

Check Your Privilege



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“One Voluntarist’s Perspective” is an original column appearing most Mondays at Everything-Voluntary.com, by the founder and editor Skyler J. Collins. Archived columns can be found here. OVP-only RSS feed available here.

The “Check Your Privilege” meme originated in 2006, but was brought before the libertarian community in early 2014 by FEE and *Stossel*. As interesting as the premise is, that we should be cognizant of the privileges that our race, gender, family wealth, *et cetera* bring us, I’d rather talk about what I consider of much greater importance, “Check Your Political Privilege”.

What is Privilege?

A privilege is a “grant, commission”, or, as it’s from the Latin *privus*, it means “law applying only to an individual.” Society, at least American society, seems to have broadened the definition to apply to grants and commissions not necessarily as a matter of state-made law. When I grant my kids use of my property, my computer, for example, they are enjoying a “privilege” only given to a few select people. Likewise, if the color of my skin, my gender, or my family’s wealth gets me access to people and places not otherwise accessible, I am considered as one having “privilege.” Nevertheless, privilege began as a form of political favoritism, or of special interest bargaining of political power.

Political Privilege

When a person is given handouts by the state; when a person is employed by the state; when a person is given power by the state, when a person’s crimes go unpunished by the state, when a person’s business is protected from competition by the state; when a person is able to conquer others and monopolize the provision of government, of law and order, thereby creating a state, that person, or rather, those people have political privilege not otherwise given to everyone else. That political privilege is not enforced by opinion but through violence. All of the above privileges are more damaging to a society and its economy than privilege of any other sort, and are all dependent on that last one, the monopolization of the provision of law and order.

As evil as racism and sexism are, statism gives everyone a way to profit at the expense of

others; to kidnap and cage others who engage in unpopular but peaceful activities; to drop bombs on others; to batter or murder innocent others. Statism, the result of greed, malice, violent conquest, lies, and deceit is the greatest evil in the world today.

Final Thoughts

As the title suggests, check your privilege. What favors and powers have you been given by the state? And I'm not talking about tax breaks, because those are owed to everyone. What about handouts? What about protection from competition? What about state employment? What about getting away with murder? If the value you offer others isn't purchased willingly by all parties involved, you're likely politically privileged. You should check, nay, *abolish* that.

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