

CONSEQUENTIALISM

Consequentialism

Consequentialism is a theory of normative ethics that states that the moral value of an action or decision should be judged based on its consequences.

Consequentialism can be broken down in to two core beliefs:

1. That the consequences of an act are what ultimately matter when assessing its moral worth
2. That this evaluation should focus on the over all good for society as a whole rather than on individual gains or losses.

TYPES OF CONSEQUENTIALISM

Plain Consequentialism and the definition of consequence

Of all the things a person might do at any given moment, the morally right action is the one with the best overall consequences.

(If there is no one best action because several actions are tied for best consequences, then of course any of those several actions would be right.)

Plain Scalar Consequentialism

Of any two things a person might do at any given moment, one is better than another to the extent that its overall consequences are better than the other's overall consequences.

Expectable Consequentialism and Reasonable Consequentialism

Expectable Consequentialism:

The morally right action is the action whose reasonably expectable consequences are best. (There can also be a scalar version of this view and of the others introduced below.)

Reasonable Consequentialism:

An action is morally right if and only if it has the best reasonably expected consequences.

Dual Consequentialism

The word "right" is ambiguous in that it has a moral sense and an objective sense; the action with the best consequences is the objectively right action and any action that can be reasonably estimated to be objectively right is the morally right action.

Rule Consequentialism

The rightness of an act depends not on the goodness of its consequences, but on whether or not it is in accordance with a certain code of rules, which has been selected for its good consequences.

FREEDOM OF WILL &

DETERMINISM

Kant's Objection to Determinism

Kant's objection to determinism posits that people are not like things, as they can be conscious of the operation of physical and psychological laws. He argues that people make choices based on reasons, not causes and effects, and that causes are irrelevant to actions.

Libertarianism (freedom of will)

Libertarianism, a theory positing that we have free wills, argues that only some actions are free, based on deliberation and moral responsibility, and is supported by William James and Corliss Lamont.

The Argument from Deliberation

The argument from deliberation asserts that every individual is free to make their own choices, and these decisions are influenced by deliberations.

The Argument from Moral Responsibility

Determinism contradicts moral responsibility, which implies choices between good and evil actions. We take moral responsibility seriously, feeling rational guilt for failing to perform duties, as we are essentially free.

Compatibilism

Compatibilism, a middle ground between freedom of will and determinism, argues that we are determined but still have moral responsibilities. It distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary actions, arguing that both freedom and determinism are necessary for humankind, science, and morality.

QUIZ TIME

