Protecting Our Future: What Contribution Can I Make?

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Abstract:

A)The crises related to climate and the economy endanger future and current generations, but altering the small impact or minimal emissions of an individual person is—because of the failure of political coordination—not the best way to overcome these crises.

B) When we act as individuals to act as stopgaps for policy to minimise the mountain of problems, the following applies: We should not waste our energies on limited involvements in small, primarily symbolic collaborations but should instead endeavour to make the biggest difference of which we are capable with regard to improving the world.

C) We make the biggest difference when our limited budget for improving the world is used against poverty, for example, and combatting poverty is precisely what brings positive side effects with regard to human rights and the protection of the climate, animals and species. For example, support for poor farmers in rain forests can save those rain forests. Every CO2 calculator demonstrates that commitment to the Third World is up to 50 times more efficient than personal emissions reductions.

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I. The problem

These statements are unusual; they differ markedly from the views expressed in the literature. The mainstream[1], represents the relevance of small-scale operations for the improvement of the world, which are characterized by changes in personal emission behaviour. The counter position goes back to W. Sinnott-Armstrong[2], who simply denies any useful contribution of individual emissions behaviour and, at the same time, demands a solely political commitment of the individual to combat the climate crisis. A truly efficient way to help is to realize the multiple effects of actions, which are both freed from other people's will to cooperate while also still helping much more efficiently than the behaviour patterns common today. Political engagement is added as an option with low costs (elections) and, in exceptional cases, blatant profits (role model function, "Greta Thunberg").

Can the consuming (and emissions-) -behaviour of one "normal" individual make the world better? That might be the case; however, each individual consumer might decide not to change anything but instead rely on the efforts of others. Such a person could argue that companies are unlikely to adjust their production due to one single item being sold or not sold, so that person's purchase does not make any difference (a collective action problem).

I have studied problems of collective action in the context of purchase situations and especially in the context of emission situations[3]. With my purchases or my emissions, can I make any difference for better or worse? Am I morally obligated to abstain from certain purchases and acts of emissions? The research question Q can be articulated as follows:

Q. Is it possible that many purchase or emission actions together make a difference in terms of welfare but no single action of these sorts makes any (positive or negative) difference in terms of welfare?

To study Q, I will refer to consequentialism as a normative framework. Consequentialism evaluates actions on the basis of their consequences. Problems of collective action as described in Q pose a fundamental challenge to a consequentialist rationale, which makes consequentialism an interesting framework for my research[4]. Consequentialism is the ethical theory that bases morality solely on the consequences of actions, i.e. not on intentions and so on. If a single action does not bear any negative consequences or has no consequences at all, act-consequentialism which involves an application of consequentialism to individual actions cannot morally condemn the action but can eventually emphasize a different alternative; this is the challenge with regard to collective action problems.

II. The consumer and the emitter

Since at least the 1980s, there has been a line of argument that attributes a significant role to individual actions within the framework of larger projects of cooperation. This chain of thought was first forged by Peter Singer and then continued by Parfit, Norcross and Matheny and by Kagan. I enter into the discourse at the most current, prominent link in this chain: i.e., with Shelly Kagan. In his article "Do I Make a Difference?" he argues that all collective action problems inherit a single (or several) threshold(s). Before this threshold is reached, several individual acts may occur without producing any harm. Once the threshold has been reached, a single additional action triggers the harmful result. It therefore holds true that while "most acts make no difference, [...] some single act makes a great deal of difference"[5]. Kagan refers to such cases as *triggering cases*.

In order to illustrate a triggering case in daily consumption choices, Kagan uses the example of purchasing chicken. He assumes that chickens are raised and slaughtered on a chicken farm before they are delivered to the butcher's counter of a supermarket. At first sight, the purchase of an individual chicken does not seem to make any difference. The chicken is already dead

when it arrives at the supermarket; thus the harm has already been created and cannot be attributed to the act of purchasing. Nevertheless, a single chicken purchase might trigger the order (and therefore the death) of new chickens. In Kagan's scenario, the supermarket does not order a new chicken for every chicken sold. Instead, it orders in fixed cycles: once T chickens have been sold, T additional chickens are reordered. This seems to obey the laws of the market and I call this the symmetry thesis. The chicken farm reacts to the supermarket's order; i.e. it kills the corresponding number of chickens and hatches T new eggs. The scenario resembles a triggering case in which every T^{th} purchase constitutes a triggering action. If T equals 25, for instance, then the 25th, 50th, 75th etc. chicken purchases will each trigger the death of 25 chickens.

For his analysis, Kagan focuses on the cohort size, i.e. the number of people buying chickens (assumption: 1 chicken per person) at a given store on a particular day. Here, two scenarios can be distinguished:

I) The cohort size is equal to T (or a multiple of T)

If exactly T (or $2T$, $3T$ etc.) chickens have been sold, each chicken purchase can be directly linked to the harm associated with the death of the chickens. If one customer had not made a purchase, the threshold of T would not have been reached, and thus no additional T chickens would have been ordered and killed. As this holds true for each individual consumer, it can be concluded that each purchase makes a morally relevant difference.

II) The cohort size is not equal to T (or a multiple of T)

In this scenario, the individual purchase can no longer be related to the death of the chickens. Even if a single consumer had refrained from his purchase, still the same number of chickens would have been ordered and killed.

The individual consumer does not know the size of his cohort and thus has no idea whether he is facing scenario I or II. In order to account for this problem, Kagan uses the concept of

expected utility (EUT). The EUT is the sum of the utilities of outcomes of an act multiplied by the respective probabilities that these outcomes will become real:

EUT = $\sum$ [Utility (Outcome$_i$) * Probability$_i$]

In relation to the chicken example, the (positive) utility associated with the purchase consists in the pleasure that can be derived from consuming the chicken. The death of the chicken constitutes a disutility that needs to be considered as well.

EUT one chicken = Expected Pleasure (EP) - Expected Harm (EH)

Kagan assumes the harm created by the killing of the chicken to be greater than the pleasure derived from its consumption. Having made those assumptions, the EUT of buying a chicken can now be calculated as follows:

In any case, the pleasure associated with the purchase equals the consumption of one chicken.

EPPurchase = pleasure derived from consuming 1 chicken.

The harm related to the purchase depends on the size of the cohort the consumer is part of. If the cohort size equals (a multiple of) T (scenario I), the purchase is associated with the death of T additional chickens. If not (scenario II), no harm can be attributed to the purchase. While the former is relatively unlikely (corresponding probability $\frac{1}{T}$), the latter is by far the more probable scenario (corresponding probability $\frac{T-1}{T}$). Both scenarios need to be taken into account when calculating EH. As indicated in the calculation, it turns out that EH consists of exactly one dead chicken.

$$\mathrm{EH}_{\mathrm{Purchase}} = \underbrace{\frac{1}{T} * T \text{ (dead chicken)}}_{\text{scenario I}} + \underbrace{\frac{T-1}{T} * 0 \text{ (dead chicken)}}_{\text{scenario II}}$$

$$= \frac{1}{T} * T \text{ (dead chicken)}$$

= 1 (dead chicken)

In a final step, EP can be offset against EH. As the pleasure of consuming the chicken does not outweigh the harm created by the killing (per assumption), the EUT will doubtlessly be negative.

$EUT_{Purchase} = EP_{Purchase} - EH_{Purchase}$ | (given $EP_{Purchase} < EH_{Purchase}$)

$EUT_{Purchase} < 0$

Kagan concludes that not buying the chicken constitutes the superior alternative compared to buying it.

All in all, Kagan provides a negative answer to Q: All problems that emerge from collective buying patterns inherit a threshold which can be crossed by a single purchase. Crossing the threshold induces the production of additional products (chickens, sweatshirts etc.) and thus the creation of additional product-related harm. Even though the consumer does not know whether his particular purchase will actually trigger new production (or more precisely: whether he is part of a cohort of the relevant size), he knows that this could be the case. Overall, it is the possibility of causing harm that yields a negative EUT and thereby makes the purchase compared to not buying morally unacceptable.

In the field of consuming ethics, there is the special factor that the symmetry of the probability of occurrence and magnitude of harmful impact with regard to an individual action, which is the point of departure for Kagan and his predecessors, lies in the hands of special markets and politics. For each individual customer or emitter, the probability of setting off the trigger is $\frac{1}{T}$, while the maximum amount of harm generated by the triggering action is exactly T. With this thesis, the essential intermediate step has been taken to attest that every consumption or emission action has negative expected utility.[6]

A critique of the symmetry thesis is offered by Julia Nefsky: “There is no guarantee that the expected utility will come out negative in every triggering case. Whether it does or not depends

on the probabilities and on the goodness and badness of the relevant consequences."[7]. I have shown that the symmetry thesis fails in context of climate ethics[8].

Kagan defends his points empirically by the symmetry thesis. In addition he gives an a priori argument. A short overview may be helpful: Let us begin with Derek Parfits harmless torturer problem. In the harmless torturer case it is questionable whether it is morally right to be one of a thousand persons who, by pressing a button, make a very small contribution to increasing the electrical voltage to which another person is being subjected and which, when viewed overall, causes this person great pain. But here the steps of each individual voltage increase should remain imperceptible to the sacrificed person. My pressing of the button does not cause any altered perception of pain in comparison to the amount of measured voltage caused by my predecessor[9].

But in comparison with the initial and final states of all individual contributions combined, there is a great difference in the degree of suffering. How can the difference between 0 and 1000 be so grave when all intermediate steps are harmless? Kagan believes that such cases do not exist. But that means that you can solve the problem of the sorites paradoxon which is here implicated easily in one direction. J. Nefsky offers a solution according to which the small increase in voltage caused by a protagonist in the example is not sufficient for leading to different perceptions of suffering. A minimal increase in voltage is simply not the right unit for causing perceptible suffering; just as in the Sorites problem, the grain of sand does not turn the heap into a hill[10]. So Kagans a priori point might not work - there exist alternatives. For Kagan remains the empirical symmetry thesis.

III. The European meat industry

This thesis is examined with regard to its dependence on various. Kagan provides a negative answer to Q by performing an expected utility analysis that yields a negative expected utility

for the single meat purchase. He concludes that each purchase can make a difference for the worse and thus can be condemned by a consequentialist rationale. Having outlined Kagan's line of argument, I reveal the underlying assumptions of his model, such as a symmetric relation between supply and demand. With regard to his example, he emphasizes that the butcher "adjusts his order to keep up with demand."[11]

To estimate long-term influences in Kagan's example, I need to consider the fact that the industry chosen by Kagan (the meat industry) is a very specific one. Meat is an agricultural product and is as such subject to a variety of political rules and regulations. These rules and regulations, in turn, depend on the geographic location of the corresponding market and differ significantly from country to country. In the following, I will focus on the particularities of the meat industry within the European Union.

In the 1980s, for instance, it was common to systematically subsidize meat production in the EU with up to 15 billion euros annually. (http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/service/agrarsubventionen-der-eu-werden-viel-zu-spaet-abgeschafft-a-944019.html). In 2014, direct subsidies related to meat production in the EU were finally abolished (with the exception of France, Austria and Denmark) (http://www.bauernverband.de/43-gemeinsameagrarpolitik-gap-erste-saeule). As of now, there are still some measures of state support in place (e.g. the VAT reduction for meat in Germany), yet with a significantly lower impact.

However, the decisive aspect in this regard is the fact that meat subsidies have been abolished because they were no longer required by the meat industry. Former EU minister of agriculture Dacian Ciolos has pointed to the fact that at some point, industry characteristics might change again such that the decision might be reversed (https://info.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/blog/exportsubventionen-afrika-sind-nicht-abgeschafft;

https://germanwatch.org/de/9079). I therefore conclude that meat subsidies have currently been paused rather than irreversibly abolished.

This producer-friendly attitude also reflects the official definition of EU agricultural policy as a whole: in order to organize agricultural policy within the EU, member states have agreed on a so-called Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which steers and regulates the supply of agricultural products. The goal of the CAP is to ensure "a decent standard of living for farmers, at the same time as setting requirements for animal health and welfare, environmental protection and food safety." (https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-overview_en) In relation to my research question Q, the CAP is a relevant factor to be considered in my analysis. The steering force of the CAP alters the rules of the game and substantially impacts upon farmers' production-related decisions (e.g. what / how / how much to produce). All in all, the subsidies and governmental support measures related to the meat industry serve as a "safety net" that makes producers less vulnerable to fluctuations in demand. In the event of crises, some sort of governmental interference *can be expected*. It can be speculated whether this aid will be long-term or limited; here economic and political interests (lobby protection, interest in food security) are opposed to each other.

IV. The great events heuristics

I want to express a fundamental doubt with regard to the methodological applicability of expected-utility analyses which Kagan uses. They are frequently too complicated and have too many prerequisites to actually be used. Moreover, many consequentialists tend to waste their energies calculating minuscule differences and overlook the alternatives that are truly relevant in the sense of maximizing overall utility.

Kagan's consumer ethics, it´s application to individual emission actions and Parfit's harmless torturer fall into this category. There may be validity to Kagan's thesis that, in cases governed

by the marketplace, the expected utility of an uncooperative action is, as a rule, negative[12]. However, even in Kagan's example, there are plausible reasons to doubt that this negative expected utility is *immense*, if it exists at all. Even if there is a probability that, for example, my specific "short" trip by car for a distance of 100 kilometres could trigger a tipping point in the climate system, the high degree of damage that I could cause *is (almost) compensated for by the low likelihood that this event would actually occur*. There is apparently little reason to believe that the possible negative value of the utility expected from refusing to cooperate *would be immense* if there is one at all. A product in which one factor is extremely small is not an especially appropriate candidate for a high final outcome, which is the reason why a vigorous dispute has arisen with regard to Kagan's question, "Do I make a difference?" Regardless of whether climate change and Kagan's argument is a good example of a cooperative project with a low utility expected from individual contributions, cooperative projects of the harmless torturer type are just that because individual contributions (a turning of the voltage switch) are, by definition, imperceptible, and accordingly, the effects of these collaborative actions are quite minimal when viewed as individual contributions. The particular fascination of this debate lies in the fact that individual actions are negligible in themselves, but their accumulations give cause for concern.

I intend to use this point in order to develop a heuristic that helps us to maintain a focus on what is essential when we are consequentialists. We must concentrate on what we actually know: we at least have knowledge about large differences in utility among various options, i.e., about which options for action evince comparatively great or extremely little utility, *because we can recognize large differences better than small ones.* Hence, I wish to defend the following argument:

1. Precise estimates and analyses should not be used as methods of determining the expected utility of options that lie in a grey area, i.e., that are situated quite close

to each other (e.g., the issue of whether and to what extent a concrete trip in an SUV damages the climate).

2. Instead, one should use, as a utility maximizer, expected utility values that are as large as possible; in other words, a rough estimate should be undertaken with regard to options that have significantly higher expected utility than the options in the grey zone.

3. DEF: Great events are defined as a set of options S_1 for actions characterized by the fact that, after an initial approximation, the expected utility of the elements of S_1 is significantly larger than that of the elements of the set of options for actions situated in the grey zone.

C1: As a utility maximizer, one should attempt a rough estimate of great events[13].

An example: We know that utility is more enhanced by i) feeding a hungry person for a month than by paying 1000 German workers for the same time period a minimum wage of ii) €9.50 rather than iii) €9.49 per hour. The fact that we can assess comparatively large differences between consequences such as i) in comparison to ii) and iii), with the last-named pair being situated in close proximity, is the basis for our ethical and prudential decisions.

Thus, a new decision tool called the "great event heuristics" is defined in the light of which the aforementioned problems of collective action[14] must be re-evaluated.

V. What difference can I make?

As a consequence of this work, one could think that it is infinitely difficult to make the right decisions in the ethics of consuming, etc. Question Q seems to be answered positively. A single limited purchase action has no effect in markets like the meat market and in climate protection

a single emission action has no effect[15] or only one so small that it can be neglected. The influence depends on specific markets or on characteristics of nature and, moreover, if it does, it is minimal. Thus, one would rather not commit oneself at all. This conclusion is a fallacy when applying the great event heuristic. In fact, it is difficult to decide whether and when an individual purchase etc. improves the world (like the choice between ii) and iii) above). This effect can often be achieved more effectively *by donating to charities the money* that could be used for things such as the conscious consumption of alternative products[16]. Donations have the advantage that an individual action can also *help without collective cooperation* and thus have a direct effect compared to actions such as ethical consumption. Conscious consumption, for example, makes a positive difference to the world only if enough consumers participate. Therefore, there is the danger of wasting one's money and effort. In contrast, a donation to an effective charity can make a difference in terms of welfare, no matter how many others participate; for example, it can result in a person being cured of blindness. Those who have spare resources to improve the world should therefore donate their money to effective charities instead of spending it on more expensive consumption or avoiding emissions. Every CO_2 calculator teaches: in developing countries, you can sequester up to 50 times more CO_2 for the same cost than by changing your emissions behavior[17]. Donations to charity even make it possible to combine assured welfare gains with possible successes of collective actions like effects on climate protection. For example, if I secure the livelihood of small farmers in the rain forest, I directly help these farmers. In addition, I prevent them from selling their (or their communities') land to large corporations that would destroy the rain forest (as the charity "Cool Earth" does). I thereby help protect species diversity, and I may help to fight climate change, provided that a sufficient number of small farmers receive that kind of support. Other examples would be: fighting energy poverty with renewable energy, fighting population growth with contraceptives, which strengthens women's rights and women's health. Moreover, it is often

easier for us to pay money in order to maintain motivation than to fundamentally change our behaviour. Therefore, this strategy preserves our motivation and is not an excessive demand.

Another advantage of the strategies around forests is that they do not try to reduce the demand

(Fig 1)

for fossil fuels, which as seen is difficult anyway because the oil market is similarly politically dominated as the meat market. The following graph (Fig 1), in which the yellow line shows the global oil production and the green line the price of oil, confirms this:

The graph shows that the production of oil is completely decoupled from its price. An explanation could be that political interests are being served. In this sense, the OPEC+ states continuously explain that their prices are oriented towards long-term predictability and reliability. My small reduction of gas cannot reduce the oil production on such a market. Pricing ignores such signals. My small donation, however, certainly benefits people, and hopefully also the climate. Granted, in order to achieve the latter aim, certain people have to cooperate. But I do not necessarily have to rely on market mechanisms and my small contribution is guaranteed to have positive effects.

Thus, contributions to rain-forests etc. are also not subject to a response that results in the "green paradox"[18] that sets in if we really succeed in influencing with our changed demand. It goes like this: We save fossil energies, the world market price falls as a result and other

countries buy them cheaper because they most urgently want growth. Perhaps even more fossil resources will be extracted because their owners understand that these resources will become worthless in the future and therefore they want to sell them quickly. De facto, nothing is saved by the reduced demand, but we subsidise the prices for the emerging countries. This may make sense as development aid, but was intended as a climate protection measure. So on the one hand it is difficult to achieve anything at all with demand, on the other hand it is difficult to achieve the right thing, namely to cut production.

We can see why "compensation" does not suit my cause. "Compensating" always sounds like you are doing something harmful and then, afterwards, you are doing "just as much" good in order to compensate for the harm. This is a wrong way of thinking necessary is not a zero-sum game. My strategy is not about compensating for the kind of car that I ride. It is about reaching an effective amount of donations that brings more climate gases out of the world than is currently the case.

Furthermore, my described strategy is linked to a message: *The time is coming when we in industrial countries will be compelled, in any case, to renounce actions that damage the climate.* This point in time is reached when the costs of avoiding CO_2 emissions in the southern reaches of the world are no longer fundamentally lower than in our own country and when politics starts to coordinate our behaviour effectivly, assuming that it is the cause of climate change. However, in this way, we gain time for the change in private behaviour until in which technology can be further developed, that can preserve, for example, our cherished individual mobility. Such technologies, in turn, offer protection from excessive demands.

In some cases, though, my cooperation in conscious consumption is costless to me, or I can achieve welfare gains from it. On the other hand, many people may feel like hypocrites if they donate money to combat climate change but do not try to reduce their CO2 emissions themselves. In this case, everyone has to check for him or herself what increases their

willingness to donate: “merely” donating or also affording a good feeling. If one of this cases is given, I should cooperate. For example, it does not make a difference to me whether I install Google or Ecosia (a search engine that uses its revenues from advertisement for reforestation) on my computer, but it does make a difference to the world.

Thus, the above result regarding the partial powerlessness of the individual consumer or emitter is constructively exploited and does not lead us to conclude from a lack of influence that we cannot change anything and must therefore maintain the status quo. Rather, it serves as an indication that resources can be used more effectively in other places than for individual consumption or a change of emissions behaviour (Overlooked third options in the sense of the great event heuristic).

Another reaction to the findings presented here is to focus not on one's own purchasing or emitting behaviour but on the political commitment of citizens[19]. This focus is certainly a possible reaction to the situation described, but it is difficult to demonstrate that the individual is more influential as a political actor or voter than as, for example, a consumer. However, here, once again, in the sense of my heuristic, I issue a call not to measure minimal costs such as the effort of making an X on a piece of paper and mailing the ballot in comparison to the harm arising from not voting but instead to accept these actions as marginal costs. We are often overly burdened by the calculation of tiny differences in utility, i.e., with a special form of nit-picking. The world is so difficult to calculate that we should not even make the attempt when what is at stake is not large (I call this *low-cost tolerance*). Engaging in political action as Greta Thunberg does is another possibility of individual action, although this is possible only for the very few. However, when such action is possible, it should be pursued. My strategy shifts the responsibility to donating and to policy change here on the ground. And the two are connected, because donations also send a political signal that citizens want a climate change, which creates pressure for change in politics.

But isn't this whole strategy a trade in indulgences? But it's not about guilt, it's about less poverty and less CO_2. And as far as donations are concerned, we do change our behaviour and bear the burdens that we mostly shirk these days. That is the opposite of selling indulgences. Also missing is the misappropriation of funds that constituted the classic sale of indulgences: churches are not built from donations, but they serve the purpose of fighting poverty and climate gases. To omit the aforementioned efficiency potentials would be almost criminal, in times where rapid reductions are needed. The question remains as to how much we should contribute to meet the concerns of morality or should become involved in other ways. Behind the question as to what one must do personally is the following general problem: *How much does morality require of us?* For example, must we spend all our time and use all our money to attempt to maximize happiness in the world? I do not have an answer to this gargantuan problem. I treat it pragmatically: *If we commit ourselves in the lower-percentage area of our temporal and financial possibilities, that cannot constitute an excessive burden.* Western average earners belong to the richest one percent of the world's population. If we live on this island of wealth and people are drowning off its shores, then we can only be counted among the good people if we commit at least some percents of our time and financial resources against drowning. In any other case, we have to admit to ourselves that we simply do not care about the plight of others and cannot belong to the good people. If we want to call ourselves moral actors, that is, if we want to belong to "the good guys," which is what almost all of us want, we cannot say that we are completely indifferent to this misery. If every average wage-earner would bestir him or herself to contribute 4% of his or her income and 1% of time to get politically involved, for example, then most global problems could be solved because the sums of money thereby amassed would amount to at least a figure in the triple-digit billions. Moreover, this cannot be considered to be an excessive demand because even if one does not *wish* to become involved to this degree, a normal wage-earner *can* in any case commit him or herself to that partial extent.[20] My considerations apply to natural persons, but also to companies. They, too, should

donate part of their earnings to the most useful causes, which they do to some extent in the municipal sector, although this does not meet ethical requirements. As a rule, they are not oriented toward realizing the greatest welfare effect, but get involved locally to create win-win conditions. However, elsewhere[21] I advocate a lower donation requirement for companies, which I limited to 1.5% of earnings, because companies have other obligations besides donations. They should also transform their internal operations (i.e., operations located in the business area) because even if they realize more welfare through external commitments such as donations, internal measures are more enforceable because they are more likely to be rewarded by the customer. They can be thought of in terms of WIN-WIN relationships[22]. This is important for companies, because they are less interested in seeing themselves as moral actors than in increasing profits. Thus, the feasibility increases by limiting the external commitment, which, however, still has a large impact due to the sums that are jointly generated. The total benefit realized through a reduced obligation to donate is thus likely to be even greater than it would be with a four-percent obligation. For all those who still do not feel well about my proposed strategy: Since, unfortunately, our knowledge about the future is imperfect and we normally tend not to focus only on efficiency, we should consider following several strategies at the same time. One could diversify the charities that one supports, and in any case, one needs to strive for relevant information about available charities. Solar ovens in India solidly promote both health and climate protection, while rainforest could theoretically also burn down, in particular if one fails to get its owner on one's side. Therefore, both the solid and the risky policy should be part of the portfolio. We simply cannot avoid taking some risk in our desperate situation. The important point is that in any portfolio the strategy "donate and replace" should have its place, but you may also include the standard strategy in your portfolio if it isn't too costly. And only the individual's subjective perception determines how costly in terms of personal welfare the standard strategy is. Those who are not bothered by abstaining from meat will not find that this strategy strains their motivation. My argument assumes the relevant

interests of normal people, who have a limited budget for help. Often even such normal people can cooperate without a debilitating loss of welfare. Casting one's vote (per postal vote) or using Ecosia instead of Google as a search engine doesn't come with any costs. Therefore, one should do it. In this way, the "either or" turns out to become an "and".

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