



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 14 June 2017 – Afternoon

A2 GCE CRITICAL THINKING

F503/01/RB Ethical Reasoning and Decision-Making

RESOURCE BOOKLET

To be issued with the Question Paper

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Use the resource documents to answer the questions in the Question Paper.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The information contained in this Resource Booklet was accurate when it went to press, but may subsequently have changed. Questions should be answered on the basis that the information is correct.
- This document consists of **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Document 1

Famine, affluence and morality

Because most people regard giving money to people in need as an act of charity, they do not think that there is anything wrong with not giving. The charitable person may be praised, but the person who is not charitable is not condemned. People do not feel in any way ashamed or guilty about spending money on new clothes or a new car instead of giving it to relieve world poverty. Indeed, the alternative does not occur to them.

This way of looking at the matter cannot be justified.

I begin with the assumption that suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care are bad. I think most people will agree about this. My next point is this: if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it. An application of this principle would be as follows: if I am walking past a shallow pond and see a child drowning in it, I ought to wade in and pull the child out. This will mean getting my clothes muddy, but this is insignificant, while the death of the child would presumably be a very bad thing.

The outcome of this argument is that our traditional moral categories are upset. The traditional distinction between duty and charity cannot be drawn, or at least, not in the place we normally draw it.

When we buy new clothes not to keep ourselves warm but to look 'well-dressed' we are not providing for any important need. We would not be sacrificing anything significant if we were to continue to wear our old clothes, and give the money to famine relief. By doing so, we would be preventing another person from starving. It follows from what I have said earlier that we ought to give money away, rather than spend it on clothes which we do not need to keep us warm. Giving money in this way is not charitable, or generous. On the contrary, it is a duty to give the money away, and it is wrong not to do so.

The formula is simple: whatever money you're spending on luxuries, not necessities, should be given away.

Source: Peter Singer

Peter Singer is Professor of Bioethics at the Universities of Princeton (USA) and Melbourne (Australia). His publications have been very influential on the debates about the Right to Life, Animal Rights and Utilitarianism.

Document 2

Lifeboat ethics

Garrett Hardin has provided the main philosophical argument against Singer's claim that people in the affluent West have a moral duty to give a significant proportion of their income to relieve world poverty. Because Hardin uses the analogy of a lifeboat, his approach has become known as 'lifeboat ethics'. 1

Hardin uses the example of a lifeboat which contains 50 people and is capable of carrying 60. If the lifeboat is surrounded by 100 people begging to be taken onboard in order to be saved from drowning, he suggests it would be a false kindness to take them, because the boat would become over-loaded and sink, with the loss of all 150 lives. 2

Hardin suggests that the rich nations of the world resemble lifeboats, "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." He claims that the reason why they are poor is that the population of their countries exceeds the number they can support. Food aid makes the problem worse, by enabling even more people to survive in the short term. He concludes, "Gifts of food to an overpopulated country boomerang, increasing starvation over the long run. Our choice is really whether to let some die this year or to let more die in the following years." 3

Source: College handout

Garrett Hardin was Professor of Human Ecology at the University of California.

Document 3

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Document 4

Religious teaching on charitable giving

Church of England

The Church of England encourages church members to set the target of giving 5% of their income to and through the church, and a further 5% to charity. Giving to relief agencies such as Christian Aid is an obvious way of fulfilling the second of these elements of Christian giving.

Islam

The five fundamental practices of Islam are known as the Five Pillars. One of these pillars is *zakat*. All Muslims whose wealth totals more than a certain amount are expected to give 2.5% of their wealth to the poor. Many do this through Muslim Aid or other relief agencies.

Buddhism

Giving to charity is essential to Buddhism. However, one's motivation for giving to others is at least as important as what is given. We should practise giving in order to release greed and self-clinging. Some Buddhist teachers state that giving is good because it accrues merit and will bring future happiness, but the Buddha taught that we should give without expecting any reward.

Document 5

Donating to charity

UK giving increased by £1.1bn in 2012–13. The average amount donated per person went up by £2 to £29 a month. Analysis shows that women give more than men. Intriguingly, the poor are more generous than the rich. The bottom fifth of society give 3% of their income whereas the top fifth give just 1%. 1

“Donors choose causes with which they have a personal connection, that relate to their own life experiences and that help people with whom they feel some affinity,” says Beth Breeze, director of the Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent. While most American charitable giving is planned, British donors are largely reactive, giving only when asked, Breeze says. Research shows that direct interaction between charities and the public increases it, and Comic Relief is the great exemplar of involving the public. 2

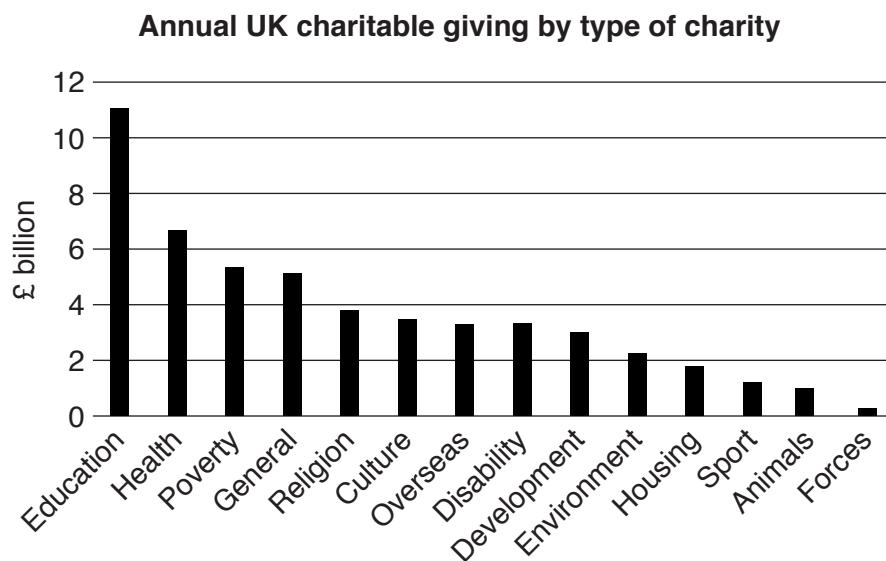
The rise of social media has only boosted that, enabling ordinary people to have a direct influence on other people’s giving. Charities have learnt how to turn likes on Facebook and retweets on Twitter into generating income. The speed with which the Facebook ice-bucket challenge*, went viral in 2014 shows the potential this route may offer. 3

Source: The Independent

* Here iced water was thrown over people to raise money for charity.

Document 6

Where do we give our money?



Source: Charities Aid Foundation using statistics from the Charity Commission.

Charities Aid Foundation helps individuals give to charities effectively and also plays a key role in representing the needs of donors and the charitable sector, working with Government and others to shape policy and legislation.

The Charity Commission registers and regulates charities in England and Wales, to ensure that the public can support charities with confidence.



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