

(This is a video response.)

This person presented an objection to my principle, R, about what makes an action voluntary and proposed a principle of his own.

In my previous video, I already addressed an objection like his.

So here, I just want to challenge his principle. He said:

(F) “What’s voluntary is an engagement between two entities absent physical force.”

I’m going to assume he’s including threats of force in here too.

Now, I’m happy to say there are different definitions of “voluntary”—one represented by my principle and one by his—and both might be relevant to morality in different ways.

And yes, one drawback of my definition is that it relies on moral judgments about what counts as “reasonable”.

But his definition’s very narrow, and it has implications I don’t think he’d like, since he appears to be a capitalist who thinks rent is voluntary.

By his definition, it’s not. The landlord threatens you with force if you refuse to pay rent or leave, just like the gov threatens you with force if you refuse to pay taxes or leave.

He’d probably say the difference is that the landlord “owns” the land, but the gov doesn’t own its territory.

But not everyone accepts the landlord’s ownership claim over that land, just like not everyone accepts the people’s collective ownership over the country.

In both cases, threats of force are used, justified by claims of ownership not everyone accepts. So both are involuntary by his definition.