

Left-Libertarianism and Global Justice

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Abstract: We defend a version of left-libertarianism, and discuss some of its implications for global justice (and economic justice among nations in particular). Like the better known right-libertarianism, left-libertarianism holds that agents own themselves. Unlike right-libertarianism, left-libertarianism holds that natural resources (land, oil, air, etc.) are owned in some egalitarian sense and can be legitimately appropriated by individuals or groups only when the appropriations are compatible with the specified form of egalitarian ownership. We defend the thesis of self-ownership on the grounds that it is required to protect individuals adequately from interference in their lives by others. We then defend a particular conception of egalitarian ownership of natural resources according to which those who appropriate unappropriated natural resources must pay competitive rent (determined by supply and demand) for the rights that they have claimed.

We then go on to apply the principles to issues of global justice. We defend the view that countries owe payments to a global fund for the value of unimproved natural resources that they have appropriated, and that this fund is to be divided on some egalitarian basis among the citizens of the world. We disagree, however, on whether the global fund is to be divided equally among all

(so that no net rent is paid if one appropriates only a per capita share) or to be divided so as to promote effective equality of opportunity for a good life. We discuss and debate these issues.

1. Introduction

We address the question of what obligations of economic justice citizens of one country have to citizens of other countries. We hold that there are some such obligations, and although we hold that these obligations are obligations of individual citizens, we speak loosely of obligations of one country to another—understood as the composite obligations of the citizens of one country to citizens of another.

We are concerned here with *duties of justice*, which we understand as *enforceable* duties of morality. They are the moral duties that agents have that other agents are morally *permitted to coerce* them to fulfill. On most views, not all moral duties are duties of justice, since there are some duties (such as helping one's elderly mother, perhaps) that are not legitimately enforceable by others. We believe that there are duties of justice between (citizens of different) countries.

We address the issue of global economic justice by addressing the question of who owns what in the world. There are three categories of things that must be considered: *beings with moral standing* (beings that matter morally for their own sake), *natural resources* (unproduced resources with no standing, such as land, air, water, etc.), and *artifacts* (produced resources with no standing). For simplicity, we assume that all beings with moral standing are agents (rational choosers), and we thus ignore the important and difficult problem of the status of children, fetuses, and animals (which we believe have some sort of non-full moral standing). We also assume that there is just one generation of agents, and we thus also ignore the important problems concerning future generations. These gross simplifications permit us to focus on the core issues of global economic justice that arise in a context of a single generation of agents.

2. A Brief Statement of the Problem

What does economic justice require in the way of wealth distribution among countries? We focus on two kinds of wealth (1) human wealth, which are the personal characteristics of the citizens that are conducive to a good life (e.g., what capacities they have); (2) non-agent resource wealth, which are the non-agent resources of the country that are conducive to a good life (e.g., land, machines, etc.). Furthermore for each of these two types of wealth, we can distinguish between: (a) the initial wealth (i.e., the initial personal characteristics of the citizens, and the initial natural resources), (b) the created part of the wealth (e.g., the personal characteristics that the citizens choose to develop and the artifacts that they choose to produce). Making the distinction between the initial and the created parts is of course almost always difficult in practice, and even in theory there are many murky issues. We believe, however, that sense can be made of this distinction, and simply assume it here.

We both agree that inequalities in wealth that are appropriately attributable to the choices of the agents involved (e.g., the extent to which they develop their capacities or produce artifacts) are not issues of justice. (Recall that we are here assuming a single generation of agents. Where there are multiple generations, this view may need to be modified.) Although this is a controversial issue, we simply assume it in what follows. Hence in what follows we are only concerned with inequalities in unchosen (initial) personal characteristics and natural resources.

Our question then is: To what extent do agents of one country owe agents of another country payments if their unchosen (initial) natural resources or personal characteristics are more valuable?

3. Left-Libertarianism: A First Gloss

We defend a *left-libertarian* theory of justice, and discuss its implications for global justice. In our simplified world there are agents, natural resources, and artifacts. *Libertarian* theories of justice hold that *agents*, at least initially, own themselves, and thus owe no service to others, except through voluntary action. The most familiar libertarian theories (e.g., Nozick [1974]) are *right-libertarian* in that they hold that *natural resources* are initially unowned and, under a broad range of realistic circumstances, can be privately appropriated without the consent of, or any significant payment to, the other members of society. *Left-libertarian* theories, by contrast, hold that natural resources are owned by the members of society in some egalitarian manner, and may be appropriated only in ways that are compatible with the rights of all to natural resources. Left-libertarian theories have been propounded for over two centuries¹, but in recent years there has been a revival of interest in them. Theories roughly of this sort (but with some important qualifications noted below) have been explored (but not defended) by Gibbard [1976] and Kolm [1985, 1986], advocated by Grunebaum [1987], Steiner [1994], Van Parijs [1995], and Tideman [1991, 1994, 1997, 1998], and criticized by Cohen [1995].

Left-libertarianism has two central ideas: (1) Agents own themselves. (2) The value of natural resources is owned in some egalitarian sense. Different left-libertarian theories have different conceptions either of self-ownership or of the relevant form of egalitarian ownership of natural resources (and indirectly of the ownership of artifacts). We start by explaining and motivating the thesis of self-ownership for agents. Then we discuss some different conceptions of egalitarian ownership of natural resources.

The core idea of self-ownership is that agents own themselves in much the same way that they can own inanimate objects. This ownership is typically taken to include, at a minimum, (1) full *control rights* over (power to grant and deny permission for) the *use* of their persons (e.g.,

what things are done to them) and (2) full *immunity from payment* for the possession and exercise of these rights (ensuring, for example, that the rights are not merely rented). One of us (Vallentyne) holds that self-ownership also includes (3) full *rights to transfer* the rights they have to others (by sale, rental, gift, or loan), so that individuals are able to make binding and enforceable commitments of personal services and even to sell themselves into slavery. The other of us (Tideman) denies (3), and holds the control and payment immunity rights of (1) and (2) are inalienable and cannot be transferred to others. Although he denies that individuals have the power to make binding and enforceable commitments of personal services, his view does permit a person to pledge his/her accumulated physical wealth as security for a personal service commitment. (On this view one can agree to forfeit some of one's wealth if one does not perform a specified personal service, but one cannot transfer the moral right to decide whether one will perform the service.) Vallentyne's view gives an agent who does not change his/her mind a more valuable ownership of him/herself, while Tideman's view ensures that any person that one encounters owns him/herself to the greatest extent that a person can.²

Self-ownership, on either view, is plausible because it imposes appropriate constraints on how individuals may be treated by others without their consent. Killing, torturing, or enslaving innocent individuals without their consent is unjust no matter how effective it may be as a means to some moral goal. Some form of self-ownership is necessary to recognize adequately that agents have the *formal right to control the use of their person*. There are some things (such as physical contact of various sorts) that others may not do to an agent without his/her consent, and those very things are permissible if the agent gives his/her consent and the owners of other resources involved give their consent. The view that agents have the right to control the use of their persons is, of course, highly controversial. A constraint against killing an agent need not be accompanied by the right of the agent to waive the constraint, as self-ownership holds. (One

might hold, for example, that killing is always wrong—even with the consent of the agent.) A full argument would need to address many important relevant issues that we here ignore.

The assumption that some form of self-ownership imposes constraints on the promotion of equality need not be the assumption that self-ownership as we define it imposes such constraints. Our concept of self-ownership gives agents both *control rights* over the *use* of their persons and various *tax immunities*. One can endorse a partial form of self-ownership (e.g., control rights) without endorsing full self-ownership (e.g. with full tax immunities). So, much more argument is needed for a full defense of self-ownership. We hope that we have said enough to give it at least some plausibility.

Self-ownership is one central ideal of left-libertarianism. The other is egalitarian ownership of the value of natural resources. There are many forms that this egalitarian ownership can take, and we defend one form.

One basic issue concerns the level of jurisdiction at which egalitarian ownership applies. One view is that the land occupied by each country is owned in some egalitarian manner by its citizens, but that non-citizens have no claim to the value of that land. This would be egalitarian internally, but viewed globally, this might involve an extremely inegalitarian distribution of rights over natural resources. Those who live in countries that control less valuable natural resources would thereby have less valuable ownership rights. Natural resources were not created by any (non-divine) agent, and no agent has any special entitlement to a greater share merely because he/she happened to be there first. Hence, any plausible view treats the egalitarian ownership of natural resources as holding at the global level (the entire world). This crucial claim is assumed in what follows.

According to one version of left-libertarianism, natural resources are *jointly owned* in the sense that authorization to use, or to appropriate, is given through some specified collective

decision-making process (e.g., by majority or unanimous decision). One form of this approach—advocated (seemingly, at least) by Grunebaum [1987]—holds that collective approval is needed for any *use*, as well as appropriation, of natural resources. But as Fressola [1981] and Cohen [1986, 1995] have argued, this is implausible, since it holds that, for agents like us, no one has the right to *do anything* (e.g., stand in a given spot, eat an apple, or even breathe) without authorization from other members of society. For every action requires the use of some natural resources (e.g., occupying a spatial location), and thus no one is permitted to do anything without approval from others.

A more plausible form of joint ownership of natural resources—held perhaps by Grotius [1625] and Pufendorf [1672], and explored by Gibbard [1976]—holds that prior to any agreement agents are permitted to *use* natural resources in conformance with specified terms of *common use*, but they have no *exclusive* rights of use (no private ownership). Roughly, this means that they are permitted to use natural resources in various ways (occupy locations, breathe air, eat apples) as long as those resources are not then in use by others (and perhaps subject to certain conditions of sustainability), but they have no rights over any natural resources that they are not currently using. On this view, the initial rights over natural resources are like rights over public park benches. One has a right to use a resource (e.g., sit in one), but once one stops using it, one has no right to prevent others from using it.

Even this form of joint ownership of natural resources, however, is implausible. For it has the implication that no *appropriation* (i.e. acquisition of exclusive rights of use) could be just in the absence of actual collective agreement. It is most implausible to hold that the consent of others is required for just appropriation when communication with all relevant others is impossible, extremely difficult, or expensive (as it almost always is). And even when communication is relatively easy and costless, it is unclear why one needs the consent of others

as long as one makes an appropriate compensatory payment for the natural resources appropriated.

A different sort of approach holds that agents may use, or appropriate, unappropriated natural resources without the permission of others, but if they do so, they acquire certain obligations. Below we suggest that some form of this approach is plausible. But first we must see that some forms clearly are not. An extreme form of this approach holds that anyone who *uses* natural resources (which is of course everyone) *forfeits all rights* of self-ownership (e.g., acquires an enforceable duty to do whatever maximally promotes equality). A slightly less extreme form allows agents to use natural resources subject to the rules of common use without any loss of self-ownership, but holds that anyone who *appropriates* (claims rights of exclusive use over) natural resources forfeits all rights of self-ownership. Both these views hold that agents are “initially” self-owners, and are thus “formally” versions of libertarianism. Neither is plausible because they allow self-ownership to be lost too easily.

A plausible conception of the ownership of natural resources must be compatible with reasonably *secure* (not easily lost) self-ownership. At a minimum it should allow unappropriated resources to be *used* by agents *without the permission of others* and *without any loss of the rights of self-ownership*—as long as it does not violate the property rights of others. Without some such condition of permissible use of natural resources, self-ownership has no real force, since it could be lost through the unavoidable use of natural resources. In addition, a plausible conception of the ownership of natural resources should be *unilateralist* in the sense of allowing agents to *appropriate* unappropriated natural resources without the consent of others—and with no loss of self-ownership—as long as they make an appropriate payment (to be discussed below).³

In what follows, then, we consider some unilateralist conceptions of natural resource

ownership (in conjunction with self-ownership). *Radical right libertarians*—such as Rothbard [1978, 1982] and Kirzner [1978]—hold that there are no payment requirements for the appropriation of unappropriated resources. Agents are free to take ownership of whatever unappropriated natural resources they find (or mix their labor with). Obviously, this is a non-starter from a viewpoint that requires egalitarian ownership of resources. *Nozickian right libertarians*—such as Nozick [1974]—hold that the only payment requirements are those of a Nozickian proviso, which requires roughly that (taking account of the general benefits of a system of exclusive rights to natural resources), no individual be made worse off (in some appropriate sense) by the appropriation (compared with the situation before appropriation).⁴ It seems quite plausible that satisfaction of some form of a Nozickian proviso is a *necessary* condition for just unilateral appropriation. But Nozickian libertarians are mistaken in holding that it is *sufficient* for just appropriation. For a world without the possibility of appropriating exclusive rights to natural resources would leave people very poor. Little if any compensation is required by a Nozickian proviso. There is no excuse for those who first appropriate natural resources to insist that the whole gain in efficiency from institutions for exclusive appropriation of natural resources must be assigned to them, when there are alternative protocols for assigning the gain that would preserve most if not all of the efficiency gain. Those who wish to impose an institution and justify it on grounds of efficiency have, at most, a claim to the gain as compared to the next most efficient institution, not a claim to the gain as compared to no institution.

Georgist libertarians—such as eponymous George [1879, 1892], Steiner [1977, 1980, 1981, 1992, 1994], and Tideman [1991, 1994, 1997, 1998]—hold that agents may appropriate unappropriated natural resources as long as they pay the competitive value of the rights they claim.⁵ Because of potential problems with future generations (which we are here ignoring), the rights involved are usually understood as temporary in nature, and thus the competitive value is

understood as the competitive *rent* owed for the rights claimed. For simplicity, we also make this assumption.

We believe that Georgist libertarianism is plausible. It allows agents to use and appropriate unowned natural resources as long as they pay the competitive value of the rights they claim. Furthermore, it holds that agents fully own the artifacts that they produce with their labor, as long as they pay the rent on the underlying natural resources they own and the owners of any other labor, natural resources, or artifacts involved in the production have consented (e.g., in return for a payment) to the use of these resources and have renounced any claim to the product. Thus, for example, if I produce some apples on some land that I have claimed, then I own the apples as long as I have paid any required rent for the land. If I hire someone to work for me, and rent some machinery from someone, then I own the apples as long as I have paid any required rent for the land, the wages to the hired hand, and the rent for the machinery.

We address below the question of how the rent payments are to be divided up. One of us suggests that they should be divided up equally, and one of us argues that they should be used to promote equality of effective opportunities for a good life (and thus divided up unequally). The point to note here is that, however they are divided up, the duty to make payments is limited to the competitive value of the rights over natural resources that one claims. There are no duties to contribute simply because someone is in need. Nor does the amount that agents are required to contribute depend on how fortunate they are with respect to their personal endowments (capacities, etc.) or their situational endowments (wealth, opportunities, etc.). The duty to make payments to others is based solely on the value of the natural resources one appropriates. If one appropriates none, one owes nothing.

Purist egalitarians reject this limited egalitarian duty. They hold that equality must be promoted whenever possible. No constraints are imposed in principle on how this may be done.

We believe, however, that the egalitarian duty is indeed limited in two ways. First, violations of self-ownership are not permitted no matter how effective they may be in promoting equality. Agents may not be killed, tortured, or assaulted without their consent. Nor may they be coerced into providing involuntary services for others (e.g., mandatory labor for the state). Nor do agents owe any taxes merely because they exist or because they use natural resources in ways that do not reduce the value of the opportunities of others. Second, although agents do owe taxes (rent) if they appropriate natural resources, these taxes are based solely on the competitive value of the rights over the resources that they claim. No taxes are owed for simply having or exercising one's talents. For example, setting taxes for each agent at some fraction of the value of his/her actual or maximally valuable annual product is inadmissible.

So, the Georgist conception of egalitarian ownership of natural resources is plausible because it recognizes that agents must pay the full competitive value of any rights of over natural resources they claim, but it denies that agents have an unlimited duty to promote equality.

If Georgist left-libertarianism is accepted, then we can draw one implication for global justice. Each country is required by justice to make a payment for distribution among all countries equal to the value of the rights they have claimed over unimproved natural resources. Countries that have appropriated more valuable natural resources owe more than those who have appropriated less valuable natural resources.

So far, so good. We now consider how these rent payments are to be allocated among countries.

4. Distributing the Rent Payments

So far we have addressed the obligations to make payments for natural resources appropriated. We now turn to how these payments are to be distributed. For simplicity we ignore the

important question of how administrative expenses are factored in and simply discuss how the payments should be distributed if it could be done without any administrative cost.

There is, of course, a very wide range of possible answers to the question of how the rent payments should be distributed. One might hold, for example, that a utilitarian principle should be applied. We simply assume here that some sort of egalitarian principle should be applied. After all, natural resources are in some sense the common property of all.

One of us (Tideman) holds that the rent payments should be *divided equally* among all agents in the world. The net effect of this idea, in conjunction with the idea that competitive rent is owed for rights claimed over natural resources, is that agents and countries effectively owe rent payments only to the extent that they appropriate more than an equal per capita share of the value of natural resources. For if they appropriate just a per capita share, their share of the rent payments equals the rent they owe, and hence no net rent is due.

The other of us (Vallentyne) holds that the rent payments should be divided *so as to promote effective equality of opportunity for a good life*. There are, of course, many issues here that a full theory of equality promotion would have to address. What makes for a good life? How exactly are effective opportunities understood? On what basis are effective opportunities assessed? Are the requisite interpersonal comparisons possible? How is equality measured? These important issues are not addressed here, except to stipulate that the relevant equality promotion is to be done by making people's lives better, and not by leveling-down.⁶ For present purposes it suffices to contrast this view with the previous one. On Vallentyne's view, the rent payments are not normally divided up equally but rather divided up unequally so as to equalize effective opportunities for a good life (whatever exactly that requires). Someone who has advantageous unchosen personal capacities (e.g., a strong, beautiful, intelligent person with a happy disposition) gets less (and perhaps nothing) from the rent payments than a person with

disadvantageous personal capacities (e.g., a weak, ugly, stupid person with a depressive disposition). (If our model had more than one generation, we might ask whether those who bring weak, ugly, stupid people with depressive dispositions into the world have an obligation to compensate those who thereby receive less rent.) The same point applies to those who have advantageous unchosen situations (e.g., those who come to start life in an especially desirable physical or social location). The most basic point on this view is simply that the division of the rent payments should compensate for unchosen inequalities in opportunities for a good life.

Because we both agree that the demands of equality are limited to how the rent payments should be spent, we both agree that agents and countries do not have a duty of justice to do whatever is necessary to promote equality. The economic duties of agents and countries are determined by the value of the natural resources that they appropriate, and do not depend on the needs or relative deprivations of others (except of course to the extent that this affects the competitive value of the rights claimed).

At issue is how the independently generated rent payments are to be divided. Tideman endorses the view that each agent has a right to an equal share of the value of natural resources. Vallentyne endorses the view that justice requires that the value of natural resources be used to promote effectively equality of opportunity for a good life. At issue between the two views is the question of whether disadvantages in unchosen characteristics entitles one to a greater share of the value of natural resources (the rent payments). This is a deep and controversial issue that we cannot develop here. Suffice it to say that the equal share view is a form of external resourcism—the view that justice is concerned only with the distribution of external (non-personal resources), and that the effectively equality of opportunity view is a form of welfarism—the view that justice is concerned with the distribution of all resources (personal and external) and with how they affect the opportunity for a good life.

In terms of global justice, this issue is relevant only if there are differences among countries in the average value of the effective opportunities for a good life. One way that there can be such differences is by there being differences in the distribution of innate personal capacities of the citizens (initial immunity to disease and depression, disposition to intelligence, strength, etc.). In the world as it is, for reasonably large countries the differences on average in such characteristics are likely to be quite small. Furthermore, even where there are significant differences, our knowledge of the differences is likely to be very limited. Hence, in practice in typical cases it is unlikely that there will be a difference between the two approaches with respect to the impact of differences of innate personal capacities. As we now indicate however, there are other sources where the two approaches to the division of the rent payments are likely to yield significant differences in practice.

First, even if countries differ little on average in the distribution of innate personal capacities, the (e.g. socially inherited) *initial (unchosen) beliefs, values, and practical knowledge* of adults may have a significant impact on their effective opportunity for a good life. If individuals in one country start adult life with many more false beliefs (e.g., false superstitions about how to avoid disease and depression, about how to develop intelligence and strength, etc.), that reduces the value of their effective opportunity for a good life. Likewise, if the individuals start life with *values* that are very difficult to satisfy, and very difficult to change, this too may have a significant impact on the value of their effective opportunities for a good life. To the extent these factors have such an effect, the equality promotion model of the division of the rent payments, but not the equal division model, gives countries with a greater proportion of such disadvantaged individuals a greater share of the rent payments.

So far we have considered ways in which individuals might be disadvantaged in their effective opportunity for a good life by their own personal characteristics. Individuals can also

be disadvantaged by the personal characteristics of their neighbors, and by the general social climate in their country and in neighboring countries. The extent to which others in one's country are disposed to trust and cooperate with others (whether this is innate or socially conditioned), for example, very much affects one's effective life opportunities. The two models of division of the rent payments are likely to differ because of such differences.⁷

Yet another factor in the determination of effective opportunities for a good life is the vicinity to desirable natural resources. Although those who appropriate natural resources owe competitive rent for the rights claimed, the starting geographical positions of agents affect their effective opportunities for a good life. First, citizens may have unchosen psychological attachments to their geographical region of origin, even if it is otherwise less desirable. More generally, the costs of moving to take advantage of desirable natural resources depends very much on where one starts from. So this is yet another factor that affects the effective opportunities for a good life.

Finally, the artifacts (roads, machines, etc.) with which the citizens of a country start their adult life are another source of inequality in effective opportunity for a good life. Strictly speaking, in our simplified model in which there is only one generation of agents, there are no such artifacts, but it is worth mentioning here because in real life they are likely to be a major source of inequality of effective opportunity for a good life. We have not here addressed the status of such artifacts, but for the record one of us (Tideman) holds that those who own artifacts have a right to transfer them to others by gift without any taxation, and one of us (Vallentyne) denies that individuals have such a right. The point here is simply to note that to the extent that there is transmission of artifactual wealth from one generation to a later generation, this too is a factor in generating inequality of effective opportunity for a good life among countries.

In sum, there are likely to be significant differences in practice between the two models

of rent payment division. It ultimately boils down to whether one views the value of natural resources as a fund to be divided equally or as a fund for the promotion of effective equality of opportunity for a good life.

5. Conclusion

We have given the outline of a left-libertarian theory of justice according to which each agent, initially at least, owns him/herself, and natural resources are owned in some egalitarian sense. Self-ownership, we have suggested, is needed to provide agents with adequate protection against interference from others. Egalitarian ownership of natural resources is plausible because none of the agents created these resources. Furthermore, this egalitarian ownership is most plausible when understood as *global* (and not merely national) egalitarian ownership of the value of natural resources. We have defended a version of Georgist left-libertarianism according to which those who appropriate natural resources are required to pay competitive rent for the value of the rights they claim. This generates a fund of rent payments that is to be divided among the citizens of the world.

There are many important unresolved issues in this approach. In particular, we, the authors, disagree about how the rent payments are to be divided. Tideman holds that the rent payments should be divided equally among all agents, whereas Vallentyne holds that the rent payments should be spent so as to promote effectively equality of opportunity for a good life among agents. In addition to these, there are many other important issues that need to be addressed. We identify some of the main ones in the appendix.

On any plausible view of left-libertarianism, however, national boundaries are arbitrary in principle (although not in practice), and those countries that have appropriated more than their per capita share of the value of natural resources, and for which the average unchosen advantage

is greater than the global average, owe payments to those countries that that have appropriated less than their per capita share of the value of natural resources, and for which the average unchosen advantage is no greater than the global average.

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Appendix: Important issues that a full left-libertarian theory would need to address

1. The notion of competitive rent: Exactly how is competitive rent determined? What are the initial allocations of rights relative to which demand and supply operate (e.g., common use of natural resources as modified by past just appropriations)? What is the relevant process for determining the competitive value (market-clearing price? second price auction)? Do problems of multiple equilibria (multiple possible competitive prices) arise, and if so, how are they handled?
2. Dealing with existing beings with partial moral standing (i.e., that are not full agents): How is the theory extended to deal with sentient beings with no potential for agency (low level animals, defective humans), sentient beings with no agency but with the potential for agency (normal fetuses, infants), sentient beings with partial agency (children, great apes)?
3. Dealing with future beings with moral standing: How are the following issues to be dealt with in light of the definite or possible existence of future beings with moral standing: the use non-renewable resources, gifts to later generations, procreation?
4. Implementation: To whom is rent to be paid where there is no government or no government that distributes the rent appropriately (e.g., if the government is grossly inefficient or corrupt)?

Endnotes

¹ Early exponents of some form of self-ownership combined with some form of egalitarian ownership of natural resources include: Ogilvie [1781], Spence [1793], Paine [1795], Colins [1835], Huet [1853], Dove [1850, 1854], Spencer [1851], George [1879, 1892], and Walras [1896]. For insightful discussion of some of these early views, see Cunliffe [1987, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1998].

² Another way of capturing the difference in views is to say that both hold that agents fully own themselves, but Vallentyne regards the agents who own themselves as people in the normal intuitive sense (e.g., that can live for fifty years or more), while Tideman holds that the agents that own themselves are “agent-stages” which exist only for very short periods of time.

³ We leave open here what agents must do in addition to making an appropriate payment. The most plausible view, we believe, simply requires that they stake a claim (assert certain rights). The payment owed would thus depend on what rights are claimed. Other possible views are that agents must discover the natural resource, or that they must mix their labor with it. Although we believe neither of these view to be plausible, for generality we leave open this issue.

⁴ Locke [1690] was not a Nozickian libertarian. For he disallowed appropriation that would lead to spoilage, he rejected the right of voluntary self-enslavement, and he held that one had a duty to provide the means of subsistence to those unable to provide for themselves. He arguably also rejected the Nozickian proviso, since he may have meant “enough and as good” to mean “an equally valuable share”.

⁵ For discussion of the views of Henry George, and of contemporary Georgist economists, see: Andelson [1991], Harrison, Hudson, Miller and Feder [1994], Tideman [1994], and Wenzel [1997]. Van Parijs [1995] also defends charging competitive rent for the appropriation of natural resources. He is not, however, a Georgist libertarian because he endorses charging rent on (or taxes equal to up to 100% of the value of) all non-personal assets that were “given” to an agent (as opposed to produced by him/her).

⁶ Vallentyne would defend the view that equality should be promoted among the Pareto optimal arrangements (i.e., arrangements for which no one’s opportunity set can be improved except by making someone else’s opportunity set worse).

⁷ Another factor that can affect life opportunities is the material wealth inherited from previous generations of one’s country. Given, however, that we are assuming only a single generation, this factor won’t arise.