

## Resolving the Repugnant Conclusion: In search of Theory X

Naomi Wellington, Monash University

ABSTRACT. The Repugnant Conclusion (RC), as stated by Derek Parfit (1984), whereby an incredibly large population with an extremely low quality of life is considered to be *better than* a much smaller population with a very high quality of life, appears *repugnant* primarily in virtue of being extremely counter-intuitive. In this paper I endorse the view that we must avoid the Repugnant Conclusion. I argue that the best way to do this is by replacing the utilitarian Total Principle (whereby the best outcome is the outcome with the greatest quantity of wellbeing) with *Theory X* -- Parfit's format for the best theory of beneficence. I find the General Universal Pareto Principle to be the best candidate for Theory X and argue that it avoids the RC without leading to other repulsive or absurd conclusions.

New Antigone Volume 1 Numbers 3-4 2008 Well-being and Happiness

[http://www.newantigone.com/New\\_Issue/ni\\_wah.html](http://www.newantigone.com/New_Issue/ni_wah.html)

Published online in December 2008.