Conversations on Climate Justice

Conclusions from Contradictions

After reflecting on the conversations on climate justice, I realized that there is a pattern of contradictions that arise from the climate crisis. Hopefully, through analysis of these contradictions we may draw valuable lessons. One contradiction mentioned was the tendency of people to value individuality, despite the fact that working together collectively is arguably the most effective way to create change. Two more contradictions arise from the fact that both the countries and the people who tend to contribute the least to climate change are typically the most adversely impacted. Lastly, institutions such as the research and medical industries tend to promote public health, yet contribute extensively to pollution and waste.

The idea of a rugged individual using relentless hard work to rise up in society is one that has been popularized by history books, pop culture, and the media over the years. If you are dissatisfied with your life or facing misfortune, it is your distinct responsibility to pull yourself to a better place. Yet, humans cannot operate alone. Humans could not even exist without the gametes of others, and through every step of life, humans realize more success when they work collaboratively. In terms of the climate crisis, individuality is also held to a high standard: people boast about recycling or taking a short shower but may be less likely to talk about how they are part of an environmental union at the company they work for, working with others to lower the company's carbon footprint.

it is important to deeply consider if an act is for the benefit of one's appearance or for true change.

A pair of contradictions that appears in many conversations about climate change is the relationship between those causing the most damage, and those facing the consequence of said damage. Historically, large and wealthy countries such as the United States have been the biggest contributors to the climate crisis. They have gone unchecked and produced massive amounts of waste and pollution. Yet, the United States and its counterparts are not the countries who have to live with the extensive effects of these actions. Countries that are small, poor, and at a geographical disadvantage end up being the most susceptible to climate change. For instance, Fiji is one of the countries most impacted by climate disasters, and projected to face more negative effects in the future, yet it also has a miniscule contribution to these issues in comparison to others. This situation might make us consider the fact that larger, wealthy countries might be indebted to those they have been harming for so long. It could be argued that these countries should pay financial reparations for the damage done to the poorer countries, contribute to their development of protective infrastructure, and drastically limit the harm they themselves are doing.

This theme is reflected in terms of people. The groups of people who contribute the most to harming the environment are typically not the ones who face the negative effects. Typically, individuals with the largest carbon footprint are those with the most purchasing power, who contribute to climate change in part due to their wealth. Whether it be spending money on disposable goods, using massive amounts of energy to heat large homes or run appliances, or driving a personal car instead of taking public transportation, habits associated with wealth tend to be those that yield poor results for the planet. Meanwhile, the people living the least

issues in a different way