

Monopolization of a Water Supply

Written by Wheylous for The Voluntaryist Reader.

A charge occasionally levied against libertarianism is that a vital natural resource, such as a water supply, could be monopolized by an astute businessman, who could then hold society hostage with the threat of cutting off its ability of replenishing its bodily fluids. This is a most curious attack upon capitalism, because it touches upon a fundamental aspect of the system – property rights. Property rights exist for the *very purpose* of resolving the problem of scarcity. The “water-monopolizer” attack, then, attempts to suggest that scarcity discredits private property – when scarcity is the very problem property rights exist to resolve! Let’s unpack the water-monopolizer situation and analyze it from two different sides.

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