

Self Regulation Should be a Higher Value

Most libertarians are focusing on the recent developments on North Korea and the seeming positive developments in regards to diplomatic relations with the South and the US (maybe). I fully support this but have nothing substantive to add.

Another topic I have been thinking about recently however is, protesters are demanding the likes of Apple and Facebook make their products and services less enjoyable/provide less value. These protesters claim that Apple holds them captive or Facebook is too addictive and hurting social cohesion. I don't disagree with this view but I don't see this as a reason we need to protest.

On the one hand, whatever the consumer wants, the consumer gets. (For the record, I am 100% against the government forcing in anyway any company to provide any type of service or product.) If the consumer realizes he doesn't have the self-control to cut off Facebook or put down the phone, perhaps it is rational to demand products and services from the private market that help them regain control of their lives. On the other, this seems to be a very dis-empowering and "I can't control anything" attitude that hurts society generally and more important the specific individuals involved.

It seems to me, that as libertarians, we promote the view that you can take care of yourself. You don't need a nanny state to tell you what you can and can't do or where you can and can't go. On the other hand, in a totally free society plenty of self-regulation and private regulation agencies and/or companies would exist.

So how should we view this?

I don't claim to have the answer but my gut is telling me this is something we should encourage people to regulate internally. People will need to be able to regulate themselves in a totally voluntary society so I would think this should be a view we should encourage and promote.

I see this argument overlapping with a similar idea in the gun regulation debate. The idea being, you can't regulate a civilized society. True, the private market would do a better job than the government but a truly civil and voluntary society likely requires significant self-regulation.

I am not advocating any type of coercion or force but I do think this is the type of discussion that might prove fruitful in developing the values that might ultimately get us to a voluntary society. I would be grateful to hear more thoughts on this topic.