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**“Fair Shares”: A Biological Approach to Social Justice**

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**ABSTRACT.** A biologically grounded approach to social justice enables us to define a middle-ground between capitalism and socialism, and to finesse the ideological standoff between them. The accumulating evidence regarding human evolution (a k a the “state of nature”) and our growing understanding of the complexities and dualities of “human nature” provide the basis for a new, “bioeconomic” political ideology that I call “fair shares.” This paradigm includes three complementary normative principles: (1) goods and services should be distributed to each according to his or her basic needs; (2) “surpluses” beyond the provision for our basic needs should be distributed according to merit; in return, (3) each of us has an obligation to contribute to the “collective survival enterprise” in accordance with his or her ability. Though none of these principles is original, in combination they define an ideological middle-ground that could be characterized as “enlightened capitalism.” Some of the many issues that are raised, and questions begged, by this formulation are also briefly addressed.

**“Life is unfair.”**

--John F. Kennedy

**“Funny, I always believed that the world was what we make of it.”**

--Ellie Arroway (The Movie “Contact”)

**“The color of truth is grey.”**

--Attributed to André Gide