


The Desktop Regulatory State: The Countervailing Power of Individuals and Networks

By Kevin A. Carson

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Defenders of the modern state often claim that it's needed to protect us—from terrorists, invaders, bullies, and rapacious corporations. Economist John Kenneth Galbraith, for instance, famously argued that the state was a source of “countervailing power” that kept other social institutions in check. But what if those “countervailing” institution—corporations, government agencies and domesticated labor unions—in practice collude more than they “countervail” each other? And what if network communications technology and digital platforms now enable us to take on all those dinosaur hierarchies as equals—and more than equals. In *The Desktop Regulatory State*, Kevin Carson shows how the power of self-regulation, which people engaged in social cooperation have always possessed, has been amplified and intensified by changes in consciousness—as people have become aware of their own power and of their ability to care for themselves without the state—and in technology—especially information technology. Drawing as usual on a wide array of insights from diverse disciplines, Carson paints an inspiring, challenging, and optimistic portrait of a humane future without the state, and points provocatively toward the steps we need to take in order to achieve it.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Kevin Carson is a Senior Fellow and holds the Karl Hess Chair in Social Theory at Center for a Stateless Society (C4SS.org), where he writes news commentary and research papers. He is the author of three previous books: *Studies in Mutualist Political Economy*; *Organization Theory: A Libertarian Perspective*; and *The Homebrew Industrial Revolution: A Low-Overhead Manifesto*.

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