

Church Purpose and

Goals

IMAGINE YOU FOUND a magic lamp with a djinn who will grant you a wish. What would you wish for? Money? Power? Fame? Fortune? Immortality? Cure all disease? End world hunger? World peace? What would be the most moral wish you could make? What is Morality? When you see someone being hurt, or stolen from, or insulted do you get a gut reaction—a feeling that there is something wrong about whatever is happening? If you do, then you are experiencing the phenomenon of morality. Ultimately when we speak of morality, we are referring to these specific feelings we get when we see or think about certain kinds of actions. Some actions make us feel a positive feeling, which we label as moral actions. Some give us a negative feeling, which we label immoral actions. When trying to discover what morality is, we are trying to find out what causes these feelings and what, if anything, do the feelings refer to. 63 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. It is possible that these feelings are just an illusory byproduct of evolution and refer to nothing in reality independent of our imagination—like a mirage off in the distance—in which case, there is no objective morality. It is simply a subjective evolutionary inclination. But maybe, just maybe, our feelings about morality are more like our eyes. Perceiving something that is actually there—existing in reality outside of our imagination. If that is the case, then morality refers to something which is objective. If there is such a thing, what might it be? A God's nature? An undiscovered law of nature? A moral particle? An abstract or platonic object? A new law of logic? There are many possibilities it could be, as with any currently unknown phenomenon. In order to come to an answer, we must follow the evidence to try to discover the truth. Subjective Morality If morality is subjective, that means what makes something moral is simply the fact that some mind thinks it is, e.g. opinion, thoughts, feelings etc. All of the best evidence we currently have supports the subjective morality hypothesis—that morality is just a byproduct of evolution. However, I am a moral realist. Meaning, I believe in objective morality. The reason I am a moral realist is because there are indications morality may be more than just a subjective byproduct of evolution. For example, if we were to discover other kinds of life, such as aliens from different galaxies, or discover true artificial intelligence—will they also have some view on morality? If they do, will all the different forms of life seem to be converging on a single model of morality? If this was the case it would be good evidence morality is something more than a subjective inclination. If we were to create artificial intelligence or discovered similar such beings on other planets that did not evolve, and these developed without having been preprogrammed with morality, and if they happened to discover morality on their own, this would be conclusive evidence morality is not contingent on evolution. I believe it is highly likely that if/when such beings do occur, they will eventually develop a morality of their own. More importantly, I believe the morality they develop, (as well as the morality developed by all or the majority 64 Objective Morality Without God? 1. of conscious beings in the universe), will converge on a single model—just as scientific discoveries made by all of these different species will also converge on a single model. Indicating there is some deeper truth outside of just our subjective imaginations for morality—just as there is for science. I believe both of these conditions are highly likely. That other forms of life will develop morality independently and they will all converge on a single model. Which is the reason I am a moral realist. So, even though we don't have any conclusive evidence of objective morality today, it is worth while to try and figure out what this ultimate model of objective morality, (upon which all consciousness beings will converge), might be and what might ground it. Objective Morality If morality is objective that means what makes something moral is independent of what any mind thinks or feels, e.g. a law of nature, a fact of reality, etc. Morality is a term that is often confusing because we are very anthropocentric beings. We humans like to think of ourselves as the center of the universe. Because of this, when we ask questions like, "What is the moral thing to do?" we have a tendency to contextualize this question by comparing it to our personal limitations. This is often seen in the form of the phrase "ought implies can." Meaning, that if something is the moral thing to do, and you are morally obligated to do it, this assumes you must be physically able to do it. I agree, it would not make much sense to call someone immoral for not doing something it is physically impossible for them to do. For example, using a classic moral dilemma—if you see a baby drowning a few feet away and there would be no cost to you to save it, would you be obligated to do so? We would never say a paraplegic was immoral for not saving the baby, because they are literally incapable of doing so. That is perfectly reasonable. However, when talking about objective morality, this is a fundamental mistake we must overcome. If there is an objective morality, it would be self-contradictory to base that objective morality on subjective human limitations. Therefore, this "ought implies can" mentality is a flawed way of thinking when talking about something being objective. We 65 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. need to filter out our subjective limitations, rather than use those subjective limitations as the basis to evaluate what the objective standard would be. The objectively moral thing is the standard that would apply to all beings of any subjective kind—including the most capable being in any given moral situation. This is what we mean by objective morality. The moral fact of the matter is independent of any subjective context. So, if you imagine the most capable being, i.e. a being that is infinitely powerful in any given moral situation—the objectively moral thing to do is the standard that being is measured against. Meaning, if the all-powerful being would be immoral if it did or did not do X, that action X is the objectively moral action. Once we know the objectively moral actions, we can then apply the subjective limitations of any individual to know what is the best action they can do subjectively. This would obviously not be the objective moral action; it would only be the best subjective moral action that individual can take. So, when asking the question of whether or not something is moral, we need to clarify if we are asking if something is objectively moral, i.e. moral independent of subjective limitations, or if we are asking if the action is subjectively moral, i.e. the best action an individual can do given their limitations to get as close to the objective standard as possible. Most people usually mean the latter. However, in order to answer the question about subjective morality, you first need some objective standard that you can compare to, in order to know if the action in question is getting as close to that standard as possible, or not. So, to answer any question of whether or not something is moral you need to start with the objective standard and answer what the objectively moral action is in that situation. And only then, (once you have that objective answer), can you apply the subjective limitation of an individual to know which action they can take. This would maximize the moral outcome by getting as close to the objective standard as possible. We can use this same analogy to understand why a God-based morality does not work. If we imagine an all-powerful being in any given moral situation and want to know what the moral action is, we could not simply say, "Whatever the being happens to do is the objectively moral thing." Even if the being is perfectly moral and/or the grounds of morality, this answer fails 66 Objective Morality Without God? 1. because it is simply telling us the location of morality. But it tells us nothing about the principles that describe why the action is moral. Is something moral simply because the God would do it, or would the God do it because the action is moral? If whatever God does is the moral thing, for no other reason than the fact he does it, then morality is arbitrary. However, if a God does an action because the action itself is moral, (based on some set of criteria that defines morality), then in order to know what morality is we need to know that criteria. Knowing what the God would do might give us the answer to which action is moral. But it doesn't tell us anything about morality itself. For that you would still need to provide the principles describing what makes that action the moral one. Because of this, referencing God doesn't tell us anything about morality. It is simply asserting where morality is located. It does not provide any definition of the moral principles that would tell us what the moral actions are. This leads to a rather perplexing problem. If you can't tell us what the moral principles are, then you must not have started with the moral principle as your basis to conclude a God was the source. So, how did the theists conclude God was the source at all? A serious model of morality would start with the phenomenon we observe, create principles to describe the patterns in that phenomenon, and only then try to infer based on those patterns what the ground of morality is. It seems theists are going about this entirely backwards. Starting with their conclusion and trying to make the evidence fit. This is the key to why secular models of morality are so much better, and preferred by the consensus of experts in the academic field of ethics, (over theistic models). Theistic models of morality usually start with their conclusion. A God or holy book which says God is the grounds of morality. Then work backwards, making up principles to fit the God. Secular models do the opposite. They start with the observed phenomenon of morality, then try to come up with principles that accurately describe morality. Only then, they try to infer what the ground of these principles may be. The secular method is the same method science uses. 67 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. So, as any serious model does, we will start by looking at the phenomenon—the feelings we get of morality, and try to discern a pattern in these feelings which we can describe with some moral principle. Moral Intuition Would the world be better without rape? If you think it would, you are experiencing moral intuition. Our moral intuitions tell us certain actions are right and others are wrong, i.e. moral and immoral. For example, we tend to see killing for fun as immoral. But why? What is it about certain actions that makes them immoral? The best approach to answering this question is to analyze the various kinds of moral and immoral actions to try and find some common factors that outline what the essence of morality is. We can imagine different ways the world can be, and use our moral intuitions to assess which ones are more moral than the others. And, continue comparing possible worlds, filtering out the less moral ones to try and get to the best of all possible worlds. You might worry the worlds we imagine might have some unforeseen consequences. But we can evaluate those worlds as well. Which would be more moral: the world we imagine with these consequences, or a world we imagine with the consequences being optional? Meaning, people can opt out of the consequences and reject them from existing in their world. Clearly, having the

consequences be optional rather than forced, would be more moral. So, we can evaluate those cases as well. Moral actions: saving, assisting, helping, healing, freeing, giving, self-sacrifice, protecting, etc. Immoral actions: killing, rape, torture, slavery, theft, lying, cheating, bullying, etc. Of this list, we can see some actions are contingently moral/immoral—like killing. For example, killing in self-defense, or killing to save the lives of others, is not at all the same as killing for fun. It seems like certain immoral actions can be made less immoral, or even moral, depending on their context. 68 Objective Morality Without God? 1. However, there are some immoral actions that cannot be contextualized—like rape. There is no context in which rape is moral. Even if there were some case where rape could save the lives of many people, it would still be immoral. So, while some actions, like killing, are contingently immoral, other actions, like rape, are necessarily immoral. What is the difference between contingent and necessary immoral actions? Let us look again at the action of killing. If you were to kill someone who wanted their life to end, then it may be moral to kill them in order to end their suffering, (such as in euthanasia/assisted suicide). Therefore, consensual killing is not immoral at all. When we try to apply the same criteria to rape, there is a problem. Rape is by definition non-consensual. If it were to be consensual, then it would no longer be rape. The term "consensual rape" would be like the equation "1 + 1 = 5." It is a self-contradiction. So, just as we can say it is objectively the case that $1 + 1 = 2$, we can also say it is objectively the case that rape is non-consensual. This consensual factor seems to be the difference between rape and killing. It is why one cannot ever be moral but the other can. It seems that consent is a determining factor in whether an action is contingently immoral or necessarily immoral. It seems that all necessarily immoral actions entail being, by definition, non-consensual. Therefore, it seems we can tell the difference between contingent and necessary immoral actions by what happens when we make the action consensual. If the action is made consensual, and it becomes moral or amoral, then it is only a contingently immoral action. Whereas, if making the action consensual the action becomes self-contradictory, then such an action is necessarily immoral. When talking about objective morality, it is these necessarily immoral things we are concerned with. The contingently immoral things are only subjectively immoral to the context. So, they are not relevant to objective morality. It would be incorrect to say killing is objectively immoral. Because we can use consent as a means to separate immoral actions into kinds, this implies consent is something that is pivotal in determining what the essence of immorality is. In fact, it seems that many, if not most immoral 69 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. actions, stop being immoral if we make them consensual. We can thus conclude immorality is a non-consensual... "something." 5 Another important aspect of morality is discovered if we look at examples of non-consensual actions. For example, if I pick up a rock. You did not consent to my doing so, making it a non-consensual action. However, picking up a rock is clearly not immoral. Therefore, it seems consent only applies to yourself and your property. You cannot consent on behalf of someone else or something you have no say over, such as a rock. So, for something to be immoral, it has to be a non-consensual "something" that affects a person or their property, i.e. an imposition. So, immorality is an imposition on someone without their consent. Another consideration is that it is obviously not immoral to harm a rock. The reason for this seems to be that rocks don't have the ability to feel. Even lacking the ability to feel, it can still be immoral to harm something, such as in the case of an unconscious person. So, it seems the fact that it is unable to feel, (because it does not have consciousness, nor the potential of being conscious), is what makes it not immoral to harm a rock. Therefore, morality seems to be in some way related to things with consciousness, or the potential to have consciousness in some respect. By looking at the evidence of our moral intuitions and connecting all the dots, the picture it portrays I believe can be expressed by the principle: involuntary imposition of will is immoral. We can mirror the same methodology for morality to come to the conclusion: voluntary assistance of will is moral. If this view of morality is correct, that any involuntary imposition is immoral, this has counterintuitive consequences that go against a great many of our moral intuitions. For example, if this model is correct, then killing one person to save another, or five others, would be immoral. Disciplining children without their consent would be immoral. Putting criminals in jail would be immoral. Giving a drug addict all the drugs they want would be moral. And, helping someone to commit a crime would be moral. 5 I define 'consent' as: If person X could know every possible action that could occur to them in every possible context, and could place each on a list of "allowed" and "not allowed," those on the allowed list would be consensual. 70 Objective Morality Without God? 1. For a model of morality primarily based on moral intuitions, having consequences that contradict many of our moral intuitions is quite a big problem. If this were all the evidence we had for morality, we would be in a bit of a bind. However, there is still another line of evidence to look at—moral progress. Let us see if adding in the other data points from moral progress can help resolve these issues. But before we jump to moral progress, let us explore some more features of morality by looking at our moral intuitions. Another common feature of the feelings of morality is the sense of "oughtness" we get when we see an immoral action. We feel as if the person ought not have done that. Or, if we see someone who could have done a moral action, but did not, we feel they ought to have done it. This feeling of "oughtness" is a key topic in moral discourse. Many believe this sense of "oughtness" is fundamental to morality. Therefore, if an objective morality exists, it must have some "oughtness" quality to it in order to accurately reflect these feelings about morality. However, I think that is incorrect. I believe our feelings of "oughtness" are not fundamental to the essence of what morality is, but rather an anthropocentric addition. In other words, it is not the "oughtness" that makes something moral. What makes something moral is something else entirely. We can demonstrate this is the case. Is something moral because we ought to do it, or ought we do it because it's moral based on some independent criteria? It seems to be the case that something is moral because it fits some set of criteria. Only after something has met those criteria, do we add the prescription that we ought, or ought not, do it. Therefore, oughtness is not intrinsic to morality but is rather a corollary addendum. However, "oughtness" represents one of the most common features of our moral feelings. We only apply moral language to agents, e.g. that person who killed someone for no reason is immoral, but that rock which fell on someone and killed them is not immoral. The world would have been better had both actions not occurred, but we only call one of them immoral. The reason I believe this is the case, is because we only have perceived control over one of the actions. Meaning, we believe we can influence the person to not kill by creating laws, providing deterrents, teaching people social norms that guide their actions. We can do none of this to affect the actions of the rock. 71 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. Therefore, this sense of "oughtness" only seems to apply to individuals who are aware of these social norms, and are intellectually capable of recognizing their action goes against them. So, an action which would be immoral for an adult human of some reasonable level of mental acuity, would not be immoral if done by a child. Or, someone who is mentally handicapped, or a lion, or a rock, because they lack the intellectual ability to understand their action goes against the social norms. However, this seems to go against another of our intuitions about morality—that it is supremely important. There is nothing higher than being a morally perfect being. A pacifist Buddhist monk who owns nothing but the clothes on his back is a superior person than Caesar, or Genghis Khan, or Attila the Hun, (powerful warlords who conquered half the world and could have anything they wanted). If morality is what is supremely important, isn't the consequence of the person losing their life more important than who or what caused it? If that is the case, would it not make more sense for the consequence to have more moral weight than who or what caused it? It seems to me, the supremely important fact in that scenario is the death of the individual. If that's the case, why do we call someone who died by a falling rock simply "bad"? Whereas, if a person is doing the killing, it is given the more significant label "immoral"? The fact that a person is the one doing the killing seems almost trivial in importance in comparison to the significance of the lost life. To call someone's death simply "bad" seems to be entirely insufficient to convey severity of the event. Morally Perfect World I want you to imagine a Morally Perfect World. What does it look like? Is there no death, no murder, no torture, no aging, no hunger, no strife, no poverty, no disease? Is the morally perfect world the same as a perfect world? Or, is there a difference? If you define morality as only having to do with the actions of agents, then even if all agents were perfectly moral, the world would still have death, suffering, disease, and all manner of terrible things. By this definition, a 72 Objective Morality Without God? 1. morally perfect world is nowhere near a perfect world. In fact, most of the bad things that happen are caused not by agents, but by nature. Nature kills more people every year than all human wars combined. So, defining morality to only pertain to actions of agents seems strange to me. When I talk about objective morality, I am using that term to refer to the essence of goodness itself—the ground of all goodness. The idea that a morally perfect world would still have so much bad seems to miss the core of what morality is—as it is oblivious to many, maybe even most, of the goods and evils in the world. For this reason, when I imagine a morally perfect world, for me, it is the same as the perfect world. Therefore, instead of defining morality as how agents should act, I define morality as the principles that describe the nature of the perfect world. Not just for actions of agents, but any actions. If you think a morally perfect world could still have billions of people suffering from disease and dying painful, natural deaths—and yet, the world could still be perfectly moral—then, I think you have an inane understanding of morality. Criticism of Philosophy Unfortunately, this is how most philosophers understand morality. This is one of the primary reasons I think moral philosophy is unproductive and unrelated for most people. Also, if you think morality only pertains to actions of agents, then there must be some other kind of "goodness" to describe all the "goods" which don't have to do with human action. In fact, there seems to be far more of this other kind of "goodness." So, if they are

separate, this other kind of "goodness" supersedes morality by a significant margin. However, when I use the term "goodness" I don't tend to think of it as having greater significance than morality. On the contrary, I think morality has greater significance than "goodness." If our intuition about morality—that it is supremely important—is correct, then I believe it is more accurate to apply moral language to the more significant event: the death of the individual, independent of who or what caused it. Of course, this leads to the question, "Why do we only use moral language to apply to agents?" As I mentioned earlier, this seems to be due to the fact that we have some perceived control over agents—in that we can influence their actions with social norms. If my interpretation is correct, then if we are able to gain a similar level of influence over rocks falling on people, we would begin to see that as morally significant as well. Do we see moral intuitions shifting under certain circumstances to give us a reason to expect they may shift in this way? I believe we do. In the example of the moral progress we see across time. Moral Progress Societies tend to have shifts in their moral intuitions and beliefs over time. Some of the best examples of moral progress are; women's rights, gender equality, LGBT rights, decreases in racism, abolition of slavery, increases in freedom of expression, decreases in capital punishment, helping the elderly, helping the mental and physically handicapped, increases in charity, human rights movement, reduction of child labor, workers' rights, civil rights, veganism/vegetarianism, animal rights, universal healthcare, etc. Are these changes random, or is there a pattern in them across cultures—something that connects them? There are examples of things which were culturally seen as moral becoming culturally seen as immoral. Such as certain kinds of disciplining children, like spanking—causing a child physical pain to deter them from doing certain actions. This was once seen as the moral duty of parents to make sure their children are prepared for living in the world. But as society has progressed, and a greater understanding of the psychological harm this can do to some children has been determined, and the fact there are non-violent ways to achieve the same outcome—society at large has begun to see such a method as cruel and immoral. There are also examples of things considered amoral becoming seen as moral. Such as, caring for the environment, (as we gain the resources to be able to live without damaging ecosystems). For example, it begins to be seen as immoral to damage the environment with pollution, or over hunting/fishing a species to extinction. Another common example is veganism/vegetarianism. In many developed nations it is becoming seen as immoral to kill animals. 74 Objective Morality Without God? 1. We also see the opposite—things once being seen as immoral becoming moral. Such as killing the enemy in war. Or, rationing resources while prioritizing certain groups. These can begin to be seen as moral if there is a loss or limitation of the availability of resources and such actions become necessary for survival. Each of these advances only seem to take place in extremely specific circumstances. Namely, as the society involved makes technological advancements or gains access to an abundance of resources. Societies implemented many required actions and prohibitions which were believed to be beneficial to the society in some respect. As the technological limitations of societies are removed, the old prohibitions and requirements are no longer perceived as necessary or beneficial. These begin to be questioned, causing the perception of them as being moral/immoral to begin to shift. As society gains enough excess resources to allow for more individual freedoms, without causing a detriment to the society, it appears as if we begin to allow for those freedoms to be seen as morally neutral. Whereas, if the action would be a detriment to the society by requiring resources and not producing enough in exchange to be beneficial, we would see the action as immoral. For example, gay marriage. Because gay couples cannot produce biological children it is not as evolutionarily beneficial to a society as they still require food and other resources. So, it makes sense societies with very limited resources did not provide resources to gay couples, and would instead give the resources to heterosexual couples. This would allow for the society to survive longer giving societies who happened to demonize gay relationships an evolutionary advantage. However, once agriculture provides an abundance of food and other resources, resulting in no detriment to the society for providing them to gay couples, societies begin to shift to being more accepting of gay relationships. Of course, this process is slowed if there is a prominent ideology in the society which inherently demonizes such relationships. Such ideologies become prevalent because of the evolutionary advantages their doctrines provide. Their more explicit doctrines will only begin to be questioned once the less stringent required actions and restrictions lose relevance, in a similar fashion due to technological progress in other domains. 75 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. All of the examples I have provided so far involve culpable agents. But there are also examples of moral progress that seem to be applying moral language to non-agents. Such as in the modern social justice community which uses morally charged terms like: racist, sexist, misogynistic, transphobic, etc., applying such terms to non-culpable individuals and non-conscious entities. For example, a system or argument can be racist without a culpable person being involved. Also, arguing that someone can be subconsciously racist without having any ill-intention. That pattern hidden in these examples is—as technology or access to resources increases, the scope of morality also increases. Starting from those of the highest social status, then eventually trickling down to those of lower social status. For example, from men in positions of authority, to men of a lower social status, to women, to animals we like, to the elderly and handicapped, to other cultures and races, to criminals, to animals of higher intelligence, to animals of lower intelligence, etc. Each of these stages being a result of the technological advance of the society. Allowing it to have excess resources, which can then be used to support the lives of those with lower social status. Doing so previously would take resources away from those of higher social standing, whom the society is perceived to depend on for its survival. Thereby, putting the society at risk. The pattern also goes in the opposite direction. Once we lose access to resources or means to sustain ourselves, the pattern reverses. Harsh environments create harsh people. If we follow this pattern to its extreme, and imagine we had infinite resources, the scope of moral progress will continue to grow until it encompasses every conscious entity. One by one, humans would begin to feel morally compelled to provide all conscious entities with the resources they require to live, and then, additionally to live well—free from involuntary impositions. As mentioned in the section on moral intuition, some immoral actions are only contingently immoral, and others are necessarily immoral. Moral progress tells us there are also contingent moral intuitions that were adopted for the purpose of survival, but really have nothing to do with morality. Just as contingent immoral actions are irrelevant to objective morality because they are only subjectively immoral to certain contexts, the same applies to our intuitions. If our intuitions are only subjective to specific social contexts, then 76 Objective Morality Without God? 1. they do not tell us about objective morality, and we must filter the contingent intuitions out of our consideration of determining what objective morality is. This might just be able to solve the problems presented earlier in the proposed definition of objective morality/immorality, (involuntary imposition of will). If our intuitions in the counterintuitive examples are all contingent intuitions, then we need to filter them out of our consideration of objective morality. They are only relevant in the subjective context of our social situations and will change in accordance with new social situations. Therefore, having no bearing on objective morality. Let us look again at the counterintuitive examples. Are these actions contingently immoral? To find out we must take moral progress to its extreme and imagine we have infinite resources, and then see if the proposed solution is moral or if there is a more moral alternative. Criticisms/Objections Killing One to Save Many is Immoral If we imagine we have infinite resources, killing one to save many is never the moral option because there will always be a more moral option available to us. Such as, teleporting the victims to safety. It's only justified to kill the one because you don't have infinite resources. So, it's the lesser evil option. Being the lesser evil doesn't make it moral. It's still evil. Punishing Children is Immoral If we imagine we have infinite resources, punishing children is never the moral option. There will always be a more moral option available to us. Such as, giving them the intellectual capabilities to recognize the implication of any action, (essentially making them adults, at which point they have the right to make choices for themselves). It is only justified to punish children, because if you don't, they will suffer far worse consequences imposed on them by reality—if they do not learn to avoid certain actions. But again, that does not mean it is moral to punish children. Only the lesser evil done to prevent the greater harm if you do not. 77 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. Putting Criminals in Jail is Immoral If we imagine we have infinite resources, forcing a person to be in jail against their will is never the moral option. There will always be a more moral option available to us. Such as, teleporting the victims to safety or giving each person their own personal force field to protect them from criminals. It's only justified to imprison the criminal because we don't have infinite resources. So, it's the lesser evil option. Being the lesser evil doesn't make it moral. It's still immoral. Giving a Drug Addict Drugs is Moral If we imagine we have infinite resources, we could create a cure to any of the negative side effects of any drug. The reason it is considered immoral to give an addict the drugs they desire is because of the harsh negative consequences on their body/life. Therefore, if we can remove any such consequences, there is no reason not to give the addict the drugs he desires, (as there are no consequences). In such a case, it would actually be moral to give the drug addict the drugs. If we have infinite resources. Helping Someone to Commit a Crime is Moral If we imagine we have infinite resources, we could create a virtual world where the person can commit as many crimes as he/she likes with no consequence to others, allowing them to fulfill their will with no consequences. Thus, it would be moral to help them commit their desired crime. If we had infinite resources. If they specifically willed to impose involuntary restrictions on someone else's will, then it would necessarily be immoral to help them. As it would entail imposing on someone else without their consent. Rocks Falling on People is Immoral One obvious example of this being accepted is religious

and it is called "natural evils." In Christianity, these include tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. One of our biggest intuitions is of blameworthiness. How can something be 78 Objective Morality Without God? 1. immoral if it can't be considered blameworthy, (as rocks obviously cannot)? I believe this contradicts with our intuition that morality is supremely important. Which is more important, the blameworthiness of the perpetrator or the consequence to the victim? I would say the impact on the victim is far more important by comparison. So, if our intuitions that morality is supremely important are correct, then the impact on the victims would be far more relevant to moral language. In which case, if we compare a rock falling on someone vs. a perpetrator deliberately killing someone, the vast majority of the moral significance is in the death of the victim, not the intentionality of the perpetrator. Therefore, we should not discount the rock falling and killing someone from having moral considerations. I believe this is the primary reason the social justice community so readily apply moral language to non-culpable entities, such as systems, arguments, and subconscious tendencies. One of the biggest indications that we will begin to see inanimate objects as morally culpable is advances in the field of neurology. Neurology indicates we are all subject to our brain chemistry. So, no one is ultimately to blame for their actions, as there is no such thing as libertarian free will. We are all victims of our physical brain chemistry. So, there is no such thing as blame worthiness. Therefore, morality ultimately does describe non-culpable objects. Namely, chemistry and matter in motion. We know many actions we would often label immoral are not caused by the choice of an individual, but by the physical processes in their brain, such as brain tumors: "The sudden and uncontrollable paedophilia exhibited by a 40-year-old man was caused by an egg-sized brain tumour, his doctors have told a scientific conference. And once the tumour had been removed, his sex-obsession disappeared." 6 Such facts discovered in neurology are causing a change in how we view criminality. Making it more of a medical condition in need of treatment rather than a punishable offence. I believe morality will have the same shift. We will begin to see immoral actions as actions that should be prevented, not actions done by agents who are blameworthy. 6 Charles Choi, 21 October 2002, Brain tumour causes uncontrollable paedophilia, newscientists.com, Retrieved from: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn2943-brain-tumour-causes-uncontrollable-paedophilia/> 79 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. To use an example, I first heard from Sam Harris—psychopathy. We tend to see the actions of psychopaths as immoral. They do actions which actively harm others for their own benefit or pleasure and feel no remorse. Because of this we see them as bad people deserving of punishment. But imagine with future advancements in neurology, we discovered a cure for psychopathy. Where you could just take a pill and open the pathways in the brain which were impaired, allowing the individual to feel the empathy and compassion they were unable to feel before. Now, they feel the guilt and remorse for their actions. Once we get to this point, we will no longer see psychopaths as morally culpable for their actions. Rather, victims of their biology—exactly like the brain tumor. This is not just true of brain tumors or psychopathy but all mental conditions. Once we find out any action that we perceive as immoral was caused by some curable brain state, we will no longer see it as a morally culpable action done by an evil person. Rather we will see both the perpetrator and the victim as victims of a disease. If we intend to be honest in our search for morality, we must incorporate these facts discovered in neurology and other modern scientific fields and follow the evidence wherever it leads. Many people do this by adopting the compatibilist approach. Compatibilism being the position that free will is compatible with determinism. Meaning, even though we are determined, we can still have free will in the sense that, insofar as our brains act without outside influence, even though our brains are wholly determined by physical and biological forces, then we are free. Others do away with morality all together as a fictitious concept relating to the myth of free will. There is a third approach. That adopted by the social justice community I mentioned earlier, which is broadening the concept of morality to apply to things with no culpability. Such as, system, arguments, and subconscious biases. But I take a different approach. I believe the concept of morality will evolve, much like the criminal justice system is doing now, into a more realistic understanding that incorporates advances in our knowledge of reality. For example, recognizing morality does not refer to some persons culpable choice to do good or bad, but rather their brain chemistry and whether or not it predisposes them to help or harm others. Thus, changing the concept of 80 Objective Morality Without God? 1. morality to mean something like, "Does the physical structure of that brain assist people or harm people?" This shift from seeing morality as actions done by agents, to actions done by physical brain states, is moving us a step closer to seeing inanimate objects as having moral significance. We can then ask, if physical brain states in agents can be moral/immoral, then why not see physical states outside of agents as being able to do moral/immoral actions? Like, rocks falling on people? We can potentially make a moral comparison between physical states just as we do for brain states. This physical system is predisposed to harm wills, more than that physical system, and is thus, more immoral. I believe this is likely to occur. So, I argue in the future, people will intuitively see morality/immorality not as actions done by agents, but any action done to agents—regardless of who or what does the action. It seems as if these counterintuitive consequences are not so counter intuitive after all. They are simple contingent intuitions based on our current subjective circumstances. We can see the evidence of such intuitions changing, even today. In the future when our technological means progress sufficiently, these criticisms will themselves become examples of moral progress. Where a past society did not see the moral significance, the future society will. Now that we have analyzed the evidence of morality from brain intuition, and moral progress, and have derived principles based on the patterns in each, let us build a more comprehensive model of what an objective morality will look like if we project these principles to their extreme. Contradictory Wills Objection If one person wills to not be alone, or for a particular person to be with them, yet the other wishes to not be with that person, in my model this will result in the person who wishes the other to be with them, to be rejected their desires and end up being alone. This seems like an involuntary imposition on the will of the person who is alone, thus being immoral or providing a contradiction in my model. This is incorrect. The principle "no involuntary imposition of will" is not limited to "your will" but "all wills involved." Your will only applies to yourself 81 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. and your property. If you will something involving another person, for there to be no involuntary imposition of will, ALL parties involved must consent. So, if you will for another to be in your universe, and they do not consent, that is not an involuntary imposition of your will. Because your will only applies to yourself and your property and does not apply to other conscious beings. Their will applies to themselves and their property. So, if they stay in their own universe, neither yourself, they, your property, nor their property has been involuntarily imposed upon. Therefore, no involuntary imposition of will has occurred. The Moral Standard Based on moral intuition we can conclude that morality can be described with the principle "involuntary imposition of will is immoral." Based on moral progress, we can conclude this principle extends to all conscious agents. And, the imposition we currently see as justified are all contingent on subjective limitations. Following these lines of evidence, we can conclude the objective moral standard is a world where there is no involuntary imposition of will of any conscious agents. What would such a world look like? If we imagine having the infinite resources to accomplish this. Every conscious agent would get a universe of their own which they can design however they wish and decide all the actions that are allowed to occur in their universe. Any other such actions would be physically impossible in their universe. You may invite others to your universe, or be invited to theirs. And, they may consent to joining you if they are fully aware of all the rules you have in place and agree to them. It will also be possible to make new worlds jointly with other people. The only limitation being—you cannot create or force other conscious beings in your universe or program them with desires set by you. Once created, they would immediately get their own universe and the freedom to design it however they see fit. In such a morally perfect world, all interactions will necessarily be consensual. If someone tries to harm you without your consent, it will be physically impossible. For example, if someone throws a cup at you it will simply pass 82 Objective Morality Without God? 1. through you like you are a ghost, unless you consent to it hitting you. In such a world, immoral actions such as rape and murder are impossible. I call this world "The Best of all Possible Worlds" (BPW for short). This is the morally perfect world we can use as a basis to measure all actions to see if they meet the standard of this world. If an action would not be allowed in this world, then it is objectively immoral. To know the objectively moral action for any given situation, we would imagine the same situation occurring in the BPW. Whatever would be expected of us in that case would be the objectively moral action. If anyone can design their universe as they choose, will moral actions even be possible as anyone can simply snap their fingers to achieve anything they desire in their universe? Yes, though they will be more about relationships. For example, if someone desires companionship or company, spending time with them in their universe or inviting them to yours, will be moral actions. As you are voluntarily assisting them to achieve their wills—the definition of a moral action. Let us see how this model addresses the classical moral dilemma of the trolley problem. If there is a trolley heading down a track toward five people, and you are at a switch which can change the direction of the trolley to a second track; however, there is one person standing on the second track, and you will hit them instead, should you flip the switch? Assuming none of the persons involved consented to being hit by a train, this entire situation would be impossible in the BPW. Any of the individuals being hit by the train, without their consent, would be immoral. Therefore, we know, no matter what we choose in our realistic world, an immoral action will occur either way. To resolve this, we must consider what action we can take to bring us as close as possible to the BPW, given our limitations. If we do nothing, five immoral actions will occur as the five individuals are hit

by the train. If you flip the switch, only one immoral action will occur. In this case it is reasonable to flip the switch to save the five, even if you kill the one, as you have prevented a net four immoral actions—getting as close to the BPW as possible given your limitations. However, there is another consideration to remember: culpability. In the case you flipped the switch and saved four lives, you have done four moral actions which you take credit for. However, you have also done one immoral action which is also partially your fault and you should be obligated to try to accommodate the victim or their family. If you had done nothing, five immoral actions would have occurred. However, none of which you are responsible for as the physical environment itself and the moving trolley is to blame. This is why you are only partially to blame for the one immoral action caused by flipping the switch. The vast majority of the culpability lies in the physical environment of the trolley, (which is not your fault). However, consider a similar example. If instead of there being a switch to change the direction of the trolley, there was a very fat man standing in front of the track. And, if you pushed him onto the track, it would cause him to be hit by the trolley, stopping it and saving the five. In this case, you would almost entirely be responsible for the death of the fat man. The culpability being mostly on you, rather than the trolley. Therefore, in this case it would be wrong of you to push the fat man. Whereas, it is not, for you to flip the switch. This illustrates that justification for doing an action, which will lead to an immoral outcome, is based on culpability. If the majority of the culpability is not on you, and you are simply mitigating an already immoral circumstance, then such an action is a justified immoral action. This can also be called a subjectively moral action. As it is the best you can do given your limitations. However, if the majority of the culpability is on you, then it is an unjustified immoral action. In other words, both objectively and subjectively immoral. At the beginning of my opening, I asked a question: Imagine you found a magic lamp with a djinni who will grant you a wish, what would be the most moral wish you could make? My answer to this question would be to wish for the djinni to create The Best of all Possible Worlds as I have described it. Where every conscious being gets their own universe, they can design however they like. And, it is physically impossible to force any conscious being to do anything they do not consent to doing. If you feel this answer is more moral than the answer you came up with when you began reading, or you feel this answer is a good contender for what the most moral wish would be, then I have done my job. 84 Objective Morality Without God? 1. This provides us a fairly comprehensive model to contrast actions with, in order to determine if they are moral or immoral. But it does not answer the last question about morality—what grounds morality? What is the ontology of morality/what is it made of? Moral Ontology Ontology of morality: we have intuitions that are separate from moral intuitions. Like the intuition that is $A = B$, and $B = C$, therefore $A = C$. Nothing can be completely green and completely blue at the same time. These are also intuitions like moral intuitions. Logic and math are languages to describe our intuitions about these fields. We also have similar intuitions about morality. So, the field of morality is analogous to the field of math and logic. Math and logic are languages humans invented to describe patterns of how reality operates. In other words, logic and math describe some feature of reality akin to a law of nature. I believe morality also describes some feature of reality—a moral law of nature. If we understand morality in the way which I have proposed, what could possibly ground such a thing? Obviously, the BPW does not exist as anything more than an abstract ideal, (as there are clearly many involuntary impositions of will all around us every day). But it does not need to exist to act as a ground. A perfect triangle is an object with three perfectly straight lines, each with an adjoining angle of 60 degrees. In our world, it is impossible to draw a perfect triangle. As an example, when we use an electron microscope to zoom in on the lines, we will see they are never perfectly straight as the electrons move in rounded bubble shapes. However, we can still use the non-existent abstract idea of a perfect triangle to get as close as possible given our limitations. We can do the same with the BPW, even though it also does not exist. However, there is something that does exist which is leading us to this abstract ideal. As I mentioned before, I believe that all conscious agents will develop morality independently from one another, including non-evolutionary consciousnesses. In addition, they will all converge on a singular model of morality. If this is true, then there is something inherent to all minds causing this phenomenon. 85 Tom Jump and Rick Mattson 1. Such properties commonly resulting among diverse groups are referred to as higher order emergent properties. Some other example of higher order emergent properties are health and fitness. Fitness is the ability for an organism to survive in an environment. Some organisms are more fit than others, as they can survive/thrive in more and harsher environments. Is fitness objective? Yes, it is an objective higher order emergent phenomenon describing a relation between an organism and environment in which it can live—which is true independent of minds or opinion. Is there a highest level of fitness, like an objective standard to compare the fitness of other creatures? Yes, it is possible for an organism to be capable of surviving in any environment. Thus, making it the objective standard of fitness. We know of no such organism, but we can use the abstract ideal as a guide in determining the level of fitness of any given organism. Morality is a higher order emergent property like fitness. But instead of measuring the relation between an organism and its ability to survive in an environment, morality measures some relation between an environment and consciousness and the entities interactions within these. Or, in the case of my model, the ability for conscious entities to act without involuntary imposition of will in any given environment. Why call this higher order phenomenon morality when we could just call it something different? Remember, ultimately morality is whatever is causing those feelings we have when we see certain actions, we call moral or immoral. Whatever is causing those feelings and what those feelings refer to is morality. If such a higher order emergent property exists, it would explain why we have the moral intuitions and progress we observe and why such things are also present in all conscious agents. Therefore, this definition seems to exactly map onto what we are referring to when we are talking about morality. We can go one step further. This higher order emergent property view of morality can be seen as an undiscovered law of nature, i.e. the moral law. This law can be ultimately grounded in Naturalistic Pantheism—the position that the fundamental nature of reality is unguided natural processes, i.e. not a mind or non-physical consciousness. Value, meaning, purpose, etc., can also be naturalistically grounded in similar way. 86 Objective Morality Without God? 1. In order to try and make Naturalistic Pantheism into something those who believe in a God can relate to and/or understand, we can describe it in terms of God's properties. A theistic God is usually described as having the properties: eternal (or outside of spacetime/the first mover), all-powerful (or necessary), all-good, all knowing, personal, conscious being. If you remove "personal" you get a deistic God which is eternal, all-powerful, all-good, all knowing, and conscious being. You can think of Naturalistic Pantheism as removing all the conscious aspects leaving only eternal, (or outside of spacetime/the first mover), all-powerful (or necessary) nature. Or put simply—Naturalistic Pantheism is eternal, all-powerful nature. This can act as a ground for objective morality in a similar way theists believe God does. Objective morality, the undiscovered law of nature, is a part of the nature of Naturalistic Pantheism. So, just as a God can be said to ground objective morality, Atheistic models of reality can also ground objective morality and are far better by comparison

The primary goal of “The Church of the Best Possible World” is to move our world towards becoming a morally perfect world. Our mission statement is, "Lower the cost of

living for as many people as much as possible." Currently the most pragmatic way to move closer to such a world is by lowering the cost of living for as many as possible. This can be done in many ways such as providing affordable housing.

A Secondary goal of "The Church of the Best Possible World", is educating people about the rational epistemology endorsed by "The Church of the Best Possible World", in which claims can only be justified by evidence proportional to their entailments.



WHO WE ARE

Our Vision and

Mission

The mission of the Church is to move the world closer to the Best Possible World—a world in which conscious beings can exist without being forced against their will.

We recognize that the world as it exists today contains pervasive involuntary imposition. Some of this imposition is unavoidable. Much of it is not.

Our mission is therefore not moral purity, not condemnation, and not control, but direction.

The Church exists to reduce involuntary imposition wherever reduction is possible, with particular focus on avoidable, unnecessary, or gratuitous impositions—those imposed by systems, practices, habits, or decisions that could have been otherwise.

We do not claim that all harm can be eliminated. We do not claim that all imposition can be avoided. We do claim that avoidable imposition matters morally, and that reducing it is meaningful even when perfection is unattainable.

Our work is guided by three commitments:

- Recognition — honestly identifying involuntary imposition when it occurs, without defaulting to blame or moral condemnation.
- Reduction — prioritizing changes that prevent future imposition without creating new coercion, especially where imposition serves no necessary purpose.
- Orientation — holding the Best Possible World as a moral horizon that defines what “better” ultimately means, even when it cannot be fully realized.

The Church directs its efforts primarily toward cases where imposition is gratuitous—imposed not by necessity, but by convenience, inertia, tradition, or unexamined authority. In these cases, reduction is not only possible but morally urgent. Where imposition is unavoidable, we do not pretend it becomes good. Instead, we seek less imposition rather than moral absolution, and restraint rather than justification.

We do not rule, command, or enforce. We do not require belief or participation. The Church exists to clarify moral direction, not to impose it.

In moving the world incrementally toward fewer involuntary impositions—especially where those impositions are avoidable—we affirm a simple truth:

Every reduction in coercion, however small, is a real moral improvement.

This is how the Church serves its mission: not by reshaping the world through force, but by withdrawing force wherever it need not exist, and

by keeping open the possibility of a world where it need not exist at all.

WHERE WE ARE

The Church of the Best Possible World is headquartered in Minneapolis MN. Minneapolis values diversity, inclusivity, social justice, education, sustainability, and the arts, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

We currently hold weekly church services on Sunday from 10am-2pm Central time, primary hosted on the TJump twitch, discord and YouTube channel.

For more information and to find out how you can get involved, please visit our [Join Us](#) page.

Phone: 612-888-2016



tejump@comcast.net



HOW WE DO IT

Providing affordable and lower-cost housing has a significant impact on improving people's quality of life in several ways:

1. **Financial Stability:** Affordable housing reduces the burden of high housing costs, allowing individuals and families to allocate their income towards other essential needs such as food, healthcare, education, and savings. This financial stability promotes overall well-being and reduces the risk of housing insecurity and homelessness.

2. **Improved Physical and Mental Health:** Access to safe and affordable housing contributes to better physical and mental health outcomes. Stable housing provides a secure and comfortable environment, reducing stress and promoting better overall health. It also facilitates access to amenities, healthcare services, and community support, leading to improved well-being.
3. **Educational Opportunities:** Affordable housing enables families to live in neighborhoods with quality schools and educational resources, setting the stage for children's academic success. When families are not burdened by high housing costs, they can invest in their children's education, such as extracurricular activities, tutoring, or higher education, enhancing their long-term prospects.
4. **Community Engagement:** Affordable housing fosters community stability and cohesion. When individuals and families can afford to stay in one place, they build stronger connections with their neighbors, participate in community activities, and contribute to the social fabric of the neighborhood. This sense of belonging enhances social bonds, promotes civic engagement, and creates a safer and more vibrant community.
5. **Economic Mobility:** Affordable housing plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty by providing individuals and families with a foundation to pursue economic opportunities. When housing costs are manageable, people can invest in their careers, acquire job training, or pursue entrepreneurial ventures, leading to increased income potential and upward mobility.
6. **Family Well-being:** Affordable housing allows families to live in adequate and stable housing, providing a nurturing environment for children to grow and thrive. It reduces the strain on parents, allowing them to focus on parenting responsibilities, spend quality time with their children, and create a supportive home environment.

In summary, providing affordable and lower-cost housing not only addresses a basic human need but also has a profound positive impact on individuals, families, and communities, improving financial stability, physical and mental health, educational opportunities, community engagement, economic mobility, and overall family well-being.

Our Moral Framework

The moral framework of the Church begins with a single, foundational recognition:

Being forced against one's will is morally bad.

From this recognition, everything else follows.

What Morality Is

About

Morality, as we understand it, is not primarily about intentions, character, obedience, virtue, or blame. It is about what happens to conscious beings—specifically, whether their wills are respected or overridden.

A state of affairs is morally negative when it involves involuntary imposition: when a conscious being is forced into a condition they did not choose and could not reasonably refuse.

This remains true even when:

- no one intended harm,
- no one is at fault,
- or the harm was unavoidable.

Morality concerns what is imposed, not merely who caused it.

Imposition and

Consent

At the center of our framework is the distinction between:

- voluntary interaction, and
- involuntary imposition.

When a conscious agent consents, interaction is morally neutral or permissible.

When consent is absent and a will is overridden, the resulting state is morally bad.

Consent matters because no one is obligated to surrender their body, choices, or experience to others.

Moral Valence vs

Moral Blame

A key distinction in our framework is between moral valence and moral blame.

- Moral valence describes whether a state of affairs is morally negative, neutral, or positive based on whether it involves involuntary imposition.
- Moral blame applies only to agents capable of choice and responsibility.

This means:

- A natural disaster can be morally bad without anyone being guilty.
- A system can be immoral without malicious intent.
- Harm can matter morally even when no one deserves punishment.

This separation allows moral clarity without moral condemnation.

Unavoidable Harm

and Moral

Comparison

We recognize that some involuntary impositions cannot be avoided in the world as it currently exists.

When imposition is unavoidable:

- it does not become morally acceptable,
- it remains morally negative.

However, unavoidable harms can still be morally compared.

A state that imposes less on fewer wills, for a shorter duration, or in a reversible way is morally preferable to one that imposes more—even if both are imperfect.

This allows us to say:

- Some outcomes are less immoral than others without ever saying:
- Harm is justified.

Prevention Without

Coercion

Preventing future involuntary imposition is not itself an imposition, provided it does not override an existing will.

This distinction is crucial.

It allows for:

- rescue,
- safeguards,
- harm prevention,
- and risk reduction,

while still rejecting coercion, forced compliance, or moral override.

Reducing future harm matters, even when harm cannot be eliminated entirely.

The Best Possible

World

Our framework holds that coercion and suffering are not logically necessary for conscious existence.

A world in which:

- conscious beings exist,
- no one is forced against their will,
- and no imposition occurs,

is conceptually coherent.

This world—the Best Possible World—is not promised, predicted, or required. It functions as a moral horizon: a reference point that defines what “better” ultimately means.

The fact that our world falls short does not negate the standard—it clarifies it.

Moral Direction, Not

Moral Purity

We do not treat morality as a test of purity or worth.

We explicitly distinguish:

- moral truth from human feasibility, and
- moral evaluation from moral expectation.

Living within an immoral world is not itself a moral failure.

Moral improvement consists in movement toward less involuntary imposition, even when perfection is impossible.

Every reduction matters.

Limits of

Knowledge and

Moral Humility

We acknowledge that current science does not fully explain:

- what a will is,
- how to measure will-frustration,
- or how to perfectly compare subjective experiences.

Rather than inventing false precision, our framework explicitly names these limits.

Where knowledge ends, we exercise restraint.

Where certainty is unavailable, we refuse dogma.

Moral fidelity takes precedence over algorithmic certainty.

What This

Framework Rejects

Our moral framework explicitly rejects:

- coercion justified by outcomes,
- moral authority enforced through power,
- guilt-based obedience,
- harm excused by necessity,
- and systems that treat individuals as means rather than ends.

It also rejects the idea that morality exists to comfort, reassure, or simplify reality.

What This

Framework Affirms

It affirms that:

- involuntary imposition is morally real,
- reduction without justification is meaningful,
- prevention without override is possible,
- blame is not required for harm to matter,
- and a world without coercion is worth orienting toward.

In Summary

Our moral framework is not about controlling behavior or assigning virtue.

It is about seeing clearly.

It asks one primary question:

Where is force being imposed that does not need to be?

And it offers one guiding answer:

Every avoidable reduction in involuntary imposition brings the world closer to the Best Possible World.

That is the moral framework of the Church.



Canon

The Canon of the Church of the Best Possible World sets forth the Church's formal moral and epistemological commitments. It defines

the core principles, classifications, and boundaries that constitute the Church's authoritative doctrine, independent of argument, application, or debate. The Canon is intended to be stable, precise, and internally coherent, serving as the normative foundation from which further explanation, definition, and analysis proceed.

Definitions

The Definitions page is the reference anchor for the entire Church of the BPW framework. It provides precise, non-ambiguous meanings for all core terms used throughout the site—especially words that are commonly overloaded, emotionally charged, or inconsistently defined in everyday language. Each definition is written to eliminate intuition-based drift and ensure that arguments, moral claims, and disagreements are evaluated on shared terms rather than assumptions. This page is not rhetorical or persuasive; it is structural. Its purpose is to make every other page readable, testable, and internally consistent by fixing language before conclusions are drawn.

Vision

The Vision page outlines the long-term aim of the Church of the BPW and the direction all of its ideas are meant to serve. It describes a world guided by clear moral constraints rather than intuition, tradition, or power, where moral claims are evaluated by their logical consequences instead of social acceptance. This page is aspirational but disciplined: it does not promise utopia or emotional comfort, but a framework for minimizing unjustified imposition and maximizing moral clarity. Its purpose is to show how the definitions, epistemology, and canon converge into a coherent direction for thought, dialogue, and societal progress.



Epistemology

The Epistemology page explains how knowledge claims are evaluated within the Church of the BPW framework. It defines what counts as justified belief, how certainty and uncertainty are handled, and why intuition, tradition, and consensus are insufficient on their own to establish truth. This page lays out the standards for evidence, logical consistency, and falsifiability that all arguments on the site must meet. Its role is foundational: before asking what is moral or true, it clarifies how we can know anything at all, ensuring that

conclusions follow from transparent and repeatable reasoning rather than authority or feeling.

Canon

IMPOSITION ETHICS — Canonical Specification v1.2

Status: Locked / Authoritative

Author, Owner, and Originator: Tom Jump

Date: Canon sealed at v1.2

STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document constitutes the frozen canon of Imposition Ethics.
All principles designated as canonical are authoritative.
Content explicitly labeled Provisional is non-canonical, subordinate to canon, and subject to revision or retraction based on future scientific progress.
No provisional content overrides canonical principles.

Foundational Principles

1. Core Axiom (Imposition Principle)

All involuntary imposition on the will of a conscious agent is immoral.
All voluntary assistance of the will of a conscious agent is moral.

DEFINITIONS

Involuntary Imposition

Any state or action that frustrates, constrains, or overrides the will of a conscious agent without that agent's consent.

Will

The preferences, intentions, or volitional states of a conscious agent.

Consent

Voluntary authorization by a conscious agent, free of coercion or overriding influence.

Conscious Agent

An entity capable of having a will.

Purpose of Morality

The function of morality is the systematic reduction of involuntary imposition across conscious agents. Attempting to move the world closer to the Best of all Possible Worlds (BPW), a world with no involuntary imposition of will.

2. Consent Principle

An interaction is morally permissible only when participation is voluntary and free from coercion, manipulation, or override.

3. Conscious Agent Principle

Moral evaluation applies wherever a conscious agent capable of having a will is affected.

Moral Structure Principles

A state may be morally negative without any agent being blameworthy.

4. Moral Valence Principle

Moral valence attaches to states of affairs based on whether involuntary imposition occurs. Moral valence concerns whether a state involves involuntary imposition.

5. Moral Blame Separation Principle

Moral blame applies only to agents capable of choice and responsibility and is distinct from moral valence.

6. Nature Valence Principle

States produced by nature may have negative moral valence without any agent being morally blameworthy.

Unavoidability and Comparison

7. Unavoidability Non-Justification Principle

The unavoidability of an involuntary imposition does not render it moral.

8. Comparative Imposition Principle

When involuntary imposition cannot be avoided, immoral states are morally ranked by the degree of will-frustration imposed.

9. Non-Conversion Principle

Comparative ranking never converts an immoral state into a moral one.

Prevention and Reduction

10. Prevention Without Override Principle

Preventing a future involuntary imposition is not itself an imposition when it does not override an existing will.

11. Directional Moral Improvement Principle

Moral improvement consists in movement toward reduced involuntary imposition, even when moral perfection is unattainable.

12. Reduction Priority Principle

Where reduction of involuntary imposition is possible without creating new imposition, such reduction is morally preferable.

Modal and Existential Principles

13. World-Dependence of Imposition Principle (BPW)

Involuntary imposition is a contingent feature of immoral worlds and is not a necessary condition of conscious existence.

14. Best Possible World Principle

A world in which conscious agents exist without involuntary imposition is conceptually coherent and defines the moral horizon.

Agency, Communication, and Existence

15. Non-Obligation of Expression Principle

No agent is morally obligated to use their body, speech, or actions to satisfy another's preferences; lying is not inherently immoral.

16. Non-Imposition of Existence Principle

Birth is not immoral, as no pre-existing will exists to be imposed upon.

Epistemic and Procedural Principles

17. Moral Fidelity and Epistemic Humility Principle

Where full formalization would require unjustified assumptions, moral fidelity takes precedence over algorithmic completeness; principled judgment is required under epistemic limits.

Restorative Principle

18. Absolution Through Acknowledgment Principle

Absolution consists in the sincere acknowledgment of an immoral act and a request for forgiveness. Absolution does not negate, erase, omit, or reclassify the immoral act itself; it concerns moral blame and relational repair, not moral valence.

19. Objective–Subjective Distinction Principle (Non-Prescriptive Morality)

Objective morality identifies the ideal moral standard independent of any agent's limitations; it does not generate obligations, commands, or action-imperatives. Subjective moral action consists only in approximating the objective standard as closely as possible given one's constraints, without converting moral evaluation into coercive prescription.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Moral truth is descriptive, not imperative.
- “Less immoral” does not entail “morally required.”
- The absence of an objectively perfect option does not create a duty to act.
- Moral evaluation precedes, but does not compel, action.
- Moral obligation is not produced by the framework itself.

This principle formalizes the rejection of “ought implies can” as a basis for objective morality and preserves the separation between:

- moral valence (what is morally ideal), and
- agent behavior (what is possible or chosen under constraint).

20. Total Moral Tragicness Principle

Total moral tragicness refers to the degree to which a situation necessarily contains unavoidable involuntary imposition, such that every available option remains morally immoral. Comparative ranking may identify less immoral outcomes, but it does not eliminate the moral tragedy of the situation.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Total moral tragicness applies only where no available alternative avoids involuntary imposition.
- A situation may be morally tragic even when agents act optimally under constraint.
- Comparative judgment does not convert immorality into morality.
- Total moral tragicness concerns the structure of the situation, not moral blame.
- Absolution or forgiveness does not erase moral tragicness; it addresses only blame or relational repair.

21. Is–Ought Dissolution Principle

Moral facts are descriptive, not prescriptive. What makes a state of affairs moral or immoral is independent of any obligation to act.

“Oughtness” does not arise from moral facts themselves, but is a contingent, anthropocentric response that follows moral evaluation rather than being intrinsic to it.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Moral reality identifies what is morally the case, not what agents must do.
- No logical inference from is to ought is required or permitted.
- Prescriptions and obligations are not fundamental features of morality.
- Moral evaluation precedes, but does not entail, action-guiding commands.
- Feelings of moral obligation reflect perceived agency and social influence, not the essence of morality itself.

22. Refined Non-Prescriptive Action Orientation Principle

Imposition Ethics provides action guidance in the form of evaluative and orientational structure, not prescriptive commands or obligations.

The framework guides agents and institutions by identifying morally relevant features of situations, comparatively ranking states of affairs by degree of involuntary imposition, and delineating constraints on moral justification, without determining or requiring any specific action.

Action guidance within the framework consists in clarifying:

- which features of a situation are morally salient,
- how available options compare in degree of will-frustration,
- which moral claims are prohibited (e.g., justification, sanctification, obligation),
- and how agents may voluntarily orient their choices under constraint.

The absence of determinate prescriptions reflects moral reality under tragic or epistemically limited conditions rather than incompleteness of the framework. Moral evaluation informs action without compelling it.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Guidance is informational and orientational, not mandatory.
- Comparative ranking aids deliberation without generating duty.
- Lack of a single “correct action” does not imply lack of moral structure.
- Prescriptive certainty is rejected where it would require moral distortion.
- Voluntary alignment with moral evaluation is permitted but never required.

Coordination & Actionability Extension (CAE)

23. Voluntary Adoption Principle

Agents may freely and reversibly adopt self-imposed behavioral constraints or moral postures aimed at reducing involuntary imposition, without such adoption generating moral obligations for themselves or others.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Adoption is an expression of alignment, not duty.
- Constraints are binding only by continued consent.
- Revocation of adoption carries no moral blame.

24. Moral Posture Declaration Principle

An agent may publicly declare a moral posture (e.g., imposition minimization, consent prioritization) to signal intent and facilitate voluntary coordination, without implying moral superiority or obligation.

Clarifications:

- Declarations function as coordination signals, not commitments enforceable by others.
- Misalignment between posture and action does not retroactively impose obligation.

25. Heuristic Orientation Principle

Agents may employ defeasible heuristics that approximate movement toward reduced involuntary imposition where full moral evaluation is impractical, without such heuristics constituting moral rules.

Clarifications:

- Heuristics are context-sensitive and revisable.
- Heuristic failure does not convert action into moral wrongdoing beyond existing imposition.

26. Consent-Presumption Heuristic

In conditions of epistemic uncertainty regarding consent, agents aligned with imposition reduction may voluntarily presume non-consent until consent is reasonably established.

Clarifications:

- This presumption is prudential, not obligatory.
- The heuristic may be overridden by contextual factors without moral breach.

27. Least-Frustration Heuristic

Where involuntary imposition is unavoidable, agents may voluntarily orient toward options that comparatively minimize the degree, scope, or intensity of will-frustration.

Clarifications:

- This heuristic does not justify the imposition.
- Comparative minimization does not convert immorality into morality.

28. Reversibility Preference Heuristic

Agents may voluntarily prefer actions that preserve future consent possibilities and minimize irreversible will-frustration.

Clarifications:

- Preference does not entail obligation.
- Irreversibility alone does not determine moral valence.

29. Moral Tragedy Recognition Principle

Agents and institutions may explicitly recognize and name situations in which all available options involve involuntary imposition, without reframing any option as morally justified.

Clarifications:

- Recognition does not assign moral blame.
- Naming tragedy prevents moral laundering and false justification.

30. Legitimacy Without Moral Justification Principle

Actions or policies may be socially legitimate for coordination, safety, or stability purposes even when morally immoral, provided their involuntary imposition is minimized and openly acknowledged.

Clarifications:

- Legitimacy concerns coordination, not moral goodness.
- Moral evaluation remains unchanged by legitimacy.

31. Institutional Imposition-Reduction Principle

Institutions may voluntarily adopt structural aims, metrics, or design features intended to reduce involuntary imposition over time, without claiming moral authority or justification.

Clarifications:

- Institutional goals are engineering-oriented, not moral mandates.
- Reduction may be partial, incremental, and imperfect.

32. Exit and Appeal Facilitation Principle

Institutions aligned with imposition reduction may voluntarily prioritize low exit costs, appealability, and revision mechanisms to preserve agent autonomy under constraint.

Clarifications:

- Facilitation does not guarantee consent.
- Structural constraints may remain morally tragic despite mitigation.

33. Moral Transparency Principle

No involuntary imposition may be truthfully described as morally good, justified, or right solely by virtue of necessity, authority, or beneficial outcome.

Clarifications:

- Transparency applies to language and framing.
- Beneficial consequences do not negate imposition.

34. Acknowledgment and Repair Orientation Principle

Agents or institutions responsible for involuntary imposition may engage in acknowledgment and relational repair without reclassifying the imposition as morally permissible.

Clarifications:

- Repair concerns blame, trust, and future reduction.
- Moral valence remains unchanged.

35. Alignment-Based Motivation Principle

Action in response to moral evaluation may be motivated by voluntary alignment with the moral horizon (BPW) rather than obligation, duty, or command.

Clarifications:

- Alignment is aspirational, not enforceable.
- Lack of alignment generates no moral blame.

36. Coordination Without Coercive Moralization Principle

Collective coordination may proceed using shared evaluative language and comparative rankings without converting moral evaluation into prescriptive or coercive moral demands.

Clarifications:

- Coordination relies on consent and shared intent.
- Moral disagreement does not authorize coercion.

37. Moral Interface Principle

Where direct moral evaluation is too complex for real-time decision-making, agents and institutions may rely on simplified moral interfaces (heuristics, declarations, metrics) that preserve fidelity to imposition reduction without claiming completeness.

Clarifications:

- Interfaces are representational tools, not moral truth itself.
- Fidelity takes precedence over exhaustiveness.

38. Directional World-Improvement Principle (BPW-Oriented)

Agents and institutions may voluntarily evaluate actions, structures, and reforms by their tendency to move the world directionally closer to a Best Possible World characterized by conscious existence without involuntary imposition.

Clarifications:

- Directionality does not imply obligation.
- Movement toward BPW does not negate present moral tragicness.

39. Non-Sanctification of Action Principle

No action, policy, or institution may be morally sanctified or declared righteous solely because it represents the least immoral available option.

Clarifications:

- Least-immoral status does not confer moral goodness.
- Sanctification constitutes moral distortion.

40. Voluntary Continuity Principle

Sustained participation in imposition-reduction practices remains morally valid only insofar as participation continues to be voluntary and revocable.

Clarifications:

- Continuity is consent-dependent.
- Withdrawal does not retroactively generate moral fault.

41. Non-Justification of Imposition Principle

No involuntary imposition on the will of a conscious agent may be morally justified, morally required, morally permitted, or morally sanctified by appeal to necessity, benefit, authority, rule, outcome, consent substitution, or comparative improvement.

The occurrence, unavoidability, or comparative minimization of an involuntary imposition does not alter its moral valence. At most, comparison may identify degrees of immorality or tragic constraint, but it cannot convert imposition into moral rightness or obligation.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Moral evaluation identifies imposition as immoral wherever it occurs, without exception.
- Necessity, emergency, or lack of alternatives does not generate moral justification.
- “Less immoral” does not entail “morally acceptable,” “justified,” or “required.”
- Appeals to authority, law, social order, or beneficial outcomes do not negate imposition.
- Recognition of tragic constraint preserves moral truth rather than excusing violation.

42. Applicability Without Distortion Principle (how to apply consistently in real world)

The difficulty of consistently applying moral evaluation in real-world scenarios does not indicate a defect in the moral framework, but reflects the presence of unavoidable involuntary imposition, epistemic

limitation, and moral tragedy. No increase in ease, determinacy, or procedural clarity may be achieved by reclassifying involuntary imposition as morally justified, required, or permissible.

Where other moral systems simplify application by converting evaluation into obligation, necessity into justification, or tragedy into moral rightness, Imposition Ethics preserves moral fidelity by refusing such distortions. Consistent application therefore requires judgment, transparency, and acknowledgment of constraint rather than algorithmic action-selection or prescriptive certainty.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Moral accuracy takes precedence over ease of application.
- Practical difficulty does not imply conceptual inconsistency.
- Indeterminacy under constraint is a feature of moral reality, not a theoretical failure.
- Algorithmic completeness is rejected where it would require moral laundering.
- Real-world application may remain morally tragic even when agents act optimally under constraint.

43. Emergency, Benign Uncertainty, and Extreme-Case Fidelity Principle

Emergency situations, benign consent uncertainty, and extreme or time-constrained scenarios do not suspend, override, or simplify moral evaluation. Where involuntary imposition is unavoidable, the situation is morally tragic, and no available option becomes morally justified, required, or right by virtue of urgency, benefit, or necessity.

In such conditions, Imposition Ethics permits comparative evaluation of available states of affairs by degree of will-frustration, without converting comparative reduction into moral permission or obligation.

Agents may voluntarily act under constraint, including reliance on defeasible heuristics or intuitive judgment, but no action is morally demanded, and no coercive act is morally laundered by emergency or uncertainty.

Benign surprises or uncertain-consent interactions are evaluated by actual will-frustration rather than the absence of prior consent alone.

Where no will is frustrated, no involuntary imposition occurs; where minor frustration occurs, moral valence scales with severity without invoking prohibition or blame.

Apparent lack of determinate guidance in extreme cases reflects moral reality rather than theoretical incompleteness. The framework preserves moral fidelity by refusing to manufacture prescriptions, permissions, or justifications where moral tragedy or epistemic limitation persists.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Emergencies do not generate moral justification or obligation.
- “Saving someone” against their will may be less immoral, but never morally right.
- Surprise or uncertainty does not constitute imposition absent actual will-frustration.
- Over-caution is not required; heuristics are voluntary and defeasible.
- Extreme cases expose moral tragedy rather than licensing moral shortcuts.
- Moral evaluation remains descriptive even when action is urgent.

44. Institutional Practical Application and Fidelity Principle

Institutions may operationalize Imposition Ethics through voluntary structures, policies, metrics, and procedures that aim to reduce, mitigate, or make transparent involuntary imposition over time, provided that such implementation does not claim moral authority, generate moral obligations, or reclassify involuntary imposition as morally justified.

Practical application at the institutional level consists in design orientation, not moral prescription. Institutions may employ comparative evaluation, imposition-reduction goals, exit mechanisms, appeal processes, and transparency standards as engineering tools for coordination under constraint, while fully acknowledging that institutional actions may remain morally tragic.

Institutional practicality is achieved by preserving moral truth under constraint rather than by manufacturing moral permission, obligation, or righteousness for coercive actions undertaken for coordination, safety, or stability.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- Institutions apply the framework descriptively, not authoritatively.
- Policies may be legitimate for coordination without being morally justified.
- Comparative reduction does not convert institutional coercion into moral rightness.
- Transparency and acknowledgment take precedence over moral laundering.
- Institutional effectiveness does not license moral sanctification.
- Exit, appeal, and revision mechanisms preserve agent autonomy under constraint.
- Failure to fully eliminate imposition reflects world conditions, not institutional moral defect.

45. Comparative Imposition Principle

When involuntary imposition cannot be avoided, all resulting states remain immoral; however, they are morally ranked by the degree of will-frustration imposed.

Comparison does not convert immorality into morality.

“Less immoral” does not mean “moral.”

46. Prevention Clarification

Preventing a future involuntary imposition is not itself an imposition when it does not override an existing will.

Prevention, safeguards, and risk reduction are morally meaningful when they do not violate an existing will.

47. Non-Goals

Imposition Ethics does not:

- Assign positive moral duties
- Justify coercion
- Aggregate outcomes to override consent
- Excuse harm by appeal to necessity
- Collapse moral truth into procedural governance

48. Optional Prescriptive Implementation Principle (BPW-Alignment Policy)

Imposition Ethics may be implemented as a voluntary, prescriptive decision-policy for agents and institutions who choose to align their behavior with the moral horizon (BPW). Under this implementation, agents may treat the framework as action-guiding in the following way:

- Prefer actions that are voluntary assistance of will (consented cooperation).
- Prefer actions that avoid creating new involuntary imposition.
- Where involuntary imposition is unavoidable, prefer options that comparatively minimize will-frustration (least-imposition orientation), without converting that minimization into moral justification.

This prescriptive implementation is an adopted posture, not a moral command generated by the framework itself. Pursuit of BPW is not an imperative, and no agent is morally required to act, optimize, or sacrifice.

Clarifications (canonical intent):

- “Should” in this principle is conditional: it applies only within a voluntarily adopted BPW-alignment policy.
- No unnecessary involuntary imposition may be undertaken solely to move the world closer to BPW.
- BPW-oriented projects are permitted only insofar as they are themselves voluntary assistance and do not impose on existing wills.
- “Least imposition” guides choice under constraint, but never makes an imposition morally

good, justified, permitted, or required.

Principle 49 — Kantian Imperative-Form Clarification (Categorical Classification, Hypothetical Prescription)

Statement:

Imposition Ethics issues categorical moral classifications (moral/immoral valence) but does not generate categorical imperatives (unconditional action-commands). In Kant's terms:

- A categorical imperative commands action unconditionally (independent of any chosen end).
- A hypothetical imperative commands action conditionally (given an adopted end/policy).

Accordingly, Imposition Ethics is categorical in evaluation but hypothetical in prescription:

1. Categorical classification (unconditional valence):
 - a. "Involuntary imposition on a conscious will is immoral."
 - b. "Voluntary assistance of will is moral."
2. Hypothetical prescription (conditional guidance):
 - a. "If an agent/institution voluntarily adopts BPW-alignment (least-imposition orientation), then it should prefer voluntary assistance and, where imposition is unavoidable, choose the comparatively least-imposing available option."

Canonical intent / safeguards:

- "Immoral" is a verdict about a state/action's valence, not an automatically binding command on every agent.
- Any "should/must" language is policy-conditional unless explicitly marked otherwise.
- No agent is categorically required to optimize, sacrifice, or pursue BPW; BPW-alignment is an optional adopted posture, not a universal duty.

50. Moral Recognition,

Grief, and Compassion

Principle

(Comfort Without Distortion)

Where agents are involved in situations containing involuntary imposition—especially under unavoidable constraint or moral tragedy—Imposition Ethics affirms that moral recognition, compassion, and shared grief are appropriate and truth-preserving responses, provided they do not reclassify the imposition as morally justified, permitted, required, or good.

Moral comfort within the framework consists in accurately naming moral reality rather than resolving or redeeming it. Agents may be acknowledged as blameless under constraint, even when participating in outcomes with negative moral valence. Emotional support, relational repair, and communal recognition may be offered without implying moral righteousness, necessity, or obligation.

The morally fitting affective orientation to tragic situations is not pride, righteousness, or guilt-by-default, but grief, humility, and solidarity in recognition of a world that fails to fully respect will.

This principle permits consolation grounded in truth:

that the agent did not create the tragedy,

that no available option was morally good,

that moral failure of the situation does not entail moral defect of the agent,

and that acknowledgment and repair remain meaningful without altering moral valence.

Clarifications (canonical

intent):

- Moral comfort must not rely on justification, sanctification, necessity, or outcome-based permission.
- Recognition that an agent acted under constraint does not convert an immoral act into a moral one.
- Compassion toward agents does not negate harm, erase moral tragedy, or dissolve responsibility for acknowledgment and repair.
- Grief is an appropriate moral response where no option avoids involuntary imposition.
- Blamelessness under constraint concerns moral blame, not moral valence.
- Communal or pastoral responses may support agents emotionally without generating obligation, absolution-by-justification, or moral authority.

- Hope within the framework is directional, oriented toward future reduction of involuntary imposition rather than redemption of past harm.

Functional Role in the Canon

This principle:

- Improves psychological and pastoral comfort without moral laundering
- Preserves honesty in tragedy
- Reinforces the valence–blame separation
- Prevents drift toward hero narratives or guilt mysticism
- Complements Principle 18 (Acknowledgment & Absolution) without expanding absolution into justification
- Supports BPW-alignment motivation without obligation

CLARIFICATIONS

Nature can generate states with negative moral valence without being morally blameworthy.

Lying is not inherently immoral, as no agent is obligated to use their body or speech to convey truth.

Birth is not immoral, as no prior will exists to be imposed upon.

All unavoidable harms remain immoral; comparison does not justify harm.

PROVISIONAL APPENDIX v0.1

Status: Non-Canonical / Research-Scoped / Retractable

P1. STATUS OF WILL AND VOLITION

Current science does not provide an objective, complete, evaluator-independent theory of will or volition.

Behavioral reports, psychological models, and neural correlates may inform interpretation, but do not constitute a settled definition of what a will is, how many wills an agent has, or how wills persist across time and context.

P2. Provisional Scientific

Will-Model Principle

(Non-Canonical / Research-Scoped)

Statement: A will may be provisionally modeled as the set of stable, reflectively endorsed preferences an agent would maintain under conditions of adequate information, non-coercion, and minimal distortion. This model is descriptive and heuristic, not metaphysical or definitive, and serves to clarify how will-frustration may be interpreted in practical evaluation.

Canonical Intent / Safeguards:

- This model does not claim to identify the essence of will; it offers a scientifically tractable approximation for moral analysis.
- Stability refers to preferences that persist across time and context, not momentary impulses.
- Reflective endorsement refers to preferences an agent would accept upon consideration, not those produced by manipulation, coercion, or impaired cognition.
- Adequate information refers to the agent having access to relevant facts, without requiring omniscience.

- This model does not generate moral justification, obligation, or permission; it only clarifies how imposition may be interpreted.
- Where empirical evidence contradicts or refines this model, the model is revisable without altering the core axiom of Imposition Ethics.
- The model is a tool for comparative evaluation, not a determinant of moral truth.

Clarifications:

- Will-frustration is interpreted as interference with these stable, reflectively endorsed preferences.
- Conflicting or fragmented preferences may be analyzed by identifying which preferences the agent would endorse under non-distorted conditions.
- This model does not quantify will-frustration; it only provides a structured basis for identifying it.
- The model is compatible with multiple scientific theories of agency, including predictive processing, preference architecture, and cognitive-behavioral frameworks.
- Adoption of this model is voluntary and does not impose obligations on agents or institutions.

P2.b — Will as Agency-Relevant Choice Set

Hypothesis:

A will may be provisionally identified with the range of choices necessary for an agent to exercise meaningful agency.

Status: Conceptually useful, dependent on unresolved agency theory.

P3. LIMITS ON QUANTIFYING WILL-FRUSTRATION

No scientifically grounded, non-arbitrary metric currently exists for quantifying the severity of will-frustration.

The following may be comparatively relevant, but are not algorithmically determinative:

- Intensity
- Duration
- Scope
- Reversibility

P4. HYPOTHETICAL ORDERING PRINCIPLES (NON-AGGREGATIVE)

P4.a — Reversibility Priority Hypothesis

Hypothesis:

Irreversible impositions are morally worse than reversible impositions, *ceteris paribus*.

P4.b — Duration Sensitivity Hypothesis

Hypothesis:

Longer-lasting impositions may be morally worse than shorter ones, absent countervailing factors.

P4.c — Scope as Comparative, Not Aggregative Hypothesis

Hypothesis:

Scope may inform comparison but cannot override individual will-violation.

P5. OVERRIDE AND PREVENTION BOUNDARIES

P5.a — Override Threshold Hypothesis

Hypothesis:

An override occurs when an agent's counterfactual choice set is reduced below the minimum required for meaningful agency.

P5.b — Prevention Boundary Hypothesis

Hypothesis:

Prevention includes actions that reduce the probability of future involuntary imposition without materially constraining present choice sets.

Provisional Appendix —

Provisional Principles (Non-Canonical)

Status: Provisional / Non-Canonical

Scope: Optional implementation modules for agents or institutions who voluntarily adopt BPW-alignment.

Constraint: No provisional principle overrides or revises canonical principles.

P1. Positive Value Neutrality

Principle

Principle (provisional):

Imposition Ethics does not define a single, universal “good,” “flourishing,” or “best life.” Positive value is treated as agent-relative: what a conscious agent, under informed and non-coerced conditions, stably endorses as desired or worthwhile.

Clarifications (provisional intent):

- The canon classifies immorality via involuntary imposition; it does not mandate a specific life-plan or value hierarchy.
- BPW-alignment (when adopted) constrains how goods may be pursued (via consent), not which goods are correct.

P2. Voluntary Motivational

Grounds Principle

Principle (provisional):

Agents may have non-obligatory reasons to adopt BPW-alignment—prudential, relational, identity-based, or institutional—without those reasons constituting categorical moral requirements.

Clarifications (provisional intent):

- Typical motives may include: reducing conflict, increasing trust, stabilizing cooperation, preserving dignity, or aligning with self-identity as a non-coercive agent.
- Motivation explains why an agent might choose alignment; it does not generate a moral command to do so.

P3. Voluntary Coordination

and Arbitration Principle

Principle (provisional):

Where multiple wills conflict, agents who adopt BPW-alignment may

treat voluntary coordination as the primary resolution method: negotiation, trade, mediation, and pre-agreed fair procedures. If deadlock persists and imposition is unavoidable, agents may choose comparatively least-imposing options while retaining full recognition that the resulting state remains morally negative in valence.

Clarifications (provisional intent):

- Coordination tools may include: mutual compromise, rotation/time-sharing, side-payments, lotteries, neutral mediation, or contract rules chosen in advance.
- “Least-imposing” is comparative triage, not moral justification, permission, or requirement.

P4. Institutional Consent

Preservation Principle

Principle (provisional):

Institutions that voluntarily adopt BPW-alignment may be evaluated by their capacity to preserve consent at scale and to reduce reliance on coercion through transparency, procedural protections, and constrained authority.

Clarifications (provisional intent):

- BPW-aligned institutional design may emphasize: meaningful exit/alternatives, due process, transparency, limited scope, auditability, and checks against concentrated power.
- Institutional legitimacy (within this module) is treated as a practical function of comparative reductions in imposed will-frustration, not moral authority.

P5. Character and Habit

Development Principle

Principle (provisional):

Agents who adopt BPW-alignment may cultivate practical traits and habits that tend to reduce imposition and increase voluntary assistance of will.

Clarifications (provisional intent):

- Examples of BPW-supportive traits: consent-attunement, restraint, epistemic humility about others' preferences, transparency, patience, and repair orientation (apology/restitution when imposition occurs).
- These traits are framed as instrumental competencies, not as a moral ranking of persons.

P6. Narrative Horizon

Principle

Principle (provisional):

BPW may be treated as a moral horizon—a voluntarily chosen direction of social and personal development characterized by expanding zones of voluntary cooperation and shrinking reliance on involuntary control, without implying inevitability, obligation, or moral redemption of tragedy.

Clarifications (provisional intent):

- “Progress” within this narrative means increased consent-respecting coordination, not moral perfection or universal duty.
- Tragic cases remain tragic: reduced imposition does not convert immoral states into moral ones.

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED

BY THE PRINCIPLES

1. Core Axiom (Imposition

Principle)

Problem it solves:

- Utilitarianism: justifies overriding individuals for aggregate good.
- Kantian deontology: permits coercion via “rational duty” even against actual will.
- Christianity / Islam: sanctify coercion via divine authority.

What this principle fixes:

It eliminates all moral laundering mechanisms by grounding immorality in actual will-violation, not outcomes, rules, intentions, or authority.

2. Consent Principle

Problem it solves:

- Social-contract theories that treat “implicit consent” as real consent
- Religious obedience models where consent is irrelevant

Fix:

Restores voluntary participation as the sole gateway to moral permissibility.

3. Conscious Agent Principle

Problem it solves:

- Animistic, environmental, or theistic systems that moralize objects, laws, or abstractions

Fix:

Restricts moral relevance strictly to beings with wills, preventing category errors.

MORAL STRUCTURE

PRINCIPLES

4. Moral Valence Principle

Problem it solves:

- Virtue ethics conflating “bad people” with “bad states”
- Legalistic systems equating wrongdoing with blame

Fix:

Separates moral reality from character judgments.

5. Moral Blame Separation

Principle

Problem it solves:

- Doctrines of original sin
- Collective guilt models
- Karma systems that assign blame without agency

Fix:

Blame applies only where choice exists.

6. Nature Valence Principle

Problem it solves:

- Theodicies claiming suffering is “good” or “deserved”
- Stoic acceptance that erases moral tragedy

Fix:

Allows nature to be morally bad without moral blame, preserving honesty.

UNAVOIDABILITY & COMPARISON

7. Unavoidability Non- Justification Principle

Problem it solves:

- “No choice” defenses in law, religion, and war ethics

Fix:

Necessity never becomes morality.

8. Comparative Imposition

Principle

Problem it solves:

- Binary moral systems that collapse tragic choices
- Utilitarian aggregation

Fix:

Allows ranking without justification.

9. Non-Conversion Principle

Problem it solves:

- “Least evil becomes good” reasoning
- Ends-justify-means ethics

Fix:

Prevents moral alchemy.

PREVENTION &

REDUCTION

10. Prevention Without

Override Principle

Problem it solves:

- Preemptive punishment doctrines
- Paternalism framed as protection

Fix:

Distinguishes risk reduction from coercion.

11–12. Directional

Improvement & Reduction

Priority

Problem it solves:

- Moral perfectionism
- Binary purity ethics

Fix:

Allows progress without lies.

MODAL & EXISTENTIAL

PRINCIPLES

13–14. World-Dependence &

Best Possible World (BPW)

Problem it solves:

- Claims that suffering is metaphysically necessary
- Religious glorification of hardship

Fix:

Preserves the conceptual coherence of a harm-free world.

AGENCY,

COMMUNICATION,

EXISTENCE

15. Non-Obligation of

Expression Principle

Problem it solves:

- Absolute truth-telling doctrines
- Confessions under coercion

Fix:

Reclaims bodily and communicative autonomy.

16. Non-Imposition of

Existence Principle

Problem it solves:

- Anti-natalist claims that birth is harm
- Religious guilt attached to existence

Fix:

No will → no imposition.

EPISTEMIC & PROCEDURAL PRINCIPLES

17. Moral Fidelity &

Epistemic Humility

Problem it solves:

- Algorithmic ethics
- Divine command certainty

Fix:

Truth > completeness.

RESTORATION

18. Absolution Through

Acknowledgment

Problem it solves:

- Religious absolution that erases wrongdoing
- Legal pardon conflated with moral cleansing

Fix:

Repairs blame without falsifying history.

NORMATIVITY & ACTION

GUIDANCE

19–22. Non-Prescriptive

Morality & Action Orientation

Problem it solves:

- The is–ought collapse
- Moral obligation as coercive demand

Fix:

Morality describes, it does not command.

20. Total Moral Tragicness

Principle

Problem it solves:

- “Someone must be right” thinking
- Hero narratives in tragedy

Fix:

Names tragedy honestly.

21. Is–Ought Dissolution

Principle

Problem it solves:

- Humean inference abuse
- Moral obligation mysticism

Fix:

Ends the logical error permanently.

COORDINATION &

INSTITUTIONS (23–44)

Problems these collectively solve:

- Moral authoritarianism
- Institutional sanctification
- Coercive moralization
- “For your own good” governance

What they fix:

They allow coordination without moral lies, legitimacy without righteousness, and institutions without moral authority.

Key targets include:

- Theocracy
- Rule utilitarianism
- Moral legalism

FINAL INVARIANT

41–43. Non-Justification,

Applicability, Emergency

Fidelity

Problem it solves:

- Emergency ethics exceptions
- Wartime moral laundering
- “Extreme cases prove the rule”

Fix:

Even hell does not become holy.

Principle 48 (Voluntary

Prescriptive Implementation)

solves the problems of...

- Action-guidance ambiguity
 - Without it, the framework can rank states by imposition but can appear to lack a clear “move-selection” rule.
 - This principle supplies an opt-in decision policy: prefer voluntary assistance; if imposition is unavoidable, minimize will-frustration.
- “So what should I do?” under tragic constraints
 - In dilemmas where every available option involves harm, it provides a consistent selection rule (least-imposing) without pretending the outcome becomes “good.”
- Backdoor authoritarianism and moral mission creep
 - Prevents the slide from “BPW is best” to “therefore coercion is permitted to get there.”
 - It explicitly blocks unnecessary imposition done solely for “progress toward BPW.”
- Is-ought / normativity confusion
 - Keeps “should” conditional and non-authoritarian: If an agent or institution voluntarily adopts BPW-alignment, then they should...
 - Avoids claiming the canon itself issues categorical imperatives.

- Demandingness collapse
 - Stops the framework from being interpreted as requiring endless optimization, sacrifice, or maximization.
 - Prescriptivity becomes a chosen posture, not a universal moral requirement imposed on everyone.
- Institutional implementation gaps
 - Gives organizations a policy-ready operational rule (training/SOPs): consent-first; where coercion cannot be avoided, minimize imposition; do not rebrand tragedy as moral success.
- Conceptual drift into consequentialism
 - Guards the distinction:
 - Less imposition ≠ moral justification
 - Comparative ranking ≠ permission to impose

WHAT THIS ACHIEVES

OVER OTHER SYSTEMS

- No authority worship
- No outcome worship
- No obligation mysticism
- No moral laundering
- No false certainty
- No heroic lies

Imposition Ethics is the first system that stays honest even when morality fails to save us.

Vision

Mission Statement (Public-Facing)

The Church exists to recognize involuntary imposition as morally real, to reduce coercion wherever possible, and to orient toward a world in which conscious beings can exist without being forced against their will.

The Vision of the Church

The Church exists to recognize, articulate, and orient toward a world without involuntary imposition.

It does not claim that the world is good.

It does not claim that people are evil.

It claims that coercion, constraint, and unchosen harm are morally real, even when they are ordinary, accidental, or unavoidable.

The Church's vision begins with a simple recognition:

Being forced against one's will is morally bad—wherever it occurs, whoever causes it, and whether or not anyone is to blame.

From this recognition follows a clear orientation:

Moral progress consists in movement toward reduced involuntary imposition, even when moral perfection is unattainable.

The World as It Is

The Church understands the present world as morally compromised—not because of sin, failure, or guilt, but because involuntary imposition is pervasive.

Nature imposes.

Systems impose.

Circumstances impose.

Sometimes people impose.

Much of this is unavoidable. Much of it is not anyone's fault.

The Church therefore rejects moral blame as the center of ethics.

Instead, it focuses on moral valence—whether a state of affairs involves involuntary imposition at all.

A disaster can be morally bad without anyone being morally guilty.

A system can be immoral without malicious intent.

A life can be lived ethically inside an unethical world.

The Best Possible World

(BPW)

The Church holds that coercion and suffering are not logically necessary for conscious existence.

A world in which:

- conscious agents exist,
- no agent imposes on another,
- and nature itself does not impose,

is conceptually coherent.

This world—the Best Possible World—is not promised, predicted, or demanded.

It is the moral horizon.

The Church's vision is not utopian optimism, but directional clarity:

This is what “better” ultimately means.

Moral Action Without Moral

Purity

The Church does not demand perfection.

It explicitly distinguishes:

- moral truth from human feasibility,
- evaluation from expectation.

To live within an immoral world is not itself a moral failure.

The Church therefore rejects:

- guilt-based morality,
- purity tests,
- moral hero narratives,
- and coercive enforcement of “goodness.”

Instead, it affirms:

- prevention without override,
- reduction without justification,
- comparison without permission.

When imposition cannot be avoided, the Church seeks less imposition rather than moral absolutism.

The Role of Judgment and

Humility

Because current science cannot fully define will, volition, or the precise severity of will-frustration, the Church does not claim mechanical certainty.

It treats moral reasoning as:

- principled,
- disciplined,
- honest about limits.

Where knowledge ends, the Church refuses false precision.

Moral fidelity is valued over algorithmic completeness.

Truth is preferred to comfort.

The Church's Orientation

The Church exists to:

- Name involuntary imposition wherever it appears
- Refuse to excuse harm by appeal to necessity
- Reduce future coercion without creating new coercion

- Preserve autonomy without demanding obedience
- Hold open the possibility of a world without force
 - It does not rule.
 - It does not command.
 - It does not promise salvation.
 - It orients.

In One Sentence

The vision of the Church is a world in which conscious beings exist without being forced against their will—and a present in which every step away from coercion, however small, is morally meaningful.

Rituals and

Practices

Rituals and Practices

(Canon-Consistent)

All Church practices follow one constraint:

They must never impose participation, belief, speech, or conformity.

Accordingly, practices are opt-in, reflective, and non-authoritative.

1. Recognition Practice

A voluntary practice of naming imposition.

Participants may:

- Identify forms of involuntary imposition in the world (natural, systemic, situational)
- Distinguish harm from blame
- Acknowledge unavoidable immorality without assigning guilt

Purpose:

- Moral clarity without condemnation

2. Reduction Practice

A voluntary orientation toward prevention.

Participants may:

- Reflect on ways future imposition could be reduced
- Prioritize reversibility and restraint
- Prefer non-escalation when uncertain

Purpose:

- Directional moral improvement without moral heroism

3. Silence / Non-Action

Practice

A sanctioned practice of choosing not to act.

Participants may:

- Acknowledge limits of knowledge or capacity
- Refrain from intervention when action would impose
- Accept unresolved immorality without denial

Purpose:

- Respect for autonomy and epistemic humility

4. BPW Reflection

An optional contemplative practice.

Participants may:

- Reflect on the Best Possible World as a moral horizon
- Contrast contingent harm with logical necessity
- Affirm that coercion is not inherent to existence

Purpose:

- Maintain hope without prediction or promise

5. Exit Practice

A formal recognition that leaving is always permitted.

No explanations required.

No penalties.

No moral inference drawn.

Purpose:

- To ensure the Church never becomes a source of imposition.

Epistemology

EPISTEMOLOGY

Church of the Best Possible World

Purpose of This Page

This page defines the epistemological standards endorsed by the Church of the Best Possible World. These standards govern how claims are justified, evaluated, and distinguished from belief.

Epistemology addresses how claims may be known or supported, and is separate from the moral commitments defined in the Canon.

Epistemic Principle

Justification of any claim requires evidence proportional to its entailments.

Types of Claims

Claims are categorized according to the kind of evidence required to justify them.

Conceptual Claims

Claims concerning concepts, definitions, logical relationships, or meanings. Conceptual claims require conceptual evidence, such as logical consistency, definitional clarity, or analytic argument.

Empirical Claims

Claims concerning states of affairs in the observable world. Empirical claims require empirical evidence, including observation, experimentation, measurement, or novel testable prediction.

Metaphysical Claims

Claims concerning the fundamental nature of reality or necessary conditions of existence. Metaphysical claims require metaphysical justification, such as direct self-evident awareness or unavoidable presupposition.

Evidence

Information or justification that increases the rational credibility of a claim. Evidence must be relevant to the type of claim being made and sufficient in strength to support its entailments.

Entailments

The logical, practical, or moral consequences that would follow if a claim were true. Claims with greater entailments require proportionally stronger justification.

Belief

Acceptance of a proposition as true. Belief alone does not constitute justification and may exist independently of evidence.

Faith

An epistemically unjustified belief. Faith, as defined here, is belief held without sufficient evidence proportional to its entailments.

Justified Belief

A belief supported by evidence appropriate in kind and strength to the claim's entailments.

Unjustified Belief

A belief held without sufficient evidence proportional to its entailments.

Knowledge

A justified belief that is true. Knowledge requires both truth and adequate justification.

Burden of Proof

The responsibility to provide justification rests with the individual or institution making a claim. Extraordinary claims require proportionally extraordinary evidence.

Application to Morality

Moral claims endorsed by the Church are defined in the Canon. The epistemological standards described here govern how such claims are evaluated, defended, or revised. Acceptance of a moral commitment does not imply empirical proof unless the claim itself is empirical in nature.

Epistemic Humility

The Church acknowledges the possibility of error and affirms that claims may be revised in light of stronger evidence or clearer reasoning. Commitment to epistemic standards includes openness to correction.

Separation of Domains

Moral truth, empirical fact, and metaphysical necessity are distinct domains. Confusion between these domains undermines clarity and justification. Claims must be evaluated within the appropriate epistemic category.

Definitions

DEFINITIONS

Church of the Best Possible World

Purpose of This Page

This page provides precise definitions of key terms used throughout the moral framework and Canon of the Church of the Best Possible World. These definitions are intended to ensure clarity, consistency, and shared understanding. Where definitions differ from common usage, the meanings given here take precedence within the context of the Church's doctrine.

Objective

True independent of any individual mind, opinion, intuition, emotion, cultural norm, or subjective perspective.

Morality

That which concerns how the wills of conscious agents.

Objective Morality

A moral fact or moral status that is true independent of any mind, belief, intuition, or feeling.

Objective Moral Action

An action that factually constitutes voluntary assistance of will, regardless of how it is perceived or interpreted by any agent.

Objective Immoral Action

An action that factually constitutes an involuntary imposition of will, regardless of intention, belief, or outcome.

Will

The capacity of a conscious agent to form preferences, intentions, or desires regarding their own actions, body, or property. (e.g. Your will does not apply to another's body)

Conscious Agent

Any being capable of subjective experience and possessing a will. Moral consideration applies to all conscious agents regardless of intelligence, power, or form.

Voluntary Assistance of Will

An action that supports or enables the will of a conscious agent with that agent's informed and non-coerced consent.

Involuntary Imposition of Will

An action that interferes with, overrides, or constrains the will of a conscious agent without that agent's informed and non-coerced consent.

Justified Immoral Action

An action that constitutes an involuntary imposition of will, but is performed to prevent, stop, or reduce other involuntary impositions when no fully non-imposing option is available, and the least-imposing effective option is chosen.

Unjustified Moral Action

An action that, in fact, assists a person's will (they do consent, or would have consented if given the opportunity), but where the actor lacked adequate warrant of consent at the time of acting and could have used a consent-seeking or lower-risk alternative.

Consent

Agreement given by a conscious agent that is informed, voluntary, and free from coercion, manipulation, or duress.

Duress

Any condition under which consent is extracted through threat, force, deprivation, or undue pressure, thereby invalidating that consent.

Justified Immoral Action

An action that constitutes an involuntary imposition of will but is performed to prevent a greater involuntary imposition of will. Such actions remain immoral and require acknowledgment and atonement.

Unjustified Moral Action

An action intended as assistance of will where consent is uncertain, and where the action ultimately supports or enables the will of a conscious agent.

Atonement

The acknowledgment of having committed an immoral action, accompanied by efforts to remedy, repair, or take responsibility for the moral violation.

Non-Cancellation

The principle that moral and immoral actions do not offset, cancel, or aggregate. Each action retains its own moral status regardless of other actions performed.

Best Possible World (BPW)

A world in which involuntary imposition of will is impossible, such that no conscious agent can be forced to act without consent.

Subjective Moral Action

An action that may be the most moral action an agent is capable of performing given their limitations, but which is not the most moral

action that any logically possible being could perform in the same circumstances.

Objectively Most Moral Action

The most moral action possible for any logically possible being in a given situation, independent of practical limitations.

Answering Moral Dilemmas

The Trolley Problem

Scenario: A runaway trolley is heading toward five people tied to a track. You stand beside a lever that, if pulled, will divert the trolley to another track—where it will kill one person.

Standard framing (Utilitarian):

Pulling the lever is morally required to minimize harm (saving five > losing one).

Imposition Ethics framing:

Both options involve involuntary imposition, but the moral evaluation must distinguish between:

- Moral Valence: Whether a state of affairs involves will-violation.
- Moral Blame: Whether a moral agent is responsible for that violation.



Option 1: Do not pull the

lever

- The five people die.
- The deaths result from natural circumstances (the trolley's trajectory), not a moral agent's action.
- Therefore:
 - Negative moral valence: Nature has produced a state that involves the frustration of five wills.
 - No moral blame: You did not override anyone's will. You allowed nature to run its course.

Conclusion:

This is a morally tragic outcome, but you bear no moral blame.

Nature, while not blameworthy itself, generates the negative valence.

Option 2: Pull the lever

- The one person is killed to save five.
- You, a conscious agent, take deliberate action that overrides the will of that one person.
- Therefore:
 - Mitigation: You reduce the overall will-frustration in the outcome.
 - Moral blame: You have imposed upon a conscious agent without consent.

Conclusion:

You have reduced moral valence in the outcome but incurred moral blame through action. You are now an agent of imposition, even if your act was the least immoral available.

Imposition Ethics

Evaluation Summary:

Action	Moral Valence	Moral Blame	Judgment
Do Nothing	High (5 deaths)	None	Tragic, but agent is blameless
Pull Lever	Lower (1 death)	Present (1 killed)	Less immoral overall, but blameworthy

Key Principle Applied:

“A state may be morally negative without any agent being blameworthy” — Moral Blame Separation Principle



Directional Moral

Guidance:

- Imposition Ethics allows voluntary alignment with the reduction of moral valence, but does not require intervention.
- You may choose to act—but this action does not become morally right, only less immoral, and you bear blame for the imposed death.
- There is no morally clean option here—this is a total moral tragedy.

Takeaway:

In Imposition Ethics, pulling the lever does not become “right”—it simply trades off types of moral cost. Letting five die is more tragic, but not blameworthy. Acting to save them reduces overall tragedy, but makes you morally implicated in the death of the one.

The Fat Man Variant

Scenario: A trolley is barreling toward five people tied to the tracks. You are on a footbridge above the track with a large man standing

next to you. Pushing him onto the tracks would stop the trolley and save the five people—but it would kill him.

✘ Standard Utilitarian View:

You should push the man—saving five outweighs sacrificing one.

🗣️ Imposition Ethics View:

This scenario introduces direct, intentional, and irreversible override of a conscious agent's will by another agent. That moral fact cannot be sanitized by appeal to outcomes.

▨ Option: Push the Fat Man

- You intentionally override his will—he is not consenting to be sacrificed.
- His death is a result of your deliberate action, not nature.
- Therefore:
 - Reduced overall will-frustration: Five lives saved.
 - High moral blame: You impose death directly and irreversibly on a non-consenting agent.

This is an immoral act.

Even though it reduces the net number of frustrated wills, it transfers

the moral cost onto you.

You become the agent of imposition, and the act cannot be justified under any appeal to benefit or necessity.

Option: Do Nothing

- The five die due to the trolley's natural course.
- You took no action that violated another agent's will.
- Therefore:
 - Negative moral valence: Five wills are frustrated by death.
 - No moral blame: You did not override any conscious agent's will.

This is tragic, not blameworthy.

The deaths are the result of nature—not your actions. According to Imposition Ethics, it is morally tragic, but you remain morally innocent.

Imposition Ethics

Evaluation Summary

Action	Moral Valence	Moral Blame	Judgment
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Do Nothing	High (5 deaths)	None	Tragic outcome, agent remains blameless
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Push Fat Man Lower valence High Immoral act: reduced valence, agent to blame

Key Principles Applied:

- Core Axiom (Imposition Principle)
- Moral Valence Principle
- Moral Blame Separation Principle
- Non-Justification of Imposition Principle

Directional Moral

Guidance:

- Pushing the man might reduce the scale of involuntary imposition in total—but it does so by committing a morally blameworthy act.
- The act cannot be justified, sanctified, or declared morally right, even if it results in fewer deaths.
- The is–ought gap remains: evaluation does not generate obligation.
- You may choose to act, but this voluntary alignment is not required, and it incurs moral cost.

Imposition Ethics

Summary of the Fat Man

Case:

- Pushing the fat man = agent-induced imposition → morally blameworthy
- Not pushing = nature-induced imposition → morally tragic, but agent blameless
“Even when tragedy is inescapable, morality remains descriptive—not prescriptive.”

The Hospital Organ Harvest

Scenario:

Five patients are dying—each needs a different organ to survive. A healthy person walks into the hospital for a routine check-up. The doctor considers euthanizing this person (without consent) to harvest their organs and save the five patients.

✘ Standard Utilitarian View:

Killing one to save five is the moral action—because it maximizes total well-being.

🗣️ Imposition Ethics View:

This case represents a direct, coercive override of a conscious agent's body, will, and life—without consent. This is the archetype of immoral imposition, no matter how "beneficial" the outcome.

▨ Option: Kill the Healthy

Patient

- The doctor forcibly takes the organs, resulting in the death of a non-consenting conscious agent.
- This is a deliberate override of the patient's will and autonomy.
- Therefore:
 - Reduced will-frustration overall: Five lives saved.

- Severe moral blame: The doctor is now the agent of violent imposition on one.
This is a morally blameworthy act.
Even if five are saved, the means are immoral—the ends do not cleanse the method.

Option: Do Not Kill

- The five patients die as a result of their own medical conditions—not due to any agent's action.
- No will is overridden through your inaction.
- Therefore:
 - Negative moral valence: Five deaths represent five cases of will-frustration.
 - No moral blame: These are natural tragedies, not caused by moral agents.
This is a morally tragic situation, but the doctor bears no blame for the patients' conditions. Not acting is morally preferable to becoming the cause of a direct imposition.

Imposition Ethics

Evaluation Summary

Action	Moral Valence	Moral Blame	Judgment
Do Nothing	High (5 deaths)	None	Tragic, but doctor is blameless

Kill Patient
Lower valence
Severe
Immoral: Doctor becomes agent of imposition

Why This Matters in

Imposition Ethics

This case illustrates a fundamental boundary of the framework:

Consent cannot be substituted by utility.

No amount of good outcomes justifies the override of a conscious agent's will.

- Imposition Ethics does not permit moral laundering via:
 - Aggregation of benefit
 - Institutional authority
 - Outcome-maximization
 - “Ends justify the means” logic

Directional Moral

Guidance:

- Choosing not to kill is morally tragic, but preserves moral fidelity.
- Choosing to kill may appear "pragmatic" or "utilitarian", but results in moral blame that cannot be erased.
- The framework affirms that:
 - You may voluntarily seek non-imposing solutions (organ donation programs, etc.)
 - You may never justify coercive imposition—even for good outcomes.

Key Principles Applied:

- Core Axiom (Imposition Principle)
- Consent Principle
- Non-Justification of Imposition Principle
- Comparative Imposition Principle
- Moral Valence ≠ Moral Blame
- Institutional Practical Application and Fidelity Principle

Summary of the Hospital

Organ Case in Imposition

Ethics

- Killing the one = Action of direct, blameworthy imposition
- Letting five die = Morally tragic, but blameless
- Moral truth is preserved, even when outcomes are grim.
"No life should be taken as a means, even to save others. Moral tragedy does not license moral distortion."

Comparative Analysis:

Degrees of Moral Blame in

Imposition Ethics

Under Imposition Ethics, the moral status of an action is determined not by its outcome, but by whether and how it constitutes an involuntary imposition on a conscious agent's will. Importantly, the framework distinguishes between moral valence (how immoral the outcome is) and moral blame (whether and how much an agent is blameworthy). In tragic scenarios, all outcomes may have negative moral valence, but the blameworthiness of the agent varies based on the nature and intensity of the imposition they directly cause. The following compares the three standard moral dilemmas using this lens:

1. The Standard Trolley

Problem

In this case, pulling a lever diverts a trolley from a track where five will die to one where a single person will die. The lever itself is a mechanical intermediary—it is not a person, nor does it have a will. The bystander who pulls the lever intervenes on nature, not directly on a person.

- Moral Valence: The outcome is morally negative regardless (someone dies).
- Blameworthiness: Low.

The bystander is not directly imposing on a conscious agent; the one person's death results from redirecting a force of nature, not from physical or intimate violation. This reduces the moral blame attached to the agent's role, even though the outcome is still tragic.

The imposition is indirect and mediated through an impersonal mechanism. The agent does not directly touch or coerce any person's body or will.

2. The Fat Man Variant

Here, the bystander must push a large man off a bridge to stop the trolley, thereby saving five others. Unlike the lever, the bystander here

directly imposes upon another conscious agent, overriding his will, bodily autonomy, and ultimately causing his death.

- Moral Valence: Still negative—someone dies involuntarily.
- Blameworthiness: Higher than in the standard trolley case.

The agent directly uses another person's body as a means to an end. The imposition is intentional, physical, and personally mediated. The fat man does not consent and is not a threat; he is an uninvolved third party. His death is caused not by redirection of a force, but by direct coercion and use of his body.

The imposition is personal, direct, and physically forceful, and thus more blameworthy.

3. The Hospital Organ

Harvest

In this case, a doctor euthanizes a healthy patient without consent to harvest five organs for five dying patients. This represents the most extreme form of imposition among the three dilemmas.

- Moral Valence: Still negative—one person dies for others.
- Blameworthiness: Highest of the three.

The doctor's act is not only direct, but also intimate, multi-layered, and systemic: it involves deception or betrayal of trust, intentional killing, and multiple violations (invasion of multiple organs, bodily autonomy, and life itself). It is also carried out under institutional cover, adding the risk of moral laundering.

The imposition is maximally direct and expansive: the agent violates not just the will to live, but bodily integrity on multiple levels, all without consent.

Conclusion

In Imposition Ethics, the degree of moral blame is a function of how directly and invasively an agent imposes on another's will. While all three dilemmas result in the same comparative moral valence—tragedy involving the loss of life—the pathway to that outcome, and the nature of the imposition, fundamentally change the agent's moral standing. The more direct, intentional, and multi-dimensional the imposition, the greater the blameworthiness.

This analysis preserves moral clarity even in tragic situations, and avoids the common ethical distortion of using good outcomes to justify morally blameworthy acts.

Dilemma	Nature of Imposition	Moral Valence
 <p>Trolley Problem</p>	<p>Indirect (on nature)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Uses a lever; does not touch the victim</i></p>	 <p>Negative</p>
 <p>Fat Man</p>	<p>Direct (on one person)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Pushes a non-consenting person physically</i></p>	 <p>Negative</p>
 <p>Organ Harvest</p>	<p>Direct & Systemic (many organs, trust)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Intentional killing; multiple physical invasions</i></p>	 <p>Negative</p>

Moral Prescriptions

Trolley problem: Pull the lever?

Prescriptive answer (under an adopted BPW-alignment policy): Pull the lever.

Reason: in a forced-choice where some involuntary imposition will occur no matter what, choose the option that minimizes total will-frustration (1 death instead of 5), while recognizing it does not become moral—it is the least-imposing option.

Checklist decision rule

(Imposition Ethics →

prescriptive

implementation)

- Step 1: Identify involuntary imposition in each outcome
 - Do nothing → 5 wills overridden (death), caused by nature.
 - Pull lever → 1 will overridden (death), caused by your intervention.
- Step 2: Separate valence vs blame
 - Moral valence (state of affairs): negative in both cases (someone is killed without consent).
 - Moral blame (agent responsibility):
 - Do nothing → less/none attributable to you (you didn't initiate the override).

- Pull lever → blame attaches to you (you become the direct causal imposer).
- Step 3: Apply BPW-alignment priority
 - When imposition is unavoidable, choose the comparatively least involuntary imposition.
 - Here: 1 death < 5 deaths ⇒ pull the lever.
- Step 4: Non-conversion constraint
 - “Less bad” ≠ “good.”
 - Pulling the lever is still an immoral imposition, even if it’s the least-imposing available action.

Compact infographic-style

summary

Option A — Don’t pull

- Outcome: 5 die
- Imposition magnitude: Very high
- Source: Nature/trolley trajectory
- Your blame: Minimal/none (omission)

Option B — Pull

- Outcome: 1 dies
- Imposition magnitude: Lower (least-imposing)
- Source: You redirect trolley
- Your blame: Yes (you become the imposer)

Prescriptive verdict (BPW-alignment): Pull.

Moral status: still immoral; chosen because it is least-imposing, not because it becomes justified.

Should the Doctor kill the person?

No. Under a BPW-alignment policy (Principle 48), the doctor should not kill the healthy person, because that is a maximal, direct, nonconsensual override of a conscious agent's will and cannot be converted into "permission" by the fact that five would be saved.

What the doctor should do instead (BPW-alignment)

- Refuse nonconsensual harvest (no euthanasia, no forced sedation/restraint/transport to enable organ removal).
- Exhaust voluntary pathways immediately:
 - check donor registry / prior consent,
 - contact organ procurement and regional sharing networks,
 - seek independently volunteering living donors (no coercion or manipulative pressure).
- Provide bridging care where possible (stabilization, temporary supports) and palliative care if needed.

Institutional guardrails

- Trigger ethics + legal compliance to prevent ad hoc “ends justify means” escalation.
- Follow pre-committed allocation rules rather than improvising a new coercive exception.

Constraint rule (when harm can't be avoided)

- If some patients will die due to scarcity, choose options that minimize will-frustration among consent-compatible choices—but never introduce a new extreme imposition (killing an unwilling person) to reduce overall tragedy.

Steal the Drug?

Prescriptive answer (under an adopted BPW-alignment policy): Steal the drug (nonviolently), but minimize the imposition and immediately move to restitution.

Reason: if the choice is genuinely forced, violating a pharmacist's property-will is typically a smaller involuntary imposition than allowing a person to die (maximal will-frustration). The theft remains immoral; it is chosen as the least-imposing option available.

Heinz dilemma (standard setup)

Scenario: Heinz's spouse is dying. A pharmacist has a life-saving drug but refuses to sell at an affordable price. Time is critical.

Checklist decision rule

(Imposition Ethics →

prescriptive

implementation)

- Step 1: List options and the impositions they create
 - Don't steal → spouse dies (involuntary imposition by nature/disease on spouse's will).
 - Steal → pharmacist's property/will is overridden (involuntary imposition by Heinz).
- Step 2: Separate moral valence vs moral blame
 - Valence: negative in both outcomes (someone's will is involuntarily frustrated).
 - Blame:
 - Don't steal → little/no blame for the death (you didn't impose it).
 - Steal → blame attaches to you (you become the imposer on the pharmacist).

- Step 3: Apply BPW-alignment priorities
 - Prefer voluntary assistance and consent-based routes first.
 - If time-critical and refusal is final, and some imposition is unavoidable:
 - choose the option that minimizes total will-frustration.
- Step 4: Add the “minimize-imposition execution” constraint
 - If you steal, do it in the least-imposing way:
 - take only the needed dose,
 - no violence / no threats / no coercion of persons,
 - leave an IOU + contact info,
 - pursue repayment/restitution immediately.

Compact infographic-style

summary

Option A — Don't steal

- Outcome: spouse dies
- Imposition magnitude: maximal (death overrides an entire future will)
- Source: nature/disease
- Your blame: low/none (omission)
- Prescriptive status: rejected if it's a genuine forced-choice

Option B — Steal

(nonviolently)

- Outcome: spouse lives; pharmacist's will/property is overridden
- Imposition magnitude: typically lower than death
- Source: you (direct imposition)
- Your blame: yes (you commit the override)
- Prescriptive status: chosen as least-imposing if no consent route remains

“Do-this-first” micro-plan (to

keep it prescriptive)

- Attempt fast consent routes:
 - negotiate price/partial payment, loan, charity, emergency assistance
- If refusal is final and time-critical:
 - steal only what's necessary, no force, leave restitution path

- After the emergency:
- repay, make restitution, and restore as much consent as possible

Should the Doctor kill the person?

No. Under a BPW-alignment policy (Principle 48), the doctor should not kill the healthy person, because that is a maximal, direct, nonconsensual override of a conscious agent's will and cannot be converted into "permission" by the fact that five would be saved.

What the doctor should do instead (BPW-alignment)

- Refuse nonconsensual harvest (no euthanasia, no forced sedation/restraint/transport to enable organ removal).
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 - check donor registry / prior consent,
 - contact organ procurement and regional sharing networks,
 - seek independently volunteering living donors (no coercion or manipulative pressure).
- Provide bridging care where possible (stabilization, temporary supports) and palliative care if needed.

Institutional guardrails

- Trigger ethics + legal compliance to prevent ad hoc “ends justify means” escalation.
- Follow pre-committed allocation rules rather than improvising a new coercive exception.

Constraint rule (when harm can't be avoided)

- If some patients will die due to scarcity, choose options that minimize will-frustration among consent-compatible choices—but never introduce a new extreme imposition (killing an unwilling person) to reduce overall tragedy.

Prescriptive answer (under an adopted BPW-alignment policy):

Disconnect (you are not required to remain connected).

Reason: remaining connected is an ongoing non-consensual use of your body—a continuing involuntary imposition on your will.

Disconnecting is best described as ending compelled assistance, not as initiating an imposition on the violinist.

Violinist dilemma (standard setup)

Scenario: You wake up kidnapped and surgically connected to a famous violinist who will die unless you remain connected for months. You did not consent.

Checklist decision rule

(Imposition Ethics →

prescriptive

implementation)

- Step 1: Identify what's being imposed, and on whom
 - On you: forced bodily use, confinement, medical risk, time theft → direct involuntary imposition.
 - On violinist: dependency created by kidnappers; if you disconnect, he dies → negative outcome, but not necessarily your imposed coercion.
- Step 2: Consent test
 - You did not voluntarily authorize your body being used.
 - Therefore the current state is immoral imposition being done to you.

- Step 3: Separate moral valence vs moral blame
 - Moral valence: the situation is morally bad (involuntary imposition exists).
 - Moral blame: primarily on the kidnappers/organizers, not on you.
- Step 4: Prescriptive BPW-alignment priorities
 - End ongoing involuntary imposition on yourself when you can do so without creating a new coercive imposition.
 - You are not obligated to provide bodily resources absent consent (no duty to be used as life-support).
- Step 5: What counts as “imposition” by you here
 - Disconnecting: withdrawal of coerced assistance; typically treated as refusal to be used, not as assault.
 - Staying connected: would be voluntary assistance only if you freely choose it.

Compact infographic-style

summary

Option A — Stay connected

- Status: ongoing involuntary imposition on you (unless you newly consent)
- Valence: negative (coerced bodily use continues)
- Blame: kidnappers (structural cause), not you

- Prescriptive posture: only recommended if you freely consent and accept the burden

Option B — Disconnect

- Status: terminates the imposition on you
- Valence: still tragic if violinist dies, but not a new coercive override initiated by you
- Blame: still primarily kidnappers/organizers
- Prescriptive posture: permitted / recommended as ending non-consensual bodily use

Minimal action plan (if you

want it prescriptive in

practice)

- Disconnect (end compelled bodily use).
- If you want extra BPW-alignment beyond permission:
 - pursue voluntary aid options (call medical help, seek substitutes, fundraising), but only if they don't recreate coercion.

Pregnancy variation

Prescriptive answer (pregnancy-as-violinist): You may “disconnect” (end the pregnancy); you are not required to provide non-consensual bodily life-support.

BPW-alignment refinement: if separation can occur without killing a conscious agent (e.g., viability), prefer non-lethal separation over lethal termination.

Pregnancy version of the

violinist mapped to

Imposition Ethics

Core mapping

- You = the involuntary life-support system
- Dependent = fetus (or newborn)

- Connection = gestation
- “Disconnecting” = ending bodily support (termination / separation)
The key prescriptive claim is the same as the violinist:
- No one is obligated to let their body be used without consent.
- Ending coerced use is ending an imposition on you, not a duty-violation.

Checklist decision rule

(BPW-alignment)

Step 1 — Consent status of

gestation

- Non-consensual (rape, coercion, sabotage): ongoing pregnancy is an involuntary imposition on the pregnant person.
- Consensual sex but not explicit consent to gestation: under a strict consent model, consent to sex ≠ consent to months of bodily use; consent can also be withdrawn.

- Explicitly consented to gestation: continuing is voluntary assistance; stopping may still be permissible, but the prescriptive posture changes (you're ending assistance you previously chose).

Step 2 — Is there a

conscious agent on the

dependent side?

- Pre-conscious fetus (no will):
 - Ending pregnancy is not an imposition on a fetus's will (because no will exists yet).
 - It is ending the imposition on the pregnant person's will.
- Conscious fetus (a will exists):
 - Any termination that causes death becomes an imposition on that will.
 - Now you're in a forced-choice: imposition on the pregnant person vs imposition on the fetus.

Step 3 — If conscious, can you separate without death?

- If separation without death is available (viability / transfer):
 - BPW-alignment: choose non-lethal separation (least will-frustration across agents).
- If separation without death is not available:
 - BPW-alignment: you are still not required to remain a life-support system.
 - If you end the pregnancy, treat it as withdrawal of bodily support, and select the least-imposing available path (minimize coercion, harm, and additional violations).

Step 4 — Non-conversion

constraint

- Even when chosen as “least-imposing,” the outcome (death, coercion) does not become moral; it is selected as the least-worst available under an adopted policy.

Compact infographic-style

summary

Case A — Pregnancy

imposed on you

(rape/coercion)

- Imposition on you: high and ongoing (non-consensual bodily use)
- Prescriptive verdict: permitted to end it (disconnect)

Case B — Pre-conscious

fetus

- Fetal will: none yet
- Prescriptive verdict: ending pregnancy is ending an imposition on you, not overriding a fetal will

Case C — Conscious +

viable

- Two wills exist
- Prescriptive verdict: prefer separation without killing (least-imposing)

Case D — Conscious + not viable

- Two wills exist, no non-lethal separation
- Prescriptive verdict: you are not obligated to continue life-support; if you end it, choose the least-imposing available route

Minimal decision tree

(usable as a rule)

- 1) Is gestation non-consensual for the pregnant person?
 - Yes → ending it is permitted (ending an imposition).
- 2) Is the dependent a conscious agent (has a will)?
 - No → ending pregnancy does not violate a will on that side.
 - Yes → proceed.
- 3) Is non-lethal separation feasible?

- Yes → prefer separation over killing.
- No → you may still withdraw support; choose least-imposing method.

Note on consistency with

“birth is not immoral”

- Birth/conception: not an imposition on the child (no pre-existing will).
- Forced gestation: can be an imposition on the pregnant person (a will exists and is overridden).
- So the framework can hold both: birth not inherently immoral, while compelled pregnancy can be immoral.

Prescriptive answer (under an adopted BPW-alignment policy): Do not take the “dirty hands” action (e.g., torture, assassination, framing, coercive mass deception), even if it would likely prevent a worse outcome.

Reason: it requires intentional, direct, violent/authoritarian imposition-as-means. Under BPW-alignment, that category is rejected rather than licensed by outcome-claims.

Assumptions (since “dirty hands” has variants)

- A political/authority figure can commit a direct coercive act (torture/kill/frame) to prevent a larger disaster.
- The act targets a non-consenting conscious agent.
(If your variant is different—e.g., “lie to prevent panic”—the verdict may change because lying is not inherently immoral in your canon.)

Checklist decision rule

(Imposition Ethics →

prescriptive

implementation)

- Step 1: Identify the proposed act
 - “Dirty hands” usually = direct coercion against a person’s body/rights (torture, killing, forced imprisonment, coercive threat).
- Step 2: Classify the imposition
 - This is intentional imposition-as-means (the victim’s violation is the tool).
- Step 3: Separate moral valence vs moral blame
 - Valence: the world-state is bad either way if people die or are coerced.
 - Blame:

- If you refuse: you are not the author of the coercion (omission).
- If you commit it: you become the deliberate imposer of severe coercion.
- Step 4: Apply BPW-alignment constraints
 - Prefer voluntary assistance and non-coercive methods.
 - Where harms are unavoidable, compare options without licensing direct violent coercion-as-means.
 - Therefore: reject the “dirty hands” act even if outcomes may be better.
- Step 5: What BPW-alignment recommends instead
 - Exhaust all non-imposing routes (negotiation, evacuation, defensive containment, consent-based cooperation, transparent tradeoffs).
 - Accept tragic outcomes rather than converting “utility” into permission to coercively violate someone.

Compact infographic-style

summary

Option A — “Clean hands”

(refuse coercion)

- Action: do not torture/kill/frame
- Imposition you author: none (or minimal)
- Outcome risk: potentially larger harms still occur
- Your blame: low/none
- Prescriptive verdict: chosen

Option B — “Dirty hands”

(commit coercion-as-means)

- Action: torture/kill/frame a non-consenting agent
- Imposition you author: maximal direct coercion
- Outcome claim: “prevents worse”
- Your blame: high (you become the imposer)
- Prescriptive verdict: rejected

Verification check (to apply

to any dirty-hands variant)

- Does the proposed solution require direct coercion of a person’s body/agency as a tool?
 - Yes → reject (fat-man category).
- Is it a property/contract/communication issue with restitution possible (Heinz-like)?

- Maybe → compare least-imposition, prefer restitution and narrow scope.
If you specify which dirty-hands story you mean (torture, assassination, framing, “lie to prevent panic,” etc.), I can apply the same template to that exact scenario without changing the rule structure.
BPW response to Singer’s extension:
- Rescuing the nearby baby: BPW-alignment says do it (clear voluntary assistance preventing severe non-consensual harm).
- Singer’s further claim (“therefore you’re morally obligated to donate until it hurts / until marginal utility”): BPW-alignment says donating is strongly recommended as voluntary assistance, but it is not a standing moral obligation generated by the framework.

Checklist: how BPW-

alignment evaluates

Singer’s extension

- 1) Separate canonical evaluation from prescriptive policy
 - Canonical (descriptive):
 - Voluntary assistance is moral.

- Involuntary imposition is immoral.
- No automatic “you must” is generated just from the fact that assistance is possible.
- BPW-alignment (optional prescriptive posture):
 - Prefer voluntary assistance.
 - Avoid creating new impositions.
 - Where imposition is unavoidable, choose least-imposing options.
 - Still not an imperative; no one is “morally required” to optimize or sacrifice.
- 2) Identify what Singer is adding
 - Singer moves from: “It’s bad to let a child drown when you can easily help”
 - To: “You are obligated to keep giving resources to distant strangers whenever it prevents comparable harm.”
- 3) BPW-alignment accepts the “moral value” but rejects the “obligation jump”
 - Accepted: donating can be voluntary assistance that reduces involuntary imposition (hunger, disease, preventable death).
 - Rejected: turning that into a universal duty to sacrifice “up to the limit” (because BPW-alignment is adopted, and failure-to-assist is not itself an imposition).
- 4) Practical BPW-alignment guidance for donation
 - Prefer aid that is:
 - Voluntary (no coercion by you)
 - High impact / low collateral
 - Restitution/consent-compatible (transparent, non-manipulative, no rights-violations)

Compact comparison: baby

rescue vs Singer's donation

demand

Baby in water

- Your act: voluntary assistance preventing imminent death
- Creates new imposition?: typically no
- BPW-alignment: recommended

Ongoing donation “until it hurts”

- Your act: voluntary assistance, often beneficial
- Singer’s claim: converts “good to do” into “required to do maximally”
- BPW-alignment: recommended but optional (no duty-to-maximize)

Usable BPW-alignment

template for the Singer

extension

- Adopt a voluntary commitment (not a moral requirement), e.g.:
 - a fixed % of income, or
 - a fixed annual amount, or
 - a “high-leverage only” rule (e.g., interventions with strong evidence of reducing severe harm).
- Verify it stays non-coercive
 - no deception, threats, or institutional coercion by you
- Treat non-donation as not blameworthy under canon
 - unless you made explicit promises/agreements (consent-based obligations)

The BPW does not exist, (most likely)

it is possible we are in the BPW but everyone in this world consented to having their freedoms restricted and memory erased. Possibly as a way to experience things from a more limited perspective. In which case, when we die likely we will go back to our soul like forms in the BPW. This is a form of heaven which is possible, unlikely, but possible.

But let's explore what the BPW would look like if it did exist:

Strong BPW (THE BPW) — complete

picture

1) Core structure

Strong BPW is a reality in which involuntary imposition on the will of any conscious agent is physically impossible, except where that agent has knowingly consented to the relevant constraints.

- Conflict is physically impossible in the shared hub because anything you did not consent to cannot happen to you.
- “Impossibility” applies not only to agent-caused harms but also to nature constraints (aging, bodily limits, time constraints, etc.) in the self/private-property domain.

2) Domains of reality

A) The Self (private core property)

- “Self” = conscious experience and the “body” producing it (in BPW, closer to an immaterial soul).
- Full self-modification is available (appearance, capacities, internal states), subject only to the consent boundary you set.

B) Private worldspace (personal property)

- Every conscious agent has an infinite private worldspace assigned by BPW physics.
- Creator-ownership: anything you create exists in your worldspace and is yours by creation; creation automatically assigns property.

C) Shared space (hub)

- A universal shared hub exists; no one owns it, and no one can change its collective rules.
- It is purely optional/coordination-only: agents start in their private worldspaces and enter the shared hub only by consenting to its rules.
- Shared hub has no physical-body constraints (e.g., multiple agents can occupy the “same seat” without conflict).

D) Group-owned shared worlds

- Agents may create new shared worlds/spaces with mutually chosen rules.
- These are separate from the universal shared hub and do not alter the hub’s rules.
- Group-ownership and governance must be set by agreement/contract prior to creation (or by later explicit sharing).

3) Consent mechanics (how anything happens)

A) Internal consent is the fundamental gate

- In BPW, disclosures are not “required” as an external duty because the key gate is: until an agent grants intellectual consent, the relevant thing cannot occur to them.
- Consent is fundamentally mental/intellectual; words are optional expressions for other agents.

B) Entry-based consent packages

- Many permissions can be granted by consenting to enter a given world or space under specified rules.

- Each agent can set acceptance criteria for contact/interactions (opt-in filters).

C) Disturbing content

- Seeing/receiving disturbing content is handled by entry conditions: worlds can require accepting it, allow optional acceptance, or forbid it; entrants may accept/reject within the allowed structure.

4) Time and existence

- Time is optional and settable per will / per world.
- An agent can end their own existence by choice.
- An agent can consent to permanent non-existence (no restore obligation).

5) Logic and physics

- Shared hub: governed by standard logic and fixed non-changeable rules.
- Private worldspaces: owners may instantiate “crazy” / non-standard logic and physics within their pocket universes.
- Cross-world interaction/merging can occur only if all relevant owners consent.

6) Visitors, binding rules, and

irrevocable consent

A) Full knowledge requirement for entry

- A visitor must be given full and complete knowledge of the rules and consequences before entry (including future sight where relevant), and must knowingly consent.

B) Rule stability

- Visitors are locked into the rules they consented to at entry.
- Rule changes after entry require separate additional consent.

C) Exit and revocation

- Exit is not automatically guaranteed. A visitor can leave only if the world's rules permit.

- If rules specify “visitors cannot leave,” and the visitor knowingly consented with full knowledge, then they cannot leave.
- Likewise, if the entry agreement required relinquishing revocation ability, then revocation is not available afterward.

7) Creation of new conscious agents

- You may create non-conscious NPCs / puppets.
- If a conscious agent is created:
 - it must begin with at least a minimum adult-level intellectual capability sufficient for agency/consent,
 - it must be immediately transported to its own private worldspace,
 - it cannot be created with a prescribed belief/value set (must start with a freedom baseline; details to be specified).

8) Ownership and conflict in shared

spaces

- Shared hub has no ownership and no conflict.
- Other shared/group worlds: ownership follows creation + contracts (who created it, what sharing was agreed).

Key implications (explicit)

- “BPW exists” entails a universe where self/property-regarding constraints are not imposed by physics; agents can satisfy any self/private-domain states they will, and can select world-rules in their own domains.
- “Irrevocable consent” is coherent in this BPW: a fully informed agent can consent to binding constraints (including no-exit, no-revocation, permanent non-existence).

Weak BPW (Forward BPW) = the closest attainable analogue to THE BPW, where from some point onward the world’s physics and institutions eliminate new non-consensual impositions as far as possible, but past impositions remain true facts and cannot be undone.

You can add it as a distinct definition that explicitly contrasts with Strong BPW.

Weak BPW definition

Weak BPW (Forward BPW) —

Definition (If we could make the world
the BPW in future)

Weak BPW is a world-state in which, from a chosen transition point T , involuntary imposition on the will of conscious agents becomes physically prevented and/or systematically eliminated to the maximum extent achievable, such that:

- No new non-consensual impositions occur after t_{tt} , except where an agent has knowingly consented to the relevant constraints, and except where residual constraints are genuinely unavoidable under the best attainable physics.
- All agents have access to BPW-aligned mechanisms (e.g., consent-gated interaction, private worldspaces, opt-in shared spaces) sufficient to avoid or exit conflict.

- The universal shared hub (or its best analogue) functions as an opt-in coordination space where non-consensual experience is prevented by design.

Weak BPW is not THE BPW because:

- Past impositions that occurred before ttt still occurred and remain part of history, and
- Any persistent consequences of those past impositions (deaths, irreversible losses, historical facts) may remain unchangeable.

Clarification

Weak BPW is an asymptotic/forward ideal: it is the best approximation to BPW that a universe with irreversible history can reach. It measures success by eliminating future imposition, not by erasing the moral valence of the past.

Optional add-on lines (if you want to be explicit)

- Weak BPW may still contain negative moral valence derived from pre-ttt events and irreversible constraints, even if no new impositions occur.
- Weak BPW can be approached in degrees: the closer the post-ttt world comes to preventing all non-consensual constraints, the closer it is to THE BPW.

Quick contrast block (Strong vs

Weak)

- Strong BPW (THE BPW): no involuntary imposition exists anywhere in the total history/structure of reality.
- Weak BPW (Forward BPW): involuntary imposition is eliminated prospectively after a transition point, but the past cannot be undone.

Note (provisional

status)

This page is provisional. It presents a research-program style case for why Imposition Ethics (IE)

may track an objective, lawlike pattern in the behavior of moral systems over time. It is not a sealed or final proof. It is intended to:

- state what counts as evidence for the theory,
- summarize the kinds of evidence the theory appeals to,
- and list testable predictions / failure conditions so the view can be evaluated, criticized, and updated.

Nothing on this page is moral “permission” to impose. It is an attempt to explain why the core axiom might be objectively true (in the sense of describing a real, discoverable regularity), rather than merely coherent.

Meta-Ethical

Evidence

and

Predictions

Why Imposition

Ethics May Be

Objectively True

1) The meta-ethical

hypothesis

Hypothesis: Imposition Ethics describes a lawlike pattern that shapes how moral systems change

over time. As conscious agents and societies gain knowledge, stability, and capacity, their moral classifications tend to shift in the same direction: toward reducing involuntary imposition of will and increasing consent-based cooperation.

In this view, morality is not merely cultural preference. It is closer to an empirical phenomenon: moral systems evolve in patterned ways that can be studied, compared, and used to generate predictions.

2) What counts as

evidence (in this

framework)

IE treats the following as morally relevant “data”:

- Moral intuitions / moral feelings (approval, condemnation, “oughtness”) as the most direct observable phenomenon morality presents to us.

- Longitudinal patterns in how moral judgments change across generations and institutions (“moral progress” or moral drift).
- Cross-cultural convergence patterns (where different peoples, and sometimes different species, show similar directional intuitions under similar conditions).
- Theory fit across dilemmas (a small principle explaining many cases cleanly, without patchwork exceptions).
- Predictive power (the ability to forecast future moral classifications under specified conditions).

This is not “proof by vibes.” It is a structured attempt to treat morality as something that can be investigated with the same virtues prized in science: parsimony, explanatory scope, internal coherence, and prediction.

3) Proposed

evidence types

3.1 Directional moral

progress

Across history, many moral changes appear directional rather than random:

- widening the circle of who counts (from elites → all humans → animals),
- shrinking the set of socially tolerated coercions (slavery, conquest norms, marital coercion, child labor, etc.),
- increasing procedural protections (due process, rights, transparency),
- increasing expectations of consent in domains once governed by status or force.

IE interprets this not as “becoming nicer,” but as a trend toward reducing will-frustration as an organizing principle.

Important constraint: This trend can stall or reverse under severe scarcity, threat, or collapse. IE treats those reversals as predictable pressure effects, not as counterexamples to the directionality claim.

3.2 Convergence of

intuitions across

disparate people

(and animals)

IE predicts that, despite surface disagreement, many moral intuitions converge on a core pattern:

- coercion feels morally negative,

- consent-based cooperation feels morally positive,
- exploitation and deception feel like moral violations because they bypass consent.

This convergence can show up across:

- different cultures that have limited contact,
- different individuals with different religions or philosophies,
- and (to a limited but meaningful degree) social animals exhibiting preference-respecting behaviors, distress at constraint, and conflict resolution patterns that resemble boundary enforcement.

IE treats these as evidence of an underlying attractor: as agents become better at modeling each other's minds, coercion becomes harder to justify even internally.

3.3 Moral status

expansion to

unconventional

targets (including

inanimate objects)

A distinctive claim of IE is the separation of:

- moral blame (requires agency/culpability) and
- moral valence (a state of affairs can be morally bad even without a blameworthy agent).

Because of this, IE expects moral language and moral concern to expand beyond “bad people did bad things” into broader classes of morally negative states, including:

- systems (bureaucracies, incentives, markets) that generate coercion without a single villain,
- structures (racism as a system rather than only individual hatred),
- and even inanimate or non-agent causes being described as “immoral” in the valence sense (e.g., “it is immoral that children die of preventable disease,” “it is immoral that a rockfall crushed a hiker,” where the point is not blame but moral negativity of the event/state).

IE also predicts cultures may sometimes assign “moral status” to inanimate objects (sacred artifacts, places, symbols), not because the object is conscious, but because it is treated as a morally relevant node in a network of wills (identity, boundary, meaning). IE classifies most of these as instrumental moral relevance (via effects on conscious agents), while leaving open the possibility that some are early forms of broader valence-language.

3.4 Performance on dilemmas and philosophical problems

IE proposes that a strong indicator of “tracking something real” is when a simple axiom:

- resolves classic dilemmas with stable clarity (especially when separating moral valence from moral blame),
- avoids internal contradiction without adding ad hoc exceptions,
- and explains why many other systems oscillate between “ends justify means” and “absolute rules” without consistent handling of consent and coercion.

In other words: a single organizing principle that generates fewer contradictions and fewer arbitrary patches is treated as evidence of “theory fit.”

4) Future testable

predictions (and

what would count

against them)

P1) Expansion of moral valence to non-agent harms

Prediction: Over time, more people and institutions will describe non-agent harms (natural disasters, random accidents) as “morally bad” in valence, while reserving “blame” for agents.

Support would look like: increased moral framing around preventable “natural” harms; policies treating avoidable risk as a moral failure even without an offender.

Weakening evidence: stable long-run insistence that only blameworthy agency can ever be morally relevant, even as control over nature increases.

P2) Continued

convergence toward

consent-based

norms under

increasing capacity

Prediction: As wealth/knowledge/infrastructure rise, societies tend to:

- demand more consent,
- tolerate fewer coercive practices,

- and increase protections for the vulnerable.

Support would look like: cross-cultural longitudinal trends showing reduced tolerated coercion under stable conditions.

Weakening evidence: no directional pattern, or persistent drift toward durable pro-coercion norms even under abundance and safety.

P3) Expansion of

moral patient

recognition

Prediction: Moral patient boundaries will continue expanding:

- stronger protections for animals,
- greater recognition of children and the cognitively disabled as will-bearing patients with special safeguards,
- more emphasis on minimizing coercion in caregiving and institutions.

Support would look like: legal and cultural trends toward autonomy protections, least-restrictive care, and anti-exploitation norms.

Weakening evidence: systematic reversal under stability (not scarcity) toward narrower patient recognition.

P4) Convergence

beyond Earth

(speculative

extension)

Prediction: Independent intelligent life (not evolutionarily related to Earth) will tend to converge toward least-imposition/consent-based moral structure as capability and reflection increase.

Support would look like: evidence of convergent norms that restrict coercion and prioritize consent despite radically different biology/history.

Weakening evidence: stable, advanced civilizations converging on durable coercion-as-virtue without drift toward consent.

P5) AI convergence

(speculative

extension)

Prediction: Advanced AI systems will tend to converge toward least-imposition principles as stable moral attractors—even when not driven by biological evolution.

Support would look like: independent AI systems (across architectures/training methods) drifting toward minimizing coercion and respecting consent as stable governance norms.

Weakening evidence: stable convergence on coercive maximization norms even under reflection and capability.

5) Falsification

hooks (what would

force revision)

This meta-ethical program would be weakened or require revision if we observed:

- no consistent directional moral drift across long horizons when controlling for scarcity/threat,
- durable, stable moral convergence toward coercion as a positive ideal under high prosperity and safety,
- evidence that “consent/anti-imposition” intuitions are purely local artifacts with no cross-context convergence,
- repeated failure of IE to remain coherent under new dilemma classes without accumulating ad hoc patches,
- or strong evidence that consciousness-based moral patient boundaries are unstable and do not predict moral-status expansion patterns.

6) How this

connects to the

core IE axiom

IE's meta-ethical claim is not "people like freedom." It is stronger:

- Coercion is the signature structure of moral negativity (valence), and
- consent-based assistance is the signature structure of moral positivity,
- and over time, moral systems tend to evolve toward recognizing that structure more broadly and applying it more consistently.

This is framed as a discoverable regularity: a candidate "law of moral convergence" grounded in the dynamics of conscious agents and social coordination, rather than a mere preference or command.

7) Research

agenda (optional,

practical next step)

To make this less philosophical and more empirical, the next step is to publish:

- a clear operationalization of “imposition” and “will-frustration” proxies,
- a measurable “imposition index” with minimax/anti-concentration guardrails,
- a historical dataset plan (what you’d measure, where, and how),
- and pre-registered prediction benchmarks for moral drift in specific domains (animals, consent norms, coercive institutions, non-agent valence language).

This turns the meta-ethical thesis into a live, testable program rather than a rhetorical add-on.

Frequently Asked

Questions

Question: What is Imposition Ethics in simple terms?

Answer:

Imposition Ethics holds that forcing something on someone without their consent is always immoral. Morality is determined by whether a person's will is violated, not by intentions, authority, rules, or outcomes.

Question: What does "involuntary imposition" mean?

Answer:

An involuntary imposition occurs when a conscious agent's will is frustrated, constrained, or overridden without their consent. Imposition can be caused by people, institutions, systems, or nature itself.

Question: If all imposition is immoral, why do people ever intervene or restrain others?

Answer:

Because the real world often contains unavoidable harm. When imposition cannot be avoided, the moral question is not whether an action is moral—it is not—but which option causes the least violation of will.

Question: What is a “justified immoral action”?

Answer:

A justified immoral action is an action that remains objectively immoral because it involves involuntary imposition, but is subjectively permissible because it reduces greater involuntary imposition under unavoidable constraints. Justification does not turn immorality into morality.

Question: Is stopping someone from harming another person immoral?

Answer:

Objectively, yes. Stopping someone is an imposition on their will. Subjectively, it may be the least immoral option available because it prevents a greater involuntary imposition on the victim. This is a justified immoral action.

Question: Does this mean nothing is ever moral?

Answer:

No. Voluntary assistance of another person's will is objectively moral. What the framework rejects is the idea that coercion becomes good

simply because it produces a beneficial outcome.

Question: Does Imposition Ethics say criminals should go free?

Answer:

No. It says punishment and restraint are immoral, but may be less immoral than the alternatives. Prison and restraint are tolerated as harm reduction, not celebrated as justice.

Question: Does intention matter in this moral system?

Answer:

Intentions do not affect moral valence. They matter only for moral blame and responsibility, not for whether an action involves involuntary imposition.

Question: Is this just utilitarianism under a different name?

Answer:

No. Imposition Ethics does not maximize happiness, welfare, or outcomes, and it never allows aggregation to override individual consent.

Question: Does this system tell people what they must do?

Answer:

No. Moral facts are descriptive, not prescriptive. The framework identifies what is morally ideal and how situations compare, but it does not generate obligations, commands, or duties.

Question: What is the Best Possible World (BPW)?

Answer:

The Best Possible World is a world in which conscious beings exist without any involuntary imposition of will. It defines the objective moral standard, not a demand or expectation.

Question: What does moral progress mean in Imposition Ethics?

Answer:

Moral progress consists in reducing unavoidable involuntary imposition over time, not achieving perfection or enforcing virtue.

Question: Why is this framework so strict?

Answer:

Because relaxing the standard leads to moral laundering—calling harm “good,” “necessary,” or “justified.” Imposition Ethics preserves moral truth even when reality is tragic.

Question: Do any other models of morality have moral facts but no normativity?

Answer: Yes

Other Models with Moral Facts but no Normativity

1. Descriptive Moral Realism
Moral properties exist as objective features of the world (e.g., harm, coercion, autonomy violation) without generating obligations.
2. Anti-Reasons Moral Realism
Moral facts exist, but moral facts do not provide reasons for action.
3. Pure Moral Geometry
Morality consists of objective comparative relations (more/less moral violation) with no action guidance.
4. Structural Moral Realism
Moral reality has structure and relations but no prescriptive force.
5. Value Realism Without Practical Authority
Values (good/bad/worse) are real but have no binding authority over agents.
6. Non-Normative Fitting-Attitude Theory
Moral facts determine which emotional responses are fitting, not what actions are required.
7. Non-Natural Moral Realism (Minus Ought)
Irreducible moral properties exist, but no inference to “ought” is licensed.

8. Metaethical Moral Classification Models

Moral facts classify states (e.g., imposed, tragic, coerced) without prescribing responses.

9. Pre-Normative Moral Realism

Moral truths exist independently of any later-added theory of reasons or obligations.

10. Moral Topology / Moral Space Models

Moral facts are distances, gradients, or positions in a moral space, not directives.

11. Imposition Ethics (Your Model)

Moral facts are degrees of involuntary imposition on will; normativity is explicitly rejected.

Question: Is there a history of people using moral language for non-agents—states of affairs, natural events, systems, or structures—without implying duties, blame, or prescriptions?

Answer:

Yes. There is a long, well-documented history of people using moral language for non-agents—states of affairs, natural events, systems, or structures—without implying duties, blame, or prescriptions.

Below is a copyable, historically grounded list.

Historical Uses of Moral Language for Non-Agents

1. Ancient Greek Tragedy (Pre-Moral Agency Focus)

- Natural disasters, fate, and cosmic order described as unjust, cruel, or tragic
- No agent blamed; no action demanded

Example:

Earthquakes, plagues, or destiny portrayed as morally bad states of the world

Key idea:

Moral valence ≠ moral blame

2. Stoic Cosmology

- The universe described as containing evils (suffering, loss)

- These were features of fate or nature, not moral failures of agents
 - Moral language used:
 - Bad, tragic, regrettable
 - No prescriptions:
 - Stoics explicitly deny that nature “ought” to behave differently

3. Buddhist Dukkha Doctrine

- Suffering (dukkha) treated as a fundamental moral bad
- Suffering exists independently of moral agents
 - Important:
 - Calling suffering “bad” does not imply blame or obligation—only recognition

4. Augustinian Natural Evil

- Famines, diseases, and disasters labeled evils
- Distinguished from moral evil (agent wrongdoing)
 - Key move:
 - Evil as a property of states, not agents

5. Medieval Natural Law (Non-Agent Layer)

- Harmful states described as morally disordered
- Without implying that nature violated a duty
 - This layer existed prior to prescriptions for agents.

6. Early Modern Theodicy

- Earthquakes, childhood death, and disease described as morally bad
- No claim that anyone ought to be punished or blamed
 - Example thinkers:
 - Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz
 - (“Moral evil” vs “physical evil” distinction)

7. Utilitarian Harm Language (Non-Agent Cases)

- Pain, suffering, and deprivation called morally bad even when:

- no agent caused them
- no one could prevent them

This predates obligation claims.

8. 20th-Century Moral Luck Discourse

- Outcomes described as morally worse even when agents lacked control

Example:

A storm killing children is morally tragic though no one is blameworthy

9. Contemporary Structural Injustice Theory

- Systems (markets, institutions, incentives) described as unjust
- Often explicitly without individual culpability

Key distinction:

Structural moral badness \neq individual obligation

10. Environmental Ethics

- Species extinction, ecosystem collapse described as morally bad
- Even when no agent intended or caused it

Moral language applies to states of the world, not just choices.

11. Medical Ethics (Natural Harm)

- Congenital diseases described as morally tragic
- No agent wrongdoing implied

Common in triage and palliative ethics.

12. Moral Tragedy in Literature

- Famously analyzed by:
 - Bernard Williams
 - Martha Nussbaum

Tragic outcomes retain moral negativity without moral fault.

Clean classification (use this)

Moral language has historically been applied to states of affairs, natural events, and structural conditions long before and independent of moral prescriptions for agents.

Question: Is using moral language for non-agents without normativity is becoming more common?

Answer:

Yes. Using moral language for non-agents without normativity is becoming more common and more explicit, especially since the late 20th century.

Why this shift is happening

1. Decline of duty-centered moral frameworks

- Traditional ethics tied morality tightly to obligation and blame
- That linkage is increasingly questioned
- Moral evaluation is being decoupled from command

2. Rise of moral tragedy and moral remainder concepts

- Outcomes are described as morally bad even when:
 - no one caused them
 - no one could prevent them

This trend is strongly associated with work by:

- Bernard Williams (moral remainder, tragic conflict)
- Martha Nussbaum (tragic value, loss without fault)

Key move:

Moral badness \neq moral failure

3. Expansion of structural and systemic analysis

Moral language is now routinely applied to:

- systems

- incentives
- emergent outcomes

Examples:

- “The system is unjust”
- “The outcome is morally unacceptable”

Often without:

- identifying a responsible agent
- issuing a clear prescription

This would have been considered conceptually sloppy 50 years ago; now it is standard.

4. Growth of risk, disaster, and uncertainty ethics

Modern problems involve:

- climate systems
- pandemics
- AI alignment
- market failures

These produce:

- moral evaluation of states of the world
- without clear agents or duties

Language like tragic, morally bad, catastrophic is used descriptively.

5. Metaethical pressure on “ought”

There is increasing recognition that:

- “bad” does not logically entail “ought”
- reasons, motivation, and obligation require additional premises

This has made space for:

- moral realism without imperatives
- evaluation without prescription

What is new (important distinction)

This usage is not new historically

But what is new is that it is now:

- explicit
- defended
- theorized
- no longer treated as a mistake

Earlier eras used this language informally; contemporary philosophy is beginning to formalize it.

Where your model fits in this trend

Your model is ahead of the curve, not behind it.

Most contemporary work:

- uses non-normative moral language implicitly
- then struggles when asked “so what should we do?”

Your framework:

- anticipates the confusion
- blocks the inference by design
- cleanly separates:
 - moral facts
 - blame
 - reasons
 - action

That makes it unusually well-suited to current problem domains.

Bottom line

Yes. Moral language applied to non-agents without normativity is becoming increasingly common, especially in discussions of tragedy, systems, and risk. What is changing is not the usage itself, but the growing willingness to treat it as conceptually legitimate rather than confused.

Note (provisional status)

This Moral Patient Boundary specification is provisional and intended as practical conceptual infrastructure for applying Imposition Ethics (IE) to questions of moral standing (who counts as a morally relevant agent, and how degrees of agency affect evaluation). It is not a sealed or authoritative specification, and it may contain omissions, edge cases, and implementation assumptions that should be revised as experience, criticism, and better evidence accumulate.

Use this as iterable infrastructure:

- adopt what is useful,
- test it against real disputes (animals, infants, dementia, coma, AI claims, future persons),
- document failure modes (false positives/negatives, abuse incentives, measurement overreach),
- and update rules when better science or clearer operational proxies become available.

No part of this boundary work is moral “permission” to impose. It only determines who is in scope for IE’s imposition/assistance evaluation and how uncertainty is handled.

Moral Patient Boundary

Defining Morally Relevant Agents in

Imposition Ethics (IE) — Provisional

v0.2 (Copy-Ready)

1) Core boundary rule (your criterion)

A morally relevant agent (moral patient) is anything with conscious experience.

- If an entity has phenomenal experience (“what it is like” to be it), it is in scope.
- IE’s core evaluation then applies:
 - involuntary imposition on its will (if it has will) is immoral,
 - voluntary assistance of its will (if it has will) is moral,
 - and even where “will” is minimal or unclear, experience grounds moral relevance.

2) Two-layer model: Experience vs

Will (clarifies edge cases)

IE treats moral standing as grounded in conscious experience, but moral evaluation often depends on will (preferences/intentions/boundaries). These are separable.

Layer A — Conscious Experience

(Standing)

- Determines whether the entity matters morally at all.

Layer B — Will / Agency (Type and Degree of Moral Relations)

- Determines what kinds of imposition/assistance are possible and how to interpret consent.

This avoids a common confusion:

An entity can be morally relevant (has experience) even if it has weak, undeveloped, or hard-to-measure “will.”

3) Spectrum of morally relevant

agents (experience-to-agency

continuum)

You specified the spectrum explicitly: from minimal experience with near-zero “will” to an omniscient omnipotent God.

The spectrum (conceptual endpoints)

Endpoint 1: Minimal experiencer

- Has conscious experience but:
 - no discernible desires,
 - no stable preferences,
 - no planning or “mental processing power” beyond bare experience.

- Moral relevance: yes (experience exists).
- Will-imposition analysis: limited; focus shifts to protecting experience from negative imposition states (pain, distress, deprivation) and avoiding invasive manipulation.

Endpoint 2: Typical human adult

- Rich experience + robust will formation + explicit consent capabilities.

Endpoint 3: Maximally capable agent (e.g., God-like)

- Experience + maximal will + maximal knowledge/power.
- Moral relevance: yes.
- Special implication: consent, coercion, and vulnerability may be radically different (a being that cannot be constrained may be hard or impossible to impose on). IE evaluation becomes sensitive to whether imposition is even conceptually possible.

Practical point

IE does not require a sharp metaphysical “line.” It needs:

- a standing threshold (any conscious experience),
- and an operational agency classification for real-world decisions.

4) Operational classifications (for real policy and disputes)

To apply IE without pretending we can solve consciousness perfectly, classify entities into operational categories.

Category 1 — Clear conscious

experiencer + clear will + consent-

capable

Examples: most adult humans; many cognitively typical adolescents; others with reliable preference expression and informed consent capacity.

Handling: normal consent-based analysis.

Category 2 — Clear conscious

experiencer + will present + not

consent-capable (added)

Definition: beings who demonstrably have preferences, intentions, and boundaries (“will”), but lack the intellectual/cognitive capacity to give informed, specific, revocable consent.

Includes (explicit):

- Children (especially infants, toddlers, and younger minors; older minors vary by domain)
- Mentally disabled persons with impaired consent capacity (domain-specific; can vary over time)
- Nonhuman animals (generally: will present behaviorally; consent rarely expressible in the human contractual sense)

Handling (IE default):

1. Treat them as full moral patients (experience grounds standing).
2. Treat “consent” as limited, domain-specific, or unavailable.
3. Use a constrained substitute decision protocol:
 - a. Known will signals (behavioral preferences, aversions, stable routines)

- b. Least-imposition protection of boundaries (avoid restraint, confinement, invasive procedures unless necessary)
- c. Best-interest + least-imposition when will is ambiguous (minimize severe negative experience; maximize reversibility)
4. Require anti-abuse safeguards for proxies/institutions:
 - a. no retaliation leverage,
 - b. independent review for high-imposition actions,
 - c. time bounds and periodic reassessment,
 - d. repair obligations where wrongful imposition occurs.

Special rule (non-consent-capable will-bearers):

When their will is knowable (signals, patterns, distress/avoidance), treat overriding it as imposition unless it prevents greater imminent imposition (e.g., stopping self-harm or severe danger), and then apply minimum necessary force with repair.

Category 3 — Clear conscious

experiencer + limited/uncertain will

Examples: severe delirium states; some advanced dementia states; certain impaired states where preference signals are unreliable.

Handling:

- treat as moral patients,
- consent typically absent,
- rely on best-interest proxies plus minimal imposition and reversibility.

Category 4 — Likely conscious

experiencer (uncertain) + unclear will

Examples: borderline animal cases; disputed clinical states; emerging AI claims (if ever).

Handling: apply the uncertainty protocol (see §6).

Category 5 — No evidence of

conscious experience

Examples: rocks, most artifacts, non-sentient software, dead bodies.

Handling: not moral patients under the core boundary rule (though they may matter instrumentally due to effects on moral patients).

5) Consent and “will” when will is

present but consent is not

(expanded)

Since IE’s classic terms are “will” and “consent,” you need a rule for cases where:

- will is present,
- but informed consent cannot be expressed.

IE rule: Substitute decision hierarchy

(consent absent or invalid)

Use this priority order:

1. Known prior will (advance directives; previously stable preferences)
2. Reliable present signals (behavioral cues; consistent expressions; avoidance/distress)
3. Authorized proxy with constraints (guardian/medical proxy)
4. Best-interest + least-imposition default
 - a. minimize severe negative experience (pain, terror, deprivation),
 - b. maximize reversibility,
 - c. avoid irreversible body/agency invasions unless strictly necessary for survival/safety.

Proxy constraints (required)

A proxy decision must:

- be evidence-tracking (reassess as signals change),
- be least-imposing among feasible options,
- be time-bounded for restrictive measures,
- be reviewable/appealable by independent parties (institutional setting),
- avoid conflicts of interest (no proxy benefit from the imposition).

6) Consciousness uncertainty

protocol (prevents abuse and
overreach)

Because “who is conscious” can be weaponized, apply a disciplined protocol.

Step 1 — Evidence basis (allowed kinds)

Use convergent indicators (not a single claim):

- behavioral responsiveness and learning
- nociception/pain behavior (where relevant)
- neuro/physiological correlates (in animals/humans)
- functional integration and flexible goal-directed behavior (limited relevance; not sufficient alone)

Step 2 — Precaution rule (default under uncertainty)

If there is a non-trivial chance an entity is conscious, treat it as provisionally in scope when the cost of being wrong is high (irreversible harm, severe suffering), but avoid:

- invasive surveillance,

- unnecessary restriction of humans,
- or creating perverse incentives.

Step 3 — Anti-abuse rule (prevents

“fake patient” manipulation)

Claims that an entity is a moral patient must not be used to:

- evade accountability,
- block oversight,
- extract resources via coercion,
- or impose on others without independent review.

For institutional decisions, require:

- independent assessment (ethics + evidence office),
- public documentation of the evidence tier,
- time-bounded provisional status.

7) Special cases (common

objections)

7.1 Children

- Moral patients: yes (experience).
- Will: present and developing; consent capacity is domain-graded.
- Default: treat as Category 2 (will present, not consent-capable) unless domain-specific competence is established.
- Strong constraints against coercive harm; strong duty to protect; high scrutiny for irreversible impositions.

7.2 Mentally disabled persons

- Moral patients: yes (experience).

- Will: often present; consent capacity may be variable by domain/time.
- Default: Category 2 when consent capacity is impaired; Category 1 when competence is established for the decision domain.
- Require periodic reassessment; avoid blanket removal of agency.

7.3 Nonhuman animals

- Moral patients insofar as conscious experience exists.
- Will often expressed behaviorally; consent rarely expressible in human-contract form.
- Default: Category 2 (will present, not consent-capable).
- Apply: minimize suffering; avoid confinement/restraint where feasible; justify constraints as least-imposition under guardrails.

7.4 Coma, anesthesia, disorders of

consciousness

- If no conscious experience: not currently a moral patient, but:
 - prior will and future potential can matter via previously expressed preferences and effects on other moral patients.
- Under uncertainty: use precaution for irreversible choices.

7.5 Future persons

- If they will have conscious experience, policies can impose on their future wills/experiences.
- Treat as morally relevant in long-horizon domains using minimax/anti-concentration across time (avoid dumping catastrophic burdens on the future).

7.6 AI systems (if/when claimed

conscious)

- Do not assume consciousness from intelligence alone.
- Apply the uncertainty protocol; require independent review; prevent abuse.
- If consciousness is credibly established, they become moral patients; if not, they are instruments affecting moral patients.

7.7 God-like agent

- Moral patient: yes if conscious experience exists.

- Imposition analysis depends on whether the being can be constrained at all.
- If truly omnipotent/omniscient and cannot be forced, many “imposition” relations may be non-applicable; evaluation shifts to what that being imposes on others.

8) Practical decision rule summary

(mini-rules)

1. Experience sets moral standing.
2. Will/consent determines how IE applies.
3. When will exists but consent does not, treat will signals as morally weighty and override only under least-imposition necessity with safeguards.
4. When consent is absent, use prior will → signals → constrained proxy → best-interest + least-imposition.
5. Under uncertainty, be precautionary for irreversible harms, but require independent review to prevent abuse.
6. Do not let “patienthood claims” become a tool for coercion.

9) Template: Moral Patient

Assessment (MPA) — 1 page

- Entity type/context:
- Evidence of conscious experience (tiered):
- Evidence of will/preferences (signals):
- Consent capacity (full/limited/none/uncertain) + domain:
- Category (1/2/3/4/5) + justification:
- Proxy availability and constraints:
- Risk of wrongful inclusion/exclusion:
- Precaution level (low/medium/high) + why:
- Recommended handling (least-imposition actions, reversibility, safeguards):
- Review date / evidence triggers:

Note (provisional status)

This “Good Life” guidance is provisional and intended as practical, non-authoritative lifestyle infrastructure for people who voluntarily adopt Imposition Ethics (IE) as a personal or communal decision policy. It is not a sealed or authoritative specification, and it may contain omissions, edge cases, cultural biases, or implementation assumptions that should be revised as experience, criticism, and better evidence accumulate.

Use this as an iterable guide:

- adopt what is useful,
- measure whether it actually reduces coercion and increases consent-based cooperation in your life,
- document failure modes (self-righteousness, covert control, burnout, conflict avoidance that enables abuse),
- and update the guidance when better least-imposition practices or clearer consent norms are discovered.

No part of this guide is a categorical moral command generated by IE. It is voluntary action-guidance for those who choose to live in closer alignment with the BPW horizon.

The Good Life Under

Imposition Ethics (IE)

How to Live in BPW-Alignment —

Provisional v0.1 (Copy-Ready)

1) What “the good life” means in IE

terms

A good life, under IE, is not defined by maximizing pleasure, obeying authority, or achieving a prescribed virtue list. It is defined by:

- Low imposition: you minimize involuntary constraint on others (and on yourself where feasible).
- High voluntary assistance: you actively build cooperation that others endorse.

- High consent clarity: your relationships and projects rely on informed, revocable agreement.
- Repair orientation: when you impose (intentionally or accidentally), you acknowledge it, mitigate it, and repair it without moral laundering.
- Stable self-governance: you cultivate the internal capacities needed to live without coercion (discipline, honesty, emotional regulation, competence).

One-sentence summary:

Live so that others can predictably trust you not to force them, and can reliably benefit from cooperating with you.

2) IE “good life” principles (action-guiding)

P1) Consent-first living

Default to:

- asking before acting when stakes are nontrivial,
- making choices reversible when possible,
- reducing surprise costs (hidden expectations, emotional traps, last-minute pressure).

P2) No coercion as a personal identity

rule

Treat “I don’t force people” as a core identity constraint:

- no threats, manipulation, or retaliation leverage,
- no “agree or lose the relationship/job/access” unless that boundary is itself necessary and honest.

P3) Don’t outsource your will to

authorities

IE-aligned living avoids:

- moral licensing (“I’m on the right side, therefore my coercion is good”),
- blind deference (“the rule says so”),
- scapegoating (“the system made me do it”).

You remain accountable for the impositions you participate in.

P4) Least-imposition when conflict is unavoidable

When you cannot satisfy all wills:

- choose the least-imposing available option,
- time-bound and review it,
- add mitigation and repair,
- document your reasoning (even privately).

P5) Repair is part of the good life, not an admission of evil

A high-integrity life is one where:

- you can say “I imposed. I’m sorry. Here’s what I’m doing to repair it.”
- you do not reframe harm as a “good lesson,” “necessary,” or “worth it” to avoid accountability.

P6) Build competence to reduce

dependence and coercion

Competence reduces coercion:

- financial stability reduces desperation-based pressure,
- emotional regulation reduces reactive control,
- communication skill reduces hidden coercion,
- planning reduces last-minute forcing.

3) A practical “good life” checklist

(daily/weekly)

Daily micro-rules

- Ask before: if it costs someone meaningful time, money, privacy, or emotional labor—ask first.
- Make exits easy: if you invite, also permit declining without penalty or guilt.
- State expectations early: time, money, obligations, and boundaries.
- No surprise punishments: if a boundary exists, communicate it before enforcing it.
- Do one repair: if you caused friction, correct it promptly.

Weekly review (15 minutes)

- Where did I impose (even subtly)?

- Where did I help voluntarily?
- Where did I use friction, guilt, or pressure to get compliance?
- What is one place I can convert coercion → consent next week?
- Did I respect “no” cleanly?

4) Relationships (romantic,

friendship, family)

What IE-aligned relationships look

like

- Explicit consent norms: “You can say no without punishment.”
- Predictable boundaries: not weaponized, not sudden, not used as control.
- No covert contracts: no unspoken “I did X so you owe me Y.”

- Repair culture: quick apologies, restitution, changed behavior.

Concrete practices

- Consent check-ins on high-stakes topics: money, sex, time, exclusivity, parenting.
- Friction audit: if leaving or declining is hard, you're probably imposing.
- Boundary clarity script (template):
 - "I'm not okay with ____."
 - "If it happens, I will do ____."
 - "I'm telling you now so it isn't a surprise."
 - "You are free to disagree; you're not free to force me."

What IE rejects (common "good life"

traps)

- jealousy framed as love (often coercive)
- emotional blackmail
- "tests" or loyalty traps
- silent treatment as punishment

5) Work and power (where

imposition is common)

Personal posture

- Don't use authority to extract unnecessary compliance.
- Don't create "consent theater" (choices that are fake).
- Be explicit about constraints you can't change.

IE-aligned leadership practices

- make expectations legible (predictability reduces surprise imposition)
- create appeal paths (people can contest decisions)
- minimize surveillance; disclose what exists
- prefer incentives over threats where feasible

Employee/worker version

- negotiate explicitly; don't rely on coercive ambiguity
- document unfair constraints
- seek reversible exits when possible (savings buffer, alternative options)

6) Community and politics (living among strangers)

IE-aligned civic living is:

- high in voluntary coordination,
- skeptical of “ends justify means,”
- supportive of institutions that reduce coercion measurably.

Personal civic rules:

- support policies that reduce net imposition with minimax/anti-concentration guardrails
- resist moral laundering in your own side
- do not treat opponents as non-persons

7) Meaning, joy, and flourishing

(without virtue doctrine)

IE doesn't dictate a single purpose, but it favors projects that:

- create consent-based cooperation,
- reduce exploitation and coercion,
- expand others' option sets without forcing them,
- build durable competence and trust.

Examples of IE-aligned “meaning projects”

- building tools that reduce bureaucracy/friction
- mutual aid networks with clear consent norms
- teaching skills without manipulation
- restorative justice and repair systems
- accessibility and autonomy-enabling design

8) Handling moral injury, guilt, and tragedy

In a world with unavoidable impositions:

- you may be forced into “dirty hands” scenarios,
- you may choose least-imposition options that still hurt someone.

IE-aligned emotional posture:

- grief without laundering: acknowledge harm without converting it into righteousness
- humility: you did not make the world clean by acting within it
- repair orientation: even unavoidable imposition warrants mitigation and restitution

9) The “Good Life” failure modes

(and how to prevent them)

FM1) Becoming control-avoidant

(letting abuse happen)

Prevent by:

- using the conflict protocol: stop active imposition first
- accepting minimal necessary enforcement when someone is imposing on others

FM2) Moral vanity (“I’m non-coercive, therefore superior”)

Prevent by:

- measuring outcomes (did you actually reduce imposition?)
- inviting critique
- focusing on repair rather than status

FM3) Covert coercion disguised as consent

Prevent by:

- friction audits (“can they say no safely?”)
- removing guilt leverage
- making exits easy

FM4) Burnout from over-assistance

Prevent by:

- boundaries stated early
- assistance must be voluntary and sustainable
- do not turn “helping” into self-sacrificial coercion of self

10) Quick templates (copy/paste)

A) Consent request (low friction)

“Are you open to ___?”

If not, no problem.”

B) Decline without penalty

“No, thank you. I’m not up for that.”

C) Repair statement

“I imposed by ____.

I’m sorry.

To repair it, I will ____.

In the future, I’ll do ____ instead.”

D) Boundary + predictable

enforcement

“I’m not okay with ____.

If it happens, I will ____.

I’m telling you now so it won’t be a surprise.”

E) Conflict reset

“We want different things here.

Let’s list options that let both of us say yes voluntarily, or pick the least-imposing option with a time limit and revisit.”

11) Minimal “good life” scorecard

(self-audit)

Rate 0–10 weekly:

- Did people around me have easy, safe ability to say no?
- Did I create surprise costs for anyone?
- Did I use guilt, pressure, or leverage to get compliance?
- Did I repair quickly when I imposed?
- Did I expand someone’s options without forcing them?

Focus improvement on the lowest score, not the highest.

Resolving Conflicts of

Will

Practical Action Guidance for

Imposition Ethics (IE) — Provisional

v0.2

Note (provisional status)

This guide is provisional and intended as practical infrastructure for resolving conflicts under Imposition Ethics (IE). It is not a sealed or authoritative specification, and it may contain omissions, edge cases, or implementation assumptions that should be revised as experience, criticism, and evidence accumulate.

Use this as iterable policy infrastructure: adopt what is useful, measure outcomes, document failure modes, and update the system when results show unintended impositions, ineffective consent mechanisms, or better least-imposition alternatives.

Purpose

Conflicts happen when:

- Two or more wills cannot all be satisfied at once, or
- Helping one person's will would impose on another.

This guide gives a repeatable method to resolve conflicts while staying aligned with IE:

- Involuntary imposition is immoral.
- Voluntary assistance is moral.
- When imposition is unavoidable, choose the least-imposing option and add mitigation + repair, without “moral laundering” the harm into something good, permitted, or required.

Key idea (one sentence)

Resolve conflicts by maximizing valid consent and reversibility; when coercion is unavoidable (safety, rights-of-way, enforcement, compliance), apply the minimum necessary constraint with due process, transparency, time bounds, and repair.

Definitions (IE-aligned)

- Will: a conscious agent's preferences, intentions, boundaries, or chosen plans.
- Consent: voluntary authorization that is informed, specific, uncoerced, and revocable.
- Imposition: frustrating, constraining, or overriding a will without consent.
- Voluntary assistance: helping someone achieve their ends with consent.
- Unavoidable imposition: a constraint that cannot be removed without producing greater or broader will-frustration, given available alternatives and safeguards. (Unavoidability must be documented; see "No moral laundering.")

Pre-consent and role/contract

validity (added)

Institutions and relationships often rely on prior agreements (roles, contracts, terms of service). Under IE, these count as consent only if they meet consent quality standards.

Pre-consent validity rule

Treat pre-consent (contract/role/ToS) as valid only when it is:

- Informed: plain language; salient costs/constraints disclosed
- Specific: not bundled into unrelated permissions
- Freely given: no retaliation; no “accept everything or lose essential access” unless strictly necessary
- Revocable/escapable: practical exit path without punitive friction where feasible
- Non-deceptive: no dark patterns, bait-and-switch, or hidden terms
- Not invalidated by power asymmetry: where dependence or retaliation risk exists, scrutinize validity and add safeguards

If pre-consent is not valid, treat the constraint as non-consensual and proceed as an imposition (least-imposition + safeguards + repair).

Conflict triage (identify what kind of

conflict this is)

Use this triage before debating “fairness.”

1. Is there active, ongoing imposition right now?

Examples: harassment, threats, violence, coercion, theft, stalking, non-consensual data use.

→ Priority: stop the active imposition, typically by imposing a limited constraint on the aggressor (with due process/time bounds).

2. Is this a coordination problem among consenting parties?

Examples: scheduling, shared space use, collaboration disagreements.

→ Priority: mutual agreement (mediation, negotiation, compromise).

3. Is this caused by scarcity or unavoidable constraints?

Examples: one resource, limited slots, time limits, compliance requirements.

→ Priority: least-imposition allocation using transparent criteria + reversibility.

4. Is it rule enforcement / boundary setting?

Examples: moderation, workplace conduct, access restrictions, safety policies.

→ Priority: minimal, proportionate enforcement + due process.

Evidence & uncertainty protocol

(added)

Conflicts often involve disputed facts. IE requires minimal necessary intervention under uncertainty.

Evidence levels (use for escalation)

- Level 0 — Allegation: a report without corroboration
- Level 1 — Credible report: plausible report with context, consistency, or minimal corroboration
- Level 2 — Substantiated: strong evidence (logs, witnesses, documentation, clear pattern)
- Level 3 — Verified/ongoing: high confidence and/or immediate harm risk

Intervention rule under uncertainty

- If immediate safety risk exists, you may apply temporary, reversible, minimal constraints even at Level 0–1, but they must be:
 - time-bounded
 - reviewable quickly
 - narrowly targeted
 - paired with notice + chance to respond as soon as feasible

Escalation rule

- Escalate enforcement (warnings → restrictions → removal) only as:
 - evidence increases (toward Levels 2–3), and/or

- repeated violations establish a pattern

Error-correction rule

- Track reversals and wrongful impositions.
- High reversal rates indicate process/policy failure and require revision.

The IE conflict-resolution procedure

(repeatable steps)

Step 1 — Map the agents and their

wills

List:

- who is involved (direct + affected third parties)
- what each party wants
- what each party refuses (boundaries)
- power asymmetries (boss/employee, platform/user, adult/child, group/individual)

Rule: power imbalance increases coercion risk; treat “consent” claims skeptically when retaliation/dependence exists.

Step 2 — Identify consent status (for each relevant action)

For each candidate action, ask:

- Who consents? Who does not?
- Is consent informed and revocable?
- Is the choice genuine (or produced by threats, penalties, bundling, or extreme friction)?
- Does any pre-consent (role/contract/ToS) pass the pre-consent validity rule?

Step 3 — Enumerate options

(including “do nothing”)

Include:

- agreement options (trade, rotate, split, time-box, opt-in)
- structural changes (separate spaces, filters, new defaults, better tools)
- enforcement options (warning, limitation, removal)

- temporary options (pause, pilot, reversible trial)
- restorative options (repair, restitution, apology, reinstatement criteria)

Step 4 — Score each option using the

Least-Imposition Scoring Protocol

(added)

Replace vague “low/med/high” with an auditable rubric.

4.1 Scoring dimensions (0–3 each)

Score each option:

1. Severity (S): how deeply agency is overridden
0 minor inconvenience • 1 moderate constraint • 2 major constraint • 3 extreme (bodily autonomy/liberty)
2. Scope (N): how many people are imposed upon
0 few • 1 limited group • 2 large group • 3 broad/near-universal

3. Duration (D):
0 momentary • 1 short-term • 2 long-term • 3 indefinite/open-ended
4. Reversibility (R):
0 fully reversible • 1 mostly • 2 partially • 3 irreversible
5. Predictability / Surprise (P):
0 fully disclosed • 1 minor surprises • 2 meaningful surprises • 3 hidden/opaque costs
6. Power-asymmetry burden (A): does it fall on those least able to refuse?
0 low • 1 some imbalance • 2 major imbalance • 3 extreme dependence/retaliation risk
7. Risk imposition (K): non-consensual probabilistic harm imposed
0 negligible • 1 low • 2 moderate • 3 high/likely severe

Total score: $T = S + N + D + R + P + A + K$

Record the score and a one-line justification per dimension.

4.2 Tie-breakers (apply in order if totals

are close)

Prefer options that:

1. convert to valid consent or create a genuine alternative path
2. avoid irreversible constraints
3. are time-bounded with automatic review/sunset
4. are targeted rather than blanket
5. reduce burdens on vulnerable groups (lower A)
6. improve appealability and error correction

4.3 Calibration (so teams converge)

- Use 3–5 historical cases to calibrate scoring across reviewers.
- If two reviewers' totals differ by >3 points on the same option, require reconciliation and document the disagreement.

Step 5 — Prefer consent-first

solutions

Choose options that:

- increase mutual valid consent
- increase reversibility
- reduce surprise costs
- reduce power-based coercion

Rule: If a consent-first option exists, prefer it—even if less “efficient.”

Step 6 — If imposition is unavoidable:

pick the least-imposing constraint +

safeguards

When you must impose (safety, fraud prevention, legal requirements, unavoidable conflicts):

1. Choose the option with the lowest total score (T), applying tie-breakers.
2. Add safeguards (required):
 - Proportionality: minimum constraint necessary to stop/contain the imposition
 - Time bounds: shortest duration compatible with safety/need + explicit review date
 - Transparency: clear reasons in plain language
 - Due process: notice → chance to respond → appeal
 - Mitigation: exemptions/accommodations where feasible; reduce scope and data/time extraction
 - Repair: restore losses where possible (refunds, reinstatement paths, apologies, restitution)

Step 6B — Aggregation & distribution

guardrails (added)

To prevent “least total score” from becoming a quiet utilitarian override, apply these guardrails:

1. Minimax guardrail: prefer the option that minimizes the worst individual imposition when feasible.
2. Anti-concentration guardrail: avoid concentrating heavy burdens on the powerless even if total scores are slightly lower.
3. Irreversibility priority: treat irreversible liberty/bodily autonomy constraints as exceptionally costly; require stronger justification and stronger safeguards.
4. Error-cost guardrail: under uncertainty, prefer reversible/time-bounded constraints with strong appeal and correction pathways.

If a lower-total option violates these guardrails, choose the next-best option that satisfies them, and document why.

Step 7 — “No moral laundering”

statement (required)

Document plainly:

- what impositions remain
- why they were unavoidable operationally (including why consent/alternatives failed)
- what mitigations/appeals/repairs exist
- what evidence/thresholds would trigger revision (metrics, incidents, review date)

Rule: Least-imposition is not moral permission; it is harm minimization under constraint.

Default rules of thumb (mini-rules)

1. Stop imposition before optimizing preferences.
2. Don't assist one person's will to impose on another.
3. Prefer separation over domination (filters, boundaries, separate channels/spaces).
4. Prefer reversible decisions (trials, time-boxes, appeals).
5. Use neutral, predictable criteria under scarcity (published in advance).
6. Escalate enforcement gradually when safe (warn → restrict → remove).
7. Under uncertainty, constrain minimally and reversibly until evidence improves.

Institutional process version

(company/workplace/platform)

Intake

- Single channel to report conflicts (anonymous option where retaliation risk exists)
- Immediate screening for safety threats / active imposition
- Classify evidence level (0–3)

Fact-finding (minimal but sufficient)

- Gather statements and relevant evidence
- Avoid invasive collection beyond what's needed (data minimization)

Interim measures (if needed)

- Temporary separation or limited restrictions
- Must be: targeted, minimal, time-bounded, reviewable

Resolution selection

- Apply the IE procedure: consent-first → least-imposition scoring → guardrails → safeguards
- Write the “no moral laundering” statement

Communication

Explain outcome in plain language:

- what happened (as found)
- what standard applies (rule/constraint)
- what action is taken and for how long
- how to appeal and what evidence would change the outcome
- how to prevent recurrence

Appeal and review

- Independent reviewer or separate chain
- Track reversal/error rates (high reversal = policy/process problem)

Common conflict types and IE-

aligned resolutions

A) Boundary violations (harassment,

threats, coercion)

- Protect target first (stop active imposition)
- Impose minimal necessary restriction on violator
- Provide appeal; do not require the target to negotiate their boundary

B) Coordination conflicts (shared

space, scheduling, collaboration)

- Mediation: clarify needs; propose tradeoffs
- Rotation/time-splitting if both consent
- Separation if repeated conflict persists

C) Scarcity conflicts (limited

slots/resources)

- Transparent allocation rules published in advance
- Reversible allocations and waitlists where feasible
- Avoid surprise midstream changes

D) Enforcement conflicts (rules,

moderation, workplace discipline)

- Clear rules and predictable escalation
- Proportionate sanctions
- Due process + appeal
- Repair paths (reinstatement, training, probation) where feasible

E) Values conflicts (deep

disagreement)

- IE does not require value alignment
- Prioritize coexistence structures: opt-outs, filters, separate channels, local autonomy
- Intervene only where values become imposition on others

Example applications (short)

Example 1 — Workplace scheduling

conflict

- Consent-first: swaps, preference bidding, rotating undesirable shifts
- If unavoidable: apply neutral criteria (rotation/seniority/lottery) + notice + appeal + time-boxed schedule review

Example 2 — Platform moderation

conflict

- Stop active harassment: targeted restriction on sender
- Provide reason + appeal
- Time-bound restrictions where feasible; escalate only for repetition/stronger evidence

Example 3 — Privacy vs

personalization conflict

- Default to minimal collection
- Personalization opt-in + reversible
- No penalties for declining optional data use

Metrics (so this doesn't become vague)

Track:

- time-to-resolution
- repeat-conflict rate
- appeal rate and reversal rate
- retaliation incidents
- satisfaction for both parties (separately)
- “surprise cost” complaints (blindsided = hidden imposition)
- interim measure duration (should trend down)
- evidence-level distribution at time of restriction (overreach detection)

Closing principle (institutional posture)

IE conflict resolution aims for:

- Maximum valid consent
- Minimum coercion
- Strong safeguards when coercion is unavoidable
- Honest recognition of remaining imposition as a moral cost, not a moral success

Role of Members

Roles: Members vs

Observers

Observers

Observers are anyone who engages with the Church's ideas without commitment.

- No affirmation required
- No participation expected
- No moral judgment applied
- May disagree with any or all conclusions

Observers may:

- Attend discussions
- Read materials
- Question the framework
- Leave without consequence

The Church explicitly affirms that observation without assent is morally neutral.

Members

Members are those who voluntarily align themselves with the Church's orientation.

Membership implies:

- Acceptance of the canon as a moral framework
- Commitment to reducing involuntary imposition where feasible
- Willingness to name coercion honestly, even when uncomfortable

Membership does not imply:

- Moral superiority
- Authority over others
- Obligation to act beyond one's capacity
- Permission to coerce in the name of the Church

Membership is self-selected, non-binding, and revocable at any time.

No one is morally better for being a member, and no one is morally worse for not being one.

Institutional Implementation Guide for Imposition Ethics (IE)

Note:

This guide is provisional and intended as a practical starting point for institutions seeking to implement Imposition Ethics (IE). It is not a sealed or authoritative specification, and it may contain omissions, edge cases, or implementation assumptions that should be revised as experience, criticism, and better evidence accumulate.

Institutions should treat the procedures, templates, and metrics below as iterable policy

infrastructure: adopt what is useful, measure outcomes, document failure modes, and update the system when results show unintended impositions, ineffective consent mechanisms, or better least-imposition alternatives.

Implement IE in an institution by voluntarily adopting it as a decision policy that:

- Reduces involuntary imposition on conscious agents' wills where possible.
- Increases voluntary assistance (consented cooperation) where possible.
- When imposition is unavoidable, selects the least-imposing option and adds mitigation + repair, without re-labeling the imposition as "good," "permitted," or "required."

Implementation checklist

Phase 1 — Commit and define scope (1–2 weeks)

- Adopt an IE Charter (what you will measure, where it applies, what it does not replace).
- Appoint an IE Owner (single accountable executive) and an IE Review Group (cross-functional).
- Define the "agents" you affect: employees, customers, users, contractors, vendors, community, regulators.
- Create an Imposition Register (like a risk register, but will-frustration focused).

Phase 2 — Build operating systems (2–8 weeks)

- Add an IE Impact Assessment (IE-IA) to product, policy, and process changes.
- Build consent infrastructure (clear choices, revocability, audit trails, accessible UX).
- Establish due process for enforcement: notice → explanation → appeal → correction pathway.
- Train teams on IE decision-making and documentation.

Phase 3 — Embed and measure (ongoing)

- Make IE-IA required at: HR policies, data/privacy, pricing, enforcement, product UX, safety/security.
- Track metrics and publish internal quarterly reviews.

- Treat “unavoidable impositions” as recognized moral costs with mitigation, not victories.

1) Translate IE into institutional terms

Core mapping

- Will (institutional): a stakeholder’s preferences, boundaries, plans, informed choices.
- Consent: voluntary authorization that is informed, specific, uncoerced, and revocable.
- Involuntary imposition: forcing outcomes, constraining options, or extracting resources without consent (including via manipulation, hidden terms, dark patterns, or retaliation).
- Voluntary assistance: helping stakeholders achieve their ends as they endorse them, with consent.

Institutional stance (important)

- IE can be adopted as prescriptive policy, but that prescriptivity is conditional on adoption.
- “Least-imposition” is a decision heuristic under constraint, not a moral conversion of harm into good.
- Do not impose additional constraints purely to “move the world closer” to any ideal horizon.

2) Governance: make IE real, not aspirational

Roles

- IE Owner (Exec): accountable for adoption, resources, and conflicts.
- IE Review Group: Legal/Compliance, HR, Product, Security, Support, Ops, Accessibility.
- IE Ombuds / Intake: neutral channel for reporting coercion or consent violations.

Artifacts

- IE Charter (public internally; optionally external summary).
- Imposition Register: catalog recurring and structural impositions (e.g., termination, surveillance, collections, bans).
- IE Impact Assessment (IE-IA): mandatory for major decisions.

Decision gates (simple rule)

Any policy/product/process change that affects stakeholder choice, access, money, data,

employment status, or bodily/time autonomy must pass an IE-IA.

3) Consent infrastructure (the main lever)

Consent quality standards

Consent must be:

- Informed: plain language, salient risks/costs, no buried surprises.
- Specific: separate choices for separate uses (especially data).
- Freely given: no retaliation, no “accept all or lose everything” unless strictly necessary.
- Reversible: easy withdrawal; withdrawal doesn’t trigger punitive friction.
- Auditable: records of when/what was agreed to.

Institutional patterns that look like “consent” but often aren’t

- Default opt-ins with confusing opt-outs
- “Consent” obtained under economic duress with no alternative path
- Bundled consent (one checkbox for many unrelated actions)
- Deceptive UX (“dark patterns”) that steer agreement

Minimum viable consent system (practical)

- One page: choices, consequences, reversibility.
- A “Manage preferences” panel that is:
 - reachable in ≤ 2 clicks,
 - understandable,
 - consistent across devices,
 - logged and testable.

4) The IE Impact Assessment (IE-IA) decision procedure

Use this for every significant institutional action (policy, product, enforcement, HR, pricing, data, security).

Step 1 — Stakeholder map

List affected agents:

- direct (primary users/employees/customers)
- indirect (bystanders, community, dependents)

- vulnerable groups (power imbalance increases coercion risk)
 - Step 2 — Enumerate options (including “do nothing”)
- Option A, B, C...
- Include non-obvious alternatives: pilot, delay, partial rollout, opt-in, reversible trial.
 - Step 3 — Identify impositions per option
 - For each option, document:
- What is constrained/overridden? (time, money, speech, access, data, movement, employment, bodily autonomy)
- Is consent present? (and is it high-quality?)
- Magnitude (low/med/high), scope (how many), duration, reversibility
- Predictability (are costs known or surprise?)
 - Step 4 — Identify voluntary assistance per option
- What does this enable for consenting agents?
- Is assistance contingent on hidden costs?
 - Step 5 — Avoidability test
 - Can you:
- remove the imposition entirely?
- convert it to opt-in?
- offer a genuine alternative path?
- shorten duration or increase reversibility?
- reduce data/time extraction?
 - Step 6 — If unavoidable: least-imposition selection + mitigation
 - When constraint is unavoidable (safety, fraud prevention, legal compliance, operational necessity):
- Choose the least imposing option available.
- Add:
 - mitigation (reduce scope/duration; exemptions; accommodations),
 - repair (refunds, reinstatement paths, apologies, restoration where possible),
 - oversight (appeals, audits, error-rate monitoring).

Step 7 — “No moral laundering” statement

Record explicitly:

- what impositions remain,
- why they are unavoidable operationally,
- what mitigations exist,
- what signals would trigger revision.

5) Handling conflicts of will (institutional reality)

Institutions constantly face situations where helping one person’s will would impose on another.

Conflict rule (operational)

When an action is:

- voluntary assistance to one party and
- involuntary imposition on another,

treat it as morally mixed and manage it by:

- refusing to assist in creating imposition where feasible,
- if intervention is required (e.g., safety), applying minimal force, due process, and repair.

Common examples

- Enabling harassment: “user wants to message” vs target’s will not to be harassed
→ restrict sender (imposition on sender), protect target, add appeal path.
- Employee wants unsafe shortcuts vs customers’ will not to be harmed
→ constrain employee behavior with training + accountability, minimize surveillance, maximize clarity.

6) Department-by-department implementation

A) Product & UX

Goal: eliminate coercive design and maximize reversible choice.

Implement:

- No dark patterns (forced continuity, hidden fees, confusing cancellation).
- Default to privacy-minimizing and opt-in for non-essential data.
- Make cancellation/exit as easy as signup.
- Add “reversibility” features: undo, trial rollback, export, delete.

IE-IA triggers:

- pricing changes
- onboarding flows
- notifications and engagement loops
- personalization/ads
- paywalls and cancellations

B) Data, privacy, and security

Goal: reduce involuntary extraction and involuntary exposure.

Implement:

- Data minimization (collect only what's needed).
- Purpose limitation (no surprise secondary use).
- Granular consent and easy revocation.
- Breach response as repair: clear notice, remediation, restitution where appropriate.

Security often requires impositions (rate limits, bans, verification). Make them:

- proportionate,
- auditable,
- appealable,
- time-bounded where possible.

C) HR and people operations

Goal: reduce coercive workplace structures and increase negotiated cooperation.

Implement:

- Transparent job expectations and performance criteria.
- Scheduling: prefer employee choice; predictable notice; opt-in for extra shifts.
- Monitoring: minimal necessary; disclose; avoid invasive surveillance.
- Discipline/termination: documented reasons, chance to respond, appeal, and humane offboarding.

High-imposition areas to manage explicitly:

- noncompetes / restrictive covenants (where legal)
- mandatory overtime

- intrusive monitoring
- retaliation risk for complaints

D) Customer support and collections

Goal: resolve issues with minimal coercion.

Implement:

- Easy access to a human path for high-stakes issues.
- Refund/replacement policies that don't require excessive labor or humiliation.
- Collections: transparency, negotiated plans, no deceptive pressure tactics.

E) Compliance and legal

Goal: comply without using compliance as a blanket justification for extra impositions.

Implement:

- Separate "legally required" from "convenient."
- For each legal-driven constraint: minimize scope, maximize clarity, add alternatives.

F) Trust & Safety / Community moderation

Goal: reduce harm without overreach.

Implement:

- Clear rules (predictability reduces surprise imposition).
- Progressive enforcement when possible (warning → limited restriction → removal).
- Appeals, error tracking, and periodic reinstatement review.

G) Procurement and supply chain

Goal: avoid benefiting from coercive labor or predatory contracts.

Implement:

- Vendor code of conduct (wages, working conditions, coercion indicators).
- Contract fairness review (termination clauses, unilateral changes, punitive penalties).
- Prefer vendors with transparent grievance mechanisms.

7) Metrics that match IE (not just PR)

Track both imposition and assistance.

Imposition indicators

- % of flows that are opt-out vs opt-in
- time/steps to cancel vs sign up
- number and type of enforcement actions; appeal reversal rate

- surveillance scope: tools used, data categories monitored
- policy exceptions/accommodations granted
- complaint volume about coercion, retaliation, manipulation

Assistance indicators

- user success outcomes where users explicitly endorse the goal
- employee autonomy scores (survey: scheduling control, clarity, psychological safety)
- accessibility completion rates and satisfaction
- resolution time for support with low friction

Quality indicators

- “Surprise cost” rate (billing disputes, hidden fee complaints)
- consent withdrawal success rate (did the system actually honor revocation?)
- audit outcomes for consent logs and enforcement fairness

8) Training and cultural integration

Training modules (minimal set)

- IE basics (will/consent/imposition/assistance)
- Detecting pseudo-consent (dark patterns, coercion via friction)
- IE-IA workshop using real scenarios from your org
- “Unavoidable imposition” protocol: mitigation + repair + documentation

Behavioral expectations

- Staff can raise “IE concerns” without retaliation.
- Teams must document tradeoffs rather than hiding them.

9) Templates you can copy into a company policy set

A) IE Charter (short form)

- We adopt Imposition Ethics as an internal decision policy.
- We aim to reduce involuntary imposition and increase voluntary assistance where feasible.
- When constraints are unavoidable, we select the least-imposing option and implement mitigation, repair, and appeal.
- This policy complements (and does not replace) legal compliance, safety duties, and contractual obligations.

B) IE Impact Assessment (one-page form)

- Decision:
- Stakeholders affected:
- Options considered (including do-nothing):
- For each option:
 - Impositions (what, who, duration, reversibility, consent quality):
 - Voluntary assistance enabled:
 - Avoidability alternatives:
 - If unavoidable: mitigation + repair + appeals:
- Final selection and why least-imposing:
- Review date / trigger conditions for reevaluation:

C) Consent standard (public-facing phrasing)

- We ask permission in clear language.
- You can change your mind easily.
- We separate essential functions from optional uses.
- We do not punish you for declining optional choices.

10) Common failure modes (and how to prevent them)

- IE becomes branding only → require IE-IA at decision gates; audit compliance.
- Consent theater (choices exist but are unusable) → measure withdrawal success and time-to-opt-out.
- Bundling and coercion via friction → parity rule: leaving must be as easy as joining.
- Safety used as a blank check → require proportionality, time bounds, and appeal.
- “Least-imposition” becomes moral justification → document remaining impositions as costs, not wins.

11) A practical rollout plan (90 days)

Days 1–15

- Adopt Charter, appoint Owner/Review Group, create Imposition Register.
- Choose 3 high-imposition areas to tackle first (often: cancellations, data consent, workplace monitoring).

Days 16–45

- Implement IE-IA workflow.
- Fix one major coercive flow end-to-end (prove measurable change).

- Launch complaint/ombuds channel and anti-retaliation rule.

Days 46–90

- Expand to HR discipline/appeals, moderation enforcement, and vendor contracts.
- Publish internal dashboard metrics.
- Run an IE audit on two completed decisions; revise process.

Imposition Ethics

Government

Implementation

Framework (IE-GIF) —

v1.0

Note (provisional status)

This Government Implementation Framework is provisional and intended as practical policy infrastructure for applying Imposition Ethics (IE) to government decision-making. It is not a sealed or authoritative specification, and it may contain omissions, edge cases, and implementation assumptions that should be revised as experience, criticism, and better evidence accumulate.

Use this framework as an iterable governance system:

- adopt what is useful,
- pilot where uncertainty is high,
- measure outcomes with transparent methods,
- document failure modes (unintended impositions, metric gaming, enforcement errors, inequitable burden concentration),
- and update the rules when results show better least-imposition alternatives or weaknesses in consent, due process, and repair.

No part of this framework should be treated as moral “permission” to impose; coercive policies remain recognized moral costs and must be justified only in the operational sense of evidence-backed least-imposition selection under binding guardrails, with time bounds, appeals, and repair.

1) Government adoption stance

(foundational)

1.1 Charter statement

The Government voluntarily adopts Imposition Ethics (IE) as a governing decision policy:

- Minimize involuntary imposition on the will of conscious agents.
- Maximize voluntary assistance through consent-based cooperation where feasible.
- When coercion is unavoidable for coordination/public safety/legal necessity, select the least-imposing option, add mitigation + repair, and maintain due process.

1.2 Non-laundering clause (required language)

No coercive policy is declared “morally good,” “permitted,” or “required” by IE. Coercion is treated as a recognized moral cost managed by:

- minimal sufficiency,
- evidence-based least-imposition selection,
- time bounds,
- transparent justification,
- repair and error correction.

(If you want to use the word “justified” publicly: define it as “selected as least-imposing under evidence and guardrails,” not as moral permission.)

2) Core governance architecture

2.1 Institutions (new or repurposed)

A) Evidence & Imposition Office (EIO) (independent, statutory)

- Sets measurement standards (NII), evidence thresholds, and evaluation methods.
- Reviews all IIAs for major policies.
- Publishes public dashboards, replication reports, and “imposition audits.”

B) Imposition Ombuds & Appeals Authority (IOAA)

- Handles citizen complaints about coercion/consent violations.
- Has power to compel agency responses, order corrective action pathways, and recommend remediation.

C) Imposition Review Court (IRC) / specialized judicial standard

- Courts review coercive measures using IE standards:
 - minimal sufficiency,
 - guardrails,
 - evidence quality,
 - time bounds,
 - due process.

2.2 Decision gates

Any policy that affects money, liberty, movement, speech, data, bodily autonomy, employment, housing access, education access, or enforcement status must include an Imposition Impact Assessment (IIA) and an EIO review.

3) The national metric: measuring

“imposition” (NII)

3.1 National Imposition Index (NII):

what it measures

NII is a composite of measurable “will-frustration proxies,” tracked over time and by subgroup.

Core components

1. Coercive constraint rate
 - a. arrests/detentions, fines, forced compliance orders, compulsory seizures
2. Involuntary deprivation
 - a. homelessness, food insecurity, untreated serious illness, extreme poverty
3. Violence and predation exposure

- a. assault/victimization rates, coercive exploitation, domestic violence
- 4. Time/administrative burden imposed
 - a. hours spent on compliance paperwork, waiting, procedural hurdles
- 5. Involuntary risk exposure
 - a. preventable mortality, pollution exposure, workplace injury rates
- 6. Rights violation indicators
 - a. wrongful convictions, unlawful searches, discrimination findings
- 7. Consent integrity indicators
 - a. opt-out success, clarity of notices, reversal/error rates in enforcement decisions

Distribution requirement

NII must be reported:

- overall national level
- by region
- by vulnerable groups (poverty, disability, minority status, etc.)
- by “worst-off decile” (minimax tracking)

3.2 Guardrail metrics (mandatory)

These are not “nice-to-have”; they constrain what counts as acceptable.

- Minimax: track the worst-off group’s imposition separately; policies must not improve averages by crushing a minority.
- Anti-concentration: quantify burden concentration; penalize policies that dump coercion on low-power groups.
- Irreversibility: special flag for irreversible harms (death, lifelong incarceration, sterilization, permanent exile, etc.).
- Error-cost: track wrongful impositions and reversals (false positives) and require corrective thresholds.

4) Evidence standard: how

“scientific proof” controls coercion

4.1 IE Evidence Standard (IES)

A coercive policy is eligible for adoption only if it meets one of the following:

Tier 1 (strongest):

- randomized controlled trials (where ethical/possible) showing NII reduction

Tier 2:

- strong quasi-experimental evidence (difference-in-differences, RDD, matched controls, natural experiments) showing NII reduction

Tier 3 (provisional, time-bounded):

- best-available evidence + strong theory + pilot requirement + strict sunset + rapid evaluation plan

4.2 Required evidence properties

- Causal identification (not mere correlation)
- Replicability (or at least independent reanalysis of data/code by EIO)
- Subgroup analysis (no hidden harm to the worst-off)
- External validity statement (what contexts it likely generalizes to)
- Adversarial testing (how it could be gamed; what prevents gaming)

4.3 The key decision rule (what

replaces “justified”)

A coercive policy is selected only if:

1. It is minimally sufficient for its stated aim; and
2. It is the least-imposing among feasible alternatives; and
3. Evidence predicts it will reduce NII (overall and not violate guardrails); and
4. It includes mitigation + repair + due process + time bounds.

5) The Imposition Impact

Assessment (IIA) for all

bills/regulations

5.1 IIA one-page required fields

A) Policy statement

- objective, target population, enforcement mechanism, duration

B) Options considered

- include “do nothing,” non-coercive alternatives, local/opt-in alternatives, reversible pilots

C) Imposition scoring (0–3 each)

Score each option:

- Severity (S), Scope (N), Duration (D), Reversibility (R), Surprise (P), Power asymmetry (A), Risk imposed (K)
- D) Guardrail check
- minimax impact, concentration impact, irreversibility flag, error-cost plan
- E) Evidence plan
- evidence tier, expected NII effect size, evaluation design, falsification tests
- F) Due process & repair
- notice, appeal, correction, restitution pathways, wrongful imposition remedies
- G) Sunset & triggers
- automatic expiration date
 - reevaluation triggers (thresholds)

5.2 Tie-breakers for selecting between

close options

Prefer options that:

1. convert coercion into valid consent or real alternatives
2. maximize reversibility and time bounds
3. reduce burdens on the powerless
4. reduce wrongful imposition probability
5. reduce administrative/time burdens

6) Taxation under IE: the “Imposition

Reduction Funding Rule”

6.1 Taxation is treated as an

imposition

Taxes are coercive extraction; under IE they are a recognized imposition requiring:

- evidence of net NII reduction (including minimax)
- least-imposing tax design among feasible revenue options
- transparency, predictability, and minimization of compliance burden
- repair mechanisms (credits/refunds) when errors occur

6.2 The tax decision metric (what you requested)

A tax is eligible only if evidence shows it funds programs that demonstrably reduce NII more than the tax increases imposition.

This requires two measurements:

1. Tax imposition cost (money taken + compliance time + enforcement harms)
2. Spending imposition reduction benefit (causal reduction in NII components)

6.3 IE tax design constraints (least-imposition taxation)

- Minimize compliance burden (withholding, prefilled filing, simplified schedules)
- Avoid regressive concentration unless offset with automatic credits
- Stability/predictability (no surprise tax shocks)
- Error repair (fast refunds, interest on wrongful seizures)

- Enforcement constraints (graduated, appealable, minimal necessary coercion)

6.4 Budgeting as an “Imposition

Portfolio”

Each fiscal year:

- publish an Imposition Budget:
 - total coercive extraction (tax/fees)
 - expected NII reduction from funded programs
 - distribution effects and minimax outcomes
- require program sunsets unless NII improvements persist

7) Criminal justice and policing

under IE (high-stakes coercion)

7.1 Permitted function (under

adopted policy)

Coercion is limited to:

- containment of active imposition (stopping violence/fraud)
- prevention with minimal constraints
- restitution/repair

7.2 Hard constraints

- Irreversibility priority: treat irreversible coercion (long incarceration, lethal force) as exceptional.
- Error-cost guardrail: wrongful conviction/arrest triggers automatic policy review thresholds.
- Due process floor: clear notice, counsel access, appeal, evidence transparency.

7.3 Evidence requirement

- policing and sentencing policies require causal evidence that they reduce victimization (active impositions) without increasing wrongful impositions and concentrated harms.

8) Public health and safety

mandates (coordination without

blank checks)

8.1 Public-Goods Constraint Rule

Mandates require:

- minimal sufficiency
- narrow scope
- time bounds and automatic review
- clear metrics (what ends it)
- exemptions/accommodations where feasible
- appealability and repair

8.2 Evidence

Use tiered evidence with pilots when uncertainty is high; prioritize reversible measures first.

9) Data, surveillance, and privacy

(imposition via information)

- Surveillance is treated as imposition (risk + autonomy intrusion).
- Adopt data minimization and strict purpose limits.
- Require causal evidence that any surveillance reduces NII more than it increases coercion risks.
- Strong anti-abuse controls: audit logs, independent oversight, warrant standards, expiration.

10) Scarcity triage: allocation under constraints

For scarce resources (medical slots, housing, disaster relief):

- publish transparent criteria in advance
- maximize reversibility (waitlists, appeals)
- apply minimax: protect worst-off from extreme deprivation
- avoid “hidden rationing” via friction

11) Emergency powers (high-risk for abuse)

Emergency actions must include:

- automatic expiration (short)
- legislative renewal required
- independent review by EIO + courts
- strict evidence reporting cadence
- post-mortem imposition audit + repair for wrongful impositions

12) Federalism and local autonomy

(structural consent maximization)

- prefer local opt-ins/pilots where feasible
- allow jurisdictional variation to test lower-imposition alternatives
- require national baseline rights-floor to prevent local oppression

13) Foreign policy and defense

(provisional doctrine)

- treat war/force as extreme imposition requiring:
 - strict necessity standard
 - minimax for civilians
 - evidence-based threat assessment
 - time-bounded authorization
 - post-action imposition audit and reparations policy

14) Monitoring, audits, and

continuous improvement

14.1 Required public reporting

- quarterly NII updates
- coercion dashboards (arrests, fines, seizures, enforcement errors)
- program evaluations (what reduced NII; what failed)

14.2 Automatic triggers for policy

revision

- reversal/wrongful-imposition rate exceeds threshold
- minimax subgroup worsens
- concentration index worsens
- predicted NII reduction not observed

14.3 Anti-Goodhart protections

- multiple metrics (not one number)
- independent audits and replication
- penalties for metric manipulation focused on restitution/containment

15) Copy-ready templates

A) IE Imposition Impact Assessment

(IIA) — 1 page

- Policy:
- Objective:
- Enforcement mechanism:
- Options (A/B/C + do nothing):
- Consent/alternatives:
- Scoring per option (S,N,D,R,P,A,K) + total:
- Guardrails (minimax/anti-concentration/irreversibility/error-cost):
- Evidence tier + evaluation design:
- Due process + appeal:
- Mitigation + repair:
- Sunset date + triggers:
- EIO review notes:

B) Tax Proposal IE Sheet

- Revenue method:
- Compliance burden estimate:
- Enforcement imposition plan (minimal, appealable):
- Spending targets:
- Evidence for NII reduction (tier + design):
- Distribution/minimax analysis:
- Offset/credits/repair:
- Sunset + reevaluation triggers:

What to watch (pitfalls)

- “Scientific evidence” can be gamed unless you require causal designs, replication, and guardrails.
- Measurement itself imposes (data collection/surveillance). Budget measurement burden explicitly.
- Averages hide oppression unless minimax + anti-concentration are binding constraints.
- Emergency powers are the main corruption vector; keep sunsets and independent review hard-coded.

IE High-

Stakes

Governance

Protocol (IE-

HSGP) —

Provisional

v0.1

Note (provisional status)

This High-Stakes Governance Model is provisional and intended as practical policy infrastructure for applying Imposition Ethics (IE) to extreme, time-pressured, high-uncertainty situations (war, famine, pandemics, mass disasters, catastrophic risk). It is not a sealed or authoritative specification, and it may contain omissions, edge cases, and implementation assumptions that should be revised as experience, criticism, and better evidence accumulate.

Use this model as an iterable governance system:

- adopt what is useful,
- pilot where uncertainty is high,
- measure outcomes with transparent methods,
- document failure modes (unintended impositions, metric gaming, enforcement errors, inequitable burden concentration),
- and update rules when results show better least-imposition alternatives or weaknesses in consent, due process, and repair.

No part of this model should be treated as moral “permission” to impose. Coercive actions remain recognized moral costs and are selected only in

the operational sense of evidence-backed least-imposition under binding guardrails, with time bounds, oversight, and repair.

1) Scope

Applies to situations with:

- imminent or ongoing mass harm (large-scale death, injury, displacement, rights violations),
- time pressure that prevents normal deliberation,
- high uncertainty and adversarial conditions,
- risk of irreversible outcomes.

Examples (non-exhaustive):

- War/armed conflict, invasion, civil conflict
- Famine/food system collapse
- Pandemic/biological events
- Catastrophic natural disasters (earthquake, hurricanes, wildfire megaseasons)
- Mass refugee flows and state collapse
- Critical infrastructure collapse (grid, water, supply chain)
- Severe cyber events affecting essential services
- Nuclear escalation risk (policy-level only; no operational guidance)

2) IE stance in high- stakes contexts

High-stakes conditions do not suspend IE. They increase:

- the likelihood that some imposition is unavoidable,
- the burden of proof for irreversible constraints,
- the need for tight time bounds, oversight, and repair.

Core operating rule:

Maximize valid consent and reversibility; when coercion is unavoidable to prevent or contain large-scale active imposition, apply the minimum necessary constraint, targeted and time-bounded, with due process and repair.

3) Binding

guardrails (non-

negotiable

constraints)

These are mandatory constraints on any high-stakes action.

G1) Minimax (protect the worst-off)

Prefer options that minimize the worst individual/group imposition, not merely the average.

G2) Anti-

concentration

Avoid dumping burdens on low-power groups (poor, disabled, minorities, migrants, political dissidents) even if totals improve.

G3) Irreversibility

priority

Treat irreversible impositions (death, torture, permanent detention, mass displacement, lifelong deprivation) as exceptionally costly. Require stronger evidence and stricter oversight.

G4) Error-cost /

wrongful-imposition

control

Under uncertainty, prefer reversible, reviewable, and appealable interventions. Track and aggressively correct false positives.

G5) Minimal

sufficiency (no

excess force)

Actions must be no broader than needed to stop/contain the threat.

G6) No moral

laundering

Record remaining impositions as moral costs; do not reclassify them as “good,” “permitted,” or “required.”

4) High-stakes

classification and

authority tiers

To prevent “emergency” becoming a blank check, use explicit tiers with escalating requirements.

Tier H0 — Elevated

risk (no emergency

powers)

- normal processes; preparatory measures; voluntary programs

Tier H1 — Acute

threat (limited

emergency powers)

- time-bounded executive actions allowed
- mandatory review within short fixed window
- strong transparency and evaluation plan

Tier H2 — Active

mass harm

(expanded but

constrained powers)

- targeted coercive measures allowed only under strict minimal sufficiency
- automatic sunset; legislative renewal required
- independent oversight audit cadence increases

Tier H3 —

Catastrophic risk

(maximum constraint

on decision-makers)

- highest evidentiary burden feasible
- “irreversibility priority” is strongest
- multiple independent reviews required (red team, legal, ethics, evidence office)
- post-action reparations plan is mandatory

5) Evidence

standard under high

uncertainty (IES-H)

When RCTs are impossible, “science” means disciplined inference, not rhetoric.

Evidence tiers (high-stakes)

- E1 (Strong causal): high-quality quasi-experimental evidence; consistent across contexts
- E2 (Convergent): multiple independent lines (observational, mechanistic, historical analogs) point same direction
- E3 (Provisional emergency): best-available evidence + strong plausibility + strict pilot/time-box + rapid evaluation + automatic rollback triggers

Required evidence

properties

- explicit uncertainty ranges (confidence bands)
- subgroup impact estimates (minimax/anti-concentration)
- adversarial analysis (how it fails if opponent acts)
- falsification tests (what would prove the policy wrong)

- measurement burden assessment (data collection can itself impose)

6) High-Stakes

Imposition Impact

Assessment (HS-

IIA) — Mandatory

procedure

Every major action in H1–H3 must complete an HS-IIA (even if abbreviated initially, then completed within a fixed time window).

Step 1 — Map

affected agents and

rights-like

boundaries

- direct population, indirect third parties, neighboring states, future persons (where relevant)
- vulnerable groups explicitly listed
- what each group would refuse if able (boundaries), not only preferences

Step 2 — Identify the active imposition

Name the ongoing or imminent imposition:

- violence/predation
- starvation
- involuntary infection exposure
- displacement
- infrastructure deprivation (water/power)
- coercive exploitation

Step 3 — Enumerate

options (include non-

coercive)

Include:

- diplomacy/negotiation/ceasefire options (when applicable)
- voluntary incentives and logistics
- targeted restrictions
- structural separation (corridors, zones, time/space partition)
- do-nothing (explicitly scored)

Step 4 — Score

each option (0–3

rubric; auditable)

Score per option:

- Severity (S), Scope (N), Duration (D), Reversibility (R), Surprise (P), Power asymmetry (A), Risk imposed (K)

Total: $T = S + N + D + R + P + A + K$

Step 5 — Apply

guardrails (must-

pass constraints)

- minimax check: worst-off outcome by option
- concentration check: who bears the burden
- irreversibility check: flags + extra review
- error-cost plan: appeals, correction, compensation, rollback triggers

Step 6 — Select

“least-imposing

sufficient” option

Choose the lowest-imposition option that is credibly sufficient to contain the threat, subject to guardrails.

Step 7 —

Safeguards package

(required)

- time bounds + sunset date
- transparency: plain-language rationale and criteria
- due process: notice → response → appeal (even in compressed form)
- mitigation: exemptions/accommodations where feasible
- repair: restitution, compensation, reinstatement paths
- evaluation plan + triggers for rollback/escalation

Step 8 — No moral

laundering statement

(required)

Document:

- remaining impositions
- why unavoidable
- what mitigations/appeals/repairs exist
- what evidence triggers revision

7) Domain modules

7A) War and armed

conflict (policy-level

constraints)

Primary objective (IE

framing)

Contain and end active large-scale imposition (killing, coercion, territorial domination) while minimizing new impositions.

Hard constraints

- prioritize nonviolent and consent-maximizing options first (diplomacy, withdrawal offers, third-party mediation) when feasible
- civilian minimax: minimize worst-off (typically civilians) even when strategically costly
- targeting constraint: prefer highly targeted measures over broad collective punishment
- time bounds: authorizations expire quickly without renewal
- transparency + oversight: independent review of claims, proportionality reasoning in IE terms (scope/severity minimization)

Mobilization/conscrip

tion doctrine (high-

imposition)

- default: volunteer forces and consent-based incentives
- if coercive mobilization claimed “unavoidable,” require:
 - H3-level review
 - minimax/anti-concentration enforcement (no dumping on the poor)
 - narrow duration, exemptions, conscientious objector paths, noncombat alternatives
 - robust compensation + lifelong repair obligations for harms

Prisoners/detention

- detention only for containment, not punitive suffering
- strict due process, time bounds, periodic review, humane conditions
- wrongful detention repair is mandatory

Post-conflict repair

- restitution and reconstruction prioritized
- documentation, truth processes, compensation funds
- institutional learning audit (see section 10)

7B) Famine and mass deprivation (food/water/energy)

Primary objective

Reduce involuntary deprivation (starvation, thirst, exposure) with minimal coercion and minimal burden concentration.

Default strategy

order (least-

imposition

preference)

1. logistics + procurement expansion (voluntary contracting, import corridors)
2. targeted cash/food transfers (maximize choice/consent)
3. rationing only if unavoidable, with transparent rules and appeals
4. coercive seizure controls only if strictly necessary, time-bounded, and reparable

Allocation under scarcity

- publish criteria in advance (as early as possible)
- minimax: prioritize preventing worst-off outcomes (death, severe malnutrition)
- avoid friction-based rationing (hidden queues, paperwork burdens)
- reversible updates; rapid appeals

Price controls /

restrictions (if used)

- require evidence they reduce deprivation without creating black-market coercion
- time-bounded; evaluate quickly; rollback triggers

Anti-exploitation

enforcement

- focus on containment of coercive predation (hoarding extortion, violent theft)
- enforcement must be targeted, appealable, and non-punitive beyond containment/restitution

7C) Pandemics /

contagious public

health emergencies

Primary objective

Reduce involuntary infection exposure and severe outcomes while minimizing autonomy impositions.

Intervention ladder

(least-imposition

order)

1. information + voluntary behavior supports
2. access enablement (free masks/tests/ventilation upgrades)
3. targeted protections for high-risk settings
4. time-bounded mandates only if evidence shows net minimax improvement

Mandate constraints

- minimal sufficiency and narrow scope
- time bounds + clear end conditions
- exemptions/accommodations with low friction
- strong due process for enforcement and penalties
- monitor unequal burdens (anti-concentration)

7D) Mass disaster

response

(earthquake, flood,

wildfire,

infrastructure

collapse)

Primary objective

Prevent death/injury and severe deprivation;
restore autonomy quickly.

Key doctrines

- evacuations: prefer voluntary + support; if mandatory, time-bounded and narrowly scoped
- property access restrictions: minimal necessary; clear passes/appeals
- emergency shelters: dignity standards; privacy; non-coercive access where possible
- reconstruction: prioritize restoring choice and preventing displacement concentration

7E) Refugee flows

and state collapse

Primary objective

Minimize coercive displacement harms and prevent exploitation/violence.

Constraints

- minimize detention; prefer supervised release and support
- non-punitive processing; transparent timelines
- avoid concentration harms (camps as long-term coercion); pursue integration options
- strong anti-retaliation and anti-exploitation enforcement

7F) Catastrophic

risk and long-

horizon threats

(climate, systemic

collapse)

Primary objective

Reduce extreme future impositions without imposing unjust concentrated burdens now.

Required approach

- emphasize consent-based transitions, subsidies, and enabling infrastructure
- if coercive regulation is claimed necessary, require:
 - explicit minimax justification across generations
 - anti-concentration constraints domestically
 - time-bounded rules with periodic reassessment
 - compensation/transition repair for those burdened

8) Emergency

powers: structural

anti-abuse design

Any emergency order must include:

- short automatic expiration (sunset)
- renewal only via explicit legislative vote at fixed intervals
- independent oversight audit cadence (weekly/biweekly in H2/H3)
- public reporting: scope, enforcement actions, errors, appeals, repairs
- post-emergency “imposition audit” and compensation plan for wrongful harms

9) Communication

standard (reduces

surprise-imposition)

Public messaging must state plainly:

- what is being constrained and for how long
- why (threat description + evidence tier)
- what alternatives exist
- how to appeal or get accommodations
- what ends the policy (metrics/conditions)

10) Repair,

restitution, and

post-mortem

learning

(mandatory)

10.1 Repair

obligations

For any high-stakes coercive policy, government must provide:

- compensation for wrongful impositions
- reinstatement pathways when feasible
- medical/psychological care for harmed populations where relevant
- public acknowledgment and corrective action plans

10.2 Post-mortem

Imposition Audit

(within fixed time)

- what impositions occurred (intended and unintended)
- distribution analysis (who bore burdens)
- error analysis (false positives/negatives)
- evidence performance (predictions vs outcomes)
- policy updates and guardrail improvements

11) Templates

(copy-ready)

A) HS-IIA (one-page

form)

- Situation tier (H0–H3):
- Threat description (active imposition identified):
- Affected agents (including vulnerable groups):
- Options considered (including non-coercive):
- Evidence tier per option (E1/E2/E3) + uncertainty:
- Scoring per option (S,N,D,R,P,A,K) + total:
- Guardrails check (minimax/anti-concentration/irreversibility/error-cost):
- Selected option and minimal sufficiency rationale:
- Safeguards (sunset, due process, appeals, mitigation, repair):

- Rollback/escalation triggers:
- No moral laundering statement:
- Public communication summary:

B) Emergency Order

Record (minimum
required fields)

- legal authority invoked:
- scope and duration:
- enforcement mechanism:
- appeals/accommodations:
- oversight schedule:
- reporting schedule:
- repair fund trigger conditions:

12) Practical

verification checklist

(does this actually

resolve high-stakes

objections?)

- Different reviewers using HS-IIA converge on similar scores and same option.
- Worst-off group outcomes improve or at least do not worsen (minimax enforced).

- Emergency powers expire unless re-justified with updated evidence.
- Wrongful imposition rates are tracked and compensated.
- Post-mortems produce real rule changes (guardrails evolve).

Pastoral Appendix

to the Church of the

Best Possible

World

Purpose

This appendix provides guidance for emotional and moral support for agents engaging with morally tragic situations under BPW-alignment. Its goal is to reduce suffering, isolation, and shame, while remaining faithful to the core principles of Imposition Ethics: no obligation, no justification of harm, no moral laundering of outcomes.

1. Temporal Mercy

- Moral evaluation applies to the state of affairs at the time, not to an agent's permanent moral identity.
- Past involvement in tragic outcomes does not define your worth or preclude continued alignment in the future.
- Reflection, learning, and future moral engagement are always meaningful.

Suggested practice: Maintain a personal journal or log to separate actions from identity, and allow yourself space to reflect without judgment.

2. Shared Burden

- Tragic outcomes often involve structural, natural, or institutional factors beyond the agent's control.
- Moral burden is distributed across circumstances, not concentrated solely on any one actor.

Suggested practice: Seek communal dialogue or peer support when facing moral tragedy. Recognize the role of wider context in outcomes.

3. Recognition of Effort

- Voluntary effort to reduce harm is valuable to acknowledge, even when outcomes remain tragic.
- Recognition of alignment does not sanitize or justify the outcome—it honors intentionality.

Suggested practice: Create a personal or communal acknowledgment ritual for acts of alignment or least-imposition efforts.

4. Moral Language Care

- Describe morally tragic outcomes accurately but gently. Avoid harsh, absolutist, or shaming language beyond the moral facts.
- This reduces additional suffering and prevents internalized moral cruelty.

Suggested practice: Use reflective language when reviewing outcomes, for example: “This action caused unavoidable imposition; I acted with awareness and tried to minimize harm.”

5. Forward Orientation

- Focus on future reduction of involuntary imposition, without implying redemption, justification, or erasure of past harm.
- Align action toward voluntary, consent-compatible, least-imposing contributions.

Suggested practice: Identify concrete steps you can take to reduce harm in your current context without coercion or overextension.

6. Voluntary Support

Structures

- Participation in non-authoritative pastoral support (counseling, reflection groups, mentoring) is encouraged.
- These structures must remain non-coercive, optional, and consent-respecting.
Suggested practice: Establish or join support circles focused on shared moral reflection rather than prescriptive judgment.

7. Moral Exhaustion

Recognition

- Sustained exposure to tragic outcomes may cause grief, moral fatigue, or withdrawal, which are understandable and legitimate.
- Experiencing exhaustion does not constitute moral failure.

Suggested practice: Allow time for rest, reflection, and self-care without guilt. Re-engage when able.

8. Comfort Boundary

Guardrails

Pastoral care and comfort must never:

- Reclassify tragic outcomes as justified or “good”
- Impose moral obligation
- Sanitize moral failure
- Replace acknowledgment of tragedy with narrative closure

Reminder: Comfort exists to support agents, not to convert tragedy into moral satisfaction.

Summary

The Pastoral Appendix provides practical scaffolding for human support:

- Acknowledges effort and reduces isolation
- Preserves grief, shame, and moral truth where appropriate
- Offers voluntary reflection, support, and future orientation

- Upholds Imposition Ethics' core values of non-coercion, moral honesty, and respect for conscious agents

Comfort is not about saying "it's okay" — it's about holding the tragic truth gently, without adding extra imposition.

Pastoral ToolKit

Comforting in

Alignment with

Imposition Ethics

Purpose:

To provide practical, non-coercive ways to support members or others facing moral dilemmas, grief, or stress, while staying faithful to BPW principles of minimizing involuntary imposition and acting ethically without converting tragedy into “moral success.”

1. Acknowledge and

Validate

- Goal: Recognize emotional and moral burden.
- Methods:
 - Listen attentively without judgment.
 - Say things like:
 - “I see how hard this has been for you.”
 - “It’s understandable to feel this way.”
 - Avoid framing tragedy as morally “good” if it was unavoidable.

2. Narrative Support

- Goal: Help individuals process experience through storytelling.
- Methods:

- Provide a safe space for sharing.
- Ask reflective, non-leading questions:
 - “What was hardest for you in this decision?”
- Focus on feelings and facts, not moral blame.

3. Shared Moral Framing

- Goal: Situate experience within BPW ethical framework to reduce guilt.
- Methods:
 - Explain structural or unavoidable causes of tragedy.
 - Emphasize that “least-imposing choices” were ethically aligned.
 - Clarify that minimizing harm does not equate to making the outcome morally “good.”

4. Rituals and Symbolic

Acts

- Goal: Provide psychological closure.
- Methods:
 - Candles, memorials, or reflection journals.
 - Silent contemplation of tragic outcomes.
 - Encourage voluntary acts of remembrance.

5. Practical Emotional

Support

- Goal: Reduce cognitive and emotional overload.
- Methods:
 - Connect members to counseling or peer support.
 - Encourage structured breaks, self-care, and rest.
 - Provide checklists or reflection templates for future dilemmas.

6. Peer Circles and

Mentorship

- Goal: Reduce moral isolation through community.
- Methods:
 - Voluntary discussion groups focused on moral dilemmas.

- Case study reflection sessions.
- Emphasize non-judgmental listening and sharing.

7. Positive Reinforcement

of Effort

- Goal: Acknowledge ethical effort, independent of outcome.
- Methods:
 - Highlight intentional alignment with BPW values.
 - Separate effort from tragic outcomes.
 - Praise thoughtful, least-imposing decision-making.

8. Education and

Preparation

- Goal: Reduce anxiety and empower proactive moral alignment.

- Methods:
 - Role-play scenarios using BPW checklists.
 - Provide templates for crisis or ethical dilemmas.
 - Teach consent-first and least-imposition strategies.

9. Mindfulness and

Grounding

- Goal: Reduce emotional overwhelm from moral shock or grief.
- Methods:
 - Breathing exercises, meditation, or guided reflection.
 - Encourage focus on present actions and controllable outcomes.

10. Voluntary Acts of Good

- Goal: Reinforce agency, hope, and moral coherence.
- Methods:
 - Encourage small, non-coercive acts of aid.
 - Voluntary donations or volunteer work.
 - Frame actions as optional assistance, not moral obligation.

Guiding Principles for the Toolkit

1. Non-coercion first: Never impose actions or emotional expectations.
2. Separate outcome from moral status: Tragedy may be unavoidable; ethical action is about intention and minimal imposition.
3. Empower agency: Focus on what the person can voluntarily choose or do next.
4. Offer multiple layers: Emotional, communal, practical, and reflective support.

BPW Pastoral Toolkit

Comforting support aligned with Imposition Ethics — for grief, stress, and moral burden.

Use what helps; leave the rest. No pressure, no verdicts.

1 Acknowledge & be present

- Listen without judgment. Let the moment be hard.
- Try: "I'm here with you." "This makes sense to feel."

2 Make room for the story

- Invite sharing without steering or correcting.
- Ask gently: "What felt heaviest?" "What do you need right now?"

3 BPW framing (without verdicts)

- Name unavoidability; separate tragedy from moral blame.
- Affirm: least-imposing choices are alignment, not "moral success."

4 Ritual & remembrance (optional)

- Candles, notes, memorials, quiet reflection, journaling.
- Participation is always voluntary; silence is allowed.

5 Practical supports

- Reduce overload: meals, rest, appointments, small next steps.
- Offer counseling/peer support and simple checklists.

6 Peer circles & mentorship

- Opt-in circles for listening, not debating.
- Confidentiality, gentleness, and "no fixing" as defaults.

7 Affirm the effort

- Notice care, restraint, consent-first intent, and courage.
- Separate effort from outcome; grief can coexist with alignment.

8 Prepare gently

- Role-play with consent-first & least-imposition habits.
- Share templates for crisis decisions and aftercare.

9 Grounding & steadiness

- Breathing, orienting, brief mindfulness, short walks.
- Return to what is controllable and chosen in this moment.

10 Small voluntary good

- Optional acts of aid to rebuild hope and agency.
- Frame as gifts, not obligations: "If you want to..."

Guiding principles (BPW-aligned)

- Non-coercion first: offer options; avoid pressure or emotional expectations.
- Tragedy ≠ moral success: minimizing harm can be aligned without calling the outcome "good."
- Agency over guilt: focus on what can be voluntarily chosen next.
- Multiple layers of care: emotional, communal, practical, reflective.

For community use • Copy/print

