

# Candidate 1 evidence

## Would a utilitarian approve of the death penalty?

Utilitarianism focuses on maximizing happiness and minimizing suffering. When it comes to the death penalty, a utilitarian would weigh the pros and cons. Meaning pros might include deterring crime and providing comfort and safety to victims' families, which would create happiness. However, there are significant downsides, such as the risk of executing innocent people and the emotional damage that would be inflicted on society.

Another factor is the consideration of cost and effectiveness of the death penalty as opposed to other forms of deterrence or punishment. The death penalty can be more expensive due to long legal processes, such as maintaining death row facilities.

There are however many alternatives to the death penalty, such as life sentences, deportation and placed into psychiatric hospitals. This allows concerns of emotional wreck and legal expenses to decrease, therefore benefiting a utilitarian's moral view. This does not translate to the risk of wrongful punishment or execution, as wrongful imprisonment is in some cases not avoidable.

A utilitarian however would need to weigh these positives and negatives to therefore see if the death penalty can be exchanged with other forms of capital punishment. These ideas were created mostly by Jeremy Bentham and titled (the greatest happiness principle.)

Life sentences however would have much less negative impact as if people have pleaded not guilty, they are given a chance to be released if at some point during their sentence they are proven to not be guilty. This shows that life sentences are more on the moral side of punishments as it gives people wrongly accused of crime a chance to be proven innocent. This then maximizes happiness as the victim's families will still have a sense of closure, while the families of the one sentenced do not suffer through the death sentence of their relative, giving the situation a better standpoint in moral definition.

However, in some cases, people are falsely accused of murder and given the death penalty, if later proven innocent after the sentence is carried out, there is no positive outcome to either the victims' families or the family of the person sentenced. This only produces negative emotions and more suffering to the families which a utilitarian would heavily disagree with

Overall, there are some exceptions to the death penalty being both accepted and moral. One of them being the extent of the crimes committed, and another being the evidence given to prove somebody of being guilty. A utilitarian would likely not approve of the death penalty as there are many factors that would suggest an unbalanced, and negative outcome.

Would a utilitarian approve of the death penalty?

Utilitarianism might approve of the death penalty if it is believed to produce the greatest good for the greatest number and if supporters argue that it deters crime and protects everyone as utilitarianism focuses heavily on the greatest happiness principle. People might also say that the death penalty gives justice and closure to people's families/victims to murder.

Utilitarianism is a way of thinking about what is right and what is wrong, but also what brings the most happiness out of a situation. If ~~someone~~ something makes people happy it is therefore considered good. These ideas were created mostly by Jeremy Bentham and titled (The greatest happiness principle)

Utilitarianism Maximizes happiness  
minimizes suffering.

Pros: deterrence, justice to victims, safety.

Cons: Risk of wrongful executions, emotional toll, moral issues.

Alternatives: life sentences, LWOP

Conclusion: equal benefits to drawback/negative to see if it maximises overall happiness