Identity and Community Through Associations with Professional Sports Teams

This paper aims to analyze how fans of sports teams develop an active and strong community over an extended period, the personal connection each fan develops in their sense of identity as it relates to a sports team, and how branding impacts both identity and community within a team environment and fan interactions. Using affective agenda-setting theory, self-categorization theory, and social identity theory, this paper will support the belief that a strong connection exists between self-identity and sports teams' branding and messaging themes. Recommendations include exploring how linguistics affects perceptions of media and data analysis of the connection between access to sports viewership and social media engagement. Conclusions find that one can find identity in sports but are more complex than the sport we identify with.