

# Good essay about jeremy bentham and john stuart mills theory of utilitarian moral...

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The theory of utilitarianism was first articulated explicitly by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), and expounded and strengthened by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) in his book, *Utilitarianism*. Although the philosophy of utilitarianism had been a long tradition, it was absolute hedonism, in that it was majorly individualistic. Therefore, Bentham sought and managed to reformulate it, so that it could be defined in aggregate term as “the greatest happiness principle”; a moral act is the one that produces greatest utility/ happiness to all beings/majority in the society. Although Bentham treated all forms of pleasures as equal, Mill went further to distinguish them as happiness and contentment, with the latter being of lower value than the former.

Apparently, the theory is relativist: it is relative to every society and at a certain period of time, as it has no absolute standards by which all individuals in the whole world ought to act at all times so that aggregate utility could be ascertained (Hinman, 2014; West, 2014).

Utilitarianism relies on aggregate intrinsic values of the society and therefore a moral action is the one that brings most benefits than harms to the society. Therefore, it should be aimed at producing good consequences to people, regardless of the intentions of the doer(s). Generally, the major goal of moral actions/morality should be making the world a better place. According to Hinman (2014), the four principle candidate values of utilitarianism have been pleasure, happiness, ideals and preference. Bentham believed that every moral human being should strive to increase aggregate amount of pleasure on earth. For Mill, happiness stands better to be a standard of morality. However, Moore seemed to differ a bit with others since he established that a world with more pleasure cannot be good. He asserted

that the aggregate society should stress on ideals such as justice, knowledge, freedom and beauty for greater happiness. Kenneth Arrow notes that satisfaction should be the best intrinsic measure of morals. In this regard, the society's morals will be determined by aggregate preferences of members of a given society (Hinman, 2014).

While making decisions whether somebody is moral or not, both benefits and harms to the society will be listed so that the greater side could be determined. If the good side is greater, the person will be moral because of the greater satisfaction, pleasure or happiness that the benefits will elicit due to the societal ideals. Alternatively, utilitarianism supports democracy and therefore morals/morality can be determined through election by free people (Hinman, 2014; West, 2014).

## References

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