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## The Koch Cato Affair

Arnold Kling

[Don Boudreaux](#) shares his thoughts. My take:

1. Usually, corporate soap opera is less important in the grand scheme of things than it is to the people involved. Institutions go on. History goes on.
2. We discussed think tanks [with Tevi Troy](#) and he was a bit nostalgic for the model of a think tank as a quasi-academic institution. I suspect that there are structural reasons for their evolution away from that.
3. Troy seemed annoyed with the use by donors of metrics. This is pretty common for professionals. They don't like being subjected to metrics, because it feels that it threatens their autonomy. They don't get any sympathy from me on that score.
4. With non-profits, the metrics are determined by the donors. I have higher regard for the for-profit sector where the metrics are determined by customers. This is one of my more against-the-grain views--thinking that the for-profit sector is morally superior to the non-profit sector.
5. In the discussion with Troy, I cited Jagadeesh Gokhale of Cato as an exemplar of the quasi-academic approach.
6. I wrote [Crisis of Abundance](#) for Cato, under the guidance of Brink Lindsey, back in 2006. I am very proud of that book. Between that and other miscellaneous writing, I think that between 2006 and 2010 I was paid about \$10,000 by Cato.
7. Think tanks, like universities, may be ripe for disintermediation. Although I think my writing for Cato helped my personal brand, I would rather be viewed as an independent scholar. I view scholars as personal brands, and I

do not think that affiliation with a think tank adds anything to their personal brands.

8. I think that the large struggle is against what Ken Kesey's fictional character Chief Broom might have meant by what he called The Combine. What I mean by it is government, schools, and the liberal media, all of which are doing PR for statism. I have no idea what the right strategies and tactics are in that struggle. I suspect it depends more on how people approach making a living, raising their children, and joining in the various organizations of civil society.

So, overall, I am not emotionally invested in the control issue involving the Kochs, on either side.