Utilitarianism

Includes two doctrines:

1. The *right* action: actions are right if they maximise the good for the majority. (The greatest good for the greatest number.)

2. The *good*: happiness/satisfaction is good.
Criticisms of utilitarianism:


2. But “the end doesn’t justify the means” (Kant)
   — It’s possible to justify greater inequality of good, against fairness or equality or *redistributive justice*
   — or to punish the innocent for maximum gain, against *retributive justice*
   — or against duties of *truth-telling* or *promise-keeping*
Rights?

3. What of rights? If A injures B, for the good of the majority, but may violate B’s rights.

4. A is on a bus party which is captured by bandits. The (honourable) bandit chief promises to release A + the rest if A agrees to shoot any member of the party. If A refuses, then the bandit chief will shoot all. Should A shoot \( \rightarrow \) the rest set free?

Utilitarianism missing a link to morality of the person.

P.S. See Peter Singer on next Monday’s Enough Rope with Andrew Denton (Channel 2 at 9:30 pm 4/10/04, the 47th anniversary of Sputnik 1’s launch).
### Efficiency v. Equity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficiency v. Equity</th>
<th>more equal</th>
<th>Greater efficiency, greater equality.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less efficiency, greater equality.</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smaller cake, more even slices.</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<th>Status Quo Ante</th>
<th>efficiency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less efficiency, less equality.</td>
<td>Greater efficiency, less equality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smaller cake, less even slices.</td>
<td>Larger cake, less even slices.</td>
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**Efficiency v. Equity or Fairness**

(lexicographic ordering)
Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923) —

Proposed a limitation on utilitarianism:

*The Pareto Improvement Criterion:*

An action should be undertaken if it improves the welfare of at least one person, while making no-one worse off.

Consequences?