

Dani Garcia

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Final Argument

Renewable Energy: An Utilitarian Solution

At the moment, climate change is affecting the world slowly, but drastically. It is being caused by multiple contributors, such as fossil fuels. When burning fossil fuels, they release carbon emissions. These carbon emissions cause catastrophic events such as air pollution, global warming, ocean warming, rising sea levels, and other consequences. They affect the environment negatively as a whole, wildlife and humans alike. All the effects of climate change are causing a negative impact on the environment and weather patterns. Devastating events are occurring from these changes. Human populations and wildlife are having to adapt to the new environment. The utilitarian philosophy believes that actions need to provide happiness that will be sufficient in the long run for the vast majority. Utilitarianism proposes renewable energy as a tech solution against climate change. Renewable energy is an efficient solution since it is 1) a sufficient source of energy, 2) healthier for the environment, and 3) able to naturally replenish and restore.

The main principle of utilitarianism is maximizing happiness for the vast majority, and to be sufficient in the long run. Jeremy Bentham, a well know utilitarian philosopher, believes that “The highest principle of morality is to maximize happiness, the overall balance of pleasure over pain.” (Sandel, Pg. 34). In other words, utilitarianism is mainly on the focus of maximizing happiness. It doesn't matter if the pleasure is higher or lower, it's only immoral if it can cause unhappiness. In theory, it allows policies to be made under the influence of what would be best for the majority of the community. Utilitarianism is also formed by different concepts. One concept is benefits over costs. It's a way to make a decision that will promise utility. If the solution has more benefits than costs it will be enforced, this is why utilitarians use a cost-benefit analysis to analyze both the advantages and disadvantages. Another concept is higher pleasures. They are pleasures that can cause a longer duration of happiness that is more effective. If the

solution produces long-lasting happiness for the vast majority, then it is considered a higher pleasure. Utilitarianism has multiple concepts, though these are a few of them.

Green energy, also known as renewable energy, comes from natural sources. These sources are solar, wind, biogas, biomass, and occasionally hydroelectric. Since these sources come from the environment, they are able to replenish themselves and unable to emit carbon emissions. Using a cost-benefit analysis, renewable energy provides many benefits. These benefits include stable energy prices, release low to zero carbon emissions, and are unable to run out since they come from the environment. This type of energy comes commonly from the maintenance of solar panels and wind turbines. Lora Shinn, an author of the NRDC, explains that renewable energy is a “Promise of a clean energy future.” (Shinn, 2018). Shinn explains that renewable energy is a solution that can benefit the environment with the assurance of cleaner energy and air quality. An article by Climate Action, an environmental news resource, explains that “Global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the energy sector can be reduced by 70 percent by 2050 and completely phased-out by 2060 with a net positive economic outlook” (ClimateAction). The article explains that the statistic was founded by IRENA, an organization helping to expand on renewable energy. Considering this statistic, renewable energy can cause a great impact on the decrease in carbon emissions. If the use of renewable energy is common, the detrimental effects on climate change could drastically reduce.

Continuing with the cost-benefit analysis, renewable energy has some disadvantages. These disadvantages include geographic limitations, expensive development costs, and its difficulty to provide electricity for large populations. Renewable energy can be assumed unreliable since it solely depends on the weather. Locations around the world have different weather patterns; some places have a higher chance of wind, while others are more exposed to the sun. In order for communities to use this alternative energy, there would have to be an increase in expenses for solar panels and wind turbines. Conserve-Energy, a source for climate change and green energy, explains that, “There are still challenges to the generation of large quantities of power in renewable energy technology compared to traditional forms of energy generation like fossil fuel.” (Conserve-Energy). In other words, fossil fuel production provides larger energy quantities based on the community's demand. Renewable energy is still considered

unreliable since it has a heavy dependence on weather conditions. Even though renewable energy can be considered inefficient, it is more beneficial for the majority. As stated in the previous paragraphs, renewable energy helps financially, environmentally, and medically. It decreases the price of energy since it comes from natural resources. The natural resources prevent air pollution, which leads to cleaner air quality. The better the air quality there is, the less the population deals with respiratory issues that affect our body negatively. Renewable energy overrules its own disadvantages.

Using a utilitarian concept, renewable energy's benefits outweigh the costs. These benefits allow the human and wildlife populations to live in a cleaner and inexpensive environment. Renewables can start off expensive from maintenance, but decrease over time and increase cleaner air quality, which maximizes happiness in the long run. It also provides us with a higher pleasure, such as cleaner air quality. Having clean air quality can be considered a higher pleasure since it's an effective pleasure that will benefit humans by preventing respiratory and other health risks. The prevention of health risks will lead to long-term happiness for those with these risks. Renewable energy will allow the world population to be able to live in a safer and healthier environment. This long-lasting solution will create a future that is sustainable for the whole environment by providing cleaner and reliable energy that doesn't harm the population. Without renewable energy, climate change will increase and negatively change our future in the long run.

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