

Utilitarianism

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§1 Introduction

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that was first systematically developed in England in the late eighteenth century. Utilitarianism is the view that an action is right to the extent that it increases wellbeing. (Wellbeing is what you have if your life is going well.) When you’re deciding what the ethically right thing to do is, you should choose to do what increases wellbeing the most, and no one’s wellbeing matters more than anyone else’s. (There are several kinds of utilitarianism that vary with that description in different ways, which we’ll look at later.)

Utilitarianism can be viewed as the combination of two ideas, *consequentialism* and *welfarism*. Consequentialism is the view that an act is right to the extent that it has the best consequences, and welfarism is the view that the only thing that ultimately matters ethically is wellbeing. So, utilitarians think you should do what has the best consequences, and that the kind of consequences that matter are promoting wellbeing.

Utilitarianism is for many people a commonsense idea: when we’re thinking about the ethically right thing to do, what matters is which action will help people (and animals) and which will harm them. The more an action helps people, the better it is; the more an action harms people, the worse it is. Utilitarianism does a good job of capturing the idea that what’s central to ethics is treating others well, and it also does a good job of expressing an intuitive view of what treating others well means: promoting their wellbeing. The basic idea is that what matters is making the world a better place, which means helping people’s lives go well.

Utilitarianism is also attractive in giving a clear criterion for right action. Under some ethical theories, what makes an action right or wrong is complex to explain, and it can be hard to see how to work out whether an action is one you should do. Utilitarianism is relatively straightforward: you work out which action is going to do the most good for everyone by promoting their wellbeing, and you do that.

Another way utilitarianism is attractive is in offering an ethical view that works at a political level, not just a personal level. Many ethical theories say how *individuals* should act, but not how we should act as a society. Utilitarianism says we should choose those laws and policies that best promote wellbeing, treating everyone equally. That's an intuitive idea for deciding what to do as a society, and one that in principle is relatively straightforward to apply: when considering whether to introduce a law or policy, work out whether it will make people's lives better or not, and introduce it if it does. In fact, as we'll see, utilitarianism was initially developed more as a political and legal theory than a personal moral code.

Despite these attractive features of utilitarianism, there are some strong arguments against it, which we'll look at in the section on objections.

§2 Early Utilitarians

2.1 Bentham

The philosopher who coined the term "utilitarianism" and first gave a systematic account of the view was Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). By "utility," Bentham meant "the quality of being instrumental for wellbeing;" something has utility just if it will promote wellbeing. Utilitarianism, then, is the view that actions are right to the extent they have utility.

"Utilitarianism" is a famously bad name for the theory, as it makes it sound dull and joyless; we use the word to describe buildings or objects that are practical and useful but not attractive or interesting. That's unfortunate, as utilitarians usually think of wellbeing as pleasure or happiness, and their notions of pleasure and happiness can be rich and broad.

Bentham lived in England and spent his life trying to reform legal and political systems. Bentham described the English legal system as a "fathomless and boundless chaos" that denied justice to people (quoted in Judson 1910, 42).

He saw utilitarianism as a rational, practical basis for laws and policies, to replace the ad-hoc and arbitrary way they were created and maintained at the time. Simply, he thought legislators should evaluate laws and policies by whether or not they promoted people's wellbeing.

Bentham was a *hedonist* about wellbeing. Hedonism is the view that the only thing that contributes to wellbeing is pleasure, and the only thing that detracts from it is pain. How great a pleasure is, Bentham thought, depends on its intensity, duration, certainty (how likely it is to occur), propinquity (how soon it will occur), fecundity (how likely it is to be followed by other pleasures), purity (how likely it is to *not* be followed by pain) and extent (how many people will be affected by it). What makes *no* difference to how great a pleasure is, Bentham thought, is its source – he said it makes no difference whether pleasure comes from poetry or from push-pin (a children's game of the time).

The practical implications of Bentham's theory were progressive or even revolutionary at the time. One of these was the idea that the purpose of criminal punishment should only be deterrence, not retribution; it is bad if criminals suffer, and they should be made to suffer only to prevent the occurrence of worse suffering. Another view of Bentham's, very controversial at the time, was that animals should be protected by law from mistreatment. Animals are afforded less protection than people in law, and the reason given is usually that animals have lower moral status as they lack humans' powers of reasoning. Bentham argued that this was not a morally relevant difference when causing pain, and wrote "the question is not, Can they *reason*? Nor, can they *talk*? But, can they *suffer*?" (Bentham 1789, 283n). Bentham also believed that the vote – permitted only for certain men at the time – should be extended to all adults, including women.

2.2 Mill

John Stuart Mill (1806-73) was Bentham's godson (Bentham and Mill's father, James Mill, were close friends). Mill was well-known as a philosopher in his lifetime, but, like Bentham, was also a social and political reformer, and was a British MP from 1865-1868. Mill did much to popularise utilitarianism, not least by publishing Bentham's work, which wasn't well known in his own lifetime. Something that helped Mill's popularisation of utilitarianism is that, although he wrote a huge amount, his book *Utilitarianism* is only about seventy pages long,

easy to read, and was first published as a series of magazine articles (J. S. Mill 1863).

Mill's utilitarianism differs from Bentham's mainly in their views of wellbeing. While both were hedonists, believing wellbeing consists just in pleasure, Mill disagreed with Bentham's view that the *source* of a pleasure makes no difference. He believed there are higher and lower pleasures, and that higher pleasures contribute more to wellbeing. Higher pleasures include things like intellectual and profound emotional pleasures, and pleasures achieved through activity rather than experienced passively. Famously, he wrote "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied" (J. S. Mill 1863, 10). We know the difference between the quality of higher and lower pleasures, Mill thought, because anyone who has experienced both prefers the higher ones.

Mill thought that as the only thing that matters is wellbeing and everyone's wellbeing is equally important, people should be guaranteed the basics of life, such as food, shelter, and freedom. He believed people are the best judges of what contributes to their own wellbeing, and so they should be free to live how they like if it doesn't harm others. His book *On Liberty*, which includes that argument, remains extremely influential in political thought (J. S. Mill 1859).

2.3 Harriet Taylor Mill

Mill met Harriet Taylor (1807–58) in 1830, and although she was already married, they soon fell in love. Taylor's husband died in 1849, and she and Mill married in 1851. Taylor Mill was not only a major influence on Mill, but also a collaborator. Mill wrote, "not only during the years of our married life, but during many of the years of confidential friendship which preceded it, all my published writings were as much my wife's work as mine; her share in them constantly increasing as years advanced" (J. S. Mill 1873, 251).

Taylor Mill also published, under her own name, the essay "The Enfranchisement of Women," in 1851 (H. T. Mill 1998, 51-73). This was a very important early work in feminist philosophy. At a time when women were not allowed to vote and married women could not legally own property in their own names, Taylor Mill argued for full social and political equality for women, and that married women should work outside the home. She heavily influenced an

important essay of Mill's on the subject, "On the Subjection of Women" (J. S. Mill 1869).

During the twentieth century many kinds of utilitarianism were developed, often in response to arguments against the views of Bentham, Mill, and other early utilitarians. At this point it is easier to talk about the different types of utilitarianism, rather than about particular philosophers. Before doing so in the section on different types of utilitarianism, we'll look at a couple of the ways utilitarianism works in practice.

§3 Utilitarianism in Practice

We'll look at how utilitarianism works in practice by discussing the treatment of two topics in ethics by the best-known living utilitarian philosopher, Peter Singer. Utilitarianism says that the only thing that matters is wellbeing, and that everyone's wellbeing matters equally. We saw that the early utilitarians thus thought their society needed to change the way it treated women, who were not afforded many of the basic rights men enjoyed; gay people, who were punished harshly for actions that harmed no one's wellbeing; and animals, the treatment of which in ways that caused them great suffering was considered ethically permissible.

Singer's 1975 book *Animal Liberation* takes up this last theme (1975). Singer argues that it's wrong to treat the interests of animals differently from the interests of people (though of course, those interests are different; it's not in the interests of animals to have education, for example). It's in the interests of all sentient beings, whether human or not, to have wellbeing, including feeling pleasure and not feeling pain. So, it's just as wrong to cause a certain amount of suffering to an animal as it is to cause that same amount of suffering to a human.

Some opponents of this argument say that the interests of humans matter more because they have greater cognitive abilities than animals. However, Singer points out that there are a lot of humans who *don't* have greater cognitive abilities than some animals; an adult chimpanzee has the intelligence of a four-year old child, for example. Babies and people with some severe cognitive disabilities have lesser cognitive abilities than some animals. This suggests a test for whether it's permissible to do something to an animal: you should consider whether you think it's okay to do that thing to a human with the same cognitive abilities as the animal, and if it isn't okay to do it to the human, it isn't okay to do

to the animal. (These examples are often unpleasant to think about, because we're used to thinking of animals and humans so differently.) For example, babies and some adults with severe cognitive disabilities have cognitive abilities and abilities to feel pleasure and pain that are no greater than those of a cow. So, if it is wrong to kill those humans or conduct scientific experiments on them, it's wrong to kill a cow or experiment on it. Animals are bred and killed for food in huge numbers, generally living in conditions bad for their wellbeing, even though nutritional alternatives are available. They're also used in scientific experiments that offer little benefit. Singer says that as these practices cost far more in wellbeing than they contribute, they're wrong.¹

Another topic on which utilitarianism has been influential is our behaviour towards the world's poor. In a famous article, Singer asks us to imagine passing a child drowning in a pond (1972). If you can save the child, it would be wrong not to, even if you suffer some inconvenience or ruin your clothes. As it happens, there are children dying of starvation and easily preventable diseases whom we can save just as easily by making donations to aid organisations. Just as it is wrong to let the child drown in the pond if we can save her, it is wrong to let a child far from us die of starvation or disease if we can save her. There is no ethically relevant difference between the child in the pond and children dying of starvation. The children dying of starvation are far away, but it isn't obvious why this matters ethically. So, Singer argues, we should be making substantial donations to aid organisations. This argument led people to establish groups like Giving What We Can, which encourages people to pledge to give 10% of their income to the most effective charities.

These arguments that we should change how we treat animals and respond to severe poverty are good examples of how utilitarianism works in practice. Although utilitarian theories developed a great deal between Bentham and Singer—we'll see several variations in the next section—we can see the continuity between Singer and Bentham's saying that "each is to count for one, and no one for more than one" (J. S. Mill 1863, 257). The utilitarian idea is still that we should

¹ Singer has been accused of seriously devaluing the lives of disabled people in some such arguments.

make the world a better place by improving wellbeing, and that everyone's wellbeing matters equally.

§4 Types of Utilitarianism

4.1 Types of Utilitarianism with Different Theories of Wellbeing

Utilitarianism says that what matters, ethically, is wellbeing. Wellbeing is what you have that makes your life go well: what's ultimately good for you. But philosophers of wellbeing disagree about what the correct theory of wellbeing is – about what it is that's ultimately good for you – and utilitarianism isn't committed to any particular view. One way of dividing types of utilitarianism is therefore by the theory of wellbeing they hold to be correct.

One view of wellbeing we've already encountered is hedonism, the view that wellbeing is a matter of having pleasure and not having pain or suffering. This was Bentham and Mill's view. Theories of wellbeing are concerned with what wellbeing *ultimately* consists in, so hedonists can think lots of different things can contribute to wellbeing that aren't pleasurable themselves, if they *result* in pleasure. Exercising might contribute to your wellbeing, for example, even if you don't enjoy it. If being fit and healthy gives you pleasure, and exercise makes you fit and healthy, then exercise contributes to your wellbeing.

An objection to hedonism is that it makes all wellbeing a matter just of having certain experiences, regardless of whether those experiences are based in reality. If there was an "experience machine" that gave you great pleasure by making you think you were experiencing the life most pleasant for you, when in reality you're just immobile and hooked up to a machine, many people think hooking up to the machine wouldn't be good for your wellbeing (Nozick 1974, 43). But in this example, the person inside the machine is experiencing as much as or more pleasure than she would outside it. So, if you think that being in the machine wouldn't be good for your wellbeing, you can't think hedonism is correct.

The *desire-satisfaction* (also called *preference-satisfaction*) theory of wellbeing holds that wellbeing is a matter of having satisfied desires: getting what it is in life you want or prefer, whether or not that gives you pleasure. The word "desire" can make us think of pleasures like food or sex, but desires include things like wanting world peace, wanting to be kind, and wanting your loved ones to be safe.

The stronger and more important a desire is to you, the more its satisfaction contributes to your wellbeing.

Some desire satisfaction theorists think that satisfying *any* desire you have contributes to your wellbeing, while others think that only satisfying *certain* desires matters. Some of your desires might be ones you wish you didn't have, like a regretful smoker's desire for a cigarette; and other desires might be ones that you have because you're not thinking clearly or you're misinformed, like your desire to quench your thirst by drinking what you think is water but is actually gin. The view that all your desires matter for your wellbeing is the *unrestricted* desire-satisfaction theory, while the views that say only some desires matter are *restricted* desire-satisfaction theories.

An objection to desire-satisfaction theories is that even if a person is thinking clearly and is well-informed, her deepest desires might be for a life that *can't* be good for her. Perhaps, for example, she wants more than anything to spend her life counting grass (Rawls 1971, 432). Another objection is that some desires don't seem to affect your wellbeing even if you endorse them and they're well-informed. For example, you might desire that a stranger you meet on the train has a good life, and she might go on to have a good life without you ever hearing of her again. It seems strange, at least, to think that this would contribute to your wellbeing, as it will never have an effect on you that you'll be aware of.

Utilitarians tend to endorse either hedonism or a desire-satisfaction theory. Some, though, hold an *objective list* theory. These theories are called "objective" because they say wellbeing doesn't depend on your attitudes, such as your desires; and they're called "lists" because they usually say wellbeing consists of having several different things that are good for you. Things on the list might include health, knowledge, good relationships, and freedom. Having pleasure and having some satisfied desires can also be on the list. Whereas hedonism says that *only* pleasure matters, and desire-satisfaction theories say *only* satisfied desires matter, objective list theories can include some kinds of pleasures and satisfied desires on their list.

One difficulty with objective list theories is that they say that things you don't care about in the slightest can determine whether you have wellbeing or not, which seems wrong. For example, an objective list theory might have knowledge on the list. If someone has great knowledge about something they don't care about in the slightest, it is odd to think that this adds to their wellbeing. Another

is that some objective list theories don't have an explanation for what does and doesn't go on the list. For example, a theory might have health, good relationships, knowledge, accomplishment, and acting well towards others on the list. But what do those things all have in common that makes them constituents of wellbeing?

There's a huge literature on theories of wellbeing, and each theory has responses to the objections I've mentioned (and to the many objections I haven't mentioned). For our purposes what matters is that there are different theories of wellbeing, any one of which a utilitarian might think gives the right account of what it is we should promote in the world. Importantly, it's no objection to utilitarianism to argue that a particular theory of wellbeing is wrong; everyone thinks there's *some* correct theory of wellbeing, and whatever it says wellbeing is, that's what we should promote. An argument against the particular theory of wellbeing a utilitarian view uses is only an objection to a *particular kind* of utilitarianism, rather than utilitarianism as a whole.

4.2 Types of Utilitarianism with Different Theories of Right Action

Another difference between utilitarian theories is what exactly they say makes an action right. The simplest utilitarian criterion of right action is that an action is right if and only if, and because, it has consequences for wellbeing at least as good as any other act. This is called *act utilitarianism*. Put simply, what makes an act right or wrong is just the consequences it has for wellbeing.

A problem with act utilitarianism is that we can think of situations in which it recommends acts that seem deeply wrong. In a famous example, we're asked to imagine a sheriff in a small town with a Black minority and a White population hostile towards them (McCloskey 1957). The White population believes that a particular Black man committed a rape, when he's in fact innocent. The sheriff cannot find out who committed the rape, and if no one is convicted of it the White population will riot against the Black population and likely kill several people. The sheriff can frame and punish the person the White population suspects, and that will avert the riot. Act utilitarianism seems to say that the right thing for the sheriff to do is to frame the person. But this seems deeply wrong to many people.

In response to problems like the sheriff example, some utilitarians reject act utilitarianism in favour of *rule utilitarianism*. According to rule utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if, and because, it's in accord with one of the right ethical

rules, and the right ethical rules are the ones that have the best consequences for wellbeing overall if people generally internalise and follow them (Hooker 2000, 32). Put simply, what makes an action right or wrong are the consequences for wellbeing of following the rule that says to do it. In the sheriff case, rule utilitarianism would say it's wrong for the sheriff to frame the innocent man, because doing so would breach the rule that you should only punish people for things they've done. That's one of the right ethical rules because people generally following it has good consequences; almost always, punishing people for what they *have* done wrong and not what they *haven't* promotes wellbeing.

Act utilitarians argue that rule utilitarianism is wrong because, they say, it doesn't make sense to follow a rule in those exceptional cases when doing so won't have good consequences and might even cause misery. The act utilitarian J. J. C. Smart called always sticking to the rules "rule worship" (1956, 349). If rule utilitarianism *does* allow exceptions, act utilitarians say, then it's actually just act utilitarianism after all, as this would mean that it is ultimately the consequences of acts that matter, not the consequences of rules. For example, a good rule is to save people from drowning if you can. But what if the person is a murderous dictator, whose death will free a nation from terrible suffering? If rule utilitarians permit an exception in this case because the consequences of saving the dictator would be so bad, it seems rule utilitarians are evaluating the consequences of individual actions after all, rather than thinking in terms of rules.

However, some utilitarians have a different criterion for right *action* than they have for right *decision making*. For example, you might think that what *makes* an action right or wrong is the consequences it has for wellbeing. But you might also think that *deciding what to do* by working out the consequences of each act is a bad way to do things, and so you should follow rules instead. After all, it is almost certainly impractical to calculate—case by case—the consequences of every action we perform. Hence, we can accept *act utilitarianism* as the *criterion* for right action, while using *rule-following* as the decision-making *procedure*. This kind of theory is called *indirect utilitarianism* because you don't work out what to do by directly working out what the right action is.

The difference between indirect utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism can be confusing when indirect utilitarianism says the right decision procedure is to follow rules. The difference is that although rule utilitarianism and this kind of indirect utilitarianism both say you should follow the rules, rule utilitarianism

says what makes an act right is that *it's in accordance with the right rules*. But indirect utilitarianism says that what makes an act right is that *it has the best consequences*. So, indirect utilitarianism can sometimes seem odd, in that it can say that sometimes the act you should perform isn't actually the right act. The reason indirect utilitarianism says that is because it says you shouldn't be *thinking about* which act has the best consequences, just which act fits the best rules. (See figure 1.)

	Rule utilitarianism	Indirect utilitarianism
What makes an act right?	The act fits the set of rules that have the best consequences.	The act has the best consequences.
How do you decide what to do?	Follow the right set of rules (the rules that have the best consequences).	Follow the right set of rules (the rules that have the best consequences).

Figure 1: Rule utilitarianism and indirect utilitarianism

Indirect utilitarianism can help with objections to act utilitarianism like the sheriff example, while avoiding the problems that rule utilitarianism has. It can say that the right action in the sheriff case is to frame the innocent person to avoid the deadly riot. But it also says that the sheriff should *not* decide to do that, because the sheriff shouldn't be thinking about which act has the best consequences. Instead, he should be making decisions according to the best rules, which say *not* to frame innocent people. Although following those rules means the sheriff won't perform the best act *in this case*, over the course of the sheriff's life he'll do more good this way.

§5 Objections

As with other ethical theories, a wide range of arguments have been made against utilitarianism. Utilitarians have responded to these objections by adjusting their theories or arguing that the objections fail. This prompts a new round of objections and yet more responses to those objections, generating a large literature. Here we'll look at just three objections and the most common utilitarian responses to them.

5.1 The Cluelessness Objection

One objection to utilitarianism is that we can't be sure what the consequences of our actions will be, and so if utilitarianism is the right ethical theory, we can never know what the right action is. If utilitarianism is right, the objection says, then we're ethically "clueless." Utilitarians, though, say that we know well enough the *likelihood* of various consequences of our actions. For example, it's possible that killing someone just because he annoys you might have good consequences overall, but very unlikely; and it's possible that saving a drowning child will have bad consequences overall, but very unlikely. We can't *always* know what the right action is under utilitarianism, but that's the case for ethical theories in general.

The other two objections we'll look at are more important than the cluelessness objection. One of these objections is that if utilitarianism is correct, then we're obliged to do things that seem to be very wrong; this can be called the *injustice* objection (Mulgan 2007, 93). The other objection is that if utilitarianism is correct, then we're obliged to do things that ask far too much of us; this is called the *demandingness* objection.

5.2 The Injustice Objection

We've encountered an example of the injustice objection, the sheriff case. Another common example is a surgeon who has five patients who need different life-saving organ transplants and one healthy patient with all those organs. The surgeon could save the five sick patients by killing the healthy patient and transplanting her organs to the others. Utilitarianism seems to say the surgeon ought to do that, which seems wrong.

We also saw earlier a possible utilitarian response to such injustice objections, which was to change from act utilitarianism to rule utilitarianism. The rules with

the best consequences say sheriffs should only charge people they believe are guilty (or the legal system would collapse) and surgeons shouldn't deliberately kill their patients (or people wouldn't go to the hospital).

But there are ways to respond to the injustice objection while sticking to act utilitarianism. One way is to admit that act utilitarianism requires the action that *seems* unjust, but to deny that it *is* unjust. For example, utilitarians might say that it *feels* very wrong for the sheriff to frame the innocent person, but ask, is it *really* better to let several people be killed by rioters instead? Part of this utilitarian response can be arguing that our intuitions about these cases aren't reliable; that those intuitions are shaped by what's *usually* the right thing to do or are something we have because of humans' early evolutionary history, and they don't reliably work in societies like ours where we have well-developed legal systems and people can do things like organ transplants.

Another response to the injustice objections is to say that the examples are too unrealistic to matter. Utilitarians might say, for example, that circumstances in which a surgeon can kill a person and successfully transplant five of their organs into five other patients, while being certain those five people's lives will be saved, are too unlikely to worry about. And if a surgeon thinks she is in these circumstances the chances that she's got something wrong and wouldn't make things better by killing the healthy patient are high enough that she should play it safe and just care for her patients in the normal way. Although Bentham and Mill didn't encounter these kinds of objections, this kind of response seems in keeping with their emphasis on real, practical matters.

5.3 The Demandingness Objection

The demandingness objection is that if utilitarianism is right, then there are some things we're obliged to do, but we *can't* be obliged to do them because they ask too much of us. For example, think of Singer's argument that we ought to save children's lives if we can, even if they're in distant countries. There are so many children whose lives we can save by making donations that Singer's argument seems to mean that we should radically change our lives. Any money we spend on luxuries, even small ones like a trip to the movies, could instead go towards saving people's lives. And as our luxuries don't make as much difference to our wellbeing as staying alive does to the wellbeing of people facing death from curable disease or starvation, utilitarianism seems to require us to give up all our

luxuries. We'd not only have to live extremely simply, but also give up on our important plans in life—for example, going to university—which don't contribute more to our wellbeing than using our resources and time to save others contributes to theirs. But, the objection goes, this *can't* be right—if an ethical theory asks this much of us, it must be wrong.

One utilitarian response to the demandingness objection is to accept that utilitarianism is this demanding but deny that means it's wrong. We happen to live in a world that's very unjust and in which we're able to make a difference to the lives of suffering people not geographically close to us (something that just happens to be true at this point in history). In these circumstances, it happens that we can save others from death or disease instead of indulging in luxuries for ourselves, so we should do so. Utilitarians can, again, question the reliability of our intuitions that utilitarianism is too demanding, as we evolved those intuitions when we couldn't affect distant strangers.

Utilitarians can also soften the demandingness of the theory in a couple of ways. One way is to abandon the distinction between *right and wrong* in favour of a distinction between *better and worse*: we should think of actions as being on a scale of worse to better. This is called *scalar utilitarianism* (Norcross 2006). This means we can think of someone giving some of her income and time to people in need, but still spending time on her own plans and enjoying some indulgences, as not doing what's *wrong*, just not doing what's *best*. Another thing that can soften utilitarianism's demandingness is to distinguish between *doing something wrong* (or not doing what's best) and *doing something blameworthy*. Although utilitarianism might mean that people should ideally be giving a great deal of their money and time to others, it doesn't necessarily mean that people should be blamed for not doing that. Utilitarianism only supports blaming people when that has the best consequences.

§6 Conclusion

Utilitarianism has waxed and waned in its popularity since its inception. It was the dominant ethical theory for much of the twentieth century, before falling out of favour in the second half, as duty-based and virtue-based theories became more widely accepted. However, Western philosophers are strongly divided on which ethical theory is correct, and utilitarianism retains a strong following. There are no indications of this changing, and utilitarianism will continue to have

strong support – and to have a strong influence on many non-utilitarian theories – as long as people find appealing the ideas that what matters ethically is making the world a better place, and that what makes the world a better place is the wellbeing of everyone in it.

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