향이 있습니까?

- 네
- 아니요

‘네’ 라고 대답한 경우, 이름과 연락 가능한 이메일 주소를 남겨주세요

- 이름:
- 이메일 주소:

설문조사에 참여해 주셔서 감사합니다.

## APPENDIX G

### Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS)

Athletic Identity is the degree of importance, strength and exclusivity attached to the athlete role that is maintained by the athlete and influenced by their environment.

Please mark an “x” in the space that best reflects the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement in relation to your own sports participation

- (1) I consider myself an athlete.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (2) I have many goals related to sports.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (3) Most of my friends are athletes.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (4) Sport is the most important part of my life.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (5) I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (6) I need to participate in sport to feel good about myself.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (7) Other people see me mainly as an athlete.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (8) I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- (9) Sport is the only important thing in my life.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree
- I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.  
Strong Disagree : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : Strong Agree

NOTE: Score range from 2 to 14 from the 2-items social identity (Items 3, 7), self-identity (Items 1, 2), and negative affectivity (Items 8, 10) subscales. Scores range from 3 to 21 for the 3-item exclusivity (Items 4, 5, 6, 9) subscale.

### 운동선수 정체성 측정 척도 (10 문항) – 장애인 선수에만 해당

참고: 운동선수 정체성은 선수자신과 선수환경에 의해 유지되거나 영향을 받는 요소로, 설문지를 통해 선수로서의 역할의 중요성, 강점 그리고 배타성을 측정합니다. 아래 문항에 동의하거나 동의하지 않은 정도를 가장 잘 나타내는 공간에 X 표시를 하십시오.

- 나는 운동선수라고 생각한다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나는 운동과 관련되어 이루고 싶은 목표가 있다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나의 친구들은 대부분 운동선수이다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 스포츠는 내 인생에 가장 중요한 부분이다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나는 다른 여타활동들보다 운동과 관련된 생각에 더욱 많은 시간을 할애한다.  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나 자신을 재충전하기위해 스포츠활동에 참여하려 한다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나는 다른 사람으로부터 운동선수로 인식된다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나는 경기 성적이 좋지 않았을 때 기분이 나쁘다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 내 인생에서 가장 중요한 것으로 스포츠가 유일무이하다  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다
- 나는 부상에 의해 대회에 참여할 수 없다면 매우 우울해질 것이다.  
전혀 그렇지 않다: \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: 매우 그렇다

## **APPENDIX H**

### **Interview guide for all participant groups**

Thank you for saying you are happy to help out with our research by participating in this interview. The purpose of this study is to expand understanding in the area of disability, sport and social activism and to identify how disability sport contexts can be utilised to enable social justice missions. The idea of this interview is to allow you to share your experiences, opinions, and perceptions of social activism.

There are no right or wrong answers, different people often hold different points of view. All points of view, including both positive and negative comments, are important. Of course, what to say, how to say it, and how much you want to say, is up to you. Try to be honest but if there is anything you don't wish to talk about, then you don't have to, and please let us know if this is the case.

I would like to audio record our discussion so that I do not miss any of your comments if that is okay with you. I would like to remind you that everything you say will remain completely confidential and the information will only be used by the Research Team. Any published research that might result from such discussions will not contain your name. The interview will last for approximately 1 to 2 hours. During this time, I would like to explore a number of issues on this topic. If you have any questions about the research project, I will be more than happy to answer these at the end of the session. Do you have any question about the interview itself?

[turn on audio recorders]

#### **• Personal details**

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Types of sports (only for athletes)
- Email address

#### **• Questions**

- Can you give us a short overview your perspective about disability in South Korea?
- What does activism mean to you?
- Have you experienced engaging in activism? If yes, can you provide some examples of when you engaged in activism?
- What resources do you use to engage in social activism?
- What motivates you to do activism?
- Have you experienced barrier participating in activism? If you so, could you please give example?
- Why don't you identify as an activist?
- Do you identify as disability activist?

#### **• Summary**

During this discussion, we were aiming to find out about your experiences and perception of activism. Considering the purpose of this research was to look at disability, sport and social activism, is anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for participating in today's discussion.



## **APPENDIX I**

### **Interview guide for each group**

#### **1. Elite athletes**

- Can you tell me why you play sport?
- What do you think about elite athlete status for activism in society?
- How does your interaction with sports staff (i.e. coach) / competitors and peers (i.e. teammates) support your activist identity?
- How does engaging in activism impact athletic identity and sports performance?
- How do you feel about disability rights groups?

#### **2. Recreational athletes**

- Has your sports participation affected the formation of activist orientation?
- How does your interaction with people in your sports to support your activist identity?
- How do you think the difference between disability sports society and non-sport society?
- How do you feel about disability sports as domains to highlight inequalities?
- Do you feel elite disabled athletes contribute towards disability empowerment and equality?
- Can you give your perspective about the role of disability sports or elite disabled athletes in future? (i.e. implication, change)

#### **3. Non-athletes**

- How does your interaction with people in society (e.g., disability rights group, workplace, friends) to support your activist identity?
- How do you feel about disability sports as domains to highlight inequalities?
- Do you feel elite disabled athletes contribute towards disability empowerment and equality?
- Can you give your perspective about the role of disability sports or elite disabled athletes in future? (i.e. implication, change)
- Do you feel elite disabled athletes contribute towards disability empowerment and equality?
- Can you provide both perspectives on activism platform with disability sports or non-sports activist group?

#### **4. KPC members who were elite athletes**

- Can you share your experience of activism when you were an elite athlete and retired athletes compared to now?
- How do you or your organisation aim to improve the lives of disabled people?
- How do you feel about disabled elite athletes engaging in activism?
- How do you feel disabled elite athlete activism can contribute to the disability rights movement?
- How do you feel the Paralympic movement impacts the lives of disabled people?
- How would Para-athlete activism fit with your (or your organizations) ideology?
- Are there any dangers of promoting activism within your organisation?
- Can you give your perspective about the role of disability sports or disabled elite athletes in future? (i.e. implication, change)