

# Re: Historical comparisons

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- *From:* "William Mook" <[william.mook@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:william.mook@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 12 Mar 2006 13:54:29 -0800
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royls@xxxxxxxxx wrote:

On 12 Mar 2006 11:03:54 -0800, "William Mook"  
<[william.mook@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:william.mook@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

Any system of privilege requires government sanction to work.

Or those able to can do it themselves: the feudal system.

This is relevant to a modern industrial economy how?

The  
question we have to ask is, the system of privilege beneficial to society  
or not? Is the system of privilege fair or unfair?

Privilege is unfair by definition,

Your definition!

- How is giving an artist the right to own his art unfair?
- How is giving an inventor the right to own his intellectual property unfair?
- How is giving a developer the right to own what he develops unfair?

These all involve giving these folks the privilege of controlling a resource. But it denies no one of a resource they currently use, and by giving these creators of wealth this privilege, society is made wealthier

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You've defined things pretty consistently. I give you that. I just don't buy your definitions 100% – since they're not consistent with experience.

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Your definitions are inconsistent with is our experience! Our experience is that private property and private enterprise are very good at creating wealthy societies. Public ownership of property and public enterprises are not.

so it's hard to see how it can ever benefit society.

When a resource that society never knew existed is brought into society. When a new work of art is made, when a new invention is created, or when a new natural resource is developed.

And in fact, it doesn't.

Not if by doing so you rob someone else the use of it no. Your example of slavery is germane here. Your other examples don't make any sense. They rely on things that are obvious and when I say they're not obvious to me you say I'm an ignoramous! lol. **BUT OFFER NO CLEAR CONCISE RATIONALE FOR HOLDING TO THE BELIEFS THAT YOU DO.**

In some theoretical sense if a developer develops a resource that is unknown to society before his arrival, I guess you could say the public is denied this free resource. But the fact is, without the developer, the public was **ALREADY** denied this resource because they were ignorant of it and lacked the ability to develop it themselves.

The US patent office grants letters of patent to provide a monopoly for an inventor of a new product or process for a limited period of time. This is a privilege. But I don't judge it to be an unfair one, since it allows the creator of wealth to capture a portion of that wealth for himself.

No, that is false. It allows the privilege holder to extort wealth created by others.

Without the invention those others you mention would not be able to create anything. With the invention, they may.

Lets look at this in more detail. An inventor creates something. Say a new kind of Cash Register. Okay? So, He gets a patent and organizes labor, and equipment, and so forth – and builds and sells cash registers. Hey pays for his labor, he pays for his equipment, the same way an artist pays for his stuff. Who is denied anything? Those

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people wouldn't be employed making anything if the inventor sat on his ass and did nothing.

So, he makes a cash register and sells it at market rates, which hopefully exceeds the cost of production lol. He pockets the profit.

You don't think the inventor would be hurt if someone else reverse engineered his invention and began making copies? Here this inventor did all the hard work and now someone else steals his invention. Don't you think he has some rights for creating something wonderful?

This benefits society because this encourages people to create new things that enrich our lives.

That is often claimed, but has never been demonstrated.

??? Talk about me being ignorant of obvious facts! lol!!

Look, millions of patents are issued each year, billions of dollars are created each year, without a system of intellectual property rights, what do you think would happen to this rate of innovation? It would plummet.

And part of obtaining a patent is the requirement to teach. You must tell posterity how the heck you are doing what you're doing to get a monopoly on it. What do you think would happen without patent rights? People would rightfully be very secretive, and the way in which things were done would be hidden, so the rate of innovation would again plummet.

Its sort of like granting an artist the right to own his artwork, which can be worth far more than the time and material put into it.

No, it is not. An artist owns his work because he produced it, so he does not thereby deprive others of it by owning it.

So him owning a copyright of the artwork to keep others from copying it without paying him for the right to do so is okay by you?

And its okay for a novelist to obtain a copyright on his work too?

We are not deprived of an artwork because of who owns it. If the artist doesn't produce his artwork in the first place, then we

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are deprived of it.

An inventor produces an invention.  
A developer brings resources to market.

If an inventor does not produce an invention, then we are deprived of it.

If a developer does not develop a resource then we are deprived of it.

We are not deprived of an invention because the inventor claims intellectual property rights.

We are not deprived of an undeveloped resource because the developer claims ownership rights once developed.

I understand you believe the public is deprived by virtue of your overly broad definition of public rights to unknown and undeveloped natural resources.

A patent deprives  
others of the right to produce a certain item themselves,  
even if they invent it themselves.

??? If someone invents something, someone else can't invent it later.  
So, that's confusing for me that you said that.

The problem I'm addressing isn't multiple claims of ownership of intellectual property. The problem I'm addressing is lack of innovation, lack of development.

Slavery is an example of an unfair system of privilege, where those who benefit from the privilege of slave ownership do so at a tremendous cost to those who are enslaved. This is an unfair privilege and actually impoverishes society since the creativity and productivity of those enslaved are so diminished.

The same is true of all privileges.

No it isn't.

Just not as visibly or  
egregiously

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Not at all...

as in the case of slavery.

Slavery denies a human being the right to live as he desires to benefit another human being. This is clearly wrong.

Ownership of a thing denies another who may wish to claim ownership.

This is a sort of privilege.

But if the thing owned was created by the person owning it, and would not have been created otherwise, then people are actually better off because the thing was created.

When an artist creates an artwork, when an inventor creates an innovation, when a developer develops an undeveloped resource – we all benefit by these creations – and those who created these new and valuable things enrich society and justly deserve to reap the benefits of their creation. Patent rights, copyrights, and property rights are one way this is achieved.

Granting rights of ownership of resources to those who discover and develop new resources unknown prior to their discovery and development – works the way patent law works.

It's actually worse, but we'll let that go for the moment.

Why not now?

I can see an argument being made that these should be limited in time to 20 years or so – but granting ownership rights to those who take the trouble to discover and develop resources seems to me to be a fair granting of rights.

Developing resources is productive: it adds to the total wealth in existence, and therefore does not deprive others of the wealth thus added.

Thank you.

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Then you will agree that those who develop off world resources have a right to the resources they add to the total wealth in existence.

By contrast, discovering resources adds nothing to the total wealth in existence, it merely changes the discoverer's own state of knowledge.

If those who discover resources don't have rights to the knowledge they create then there is no incentive to go out and develop that knowledge. I'm not so worried about who owns something no one knows about. I'm worried about never knowing something that is very useful.

Also, what about innovation? I mean, I can imagine NASA developing all sorts of knowledge about resources in the solar system. I can imagine developers wanting to lease sites across the solar system to develop resources from that knowledge.

What about the guy who looks at this data and interprets it in an innovative way to discover something no one else knows about? What does he deserve for creating this innovation? What would motivate someone for *\*developing\** this knowledge?

It seems to me that knowledge is damned important.

Just as a patent effectively deprives others of the right to invent and use the thing themselves,

If its already invented, society doesn't need it invented again. So, I'm not following you here.

granting ownership of resources effectively deprives others of the right to discover and use them themselves.

For a period of time yes, provided the first inventor teaches the invention and puts it in the public domain.

How would you reward inventors, novelists, artists, discoverers, developers?

It also seems to me since it encourages people to go out and develop resources that otherwise wouldn't be developed efficiently, it seems to me to be a

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good thing for society. So, I support it.

But you are just wrong, because you wrongly assume that without such privileges the resources would not be developed efficiently.

That's right – but I'm not wrong.

In actual fact, resource ownership privileges provoke both unproductive hoarding and wasteful speculation.

References?

Economic efficiency is optimized and incentives most accurate when resource users must pay the market rent to those they deprive of the resource.

I don't know what this means. Please explain it in simpler terms.

So, I think if there were an international body set up to grant ownership rights to off-world resources, you would see lots of money flowing into off-world development and ultimately, you would see goods and materials flowing down from the skies to enrich all life on Earth.

Flat false.

That's why we see interplanetary development such a hot investment today? lol.

NOT!

You would see more development and a greater flow of wealth if those who wanted to exclude others from using those resources had to pay the market rent to those they wished to exclude.

If the UN were to lease exploration and production rights to companies and they took the rent out as a royalty interest against production, as well as charging a small annual fee to maintain its exploration and discovery rights, and where the corporation obtained the balance in the form of working interest – I don't see why this wouldn't work.

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There are also third party effects that have to be taken into account. We don't want people making WMDs and other threatening stuff in outer space – so that would have to be put in there too.

The current restriction on ownership of celestial bodies has blocked this sort of development and I think it should change sooner rather than later.

Again, you are just assuming that lack of ownership rights is what is blocking development of off–earth resources. That is just false.

References?

In fact, development would be most efficient if those who wanted to use the resources paid the market rent to those they wish to exclude from using them.

Ownership even by nations is not permitted under current law. I would be happy if the UN set up a system of planetary and space leasing allowing companies to pay rents for the right to explore and develop resources off–world.

Think about it: if you own a resource, you can just sit on it and hope for a speculative gain,

Yes, that's how it worked in Ohio when it was an unexplored territory. Folks in England bought rights to large tracts of land, and that money was used to build ships and attract settlers and the property was settled..

the exact same way the owners of the 11,000 vacant lots in NYC do.

NYC is not a frontier like the surface of Mars. (Or the Ohio territory in the 17th cent)

But if you are paying the market rent for it, you are going to do something to earn that money back.

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If a market rent exists – okay. But what market rent would you apply to Mars?

Sorry, William, but you are just ignorant of the relevant economics.

F— you too sweetheart. You have such a nice way with words. I notice when I push you up against your definitions you are totally incapable of stretching your mind enough to even speak of your definitions in other terms. This is a mark of a truly ignorant person.

I don't know how to tell you to become more mentally flexible.

lol.

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