

Candidate 6 evidence

I believe that in this situation, that Utilitarianism will provide a successful solution to the scenario that maximises aggregate pleasure and minimises aggregate pain. A Utilitarian would be morally obligated to cause the death of the dictator.

Utilitarians make decisions based off which action would create the most aggregate pleasure (happiness) and least aggregate pain (unhappiness). There are many ways philosophers can do this: Bentham's Hedonic Calculus which is a pseudo-scientific way of calculating how much pain or pleasure and action will cause which is judged based on seven criteria: Intensity, Duration, Certainty, Propinquity, Fecundity, Purity and Extent. The higher the numerical value an action has, the more moral said action is. Another way Utilitarians can make decision is John Stuart Mill's 'Higher and Lower Pleasures' which

means that some actions are seen as higher because they can only be performed by humans: watching a movie, admiring art and listening to music and some pleasures are seen as lower because they are done by both humans and animals: eating, drinking and sex. A way to distinguish the two are that higher pleasures are intellectual pleasures of the mind and lower pleasures are bodily, sensual pleasures.

A Utilitarian would first ask what the courses of action are in this scenario: save the dictator's life through surgery or kill the dictator during surgery. They would then figure out everyone affected by these actions: the surgeon, the dictator, the tens of thousands the dictator hurts through his leadership and the dictator's loyal staff. The Utilitarian would then decide who would receive the most pain or pleasure from each action. If the surgeon decides to complete the surgery and save the dictator's life, the dictator and his loyal staff gain pleasure from his life being saved but the surgeon and the tens of thousands the dictator hurts through his actions gain pain from the suffering the dictator will inflict on people now that he is alive. If the surgeon decides to kill the dictator during surgery and make it seem they are not responsible then the surgeon and the tens of thousands the dictator would have harmed gain pleasure knowing that the dictator can no longer cause harm to people but the dictator and his loyal staff gain pain from the dictator's death knowing they will soon be out of a job and persecuted. A Utilitarian would choose to kill the dictator because the pleasure that the tens of thousands of people the dictator could have hurt and the surgeon gain outweighs the pain the dictator and his loyal staff receive from his passing.

I believe that Utilitarianism works well in this scenario to decide on an outcome to the situation that creates the most aggregate pleasure and minimise the amount of aggregate pain.

In conclusion, I believe that Utilitarianism provides a successful solution to the scenario that maximises aggregate pleasure and minimises aggregate pain. Causing the death of the dictator was the morally correct action to do.