

LIBERTARIANISM

ITS STRENGTH IS ITS WEAKNESS

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The following essay reflects exactly the strengths and weaknesses that it explores in libertarianism, which is regrettable, inevitable and yet, per se consistent. Libertarianism is strongly based in economic knowledge, which makes it hard and sometimes downright impossible to follow for many if not most people. Libertarianism is also often counter intuitive in its consequent rationality, it argues for giving opponents the same rights as oneself demands, which doesn't appeal to the more emotional characters who prefer to silence, disarm and disadvantage the opposition as "undeserving". It's even more counterintuitive not to solve all problems through intervention but deregulation instead: fighting misinformation through freedom of speech, fighting narcotraffic through legalization of drugs and crime through legalization of firearms are concepts that seem paradoxical.

Yet, one can hardly deny the far more than 5000 years of statist and authoritarian failure, which leave Libertarianism as the currently best solution to prevent further economic disasters and devastating wars.

PART 1

When we reach the point in life where we realize just how important freedom is, and that it works only both ways — by not just demanding it for oneself but by granting it to others, even and especially when we disagree with them — we become “libertarians”. Which often involves not even knowing the terminology let alone the theory behind it.

Not only is Libertarianism a rare mindset but also notoriously hard to define and much obfuscated by those who oppose it – namely media, education and the many collectivist organizations in charge.

In a nutshell, Libertarianism has two poles with blurred lines between them: Classic Libertarianism, and Anarcho Capitalism.

Classic Libertarianism (think Milton Friedman and Thomas Sowell) supports a small government and sees it necessary as a third party to provide 1) the legal system and 2) societal safety. So, courts, police and military — and all with as little bureaucracy as possible. Classical Libertarians are “minarchists” in the literal sense of the word — from the Latin “minimal” and the Greek “archein,” to rule.

Anarcho Capitalists, or Aparactonomists, go further because they agree with Libertarians that free markets are far more efficient than government, as established by Austrian economists and empirically proven, but find the idea that government should provide legal systems and protection contradictory — because government fails at everything it tries and does, so why let it handle anything, let alone such greatly important aspects. Instead they suggest a private law society (Rothbard, Hoppe), or a stateless nation (Kayser), based on free market organization.

With that we see that the common denominator is less a political stance and more of an economic insight: free markets work better than centralization and regulation. That economic insight includes consequentially free speech and private property.

Today, “free market” is deemed a “capitalist” scheme to exploit and betray workers, customers and competitors. Capitalism, it is said, is what wiped out the middle class and undermined democracy. Such polemics are factually wrong and willfully misleading but reached their aim: utter confusion of what means what. Therefore, we prefer to call the free market system Eleuthagorism, its opposite, regulated markets, Archgagorism and a stateless eleuthagorist society an Aparactonomy, what Rothbard, Hoppe

and others called Anarcho Capitalism. By using that terminology we hope to circumvent the purposeful obfuscation and semantic sleight of hand.

“Life, liberty and property” are therefore the short formula that all libertarians agree on; these three are mutually conditional. The moment you limit one, the other two are in grave danger.

This is where Libertarians have two problems: firstly, the two poles disagree on to what point one can compromise. Secondly, and more importantly, that line of thinking is a tough sell because you have no scapegoat, no enemy, which is the best if not the only way to unite people! Without an easily understood cause you can’t mobilize a majority, which is why “Statists” and “Collectivists” always win. Who cares about freedom of speech when “the rich abuse the system and exploit the poor” or “the foreigners steal our jobs”? Those are comprehensive arguments with alarming claims that seem quite true at first glance and do imply that the solution is right there — just “tax the enemy” and/or “kick out the enemy”. Furthermore, as much as it pains one to admit, these simple solutions do work but here’s the catch: in the short term and there only. In the long run such actions backfire badly, as all libertarians know and point out over and over again, they ruin entrepreneurship and economy and rob society of what it truly needs to thrive – inequality. Yes, indeed! Inequality, as in “diversity” but the real meaning, not the DEI bastardized version.

Organization, also known as “division¹ of labor”, is based in inequality, which means different talents, skills and capabilities. Working together requires matching different skill sets to improve efficiency. In some sports, e.g., tug-o-war or relay race, the team members share the same crucial skill, but in most sports that isn’t the case. Be it American Football or soccer, defense and offense players have vastly different skills for their vastly different tasks, and that absolutely applies to economy and society. If an entire society consists of nothing but tailors, who will build the houses, do the plumbing, raise the cattle, treat patients or transport goods? Which brings us back to what unifies libertarians: knowing and understanding that an economy can run perfectly without bureaucrats as they are not in the slightest essential and worse, slow down market mechanisms. That means, public servants and civil officers rarely add anything of value but instead hinder those who actually do. Bureaucrats make everything inefficient and expensive, while claiming to be necessary for law and order.

What makes the entire discussion interesting and necessary culminates therefore in understanding that “left” and “right” are not political opposites but parallels that aim at full state control (meaning limiting life, liberty and property) while the actual opposite is Libertarianism as it seeks to protect the freedom

1 Both ‘diversity’ and ‘division’ derive from the Latin dividere, meaning ‘to divide’

of the individual. Left and right are barely distinguishable Collectivists and Statists. Libertarians, and especially the anarcho-capitalists among them, are the exact opposite demanding as little state and authoritarianism as possible, which is why they and only they demand freedom of speech and private property. There is no private property in a fascist or socialist country, and neither do they allow freedom of expression in any shape or form. The much propagated idea that the difference of left and right was “private vs state owned means of production” doesn’t really hold up with National Socialism and Maoism, two systems that are only geographically far while ideologically built on the same principles and with extremely similar outcomes of murder and devastation. Also Argentina’s Peronism is famously hard to categorize as left or right.

Now, when has an authoritarian country ever reversed course and allowed MORE instead of less freedom? When has taxation ever been decreased instead of increased – long term? When has a bureaucracy ever been reduced instead of consistently grown?

These things happened rarely and when then only for a short while, which is baffling considering how well it ALWAYS worked while it lasted (Victorian England, Germany under Ludwig Erhard, US under Reagan, Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew, Hong Kong, UAE and Switzerland until recently). Instead, government doesn’t continue and amplify what empirically works but rather amplifies itself, its regulations and its taxation.

That is because of the law of accumulation, also known as the **Matthew Effect**, with momentum comes growth and increase, until it collapses.

Statism is the idea that human leaders can regulate reality to reach desired market outcomes, the idea that the infinite complexity of interconnected systems can be dominated by humans. Is it just wishful thinking, or borderline ridiculous arrogance? Rarely ever could three referees command 22 soccer players for 90 minutes without serious disagreements but a couple of eloquent charmers without any expertise can run entire economies 24/7 for four years straight, directing and regulating climate, agriculture, education, production, manufacturing, research and development, patents, innovation, global influences, balancing technological disruptions and their influences on global scales, wars, violent conflicts between groups and communities, medical necessities and threats, criminal intent and enterprise, organized crime and fraud, corporate greed, monopolies and lobbyist interference, industrial espionage, foreign infiltration, destabilizing tactics of unknown agents... etc, etc... seriously?

The only thing governments can do is redistribute wealth and grow harmful bureaucracies that increase poverty and state dependence, inevitably minimizing motivation to work and innovate. Government,

the bigger it gets, the more anti-meritocratic it becomes, is based on a systemic flaw and utterly wrong beliefs and the solution is not a magic pill but freedom and self reliance – hard work. So, a tough sell.

PART 2

Once governments are established and have grown too big, there's no soft landing anymore. Once the point of no return is passed, the system will collapse, and the fallout will be disastrous. What a dark view... but here's the thing: that collapse is the occasional recession — which is bad enough — but the inevitable war. When empires fail, people die, and in large numbers. They lose not just their possessions and livelihoods but many also their lives. Therefore Sun Tzu began his masterpiece, *The Art of War*, with a stern warning: “War is a matter of life and death, the rise and fall of entire nations”.

Before that horrific end there's a time in which things could be repaired and turned around, but the longer one waits the harder it gets, until it becomes impossible and the point of no return is passed.

These collapses have never ever been driven by libertarian ideas. At no point in history has there been a war or an economic crash due to policies of life, liberty and property. There have never been libertarian terror commandos or kill squads. Libertarians seek voluntary exchange, without force and violence.

All wars, all collapses and falls were driven — directly or indirectly — by fiat currencies, totalitarian policies and corruption. “Resource scarcity,” religion, or ethnic conflict are insufficient explanations: the richest and most successful countries are those who develop technologies, not those sitting on commodities. Religion is often a much-abused pretense under which other motives — sheer greed and power — operate. As for ethnic conflict: there is nothing more idiotic than ethnic and racial arguments, as there are no pure cultures or races. Whatever the “excuse” was, the true reason for war was always greed, while the collapses were always due to many factors that showed one and the same underlying cause: fiat currency.

A libertarian country, one respecting life, liberty and property, would not attack another nation. Which sounds like a dream but it's true – why would it? There is no financial or any other incentive in waging wars. Not even when winning, as Sun Tzu also pointed out. The economic cost of war is too high, the math is clear.

Consider the Vietnam War: the United States expended over \$168 billion (roughly \$1 trillion in today's dollars) with enormous human costs — yet gained no strategic territory, no resources, and no lasting geopolitical advantage that justified the expenditure. Similarly, the recent and ongoing confrontations involving Iran under Trump and successors have already cost hundreds of billions in direct military spending, sanctions enforcement, and opportunity costs, with highly uncertain long-term gains in stability or influence. In both cases, the math does not add up for the aggressor or intervener. Just as in bureaucracy, taxation and other means of control, whatever little advantage there seems to be is short term and turns into a terrible long-term loss. No empire ever could sustain itself through aggression or regulatory overreach: none!

The Roman Empire was indeed remarkable for having been able to sustain through force and despite its corruption for such a record time, but let's be honest: it was not doing too well even during its more stable times, it already struggled with lousy quality of life. The English Empire was not lasting long in historical terms, and had its heyday thanks to the gold standard, that supported innovation and industrialization; once going back to fiat, it declined fast. There's a reason why China did so well from Deng till Hu, and why Singapore was never involved in war: it doesn't pan out mathematically.

In all large systems self-regulation works exponentially faster and better than any human interference, and while injustice and misbehavior cannot be ruled out, they are short lived as no group, community or society would allow them. Self-organization is the natural strive for efficiency and immoral behavior is remarkably inefficient, that's why it can't prevail. Theft, violence, murder, rape, lies, deception, fraud, and any kind of anti-social behavior are unacceptable to any species on earth and lead to punishment and expulsion, with or without written laws. The idea that we need government or religion to fight antisocial behavior is flat out wrong. Our nature's self-regulation does it. Our laws on the other hand create loopholes and monopolies, neither possible in self-organized systems.

Here again we see how “left and right” are unanimously putting logic on its head: government is not preventing monopolies but enabling, facilitating and creating them. It starts with the monopoly of violence, advances to the monopoly of legal tender and from there spirals out of control. Every single time. Inevitably. Without fail.

But why?

Because once you have the monopoly of violence, taxation and regulation are logical and system-inherent consequences, and from there the step to legal tender is a tiny one, nearly automatic. Legal tender may not necessarily require the establishment of a central bank but it makes it far easier. And

central banks are always (no exception) built to establish the creation of as much debt as possible, so geared towards giving credit to extremely large entities – and that means government. Once government is taking loans, it can't go back, it will take increasingly higher loans and guarantees them through taxation, making taxation permanent. Societies do economically far better without taxation, simply because every net producer manages their own money, while government doesn't. Government manages the money of others and once it starts doing that it won't give it up. Every organization is built to grow, even government. But government grows on net producers' fruit of labor, hardship, innovation, risk taking, sacrifices, and expertise. Government has none of all that, no risk, no expertise, no sacrifice, no innovation... it started by promising to make life better for all and ends up stealing from those who produce, improve and sacrifice. Government doesn't even invest, although it is often spin-doctored in that direction. When government redistributes net producers' money into education or infrastructure it seems to be an investment – until one realizes that investment is based on maximizing profitability through efficiency. No government can do that, even if they wanted to, as that requires enormous competence and expertise, which government by nature doesn't have. You'd have to compose government of the most successful experts of each field, which is impossible as the most successful tend to prefer taking care of their own business and don't wish to be bothered with the inefficiencies that come with public positions. Real entrepreneurs need the pressure of using their own money at their own risk to realize their own vision for themselves. Like any athlete, musician or artist. Like every farmer, inventor and engineer. Like every physician, medical doctor and therapist – oh, but don't they help others? Yes, to make a living, to reach status and reward. Remove the reward and see society, innovation and production collapse. Every. Single. Time.

How selfish, no?

No. There is nothing selfish about individual motivation and ambition, as it benefits society hugely. That's how nature works on planet earth, that's why all species organize, that's why there are moments in the group and moments without the group, internal and external aims. Nature functions spectacularly well and efficient, and our primitive idea of doing it better through collectivism enforcement is childish when based on well intent but a psychopathic scam when done in the name of government.

PART 3

Psychopathy. Now there's a big word, and the source of really scary movies.

Psychopathy is an antisocial disorder, characterized by the lack of empathy.

Importantly, there is clinical psychopathy and subclinical psychopathy. Clinical psychopathy is marked by violent behavior and a lack of impulse control. Which means these psychopaths don't get far — they stand out and end up in prison fast. The subclinical psychopaths have far more discipline and thus control their antisocial urges better. They don't necessarily become violent.

So, in the following we will discuss subclinical psychopathy and its overlap and combination with other antisocial traits. The research on psychopathy has shifted time and again. There was the idea that sociopathy differs greatly from psychopathy, then research determined the Dark Triad and then the Dark Tetrad traits, to which we come in a moment. By now it is clear that psychopathy is real, as it can be seen in brain scans showing a deformation in the frontal cortex. The very same deformation is seen in sociopaths, which led to more recent studies saying the lines are far more blurred than once thought, and the concept of psychopaths being born and sociopaths made doesn't hold up well. The idea that either is "highly intelligent" is also misleading. Some are, many are not. It looks like the percentage of intelligence among psychopaths is similar to that of the general population and neither enhanced nor hindered by the disorder.

Recently, behavioral experts Chase Hughes and Mark Bowen have referenced the commonly cited 1-in-20 (5%) figure for psychopathy in the general population — both are credible sources with extensive practical experience in high-stakes influence, interrogation, and behavioral analysis.

Now we come to why all that matters in the context of libertarianism and government:

While intelligence itself seems not enhanced, **leadership qualities** on the other hand clearly are! Leadership requires a higher than average intelligence, but not an exceptionally high intelligence. Leadership requires most positive traits in more than average but not exceptional proportions.

Exceptionally skilled businessmen don't make great leaders. Exceptionally competent researchers, philosophers, innovators, engineers, physicians, physicists, economists, or artists don't make great leaders. They might, once in a while, as the exception that confirms the rule, but in general, the exceptional stick to what they do best and typically stay away from extremely broad undertakings like leading a country.

Psychopaths, even in the subclinical version, not only have little to no scruples and therefore no fear of failing, they are actually tempted by the challenge. Politics — that's a subclinical psychopath's wet dream: extremely low accountability, no or not much proven qualification needed, and the two most important competencies are 1) manipulation and 2) deception. Psychopaths excel at both. Especially at Dark Triad and Dark Tetrad levels.

Dark Triad traits describe a person's behavior showing psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism. Often sadism comes into the mix, and then it's termed Dark Tetrad. Psychopathy, the lack of empathy, always includes some degree of narcissism, which means an inflated sense of oneself and extremely egocentric and selfish behavior. Narcissists are not necessarily psychopaths, but psychopaths always show narcissistic tendencies. Machiavellianism describes highly manipulative and power-hungry behavior, the need to control others. Sadism is what we call deriving pleasure from harming and hurting others.

Leadership has two basic forms of execution: open or clandestine. Political leadership seeks the limelight and is therefore requiring a significant tendency to narcissism. Intelligence services, narcotraffic or operating sex trafficking on the other hand require clandestine leadership where Machiavellianism and sadism play a much more important role than narcissism. The lack of empathy, feeling neither remorse nor guilt, are obviously a huge advantage for both open and clandestine leadership. Highly intelligent people are plagued by self-criticism and the tendency to overthink options and possibilities. Psychopaths aren't slowed down by such details — they “get shit done.” Leaders need to be able to decide swiftly and with determination — that's what society wants to see and psychopaths pick up on that like a shark smelling blood.

Research of the last 20 years first suspected subclinical psychopathy to occur in leadership, then found it to be an observable minority, and now a well-established portion. I am sure psychopathy in leadership is still significantly underrated. The deeper one goes into the research, the more obvious the Dark Triad and Dark Tetrad in leadership, politics, and corporate enterprise becomes. While intelligence agencies and mafia structures are obviously highly psychopathic by nature, the idea that limelight politicians are mostly narcissistic but barely psychopathic is not convincing and self-contradictory. Narcissists are too fragile to function long term, and only a severe level of psychopathy enables them to sufficiently “not give a shit” to keep going.

But even if one wishes to follow the current estimate of 1 in 20 people being psychopathic — and not agreeing with my argument that that number must be significantly higher in leadership positions due to

their tempting pull for psychopaths (as it is proven that psychopathy is significantly over 50% in pimps and human traffickers) — the raw numbers are already alarming.

Here is a quick comparison using recent public employment figures (approx. 2025 data):

Country	Population (approx.)	Public Employees (approx.)	Assumed 5% Psychopaths
Portugal	10.6 million	760,000	~38,000
Spain	47 million	3.1 million	~155,000
USA	330+ million	2.9 million (civilian federal, excl. military/postal)	~145,000

Sources: Portugal: <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2025-05-18/state-employs-760000-public-employees/97740>; Spain: <https://theobjective.com/espana/2025-12-16/numero-empleados-publicos-millones-efectivos>; USA: <https://usafacts.org/articles/how-many-people-work-for-the-federal-government/>

Why would I set the number significantly higher in leadership?

The Matthew Effect. Once a system is affected, or “infected,” psychopaths will create networks and structures that slowly mob out non-psychopaths and then rapidly increase the amount of fellow psychopaths.

Just look at how much government the small Portugal grew compared to the 5 times bigger Spain. The Spanish government, too, is enormous compared to that of the 7 times larger United States. It’s important to see that Portugal in its current form was founded 1976 and Spain 1978, so their governments metastasized in just 5 decades to such enormous size, which is in itself telling.

PART 4

Libertarianism is the least interesting political direction for psychopaths and dark tetrad characters.

If you crave control, power, domination – the last thing you want is freedom or freedom oriented policies! A Machiavellian sadist, who seeks peace and deregulation? It’s most obvious on all levels of

ratio, logic and common sense that dark triad or tetrad politicians and leaders do not want libertarianism.

The exact opposite though makes sense, as George Reisman, H.H. Hoppe and a few others have pointed out: there is an undeniable psychopathic tendency in communists, socialists, national socialists and fascists.

That's a polarizing stance, given the marketing of socialists as "the good ones".

Well, they are really not that. They are the undisputed leaders in mass-murdering. Stalin and Mao have killed, tortured and starved more people to death than anyone else. An estimated 100 million, a number heavily contested by left leaning academics, who — strangely enough — have nothing better to do than supporting mass murderers. The same and many further academics also support Marxist ideology and critical theory, which are not just empirically proven wrong in their majority but have also been argued to justify mass murdering. Just what is the appeal of mass murdering for academics?

For a true libertarian the idea that one human being has the right to command another is unacceptable.

It's inhumane. A grown adult can and should do as they please, and consequentially deal with the consequences: success or failure. Do what you want to do at your own risk – it's your life, so your decision.

There's a strong "don't ask, don't tell" thinking behind it, whether it's religion, sexuality, lifestyle – consenting adults shall be free to do as they please for as long as they don't impede the freedom of others. Believe what you want, love who you want, do what you want – but let others have the same rights. No privileges, no preferential treatment, no bailouts, no favoritism.

Not because we don't care or don't know what's right or wrong but because the right to err is a freedom we must grant, it's the price for actual freedom.

This part is often much misunderstood. So, let's look into the abyss of drugs, gambling, pornography and prostitution.

No libertarian has ever been known to argue that these activities have to be legalized and supported because they are so beautiful and beneficial for society.

Obviously, they are not. They are self-destructive and dangerous activities that have nothing but negative consequences for individuals and communities. So – let's outlaw them, right? The thing is, it never worked and never will.

There is a certain percentage that is drawn to drugs, gambling and other addictive and self destructive behaviors, which includes risky and promiscuous sex and adultery. Thrill seeking.

You can prohibit that all you want, it will still happen, human nature. But while murder has direct and indirect victims, ending lives and ruin those of their families and friends, crimes against oneself are nobody else's business. Personal decisions, however bad and destructive must be accepted, even though it is painful for families and loved ones.

The point here is NOT, as some would argue, that business is business and money is money – pornography, prostitution and gambling is just another business and thus shall be legal. No, these are very detrimental businesses with only short term gains and no long term benefits.

The idea of legalizing such activities is twofold in intention: remove the big profits for criminals and psychopaths by spoiling the market (an illegal product or service will be hugely lucrative due to its danger of getting caught and punished) while decriminalizing the victim, who has the right to self destruct if they so wish.

That is very different from firearms, which (most) libertarians want deregulated for self defense, not trusting government and police. A burglar will have to think twice about what they are doing when having to expect getting shot dead by the house or apartment owner, while a call to the police still leaves an ample time window to rob someone successfully and getting never caught. So, firearms do significantly deincestivize criminality.

Legalization of drugs, gambling, prostitution and pornography don't have such an upside; they are immoral. But unlike theft or murder, they should be legal, to protect individual freedom/choice and to minimize the gains of criminal individuals and organizations.

Furthermore, freedom of speech is synonymous with freedom of expression, and that includes tasteless choices as much as downright bad ones. Without defending their use or consumption, we also have to admit that there are those who can limit their intake and participation and don't become addicted. In most Western societies specific alcoholic beverages are seen as cultural staples and signs of sophistication and success — arguably that could be said for cocaine in certain high-status and celebrity circles as well.

So far the theory, now let's go into the actual reality.

Legalization of drugs, prostitution and pornography has given mixed results, as most conservatives will rightfully point out. There are various reasons for that, first of all, the lack of persistence. That means

while some things are allowed, others are forbidden and this way, alternatives and work-arounds develop. When France prohibited prostitution in 2016, or more precisely, the purchase of sex, it caused actual problems in Spain, where prostitution was a fringe phenomenon without much issue until then. But the sudden onslaught of French customers crossing the border overwhelmed the Spanish red light establishments along the border, prompting a run of pimps and prostitutes trying to get their share. By the means of standard mainstream economics all should be fine, a typical case of supply and demand. But the Austrian economists knew better: don't overlook the human element in economics. Prostitution always goes hand in hand with alcohol, drugs and excess. Inebriated and desperate people are prone to violence or an easy target of such and a suspected high percentage of pimps is psychopathic — which means indeed prone to violence. (Note: pimps and human traffickers share the same disgusting parasitic mindset; research shows significant psychopathic traits in both groups, though verifiable quantification is naturally difficult, as one would need brain scans for certainty and pimps/traffickers tend to elude prosecution more often than not — where prostitution is illegal, the prostitute and customer can be caught red-handed, while pimps rarely are.)

For decades Spain had no issues with legal prostitution, but the combination of France prohibiting it, while the amount of illegal immigrants in Spain went rapidly up since 2010 and even more so since 2015, Spain suddenly had to see that prostitution has serious consequences even if legal.

Not the same but somewhat similar were the Dutch experiences with legalizing cannabis; it was not a problem until it was. Again it was “drug tourism” and the human factor that caused the issues, once again violence and ripple effects. Amsterdam, famous for its red light district and barely having ever had issues with its prostitution, couldn't deal with the traffickers offering more and harder drugs to cannabis tourists, how the harder drugs affected the prostitutes, their pimps and customers, and when criminality got out of hand the government was quick to call legalizing a roundabout failure.

In the US on the other hand, state after state legalized cannabis and not many call it a failure; most even say “we should have done that way earlier”. The difference here: there is not much mix with prostitution, which is and remains illegal in the US. Violence is a US staple either way, so that remains unchanged, too.

What works and what not is hard to predict in completely distorted markets. The libertarian argument is: deregulate all, and then crime goes down on all fronts. Remove all incentives for harming others and reward hard work through meritocratic structure. Currently, those who operate illegal business pay no

taxes on their illegal gains, while those who work legally are punished with progressive tax rates. That concept is clearly wrong.

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