

Refusing to Recognize This Dangerous Fallacy

Some people (even among self-described libertarians and anarchists) seem to believe that property ownership includes some magical, inviolable right to be obeyed on one's property. Nothing could be further from the truth. Property owners have only one unique right as it regards other people—to ask them to leave.

This right of exclusion may be exercised at any time for any reason (or no reason), but it does not follow that the property owner has any authority over people simply because they are on his land.

Likewise, an employer does not have a right to be obeyed. He has only the right to discontinue an ongoing trading relationship with an employee. The employee has the exact same right, by the way. Once again, this right may be exercised at any time and for any reason.

No one ever has the right to be obeyed. The rights to terminate business relationships and to exclude someone from one's property do not come into existence because someone ignores your orders. They exist regardless of how an individual's behavior might align with your preferences.

The root cause of statism (and most other evils) is the belief in an entirely fictional concept—authority. It doesn't exist. Nobody possess it and nobody ever could. It's unfortunate that many people refuse to recognize this dangerous fallacy for what it is and instead perpetuate it as some mystical component of property ownership.