***4.1 Plasma International***

In this case, an entrepreneur organized the buying of blood for 90c per pint from suitable donors in a small African country. The blood was then sold to a hospital in Honduras for $150 per pint, following a disaster. This resulted in media accusations of profiteering. In analyzing this case, a right-leaning group might be asked to justify the viewpoint that “*the bad publicity is grossly unfair and there is nothing wrong with what we are doing. In fact, we should be praised.*” A typical justification, guided by the framework, might then be as follows:

“We are engaged in coordinating valuable resources *efficiently* by relying upon market *exchange*s. In this way we are creating *value* for the Honduran hospital (i.e. a desired exchange involving a product that meets specifications). We are also presenting each *individual* in the African tribe with a free choice about supplying us with blood plasma. As a result we are able to benefit our *shareholders;* put differently, we are accumulating *financial capital* that will be put to further productive use in society, *later* on. We are thus dealing in a practical way with the present situation. Some kind of global non-market health system serving local needs might come *later* but is not available now*.* In our conservative (i.e. *right*-leaning) view, we are legitimately using our entrepreneurial initiative to *exploit* a temporary opportunity for above-normal profits. In addition, our costs are high. We actually appreciate the publicity because no doubt others will soon follow us as competitors, keeping us on our toes, forcing us to seek other opportunities and perhaps finding an even better way to provide service to the hospitals and the sick.”

A left-leaning (Red) group might then justify the viewpoint that “*almost everything that ‘Plasma International’ is doing is immoral*”. Their justification for this might be along the following lines:

“First of all, the company ought to be lobbying for a non-profit system that delivers basic health services according to medical need. In places like Honduras, poverty alleviation and healthcare provision overlap greatly, whilst lack of ability-to-pay is a known *limitation* of market based systems. By charging so much, at a time of urgent need, Plasma is almost certainly destroying *value* in the Honduran health system overall (to use business-like language), due to the constraints on other needed purchases. They are also directly destroying some of the life-related *values* and *forms of capital* (i.e. human, social, ecological forms). They are not treating the disaster victims as ends-in-themselves (i.e. in accordance with *deontology* and the normative *stakeholder* theory)**.** They are *exploiting* their market power to the full, but this was achievable only because the relevant international law is not (yet) sufficiently developed. However, the *trend* is in this direction and Plasma should endorse and participate in this aspect of moral progress. Finally, they should be open and honest about their costs, that is tell the truth, in this situation*.* They should also understand that courage is a *virtue* so they should not be afraid of inviting competition in this way.”