

# On the Context of the Principle of Beneficence: The Problem of Over Demandingness within Utilitarian Theory

Prasasti Pandit<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Philosophy, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, United States of America.  
prasasti.pandit@uri.edu<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper addresses the question that how much beneficence is morally obligatory. And can the principle of beneficence be practiced in its ideal sense? Morality deals with two types of ought. In its strong sense, ought prescribes such duty and obligations failures of which are morally blamable, whereas, in its weak sense, it prescribes those duties and obligations which are morally admirable but the failure of which is not morally blamable. We can say that in its strong sense ought prescribes those duties and obligations performance of which are the necessary conditions of morality for an individual. On the other hand, in its weak sense ought prescribes those duties and obligations performing of which are morally praiseworthy but the omission of which is not morally blamable. So, these duties and obligations are sufficient factors of morality but not the necessary ones. Through a detailed literature survey, this paper shows that the notion of beneficence from Utilitarian context is supererogatory in two senses. First, Utilitarianism permits too much to maximize the good for others even by imposing harm to innocent individuals which is morally unacceptable. Second, this theory often pushes the agent for maximal contribution, including maximum sacrifices to promote the overall good. The cost, the contribution, the sacrifice, no matter how costly it is for the agent, will not even count, provided it is outweighed by the benefit of others. This paper also suggests to overcome this problem by shifting the focus from the Case-specific approach to the Agent-focused approach.

**Keywords:** Morality; Utilitarianism; Beneficence; Duty; Obligation; Sacrifice; Over Demandingness; Maximization of Good; Maximum Sacrifices; Case-Specific Approach; Agent-Focused Approach.

**Received on:** 07/10/2022, **Revised on:** 21/12/2022, **Accepted on:** 25/01/2023, **Published on:** 27/02/2023

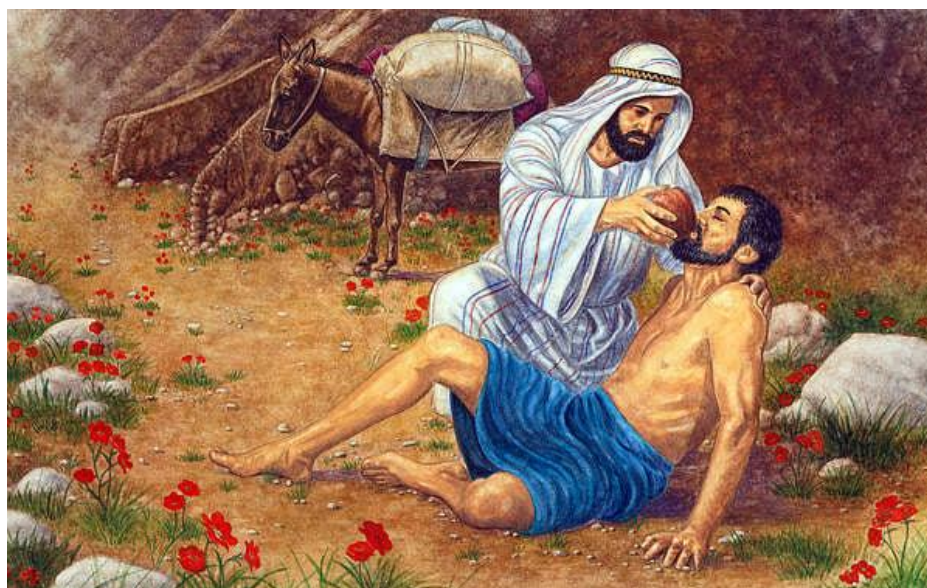
**Cite as:** P. Pandit, "On the Context of the Principle of Beneficence: The Problem of Over Demandingness within Utilitarian Theory," *FMDB Transactions on Sustainable Social Sciences Letters*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 26–42, 2023.

**Copyright** © 2023 P. Pandit, licensed to Fernando Martins De Bulhão (FMDB) Publishing Company. This is an open access article distributed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/), which permits copying, remixing, redistributing, transformation, and building upon the material in any medium so long as the original work is properly cited.

## 1. Introduction

Morality as a normative theory deal with two types of oughts. In its strong sense, ought to prescribe duty and obligations failures that are morally blameable, whereas, in its weak sense, it prescribes those duties and obligations which are morally admirable but the failure of which is not morally blameable. In its strong sense, ought to prescribe those duties and obligations that are the necessary conditions of morality for an individual. On the other hand, in its weak sense ought to prescribe those duties and obligations performing which are morally praiseworthy but the omission of which is not morally blameable. So, these duties and obligations are sufficient factors of morality but not the necessary ones. For example, this is our moral duty not to harm other individuals, failure of which is morally blameable. Nevertheless, the Utilitarian principle of beneficence demands certain amounts of contributions or sacrifices from an individual as a matter of duty or obligation for the betterment of all. Beyond that certain amount of contribution or sacrifice will be regarded as heroic actions where individuals go for the ultimate sacrifices for other beings. Such demands of contributions or sacrifices are supererogatory. To illustrate this point, Judith Thomson (1974) differentiates between the biblical character of the Good Samaritan and the Minimally Decent Samaritan (fig.1).

\*Corresponding author.



**Figure 1:** The Parable of the Good Samaritan [23]

We are not obligated to sacrifice that great amount as the Good Samaritan did in the parable. Those sacrifices are ideal and morally admirable but not morally required. But minimal contributions to the needy or sacrifices to save other beings are morally required. Beyond this, certain contributions or sacrifices can be considered supererogatory or heroic. Here the problem arises regarding the morally required number of contributions and sacrifices. Individuals are not morally required to contribute or sacrifice for other- beings if that contribution or sacrifice brings harm to their own lives; however, individuals are morally obligated to contribute or sacrifice that much which will not threaten their own lives and well-being or the cost which they have to bear for this contribution is minimal, and the risk is comparably small.

## 2. Types of Moral Obligation

Individuals are confronted with two types of obligations in their daily lives while contributing to others. We have some special obligations to our family members and near ones to whom we are connected, with special relations imbued with care and concern. This special kind of caring bond invokes special moral obligations to contribute to the well-being of our family members and loved ones with whom we are directly connected and share special relations. Due to this direct concern, we are naturally more obligated to our parents rather than to any stranger.

Again, we can perform local beneficence due to its proximity as it provides direct opportunities or contributes to others due to its nearer proximal relation. People are naturally more concerned about their local neighbours than the far ones. The spatial proximity allows us to do direct beneficence for them due to the proximal relation; we are confident about the effects of our actions. However, in our daily lives, when we see a person in trouble, we cannot simply avoid the stranger as the person has no special connection with us. As human beings, from an impartial standpoint, we cannot avoid our obligation to help other beings or to contribute and sacrifice some for others' well-being despite being strangers.

For Fishkin [6], minimal altruism is 'if a person knows that he can prevent great harm, such as the loss of human life, he is morally obligated to do so if the costs to him (and to anyone else) are minor' [6]. Every individual has the basic right to live their life. This individual's right to live implies the corresponding duty for everyone to be saved. From an impersonal standpoint, everyone has to save others' lives when the cost is minimal. Minimal altruism is accepted both in practical and Kantian theories. Preventable human loss is the most degrading action for any moral individual. So, if the loss is preventable against minimal costs, such action is morally required. From the Utilitarian standpoint, human loss has huge negative dis-utility for the individual who will die. So, the minor sacrifice of such loss should be prevented. Again, according to Kant, we cannot universalize the act of non-contribution as when an individual is in the same distress and need assistance, he would lead to contradict his principle (fig.2).



**Figure 2:** Helping the poor as a moral obligation [24]

### 3. Overdemanding Obligation in the Utilitarian Framework

The consequentialist ground of utilitarianism tells us an act is right if and only if it produces better consequences than others. It permits too much to maximize the good of others, even by imposing harm to innocent individuals, which is morally unacceptable. Here the problem arises regarding the morally required number of contributions and sacrifices. The notion of beneficence in utilitarianism is supererogatory in two senses. First, utilitarianism permits too much to maximize the good for others, even by imposing harm to innocent individuals, which is morally unacceptable. In the public health sector, minor groups' interest is usually ignored during vaccination programs to increase herd immunity [15];[16];[13]. Second, this theory often pushes the agent for maximal contribution, including maximum sacrifices to promote the overall good. The cost, the contribution, the sacrifice, no matter how costly it is for the agent, will not even count, provided the benefit of others outweighs it.

Williams [22] points out that, Utilitarian theory does not hold any extra value for the welfare of the agent and the agent's loved ones, which attacks a person's integrity. This impersonal standpoint requires that an agent view his projects impartially and equally with others which entails an impartial attitude toward their welfare. But this is inconsistent with “the point... that he is identified with his actions as flowing from his projects and attitudes which in some cases he takes seriously at the deepest level, as what his life is about. . . It is absurd to demand of such a man when the sums come in from the utility network which the projects of others have in part determined, that he should just step aside from his project and decision and acknowledge the decision that utilitarian calculation requires.” [22]. This impersonal standpoint of utilitarianism creates a rift between moral obligations and heartfelt personal commitments' [19]. According to Williams [22], this rift violates the personal integrity of an individual. To develop personal integrity, an agent must have concern for his projects and commitments. Utilitarianism cannot recognize the personal point of view [3]. From its impersonal standpoint, utilitarianism only focuses on promoting the good of others, which permits the non-obligatory demand from the moral agent to benefit others in the utilitarian theory [5]. Moreover, utilitarianism recommends sacrificing until we are not equally better off. It appears like a demanding principle. Braybrooke [2] argues against this demanding principle.

According to him, it is required to calculate utility to achieve the equilibrium solution. Braybrooke [2] recommends different schemes which will serve the personal responsibilities for global beneficence without demanding oneself the compensation contributions of others. There are different schemes, such as governments can contribute yearly some portion of the tax for the general welfare; individuals from different classes can contribute some of their portions for global beneficence by yearly reducing some of the various personal luxuries and by associating with some organizations which take responsibilities for global beneficence. People generally possess responsibilities to their family, friends, and local cultures, and they act beneficently to them from the natural inclination of local beneficence. But the question is how a person develops global beneficence responsibilities, which seems very demanding. On the one hand, some governing rules can direct one to take responsibility for global beneficence. On the other hand, a person may have responsibilities within oneself following natural inclination rather than the imposition of any external rules which direct one to act for global beneficence. The concept of responsibility is indispensable in analyzing and explaining the notion of duty. Although many theories like Kantianism put duty first, one can put responsibilities on oneself by accepting to take the initiative in some particular manner, such as charity, paying some yearly affordable extra taxes for the general welfare, and yearly reducing some luxury to contribute to global beneficence.



**Figure 3:** Everyone has moral obligations [25]

We find a different kind of theory in Reese-Schäfer [11]. Nozick, a Kantian thinker, denies any forceful obligation of beneficence over individuals and any external infringement on an individual's liberty by any external force, such as by any companies or government (fig.3). He maintains an in-between position of liberalism and socialism. To formulate his view, he starts with the natural rights of every individual who chooses and lives according to her preferences. 'Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights). So, strong and far-reaching are these rights that they raise the question of what, if anything, the state and its officials may do' [11]. For Nozick, individuals can justly choose their property by the principle of acquisition/approbation or entitled theory.

According to the entitlement theory, an individual is justly entitled to any holdings gifted to him by nature or justly acquired by inheritance or free exchange for justly acquired holdings. So, an individual who acquires a holding by the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding. Just acquisition of holding presupposes that any individual's natural rights should not violate their acquisition, i.e., one should not forcefully or illegitimately claim another's holdings. The moral liberty of choosing one's holdings implies the moral responsibility of respecting other individuals by not interfering in other person's holdings without their consent. Again, moral rights arise only by the voluntary undertaking or obligation of the one who is obligated. It never allows any kind of forceful and illegitimate interference. Here every individual has the right to live according to what she chooses. Through this way, she legitimately owns what she possesses, which presupposes that she does not threaten or harm non-consenting others by violating their rights. Nozick's theory of entitlement rules out the over-demanding obligation of beneficence as it will never force an individual to help others who have not contributed anything to that individual in this entitlement process. So, there is no concept of obligating her to aid those people. Here individuals can only justly exchange their property according to the principle of just exchange or transfer of property where an individual obtains a holding or is entitled to it from someone else through the process of just transfer or exchange of entitled property.

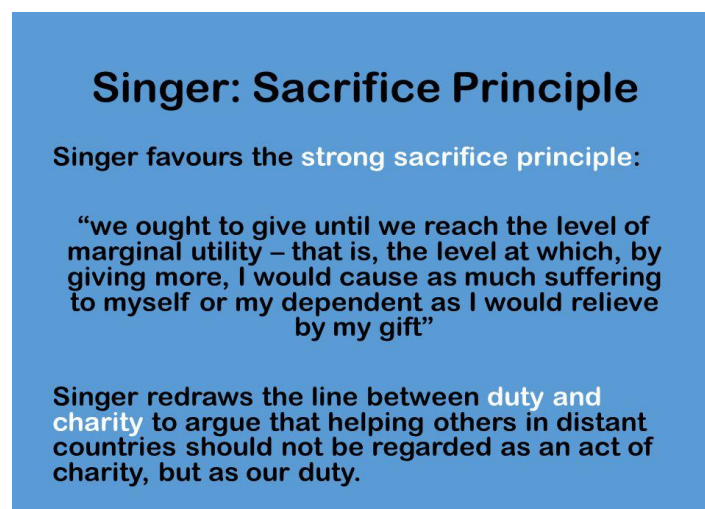
Thus, the principle of acquisition/ appropriation/entitlement is the process by which objects of the world that previously did not belong to anyone become appropriate objects. In such a society, individuals can work and live according to their preferences. He defines justice as acquiring holdings through an individual's talent, ability, and effort in a free state. Individuals obtain property through their efforts and have the right to transfer or exchange their belongings with each other's proper consent through just transfer of property. However, for him, the state had no business in helping anybody in poverty. Thus, he formulates a Utopian minimal state where every individual cares for each other's human rights, property rights, social rights, and legitimate claims of individual entitlement and legal rights. In the minimal state, individuals choose to live and acquire their holdings by either inheritance or natural abilities, talent, or by mutual transfer for holdings. Thus, each of them allows to live in their Utopian state in this state. Moreover, as the minimal state is against forceful intervention and rights-violating coercion, individuals can choose their society in this system. They cannot ever be forced to live in a society they do not want to remain in. And if they do not like the societies on offer, they are free to start their own. For Nozick, people should live in a society where they can work satisfactorily and enjoy their property without forceful infringement on others. Everyone should be credited for their labour, capability, and efficiency. Following Kant, Nozick maintains that every individual should be treated as an end and never as means which follows that every individual should obtain what she acquires by her efforts and never be used as means of the company where individual rights are compromised in the name of mass achievement of the company. Nozick, although he accepts the useful concept of happiness, he is against the aggregative and collective notion of happiness, where every

individual's happiness is counted as a whole within a mass society, as it violates an individual's right in service for the abstract notion of the greater happiness of a whole. Nozick points out that utilitarianism fails to respect the separateness of persons.

According to Nozick [11], a moral theory that holds separateness between individuals maintains that there are some things that one cannot do to others regardless of the benefit that might be produced. This position entails the individual right not to act merely as moral goals to maximize some aggregate, but the right to act for themselves. Following this, Nozick views taxation on individuals as forced labour, as whenever we pay taxes, we do half of our labour for others like the company or government. 'Seizing the results of someone's labour is equivalent to seizing hours from him and directing him to carry on various activities. If people force you to do certain or unrewarded work for a certain period, they decide what you are to do and what purposes your work is to serve apart from your decisions. This process whereby they take this decision from you makes them a part-owner of you; it gives them a property right in you. Just as having such partial control and power of decision, by right, over an animal or inanimate object would be to have a property right in it' [11].

There are two different views on receiving the wages of the workers. According to Marxism, workers should receive the full wages for their labour regardless of the risk of capitalist intervention in their market, whereas, for libertarians, nothing can compel individuals to be secure. Here, Nozick [11] maintains the middle position. He is against any redistribution by other institutions or the government as, according to him, just distribution is always voluntary. But if any natural right is violated in the acquisition process or the transfer of holdings, it will lead to injustice. And such injustices should be rectified by redistribution. People can share their property rights in two ways: by mutual transfer of individual property and by the principle of rectification. When some dominant individuals claim others' property illegitimately, rectification is required. Individuals can choose and live whatever they want or are entitled to without infringing on others' property forcefully. Governmental interference is justified only to control such forceful, illegal interference of others. So, his principle rectifies such injustices and invasions. As this governmental intervention aims to protect just property rights from any kind of injustice in a minimal state, he does not claim this rectification as coercion.

For him, the government should protect its taxpayers from the illegal and illegitimate invasion of an individual's property. Although Nozick holds that the best government governs the least, he concludes that at least a minimal state is necessary to enforce basic moral prohibitions and protect property rights. Nevertheless, this theory of entitlement within every rational individual to protect personal property law is directed at self-preservation and self-centeredness. Moreover, he denies any kind of benevolent actions following his entitlement theory. So, this theory denies any moral obligation, including the minimal ones towards other beings, which is a too-extreme position and not morally acceptable. On the contrary, Peter Singer formulates a strong principle of beneficence while discussing one's moral obligation to contribute to the infamous man-made famine of Bengal in 1971 [20]. He does not accept the principle of minimal altruism, where the cost is minimal. According to him, it is the moral obligation of the relatively affluent people of the first world country to sacrifice more than to spend money to get the benefits of the consumer society. He establishes this strong beneficence principle, not only as it is morally admirable but as it is morally required. He formulates this principle: "If it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant, we ought to do it." [20]. Here 'without sacrificing anything morally significant' means 'without causing anything else comparably bad to happen, or doing something wrong in itself, or failing to promote some moral good' [20] (fig.4).



**Singer: Sacrifice Principle**

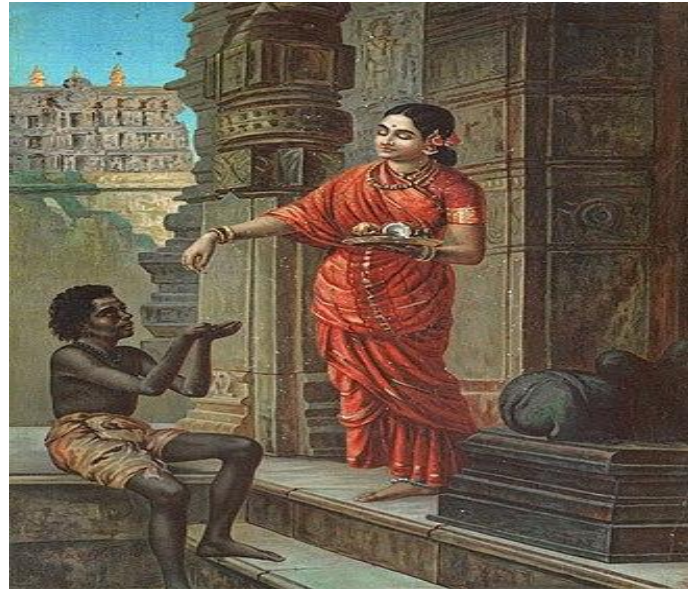
**Singer favours the strong sacrifice principle:**

**"we ought to give until we reach the level of marginal utility – that is, the level at which, by giving more, I would cause as much suffering to myself or my dependent as I would relieve by my gift"**

**Singer redraws the line between duty and charity to argue that helping others in distant countries should not be regarded as an act of charity, but as our duty.**

**Figure 4: Sacrifice Principle [26]**

He clarifies his point by illustrating an example where a person sees a drowning child passing by a shallow pond. According to the singer, the person should jump into the pond and save the child. By doing so, his clothes will be destroyed by the muddy water; however, this is insignificant compared to the child's death which would be worse. This principle holds two factors. First, regardless of proximity or distance, the principle applies to all. There is no moral difference between my child, my neighbour's child, and the Syrian child I do not know. We indeed develop a bond with the people nearer to us, but it does not follow that we discriminate against other people at a distance. Following the impartial, universal view, we have equal moral responsibility for all. However, it is argued that we are better positioned to judge and assist our near ones with whom we are in direct contact by providing the required aid. So, it is reasonable to help the poor and distressed neighbours in our locality (fig.5).



**Figure 5: Practice [27]**

In response to this argument, singer replies that there will be no justification to limit our moral responsibility within a locality and discriminate against others merely on their geographical distance as 'from the moral point of view, the development of the world into a "global village" has made an important, though still unrecognized, difference to our moral situation' [20]. Second, there is no obligatory difference between where the agent is the only obligated person to do beneficence and where the agent is one among many similar obligatory people.

These numbers do not lessen the obligation but create an ideal excuse of inactivity where a person feels less guilty for not doing his moral responsibility to help others simply because he finds no other people in the same situation for doing so. Singer prescribes that everyone in a similar situation 'ought to give as much as possible, that is, at least up to the point at which by giving more one would begin to cause serious suffering for oneself and one's dependents-perhaps even beyond this point to the point of marginal utility,' [20]. i.e., until the point of giving more, one would cause as much suffering to own self or his dependents as he would relieve by his gift to the receiver. Hence, if it is in our power or capability to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing something morally significant, we have a moral obligation to prevent this.

The singer does not identify his principle as charity or supererogatory rather, he claims that we ought to give the money away to prevent something worse, such as the starvation of a child, and it is morally wrong not to do so. We ought to give the money away to prevent starvation for someone rather than spend the money to buy luxury clothes, which is more than just keeping me warm, and this is not only generosity or charity. Rather it is morally wrong not to do so. Here, the distinction between duty and charity is established. He also points out that we cannot avoid our moral responsibilities only by claiming and blaming all evil occurrences on governmental failures; rather, he prescribes that everyone in a better position possesses the moral responsibility to prevent something evil from happening (fig.6).



**Figure 6: Moral Demandingness Objection [26]**

Many thinkers find singer's strong beneficence principle as over-demanding. We need a balance between extremist positions [14]. Dorsey [4] demonstrates that we cannot find any coherent interpretation of the singer's strong beneficence principle (in short, SBP) as she analyses that SBP confronts an interpretative trilemma, each horn of which is unacceptable. She questions how the 'comparatively morally important' (CMI, in short) should be interpreted. This interpretation has three possible ways: aggregation, non-aggregation, or mixed. If CMI interprets as aggregation, it will imply to very strong beneficence (VSBP) principle, which is morally implausible. "Aggregative approach entails that, when wondering whether I should make some sacrifice, I add up all my previous sacrifices; the overall aggregate is thus compared to the good I might do. An iterative approach ignores the previous sacrifice and compares only the present potential sacrifice for its comparable moral importance." [4]. Here, an aggregative CMI clause means an aggregation of all possible beneficiaries. It will be problematic to treat SBP as an interpretation of SBP when we compare the interest of all potential beneficiaries against that of all potential donors. According to this, if someone loses her basic subsistence to alleviate many others from their basic subsistence, the loss of the donor will not be comparable to the loss she prevents.

Here the donor's overall aggregative sacrifice cannot compare with the loss of multiple persons' basic subsistence and suffering. When subsistence is concerned, one's aggregate sacrifice can be compared to only one person's subsistence, not many. Again, from an iterative approach, one's current sacrifice of basic subsistence is not comparable with the loss of many others' basic subsistence. Hence, in its aggregative sense, CMI does not interpret in such a way required by SBP as there are 'cases in which giving up one's basic subsistence would not be comparably morally important to the good one might do in promoting subsistence' [4]. Thus, CMI interprets VSBP rather than SBP in this over-demanding form of aggregation. According to this principle, 'persons of affluent means ought to give away those means to those who might fail basic human subsistence until the point at which either a) no good can be done by doing so (i.e., the trade-off is not efficient regarding total subsistence), or b) giving more would require them to violate an independent moral principle' [4] if the CMI clause is strictly aggregative, VSBP entailed, which justifies any loss of the donor if the recipient's good is greater. This over-demandingness seriously distorts the considered moral judgment; hence, the first horn of this trilemma is unacceptable as it is morally implausible.

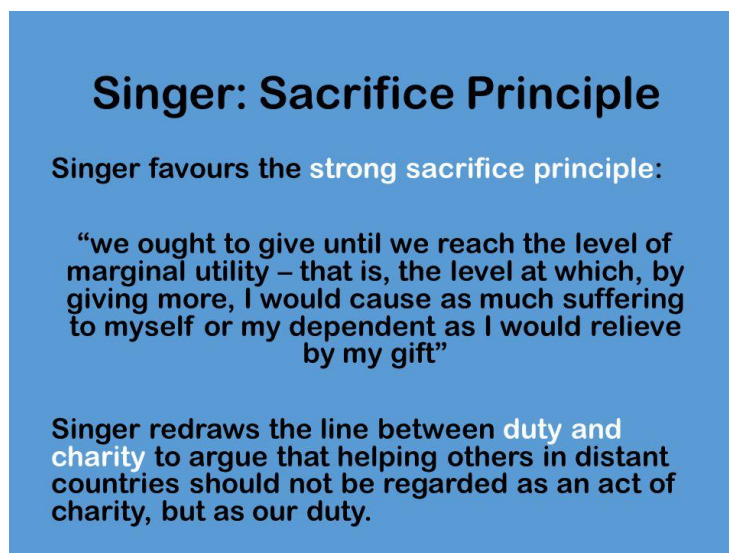
Again, if CMI is interpreted as non-aggregative, it leads to skepticism which is morally unwanted. In this form, the moral cost of saving one is identical or comparable to the cost of saving fifty people. When we consider the CMI clause in a non-aggregative approach, there is nothing morally important to determine between rescuing one and saving fifty. 'Death of one is morally equivalent to death of fifty because costs cannot be aggregated across individuals and because in the worst case scenario, no individual in the group of fifty does worse than the individual. The loss of fifty people is just as tragic as the loss of one person' [4]. This trilemma's second prong is the non-aggregative CMI clause, which necessitates SBP and raises various sceptical questions. Those who believe in number scepticism consider that any good deeds done beyond saving one life are largely irrelevant. Putting aside the overall implausibility of this perspective, it is nonetheless contrary to the spirit of SBP' [4]. Therefore, if we want to keep SBP connected to SBP while avoiding VSBP, we must dismiss the first horn, which is the aggregative CMI clause.

Again, to avoid the number skepticism, we have to reject the second horn, i.e., the non-aggregative CMI clause. Finally, if we mix aggregative and non-aggregative CMI clauses in a certain way, we can avoid both VSBP and number skepticism as 'aggregation is appropriate when considering the interests of potential beneficiaries (thus avoiding numbers skepticism); non-aggregation is appropriate when considering the interests of the donor (thus avoiding VSBP). This would allow SBP to imply

SBP\* without the troubling implication that the 50 needn't be saved in preference to [4]. However, this mixed form of CMI goes against the crucial feature of the original SBP as it implies partiality and threatens the demanding feature of the principle. In this mixed form, it allows aggregation of the interests of potential beneficiaries against each other; however, it refuses the aggregation of the interests of the donor, which leads to regarding the greater moral worth of the donor's subsistence than the subsistence of potential beneficiaries like the distant needy strangers.

Therefore, this mixed CMI clause implies partiality and threatens SBP's link to SBP because, at first glance, it seems to justify treating myself preferentially from a moral point of view, such as spending money to buy a luxury dress rather than giving it in Oxfam, where it would certainly do better for the recipients. At least in justifying his premise that distance is of little moral value, Singer appears to feel that impartiality is near to axiomatic. If the CMI clause allows partiality, it threatens the crucial connection between SBP and SBP\*. This does not prove the validity of SBP, of course. Simply because it is not demanding as a principle of kindness' [4]. Therefore, according to a skewed point of view, if I am allowed to favour myself and my immediate circle, it will violate the stringent requirements of the Strong Beneficence Principle (SBP).

Thus, Dorsey efficiently demonstrates how the SBP confronts a trilemma, each horn of which is unacceptable as the interpretation of its CMI clause either 1. so strong and demanding, which is morally implausible (aggregative interpretation), 2. introduces number skepticism (non-aggregative interpretation), and 3. implies partiality and go against its supposed demandingness (mixed interpretation). Hence, the application of SBP is morally problematic, and she generalizes all demanding principles of beneficence similarly to this problem (fig.7).



**Figure 7:** Duty and Charity [26]

Later, the singer also formulated a moderate version of the beneficence principle that requires us to prevent bad things from happening unless doing so would involve any morally significant sacrifice. On the contrary, the strong beneficence principle demands significant sacrifices to the marginal point of utility until it is not comparably morally important with the loss of others which can be prevented. But for him, this moderate version of beneficence is less demanding than the previous one. Singer finds it inadequate as this version makes the duty of beneficence avoidable.

However, this strong sense of beneficence is not morally required, as less contribution or sacrifice for others' well-being is not morally wrong. This strong version of beneficence follows from a strict consequentialist view where the principle demands to do whatever actions are required for the betterment of all and avoid all such actions which are against the betterment. This principle demands to contribute 60 or 70 percent of our total income rather than 10 percent for the betterment of needy people worldwide. Here the problem of over demandingness becomes significant when there are many recipients. This leads to overburden on the individual as such strong obligation stands as the mandatory moral requirement, and failure is morally blameable. Such demands are made as one may not contribute to another's well-being beyond a certain amount as it may hamper one's well-being and deprive one's (fig.8).

## Singer: Sacrifice Principle

**Strong Sacrifice:** “if it is in our power to prevent something [very] bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it” (p. 231).

**Weak Sacrifice:** “if it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant, we ought, morally, to do it” (p. 231).

**Figure 8:** Strong and Weak Sacrifice [26]

Miller [8] also rejects the singer's principle of sacrifice, which he considers as too demanding and leads to the radical conclusion that 'everyone has a duty not to spend money on luxuries or frills, and to use the savings due to abstinence to help those in dire need' [8]. Miller clarifies that being a moderately affluent inhabitant of a developed country, he can spend some luxury on his own and for his family if that is affordable to him after giving some money to charity. Now, acting beneficently with one's family, friends, and close associates is quite plausible. However, acting in the same kind manner or with the same concern for all is not always possible. A person can help a nearby drowning toddler. Still, it is quite impossible and over-demanding for her to save all the drowning toddlers around the world, even though their lives are not less valuable for being distant from the moral agent. For Miller, it is morally blameable if we deprive our family members or near ones of fulfilling the huge demand for global beneficence. We hold special relationships with our family members and near ones, implying special beneficence failure, which is morally blameable.

To illustrate this point, he introduces the principle of sympathy, where he regards equal respect for all but points out that equal respect does not imply equal concern for all. For example, I am not equally concerned about my cousins' parents' health; in the same manner, I am concerned about my own parents' health, although I have equal respect for both here. According to the principle of sympathy, “One's underlying disposition to respond to neediness as such ought to be sufficiently demanding that giving which would express greater underlying concern would impose a significant risk of worsening one's life if one fulfilled all further responsibilities; and it need not be any more demanding than” [8]. Singer's principle of sacrifice which demands the 'same duty of aid to everyone in peril near or far' [8] that Miller finds over-demanding. We often face a conflict between sympathy and convictions of ordinary morality, like duties to one's near ones and fundamental duties of equal appreciation for everyone's life. I cannot deprive my family by leading a less comfortable life to eradicating the world's poverty as 'while appreciating the equal worth of everyone's life, one can also be especially responsive to the needs of one's child, friend or spouse' [8]. Although Miller accepts special beneficence to a special relationship even with equal respect for all, a person may move beneficently for all in an emergency based on this equal respect for all beings. An individual can control luxury expenditure and spend more money on famine relief if it prevents something bad from happening on that crucial occasion. 'But even when no special relationship or past interaction is in play, the requirement of sensitivity to neediness, capability, and cost alone oversimplifies most people's conception of equal respect. . . Similarly, someone who appreciates the equal worth of everyone's life could be especially responsive to urgent needs encountered close at hand because actual presence makes an urgent plight especially vivid and gripping to her' [8].

The principle of sympathy recognizes the inclination to purchase stylish clothes as luxury and the troubling possibility of relieving desperate needs by donation. However, not on every occasion where one declines to buy luxury cloth and chooses plain items would constitute a morally significant sacrifice. Miller regards personal policy as the 'basic concern for others' neediness rationalizes and is manifested in more specific inclinations to aid others in certain ways in certain circumstances' rather than 'underlying dispositions' for all. On such particular occasions, 'he realizes that the luxurious purchase would violate a personal policy that he should adopt, but hasn't yet, as a means of resisting departures from sympathy; or he sees that he simply spends more on nice clothes than he has to avoid worsening his life. Without special considerations, he ought to implement such judgments of inadequate general sensitivity to others' needs through abstinence and donation now' [8]. So, whereas singer's principle of sacrifice leads to the radical conclusion of general beneficence regardless of special relationships and situations, Miller introduces a moderate form of general beneficence, which expands further than the near or closed ones according to the special requirements of needed people. Thus, as human beings, we hold a moral duty to help others. This duty

often conflicts with special beneficence towards our close ones and general beneficence towards all, including unknown strangers. We are naturally inclined to special beneficence. Generally, we share a special kind of bond with our close ones than strangers. Again, we care more about our local neighbours than the far ones due to our proximal relationship with them. Here, no external force can oblige us to be beneficent for all, but our inner humanity can obligate us to act beneficently for all [14]. Again, it is also morally blameable if we avoid our duties to our close ones for the excuse of the responsibilities of global beneficence. Despite this, situations often demand supererogatory heroic contributions from the individual, where one can develop the responsibilities to benefit all irrespective of one's close and stranger, near and far ones.

#### 4. Individual Obligations: Single or Shared

Following the discussion, another related problem evolves regarding whether our obligation of beneficence varies for others' contributions where other people in the same situation are obliged to perform the same responsibilities and not performing such responsibilities by others whether diminish my responsibility of beneficence or increase the burden upon willing individual where the recipients are large in number. In the first position, the omission of responsibilities shared by many trivializes one's responsibilities by diminishing view. This situation is absurd from the consequentialist standpoint. If everyone is going to avoid their responsibilities, assuming that a huge number will share the same responsibilities, the situation will be worst. For example, if everyone avoids paying taxes, assuming that many community members will share this obligation, the whole situation leads to disaster. Again, if every passer-by avoids a needy stranger, assuming that the obligation of help is the same as the other passer-by, and if they are avoiding their responsibilities, why shouldn't I? If everyone chooses to avoid their responsibility towards the needy, this growing insensitivity will lead to suffering irretrievable losses.

In such an insensitive society, everyone will avoid the morally required duties towards other beings by assuming the other's omission of the same duty. It is evident that if the situation demands one's huge sacrifices, such as life-threatening demands, then such demands are supererogatory as the action is heroic. But suppose the situation demands minor harm to the individual, like losing one finger, against greater beneficence like lifesaving for other- beings. In that case, the obligation is morally required from an individual. Here one may not be responsible for the worst situation resulting from the omission of the individual's responsibility as the omission of responsibilities is shared collectively by many sharers. This view is too permissible to be moral as it leads to moral insensitivity where one becomes indifferent for their every responsibility towards other beings as the person seems not accountable for the omission of her responsibilities as the consequences of her omission being shared by many sharers. Following Kantian universalization, we can say that an individual's duty will not vary due to others' behavior. An almost similar view is shared by Marcus Singer where; he states that there is no morally permissible excuse for not performing one's duty due to other's doing and doing of their responsibilities, even if that is similar. However, this leads to a more demanding and burdensome principle for a single contributor as he becomes accountable for not performing responsibilities for many recipients. Again, this invariant view leads to insensitivity towards special responsibilities to one's close ones, as here, every kind of responsibility holds the same amount from an impartial standpoint. From such an impartial view, if others share an equal amount of obligation and if one can do the obligation against minimal sacrifices, this invariant position demands those minimal amounts of beneficence from a willing and capable individual in every situation and failure of which accountable that person solely for the whole situation which leads to over-burden for the willing individual. This normative demand of goodwill leads to ought in its ideal sense, leading to supererogatory (fig.9).

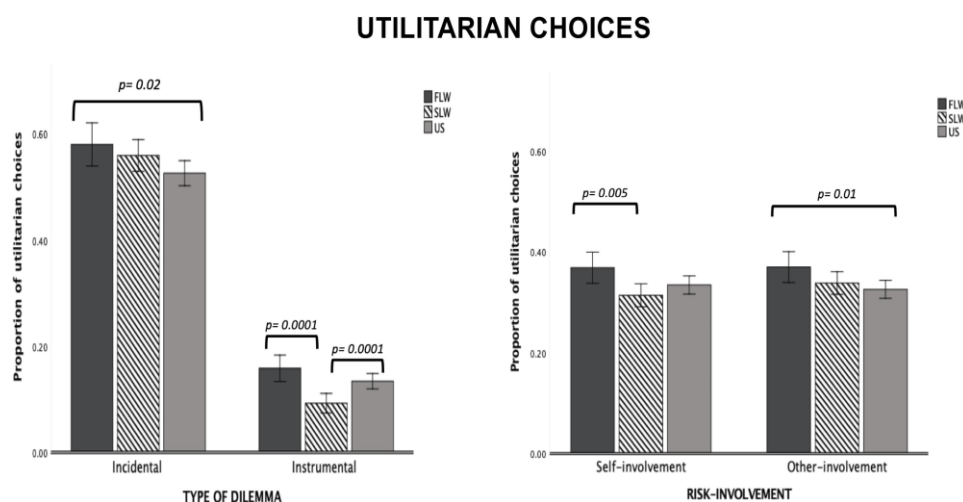


Figure 9: Utilitarian Choices [27]

Another problem arises from the theory of generalization. If everyone in the same situation is responsible for saving a drowning person, and if there are fifty potential swimmers and everyone rushes to save the person, the situation will be more disastrous. Fishkin replies, 'We calculate the effects of our action in the causal context defined by reasonable inferences about the effects of other's behavior. We then determine the difference our actions can be expected to make [6]. Following such reasonable calculation, if one sees another swimmer in the same situation is already going to save the drowning person, he can observe the situation and always be ready for any kind of help like if another swimmer also falls into danger or if the drowning person needs immediate hospitalization after saving by another swimmer, he can take care of the rest which makes some expected differences in the situation. Again, in a life-threatening situation, one may call the police for help to save a person's life from the robber rather than simply avoid his responsibilities. So, Fishkin holds the middle position where he holds that every individual's contribution makes a significant difference in a situation as the effect of the causal contribution of a situation. Every individual's contribution makes a significant difference for the needy and deprived. So, even if our actions are collectively shared, it does not affect an individual's obligation. Hence, for Fishkin, even if we can assume reasonable suppositions about others' contributions, we can still expect that our contribution will lead to some good consequences, as we should be responsible for the differences from our actions that we can be expected to make.

In this context Otsuka [12] recognizes a unique paradox of the principle of beneficence by pointing out the non-diminutive or non-benefit increasing case of prisoner's dilemma where no outcome is more beneficial or maximize the consequence either by group beneficence (rule utilitarianism) or by restricted principle (a modified form of act utilitarianism) as '(i) each outcome is less beneficial than itself or (2) "less beneficial than" is not transitive' and so, 'there is no outcome that most benefits people.' [12]. Hence, in such cases, one cannot determine simply based on maximizing beneficence on which principle she should confirm whether she should act as a member of a group that will collectively lead to the most positive difference according to the group beneficence or she should act individually to make a positive difference according to the restricted principle. This makes the principle of beneficence paradoxical (fig.10).



**Figure 10: Paradox [28]**

Otsuka presents this paradox with an analogy following [12], where many intensely thirsty wounded soldiers suffer from a limited water source. Besides them, there are also moderately thirsty people with the same limited source. Now, believers of group beneficence decided to share some portion of each member's water and share them with the intensely thirsty people by collecting each member's water in a water pit. Suppose there are one thousand intensely thirsty people, and collecting and sharing each person's water share will increase imperceptible benefits for the intensely thirsty people as by collective sharing very limited portion will be shared among all of them. Suppose one wanted to share her water with moderately thirsty people rather than intensely thirsty people. In that case, it might be increased perceptible beneficence for a few numbers of moderately thirsty people who intensely thirsty people outnumber. Again, one might decide to help some intensely thirsty people outside her group, but it might be deprived of her group members. Thus, it is paradoxical to decide according to which principle one should act as 'there is no outcome that most benefits people [12].

On the one hand, Murphy [10] argues that the extreme demand of beneficence is only applicable for act consequentialism as it 'requires each complying agent to shoulder her share of the demands of beneficence plus as many of the shares of non-complying agents as would be optimal' [10]. Suppose being an inhabitant of a first-world country and from an affluent background, one has decided to help the famine sufferers in a third-world country. Now, there are many other individuals in her own country from the same affluent economic background, but they are not ready or not yet decide to help the affected people in famine. Undoubtedly, the collective help of all complying agents would be better to overcome the famine. But this is

an illegitimate demand if the principle of beneficence demands from that particular willing individual to sacrifice more to compensate the shares of other non-complying individuals solely because it promotes the good of the larger portion of famine-affected people. During a full compliance situation, if everyone does whatever they can to make the best beneficial outcome, everyone from the same socioeconomic background must give up most of her resources and energies.

The demand is extremely high for each person in partial compliance with this situation, where not everyone is acting optimally. Murphy understands beneficence in terms of shared cooperative aims to promote the good in a mutually beneficial way which naturally resists taking on the shares of people who can contribute here but somehow do not. Murphy grounds the principle of beneficence on the compliance condition to maintain fairness. According to the compliance condition, no acceptable principle would demand more from me simply because others are doing less. When the cooperative principle of rule- consequentialism involves compliance conditions, 'each agent is required to act optimally to perform the action that makes the outcome best except in situations of partial compliance with this principle. In situations of partial compliance, it is permissible to act optimally. Still, the sacrifice each agent is required to make is limited to the level of sacrifice that would be optimal if the situation were one of full compliance; of the actions that require no more than this level of sacrifice, agents are required to perform the action that makes the outcome best' [10]. Following compliance conditions, 'one should not be required to do more than one's fair share of the demands of beneficence' [10]. The fair distribution of the demands of beneficence is equal for everyone under full compliance. The simple principle of act consequentialism fails to maintain the fair share as 'it demands more of an agent than his fair share, in the sense that it demands more than what would fairly be demanded of him under full compliance' [10]. The simple principle demands a fair share, which everyone must do under full compliance, and includes the shares of non-complying individuals to be optimal (fig.11).

## Fair Shares View

- **Liam Murphy: 'The Demands of Beneficence'**
- **What is wrong with the principles of beneficence is not so much the extent of their demands, the problem is that the demands they impose on us "are affected by the level of compliance with the principle of others" (Murphy 1993: 267).**  
**"principles of beneficence should not demand more of agents as expected compliance by other agents decreases" (Murphy 1993: 267)**
- **Murphy wants to formulate a principle of beneficence that meets this condition.**
- **Collective Principle: the principle of beneficence should affect us as a cooperative project.**

**Figure 11:** Fair Shares Views [26]

On the contrary, the intuitive thought of compliance condition is that under partial compliance, it will not demand more from the individuals than their fair share under full compliance. Murphy recognizes the principle of beneficence under the compliance condition as a cooperative conception where everyone has a shared cooperative aim for good. With this shared cooperative aim, everyone recognizes themselves as working with others to promote the good of others. The compliance condition adds the necessary condition for the shared cooperative aim: 'the impact of the compliance or non-compliance of others on each agent's pursuit of that aim is not the same as the impact of natural phenomena' [10]. Here, Murphy clarifies that under this principle, a willing individual may demand more if a situation is worse in the famine or a natural calamity. Still, it will never demand more than her fair share when the situation worsens due to the non-compliance of others' contributions. Thus, 'unless all the others contribute, it is impossible for me to pursue exactly that aim, and so under partial compliance, I will do [10].

The simple principle demands extremely high in this situation as each individual aims to promote the good, even when no one is contributing their part. The difference between the cooperative principle of beneficence under the compliance condition is that it will not demand high 'where others do not do their part, I am required to do no more nor less than I would have been required to do under full compliance' [10]. So, the advantage of this principle is it is not imposing individuals to do more than their fair share just because others do less. Murphy clarifies that 'we never were that worried about the amount of the demands; instead, we were all along concerned about doing the work of others' [10]. Both simple and cooperative principles may demand

great sacrifice under full compliance from the extremely well-off minority in an extremely badly-off country isolated from the rest of the world. Moreover, both principles may impose greater sacrifice under an emergency 'where an agent is the only person in a position to prevent some disaster or bring about some great good' [10]. There is a legitimate demand to sacrifice the fair share of the well-off individuals from the first world country to develop the condition of world poverty even with the high demand for emergencies. But the compliance condition requires the agents' awareness of whether the emergencies occur due to natural disasters or the lack of share of the non-complying agents. There is no problem with the increased demand for sacrifices from the individual for the betterment of the emergencies in the first case; however, it will never support the high demand for sacrifices from the individuals in the latter case as it is unfair to demand more due to the non-compliance of others.

On the other hand, Mulgan [9] rejects Murphy's cooperative notion of benevolence. According to him, Murphy suggests that the moral obligation of beneficence is always dependent on unreasonable empirical facts. Act Consequentialism also requires the fact to decide their action to promote the overall good in that situation. However, Murphy's principle requires all the facts but with no effect on the consequences of our actions. Moreover, during an emergency act, consequentialists determine 'How can I help?' or 'How much it will cost me?' Conversely, Murphy's principle suggests determining whether the situation results from God's act or others' non-compliance. If it will result from the latter, the individual is not obligated to help. Murphy's suggestion for the affluent individuals of a developed country is to clear their doubts. Before they know how much to sacrifice, they should be aware of the unreasonable global political economy. So, Murphy's principle presupposes that one must know the empirical facts before knowing what she requires to do. Mulgan finds this unreasonable as it demands such specific knowledge. Furthermore, the agent should gather extensive knowledge and information, and the wrong fact obligation occurs where particular information is irrelevant to determine the agent's obligation in a particular situation. The wrong fact objection points out that, in some cases, an agent may decide her obligation depending on a false premise.

Murphy points out that both the principles demand high from the affluent individuals of first world countries, and 'we feel that the extreme demands in these cases were objectionable, in just the same way that the demands made on us every day by the Simple Principle [which corresponds to Act Consequentialism] seem objectionable' [9]. Here, Mulgan [9] argues that the cooperative principle is much more objectionable than the extreme demand of act consequentialism, as act consequentialism universally demands the same from the affluent individuals of developed countries in every similar case. In contrast, the cooperative principle sometimes varies by demanding high, which is not based on the wrong facts. Murphy objected that it is over-demanding to impose a high demand on individuals for the fluctuations of shares of the non-complying agents. It is objectionable for any principle to require so little from agents where so much is to be done. According to Murphy, an individual's obligation depends upon the fair share under full compliance. 'The demands of Murphy's principle would thus vary enormously depending upon whether or not the disaster that confronts us is the result of natural forces or human actions' [9] since if it has resulted from the latter, individuals find no obligation under Murphy's principle.

Mulgan points out that 'Murphy's principle deals only with full compliance from now on' [9]; however, situations are not so straightforward. Under Murphy's principle, we idealize away the expected failures of beneficence in the future, whereas ignoring actual failures in the past affects our present. Finally, Mulgan attacks the compliance condition, which is the essential feature of Murphy's cooperative principle. Under the compliance condition, the principle of beneficence should not demand more than an individual's fair share due to non-compliance with others' share. Mulgan argues that this principle is based upon a false analogy of 'fair share.' The concept of 'doing my share' implies a condition of public good, where everyone benefits regardless of their contribution. Under the demands of beneficence, others who do not contribute their fair share benefit themselves by not sacrificing. Still, they never benefited from the contribution of a fair share of another agent. Other people are not free-riding on the agent's extra share. In a famine, the only sufferers are famine victims if the agent only gives her fair share rather than as much as she can afford to donate. So, it is unreasonable to accuse others of free-riding if the agent donates extra than her fair share. In the famine situation, Mulgan makes his fair share for the public good, which should depend on two factors, i.e., the reasonable balance between the relative disadvantage of my welfare, interests of distributing my wealth in other objects, and the benefit obtained from different donations for the famine victims. Mulgan recognizes the notion of 'doing one's fair share' as 'given until it hurts' rather than giving less on the false expectation that 'if everyone had given the same, the problem would have been solved' [9].

Mulgan admits that the cooperative principle emphasizes the importance of 'doing one's share' but supports it as a condition that is unacceptable by any principle. Hence, collective consequentialism cannot provide a satisfactory doctrine of benevolence. Finally, Mulgan concludes that to acquire a full account of benevolence, we need the two conceptions of benevolence, individual act consequentialism, and collective consequentialism, as collaborators of benevolence and not as rivals, as both are important but distinct forms of moral obligation. So, there is a need to pursue a pluralistic benevolence by combining these two rival accounts than monism. Hanser [7] presents a puzzle from the nature of the principle of beneficence. Hanser formulates a case of pure beneficence when "(a) there are people in need, (b) the agent could aid these people without harming anyone, (c) the recipients of the aid would gain more in receiving it than the agent would sacrifice in giving it, (d) nothing else the agent could do would produce more well-being, and (e) no special obligations come into play" [7]. According to Act-Utilitarianism,

an agent should act to maximize the consequence in its highest level of well-being in a specific situation. Now in this pure beneficence situation, Hanser interprets act-utilitarianism as 'the make a difference principle,' which entails an agent should help those in need in a pure beneficence situation if and only if by doing this, she can better off the condition of the needy people from their present condition. This principle of beneficence is surely objected to the demandingness objection as it requires an unreasonably greater sacrifice of the agent for the betterment of the common good. From the fairness objection, this principle is unacceptable as it requires more than one's fair share to compensate for the failure of other non-complying agents. The fair share can be small or large and varies accordingly. Still, it is not objectionable for the amount of the sacrifice but the unfair demand of compensation for others' non-compliance. So, according to 'the fair share principle,' in a pure beneficence case, an agent must sacrifice only as much in aiding people as she would in a complying situation where every needy person receives their aid and every potential giver of aid gives their fair share. Sacrifices may vary according to the situation's demand; however, the demand is much less than the demand of the make-a-difference principle.

Hanser exhibits that both principles fail in the 'limited emergency case' situation from where the puzzle evolves. He considers a case of a swimming pool where ten swimmers are drowning and ten potential rescuers among nine have no intention to save others. Now, in this situation, the make-a-difference principle requires that the one unerring rescuer should save all the ten swimmers who are over-demanding. In contrast, the fairness principle directs her to do only her fair share, in this case, saving the drowning swimmer. Hence, in limited emergency cases, both principles are unsound. The demand of the making a difference principle is great for the willing rescuer but too little for the other potential rescuer due to its condition 'if and only if' exclusively applies to the willing agent. The limited emergency case entails two moral obligations where the agent is required to save all ten swimmers by herself, and also, the other potential rescuers should help the agent; if not, they are acting morally bad. The puzzle of beneficence arises as the make-a-difference principle fails to meet the second clause at the cost of the first; conversely, the fair share principle fails to meet the first clause at the cost of the second. So, there is a need to formulate another principle of beneficence that meets both clauses. Hanser first searches for a solution to provide aid for everyone where an agent can perform pure beneficence by providing aid to as many people as she can. Following this principle, the unerring rescuer should save all ten swimmers; otherwise, she will fail.

Similarly, other potential rescuers should save as many swimmers as they can. Otherwise, they will fail to perform pure beneficence. But this principle implies a competitive conception where every person tries to provide aid for needy people as much as they can, even if it may lead to preventing other people from providing aid to benefit more people solely. In this situation, the difference principle directs every single agent solely to help others without sharing the burden of aid among the potential givers, so it will be very costly and burdensome for every single agent to provide the aid for all. The fair share principle talks about sharing aids but fails to incorporate them in emergencies.

Now, Hanser presents another principle of beneficence to resolve the puzzle of this theory, namely 'share the burden principle' where the willing agent has the option to act purely beneficently by joining with as many other willing people as she can to provide the aid together for as many needy people as they can. This principle meets the two requirements of the previous two principles. The make-a-difference principle directs the agents to maximize the number of people who receive the aid. Following the fair share principle, 'it requires a commitment to helping bear the cost of this goal's being realized' [7]. This principle entails that the willing swimmer acts correctly by saving ten swimmers. Also, it entails that other potential rescuers act badly by not helping the agent to save the swimmers. Both the fair share principle and shared the burden principle hold the moral ideal that every capable person should contribute towards providing aid for needy people; however, they differ when other people fail to contribute their fair share. Where the fair share principle by a self-regarding twist limits the agent by not providing more than their fair share, the current principle directs the agent to provide more than their fair share to achieve the goal as 'he will not want to add to anyone else's burden by failing to do himself enough' [7]. For Hanser, the puzzle is solved by the share burden principle as it entails both the willing rescuer required to save all the ten drowning swimmers and the other nine potential rescuers acting morally bad by not saving anyone or helping the agent to reach her goal to save all the swimmers. Where make a difference principle directs the first part by directing an agent towards the goal of helping the drowning swimmers but fails to meet the second by not directing other potential rescuers or capable givers by sharing the burden or helping the drowning swimmers who are the failure of the general duty of beneficence. The second is entailed from the first among the two components of the shared burden principle. All agents should aid needy people, and everyone should share the help burden to maximize aggregate well-being.

According to Hanser, the entailment of the second component from the first one is intuitively based on another principle, "The Shared End Principle: If every member of a class of agents is morally required to regard the obtaining of a certain state of affairs as an end, then every member of that class is morally required to help bring about that state of affairs" [7]. So, the first part of the shared burden principle provides the core of the general duty of beneficence. Moreover, it will obligate other potential givers to share the cost burden. Otherwise, they act badly and fail to do their fair share of often aiding by treating the agent unfairly. However, this principle is well-suited in limited emergency cases and is vulnerable to demanding objections in unlimited emergency cases. In reply, Hanser concludes that "A principle can avoid being too demanding, however, by saying

that up to a point, agents must join with others to help make it the case that as many are benefited as possible, even if this should mean contributing more than their fair share towards this end.” [7]. Here, Hanser is aware that it is not easy to measure beyond which level the agent limits her duty of beneficence; he proposes this principle as, although not final, another principle of beneficence that balances the over-demanding and fair share of goodwill, at least in limited emergency cases.

Where Hanser rests his argument, Almeida [1] picks from that point and confirms that there will be no such unique correct principle of beneficence which is available from its principled approach if it continues to maximize the level of beneficence rather than maximizing benefactors as 'the level of beneficence certain to produce the greatest overall benefits varies widely from one set of circumstances to another' [1]. Hanser recognizes the disadvantage of the make-a-difference principle, which carries the nature of act utilitarianism. This principle permits less sacrifice of the unwilling agents for the common good, where other willing agents have to compensate for the contribution. Hence, the make-a-difference principle demands more from the willing agents for compensation but wrongly permits the unwilling, uncooperative agents to ride free. Almeida formulates six different types of cases following the prisoner's dilemma to demonstrate that there is no such particular principle of beneficence that can be fitted in every case to maximize the goodwill as it varies in every situation like a limited emergency, unlimited emergency, local beneficence, global beneficence, etc. Hence, sometimes it is better for all if we are all less kind.

The prisoner's dilemma is a game theory formulated by Flood and Dresher (1950) while working on Ayn Rand to point out that two rational individuals may not cooperate, even if it is in their best interest to do so. This is a case where two prisoners have been put in separate prisons for investigation and are not in any type of communication. Due to a lack of proof, the investigator decides to imprison them for lesser charges. However, the investigating officer bargains with each prisoner individually with the offer either they betray another one or remain silent and cooperate with the other. Here are three possibilities. Firstly, if A and B betray each other, they will be imprisoned for two years. Secondly, if A betrays B, A will be free, but B alone will be imprisoned for three years and vice-versa. Finally, if A and B remain silent, both will be imprisoned only for one year for a lesser charge, which will be a common good for them. Here, 'self-regarding action does not generally maximize overall benefits. But self-regarding action is costly only if each agent chooses to benefit himself in a smaller way at the cost of greater benefits to another or to' [1].

In a case of benefit from mutual beneficence, where benefactors sacrifice less than the beneficiaries receive nothing else and the benefactor could do something to better the overall well-being, where no one is harmed, no special obligation will apply from the make a difference principle. In the mutual beneficence case, suppose A cooperates with B and doing just, but B does not. Here, the make-a-difference principle does not fail in the case of pure beneficence, 'where the contributions of each additional benefactor increase overall benefits' [1]. However, in the limited emergency case, where the cooperative outcome has a total utility equal to the one achieved in the partial defection outcomes, Hanser concludes that the make-a-difference principle is unacceptably permissive on the uncooperative agent B. He shares the burden principle as an adequate principle of beneficence that must prohibit defection by either agent in this context of pure beneficence. Share the burden principle will never allow the defectors. However, there are some cases where increasing the benefactors by sharing the burdens fails to maximize the overall beneficence. For example, 'adding one more volunteer counselor, or secondary education tutor, for instance, might both lessen the burden on others and reduce overall utility' [1]. These cases of beneficence show the inconsistency of Hanser's share the burden principle as 'no principle of beneficence can commit moral agents to the maximization of benefits and also commit them to share the burden of producing those benefits' [1]. Suppose we formulate the case of global beneficence in a prisoner's dilemma. In that case, it misleadingly suggests that global beneficence or cooperation maximizes the overall well-being more than local beneficence or non-cooperation.

But in practice, we are better positioned to benefit those nearer to us through family relations, friendship, or close localities rather than distant people. Mill also recognizes the person who has the power to extend beneficence on a global scale is a public benefactor but a rare one. So, it is often better not to emphasize maximizing global beneficence but concentrate on local beneficence. Almeida demonstrates two cases where barely beneficent groups concerned solely on the beneficence of their local groups and indifferent to others produce better well-being than the other groups and broadly than the equally beneficent who give equal significance to all and are concerned about all who are affected by their actions. Equally, the kind group possesses an impersonal, agent-neutral standpoint; however, they are not concerned about maximizing the overall beneficence, which barely the beneficent group is certainly aware of. Hence, it is a wrong conception that 'the broader the beneficence of moral agents, the greater the benefits available to them' [1]. We are often a much better benefactor at local levels of families and friends rather than in broader global beneficence. Almeida illustrates that less beneficent groups may better achieve maximization of benefits.

Moreover, there are cases where the broad beneficent groups better maximize benefits. So, we cannot certainly outright the demanding principle of beneficence or incorporate or outright the moderate principle of beneficence as a less demanding principle often produces better beneficence. In contrast, an over-demanding principle often produces better well-being. Hanser's principle is also not an exception. The diversity of contingent facts in different situations determines the overall outcome, which

often comes from an egoistic or charitable turn and often better comes from the general kind perspective. So, we cannot determine a priori the level of benevolence that maximizes the overall utility. Thus, Almeida concludes that, as a benevolent outcome is situation-specific, no such uniquely correct principled approach to beneficent solely focuses on maximizing overall beneficent rather than maximizing the benefactors. All the situation-specific analysis makes Almeida conclude, “We are sometimes all better off when we are all a little less beneficent” [1].

## 5. Conclusion

Following the above discussion, I find that the problem of over-demandingness following utilitarianism emerges due to its sole consequentialist approach to morality. The rightness and wrongness of every action depend solely on its maximum beneficial consequences, which completely ignores the intention or motive of the agent. Conversely, deontology emphasizes the motive of every action. Similarly, virtue ethics focuses on the agent's intention and virtuous motives while performing any action [17]. Following virtue ethicist Slote [21], the problem of utilitarian over demandingness can be solved by an agent-neutral conception which proposes the rightness of an action depends only on one's activity, considering it as a whole of doing good enough for the well-being of humanity in various situations. According to Slote [21], the rightness of actions is based on a motive that comes together with the underlying moral disposition of universal benevolence. He emphasizes developing universal benevolence as a moral disposition for every action than focusing on every single action. Thus, the problem of over demandingness can be solved with the agent-focused approach of virtue ethics. We can experience an evolution within the history of virtue theory [18] from ancient to modern regarding the cardinality of the virtue of benevolence.

**Funding Statement:** No funding has been obtained to help prepare this manuscript and research work.

**Conflicts of Interest Statement:** No conflicts of interest have been declared by the author(s). Citations and references are mentioned as per the used information.

## References

1. M. J. Almeida, “Why we ought to be a little less beneficent,” *Analysis*, vol. 60, no. 265, pp. 97–106, 2000.
2. D. Braybrooke and The Hegeler Institute, “A progressive approach to personal responsibility for global beneficence,” *Monist*, vol. 86, no. 2, pp. 301–322, 2003.
3. D. O. Brink, “Utilitarian morality and the personal Point of View,” *J. Philos.*, vol. 83, no. 8, p. 417, 1986.
4. D. Dorsey, “Aggregation, partiality, and the strong beneficence principle,” *Philos. Stud.*, vol. 146, no. 1, pp. 139–157, 2009.
5. A. Donagan, *The Theory of Morality*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
6. J. S. Fishkin, *The Limits of Obligation*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982.
7. M. Hanser, “A puzzle about beneficence,” *Analysis*, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 159–165, 1998.
8. R. W. Miller, “Beneficence, duty and distance,” *Philos. Public Aff.*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 357–383, 2004.
9. T. Mulgan, “Two conceptions of benevolence,” *Philos. Public Aff.*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 62–79, 1997.
10. L. B. Murphy, “The Demands of Beneficence,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 267–292, 1993.
11. W. Reese-Schäfer, “Robert nozick, anarchy, state, and utopia. New York: Basic books 1974,” in *Schlüsselwerke der Politikwissenschaft*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008, pp. 334–338.
12. M. Otsuka, “The Paradox of Group Beneficence,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 132–149, 1991.
13. P. Pandit, “On The Issue Of Infectious Diseases: The Moral Shift From Bioethics To Public Health Ethics,” *Jadavpur Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2015.
14. P. Pandit, “On the Vaccination Program of India: A brief discussion on the emerging Ethical issues,” *Academia Letters*, 2021.
15. P. Pandit, “Emerging Ethical Issue from the Worldwide Pandemic COVID-19,” *Vidyabharti International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, vol. 3, pp. 240–246, 2020.
16. P. Pandit, “On the Context of Diabetes: A Brief Discussion on the Novel Ethical Issues of Non-communicable Diseases,” *Transactions on Sustainable Health Science Letters*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 11–20, 2023.
17. P. Pandit and West Bengal Education Service, India, “The transition within virtue ethics in the context of benevolence,” *Philosophia*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2022.
18. P. Pandit, *The Moral Quest for a More Credible Principle of Beneficence: A Comparative Philosophical Analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Ethics International Press, 2022.
19. S. G. Post, “Love and the order of Beneficence,” *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 75, no. 4, pp. 499–516, 1992.
20. P. Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality,” *Philos. J. High. Sch. Econ.*, vol. V, no. 2, pp. 254–269, 2021.

21. M. Slote, "Agent-based virtue ethics," *Midwest Stud. Philos.*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 83–101, 1995.
22. J. J. C. Smart and B. Williams, "A critique of utilitarianism," in *Utilitarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp. 75–150.
23. Metropolitan Dionysios of Serbia and † K., "The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10, 25-37)," PEMPTOUSIA, 13-Nov-2021. [Online]. Available: <https://pemptousia.com/2021/11/the-parable-of-the-good-samaritan-luke-10-25-37/>. [Accessed: 22-Jul-2022].
24. "Is helping the poor a moral obligation?," netivist.org. [Online]. Available: <https://netivist.org/debate/helping-the-poor>. [Accessed: 22-Jul-2022].
25. "Everyone has moral obligations (And we're talking about them way too much)," Scientia Salon, 10-Jun-2015. [Online]. Available: <https://scientiasalon.wordpress.com/2015/06/10/everyone-has-moral-obligations-and-were-talking-about-them-way-too-much/comment-page-1/>. [Accessed: 22-Jul-2022].
26. T. Beer, *World Poverty Singer: principle of beneficence (Sacrifice Principle)*. 2017.
27. M. Mazza et al., "Moral decision-making, stress, and social cognition in frontline workers vs. Population groups during the COVID-19 pandemic: An explorative Study," *Front. Psychol.*, vol. 11, p. 588159, 2020.
28. P. Yamasaki, "What is a paradox in writing?," *What Is a Paradox in Writing? | Grammarly*, 14-Sep-2022. [Online]. Available: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/paradox/>. [Accessed: 22-Oct.-2022].