

As to the Term "Hedonic Calculus" or the "Calculus of Advantage"

Post by "Godfrey" of February 27, 2022 at 8:45 PM

That was an out-of-left-field example of calculating something nebulous; I was thinking of it as an example of the issues that I have with "hedonic calculus". [Joshua](#) most ably listed the types of factors that I would consider. How can you calculate 6, 7, 8 or even 5? On the other hand, it's relatively straightforward to calculate highest net worth individual: just add up the dollars. To me, "hedonic calculus" implies a straightforwardness that is deceptive, and as per Joshua's list is a great example of the shortcomings of utilitarianism vs EP.

There are times when it's useful to make lists of pros and cons of various options that one is considering. One could even attempt to weight them to account for one's feelings and intuitions. There is information to be gleaned from this exercise, but often the conclusion reached by doing such an exercise is overridden by one's feelings and intuitions (at least in my experience!)

While there some situations where you can just add up hedons and dolors, often it's not that simple and almost always the "equation" needs confirmation from the Feelings. I gravitate toward the phrase "choices and rejections" as it seems to me to imply a more open-ended process than "hedonic calculus". At the same time it seems to me to be a more direct statement of the actual process. I guess the Epicureans were on to something!