

Voluntaryism: One Creed to Unite Them All



Send him mail. [f](#) [t](#)

“One Voluntaryist’s Perspective” is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Monday 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 voluntary principle, that relations should be voluntary, or not at all, separates voluntaryism from other political philosophies in that it matters not the ethics behind some use of force, but in the setting aside of the use of force in lieu of persuasion and other methods of nonviolent action. In other words, voluntaryism can bring together libertarians, anarchists, mutualists, anarcho-capitalists, and left-libertarians under the same voluntaryist creed. Once united under the voluntary principle, their differences become questions for economics and legal polycentrism. What do I mean by that? Let’s see.

Economics

When individuals in society are free to exchange on mutually agreeable terms, meaning the absence of uninvited third-party interventions, what sort of associations, businesses, cooperatives, and other forms of voluntary collectives result? An interesting question. I’m no fortune teller, but my understanding of economics informs me that these would be many and varied, and their voluntary nature will guarantee the creation of wealth and the elimination of poverty.

The laws of praxeology and, subsequently, economics, like the laws of physics or biology, can’t simply be ignored or set aside. When people are free, norms and conventions are spontaneously created and evolve to ensure the protection of property. When property ownership is secure, economies develop. The details of the direction of their development will be debated by economists, but such is academic. What *may* develop and what *does* develop is a matter of time. Maybe the mutualists are correct, but so maybe are the anarcho-capitalists. When property is seemingly violated, what could a free society do? This is a question for legal theorists.

Legal Polycentrism

Call it legal polycentrism, decentralization, or panarchism, the idea that law will emerge and develop without a single dictator or platoon of legislators is very powerful. Many have

looked throughout the world today and in history and discovered the emergence of law and order without a central planner. The possibility that fair and just laws would emerge and evolve in a free society is overwhelming. Those laws that best reduce conflict, secure property, and promote “social justice” will obtain the strength of popular support.

On the contrary, when law is debated by a minority and decreed as binding over everyone, history has shown an increase in conflict, insecurity of property, and the hindrance of social justice. Something all of the above ideologies can agree on is the necessity of a free market in dispute resolution. I will even be so bold as to say that such a free market is in the best interests of progressives, conservatives, syndicalists, communists, and the like. If they feel their ideology is true and just, let it emerge spontaneously. If it can't, is it really true and just? Is monopoly and violence necessary to promote social justice, the protection of family values, or the maintenance of ethical economic practices?

Final Thoughts

Voluntaryism is first and foremost concerned with the nature of human relations. I see no reason why everyone can't hold to their preferred ideology *and* embrace the voluntary principle. I'll give people the benefit of the doubt that they don't want to use violence in their interactions with others; a readily observable practice. Be a proponent of social justice, family values, egalitarianism, mutualism, capitalism, whatever, but do so on the foundation of voluntaryism. Please?