

For this week's report I am going to talk about utilitarianism. Utilitarianism can be broken down into 3 parts: consequentialism, aggregation and hedonism. Consequentialism is the idea of making your decision based on what the outcome of an action would be. This means that we would decide our decision based on what action would end with the best outcome for all no matter how ethical the action is. The next idea is aggregation. Aggregation takes into account the sum of outcomes and suggests if the outcome as a whole is positive or negative. Lastly hedonism is the idea of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain for the most amount of people possible.

A good example that was brought up in one of the presentations was the trolley problem. I really like this example because it has been brought up many different times with different ethical ideologies that show a different answer being produced. The specific example they brought up was to pull the lever to kill one family member, or don't pull the lever to kill five random people. They argued that pulling the lever would be the correct answer based on utilitarianism because saving 5 people would have the best outcome for all, not taking into account personal beliefs or the action of killing. I believe there is no real correct answer in this situation. Once again utilitarianism states that pulling the lever is the correct answer, but deontology would suggest that not pulling the lever is the correct answer. There is no real way to tell if we should act for the better consequence or for the better action. There are so many other factors in making a decision that need to be discussed and that is seen as the ideologies differ from each other.

Another example that I really liked was when one group talked about aligning employment with utilitarian principles. I liked this portion of their presentation because they really showed both the upside and the downsides of utilitarianism. They talked about how there would be many upsides if a workforce only thought about results such as an increase in production and improved efficiency. But by only thinking about the results they may end up doing some unethical practices to reach these results leading to overworked workers and maybe legal action needed. This is another example of how utilitarianism can be both harmful and useful. We always need to think about utilitarianism when making a decision but we should also take steps to reduce risk and other negative impacts. They later talked about how utilitarianism should create the maximum happiness for the most people. But if happiness for more makes a smaller portion of people suffer, I believe it is not the correct or ethical answer.

When making a decision we can not only think about the end result being good. We also need to make sure the action we are taking is ethical. This is why deontology and utilitarianism are usually talked about together. If we think about the action that produces the most good and the most ethical action itself to be taken, then we can use those 2 standpoints to compromise and pick an action that is ethical but also has an ethical outcome. There are many different factors and situations out there which is why it is so hard to figure out the truly correct answers and why there can be so many debates about it in class. At the end of the day we can use these frameworks to have some sort of consistency in our decision making.