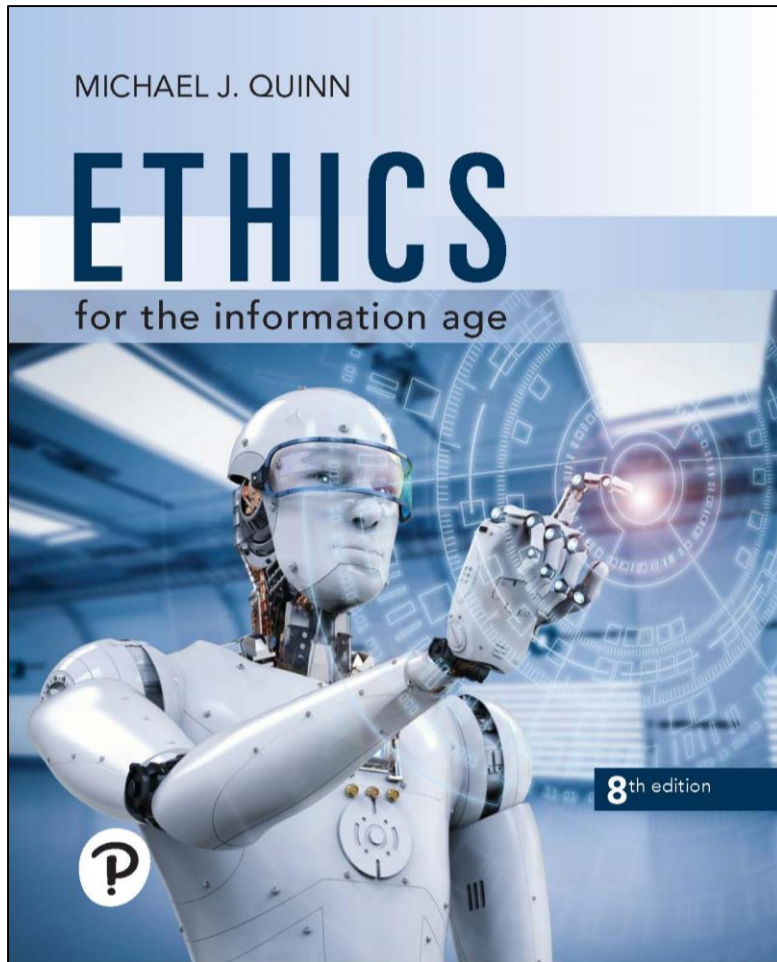


Ethics for the Information Age

Eighth Edition



Chapter 2

Ethical Frameworks

Learning Objectives

2.6 Kantianism (Duty Ethics)

2.7 Act utilitarianism

2.8 Rule utilitarianism

A Good Ethical Theory Enables You to Make Persuasive, Logical Arguments



2.6 Kantianism (Duty Ethics)

Critical Importance of Good Will

- Good will: the desire to do the right thing
- Immanuel **Kant (1720-1804)**: Only thing in the world that is good without qualification is a good will
- Reason should cultivate desire to do right thing
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant
- German [philosopher](#), one of the central [Enlightenment](#) thinkers. Kant's comprehensive and systematic works in [epistemology](#), [metaphysics](#), [ethics](#), and [aesthetics](#) have made him one of the most influential figures in modern [Western philosophy](#)

How to apply Kantian Theory

- Act only from moral rules that you can at the same time **will** to be **universal** moral laws.

Illustration

- Question: Can a person in dire straits make a promise with the intention of **breaking it later**?
- Proposed rule: “I may make promises with the intention of later breaking them.”
- The person in trouble: wants his promise to be believed so he can get what he needs.

Illustration (2 of 2)

- Universalize rule: Everyone may make & break promises
- Everyone breaking promises would make promises unbelievable, **contradicting** desire to have promise believed
- The rule is flawed. The answer to the question is “No.”

Another Way to Reason It out (1 of 2)

- Question: Can I make a promise with the intention of breaking it later?
- I want my false promise to be believed.
- In order for my false promise to be believable, I want everyone **except myself** to be truthful all the time.

Another Way to Reason It out (2 of 2)

- In other words, I want to **privilege** my needs and desires over those of everyone else.
- **Contradiction** between what **I** want to do and what I want **others** to do.
- Therefore, what I am considering doing is **wrong**.

A Quick Check

- When evaluating a proposed action, reverse roles
- What would you think if that person did the same thing to you?
- Negative reaction → evidence that your will to do that action **violates** the **principle of good will**
- **Notice similarity with the Golden Rule**

Another way to apply Kantian Theory

- Act so that you treat both **yourself and other people** as **ends in themselves** and **never** only as a **means** وسيلة to an **end** غاية.
- This is usually an easier formulation to work with.

Kant: Wrong to Use Another Person Solely as a Means to an End



Plagiarism Scenario

- Carla
 - Single mother
 - Works full time
 - Takes two evening courses/semester
- History class
 - Requires more work than normal
 - Carla earning an “A” on all work so far
 - Carla doesn’t have time to write final report
- Carla purchases report; submits it as her own work

Kantian Evaluation (1st method)

- Carla wants credit for plagiarized report
- **Rule: “You may claim credit for work performed by someone else”**
- If rule universalized, reports would **no longer be credible** indicators of student’s knowledge, and professors would not give credit for reports
- Proposal moral rule is **self-defeating**
- **It is wrong for Carla to turn in a purchased report**

Kantian Evaluation (2nd method)

- Carla submitted another person's work as her own
- She attempted to deceive professor
- She treated **professor** as a **means** to an end
 - End: passing the course
 - Means: manipulate professor
- **What Carla did was wrong**

• لاحظ: لا يؤخذ بالاعتبار الظروف المخففة للعمل الخاطئ ليرى في ضوء أفضل!!

Case for Kantianism

- Treats all persons as **moral equals**
- Gives all people moral worth as rational, autonomous beings
- **Holds everyone to the same standard**
- Produces **universal moral guidelines** عالمية تشمل الجميع

Problems: Duties may Conflict:

Perfect and Imperfect Duties

- **Perfect duty:** duty obliged to fulfill without exception
 - Example: Telling the truth
- **Imperfect duty:** duty obliged to fulfill in general but not in every instance
 - Example: Helping others
- **In the conflict between perfect and imperfect: Perfect prevails**

Case Against Kantianism

- Sometimes no rule adequately characterizes an action
- Sometimes there is no way to resolve a conflict between rules
 - In a conflict between a perfect duty and an imperfect duty, perfect duty prevails
 - Example: Money to help a friend or pay a debt??
 - In a conflict between two perfect duties, no solution
 - Steal to pay a debt??
 - In a conflict between two imperfect duties, no solution
 - Not enough money to help Parents/Aunt and Friend
- Kantianism allows no exceptions to perfect duties
- Conclusion: Despite weaknesses, a **workable ethical theory**

2.7 Act Utilitarianism

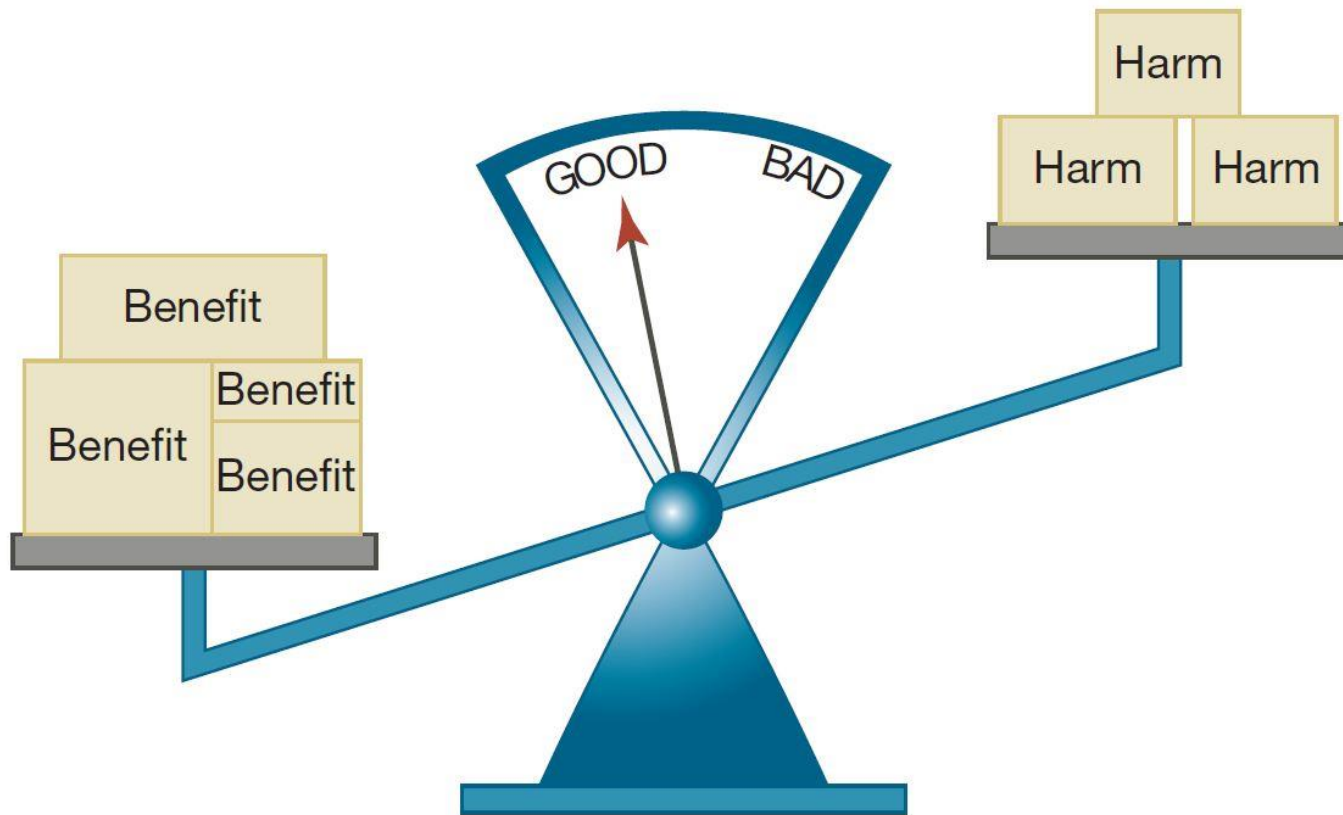
Principle of Utility (1 of 2) المنفعة

- Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873)
- An action is good if its **benefits exceed** its harms
- An action is bad if its **harms exceed** its benefits
- Utility: tendency of an object to produce happiness or prevent unhappiness for an individual or a community
- Happiness = advantage = benefit = good = pleasure (**Positive**)
- Unhappiness = disadvantage = cost = evil = pain (**Negative**)
- Utilitarianism: مذهب المنفعة, النفعية

Principle of Utility (Greatest Happiness Principle)

- An action is **right** (or **wrong**) to the extent that it **increases** (or **decreases**) the **total happiness** of the affected parties.

Principle of Utility (2 of 2)



Act Utilitarianism

- Utilitarianism
 - Morality of an action has nothing to do with **intent**
 - Focuses on the **consequences**
 - A consequentialist theory
- Act utilitarianism
 - Add up change in happiness of all affected beings
 - $\text{Sum} > 0$, action is good
 - $\text{Sum} < 0$, action is bad
 - Right action to take: one that maximizes the sum

Highway Routing Scenario

- State may replace a curvy stretch of highway
- New highway segment 1 mile shorter
- 150 houses would have to be removed
- Some wildlife habitat would be destroyed



Evaluation

- Costs
 - \$20 million to compensate homeowners
 - \$10 million to construct new highway
 - Lost wildlife habitat worth \$1 million
- Benefits
 - \$39 million savings in automobile driving costs
- Conclusion
 - Benefits exceed costs
 - Building highway a good action

Case for Act Utilitarianism

- Focuses on happiness
- Down-to-earth (practical)
- Comprehensive

Case **Against** Act Utilitarianism

- Unclear whom to **include** in calculations and how far out into the future to consider
- Too much work
- Ignores our innate فطري sense of duty
- We cannot predict consequences with certainty
- Susceptible معرض to the problem of moral luck
- Conclusion: Overall, a workable ethical theory
- [bury waste outside the country, cheaply]+-???

2.8 Rule Utilitarianism

Applying Principle of Utility to Rules

- We ought to adopt moral rules which, if followed by everyone, will lead to the greatest increase in total happiness
- Act utilitarianism applies Principle of Utility to **individual actions**
- Rule utilitarianism applies Principle of Utility to **moral rules**

Anti-Worm Scenario

- August 2003: **Blaster** worm infected thousands of Windows computers
- Soon after, **Nachi** worm appeared
 - Took control of vulnerable computer
 - Located and destroyed copies of **Blaster**
 - Downloaded software patch to fix security problem
 - Used computer as launching pad to try to “infect” other vulnerable PCs

Evaluation Using Rule Utilitarianism (1 of 2)

- Proposed rule: If I can write a **helpful** worm that **removes** a **harmful** worm from infected computers and shields them from future attacks, I should do so
- Who would benefit
 - People who do not keep their systems updated

Evaluation Using Rule Utilitarianism (2 of 2)

- Who would be harmed
 - People who use networks
 - People who's computers are invaded by buggy anti-worms
 - System administrators
- Conclusion: Harm outweighs benefits. Releasing anti-worm is wrong.

Case for Rule Utilitarianism

- Not every moral decision requires performing utilitarian calculus
- Moral rules survive exceptional situations
- Avoids the problem of moral luck
- Reduces the problem of bias
- Appeals to a wide cross-section of society

Case **Against** Utilitarianism in General

- All consequences must be measured on a single scale.
 - All units must be the same in order to do the sum
 - In certain circumstances utilitarians must **quantify the value** of a **human life**
- Utilitarianism ignores the problem of an unjust distribution of good consequences.
 - Utilitarianism does **not** mean “the greatest good of the greatest number” That requires a principle of justice
 - What happens when a conflict arises between the Principle of Utility and a principle of justice?
- **Conclusion:** Despite weaknesses, both act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism are **workable ethical theories**

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