

“Life” Within Energy Policy

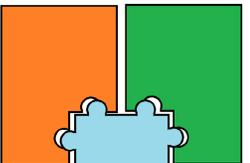
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1. Abstract

Better integrating the *value of life* into the philosophy of well-being and of sustainability can bridge the two disciplines to provide a theoretical foundation for moral policy-making in the energy field where climate change, health impacts of pollution, and loss of jobs are threats to lives.

5. Life Matters

So, as far as policies include elements of sustainability or impact lives, we ought to be explicit about those impacts if we are concerned about the morality of those policies.



2. Well-Being Comes up Short

Little (2014) and Treanor (2010) argue that well-being is often only assessing the individual in a vacuum and that rather than ignoring the moral context and surrounding community (both human and non-human), to properly operationalize well-being, we cannot neglect the moral aspects



6. Life Is Powerful

Too often taken for granted, like no other term, life immediately refers to two ends of a causal chain:

OUR CHOICES IMPACT LIVES

3. Missing Link Between Well-Being & Sustainability

O’Neill (2008), O’Brien (2013), and Kjell (2011) have tried to link sustainability and well-being; yet, they come up short without pinpointing the specific, underlying values that ground theory.

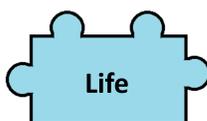


7. Morality Requires Consent

It need not be the case that everyone is treated as a vitalist, but to the extent that they do not consent to a threat to being alive, we should do everything in our power within reason to comply.

4. “Life” Is the Missing Piece

The missing piece is within environmental ethics. As Kothari (1994) advises, it is the *sacredness of life* which provides the foundational value of the sustainability movement. We cannot ignore our impacts on the lives around us, and energy policy is no exception. Rooted in Goodpaster’s (1978) perspective of moral considerability, all living organisms have moral standing simply for being alive. In this way, *life* provides theoretical support for notions of social and environmental sustainability where lives are impacted, such as in the energy field.



8. Consent Comes through LCA’s & Democratic Participation

With transparent and engaged discussions, informed by full lifecycle analyses and inclusive of all impacted stakeholders, we can not only protect fundamental rights of even the least well-off but also can plan an energy transition that helps everyone to flourish.

Deaths per Terawatt-hour	
Coal	100
Oil	36
Biofuel	12
Gas	4
Hydro	1.4
Solar	0.44
Wind	0.15
Nuclear	0.04

Wang (2011)

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