

**What do we want in a theory of welfare?**

- Usually / always people should know / care about what is good for them (?)
    - Preferentism seemingly does the best at this
      - Internal vs external:
        - Internal preferentism allows us to more easily know when we are better or worse off
        - External preferentism allows people to care about what is good for them
      - Past preferentism allows people to sometimes now not care about what is good for them
      - Ideal preferentism has just as much of a problem as objective list views
    - Welfare hedonism is not so bad at this: people typically care about happiness
      - Counterexamples? Parents are willing to sacrifice own happiness...
    - Objective list theories seem to do the worst at this
  - It should rule out bizarre / implausible benefits (?)
    - E.g. Linda desires that something happen in a distant place that she will never know about; Dex is happy doing awful things
    - Objective list theories and ideal preferentism are great at this
    - Hedonism is ok at this
      - It allows people to benefit from awful or weird things as long as they are happy
      - But at least happiness is intuitively valuable
    - Preferentism can struggle with this
      - This is the motivation for ideal views, or self-regarding views
  - Maybe it should allow for prudentially rational self-sacrifice, or give value to integrity, or authenticity (?)
    - People seem sometimes to want meaning rather than happiness, or “real” relationships / achievements at the cost of their pleasure, or feel that their lives are better off when others are better off
    - Objective list theories seemingly do best at this
    - Preferentism can make sense of this
1. A distant relative offers to treat you to dinner at Sybill’s Saint James, a decently fancy restaurant in Rolla Missouri (about 90 miles away). The dinner would cost about \$50, and you would ordinarily not be willing to pay that much for dinner there, but you are curious about the restaurant as people say it is quite good. You are neutral about your relative’s company – it will neither add anything to the evening nor make the evening worse than it would otherwise have been. Ignoring the costs of gasoline, and assuming you have nothing much to do that evening, would you go?

**Some decision theories**

*expected utility theory*: Do what [maximizes / sufficiently increases] expected utility.

*expected utility*: the average amount of good produced by the decision minus the average amount of bad produced by the decision (good and bad are usually based on welfare of relevant individuals)

*safety oriented theories*: Do what is safest. What does that mean?

*maximin*: Take the option that has the best worst outcome.

*maximax*: Take the option that has the best best outcome.

*maxiprok*: Take the option that has the best chance of turning out ok.

2. A 50 year old patient has cancer. We have three options: euthanize the patient now, do nothing, or administer an experimental drug to the patient. Euthanasia will cause a quick and painless death. If we do nothing, the patient will most likely suffer in great pain for a few months and then die, but there is a 20% chance that the cancer will go into remission for a few years before coming back and killing the patient. The experimental drug has a 90% chance of making the patient suffer even worse pain for a few months, and a 10% chance of making the cancer go away for good.

*Consider each theory of welfare we have discussed. On each, would euthanasia of the following people be the expected best option?*

3. Ms. Butler's father?

4. A severely depressed adult whose depression is most likely untreatable?