

Utilitarianism

- Three Key Utilitarians
 - Jeremy Bentham
 - John Stuart Mill
 - Henry Sidgwick
- Idea is that an act is right if it results in a net gain of “*good*” **consequences**
- **Consequences** are evaluated.
 - Can be *actual* or *expected*
 - Which consequences are valued?
 - * Pleasure (hedonistic)
 - * Preference
 - * Objective
- Consequentialists
 - an acts moral standing depends **ONLY** on the act’s consequences
- Egalitarians
 - act is right if and only if the benefits are shared equally

Utilitarianism Questions

- Which of the following are important distinctions for contemporary utilitarians?
 - Particular Acts vs. Act Types
 - Act vs. Rule Utilitarianism
 - Expected vs. Actual Consequences
- What is the essential determiner of moral value for utilitarians?
 - ~~Instrumental Value~~
- How might a utilitarian respond to a situation in which one is faced whether to tell a lie?
 - If the consequences of the lie are on the whole better than those of telling the truth, then lying is the right course of action
- According to utilitarian calculus, the consequences that an action poses to future generations can outweigh those facing individuals in the present time.
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- Rosa believes if she crams tonight for her test tomorrow, then she will do well on the exam. This is an example of what?
 - Expected Consequences
- On what point do Act Utilitarians disagree with Rule Utilitarians?
 - ?
- Classic hedonistic act utilitarianism holds that only happiness is good for its own sake and that acts are right insofar as no alternative act could bring about more of this good.
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- Which of the following is an example of an act type?
 - studying hard

- being kind to other people
- What does it mean to say that Bentham’s hedonistic utilitarian theory is *additive*?
 - The focus is on the total sum of good produced, not the manner in which that good is distributed
- While direct consequences fall within the scope of utilitarian analysis, indirect consequences are not considered sufficiently relevant.
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- Which of the following is NOT true of preference utilitarianism?
 - ~~Some preference utilitarians restrict moral correctness to “fully-informed” preferences~~
- An act utilitarian evaluates only the short-term consequences of an act.
 - No, because an act utilitarian evaluates all the consequences of an act.
- Which of the following is true of utilitarianism?
 - whether an act is permissible depends on the consequences it brings about.
- Person B has had a few really rough weeks... A utilitarian must make a choice:
 - **Action A will produce 500 utils of happiness for person A**
 - Action B will generate 499 utils of happiness for person B
- Hedonistic utilitarians argue that happiness is worth maximizing because...
 - Happiness is good for its own sake
- While humans and some animals might be morally significant to the utilitarians, many trees and plants would not be. This is because they lack _____, the trait necessary for self-awareness and self-identification with one’s constitution.
 - Sentience
- Which of the following explains the intuitive appeal of utilitarianism?
 - It would be bizarre for people to not care about the consequences of their actions.
- Egalitarians differ from other utilitarians in that...
 - they argue that acts are right only insofar as the wellbeing they produce is distributed equally
- A hedonistic utilitarian thinks that the “good” that moral actions maximize is...
 - Pleasure