

growth. However, it is his article “Utilitarianism Revised,” published in the journal *Mind* in 1936, that is of most consequence to utilitarian theory. In this article, Harrod defends the utilitarian approach against various criticisms by elaborating the theory. First, he argues that morality is concerned with means rather than ends, that is, with the promotion of whatever ultimate goals are sought by the greatest number of people. Second, he argues that utilitarian principles call for adherence to universal rules of conduct rather than conditional decisions in matters where repetition and predictability are socially beneficial.

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HARSANYI, JOHN C. (1920–2000)

John Charles Harsanyi (János Károly Harsányi) was born on 29 May 1920 in Budapest to Charles and Alice Harsanyi. Raised as a Catholic (his parents had converted from Judaism), Harsanyi graduated from the Lutheran Gymnasium in Budapest and won the national Mathematics prize for high school students in 1937. He subsequently received a diploma in Pharmacology from the University of Budapest. Following

the establishment of a pro-Nazi government in 1944, Harsanyi spent 7 months in a forced labour camp before escaping captivity. He completed a D.Phil. in Philosophy with minors in Sociology and Psychology at the University of Budapest in 1947 and then taught in the University’s Institute of Sociology for one year before being forced to resign because of his anti-Marxist views. Harsanyi then ran the family pharmacy until he fled with his future wife, Anne Klauber, and her parents to Vienna in 1950, subsequently emigrating to Australia, where he became a citizen in 1954.

Harsanyi completed an MA in Economics at the University of Sydney in 1953 and then took up a lectureship at the University of Queensland. He received a Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University in 1959. He was a research fellow at the Australian National University from 1958 to 1961, a Professor of Economics at Wayne State University from 1961 to 1963, and a Professor of Business Administration at the University of California at Berkeley from 1965 (and a Professor of Economics from 1966) until he retired in 1990. He became a US citizen in 1990. In addition to his Nobel Prize in 1994, Harsanyi was the recipient of many honours. Near the end of his life, Harsanyi suffered from Alzheimer’s disease, and died in Berkeley on 9 August 2000 of a heart attack.

Harsanyi devoted his career to identifying unique solutions to problems in Game Theory and in Ethics using Bayesian principles of rationality. He provided a decision-theoretic foundation for Utilitarianism based on principles of rationality for individual choice under uncertainty (expected utility theory). He also provided a game-theoretic analysis of Rule Utilitarianism. It was for his research in Game Theory that Harsanyi shared the Nobel Prize in Economics with John Nash and Reinhard Selten.

With a cardinal utility function, it is meaningful to make intrapersonal comparisons

of utility gains and losses. Utilitarianism not only presupposes that utility is a cardinal measure of individual well-being, but also that interpersonal comparisons of utility gains and losses are possible. According to the ordinal utility theory that gained prominence in the 1930s, cardinal utility is a meaningless concept: this, if true, would undermine utilitarianism. There was a revival of interest in cardinal utility when John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern published an axiomatic account of expected utility theory in their *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (1944). However, in the following decade, there was near consensus that von Neumann-Morgenstern utility, while useful for analysing individual choice, has no relevance for social welfare analysis, what economists call “Welfare Economics.”

In “Cardinal Utility in Welfare Economics and in the Theory of Risk-Taking” (1953), Harsanyi argued that the same cardinal measure of utility is in fact employed in both expected utility theory and Welfare Economics. Furthermore, Harsanyi proposed a general procedure for making judgements about social welfare. Harsanyi identified welfare judgements with an individual’s ethical preferences, which are the preferences for different social alternatives that he would express if he exhibited a sympathetic but impartial concern for everyone. For Harsanyi, these are the preferences that an individual would have if he thought there was an equal chance of being anyone in society, complete with their tastes, values, and objective circumstances. This hypothetical choice situation is a problem in individual decision-making under uncertainty. Assuming that each person’s actual preferences for social alternatives are described using a von Neumann-Morgenstern utility function and that ethical preferences conform with expected utility theory, it then follows that the alternatives are ranked in terms of average utility, a result now known as Harsanyi’s Impartial Observer Theorem. This theorem

provides a rational choice-theoretic foundation for Average Utilitarianism.

Harsanyi’s idea of deriving substantive ethical principles from a hypothetical choice situation in which morally irrelevant information has been excluded predates John Rawls’s use of a similar construction (his original position with its thicker veil of ignorance) to derive principles of justice in *A Theory of Justice* (1971). In “Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality? A Critique of John Rawls’s Theory” (1975), Harsanyi was critical of the lack of trade-offs in Rawls’s principles, and attributes this to Rawls’s aversion to Bayesian rationality. Much of Rawls’s criticism of utilitarianism is directed at Harsanyi’s version of utilitarianism.

It is necessary for an individual in Harsanyi’s hypothetical choice situation to make interpersonal utility comparisons. The logical basis of these comparisons was investigated in “Cardinal Welfare, Individualistic Ethics, and Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility” (1955). For Harsanyi, an interpersonal utility comparison is a form of intrapersonal utility comparison: an individual determines how well off someone else is by empathetically identifying with him. Such comparisons, he argued, are empirical statements based on an *a priori* principle that says that an individual’s well-being is a determinate function (common to everybody) of his social and biological characteristics.

In the same article, Harsanyi introduced his Social Aggregation Theorem. In this theorem, individual and social preferences for a set of risky alternatives are assumed to satisfy the expected utility axioms and two alternatives are required to be socially indifferent if everybody is indifferent between them. If each preference is represented by a von Neumann-Morgenstern utility function, it follows that the alternatives must be socially ranked by a weighted sum of the individual utilities.

The utilitarian interpretation of Harsanyi’s theorems was challenged by Amartya Sen in “Welfare Inequalities and Rawlsian

Axiomatics" (1976). Sen argued that von Neumann-Morgenstern utility is not cardinal in a sense that is relevant for making welfare comparisons. This argument was later formalized by John Weymark in "A Reconsideration of the Harsanyi-Sen Debate on Utilitarianism" (1991).

Harsanyi offered a game-theoretic analysis of Rule Utilitarianism in "Game and Decision Theoretic Models in Ethics" (1992). In Harsanyi's version of Rule Utilitarianism, an optimal moral code is one whose acceptance would maximize the sum of utilities if everybody acts in conformity with it. The optimal code is first chosen cooperatively, after which individuals freely pursue their own interests subject to the constraints imposed by the moral code. The logical status of moral rules was considered in "Ethics in Terms of Hypothetical Imperatives" (1958). In contrast to Kant, Harsanyi argued that moral rules are hypothetical imperatives of the form: if one wants to achieve A, then do B.

Harsanyi made a number of major contributions to Game Theory, particularly to bargaining theory, equilibrium selection in non-cooperative games, and the theory of games of incomplete information. Prior to the publication of his "Games with Incomplete Information Played by 'Bayesian' Players" (1967–8), no satisfactory method had been found for determining equilibrium behaviour in games in which players do not have complete information about the game's structure, including the preferences of the other players. Harsanyi's fundamental insight is that it is possible to embed such a game in a larger game of complete information and to use the latter to determine the equilibria in the original game. Harsanyi's method and his concept of a Bayesian-Nash equilibrium provide the foundations for the analysis of games of incomplete information. The analysis of economic problems in which individuals are asymmetrically informed (e.g. the design of auction mechanisms) is based on Harsanyi's pioneering research.

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See also AGGREGATIVE AND AVERAGE UTILITARIANISM; CARDINAL UTILITY; GAME THEORY; INTERPERSONAL UTILITY; ORDINAL UTILITY; PREFERENCES (PREFERENTIALISM); RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY; RAWLS, JOHN; RULE UTILITARIANISM; WELFARE (WELFARISM).

HART, HERBERT LIONEL ADOLPHUS (1907–92)

H. L. A. Hart was born on 18 July 1907, and educated at Cheltenham College, Bradford Grammar School and New College, Oxford, graduating with a First in Classical Greats in 1929. From 1932 to 1940, he practised law at the Chancery Bar; but following war service in MI5, he abandoned the law and returned to New College as a fellow and tutor in philosophy. This radical change of direction was influenced by wartime contacts with Gilbert Ryle and Stuart Hampshire. Hart joined J. L. Austin’s discussion group, where linguistic analysis countered the logical positivism of A. J. Ayer as well as the older philosophical views upheld by scholars such as H. J. Paton. None of this seemed to presage a career as a jurist; but by 1951, Hart’s participation in seminars on philosophy and legal concepts led some to see him as an appropriate successor to A. L. Goodhart as Professor of Jurisprudence. His

appointment produced a remarkable change in Hart—till then an outstanding tutor, but a reluctant lecturer, whose self-critical perfectionism restricted his publications. His professorial teaching revealed a very different personality. It also confirmed his commitment to analytical philosophy and to a utilitarian position. Neither commitment was inflexible; but the permanence of both underlay the dynamism of change.

In 1961, Hart published his most influential work on jurisprudence, *The Concept of Law*. Hart’s posthumous editors justly claimed that the book “transformed the way jurisprudence was understood and studied in the English-speaking world and beyond” (Hart, 1994, p. viii). Based on his lectures, *The Concept of Law* provided an account of the role of coercive force in legal systems and of the relationship between law and morality. The historical dimension is secondary, but important here for the relationship between Hart’s thinking and the utilitarian tradition on which he drew, particularly John Austin’s *Province of Jurisprudence* (1832), which he edited in 1954. In his introduction to this work, Hart echoed and developed Austin’s emphasis on *rules* as a—or even *the*—central element in law. He also insisted, however, on a distinction between two kinds of rule: “to say that a legal system exists entails not that there is a general habit of obedience to determinate persons, but that there is a general acceptance of a constitutional rule, simple or complex, defining the manner in which the ordinary rules of the system are to be identified” (Austin, p. xii). Hart, like Austin, mistrusted what he called, in a 1957 lecture reprinted in his *Essays in Jurisprudence and Philosophy*, “the growth of theory on the back of definition” (Hart, 1983, p. 25). His 1953 inaugural lecture on “Definition and Theory in Jurisprudence” had provided early evidence of Hart’s interest in Bentham, whom he followed in arguing that the standard genus/species mode was inappropriate for the definition of legal concepts and should

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