

# Commercialism and the Moral Standing of the National Collegiate Athletic Association

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**14:45-16:25; Parallel Sessions**  
**Room 1 (Third of Four Presenters)**

# Commercialism and the Moral Standing of the National Collegiate Athletic Association

- **Short Description:**
- Insights generated from utilitarian moral analysis provide National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) leadership with a structured foundation from which to make commercialism related choices supporting overall organizational happiness and stability.



# NCAA and Commercialism

- NCAA generates large sums of money through commercialism (McEvoy, Morse, & Shapiro, 2013).



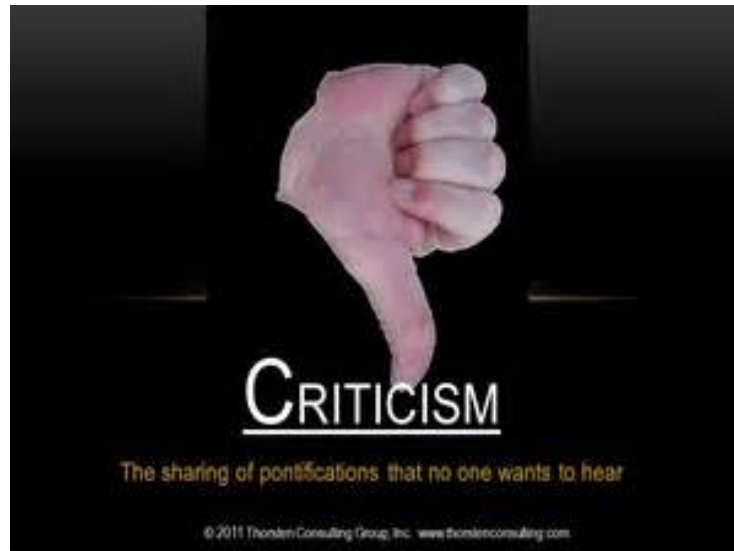
# NCAA, Commercialism, & Morality

- Commercialism potentially affects, for better or worse, the moral standing of the NCAA.



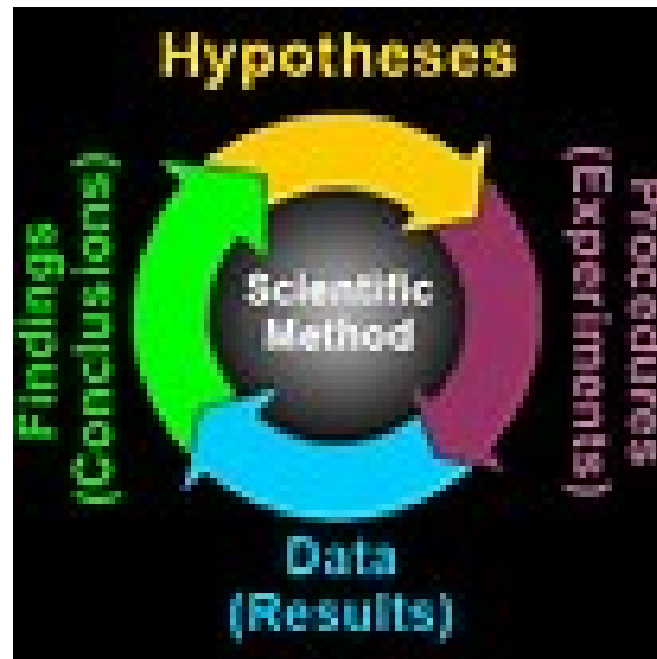
# NCAA & Commercialism Criticism

- There is an abundance of literature criticizing the commercial influence over the NCAA (Marburger, 2013; Porto, 2012; Sundram, 2010)



# Objective Analysis of NCAA Commercialism

- Limited empirical data regarding NCAA commercialism & morality



# NCAA and Commercial Revenue

- March Madness - \$771 million (Wiebert, 2011)
- 90% of NCAA operating budget (NCAA, 2011)
- \$\$\$\$\$ NCAA & member institutions (Suggs, 2004)
- Expansion of the March Madness Tournament
- Major college football, bowl games \$\$\$\$\$
- Conference realignments (Bozich, 2010; Feinstein, 2010)





# NCAA Commercialistic Efforts (NCAA.com, 2014)





## *A Brief Sidebar:*

# **“Why We Need Social Theory to Understand Sport Mega Events” (Keynote, Susan Brownell)**

### Some Notes:

OLYMPIC GAMES (Huge Party) (Hosting Platform)

- Disseminating Chinese Culture
- Cross Cultural (Commercialistic Based) Communication

- Heads of Multinational Corporate Leaders
- Entertainment & Hospitality Industry
- Politics

- Bilateral Meeting Between Leadership
- Closer to World Peace (a Format)

- Its attraction is staggering; the same for NCAA mega events



# Application of utilitarian moral theory: attempt to assess effect of commercialism on overall moral standing of NCAA



# Utilitarian Moral Theory as a Guide

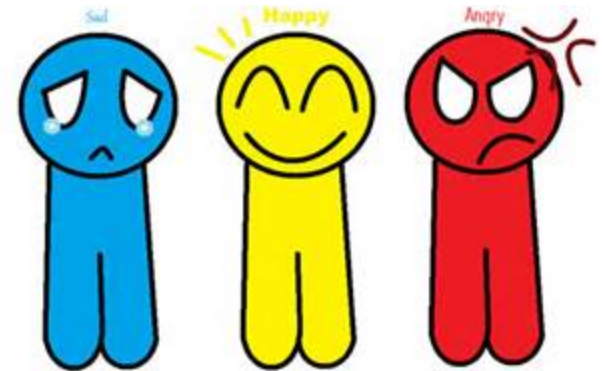
- Sport Organization & Societal Policy Guided by:

- Mill's Greatest Happiness Principle

- Bentham's Hedonic Calculus

- Hume's View on Sentiment

- Commercialism



# Utilitarianism = Most Happiness = Morally Good (Mill, 1863; Bentham, 1789/1961)



John Stuart Mill



Jeremy Bentham



David Hume

# Mill's Greatest Happiness Principle

*“Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness” (Mill, 1863/1969, p. 36).*

**Right**



**Wrong**



# Mill's Greatest Happiness Principle

- “The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals ‘utility’ or the “greatest happiness principle” holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the [dep]privation of pleasure.” (Mill, 1863/1969, p. 36)
- Burton (1962) stated: “That is useful which, taking all times and all persons into consideration, leaves a balance of happiness; and, – the creation of the largest possible balance of happiness...”

# Jeremy Bentham

*“Nature has placed mankind under two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure...”*

(Bentham, p. 17)





# David Hume

**“Passion Drives Reason...”**

**Innovation Stirring:**

**Passion, Sentiments, Feelings?**



# Utilitarian Moral analysis

- Actions and behaviors of the sporting community and resultant overall happiness measured against overall unhappiness caused by NCAA commercialism



# Who makes up the sporting community?

- “Members of the sporting community directly related to sport might include players, coaches, team managers, athletic directors, and additional support personnel such as sports information directors, statisticians, and sport marketers. (Schneider, 2011, p. 29)”
- Indirectly related to sport, e.g., friends and families of players, and fans.



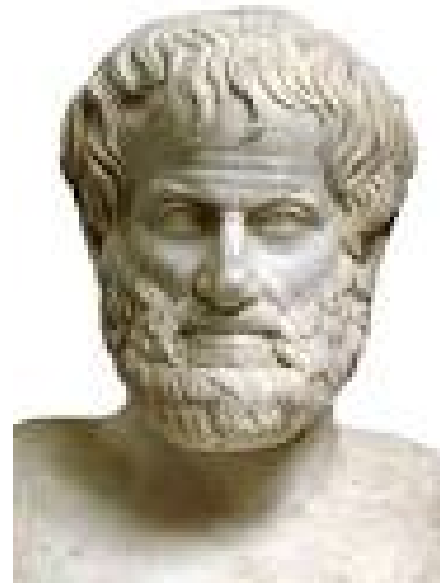
# Moral Assessment Guiding NCAA Leadership

- commercialism related choices
- maximize long-term happiness of the sporting community
- support organizational stability



# Aristotle's Golden Mean

- Balanced approach



# **Final Moral Analysis Regarding Effect of Commercialism**

- A) Where is NCAA moral standing presently?
- B) Provision of a structured foundation from which to make commercialism related choices
  - organizational happiness
  - stability

# Eliciting Happiness



- \$2.7 billion NCAA scholarships
- Hosting tournaments/championships
- Gender equity
- 90% back to athletes

(NCAA.org, 2014)



# HAPPINESS & UNHAPPINESS from NCAA Tournament (members of Sporting Community)

## *from March Madness tournament*

### Happiness & Unhappiness:

- energy & enthusiasm during tournament
- athletic director pride
- Brings communities together (Harrison, as cited in Wolverton, 2006)



# HAPPINESS & UNHAPPINESS (members of Sporting Community)

## *Exorbitant coaching salaries subsidized by commercial endeavors*

- members of the university community (some unhappy)
- senior administration (happy) – reinvest profits from winning into education



# Final Points

## The Beginning for a Discussion

- NCAA wants and needs for overall happiness
- Balance – Aristotle's Golden Mean
- How much too much?
- Breaking point?
- Moral deterioration = structural deterioration

# **End-Thank You**

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