

Chapter 13: Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism

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- Two types of utilitarianism
 - Act utilitarianism: An act is right if and only if it results in as much good or utility as any available alternative
 - Rule utilitarianism: An act is right if and only if it is required by a rule that is a member of a set of rules whose acceptance would lead to a greater utility than any available alternative
- Advantages of utilitarianism
 - Single principle yields potential answer for every situation
 - Substantive rather than merely formal doctrine

Chapter 13: Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism (continued)

- Five objections to utilitarianism
 1. No-rest objection
 - How can I rest or enjoy life if by sacrificing I can make others happier?
 - Response: Rule prescribing rest and entertainment would be included in a utility-maximizing set of rules
 2. Absurd-implications objection
 - Utilitarianism can lead to morally counterintuitive conclusions
 - Response: We should be ready to change our moral biases in the interest of utility
 3. Integrity objection
 - Utilitarianism can require us to violate our most deeply held principles
 - Response: Integrity is not an absolute; some alienation might be necessary for the moral life

Chapter 13: Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism (continued)

4. Justice objection

- Utilitarianism can require unjust actions
- Response: Justice is not an absolute, but it makes good sense to have a principle of justice we generally follow

5. Publicity objection

- It is not prudent to recommend that everyone act as a utilitarian
- Response: Utilitarian rules can be universally recommended, and publicity is not an absolute requirement of morality