

# On the Non-Aggression Principle II

The Non-Aggression Principle of libertarianism is simple, but it begs the question. How do we know if an act is aggressive? That depends entirely on who owns the scarce resource on which the act is being perpetrated. If I own your body then me attacking your body with force is just me using my property as I see fit, but if you own your body then my attack is an act of aggression. Perhaps the Non-Aggression Principle should have embedded within it the idea of relativistic ownership. What is that? Instead of asking “Who had it first?” we ask, “Among the current parties in dispute, who has the better claim to it?” This way we don’t need to understand or assume the underlying property rights convention before we use some scarce resource that we discover. All we need to do is ask ourselves, “Do I have a better claim to this scarce resource than anybody else?” It should be obvious that unless I created the scarce resource or I am certain that I pulled it out of an unowned state, that I must get permission to do whatever it is I want to do with it, and I don’t act before doing so (we call this doing our *due diligence*). For example I believe that I own my body, that my claim to my body is superior to anybody else’s, so I may operate on the presumptive certainty that my body is mine to do with as I please. I’m also certain that I own my house and the land on which it sits, because I’ve gone through the process of getting title to it and paying for title insurance that guaranteed to me that my title was free and clear of any other claims. If you know it’s not yours, then you may not use force against it. That’s the Non-Aggression Principle that doesn’t beg any questions, and today’s ~~two~~ three cents.