Save the Five: Meeting Taurek's Challenge

Abstract: Six people are in trouble. We can save five of them or just the sixth. What should we do? John Taurek (1977) defends a radical view: We are not required to save the greater number. Taurek's paper has persuaded some. But even the unpersuaded agree that Taurek poses a deep and important challenge: From where does the priority of the many derive? It seems difficult, or even impossible, to convince someone who denies the importance of the numbers... to care about the numbers. That's what this paper aims to do. It will argue that the priority of the many follows, with minimal other assumptions, from something all should accept: the modest premise that if we can improve one person's chance of survival—without affecting anyone else—we should.

1   Introduction

At its best, philosophy can challenge our deepest and most passionately held convictions. Few papers do this as forcefully as John Taurek's (1977) "Should the Numbers Count?"

Six people are in trouble. We can rescue five of them or just the remaining one. What should we do? Naturally, many hold that we should simply save the five. This way, fewer people will die.

Taurek flatly rejects this view. He argues that, other things equal, there is no obligation to prioritize the greater number.[1] Such an obligation, as he sees it, is ruled out by other, more fundamental, ethical commitments. Faced with the choice himself, Taurek suggests he would flip a coin to decide.

You might object: But what if the numbers were more skewed? What if the choice were between saving one and saving fifty? Taurek replies that he'd flip a coin here too and sees no reason why merely increasing the numbers should make any difference.[2]

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[1] For other defenses of this view, see Anscombe (1967, pre-Taurek), Otsuka (2004), Doggett (2013), and Setiya (2014). For criticism, see Parfit (1978), Kavka (1979), Kamm (1984, 1993), Scanlon (1999), Hirose (2001), Bradley (2009), Rasmussen (2012), Walden (2014), Sung (2022), Henning (forthcoming). For responses to the criticism, see Otsuka (2000), Lübbe (2008), Doggett (2009, 2013), Almeida (2010), Lang and Lawlor (2013, 2015), and Muñoz (2022, forthcoming).

[2] See p. 306. Taurek doesn't just assert these things. He motivates them with examples and arguments. One argument appeals to the premise that morality permits some degree of partiality. It would clearly be permissible, Taurek thinks, for a person to rescue her friend (or herself) rather than five strangers. But once we say this, Taurek

It's difficult to respond effectively to Taurek. The principle he denies, which might be called *the priority of the many*, is so basic, that it's hard to see how it could be derived from more basic principles. If it can't, then there's a stalemate between Taurekians and the rest of us.

For some time, I believed that no progress could be made here. Some people assume the priority of the many; others don't. I felt that there wasn't much either side could say to persuade the other. Daniel Muñoz (forthcoming) agrees: "There is no convincing argument from neutral premises for, or against, the view that the numbers should count" (§7).

But I've come to think that the priority of the many can be defended without begging the question against Taurek and his allies. At the core of the argument is a premise that even staunch Taurekians can accept: *if we can improve an individual's chance of survival, without affecting anyone else, we should*. As we'll see, this modest premise can take us much of the way toward establishing the priority of the many, with few other assumptions needed. Ultimately, we'll see that the most promising Taurekian view turns out not to apply to the very sorts of cases for which it was first proposed—rescue cases involving strangers.

2 Two Taurekian Views

Before we see the argument, we should first explore the range of views open to Taurekians, in responding to rescue cases. One extreme view holds that there are no duties of rescue at all. Such a view would permit us to save *none*—or to ignore a drowning child. While this extreme view is one way for the numbers not to count, this doesn't seem to be Taurek's

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thinks that it becomes difficult to uphold a general obligation to save the greater number in cases where no special relationships are present. A second argument derives from the thought that betterness simpliciter is unintelligible—or in other words, that it doesn't make sense to compare outcomes without first specifying a person or group, relative to whom the outcomes are to be evaluated. Saving the five is clearly better for the five; saving the one is clearly better for the one. But can we say that saving the five is just flat out better? Taurek would ask: Better for whom? (See Geach 1956, Foot 1985, Thomson 1994, and Kraut 2012 for other expressions of a similar view.) It's tempting to respond to these arguments directly. But as we'll see, there is a more straightforward response available—one which doesn't require us to settle difficult questions about moral partiality or the nature of value itself.

preferred view.[3] Instead, Taurek seems to think that the claim of the one and the claim of the five are both deeply morally significant. So we'll set this view aside and assume that we must save someone.

Given that we must save someone, what should we do? Here, Taurekians divide into two camps: *randomizing* Taurekians hold that we must give all parties an equal chance (e.g. by flipping a coin), while *simple* Taurekians hold that these rescue cases permit either choice with no randomization required. We'll motivate each view in turn.

In his paper, Taurek himself suggested that he would flip a coin to decide whom to save (p. 303).

> Here are six human beings. I can empathize with each of them. I would not like to see any of them die. But I cannot save everyone. Why not give each person an equal chance to survive? Perhaps I could flip a coin. Heads, I [save] these five. Tails, I [save] this one. In this way I give each of the six persons a fifty-fifty chance of surviving. Where such an option is open to me it would seem to best express my equal concern and respect for each person. Who among them could complain that I have done wrong? And on what grounds?

Though Taurek never explicitly asserts that randomizing is morally required, this appears to be his preferred view,[4] and it has been defended explicitly by others.[5] Call this the *randomizing Taurekian view*.

There is a different sort of Taurekian view, however, which doesn't require randomization. This alternative view simply permits us to save either group and can be motivated along the following lines.[6]

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[3] Officially, Taurek doesn't rule out this extreme libertarian view (p. 293, fn. 1), but if it's true, then few of his arguments are morally relevant. Indeed, Taurek's paper seems to assume that both parties have strong claims to be rescued and explores how to compare them. We will do the same here.

[4] Otsuka (2000, p. 288), Bradley (2009, p. 1), Lang and Lawlor (2013, p. 1), and Walden (2014, p. 232) interpret Taurek as endorsing the randomization requirement, but see Doggett (ms.) and Lang and Lawlor (2015) for persuasive dissent on this interpretive point.

[5] See Otsuka (2000), Wasserman and Strudler (2003), and Almeida (2010). Timmerman (2010) defends a different randomizing view, which recommends performing a lottery that gives each party an equal chance of being selected. In effect, Timmerman's view gives a ⅚ chance of saving the five and a ⅙ chance of saving the one. This still counts as a randomizing Taurekian view for the purposes of this paper.

[6] The position below is a simplified statement of Doggett's (2013) position. See that paper for a forceful and engaging development of this sort of thinking.

> Suppose I can save either of two people, one of whom is happier than the other. Intuitively, I'm not required to save the happier one; I'm permitted to save either. Similarly, if one of the two is healthier and expects to live a longer life, I'm not required to save the healthier one; I'm permitted to save either. Once we reject utilitarian thinking in these cases, we'll discover that Taurek's original 'five vs. one' scenario is relevantly similar and thus permits either choice.

This view straightforwardly permits us to save the few at the expense of the many. Call this the *simple Taurekian view*.

In short, the randomizing Taurekian requires us to equalize the relevant chances, while the simple Taurekian flatly permits either choice. Next, we'll examine an argument against both views, which proceeds by considering some variations on the original scenario.

3 The Argument[7]

The argument presented below begins from the same initial premise as Bradley's (2009) argument against Taurek, and it appeals to points made by Almeida (2010), Walden (2014), and especially Hare (2016).[8] Bringing together their observations and organizing them appropriately yields a forceful argument for saving the five.[9]

3.1 The Ex Ante Case

Let's begin by thinking about an *ex ante* version of our original case. Six people—numbered from 1 to 6—are now together, but they are soon to be randomly divided into two groups. Five will be stranded on the bigger island, while the sixth will be stranded on the smaller island. A die was rolled yesterday to determine who would be sent where. Specifically, the

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[7] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research* for constructive suggestions that greatly improved this section—particularly §3.1 and §3.2.

[8] See Almeida (2010) and Lang and Lawlor (2013) for replies to Bradley. Almeida's view is a version of the hard line view discussed below, while Lang and Lawlor's reply turns on certain diachronic features of Bradley's presentation, which are absent from the version we'll consider below.

[9] Henning (forthcoming) advances a similar argument to the one explored below. I find his case convincing. One point of divergence, though, is the proceduralist framework that Henning's argument assumes. While I find it plausible that rescue cases should be adjudicated in a way that best respects the current preferences of the stakeholders, Taurek and his followers are not committed to this (in spite of the broadly contractualist sympathies Taurek exhibits). In what follows, we'll examine an argument that avoids this proceduralist assumption.

person whose number came up will be the one sent to the smaller island. The result is not yet known, but we must decide, right now, where to send the rescue ship. What should we do?

At first glance, this ex ante case may not seem relevantly different. After all, it's still a choice between saving one and saving five. If the numbers weren't enough for Taurek in the original case, wouldn't he say the same here? Not necessarily.[10] Taurek is concerned with how we might justify our choice to each person. In the original case, all we can say to the one is: *Sorry, there's five of them and only one of you*. And for Taurek, this is inadequate. But in this ex ante case, we can arguably give the same justification to all six people: *By sending the ship to the bigger island, I'm making the choice that has the highest chance of saving you*.[11] So it's at least not obvious that the ex ante case should be treated the same.

So Taurek and his followers have two options for responding to the ex ante case. They can take the *hard line view*, which says that even here,

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[10] Taurek discusses a related case. He imagines various stakeholders who have equal claim to a shared resource, such as a rescue ship, and he observes that an ex ante policy of rescuing the greater number (whenever emergencies arise) is agreeable to all stakeholders at the time of the policy's adoption (pp. 312–313):

> Now a policy for the employment of that resource in just such contingencies as this present trade-off situation must be adopted. And it must be a policy agreeable in advance to all those who are supposed to see their interests as equally served. The captain's duty, then, whatever it is, is seen as deriving from this agreement. Thus, to justify his action to those left behind we need only cite the policy to which they, along with the others, have agreed in advance (theoretically, anyway).
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> Into the formation of such an agreement or policy, a consideration of the relative numbers in possible future trade-off situations may enter in a way to which I would find no objection; in a way that commits no one to the impersonal, comparative evaluation of the outcomes [which I have rejected]. It could well be agreed to by all, in advance, that should a trade-off situation arise the resource is to be used to save the maximum number of those who have equal claims. For we may suppose that none of these people knows, at the time the resource is purchased in their collective name, where in the future he may find himself should a trade-off situation arise, whether among the few or among the many. Hence such a policy might be found acceptable to all these people simply on the ground that such a policy maximizes each individual's chances of benefiting from the resource.

Although Taurek stops short of asserting outright that saving the greater number is required in this ex ante case, he seems moved by the argument in its favor.

[11] Admittedly, two varieties of chance are potentially relevant here. Suppose that person #6 was, in fact, assigned to the smaller island. Then sending the ship to the bigger island has no *objective* chance of saving them. But given the information available at the time the decision was made, the *epistemic* chance of saving person #6 by saving the five is still ⅚. It's up to the Taurekian to decide which types of chances are relevant here, if any. In any case, it's worth noting that in the ex ante case, there's one course of action that maximizes everyone's epistemic chance of survival.

the numbers aren't enough. Or they can take the *soft line view*, which concedes that we should save the five ex ante but maintains that the ex ante case is importantly different. As we'll see, the hard line view turns out to conflict with a modest premise: *if we can improve a person's chance of survival, without affecting anyone else, we should*. The soft line view avoids this conflict but renders the Taurekian view untenable in a wide range of cases, including the original scenario, as conceived by Taurek. Let's start by confronting the hard line view.

3.2 The Hard Line View

Suppose we're now facing the ex ante choice. We must push one of two lettered buttons: Ⓢ sends the ship to the smaller island; Ⓑ sends the ship to the bigger island.

> Ⓢ: Save the one person whose number came up.
> Ⓑ: Save the five people whose numbers did not come up.

We'll now examine an argument for choosing Ⓑ, which begins with a simpler choice—a choice involving just one person.

The Decompositional Argument

Alex is in trouble. A die was rolled yesterday, and no one knows the result. We must push either of two little buttons: (*s*) or (*b*).

> (*s*): Save Alex iff 1 came up.
> (*b*): Save Alex iff 1 did not come up.

One button saves Alex. The other dooms him. We don't know which is which. But it is clear, I think, what we should do: We should press *(b)*. This gives Alex a better chance of survival (⅚ rather than ⅙).[12] One would have

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[12] It is worth distinguishing subjective and objective requirements here. Suppose I have cancer, but my doctor doesn't know this. If she were to start giving me chemotherapy, *without any evidence of my having cancer*, what she'd be doing is clearly wrong, in an important sense. This judgment is associated with subjective requirements, which are sensitive to the agent's evidence. Objective requirements, in contrast, are sensitive to all of the facts. Granting this distinction, we'd say that my doctor conformed to her objective requirements but not her subjective requirements. As is evident from this example, subjective requirements are the ones that track what a good person (or good doctor) would do, and they are more closely associated with praise- and

to be quite extreme to deny this.[13] So far, no problem.

Next, consider a sequence of six choices. Imagine that our six people are still numbered 1 to 6. And again a die was rolled yesterday. For each person, we are given a choice of the following form.

(*s*): Ensure that person #*N* is saved iff the result was *N*.
(*b*): Ensure that person #*N* is saved iff the result was *not N*.

Importantly, these are six separate and independent choices. In principle, we can choose (*s*) for some and (*b*) for others. If we choose (*s*) every time, we're effectively choosing Ⓢ—we're guaranteed to save one, the person whose number came up. If we choose (*b*) every time, we're effectively choosing Ⓑ—we're guaranteed to save five, the people whose numbers did not come up. And there are a range of other possible outcomes, which involve combining (*s*) and (*b*) in various ways.

What should we do here? Note that each decision, taken alone, is a copy of the simpler decision involving Alex. For this reason, it's tempting to conclude that we should choose option (*b*) every time, maximizing each person's epistemic probability of survival. But as noted above, choosing (*b*) six times is equivalent to choosing Ⓑ, which saves the five ex ante.

There is a tension here for the hard line view. According to the hard

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blameworthiness. I assume that Taurekians would not want to say, "Oh, I grant that flipping a coin would be deeply blameworthy, and I grant that any morally good person would **of course** save the five; I'm merely making a point about objective requirements." For this reason, this paper is about one's subjective requirements, which reinforces the point made in the text.

[13] In principle, the Taurekian could deny this. The Taurekian could concede that it's permissible to give Alex a ⅙ chance of survival, even though we could give him a ⅚ chance instead. If the Taurekian says this, I confess: the debate ends here. This is a fundamental disagreement. But it's worth noting both how radical this view is and how far it is from the Taurekian view, as standardly conceived.

First, the radicality. Imagine that someone is almost certain to die if we do nothing and almost certain to survive unharmed if we intervene. If we're not required to raise a person's probability from ⅙ to ⅚, then presumably, we're not required to raise their probability from 1% to 99% either. This looks very close to a view that denies duties of rescue altogether—a view we set aside at the outset.

Second, Taurek's view is often thought to be a radical view about ethical trade-offs *involving different people*. But if the Taurekian adopts this radical stance even in a single-person case, then what makes the view radical is not its treatment of trade-offs but rather its denial that we should try to save people at all.

line view, we're not required to choose Ⓑ. But in this sequential case, we're seemingly required to make a series of decisions which jointly are equivalent to Ⓑ. Why is this?

Admittedly, the foregoing argument is diachronic in nature. It moves from premises about what's required in a certain sequence of decisions to a conclusion about what's required in one and the same decision. And it isn't obvious that these should be treated the same. But interestingly, the preceding argument can be recast as a single choice.

The Synchronic Argument

Rather than make six decisions in a sequence, imagine that we must now put forward *one* course of action, which specifies a treatment plan for each of our six stakeholders (#1-#6). We have the same six decisions, but we must make them all at once. Here is a partial list of the available options.

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	min. saved	max. saved
option 1: Ⓢ	s	s	s	s	s	s	1	1
option 2	b	s	s	s	s	s	0	2
option 3	s	b	s	s	s	s	0	2
option 4	s	s	b	s	s	s	0	2
option 5	s	s	s	b	s	s	0	2
option 6	s	s	s	s	b	s	0	2
option 7	s	s	s	s	s	b	0	2
option 8	b	b	s	s	s	s	0	3
...			...				...	...
option 62	b	s	b	b	b	b	0	6
option 63	s	b	b	b	b	b	0	6
option 64: Ⓑ	b	b	b	b	b	b	5	5

This is just one choice, and there are sixty-four options. Among those is Ⓢ (option 1), which is certain to save one—the person whose number came up. Another option is Ⓑ (option 64), which is certain to save five—the people whose numbers did not come up. But this time, there are some additional options (options 2-63). What should we do?

Compare options 1 and 2. They are identical except insofar as they pertain to one specific individual (person #1). And between them, option 2

gives person #1 a far better chance of survival (⅚ vs. ⅙) *without affecting anyone else*. It seems wrong to choose option 1 if option 2 is available.

If this argument works, though, it doesn't just rule out option 1. It rules out every option in the list except the last. After all, for any option that gives someone an (*s*), there is an alternative that gives them a (*b*) and changes nothing else.

The bottom line? This looks like a strong argument for Ⓑ. Every alternative to Ⓑ gives someone a ⅙ probability of survival, when we could give that person a ⅚ probability instead, *without affecting anyone else*.

In response, the hard liner could maintain that we should choose one of the few options that has a chance of saving *all* six people (options 58-63), even though these will end up giving one specific person a suboptimal chance of survival.[14] Alternatively, the hard liner could concede that Ⓑ is required in this sixty-four option case but maintain that Ⓑ is not required in a binary choice between Ⓑ and Ⓢ.[15] These positions seem awkward, though, and would require independent motivation.

In short, the hard liner faces some hard questions. Is it wrong to give a person a ⅙ chance of survival when that person could be given a ⅚ chance instead (without affecting anyone else)? If so, then—in light of the foregoing argument—how do we avoid the result that we are required to

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[14] Some forms of ex post contractualism, such as that found in Reibetanz (1998), will actually require this. After the fact, option 64 is certain to generate a complaint from the person who loses their life. But option 63, for example, is not certain to generate any such complaint. For some, this makes option 63 preferable to option 64. From another angle, however, option 63 continues to appear suspect, I think. It gives person #1 only a ⅙ chance of survival, when we could give her a ⅚ chance of survival instead—at no cost to anyone else. In effect, we are dramatically reducing her chance of survival in order to correlate her fate with the others' fates in a way that leaves open the possibility of saving all six. This looks morally bankrupt. The fact that this type of contractualism is sensitive to correlations in the stakeholders' fates seems troublesome.

[15] Going this route could involve rejecting the first of Sen's (1971) three consistency conditions, which he called 'α' (alpha), and which I would call Contraction Consistency. It asserts that if *X* is rationally required when the options are *X*, *Y*, and some other alternatives, then *X* is still rationally required in a binary choice between *X* and *Y*. I don't know what would motivate rejecting such a principle in this context. The thought would be that one is not required to save the five if saving the five and saving the one are your only two options. But if some alternative options were introduced—options which you're not interested in choosing regardless—then suddenly you would become required to save the five. At a glance, such a view sounds pretty unattractive.

save the five ex ante?

These questions only arise for the hard liner, though. After all, the foregoing argument only applies to the ex ante case. When the stakeholders' locations are known, saving the five will certainly not maximize everyone's chance of survival. For this reason, the soft line view may seem more promising to some. We'll examine that next.

3.3 *The Soft Line View*

According to the soft liner, we are required to save the five ex ante but not in Taurek's original case. What's the difference? The difference is that, in the original case, we know who would die if we were to save the five. And this knowledge makes the crucial difference. This is a natural suggestion. But careful reflection on what this sort of knowledge involves uncovers difficulties. Ultimately, thinking through these issues will, I think, lead to the imposition of harsh limits on the applicability of the Taurekian view.

In short, the plan is to begin with a version of the ex ante case involving six strangers and then to explore what exactly we'd have to learn to change what's required of us.

So we have the ex ante case again. The six people are strangers to us. We know nothing about them—not their names, not their faces, nothing. The die has been rolled, but we know nothing of the result, just as before. At this point, the soft liner agrees that we are required to save the five.

Next, let's suppose that the six people are actually sent to their respective islands—again without our knowledge. So *they* know who would die if we choose to save the five. Presumably, this isn't relevant. Presumably, what matters is what we (the rescuers) know, not what they (the stakeholders) know.

So: what's something we could learn, which would change what's required of us? The six people are complete strangers after all. Suppose we say to ourselves: *One of the six people is now on the smaller island; let's call that individual 'Sam'.* Arguably, by doing this, we successfully refer to the person on the smaller island. Do we now know who is where, in the relevant sense? Presumably not. All we did was coin a name.[16] The

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[16] See Almeida (2010 pp. 4–5) for a verison of this point. See also Hare's discussion of "Bridgey" (2016, p. 468).

situation hasn't meaningfully changed.

Let's imagine learning something a bit more substantial. This time, suppose we use the letters *A* through *F* to refer to the six, assigning those letters alphabetically by surname. We haven't met the six people, but we can refer to each of them uniquely. And next, let's suppose that, before making our decision about where to send the ship, we learn that, using our naming scheme, *Person* B *is on the smaller island.* This time, we've learned something concrete: namely, that the person whose name comes second in an alphabetical list is the one who will die if we send the ship to the bigger island. Does this knowledge absolve us of our prior obligation to save the five? That's some heavy lifting for such a tiny fact.

The soft liner faces a question here. Just what kind of knowledge about the stakeholders must we have, so that the ex ante obligation to save the five goes out of effect?[17] Would it help if we started with their first names, and then learned which one belonged to the person on the smaller island? What about full names? Photographs of their faces? Social security numbers? Superficial pieces of information like these don't seem capable of making such an important moral difference.

At this point, an opponent of Taurek could boldly assert that there isn't *any* kind of knowledge that could plausibly make the crucial difference here. But this is a stronger claim than has been established, and it is stronger than what I am prepared to assert. Instead, I want to explore what I take to be the most promising way forward for the Taurekian, in response to these questions.

The most promising response, as I see it, concedes that knowing superficial facts (such as names or social security numbers) is not morally relevant. This response maintains, though, that knowing normatively rich details about the stakeholders' lives can importantly change the character of the situation. In the present context, the thought would be that we are required to save the five, unless we possess this "normatively rich" knowledge about the six people (*and* know which of these people with

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[17] See Hare (2009, 2010, and especially 2016, §6: What Is It to Know Your Victim?) for a discussion of this important issue in a few different contexts. As I'll explain below, Hare's story has the potential to save Taurek's view, but only by severely restricting the class of cases to which it applies.

whom we are richly acquainted is on the smaller island).

A closely related idea has been explored in depth by Caspar Hare (2009, 2010, 2016), who argues that this richer knowledge can make a moral and rational difference in various contexts—though Hare doesn't specifically advocate its application here. One can certainly ask what this richer knowledge amounts to or about why it makes such an important moral difference, if indeed it does. But I want to set such questions aside and instead explore what it would mean for the Taurekian view if this proposal were successful. Appealing to Hare's story, I believe, places strong limits on the applicability of the Taurekian view.

In the first place, it is already widely thought that we are permitted to save a close friend or relative at the expense of the five. That much is accepted by many non-Taurekians. What makes the Taurekian view distinctive is the assertion that we may save the one, even when we have no special concern for them. On the current view, however, this assertion is true only when we have normatively rich knowledge of the involved parties. And if this is right, then at best, Taurek's view applies to rescue cases where we (*i*) are richly acquainted with the six people but (*ii*) have no special concern for them. Perhaps some cases will thread this needle, but not very many.

Moreover, it's worth emphasizing the wide range of cases in which the Taurekian view will turn out to be silent, on the current proposal. In rescue situations involving strangers, or involving people whom we only know by name or face, Taurek's view would turn out not to apply. We would still be required to save the greater number. And certainly, in cases involving distribution of aid to people far away, with whom we have never interacted, Taurek's view would not apply. We would still be required to save the greater number. If the Taurekian view turns out to be untenable in these ordinary rescue cases, and only possibly tenable under rare conditions, this fact seems worth acknowledging.

One might have thought that if Taurek were right, then it would have dramatic and radical implications about charity: For example, if Taurek were right, it would seem to follow that the effective altruism movement is entirely misguided. But what we've seen is that the best version of the

soft line Taurekian view turns out not to have these sweeping implications for applied ethics.

Conclusion

At its core, Taurek's view is one of skepticism about whether the numbers count. Taurek asserts that they do not. In this paper, we've tried our best to develop a tenable version of Taurek's position. After some exploration, here are the options open to Taurek and his followers. First, there is the extreme libertarian view, which asserts that there are no positive duties of rescue at all. Second, there is a hard line view, which conflicts with the modest idea that you should raise a person's probability of survival, where you can do so without affecting anyone else. If that's still too radical, then what remains is the soft line view. And on the soft line view, in a wide range of realistic cases—including rescue cases involving strangers—the numbers do count, and they are decisive.[18]

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