

Utilitarianism. evaluation of the objection

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Utilitarianism Introduction Utilitarianism is a theory of ethics that holds that: the best course of action maximizes the greatest overall “ good” for the largest number of individuals. Therefore, it is a form of consequentialism, which states that; the moral action’s worth is usually determined by the results of its outcome. According to Bentham Jeremy, utilitarianism is the principle of the greatest felicity or happiness. Utilitarianism is normally characterized as a reductionist and quantitative approach to ethics. It is a form of naturalism type (Gustaf et al. 12), and contrasts with deontological ethics, virtue ethics and pragmatic ethics among others. A course of action that maximizes the common good of the greatest number of individuals is difficult to assume in modern society. This is because, people have become so opportunistic and capitalists that they only mind their own welfare. For example, environmental conservation is something that maximizes the common good of many people. Unfortunately, capitalism and industrialization have played a major role in affecting global warming due to effects of green house gases. Therefore, how can the society ensure utilitarianism so as to ensure that the effects of whatever course of action benefit the wider society instead of ruining them? Negative Utilitarianism Utilitarian theories seek to produce the greatest benefit for the largest number of people (Gustaf et al. 17). Negative utilitarianism, on the other hand, requires people to promote the least harm or evil, or to try and prevent great suffering for as many people as possible. Proponents of negative utilitarianism like Clark Wolf and Karl Popper argue that this formula is much more effective because the greatest harms or evils are more consequential compared to the greatest goods. For instance, it is impossible for industries to stop production in order to eliminate the effects of green

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house gases. However, it is possible for industries, especially in the developed world, to reduce the amount of emitted gases by application of necessary precautions. Therefore, the amount emitted will be little, thus having very little effects. This will promote less harm to the greatest number of people, something that is logic and applicable. This theory clarifies the ethics field, if demands are negatively formulated. This means that it is always logic to demand elimination of suffering instead of promoting happiness. Advocates of utilitarian principle, however, argue that negative utilitarianism only aims at finding the least painful and quickest method of destroying the entirety of humanity by minimizing suffering. However, utilitarian theory wants to destroy the problem for the common good of the majority by not only reducing suffering, but also ensuring the most beneficial course of action. Utilitarianism of negative preference avoids moral killing problem but demands justification for the new lives' creation. Some theoreticians believe that negative utilitarianism is a sub-branch of classical utilitarianism, which advocates for the avoidance of suffering, instead of promoting happiness. Evaluation of the Objection Though negative utilitarianism happens to be easily applicable in the society, it slowly kills human entirety. Reducing suffering only is a short cut that only lasts in the short run, but whose long-term costs are very big. Though it is hard to achieve happiness for the greatest number of individuals, if it is achievable, that is what we should all promote no matter its costs. Negative utilitarianism is a kind of escapism that can be easily achieved, but whose benefits only last for a while. Gustaf et al. (27) say that negative utilitarianism would call for world destruction as long as it can avoid pinprick pain. Pessimistic negative utilitarian are likely to remain childless (Gustaf et <https://assignbuster.com/utilitarianism-evaluation-of-the-objection/>

al. 12), as optimistic negative utilitarian strongly believe that the worst suffering cases can be defeated in time. For instance, still in the case of environmental conservation in reduction of green house gases, reducing the amount of gases emitted reduces human suffering, something that is easily applicable. However, in the long term, these small amounts will accumulate slowly by slowly and eventually cause global warming. The effects and suffering caused by global warming will be much bigger, and hence, it is best to look for long-term solutions that will ensure reduced suffering and human happiness even in the future. However, utilitarian theory is criticized for lack of any convincing proof. It has not been proven to be ethically correct by logic or science. Further more; its critics argue that happiness of two different people cannot be counted together meaningfully. Conclusion The principles of utilitarian theory can be very good because it aims at ensuring human happiness of the greatest number of individuals. Unfortunately, its demands are far beyond reach because it is difficult to apply it in real life situations. Therefore, it is very hard for people to only take a course of action that maximizes the greatest overall "good" for the largest number of individuals. On the other hand, negative utilitarianism seems to be much applicable in real life situations, as it aims at avoiding human suffering without seeking common happiness. The criticisms against utilitarianism seem to favor negative utilitarianism because it is easily applicable and does not seek common happiness for the largest number of individuals.

Unfortunately, it only seeks short term solutions that might cause much bigger costs, like greater human suffering in the future. Work Cited Gustaf, Arrhenius. Jesper, Ryberg, and Torbjorn, Tannsjo. Stanford Encyclopedia of

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