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## Understanding Power and Influence Players

The reaction in the comment section to my column, [Krugman Explains the Wisconsin Power Game \(Then calls for the unions to grab the power\)](#), does not surprise me. It is difficult to understand how power players think and use leverage. Their way of thinking is far different from the way you and I think. So let me address, in further detail, why I reached the conclusions I have.

But first, let me state that the charge in the comments that I have some kind of "sour grapes" dispute with the Koch brothers is simply off base. I don't know the brothers personally and have never interacted with them, or their organizations, other than by my attending a few of the events they have sponsored at their Cato Institute operation in Washington D.C.. I have listened to lectures at the Hayek Auditorium at the Institute and eaten the pretty decent sandwiches that are provided after the events.

But, when someone tells me he is a big Boston Red Sox fan, yet I see him always wearing Derek Jeter shirts and I further learn he has box seats at Yankee Stadium and flies to NYC at every opportunity to watch the Yankees play, a question like, "Where's your David Ortiz shirt?" or "Have you ever been to Fenway Park?" does not seem out of order.

The Koch brothers openly proclaim to be libertarians, yet, there seems to be little support from them of Ron Paul (although he may be getting too big and popular for them to ignore completely) and, like I said, I have been to the Koch-funded Cato Institute and they have a beautiful portrait of Friedrich von Hayek, but there is no obvious recognition of the work of Ludwig von Mises. Hayek has done some great work but he is no Mises.

And then when I see them move into the political arena with support for non-Paulian Republicans and take up a cause that has to be dear to the heart of establishment Republicans, i.e. breaking up public employee unions, I start looking at what else might be going on. Again, I repeat, there is nothing wrong with breaking up public employee unions, but it just appears to me to be an odd place for a libertarian organization to focus its energy, though it is a great place to focus if you seek to influence power, rather than eliminate it.

Power players just work differently than you and I. They see situations in terms of leverage and how it allows them to move pieces on their life's chess board. I am aware of one of the most powerful men in California. You will never see his name in the paper, but everyone, who needs to know who he is, knows him.

This gentleman, although not officially having any control over the process, is really in charge of what movie stars gets their star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, not only which stars, but where on the Walk of Fame the star is placed and when. All the Hollywood movie stars know this. Now, if you or I had this influence, we might think it is pretty cool. This power broker thinks differently. For him this is leverage he has on movie stars (along with some other leverage he has on movie stars who are already on the Walk of

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Fame). If you need a movie star, for whatever reason, he can deliver. Do you have a charity event that is not selling well? No problem, this operator will have two or three movie stars at the event and endorsing the event, pronto.

Jerry Buss, the owner of the Lakers, wanted a star on the Walk of Fame real bad. This man arranged it. Do you need courtside seats to game 7 of a Lakers NBA championship game? This operator can now get them from Buss.

Do you need a dead body moved when the government doesn't want it moved? My man can take care of that. Way back when a plane crashed in Chicago on takeoff, the NTSB, as part of their investigation's standard operating procedure, refused to allow relatives to claim bodies immediately. One powerful family, because of religious reasons, wanted the body of a victim, so they could bury it immediately, the NTSB said "no". The family contacted this operator. He flew to Chicago, got the body released immediately, and personally escorted the body back by private plane to Los Angeles.

I suspect this operator also has squelched a Beverly Hills murder investigation or two. He probably knows more Cabinet officials on a first name basis than the President. I know of one person who was commissioner of a very powerful federal agency. Although he didn't do much while he ran the agency (probably a good thing) the one thing he did do immediately was take calls if my man called.

I could go on and on about this operator, but the bottom line is he knows the leverage points which gain him the access points to create more leverage and more power. Once you see a guy like this operating, you begin to see how power players operate. They think in terms of leverage and influence in a way that an average person never comes close to thinking .

So when I noticed the Koch brothers funding, of all things, the breaking up of public unions (in Wisconsin!), given all the areas that could be funded to slow the growth of government, I felt it needed a closer look.

When you think about it, the greatest beneficiary of the break up of public unions is the establishment Republicans, since the Democratic party gains much support from these unions. My man in California would very quickly recognize the leverage play with establishment Republicans, if he could help smash public unions. But influence for what reason? If you poke around a bit, you do notice a reason. You notice that the governor's "budget repair bill" includes a provision for no bid sales of assets. Mind you, [these are not the types of sales that are conducted in the private sector](#), And then on top of this, there is the curious fact that Koch Industries has set up a [lobbying office](#) in Wisconsin with 7 lobbyists! In Wisconsin! At this point you have to realize that the Koch brothers clearly understand power and influence as well as, if not better than, my man in California.

There may be an occasional byproduct of some type of small advance in the promotion of some freedom concept, but this Wisconsin showdown looks to me like a power, influence and government control game that has little to do with free markets and the advance of liberty.

Posted by Robert Wenzel at 11:10 AM

## 9 comments:

### Anonymous said...

Definitely has nothing to do with liberty. I'm no fan of the Unions from a free market perspective myself, but one thing that they have done is keep a marginally inflation based pay scale in the average American mind.

The breaking of the unions is just another step in merging the America's in my opinion.

My heart breaks for all my family and friends who are effected by this though.

February 23, 2011 11:40 AM

### theultimatesaggingmattress said...

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This blog further reinforces the critique leveled against the proponents of "anarcho-capitalism" and Ron Paul/Lew Rockwell libertarianism: ideology and dogmatism. Why must one participate with dependency in this group dynamic? The philosophies of thinkers such as Murray Rothbard and Hans Hoppe are penetrating and revealing, but why must they be worshipped?

The Cato Institute does not need a picture of von Mises on its wall. I would take down the picture of Hayek. The Hero Worship lies at the root of the institution known as the state. The dependency group dynamic looks to the fearless leader--Obama, Reagan, Washington, Lenin, Hitler, Roosevelt, and even Ron Paul--for answers.

Mr. Wenzel: can you not see that it is IDEOLOGY that corrupts? The emotional human creature finds his or circumstances unacceptable and an "ideal" solution is thought up. To implement this idea, the creature seeks a solution provider--a leader. The leader, full of ego from the reverie shown him or her, is corrupted because the emotional human creature is incapable of resisting the lust for THE POWER. The reverie is much the same as the ring in The Lord of the Rings. Once possessed, the soul is possessed.

I suppose I do not qualify as a libertarian, because I worship no man, no woman, no idea, no god. When I was younger, I naively believed that was the heart of the libertarian political philosophy, but now, I realize it is just as dogmatic and rigid as Marxism: if one does not support Ron Paul, no libertarian; if one does not agree with the von Mises Institute on every cockamamie scheme, no libertarian; if one does not have a poster of Rothbard or a t-shirt of Hans Hoppe, no libertarian etc., etc, etc.

Will the truth ever be seen? That it is the leader-led dynamic that creates the dynamic known as the state. Hey anarchists: want to end the state? End it in your hearts first. Give up your ideas--commit ideological anarchy. Because the state is just the manifestation of a state of mind, and as long as anyone, or any group, demands certain beliefs and practices for "membership", the dependency group dynamic marches on to beat of the STATE. End the cycle of dependency.

So, I would prefer that Ron Paul does not run for president, and I would prefer that he does not win another election. It would be a corrupting event.

To the point of this comment, as well: why is it inappropriate for the state to dispossessed of its assets? Why shouldn't the government unions be busted up? I can't think of a reason.

Mr. Wenzel, the cynicism demonstrated by your posts on this matter, and the silence of this situation--the dismantling of public unions (institutions of power)--on lewrockwell.com, outside of a link to your blog, is palpable. I for one would prefer that the democratic party machine be broken. That is one less cancer in our hearts.

February 23, 2011 1:39 PM

#### Anonymous said...

So the way the process is supposed to work is that provision in the budget that has Wenzel in a knot can be debated, and left in or taken out. Certainly if Wenzel knows about it then others do too. If it stays in then Wisconsin has corrupt politics that can be influenced by lobbyists. Is that a new thing? Meanwhile, if the teachers union gets busted all I can say is Hallelujah!

February 24, 2011 12:53 AM

#### Anonymous said...

Yes, let's all run around and reject anyone who shows leadership, because, if they show leadership, they're trying to indoctrinate us into their cult, and as anarchists, we can't have that in our cult.

We must remain true to the cult of hyperindividualism and egalitarianism, whose creed states, in chapter one, that men cannot specialize in public communication and influence of others on behalf of the same ideas held by the more taciturn and introverted sorts.

It's just like statism to stand next to a guy wearing a shirt that says "I'm with him" and let him do all the fast talking.

Influence Players

- [Wisconsin-Style Bill Hits Florida](#)
- [Koch Brothers Open Lobbying Office in Wisconsin \(With 7 Lobbyists\)](#)
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February 24, 2011 1:59 AM

**Anonymous said...**

@TUSMI I like your style. Always question. Doing so always requires that you consider too, that you may be wrong.

There ARE ideas worth worshipping. Living by the golden rule is one. And there are perfectly rational reasons for holding individuals in high esteem. Individuals who have revealed truths to you, or who have brilliantly expressed those ideals that you have come to recognize as such, for instance.

February 24, 2011 4:06 AM

**Anonymous said...**

Mr. Stained Mattress, you can never be relied upon for anything, because you have no foundation for what you believe. Today, X is a good thing, and because you have no beliefs or foundation Y will be the new vision for you tomorrow.

What is worse than an anti-christ ideologue, but a man who can believe anything. You are dangerous. You cannot be trusted. Today monopoly is good, tomorrow it's a death sentence.

February 24, 2011 7:47 AM

**Anonymous said...**

I give a lot of money to candidate B, because he is for protecting puppies. However, candidate B is purported to love cats and owns several of them. Does this mean I'm a secret cat lover too?

Public unions are dangerous.

Private unions in the private sector can be a service for good.

What is so hard about this?

February 24, 2011 7:50 AM

**Anonymous said...**

Who is this Californian that you speak of?

February 24, 2011 8:48 AM

**Anonymous said...**

Question everything, especially "authority."

Do *not* do to others what you would *not* have done to yourself.

February 24, 2011 9:45 AM

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