

Monopoly and the Free Society



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

One of the criticisms that voluntarists receive is that in a free society, what’s to stop someone from obtaining a monopoly on the provision of a good or service? If there’s no central anti-trust regulator, a business could use all sorts of tactics and schemes to secure for themselves a monopoly in the market. Is this a valid criticism? Not really.

Monopoly

I might as well start with the tautological argument. By definition, monopolies cannot occur without either a central authority limiting who may provide what good or service, or an explicit contract outlining who may provide what good or service between the parties involved. The latter is completely justified in my book, while the former is not. Of course, the former begs the question: what is the central authority if not itself an illicit monopoly? Should our fear of monopoly cause us to establish a monopoly, and on the most important and dangerous functions in society, law and order? That seems a bit inconsistent.

Free Society

If there’s one thing for certain, whenever a person begins producing value for consumers, others quickly imitate them and the industry becomes saturated with competing providers of said value. Like flies to shit, no person or business is safe from competition so long as there isn’t a central authority using their more powerful guns to limit who may provide what. Given the hypothetical of a free society, there is not central authority with more powerful guns. Getting to a free society is a much bigger challenge than keeping it, in my opinion. Read my booklet *Toward a Free Society: A Short Guide on Building a Culture of Liberty* for my view on getting to a free society. Once achieved, every good or service imaginable will have countless producers vying for market share. Outside of explicit contract, I’m quite skeptical that any person or business could ever obtain sole producer status for any significant period of time. There’s just too many cutthroats ready and willing to offer a better value, and that’s a *wonderful* thing.

Final Thoughts

Monopoly is a major concern of mine, particular the entity that monopolizes the provision of law and order, ie. the state. This monopoly secures every other potential monopoly. Abolish the state, and you abolish monopoly. Start by abolishing statist practices in your home, such as punitive, authoritarian parenting and schooling. Raising your kids as autonomous individuals builds the requisite culture of liberty to achieving the free society.

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