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Critical Thinking

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Moral Ground, Hardin or Singer?

Hardin and Singer are both authors, who propose how the world should deal with the world poverty problem. Singer proposes a solution where everyone who makes more than thirty-thousand dollars, should donate the rest of their money to the poor. While Hardin proposes why the world should avoid helping the poor. Both Hardin and Singer are authors who want the best outcome for the world. While both have good intentions Hardin's solution has a higher moral ground compared to Singer's.

To summarize Singer's solution, he argues that individuals in developed countries have a moral obligation to donate their comfort spending to help solve global poverty. Singer's first premise is that not donating any pleasure money is just as morally wrong as sacrificing an expensive car to save a child who would be hit by a train. He argues that if anyone does not act to help the poor when they have the power to, then they are morally responsible for any poverty. Singer's second premise is that rich countries have a lot of power to help poor countries. Singer states that it takes two hundred dollars to help a child live for four years. Money donated can do a lot in other countries. Singer's last premise is that it does not matter if the person is seen being saved or not, the outcome is the same, and therefore the moral obligation is the same. Next, Hardin's solution summarizes that he argues that rich countries do not have any obligation to help poor countries. His first premise is that there are not enough resources to support the poor. Poorer countries have two times as much population as rich and have three times as much of a

birth rate because of this helping would make the problem worse. His second premise is about the tragedy of the commons, if resources were shared, people would overuse them and deplete them and thus no one would contribute to the resources. His last premise is that helping would make them dependent on the help and thus would use it irresponsibly. A nation that receives aid would not try to innovate and try to expand its infrastructure.

Hardin's solution to poverty is on a higher moral ground than Singer's even though both solutions are very flawed. The first premise is that the idea that everyone should just donate their pleasure money is foolish. It is not as simple as throwing money at a problem. While it might seem great to donate to the poor, it is ultimately bad advice. Donating money will only help in the short term, the poorer countries can't always be on the receiving end of aid; they need to figure out how they can support themselves, such as better infrastructure, education, and healthcare. The second premise is that Singer's approach to get people to donate is morally wrong. For example, he guilt trips the reader by saying it is just as wrong to not donate as it is to kidnap a child for money. The approach takes advantage of people's emotions rather than focusing on logic. He gives the reader a sense of urgency by giving them a phone number that accepts donations. A person swayed by this tactic does not know what they are getting themselves into as they probably don't know what the charity does. The third premise is that Singer gets his numbers wrong about how much a family makes and how much to support a child costs. Singer claims that it takes two hundred dollars to support a child for four years, which is about fifty dollars a year. Simply fifty dollars is too little. Even food for a child is going to be at least 500 dollars a year, not even close to 200 dollars. Singer also claims that most families make 75 thousand dollars a year when in fact almost no family makes that much a year. Singer is misleading the readers by stretching what the money actually can do. In the end, Hardin

is on a higher ground morally than Singer as the idea of throwing money at a problem is bad advice and Singer is relying on emotions to guilt trip his audience to donate, and lastly, Singer is skewed on what money can help out.

Overall, both of the papers on poverty by Hardin and Singer, are only partially correct. A combination of both authors would show a better solution. My first criticism is that Hardin does a good job of showing the problems and how complex the problems can be. However his reasonings for not helping are very closed-minded, there are plenty of ways of going past the limits of problems. For example, Hardin showed closed-minded thinking in his unrealistic metaphor of a lifeboat, ignoring the benefits of having aids and ignoring possible solutions. My second criticism is with Singer of how short-sighted his solution is. While it is good to encourage people to make a change. Guilt-tripping would not be a moral way of doing this. A charity that would be encouraged to donate needs to be exact with its numbers and very clear with what it is doing what it is solving and how it will help those who are in poverty. My third criticism is that a solution to poverty is very complex and needs a variety of components from both papers to fix the problem, such as identifying the limits and the problems, for example avoiding being too dependent on the aid and avoiding the tragedy of the common and promoting people to execute a solution and encourage people and governments to help and chip in. In the end, both Hardin and Singer showed great solutions and they both did a great job on how they influence people on the worldwide issue.

In the end, Singer argues that individuals have a moral obligation to address global poverty by making significant personal sacrifices to the poor. Hardin argues for not helping the poor as there are not enough resources to support them and they would be too dependent on any aid and misuse the resource. Hardin is on the higher moral ground compared to Singer, because

Siger gives bad advice on donating, and guilt trips people into giving in and skewed on how much the money helps. Lastly, a combination of both papers is needed to get a complete solution to solve poverty. Part of it is finding the limits and problems overcoming them with unique solutions and encouraging people to donate.