**Utilitarian/Millian Role Sheet**

**Core Beliefs**

You are a proponent of John Stuart Mill’s Utilitarian moral philosophy from Chapter 2 of his book *Utilitarianism*. This chapter is the foundation of your beliefs, your thinking, and your behavior. Sometimes it may be obvious how Mill’s principles require you to speak and act. Other times, however, it may be unclear how to apply these principles to current political issues. In such cases, you will need to decide for yourself what Mill’s principles require you to say or do. So long as your speech and actions don’t contradict your foundational Utilitarian principles, you will be living up to your role.

The supreme moral principle for Mill is the “Principle of Utility”, which he calls “the Greatest Happiness Principle.” It maintains that actions are morally good or right to the extent that they promote happiness, and morally bad or wrong to the extent that they promote unhappiness. This means that you will approve of and endorse things to the extent that they promote happiness, and will disapprove of things to the extent that they promote unhappiness. The Greatest Happiness Principle basically tells us to do the best job of promoting happiness—i.e., to maximize it—so doing this is your ultimate goal. As a result, you will be “all about happiness”—you will always be concerned about doing the best job of promoting happiness.

A second major aspect of Mill’s Utilitarianism is what we can call the Principle of Equality: the happiness of anything capable of experiencing happiness and unhappiness—human and non-human alike—is equally important to promote. Put differently, each sentient creature’s happiness matters, and matters equally, in the calculus of happiness. Promoting a person’s happiness is no more important than promoting a rat’s happiness; promoting a person’s happiness and a rat’s happiness to the same degree has equal moral weight under Utilitarianism. If you can do a better job of promoting happiness by favoring non-humans over humans, then you should favor the non-humans. Your Utilitarian philosophy thus espouses a strong form of moral equality and calls for concern not just for human happiness, but for the happiness of non-humans as well.

The three major factions and most of the other indeterminates are non-Utilitarian thinkers. The basic principles that they espouse are fundamentally at odds with the basic Principle of Utility, and so you will view them all as coming from fundamentally mistaken evaluative perspectives. At the same time, however, some form of moral equality is espoused by the three major factions and at least most determinates, so this gives you a point of commonality to utilize when trying to make agreements or forge alliances with other players. Moreover, even though the Principle of Utility might be at odds with the fundamental principles of others, you may nevertheless come to considerable agreement with others who are coming from different perspectives after applying Utilitarian reasoning to the issues. So for example, Mill is a proponent of free trade because he thinks this will do the best job of promoting overall happiness, and so he may agree with the Small Government Faction on the importance of free trade. Also, as someone concerned with promoting happiness, you may find yourself agreeing with the Uniform Liberal Faction on the necessity of the welfare state (although you may not agree on the extent of such a state). Just because you come from a fundamentally different perspective doesn’t mean you’ll disagree with those coming from non-Utilitarian perspectives—whether you’ll agree or not depends on what you judge to be the best way of promoting happiness or welfare.

**Major Goal**

Your major goal is to promote happiness or welfare. That’s all you’re ultimately trying to do. As someone who ultimately cares about doing the best job of promoting welfare, you’ll not only believe in the necessity of the welfare state, but chances are you’ll believe in a rather strong or extensive welfare state—one that you have good reason to believe will maximize happiness, where everyone’s happiness matters equally. Your first vote will be on whether to raise or lower national welfare provisions, and even though your focus on promoting welfare will dispose you to raise these provisions, you’ll have to figure out whether raising them will actually do a better job of promoting welfare than the status quo. The second vote will likely be on immigration policy, so you’ll need to figure out and endorse whatever policy option, in your judgment, does the best job of promoting welfare. The third vote will likely be on minority rights, and once again you’ll need to figure out and endorse whatever policy option you judge to do the best job of promoting welfare. You can also introduce measures of your own to maximize happiness if any come to mind.

Unlike some other characters, you have a separate issue of concern. The United Nations will soon review its Human Development Index (HDI), an international ranking of countries according to their level of development. The notion of development that the HDI has traditionally employed is based on capabilities, reflecting the involvement of Amartya Sen. The review, however, means there is a real possibility that that may change. You believe that the HDI should be revised according to a different design, one that reflects your view that justice centrally concerns the welfare of persons. It will be a major victory for you if you can convince the assembly to pass a resolution, written by you, stating as much. The purpose of doing so will be to send a message to the UN in the hope of influence its review.

Note that your resolution does not need to outline the particulars of the HDI in any detail: your concern is with the philosophy of its overall approach. So long as you can convince the assembly to endorse your broad philosophy as it pertains to the HDI, you will have achieved a significant personal victory. But be warned: there may be other players in the game who want the HDI to take a different approach. Remember that you can bargain with factions and other indeterminates, possibly voting to support a measure of theirs in return for their support of yours.

More information on the HDI is available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev>. See in particular the section, “Intellectual and Historical Underpinnings.”

**Tips and Strategies**

You’re a card-carrying Utilitarian, and everyone knows it. Although you can find common ground with your peers by affirming our moral equality, most of your peers, as non-Utilitarian thinkers, will be hostile to your basic principles and will see them as fundamentally misguided. They may even see them as showing insufficient respect to our rights or considerations of justice more generally (e.g., the Small Government Faction), or as wrongly focused on happiness (e.g., the Uniform Liberalism Faction). Consequently, it’s very likely that *Utilitarian reasoning will not persuade your peers*, and so it’s a bad idea to try to convince them of anything with Utilitarian justification. When making a decision on policy, you have to use Utilitarian reasoning to figure out which option does the best job of promoting welfare because passing such policies is all that you really care about. However, when persuading your peers to agree with you, *you should* *use non-Utilitarian reasoning*. In particular, *you should use their principles* to argue for your favored policy. If your peers care about rights, then argue that your favored policy does the best job of respecting some important right that we have. For this to work you’ll need to know the fundamental principles of your ideological opponents so that you can convince them, on their own terms, to agree with your policy decisions. Once your principles tell you to endorse some position, figure out how to convince your peers that they should endorse the same position given their principles. You shouldn’t have any qualms about adopting this strategy because your own principles endorse it: for any given policy that the Principle of Utility recommends, that very same principle endorses the adoption of whatever method will get your peers to agree with you—in this case, non-Utilitarian persuasion—so that the legislation passes.

Although you care only about promoting welfare and probably favor an extensive welfare state, it’s not always clear what the Principle of Utility endorses. You cannot always tell, right away, which option does the best job of promoting welfare because options tend to have both good and bad consequences, and sometimes the Principle of Utility can be used to justify multiple options (which makes it difficult for you to tell which option it truly endorses). The indeterminacy of what the Principle of Utility calls for is what makes you a true indeterminate on the game’s central issues, and this makes you an attractive ally.

**Victory Conditions**

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| **Points** | **Objective** |
| 1 | The assembly passes any proposal that promotes overall welfare relative to the status quo |
| -2 | The assembly passes any proposal that undermines overall welfare relative to the status quo |
| -0.5 | The assembly enshrines the status quo where the status quo does not promote overall welfare |
| 2 | The assembly endorses your HDI proposal |
| 1 | The assembly votes on your HDI proposal (without passing) |
| 1/per resolution | The assembly passes a resolution on a topic or topics other than the HDI endorsing your view that welfare is the primary metric of justice |

**Primary Essay**

John Stuart Mill, “What Utilitarianism Is.” On Liberty and Utilitarianism (London: David Campbell, 1992): 117-136.