

# Garrett hardin's article "lifeboat ethics: helping the poor" essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



## **Garrett Hardin's article "Lifeboat Ethics: Helping the Poor" Essay Sample**

I find a few things wrong with Garrett Hardin's article "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor." The dominant argument I have against his article is that it is completely one sided. Hardin fails to even glance at the people, who do not fall under his ideas of what our society, nation, world is like. He has his own opinions, which he is 100% entitled to, but he poses these ideas in his article in such a way that he leaves no room for any alternative ways of thinking. It's as though he thinks his thoughts are the right ones, so there is no reason to allow others to have ideas of their own.

Here is how Hardin describes the "lifeboat" of our world: "If we divide the world crudely into rich nations and poor nations, two thirds of them are desperately poor, and only one third comparatively rich, with the United States the wealthiest of all. Metaphorically each nation can be seen as a lifeboat full of comparatively rich people. In the ocean outside each lifeboat swim the poor of the world, who would like to get in, or at least to share some of the wealth."

I must admit, that I do think Hardin does make a good point with his metaphor. There are, in a crude sense, two groups that we could divide the world into...the rich and the poor. And the metaphor of a lifeboat makes sense. There are those who are swimming in the water, either asking for help into the boat, or are asking for some sort of handout. Hardin goes on in the article to say that he thinks most of the "swimmers" fall under the category

of asking for the handouts. This is the problem. This is a HUGE generalization by Hardin, which I think is not true.

Yes, it's true that the US has a welfare system for those who do not make an adequate amount of money to support them. And again, yes, it's true that our nation's taxes supplied by all classes are what provide the money for these services. However, just because we offer this help to people, that does not mean that all poor people take advantage of the system in order to gain things for themselves. There are a lot of lower class citizens out there who are indeed making an honest effort to get somewhere in life, instead of staying where they're at and " mooching" off of the higher classes.

Hardin would disagree with me.

In short, Hardin is right and I'm right. There are some poor who choose to use the system and basically take from the rich. BUT, there are also a lot of people out there who are not doing this, yet still get slack because of those who do. I actually enjoyed Hardin's article, I just think he needs to quit generalizing his " facts" so much and to open up his arguments to allow other's opinions and ideas in on the topics he is discussing.