

In this case study analysis paper, I shall argue that it is morally correct for H.B. Fuller to produce and sell its products in Central America.

According to the Basic Moral Standard of Utilitarianism, the relevant facts that support my moral judgment are as follows. Utilitarianism says that an action is morally correct if the sum total of benefits produced by that action is greater than the sum total of benefits produced by any other action that could have been performed in its place. In this case of H.B. Fuller, they are producing a toluene-based glue in Central America that is used by many Latin American shoe manufacturers, leather workers, carpenters, furniture makers, and small shoe repair shops because of its ability to set very rapidly, adhere strongly, and its resistance to water. Thus, by producing and selling this product in Central America, it is helping many other businesses in Central America. H.B. Fuller also provides many jobs in the producing and selling of the toluene-based glue. Some places in South America, such as Honduras and Guatemala, are in heavy poverty and have unemployment rates around 15 and 20 percent. In taking away H.B. Fuller, it would mean taking away more jobs in places where unemployment rates are already very high. Finally, Central America operations make 15 percent of H.B. Fuller's sale revenues, and these operations account for 27 percent of its profits. This means that Latin American operations are much more lucrative than H.B. Fuller's operations anywhere else in the world.

On the other hand, the relevant facts that support the opposite of my moral judgment are as follows. In this glue that H.B. Fuller is producing is a sweet-smelling chemical called toluene, which is a neurotoxin that can cause irreparable nerve damage. This chemical, when sniffed by people, can also create a high. Thousands of children who are homeless in Central America (especially Guatemala and Honduras) have become addicted to inhaling this toluene-based glue. This has caused many children to have died, and many more became severely disabled by

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blindness, diminished brain functioning, and crippling muscle atrophy. Children would often begin sniffing this cheap glue in order to escape their painful lives out on the street, after being abandoned by their parents or running away.

In the final analysis, here is why the evidence which supports my moral judgment outweighs the opposite conclusion. In producing this product, H.B. Fuller is helping many people in Central America - shoe manufacturers, leather workers, carpenters, furniture makers, and small shoe repair shops, and those who work to produce and sell this product. It is illegal in Central America for this toluene-based glue to be sold to children, thus it was only meant to go to those who needed in their line of work and those were hopefully old enough to understand the repercussions of using the glue improperly. H.B. Fuller also discontinued selling the glue in small jars so that it would become harder for those who wanted to abuse the toluene-based glue to get a hold of it. So even though there are many children getting hurt through sniffing the toluene-base glue, more people are benefiting from the production and selling of the products.

According to Basic Moral Standard of the Natural Rights Theory, the relevant facts that support my moral judgment are as follows. Natural Rights Theory states that an action is morally correct if it respects the natural rights of human beings. In this case, H.B. Fuller has the right to work. Central America is a primary location of sales revenues and profits for the company. In making H.B. Fuller leave Central America, it would be taking away this majority of sales revenues and profits for the company. If H.B. Fuller left, it would also be taking away the right to work for all of the people that are employed by the company in Central America. Some people may argue that the workers could seek work elsewhere, but when the unemployment rate is so high in some of these countries (15 and 20 percent), that could mean that there is not much out there on the job market for the workers to do if they lose their current

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positions at this company. H.B. Fuller could also claim the right to nationality and residence within Central America. If H.B. Fuller was made to leave Central America, this would be denying the company the natural right to reside within this country.

On the other hand, the relevant facts that support the opposite of my moral judgment are as follows. With the damage that this toluene-glue is causing to the children, severely hurting some and even killing others, some people could say that H.B. Fuller is denying these children the right to life. By not trying harder to restrict who can get ahold of the toluene-based glue and not trying harder to find a way to change the product so that it will not be abused in such a way, H.B. Fuller's product is taking this right to life from these children. In their product hurting so many in such a way, some may also say that H.B. Fuller is denying their workers and the people who sell the toluene-based glue the right to freedom of conscience. Though these workers need these jobs, or need the income from this product, they are making the product and selling it knowing that they could be helping to make and distribute a product that could harm or even kill another human being. By working for H.B. Fuller, it may weigh some people's minds down with guilt in result.

In the final analysis, here is why the evidence which supports my moral judgment outweighs the opposite conclusion. In having this right to work, most people would hopefully realize they are creating a product that is going to help many other people in their jobs. Thus, knowing they are working purposefully to help these other people in their own work, they would know that other people also have the right to liberty. This right includes inhaling the toluene-glue, even if it could be harmful to a person. It includes the right to sell the toluene-based glue to those who are underage, even if it is against the law, because this right to liberty is a moral standard and not one monitored and enforced by law (though some do line up). So in all, this

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right to work would be a more important right (and more applicable right) to this case of H.B. Fuller producing and selling their product in Central America.

According to Basic Moral Standard of the Distributive Justice Theory, the relevant facts that support my moral judgment are as follows. The Distributive Justice Theory states that an action is morally correct if it involves treating similarly individuals who are similar in relevant respects, and dissimilarly individuals who are dissimilar in relevant respects, in proportion to their dissimilarity. Though H.B. Fuller is one of the largest sellers of this toluene-based glue within Central America, there are other companies within this region that sell toluene-based glues as well. These companies do not undergo the pressure to stop producing and selling the product that H.B. Fuller does. Though H.B. Fuller is one of the more profitable companies in this region selling their glue, this is not a relevant enough factor to count. If H.B. Fuller left Central America, another company that already makes this toluene-based glue would most likely rise up to fill the orders that H.B. Fuller would be leaving behind. This would mean that the toxin that the homeless children are inhaling would still be available to the public. If they truly want to respect the Distributive Justice Theory they would either have to work to make all of the companies in the region leave or stop producing toluene-based products, or they have to leave them alone in their business endeavors.

On the other hand, the relevant facts that support the opposite of my moral judgment are as follows. Some people may decide that though there are other companies selling this toluene-based product in this region, they are not near as big and as widely known as H.B. Fuller. In not being as big, they could not take on as many orders as H.B. Fuller does at the current time. They could also say, with the other companies being less well-known, it helps to lessen the chance that the homeless will know what to look for when they are trying to find a way to get high. Thus,

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H.B. Fuller's notoriety and size is a relevant factor to be taken into consideration when being compared with the other companies that sell this toluene-base glue.

In the final analysis, here is why the evidence which supports my moral judgment outweighs the opposite conclusion. Though H.B. Fuller may be more notorious and be bigger than these other companies in the region, there is the chance that should they leave that another company will rise to take their place in producing and selling this glue on a large scale – thus making it more well-known within that region. The homeless children could also not have any problems with locating this new brand of toluene-based glue – perhaps some children are already using another brand, but it is being blamed on H.B. Fuller. Thus, to be true to the Distributive Justice Theory, H.B. Fuller should receive the same treatment as the other companies selling toluene-based glue in the region – either they all can stay or they all have to go (change).

According to the Basic Moral Standard of the Care Theory, the relevant facts that support my moral judgment are as follows. Care Theory states that an action is morally correct if it takes into account the closest concrete relationships of the person doing the action and the people who are vulnerable and dependent on his/her care. When it comes to H.B. Fuller, their closest relationships are between their workers and the people who sell or use their product in their own line of work. The workers are dependent on H.B. Fuller to provide them a job so that they may in return live a life that contains the necessary elements to survive. The people who sell the product of H.B. Fuller become dependent on this toluene-based glue to bring in customers and revenue for their shops. And then the people who use this toluene-based glue in their own line of work (shoe manufacturers, leather workers, carpenters, furniture makers, and small shoe repair shops) rely on H.B. Fuller to continue to manufacture and sell their product so

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that they in turn can use the product to make their own products in the best way so that they can continue to bring in customers and continue to have a revenue as well.

On the other hand, the relevant facts that support the opposite of my moral judgment are as follows. Some people may be inclined to say that the homeless people in Central America are the people who are really vulnerable and dependent on what H.B. Fuller does in the making the toluene-based glue and whether or not they continue to produce and sell it. This is then saying that the closest relationship is between H.B. Fuller and the homeless children of Central America. This relationship is technically then between H.B. Fuller and any person who buys the product.

In the final analysis, here is why the evidence which supports my moral judgment outweighs the opposite conclusion. When it comes down to it, many more people are relying on their relationship with H.B. Fuller to provide jobs and income for their lives. Even if a person decides to say that the closest relationship is between H.B. Fuller and the consumers of this product, they would have to realize that there are many other people besides the homeless children buying this product to use. If H.B. Fuller decided to leave Central America, they would be letting down relationships with other consumers. H.B. Fuller, however, has shown that though they cannot abandon their closest relationships – which are with their workers and the people who sell the product – they do still care about the children in Central America. H.B. Fuller has done this in ways that include making it difficult to buy the product in small quantities, providing warning labels on the product, and providing social workers to help work with the homeless children. This toluene-based glue used to be sold in small jars that were cheap and convenient for these children to get ahold of and use to get high. By switching the way in which their product is sold (larger quantities), it is more difficult for the homeless children to get

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ahold of and is much less convenient for them to use. The warning labels on the product state that this product is not safe to be misused, thus trying to let people know that if they chose to use the toluene-based glue in a way that is not authorized, there could be horrible consequences. By providing social workers for the children, H.B. Fuller has even gone a step further to help. These children are not H.B. Fuller's responsibility, yet they work towards helping these children as they struggle on the streets. Other people must now step up and help with these children. Toluene-based glue is supposed to be illegal for children to purchase, but somehow they are still getting the product. Others need to stop purchasing the product for them or the sellers need to be more strictly enforced in who they sell the toluene-based glue to.

According to the Basic Moral Standard of Catholic Social Teaching, the relevant facts that support my moral judgment are as follows. This standard states that an action is morally correct if it is respectful of, and guided by, the fact that human beings are communal beings who have a transcendent end, have a fundamental dignity and worth as creatures made in God's image, have certain natural rights, must work to achieve the common good, and should be treated with justice. With the fact that human beings have certain natural rights, the right to work, H.B. Fuller is working to be respectful of human beings in this aspect. This is being respectful of human beings and giving them a chance to better their lives so that they may provide for themselves and their families. It is also okay, according to this standard, for H.B. Fuller to be selling their product if they are respectful of the fact that human beings must work to achieve the common good. By taking H.B. Fuller away from Central America, it would be retracting from the common good by contributing to a lack of jobs in this country that is already struggling with unemployment, which means harming the conditions of social living. H.B. Fuller is aware of the fact that this is not really a problem with their toluene-based glue, but rather more of a social

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issue that has come to be due to poverty. To help these sum total conditions of living even more, H.B. Fuller has encouraged the government to control distribution of the toluene-based glue. The government has already made it illegal to sell this glue to children, but they do not do much to enforce this law. H.B. Fuller has also been encouraging the government to work to educate street children on the dangers of inhaling the toluene-based glue. When the government failed to do this, H.B. Fuller made sure to provide warning labels on the product to try and make the buyer aware of the consequences of misusing the product. The company has also tried to make it more difficult for children to get ahold of by discontinuing selling the product in small jars. H.B. Fuller has then even taken one step further toward working toward the common good by paying for some social workers to work with the street children to help educate them and warn them of the harm that can come from using the toluene-based glue in such a way. These are definite steps of working toward a common good. Then, H.B. Fuller has been respectful of the fact that human beings should be treated with justice – they should be given what is necessary to allow them to live with the minimum level of human dignity and reflect their intrinsic value and worth. By working toward the common good, H.B. Fuller has been working to give the children a chance to have dignity and show that they believe the children have value and worth, but H.B. Fuller must also help their own workers by giving them jobs so that they may have what is necessary to live with the minimum level and human dignity. If H.B. Fuller left, it would be taking away the means for some of these people to live with this level of dignity. In looking back at the Distributive Justice Theory, H.B. Fuller should also be treated with this justice that is afforded to the other companies who also sell the toluene-based glue. These companies are given respect which then should be given to H.B. Fuller, as a company that is made up of human beings that need to live with human dignity and should reflect their intrinsic value and worth.

On the other hand, the relevant facts that support the opposite of my moral judgment are as follows. When looking at Catholic Social Teaching, it can be said it would be morally correct for H.B. Fuller to stop producing and selling their products because it would be respectful of the fact that human beings are communal beings who have a transcendent end. In removing their company and products from Central America, it would be more respectful toward the lives of the street children and the transcendent end that they are working towards. Removing the product would also be saying that H.B. Fuller would be being respectful of the fact that human beings have a fundamental dignity and worth as creatures made in God's image. In taking the toluene-based glue away, the company would be telling the homeless children that they have dignity and worth and do not need to get high to feel good, but that they should be able to feel good without hurting themselves. Catholic Social Teaching also says that in H.B. Fuller withdrawing from Central America, it would be respectful of that fact that human beings have certain natural rights (as mentioned earlier), such as the right to life. This right to life is being put at risk through having this product available for the children to abuse. People may also say that in withdrawing from Central America, H.B. Fuller would be working to achieve the common good. This common good would mean that removing the product would take away this product that the homeless children use as an escape. And finally, in removing H.B. Fuller, according to Catholic Social Teaching, it would be more respectful of the fact that human beings should be treated with justice. By not having this product, it is allowing the street children to live with more human dignity and help them to better reflect their intrinsic value and worth as human beings. By not having toluene-based glue so readily at hand, they will not be able to get high as easily which will give them more dignity. In not being able to use this toluene-based glue, hopefully they will

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not be able to hurt themselves in this way, which is saying that they have value and worth as human beings.

In the final analysis, here is why the evidence which supports my moral judgment outweighs the opposite conclusion. In my opinion, H.B. Fuller is morally correct according to Catholic Social Teaching due to the extent in staying that they are helping more people and working towards the common good more by providing jobs and products to help people and they are also taking steps to help educate and help the street children. If H.B. Fuller was made to leave, they may be taking away the product that the children are using, but they are also taking jobs away from many dependent people and also taking away the extra support that H.B. Fuller is providing the children. H.B. Fuller has been working toward a common good, but they now need the help of the government and other people to further work toward the common good. The homeless children and this problem of them using chemicals to get high will not just disappear if H.B. Fuller does from Central America. This is a bigger issue than just one company and their one product. With Catholic Social Teaching protecting the workers right to work and H.B. Fuller's right to be treated with justice, these state that H.B. Fuller is morally correct in producing and selling their products in Central America.