International Theory (2019), **11**, 48–80
doi:10.1017/S1752971918000209

International Theory

ARTICLE

Global poverty, global sacrifices, and natural resource reforms

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My aim in this essay is to advance discussion of how to justify the sacrifices that reforms combating global poverty might entail for the world's better-off. I begin from the assumption that we should not try to motivate such sacrifices solely through the hope that they will produce significant poverty gains. Instead, we should also explore whether the affluent actually have compelling moral claims to the goods that they might be asked to relinquish as part of certain global reforms. This alternative strategy forms the background for my discussion of two influential global reform proposals. The first proposal is to tax the natural resource wealth enjoyed by various affluent countries in order to ameliorate global poverty. The second proposal is to prohibit the resource corporations based in affluent democracies from purchasing natural resources controlled by extreme kleptocrats. I argue that once we examine the relationship between these proposals from a sacrifice-sensitive perspective, we find that they genuinely conflict with each other, and that there are sacrifice-related reasons to put aside the canonical proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource wealth.

Keywords: Redistribution; morality of international trade; egalitarianism; resource curse; foreign aid; public property

My aim in this essay is to contribute to two strands of the normative conversation on extreme global poverty. First, I wish to intervene in the ongoing discussion on how to justify global reforms that could potentially ameliorate extreme poverty: in particular, I seek to advance discussion of how to justify the *sacrifices* that such reforms might entail for the world's better-off. Second, I wish to show that close attention to sacrifice considerations casts a new light on specific proposals for global reform that have been the subject of much philosophical debate.

This dual effort will be motivated by a belief which, for the most part, I shall assume rather than defend. The belief is that extreme global poverty ought to trigger action on the part of the world's affluent, but also that we should not try to justify sacrifices involved in such action *solely* through the hope that it will produce significant poverty gains.

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One immediate reason to avoid such exclusive reliance on consequentialist reasoning is that there are many contexts where there is considerable uncertainty as to the long-term poverty effects of possible sacrifices from the affluent.[1] This uncertainty, in turn, might be reduced by increasing the sacrifices we are willing to demand from the affluent in order to achieve good outcomes for the poor. But here enters another key concern: the more we increase the scope of sacrifice we demand on such consequentialist grounds, the greater is the fear that we will end up treating the affluent as mere means to the ends of the poor.

This fear, to be sure, may not be relevant when we think about trivial sacrifices. To take Peter Singer's classic example: the bypasser who only has to wet his trousers to rescue a drowning child from a shallow pond cannot plausibly reject the demand to make the rescue simply by saying that such a demand treats him as 'mere means'. But the worry about treating some as mere means to the ends of others certainly *does* become relevant when we consider how far from the shallow pond example a full-blown consequentialist position might take us. After all, at least some consequentialists – most prominently Singer himself – hold that in principle, the world's affluent ought to be willing to give up *anything* not necessary for their own basic needs simply because of the good consequences such sacrifice might yield for the global poor.[2] But for the many who think that consequences are not the only morally important factor, this kind of extreme demand is bound to trigger a genuine worry about treating the affluent as mere means to the ends of the poor.[3]

Taking this worry as my point of departure, I will examine here an additional way of justifying sacrifices on the part of the affluent. The guiding idea will be that rather than focusing exclusively on the poverty gains that certain sacrifices might generate, and then appealing to these potential gains as justification for the relevant sacrifices, we should also explore whether the affluent actually have compelling moral claims to the goods that they might be asked to relinquish as part of certain global reforms. To make the same point in different words: *independently* of the anti-poverty *output* that the relevant sacrifices might produce, we can also interrogate the moral status of the *input* – of the specific resources that the affluent are being asked to give up. For if it will turn out that the claim of the affluent to at least some of these resources is weak (or even nonexistent), then it will be much easier to justify the demand that at least some of these resources be relinquished.[4]

In turn, this alternative strategy for thinking about the justification of global sacrifice will form the background for my discussion of two influential global

[1]See, for example, Cohen 2010a, Wenar 2010a, Wisor 2011, Blake 2012, Easterly 2014.

[2]Singer 1972.

[3]This worry drives, for example, Richard Miller's insistence (2010, 9) that 'no one would have paid attention' to Singer's argument had Singer based his claims on the radical utilitarian 'doctrine that we always have a duty to make the choice by which we contribute as much as we can to overall happiness'. For other discussions of consequentialist demandingness regarding global poverty see, for example, Ashford 2000 (invoking a controversial notion of 'emergency' to defend consequentialist demandingness); Ashford 2003; Wenar 2003; Cullity 2004; Brock and Blake 2015.

[4]Christian Barry and Gerhard Øverland capture this thought as follows: 'If there is any reason to question the entitlements of the affluent … this will change the extent to which they can treat the giving up of … assets as costs that they can appeal to in order to justify their refusal to do more to help the global poor'. Barry and Øverland 2016, 28.

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reform proposals, both of which are tied to natural resources.[5] The first proposal, which has its roots in some of the founding work of contemporary global theory, is to tax the natural resource revenue enjoyed by various affluent countries.[6] The second proposal is to prohibit the resource corporations based in affluent democracies from purchasing natural resources controlled by regimes that are manifestly unaccountable to their people, focusing in particular on regimes that leave the people they rule extremely impoverished.[7]

I hope to show that a juxtaposition of these two reforms that takes sacrifice considerations as its background can enrich our thinking about multiple themes of contemporary political philosophy. One such theme is the distinction between the idea of moral arbitrariness, which has dominated much of the philosophical work on natural resource revenue, and the idea of moral illegitimacy. Another theme is the interaction between normative global theory and social science. And yet another theme is the implications of domestic egalitarianism for global theorizing. However, while illuminating these broad themes in novel ways should be useful in and of itself, I will ultimately be employing these themes in the service of a concrete practical claim. I shall argue that once we delve into the exact relationship between the reform proposals tied to natural resources, we find that they conflict with each other, and that there are sacrifice-related reasons to *put aside* the canonical proposal for global redistribution of natural resource revenue.

I develop my arguments as follows. The first section situates mainstream egalitarian commitments – which I take as my point of departure for thinking about global sacrifices – between the extremes of utilitarianism and libertarianism. In the second section, I contend that the proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue provides an inadequate solution to sacrifice complaints. The third section explains why reform of customary trade in natural resources better

[5]My analysis of both proposals will focus (as most of their adherents do) on natural resources that are traded as highly valuable commodities in global markets – oil, gas, diamonds, copper, and so on. This focus consciously leaves aside other kinds of natural resources: I will not, for example, take a stance here on broader questions regarding entitlements to 'biophysical space', which drive some recent normative explorations of global politics (see, e.g., Risse 2012; Hayward 2013). This agnosticism stems partly from skepticism regarding the practical salience of 'biophysical space' (see Stilz 2014), and partly from the familiar Rawlsian thought that 'the correct regulative principle for anything depends on the nature of that thing' (Rawls 1999a, 25). Although the arguments that I will develop here suggest important normative commonalities across all types of resources regulated by a political community, there is no necessary reason why the *complete* normative principles applying to natural resources that have a predominantly instrumental, commercial value (e.g., crude oil) should be identical to the normative principles regulating natural resources to which communities develop much thicker, noninstrumental attachments (e.g., a particular river that a given community regards as holy) or to the principles regulating ecologically crucial resources. For some of the relevant debates, see Kolers 2012, Armstrong, 2014, Moore 2012, Schupert 2014.

[6]Theorists who endorse a global redistribution of natural resource revenue often apply it both to the manifestly nonideal problem of extreme global poverty, and to more 'ideal theory' egalitarian visions of perfect global justice. See, for example, Beitz 1979, Pogge 1994, Pogge 2011, Steiner 2011, Casal 2011, Armstrong 2013a, 2013b. My focus will be on the nonideal context, though I discuss ideal theory concerns in the closing section. I will use natural resource revenue to refer to the monetary value that natural resources yield in the market (the value of an oil barrel, e.g., in dollars). I will use the term natural resource *endowments* to refer to the natural resources themselves (the amount of oil, for instance).

[7]See Pogge 2002, Pogge 2010, Wenar 2008, Wenar 2010b, Wenar 2011, Wenar 2016, Nili 2013b, Nili 2015.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

addresses these complaints, and why it conflicts with a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. The fourth section anticipates concerns about harms that might befall the poor as a result of reform to customary trade. Finally, the fifth section anticipates ideal theory objections.

Utilitarians, libertarians, and mainstream egalitarianism

It will be helpful to begin with three commitments that I shall assume here, and that I take to be jointly constitutive of mainstream egalitarianism. The first commitment is to find ways to justify various economic reforms that could improve the position of the worst-off. At the domestic level, this commitment refers to the position of a polity's worst-off citizens. At the global level, this commitment refers, at minimum, to the position of any individual in the world suffering from extreme poverty.

The second commitment that I shall identify with mainstream egalitarianism is the commitment that I have already emphasized and endorsed above, not to treat some agents as mere means to the good of others. Insisting on the 'priority of the right to the good',[8] mainstream egalitarians normally refuse to allow agents' rights to be overridden by the possible attainment of beneficial outcomes for others. Even while mainstream egalitarians recognize that any plausible normative theory has to take consequences as a factor,[9] they hold that 'taking rights seriously'[10] means (among other things) seeing agents' rights as normally trumping good consequences. All mainstream egalitarians agree with Rawls, against utilitarianism, that each person 'possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override'.[11] Accordingly, mainstream egalitarians firmly oppose legal prosecution of the innocent, for example, even when such prosecution might yield significant positive consequences.[12] And mainstream egalitarians also insist – just as firmly as libertarians do – that the integrity of the person prohibits infringements on individuals' bodily rights, even when such infringements promise to deliver considerable consequentialist gains.[13]

However, third, while mainstream egalitarianism converges with libertarians on these anti-utilitarian views, it also rejects an essential element of many libertarian doctrines – namely, pre-political property rights. The commitment to the denial of pre-political property is essential to mainstream egalitarians, because it is crucial for aligning their egalitarianism with their anti-utilitarian foundations. After all, if there are pre-political property rights, then core egalitarian policies such as redistributive taxation amount to a 'utilitarianism of rights',[14] impermissibly sacrificing the property rights of the better off for the sake of the (purported) rights of the less well-off. In order to reject this libertarian complaint, mainstream egalitarians must hold that (at least when it comes to anything external to individual

[8]Rawls 1999a, 28.

[9]Rawls for instance is explicit that even a position with a non-consequentialist foundation must not be indifferent towards consequences. Such indifference would be "irrational, crazy." Rawls, 1999a, 26.

[10]Dworkin 1978.

[11]Rawls 1999a, 3.

[12]See, e.g., Dworkin 1978.

[13]See, e.g., Rawls 1999a, 89.

[14]Nozick 1974, passim.

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bodies) pre-political property rights simply *do not exist*. Hence the mainstream egalitarian emphasis on the thought that property rights are a legal creation: they are constructed by political institutions, in the service of independently specified normative aims.[15] This conception of property is necessary in order for mainstream egalitarians to unify their egalitarian and anti-utilitarian convictions.

There are several reasons to take the three mainstream egalitarian commitments just mentioned as our point of departure. One basic reason is that multiple important theorists subscribe to these three commitments. The list features seminal figures in contemporary moral and political philosophy (alongside Rawls, Ronald Dworkin,[16] T.M. Scanlon,[17] and Thomas Nagel[18] all come to mind) as well as some of their most prominent students (e.g., Thomas Pogge,[19] Samuel Freeman).[20] The list also includes several younger scholars who have been making important contributions to global political theory in recent years (such as Michael Blake, Anna Stilz, and Aaron James, among others).[21]

Another reason to take the three mainstream egalitarian commitments as our starting point is that they are usefully ecumenical. Philosophers who share the concern for the worst-off, the belief in the priority of the right to the good, and the rejection of pre-political property, can nonetheless disagree amongst themselves on a wide range of issues. Thus for instance, the theorists just mentioned explicitly disagree with one another about the role that hypothetical consent can play in a theory of justice;[22] about the extent of permissible inequality, both domestically[23] and globally;[24] and even about the identity of the agents on which global political

[15]The mainstream egalitarian rejection of pre-political property entails a fundamental disagreement not only with right-libertarians such as Nozick, but also with left-libertarians who put much stock in the idea of humanity's (pre-political) common ownership of the Earth – an idea that I will accordingly marginalize here (with the partial exception of 3.4). For a detailed mainstream egalitarian critique of left-libertarians, see Fried 2004. Note further that the rejection of pre-political property is often accompanied by a rejection of past-oriented thinking about property. Rather than tracing property rights through the mist of time to some 'original acquisition', mainstream egalitarians favor a forward-looking conception of ownership – meaning, among other things, that mainstream egalitarians are reluctant to have recursive accounts of property. The reasons have to do both with classic epistemic issues regarding historical injustice, and with later generations' expectations, that are often taken as superseding historical injustice. See Waldron 1988, Waldron 1992, Waldron 1994, Rawls 1999b, 39, Wenar 2006, Stilz 2011. For opposing views see Butt 2009, Mills 2010.

[16]Dworkin's rejection of pre-political property, concern for the least advantaged, and emphasis on the priority of the right to the good are all evident in Dworkin 1981.

[17]Scanlon rejects pre-political property in Scanlon 1977. He defends the concern for the least advantaged and the priority of the right to the good in Scanlon 1998.

[18]For the priority of the right to the good in Nagel see, for example, Nagel 1986; for his rejection of pre-political property, see Murphy and Nagel 2002; regarding the concern for the least advantaged, see Nagel 1991.

[19]The concern for the least advantaged dominates Pogge's work; see for example, Pogge 2002. Pogge rejects pre-political property in Pogge 1989, and emphasizes the priority of the right to the good in Pogge 1993.

[20]See Freeman 2001, Freeman 2006, Freeman 2013.

[21]See, for example, Stilz 2009a, Stilz 2011; Blake 2013a, Blake 2013b; James 2012.

[22]See, for example, Dworkin's critique of Rawls (Dworkin 1978, chap. 6).

[23]Compare, for example, Rawls 1999a and Nagel 1991.

[24]Compare for instance Freeman 2006 and Pogge 2002.

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philosophy should focus.[25] These disagreements suggest that mainstream egalitarianism – at least as I will employ the term here – is quite a broad church.

The final reason to begin our reflections from the perspective of mainstream egalitarianism has to do with the attractive middle ground that this position seeks, between utilitarianism and libertarianism. Like utilitarians and unlike extreme libertarians, mainstream egalitarianism recognizes the affluent's duty to aid the worst-off. At the same time, in contrast to extreme utilitarians, mainstream egalitarians also recognize the significance of bringing this duty "under control,"[26] in a way that will prevent it from completely overtaking the lives of its bearers. There is, I believe, much to be said in favor of this moderate stance.[27]

Mainstream egalitarianism and the global redistribution of natural resource revenue

Equipped with this characterization of mainstream egalitarianism and its importance, we can now turn to ask how mainstream egalitarians should think about global reform proposals tied to natural resource revenue. We can start with the proposal to redistribute natural resource revenue globally, and its relationship to moral arbitrariness.

The idea of moral arbitrariness has often been seen as a powerful tool in the egalitarian arsenal, deflating libertarian claims about 'excessive sacrifices' imposed on the affluent by redistributive schemes. The moral arbitrariness thought is that many advantages possessed by the affluent – from certain natural endowments to inheritances – are ones to which they can claim no moral desert, insofar as these advantages are not attributable to their choices or efforts. As Rawls famously wrote when reflecting on domestic justice among citizens, 'No one deserves his greater natural capacity nor merits a more favorable starting place in society'.[28] And if at least some of the affluent members of society owe their affluence to such products of 'the natural lottery',[29] then this seems to make redistribution of their wealth far easier to defend.

Many global political theorists – starting with Charles Beitz in the 1970s – have sought to establish a parallel between this domestic thought about moral arbitrariness and a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. Natural resources, the classic idea goes, are morally arbitrary in the sense that no people can claim special moral desert to the revenue deriving from them.[30] Thus for example, the mere fact that a people happens to have abundant oil, coal, or gas within its borders

[25]Compare, for example, Blake 2013 to Pogge 2013.

[26]Herman 2001, 227.

[27]Barry and Øverland (2016, 28) capture the appeal of this stance by noting that a moderate view of the affluent's duty to aid the poor 'seems … to strike a reasonable balance between two important values, moral equality and autonomy. Since all people have equal worth, it is reasonable to expect that all individuals would be required to make certain sacrifices to protect others from very bad things happening to them. However, because our interest in autonomy is also important, we are nevertheless entitled to give some priority to our own concerns. Therefore, what individuals are morally required to sacrifice to help others in need is significant, but limited'. See also Scanlon 1998, 224.

[28]Rawls 1999a, 87.

[29]Rawls 1999a, 65.

[30]Beitz 1979, 137–138.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

does not say anything about who should own the revenue from these resources.[31] While sovereign peoples might claim moral desert to the social and human capital that they develop, it is much harder to claim moral desert to natural resources that are 'simply "there," with no-one responsible for creating them'.[32] And this fact appears to make a global redistribution of natural resource revenue much easier to justify.

The suggestion that we should think about societies' natural resource revenue as morally arbitrary has considerable intuitive force. But in this section, I nonetheless wish to show that, at least from the perspective of mainstream egalitarianism, the appeal to moral arbitrariness cannot distinguish a global redistribution of natural resource revenue from many other global reform proposals bearing on global poverty. This is so for at least three reasons. First, social–scientific research undermines the view of natural resource revenue as morally arbitrary. Second, once we note the precise role that the idea of moral arbitrariness has to play in the global redistribution proposal, we can see that this proposal does not adequately respond to sacrifice complaints triggered by collective action problems. Finally, the global redistribution proposal also encounters difficulties in justifying substantial *immediate* sacrifices from resource-rich countries. I elaborate each of these points in turn.

The moral arbitrariness of natural resource revenue and the resource curse debate

The social–science literature on natural resource abundance provides reasons to doubt the familiar classification of natural resource revenue as morally arbitrary. To see this point, a very brief overview of the relevant literature might be handy.[33]

Social scientists have long debated the effects of abundant natural resources on a country's political institutions and economic performance. Initially, much of the effort in this literature was focused on showing that there is a genuine 'resource curse' – that is, on establishing that natural resource abundance often causes problematic political and economic outcomes. Part of the reasoning here had to do with 'Dutch disease' effects of natural resource exports on other sectors of a country's economy.[34] But at least equally important was the claim that an

[31]I shall use the term 'people' here to refer to all citizens of a society who, taken collectively, make up the group agent that is 'the sovereign people' or 'the sovereign body politic'. Accordingly, distinct ethnic, linguistic, or cultural groups that are not organized within distinct sovereign political communities do not fall under my definition of a people for the purposes of this essay: the Basques and Catalans, for example, are linguistically distinct from other citizens of Spain, but it is their shared membership in the Spanish body politic that matters here. In relying on this conception of peoplehood, my view broadly follows Stilz's (2011, 592–593) thought that 'Over time, political cooperation can constitute a group of citizens into a collective agent with important ties binding them together'. Moreover, like Stilz (and many others in the territorial rights literature), I shall assume that peoples are the agents who claim territorial rights, even if they necessarily do so through state institutions (hence I will sometimes speak of "states" making certain claims in the name of the people). At the same time, as 3.4 will make clear, I depart from the orthodox view of the relationship among the key components of territorial rights.

[32]Armstrong 2014a, 48.

[33]This overview is based on Nili 2016b.

[34]Thus, for example, natural resource revenue inflates the country's exchange rate, since it comes in the form of foreign currency. As a result, agricultural and industrial imports become more attractive, while the country's agricultural and industrial exports becomes less competitive. In such ways, a dominant natural

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abundance of natural resources triggers pernicious political dynamics, which can then generate grave economic conditions for sizeable portions of a country's population. The main thought has been that natural resource abundance provides a variety of incentives for manifestly unaccountable government. Most dramatically, natural resource abundance incentivizes usurpers who take over their countries' natural resources revenue, and free themselves from the need to elicit their population's voluntary cooperation. Sustaining their power and (often luxurious) lifestyle through resource rents, such rulers have little incentive to be concerned about their country's economic development; at the limit, they may even actively destroy the country's basic infrastructure (as Congo's Laurent Kabila infamously did) as a way of making it more difficult for other potential usurpers to out-do them. Such dynamics bring together the prospects of civil war, extreme repression, and extreme poverty – all of which form part of the 'resource curse'.[35]

In recent years, however, critics of the 'resource curse' thesis have gained ascendance in political economy debates, and have been challenging this narrative. Their main claim is that a society's natural endowments have little or no independent causal impact on its members' fortunes. Specifically, a key ingredient of the 'resource curse' connection between political and economic outcomes is the idea that in the long run, authoritarianism hinders economic performance in comparison to democracy:[36] if natural resource abundance harms economic growth, it will frequently do so indirectly, by causing authoritarianism. Critics of the 'resource curse' thesis, however, insist what matters is the kind of institutions that precede the discovery of natural resources, rather than the resources themselves. Some critics seek to explain 'curse' cases by highlighting weak state capacity preceding the discovery of natural resources.[37] Other critics point to the varying calculations of economic elites as crucial in shaping whether natural resource abundance supports authoritarianism or democracy.[38] And yet others argue that both democracies and autocracies are able to boost their stability through nontax revenues.[39] But despite the different specific arguments, all critics of the resource curse thesis emphasize the same core notion: institutions, rather than natural endowments, are decisive in shaping economic prospects.

It should be clear why awareness of this social–scientific state of play is important here. Insofar as 'most of the recent work on the resource curse' holds that 'the effect of resource wealth on political and economic development is conditioned by the nature of domestic institutions',[40] it follows that the classification of natural resource revenue as morally arbitrary is far from secure. To evince this problem, consider how a representative of an affluent, resource-rich country could respond to a requirement that her society transfers natural resource revenue to poorer countries. This representative might say: 'Many of the poorer societies to which we are now required to transfer natural resource revenue have larger natural

resource sector can shrink other sectors of the economy, making it less diversified, and more dependent on (often volatile) global demand for a specific natural resource. See Ross 2012, 47–48.

[35]See, for example, Wantchekon 2002; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Aslaksen 2010.

[36]See Gerring et al. 2005.

[37]For example, Haber and Menaldo 2011, Kennedy and Tiede 2013.

[38]For example, Dunning, 2008.

[39]For example, Morrison 2009.

[40]Wiens 2015 87.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

resource endowments than we do. The difference between us and them is therefore not about luck. Rather, this difference is due to the fact that we had the right kind of institutions prior to the discovery of natural resources. If our institutions were as exploitative as theirs, then we too would have been suffering from a "resource curse." But the fact that our institutions were in better shape when natural resources were discovered is *not* morally arbitrary'.[41]

This point strongly suggests that mainstream egalitarians who wish to draw upon morally arbitrary wealth for the purposes of global poverty alleviation should not focus on natural resources. Mainstream egalitarians might be better off focusing, for instance, on the morally arbitrary inheritances of extremely wealthy individuals within affluent countries.[42] It is far from clear that natural resources actually have any special advantages in the 'moral arbitrariness' category. And it is therefore far from clear that an appeal to the moral arbitrariness of natural resource revenue can help to confront sacrifice concerns.

Global redistribution, solitary action, and ineffective sacrifice

The second difficulty that afflicts the global redistribution proposal has to do with the precise role that moral arbitrariness can play in its justification. From a mainstream egalitarian perspective, at least, a global redistribution of natural resource revenue cannot be justified by stipulating as its goal the *elimination* of morally arbitrary inequalities in societies' natural resource endowments, since this goal would require that impoverished but resource-rich countries transfer natural resources to affluent but resource-poor ones, or transfer natural resource revenue by way of compensation. Such a requirement would clearly go against the mainstream egalitarian commitment to improve the position of the poor.[43] Therefore, the idea of moral arbitrariness has to play a more indirect role in a mainstream egalitarian argument for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. The appeal to moral arbitrariness can only play an anticipatory or 'defensive' function: it is meant to block certain kinds of attempts to *resist* such redistribution. The direct mainstream egalitarian justification for a global redistribution of natural

[41]It is worth distinguishing this point from a more familiar argument – that societies' choices and efforts yield considerable improvements in the value of certain natural resources, and thus establish a special claim over these resources (see for instance Miller 2007, 217–218). The argument from improvement is vulnerable to the rejoinder that the resources' pre-improvement value can still be redistributed (see Armstrong 2013b, 2015). But the argument I am suggesting here is more immune to this rejoinder, since it better captures what is distinctive about point-source natural resources. The main picture we should have in mind with regard to these resources is not one where some original positive value (however marginal) is significantly enhanced through agents' labor or choices. The more suitable picture is one where the relevant resource might very well have *negative* value, and where agents' choices and efforts shape whether the resource would become an asset or a liability.

[42]An anonymous reviewer wonders whether the 'inheritances' of sovereign peoples from preceding generations – including accountable institutions created by preceding generations – should be considered equally morally arbitrary. I doubt that this is the case in general, but (more importantly for present purposes), am also skeptical of this analogy's dialectical value. After all, if one firmly believes that no sovereign people can claim a moral entitlement to anything produced by its distant predecessors (putting overlapping generations aside), why pay so much attention to natural resource revenues as an object of redistribution? Why not say that any source of wealth traceable to a sufficiently distant past is potentially subject to redistribution?

[43]For remarks in similar spirit, see Armstrong 2013a, 335.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

resource revenue, at least in our manifestly non-ideal world, has to point to the intended benefits of such redistribution for the worst-off.

This justification is not problematic in and of itself.[44] But it *is* problematic when considered in conjunction with issues of global collective action, and with the kinds of sacrifice complaints that these issues trigger. The absence of a global sovereign generates pervasive collective action problems, haunting attempts to ensure that multiple countries all contribute towards a common cause. Given this enduring reality, there is considerable temptation for each society to excuse itself from contributing to multilateral efforts, by pointing to a set of other societies, and saying 'we will make sacrifices right after *them*'. In defending demands for global sacrifices, it is therefore important to be able to identify, for each relevant society, sufficient moral grounds for sacrifice that are independent of the actions of others.[45]

However, the proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue cannot satisfy this desideratum. Each society that is asked to sacrifice a portion of its natural resource revenue for the sake of ameliorating global poverty could argue that, since there is no assurance that other societies will make similar sacrifices, the main question to ask is whether its own solitary sacrifices, taken in isolation, will achieve enduring poverty gains. And given the many contexts where there will be no certainty about the achievement of such gains, there will also be many contexts when the demand for solitary sacrifices will seem far from secure.

Now, some may respond to such 'ineffective sacrifice' excuses by simply demanding that each society commit a portion of its natural resource revenue that will be substantial enough to make a difference to global poverty, independently of what any other society does. But this kind of demand will merely recreate rather than resolve the concern that triggered our inquiry: namely, that demands of substantial sacrifice for the global poor might end up treating some agents as mere means to the ends of others. Moreover, the weight of this concern is only amplified when one adds in familiar claims about the unfairness of some agents 'picking up the moral slack' for others.[46]

Global redistribution and the pace of sacrifice

Moral reflection on extreme global poverty is typically accompanied by a sense of urgency. Some theorists go so far as to suggest that 'the debate on global poverty must provide guidance about what can be done immediately'.[47] But even those philosophers who do not share this thought will likely agree that, all else equal, it is preferable to focus our attention on normative policy proposals that can generate 'action this day', not – or at least not *only* – in the distant future. And this observation suggests that we should (ceteris paribus) prioritize those global reform proposals related to global poverty that can justify *immediate* substantial sacrifices. This issue – the pace of sacrifice – represents the final problem that the global redistribution proposal encounters with regard to sacrifice complaints. A major part of the proposal's intuitive appeal (arguably) derives from the thought that it

[44]This is true even from a mainstream egalitarian perspective. As I noted above, mainstream egalitarians recognize that consequences are a morally important factor, even if not the only factor.

[45]Here I follow Nili 2014.

[46]Miller 2011.

[47]Blunt 2015, 540.

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places enormous resources at the immediate disposal of anti-poverty efforts.[48] But this thought is actually misleading, for several reasons.

One reason has to do with the problems of global collective action just emphasized. Given that these problems are enduring – resulting from structural features of global politics that are not going to disappear anytime soon – it follows that we can only demand of separate countries to make substantial immediate sacrifices for the sake of moral ends, if we are also willing to demand of each country to make such sacrifices independently of others' actions. In other words, justifying substantial immediate sacrifice requires that we be able to justify substantial *solitary* sacrifice. But I just argued that the global redistribution proposal has trouble justifying significant solitary sacrifice. Hence it follows that the proposal also has trouble justifying substantial immediate sacrifice.

The idea of stable expectations provides another reason for skepticism about the scope of immediate sacrifices that the global redistribution proposal can justify. This idea warrants more elaboration, partly because of some important distinctions it involves, and partly because these distinctions will play a role in several claims I will make later on.[49]

We can start with a simple observation: virtually all influential moral theories agree that stable expectations matter, in the following sense. It is morally important that agents have at least a minimal level of confidence in the stability of their central projects – knowing that those projects are not entirely dependent upon fluctuating circumstances that are completely outside of their control.[50] Moreover, one familiar argument for the significance of the particular rights with which we have been concerned – rights of ownership – is precisely that such rights allow agents to develop stable expectations regarding the resources that they can deploy in pursuit of their projects.[51]

Now, on the one hand, it would be implausible to say that all stable expectations, no matter how unjust their source, are morally important. In a society long based on slave labor, for instance, individuals may very well expect to have continued access to such labor, but these expectations would clearly be morally irrelevant. Yet, on the other hand, it seems equally implausible to say that agents' stable expectations matter morally only when these expectations are rooted in institutional arrangements that are perfectly just. It seems sensible to say that agents can develop legitimate expectations even in certain unjust conditions. And such expectations, in turn, affect the *pace* of sacrifice that may be required of agents, even when considering transition to more just arrangements.

[48]See, for example, Armstrong 2013b, 424; Pogge 2002.

[49]There is a growing literature in moral and political theory on the topic, matching legal scholars' long-standing interest in the kinds of expectations that citizens may legitimately develop in light of existing law. See, for example, Brown 2012, Meyer and Sanklecha 2014, Brown 2017, Green 2017. For an earlier influential account, see Buchanan 1975. My full views on stable expectations differ from some of these authors, but these differences need not detain us here.

[50]Goodin 1990 emphasizes the convergence of different moral theories on the significance of 'stabilizing expectations'.

[51]Thus, for example, the thought – strongly identified with Bernard Williams – that agents' central projects are the core of their 'integrity' seems to provide the best explanation for Rawls' claim that his theory views 'a right to personal property as necessary for citizens' independence and integrity'. (Rawls 1999a, xvi).

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If we accept this thought, then we need to distinguish those political conditions that can still give rise to legitimate expectations despite being morally suboptimal, in contrast to political conditions that can ground no such expectations. In my view, the best way to draw this distinction is through reference to reasonable disagreement about the demands of equality. When stable expectations are rooted in political arrangements that violate the demands of equality to an extent that lies beyond the scope of reasonable disagreement – as is the case with slavery – then these expectations are devoid of any moral weight. But when the relevant political arrangements lie *within* the scope of reasonable disagreement about the demands of equality, then the expectations to which they give rise do have moral weight.[52]

These distinctions matter for our reflections on redistributive schemes. If nothing else, this is because redistribution falls squarely in the realm of reasonable disagreement about equality's demands. Consider domestic redistribution first. Suppose that justice requires a considerable increase of the tax burden applying to well-off members of a given society, where income tax rates have been stable for a long period. Even if this is the case, it does not follow that it is morally permissible – let alone morally required – to dramatically increase the relevant tax rates over night. Because there can be reasonable disagreement about the degree to which a basic commitment to the equality of all citizens requires a progressive tax system, individuals can *legitimately* develop expectations around resources they have held for a sustained period, even if they would not enjoy these resources under a more progressive tax code. And when considering the morally appropriate pace of transition to a more egalitarian society, these legitimate expectations would have to be taken into account.

A parallel point, I believe, obtains with regard to global redistribution – including a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. Many affluent societies that are resource rich have clearly developed plans that depend on the continued availability of (at least roughly) the same level of natural resource revenues. Given reasonable (and, one might add, enduring) disagreement about the requirements of global justice, it seems intuitive to think that these stable expectations are legitimate. But these legitimate expectations would be disrupted by a demand that a society *immediately* sacrifices a substantial portion of its natural resource revenue for the sake of global ends.[53]

[52]One way to think about this moral weight is through the prism of democratic authority. According to an increasingly influential view of political authority, political decisions rooted in democratic procedures have a special claim to authority over us, given the equality they embody (at least as long as the substance of these decisions is also compatible with some plausible interpretation of the value of equality). Hence equality itself requires that citizens treat the results of democratic procedures as binding, even when they disagree with these results (see, e.g., Kolodny 2014; Viehoff 2014). But if we impose on citizens the moral cost of upholding a legitimate political order that they deem unjust, then we should also allow them the benefit of developing, under this legitimate order, stable expectations that are – at least in some sense – morally protected.

[53]In saying all this, I do not mean to deny that there are many political contexts where gradual reform too can have moral value. My claim is only that in *specific* contexts where reform is clearly urgent, and where conflicting reform proposals differ in how immediately they can be implemented without violating moral constraints, the normative comparison between the relevant proposals should take this difference into account. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to clarify this issue.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The broader view: natural resource revenue, natural resource trade, and sacrifice concerns

Up to this point, I have argued that the proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue does not provide an adequate response to the sacrifice complaints that often bedevil reform proposals connected to global poverty. From this point onwards, however, I shall focus on making an even more damning charge: that the proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue actually undermines the *overall* effort to defeat sacrifice complaints, by undermining an alternative reform proposal that is much more promising as a way of meeting such complaints. The relevant alternative is to stop to recognizing severely repressive regimes as legitimate vendors of state-owned natural resources, focusing in particular on those regimes that turn natural resource revenue into a source of severe deprivation for those they govern. Below I will suggest that this reform is best understood – at least from a perspective sensitive to sacrifice considerations – as grounded in a specific idea: that state-owned natural resources are the property of the people of the state rather than the property of de-facto rulers.[54] But if that is true, then we should instinctively recognize at least a potential tension between this reform proposal and that of a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. One proposal, after all, puts a very strong emphasis on the special claims of the people of a given state to the natural resources encompassed within the state's territory, while the other proposal seeks precisely to *de*-emphasize such claims in favor of outsiders' competing claims. In order to show that this apparent tension is genuine, we obviously need an argument (which I shall provide below). Yet it nonetheless seems sensible to take this tension as our point of departure for comparing the two reform ideas.

I begin this comparison by outlining my assumptions concerning the anti-poverty impact of reform to customary trade (Kleptocrats and poverty sub-section). In the following section, I argue that the proposal to withdraw dictators' trading privileges in natural resources provides a much stronger solution to sacrifice complaints than does the global redistribution proposal. I then seek to establish that this stronger solution to sacrifice complaints is available *only* if we view the people in each state as the rightful owners of that state's natural resource revenue. Finally, I turn to show that – at least from a mainstream egalitarian viewpoint – the apparent conflict between this 'national ownership' (as I will call it) and the global redistribution proposal is *genuine*. Therefore, mainstream egalitarians who take sacrifice concerns seriously must see the two global reform proposals tied to natural resources as ultimately conflicting. This means that in order to retain the superior solution to sacrifice complaints, mainstream egalitarians should put aside the proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue.

Kleptocrats and poverty

Why think that stopping to purchase natural resources from extreme kleptocrats could be significant in ameliorating poverty? One way to answer this question is to return to the resource curse debate surveyed earlier. Despite important disagreements, both social scientists who believe that natural resource abundance causes

[54]See, for example, Wenar 2008.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

political and economic maladies, and their critics who insist that natural resources have no independent causal force, agree on the following key point: *once* a situation exists where a kleptocracy controls sizeable amounts of natural resources traded as commodities in global markets, there is a clear danger of a vicious cycle, with the regime perpetuating its hold on power, through its control of natural resource revenue, at the population's expense.[55] A withdrawal of extreme kleptocrats' trading privileges in natural resources would interact with the very heart of this vicious cycle.[56]

It might be helpful to spell out further some of the basis for hope here, especially with regard to specific political moments in which political power is contested.[57] Coups provide one key example. As I stressed earlier, in many resource-abundant countries where democratic procedures are either nonexistent or extremely fragile, the threat and reality of coups form an integral part of the political landscape. And wherever a coup is a well-tried method for gaining political power, the prospects for accountable government that is responsive to its people's needs depend to a considerable degree on the odds that a coup will occur at any given time, as well as on the kind of regime that is likely to follow in the aftermath of a coup. It is therefore significant that recent empirical work finds that various economic measures taken by foreign democracies in response to coups both precipitate postcoup competitive elections, and reduce the overall incidence of coups against elected governments.[58] This empirical finding supports the thought that reform to customary trade might alter the incentive structure currently pushing various actors to seek political power by brute force, and to retain power through such force, using natural resource revenue against their people rather than channeling this revenue to the people.

Another key example concerns rigged elections. A large number of corrupt dictatorships hold elections only to massively rig them.[59] But such elections, despite not being remotely free and fair, can still be meaningful political events, insofar as they can provide focal points for popular protests against the regime. And in this context, a refusal by foreign governments to grant the regime certain customary privileges can have special significance. These customary privileges can aggravate the collective action problems facing opposition movements, by entrenching the sense that the odds of defeating the regime are overwhelmingly small. Correspondingly, denying these privileges means generating less headwind

[55]See the sources cited in notes 34 through 39 above.

[56]The same idea can be expressed in terms of broader models of political power, such as the 'selectorate theory' advanced by Bueno De Mesquita and his colleagues (see Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James Morrow. 2003, *The Logic of Political Survival* [MIT Press]). The vicious cycle of natural resource abundance often means that leaders only need to secure the support of a coalition that is a tiny fraction of the citizenry (so their 'winning coalition', to use the theory's terms, is particularly small), and can therefore focus on turning natural resource wealth from a public good – one employed for the benefit of the population at large – into a 'private good', distributed only to those loyal to the leadership. It is plausible to hope that reform of customary trade would make it more difficult for dictators to turn natural resources into a private good, because it will be more difficult for them to turn these resources into wealth that can be privately distributed.

[57]This and the following paragraph draw on Marinov and Nili 2015.

[58]See Goemans and Marinov 2014.

[59]See Hyde 2011, Rundlett and Svolik 2016.

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for potential opposition movements as they try to rally ordinary citizens to demand at least minimal provision of basic government services.

Let me be clear about what I have been suggesting here. Nothing in the preceding paragraphs is meant to imply that reforming customary trade in natural resources would be *sufficient* to 'solve' extreme poverty. This is plainly not the case when thinking about extreme poverty in the world writ large, given that such poverty also exists in resource-scarce countries. And even when looking only at resource-abundant countries, we should not be too quick to think that reform to customary natural resource trade *by itself* will deal decisively with poverty.[60] What *does* seem plausible, however, is that in those countries currently suffering from the deadly, self-reinforcing combination of natural resource abundance and extreme kleptocracies, reform to customary trade in natural resources is a *necessary* condition for positive political and economic change.

Why reforming customary trade is a more promising way to respond to sacrifice concerns

Equipped with these empirical assumptions, let us now turn to the normative comparison between the two global reform proposals. The key to this comparison lies with a distinction between moral arbitrariness and moral illegitimacy. The global redistribution proposal tries to appeal to the moral arbitrariness of natural resource revenue to justify sacrifice of (some of) this revenue. In contrast, the sacrifices involved in reform to customary trade with kleptocrats can be justified through reference to the idea that such trade is morally *illegitimate*. And this distinction, I want to argue, makes a difference from a perspective sensitive to sacrifice considerations.

We can start to see the difference by considering the differences in the general structure of illegitimacy charges, as compared to arbitrariness charges. When we are saying to a certain agent that its claim to some resource is morally arbitrary, we are denying that this agent has any special moral right to the resource in question, but we can still accept the thought that the agent's claim to the resource is *not obviously weaker* than that of any other agent. Take the example of inheritance again: if you inherit a certain sum of money simply in virtue of being a member of given family, we may say that this inheritance is morally arbitrary – you cannot claim any kind of moral desert to this inheritance, and this will weaken your moral claim against the inheritance being subject to tax. But you would still have (absent

[60]On this specific point I agree with the critique that Armstrong (2017, chapter 7) presses against Wenar (2016). Wiens (2015) also stresses the thought that reform to customary trade will not suffice to address extreme poverty in kleptocracies, though his particular argument supporting this claim seems problematic. On Wiens' view, resource-rich kleptocracies are likely to remain in power as long as ordinary citizens do not have credible exit options that will allow them to be more ambitious in the demands they pose to their governments, meaning that reform to customary trade has to be combined with much more permissive immigration policies on the part of affluent democracies. But while there is much be said for such immigration reform (in general, and perhaps even more specifically as a compensatory measure related to ongoing wrongs such as those involved in customary trade), I am not persuaded that the lack of exit options is a central reason why kleptocracies endure. There is little reason to think that rulers in countries such as Chad, Equatorial Guinea, or Angola would be greatly concerned if their country became virtually empty, so long as they retained the power to sell off rights to natural resources to foreign bidders, who extract these resources without relying in any way on the local population.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

other normatively relevant facts) a moral claim that is *equal* to that of any other citizen, to enjoy the public services that the relevant tax will support.

However, if we say that a certain agent's claim to some resource is illegitimate, we are making a more forceful accusation: we are saying that the relevant agent has no right *at all* to this resource, and is violating the special moral right of *another* specific agent (or a specific set of agents) to this resource. Thus if you falsify the will of distant relatives, so that, instead of their property going to their children as their actual will stipulated, you gain control of their inheritance, it would be inaccurate to say that your claim to the inheritance is morally arbitrary. Rather, your claim is morally illegitimate: you have no right whatsoever to this inheritance, and are violating the special rights of specific other agents (the children of your deceased relatives) to that inheritance.

These differences between moral arbitrariness and moral illegitimacy are pertinent here for three reasons. First, because charges of moral illegitimacy isolate a specific agent that is violating the special rights of specific other agents, these charges cannot be deflected through appeal to any kind of collective action problem, such as the 'ineffective sacrifice' reasoning discussed above. After all, if you are wronging a specific other agent, then you ought to stop doing so independently of whether others continue, and (arguably) even independently of whether your victim will be better-off as a result. Thus for instance, if all of your neighbors in a downtrodden town are routinely robbing the old lady across the street, you arguably ought to stop robbing her even if others will simply rob what you will not, meaning that reforming your conduct will likely fail to produce better consequences for her.[61] In other words, when claims to certain resources are morally illegitimate, the demand to sacrifice these resources cannot be deflected by appealing to doubts about solitary sacrifice.

Second, the accusation that a claim to certain resources is illegitimate can justify immediate sacrifice of these resources much more easily than can the invoking of moral arbitrariness. This is because, unlike charges of arbitrariness, charges of illegitimacy *nullify the significance of any expectations* that agents might develop to resources that they have been controlling.

Our earlier pair of inheritance examples will help to demonstrate this contrast. The inheritor of a family estate may plausibly insist (at least if she has long been promised this inheritance) that she has developed important plans around the estate, and that a sudden massive increase of tax rates that apply to it will disrupt her plans. More specifically, such a person might say that there is reasonable disagreement as to how a society should structure rules of inheritance if it is to respect each of its citizens as an equal; and given this reasonable disagreement about the demands of equality, her inheritance expectations are legitimate even if an alternative set of inheritance regulations would better comport with the equality of all citizens, and thus be more just. However, a person who illicitly takes over the inheritance of others cannot invoke such reasoning. This is because a property regime which allows persons to 'inherit' resources simply in virtue of seizing them through fraud lies beyond the scope of reasonable disagreement: such a regime would not even feature a recognizable notion of property. Therefore, the person

[61]This concrete example of course only illustrates a more abstract thought: that non-consequentialist reasons exist, in Nagel's elegant formulation, 'against *your* doing something, not just against its happening'. (Nagel 1986, 177, my italics). For more recent disputes on this score, see Kagan 2011, Nefsky 2011.

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who commits fraud in order to obtain another's inheritance cannot appeal to any legitimate expectations. Such a wrongdoer ought to return this inheritance immediately, even if he has constructed many plans around the assumption that his crime will never be revealed. These plans cannot slow down the pace of sacrifice that morality requires of him.

The third and final reason why the distinction between moral illegitimacy and moral arbitrariness matters for our purposes is that we can readily see how reform to customary trade with kleptocrats can invoke the charge of morally illegitimate holdings. If we endorse the idea that state-owned natural resources belong to the people of the state rather than to de-facto rulers, then it follows that rulers have to point to some meaningful authorization from their people (or from their people's elected representatives) to engage in sales of the people's natural resources. But severely repressive regimes cannot claim such authorization. Hence corporations who purchase natural resources from such regimes, in full knowledge that these transactions are in no way authorized by the people, are making *illegitimate* claims to the relevant resources and to the revenue deriving from them. Since they have gained control over natural resources without authorization from their real owners, corporations do not have a legitimate claim to the natural resources they purchase from kleptocrats.[62] It therefore also follows – given the analysis above – that corporations based in affluent countries, and the governments regulating them, cannot invoke any kind of sacrifice complaints to block or slow down reform of customary trade with kleptocrats.

For one thing, no corporation or government can appeal to the ineffectiveness of solitary sacrifice: if customary trade with kleptocrats amounts to a systematic violation of peoples' property rights, then each corporation transacting with kleptocrats, and each government regulating such transactions, ought to stop these transactions, independently of the actions of other corporations or governments. Moreover, each corporation and government ought to stop such transactions *immediately*: none can appeal to the expectation of continued access to natural resources, as a way of slowing down the demand to sacrifice this access. This expectation is illegitimate, and we can therefore ignore it for the purposes of moral analysis, in much the same way that we would ignore a complaint by slave traders, that an immediate end to international slave trade would disrupt plans they have developed on the basis of the expectation that this international practice would endure.

The sacrifice complaints that pose considerable difficulties for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue seem far less damaging, then, when we consider reform to natural resource trade with kleptocrats. The latter proposal, I accordingly conclude, can address sacrifice complaints far better than the former.

Reform to customary trade and the idea of national ownership

Some might wonder why are these advantages of one global reform proposal over another so important. Why cannot we simply endorse both reform proposals tied to natural resources? My answer is that, at least from a mainstream egalitarian perspective sensitive to sacrifice considerations, reform to natural resource trade with kleptocrats depends on the idea of national ownership of such resources, but

[62]See Wenar 2008, Pogge 2010, Nili 2011b.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the proposal to redistribute natural resource revenue globally undermines this very idea. In this subsection, I focus on the first part of the answer – on showing why, from a sacrifice-sensitive perspective, national ownership must underlie reform of customary trade with kleptocrats.

Some theorists hold that reform of such trade can be supported even by those who dispute the idea of national ownership over natural resources. Leif Wenar, to take one important example, notes that 'some philosophers may hold to the idea that the earth in some way belongs to all humans equally', yet he argues that 'simply as a practical matter … global egalitarians will certainly condemn dictators and civil warriors seizing natural resources by force in underdeveloped countries'.[63]

The main problem with this justification is that it comes up short against the non-consequentialist foundation of mainstream egalitarianism – the same foundation that initiated our discussion. The impetus for our inquiry, recall, is the thought that even if there is a moral requirement to help the global poor, this requirement has to be qualified if it is to remain plausible, and if the affluent are not be treated as mere means to the ends of the poor. Wenar himself, it is important to note, makes this point:

> The [r]ich cannot in fairness be required to give up huge amounts of resources just to provide the smallest gains to the [p]oor…considerations of sacrifice are part of our thinking about our moral duties, and so…the complaint of sacrifice will have a place in any plausible moral theory. The complaints of the poor cannot have absolute priority.[64]

The weight of this point is evident if we consider the sheer scale of affluent democracies' natural resources transactions with severely oppressive regimes. Wenar's own calculations suggest that (at a conservative estimate) reforming tainted natural resource trade with dictators will require American resource corporations, for example, to give up *600,000,000* (*six hundred million*) oil barrels they currently purchase every year – *more than one eighth* of U.S oil imports alone.[65]

[63]Wenar, 2008, 12. Wenar also offers a more ideal theory argument – that reform of customary trade with kleptocrats 'will push the highly unequal pattern of control over resources toward greater equality among individuals around the world, and so will make progress toward the global egalitarian ideal'. I put this argument aside, partly because of the general non-ideal focus of this essay, and partly for the following, more specific, reasons. Even if the (not obvious) claim were established that cosmopolitan ideal theory *requires* a withdrawal of dictators' trading privileges, one would still need a non-consequentialist theory of transition from the present world to the ideal one, specifying what economic sacrifices can reasonably be required of individual and collective agents simply in the name of the cosmopolitan ideal (Wenar himself [1998, 816] notes that mainstream egalitarians need 'a theory of transition' regarding such sacrifices). One would also need a non-consequentialist theory explaining what sacrifices towards the global ideal can be expected of specific agents given the collective action problems emphasized earlier. Lastly, we would need a non-consequentialist theory explaining what sacrifices can be demanded of agents who reasonably dispute the cosmopolitan ideal: 'A theory of justice', as Rawls writes, 'must work out from its own point of view how to treat those who dissent from it'. (Rawls, 1999a, 325) I say more about such disputes below.

[64]Wenar, 2003, 288–289.

[65]Wenar, 2008, 25. One may wonder whether this figure is misleading, insofar as the real issue appears to be the price increase that would follow if affluent democracies refused to buy oil from certain countries. However, it is sensible to bear this figure in mind at least as a rough indicator of the kind of costs involved in reforming customary trade, given the profound uncertainty surrounding the viability of alternatives to oil controlled by authoritarians, especially shale gas and oil – and the resulting uncertainty about energy prices in a post-reform market. For an extremely skeptical scientific outlook on the long-term viability of

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When we move to other affluent democracies and other resources, the requisite sacrifice becomes even more extraordinary. Yet in order to justify such monumental sacrifices from a non-consequentialist perspective, it is not enough to merely 'condemn', as Wenar puts it, the foreign practices which the sacrifices might help reform. After all, from the mere fact that I condemn some practice undertaken by others, it clearly does not follow that I have a duty to make substantial sacrifices to reform this practice. Recognizing that A is wronging B, and should be condemned for doing so, does not yet entail that C *ought* to make heavy sacrifices to help reform A's conduct or improve B's situation.

In contrast, as we have seen above, the idea of national property rights *can* ground the duty that is sought here. If we hold that by transacting with dictators, democracies and the resource corporations they regulate are materially implicated in massive scale theft from foreign peoples, then appeals to heavy sacrifices become largely irrelevant. Hardly anyone thinks, for example, that colonial powers could excuse continuing their systematic theft from the victims of colonialism simply by saying that ending colonialism will require that they sacrifice the tremendous wealth they have seized illicitly. The same point applies to the essentially neocolonial practice of customary transactions between kleptocrats and corporations based on affluent democracies, and the way these transactions violate the national property rights of the peoples living under kleptocrats. But of course, it could only apply *if* one affirmed such rights.

Two objections might be made here. According to the first objection, it is true that an appeal to excessive sacrifice would not have justified why past colonial powers could continue colonial theft. But present customary transactions in natural resources with dictators are qualitatively different from this colonial theft. These transactions might make affluent democracies' resource corporations *complicit* in dictators' theft. But these transactions do not mark the resource corporations of affluent democracies as *themselves* thieves, and so it is much more difficult to require significant sacrifices of these corporations.

My response to this objection is that its heavy emphasis on the distinction between perpetrating theft and 'mere' complicity in theft is misleading. We can see this point already at an abstract level. Parties who are ostensibly mere 'accomplices' to perpetrators' theft can sometimes be so intimately involved in this theft that it would in fact be misleading to describe them as accomplices, and more accurate to describe them as co-perpetrators. If I continuously promise to buy the loot you obtain from your victims after every robbery you commit, and over time we develop a clear set of mutual expectations where I rely on your offers of the loot and you rely on my willingness to buy it, then you may be the chief perpetrator and I may initially be merely 'complicit', but my involvement in your crime could be argued to be so deep so as to make me (eventually, at least) a *coconspirator*. Indeed, my failure to respect the victims' rights is, arguably, almost

shale gas and oil see Miller and Sorrell 2014, 2, 24. Note, moreover, that a comprehensive account of the costs of reform to customary trade has to factor in the likely retaliatory measures by targeted regimes, such as withdrawal of their investments in affluent democracies, limiting foreign policy cooperation, and reducing purchases of military equipment (as noted in Wenar 2016, 285). All of these join together to make the costs of reforming customary trade far from trivial (thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to say more on this issue).

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as pronounced as yours.[66] In turn, it seems intuitive to think that this moral description applies to the role that resource corporations play in kleptocrats' theft of their peoples' natural resources – that at least some resource corporations based in affluent democracies can be seen as actively *colluding* with klepocrats to steal their peoples' wealth.[67] It therefore follows that just as appeals to heavy sacrifice could not remove the duty to end colonial theft of natural resources in the past, appeals to heavy sacrifice cannot remove the duty to end neocolonial transactions in natural resources at present.

The second objection I wish to consider goes in a different direction. According to this objection, one can reject a very robust form of national ownership, and insist that the moral claim of a people to the natural resources found within its territory is not so strong so as to be entirely insensitive to the interests of non-nationals, while also insisting that this claim is *far stronger* than the claim of kleptocrats who control these resources through the entirely unaccountable use of force.

The main problem with this objection has to do with its appeal to the interests of non-nationals. To say that a people's moral claim over natural resources should be 'sensitive' to the interests of non-nationals is not, in and of itself, to rule out even the most exclusionary form of national ownership. After all, even the most robust form of ownership over any object is constrained in obvious ways by the rights and interests of others (even if you have the most absolute right of ownership over your car, for instance, the rights and interests of the person next to you still prevent you, morally speaking, from running him over). So if 'sensitivity' to the interests of non-nationals is going to preclude the idea of exclusive national ownership over natural resources, there must be reasons for why a *particular* kind of sensitivity is warranted when it comes to natural resources.

In turn, the only way to defend this special sensitivity (as far as I can tell) is to assert that in some practically significant sense, all non-nationals too ought to be seen as *owners* of Earth's natural resources. But this kind of assertion will not save the objection either.[68] One reason is that if we truly take seriously the idea that humanity as a whole owns Earth's natural resources, then we have to extend the proposal to reform customary trade in natural resources to such a degree that it becomes implausible. For the idea of humanity as an owner suggests that all customary trade in natural resources is morally illegitimate, because *no* part of this trade is authorized by humanity as a whole. Even the most democratic governments that currently exist in the world engage in continuous sales of natural resources without any form of authorization from those who are not part of their electorate. If we affirmed a practically significant notion of humanity's ownership, it would therefore follow that all customary transactions in natural resources which include *any* existing government ought to be stopped, because all of them violate the rights of owners to authorize transfers of their property. But this implication is so clearly untenable, that it must be seen as a *reductio* of the argument for

[66]See in this context the discussion in Lepora and Goodin 2013.

[67]See, for example, Pogge 2002, 142.

[68]Even if we temporarily put aside the mainstream egalitarian doubts regarding appeals to any kind of pre-political property.

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reforming dictators' trading privileges. Hence the idea of humanity as an owner can only undermine – it cannot underlie – this reform.

Why global redistribution entails a denial of national ownership over natural resources

I have argued that the proposal to reform customary trade with kleptocrats must invoke the idea of national ownership over natural resources in order to justify the sacrifices that disruptions of trade would entail. I now wish to show that, from a mainstream egalitarian perspective that is sensitive to sacrifice considerations, we cannot endorse reform to customary trade in natural resources while also endorsing the proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. The reason is that the global redistribution proposal necessarily conflicts with the idea of national ownership that – we have just seen – is necessary for the alternative proposal to respond to sacrifice complaints.[69]

In order to understand why mainstream egalitarians cannot coherently support both a global redistribution of natural resource revenue and the idea of national ownership over natural resources, we first need to ask what redistribution entails from a mainstream egalitarian perspective. A deceptively easy answer holds that redistribution *balances* the property rights of some against the needs of others. When the state under whose jurisdiction you work, for example, taxes you at thirty percent, it is taking away income you truly *own*, but this might be justified on the basis of the benefits that this income will produce for less fortunate others. We have seen above, however, that mainstream egalitarians cannot endorse this kind of balancing act, because such an act would flatly contradict the anti-utilitarian foundation of their position: it would amount to a 'utilitarianism of rights', gravely undermining their commitment to treat all persons as 'ends in themselves'[70] rather than as mere means to the ends of others. That – to reiterate – is exactly why mainstream egalitarians have been working so hard to show that pre-political property is a 'libertarian myth':[71] precisely in order to establish that the egalitarian redistribution they support coheres with their non-consequentialist outlook.

Because mainstream egalitarians staunchly reject the idea that agents have any pre-political property claims, they also reject the claim that when political institutions pursue redistribution, they 'take away' what 'belongs' to agents. To an agent who, faced with redistributive taxation, complains 'I *own* my pre-tax income', mainstream egalitarians respond: *no, you don't*. On the mainstream egalitarian understanding, if the body politic applies to you an income-tax of (say) 30%, it does not 'take away' 30% of 'your' money; rather, the body politic decides that you get to *keep* 70%.

So far, you might say, so familiar. The last two paragraphs merely restate the mainstream egalitarian premises that I have introduced already in section 1, and that are often taken as conventional wisdom. But I believe that this conventional wisdom in fact has radical implications. One way to see these implications is to consider again the example I just gave. If it is really the case that when applying to you a thirty percent income tax, the body politic does not 'take away' 30% of

[69]The arguments of this section follow Nili 2013a, Nili forthcoming (a).

[70]Rawls, 1999, 156.

[71]See Murphy and Nagel 2002.

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'your' money, but rather decides that you get to keep 70%, then there seems to be no way to deny that the body politic claims *some* kind of prior, original, or deep ownership over the entire 100%. Even if you get to control your post-tax income and use it as you please (and even if there are compelling moral reasons for allowing you to do so), this economic freedom is based on deeper ownership exercised by the body politic taxing you. Put otherwise: if you do not own your pretax income, ultimately, the *body politic does*. Under the picture I am suggesting, then, the mainstream egalitarian rejection of pre-political property leads to an essentially Rousseauian view: agents exercise property rights as trustees of goods that are ultimately owned by the community, and redistributive taxation is simply a reflection of this ultimate collective ownership.[72]

This point is crucial to our discussion, because it obtains not only for the domestic but also for the global context. Arguably, e*very* mainstream egalitarian scheme of redistribution entails some kind of claim of deep ownership, by the community in whose name the scheme is enacted, to the object being redistributed. A global redistribution of natural resource revenue from one people to another (or to individuals who belong to another people) is no exception. Here too, it will have to be the case that the community in question – humanity at large – claims some kind of prior or deep ownership over goods that are held, but are not ultimately owned, by specific agents – this time, specific peoples. So if a particular people were to complain 'we own these natural resources' – the mainstream egalitarian answer would have to parallel the answer in the domestic case: 'no, you do not. Humanity does'.

This argument is likely to trigger multiple objections already with regard to its domestic components. One likely objection proceeds as follows. Mainstream egalitarians, to be sure, hold that a domestic body politic has the normative authority to regulate property rights within its jurisdiction, and this authority includes the power to set the structure of ownership over natural resources and tax them. But it seems odd to say that in order to affirm this regulatory power, a mainstream egalitarian also has to affirm the claim that the political community is the ultimate, prior or deep owner of the natural resources found within its jurisdiction.

The problem with this objection is that it has to assume a pre-political conception of ownership, according to which agents appropriate resources *before* overarching political regulation arrives on the scene. *If* it is the case that the body politic regulates holdings that are essentially pre-political, then it might indeed some odd to say that the claim of the body politic to regulate property also entails a claim of ownership. But recall that mainstream egalitarians hold that property rights follow from rather than precede political regulation – that the body politic *creates* a property regime. And once one subscribes to *this* understanding of

[72]See Cohen 2010b, 140. For a detailed analysis of the Rousseuian conception of property see Hendrix 2008. It is this Rousseuian idea that generates the distance (mentioned above) between my view of territorial rights and the view dominant in the literature. Many territorial rights theorists assume that the body politic's rights of jurisdiction within its territory are analytically separate from the body politic's property rights, primarily because the body politic wields jurisdiction over both private and public property encompassed within its territory (see, e.g., Buchanan 2003, 233–234). But my suggestion here is that, from a mainstream egalitarian perspective, there is *no* originally private property, meaning that a body politic's jurisdictional rights and property rights are intertwined. At the same, my account is still compatible with holding that the other component of territorial rights – rights of border control – can be analyzed separately. Thus my view is *partially* compatible with the familiar insistence that the different components of territorial rights are independent of one another (see, e.g., Miller 2012; Dietrich 2014).

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property, it should no longer be odd to see the political community as a deep owner of the resources it regulates. If the regulation of the political community is what creates individual property rights in specific object X, then the political community must also claim some kind of ownership over X which precedes individual rights. Fortunately for our purposes, this point is perhaps most obvious in the case of tangible material objects such as natural resources. If one ascribes to a political community the power to create individual property rights in oil within its jurisdiction, for example, one must also ascribe to the political community prior ownership of this oil. In the context of natural resources, at least, the distinction between regulation and ownership cannot sustain the weight that the objection places upon it.

Admittedly, this account of deep collective ownership may still strike many readers as an overly radical rendition of *mainstream* egalitarian commitments. But this appearance should be resisted, for at least three reasons. First, upon careful inspection, we can actually find the idea of deep collective ownership doing essential (if understated) work in some of the classic exemplars of mainstream egalitarianism. Dworkin's theory of 'equality of resources' provides a good example. Dworkin asks us to imagine shipwreck survivors who end up on a desert island with abundant resources and no native population, and who then establish the distributive patterns of their new society through an auction in which all have equal bargaining powers. This story not only explicitly puts aside Lockean conceptions of unilateral individual appropriation and 'starting gate equality'. Dworkin must also assume that the survivors as a group claim *original collective ownership* over the island: that is why he can write that the survivors are able in principle to '*keep* some resources as owned in common by any state they might create'.[73]

Second, we should also be careful to note that public property is an indispensable element of almost every functioning state and economy. It is therefore an important virtue of the idea of deep collective ownership, that it allows mainstream egalitarians to offer a coherent account of public property. After all, given their rejection of pre-political private property, mainstream egalitarians cannot see public property as the simple amalgamation of private pre-political holdings.[74] The idea of deep public ownership provides mainstream egalitarians with an alternative – namely, to treat private holdings as derived from public ones, rather than the other way around.

Third, accordingly, I would like to suggest that rather than shying away from the idea of deep collective ownership, mainstream egalitarians should seek to show that the implications of this idea are less frightening than they may seem. Mainstream egalitarians can emphasize, for instance, that public claims over individual income do not entail any kind of ownership of individual persons (*pace* libertarians).[75] Mainstream egalitarians can also emphasize that the claim of deep public ownership over individual income is defeasible, and would indeed be largely defeated in most circumstances, because reasons of personal autonomy, as well as efficiency, militate in favor of allowing significant room for individual holdings. In such ways, mainstream egalitarians can endorse the idea of deep collective ownership while

[73]Dworkin 1981, at 285, 309.

[74]Note that such a view has trouble explaining why individuals cannot unilaterally secede from the state, taking their pre-political property with them (a point emphasized, among others, in Stilz 2009 and Nine 2012).

[75]See Scanlon 1977, Fried 2004.

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still accommodating the – quintessentially mainstream – thought that 'any just society will have a prominent place for private property'.[76]

This thought, however, leads to another objection, moving from the domestic to the international part of my argument. Although mainstream egalitarians deny that at the domestic level, individuals have pre-political rights of ownership against the political community, no mainstream egalitarian denies that individuals enjoy rights of ownership vis-à-vis *one another*, redistribution notwithstanding. Why, then, cannot the analogous point obtain internationally? Why cannot mainstream egalitarians say that a global redistribution of natural resource revenue is compatible with each *people* enjoying property rights in its natural resources vis-à-vis other peoples and external actors?

To see why this objection does not succeed, we need to look more closely at the mainstream egalitarian source of property immunities that individuals claim against one another. If I claim an immunity against your entering a house without my permission (or, say, sue you for violating this immunity), I cannot base this claim on a chain of property transactions going all the way to some mythical 'original acquisition' by someone who 'mixed their labor' with something – since this would again be the story of pre-political property that mainstream egalitarians reject. Instead, my property immunity regarding the house must derive from the overarching sovereign body. It is necessary for me to show that the sovereign body politic has granted me title to the house. Or, to use the Rousseauian terminology suggested above: it is necessary for me to show that the authorities of the relevant body politic – the ultimate owner of the house – specified that the house will be entrusted to me, in such a way that gives me immunity against your entering it without my permission. The question we need to ask, then, is whether a specific people can make a parallel claim against another people. Can a people point to an overarching sovereign authority that specifies its title, vis-à-vis other peoples, to the natural resources within its territory? Absent a global sovereign, the answer must be negative. If there is no global sovereign authority above peoples, there is no authority that specifies property immunities that each people will enjoy against other peoples. Therefore, the analogy between individual and national property immunities – the analogy on which the objection relies – cannot obtain.

There is, however, one more objection that is worth considering in this context, which applies to both the domestic and the international parts of my argument. This objection challenges my emphasis on the need for an overarching political authority to define property rights. According to this objection, even if we reject any pre-political conception of property, we do not have to get to the conclusion that property rights exercised by discrete agents are derived from an overarching political authority representing a community that is the 'prior' or 'ultimate' owner. Instead, we can simply say that *no* agent has ultimate ownership over *anything*, and that the property rights of discrete agents are derivative *only* from principles of distributive justice.

One problem with this objection is that it overestimates the ability of distributive principles alone – detached from political authority – to fix property rights. Enduring and pervasive disagreements regarding principles of distributive justice, both domestically and globally, mean that no specific set of principles can, by itself, suffice to ground stable property rights. Thus any set of principles has to

[76]Buchanan 2003, 233–234.

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be backed by political authority that will fix a specific set of property rights, to be exercised by agents under its jurisdiction.[77] In turn, as long as one rejects pre-political property, one must still think that in order to perform this function, the relevant authority must be able to claim – in the name of the political community as a whole – ultimate ownership over the resources in which it creates private, non-ultimate rights of ownership.

The other key problem with the objection is that it cannot explain the forceful intuition that agents may legitimately exercise property rights, even when this exercise leads to distributive outcomes that are less than fully just. Thus for example, suppose that elected representatives in a given society make a series of decisions regarding public property that are morally legitimate, because they are based on plausible interpretations of what it means to treat all citizens as equals. These decisions, however, are not fully just, because they do not comport with the best interpretation of equality. Now suppose that an external power sought to impose this optimal interpretation on the relevant society, adjusting decisions regarding public property accordingly. It seems intuitive to condemn this external imposition. We want to say that insofar as public property belongs to the members of the public body politic, only they, not outsiders, have the moral authority to decide what to do with this property. But the objection does not allow this intuitive response. On the objection's terms, it is not clear why the external imposition would be wrong: after all, if, as the objection holds, no agent has ultimate ownership over anything, and property rights are entirely derivative from principles of distributive justice, then agents can *never* make property-based complaints when others manipulate their resources in ways that better accord with principles of distributive justice. Insofar as we do believe such complaints are significant, we have further reason to reject the objection.[78]

The upshot of all this is that in order for the idea of national ownership to stand from a mainstream egalitarian perspective, each people *must* be able to claim that it is *the ultimate owner* of natural resources encompassed within its territory. As we have seen, however, a global redistribution of natural resource revenues requires rejecting precisely this claim. Therefore, mainstream egalitarians cannot simultaneously endorse such global redistribution and national ownership.

Disruptions to customary trade and the fate of the poor

If what I have said so far is cogent, then putting sacrifice complaints center stage sharpens our thinking about two prominent reform proposals tied to natural resources, and the relationship between them. When it comes to anticipating sacrifice complaints, reform of natural resource trade with extreme kleptocrats has considerable advantages over a global redistribution of natural resource revenue. And these advantages matter because from a sacrifice-sensitive perspective, there exists a genuine conflict between the two reform proposals: one proposal has to rely on the denial of the normative principle that is supposed to justify the sacrifices entailed by the other.

[77]For similar claims see Christiano 2004, 277–280.

[78]This argument aligns with, though it is not identical to, the concerns of those who invoke national self-determination in response to the global redistribution proposal (see, e.g., Moore 2012). For a broader discussion of imposing visions of global justice from the outside, see Tan 2010.

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However, in order to complete my argument, it is not enough to establish this normative conflict between the two reform proposals. It is also important to anticipate an empirical critique that is likely to be levelled against my claims. This critique concerns the harms that disruptions of customary trade might impose on to the poorest citizens of countries currently ruled by kleptocrats. Sanctions that end up harming the most vulnerable members of the 'target' states are, after all, a familiar story. What assurance do we have that reform of customary trade with kleptocrats would be different?[79]

This challenge is important, if nothing else, due to the serious obstacles that stand in the way of social–scientific confidence on these issues. As I have argued at length elsewhere, social scientists generally face structural difficulties in assessing macro-level global reforms with precision.[80] These difficulties, in turn, mean that we should not underestimate fears regarding collateral damage following from reforms of customary trade.

However, while it is true that we should not underestimate these fears, we should also be careful not to *overestimate* them, for at least two reasons. First, even where there are grounds for thinking that reform to customary trade will impose risks on the poor, it does not follow that such reform should be jettisoned. This is especially true if we accept the suggestion above, that reform to customary trade might very well be necessary for the achievement of enduring structural remedies to extreme poverty in certain countries. If this is so, then we should *combine* such reform with targeted injections of funds and goods, which would mitigate any short-term risks that a prohibition on natural resources from extreme kleptocrats might yield for their victims.[81]

Second, we should refrain from adopting an overly rosy picture of the status quo obtaining in countries ruled by such kleptocrats. In fact, there are at least some such cases where it is far from obvious that the population's condition can get any worse, given the severity of its current predicament in the face of staggering levels of corruption.

Here are some examples. In Chad, *Transparency International* estimates that more than *ninety nine* percent of the nonwage expenditures officially allocated

[79]See Wisor 2016 for the latest example of this sort of skepticism.

[80]See my 2016a.

[81]On this specific point I agree with Armstrong 2017, chapter 7, section 2. Does this point 'smuggle back in' a global redistribution of natural resource wealth, as the source of global support for the poor? No. To reiterate what I said earlier, other sources of wealth could do just as well in ameliorating the symptoms of poverty, and we can tap into these alternative sources without undermining the normative principles needed to defend the more structural policy reform. In other words, we should make use of the fact that, unlike reform to customary trade, a global redistribution of natural resource revenue is *substitutable* – it could be replaced with alternative sources of wealth – without any loss. I should also note that if this point is granted, it renders moot at least one debate between Armstrong and myself. In an earlier essay (Nili 2016a), I registered skepticism about the hope that the global redistribution of natural resource revenues will have a *significant* impact on extreme poverty. Armstrong (2017, p. 184) took me to task on this score, suggesting that I must show 'that there is *nothing* we can do with the proceeds of resource taxes to improve the position of the poor'. (Italics in the original). I think that Armstrong's response, to reprise Sir Humphrey Appleby, does not properly appreciate the significance of 'significant'. But we can put all that to one side, if we agree that *whatever* poverty impact that might attained by a global redistribution of natural resource revenues can be attained through alternative sources of wealth that are at least as morally arbitrary. I am grateful to Chris Armstrong for multiple fruitful exchanges on this issue.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

towards healthcare simply disappear before they reach care providers.[82] In Equatorial Guinea, much discussed by Wenar, national income has quadrupled since the discovery of oil, yet educational levels have stagnated, whereas 'neonatal, post-neonatal, and childhood death rates all *increased* between 1990 and 2010—that is, children died *more often* after the oil revenues began to come in'.[83] These trends are not surprising, given that the country's murderous ruler and his son spend billions on multiple luxury cars and personal jets with golden toilets, while "three quarters of the population lives on less than what $2 a day would buy in the United States, and half the population does not have access to clean drinking water or proper sanitation."[84] Finally, consider Angola, a country 'laden', as the *New York Times* put it, 'with oil, diamonds, Porsche-driving millionaires and toddlers starving to death':

> "New UNICEF figures show this well off but corrupt African nation is ranked No. 1 in the world in the rate at which children die before the age of five…Oil and diamonds give it a wealth that is rare in sub-Saharan Africa … [yet] because of widespread malnutrition, more than one quarter of Angolan children are physically stunted. Under the corrupt and autocratic president, José Eduardo dos Santos, who has ruled for 35 years, billions of dollars flow to a small elite – as kids starve … some of the poorest countries, such as Mauritania and Burkina Faso, fortify flour with micronutrients – one of the cheapest ways possible to save lives – yet dos Santos has not tried that. He invests roughly three times as much on defense and security as on health. There are many ways for a leader to kill his people, and although dos Santos is not committing genocide he is presiding over the systematic looting of his state and neglect of his people. As a result, 150,000 Angolan children die annually."[85]

When considering such countries, where ordinary people openly express their preference for colonial times over their current condition,[86] it is far from obvious that the general population has anything left to lose from structural reform to customary trade in natural resources.

Ideal and nonideal theory

Having considered an empirical concern about my argument, I want to close by anticipating two, more straightforwardly normative objections, both of which revolve around ideal theory.

The opening objection is that my argument ignores cosmopolitan ideal theories which suggest that national property rights in natural resources are simply 'false'.[87] From this cosmopolitan perspective, to endorse national ownership as a moral standard at present is to trumpet a supposed moral principle solely for the sake of expediency – as a kind of 'use morality' that will give way to our 'real morality'

[82]Transparency International 2014, 4.
[83]Wenar 2016, 70.
[84]Wenar 2016, 69.
[85]Kristof 2015.
[86]Kristof 2015.
[87]For example, Casal 2011, 317.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press

once the former no longer has instrumental value. Such a strategy, in turn, conflicts not only with the deep-seated cosmopolitan suspicion of any type of national privilege, but also with the deontological foundations of mainstream egalitarianism, which I have been stressing throughout. How can a deontological view which rejects anything 'hidden' in political morality[88] also endorse a form of 'government-house utilitarianism', where a false morality is cultivated solely for public consumption?[89]

One response to this objection that, from a mainstream egalitarian perspective, it is a category mistake to describe the moral status of ownership claims in factual terms, as if these claims could be 'true' or 'false'.[90] This is because, as I have pointed out repeatedly, mainstream egalitarians think of property rights not as a moral fact to be grasped, but rather as an instrument for achieving independent normative aims. From this perspective, it makes sense to debate the instrumental value of a given property regime; similarly, it makes sense to debate the instrumental value of treating a certain political community as having jurisdictional rights to create a property regime within a certain territory.[91] But it does *not* make sense to debate whether a given property-related instrument is 'true' or 'false', just as it does not make sense to debate whether a given tax code proposal is 'true' or 'false'.

A further response to the objection is the following. The objection's understanding of national ownership as a dishonest 'use morality' stems from the assumption that we will move away from national ownership, when we move past the circumstances of the present world.[92] But there is no need to take any stand on the normative positions we will hold in a different world: there is no need to cast judgment here and now on what modes of ownership we shall endorse in worlds that are not ours.[93] So we do not need to say that national ownership is endorsed in the present only to be jettisoned later on. Instead, we can simply say that we endorse national ownership in the present world, while remaining agnostic regarding the principles we will endorse in remote circumstances.[94]

[88]See Rawls 1993, 68.

[89]I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to address these concerns.

[90]Of course one could argue that within a property regime that is *already* constituted, certain claims regarding ownership are true or false (e.g. 'it is not true that the state recognizes you as the owner of this lot'). But here we are dealing with the prior moral question of which property regime *ought* to be constituted from the outset.

[91]Although I believe that the common preoccupation of the territorial rights literature with the question of 'why this particular people has rights over this particular territory' is problematic in some important ways. I explain why in Nili, forthcoming (b), chap. 2.

[92]I am assuming that no cosmopolitan – not even cosmopolitan egalitarians, who wish to replicate domestic standards of justice globally – will insist that we simply ought to ignore the problems of the present world in a quest for the most ambitious global ideal. Specifically, I assume that no cosmopolitan would want to drive towards a remote global egalitarian ideal if such a drive will *undermine* the more modest and more urgent effort of combating extreme poverty. This kind of trade-off will be a vivid example of how focusing on a remote vision of perfect justice can have dangerous implications in the here and now. For an extended discussion of this concern, see Hendrix 2012.

[93]For similar claims in favor of a general pragmatic orientation to moral principles, see Pogge 1990, Pogge 2008.

[94]Elsewhere (e.g., Nili 2018), I go further, and try to show that we *ought* to adopt this kind of agnosticism. This is the case, at least, if we take seriously the temporally sensitive nature of the 'limits of practical possibility' which (according to the Rawlsian mainstream) provide ideal theory's basic building blocs. Putting this temporal sensitivity center-stage, I argue, ultimately means seeing concrete policy reforms,

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With these points in mind, we can consider an ideal theory objection concerning the global redistribution of natural resource revenue. According to this objection, the arguments I have been making here against such global redistribution are deeply misleading. This is because the global redistribution proposal does not primarily aim to alleviate global poverty. Rather, the proposal sees the equalization of natural resource endowments across societies as an ideal theory demand. This objection can take either a bold or a modest form, neither one of which, in my view, succeeds. The bold variant holds that the global redistribution proposal has direct implications for our manifestly non-ideal world. This proposal does in fact require that resource-abundant countries compensate resource-scarce ones, even if this would place poor countries on the giving end and affluent countries on the receiving end.

Earlier I pointed out that, given their commitment to improving the position of the worst-off, mainstream egalitarians have to reject this position. But here is the place to add that this rejection seems very much like the only tenable option. There may be some who would want to bite the bullet and insist that resource-abundant Congo, for example, ought to compensate resource-scarce Japan.[95] But the overwhelming majority of political theorists, at least, are unlikely to have such strong teeth.[96] The insistence that resource-scarce societies ought to be compensated, without any attention *at all* to which societies would benefit from such compensation and which would lose, can be only a *reductio* of the global redistribution proposal, not a QED.[97]

What, then, of the modest variant of the objection? According to this variant, we should not expect the ideal theory proposal for a global redistribution of natural resource revenue to have *any* practical bearing on the manifestly non-ideal problems of poverty and sacrifice: these are entirely different issues.

One worry about this way of framing the global redistribution proposal is that it does not actually comport with how some of its most influential supporters have

such as reform to customary trade in natural resources, as *analytically* prior to, rather than derivative from, ideal theory. My points here, however, do not depend on this more radical argument.

[95]We may imagine a more moderate view, according to which distributive justice indeed requires such a transfer, but is simply outweighed by other principles of political morality. But then the immediate challenge is to identify what the full principles of political morality are, to explain how they are supposed to relate to one another in general, and how they would bear on the specific problem at hand. Arguing merely that the elimination of moral arbitrariness is one out of a slew of morally relevant aims does not, in the end, take us very far.

[96]In fairness, a similar point can also be made about reform to customary trade with kleptocrats, in those cases where such reform really would pose grave risks to kleptocrats' most vulnerable victims. I now believe that some of my earlier work on this topic (e.g., Nili 2011a; Nili 2013b), while recognizing these risks, did not accord them sufficient weight.

[97]Stilz expresses a similar (Scanlonian) complaint when discussing Mathias Risse's arguments in favor of an equal entitlement of all human beings to the Earth's 'biophysical space': 'faced with real people and their projects, an abstract commitment to equally distributing biophysical space seems like a strange crusade, rooted in fascination with a pattern … Would the world be a better place if we all migrated so as to produce the pattern of equal-per-capita-use, with many more people now living in the mountains of Burma, and with many fewer in Tokyo? [..] very little turns on our approximating a pattern of equal access to biophysical resources. Indeed, insofar as achieving that pattern might risk undermining other important social goods…the principle of equal per capita shares of the unimproved earth could reasonably be rejected'. Stilz 2014, 508.

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presented it.[98] But there is also a deeper worry – namely, that we have ample reason to doubt the value of an ideal theory that does not even try to help us confront the most pressing moral problems we face here and now. A normative framework that is simply silent on real-world moral questions is unlikely to appeal to the many who believe that even a 'realistic utopia' should provide 'guidance where guidance is needed' on practical questions of public policy.[99]

Acknowledgements. I presented earlier versions of this essay at Yale University and the University of Birmingham, where participants asked many probing questions. Thanks also to Chris Armstrong, Luis Cabrera, Tom Donhaue, Clarissa Gross, Lisa Herzog, Robert Lepenies, Matt Lindauer, Niki Marinov, Paulina Ochoa, Thomas Pogge, Michael Ross, Ian Shapiro, David Wiens, Leif Wenar, Scott Wisor, Elizabeth Wood, and Alex Zakaras, for conversations and comments on this essay and its themes. Finally, I am grateful to the journal's editors, as well as to two anonymous referees, for incisive comments on earlier versions.

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[98]See, again, Beitz 1979, Pogge 1994, Armstrong 2013a.

[99]Rawls 1999a, 18. Dworkin (2000, 4) similarly insists that political philosophy should 'respond to politics', and philosophical argument has to begin in real life, 'because only then it is likely to have the right shape, not only finally to help us, but also finally to satisfy us that the problems we have followed into the clouds are, even intellectually, genuine not spurious'.

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Cite this article: Nili, S. 2018. Global poverty, global sacrifices, and natural resource reforms. International Theory 11: 48–80, doi:10.1017/S1752971918000209

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971918000209 Published online by Cambridge University Press