

# Free essay on famine and morality

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



## **Philosophy**

On a personal level, the privileged members of society have an obligation to help the less privileged members of society. This simply means that those in need of help should receive the appropriate amount of help that they require so as to help them out of the given predicament that they are in. Hardin's lifeboat analogy, however, seems to be of a contrary opinion. This analogy paints the picture of a boat at sea with space for ten people and a hundred drowning people in the water. The people in the boat are thus faced with a dilemma. The dilemma arises as to exactly who should be saved and the criteria that will be employed to establish who will be saved. It is very clear that the boat cannot save all people that are drowning in the water thus a crisis in terms of ethics presents itself. Hardin, however, adds that the only way in which the people in the boat can objectively choose whom to save and who to leave in the water rests on the leadership of the boat. If the people on the boat have a single solitary leader then a decision can be arrived at on who should be saved and who should not be saved. The working of this analogy rests on the fact that the people on the boat represent the well-off countries in the world while the drowning people represent the poorer countries of the world. Clearly aid cannot be given to every poor country on the planet. The question thus presents itself as to which countries should be helped and the factors motivating the choice behind this decision. According to Hardin if the world had one solitary leader then it would be possible to choose which nations to offer aid but since this solitary leadership lacks then no nation should be helped at all.

This analogy is not convincing at all. The fact that a single solitary global

leadership is not in place does not rule out the fact that developed nations have their own leadership mechanisms in place. This leadership is fully capable of selecting which nations should receive a given amount of aid and the establishment of the criteria to be used in the selection of these nations. Hardin is right on the fact that not all nations can be saved by their developed counterparts. He is, however, very wrong on the assertion that since not all nations can be helped then absolutely no nation should be helped. Hardin in his argument presents a conflict of ethics and morality. It is the moral responsibility of the people on the boat to help as many people as they can. If the people on the boat choose not to help any person simply because they cannot help all people then this brings about question marks as to the inclination of their moral and ethical compasses. Hardin is simply trying to shield the inclination that no nation should be helped behind the veil of how to choose which nation to help. The people on the boat can come up with a random method of choosing whom to save. Thus, they are doing the best they can to help as many people as possible yet at the same time eliminating the element of discrimination from the exercise entirely.