

welfare: that which is intrinsically prudentially good for people

objective list theories of welfare: these theories say that certain things are intrinsically prudentially good for all people, and list what they are

plausible candidates: happiness, autonomy (or freedom), friendship/relationships, meaningful work

1. Wilfred is a loner: he does not want or enjoy relationships with other human beings. Would you make Wilfred better off if you formed a relationship with him? If you had a relationship with Wilfred, would you harm him by ending the relationship?

welfare hedonism: the view that A's pleasure/happiness is always intrinsically good for A, and nothing else is intrinsically good for A, and that A's pain/suffering is always intrinsically bad for A, and nothing else is intrinsically bad for A

2. Dex takes great pleasure at torturing small animals. As long as he doesn't get caught, is he better off torturing small animals than he is not doing so?
3. Sue's partner no longer loves her or finds her attractive. However, the partner is an excellent actor, and can fake these feelings for a few more months. Assume that Sue won't be any more upset about breaking up in a few months than she would be breaking up now. Is Sue better off if the partner keeps up a sham relationship with her for a few more months than she would be breaking up now?

preferentism [also called “*desire theories*” or “*desire satisfaction theories*”]: welfare consists in getting/doing what one wants/prefers/desires; not getting what one wants/prefers/desires is bad for one

4. Linda desires that someone, somewhere in the world wins ten games of solitaire in a row. This happens thousands of miles away from Linda. Is Linda better off?

5. Callie desires when she was a kid to drive a convertible as an adult. Callie now drives a convertible and hates it. Does achieving her childhood desire make her somewhat better off?

unrestricted preferentism: achieving any desire in any way is good for one

present desire views: one is only better of now getting what one desires now

internal vs external views: one is better of *knowing* that one’s desire is achieved versus one is better off if one’s desire is achieved (whether or not that is known)

ideal/informed views: only ideal or informed desires count

self-regarding views: only self-regarding desires count

Theories of welfare and euthanasia

Claim: If a patient P’s *expected welfare* is positive, then it is wrong to euthanize that patient without morally relevant consent.

expected welfare: this is calculated by considering the possible ways the patient could current be now and in the future, determining how good or bad each would be for the patient, and weighing these values by the likelihood of each possibility

According to each theory of welfare, would it be wrong to euthanize the following patients without their morally relevant consent?

6. Ms. Butler’s father?

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