[Forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*, DOI: 10.1007/s11098-013-0114-x.
The final publication is available at link.springer.com.]

Combinative Consequentialism and the Problem of Act Versions

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In the 1960's, Lars Bergström and Hector-Neri Castañeda noticed a problem with alternative acts and consequentialism. The source of the problem is that some performable acts are versions of other performable acts and the versions need not have the same consequences as the originals. Therefore, if all performable acts are among the agent's alternatives, act consequentialism yields deontic paradoxes. A standard response is to restrict the application of act consequentialism to certain relevant alternative sets. Many proposals are based on some variation of maximalism, that is, the view that act consequentialism should only be applied to maximally specific acts. In this paper, I argue that maximalism cannot yield the right prescriptions in some cases where one can either (i) form at once the intention to do an immediate act and form at a later time the intention to do a succeeding act or (ii) form at once the intention to do both acts and where the consequences of (i) and (ii) differ in value. Maximalism also violates normative invariance, that is, the condition that if an act is performable in a situation, then the normative status of the act does not depend on what acts are performed in the situation. Instead of maximalism, I propose that the relevant alternatives should be the exhaustive combinations of acts the agent can jointly perform without performing any other act in the situation. In this way, one avoids the problem of act versions without violating normative invariance. Another advantage is that one can adequately differentiate between possibilities like (i) and (ii).

In the 1960's, Lars Bergström and Hector-Neri Castañeda noticed a problem with alternative acts and consequentialism.[1] The source of the problem is that some performable acts are versions of other performable acts and the versions need not have the same consequences as the originals. Therefore, if all performable acts

1. Bergström (1966) and Castaneda (1968).

are among the agent's alternatives, consequentialism yields deontic paradoxes. This discovery gave rise to a search of an adequate criterion for the relevant alternative set for consequentialism.[2] In response to this problem, I shall argue that the relevant alternatives should be the exhaustive combinations of acts the agent can jointly perform without performing any other act in the situation.

The traditional form of consequentialism can be stated as follows:

> *Act consequentialism (AC)*
> An act is obligatory for (a person) P in (a situation) S if and only if its outcome is better than the outcome of every other alternative act for P in S.
>
> An act is right for P in S if and only if its outcome is not worse than the outcome of any other alternative act for P in S.
>
> An act is wrong for P in S if and only if its outcome is worse than the outcome of some other alternative act for P in S.

The problem of act versions is due to the fact that an agent can in the same situation perform both a certain act and some more specific version of it. Here, we take an act x to be a *version* of an act y if and only if x and y are different acts performable by the same agent in the same situation and it is logically necessary that y is performed if x is performed. Suppose, for instance, that the following acts are all performable by an agent in a situation:

> a = 'go to the movies'.
>
> $a \wedge b$ = 'go to the movies and buy popcorn'.
>
> $a \wedge \neg b$ = 'go to the movies and do not buy popcorn'.
>
> $\neg a$ = 'do not go to the movies'.

Here, $a \wedge b$ and $a \wedge \neg b$ are different versions of a. Suppose then that the agent's alternative set in the situation is the set of all these acts, that is, the set $\{a, a \wedge b, a \wedge \neg b, \neg a\}$. Furthermore, suppose that the consequences of $a \wedge b$ are better than those for the other alternatives in this set, including a. AC then yields that $a \wedge b$ is obligatory and that a is wrong. But this means, since one cannot do $a \wedge b$

2. For a comprehensive overview, see Carlson (1995, ch. 6–7).

without doing a, that in order to do what is obligatory one must do something wrong, which seems counter-intuitive.[3]

One might object that we could easily avoid the problem by adding the natural requirement that all alternatives in an alternative set must be pairwise incompatible. This requirement rules out that both a and $a \wedge b$ belong to the same alternative set. But then there might be more than one set of jointly exhaustive and pairwise incompatible acts that the agent can perform in the situation. Both $\{a, \neg a\}$ and $\{a \wedge b, a \wedge \neg b, \neg a\}$ are two such sets. Suppose that the consequences of a are worse than those of $\neg a$ and as before that the consequences of $a \wedge b$ are better than those of $\neg a$. Then applied to $\{a, \neg a\}$, AC yields that $\neg a$ is obligatory; but, applied to $\{a \wedge b, a \wedge \neg b, \neg a\}$, AC yields that $\neg a$ is not obligatory. So, if AC is applied to each alternative set in a situation, this will in some cases result in mutually inconsistent normative conclusions.

A standard response has been to restrict the application of AC to certain relevant alternative sets. Many such proposals are based on the idea that AC should only be applied to maximally specific acts. We will examine two representative proposals due to Holly M. Smith and Krister Bykvist.[4] To state Smith's proposal, we need to introduce some terminology. An act a is *contained* in an act b if and only if a and b are agent identical, the period at which a is performed is a proper or improper part of the period at which b is performed, and it is logically necessary that a is performed if b is performed.[5] An act a is *maximal* for P in S if and only if a is performable by P in S and a is not contained in any other act performable by P in S. Smith proposes the following:[6]

3. If we assume—following several authors in the debate, see Bykvist (2002, p. 66, fn. 2)—that the relevant consequences of an act is the possible world that would be actual if the act were performed, then $a \wedge b$ is not performed in the above example. Since, under this assumption, if $a \wedge b$ is performed, $a \wedge b$ and a have the same consequences. This yields that $a \wedge b$ would not be obligatory if performed. If $a \wedge b$ were performed, both a and $a \wedge b$ would be right. So there is an act available such that if one performed it, one would act permissibly. This illustrates the problem of normative variance, which we will return to later.

4. Goldman (1978) and Bykvist (2002). Goldman has changed her name to Smith since the publication of her paper. For two similar proposals see, Jackson and Pargetter (1986, pp. 249–250) and Portmore (2011, pp. 232–233). The arguments against maximalism below work equally well against Jackson and Pargetter's and Portmore's proposals.

5. Prawitz (1968, p. 80).

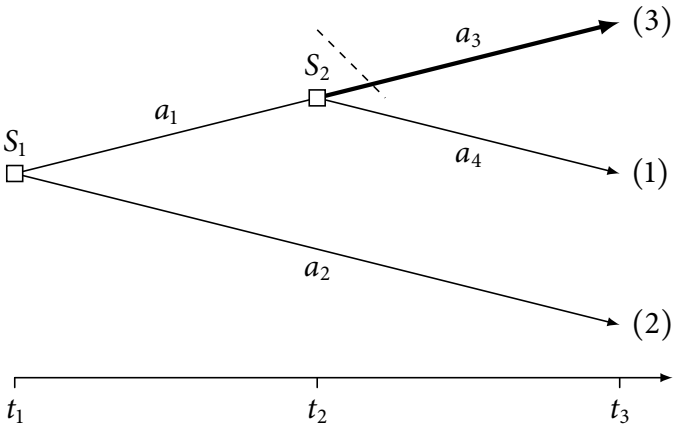
6. Goldman (1978).

Maximalism
The relevant alternative set for P in S consists of all acts that are maximal for P in S.

Maximalism avoids the problem of act versions, because it limits the application of AC to the set of all performable maximal acts in a situation and these maximal acts do not have more specific versions. For example, according to maximalism, if $a \wedge b$ is performable in the situation, AC cannot be applied to $\{a, \neg a\}$. This is because a is not a maximal; a is contained in $a \wedge b$.

Bykvist objects that maximalism yields counter-intuitive prescriptions in the following type of case:[7]

Case 1



In this example, there are three performable acts in situation S_1 at t_1—namely, a_1, a_2, and $a_1 \wedge a_4$—and two performable acts in situation S_2 at t_2—namely, a_3 and a_4. The thick line denotes that if the agent were to perform a_1, the agent would freely perform a_3. The dashed line over S_2 denotes that $a_1 \wedge a_3$ is not performable in S_1 although a_3 is performable in S_2. One might wonder how this is possible. According to Bykvist, an act is performable at a time only if the agent can at this time form an intention to do it.[8] He offers the explanation that the

7. Bykvist (2002, p. 50).

8. Bykvist (2002, p. 50). A more plausible condition would be that an act is performable at a time only if the agent at this time either already has the intention to do it or is able to form an intention to do it. That you are unable to form an intention to do an act you already intend to do, should not make you unable to perform this act.

agent lacks at t_1 the concepts needed to form an intention to perform $a_1 \wedge a_3$ but by t_2 the agent has acquired these concepts and thereby gained the ability to form an intention to perform a_3.[9] Bykvist claims that the only maximal acts for the agent in S_1 are $a_1 \wedge a_4$ and a_2. Thus a_2 is obligatory, since it has the best consequences of all maximal acts. But there is a way to achieve a better outcome, that is, to perform the non-maximal act a_1.[10]

Instead of maximalism, Bykvist defends the combination of AC and the following criterion for the relevant alternative set:[11]

> *Quasi-maximalism*
> The relevant alternative set for P in S consists of every act a such that (1) a is immediately performable by P in S and (2) for any act b not contained in a, if b would be performed were the agent to perform a in S, then $a \wedge b$ is not immediately performable by P in S.

According to quasi-maximalism, the relevant alternative set in Case 1 is $\{a_1, a_1 \wedge a_4, a_2\}$. Hence it yields that a_1 is obligatory, which has the best achievable outcome. But, as Bykvist notes, quasi-maximalism has other problems. It violates the following plausible principle:

> *Strong normative invariance*
> If a is performable by P in S, then the normative status of a does not depend on what acts P performs in S.[12]

The standard argument in support of normative invariance is that violating it yields problems with action guidance even for agents who know all morally

9. There is, however, a reply available to Smith that Bykvist does not consider. Like most authors in the debate, e.g. Bergström (1966, pp. 24–25), Smith takes forbearances to be acts, Goldman (1978, p. 189). That is, if P intentionally avoids performing a, P has performed the forbearance $\neg a$. If one has the concepts necessary to form an intention to perform $a_1 \wedge a_4$, one should also have the concepts necessary to form an intention to perform $a_1 \wedge \neg a_4$. Hence we have no explanation for why $a_1 \wedge \neg a_4$ is not a maximal act in S_1. And, if $a_1 \wedge \neg a_4$ were a maximal act, it would be obligatory and a_2 would be wrong. So the act prescribed on maximalism would then yield the best consequences. This reply could also answer, *mutatis mutandis*, Erik Carlson's similar objection in Carlson (1995, pp. 122–123). To fix Bykvist's objection, one needs another explanation for why the agent cannot form the intention to $a_1 \wedge \neg a_4$ but can form the intention to $a_1 \wedge a_4$.

10. Bykvist (2002, p. 55).

11. Bykvist (2002, p. 56).

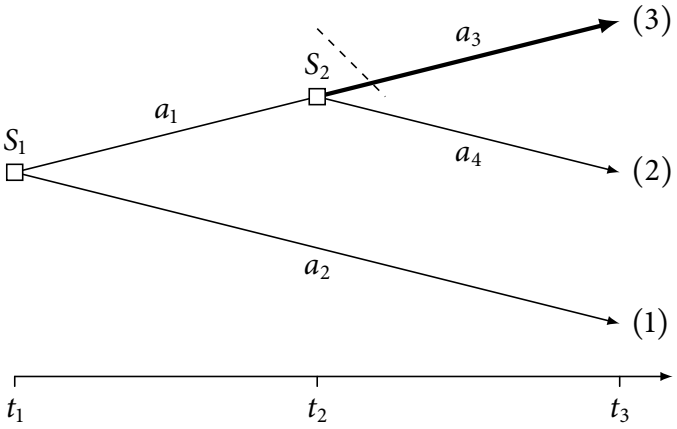
12. Carlson (1995, p. 101). H. A. Prichard (1932, p. 26) had the same idea but restricted his claim to obligations: 'the existence of an obligation to do some action cannot possibly depend on actual performance of the action.'

relevant facts except that they do not know what they will do. If there is normative variance, it seems that one must already know what one will do in a situation in order to know what one ought to do in the situation.[13] Nonetheless, Bykvist argues that agents with complete knowledge can apply his theory if they are unconstrained in their ability to grasp future acts.[14] Such agents are able in any situation to form an intention to do any of their future acts and will thus never face situations with normative variance on his theory. Still, the action-guidance complaint seems to remain for agents without this, somewhat ad hoc, superpower to form an intention in any situation for any of their future acts.

In defence of normative variance, Frances Howard-Snyder suggests that in order to get action guidance it is enough that the agent knows that an act would be right if it were performed.[15] But suppose you will in fact not do an act *a*, that *a* is wrong, and that you know that if *a* were done, it would be right. In so far as the knowledge of this counterfactual gives you guidance in favour of doing *a*, it gives wicked guidance, since *a* is in fact wrong. Even if this alleged action guidance would be righteous were you to follow it, this does not alter the fact that it is wicked, since it actually recommends a wrong act.

To see that Bykvist's theory violates strong normative invariance, consider the following case:[16]

Case 2



13. Carlson (1995, p. 101).
14. Bykvist (2007, pp. 112–113).
15. Howard-Snyder (2007, p. 6).
16. Bykvist (2002, p. 62).

If $a_1 \wedge a_4$ is not performed, quasi-maximalism yields that the relevant alternative set is $\{a_1, a_1 \wedge a_4, a_2\}$ and hence that $a_1 \wedge a_4$ is wrong. But, if $a_1 \wedge a_4$ is performed, quasi-maximalism yields that the relevant alternative set is $\{a_1 \wedge a_4, a_2\}$, since a_1 no longer qualifies as relevant. This is because a_4 would then be performed were the agent to perform a_1. Therefore, if $a_1 \wedge a_4$ is performed, it is obligatory.

Yet Bykvist does not think this is a serious drawback. He writes:

> But is this a good objection to my theory? Note that this situation is special in the sense that both the repertoire of alternative actions and the associated outcomes would change if a_1-*and*-a_4 were performed. If a_1-*and*-a_4 were performed, then a_1 would no longer be an alternative action. The agent would face a choice between two disasters, one major and one minor. Why should we assume that the normative status of an action should be fixed when we vary the alternatives and their outcomes? After all, the underlying idea of a comparative consequentialism like my theory is precisely that the normative status of an action is determined by the value of its outcome as compared to the values of the outcomes of its alternatives.[17]

I am not fully convinced by Bykvist's defence. One may agree that normative invariance is not a plausible condition on the assumption that the available alternatives in a situation might vary depending on what the agent does in the situation. Nevertheless, this is irrelevant unless we find this assumption plausible. That is, in order for the defence to get off the ground, we need to reject the following condition—which, as Bykvist notes, is also violated by his theory:

> *Alternative invariance*
> The relevant alternative set for P in S does not depend on what acts P performs in S.

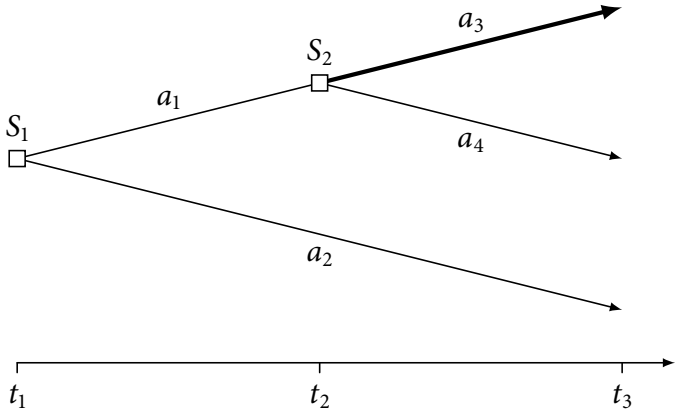
The trouble is that alternative invariance seems at least as plausible as normative invariance and violating it yields similar problems for action guidance. In order to apply AC, one needs to know what the relevant alternatives are. But, if alternative invariance is violated, one might need to know what one will do in order to know what one's relevant alternatives are. Hence if alternative invariance is violated, one might need to know what one will do in order to apply AC. It seems then that the same type of considerations that has been given in support of normative invariance also supports alternative invariance. Thus Bykvist's

17. Bykvist (2002, p. 62).

argument against normative invariance, where one premise is incompatible with alternative invariance, seems to be begging the question.

Now we shall look at one final problem for maximalism and quasi-maximalism. A salient feature of maximalism and quasi-maximalism is that a cannot belong to a relevant alternative set for P in S if $a \wedge b$ is performable by P in S and b would be performed were the agent to perform a in S. A consequence of this is that maximalism and quasi-maximalism do not differentiate between the following two possibilities in Case 3:

Case 3



(i) P performs a_1 in S_1 without forming or having an intention at t_1 to perform a_3, and P performs a_3 in S_2 having formed an intention to perform a_3 after t_1.

(ii) P performs $a_1 \wedge a_3$ in S_1 forming or having an intention at t_1 to perform $a_1 \wedge a_3$.

These two possibilities might have different consequences, and it is up to P in the relevant sense whether (i) rather than (ii) is realized. A natural diagnosis is that only in (ii) does P intentionally perform $a_1 \wedge a_3$ in S_1—in (i) P intentionally performs just a_1 in S_1. The difference between (i) and (ii) is the time at which the agent decides to do a_3. If it is up to us in the morally relevant sense whether to intentionally perform some act, it should also be up to us in this sense whether to form an intention to perform the act. And, in at least some cases, it is not merely up to us whether to form an intention to do some act; it is also up to us whether to form it at one time rather than another. For example, suppose you

have just received an invitation to a party. Then it seems plausible that it is up to you whether to immediately form an intention to attend, and if you do not form one immediately, you can still form an intention later.

Since the consequences might be optimal for one of (i) and (ii) and catastrophic for the other, a plausible version of consequentialism should be able to prescribe one of them and not the other. Suppose, for example, that the agent gets an offer to participate in a version of Newcomb's problem.[18] In this problem, there are two boxes. The first contains $1,000, and the second contains either $1,000,000 or nothing. The agent is given a choice between either taking what is in both boxes or only taking what is in the second box. The contents of the second box depends on what a predictor predicts the agent will choose. If the predictor predicts that the agent will take what is in both boxes, he puts nothing in the second box. If the predictor predicts that the agent will take only what is in the second box, he puts $1,000,000 in the second box. In Case 3, let a_1 be to accept the offer to participate in the Newcomb problem, and let a_3 be to take what is in both boxes. In this version of Newcomb's problem, the predictor bases his prediction on an observation of the agent at t_1. By either a brain scan of the agent at t_1 or a meticulous observation of the agent's behaviour at t_1, the predictor can tell whether the agent has formed at t_1 an intention to do $a_1 \wedge a_3$ or if the agent has merely formed at that time an intention to do a_1. Hence under possibility (i), the agent gets $1,001,000, and under possibility (ii) the agent gets just $1,000. Suppose also that the agent will put the money to good use. Then it seems plausible that (i) has better consequences than (ii).

So it seems plausible that both possibilities (i) and (ii) are open to the agent and furthermore that (i) is the only way the agent can achieve the best consequences in S_1. On both maximalism and quasi-maximalism, the relevant alternative set in S_1 is $\{a_1 \wedge a_3, a_1 \wedge a_4, a_2\}$. First, (i) is not a way to do either of $a_1 \wedge a_4$ or a_2. Second, (ii) is a way to intentionally perform $a_1 \wedge a_3$ in S_1. Hence there is no way on either maximalism or quasi-maximalism to prescribe possibility (i) without prescribing possibility (ii), which is something a plausible version of consequentialism should be able to do. Had, on the other hand, the non-maximal a_1 been one of the relevant alternatives, there might perhaps have been a way to differentiate between the possibilities. Thus neither maximalism nor quasi-maximalism can handle Case 3 adequately.

18. For the original, see Nozick (1969, pp. 114–115).

Smith's and Bykvist's theories occupy an intermediate position in the debate between actualism and possibilism. This debate concerns whether the agent's simultaneous or future acts may determine what the agent ought to do in a situation. Actualism claims, at least in an extreme version, that it is always relevant to the normative status of an act *a* in a situation *S* what other acts the agent would perform in *S* and later situations if the agent were to perform *a* in *S*. On the other hand, possibilism claims—again, at least in an extreme version—that this is never relevant; it only attends to what is possible for the agent.[19]

The problem of act versions has motivated some authors to accept some form of possibilism.[20] A rough version of possibilism can be stated as follows:

> *Possibilism*
> An act is obligatory for *P* in *S* if and only if it is performed in *S* in all the best possible lives still open to *P* in *S*.

Possibilism avoids the problem of act versions, because it maximizes over lives rather than over acts. The different possible lives that are open to an agent are mutually exclusive, and hence none of these lives is a version of another. Rather than the consequences of individual acts, it is the consequences of exhaustive combinations of the agent's present and future acts that matters on possibilism. There are, however, some strong objections to possibilism. One stock objection is that possibilism might prescribe acts with catastrophic consequences. Suppose, for example, that an act *a* is performed in the best possible life still open to *P* in *S*. Nevertheless, performing *a* in *S* has catastrophic consequences unless *P* performs *b* in some future situation many years from now. Suppose further that *P* will in fact not perform *b*. Moreover, *P* cannot in *S* form any intention to perform *b* nor can *P* in *S* control whether *P* will do *b* in the future. So performing *a* in *S* has bad consequences and *P* cannot in *S* do anything about this fact. The problem is that possibilism still yields that *a* is obligatory in *S*, which seems implausible.[21]

Even though possibilism might not be normatively plausible, the idea that one might avoid the problem of act versions by maximizing the consequences of exhaustive combinations of acts rather than individual acts still has promise. One might avoid the problem with catastrophic prescriptions if one limits the

19. Jackson and Pargetter (1986, p. 233) and Carlson (1999, p. 260).
20. See, e.g. Feldman (1986, pp. 36–38) and Zimmerman (1996, pp. 25–26).
21. Carlson (1999, p. 261).

relevant combinations to just combinations of acts that can be performed in the present situation. Thus we take the relevant alternatives to be not just the individual acts the agent can perform but the exhaustive combinations of acts that the agent can jointly perform in the situation. Let us say that *P* in *S* *jointly intentionally performs* all and only the acts in a set of acts *X* if and only if (1) for all acts *a* in *X*, *P* intentionally performs *a* in *S* and (2) for all acts *a* such that *P* intentionally performs *a* in *S*, *a* is in *X*. In addition, I take a necessary condition for that *P* intentionally performs an act *a* in *S* to be that *P* forms or has at the time of *S* an intention to perform *a*. I propose

> *Combinative act consequentialism (CAC)*
> It is obligatory for *P* in *S* to jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in a set of acts *X* if and only if
>
> (1) *P* in *S* can jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in *X* and
>
> (2) for every other set of acts *Y* such that *P* in *S* can jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in *Y*, the outcome of *P* in *S* jointly intentionally performing all and only the acts in *X* is better than the outcome of *P* in *S* jointly intentionally performing all and only the acts in *Y*.
>
> It is right for *P* in *S* to jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in a set of acts *X* if and only if
>
> (1) *P* in *S* can jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in *X* and
>
> (2) for every set of acts *Y* such that *P* in *S* can jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in *Y*, the outcome of *P* in *S* jointly intentionally performing all and only the acts in *X* is not worse than the outcome of *P* in *S* jointly intentionally performing all and only the acts in *Y*.
>
> It is wrong for *P* in *S* to jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in a set of acts *X* if and only if it is not right for *P* in *S*.

On CAC, we are able to handle Case 3 adequately. If possibility (i) has the best consequences, CAC prescribes that the agent in S_1 jointly intentionally performs

all and only the acts in a set that includes a_1 but neither $a_1 \wedge a_3$ nor a_3 and hence it prescribes possibility (i) and not (ii). Since I take a necessary condition for that P in S intentionally performs an act a to be that P forms or has at the time of S an intention to perform a, the agent does not in S_1 intentionally perform $a_1 \wedge a_3$ or a_3 under possibility (i). If, on the other hand, possibility (ii) has the best consequences, CAC prescribes that the agent in S_1 jointly intentionally performs all and only the acts in a set that includes $a_1 \wedge a_3$ and hence it prescribes (ii) and not (i).

One might perhaps wonder how an exhaustive combination of acts differs from an individual compound act with the same acts as parts. That the compound act is performed implies that the acts in the combination of acts are performed, and vice versa. The main difference is that the exhaustive combination of acts, since it is exhaustive, rules out that any other acts are performed in the same situation. This lets us avoid, among other things, normative variance. The consequences of an individual act in a situation might depend on what additional acts are performed in the situation. But the consequences of an exhaustive combination of acts in a situation does not depend on what additional acts are performed in the situation, since the performance of the exhaustive combination rules out that any other acts are performed in the situation. Since, unlike Bykvist's quasi-maximalism, CAC satisfies alternative invariance, the relevant alternative set does not depend on what acts are performed in the situation. And, since the consequences of these alternatives do not depend on what acts are performed in the situation, CAC satisfies normative invariance.[22]

22. That CAC maximizes over performable exhaustive combinations of acts rather than all performable combinations of acts is one of many differences between CAC and a similarly named proposal by Bart Streumer (2003, p. 244). He proposes the following, where X is whatever the good consists in:

> *Combined act consequentialism*: An act is right if and only if it belongs to a combination of acts that maximizes X and that agents can perform.

One problem with Streumer's proposal is that it violates normative invariance. This is because the consequences of a combination of acts might depend on what other acts are performed. Suppose, for example, that if just a_1 and a_2 were performed, then the combination $\{a_1, a_2\}$ would maximize X—and hence a_1 would be right. But suppose, furthermore, that if a_1, a_2, and also a_3 were performed, then the combination $\{a_1, a_2\}$ would not maximize X—and then a_1 would not be right. One might object that one can avoid this problem if these combinations of acts are required to not be contained in any other performable combination of acts. In that case, however, Streumer's proposal is a version of maximalism and is hence vulnerable to the objections I raised to maximalism above.

A further motivation for taking the relevant alternatives to be exhaustive combinations of acts is that one is no longer plagued by problems with versions. Since no exhaustive combination of acts is a version of another one, they do not give rise to a problem of versions. For example, if I jointly intentionally perform at a certain time all and only the acts in a set that includes *a* but no more specific act, I cannot simultaneously jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in a set that includes the more specific act $a \wedge b$. Similarly, if I jointly intentionally perform at a certain time all and only the acts in a set that includes the act *go to the movies* but no more specific act, I cannot simultaneously jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in a set that includes the more specific act *go to the movies and buy popcorn*.

I take CAC to be a rival of AC. That is, if we accept CAC, we should reject AC. Still, there is no *logical* inconsistency in accepting both of them, since AC is a theory about the normative status of individual acts and CAC is a theory of the normative status of combinations of acts. But, if one accepts both, one might get normatively incompatible prescriptions, where a combination of acts that is obligatory according to CAC includes acts that are wrong according to AC.

One might perhaps object to CAC that, unlike AC, it does not tell us whether individual acts are right or wrong, which might be something an adequate moral theory should be able to tell us. While we should not assign rightness and wrongness to individual acts according to AC if we accept CAC, we can still say something about their normative status. We may distinguish between obligation in two senses. In addition to what ought to be done in a primary non-derivative sense of ought, some things ought to be done in a derivative sense, because they are a prerequisite for doing what ought to be done in the primary sense. Hence an act is obligatory in the derivative prerequisite sense in a situation if performing it is a prerequisite for fulfilling the non-derivative obligations in the situation. Similarly, an act is right in the prerequisite sense in a situation if performing it is compatible with fulfilling the non-derivative obligations in the situation.[23] Following this approach, I propose that

> An act *a* is obligatory in the prerequisite sense for *P* in *S* if and only if *a* is part of every set of acts such that it is right for *P* in *S* to jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in the set.

23. Carlson (1995, p. 142).

> An act *a* is right in the prerequisite sense for *P* in *S* if and only if *a* is part of some set of acts such that it is right for *P* in *S* to jointly intentionally perform all and only the acts in the set.
>
> An act *a* is wrong in the prerequisite sense for *P* in *S* if and only if *a* is not right in the prerequisite sense for *P* in *S*.

These derivative prescriptions for individual acts are normatively consistent with the non-derivative prescriptions of CAC.[24]

I wish to thank Gustaf Arrhenius, John Cantwell, Erik Carlson, Sven Ove Hansson, Jens Johansson, Martin Peterson, Wlodek Rabinowicz, Tor Sandqvist, and an anonymous referee for valuable comments. Thanks also to my audiences at *Preferences and Decisions: A Workshop at the Division of Philosophy, KTH*, Royal Institute of Technology, May 17, 2011; *Filosofidagarna*, University of Gothenburg, June 12, 2011; *ECAP7: Seventh European Congress of Analytic Philosophy*, Vita-Salute San Raffaele University and University of Milan, September 3, 2011; the seminar in practical philosophy at Uppsala University, October 21, 2011; and *ISUS XII 2012*, New York University Stern School of Business, August 11, 2012. Financial support from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme is gratefully acknowledged.

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24. This problem, however, is not unique to CAC. The combination of AC and maximalism faces an analogous problem, since it only gives normative statuses to maximal acts. And, in a similar manner, Smith and Bykvist also introduce a prerequisite sense of ought in order to say something about the normative statuses of non-maximal acts. See, Goldman (1978, pp. 190–191) and Bykvist (2002, p. 57).

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