

Is a Full Scholarship Enough?

How various segments of American society have debated whether college athletes should be paid

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Abstract:

In this paper, I explored how various styles of economic thought were used by different segments of society to analyze the issue of paying college athletes. I was surprised to notice the similarities in arguments presented by the more “academic” segments, including professional economics literature and think tanks, and the arguments presented by other segments of American society, such as mass media and public opinion. While most people may be unfamiliar with terms such as “marginal revenue product”, they can see the logic in paying an athlete an amount that reflects his value to the university. Also, people both for and against paying athletes used a social democratic argument, each tweaking it to conform to their beliefs. Those opposed to paying college athletes compared the athletes to students who had to pay full tuition. They felt that the athletes were privileged to receive their scholarships and additional money should be spent on other students rather than giving even more to the athletes. Those in favor of paying college athletes compared the athletes with wealthy college administrators and advocated a redistribution of income that gave less to the administrators and more to the athletes.

Introduction

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was founded in 1905 to govern college athletics, which had become increasingly violent and dangerous. Gradually, the NCAA expanded its role and established regulations for college eligibility. Student-athletes face harsh restrictions on the type and amount of compensation they receive. Schools are allowed to provide students with scholarships for tuition and room and board; any other gift or payment given to a student-athlete is forbidden and may result in a permanent loss of eligibility for the student.

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Historically, there had been some murmurings that this arrangement was unfair for students, but it is only in the past twenty years or so that the issue has been seriously discussed by politicians, academics, and members of the media. The biggest reason for this is the explosion of money generated by college basketball and football, with recent TV deals reaching billions of dollars. Many people think it is wrong that colleges make so much money while the athletes who generate the revenue go unpaid. Others feel that it is absurd that college students be paid to play sports. Arguments on both sides can often be categorized into various styles of economic thought. In this paper, I examine how different styles of economic thought are used in various segments of society to analyze the issue of whether college athletes should be paid. First, I will look at more “academic” segments, including formal economic literature and think tanks. The opinions here are usually written by well-educated individuals who have closely researched the topic. Next, I will look at segments of society that are primarily concerned with communicating with the American public. These include special interest groups, the mass media, and popular culture. These segments attempt to make this complicated issue more understandable. Then I will look at how the general public, which has been presented with such a wealth of information, feels about this issue. Finally, I will look at what the American government, who has the power to enact change, has done. I will conclude by looking at the role each segment, and the styles of thought employed by each, plays in a democracy.

Professional Economics Literature

An introductory course in microeconomics will give a rough overview of neoclassical economic theory. All firms have the same goal: maximize profits by

producing up to a point where marginal revenue is equal to marginal cost. Many economists have theorized that the basic principles of neoclassical economics still hold true in complicated and unique markets². One market that is unique for several reasons is the market for student athletes in high-revenue college sports such as men's basketball and football. Professional economists use, and in some cases adapt, neoclassical principles to analyze the unique market for college athletes.

College athletics is different from most markets, including professional sports, for several reasons. First, the profit-maximizing goal is not usually realistic, because athletic departments were not designed for the sole purpose of making money. Furthermore, there exist the alternate goals of providing student-athletes with an education and regulating competition between schools, as well as trying to maximize revenues. NCAA member schools are also able to openly collude to set the compensation for student athletes. Finally, it is difficult to tell the marginal revenue any student-athlete adds to his school, just as is the case in professional sports. These complexities combine to make the market for the services of college athletes difficult to analyze using neoclassical strategies. Nevertheless, economists still use neoclassical theories to model the behavior of the market for student athletes. In some cases, they make adaptations to traditional assumptions in order to model this market more accurately. This allows economists to continue to use the underlying assumptions of neoclassical economics, that all parties tend to act rationally and pursue what is in their best interest.

One example of formal economic literature that attempts to apply neoclassical economic analysis to the market for college athletes is an article from *The Journal of*

² An example of this can be found in Tyler Cowen's *In Praise of Commercial Culture*. In the book, he used a neoclassical analysis to examine the art market and show how an open market has benefited the art industry.

Human Resources (DeBrock, Hendricks, and Koenker, 1996). This article creates a pair of equations that students (presumably subconsciously) evaluate. One is the value to them of staying in school, one is the value of entering the labor market early. Student-athletes, like all students, select whichever alternative gives them the greatest expected return. “The decision to drop out of college is a function of the student’s own abilities in combination with that student’s evaluation of the return to continued participation” (p. 517). This theory even goes so far as to say that “the graduation rate of an institution will reflect the value of holding a degree from the institution.”

While the authors’ theory is precisely in line with neoclassical principles, it may rest on a weak assumption that student-athletes will always act rationally. While it is reasonable to generalize that adult consumers can decide which of a bundle of goods gives them the greatest utility, it may be unrealistic to assume the same from a young athlete weighing his options. Young athletes cannot be expected to have perfect foresight and be able to calculate their future expected earnings with any type of accuracy. Several factors are difficult for an inexperienced student to account for, such as how their perceived value to employers will change if they stay in school, the future price of substitutes (other players), and the probability of injury. Student-athletes often receive advice from their college coach as well as agents pertaining to their value in the professional market. Neither agents (who receive a percentage of any contract their clients sign) nor coaches (who rely on these players to help them win games) can claim to be completely objective advisors. Furthermore, there may be some non-monetary benefits that come from possessing a college degree, such as the satisfaction of having finished what you started.

Though it is not perfect, the model created in the aforementioned article does what basic neoclassical economic models are meant to do: develop generalizations to explain general trends in data. It explains why colleges with low overall graduation rates tend to have low athlete graduation rates. It also provides a rebuttal to attacks on colleges with low athlete graduation rates, stating that the players just acted reasonably and found that their future utility would be maximized if they chose not to get a diploma.

The neoclassical economic style can also be seen in the book *The National Collegiate Athletic Association: A Study in Cartel Behavior* (Fleisher, Goff, and Tollison, 1992). The book begins by setting the framework for why it is reasonable to assume the NCAA is a cartel. It compares the behavior of the NCAA to what happens in the neoclassical model of a cartel and shows that they are practically identical; in both, output is restricted, as is competition for inputs. The result is less output, higher prices, and greater net revenues. The book addresses the claims that the NCAA is required to collude because of the unique environment and refutes each one. It shows how the NCAA is structured specifically to maximize the net revenues of the athletic departments of its member universities, especially the universities that are members of major conferences. This can be seen in how the NCAA restricted televised games and how it has managed to keep player compensation roughly constant (college tuition, housing, a board plan, and a small stipend) even as revenues have drastically increased.

This stability in player compensation is mentioned repeatedly in the book and is contrasted to the huge increases in both revenues and payments to other people, such as coaches. From a purely neoclassical economic perspective, something is clearly wrong with this situation. If workers (in this case, athletes) see the cost of their product go up so

that the profitability of their firm increases, the workers' pay should be also increase. Under competition, someone would offer to pay them their marginal revenue product and they would switch jobs. The obvious implication here is that there is imperfect competition in this industry and no wage competition.

The book is an excellent example of neoclassical economics being applied to a particular market. It uses the neoclassical strategy of using a model to explain data; the authors analyzed data and compared it with neoclassical cartel theory. The book also implicitly advocated the goal of neoclassical economics: efficiency. It did this by showing how the decrease in regulations over television coverage of NCAA football games resulted in greater output and lower profits, which is what happens in neoclassical economics when a monopoly is eliminated in favor of a more efficient free market.

A third example of formal economic literature on the topic is Athletics versus Academics? Evidence from SAT Scores (McCormick and Tinsley, 1987). The purpose of this article was to give an economic answer to the question of whether athletic programs helped or hurt the academics of a university. It did this by analyzing an array of statistics, ranging from the number of volumes in a school's library to the winning percentage of its football team to the average SAT score of incoming freshman. The results suggested that a winning athletics program was associated with a higher academic reputation (represented by SAT scores of incoming freshmen). However, the correlation did not imply causation, and the conclusion noted that, "in many ways, this study leaves unanswered more questions than it answers."

All of these sources suggest the benefits of neoclassical economics: the ability to use models to determine how to achieve maximum efficiency. While the neoclassical

style is unable to perfectly explain every intricacy of the market for college athletes, it does give insight as to the current state of the market and what could potentially be done to make it more efficient. The limitations of the models are understandable, because it is impossible to model every individual exactly, and general assumptions must always be made. When taken with perspective, the neoclassical style can be an excellent tool for evaluating markets, even markets that initially appear difficult to analyze.

Think Tanks

Non-governmental Research Institutes or think tanks play an important role in the American economy. They use their budgets to research various topics and offer their own viewpoints on them, providing another voice in the public debate of contested issues. They also help to bridge the gap between the academic elite and the uninformed public by publishing reports and writing op-ed pieces for newspapers. The debate over paying college athletes has featured two such op-eds by major think tanks as well as a published report. While the op-eds were written by two unaffiliated think tanks, their messages are surprisingly similar, and much unlike statements from the government or media about this issue. The viewpoint offered in these pieces exemplifies one of the reasons why think tanks are a valuable part of our society: they offer a new and often brazen viewpoint. A third contribution was a publication from the Milken Institute written by Roger Noll. Noll used a purely neoclassical viewpoint to analyze the issue and recommend change. The op-eds used a combination of the neoclassical and institutionalist styles while claiming to be a realist voice in a debate among illogical idealists.

The first op-ed was written in 1999 by Casey J. Lartigue Jr on behalf of the CATO Institute, a conservative think tank. The piece appeared in several major newspapers, including the *USA Today* and the *Baltimore Sun*, as well as the *Libertarian Enterprise*. In it, Lartigue is extremely critical of the status quo. He refers to college basketball as a “charade” and a “training camp for professional players.” He makes statements that accuse student-athletes of being unworthy of a college education, telling of athletes “dozing through lightweight courses to remain eligible for their non-academic scholarships” and “taking up space in institutions of higher learning” and stating that student-athletes “erode academic standards and pervert the educational mission.”

Lartigue believes that the NCAA needs to be totally revamped and states that it “should declare a separation of academics and major athletics”. He believes that athletics detract from a college’s mission of higher education and therefore the two should be separated. However, he realizes that this is unlikely because “there is simply too much money to be made in ‘amateur’ athletics.” He feels that a good solution that will benefit everyone would be to allow athletes to compete for a college without actually taking classes while eliminating the rules preventing student-athletes from receiving money while in college. He reasons that this will help keep athletes from leaving for the pros early, keeping their skills in the amateur ranks and letting the NCAA profit from their efforts. This will also eliminate the negative impact that he believes student-athletes have on the academic community of a university.

A similar piece was written in 2000 by Herbert London of the Hudson Institute and published in the *Ventura County Star*. He also conveyed the attitude that student-athletes do not belong in institutes of higher learning, stating that “there are a

disproportionate number of physical education, sociology and communication majors biding their time” and “many basketball players on financial assistance are studying weightlifting and ball-handling. It's fraudulent to call them students.”

London makes a suggestion that is nearly identical to Lartigue's: “As I see it, the reform that makes most sense is the separation of student and athlete.” He does this with similar arguments: schools want the revenue that athletes generate, colleges will be better off if they can keep the athletes on the court and out of the classroom, and the whole idea of a student-athlete is a charade anyway. The similarities in the arguments of the two pieces may be related to the similar backgrounds of their authors. Both are members of the academic elite, which can explain the disdain they have for athletes, who the authors feel have disrupted academic institutions.

Upon first look, it is difficult to classify the arguments used in the two pieces into a style of economic thought. They use little economic terminology and consider the financial aspects of college athletics to be secondary to the consequences they have for academia. However, a closer look shows both neoclassical and institutionalist styles, with the concepts of neoclassical economics used to recommend institutionalist policies.

The report by the Milken Institute was written by Roger G. Noll and entitled “The Business of College Sports and the High Cost of Winning.” The Milken Institute calls itself an “economic think tank,” and the report was rooted in neoclassical economic theory. It contained language that may seem audacious to some but would seem perfectly sensible to someone trained in neoclassical economics. One example of this is when the author discusses the worth of an athletic scholarship: “For an athlete who has no interest in the educational aspects of being a college athlete, the part of a scholarship that covers

academics has no value.” Noll also notes how the restrictions on athlete compensation work to redistribute income regressively, since the income that high-revenue sports generate is often given to low-revenue sports such as lacrosse and crew: “For the most part, these beneficiaries are... from families with above average incomes. By contrast, [NCAA rules] harm the star athletes in football, men’s basketball and, to a lesser degree, women’s basketball – athletes who disproportionately come from lower-income families.”

The neoclassical style of thought is prevalent throughout all the papers, and it is especially evident when the authors rationalize their ideas for reforming the NCAA. While it would be easy for them to say that this setup would be more “fair”, they instead focus on the neoclassical idea of Pareto efficiency. Though they do not call it by this name, they recognize that in order for everyone involved to agree to a change, everyone must be made better off. In both op-eds, the authors each argue that both colleges and student-athletes would benefit if academics and athletics were separated. The neoclassical assumption that everyone will make decisions on the margin and pursue their own self-interest is also used in both pieces, with student athletes assumed to be deciding which is best for them: another year in college or taking their chances in the pros. This assumption, similar to the one used in formal economics literature, is used when the authors infer that increasing the benefits for athletes who stay in college (allowing them to receive payments) and decreasing their costs (by not forcing them to attend classes) will result in more athletes staying in college. While neither author claims to be offering an economic analysis of the issue, they both use logic rooted in neoclassical economics.

While their logic is based in neoclassical economics, their desired policy changes display an institutionalist style of thought. Just as think tanks are a distinctly American invention³, the institutionalist style is the most distinctly American economic style. This style deals largely with effectively adapting to change and eliminating inefficiencies or problems in the market. In this case, the authors looked at the current NCAA as an outdated system that did not act in the best interests of its member institutions or the athletes it claimed to protect. College athletics have quickly become a multi-billion dollar industry, and the NCAA has not kept up with this rapidly changing landscape. This is why both authors looked to manage this change by completely revamping the NCAA and, in the process, allowing student athletes to be paid.

The piece by Noll, on the other hand, advocates policies rooted in neoclassical economics. He wished to use incentives, rather than rules, to change the NCAA. One policy suggestion was to “base the number of scholarships a school can offer on the academic success of its scholarship athletes”. He also considered a possibility similar to salary caps in professional sports: “convert the current limit on the value of an athletic scholarship to a budget ceiling on all payments to athletes,” with schools free to distribute that amount amongst its athletes however it chooses. Noll’s idea of giving schools more freedom while providing them with incentives to improve their academics was one that, while it may seem strange to the average reader, would make sense when subjected to a neoclassical analysis.

The three pieces discussed here show why think tanks play such an important role in American society: they can help shape public debate by providing a unique voice. This voice tends to be highly educated and well spoken. It also is more able to speak its

³ *The Fifth Estate* (Goodwin, 1995)

mind than academics are, because authors are not directly tied to any university⁴. While think tanks are made up of biased individuals and cannot be assumed to be completely objective, they frequently provide a refreshingly candid voice in a public debate that is often muddled in bland rhetoric.

Special Interest Groups

While think-tanks have the primary goal of researching issues and developing an informed opinion, special interest groups (SIGs) exist purely to benefit their members. SIGs play an influential role in nearly all policy decisions in America. While these groups are often vilified for interfering in the political process, the reports and statements of SIGs are often useful for gaining an understanding of complicated issues. This usefulness actually stems from the mission of a SIG: to represent a group of people by deciding what policies will be in their best interest and convincing policy makers to adopt those stances. One way that SIGs work to achieve this mission is by publishing reports full of research and ideas that conform to their viewpoint. The result is information that, while clearly opinionated, is well researched, has a clear message, and is easy to understand. The issue of paying college athletes is no different; SIGs on both sides have made passionate arguments, and while neither side presents a balanced view of the current situation, after listening to both sides one is able to form an informed opinion on the issue. The SIGs use many different styles of thought, including neoclassical, moral critical, and social democratic, with all of the styles of thoughts having clear mercantilist undertones.

The first criticism of anything produced by a SIG is that it is “biased”. Though it would be easy to discredit all SIG materials for that, this would just result in perfectly

⁴ This is not the case with Roger Noll, who is a professor at Stanford University

useful research being ignored. The undeniable partiality in SIG publications can actually show itself to be a benefit for readers. First of all, this lack of objectivity is not at all secret; SIGs clearly state their policy goals and beliefs and work to get them implemented. Because their stance is so evident, it can be taken into consideration whenever a reader is evaluating a SIG publication. On the other hand, the places where most Americans get their information— their friends and the mass media— are comprised of people who have beliefs and biases of their own.⁵ This partiality can be impossible to see, though, and a reader will be left wondering if they got the truth or an editorialized view of it. Furthermore, a successful SIG cannot just preach to the choir; it must draw more people into its position. A SIG that continually presents skewed or blatantly untrue data will eventually be disregarded by the public and rendered ineffective. Therefore, when there are SIGs on each side of an issue, the result is similar to a court case, with each side using evidence and persuasive arguments in an attempt to win over a group of individuals. Of course, if the SIGs on one side have enough money and power to dominate the debate, the “jury” will not receive balanced information.

In the debate over paying college athletes, neither side has dominated the discussion, and the result—data and arguments from each viewpoint—has actually been beneficial to astute observers wishing to make an informed judgment. While neither side has had many SIGs speak out on its behalf, those that have are very opinionated and are able to give a decent overview of the situation. The against side is represented by the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The for side is represented by the Black Athlete Sports

⁵ Blendon and Glitterman, pg. 115

Network and the Collegiate Athletes Coalition in conjunction with the United Steelworkers Union.

The NCAA, a recipient of billions of dollars in revenues from intercollegiate sports, does not want to give this money up to athletes. Its arguments contain many styles of economic thought, all united by their mercantilist undertones. In a speech before the AAUP, NCAA President Myles Brand said, “I emphatically reject the notion that we should pay students to play sports. It is both impractical and philosophically wrong.” His “impractical” argument is rooted in basic neoclassical economics: Brand states, “As a whole, intercollegiate athletics on all campuses combined brings in about \$4 billion annually in revenue, but spends in excess of \$5 billion.” Brand is saying that paying athletes is nonsensical, because they really aren’t helping schools make money. Furthermore, he states “the American public enjoys and supports the intercollegiate model and they do not want it to move toward the professional approach.” In other words, paying athletes would alter the product the NCAA produces (intercollegiate sporting events), and customers would not approve of the change. His “philosophical” argument is, not surprisingly, based on the philosophical style of economic thought, where goals other than profits and efficiency are sought. In this case, Brand’s goal is clear: “What I support – and encourage you to do the same – is the intercollegiate model of sports. This model is firmly grounded in the education of students who participate in athletics. This is our target and should guide how we conduct intercollegiate athletics.” In addition to these two arguments, Brand uses a tactic commonly used by the media: telling a story about likable characters in order to appeal to the emotions of listeners:

“As president of the NCAA, I have also had the opportunity to attend other championships, including the Division III track championship last

spring. I paid particular attention to the high jump event and watched as two student-athletes battled to the final jump, urging each other to new heights and sharing both the joy of success and the disappointment of finishing second. In their competition and camaraderie, they represented all the values we associate with participation in sports.”

In all of these arguments, Brand’s mercantilist intentions are not hard to find. The NCAA clearly benefits when players are unpaid. His contention that it would be unfeasible to pay athletes simply doesn’t stand up to neoclassic analysis; if colleges are losing money and cannot afford to pay athletes, than they simply will choose not to, and athletes will have to settle for their scholarships. His philosophical argument is certainly bold; it basically places the NCAA on moral high ground for its actions to prevent college athletes from making any money from their endeavors.

A lengthy column in *Academe*, a publication of the AAUP, was submitted by University of Oregon professor James W. Earl. He uses a philosophical argument to attempt to persuade fellow professors to take action against the rise in power of college athletics:

“To some people, the university is a business...but for you and me—for the faculty—the university is obviously something else and something more: it's academic freedom; it's the arts and sciences; it's the library, the all-nighter, the seminar table; it's liberal education, pure research, the sharing of ideas, the love of books, and the Socratic method; it's young people on a steep learning curve; it's Phi Beta Kappa and lifelong learning.”

Earl wants his fellow professors to look beyond the revenues of college sports and look at how they will affect the university as a whole. His goals of “cutting costs” and “recommitting college sports to amateurism, particularly in revenue sports” clearly stand in opposition to the notion of paying athletes. Earl also attempts a

moral-critical⁶ appeal to the emotions of his colleagues when he tells a story of a time when he read in the newspaper “the athletics department announced a \$90 million expansion of our stadium... Oddly, in the same issue, I also read about the latest round of cuts to the university's budget by the state legislature.” Earl’s appeal to his fellow professors is a mercantilist one; he believes that professors will benefit if the budget and power of athletic departments decreases. He chooses to convey this by telling his colleagues of the reasons he feels this will benefit both professors and universities. He never looks into the possibility that football and basketball teams can provide revenue for academic programs, or that colleges can have large, successful athletic programs without sacrificing their academic ideals.

While the NCAA and AAUP are large organizations with well-educated individuals as members, the SIGs on the For side tend to be smaller and less powerful. While these organizations have smaller budgets and audiences, they do a good job making up for their lack of size by being especially vocal and using dramatic language. This is exemplified in an article by Emmett L. Gill Jr. published online by the Black Athlete Sports Network. This article, an excellent example of the moral critical style of thought, attempts to outrage its readers and spur them to action. In the article, Gill makes harsh accusations: “College basketball is synonymous with slavery because it was built on the work and production of African-American athletes.” He says that “Division I schools generated a total of \$462 million during the 98-99 season... In return, athletes

⁶ Moral-critical literature often attempts to appeal to people’s emotions by outraging them. For example, in *Neuromancer*, William Gibson uses stories about drug trade and the selling of organs to shock his audience.

receive room, board and tuition (does this arrangement sound familiar?)”

Throughout the article, he repeatedly referred to athletes as “slaves” and “indentured servants” and calls colleges “plantations”. While his wording certainly grabs the reader’s attention, it can be a bit extreme at times, and may lead a reader to discount his statements, which would be unfortunate because he makes many valid points, such as how athletes often spend 40 hours per week training for their sports, the penalties imposed by the NCAA for changing schools, and how the NCAA is attempting to further expand its control over players by changing “the culture of summer basketball by enhancing the role of the NCAA.” Sadly, Gill’s valid points are almost lost among his heavily biased assertions. Chief among them is his insinuation that black college athletes are tantamount to slaves. He never mentions the one clear difference: college athletes choose to accept their scholarships and know the conditions of them. They can, at any time, decide they no longer wish to participate under those conditions and simply leave their university.

A more moderate viewpoint can be found in the opinions of the Collegiate Athletes Coalition (CAC), a group of college athletes in California. The group was founded by a former UCLA football player and aims to “establish a national players association of Division I-A football teams in order to influence NCAA legislation.” It also has the support of the United Steelworkers Association (USWA), a 1.2 million member organization, although the USWA has said little about the CAC. While the CAC claims that it is not a union, it has union-like goals and appears to be attempting to establish itself as a respectable organization.

One way it does this is by making its arguments in a clear, reasonable manner. For example, while the group's webpage states "Student-athletes across the nation are subject to inequitable restrictions imposed by the NCAA," it also concedes that "There is no question about it - student-athletes are fortunate. We have been given an opportunity to get an education while playing sports that we enjoy." The group makes several valid points, most involving a combination of the neoclassical and moral critical economic styles. For example, it mentions how athletes are at an increased risk of injury and should be compensated for it. This appeals to a social-democratic idea of fairness as well as the neoclassic principle that greater risk must come with a greater reward. The webpage also effectively compares the monthly allowance scholarship athletes receive with the actual costs of living that they face and shows how the allowance simply does not cover the full cost of attendance. This provides unique insight concerning the financial troubles an athlete may incur and is most likely included on the web page because members of CAC have struggled with not being able to make ends meet. The paper does not, however, mention the fact that college students are frequently poor and have to be as frugal as possible, often with no university support. While the points raised on the webpage are valid and persuasive, the mercantilist goals of the CAC are clear: these players want what is best for themselves, and they are trying to make their case as convincing as possible.

Special interest groups are maligned for muddying the waters in policy debates by producing biased information. This is myopic, however, and ignores the benefits of SIGs: they often present data and arguments that other sectors do not, and they do it in a

way that is easy to understand. In fact, if the SIGs do not intentionally deceive their audience and all sides of the debate are well represented, as is the case in the issue of paying college athletes, SIGs can actually be a meaningful and useful voice in the debate.

Mass Media

Various theories of American media exist, with most theories falling between two extremes. At best, they are well informed, think for themselves, are free to speak their minds, and have an obligation to the truth and an ability to make complicated issues simple. At worst, they care only about attracting an audience, resulting in sensationalized news that can misinform the public by oversimplifying complex issues.

The more positive outlook on the media is rooted in a nearly heroic viewpoint of journalists. This outlook portrays journalists as humble laborers who are constantly toiling in order to inform the general public. They use their resources and knowledge to investigate issues and fix problems. Furthermore, consumers are intelligent enough to know good journalists from bad, and the market system weeds the bad ones out. The result is that the mass media churns out accurate news reports and draws reasonable conclusions to the data it uncovers.

This is sharply contrasted to a different view of some economists. This viewpoint sees consumers consuming news almost purely for entertainment value. This is rooted in the belief that a vast majority of news will not directly affect the viewer, so to consume news solely for the basis of being able to make more informed decisions is irrational. Rather, news is just another form of entertainment, like a movie or a musical. Journalists care only about appeasing this audience and remaining popular. The result is sensationalized stories that misinform the masses, who, for the most part, prefer this

misinformation to honest, but less captivating, news. Both this cynical viewpoint and the more heroic viewpoint are essential for an analysis of the media's perspective on the issue of paying college athletes, with the media generally lying somewhere in the middle of these two extremes and reaching the conclusion that college athletes should be paid. Specifically, the media tended to use neoclassical, social democratic, and moral critical styles in an attempt to balance the desire to create entertaining stories that interest people with the responsibility to produce factual reports.

The vast majority of useful material concerning the payment of college athletes came in the form of columns by sports reporters. Because of their career, these reporters are able to provide us with a useful and unique perspective on the issue. Sports reporters follow college athletics daily and are often familiar with the regulations of the NCAA. They typically have a college degree, meaning that they have spent time in the same institutions these athletes are in now. The careers of these reporters also depend on the popularity of college athletics, which may remove some of the objectivity from their analysis but can also provide added incentive for the reporters to recommend what they truly believe will be best for college sports. It is also important to remember the context in which reporters work: they are given a limited amount of space and, because they work for corporations that are trying to make a profit, must try to produce interesting writing. All of these facts combine to form the context through which the mass media's interpretation of the issue should be examined.

The exposure that reporters have to the revenue generated by college athletes shapes the largely neoclassical view that is prevalent in the media. Members of the media get to see first-hand what huge money-makers college football and basketball are;

they sit in huge stadiums full of paying customers and work for media conglomerates that pay huge sums of money for the rights to broadcast these games. It is certainly understandable why journalists would see that athletes are not being paid an amount that represents the revenue they generate. As one reporter said, “They're paid entertainers -- and poorly paid ones at that.”⁷ Another said, “Why shouldn't a top recruit be enticed to a school with a new car? Welcome to America. The free market system works.”⁸ This is a far different from the argument, which we will find among the general public, that athletes should be unpaid and play for the “love of the game.” This argument may be absent because its hypocrisy would be evident; if college athletes should play basketball for free because they love the sport, one could contend that reporters should work for free simply because they love watching the sport. Rather than deny the business aspects of college sports, journalists feel that the NCAA should embrace the business model and pay its athletes as employees. Their assertions that players should be paid for the revenue they generate is closely tied to basic neoclassical economic theory.

Somewhat similar to the neoclassical viewpoint, the social democratic voice is also very prevalent among the media. While the neoclassical viewpoint states that athletes should be paid because they generate revenue, the social democratic one states that athletes should be paid because it is unfair for athletes to live in near poverty while college administrators draw large salaries. This viewpoint was exemplified in a news article about a recent pay increase given to NCAA president Miles Brand. The article compared Brand's \$835,531 salary with the zero received by men's college basketball players. One possible cause for the prevalence of this viewpoint is the fact that reporters

⁷ Paul Ruschmann, in an editorial for the *Detroit News* in 2003

⁸ Pete Fiutak, in an editorial for *CollegeFootballNews.com* in 2004

will often closely follow a team, interviewing its players after every game. What results from this is a close relationship between reporter and player, allowing reporters to see how many players do live in near poverty. Reporters see this, contrast it with the well-paid network executives and college administrators who make millions from NCAA sporting events, and see an injustice that needs to be corrected. The resulting call for a redistribution of this income is a clear example of the social democratic style.

Branching off from the social democratic style is the more radical moral critical style of thinking employed by some reporters. They use harsh language to accuse the NCAA of having absurd policies that exploit students. These articles also serve as excellent examples of what many consider to be weaknesses of the media⁹. This perceived weakness is based in the belief that people want news that can be read and interpreted without much thought. This is often done by taking a general, often complex issue, and simplifying it into a battle of good and evil, with interesting characters playing each role. This provides a story that is interesting, simple, and can give readers the belief that they are now well informed. Prominent journalists, including *Sports Illustrated's* Rick Reilly, have written columns in this style, portraying select college athletes as good people who are being bullied by the evil empire of the NCAA. Reilly used several specific anecdotes to prove his point. He tells of the NCAA punishing the University of Utah's basketball program because its coach bought dinner for a player whose father had just died. Reilly and others wrote about Aaron Adair, a college athlete who beat brain cancer, published a book about his survival, and was ruled ineligible by the NCAA because of it. Reilly's column is an excellent example of how the moral critical style is

⁹ Michael C. Jensen wrote that people "demand answers to questions, including those that are unanswerable. As a result, the media is generally in the business of providing simple answers to complex problems whose answers are unknown, and it must do so in an entertaining way" (1979)

used in journalism. While moral critical literature is traditionally fiction, journalists have adapted it into a popular method of writing. The characters are real, and while their fates are generally not typical, they are meant to represent what is possible under the current system. The intentions of these journalists are the same as that of moral-critical authors: to outrage the public at the current situation and spark a change. The journalists, however, have several distinct advantages over past authors: their stories are founded in truth instead of being purely hypothetical, they reach a wider audience than most novels, and their messages can be quickly and easily conveyed in a page or two. While some will argue that this moral-critical writing style is misleading and sensationalized, others feel that it is an honest voice that can persuade a large audience that a change is needed in an issue that would otherwise be ignored. Regardless of one's beliefs, the moral-critical style is an important part of today's journalism and should not be overlooked.

While the exuberantly positive and the extremely cynical view of the media are starkly different, it is important that each be considered when attempting to judge the media's stance on an issue. They form the framework through which the media should be viewed. The media are not perfect, but when viewed with the proper perspective, it can provide valuable, informed insight on complex issues.

Popular Culture

If mass media is a source of information that has been modified for entertainment's sake, then popular culture is a source of pure entertainment that may contain traces of fact. However, any complete examination of a policy issue requires a look at the way popular culture portrays and explains the issue. Books, movies and television shows, while clearly designed to entertain their audiences, shape many

people's opinions because they frequently are people's only source of information about a subject. Furthermore, the presentation of these forms of entertainment can appeal to people's emotions and be more persuasive than technical literature. American movies have, through generalizations and exaggerations, muddied the debate over paying college athletes by misinforming the public. The two recent films I will examine are *Blue Chips* (1994) and *The Program* (1993). I will offer an explanation of how these movies may have shaped people's opinions on whether college athletes should be paid. I will also compare these two films with other films made about amateur athletics.

Blue Chips and *The Program* both provide a look into a fictional high-profile collegiate athletic program. *The Program* follows Eastern State University's football team while *Blue Chips* follows Western University basketball. While both films claim to give an insider's perspective on big-time college sports, the films are clearly more concerned with providing entertainment than information.

Athletes in both films are, for the most part, stereotypical dumb jocks. They like to drink and flirt with girls. *The Program* further demeans college athletes by portraying an alcoholic quarterback and a steroid-addicted lineman. Whenever they are shown in class, athletes in both movies clearly have no idea what the professor is talking about. One player in *Blue Chips* is flunking a course on television. Almost all of the athletes in both films need tutoring, and one player in *The Program* is caught having his tutor take a test for him. Players' only academic concern is staying eligible. This is illustrated in *The Program* in one exchange between upperclassman Alvan and freshman Darnell:

Alvin: *All you need to know is how to sign an NFL contract...period.*
Darnell: *I know man but I promised the Rev I'd get a degree; I don't wanna let him down.*

Alvin: *Whatchu think nigga...you gonna be on the Supreme Court?*¹⁰

Professors are caricaturized just as much as athletes in the movies. In *The Program*, the only professor who plays an important role is an old man who argues against reinstating the cheating player at a university hearing. He wears an antiquated brown suit with a bow tie and speaks eloquently of the University's role as an institute for higher learning.¹¹ *Blue Chips* contains one scene in a classroom. The professor is once again portrayed as being old and out of touch. He reads archaically worded poems aloud and when freshman basketball player Neon dares to interrupt him, Neon is quickly chastised: "This is a lecture, not a discussion!"

Whenever they are shown together, it is clear that these players do not belong in a classroom with their professors. The athletes are incapable of understanding the material and disrupt the class. The professors are completely out of touch with reality and unable to communicate with non-academics. The message of both of these films is clear: the term student-athlete is a misnomer; these kids are at school to play sports, not to receive an education.

Also stereotyped are school alumni, who are portrayed as wealthy, well-dressed, and eager to throw money around. The only real villain in either film is Happy, the head of the Western University alumni association in *Blue Chips*. The first time Happy appears on screen, he is at a bar escorted by two young women. When Western University head basketball coach Pete Bell calls Happy's home, Happy is swimming in his massive pool. Not only is he rich, Happy is an all-powerful puppeteer, controlling

¹⁰"Memorable Quotes from The Program" Internet Movie Database

¹¹ In one exchange, the professor said, "But this is not a football vocational school. It's an institute of higher learning" to which the coach said, "But when's the last time 80,000 people showed up for a damn chemistry test"

Western University with his wallet. All he has to do is ask, and money, cars, jobs, and houses appear for recruits and their families. While alumni do not play a major role in *The Program*, they do conform to this stereotype; when they are on screen, alumni wear suits, mingle with players, and give them envelopes full of cash. Overall, these films present a very critical, overly simplified view of alumni. Alumni are shown as largely responsible for ruining the integrity of college athletics. They pressure administrators to fire coaches whom the alumni dislike and encourage athletes to violate NCAA rules. Not only are the actions of alumni reprehensible, their goals aren't nearly as noble as they claim; the alumni are far less concerned with the university's reputation than with showing off how rich and mighty they are. As Happy triumphantly shouted to Coach Bell at the end of *Blue Chips*, "I own you!"

Both films have surprisingly little to say specifically addressing whether college athletes should be paid by their Universities. This is especially remarkable considering how both films insinuated that athletes are there solely to make money. As Coach Pete says in *Blue Chips*, "'This ain't about education. It ain't much about winning and it sure as hell ain't much about basketball. It's about MONEY!" If anything, legitimate payments to athletes are considered to be a minor issue. Their only mention in *The Program* occurs after an alumnus hands Darnell an envelope of money. Darnell tells an older player about the obvious NCAA violation that occurred, but the older player is nonchalant about the whole issue and justifies their accepting money by reminding Darnell how much he is worth to Western University: "You cannot live on no \$500 a month scholarship money, and the [NCAA] won't let us have jobs, so you take your money where you can get it... They ought to be paying us anyway. The athletic

department gets 3 million just for going to a bowl game.” Unfortunately, the film does not address the issue further.

Not only do these films give Hollywood’s perspective on college athletics, they also serve as an example of moral critical literature,¹² lashing out at the current state by explaining what the current conditions allow. Both films do an excellent job displaying the hypocrisy of NCAA rules. One example of this is when Happy tells Coach Pete, “These athletes generate millions of dollars for the university. What do they get? Nothing! What do you get? You get a multi year contract. You get a six figure shoe deal so your team can be a walking billboard. And that is all legal.” However, neither film offers any suggestion for change. The closest they come is giving a vague idea of what they think college sports should look like. Their idealized view falls into the theological-philosophical style of thought. In the case of *The Program* and *Blue Chips*, the films advocate players, coaches, and administrators all participating in college athletics for the love of sports, not to maximize profits. Amateur sports are shown as a beautiful thing that has been tainted by money. After Coach Bell finds out one of his players took money in exchange for shaving points, he told him, “You took the purest thing in your life, and you corrupted it.” After quitting his job, sick of what college sports have become, Coach Bell stops on his walk back and gives some pointers to a group of boys playing basketball outside. The message of the film is clear: *This* is what amateur sports should look like. The films mourn how sports have been corrupted by money but don’t recommend any way of returning sports to their purity. Because of this, the films

¹² It is not surprising that the film contains elements of economic thought. As Watts and Smith wrote, “In turn, economic thought and circumstances help shape and direct literature, drama, and language”. These films exhibit the same moral-critical style used by authors like James Gibson and Charles Dickens to criticize economic conditions.

contribute little to the debate; knowing that things are not the way they were before does not help anyone trying to decide what should be done.

This cynical view of college athletics is far different from how college and other amateur sports are typically portrayed in films. Prior to the 1990's, amateur sports have generally been portrayed very ideologically, with a group of people competing because they love the game. *Chariots of Fire* (Hudson, 1981) was a film about young runners training for the 1924 Summer Olympics. The theological-philosophical views of this movie were evident. One character said, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure."¹³ Other films about amateur sports include *Without Limits* (1998), *Miracle* (2004), *Hoosiers* (1986), *Remember the Titans* (2000), and *The Sandlot* (1993). These movies each cover a different sport, but they all have an idealized view of amateur athletics. All of them are also set in a time prior to the 1990's. Historical films, such as *Miracle*, which depicts the 1980 Olympics, and *Chariots of Fire*, carry the same ideological message as *Blue Chips* and *The Program*. However, rather than criticize the way things are now, these films choose to reminisce about the way things used to be. The result is the same: audiences are left wishing that college sports could go back to their purer state, without any idea of how this could be done.

Overall, popular culture has contributed little new information in the debate over paying college athletes. Furthermore, by stereotyping college athletes, professors, and alumni, they have misinformed the public. This is disappointing, because the segment could have used its power to attract genuine interest in the topic and encourage people to carefully think about the issue. While the arguments given by many people who favor

¹³ "Memorable Quotes from Chariots of Fire" Internet Movie Database

paying college athletes have seemed reasonable, hardly anyone would advocate paying anything to the reckless, irresponsible football players in *The Program*. This illustrates the major problem with letting popular culture shape economic policy: in doing this, one allows an industry built on entertainment to influence policies that must be rooted in fact.

Public Opinion

The general public, hearing arguments from both sides, has become quite divided over the issue. The debate has been heated, with impassioned sports fans on both sides of the issue emotionally telling of what they perceive to be injustices. A look at their statements reveals interesting trends. While the general public did not seem to have much formal economics training, the arguments of both sides contained elements of specific economic styles of thought. This paper will examine how the general public has used the moral-critical, social democratic, neoclassical, and philosophical styles, along with a general resistance to change, in debating the issue of whether college athletes should be paid.

It is interesting to note the similarities in the styles of thought used by people both for and against paying college athletes. Both sides of the debate use a combination of the social democratic and moral critical styles to attempt to prove their point. The moral critical style could often be seen at the beginning of a statement, which contained an anecdote meant to convince the reader of the unfairness of the current situation. People in favor of paying college athletes (the For side) told of athletes who could barely afford food and toiletries because the NCAA wouldn't allow them to receive money. People opposed to paying athletes (the Against side) compared poor, hard-working students who

have to pay their own tuition with rich, spoiled, ungrateful athletes on scholarship. This is exemplified in this posting on an Internet message board:

As a classical musician, from a very poor family, I had to literally work my way through college. I was then and am now an excellent and outstanding musician. However, college and university music departments could only offer minimal scholarship aid due to the fact that most dollars went to the athletics department. I bitterly resent all the hard hours of long and tremendously grueling practice I had to do and all the long road trips I had to take just to barely get by in college. All the while, college jocks were living it up especially on the weekend, drunk and in constant sexual orgies. I am outraged at the mere thought of ANY college paying ANYONE enrolled in an athletics course of study at a college or university

This story-telling serves as a reminder of a major difference between economists and the general public: while economists look at trends in data tables, the public are more likely to base their beliefs on anecdotes that they hear from their family and friends¹⁴.

In conjunction with using the moral critical style to outrage the reader, the public would often use the social democratic style to suggest what should be done. It is interesting to note how both sides of the issue used the social democratic norm of fairness to argue their point. This occurred because the two sides had very different views of what is fair. The For side felt that it was unfair for college athletic programs to make millions of dollars while athletes' pay is restricted to their scholarship, and they wanted the income distribution to be more equitable (a belief we have seen throughout various segments). The Against side, rather than comparing athletes to administrators, compared athletes to other students. They argued that the athletes are fortunate to receive for free what their classmates have to pay thousands of dollars for. Furthermore, they didn't think that athletes deserved this money any more than other students did. As one person

¹⁴ Blendon and Glitterman, pg. 115

said in a Penn State University college newspaper, “The members of the crew team care about their sport. The racquetball players care about theirs. The biochemistry/molecular biology major cares about his major and he works hard at it. Why don't all these people deserve the fruits of the football team's labor?”¹⁵

From here, the style choices of the two sides branch out. The For side looks at the issue in a neoclassical way which is similar to its social democratic argument. This is surprising, because the social democratic style often stands in opposition to the neoclassical style. However, in this case, the argument that it is only fair to let athletes share in the money they help their schools earn is closely related to the idea of allowing the athletes to be paid for the revenue they create. As one letter to the L.A. Times said, “End the hypocrisy; pay these guys. They are there for one reason - - that is, to produce revenue for the university”. These people saw the logic of paying an athlete an amount that reflects his monetary value to the program.

The arguments of the Against side do not generally contain a neoclassical analysis, but they frequently contain two other types of arguments: a philosophical one and a general resistance to change. The philosophical argument was rooted in the belief that there is intrinsic value in amateur athletics, and that the goal of everyone involved should not be fairness or efficiency but the preservation of amateurism in college sports. This view was especially popular among avid fans who feared that college sports would be tainted. As one fan said, “If money started getting involved, I worry that college sports could be corrupted. I like things the way they are now¹⁶.” This quote is also an example of how this philosophical style of thought is closely linked to a general

¹⁵ Chris Korman, *The Digital Collegian*

¹⁶ James Fitzpatrick, quoted in the *U.S.A. Today* on August 31, 2004

resistance to change. This tendency to oppose any type of change was seen throughout arguments against paying student-athletes. People expressed their love for the current state of college sports, theorized how things could change if athletes were paid, and came to the conclusion that any change to the current system will likely have negative effects.

The arguments and styles of thought found in public opinion indicate a good understanding of the complexity of the issue. A purely neoclassical stance can be seen as being insensitive to other students and dangerous to the purity of the game, while a philosophical stance can come across as being foolishly stubborn and afraid of change. Further complicating the issue is the social democratic issue of fairness raised by both sides. While the general public may not be formally trained in economics, they demonstrated here an ability to think about the issue in ways that feature several economic styles, indicating that while a good economist should not be a slave to public opinion, he should at least pay attention to what the general public has to say.

The American Government

One of the most well-known ways that the government regulates economic activity is through its prevention of monopolies. Much less is known about prevention of monopsonies, which exist when a single company or cartel is the lone buyer of an input to production. Monopsonies that use their power to exploit producers are illegal, just as monopolies that exploit consumers are illegal. Until recently, the U.S. government had surprisingly little to say about the NCAA's seemingly monopsonistic regulations restricting athletes' pay. In the past few years, however, state lawmakers have attempted to address this perceived injustice by passing legislature that conflicts with NCAA regulations. While the traditional governmental viewpoint uses philosophical

ideals, the recent dissenters to this do so with a social democratic style that may contain some elements of Marxism. This paper will examine both of these viewpoints and the economic styles behind them.

Historically, the government has supported the NCAA's stance that it is necessary to restrict payments to athletes in order to preserve the amateur athletics programs that Americans want. The Supreme Court stated in a ruling¹⁷ that "The NCAA plays a critical role in the maintenance of a revered tradition of amateurism in college sports...the role of the NCAA must be to *preserve* a tradition that might otherwise die." It justified the NCAA's role by stating, "Without regulation, the desire of member institutions to remain athletically competitive would lead them to engage in activities that deny amateurism to the public."¹⁸ The court felt that another goal, the preservation of amateur college athletics, should be sought rather than a free market

Recently, however, several politicians have challenged this traditional view. Specifically, state legislators in Nebraska and California have proposed laws that give certain college athletes rights and payments that are currently banned by the NCAA. Interestingly, they have not used neoclassical arguments but social democratic ones, choosing to focus on fairness rather than efficiency.

Nebraska state senator Ernie Chambers drafted a bill in 2003 that mandates that football players at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln be paid¹⁹. The bill was signed into law but has not taken effect. The language of the bill states that NCAA rules restricting

¹⁷ The case, *NCAA v. Bd. of Regents of Univ. of Oklahoma* (1984), was about the NCAA's control over the football TV contracts of its member schools. The Supreme Court ruled against the NCAA, stating that its attempt to restrict number of games broadcast was not consistent with its goals of preserving amateur athletics.

¹⁸ Justice White's dissenting opinion in the 1984 case.

¹⁹ The bill, LB 688, was signed into law in 2003 by Governor Mike Johanns.

athlete compensation are “unduly restrictive and unreasonable”. The bill also attempts to counter those who talk about the purity of college athletics by reminding everyone that college sports is a huge money-maker for NCAA members. The bill states, “Maintaining a winning football team has become an integral aspect of the overall business ... of the university...” and says that the football program has the goal “of generating as much revenue as possible.” The bill implies that athletes are exploited when it says, “The exertion of players and the revenue they generate produce employment and salaries for many others.” The bill also tells how the student athlete is more of an athlete than a student, stating how players are “actively recruited by university personnel at considerable expense” and that “recipients [of athletic scholarships have] been recruited to be football players and not scholars;”

A bill with similar intentions was introduced in California in 2003 and reintroduced in 2004²⁰. This bill tells of the staggering amounts of money collected at the expense of college athletes: \$327 million taken in by athletic departments of California colleges; a \$6 billion TV deal the NCAA signed with CBS; \$89 million the NCAA received for the 2004 television rights to Division I-A Bowl Championship Series football games. The bill determines that each Division I football and basketball player generates, on average, at least \$33,000 in revenue just from championship TV contracts. The bill juxtaposes with this by telling of “students being penalized [by the NCAA] for accepting groceries.” This bill also questions the motivations of the NCAA, stating that “Many NCAA policies appear to be designed to serve the interests of that organization and its member institutions, rather than those of the student athlete.” The bill proposes

²⁰ In 2003, SB 193 was introduced by Senator Kevin Murray (D-Los Angeles) and Senator John Burton (D-San Francisco). It was resubmitted as SR 43 in 2004.

“that every student attending an institution of higher education in this state should have the same rights and benefits, regardless of his or her athletic status.”

While the wording of these bills is different, they both employ a social democratic style of economic thinking. With the implied goal of fairness, the bills are trying to redistribute of the millions of dollars the NCAA brings in so that athletes receive more of the money. This is done by mandating that more money be spent on the athletes themselves, which presumably will cut into the revenues of those who receive the money now.

It is also interesting to note that the attempts to pay players may prove impossible under the current NCAA regime. While both bills appear to be well-intentioned attempts to alter NCAA behavior, the realities of them are far more complex. Any attempts to implement them will lead to major consequences as the government and NCAA collide. This collision is inevitable, because schools will be forced to decide between obeying the law and obeying NCAA regulations. For example, if the Nebraska law is enacted, the University of Nebraska will be forced to pay its players a stipend or else it will be in violation of the law. However, as soon as it pays its players, the university will be severely punished by the NCAA for blatantly violating the rule against paying players. While it may be that the legislation was written only to prove a point, or that it was passed without thinking about the consequences of implementation, it is also possible that the legislators had a much bigger goal in mind.

This goal becomes more apparent when you see one of the conditions of the Nebraska law: it only takes effect if at least 3 other states with schools in the Big 12

conference pass similar laws.²¹ Assuming the other states have this measure, it will have the effect of allowing the schools to team up against the NCAA. The California law states in its second paragraph how much California's 45 NCAA schools produce in athletic revenue not tied to the NCAA television deals: \$327,000,000. This is a reminder to potential challengers of the large state's enormous power. These laws both hint at the possibility of defection from the NCAA, with the goal being the eventual dissolution of the NCAA.

This attempt to radically change the landscape of college athletics is one that can be tied closely with Marxism. Its pioneers are self-proclaimed enemies of the system²², and they are taking on an issue that is not easily solved through legislature. They believe that profits for some come directly at the expense of others.²³ While the legislators have not stated it outright, they may believe that the only way that justice can be obtained is by completely doing away with the current system.

Whatever the true intentions of the lawmakers, their social democratic motivations are clear. While they are not economists and cannot be expected to act as economists²⁴, they are acting in a way that most neoclassical economists would agree with. While their goal may be fairness, the elimination of a monopsony would result in greater market efficiency and greater overall utility.

Conclusion

²¹ The Big 12 is one of the nation's major NCAA conferences. States represented in the conference are Texas, with four schools, Kansas with two, Oklahoma with two, and Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Colorado with one.

²² Throughout the process, Chambers has relished his role as an underdog crusading against the mighty NCAA, stating, "I am going to be excoriated. I'm going to be condemned. Well, they condemned Jesus. Why should I feel that I'm immune? I know those who are getting the money these players generate do not relinquish it easily." (Anderson)

²³ Yates, *Naming the System*. pp 167-168.

²⁴ Aaron, "Symposium on Economists as Policy Advocates"

Each segment discussed here plays an important role in the discussion of whether college athletes should be paid. The work done by professional economists and think tanks formed the framework for discussion of this issue. Because both the authors and their target audiences tend to be well-educated, the language of these pieces tended to be more technical, allowing for a more thorough analysis of the issue. The segments that communicate information to the public have been able to convey the issue in a way that is both informative and entertaining. Special interest groups are often maligned for being “biased”. However, SIGs on both sides of this issue provided thoughtful insight. The mass media is in the business of attracting an audience, and because of this, it is sometimes concerned more with being a source of entertainment than balanced information. Overall, though, it was able to accurately and concisely examine the issue. In this issue, popular culture was possibly the most disappointing segment of American society. It is extremely powerful and reaches a wide audience, enabling it to draw attention to a little-known issue. However, on the issue of paying college athletes, popular culture, rather than encouraging viewers to take an active interest in the issue, just served to misinform the audience. The most encouraging segment, at least for an economist, may have been public opinion. It is remarkable to note the similarities in the economic styles used by the general public and the more “academic” sources, such as special interest groups and even formal economic literature. Finally, in this issue, government has been an effective “voice of the people,” evidenced by the how similar the text of laws was to the findings on public opinion.

Interestingly, many different styles of economic thought were used by the various segments of society. While the prevalent styles were the social democratic, moral critical

and neoclassical ones, there were several others heard. Completely different segments of society often had arguments rooted in the same style of thought. The differing styles served to counter each other; for example, often the moral critical styles served primarily to act as a warning of what can happen if neoclassical economics goes too far.

The various styles and various segments both work together to provide the general public with well-balanced, well-researched information. Just as each segment has its own way of presenting information, they all used different styles of thought in crafting their arguments. However, the styles of thought were often closely correlated, just as the segments of society are also intrinsically connected. A careful analysis of this economic issue requires that none of the styles of economic thought be overlooked, as they serve as a system of checks and balances on each other. Similarly, each segment discussed is an integral part of democracy. The exchange of both data and beliefs, from academic researchers to the general public to government policy makers, would not be complete if any of these segments were ignored.

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- 1) Blue Chips. 1994. Directed by William Friedkin.
- 2) Chariots of Fire. 1981. Directed by Hugh Hudson.
- 2) Hoosiers. 1986. Directed by David Anspaugh.
- 3) Miracle. 2004. Directed by Gavin O'Connor.
- 4) The Program. 1993. Directed by David S. Ward.
- 5) Remember the Titans. 2000. Directed by Boaz Yakin.
- 6) The Sandlot. 1993. Directed by David M. Evans.
- 7) Without Limits. 1998. Directed by Robert Towne.