

Natural Law and Positive Law (AI)

Natural law represents universal moral principles discoverable through human reason, asserting that a law is only legitimate if it aligns with inherent justice.

In contrast, **positive law** consists of human-made rules, such as statutes and regulations, which are valid simply because they were enacted by a recognized authority, regardless of their moral content.

The distinction between the two forms the core of classical jurisprudence:

Natural Law

- **Source:** Derived from nature, reason, or divine principles.
- **Validity:** Inherent; these rules do not need to be written down to be true or binding. An unjust law is considered fundamentally void.
- **Core Principle:** "Do good and avoid evil."
- **Famous Exponent:** Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther King Jr. (who argued for the moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws).

Positive Law

- **Source:** Written statutes, constitutions, and case law created by sovereign states or governments.
- **Validity:** Grounded in the authority that enacted it (e.g., a legislature), not in its morality.
- **Core Principle:** Order, predictability, and social utility.
- **Examples:** Speed limits, the voting age, and tax brackets.

How They Interact

Legal philosophers and scholars on platforms like [Reddit r/AskPhilosophy](#) have a **consensus** that natural law serves as a moral compass for evaluating whether positive laws are just or tyrannical. Ideally, lawmakers use natural law to guide the creation of positive laws; however, positive law is often necessary to establish the concrete, agreed-upon details of society (like which side of the road to drive on)