

Department of Philosophy

Guest Lecture Series

The Role of the NAP in the Libertarian Theory of Justice

Apr. 23, 2026 ♦ 4:00 PM ♦ Dickens Hall 207

According to some interpretations, libertarianism is a political philosophy that “rests upon one central axiom: that no man or group of men may aggress against the person or property of anyone else” (Rothbard 2006: 27). This axiom is called the Nonaggression Principle (NAP). However, in the libertarian literature there is a debate about the status of the NAP (Gordon 2013; Slenzok 2024). Some scholars suggest that the NAP is redundant or circular vis-à-vis the libertarian theory of rights (Zwolinski 2013, 2016; Sanchez 2013; Huemer 2019) – a problem that is best summarized by Matt Zwolinski’s words that “property rights follow logically from the NAP, which itself logically follows from property rights!” (Zwolinski 2016: 68). In the present paper I hypothesize that the NAP is best understood as a libertarian theory of wrongdoing rather than as a part of a libertarian theory of rights and wrongs. This hypothesis offers an opportunity to consider a more general problem of what types of behavior can and what types of behavior cannot infringe upon individual rights insofar as libertarianism is concerned.

Łukasz Dominiak is a NCU Professor in the Department of Social Philosophy at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. He holds a PhD and habilitation in political philosophy and is a Fellow of the Mises Institute. His research and interests are in libertarian legal theory.