

# Garret hardin lifeboat ethics: the case against helping people



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Life Boat Ethics The piece recognized as (Life Boat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor) was writing by Garrett Hardin in which he uses several similarities, abstract questioning and honest reasoning to make his case against helping the poor and to counter those theorists who state that the wealthy should help the poor (Hardin 1974). He states that it is not the responsibility of the wealthy nations to help and assist the poor nations. To explain why wealthy nations should not assist the poor nations he uses the example of a life boat and compares it to a wealthy nation. He proposes his hypothesis in quite a persuasive manner to increase the involvement of his audience. In his work he tries to prove that by not helping the poor, wealthy nations will be doing a correct task and will end up helping the poor nations. To support his opinion he gives an example of a life boat consisting of 50 individuals and still has space for another 10 individuals while there are hundreds other in the sea asking for helping and wanting to be saved by the life boat. Hardin states that it is impossible for the life boat and the people who have the life boat to save all of them. The people who are already within the life boat represent those individuals who represent the wealthy nations and those asking for help represent people from poor nations. During the initial stages of his written work, one might perceive that Hardin is being unethical and selfish, but as a reader proceeds, he/she may realize that his opinion may only be the way to save the depleting resources of the earth. Later in his work he states that if all of the individuals who are asking for assistance are added to the lifeboat, the boat will sink. Similarly if wealthy nations start helping all poor nations, the wealthy nations will loose their resources and they will drown along with the poor nations. He further states that the selection of 10 people out of the pool of 100 for help is impossible.

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He believes that the boat should only hold 50 people for safety purposes. He compares this condition to the condition of the poor; he states that it is very hard for wealthy nations to determine who to help and who not to help so nations should opt for not helping at all. Secondly, he believes that nations should not share its abundant resources with the 10 selected poor countries because the wealthy nation may experience situations when they might be in trouble and the surplus resources may help them during such sessions. Hardin may be wrong in believing that by helping the poor nations, the wealthy nations lose their resources but his ideas do have certain benefits. His ideas may support the notion that if wealthy countries continue to support poor ones, the poor ones will become dependant on them and will not try to take advantages of opportunities. Thus, if poor nations are not helped by the rich nations, the people of poor nations will have to look for other opportunities for survival.

#### Works Cited

Hardin, Garrett. " Lifeboat Ethics: the Case Against Helping the Poor by Garrett Hardin - The Garrett Hardin Society - Articles." The Garrett Hardin Society. N. p., 1974. Web. 27 Nov. 2012.