

**Final review**

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*Here are some questions or issues to be aware of. Note that questions/issues that I put under one heading are potentially relevant to other topics (e.g. if you are writing on collective action, there may be things you should consider that are under the heading of direct action or fair shares).*

**Direct action**

- The duty to obey the law, or to respect property rights, is *prima facie*. How strong is this duty, and how strong of a duty does it take to override it?
  - Are the rights of animals, or plants, or ecosystems strong enough to override the duty to obey the law?
    - It would be permissible to break the law, or violate property rights, to save a human life. Is the same true for animal lives, or plant lives?
    - As we saw in class, many of your classmates said “yes.”
    - This suggests that there might be a *duty* to engage in direct action.
  - Does the duty to obey the law depend on the law, or society, being just?
    - If the law, or the political system, doesn’t give legal rights to animals (or plants), can it be just?
- Would a duty to engage in direct action be unfair?
  - If everyone did their fair share – voted properly, reduced their environmental impact a bit, etc. – then maybe direct action would be unnecessary.
  - Note, though, that most of you thought that people are obligated to save lives even when that duty is unfair (e.g. drowning baby cases, paying one’s neighbor’s helper a fair wage when they are starving).
- Is a duty to engage in direct action overly demanding?
  - One has to risk prison.
  - Note, though, that most of you thought that people are obligated to save lives even when that has high personal costs (some drowning baby cases).
- Direct action and “history”
  - As we saw in class, many of you think that a person who contributed to a harm should be treated differently, morally speaking, than someone who did not.
    - E.g. people who historically have polluted a lot should have a larger “fair share” of reducing emissions.
    - E.g. people who contributed to a problem may have stronger duties to fix it (we discussed this when discussing triage; see that handout).
  - If a company or country is destroying the environment, does that change how strong its rights are, and when it is permissible to engage in direct action against it?
- Direct action and collective action:
  - Does engaging in direct action make one a free rider (others are obeying the law, you are not)?
  - Or does *not* engaging in direct action make you a free rider (if others are engaging in direct action and helping the environment)? Are you complicit if not enough people engage in direct action?

**Doing more than one's fair share**

- For any argument you make that nations are *not* obligated to do more than their fair share, ask yourself, “Does this also mean that it is permissible to do *less* than their fair share?” If so, that’s an objection you need to address.
- Definitely discuss fairness and demandingness:
  - It is always unfair to be obligated to do more than one’s fair share (by definition).
    - Sometimes it doesn’t seem that we are obligated to do  $x$  when that would be unfair.
    - But, as we saw in class, there are cases where unfair duties still seem like duties (e.g. save an unfair number of babies, pay your neighbor’s helper a fair wage when they are starving).
  - It is not *always* overly demanding to be obligated to do more than one’s fair share (see the Hohl and Roser for a discussion of this).
- Nations may have special obligations to their citizens, which require them to prioritize the citizens’ well-being ahead of the well-being of non-citizens.
  - Why is this an issue? There will be cases in which spending \$ $x$  to do more than one’s fair share for the environment does less good for one’s own citizens than spending that same money on one’s citizens would.
  - Is this still true when citizenship is unjustly allocated (e.g. not given to people or animals who deserve it)?
- Do nations have obligations to do more than their fair share even when this will do very little good? This may be to avoid complicity.

**Discriminatory siting**

- Consider the relationship between this and other issues:
  - People don’t want to live near a LULU because they suffer a disproportionate amount of the unpleasantness (compared to people who live farther away from it), but typically don’t get a disproportionate share of the benefits.
  - This is related to doing more than one’s fair share.
  - It is also related to collective action – there is an incentive to free ride, because free riders get all the benefits of what the group does without having to pay any of the costs.
- Different kinds of seeming injustice/discrimination:
  - Intentional (the LULU is sited with the goal of discrimination/oppression).
  - Foreseeable (it is clear that the LULU will disproportionately affect some group, but this is not the goal).
    - Note that in some cases, no one *now* intends discrimination, but the reason why the LULU disproportionately affects the group it does is because of intentional discrimination in the past.
  - Do these affect when a siting is wrong/unjust?
    - Similar issues may also come up in, e.g., doing more than one’s fair share, or collective action, or triage, or direct action.
- “Punching down” vs. diminishing marginal utility (also relevant to triage).
  - People who are already in bad situations may be more significantly harmed by LULUs than people who are in otherwise good situations.

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- However, it may also be that people who are already suffering are harmed less by a given LULU than a person living an otherwise good life would be.
  - Even so, sometimes people think that there is something wrong with adding on to the person's suffering, even if that it the best thing to do.
- Consider possible connections to over-demanding obligations and unfair obligations.

**Triage**

- Different considerations that one might factor in when allocating resources:
  - What affects well-being the most?
  - What protects the most rights or the most significant rights? (Regan, as opposed to Singer)
  - What is the most just or fair distribution of resources?
  - Does the historical contribution of a given party matter?
    - E.g. in a case of triage, if helping A does more good than helping B, but A is partly responsible for the bad situation and B is not, does this affect who should be helped?
- Can triage make one complicit in a harm?
  - E.g. if the government has maliciously allocated resources badly with the goal of harming certain groups, is one wrongfully complicit in that decision if one engages in triage that de-prioritizes those groups?

**Collective action**

- We saw a lot of examples in class where free riding or complicity look morally wrong.
  - But not every case that involves free riding or complicity is clear wrong *because* of the free riding/complicity; there may be some other factor that makes it wrong.
- Think about fairness/demandingness:
  - Is it unfair to free ride?
  - Is it unfair to say that A is obligated to not be complicit in harm, if lots of other people are being complicit?
  - When is it too demanding to say that we are obligated to not free ride or be complicit?
    - Free riding and complicity don't make things noticeably worse, but typically do benefit the free rider / complicit person.
    - So, being obligated to not free ride / be complicit is typically being obligated to make some sacrifice.
- Think about the connection to fair shares and discriminatory siting (as noted above).