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"Mine" or "Ours": Property and Moral Reasoning

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Sociology

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Abstract

This research seeks to address long-standing empirical questions about human morality arising from the critical sociological tradition. It examines, in social-psychological terms, the theoretical contention that systems of ownership predicated on exclusionary conceptions of what is “mine” and/or “ours” causes people to overlook or decidedly ignore the needs of others and of society at large. More specifically, it draws upon the theoretical works of Karl Marx, Erich Fromm, Erik Erikson, and C. B. Macpherson to examine the relationships between individuals’ attitudes toward private property relations and the kinds of “active” or “passive” cognitive processes individuals use when reasoning about moral problems.

A sample of 139 graduate and undergraduate students completed an online survey that contained both established and exploratory attitude scales pertaining to property ownership norms, humanism, and possessive individualism. Following the psychological research of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, participants were also asked to express moral judgments on two hypothetical moral dilemmas, and their responses were coded according to characteristics of morally “heteronomous” or “autonomous” reasoning. OLS regressions were conducted to investigate the relationships between these forms of moral reasoning and the aforementioned attitude scales.

The study’s results suggest a positive relationship between cognitive moral autonomy and humanism, as well as for the inverse relationship between cognitive moral autonomy and both private property attitudes and possessive individualism. These findings provide general (albeit tentative) support for certain theoretical critiques of private property within the Marxist-humanist tradition, namely the premise that private property norms are at odds with the exercise of autonomous moral cognition. Theoretical implications of these findings, both for the Marxian theoretical tradition and for the development of a critically oriented social-psychology of morality are also addressed.

Keywords

Morality, Property, Ownership Psychology, Marx, Critical Sociology, Humanism, Fromm, Kohlberg, Autonomy, Possessive Individualism

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, whose values of hard work, moral integrity, mutual respect, and humanistic kindness I have strived to celebrate in this research.

This is for us.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the way people think about things that are “theirs.” It explores, in social-psychological terms, the individual’s capacity for moral autonomy in a society dominated by private property.

Classical social theorists from Karl Marx (1990, 1992) and Friedrich Engels (1942, 1976), to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1994) have made the institution of private property a central issue in their moral criticism of modern society, pointing to its psychologically oppressive tendency to pit the perceived interests of owners against non-owners specifically, and persons against persons more generally, and to legitimize self-interest over considerations of the greater human community. Max Weber’s climactic image of the “iron cage” (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*) in his foreboding conclusion to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is likewise posited in direct reference to the “increasing and finally inexorable power” that “the care for external goods” might wield under the rationalizing forces of modern capitalism (1930: 123–124).

During the twentieth century, theorists in the Frankfurt School tradition such as Max Horkheimer (1947, 1989, 1993), Theodor Adorno (1989), Herbert Marcuse (1964, 1972), and Erich Fromm (1976) specified this analysis to the proliferation of instrumental rationalization within bourgeois society, drawing links between “mass” consumer culture, ideological manipulation, and the truncation of individuals’ critical reasoning faculties (see also, Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). Non-Marxists, too, such as Hannah Arendt (1958; Suchting 1962), Bertrand Russell (1961) and C.B. Macpherson (1962, 1966, 1978a, 1978b, 1979) have postulated connections between the institution of private property ownership and a burgeoning sense of people’s individuation and disembeddedness from their material and social environment. Subsequent research in critical sociology (e.g. Badiou 2014; Bauman 2008; Billig 1999) has similarly directed its attention to the processes and effects of consumer capitalist proliferation and the concomitant atomization of the individual.

And, while such critiques attended to the various *cultural* and *political-economic* implications of bourgeois hegemony, it is the Marxist-humanist tradition, carried forward most notably by Erich Fromm, that most directly connects the problem of property ownership to the problems of morality. Fromm's corpus consistently tackles not only cognitive concerns with moral autonomy (1947, 1950, 1968, 1970, 1973, 2010) but also the *moral* concern for *cognitive autonomy* (1955, 1956, 1969, 1994). That is to say, Marx's and Fromm's social analyses entail both a social-psychological diagnosis of the immature "social character" with which moral problems are addressed in society, and a *moral critique* of how that immaturity is rendered through societal conditions that promote possessiveness, greed, and crude materialism.

Despite the extensive theoretical criticism about private ownership norms, however, empirical psychological evidence to support these claims has rested largely on discursive psychoanalytic methods (e.g. Fromm 1976), and quantitative investigation remains scarce. The broader thesis expressed in Marx's and Fromm's works, as well as the work of the above mentioned theorists—that differences between individualistic versus collectivistic orientations to resource allocation are related to deeper cognitive differences between what may be termed moral *autonomy* and *heteronomy* (cf. Piaget 1965)—will be explored throughout this dissertation in various ways. Thus, it is the theoretical objective of this dissertation to advance the field of critical social-psychological inquiry by exploring the moral significance of private property relations for the modern individual. It is the empirical task of this dissertation to trace the connection between the subjective valuation of property ownership norms and the objective phenomenon of human moral cognition.

This dissertation is, therefore, also about the way people confront moral problems. However, it does not address people's "moral" or "social" *character* as such, nor does it place much stock analytically in *particular* pre-constructed ethical philosophies (e.g., utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics) or people's behavioural or attitudinal conformity to them. Rather, it builds upon the cognitive developmental social psychologies of Jean Piaget (1965) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, 1984) in order to examine how individuals themselves apperceive their view of the relevant moral dimensions of a given dilemma,

and how they construct “moral solutions” for dilemmas. Its purpose is to scratch the surface of understanding how actors come to engage moral issues and troubles regarding property ownership in their personal and public lives. It takes as its analytical point of departure the observation that when faced with a dilemma of “right” action and tasked with making a moral judgment (“what *ought* to be done?”), people utilize cognitive operations in order to evaluate the relative significance of various practical and ethical factors for making a decision (Habermas 1979; Kohlberg 1984; Piaget 1965). As will be discussed below, this process may be undergone in a more or less *passive* or *active* fashion, depending on whether one’s deliberations are guided more significantly by the *heteronomous authority* of societal conventions (e.g. norms, traditions, ideologies, pressures), or by the *autonomous reasons* constructed by one’s own critical thinking (Kohlberg 1984; Piaget 1965). This dissertation will compare these two types of moral cognition, analyze the relationship they have to attitudinal predictors concerning ownership, and discuss the sociological significance of this relationship.

Thus, this dissertation addresses the connection between two variables: moral reasoning and attitudes about property ownership. And while a study relating these two variables may perhaps appear arbitrary—what, after all, does something as “subjective” as moral cognition have to do with something so “objective” as ownership?—my aim in this dissertation is to demonstrate that there exist empirical grounds for supporting the attacks advanced by Karl Marx and other radical humanists (e.g., Erich Fromm) concerning the deleterious effects bourgeois property exerts on the modern individual’s moral sensibilities about the world around them. In the following chapters, I argue not only that there exists a *statistical* relationship between attitudes to private property and moral reasoning, but also that this relationship reveals a truncation of morally autonomous thought in cases where bourgeois morality is most strongly held.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

At least three distinct bodies of literature inform the current study’s social psychological investigation of attitudes toward property and their relationship with moral cognition: critical social theory, ownership psychology, and the sociology of morality. While each of these domains of research provide important insight into the moral significance of

property relations in modern society, they have yet to be fully integrated into a theoretically coherent research project. As such, critically oriented empirical research on the social-psychology of property regimes is often constrained by disciplinary boundaries, leaving gaps within each of them that the others might fill.

For instance, among the prevailing moral critiques of private property ownership, structuralist, materialist, and culturalist theories (especially their postmodern iterations) remain empirically inadequate for a full explanation of the *processes* by which ideologies and social norms are apperceived by individuals, and the *factors* which predict whether these processes are engaged passively or actively by individuals. As a result, social criticism and theoretical proposals for equitable (re)distributions of resources such as those suggested by Marx or Proudhon have historically underestimated the durability of possessiveness as a social-psychological phenomenon, and capitalism as a socio-historical phenomenon.

On the other hand, the methodological individualism of cognitive psychological studies of ownership restricts inquiry to atomistic conceptualizations of property ownership in ways that may not adequately account for sociocultural, historical, and ethical factors that frame the intersubjective construction of ownership “rights” in the first place. Commonly, “ownership” is a notion conceptually limited to the relations and control over *things* by individuals (Bottomore 1994: 518; Hollawell 1982a, 1982b). Cognitive psychological research thus finds itself conceptually under-equipped for dealing substantively with the broader socio-historical forces (e.g., global capitalist infrastructure, post-industrial consumerism, competition and contradiction between various normative-ethical paradigms, etc.) that frame people’s day-to-day thinking about property ownership.

Lastly, within the sociology of morality, there is burgeoning interest in exploring prevailing normative conceptions of fairness, freedom, and responsibility in ways that account for both individual and social-structural forces. This research promises to expand upon the “old” sociologies of morality constructed by Durkheim and Weber by exploring the various overlapping and “cross-cutting” social factors which shape moral

codes, behaviours, and identities (Abend 2010; Hitlin and Vaisey 2013; Stets 2010). However, it currently remains underdeveloped in its incorporation of critical sociological theories of morality, particularly those which examine moral cognition as well as the contradictory relationship between society's moral conventions and its capitalist economic structure.

In exploring the relationship between moral reasoning and property ownership attitudes, the present study seeks not only to address some long-standing questions in the area of critical social theory, but also to establish a possible framework for a more integrated critical social psychology of morality.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the foundational literature on moral reasoning and the critical sociology of property ownership. Given the tenuously explored connection between these two phenomena, its aim is not only to address the relevant literature in each domain of research but also to lay a groundwork for a critical social-psychological study of their relationship.

Section I of the chapter presents a review of the social-psychological literature on morality, including a synopsis of the current state of social scientific and neuroscientific research on morality. Specific focus is addressed to the importance (albeit underutilization) of the seminal work of Jean Piaget (1965) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, 1984) in these research areas. This discussion is followed in Section II by a social ontology of property ownership, detailing its functioning as both a social relation and a social institution. The section then turns to an overview and discussion of two analytically distinct forms of ownership in modern society: private and social ownership. Lastly, Section III of this chapter reviews other literature relevant to the current study. Here, Eriksonian research on the “humanistic value orientation” and C. B. Macpherson’s theory of “possessive individualism” will be presented as possible exploratory frameworks for understanding the sociocultural milieu in which the current study takes place.

I. MORAL RESEARCH

A. Social Science and the Meaning of “*Moral*”

In recent years, academics from both the social and natural sciences have shown a renewed interest in morality as a topic of empirical investigation. Eschewing traditional disciplinary boundaries that had formerly restricted the study of morality to the domains of philosophy and religious studies, researchers from the social and biological sciences are now attempting to examine questions of human morality in new and creative ways

that use scientific methodologies, techniques, and theories to directly confront normative-ethical problems.

The recent “explosion” in attention paid to the study of morality from legal scholars and neuroscientists (e.g. Churchland 1991, 2011), philosophers (Harris 2010), and psychologists (Green 2013; Haidt 2008, 2012) stands in contrast, however, to the reticence of many sociologists to take up morality as a full-fledged topic of inquiry (Hitlin and Vaisey 2010, 2013). Not only do technological advances in psychology and neurobiology appear to threaten the relevance of “softer” forms of moral inquiry in the public mind (and the minds of funding agencies), but they proceed with such technical complexity that social scientists find themselves most often occupying the role of audience critic rather than participating in the production of knowledge. Citing the proliferation of neurological research (e.g., of Haidt 2008, Sinnott-Armstrong 2008, Turiel 2002, and others), Hitlin and Vaisey (2013) observe that,

the further into the mind (*sic*¹) that science delves, the further that sociological issues recede. Viewed together, sociology’s decreased emphasis on morality coupled with psychology’s increased focus on biology and neuroscience paint a bleak picture for a robust understanding of the social dimensions of human morality (p. 53).

But surely whatever “morality” is, it gains at least some of its meaningfulness from the domain of *the social*—through culture, language, kinship, tradition, political economy, law, and so forth—and therefore constitutes territory well suited to sociological exploration.

And indeed, a cursory review of the classical sociological canon reveals the centrality of questions about human morality for the theoretical and empirical projects of Comte (1974), Durkheim (1957, 1974), Martineau (1838), Marx (1992), and Weber (1930; Stone 2010). Likewise, interest in morality appears in the twentieth century sociologies of Parsons (1951), Sorokin (1966), Gouldner (1970), Foucault (1999), Habermas (1979),

¹ One assumes that Hitlin and Vaisey (2013) here are in fact referring not to the mind but to the brain.

Bourdieu (1984), and Bauman (2008), as well as in the political and philosophical writings of C. Wright Mills (1959, 2008) and the Frankfurt School. More recently, sociological discourse on morality has been stimulated both indirectly by Michael Burawoy's (2005a, 2005b, 2009) call for a "public sociology," and directly by the politicization of past moral and epistemological doctrines by intersectional theorists and activists (Munoz 1993).

Theorists like Gabriel Abend (2010, 2011, 2013), Steven Hitlin (2008), Andrew Sayer (2010, 2011), and Jonathan Haidt (2008, 2012) have taken up the substantial task of explicating a research programme for a "new" sociology of morality and asserting its important role within a broader scientific division of labour in the field of moral inquiry (Hitlin and Vaisey 2013). For Abend (2010), sociology faces the unique challenge and opportunity of ascertaining knowledge about the *social* nature of morality—that is, the structures, processes and forces which shape and sanction people's conception of "moral" conduct. Because Abend's work both describes and reflects the prevailing epistemic and normative trends in social scientific research on morality it provides a useful point of departure for situating the current state of the "sociology of morality" literature.

The "sociology of morality," Abend (2010) explains,

intends to develop a social-scientific understanding of morality, in the same sense that the sociologies of religion, literature, and science intend to develop social-scientific understandings of religion, literature, and science. Sociologies of morality should be able to obtain a special kind of knowledge, different from common sense knowledge, inaccessible to the the layperson, obtained using methods that the layperson doesn't master, and so on (p. 563).

Abend argues that the attainment of this "special kind of knowledge contains the same methodological and epistemological assumptions as the objectives pursued by early sociologists like Martineau (1938) and Durkheim (1938). Indeed, the search for "what social independent variables account for the variance of moral dependent variables" is consistent across the history of sociology's moral inquiry (Abend 2010: 571). Both "old" and "new" sociologists of morality are concerned with the various social "factors" responsible for shaping moral rules, ideas, beliefs, institutions, norms, and so on (Abend 2010). How such variables are operationalized and measured may have changed, and the

language used to describe their relationship has softened (in light of criticism toward hard positivism), but what remains consistent is the deterministic logic of the mode of inquiry itself (Abend 2010). Among the differences between “new” sociological inquiry into morality and its “older” counterpart is the shift toward a more descriptive, Weberian orientation to its subject matter. Hitlin and Vaisey (2013) describe this distinction thusly:

A new approach to morality is emerging in sociology, one that is no longer wedded to the assumptions about universal internalization and unproblematic consensus that doomed functionalist theory. If the old sociology of morality was Durkheimian—seeing morality as a property of entire societies and binding its members together—then the new sociology of morality is more Weberian. Morality belongs to cross-cutting groups and less to society as a whole (p. 53).

This is an apt characterization of the current literature. Presently, the theoretical standpoint among the field’s most prominent researchers is geared toward such Weberian interests as the variations in moral concerns across social groupings, the overlapping influences of different types of social action in moral behaviour, and an effort to maintain a value-neutral stance in the analysis and understanding of morality within society.

Despite what optimism might be inspired by sociology’s potential niche in the scientific study of morality, there is currently an important conceptual deficiency within much of this literature: “*morality*” itself remains conceptually underdeveloped as both an empirical variable and a sociological phenomenon. A review of the current literature finds very little theoretical effort to conceptualize what specifically sociologists *mean* by the term “morality”/“the moral”. This problem goes to the heart of sociology’s relevance to the study of moral inquiry, and it is no exaggeration to say that the resolution of this problem is crucial to the legitimacy of a claim to be studying a “special kind” of moral inquiry.

It appears that, for many social scientists, *the moral* pertains, somewhat tautologically, to norms that are imbued with ethical weight. That is, morality is analyzed by sociologists (e.g., Abend 2010, 2013; Gouldner 1970; Hitlin and Vaisey 2013) in terms of social conventions that compel behavioural adherence to a culturally established notion of goodness, rightness, propriety, and so on. Jan Stets’ (2010) definition of morality provides an example of the meaning that many contemporary moral sociologists have for

morality: “broadly speaking, morality is the evaluative cultural codes that specify what is right or wrong, good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable in a society” (p. 544). To conceptualize morality in terms of cultural codes and social acceptability, however, requires one to confront two critical problems: the problem of abstracting ‘the moral’ from concrete experience (and thus ignoring the moral standpoints—and moral agency—of social actors), and the problem of conflating *social conventions* with *morality proper*.

The “Thomas Theorem” reminds us that in the course of everyday lived experience, individuals participate (actively or passively) in apperceiving and defining situations, both practical and normative.² If we consider that “cultural codes” are, by definition, forms of *pre-* and *proscriptive* rules for action—it becomes apparent that they only make sense in reference to social actions within a concrete (real or hypothetical) situation. Since a concern with morality implies a question of “ought,” it must be defined (at least indirectly) in reference to situations where more than one action is possible, where things could imaginably be otherwise; that is, where a moral *dilemma* is present. Norms, principles, laws, commandments, and “evaluative cultural codes” only make sense when contextualized within a real or imagined sphere of dilemmas of human action, where they may be practiced or ignored.³ The fact that people may derive various moral meanings and draw divergent conclusions about the same issue suggests that the moral ‘substance’ of morality lies not in the “established cultural codes” themselves, but rather in the apperceptive process by which a person, upon encountering and interpreting a dilemma subjectively assesses (implicitly or explicitly) the relative ethical merits of various possible resolutions.

² The Thomas Theorem: “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Merton 1995: 380).

³ A consideration of well-established “cultural codes” concerning actions like theft or generosity illustrate the contingency of moral justifiability on the particulars of a given situation. Is stealing *always* wrong? Are we *morally obligated* to share? To the extent that a person does not respond in absolutes, but instead qualifies their judgment with certain conditions and reasons, it is apparent that morality rests at least as much upon one’s “definition of the moral situation” as the cultural values one references in justifying their judgment.

B. Kohlberg and Morality

Whereas morality in contemporary society (and sociology) is widely conceptualized in terms of an adherence to normative codes of behaviour, the theoretical and empirical approach to morality taken by Piaget (1965) and Kohlberg (1981, 1984) raises the possibility of exploring *active, self-reflexive* qualities of moral cognition as well. Indeed, the difference between “heteronomous” and “autonomous” orientations to morality is one of the major empirical distinctions at stake in the present study. For Piaget, heteronomous reasoning refers to the application of norms to resolve dilemmas, whereas autonomous reasoning is capable of modifying rules and making exceptions to rules in the course of responding to the needs and claims of *persons* involved in a dilemma situation. That is, while cognitive moral heteronomy relies upon the authority of established normative conventions, cognitive moral autonomy relies upon the active use of one’s own reason in order to apply norms deemed appropriate to the moral situation. For example, if one imagines a dilemma of a person stealing some food for a person who is very hungry, heteronomous logic would tend to find this “wrong” because stealing is a violation of a rule; conversely, autonomous reasoning might try to qualify this judgment by taking account of (or arguing) that the norm against stealing is insufficiently sensitive to guide one’s decision making in a dilemma such as this.

In the developmental psychological and philosophical model developed by Kohlberg (1981, 1984), moral reasoning is invoked when addressing an hypothetical dilemma—a situation pitting competing claims or needs of persons against one another—and constitutes the reasoners’s attempt to prescribe a rational resolution in accordance with some conception of what constitutes the “good” or the “right” (see Harper 2009 for a detailed comparative analysis of these concepts and their relevance to conceptualizing “the ethical” and “the moral”). Hence, the measure and evaluation of a respondent’s reasoning in Kohlberg’s (1968) early childhood moral development research invoked the notion of “the child as a moral philosopher” (p. 24).

Kohlberg (1984) notes that philosophical conceptions of morality have four different orientations: *normative order*, which is oriented toward the adherence to rules; *utility consequences*, which is oriented toward the goodness or badness of the “welfare

consequences” of an action; *justice/fairness*, which emphasizes the *relations* of liberty, equality, reciprocity, and contract between persons”; and *ideal self*, in which the imagined image of the “good self” is brought to bear on moral decision-making (p. 183). Of these orientations, Kohlberg (1984) places greatest emphasis on the *justice* orientation, asserting that justice is the most fundamental characteristic of morality. He reasons that since “moral situations are ones of conflict of perspective or interest,” and since “justice principles are concepts for resolving these conflicts,” the need for justice is inherently embedded in concerns for morality (*ibid*: 184). Indeed, while one may act morally with varying regard for rules or the ‘greater good’, “one cannot act morally and question the need for *justice*” (*ibid*: 184; emphasis added). In this sense, a *normative order* orientation uncritically takes for granted the validity of property rights, a *utilitarian/consequentialist* view fails to adequately quantify the moral weight of social contracts, and an *ideal-self* orientation neglects the political-economic roots of social inequality. A justice orientation, however, must invoke a consideration of all of these issues in its resolutions because its conception of morality is seen to exist prior to social convention or particular circumstance.

More recently, and in reference to Kohlberg’s (1984) six-stage moral development theory (to be described below), Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine (1990) have demonstrated that an adequate conceptualization of morality must also incorporate a principle of *benevolence*, or “active sympathy,” which “views the other and human interaction through the lens of intending to promote good and prevent harm to the other” (p. 157). Such an orientation stands in a kind of constructive tension with justice as the reasoner struggles to reconcile the intent to give each party “his/her due” against the preservation of each’s well-being (and vice versa). It is only at the final stage of moral development (stage six) that the reasoner conceptualizes a resolution in which these imperatives “are at the same time mutually supportive and coordinated” under a principle of *respect for persons* (*ibid*: 157). According to Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine (1990),

this coordination can be summarized thus: benevolence constrains the momentary concern for justice to remain consistent with the promotion of good for all, while justice constrains benevolence not to be inconsistent with promoting respect for the rights of individuals conceived as autonomous agents (pp. 157–158).

It follows that the principle of respect for persons concerns itself fundamentally with the dignity of human life, rather than life itself. Consequently, the preservation of dignity necessitates that all potentially differing viewpoints be considered, and that morally adequate resolutions can only be approximated through a democratic *process* of dialogue (Kohlberg et. al 1990; Habermas 1979, 1990).

This conception is particularly well suited to the purposes of the present study. As I discuss below, property rights are widely and variously (mis)understood both culturally and legally, and it should go without saying that liberal, conservative, socialist, anarchist, and libertarian ideologies, to name a few, tend to have grossly disparate things to say about property and the “greater good.” Common among these various political philosophies, however, is the fact that each one’s ethical conception of property is essentially based on claims to justice, fairness, and some appeal to social or individual well-being (i.e.: benevolence). Kohlberg’s conception of the moral is therefore especially appropriate to the present study of how moral cognition relates to issues of property ownership. It should also be noted that the integral principle of *respect for persons* also extends the moral imperative to a matter of *dialogical principle*, rather than ideology (although some political philosophies/ideologies may be better oriented toward dialogical and/or morally valid resolutions than others). In this way, the study’s meta-ethical framework is distinguished from bias toward any *particular* political party or economic interest.

1. Moral Development

Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984) theory of moral development implies a teleological progression of individuals’ cognitive structures of moral reasoning in which an individual may potentially develop through six different stages of moral cognition. These stages constitute “structured wholes, total ways of thinking, not attitudes toward particular situations,” and, as such, encapsulate the *structure* of how an individual reasons about a dilemma, instead of the *content* of the reasoning process itself (Kohlberg 1981: 120). This is to say that each stage features a distinctly different arrangement and interaction of

cognitive operations.⁴ With each higher stage, the interaction among these cognitive operations becomes increasingly integrated and the reasoning more adequate in balancing relevant claims and points of view. Stages occur in an invariant sequence in which each progressive stage constitutes (a) an ability to actively reconstruct the structures of reasoning in lower stages and (b) increasingly approximate a conception of justice and benevolence based on the highest stage, stage six (Kohlberg 1981). Thus the superiority of one stage over another is evidenced by a reasoner's ability to independently and accurately interpret lower stage reasoning while bringing to bear a more logically coherent, universalizable resolution with the use of a more advanced stage.

The six stages can be more generally characterized according to their orientation to the conventional ethical norms of society, which Kohlberg groups into three "levels": the pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional moral levels. The *pre-conventional level*, stages one and two, characterizes an acceptance of external rules and authority without necessarily having a clear understanding of the moral status of the claims and needs of others; the *conventional level*, stages three and four, characterize an internalization and purposeful orientation to rules, authority, and social expectations *because* they are the rules, authority, and expectations of self and other (stage three), or of society (stage four); and the *post-conventional level*, stages five and six, characterizes an adherence to the principles that guide the norming of norms that underlie, and thus supersede, the conventional morality of society or any of its norms or institutions (Kohlberg 1984: 172–173).⁵

Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine (1990) argue that the last stage in Kohlberg's theory (stage six) is a cognitive structure that enables the articulation of a principled moral point of

⁴ These operations include: equality, equity, reciprocity, universality, universalizability, prescriptive role taking, empathy, sympathy (Kohlberg 1984). A synopsis of these operations is presented in Table 4.2, Chapter 4.

⁵ In Kohlberg's (1984) theory, Stage 5 is largely concerned with a prior to society focus on public welfare, maximizing utility and happiness, largely through institutionalizing notions of fair contracts. It sees human beings as free to enter into contractual relationships with others, and that they ought to be free to do so.

view that always attempts to balance and weigh the moral relevance of competing claims when attempting to produce morally adequate judgments. It therefore does not *ignore* norms, but it goes beyond simply applying them “heteronomously.” The assertion of a categorically imperative, *universalizable* principle implies the assumption that *all* reasonable people would hypothetically agree with the resolution to a dilemma if given sufficient time, resources, and communicative competency to discuss it democratically. The validation of such a claim therefore necessitates the elevation of justice and benevolence operations to the level of formal principle. This is to say that *all* justice and benevolence operations, which had at earlier stages been restricted by egoism (at preoperational stages), normative conditioning (at conventional stages), and pragmatic constraints (at stage five), are no longer treated as *optional considerations*, but instead *necessary components* to be considered in order to construct a judgment’s moral adequacy (Kohlberg 1984). “Given this self-consciousness of moral agency and decision making,” writes Kohlberg (1984: 638), “the operations of prescriptive role-taking (i.e. balancing perspectives) and universalizability become operative principles as well as being validity checks on the reasons given for upholding moral laws or norms.” As such, “stage six is not so much ‘based’ on a new social perspective beyond stage five’s notion of prior-to-society perspective” as it is on a *deliberate*, self-conscious use of the justice operations to ensure an adequate response to moral dilemmas. (Kohlberg 1984: 638).⁶

Hopefully it is now clear that Kohlberg’s model therefore assumes that moral development is a progression toward a *principled* cognitive moral orientation, one that closely approximates a (hypothetical) universally accepted morality based on respect for persons. For Kohlberg (1984), stage six exists as a “theoretical postulate but not an

⁶ In comparison with stage 6, however, stage 5 remains monological and therefore egocentric. Stage 6, in contrast to the utilitarian bent of stage 5, is deontological. It concerns itself with the needs, rights, and views/perspectives, of persons *conceived as persons* (rather than as social roles). It is concerned with responsibilities and duties toward self and other. In general, then, it is concerned with a moral point of view that emphasizes the importance of attending to the moral points of view of self and other. Accordingly, it recognizes the ideal of transcending monological deliberation and entering into a *dialogical procedure* that it recognizes as a more valid way to obtain moral consensus (see Habermas 1979; Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine 1990).

operational empirical entity” (p. 425). The stage six thinker reasons autonomously on the basis of self-chosen, universalized principles (such as an orientation of humanistic solidarity and respect for persons). Kohlberg (1984) explains that these principles are denoted by “positive *prescriptions* rather than negative *proscriptions*” (and are thereby differentiated from rules or rights), as well as by an applicability to “all persons and situations” (p. 637). For Kohlberg (1984: 637), principles may be formalized in a number of different ways, such as choosing outcomes under a Rawlsian “veil of ignorance,” adopting a role-taking exercise of “moral musical chairs,” or applying a Habermasian emphasis on dialogue to balance the competing interests of persons (i.e., “ideal communication situation”), but as we see in Kohlberg, Boyd and Levine (1990), it is only the latter formalization that guarantees that dialogical cooperation itself—and thus, arguably, *mutual* respect (Piaget 1965)—is applied as a principle.⁷

2. A-Type and B-Type Reasoning, and Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Substage

Kohlberg (1984) theorized the existence of two “substages” within stages two through five of his six-stage model. These substages were used “to conceive of moral reasoning in a hybrid fashion, in terms of its structural *and* content properties simultaneously” (Côté and Levine 2002: 197).⁸ While these substages do not feature the structured wholeness or invariant sequencing that moral stages do, they do serve to incorporate the Piagetian distinction between heteronomous (A-type) and autonomous (B-type) reasoning, and, accordingly, they can be distinguished from one another by their fundamentally different use of certain cognitive operations (Colby and Kohlberg 1987). This is to say that while stages indicate only the *structure* of a moral judgment, substages denote both the

⁷ One may note here evidence of two conflicting operationalizations of stage six: one in which advocating for a *dialogical principle* is *essential* to a sufficient formalization of *mutually respectful* prescriptivity (suggested in Kohlberg et. al 1990 and Habermas 1990), and the other in which the realistic limitations of “ideal communication” force us to afford a pragmatic concession to prescriptions that advocate a principled orientation of respect for persons, but that are formalized *monologically* (Kohlberg 1984).

⁸ Substages in this thesis are variously referred to as “types,” substages,” or described in terms of their “heteronomous” or “autonomous” content and structure.

structure and *content* of a moral judgment—that is, *how* a person thinks through the dilemma itself, and *what* they think about the specific competing interests and norms that comprise the dilemma (Kohlberg 1984).

For Piaget (1965), the distinction between “heteronomous” and “autonomous” morality lies in the way individuals relate to the formulation of rules. In his studies of childhood cognitive development, Piaget observes a qualitative difference in the ways individuals formulated moral judgments and conceived of moral rules. Young children especially tended to attribute a unilateral respect for moral rules, in which the authority of rules (and higher status figures such as adults) command “compulsory conformity” (1965: 363). In contrast, other, most often older, children conceived of rules as emerging from the rational cooperation of autonomous actors (Piaget 1965). “Autonomy” in this regard denotes both an individual’s cognitive self-sufficiency to construct reasoned justifications for a proposed moral rule and also a social environment which enables competing judgments to be resolved through mutually respectful deliberation rather than status hierarchy. It should be noted that “autonomy” in Piaget’s usage does not imply an egoistic “individuation” from all others; on the contrary, it consists in a individual’s freedom to participate conscientiously in the cooperative development of rules *with* others. Thus for Piaget (and Kohlberg) mutual respect is prerequisite for cognitive moral autonomy.

In the current dissertation, stage six provides the ideal typical reference standard for distinguishing the *content* and *structural* qualities of B-type from A-type reasoning. Just as stage six reasoning, with ‘better’ reasons than lower-stage reasoning, is able to actively reconstruct the reasoning of the latter, so too does the autonomous orientation of B-type reasoning make it capable of actively reconstructing A-type reasoning from the same stage (Kohlberg 1984). According to Kohlberg et al.’s (1984) adaptation of these concepts, A-type (i.e., heteronomous) judgments can be insensitive to the needs of persons when it applies a strict logic of equality (e.g. “everyone is equal under the law”) to resolve dilemmas. Such an approach may also be insensitive to (or intolerant of) claims that could be seen as justifying making exceptions to rules. In contrast, a B-type (i.e. autonomous) judgment, with its use of cognitive operations such as perspective

taking, sympathy, and empathy, is disposed to make exceptions to the application of norms when deemed reasonable. Furthermore, the autonomous nature of stage six suggests that, as far as preparation for postconventional reasoning is concerned, B-type reasoning at any stage constitutes a developmentally superior substage (i.e., more adequately moral) than its A-type same-stage counterpart (Côté and Levine 2002).⁹

And while Kohlberg and his colleagues eventually abandoned their attempts to formulate and test a comprehensive theory of moral substage development, there remain several reasons that a distinction between “heteronomy” and “autonomy” may provide a valuable theoretical framework for the critical social-psychological study of morality. The rest of this section will discuss the qualities of these “substages” with the intent of elucidating their empirical utility to this project.

i. Moral Heteronomy

A-type reasoning takes a “pre-constructed” approach to moral dilemmas and simply invokes existing norms to solve dilemmas, whereas B-type reasoning involves the “active reconstruction” of relevant norms, rules, and values in its consideration of normative claims (Côté and Levine 2002: 197). The “heteronomous” reasoner’s judgments invoke reasons that apply existing norms and values without a reflexive regard for the socially constructed nature of these norms. Rather, rules are regarded as being “endowed with an intrinsic and eternal value” (Piaget 1965: 26). Since this type of reasoning entails an uncritical acquiescence toward figures and institutions of authority, it does not depend on consideration of the views of other persons implicated in dilemmas. The reasoner engages very little (if at all) within the cognitive operations of sympathy, empathy, prescriptive role-taking or equity (Levine 2004). Instead, justice is conceptualized

⁹ While there is not sufficient space in this dissertation to discuss the philosophical and pragmatic basis for my position at length, it is quite clear that neither the motivation for the present research nor the assumptions made regarding the superior moral adequacy of “stage six” reasoning are independent of certain value judgments. As the present literature review would suggest, I do in fact agree with Kohlberg (1981, 1984), Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine (1990), and Habermas (1990) that a monological *or* dialogical “stage six” *is* morally adequate and *ought* to be a form of cognition obtained by human beings.

(especially at Kohlberg's preconventional and conventional stages of moral reasoning) as an exercise in the selection of, and conformity to, appropriate external rules, norms, laws, and rights to resolve the dilemmas addressed (Levine 2004).

ii. Moral Autonomy

In contrast, B-type reasoning requires the capacity to make moral judgments in ways that reflexively recognize norms as the products of social construction, and to autonomously select, modify, or reject norms based on their appropriateness in resolving the dilemma at hand (Levine 2004; see also, Piaget 1965). This process of "*norming* norms" invokes the reasoner's ability to form his or her judgments based on an active reconstruction of the relevant interests, values, and circumstances of all parties implicated in the dilemma (Côté and Levine 2002; Levine 2004). At each subsequent stage of moral development, this ability becomes increasingly adroit (Kohlberg, Levine, and Hewer 1983; Levine 2004). Most relevant to the issue of stage acquisition is the fact that since B-type reasoning involves the kind of reciprocal role-taking operations requisite for post-conventional reasoning, it suggests a greater preparedness for higher-stage reasoning than A-type reasoning (Côté and Levine 2002: 197). Thus, although heteronomous and autonomous reasoners may utilize the same stage as one another, the latter are in a better position to expand and develop their moral reasoning to higher stages while the former are held back by a combination of unilateral obedience and ethical self-absorption. In fact, Kohlberg, Levine, and Hewer (1983) argue that

subjects who are principled or B-substage are (a) more likely to make judgments of responsibility and to perform actions that are consistent with their deontic judgments of rightness and (b) more likely to perform the "right" action, right action being defined by that agreement reached between philosophical principles and postconventional judgments (p. 261).

It becomes clear, then, that the use of B-type cognitive operations provides even non-principled respondents the ability to intuit morally adequate resolutions, even if the structure of their reasoning does not elicit the most compelling arguments for the standpoint of a "highest" stage of moral reasoning.

Since substage measurements evince both the structure and content of reasoning, it is the case that different dilemmas will invoke *varying degrees* of structuring and "contenting"

in reasoning. This is to say that, depending on the *social perspectives* and *views of persons* that a respondent holds prior to the dilemma, certain norms and values perceived as relevant in the dilemma may prove influential in how cognitive operations are used. For example, Levine (1976: 41) finds that differences in both “the identity of the protagonist implicated in the moral dilemma and the nature of the issue raised by the moral dilemma” can produce variation in moral judgments from respondents at the conventional stages. Levine’s (1976) findings suggest that when moral dilemmas involve the loved ones of the respondents, the “strong norms of reciprocity that are activated by these relationships” are likely to invoke cognitive operations oriented to the preservation of “general positive relationships among people” that is characteristic of stage three reasoning (Levine 1976: 42; Rest 1973: 94 quoted in *ibid*). Since conventional reasoners are capable of taking into account different role-taking standpoints but do not yet choose these standpoints as a matter of principle, the perspective they take is somewhat dependent on *whose* perspective it is that they focus on. Thus, their sense of obligation, empathy, and sympathy tends to vary in intensity depending on the meaningfulness of the issues, interests, and parties for the individual respondent (Levine 1976). Conversely, the social distance between a respondent and a generalized or “fictitious other” removes the emotive and relationship-preserving imperative from the direct attention of the respondent, thereby opening up the possibility for the kind of perspective balancing orientation characteristic of stage four (Levine 1976).

3. Discussion

It is important that sociologies of morality not overlook the process by which a given moral problem has come to be defined and legitimated. That the moral domain references not simply *established* norms and “cultural codes,” but must also reference cognition about situations of potential normative *conflict* (i.e., moral dilemmas), highlights the importance of critically examining the social conditions under which a given moral rule or moral dilemma arises. If morality is taken up strictly from the standpoint of existing norms and normative codes, then the basis for critical inquiry into the social construction and philosophical legitimation of the *codes themselves* is severely

diminished. Inquiry into “morality” is essentially reduced to a study of descriptive ethics, social behaviourism, and existing social conventions, values, and norms.

In response to Durkheim’s *L’Education Morale*, Piaget (1965) rejects the notion that moral autonomy is tantamount to knowingly and willfully following the “rules of morality” (pp. 456–357). Piaget argues that such psychological and behavioural conformity ignores both the philosophical and procedural importance of cognition about mutual respect for resolving moral matters. Using “the existence of spontaneously formed children’s societies” as evidence of the child’s developmental capacity for cooperative rule-making (1965: 356), Piaget shows that moral autonomy lies not in unilateral respect for rules or authority figures but in the exercise of reason to *judge* the rightness of a moral rule. This of course is not to beg the question of an asocial psychologism; quite the opposite. For Piaget (1965),

There are no more such things as societies *qua* beings than there are isolated individuals. There are only relations; these relations must be studied simultaneously from outside and from inside (there being no possible conflict between psychology and sociology), and the combinations formed by them, always incomplete, cannot be taken as permanent substances (p. 360).

Hence, it is precisely the nature of these *social relations* within a given situation—either geared toward authority or mutual respect—which orient the child’s day-to-day apperception of moral problems, and thus the stimulation of his/her cognitive moral development. It stands to reason, for instance, that a social milieu oriented toward political or economic oligarchy will produce not only social hierarchies but also total “personalities” characterized by anti-democratic tendencies and the increasing inability to even perceive dilemmas (Adorno et al. 1969).¹⁰ The relevant point here is that without

¹⁰ As Fromm (1984) demonstrates, such anti-democratic sentiments need not be specific to any particular social class or ideological leaning. For both Fromm (1984) and Adorno et al. (1969), it appears that “the answer must be sought not in any single personality nor in personality factors found in the mass of people, but in processes at work in society itself” (1967: 7). As far as the present research is concerned, it would appear that one societal “process” worth examining is the way in which resource allocation and access guides the “privatization” versus “collectivization” of social relations. The current study aims to test the hypotheses logically emerging from theoretical criticisms of the “privatizing” processes at work in society.

the necessary conditions for *mutual* respect among persons who participate in the construction of society's rules, moral autonomy lies outside of *both* the individual and society.

It is here that critical sociology stands to contribute fruitfully to the development of moral inquiry in the social sciences. Without a critical examination of the social and psychological conditions *under which* and *through which* particular circumstances become “matters of great” or “minor moral moments” (cf. Churchland 2011: 9–10), moral research constrains itself to the normative confines of the dominant culture, and in this respect is predisposed to normalize its values rather than expose their inherent moral adequacy or inadequacy. This problem is not simply one of theoretical “reflexivity,” nor is it one of methodological rigour—although it is both; it also has broader societal implications. As Horkheimer (1993) observes,

The prevalent tendency in bourgeois morality to lay exclusive value upon conviction proves to be a position that inhibits progress, especially in the present. It is not consciousness of duty, enthusiasm, and sacrifice *as such*, but consciousness of duty, enthusiasm, and sacrifice *for what* which will decide the fate of humanity in the face of the prevailing peril (p. 24; emphasis added).

Horkheimer's comments stand not only as a critique of bourgeois conceptions of the moral but also of the “new” sociology of morality that purports to study it. To the extent that sociologists do not reflexively clarify and criticize the economic and socio-political relations that structure and are structured by the moral consciousness of interacting persons, their moral research cannot help but reinforce the normative conventions of the present bourgeois morality.

The present study of morality and property shares the view expressed by Freirich and Münch (2010), that we not only “have to know what morality is as a social phenomenon and a scientific object; we also need to learn more about how morality is constructed, first of all” (p. 530). In order to adequately grasp the nature of morality in present-day society, sociology must account for the way that social norms frame and influence the formulation and deliberation of moral judgments, not merely describe the judgments or the norms themselves. To again quote Piaget (1965), “when Durkheim reminds us that

the individual is unable of himself to create morality, this by no means implies that the person (i.e., the individual, insofar as he submits to the norms of reciprocity) is not free to judge everything by his reason alone” (p. 370). Thus, rather than conceptualize morality as a set of conventions to which individuals either adhere or deviate, and rather than emphasizing only its cohesive function in society, the critical sociological approach to morality taken in the present study takes up the moral domain as a site of crisis, as *a dilemma of conflicting interests*, and seeks to investigate factors that affect the relative “autonomy” people exercise in “working through” these dilemmas. How individuals *apperceive* the dilemma, and the qualities of the justifications they provide for their judgments, therefore become just as relevant to the analysis as the judgment itself.

As concerns the specific relationship between property and morality, the critical concern for “autonomy” will be examined in Chapter 3 with specific reference to the Marxian and neo-Marxist traditions. Piaget’s (1965) and Kohlberg’s (1981) moral theories suggest that sociocentricity has a stimulating effect on the development and exercise of morally autonomous reasoning and hence on the development toward moral maturity. This proposition has also been expressed by both Western Marxists (e.g., Horkheimer 1993; Fromm 1959, 1999; Habermas 1990) and by Marx himself, as part of a broader materialist critique of moral conventionalism and as a radical critique of private property (see also Engels 1976; Marx and Engels 1964). The theoretical congruity of these two domains of research forms the conceptual foundation of the present study, and will be discussed in the next chapter. Their empirical congruity is the subject of the study itself.

II. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

In his influential treatise, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, the English jurist Sir William Blackstone wrote that “there is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination, and engages the affectations of mankind, as the right of property” ([1766] cited in Shacher 2009: 8).

But what is property? And what are the *social* bases of property “rights”? Answers to such questions are deceptively complicated. Peter Hollawell (1982a) notes that on one hand, “everyday use of the term ‘property’ indicates no apparent difficulty about its

meaning. Familiar experience leads to an easy and unconscious acceptance”; and yet, on the other hand “a cursory examination of even general definitions of property confirms that it is a very complex phenomenon indeed” (p. 1). It should therefore be noted from the outset that the topic of property ownership spans an extraordinary breadth of diverse and fiercely contested scholarship across law, history, politics, cultural anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. Any attempt to assert a “neutral,” much less a *definitive* conception of property is bound to fail as either too general to be practically meaningful or too specific to be culturally or historically generalizable (Hollawell 1982a: 3; Radin 1993: 102). Likewise, any analysis of property that orients itself to a given political perspective or philosophical tradition—however transparently—is bound to meet criticism from conflicting traditions.

The purpose of this section is to establish, through an overview of some elementary social-theoretical conceptions of property ownership, a more-or-less feasible and supportable analytic framework for a critical sociological analysis of ownership norms. Accordingly, the purpose of this section is to review some broadly accepted ideas about property ownership and thus to accomplish the following conceptual tasks: (A) disentangle property ownership *norms* and *social relations* from the common-sense conceptions of property as *things*; (B) elucidate from this *relational* conception of property an ideal-typical distinction between *private* and *social* ownership norms that arise within modern property regimes; and (C) establish a theoretical framework for the critical social-psychological analysis of “private” and “social” property relations in contemporary society.

A. Conceptualizing Property

Property ownership affects all aspects of modern life, from the intimate relationships individuals have with personal possessions to the institutional formations that govern the legal and economic system of global politics, but the idea of property ownership is not prior to the society in which it arises. Rather, it is a *social construct*, with meanings and consequences varying considerably across the history of human society. As Randall Collins (1982) explains,

property is a relationship among people regarding things; it is some kind of enforcement agreement as to who can or cannot do what with certain things, and who will back others up in enforcing these actions... It is the society that makes something property and not some inviolable relation between one individual and the soil (p. 122).

Collins' observations foreground the *social* basis of property ownership. Property in its broadest sense denotes a normative, institutionalized framework for accessing and allocating resources within a given society (Waldron 1985).¹¹ However, it is a common mistake for people to unreflexively think of "property" as a *thing*—i.e., to equate "property" with the *owned possession* itself (Van Der Walt 2010: 81). The basis for this mistake lies in the fact that our prevailing system of "property ownership" places high emphasis on individuals' exclusive (i.e., *private*) entitlement to objects that are "their property." Commonly, the object itself is treated as if it has a metaphysical "property" of belonging to a person, when in fact the basis for its being *owned* lies in a set of normative relations concerning exclusivity and privation.

There are two major implications worth noting about this idea: (1) the significance of *property* lies not in the "*thing*" (i.e., the *object* of ownership) but in a particular kind of *social relationship*, and (2) as an institution, property orients people's *access to resources*. These two premises, elaborated below, have much support within the theoretical literature and are central to the current study.

1. Relations, not Things

The current study proceeds from the legal and social-theoretical premise that "property" should not be understood as "things" but as *relations* (Hohfeld 1913; Hollawell 1982a; Rudmin 1991; Vogt 1999; Waldron 1985). In modern ownership regimes, when actors make direct reference to things they own as "their" property (e.g. a swath of land, a computer, a house, or an authored manuscript), they are in fact conflating the bundle of *property rights* attributed to the thing with the *thing* itself. For instance, a landowner's

¹¹ This is not limited to individualistic modes of allocation. As will be discussed below, it may also (or alternately) include communal, public, common, collective, state, corporate, or any number of historically extant arrangements.

demand that a trespasser “get off my property!” illustrates a common misunderstanding: it is the landowner’s *relationship* vis-à-vis the trespasser—the right to refuse the encroacher’s access to the territory¹²—that constitutes the ownership of “property” (i.e. the ownership “right”), not the territory itself. Quoting Jeremiah Smith, the legal scholar Wesley Hohfeld (1913) explains that “land is not property, but the subject of property... ‘Property’ in its legal signification means only the rights of the owner in relation to it... The right of user necessarily includes the right and power of excluding others from using the land” (p. 22). The key point is that property is not the resource itself, nor is the resource itself *property*; rather, property pertains to the *social relationship* designating each party’s rights to a certain resource vis-à-vis the other parties. Property is about *who* is entitled to grant or refuse access to a resource, and who lacks such entitlements.

It should be noted immediately that some disagreement exists concerning the nature of the *rights* that such a relationship entails. Do property rights pertain to the relationship between owner–object, owner–non-owner, or both? Although much legal attention has been paid to the kinds of rights an owner has in relation to the object of ownership (e.g. “use rights,” “income rights,” “disposal rights” cf. Vogt 1999), Waldron (1985) demonstrates that property relations fundamentally lie between *persons* (owners and non-owners). He reasons that “legal relations cannot exist between people and [*things*], because [*things*] cannot have rights or duties or be bound by or recognize rules” (1985: 314). In other words, it is not *things* which are held responsible for obeying ownership laws, but *people*!

Following Hallowell, then, we might speak of the following “triadic” quality of ownership relations: “A owns B against C, where C represents all other individuals,” and B represents a specific resource (1943: 120, cited in Dittmar 1992: 36). Hence, in the “trespassing” scenario described above, the salience of property rights lies not in the landowner (A)’s relation to the land (B), but above all in relation to the “trespasser” (C), just as the trespasser’s violation lies not in setting foot on the land, but in doing so against

¹² And thus the legal, and “symbolic” power to *define* the encroacher as a trespasser.

the landowner's expressed wishes. Accordingly, since the legitimation of any property right rests upon its recognition by other people (Hollawell 1982a: 1), ownership is best understood not as an "objective" relationship, but as an *intersubjective*—i.e., *social*—relationship (Hollawell 1982a, 1982b; Munzer 2001; Pejovic 1997; Waldron 1985).¹³

However, widespread acknowledgement of the institutional legitimation of modern property relations does not imply widespread agreement on the normative-ethical *goodness* of these relations. As the work of some critical social theorists suggest, taken-for-granted assumptions about what property "is" and "ought" to be must be interrogated as a possible site of ideological domination (cf. Fromm 1976; Marcuse 1964; Marx 1992). Following W. I. Thomas, it may be said that while property ownership does not constitute an "objective" reality independent of social actors, it nevertheless has very real *consequences* for how legal, political economic, and ethical situations are defined—and therefore, very real *consequences* for the socio-political interests of those actors (cf. Hollawell 1982a).¹⁴ One such consequence, the regulation of individuals' relative control over resources, will now be discussed.

2. Access to Resources

Sociologically speaking, "property ownership" may be thought of as a system of rules governing people's relations to one another on issues of access to, and control of, scarce

¹³ It may be observed that in certain regards, "legal relations" (Hohfeld 1913; Honoré 1961) may be fruitfully distinguished from "social relations" (Hollawell 1982; Munzer 2001). Although a great deal of scholarship has been dedicated to the "legal relations" of property ownership, these may nevertheless be considered a more specific type of "social relation" given the fact that law is, ultimately, a *social* institution. In full recognition of the complexity of legal property relations, the present study seeks to investigate questions relating to this more general "social relation" of property ownership.

¹⁴ cf. Hollawell: "In the language of the symbolic interactionists, if people define *something* (rather than rights in it) as property, more frequently or more intensely than other things, then this definition has real consequences. An insistence on the importance of the subjective aspect of property reveals that the objective *definition* (property as rights) is limiting. The real breadth of the institution is pared down since the notion "right of enjoyment" conveys no sense of the *true* delights or miseries of property" (1982a: 8–9).

resources (Pejovic 1997: 65; Waldron 1985:318, 1988).¹⁵ Here, the following explanation from Waldron (1988) is instructive:

The concept of property is the concept of a system of rules governing access to and control of material resources. Something is to be regarded as a material resource if it is a material object capable of satisfying some human need or want. In all times and places with which we are familiar, material resources are scarce relative to the human demands that are made on them. (Some, of course, are scarcer than others.) Scarcity, as philosophers from Hume to Rawls have pointed out, is a presupposition of all sensible talk about property. If this assumption were ever to fail (as Marx believed it some day would) then the traditional problem of the nature and justification of rival types of property systems would probably disappear. But so long as it obtains, individuals (either on their own or in groups) are going to disagree about who is to make which use of what. These disagreements are often serious because, in many cases, being able to make use of a resource that one wants is connected directly or indirectly with one's survival. A problem, then, which I shall call the problem of *allocation*, arises in any society which regards the avoidance of serious conflict as a matter of any importance. This is the problem of determining peacefully and reasonably predictably who is to have access to which resources for what purposes and when. The system of social rules which I call property rules are ways of solving that problem (pp. 31–32).

Waldron's conceptualization of the connection between property rights and problems of *resource allocation* is of critical relevance to the present social-psychological study.

Waldron demonstrates that it is not the qualities of *objects themselves*, but rather the kinds of meanings and legal-moral arrangements people establish in relation to one another regarding the *use of* (and *access to*) resources which constitute the practice of property ownership.¹⁶ This conception also expands our analysis beyond the methodological individualism of particular rights-holders and -regarders to a broader consideration of a structured "regime" of ownership which determines and enforces these particular "rights." Waldron's conceptualization implies that at the core of property

¹⁵ In broader, more general terms, it may therefore be spoken of as a social institution, or a *property regime* (Hollawell 1982; Noyes 1936; Rose 1994; Waldron 1993).

¹⁶ Waldron (1985) uses the term "resource" to refer to "a material object capable of satisfying some human need or want" (p. 318). These resources may be corporeal (e.g. land) or incorporeal (e.g. copyright), but, as Waldron notes, "It is important to see that there is a reason for concentrating *first and foremost* on property rules about material resources, for it is only on that basis that talk about property in incorporeals becomes possible" (p. 322).

ownership lie normative questions concerning how *best* to meet the relative material interests of society's members. It explicates a critical link between *psychological and philosophical concerns with fairness* on the one hand, and *sociological concerns with resource allocation* on the other: that is, that *property's* most basic function lies in rationally coordinating a society's legal–moral doctrines with its prevailing economic relations (cf. Gouldner 1970).

Thus, to take a *sociological view of property* is to examine the connection between property relations, property norms, and property *regimes* (Hollawell 1982b). To take a *critical* sociological view of property is to examine the processes by which those factors come to shape *human* relations, and on this basis to evaluate from a *moral point of view* the effects of the property system on human well-being, autonomy, solidarity (cf. Marx 1990, 1992; Fromm 1967; Marcuse 1989). The present study seeks to explore some of these critical concerns.

B. Property Relations in the Sociological and Psychological Literature

1. Property Ownership

It has thus far been established that property ownership entails a set of normed relations among individuals pertaining to their respective access to a resource. It has also been suggested that the durability of these relations lies in their institutionalization in legal, political, and economic spheres, which in turn ascribes an implied morally-sound justification for those relations. Returning to the previously cited conception of ownership, in which “*A owns B against C, where C represents all other individuals,*” it is worth considering more concretely the relationship of A “*against*” C, the basis for its legitimation, and the effects that this relationship may have upon people's social relations more generally (Hallowell 1943: 120, cited in Dittmar 1992: 36).

The predominant ownership regime in modern capitalist societies is individualistic, *private* ownership. This form of ownership entails an owner's right to *exclude* (i.e., *deprive*) non-owners from accessing an owned resource (Durkheim 1957; Fromm 1976;

Macpherson 1962; Radin 1992; Ryan 1982; Vogt 1999).¹⁷ Such rights are “final” in the sense that decisions concerning the use, alienation, tradeability of the owned object are, in the last analysis (and with very few limitations), at the sole discretion of the private owner (Waldron 1985: 327; see also Shachar 2009).¹⁸ This is the form most frequently addressed in academic literature, legal theory, and in public discourse.

In his examination of the origin of property ownership in society, Durkheim (1957) notes the “sacred” quality that this right obtains in society, drawing connections between the origins of property and “the nature of certain religious beliefs,” and suggesting that these “can in all likelihood be attributable to similar causes” (pp. 143–144). As such, property is deeply entwined with the moral codes of society; it constitutes a basis for regulating social relations among individuals and shapes the collective conscience, often in ways that go unquestioned in people’s day-to-day lives (Van der Walt 2010). As Gerth and Mills (1953) grimly note, “in the United States many master symbols of the social structure are derived from and primarily legitimate the economic order. ‘Free enterprise’ and ‘private property’ are practically unquestionable symbols, even when they are not very skillfully used” (p. 281).

There are, however, non-exclusionary forms of property ownership within society which may be distinguished from the “private” form, and which entail significantly different relations among social actors. The theoretical possibility and historical prevalence of such non-exclusionary ownership relations serve to destabilize the fallacious conflation

¹⁷ This is the form of ownership which corresponds most closely to Durkheim’s conception of property in general: “the right of property is the right of a given individual to exclude other individuals and collective entities from the usage of a given thing” (Durkheim 1957, cited in Hollawell 1982b: 30–31).

¹⁸ “Alienation” here is used in the legal sense of a power “to alienate his legal interest to another, i.e., to extinguish his complex aggregate of jural relations and create a new and similar aggregate in the other person” (Hohfeld 1917: 746; see also, Hohfeld 1913). The Marxist geographer David Harvey (2014) provides a more specified discussion of the various meanings of alienation in social scientific, political, philosophical and legal discourses, and offers the somewhat more simplified legal definition of alienation: a power “to transfer a property right to the ownership of another” (p. 267).

of property with *private* property, or the naturalization of private property as its inevitable form. As Marx (1973) explains,

that there can be no production and hence no society where some form of property does not exist is a tautology... But it is altogether ridiculous to plea from that to a specific form of property, e.g. private property. (Which further and equally presupposes an antithetical form, *non-property*.) History rather shows common property (e.g. in India, among the Slavs, the early Celts, etc.) to be the more original form, a form which long continues to play a significant role in the shape of communal property (pp. 87–88).

More recent literature supports these claims, suggesting that while there may exist a more or less universal cultural and psychological tendency to recognize *some* form of entitlement to personal possessions, the nature of this perceived entitlement varies widely across cultures and history. Intercultural and historical variability in ownership regimes and relations dispels any facile notion that private property arises as a consequence of human beings' innate territoriality, acquisitiveness, or egoism, much less that private property should constitute anything but an historically contingent system of resource allocation (Becker 1980; Vogt 1999; Waldron 1985).¹⁹ To cite just one example,

¹⁹ It is along these lines that Marx (1970) also distinguishes between “possessions” and “property” (p. 207). As the foregoing analysis would suggest, it is only with the institution of legal relations that one's possession of a resource comes to be formalized as property, *proper*. But a “concrete substratum underlying the relation of ownership is always however presupposed” (p. 207). That is to say, it is only when certain “concrete social relations” have evolved (such as the family or the master and servant) that abstract *property relations* become a possibility. Accordingly,

private interest is itself already a socially determined interest, which can only be achieved within the conditions established by society and through the means that society affords, and that it is thus linked to the reproduction of these conditions and means. It is certainly the interest of private individuals that is at stake; but its content, as well as the form and the means of its realisation, is only given by the social conditions independent of all these individuals (1971: 65–66).

Possession is therefore distinguishable from ownership not only in the theoretical sense of an owner–object relationship (in the case of possession) versus an owner–non-owner relationship (in the case of property), but also in the historical sense of how/whether these modes of ownership emerge from the concrete economic relations within a *particular* social formation (Marx 1970: 206–207).

Becker's (1980) review of various justifications of private property demonstrates how much of the existing historical, anthropological, psychological, and socio-biological evidence about the implications of ownership may just as reasonably be used to argue *against* private property as *for* it.

2. Private and Social Property Relations

Cognitive research on the psychology of property ownership uses the term *psychological ownership* to denote a person's *sense* of ownership—that is, a mental orientation in which an individual perceives an object to be “theirs” (Chi and Han 2008; Furby 1978, 1991; Pierce and Jussila 2011; Pierce, Kostova and Dirks 2003). Just as distinctions between “*private*” property and numerous sub-categories of *non-exclusionary* property rights have been posited, a generalized distinction can be made between ownership relations that are “individualistic” (or *private*) in nature, and those that are “collectivistic” (or *social*) in nature.²⁰ Two bodies of research within the literature can help illustrate the distinction between the individualistic and collectivistic psychological orientations.

Belk (1985) examines issues of “individualistic” ownership by way of an examination of materialistic consumption habits. Belk (1984, 1985) identifies three traits of this materialistic orientation, which he operationalizes as scale measures: “possessiveness,” “non-generosity,” and “envy.” These traits pertain to a conception of ownership that foregrounds the exclusive control of objects by an individual. For instance, possessiveness and non-generosity denote an individual's inclination to retain control of an object they possess, while envy denotes an individual's desire for the possessions of others (Belk 1985). In each of these traits it is apparent that objects of ownership are conceived of in “individualistic” terms, along the lines of a sole individual owner and the things that belong to him or her. For the sake of the present study, Belk's sub-scales may

²⁰ E.g., Waldron (1985) distinguishes between “collective” and “common” property on the grounds that the latter provides no special privilege to either the collective or an individual—i.e., every resource is available to every individual—whereas this may not be the case for collective property *proper*. (See also Fromm 1976; Gerth and Mills 1953; Hollawell 1982a, 1982b; Munzer 2001; Pejovic 1995).

therefore be understood as measuring dimensions of a particularly “individualistic” conception of ownership—one which not only takes the exclusionary rights of ownership for granted, but which also places exclusive emphasis on the individual-object relationship. They therefore provide a useful means of differentiating an individual’s psychological inclinations toward acquiring and retaining *possessions* from their social attitudes toward various cultural and political norms about *property*.

In contrast to the individualistic ownership attitudes studied by Belk (1994, 1995), Pierce and Jussila (2011) examine “collective psychological ownership,” a group-level phenomenon that emerges through collectively “shared feelings, knowledge, and beliefs about a target of ownership,” and is experienced in a different way than “individual psychological ownership” (pp. 3–4). Whereas individual psychological ownership entails a sense that a target of ownership “is *mine!*”, collective psychological ownership entails the sense that it “is *ours!*” (Pierce and Jussila 2011: 16). Notably, although collective psychological ownership “transcends the limits of *individual cognition/affect*,” this does not appear to obviate a person’s sense of individual rights and responsibilities relating to an owned object (Pierce and Jussila 2011: 3). Insofar as this sense of ownership is commonly held, it is possible that one’s personal commitments to it may be enhanced. As Pierce and Jussila explain,

‘*Ours*’ is a small word, arising out of a shared event, when collectively experienced and recognized by a group of people who experience themselves as ‘us,’ it is ‘deceptive in its power and importance,’ capable of binding people together and controlling their behaviour in pursuit of a common cause (2010: 827, cited in Pierce and Jussila 2011:237).

Pierce and Jussila’s research suggests that the social bonds formed around a shared sense of ownership may produce not less but a *greater* sense of personal commitment to a target of “ownership” such as a company, community, or political cause; it does so, however, in a form that generates cohesion among the individual’s and others’ respective interests, instead of conflict. Rather than a dispersion of responsibility, a genuine sense of collective ownership may strengthen one’s identification with both the group and the thing they collectively own.

The distinction between individual and collective lenses of *psychological ownership* may be compared to certain ownership relations at the institutional level. In particular, Marx draws a dichotomy between “*private*” versus “*social*” ownership relations based on how social relations (particularly relations of production) are formed within a given economic mode of production. For Marx, “property relations... express both the manner in which people relate to nature and the manner in which they relate to each other” (Hunt 1979: 285). Under the capitalist mode of production, where the productive relationship to nature is one in which nature is appropriated and privatized, and where human relations are fractured along class lines, Marx observes a corresponding prevalence of *private* property relations. These relations can be radically contrasted with the kinds of *social* property relations necessary for natural resources to be productively cultivated toward *social* ends, and for human relations to proceed according to *collective*, rather than *private* interests (Marx 1992). Under these latter conditions, Marx contends, the reified conception of “property” discussed above would necessarily be exposed as illusion, and individual interest in property rights would be correctly understood as inextricable from collective interests (Marx 1992; Marx and Engels 1964; Fromm 1965, 1976).

C. Discussion

The above literature review has addressed the social ontology of property ownership. It has also sought to establish some foundational conceptual points regarding the social institution and cognitive apperception of property ownership in contemporary society in order to lay the theoretical groundwork for the present study. The core premises of this groundwork may be summarized as follows:

1. “Property” does not denote objects themselves, nor the possession of an object *per se*, but rather specific rights-relations among social actors. It is a mistake, therefore, to equate property with the things one “*has*.” Rather, property is understood as a specific set of institutionalized privileges which regulate one’s access to things vis-à-vis other persons. In other words, *property is a social relation*.
2. Although *private* ownership remains the dominant property regime in late-modern society, it is not the case that ownership is inevitably *exclusionary*. Indeed, private property is an historically-specific form of ownership that is relatively rare among

human societies (Fromm 1976). Ownership may take numerous forms depending upon the cultural norms and social structure of a given society. One may, however, draw a philosophically (Arendt 1958), sociologically (Gerth and Mills 1953; Marx 1992), and psychologically (Pierce and Jussila 2011) relevant distinction between private (i.e., *exclusionary*) versus social (i.e., *inclusionary*) ownership norms within contemporary society. Such a distinction stems from the way these norms orient people's social and legal relations to others and to resources.

3. Property regimes constitute durable, ubiquitous institutions which legitimate existing modes of resource allocation within a society. Private property in modern society is treated with a "sacred" reverence (Durkheim 1957), and obtains ideological purchase through its integration with other cultural values like "freedom," "individuality," and "choice" (Gerth and Mills 1953). Collective forms of ownership, by contrast, tend to be regarded as cultural exceptions to the norm, and their attendant ethical precepts (e.g. to engage in sharing, charity, co-operative ownership, wealth redistribution) are treated not as legally or socially binding "duties" but as voluntary, supererogatory "choices." In short, the ownership interests among members of modern Western society are predominantly practiced and thought about in antagonistic terms (Fromm 1976; Marx 1990).

The purpose for this somewhat lengthy review of the property ownership literature has been to provide a context for the analysis of Marx's moral critique of property, ideology, and power relations that appears in Chapter 3. Nowadays, there exists a pervasive misrecognition not only of the *socially constructed* nature of property ownership (Rudmin 1991), but also of the inherent antagonism of interests that exists between private property owners and non-owners (Gouldner 1970). The reification of property, as well as the hegemony of *private* property (i.e., the widespread failure to recognize the social relations that produce it), bears moral relevance both for questions of "fair" allocations of resources within society and for questions of how "respect," both for pre-constructed rules about property and/or for persons, is accorded in moral decision making. A few additional theoretical comments on the *social construction* and the *ideology* of property are therefore in order.

1. The Reproduction of Property Ownership Regimes in Modern Society

Among the numerous dimensions of modern property ownership, one of the most compelling surely lies in its near-total entrenchment within the cognitive/emotional sensibilities of individuals, despite how little thought is actually given to what it means to *own* something. As Rose (1994) notes,

property regimes and even individual property holdings are by no means self-evident constructs; there are many property arrangements that people have quite consciously talked themselves into. Then, too, are property arrangements, like ‘first possession,’ that seem as much a part of nature as the summer sun—even if, as I suspect, people have talked themselves into those understandings as well (p 6; emphasis added).

How is this possible? How is it that a social construct as abstract as property can be so widely practiced but so rarely interrogated? What is quite apparent is the need to account for how social practices—particularly those concerning the allocation of resources—also occur within a context of *power relations*. Whether people have indeed “*consciously* talked *themselves* into those understandings” (Rose 1994: 6), or are in fact *manipulated into* them is a problem that remains empirically underexplored by critical sociology (Gouldner 1962). By dint of the unequal control over economic, political, and cultural institutions, some individuals have greater influence over what we “talk ourselves into” than others (Mills 1956). While it is the case that the social construction of ownership regimes requires the ongoing participation of social actors, there are compelling social-theoretical reasons to consider the role of power, coercion, and force in the creation and perpetuation of these “arrangements.” Individuals socialized in an environment that rewards competitiveness, exploitation, and egoism do not simply “talk” themselves into accepting systems of privatization; they are socialized within those systems and participate in their reproduction often as a matter of course. Because ownership rules govern social relations around access to, and allocation of, basic resources, they likewise affect the fundamental modes of social, cultural, and economic reproduction within that society. Manners of social interaction, moral cognition, and symbolic discourse all proceed within particular milieux of property relations, and are more or less predisposed to reproduce those relations (Bourdieu 1977). If the total “social character” of an individual’s society—from “its language and its laws” (Marx 1992: 322; see also, Fromm

1976), to its family structures (Engels 1942), to its mode of production (Marx 1990, 1992)—reinforces the reification of private ownership, we should then not be surprised to find complementary dispositions in individuals' own normative-ethical and epistemological perspectives toward objects and others. It is reasonable, therefore, to speak of private property as a “total ideology” in Mannheim's (1936) sense of the term.

Thus, to say that property is a “social construct” is not to say that it isn't real. Rather, it is to suggest that its existence is neither prior to nor independent of the practice of social actors and the processes of social systems. It is the *consequence* of shared social definitions of what it means to “own” something. (As Berkeley notes, “to own is to be *perceived* to own” [Rudmin 1991: 86; emphasis added]). Following the constructionist logic of Berger and Luckmann (1966) or the structuration theory of Giddens (1979, 1987), property may be viewed as a socially contingent social norm, a “virtual reality.” As a social “construct,” it may enable or constrain action, but it is nevertheless also *constituted by* action in everyday practice—based upon the power relations of particular actors (cf. Giddens 1981; Gouldner 1970). With regard to Rose's (1994: 6) comments, then, people do indeed “talk themselves into” particular understandings about ownership, but their ability to do so is always already situated within social arrangements, norms, structures, and power relations that make such “talk” more or less comprehensible and realizable. Hence, the ideological purchase that property institutions have in modern society confers inordinate *power* to owners over non-owners (Gouldner 1970).

Because the everyday relations of individuals are predicated on cultural and legal norms about who may be excluded from accessing this or that object of property, such individuals are unlikely to reflect upon the implications of those norms, and may mistake the rules, the relations, or the consequences of such exclusionary relations, as “natural.” A condition of this disposition to ignore the claims of “the other” is that, in confronting a moral dilemma regarding property a person is not likely to utilize cognitive operations to apprehend the claims and needs of the other. Especially under the hegemonic logic of privatization in modern capitalism, the needs of the propertyless “other” are effectively eliminated from practical and moral consciousness.

All of this suggests that attitudes toward property contain a *moral dimension*. To my knowledge, there has never been an attempt to document the relations between *insufficient moral cognition* and property relations.²¹ The present study is an attempt to “scratch the surface” of this otherwise unexplored relationship.

2. Sociological Implications for Moral Research in the Present Study

Suffice it to say that property ownership tends to be conceived of in varied, contentious, and often fallacious ways within contemporary society (Rudmin 1991). As the preceding literature review discusses, the *relational* aspect of ownership is rarely considered in conventional discourse about property (Hollawell 1982a, 1982b; Hohfeld 1913; Waldron 1985). With respect to the exclusionary qualities of private property, for instance, ethical attention is predominantly directed toward the individualizing notion of “exclusive rights” *over objects* than to the *exclusionary social relations* that are its practical effects (Hollawell 1982; Hohfeld 1913; Waldron 1985). These common (mis)conceptions of property ownership suggest something interesting about the ways people orient to objects, others, and the social institutions in which they engage. The reification of property, and the narrowly individualized terms in which it is commonly experienced, may reflect a more generalized possessiveness in the moral and “social character” of contemporary society (cf. Fromm 1976, 1998).

Because property institutions are both structured and structuring phenomena, it is necessary that research critically addresses not only the legal, historical, economic, and psychological facts of property regimes, but also the normative discourses (i.e., the prevailing moral philosophies, social conventions, and individual values and attitudes) that reproduce them (Gerth and Mills 1953). As Lametti (2010) writes,

private property is a social institution that comprises a variety of contextual relationships among individuals through objects of social wealth and is meant to serve a variety of individual and collective purposes—human survival, human development and flourishing etc.—coupled with its scarcity. *In short, private*

²¹ As will be discussed in the following chapter, Karl Marx’s social theory clearly implies a connection here, but nowhere has the connection been empirically demonstrated.

property is social because of its ethical dimensions and implications (p. 3; emphasis added.)

This conception aptly draws out both the normative-ethical and relational qualities of private property, but there is one problem worth noting in Lametti's formulation. For Lametti, it is private property's normative-ethical and distributive significance that makes it social. The proposition appears to be backwards, though. Things are not social because they are ethical; they are ethical because they are social. That is, it is only *in* and *through* some particular social relationship and social structure that notions of "good" and "right" emerge as debatable or actionable concepts (cf. Engels 1976; Horkheimer 1993). Following Mead (1934) or Weber (1958), we might instead say that private property is necessarily *social* because it holds common meaning for social actors (however asymmetrical their relationship may be); it is necessarily *sociological* because it asymmetrically determines the kinds of outcomes—e.g. of survival, development, flourishing, on one hand, and status, influence, power, on the other—experienced by people within the property regime; and it is necessarily *moral* for the fact that the *rightness* of both these social and sociological conditions is subject to critical evaluation. From this modified point of view, it is apparent that private property *relations* are the dominant and domineering social relations that underly the prevailing notions of values, ethics, laws, and scarcity within a society, not the other way around (cf. Engels 1976; Marx 1992; Vogt 1999).

It follows that private property institutionalizes not only a procedural framework for the control and disposal of resources (e.g. Waldron 1985), but also a normative-ethical framework for how individuals relate *morally* to the interests of one another as social actors (Fromm 1976, 1998). The implication here, and the theoretical impetus of the present study, is that private property is not merely an *expression* of societal values, for both of these are in fact leaves on the same branch. Both the institution of private property and the social values used to justify it extend from the dominant *social relations* of society. Thus, the *private*, exclusionary quality of private property must, from this view, be understood as the legal expression of a broader *moral* atomization—and concomitant alienation—of individuals (cf. Marx 1992). This proposition will be explored further in Chapter 3.

III. VALUE ORIENTATION AND CRITIQUE

Before attending to the dissertation's central theoretical problem of ownership attitudes and moral reasoning, it is worth considering some additional areas of inquiry that may be relevant to the current research topic. It may be noted that the two phenomena addressed thus far, property ownership and morality, share a number of sociologically relevant connections.

Firstly, the theoretical conceptualization of both ownership and morality addressed above are understood to be constituted by *social relations*. Property is a concept that designates the relative rights and duties among individuals concerning the allocation of resources, and morality arises from attempts to resolve dilemmas of competing interests among social actors. In both regards, therefore, the way individuals conceive of the social interrelatedness of human beings, *and the values they ascribe to such relations*, is likely to correspond to their respective conceptions of property relations and moral situations. Two cultural "value orientations" prevalent within contemporary society, *humanism* and *possessive individualism*, have been incorporated into the study for exploratory purposes. These two concepts reflect more or less opposing ontological and normative-ethical conceptions of social relations, social institutions, and identity, which may provide additional explanatory support for the results of the main study of moral reasoning and property ownership attitudes.

A. The Humanistic Ethos

Erik Erikson proposes that persons develop through a series of stages which provide the foundation for their normative-ethical sensibilities (Côté and Levine 1989). Echoing in *social-psychological* terms the Kohlbergian stage logic of "pre-conventional," "conventional," and "post-conventional" moral stages, Erikson (1975) conceptualizes three "value orientation" stages: the "moral," the "ideological," and the "ethical." Like the stages in Kohlberg's theory, this stage sequence can be argued to represent the increasing adequacy (and maturation) of an individual's moral reasoning capabilities (Côté and Levine 1989: 392), but these stages also represent "a hierarchy of increasingly adaptive reasoning abilities about the source and nature of authority and the role of

individual responsibility in complying with that authority” (Côté and Levine 1989 392). In this way, Erikson’s theory lays the groundwork for connecting the development of *moral reasoning* to identity formation—and, more generally, to the agency of the “ego” (Côté 2009; Côté and Levine 1989, 1992, 2002; Levine et al. 2000).

Erikson’s (1975) examination of identity development finds that young people in contemporary society are afforded a “psychosocial moratorium” period in which they explore various ideological affinities and experiment with adult and juvenile behaviours, which may ultimately serve to generate the ego strength for a later “ethical” orientation.²² He explains that, whereas young people’s ideological preferences often have a rather “totalistic” quality, their maturation to adulthood is marked by a corresponding maturation and “absorption” of the preceding moral and ideological stages into an “ethical” orientation, one in which “a universal sense of values (is) assented to with some insight and some responsible foresight,” and through which the ego exerts the strength to direct the individual’s choices *autonomously*, in accordance with one’s *self-chosen* values (p. 206).

Erikson (1975; see also, Côté 1984; Côté and Levine 1987) distinguishes between “two principal ideological orientations” adopted by youth during the institutionalized moratorium: the “technological” ethos and “humanistic” ethos. Côté and Levine (1987) make the following distinction between the characteristics of youth who gravitate toward these two ideological orientations:

“Technological youth” (Erikson 1974:202) base their sense of ego identity on the ideological framework of the technological ethos that is dominant in our society. Erikson identifies two ideological principles that are fundamental to the technological ethos: (1) you “*become* what you *do*” (1968a:31, Erikson’s emphasis) and (2) “what works is good” (1975:216). Technological youth constitute the majority of youth in our society.

²² Distinct from the Mannheimian conception of “ideology” referenced earlier, Erikson (1975) uses the term to mean “*a system of commanding ideas* held together to a varying degree more by totalistic logic and utopian conviction than by cognitive understanding or pragmatic experience” (p. 206–207; emphasis in original).

“Humanistic youth” (Erikson, 1975:193) are that “minority of youth (that) sense that what only ‘works’ may be destructive unless restrained by a new sense of responsibility toward mankind as one species” (Erikson in Evans 1967: 34–35). Humanistic youth reject “a subordination of ideology to technology” (Erikson 1963:26). Given the dominance of the technological ethos in our society and its tendency to neutralize dissent (e.g., Marcuse 1964), humanistic youth tend to undergo a more prolonged search for an ideological framework as part of their ideological stage of value development and, therefore, tend to have the most prolonged identity crisis (pp. 68–69).

During the 1960s, Erikson regarded these two orientations as characteristic of two prevailing *ethes* in American society. As the above description suggests, the “technological” ethos embodies the prevailing “moral pragmatism” of modern culture (1975: 216). Identity formation in accordance with its corresponding norms orients the individual’s moral, ideological, and ethical sensibilities around the instrumental-rational “promise” of a universal consolidation of technical and cultural values in society (1975: 216). Conversely, the “humanistic” ethos is oriented not to the values of “method and technique” but to humanistic values such as creativity, social responsibility, and peace—as well as an often “revolutionary” sensibility against established authority, tradition, power, state violence, and default rationalization (Erikson 1975: 216; Côté and Levine 1987, 1988).

Extending Erikson’s (1975) connection of adolescent ideology to the development of an ethical orientation (p. 216), studies such as those conducted by Côté (1984), Côté and Levine (1988, 1989, 1992, 2002) and Levine et al. (2000) show that these value orientations (i.e., the technological ethos and humanistic ethos) are predictive of a number of developmental and socio-biographical outcomes. Humanistic youth tend to experience a more severe identity crisis than technological youth (Côté and Levine 1988). Humanistic youth also tend to report lower rates of “identity foreclosure” (Côté and Levine 1988), and psychosocial domains such as ego identity and moral cognition tend to develop more “consistently” (i.e., with greater coherence) in university students enrolled in humanistic faculties than technological faculties (Levine et al. 2000). Additionally, Côté and Levine (1992) find that established academics in humanistic fields report more severe psychosocial crises during their youth and young adulthood than those in technological fields (p. 405), but that the humanistic orientation is also associated with

more advanced phases of identity development. Such outcomes are likely explained by the degree of ideological conflict one experiences between their value orientation and the predominantly technocratic nature of social institutions in contemporary Western society. Youth who gravitate toward technological values encounter less conflict between the values that they hold and the values of the outside world (Côté and Levine 1988, 1992, 2003). Meanwhile, humanistic youth face the more “troublesome” challenge of holding values that are marginal to the status quo values and practical demands of a technocratic society (Côté and Levine 1988, 1992, 2002).

The challenges faced by humanistic youth do, however, entail long-term potential for stimulating greater adaptability to the complexities of modern society in general, and greater coordination of one’s apperception of moral situations and their ability to reason about them (Levine et al. 2000). Levine et al. (2000) point out that,

It is this greater crisis severity that can better prepare the humanist individual for life in a society often characterized by fluctuations in degree of social regulation and organization. ... With greater frequency they perceive themselves as learning to cope with and resolve problems with the aid of relatively fewer and less consistently defined and sanctioned institutional directives (pp. 486–487).

In other words, the incongruity between the humanist’s ideological values and those of the dominant culture generate an impetus for him or her to cultivate greater *autonomy* in adjudicating normative-ethical matters. Since technological and humanistic values orient the individual’s navigation of the psycho-social moratorium and their subsequent identity development (Levine et al. 2000: 486), it is possible that they may also influence factors relevant to the current study, such as an individual’s attitudes toward the allocation of resources or the manner in which he or she apperceives and judges moral problems.

However, for the purpose of this dissertation, it is the humanistic orientation which is of greatest theoretical and empirical interest. More precisely, it is the *sociocentric* quality of the humanistic orientation—its prioritization of human interests over institutional exigencies (Levine et al. 2000)—which make it relevant to the current study of individualistic versus social ownership norms, and heteronomous versus autonomous moral reasoning. Conversely, it is not as clear that the “technological” orientation has

this same relevance. While the “moral pragmatism” of the technological ethos indicates a nascent *ethical* sensibility (albeit a potentially amoral one) which may be of relevance to the current project, it does not offer a sufficient corollary to humanism with regard to individuals’ attitudes to *property ownership* (Erikson 1975: 216). And while retaining both the “humanist” and “technological” typologies in the current study might extend its relevance to the field of identity studies, it also runs the risk of distorting the intended function of these analytic concepts and oversimplifying the theoretical assumptions which undergird them (e.g. ego-superego struggle, institutionalized moratoria, and/or identity crisis).²³

Given the exploratory, supplementary significance of value orientations and identity to the current study, the humanistic orientation will instead be compared with an ideology that shares many characteristics with the technological orientation in regards to its “moral pragmatism” and acceptance of a technocratic status quo, but that orients its normative-ethical values and its conception of identity around the language and logic of *property ownership* specifically. This ideology has been dubbed by C. B. Macpherson as “possessive individualism.”

B. Possessive Individualism

C. B. Macpherson (1962) used the term “possessive individualism” to describe a “unifying assumption” underlying the English liberal tradition that posits the individual as the “proprietor of [their own] person and capacities” (Hansen 2015: 16; Macpherson 1962: 3). In accordance with his broader interest in the political theory of democratic liberalism, the purpose of Macpherson’s critical study of possessive individualism was to

²³ It should also be noted that while Erikson posited technological and humanistic values as two broad “transhistorically valid” cultural forces (Côté and Levine 1987, 1989), the distinction is primarily an empirical rather than a dialectical one. That is, while the values themselves are, in practice and in principle, antithetical to one another, they are not antinomies in the sense that one cannot exist without the other. It is therefore theoretically tenable that only one orientation may be studied without the other, or juxtaposed with a different set of cultural values, insofar as a researcher is willing to depart analytically from Erikson’s *particular* conception of the institutionalized moratorium.

explore “how a certain conception of property ownership had shaped liberal thinking about individualism” (Carens 1993: 2). Macpherson (1962) describes this conception as one which posits the individual as the *owner* of his or her self and capabilities, in effect equating each individual as both the property and proprietor of their own person and thus binding the notion of freedom with that of property ownership.

Macpherson observes a conception of individualism underlying the political theories of Hobbes, the Levellers, Harrington, and Locke that is deeply reflective of (if not shaped by) the “nascent capitalist relations around them”—and, more generally, the prevailing notions of property ownership during this period (Lindsay 2013: 133; Carter 2005).²⁴ As Carter (2005) explains,

Macpherson’s central thrust was to argue how such a reified world-view was ‘read back into the nature of the individual,’ so that the individual human being comes to be seen as an isolated *thing*—and, more to the point, a commodity to be bought and sold on the market. I *am* my own property, a least common denominator of ownership justifying all other property relations (p. 834).

The significance of this conception lies in its “possessive” quality—that the individual is thought to be one who “owns” one’s own productive faculties in the same way that one might privately own any other object of property (Macpherson 1962: 3). Such an individual therefore bears no particular obligation to others in society and is regarded as “free” only insofar as his or her activities are conducted independently of the will of all other people (Macpherson 1962). Thus, in contrast to the humanistic orientation

²⁴ Commentators on Macpherson’s observations (e.g. Carter 2005; Hansen 2015; Lindsay 2013), as well as Macpherson himself, have noted that this conception is “not illogical in principle” given the historical-political context in which it emerged (Macpherson 1962: 13).

For instance, under circumstances in which political powers could otherwise appropriate ownership of land or resources with relative legal impunity, the claim to private property had “become for more and more men the critically important relation determining their actual freedom and actual prospect of realizing their actual potential” (Macpherson 1962: 3). Indeed, this essential problem lies at the foundation of most liberal and libertarian justifications for private property (e.g. Becker 1980; Pipes 1999; Pejovic 1997).

described above, “the individual is seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself” (Macpherson 1962: 3).²⁵

Macpherson derives his conception of possessive individualism from an immanent analysis of the “unquestioned assumptions” about property ownership and the ontology of the human being in liberal political theory (Carter 2005: 823). These assumptions are summarized in a set of seven propositions:

1. What makes a man *human* is freedom from dependence on the wills of others.
2. Freedom from dependence on others means freedom from any relations with others except those relations which the individual enters voluntarily with a view to his own interest.
3. The individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society.
4. Although the individual cannot alienate the whole of his property in his own person, he may alienate his capacity to labour.
5. Human society consists of a series of market relations.
6. Since freedom from the wills of others is what makes a man human, each individual's freedom can rightfully be limited only by such obligations and rules as are necessary to secure the same freedoms for others.
7. Political society is a human contrivance for the protection of the individual's property in his person and goods, and (therefore) for the maintenance of orderly relations of exchange between individuals regarded as proprietors of themselves. (Macpherson 1962: 263–4).

From these propositions it may be concluded that possessive individualism identifies individuality with ownership, and ownership with freedom, in the sense that an individual “owns” their own person and capacities as private property. Such an individual bears no

²⁵ Macpherson (1962) suggests that Hobbes likely regarded possessiveness as so engrained in the constitution of the human being that the *lack* of property, or the act of *selling* one’s human capabilities (i.e., selling one’s labour), diminishes not only one’s “humanity” but one’s very *worth* as an individual (Carter 2005).

particular social duty to others except against violating the property of others. Thus, to the possessive individualist, not only is property conceived of in “private,” individualistic terms, but so is each and every human being.

Macpherson regarded this conception of human nature as fundamentally flawed, and according to Carens (1993) and Carter (2005) his account of possessive individualism can be understood as entailing three main lines of critique. The first was that by placing greater value in acquisition or consumption than “deeper human purposes or capacities,” it espoused an “impoverished view of life” (Carens 1993: 3).

The second was that it “holds out a false promise” for the possibility of freedom and equality (Carens 1993: 3). By conceiving all social relations and individual capacities as *property relations*, possessive individualism imagines that each individual should maximize the satisfaction of his or her own desires (Carens 1993: 2). This promise ultimately fails in actually-existing social and political systems, however, whenever actually-existing inequalities provide inordinate means for a segment of the population to reproduce and expand its interests at the expense of other segments (Carens 1993). As Carens (1993) notes, “a system based on private property and so-called free exchange inevitably generates a concentration of ownership of all the means of production except labour. Most people are compelled to sell their labour to gain access to the means of life. They are free and equal individuals in name only” (p. 3).

The third was that possessive individualism’s “denial of the communal basis of the individual” essentially fails on pragmatic and moral grounds (Carter 2005: 836). Connecting this line of Macpherson’s criticism to the work of Adorno, Carter (2005) shows how the theory of possessive individualism highlights the deceptive, ideological dimensions that notions of freedom and individualism can obtain in capitalist society. Not only does the assumption that the individual “owes nothing to society” ignore the facts of human ontogenesis, it also conceals the social-structural conditions which circumscribe both the individual’s actions and self-identity as a social “agent.” In spite of the possessive individualist’s illusion of independence from the rest of society, he or she is, in this regard too, “*free* in name only” (Carter 2005: 836).

Despite the considerable and lasting interest that possessive individualism has generated among political theorists (Carter 2005; Lindsay 2012; Storms 2004), as well as the significant contributions Macpherson's subsequent works made to the social scientific analysis of property ownership more generally (e.g. Macpherson 1966, 1978a, 1978b, 1979), there do not yet appear to be any attempts to operationalize Macpherson's concept for social-psychological exploration. This may be due in part to the fact that, like the humanistic and technological orientation described above, possessive individualism is not merely an attitude *per se*. Rather, "the possessive individualist ethos is an identity that imbues intersubjective norms and values upon individuals, institutions and state" (Storms 2004: 5). In other words, it entails a *Weltanschauung* encompassing an individual's sense of self, agency, freedom, and social relations.

A "possessive individualist orientation" nevertheless appears to be a fertile subject for empirical social psychological research, especially for the current study. For instance, the escalation of individualistic and materialistic values within society, reflected in the generational rise in extrinsic values and narcissistic life goals, on one hand, and decline in intrinsic values, concern for others, empathy, and civic orientation, on the other hand, provide ample indication of the continued salience of the possessive individualist orientation in society (Twenge, Campbell, and Freeman 2012). In bolstering his call for an expanded empirical investigation into the possessive individualist identity, Storms (2004) states,

At issue is the sheer pervasiveness of *possessive individualism* within modernity and how it has seeped into almost every aspect of life. Many pressing issues such as global poverty, inequality, overconsumption, and environmental degradation are problems of social obligation... Thus, what results are "*collective action*" *dilemmas* that cannot be easily solved due to our entrenched *possessive individualist* identity. By recognising this fact, it allows for more detailed schema in which to study real effects of this core identity and the roles and behaviours it perpetuates (pp. 7–8; emphasis added).

The current study aims to explore the implicit hypothesis in this claim (as well as Macpherson's overall project), that possessive individualism undermines people's abilities to resolve dilemmas of "social obligation" and "collective action." Discussion of how possessive individualism might covary with—or, in the theoretical sense,

confound—the autonomy of individuals' resolutions to the *moral* dilemmas in the current study will be presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

Sociological inquiry cannot speak comprehensively about property—especially *private* property—without addressing the processes by which it is legitimated in the modern epoch; nor can it speak comprehensively about morality—especially *moral autonomy*—without examining the particular social relations under which claims about justice, fairness, dignity, and needs are expressed, debated, and resolved. As the literature discussed in the previous chapter demonstrates, such standards have not yet been met in the *sociological* fields of property or of morality research. The preceding analysis has therefore tended to eschew traditional disciplinary boundaries separating legal, sociological, psychological, economic, and philosophical scholarship in favour of a more pragmatically-oriented conceptualization of the study's two main variables: property ownership and moral reasoning.

This chapter narrows its analytic focus the relationship between these two variables, with the aim of establishing some empirically testable hypotheses regarding their relationship. It also narrows its theoretical scope to the radical humanist perspective expressed, for instance, in Marx's early work (namely, the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and *The German Ideology*) and to Fromm's (1947, 1955, 1969, 1976, 1998) psycho-sociological critiques of modern capitalism. As will be discussed below, Marxist-humanist social criticism draws substantially upon the premise that social relations underpinning productive resources have profoundly negative effects upon the moral and social-psychological well-being of the individual. Specifically, this theoretical tradition regards the institution of *private* property (such as that practiced in modern capitalism) as a phenomenon that perpetuates the *alienation* of "man" (both the individual human being and *mankind* as a species) from its essential "human" qualities. Deprived of agency over his labour, man becomes subordinated to the very systems of social organization (e.g. property, government, religion) which he has in fact created, and ultimately finds himself "chained" —both psychically and materially—to illusory conceptions of freedom, individuality, sociality, power, progress, and morality (Fromm 1990; Marx 1992; Marx

and Engels 1964). This chapter provides a synopsis of this theory, and attempts to draw from its rich philosophical content a few recurring themes for empirical analysis.

A theoretical overview of Marx's humanist philosophy and anthropological conception of modern society will be followed by a summary overview of some key contributions to this critique, particularly by Erich Fromm. Fromm's theorization of the "having" and "being" modes of existence will be presented as perhaps the clearest statement regarding the relationship between property and moral autonomy in the Marxist humanist tradition. In contrast to the psychoanalytic tradition from which Fromm draws his analyses, however, the aim will not be to operationalize these modes into quantifiable form, but rather to deduce from them a series of hypotheses that may be tested using statistical methods.

I. THE MORAL CRITIQUE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

A. Alienation and Private Property

With respect to Karl Marx's historical, philosophical, economic, anthropological, and sociological body of work, this dissertation is most concerned with the ideas emerging from Marx's early theoretical ideas about human autonomy, property ownership, alienation, and ideology. Recognizing the breadth of interpretations and depth of controversy among scholars regarding Marx's theories, it is this researcher's view that Marx's early works lay both an ontological and a *moral* foundation for his later economic theory (see, e.g., McLellan 1971 and Fromm 1965 for two otherwise conflicting perspectives that nevertheless converge on this conclusion). Accordingly, the scholastic and activist struggles in which Marx engaged throughout his life may be regarded as a logical *moral* extension of his conception of humanity's social and productive essence and its destruction under industrial capitalism (Fromm 1990). The focus in the present analysis is therefore upon Marx's views on the relationship between property and human agency.

It is perhaps most appropriate, then, to establish plainly Marx's opposition to the institution of private property. Marx (1978b) writes:

private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only *ours* when we *have* it—when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc.—in short, when it is *used* by us. Although private property itself again conceives all these direct realizations of possession as *means of life*, and the life which they serve as means is the *life of private property*—labour and conversion into capital. In place of *all* these physical and mental senses there has therefore come the sheer estrangement of *all* these senses—the sense of *having*. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order that he might yield his inner wealth to the outer world. (p. 87).

Here it is apparent that Marx's moral criticism of private property does not simply implicate problems of the unequal *distribution* and *control* of resources. Also at issue are the effects that private property regimes have on the *humanity* of its subjects. Human beings are made "stupid" by private property—both our physical and mental faculties focused on labour and thinking become dominated by capital, and are thus impoverished and estranged from our being. The "sense of *having*" replaces all other "senses," both physical and mental, as the determinants of our practical conduct. In short, according to Marx, private property destroys the most basic human "senses" needed for an individual to relate productively to the natural and social world.²⁶

This criticism is founded in Marx's anthropological conception of human productivity and sociality, in which property results from the "objectification" of human intellect through labour in the material world. Where labour is conducted "humanely," as an expression of humankind's social being, production and distribution is likewise expressed as a cooperative social process. Conversely, where labour is conducted "inhumanely," it stands as an *alienating* process—estranging the individual from his life activity, the products of that activity, from other persons, and from the agentic qualities that distinguish human beings from other animals.

²⁶ In Marx's usage, then, "private property" entails both the *class relations* that emerge when resources are privately controlled by the bourgeois ruling class against the propertyless proletarian class, and the *political-economic system* that reproduces these relations. "Social property," by contrast, entails the ownership relations emerging from a collectively controlled mode of production, in which resources are shared amongst the community.

It is worth noting the way that Marx thinks of the relationship between alienation and private property because it serves to illustrate his more general theoretical view of human productivity. While it may appear that private property engenders conditions that alienate owners from non-owners and workers from their products, one another, etc., Marx in fact regards *alienation* as the necessary condition for the emergence of *private property*. This is because “rights” to private property are, for Marx, illusory abstractions that emerge not from human beings’ natural relation to man and nature but out of particular material conditions and under particular historical circumstances. As Marx explains in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, it is only from a profoundly alienated social condition that such illusions could take hold:

Private property is... the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of *alienated labour*, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself... [It] thus results by analysis from the concept of *alienated labour*—i.e., of *alienated man*, of estranged labour, of estranged life, of *estranged man*. True, it is as a result of the *movement of private property* that we have obtained the concept of *alienated labour* (*of alienated life*) from political economy. But on analysis of this concept it becomes clear that though private property appears to be the source, the cause of alienated labour, it is really its consequence, just as the gods *in the beginning* are not the cause but the effect of man’s intellectual confusion. Later this relationship becomes reciprocal. (1978b: 79).

There is much to be said about the claim Marx is making about the causal relation between alienation and private property here; most relevant to the present study, however, is the implication that private property is for Marx an *outcome* of humankind’s more general estrangement. As the above analogy to religious phantasy makes clear, Marx views private property not as a real, material *fact*, but as a fetish, a human creation which has obtained an illusory status as natural and real—and which has thus mastered

human beings rather than being mastered by them (1990).²⁷ His analysis of “the fetishization of commodities” in *Capital Vol. I* (1990) depicts the full manifestation of the reciprocal relationship between humankind’s social creations and its intellectual confusion under capitalist production. Here Marx depicts the processes by which the exchange value of commodities obtains hegemonic power over individuals’ social relations and psychological perceptions. Labour, the material expression of individuals’ human autonomy and the practical basis for the reproduction of both individual and society, comes to be seen only through the lens of exchange value (Marx 1990). Hence social relations obtain a purely instrumental significance, and “autonomy” is distorted into the narcissistic image of the private individual.

The connection between the alienated distortion of individuality and the institution of property receives further analysis in Marx’s (1978a) writing on “The Jewish Question.” Here Marx attacks the very social system upon which political-economic discourse about “individual rights” is conceived, and sets out to demonstrate the connection between capitalist society and the moral precepts of modern political economy. Marx interrogates the premises that distinguish the “rights” of citizens from those of humankind and demonstrates how the former reduces individuality and society to an egoistic abstraction.

At the bottom of all these distortions lies a key institution: the right to private property. It is this “inviolable and sacred” right to private property²⁸ which, Marx argues, grants the right to “enjoy one’s property and to dispose of it at one’s discretion (*à son gré*), without regard to other men, independently of society,” and thereby codifies “the right of self-

²⁷ This view is likewise implied in the opening paragraphs of “Alienated Labour,” where Marx contrasts the *a priori* of political economy with his own materialist analyses: “Political economy proceeds from the fact of private property, but it does not explain it to us. It expresses in general, abstract formulae the *material* process through which private property actually passes, and these formulae it then takes for *laws*” (1978b: 70). And later, “theology in the same way explains the origin of evil by the fall of man: that is, it assumes as a fact, in historical form, what has to be explained. We proceed from an actual economic fact” (1978b: 71).

²⁸ *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, Article XVII: “Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no one can be deprived of private usage, if it is not when the public necessity, legally noted, evidently requires it, and under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.”

interest” (1978a: 42). In political economy, citizens’ rights to liberty, security, equality, and property are all formulated on the assumption that individuals’ interests are separable from the rest of social reality. However, “none of the so-called rights of man... go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil society—that is, an individual withdrawn into himself, into the confines of his private interests and private caprice, and separated from the community” (1978a: 43). Rather than conceive of the human being as an individual member of society, modern rights relations conceive of the human being in abstraction, as an “isolated monad” whose bonds to society extend only to satisfying one’s private economic self-interests (1978a: 42).

In a turn-of-phrase that uses the German word *Judentum* to convey both a reference to the political issue of Jewish religiosity and citizenship as well as to his broader critique of *commerce* (the secondary meaning of the term),²⁹ Marx excoriates the ‘religious’ power of money to abstract and privatize social relations and thereby rule over human beings: “Money is the alienated essence of man’s work and existence; this essence dominates him and he worships it” (1978a: 50). So far as morality is concerned, the law of the ‘Jew’ (*qua* commerce) comes to engender only a “caricature” of morality, freedom, right, or reason. Instead, such principles are abstracted into legal terms which obtain a power over the very people who reproduce them. Both in themselves and among one another, individuals’ social relations are compartmentalized into legal statuses of “rights holders” and “rights regards,” and the moral conduct enacted therefrom is based not on reason but on rules, not on rightness but on rights. The individual’s legal status and legal relations become the “supreme condition of man,” to be obeyed “not because (they are) the laws of his own will and nature, but because they are dominant and any infraction of them will be avenged” (1978a: 51).

The contradiction of a societal morality that enshrines the “isolated monad” as something separable from others and from the community is the cornerstone of Marx’s response to

²⁹ Editor’s footnote in Marx (1978a: 50). Marx (1978a) also specifies this distinction more concretely when he writes “Let us consider the real Jew: not the *sabbath Jew*, whom Bauer considers, but the *everyday Jew*” (p. 48).

“The Jewish Question” (1978a: 43). The notion of distinguishing one’s “private” moral or spiritual beliefs, on one hand, from one’s social membership, on the other, is rejected by Marx on the grounds that they reify the political identity of the citizen at the expense of the personhood of the full human being. After all, the very point of emancipation according to Marx is to bring humankind’s activities (as both species and individual) more comprehensively in line with the total productive and social powers of humanity (cf. 1978a: 46).³⁰

But by replacing one abstraction, God, with another, money, the modern political revolutions have only perpetuated humankind’s alienation in secular form. “Thus,” argues Marx, “man was not liberated from religion; he received religious liberty. He was not liberated from property; he received the liberty to own property. He was not liberated from the egoism of business; he received the liberty to engage in business” (1978: 45). In effect, the prevailing political economic system abstracts the “individual” from the “material and cultural elements” which constitute the individual’s social life circumstances, and modern man is left alienated from the personal and social autonomy to shape these latter “elements.” However much liberty humankind has been granted over their own *private* affairs, the production and reproduction of “*public*” affairs is mediated by the “fantastical,” alien power of money—and thus the private interests of whoever controls it (1978a: 52). It is readily apparent that such power has become hegemonic in our own time (cf. Badiou 2014).

B. Bourgeois Property and Bourgeois Morality

Marx’s theory extends an important premise established in the previous chapter: to understand property as a *social relation* requires us to expand that understanding beyond just *legal relations*; for Marx, property (and particularly *private property*) finds its “relational” basis in the relations of man to nature, of man to man, and in the relations of *production* within a given society. The *legal relation* (i.e., of rights-holder to rights-

³⁰ Marx writes in the *Economic and Philosophic* manuscripts, for instance, that for the fully developed person “every one of your relations to man and to nature must be a *specific expression* corresponding to the object of your will, of your *real individual life*” (1978b: 105).

regarder), then, is merely the institutional system which maintains the underlying *social* relation. Furthermore, Marx raises the problem that prevailing property ownership norms are not merely *conceptually* inadequate, but that this conceptual inadequacy arises from deeper social-structural relations that are themselves *morally* inadequate. Because private property and other social-legal relations operate as powers that “cleave” the individual’s interests and identity from that of the community, and because they operate as a power *over* individual and society rather than being an expression of their own “will and nature,” these systems stand opposed to the full exercise of human autonomy (1978a: 51).

And while the personal liberties enjoyed by individuals in bourgeois society might be regarded as the fulfilment of humanity’s drive for autonomy, it should be recalled that autonomy entails not freedom from the will of others, but freedom to formulate one’s own rules in a manner that respects the rights and autonomy of self and others. Engels’ (1976) analysis of bourgeois morality illustrates the inadequacy of the existing economic relations to provide such freedom. Following the historical materialist logic of Marx’s (1978c) social ontology, Engels (1978) argues that “all moral theories have been hitherto the product, in the last analysis, of the economic conditions of society obtaining at the time” (p. 726). In each era, the prevailing ethical ideas ultimately emerge from the prevailing economic relations. Where relations of production and exchange are shaped by class antagonism, individuals (consciously or unconsciously) formulate their moral perspectives and justifications according to the external influences of the prevailing class interests.³¹ It is only when the distorting force of class antagonism has been abolished that moral autonomy may be fully realized in concrete reality, since “a really human morality, which stands above class antagonisms and above any recollection of them,

³¹ Engels here does not necessarily preclude the oppressed class from shaping moral influence; his point is rather that ethical ideas, like all other ideas, are shaped by the power relations obtaining in a given milieu. In an observation intimated in Marx and Engels (1965) and later taken up by Gramsci, he suggests that the oppressed class, should it become powerful enough, will form its own “class morality” which “represents its indignation against this domination and reflects “the future interests of the oppressed” (Engels 1978: 726).

becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class antagonisms but has even forgotten them in practical life” (Engels 1978: 726–727).

It is with the above logic that Engels *makes the explicit connection between property ownership and the truncation of moral autonomy*. For Marx and Engels, the enduring dominance of private ownership regimes has served to entrench the hegemonic moral injunction, “thou shalt not steal.” The philosophical and social scientific project undertaken by Marx and Engels entails an excoriation of the institution of private ownership and its deleterious effects on human autonomy, including human *moral* autonomy. Under capitalism, Marx (1978a) argues, commerce, competition, and private property become supreme values not only as abstract economic relations but by-and-by as sacred moral dogma:

money is the universal and self-sufficient *value* of all things. It has, therefore, deprived the whole world, both the human world and nature, of their own proper value. Money is the alienated essence of man’s work and existence; this essence dominates him and he worships it (p. 50).

Modern capital thus encroaches not only on the social relations of individuals but upon their psychological orientations as well. This phenomenon never received direct systematic analysis from Marx, but later became one of the major foci of the Western Marxists of the Frankfurt School who combined Marx’s insights with the psychoanalytic theories of Freud. The work of psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, in particular, takes direct aim at the relationship between modern ownership regimes and moral autonomy. Like Marx’s, Fromm’s theoretical framework posits not only a moral rejection of private property but an affirmation of *social* property. It is to Fromm’s “radical humanist” elaboration on Marx’s claims that the discussion now turns.

C. The Humanist Critique

Among its many intellectual contributions, Erich Fromm’s body of work provides a rich social-psychological elaboration of Marx’s critique of capitalist society. Drawing significantly from the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Fromm interprets Marx as a “radical humanist” and develops a social-psychological elaboration of Marx’s theories of alienation, bourgeois ideology, private property, and freedom (Durkin 2014; see also

Fromm 1965, 1990). Like Marx, Fromm contends that the conscious experience of individuals is greatly influenced by the material conditions of the society in which they live and the practical relations they have with others in the society. As both a social and psychological faculty, individual (and collective) agency exists in a dynamic relationship with “circumstances directly found, given, and transmitted from the past” (Marx 1978e: 595), while ideas, “have their roots in the real life of society” (cited in Durkin 2014: 41). Under conditions of capitalist production—in which social relations are expressed in terms of exploitation, technical rationality, and privatization—alienation and illusion pervade the individual’s mental and social life. Power is experienced as control over commodities (including the commodified individual); freedom is depicted as absolute independence from other people (Macpherson 1962); and *morality is rendered indistinguishable from social convention* (Fromm 1969).

What Fromm contributes to Marx’s critique of property is a direct examination of the connection between private property and alienation as a social-psychological phenomenon, and—importantly—a moral prescription that connects the development of human autonomy with the transcendence of private property (Marx 1978b: 87; Fromm 1976: 83–84). In *To Have or To Be*, Fromm (1976) elaborates upon his analysis by contrasting two “fundamental modes of existence” toward self and the world—“two different kinds of character structure... determining the *totality of a person’s, thinking, feeling, acting*” (p. 53). Fromm terms these two social-psychological “modes” of orienting to the world the “having” mode and the “being” mode.

Fromm (1976) explains that “the nature of the *having* mode of existence follows from the nature of private property. In this mode of existence all that matters is my acquisition of property and my unlimited right to keep what I have acquired” (p. 64). Individuals in the “having” mode apperceive the world in terms of *things* and *possessions*, and thus regard social relations and social norms in static, instrumental ways. As Fromm (1976) explains, humans’ mastery over the material world, insofar as it has led to the ossification of subject and object, has a paradoxically oppressive effect on the ‘master.’ Because the having orientation derives individuals’ “modes of existence” from their control over

external objects, the individual is rendered dependent upon those objects. Fromm (1976) states that,

In the having mode, there is no alive relationship between me and what I have. It and I have become things, and I have *it* because I have the force to make it mine. But there is also a reverse relationship: *it has me*, because my sense of identity, i.e., of sanity, rests upon my having *it* (and as many things as possible) (p. 77).

Fromm's statement echoes from a critical psychoanalytic standpoint Marx's analyses of alienation and commodity fetishism.³² Both Marx and Fromm contend that a mode of social life in which objects come to rule the individuals who create them is an aberration from healthy human development—a case of social and psychological *pathology* in modern society.³³

The *having* mode is concerned primarily with the conversion of dynamic (material and immaterial) relationships into commoditized (material and immaterial) objects. It therefore corresponds closely to both the individualistic, possessive orientation to *self* conceptualized by Macpherson (1962) and to the privatized, alienated institution of property ownership examined by Marx (1992). Drawing together his assessment of both the predominant *individual* state of mind and the prevailing *social milieu*, Fromm lays out an unequivocally negative evaluation of the consumerist, “materialistic” ethos represented by the *having* orientation. For Fromm, “greed for money, fame, and power has become the dominant themes of life” in Western industrial society (1976: 7), and has

³² “To them, their own social action takes the form of the action of the objects, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them” (Marx 1978d: 323).

³³ This concern is elaborated in Fromm's (1976) psychoanalytic critique of consumerism:

What matters is Freud's view that *the predominant orientation in possession occurs in the period before the achievement of full maturity and is pathological if it remains permanent*. For Freud, in other words, the person exclusively concerned with having and possession is a neurotic, mentally sick person; hence it would follow that the society in which most of the members are anal characters is a sick society (pp. 83–84).

Likewise, the present research project is concerned not only with testing the statistical relationships between various theoretical analogues of the “*having*” mode; it also aims to draw inferences about the prospects for human development based on the relationships identified.

led to the intellectual deadening of humankind's capacities for spontaneous, creative, productive existence.

Fromm's concern is therefore not simply with possessiveness or consumerism *per se*, but with the total industrial and cultural system through which private property gains its ideological power—and the consequences of that power for the future of human reason and freedom. The legitimation of private property, the romanticized pursuit of it, and the lionization of those who possess it are therefore central to the having mode. Altogether, these constitute both a consequence and a cause of alienation.

Whereas the *having* mode prioritizes non-living entities (and indeed objectifies the individual's own sense of self), the "*being*" mode prioritizes the *lived experience* and practice of existence. In the *being* mode, one's material and social environment are regarded as mutually constitutive of one's own life activity. Accordingly, insofar as one does engage in the objectification of labour, this relationship is foremost characterized by its *productive* rather than possessive qualities—that is, by *utility* rather than *commodification*. In Fromm's words, "the mode of being has as its prerequisite independence, freedom, and the presence of critical reason. Its fundamental character is that of being active, not in the sense of outward activity, of busyness, but of inner creativity, the productive use of our human powers" (p. 88). The being mode of existence, therefore, is not simply an idealistic state. It requires a "dynamic," "productive," "active" orientation to one's own reason and social relations, as well as to the concrete *material conditions* necessary for the free exercise of personal autonomy and critical reason (Fromm 1976, 1989, 1998). Heteronomy, private property, and possessive individualism, then, are *categorically inconsistent* with the being mode of existence, *both socially and psychologically* (Fromm 1976: 65–66, 1998).

For Fromm, "having" and "being" represent two alternative and contradictory modes of personal as well as social life, which bear close connection to the way in which individuals and social systems are oriented to resource allocation: either the *private* or the *social* control of property. Fromm (1976) states that

from these two contradictory strivings in every human being it follows that the social structure, its values and norms, decide which of the two becomes dominant. Cultures that foster the greed for possession, and thus the having mode of existence are rooted in one human potential; cultures that foster being and sharing are rooted in the other potential. We must decide which of these two potentials we want to cultivate, realizing, however, that our decision is largely determined by the socioeconomic structure of a given society that inclines us toward one or the other solution (p. 93).

Such alternates, Fromm argues, have serious implications for how individuals relate to the rules of society. Individuals who are obsessed with private property will not only be inclined to accept without question the “given” rules (even though they may be no more likely to *conform* to those rules). They will also be disinclined to orient their values around the interests of others for fear of “losing” power, possessions, etc. to them. For such individuals, morality is something prescribed heteronomously, and is negotiable only for the sake of one’s own utilitarian ends.

Conversely, the *being* model calls forth the active, productive powers of the human being which can only be fully realized through the liberation of one’s *social* relations from *private property* relations and with the development of one’s *critical reason* necessary to autonomously exercise one’s moral reason (Fromm 1976: 65–67). Those who regard property as subject to cooperative productive use and subjective need will accordingly tend to orient their moral consciousness around principles of mutual respect, freedom, the intrinsic worth of persons, and so on. Like all other products of “free conscious activity,” moral judgments will be dictated by the individual’s own *active* reasons and convictions rather than through uncritical obedience to power or one’s own instrumental self interest (Fromm 1967, 1976).

D. Summary: Property and Moral Autonomy

What, then, is the crux of the present examination of Marxian social theory? It is its insight into the predominant cultural and political economic relations of our time—that the regime of private property, as a “total ideology,” engenders a distorted apperception of human relations and an immature orientation to moral agency (cf. Mannheim 1936). In prioritizing above all other values the right “to enjoy and dispose *as one will*, one’s goods and revenues, the fruits of one’s work and industry,” bourgeois society produces in

the human being a passive, heteronomous relation to moral reasoning (Art. 16, *Constitution of 1793*, quoted in Marx 1978a: 42).

Marx regards private property not “merely” as an institution which engenders the progressive exploitation of a subordinate class by a dominant class but also as one that abstracted the principle of individuality at precisely the historical epoch that such individuality could have been realized as a social reality. Rather than cultivating the productive powers of each person in their “real individual life” (1978b: 105) as members of a genuine community, the right of private property engenders egoistic self-interest, the commodity fetishism of material and cultural production, and the continued alienation of individuals from one another. Under circumstances of moral uncertainty, where a dilemma of interests is at stake, it curtails the individual’s capacity to assess the situation with regard to each party’s interests. Instead, “it leads every man to see in other men, not the *realization* but rather the limitation of his own liberty” (1978a: 42). And while such egoism may be mistaken for the autonomy of “giving one one’s own law,” it is in fact the opposite, since such an individual leaves uninterrogated the *societal* laws which just so conveniently cohere with his own.

Likewise, the apperception of a dilemma itself is not perceived “merely” through the distorting lens of bourgeois morality, but it ceases to be perceived as a *moral* dilemma at all. In reference to the exercise of “free, conscious activity,” Fromm (1976) notes that “Marx’s whole critique of capitalism and his vision of socialism are rooted in the concept that self-activity is paralyzed in the capitalist system and that the goal is to restore full humanity by restoring activity in all spheres of life” (p. 83–84). At its most hegemonic, the right to private property so obscures considerations of human need that “property” itself comes to be understood as a *thing* rather than a *relation*. The language and laws of political-economy proceed on “facts” of private property that it has taken for granted, but fails to comprehend (Marx 1978b :70).

And yet these critical theories also convey the possibility for a radically different mode of being. Marx’s communistic vision and Fromm’s humanistic ethics describe social, material, and moral relations in which cooperation, material wealth, and freedom are

made commensurate as *productive human relations*. Furthermore, they relate such a system to a “fully developed humanism”—the full maturation of the human species.

II. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRENT STUDY

The forgoing discussion demonstrates that Marx’s and Fromm’s humanistic analysis of private property extend beyond just the unequal distribution of material resources in capitalist societies. Their criticism lies more specifically in the kinds of social relations that prevail in these societies. Whereas Marx directed his criticism to the political-economic and historical facts of these relations, Fromm addressed their social-psychological and moral significance. Fromm suggests that beneath the *privatization* of property lies a more general *orientation* that encompasses both a person’s relation to objects and to other persons. “Possession,” Fromm contends, “is not the actual motivation for the orientation toward *having*, but rather the necessity to *use* and *functionalize* every relation in which a person stands” (Funk 1998: 11; emphasis added). Here an important distinction can be made between the “Materialist” attitudes which Belk examines (possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy), and the attitudinal orientation to *property relations* which is the subject of this dissertation. The exclusionary *material* relationship is, for Fromm, inextricable from the exclusionary *social* relationship endemic within the private property system. Hence, the prevailing regime of material and social exclusion constitutes an intrinsically sociological and moral problem: *sociological* because it pertains to the institutional and normative determinants of resource allocation within a society, and *moral* because it concerns (or, in the case of private property, *distorts*) problems of competing needs and interests in determining a fair system of allocation.

A. Toward a Critical Social-Psychological Study of Cognitive Moral Autonomy and Property Attitudes

Piaget (1965) had the insight to recognize that the development of moral autonomy rests not merely on ontogenetic factors, but on social ones as well. In observing children’s consciousness of rules, Piaget (1965) notes that

the very nature of the relations which the child sustains with the adults around him prevents this socialization for the moment from reaching that state of equilibrium which is propitious to the development of reason. We mean, of course, the state of cooperation, in which the individuals, regarding each other as equals can exercise a mutual control and thus attain to objectivity. In other words, the very nature of the relation between the child and the adult places the child apart, so that his thought is isolated, and while he believes himself to be sharing the point of view of the world at large he is really still shut up in his own point of view. ...The child is dominated on the one hand by a whole set of rules and examples that are imposed upon him from outside. But unable as he is, on the other hand, to place himself on a level of equality with regard to his seniors, he utilizes for his own ends, unaware even of his own isolation, all that he has succeeded in grasping of the social realities that surround him (p. 36).

Could this same dynamic between moral heteronomy and social heteronomy, between egocentrism and isolation on one hand and domination and inequality on the other, be extrapolated beyond the domination of rules and parental authority to the level of *social-structural* inequality? If the power relations in one's *immediate* personal interactions affect the development of moral reasoning, as Piaget suggests, it is reasonable to suppose that so too must the total socializing environment.

This supposition finds support in the theoretical work of Marx and Fromm discussed throughout this chapter. Echoing Piaget's insight into the effects of isolation, domination, and heteronomy on the development of moral reasoning, Fromm states of the modern individual in capitalist society: "*our judgments are extremely biased because we live in a society that rests on private property*, profit and power as the pillars of its existence. To acquire, to own, and to make a profit are the sacred and inalienable rights of the individual in the industrial society" (Fromm 1998: 38–39; emphasis added). What Piaget observes in the heteronomous powers of rules and status over the developing child, Fromm and Marx examine across all of society. The prevailing ideological and economic power of private property relations exerts a power over the individual that curtails cooperation, cognitive autonomy, and moral responsibility. At the same time that the bourgeois epoch (with its emphasis on liberty, individuality, and rationality) makes possible the imagination of self-chosen, universalizable moral principles, it limits the fulfilment of precisely such a morality (Horkheimer 1993: 22–25). As Fromm (1976) notes, even "the autonomous, genuine person is forced to give up most of his or her

autonomous, genuine desires and interests, and his or her own will, and to adopt a will and desires and feelings that are *not autonomous but superimposed by the social patterns of thought and feeling*” (p. 66; emphasis added). The pervasiveness of the having orientation, and the marginality of the being orientation in contemporary society is a testament to the significance of the cultural values which socialize individuals’ senses of self, other, and possessions.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, possessive individualism entails a distinctly possessive value orientation vis-à-vis individuality, social relations, and property ownership, and that it is prevalent through much liberal political thought (Macpherson 1962). Carens (1993) summarizes the ethical thrust of possessive individualism thusly:

this version of individualism is ultimately justified on the grounds that it is congruent with human nature, for human beings are portrayed as bundles of appetites that are, in principle, unlimited and not subject to rational scrutiny. A social world organized around individuals as owners will, it is said, maximize the satisfaction of such desires (p. 2).

It is clear from this description that the social perspectives which inform the possessive individualist orientation—characterized as it is by a view of society as “as series of competitive relations between naturally dissociated and independently self-moving individuals” (Macpherson 1962: 17)—stand in stark contrast to those from which the “creative and cooperative individualism” in the Marxist-humanist tradition (and in Macpherson’s democratic theory) is derived (Carens 1993: 1–2).³⁴ It is also clear that substantial connections may be drawn between Fromm’s descriptive and evaluative conception of the having orientation and Macpherson’s conception of possessive individualism. Numerous commentators have noted parallels in Macpherson’s oeuvre and the Frankfurt School thinkers (e.g. Carens 1993; Carter 2005; Lindsay 2012; and in particular Hansen 2015), but research for this dissertation has not revealed any empirical studies that explore the links between these theories. Given the centrality that concepts

³⁴ Referencing Townsend’s (2000) analysis, Carter (2005) suggests that “concepts of commodity fetishism and reification are ‘*at the root of Macpherson’s theorization and critique of possessive individualism*’” (2005: 834; emphasis added).

of commodity fetishism and reification had in Macpherson's theorization and critique of possessive individualism (Townsend 2000, quoted in Carter 2005: 834), it may be worthwhile to explore empirically how this value orientation relates to issues of property ownership and moral reasoning.

It is reasonable to acknowledge, however, that private possessiveness, cupidity, and callous individualism are not the only "value orientations" in town. Most individuals do tend to recognize (and value) some interdependency among human beings, and certain forms of charity, cooperation, and public/social ownership are regarded as ethical goods. Likewise, although Fromm (1976) finds the being orientation to be uncommon—and discouraged—in Western capitalist society, it is nevertheless exhibited by a subset of the population, and finds its value orientation in the humanistic ethos described in Chapter 2 as well (Erikson 1965). Considering the significance that humanism plays in Marx's and Fromm's vision for the positive development of autonomy and socialism, a measure of individuals' humanistic values developed by Côté (1984) has been included in the study (See Chapter 4).

Analysis of the variations in the salience of one's humanistic orientation to life may provide explanatory insight into the kinds of attitudes one holds regarding property ownership, and their possible relationship to moral reasoning—whether, for instance, the internalization of humanistic values disposes one to prefer egalitarian, cooperative modes of ownership relations and moral conflict resolution over more individualistic modes. Research by Levine et al. (2000: 498–499) has examined the relationship between humanism and moral reasoning and found "humanistic" value orientations to be positively correlated with "moral maturity" during youth-hood, especially as compared to more "morally pragmatic" values (Erikson 1965: 216). As stated in the previous chapter, it is the *sociocentric* quality of the humanistic orientation which makes it relevant to the study of individualistic versus social ownership norms, and heteronomous versus autonomous moral reasoning.

In short, to the extent that the humanist's or possessive individualist's values orient the formation of their overall sense of self and social reality, it is possible that these values

may also influence factors relevant to the current study, such as an individuals' attitudes toward the allocation of resources or the manner in which he or she apperceives and judges moral problems.

III. PROPOSITIONS

Several propositions concerning the relationships among property ownership attitudes, moral reasoning, and value orientations within contemporary Western society can be derived from the above discussion. They are as follows.

A. Property and Ownership Attitudes

1. Understood as a spectrum ranging between *private* and *social* ownership, property ownership attitudes entail a set of beliefs about how resources *are* and *ought to be* allocated in society. Because preferences for social ownership over private ownership run counter to the conventions of contemporary North American society, maintaining the stability of this attitude with reasoning in defense of it places greater cognitive demands (i.e., demands upon autonomous moral cognition) on an individual. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect: (a) that a preference for ownership norms that more strongly emphasize the *private* allocation of resources would be associated with a diminished exercise of cognitive moral autonomy, since “pre-constructed cultural norms” are available for their justification, and (b) that a preference for ownership norms that more strongly emphasize the *social* allocation of resources would be associated with the increased exercise of cognitive moral autonomy.
2. A preference for ownership norms that more strongly emphasize the *social* allocation of resources is cognitively inconsistent with holding a *possessive* orientation to objects.
3. A preference for ownership norms that more strongly emphasize the *private* allocation of resources is cognitively consistent with an orientation of *non-generosity* toward sharing one's possessions.

B. Value Orientations: Possessive Individualism and Humanism

Because possessive individualism and humanism are philosophically, psychologically, and socially incompatible value systems, then it is reasonable to expect that:

1. A preference for ownership norms that more strongly emphasize the *private* allocation of resources is cognitively consistent with the kinds of individualistic values espoused in the possessive individualist orientation.
2. A preference for ownership norms that more strongly emphasize a *socialistic* allocation of resources is cognitively consistent with the kinds of collectivistic values espoused in the humanist tradition. Since a possessive individualistic cognitive orientation confines an individual's ontological and ethical perspective to the logics of a commodity-exchange market, then it is reasonable to expect that such a perspective is inhibitive of the exercise and development of cognitive moral autonomy. Conversely, since a humanistic orientation to social life orients individuals' social perspectives toward addressing the rights and needs of the persons who comprise its population, it is reasonable to expect that such a perspective would enhance the development of, and require the use of, cognitive moral autonomy.
3. Since the humanistic orientation toward social life (a) entails norms and values that are inconsistent with the dominant norms and values of North American capitalist society, and (b) involves the willingness to constructively critique these norms and values, it is reasonable to expect that in the context of apprehending and addressing specific moral dilemmas implicating these norms, persons who are strongly humanistic would be more likely demonstrating moral autonomy in their responses to such dilemmas. Such conflicts *do not* apply to the relationship between possessive individualism and the norms and values of North American capitalist society, and therefore nor do such expectations.

IV. SUMMARY

By examining some possible attitudinal correlates of individuals' moral reasoning, this study empirically investigates possible connections between the exercise of "autonomous" moral reasoning, on the one hand, and humanism, possessive

individualism, and property attitudes, on the other. In the most general sense, the theoretical literature presented in this chapter suggests that an attitudinal orientation in support of private, exclusionary forms of ownership is inconsistent with the exercise of autonomous moral cognition, whereas a humanistic orientation would be consistent with the use of autonomous reasoning. Further inquiry into the effects of cultural value orientations (i.e., humanism and possessive individualism) has also been proposed to provide explanatory context for understanding the relationships that may be observed between both moral reasoning and property attitudes. In particular, it has been suggested that possessive individualism constitutes a cultural value system consistent with pro-private property attitudes and heteronomous reasoning, whereas humanism constitutes a system of cultural values consistent with holding pro-social property attitudes and autonomous reasoning.

Chapter 4

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between property ownership attitudes and autonomous moral reasoning. As discussed throughout Chapter 3, there are compelling (albeit as yet empirically untested) theoretical reasons to hypothesize an inverse relationship between positive attitudes toward private property and cognitive moral autonomy. It was also proposed that this relationship might be mediated by such “value orientations” as humanism or possessive individualism. It is possible also that the relationship might be spurious. Therefore, survey data was collected to investigate this relationship quantitatively. This chapter describes the procedures for data collection and methods of analysis used in this study.

I. PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE

A. Ethics Approval

Ethics approval for this research was granted by the Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) at the University of Western Ontario (NMREB File #106468). Notices of approval and letter of informed consent appear in **Appendix A**.

B. Recruitment and Instrumentation

One hundred thirty-nine ($N=139$) graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Western Ontario and affiliate colleges volunteered to participate in this study. Recruitment was conducted through various means. Within the university, course instructors and department secretaries were contacted requesting permission to issue a call for participants either in person by in-class announcement, or digitally by disseminating a digital flyer (e.g. over email or online class portal) (see **Appendix B**). Calls for participants were also issued through passive snowball sampling over social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), word of mouth, and flyers posted around the campus. No economic or material incentive was associated with participation in the

study. Based on the desired research sample of 100–200 participants, the recruitment campaign was deemed a success.

The mixed-methods survey was comprised of Likert-style attitude questions and content analysis of written responses to hypothetical moral dilemmas. Participants completed an online survey administered via the Qualtrics data delivery system. Pilot testing suggested that the survey would take approximately 30–40 minutes to complete.

Responses were measured using various scales, both established (Belk's [1984, 1985] Possessiveness Scale and Non-generosity Scale; and a modified version of Côté's [1984] Humanistic Orientation Scale) and exploratory (a measure of Property Attitudes and of Possessive Individualism). An adapted version of Colby and Kohlberg's (1987) instrument for measuring "moral types" was also used to measure one of the main variables in this study.

1. Age

Age of respondents was measured using a drop-down menu of options ranging from 18 to 65 years or older. Nearly 75% of participants were 30 years of age or younger, and nearly half were 24 years of age or younger (**Table 4.1**).

2. Gender

Respondents were asked to specify in a text-box what gender they identified as. This enabled respondents to specify a non-binary gender identity, instead of strictly "Male" or "Female." Of those who completed the question, 26% of participants identified as "male," 72% identified as female, and 2% identified as a gender outside of these two categories (**Table 4.1**).

However, a surprisingly high number of participants (28% of the total sample) left this question blank, providing no indication as to their gender identity. While explanations for this outcome can only be speculated about, it is reasonable to assume that some respondents may have been accustomed to a more straightforward set of "binary" options and were thus confused by the open-ended nature of a text-box entry response to the question "What is your gender?" (See Survey, **Appendix C**). In any case, tests

conducted during the data analyses found no statistically significant relationships between completion/non-completion of the question and any of the study's other variables.

An additional limitation of the gender variable pertains to the small proportion of participants identifying as gender non-binary. Given the limitations of deriving representative statistics about this sample ($n=2$), the decision was made to include the gender non-binary participants in the "Women" category in the study's data analysis.³⁵ The distribution of ages for each gender category in the sample is presented in **Table 4.1**.

3. Educational Attainment

Respondents were asked to specify their highest level of educational attainment from a list of options including "Less than high school diploma," "High school graduate, or equivalent," "College/community college graduate," "University graduate," "post-graduate (e.g. Masters, Doctorate)," and "Other." These categories were subsequently re-organized into the three broad categories of educational attainment described in **Table 4.1**: "High school or lower," "Post-secondary degree or diploma," and "Post-graduate."

³⁵ The decision to place these participants in the "Women" rather than the "Men" category was based on the logic adumbrated in Section III.B below—i.e., that in a male-dominated society, the perspectives of those who do not identify as cisgender males are often marginalized and may be expressed "in a different voice" (Gilligan 1982, 1988, 2011; Gilligan and Attanucci 1988) or from a woman's/non-male "standpoint" (Smith 1987, 1990).

Nevertheless, the contradiction of providing a more "inclusive" apparatus for recording gender, only to re-instantiate a gender binary in statistical terms, is not lost on this researcher. This limitation in the research should be recognized as an important point for correction in future studies.

Table 4.1 Sample Characteristics

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	
	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
Age Group (n=136)		
19–24	64	47.1
25–30	37	27.2
>30	35	25.7
Gender (n=102)		
Man	26	25.5
Woman	74	72.5
Other/Non-Binary	2	2.0
Educational Attainment (n=136)		
High School or Lower	54	39.7
Post-Secondary	34	25.0
Post Graduate	48	35.3
Educational Milieu (i.e., Faculty Type) (n=139)		
Humanistic (e.g. Arts/Law/Social Sciences)	87	62.6
Technological (e.g. STEM & Business)	48	34.5
Mix (Humanistic & Technological)	4	2.9
Religion (n=138)		
Abrahamic	46	33.3
Atheist/No Affiliation	81	58.7
Non-Western Religiosity	11	8.0

4. Educational Milieu

Respondents were asked to specify the faculty they were enrolled in as students at the university (or its affiliated colleges). Following the research by Côté and Levine (1992) and Levine et al. (2000), these faculties were grouped into categories that could be classified as “technological” (e.g. science, technology, mathematics, engineering, and business) and “humanistic” (e.g. arts and humanities, social sciences, music, law, theology, etc.). Since the study’s concern with institutionalized moratoria pertains to the significance of *humanism*, the four respondents who reported enrolment in double majors of *both* a technological and humanistic faculty (see **Table 4.1**) were categorized as part of the humanistic group in subsequent data analyses.

5. Religion

Respondents were asked to specify whether they followed a spiritual or religious belief system. The following list of possible responses were provided:

“Aboriginal/Indigenous,” “Agnosticism,” “Atheism,” “Buddhism,” “Christianity,” “Islam,” “Judaism,” “Hinduism,” “Sikhism,” “No spiritual/religious affiliation,” “Not sure/prefer not to say,” and “Other.” For simplicity of analysis, these belief systems were organized into the three broad categories “Abrahamic” (comprised of Christianity, Islam, Judaism), “Atheist/No Affiliation” (comprised of Agnosticism, Atheism, No spiritual/religious affiliation, Not sure/prefer not to say, and Other), and “Non-Western Religiosity” (comprised of Indigenous spirituality, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism). The sample distribution for these three categories is presented in **Table 4.1**.

II. MEASURES

A. Moral Reasoning Questionnaire

The survey contained two hypothetical “moral dilemmas” adapted from the instruments developed by Colby and Kohlberg (1987), and Schrader et al. (1987) (**Appendix C**). In these dilemmas, male and female protagonists are faced with moral problems relating to the accessibility and allocation of owned objects (i.e., “property”). Respondents were asked to make “moral judgments” about what they thought the protagonist ought to do in the face of these dilemmas, and to provide written reasons for this judgment. Each of the participants’ responses to these dilemmas were analyzed with regard to whether the choices and reasons for the judgment expressed any of the nine “Piagetian” qualities of moral autonomy: choice, hierarchy, intrinsicity, prescriptivity, universality, freedom, mutual respect, reversibility, and constructivism (cf. Colby and Kohlberg 1987; Howard 1984; Piaget 1975). “Choices” were recorded as a binary “yes”/“no” judgment as to whether the protagonist should engage in a proposed act (e.g. stealing a drug to save a dying wife). “Reasons” were recorded in a text-box, where the participants were invited to explain the reasons that informed their judgment in a series of follow-up probes.

Although it uses many of the same theoretical concepts as Kohlberg’s (1984) and Colby and Kohlberg’s (1987) studies of “moral substage,” the present study’s investigation of

“A-type” and “B-type” reasoning differs from those approaches in a few notable ways. First, the present study does not assume the existence of either moral “stages” constituting “structured wholes,” or of moral “substages” orienting the structure and content of an individual’s moral judgment. Although there are theoretical and philosophical reasons for postulating the existence of a developmental stage sequence (Kohlberg 1981, 1984), a “highest” stage of moral reasoning (Côté and Levine 2002; Kohlberg 1981; Kohlberg, Boyd, and Levine 1990; and Habermas 1979), and an analytically fruitful ideal-typical distinction between moral substages within a given moral stage (Kohlberg 1984; Henderson 2012), the present study is only interested in the heteronomous and autonomous qualities of an individual’s moral reasoning more generally. It therefore uses Kohlberg’s “moral judgment interview” as a tool for conducting qualitative analysis of an individual’s moral reasoning, and not as a method of determining the “stage” or “substage” of a subject’s moral *development*.

Second, and following from the previous point, the coding and scoring procedures described below differ from those used by Colby and Kohlberg (1987). Whereas the scoring method developed by Colby and Kohlberg (1987) assess moral “substage” according to whether or not a subject’s responses pass certain “critical criteria” for autonomous reasoning (i.e., the expression of moral judgments considered to be “crucial indicators of B-type reasoning,” Henderson 2012: 28), the present study examines the total *proportion* of autonomous moral statements by a respondent.

1. Coding and Scoring Procedures for Moral Reasoning “Types”

i. Scoring Criteria

Moral autonomy and heteronomy were scored using an adapted version of Colby and Kohlberg’s (1987) instrument for measuring “moral types.” Each “choice” and each distinct, scorable moral “utterance” made by a respondent was scored as reflecting either an “autonomous” or “heteronomous” cognitive orientation; that is, moral statements that expressed an actively constructive, “sociocentric” cognitive orientation were coded as morally “autonomous,” whereas those which espoused a unilateral respect for “preconstructed” norms and values were coded as morally “heteronomous.” A rubric of the scoring criteria used in this procedure is shown in **Table 4.2**. Statements that met the

relevant criteria for “autonomous” reasoning were assigned a “pass” and coded as reflecting “B-type,” “autonomous” moral reasoning (cf. Colby and Kohlberg 1987).

ii. Moral Autonomy Score

The percentage of “passing” (i.e. autonomous, “B-type”) statements in a participant’s written responses served as their “Moral Autonomy Score” (MAS) for each dilemma. The percentage of total passing statements across both dilemmas was used to determine their overall Moral Autonomy Score. An individual’s MAS, either for individual dilemmas or across both dilemmas therefore ranges from 0–100. The overall Moral Autonomy Score taken across both dilemmas is treated as the main dependent variable in the present study.³⁶

2. Inter-Judge Reliability

The interpretative nature of Colby and Kohlberg’s (1987) methodology raises certain challenges regarding measurement reliability. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of scoring, inter-judge reliability checks were conducted on 20% of the moral reasoning survey responses (n=28). Both I and the Principal Investigator, a researcher with extensive experience in the theorization and measurement of Kohlberg’s stage and substage research, coded and compared the scores assigned to these responses.

Following the method used in other moral reasoning research (e.g. Levine 1976; Jakubowski 1989; Henderson 2012), inter-judge reliability was assessed by the proportion of agreement between coders (described henceforth as “Judges”).

This was conducted in two steps. First, comparisons were made between of the number of “scorable statements” that judges observed in each of the responses. **Table 4.3** presents the total number of “scorable statements” in each dilemma by the two judges, and the percentage of agreement between judges’ scores. The total proportion of agreement for “scorable statements” between judges was 99.1%.

³⁶ The label “Moral Autonomy Score” implies the exercise of *cognitive* moral autonomy, rather than moral autonomy *proper*. The study makes no assumptions as to whether evidence of autonomous *moral reasoning* predicts an individual’s likelihood for morally autonomous *action*.

Table 4.2 Definitions of Evaluative Criteria for Autonomous/Heteronomous Reasoning

General Criteria	Autonomous	Heteronomous
Choice	Support and justify the solution that is just and fair from the standpoint of postconventional stages (based on principles of justice, fairness, equity).	Support a solution that is based on considerations other than justice and fairness <i>and</i> are contrary to postconventional judgments.
Hierarchy	Reflect a clear hierarchy of moral values and prescriptive duties that supersede pragmatic, descriptive, consequential, or aesthetic considerations.	Contain no clear hierarchy of values OR: pragmatic, descriptive, consequential or aesthetic considerations supersede moral values.
Intrinsicity	Reflect valuing people as ends in themselves, based on respect for moral personality, moral autonomy and human dignity.	Support treating people as means to other (instrumental or pragmatic) ends.
Prescriptivity	Uphold obligations and actions (moral duty is based on inner compulsion, moral necessity, or conscience).	Reject moral duties obligations, or actions as necessities and take an instrumental or hypothetical view of moral duty.
Universality	Based on the consideration that these judgments are/should be applied to anyone and everyone in the same or similar circumstances.	Reflect uncritically assumed and accepted values or are relative to instrumental self-interests.
Freedom	Made without reference to external parameters.	Made and justified within constraints of external parameters.
Mutual Respect	Reflect importance of cooperation among equals.	Exhibit unilateral respect for authority, law, tradition, or power, whether people or institutions.
Reversibility	Characterized by ability to engage in <i>mutual reciprocal role taking</i> .	Constrained by considering <i>only one perspective on a problem</i> .
Constructivism	Consider rules and laws as humanly constructed guidelines (and thus flexible and adaptable to situations and circumstances).	Laws and rules as emanating from some higher authority (and are therefore rigid and inflexible).

Table 4.3 Inter-Judge Reliability Test 1: Comparisons of scorable statements and percentage agreement for random sample of responses to Dilemma 1 & 2

	Judge 1	Judge 2	% Agreement
Dilemma 1	176	176	100.0
Dilemma 2	146	149	98.0
Total scorable statements	322	325	99.1

Note: From random sample of 28 respondents (20% of total sample, N=139).

Second, judges compared the number of “A-type” and “B-type” reasons they scored for each respondent in the subsample. Differences in scoring were discussed on a case-by-case basis and either agreed upon or left as a disagreement. **Table 4.4** presents a broad summary of the total A-type and B-type scores that each judge observed in each of the dilemmas. On both dilemmas, A-type and B-type reasons were scored in similar proportions by the judges.

Table 4.4 Inter-Judge Reliability Test 2: Comparison of scores on A-Type and B-Type utterances for random sample of responses to Dilemma 1 & 2

		Judge 1	Judge 2
Dilemma 1	A-Type (Heteronomous)	103	99
	B-Type (Autonomous)	73	77
	% of statements scored “Autonomous”	41.5%	43.8%
Dilemma 2	A-Type (Heteronomous)	68	65
	B-Type (Autonomous)	78	84
	% of statements scored “Autonomous”	53.4%	56.4%
Total	A-Type (Heteronomous)	171	164
	B-Type (Autonomous)	151	161
	% of statements scored “Autonomous”	46.9%	49.2%

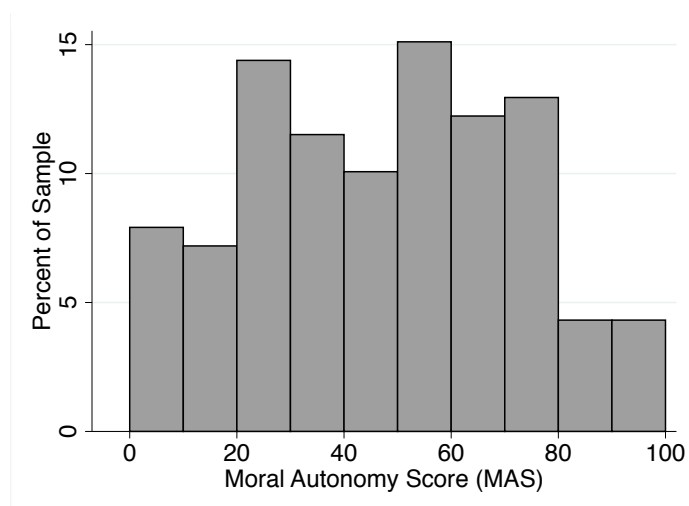
Note: From random sample of 28 respondents (20% of total sample, N=139).

Overall, there were 11 disagreements on Dilemma 1, which contained 176 scorable statements (94% agreement), and 14 disagreements on Dilemma 2, which contained 146–149 scorable statements (90–91% agreement). Since disagreements on one dilemma were sometimes balanced out by disagreements on the other dilemma, the number of disagreements on an individual’s overall A-type and B-type scores was 16 (95.0–95.1% agreement for 322–325 scorable statements). These discussions served not only as a validity check but also as a means of developing greater precision in the qualitative evaluation of moral statements. On the basis of these more refined qualitative understandings, dilemma scores for the rest of sample were reviewed and adjusted where appropriate, in order to ensure consistency of scoring across the sample.

3. Distribution of Moral Autonomy Scores

Figure 4.1 describes the distribution of Moral Autonomy Scores within the sample. Overall, the sample contained numerous cases distributed across the full range of possible scores, with both mean and media scores slightly above 46. With the exception of the low and high ends of the MAS spectrum, the distribution of scores appears to be fairly even across the sample. It is worth noting, however, that while very high usage of “heteronomous” moral reasoning is still relatively common (i.e. MAS scores between 0–20), the use of predominantly “autonomous” reasoning is especially rare. The Pearson coefficient (r) for the two dilemmas was 0.35 ($p \leq 0.001$).

Figure 4.1 Distribution of Moral Autonomy Scores (MAS) for two moral dilemmas



B. Attitude Scales

Variables representing individuals’ social attitudes were measured using various established and exploratory scales. As Côté et al. (2016: 83) note, because the reliability of short scales (like the ones used in the present study) cannot be accurately assessed

solely by conventional methods such as Cronbach's alpha, additional statistical methods should be used. In the current study, each scale was tested for construct validity using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation. This technique is well-suited to the sample size of the present study, which is not large enough to conduct a reliable Confirmatory Factor Analysis. PCA nevertheless serves to provide exploratory insight into the existence of underlying "components" in a given series of items and to measure the strength of these components (Blunch 2013; Nie et al. 1975).

Of the sample population, less than 5% had missing data in their responses to the attitude scale items. For cases in which a participant did not complete just one scale item, the missing value was imputed using the mean of the participant's other responses in that scale. This was done in order to retain these participants' responses in the analysis. For cases in which more than two items were incomplete, the case was not assigned an overall scale score, and was not included in analyses involving that scale. For ease of comparison, and since some scales were measured using a 5-point Likert scale and others used a 7-point scale, a respondent's total score on each attitude scale was averaged to a possible score out of 100.

The following summary describes the efforts taken to test the construct validity of the main covariates in the study, as well as the characteristics of these measures within the sample.³⁷

1. Property Ownership Attitudes, Non-generosity and Possessiveness

Empirical efforts to quantitatively measure attitudes toward *property ownership itself* are scarce in the sociological, psychological, and political science literature, although a few exceptions include Göncüolu-Eser, Luloff, and Warland (2004); Jackson-Smith, Kreuter, and Krannich (2005). Because these measures pertain to fairly specific studies of land ownership, however, there currently remains an absence of psychometric instruments for the analysis of individuals' attitudes toward public and private institutions of property

³⁷ A detailed summary of the scale scores within the sample is provided in **Table 4.9**, Section II.B.3, below.

ownership. An attitude scale for property ownership was therefore constructed to address this gap, and Belk's (1985) "Non-Generosity" and "Possessiveness" scales were also used as covariates for measuring additional dimensions of ownership attitudes (see Chapter 2, Section II.B.2). To avoid measurement error, items in each of these scales were presented in random order on the questionnaire.

i. Property Attitude Scales

Attitudes toward private property were measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked about the strength of agreement or disagreement with ten statements pertaining to the private or social control of resources. In addition to an item similar to the one used by Göncüolu-Eser, Luloff, and Warland (2004), the items addressed aspects of ownership such as taxation, the societal function of ownership laws, the rights to deny access to privately owned property, etc. Positive attitudes toward private property were represented by high scores on the scale, while negative attitudes toward private property (i.e. positive attitudes toward social property) were represented by low scores.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation was used to test the internal consistency of these items. Based on these tests, a five-item Property Ownership Attitudes Scale (PAS) was established as the measure of respondents' attitudes toward property attitudes. These scale items, addressing ideas such as one's right to deny others from using an object of property, the stabilizing function of property rights, redistributive taxation (reversed), hard work as a justification for ownership, and public control over private corporations (reversed), are displayed in **Table 4.5** alongside their factor loadings, eigenvalues, and Cronbach's alpha.

The internal consistency coefficient for these items was 0.71 (Cronbach's alpha), which meets the general "rule of thumb cutoff" of 0.70 (Helve et al. 2017: 202). The PCA found factor loadings greater than 0.40 for these five items, which is regarded as an "acceptable" cutoff point for inclusion of items in a component (Côté et al. 2016).

Figure 4.2 illustrates the distribution of PAS scores in the sample. These scores ranged from 10–100, with a median score of 53.3 and standard deviation of 18.2. Further details about the sample distribution for PAS appear in **Table 4.9**.

Table 4.5 Property Attitude Scale (PAS)

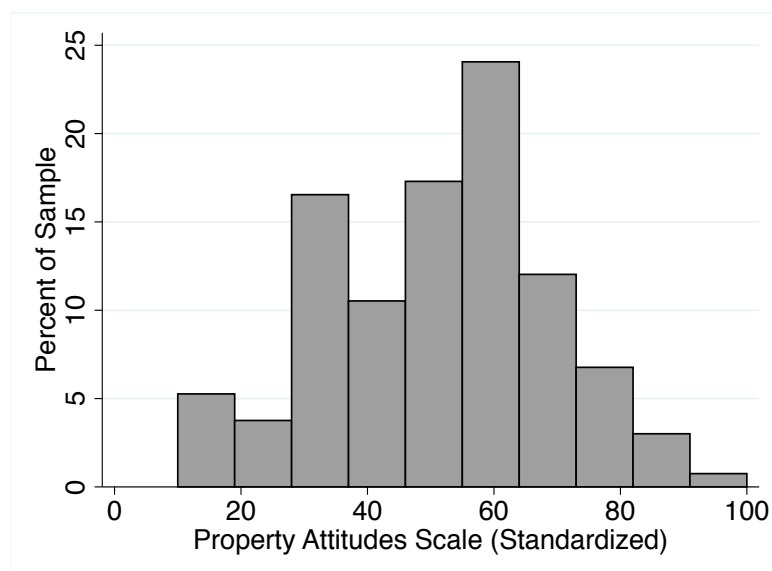
Item Wording*	Factor Loadings
If I have worked hard for the things I own, then I deserve them for myself.	0.4770
Without the right to hold and defend our private property against criminals, society would fall into chaos.	0.4318
I should have the right to deny others from using anything I own.	0.4368
The public should be afforded greater influence over the decisions of private corporations.**	0.4208
In order to improve the lives of poor people, rich people should be taxed more than they currently are.**	0.4670
Eigenvalues	2.3198
5-item alpha	0.7085

Notes: PCA, Varimax Rotation with Kaiser *off*

* 7-point scale

** Reverse scored

Figure 4.2 Distribution of Property Attitude scores (PAS) measuring positive attitudes toward private property



ii. Non-generosity and Possessiveness

Together Belk's (1984, 1985) "Non-Generosity," "Possessiveness," and "Envy" scales comprise Belk's measure of "Materialism." Because the present study is concerned with individuals' psychological orientation to "ownership"—and more specifically how people think of things that are "theirs"—the "Envy" subscale was omitted from the study and only the "Non-Generosity" and "Possessiveness" subscales were administered. These scales are comprised of seven and nine items respectively, and were measured using a five-point Likert (agree/disagree) scale.

Belk reports Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.68 and 0.72 for "Non-Generosity" and "Possessiveness" respectively (1984: 293). Using the full battery of items in the Belk scale, tests for construct validity in the present study resulted in coefficients of 0.73 and 0.66, respectively. Principal Component Analyses on the present data found acceptable factor loadings for most items, but certain items from the original scales were dropped to improve the overall component scores of these scale.

The shortened (three item) scales used for analysis in the current study are presented in **Table 4.6**. Following Côté et al. (2016: 83), it is not expected that shortening the Belk "Non-generosity" and "Possessiveness" subscales in this manner will affect the magnitude of their relationship with other measures. These shortened "Possessiveness" and "Nongenerosity" subscales loaded as two distinct factors when tested using Varimax Rotation. Component scores for both of these shortened scales are above the 0.40 "rule of thumb cut-off" (Côté et al. 2016).

It should be noted that these scales are understood to differ from the Property Attitudes Scale (described above) in an important way: as the items in each scale indicate, the Property Attitudes Scale is designed to measure individuals' attitudes toward the *social relations of property ownership*, whereas Belk's (1984) Possessiveness and Non-Generosity Scales measure individuals' attitudes toward the control over *material objects themselves*.

Table 4.6 Non-generosity and Possessiveness Scales

Item Wording*	Component 1	Component 2
Nongenerosity Scale		
I enjoy sharing what I have**	0.581	
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends	0.5745	
I enjoy donating things to charities**	0.5633	
Possessiveness Scale		
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value		0.6083
I don't get particularly upset when I lose things**		0.6340
I worry about people taking my possessions		0.4740
Eigenvalues	2.6391	1.1210
3-item alpha	0.6846	0.7072

Notes: PCA, Varimax Rotation with Kaiser *off*

* 5-point scale

** Reverse scored

Figures 4.3, and 4.4 illustrate the distribution of scores for both of these scales. Whereas Possessiveness was normally distributed and had a mean score of 55.9 (s.d.=21.3), Non-generosity scores tended to be quite lower, with a range of 0–81.25 and mean score of 31 (s.d.=18.2) (**Table 4.9**).

Figure 4.3 Distribution of Possessiveness scores using Belk (1984) Possessiveness scale

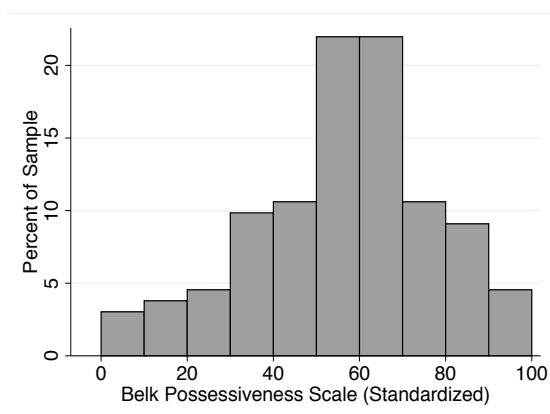
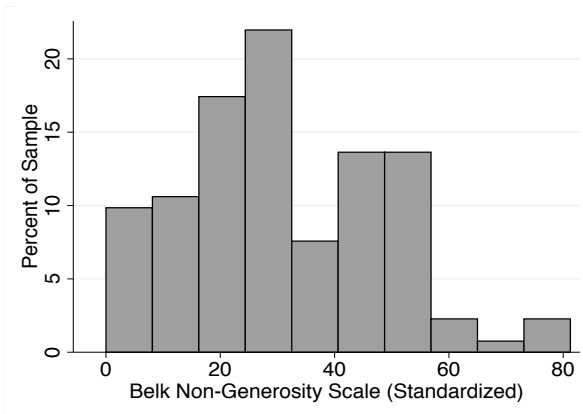


Figure 4.4 Distribution of Non-generosity scores using Belk (1984) Non-generosity scale



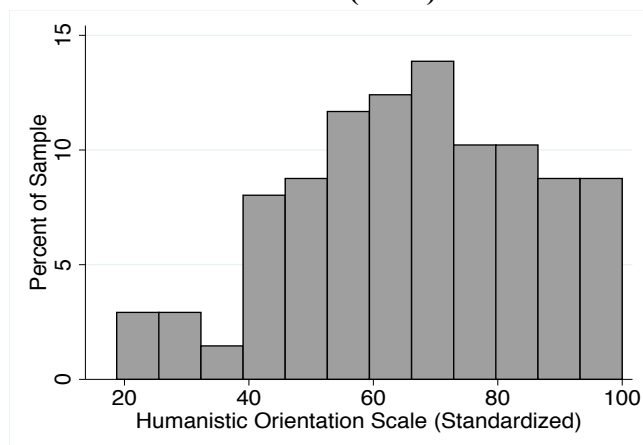
2. Cultural Value Orientations

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the current study is also interested in exploring the cultural value orientations that may provide greater explanatory context for understanding possible relationships between property ownership attitudes and moral reasoning. Therefore, scales measuring respondents' humanistic and possessive individualist orientations were also included in the survey.

i. Humanism

An adapted version of Côté's (1984) "Humanistic Orientation Scale" (HOS) was used to measure humanistic values endorsed by the study's respondents. High scores on this scale indicate that an individual holds humanistic values toward oneself, others, and/or society. The HOS has been used by Côté (1984), Côté and Levine (1989), and Jakubowski (1989), and contains four 5-point Likert Scale items. During pilot testing of the study, concerns were raised as to whether differences between the present sociocultural milieu and that of the mid-1980s (when the HOS was first developed) would necessitate an "updating" of certain survey items. For instance, one concern raised

Figure 4.5 Distribution of Humanistic Orientation Scale scores (HOS)



during pilot testing was that an item addressing whether "women were fighting too hard for what they think is equality" might not elicit the same values and sensibilities in 2015–2016 as it may have in the past. Considering the various achievements of the women's movement since the 1980s, it is possible that the item today may not be apperceived by today's

respondents in the same way. Furthermore, at the time of this study, discourses about feminism and women's equality are especially inflamed, and there was a concern that such cultural antagonism might bias respondents to take more extreme positions on the question than they might have during less contentious times. It was therefore decided that

some additional exploratory items would be included in the scale. The objective was to substitute similar yet more contemporary subject matter, while retaining as much as possible both the tone and substance of the original items. An additional item was included that contained the same phrasing as the original “women’s groups” question, but it instead asked respondents about their views on “LGBTQ groups.”

Table 4.7 Humanistic Orientation Scale (HOS)

Item Wording*	Factor Loadings
Some people argue that if the human race is to flourish and survive peacefully, people from all cultures, races, and religions must cooperate in a global agreement about military disarmament. How do you feel about this?	0.5507
Some people think that women’s groups are fighting too hard for what they think is equality and that they are hurting traditions such as marriage and the family. What do you think — are women’s groups fighting too hard for what they think is equality?***	0.4987
Some people argue that most modern work environments are too impersonal and that in their concern for efficiency and profit, they will be harmful to the psychological well-being of those who work in them. What do you think — are today’s work environments harmful or beneficial to one’s psychological well-being?	0.4362
Some people argue that the legal system has become too tolerant of people who break the law and that this is responsible for such things as higher crime rates. Given such issues as capital punishment and longer prison sentences, do you think that the law needs to impose harsher punishments on criminals?***	0.5077
Eigenvalues	1.8603
4-item alpha	0.6099

Notes: PCA, Varimax Rotation with Kaiser *off*

* 5-point scale

** Reverse scored

Tests for construct validity yielded an internal consistency coefficient of 0.57 for the five-item scale. This result is consistent with that obtained by Côté and Levine (1989), whose HOS scale returned a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.56. Although conventional wisdom suggests that such results are lower than desirable, Côté and Levine (1989) note that in fact “coefficients of this magnitude are not uncommon among attitude-type scales

that are based on only a few items and that are administered to a heterogeneous group” (p. 397). At any rate, a revised four-item HOS, containing items about military disarmament, the women’s movement, workplace alienation, and prison sentencing, was used in the present study. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.61 and PCA returned factor loadings ranging from 0.44 to 0.55 for its items (**Table 4.7**).

The distribution of scores on the HOS is illustrated in **Figure 4.5**, which shows the relatively high scores reported for humanistic values within the sample. In fact, humanism had the highest scores of the five scales used in the study, with a mean score of 65.9 (**Table 4.9**) and more than three quarters of respondents reporting positive humanistic attitudes (i.e., overall HOS scores greater than 50; not shown in tables).

ii. Possessive Individualism

As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept “possessive individualism” was developed by political scientist C. B. MacPherson to describe the prevailing orientation to the ‘self’ within liberal capitalist society and in many of its founding philosophies. The concept pertains to the notion that an individual is “seen as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them” (Macpherson 1962: 3). This concept contrasts with the “humanistic orientation” in that its conception of individuality posits one’s personal agency and powers as separable from, rather than interdependent with, a community of other social actors. The examination of this particular conception of individualism will hopefully provide particular analytical insight into the relationship between “autonomous” thought and “individualistic” values (discussed in Chapter 2). Finally, given the study’s interest in Marx’s humanistic conception of alienation and property, its liberal conception of “freedom” and autonomy also serves as a foil to the conceptions of freedom and autonomy espoused in in Marx’s theories.

Because no research has sought thus far to operationalize possessive individualism for empirical investigation, an exploratory scale was constructed. Items for the scale were developed using the tenets of “possessive individualism” summarized in C. B. Macpherson’s *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (see page 46, above). Efforts were made to develop Likert-style statements that reflected the underlying normative and

ontological viewpoint of possessive individualism, either by rephrasing or combining certain tenets directly, or by providing example issues that invoked such viewpoints (e.g. about the “right” of individuals to accept jobs vacated by striking workers).

In total, four items comprise the Possessive Individualism Orientation Scale (PIOS). These include questions concerning fairness of companies saving money by manufacturing their products in countries with low working standards, the right of individuals to take jobs vacated by striking workers, the government’s right to regulate market exchanges among businesses and economic institutions (reverse-scored), and individuals’ supposed obligation to “give back” to society when they become successful (reverse scored). High scores on this scale indicate an individual’s positive value orientation toward ideas associated with possessive individualism. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of these items was 0.66, and a PCA returned factor loadings ranging from 0.45 to 0.55 (**Table 4.8**).

Table 4.8 Possessive Individualism Scale (PIOS)

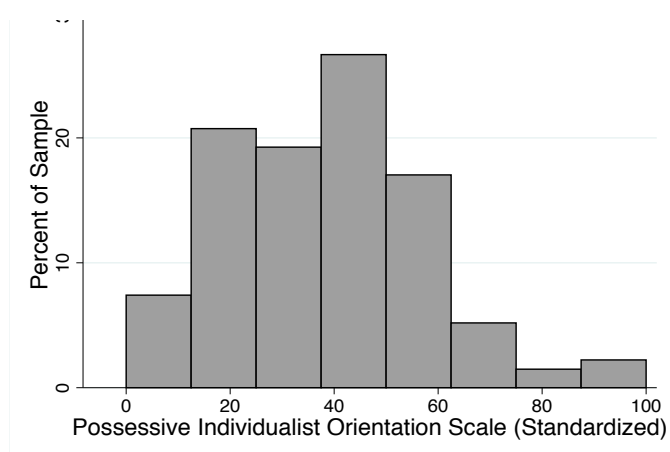
Item Wording*	Factor Loadings
Some people argue that the government has become too passive in regulating business and economic institutions. What do you think — should politicians do more to regulate the market exchanges that occur within society?***	0.5109
Some people believe that successful people have an obligation to “give back” to society for the success they have achieved. What do you think — do successful people “owe” something to society or others who are not as successful?***	0.5485
Some people feel that if a union goes on a labour strike, outside workers should not be prevented from taking up the jobs that have been vacated. What do you think — does a person have the right to take on a job vacated during a labour strike?	0.4505
Some people believe that it is wrong for companies to manufacture their products in poorer countries with low working standards, in order to save money. What do you think — are these companies taking unfair advantage of their workers?***	0.4850
Eigenvalues	2.0114
4-item alpha	0.6636

Notes: PCA, Varimax Rotation with Kaiser *off*

* 5-point scale

** Reverse scored

Figure 4.6 Distribution of Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale scores (PIOS)



The distribution of scores on the PIOS is illustrated in **Figure 4.6**. These scores tended to be lower than those on HOS, with a mean of 35.3 (**Table 4.9**), and over three quarters of the sample reporting overall disagreeable views toward the possessive individualist ideas presented in the survey (i.e., overall PIOS scores less than 50; not shown in tables).

3. Summary

The preceding discussion has outlined the characteristics of the main covariates examined in this study, as well as the efforts taken to test the construct validity of these measures. A detailed summary of the scale scores within the sample is provided in **Table 4.9**, below.

Table 4.9 Description of scale variables

	PAS ¹	Possessive-ness	Non-generosity	HOS ²	PIOS ³
n=	133	132	132	137	135
Mean	51.2	55.9	31.0	65.9	35.3
Range	10–100	6.25–100	0–81.25	18.8–100	0–100
Median	53.3	56.25	31.3	68.75	37.5
Std Dev.	18.2	21.3	18.2	18.5	20.0

Note: Scales are based on a possible score from 0–100.

¹Higher PAS score indicates greater preference for private property norms.

²Higher HOS score indicates greater “humanistic” value orientation.

³Higher PIOS score indicates greater “possessive individualist” value orientation.

III. STUDY HYPOTHESES

A. Main Research Variables

Given the theoretical rationale provided in Chapters 2 and 3, as well as the above descriptions of variables, the following hypotheses were investigated:

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): Positive attitudes toward property (PAS) will be inversely related with the exercise of autonomous reasoning (proportion of prescriptive statements classified as morally autonomous).

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Measures of humanistic value orientation (HOS) and measures of possessive individualist value orientation (PIOS) will be inversely related.

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Measures of humanistic value orientation will be inversely related with positive attitudes toward private property.

Hypothesis 4 (H₄): Measures of possessive individualist value orientation will be positively related with positive attitudes toward private property.

Hypothesis 5 (H₅): Measures of humanistic value orientation will be positively related with the exercise of autonomous moral reasoning.

Hypothesis 6 (H₆): Measures of possessive individualist value orientation will be inversely related with the exercise of autonomous moral reasoning.

B. Control Variables for Exploratory Investigation

In addition to the main research variables, analyses also included the variables of age, gender, educational attainment, educational milieu, and religion. The reason for including these variables in the present study is exploratory, since there does not appear to be any research that has investigated the possible effects of these variables on the relationships hypothesized above. However, there are reasons that suggests there may be something to be gained from exploring their possible effects.

In the case of age, while there is no empirical research suggesting an association between age and autonomous moral cognition (aside from in very young children, Piaget 1965), it is plausible that older—and thus potentially more “mature” participants in a university setting might be more accustomed to exercising various critical reasoning faculties (which might also include critical reasoning about moral dilemmas). Additionally, since the sample is likely to be over-represented by younger adults (given the sample pool of university students), age was included as a demographic control variable.

In the case of gender, some research on moral stage development has explored the possibility that men and women apperceive moral dilemmas differently, reason about moral problems differently, and/or express their reasons differently (Clopton and Sorell 1993; Gilligan 1982, 2011; Levine 1974; Silberman and Snarey 1993). For instance, it has been suggested that such differences may predispose women to make moral judgments oriented to ethics of “care” more so than of “justice” (Gilligan 1982, 2011). This thesis has received criticism on numerous grounds (e.g. Clopton and Sorell 1993; Kohlberg, Levine and Hewer 1983; and Silberman and Snarey 1993), however, and the literature remains inconclusive about the effects of gender on moral “stage” and “type” reasoning. In addition, the lack of available research concerning property ownership attitudes leaves open questions concerning its relation to gender. It is for these reasons that no specific hypotheses regarding gender have been proposed.

In the case of educational attainment, because the research was open to undergraduate and graduate students, it is possible that differences exist in the attitudes that these groups have toward property ownership and/or in the cultivation of critical reasoning abilities. A variable addressing individuals’ educational attainment has been included to explore this possibility.

In the case of “educational milieu,” research by Côté and Levine (1988, 1992) and Levine et al. (2000) find that youth enrolled in post-secondary education programs in “humanistic” fields (arts, humanities, social sciences, education) differ from those enrolled in “technological” fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, business). It may be plausible to suggest that enrolment in humanistic fields, as

compared to technological fields, may not only predict stronger preference for “humanistic” values but may also generate greater predisposition to utilize B-type reasoning. Additionally, to the extent that humanistic fields also tend to promote a more critical stance toward capitalism, social inequality, etc. than technological fields, education in humanistic fields might also produce more negative attitudes toward private property.

In the case of religion, Bader and Finke’s (2010) contribution to *The Handbook of the Sociology of Morality* provides a useful statement on the continued relevance of religious belief to the social phenomenon of morality in general, and it stands to reason that religious beliefs might likewise impact outcomes on the heteronomous/autonomous moral reasoning more specifically. Moreover, the subject matter of the two dilemmas used in the moral reasoning questionnaire (**Appendix C**) may stimulate unique responses among followers of the Abrahamic religions, which proscribe theft but promote charity and sharing. There does not appear to be any research directly addressing the relationship between autonomous/heteronomous moral reasoning and religion that could suggest/justify a concrete hypothesis, however. Participants’ religious beliefs, categorized as “Atheist/Non-religious,” “Abrahamic,” and “Non-Western Religion,” have therefore been included in the study for exploratory purposes.

Chapter 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research project seeks to investigate theoretical questions about the ways that attitudes about property ownership might relate to the way individuals reason about moral problems. For reasons discussed in Chapters 2–4, the study has also sought to explore how value orientations associated with certain cultural *ethes* like humanism and possessive individualism might impact this relationship. Specific hypotheses about the direction of these relationships were stated at the end of Chapter 4. It was also noted that, due to the exploratory nature of the research, controls for age, gender, level of education, educational milieu, and religion were also examined in order to control for possible confounding effects of an individual's biographical or demographic background on the hypothesized relationships.

The current chapter presents the results of the empirical study. It first presents the results of the study and their implications for the research hypotheses. This includes the results of bivariate and multivariate regression analyses of the study's main topic of inquiry: the relationship between property attitudes and moral reasoning (H₁). It also includes analyses of the two value orientations investigated in the study (humanism and possessive individualism): both their relationship to one another (H₂), their relationship to property attitudes (H₃, H₄), and their relationship to moral reasoning (H₅, H₆).

The chapter then presents a series of multivariate models that estimate the relationships of cognitive moral autonomy and private property attitudes when all other variables, *including* humanistic values (HOS) and possessive individualism (PIOS), are held constant. These analyses aim to further explore the attitudinal and ideological correlates of cognitive moral autonomy.

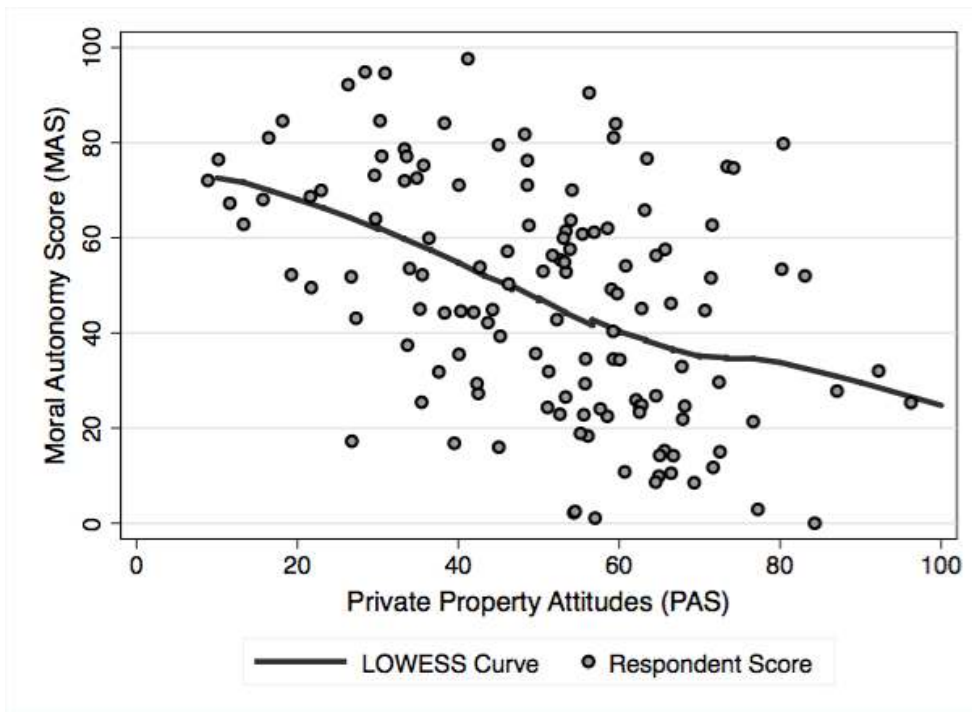
Finally, the chapter discusses the study's results and summarizes their implications, both for the research hypotheses and for the theoretical ideas it has sought to investigate.

I. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

A. Property Attitudes

Table 5.1 presents the coefficients from four nested Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models estimating the use of autonomous moral reasoning in the two moral dilemmas described in Chapter 4. The bivariate regression in Model 1a estimates the linear relationship between participants' scores on the Property Attitude Scale (PAS) and the proportion of “autonomous” (B-type) expressions in their responses to the moral judgment questionnaire (n=133). Model 1b estimates the same relationship, but specifies its analysis to only those participants whose surveys contained no missing data (n=94). Linear equations estimated in both of these models predict an inverse relationship between positive attitudes toward private property and the use of “autonomous” moral reasoning ($\beta=-0.59$; $p\leq 0.001$). The scatterplot and LOESS curve in **Figure 5.1** illustrates this relationship.

Figure 5.1 Scatterplot and fitted curve for Private Property Attitudes (PAS) and Moral Autonomy Scores (MAS)



Note: One outlier removed from scatterplot

Table 5.1 Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from OLS regression models predicting Moral Autonomy Score (MAS)

	Model 1a (n=133)	Model 1b† (n=94)	Model 2 (n=95)	Model 3 (n=94)
Property Attitude Scale (PAS)	-0.588*** (0.108)	-0.656*** (0.119)	-0.671*** (0.137)	-0.595*** (0.146)
Age			-0.315 (0.322)	-0.376 (0.322)
Gender (Female)			-0.968 (5.670)	-3.129 (5.767)
Education (<High School)				
Post-Secondary			-0.082 (6.914)	-0.310 (7.168)
Post-Graduate			2.064 (6.853)	1.214 (6.930)
Faculty Type (Humanistic)			1.510 (5.351)	2.447 (5.363)
Religion (Abrahamic)				
Atheist/Non-Affiliated			-4.436 (5.253)	-3.279 (5.287)
Non-Western Religion			-6.469 (8.923)	-3.020 (9.052)
Possessiveness				0.108 (0.136)
Non-Generosity				-0.319* (0.160)
Constant	77.423*** (5.849)	82.080*** (0.119)	94.068*** (14.376)	96.223*** (15.198)
Pseudo R2	0.1793	0.2414	0.2005	0.2181

Note: Scales are based on a possible score of 0–100

†Regression includes only respondents with no missing data

*p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001

The inverse relationship observed in the bivariate analysis remains consistent in the nested linear regressions presented in Model 2, where respondents' gender, educational attainment, educational milieu, and religious affiliation are held constant ($\beta=-0.67$; $p\leq.0001$).

Given the conceptualization of property developed in Chapter 2, the study has also sought to distinguish individuals' dispositions toward the control of *things* (i.e. possessiveness and non-generosity), on the one hand, from their attitudes toward the *social relations* and institutions of property ownership (PAS), on the other, and to control for the former.³⁸ Model 3 therefore introduces two adapted versions of Belk's (1984) "Materialism" subscales (Possessiveness and Non-generosity) to the regression equation. When demographic variables and the Possessiveness and Non-generosity scales were held constant, the inverse relationship between PAS and autonomous moral reasoning remained statistically significant ($\beta=-0.60$; $p\leq 0.001$). Of the two "Materialism" subscales included in this model, only Non-generosity was found to be significantly related to moral reasoning ($\beta=-0.32$; $p\leq 0.05$).

It will be recalled from Chapter 4 that cognitive moral autonomy scores were calculated based on the overall proportion of "B-type" (i.e., autonomous) moral reasons articulated by a respondent in their judgments of two moral dilemmas (**Appendix C**). Separate regression equations for Moral Autonomy Scores in each of the two dilemmas were also calculated (see **Appendix D**, **Appendix E**). Results for these models indicate similar patterns to those described in **Table 5.1**, finding inverse relationships between PAS and the use of cognitive moral autonomy in each dilemma. The magnitude of the predicted "effects" differs somewhat, however, as the coefficient for the bivariate relationship between PAS and MAS in Dilemma 2 ($\beta=-0.70$; $p\leq.001$) is 1.5 times that in Dilemma 1 ($\beta=-0.47$; $p\leq.001$) (**Appendix D**, **Appendix E**). Likewise, when demographic variables, Possessiveness, and Non-Generosity, are held constant (Model 3), the beta for PAS is 32% greater on Dilemma 2 than Dilemma 1.

³⁸ See discussion in Chapter 2, Section II.A, "Relations, not Things."

Despite these differences, the study finds a consistent inverse relationship between positive attitudes toward property and the exercise of autonomous moral reasoning, and thus finds support for Hypothesis 1 (H_1).

B. Value Orientations: The Humanistic Ethos and Possessive Individualist Ethos

In addition to its main topic of property attitudes and moral reasoning, this study also collected exploratory data on certain “value orientations” held by individuals, with the aim of examining the interrelation among property attitudes, moral reasoning, and cultural values like humanism and possessive individualism. It is possible that exploration of the broader cultural ethos of humanism or possessive individualism might provide further sociological context for understanding the relationship observed between moral autonomy and property attitudes in the previous section. An exploration of these relationships could also yield theoretically relevant links between the current research study and other fields of study such as identity theory and political science. Therefore, the study now turns to a deeper consideration of the relationships *among* humanism, possessive individualism, property attitudes, and moral reasoning.

1. Relationships Among the Main Scale Variables

To assess the relationships among property attitudes, humanism, and possessive individualism, this study examined both the strength and magnitude of their correlation using Pearson’s r and OLS regressions. **Table 5.2** presents the correlation coefficients (r) between each of the scale variables measured in the study. Regression coefficients estimating the linear relationships among all three possible pairings of PAS, HOS, and PIOS may be observed in **Table 5.3** and **Table 5.4**, below.³⁹

³⁹ Bivariate regressions were conducted using both the fullest available dataset and data from respondents with zero missing data. Multivariate regressions were also conducted to control for the possible confounding effects of demographic and/or biographic variables. Regression coefficients for the main dependent variable in each set of nested models remained relatively consistent even when controlling for such covariates.

Table 5.2 Pearson correlations among attitude scales

Scale	PAS	Possessive-ness	Non-generosity	HOS
Property Attitude Scale (PAS)	1.000			
Belk Possessiveness Scale	0.3478***	1.000		
Belk Non-generosity Scale	0.3949***	0.5229***	1.000	
Humanistic Orientation Scale (HOS)	-0.6570***	-0.2746**	-0.3204***	1.000
Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale (PIOS)	0.7194***	0.2283**	-0.3601***	-0.5745***

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

2. Humanism and Possessive Individualism

As expected, the Pearson coefficient for respondents scores on humanism (HOS) and possessive individualism (PIOS) indicates a moderate, inverse relationship ($r = 0.57$; $p \leq 0.001$). OLS regressions presented in **Table 5.3** yielded a coefficient (β) of approximately -0.52 ($p \leq 0.001$) (Model 4a). A similar result was obtained in regressions controlling for demographic factors ($\beta = -0.52$; $p \leq 0.001$) (Model 5).

Figure 5.2 presents a scatterplot and LOWESS curve of the relationship between HOS and PIOS scores. As these data illustrate, although humanism and possessive individualism clearly entail inversely related value orientations, individuals appear capable of holding aspects of both value orientations simultaneously—that is, while there are theoretical reasons to regard Humanism and Possessive Individualism as antagonistic value orientations (see Chapter 3, 4), they do not constitute “absolutes” about which individuals hold exclusively to one value orientation or another. With that said, it is worth noting two clusters of respondents that are observable within the scatterplot. The first of these is comprised of participants who scored below 20 on the PIOS but above 60 on the HOS. Bearing in mind that the HOS and PIOS items were administered using a 5-point Likert scale, it would appear that individuals who tend to “*strongly disagree*” with possessive individualist values and ideas also tend to respond positively to humanistic values and ideas. One can observe a second cluster of respondents whose overall scores

suggest a neutral or weak disagreement with the values and ideas addressed in *both* the HOS and PIOS (i.e., scores between 30–60). Given the fact that HOS scores skew to the right, this cluster suggests that many individuals who scored neutrally on PIOS also tended to score *relatively low* on HOS.

These results indicate that measures of humanistic and possessive individualist value orientations are inversely correlated, and therefore support Hypothesis 2 (H₂).

Table 5.3 Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from OLS regression models predicting Humanistic Orientation (HOS)

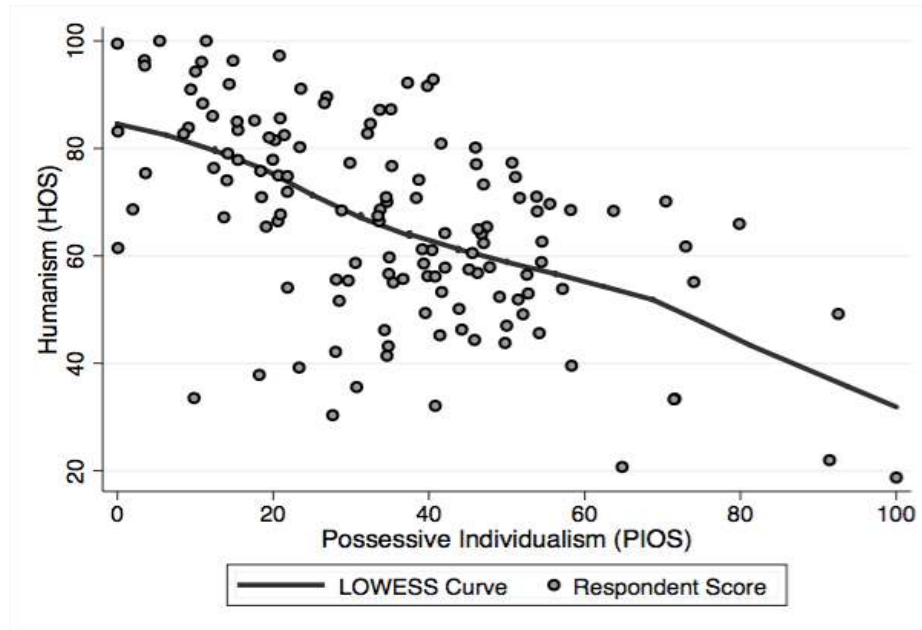
	Model 4a (n=135)	Model 4b [†] (n=94)	Model 5 (n=95)
Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale (PIOS)	-0.523*** (0.065)	-0.554*** (0.072)	-0.518*** (0.076)
Age			-0.204 (0.212)
Gender (Female)			-2.14 (3.76)
Education (<High School)			
Post-Secondary			2.174 (4.546)
Post-Graduate			3.288 (4.423)
Faculty Type (Humanistic)			2.713 (3.466)
Religion (Abrahamic)			
Atheist/Non-Affiliated			7.459* (3.384)
Non-Western Religion			11.912* (5.851)
Constant	84.697*** (2.617)	86.990*** (3.027)	83.895*** (8.148)
Pseudo R ²	0.3250	0.3852	0.4487

Note: Scales are based on a possible score of 0–100

[†]Regression includes only respondents with no missing data.

*p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001.

Figure 5.2 Scatterplot and fitted curve for PIOS and HOS scores



3. Property Attitudes and Value Orientation

As was also expected, positive attitudes toward private property are inversely correlated with humanistic values ($p \leq 0.001$), but positively correlated with possessive individualism ($p \leq 0.001$) (Table 5.2). These correlations, both with coefficients (r) greater than ± 0.65 , were actually stronger than those between property attitudes and other ostensibly “ownership oriented” attitudes measured by Belk’s “Materialism” sub-scales (Possessiveness and Non-generosity). While these latter scales were still positively related with PAS as expected, their correlations (r) with PAS were relatively weak, with neither coefficient surpassing 0.40 ($p \leq 0.001$).

Table 5.4 presents bivariate regressions between property attitudes (PAS) and humanism (HOS) and possessive individualism (PIOS), respectively. A notable characteristic of these relationships is the similarity in the magnitude of these relationships predicted in bivariate OLS regressions. The regression coefficients (β) predicting PAS scores are -0.65 for HOS (Model 6a) and 0.65 for PIOS (Model 7a). Both coefficients were statistically significant at ($p \leq 0.001$), and the direction and statistical significance of these relationships remains consistent both when examining only cases with zero missing data and when controlling for demographic variables.

Table 5.4 Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from bivariate OLS regression models predicting property attitudes (PAS)

	<u>PAS and HOS</u>		<u>PAS and PIOS</u>	
	Model 6a (n=133)	Model 6b [†] (n=94)	Model 7a (n=133)	Model 7b [†] (n=94)
Humanistic Orientation Scale (HOS)	-0.652*** (0.065)	-0.672*** (0.078)		
Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale (PIOS)			0.651*** (0.055)	0.686*** (0.059)
Constant	94.366*** (4.485)	96.812*** (5.3900)	28.253*** (2.228)	26.973*** (2.480)
Pseudo R2	0.4273	0.4425	0.5139	0.5905

Note: PAS, HOS, PIOS are based on a possible score of 0–100.

[†]Regression includes only respondents with no missing data.

*p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001

The scatterplots and LOESS curves depicted in **Figure 5.3** and **Figure 5.4** provide visual illustration of the relationships that PAS has with HOS and with PIOS. With the exception of the opposite direction of the relationship itself (and the positive and negative skew of respondents' HOS and PIOS scores), one can observe similarities in both the magnitude of “effect” that each value orientation has in relation to PAS and the linear pattern that these relationships appear to follow.

The foregoing analyses of the relationship between PAS and HOS indicate that private property attitudes are inversely related with humanistic values in the study sample. That is to say, the more emphatically an individual expresses support for humanistic values and ideas, the less support they are predicted to have for notions of private property. Thus, the results provide support for Hypothesis 3 (H₃).

Conversely, analyses of the relationship between PAS and PIOS indicate a positive correlation between private property attitudes and possessive individualist values, and therefore provide support for Hypothesis 4 (H₄) as well. It will be noted, however, that the strength of the correlation between PAS and PIOS (as well as the similarity in effects that each has in relation to moral reasoning and humanism) should inspire some caution

as to the possibility of multi-collinearity between these two exploratory scales (see Section III.B below for further discussion on this issue).

Figure 5.3 Scatterplot and fitted curve for Private Property Attitudes (PAS) and Humanistic Orientation Scale (HOS) scores

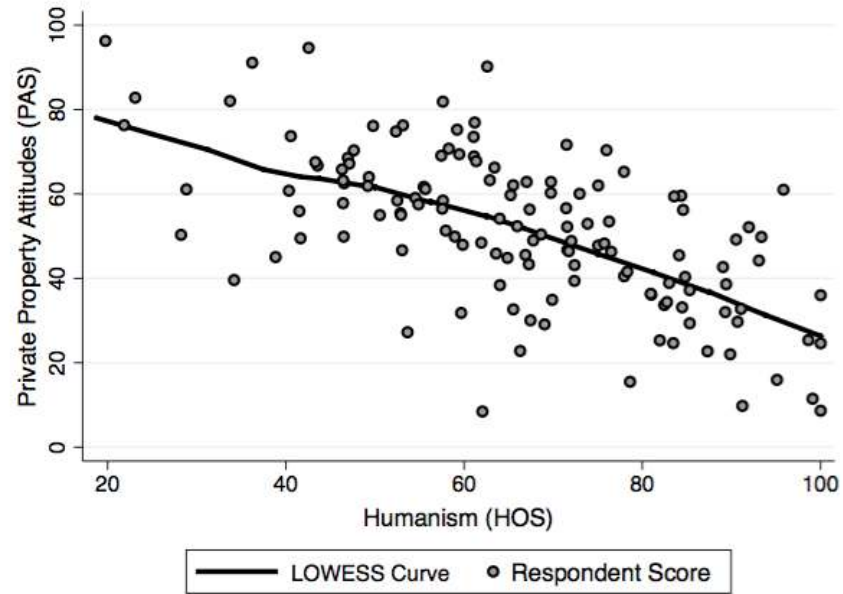
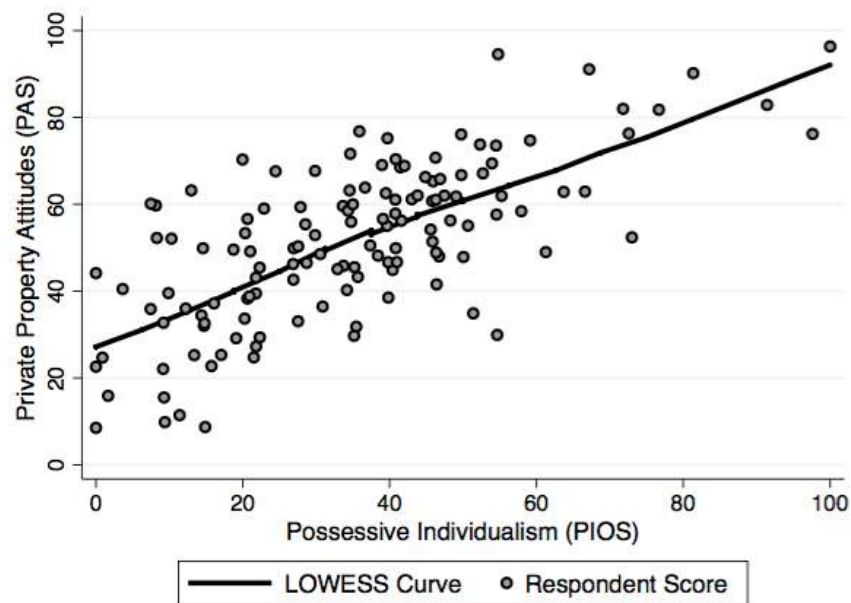


Figure 5.4 Scatterplot and fitted curve for Private Property Attitudes (PAS) and Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale (PIOS) scores



4. Value Orientations and Moral Reasoning

Table 5.5 present the results of bivariate regressions predicting the relationship of MAS with HOS and with PIOS. As was expected, Model 8a yielded a positive relationship between humanism and cognitive moral autonomy ($\beta=0.67$; $p\leq 0.001$). Additionally, HOS also explained nearly one quarter of the variation in MAS ($R^2=0.241$). Both the regression coefficient and the R-squared value for this relationship was the highest of all attitudinal predictors of MAS examined in the study (although PIOS was a close second in both regards).

Indeed, the results of Model 9a indicate that although the correlation between PIOS and MAS was in the opposite direction, it was otherwise comparable to the linear relationship between HOS–MAS in terms of both estimated effect-size ($\beta=-0.60$; $p\leq 0.001$) and the proportion of variance it explained ($R^2=0.235$).⁴⁰

Table 5.5 Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from OLS regression models predicting Moral Autonomy Score (MAS)

	<u>MAS and HOS</u>		<u>MAS and PIOS</u>	
	Model 8a (n=137)	Model 8b [†] (n=94)	Model 9a (n=135)	Model 9b [†] (n=94)
Humanistic Orientation Scale (HOS)	0.667*** (0.100)	0.661*** (0.119)		
Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale (PIOS)			-0.604*** (0.093)	-0.639*** (0.102)
Constant	2.716 (6.858)	2.850 (8.249)	68.470*** (3.771)	71.266*** (4.279)
Pseudo R2	0.2413	0.2440	0.2350	0.2922

Note: HOS and PIOS are based on a possible score of 0–100

[†]Regression includes only respondents with no missing data.

* $p\leq 0.05$; ** $p\leq 0.01$; *** $p\leq 0.001$;

⁴⁰ Multivariate regressions controlling for demographic characteristics in each of the above relationships yielded no substantive differences in effect size, nor revealed any additional predictors of MAS, and are therefore not presented in this dissertation (available on request).

These findings provide support for both Hypothesis 5 (H₅), that measures of humanism (HOS) are positively related with the exercise of autonomous moral reasoning (MAS), and Hypothesis 6 (H₆), that possessive individualism (PIOS) is inversely related with the exercise of autonomous moral reasoning (MAS).

C. Summary of Findings

To recap the study's findings thus far: it will be recalled that Section I.A. of this chapter investigated the relationship between private property attitudes and cognitive moral autonomy (H₁). OLS regressions indicated a statistically significant relationship between PAS and MAS within the sample, even when controlling for demographic variables and materialistic attitudes like possessiveness and non-generosity. The results presented in Section I.B. provided evidence supporting each of the study's hypotheses as well—i.e., that humanistic and possessive individualist value orientations are correlated with one another (H₂), with property attitudes (H₃, H₄), and with moral reasoning (H₅, H₆). Considering the complexity that these statistical interrelationships represent in social-theoretical terms, the dissertation will now undertake further exploration—and hopefully some clarification—of the observed relationships. Namely, in the interest of “scratching the surface” of an understanding of property and moral reasoning, it will investigate whether the relationship between property attitudes and moral reasoning remains significant when controlling for humanism and possessive individualism, or whether these relationships are confounded or mediated in some way.

II. FURTHER EXPLORATION: PROPERTY ATTITUDES, VALUE ORIENTATION, AND MORAL REASONING

The results described in the previous section suggest that property attitudes and cultural value orientations (humanism and possessive individualism) are interrelated in many ways—both among one another and with moral reasoning. Given this dissertation's main theoretical objective of empirically exploring Marxist humanism's theoretical critiques concerning private property and morality, this section seeks to disentangle some of those interrelationships and, more specifically, to explore how cultural value orientations like humanism and possessive individualism impact the relationship between property

attitudes and cognitive moral autonomy. Do the relationships that PAS, HOS, and PIOS each have with MAS remain consistent when the other scales are held constant? Answers to this question may not only impact the strength of support for Hypotheses 1, 5, and 6 of this study; they may also provide a clearer picture of the relative salience that each of these factors has in predicting cognitive moral autonomy.

Table 5.6 presents a series of three nested OLS regression models estimating linear relationships between cognitive moral autonomy and the key demographic and attitudinal variables addressed in this study. These models were constructed to further explore the relationship between property attitudes and moral reasoning by controlling for possibly confounding effects of cultural value orientations, possessiveness, and non-generosity. Model 10 presents the regression coefficients predicting cognitive moral autonomy when PAS, HOS, Possessiveness, Non-generosity, and demographic characteristics are accounted for. Model 11 provides a similar analysis, but controls for PIOS instead of HOS. Lastly, Model 12 holds *both* HOS and PIOS constant in the same equation (along with PAS, demographic characteristics, and the Belk sub-scales).

In Model 10, when other variables are held constant, PAS is inversely correlated with MAS ($\beta = -0.36$; $p \leq 0.05$), while HOS is positively correlated with MAS ($\beta = 0.41$; $p \leq 0.01$). Thus, property attitudes appear to be correlated with cognitive moral autonomy *even when humanistic values, possessiveness, non-generosity, and demographic factors are accounted for*. However, it is only in Model 10 that PAS is a statistically significant predictor of MAS. The relationship between moral autonomy and PAS is not significant when controlling for PIOS and the other covariates in Model 11. Likewise, it is not significant in Model 12 when *all* variables—demographic, attitudinal, and value orientations—are accounted for.⁴¹

⁴¹ The results presented above are from analyses of the Moral Autonomy Score for both moral dilemmas. Regression analyses calculated for each separate dilemma provided less conclusive estimates than those estimating overall MAS (possibly due to the lower variation in dilemma scores). While Model 10 did predict a positive relationship between HOS and MAS in Dilemma 2 (not shown, available on request), the standard errors of most of these models are too high to predict any significant relationships.

Table 5.6 Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from OLS regression models predicting the use of autonomous (B-type) moral reasoning on two hypothetical dilemmas

	Model 10 (n=94)	Model 11 (n=94)	Model 12 (n=94)
Property Attitudes (Private = Higher)	-0.357* (0.171)	-0.258 (0.201)	-0.132 (0.207)
Age	-0.286 (0.315)	-0.316 (0.314)	-0.255 (0.310)
Gender (Female)	-2.875 (5.598)	-4.385 (5.637)	-3.922 (5.544)
Education (<High School)			
Post-Secondary	-0.610 (6.958)	-1.931 (7.010)	-1.844 (6.887)
Post-Graduate	1.275 (6.726)	0.787 (6.747)	0.924 (6.629)
Faculty Type (Humanistic)	1.935 (5.209)	2.282 (5.220)	1.899 (5.132)
Religion (Abrahamic)			
Atheist/Non-Affiliated	-5.399 (5.203)	-2.522 (5.156)	-4.405 (5.154)
Non-Western Religion	-7.013 (8.932)	-2.718 (8.810)	-6.035 (8.816)
Possessiveness	0.128 (0.132)	0.067 (0.133)	0.092 (0.131)
Non-Generosity	-0.280 (0.156)	-0.228 (0.160)	-0.215 (0.157)
Humanism (HOS)	0.405* (0.164)		0.330* (0.166)
Possessive Individualism (POS)		-0.408* (0.172)	-0.324 (0.174)
Constant	53.636* (22.676)	92.354*** (14.881)	58.421* (22.488)
Pseudo R2	0.2635	0.2594	0.2851

Note: Scales are based on a possible score of 0–100.

*p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001.

Although controlling for PIOS appears to “cancel out” the relationship between PAS and moral autonomy in Model 11, whereas controlling for HOS failed to do so in Model 10, it would be incorrect to assume that possessive individualism therefore stands as the “underlying” predictor of cognitive moral autonomy. Holding all other variables constant, Model 12 predicts a positive relationship between MAS and HOS ($\beta=0.33$; $p \leq 0.05$), but no significant relationship between MAS and either PIOS or PAS. Thus, among the psychometric variables explored in this study, it is humanism that appears to be the strongest predictor of autonomous moral reasoning.

These results stand to both complicate and clarify several things for our understanding of the study hypotheses: First, Hypothesis 1 remains partially supported, but some qualifications are now clearly required. Second, the conceptual and statistical similarities in the ways PAS and PIOS relate with other variables throughout the study suggests a need to reflect critically upon whether these scales in fact measure the same thing. Third, among the three hypotheses concerning scale variables and moral reasoning (H_1 , H_5 , H_6), it is the hypothesis relating humanism to morally autonomous reasoning (H_5) which receives the strongest support. Discussion of the study’s overall implications will be taken up by way of these three key points.

III. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A. Hypothesis 1 Revisited

Findings from Models 1–3 yielded inverse correlations between property ownership attitudes and autonomous moral reasoning. Both the bivariate and multivariate models suggest that, when tasked with adjudicating a moral dilemma, participants with a strong preference for private over public property tend to rely more on “preconstructed,” heteronomous justifications than participants with more strongly collectivistic attitudes. By holding constant such demographic and biographic factors as an individual’s age, gender, religion, and educational milieu (i.e., level of education, humanistic/technological university program), it is possible to show that this relationship cannot be explained away by these background characteristics of the individual. Furthermore, by controlling for attitudinal characteristics like Possessiveness and Non-generosity, it is also possible to

show that the inverse relationship between attitudes toward property ownership (*qua* property *relations*) and moral reasoning exists even when an individual's attitudes toward the control over *objects* is held constant. These relationships appear consistent not only for predictions of an *overall* Moral Autonomy Score (MAS), but for Moral Autonomy Scores in each of the two dilemmas that were administered.

The exploratory analyses undertaken in Section I.B. provide some additional support for the study's main hypothesis (H₁), that positive private property ownership attitudes are inversely related with the use of autonomous moral reasoning. On the one hand, it was shown that when demographic characteristics, materialistic attitudes, and *humanistic values* are held constant, an inverse relationship between PAS and MAS is still observed. The cultural and social-theoretical significance of this result is worth serious consideration, as it suggests that the relationship observed in Model 10 between private property attitudes and moral reasoning cannot simply be explained away by an oversampling of "humanistic youth"; it suggests, in fact, that even *among* humanists (or non-humanists), individuals' attitudes toward property norms bear a significant relationship with the exercise of morally autonomous reasoning.

On the other hand, however, the exploratory analysis also found that the relationship between property attitudes and moral reasoning disappears when *possessive individualist values* are held constant alongside other variables (i.e., Model 11, Model 12), leaving Hypothesis 1 only partially supportable. Based on these findings, it appears untenable to regard the relationship between private property attitudes and moral reasoning as a fact independent of *certain* ideological values and beliefs. Instead, it is necessary to account for the ways that cultural value orientations impact individuals' apperception and/or judgment of moral dilemmas. Given the results of Model 11 and Model 12, it is necessary to reflect upon whether property ownership attitudes might simply entail a more *generalized notion of property*, one that encompasses one's own *self and social relations*—i.e., possessive individualism.

B. Private Property and Possessive Individualism

Insofar as individuals' attitudes toward private property norms might actually express a broader set of ideas and values regarding what should be “mine,” and what should be “ours,” the theoretical framework developed by C. B. Macpherson (1962) provides a compelling point of reference—especially for examining the neo-liberal ethos of contemporary North American capitalism.⁴² Moreover, insofar as either property attitudes or possessive individualism are inversely correlated with morally autonomous thought (as has been shown to be the case in this study wherever PAS and PIOS are not held constant in relation to one another), these relationships appear consistent with Macpherson's (1966) observations regarding the undemocratic character of unfettered private property rights. Thus, while the exploratory analyses controlling for both PAS and PIOS stand to reduce the support that may be ascribed *directly* to Hypothesis 1, they appear at least somewhat consistent with the broader theoretical principles involved. Importantly, they also serve to dispel any simplistic interpretation of the interrelationships among property attitudes, value orientation, and moral cognition. Instead, they elicit a number of exciting new theoretical and empirical problems concerning the cultural and moral complexity of psychological ownership.

More concretely, the results of the current study suggest that further investigation into property attitudes and possessive individualist values, both toward the refinement and differentiation of the Property Attitude Scale and Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale and toward various social-psychological phenomena that they might be used to investigate, would be a worthwhile undertaking.

C. The Humanistic Ethos

It is of considerable theoretical interest that humanism remains a significant predictor of cognitive moral autonomy even when other factors such as property attitudes,

⁴² It will be recalled that *essence* of possessive individualism lies in a conception of private property that extends even to notions of the *self*—i.e., the individual as “*essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities*” (Macpherson 1962: 263; emphasis added).

possessiveness, non-generosity, possessive individualism, age, gender, educational milieu, and religion are held constant. Among the three hypotheses concerning scale variables and moral reasoning, it was the hypothesis relating HOS to MAS that received the strongest support (H₅). As noted above, it is also interesting that HOS and PAS operated as statistically significant (albeit oppositional) covariate predictors of morally autonomous reasoning.

How might we make sense of these results? It is worth considering how the social and psychological recognition of “the other” lies at the crossroads of both humanistic values and moral autonomy. It seems reasonable to suggest that the regard one holds for the worth and dignity of one’s fellow human beings is an integral determinant of how one apperceives and reasons about dilemmas of conflicting interest among persons. In the course of moral deliberation, for instance, a paradigmatic sensitivity to distinguishing the *needs and interests of human beings* from the *exigencies of institutional or doctrinal norms* (and prioritizing the former over the latter) epitomizes the philosophical and psychological conceptions of *both* humanism and moral autonomy.

That this connection has been found to exist alongside attitudes to private property in predicting the use of morally autonomous reasoning—and that these characteristics should exert opposing “forces” upon moral reasoning (Model 10)—reflects in statistical terms the central thesis of Marx’s philosophical critique of bourgeois property. It suggest, as Marx postulates, that the ideological effect of private property is that it “leads every man to see in other men, not the *realization* but rather the limitation of his own liberty” (1978a: 42), but also—and perhaps more optimistically—that “the positive transcendence of *private property* as the appropriation of *human* life is, therefore, the positive transcendence of all estrangement—that is to say, the return of man...to his *human*, i.e., *social* mode of existence” (1978b: 85; emphasis in the original). While the results of the study’s hypothesis tests and the exploratory analyses are not without limitations (see Chapter 6), and merely scratch the surface of a comprehensive critical social-psychology of property ownership, they nonetheless appear to provide limited corroboration for the ethical crux of Marxist-humanist social theory: that in the face of the near-hegemonic cultural impetus toward privatism, individualism, and

commercialization, it is one's sense of *humanistic solidarity with others* that remains the decisive factor in whether the expression of one's cognitive moral faculties is an exercise of activity or passivity—of freedom or of alienation.

Chapter 6

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study of property ownership and moral reasoning intersects fields of moral development psychology, critical sociology, political theory, law, history, and normative ethics. A study of these two broad phenomena is therefore bound to suffer some degree of conceptual underdevelopment from the standpoint of any one particular discipline. In reference to his pioneering efforts to bridge the disciplinary gap between psychology and philosophy, Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) remarked, “obviously a developmental psychologist must be a fool to enter the den of philosophical wolves...unless he has to”—and then he proceeded to spend the remainder of his life demonstrating just why such a venture was necessary (p. 103). The current social-psychological study was undertaken with the same disposition in mind. It has sketched a framework for a “critical social-psychology” of morality, and sought to explore the possibilities for such a framework through a study of people’s property attitudes and moral reasoning. It has done so with the aim of contributing to a number of social-scientific research areas by drawing their respective theoretical, epistemological, and methodological frameworks into conversation. Namely, it has sought to subject Karl Marx’s theoretical critiques of private property to *empirical* investigation, and it has sought to augment its social-psychological exploration of the relationship between moral reasoning and property ownership by exploring connections to concepts from ego psychology (e.g. Erikson 1975) and political theory (e.g. Macpherson 1962). In this chapter, a consideration the study’s limitations and contributions, as well as a few points of clarification, will be presented. The chapter concludes with some closing remarks on the study’s main findings, sociological implications, and directions for future research.

I. METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS

A. Research Protocol

1. Research Sample

The sampling method used in this research presents some limitations for the generalizability of the study's findings. The convenience sample drawn for the study lacks control over the demographic characteristics of the survey sample. Due to the lack of monetary incentive provided, it is also possible that the survey attracted participants who were less "extrinsically motivated" than the general population (although providing cash or prize incentives for participation is not without its own set of drawbacks).

2. Measures of Gender

The sample contained an unexpected amount of missing data on respondents' gender. The method of collecting data on this variable was outlined in Chapter 3 and techniques for addressing missing data were described in Chapter 4. Given the lack of statistical correlation between non-response rate on gender and any other variable in the study, but also the open-ended text-box format of the question, it is plausible that some participants did not understand what was being asked of them in the question, "What gender do you identify as?" or simply overlooked the question. Future research might better address this issue by providing a set list of options (e.g. "male," "female," "other/non-binary gender identity—please specify," etc.) to reduce the non-response rate on the question.

3. Measures of Social Class

Future research should also include a measure of social class because it is of obvious sociological importance. A shortcoming of the present research is that it does not include a measure of class in the questionnaire (although given the sample characteristics—i.e., participants attended a relatively affluent post-secondary institution—much variation in class would not have been expected). Given the characteristics of the present study, it is not obvious what kinds of class differences might emerge and the variable would have been treated as an exploratory measure.

Nevertheless, there are some areas of theoretical interest that would justify including this variable in future research studies. While a full examination of the impact of class habitus on moral reasoning and property attitudes was beyond the scope of this study, it is reasonable to account for the possibility that certain cultural dispositions and/or economic freedoms “inherited” from one’s parents might effect *what* and *how* an individual thinks about things like property, morality, etc. It is possible, for instance, that the kind of cultural and economic circumstances of an individual’s primary socialization may affect persons’ ingrained value orientations (e.g. humanism, possessive individualism), ownership attitudes, or “moral perceptions of the social world” (Bourdieu 1984: 435; see also, Ignatow 2010 and Sayer 2010).

4. Response Bias

The study questionnaire contained three main sections: demographic information, moral reasoning questionnaires, and attitude scales. In order to reduce response bias, items in each of the attitude scales were presented in randomized order. However, the moral reasoning questionnaire and the surveys were not themselves randomized, meaning that participants always completed the latter after the former. Consequently, it is possible that the study’s results may be affected by question order bias. For instance, it is possible that participants might seek to rationalize the moral judgments expressed in the moral reasoning questionnaire by giving ideologically similar responses to the attitude scale items. It is also possible that participant exhaustion could lead to less attentive responses to questions in the latter parts of the survey. Future research could mitigate these possible forms of bias by ensuring that the order of attitudinal and moral reasoning sections in the survey are randomized.

B. Attitudes Scales

1. Value Orientation Scales

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage fully with the rich complexity of Erikson’s psychoanalytic and developmental theories, or with Macpherson’s analyses of liberal democracy and property ownership, much less with all of the fields that their ideas have impacted. The more modest objective for this study has been to draw upon the

Eriksonian conception of a humanistic orientation, and the Macphersonian conception of possessive individualism, in exploring the study's main topic. In this regard, this study has sought to extend its analysis beyond "merely" the attitudes or normative-ethical judgments of its participants. As was discussed in Chapter 4, the Humanistic Orientation Scale (HOS) was used to measure participants' humanistic value orientation, whereas a Possessive Individualism scale (PIOS) was constructed for purposes of this study to explore participants' possessive individualist value orientation.

Regarding the former, the results of the present research suggest that it may also be possible to derive important insights concerning the relationships among humanism, property attitudes and moral cognition. Further, more direct examination of the interaction and potential mediating effect among these variables, as well as their implications for ego development, all appear to be a fertile site for future research (cf. Côté and Levine 1989; Levine, Jakubowski and Côté 1992; Levine et al. 2000).

Regarding the latter, the final Possessive Individualist Orientation Scale (PIOS) performed acceptably on tests for construct validity (Cronbach's alpha and Principal Component Analysis). Since not all of the original items appeared to fit the construct, however, the scale ended up shorter, and perhaps more theoretically limited in its encapsulation of possessive individualism *proper*, than originally expected. The scale nevertheless appears to be promising, and further development of a psychometric instrument for possessive individualism stands to fill a gap in the literature noted by Carter (2005) and Storms (2004). Key objectives for this task include distinguishing measures of *possessive individualism* from measures of property attitudes and capitalistic ideologies, and also improving the construct validity of the scale overall.

2. Property Attitudes

Like the PIOS, the Property Attitude Scale (PAS) was constructed as an exploratory scale for the purposes of this study. Principal Component Analyses indicate that this scale is acceptable for exploratory purposes, but further refinement and elaboration upon scale items would be a direction for future research. Such an undertaking would contribute to the field of ownership psychology by more clearly distinguishing between the following:

the psychological phenomenon of property ownership as *things* and the *social-* psychological phenomenon of property ownership *as relations*.

Additionally, while the scale is intended to measure attitudes toward property relations along a spectrum of exclusionary (i.e., private) versus inclusionary (i.e., social) attitudes to ownership relations, many of the ideas expressed in the items correspond closely with Fromm's (1976) conception of the "*having*" orientation. Bearing in mind some theoretical constraints inherent in attempting to quantitatively operationalize Fromm's more "*dynamic*," psychoanalytically oriented concepts (Fromm 1990), there could nevertheless be much social scientific value to be gained from developing psychometric measures for the "Having" and "Being" orientations (1976).

C. Moral Judgment Questionnaire

The online survey format of the moral dilemma questionnaire prevented a more comprehensive in-person interview process, such as the one developed by Kohlberg. Nevertheless, the procedures for interpreting "A-type" and "B-type" moral statements provided a broad range of Moral Autonomy Scores overall. Given the differences in participants' mean scores in the two dilemmas, and the weak–moderate correlation between them ($r=0.35$), future research might strive to investigate whether qualitative characteristics of the dilemmas themselves stimulate differences in participants' apperception and adjudication of the moral situation. As was noted earlier, Levine's (1976) research suggests that particularly among individuals at the "conventional" level of moral development, one's sense of obligation, empathy, and sympathy tend to vary in intensity depending on the meaningfulness that one ascribes to specific issues, interests, and parties within the dilemma itself. This could possibly explain the stark differences in the use of autonomous/heteronomous reasoning between dilemmas by some participants, or (as in the following example) the contradictory moral statements they expressed from one dilemma to the next. For instance, Respondent 3nAVP states that it is wrong for Terence to steal a life-saving drug for a stranger because "stealing is wrong, and wrong actions bring negative results" (Dilemma 1), but that it is permissible for Anna to give her employer's baked goods to homeless people because "compassion and kindness will bring her blessings" (Dilemma 2).

Future research could examine how dilemmas themselves might account for the particular “types” of moral cognition participants exercise. Development of the scoring methodology used in the present study might therefore include non-property related moral dilemmas involving various treatments on the actors and relationships described (e.g., men/women, foreigners/native-born; best friends, strangers, business rivals, etc.).

D. Regarding Questions of Researcher Bias

Given the philosophically contentious implications of this study’s subject matter (i.e., issues of private ownership and moral “autonomy”), it is possible that this research may encounter accusations of methodological and/or ideological bias. First, it is possible that these research findings may receive criticism on the grounds that the study commits the fallacy of *petitio principii*, “begging the question” (i.e., that its conclusions have already been assumed in its methodological premises). It may be objected, for instance, that *property attitudes* are simply *moral judgments in an alternative form*—that by featuring moral dilemmas related to an individual’s conformity with or rejection of property norms, the study measures the same thing twice, and thus “stacks the deck” toward coding “autonomous” (i.e. “B-type”) scores for participants who are already likely to prefer “social” forms of ownership over “private” forms. A second possible objection might be that the study contains an implicitly “socialist” bias, not simply in terms of its research interest in Marxian theory but more substantively in its (supposed) association of “autonomy” with law-breaking activities such as stealing a life-saving drug or appropriating a business owner’s commercial property to feed the poor. Since these objections are likely to be based in some misunderstandings of the research protocol and/or confusion about the relevance of political ideology to the measures, the following points of discussion aim to address such objections and to provide some clarification on the study’s theoretical implications.

Regarding the first point of criticism, it is possible that one may interpret the study as essentially measuring the same variable twice. I should therefore like to clarify what makes the Property Attitudes Scale (PAS) and the Moral Autonomy Score (MAS) distinctly different social-psychological variables. The PAS developed for this study is concerned specifically with the *attitudes* that an individual has toward various norms of

property ownership, conceived of as a continuum from preferring “social” forms of ownership to “private” forms. In this regard, it concerns the relatively unreflective cognitive “contents” of an individual’s perception of the world. Such concerns differ categorically from the *exercise of moral cognition*, which concerns the *active process* of adjudicating between/among competing interests on the basis of some conception of justice/fairness/care/etc. Whether an individual’s moral judgments are the result of an “active *reconstruction*” of the relevant norms of the moral situation, or whether they rely passively on the authority of “preconstructed” norms or rules remains a matter theoretically distinct from any *particular* set of *attitudes* an individual might have.

This distinction also explains why very different methods were used to operationalize and measure the attitudinal and moral reasoning variables. It will be recalled that property attitudes were measured using the PAS, an exploratory scale comprised of several Likert-style items relating to an individual’s specific attitudes toward social relations of ownership, resource accessibility and allocation, and resource redistribution. In contrast, “cognitive moral autonomy” was measured by examining whether a “moral statement” met set criteria for “autonomous reasoning” formulated by Kohlberg et al. (1984) and Colby and Kohlberg (1987). Such criteria neither pertain to an individual’s property *attitudes* nor do they prescribe any particular “social” or “private” ownership norm; rather, they assess the qualities of participants’ normative expressions for indications of autonomous moral reasoning, and are therefore categorically distinct variables.⁴³

⁴³ In other words, it is perfectly plausible that an individual could “autonomously” advocate for private property, or draw from “heteronomous” norms to advocate for social property—or formulate autonomous or heteronomous judgments on moral grounds independent of property norms/attitudes altogether, such as the following two examples:

“If [Terence] goes to jail for stealing, his wife will be cured and he will get out of jail and be with her again. But if he does not steal it, then she will die and he will never get to see her again.” (Respondent 2YQFC; statement scored “Autonomous” for *hierarchy*).

“...I think the most effective method would be a public slander campaign against the Doctor, forcing him to lower the price.” (Respondent XuDsP; statement scored “Heteronomous” for *prescriptivity*).

A second line of criticism this study may face concerns the possibility of a “Marxist bias” in its measurement of moral statements—one that implicitly associates “autonomy” with criticism of private property regimes. For instance, it might be assumed that participants who prefer “social” or *socialist* forms of ownership will, by virtue of this “sociocentricity,” tend to be more inclined to reject the kinds of property laws at stake in the dilemmas, and that this may bias “autonomy” scores toward respondents with more “socialist” ideologies. This objection is worth considering especially given the relevance of the study to socialist theory.

It should first be noted that such a “criticism” essentially reconstructs the study’s main hypothesis—that individuals with positive attitudes toward social ownership will for various theoretical reasons tend to exercise moral autonomy at greater rates than those who prefer private ownership. But this is only a hypothetical postulation—the charge of “researcher bias” would be mistaken because this outcome is far from guaranteed. One can, for instance, imagine cases in which an individual with a high regard for private property ownership exercises a high degree of moral autonomy. Indeed, if the principles of neo-liberal capitalism are true, it follows that private property constitutes the *basis* for free, autonomous thought! At any rate, there is no evidence to suggest that individuals with socialistic attitudes toward ownership are *inherently* more morally autonomous. It is equally plausible that the property attitudes of socialists or capitalists, progressives or conservatives, could have had an *inverse* relation to moral autonomy from the one observed here (or that that political ideologies operate independently of moral cognition entirely).

It should therefore be borne in mind that while the study was designed to explore whether some of the social-psychological tenets of Marx’s theories about bourgeois property and bourgeois morality could be supported empirically, the study’s cognitive-operational measures may be regarded as politically and ideologically neutral in and of themselves. Rather, it is the *empirical relationship* that they share with property attitudes and value orientations that constitutes the politically interesting issue.

II. CONCLUSION

The current project has explored the social-psychological factors associated with property attitudes and moral reasoning. In drawing upon Jean Piaget's and Lawrence Kohlberg's theories as a framework for grounding "the moral domain" in terms of *dilemmas of action*, it demonstrates the continued vitality of their theories for *interdisciplinary* examination of the contexts and processes in and through which individuals apperceive and reason about moral problems. The value of using a Kohlbergian framework lies in the possibility of examining how social norms and values (e.g. those concerning property, individuality, and human dignity) relate not only to *what* but to also *how* people think about moral problems—and the extent to which that thinking is in fact "*theirs*."

By attempting to sketch the characteristics of a *critical* social-psychology of morality (Chapter 2), and subjecting the postulations of Marxian theorists to empirical investigation (Chapters 3, 4, and 5), this research has sought to re-assert the relevance of critical social theory in contemporaneous social scientific discussions of the moral (Abend 2010; Hitlin and Vaisey 2013). Specifically, this dissertation has explored the hypothesis that in modern capitalist society, the "freedom" to think and possibly act in accordance with one's self-chosen values—that is, to think and possibly act *autonomously*—is inversely correlated with the strength of an individual's preferences for private over social property norms. "Social power is today more than ever mediated by power over things," writes Horkheimer (1947: 129–130); "the more intense an individual's concern with power over things, the more will things dominate him, the more will he lack any genuine individual traits, and the more will his mind be transformed into an automaton of formalized reason." Likewise, Marcuse (1964) warns that "if the individuals find themselves in the things which shape their life they do so, not by giving, but by accepting the law of things—not the law of physics but the law of society" (p. 11). The investigation undertaken in this study provides tentative empirical support for such postulations. Its results suggest that attitudes that place "property over people" tend to also be associated not simply with an "*acceptance*" but with a *reliance* on the authority of society's "pre-constructed" moral norms, rather than being associated

with an autonomous exercise of rationality and reason amongst mutually-respecting persons.

Furthermore, the findings of this research *suggest*, in accord with the radical humanism of Karl Marx and Erich Fromm, that property ownership and moral reasoning are also connected by their shared normative implications for the individual's sense of *social being*. Insofar as a person's relation to the world is grounded by an orientation of moral and ontological solidarity with others, norms of ownership and rightness tend to be understood nominalistically, as the constructions of moral actors capable of developmental change. Insofar as a person's sense of being is *abstracted* from moral and ontological solidarity with others—that is, insofar as a person fails to develop a “view of self” integrated with the moral, the social, and the other—norms of ownership and rightness become mystified, dominating the individual as a force external to him or her. What these relationships point to is a stark contradiction between the “freedom” that property *purports* to afford the individual, and the wherewithal to *exercise* freedom as a fully conscious human being. Thus, the exploratory analyses presented in this study appear to support the theoretical postulations of the Marxist-humanist tradition, that the reification of private property may not just obstruct access to *resources* but also access to the kinds of social-psychological faculties necessary for reasoned, mutually respectful deliberations of human interests.

In conclusion, classical and contemporary critical theory has produced no shortage of compelling philosophical critiques of the oppressive, alienating effects of private property. This dissertation has investigated these theories through a mixed-methods social-psychological study—and has thus sought to empirically “scratch the surface” of ascertaining the relationship between property and moral autonomy. It therefore constitutes both the continuation of a centuries-old tradition of critical inquiry examining the morally deleterious effects of resource privatization, and also a very modest next-step toward assessing the social and psychological veracity of such analyses. Clearly, however, the results of the study are not sufficient to support the postulation that the institution of private property inhibits the *development* of morality. To subject such a postulation to empirical scrutiny would likely require a stratified, cross-cultural

longitudinal research design, a task clearly beyond the scope of the present study. What the results of the present study appear to indicate, however, is the reasonableness of pursuing such research, and the broad cross-disciplinary relevance of its subject matter. If future research should stand to refute such *developmental* postulations, then the philosophical validity of many theoretical claims within the Western critical tradition would possibly have to either be rejected or scaled back; however, if such research should come to produce valid, robust findings substantiating such developmental postulations, it would stand to verify in empirical terms that private property does not simply hinder human morality in the social-structural sense, but that it is associated with the restriction of the individual's very cognitive abilities to actualize the full extent of their moral selves. Whatever the outcome of such future research, the stakes of human morality and reason are too high for us not to ask such important questions and vigorously pursue the answers to them.

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Appendices

Appendix A Ethics Approval



Research Ethics

Western University Health Science Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Charles Levine
Department & Institution: Social Science/Sociology, Western University

NMREB File Number: 106468
Study Title: Property Ownership and Moral Reasoning
Sponsor:

NMREB Initial Approval Date: May 29, 2015
NMREB Expiry Date: May 29, 2016

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Handout	2015/04/25
Recruitment Items	Letter to Professors of Online Courses	2015/04/25
Recruitment Items	Flyer	2015/04/25
Western University Protocol		2015/04/25
Recruitment Items	Letter to Professors	2015/04/25
Instruments	Qualtrics Survey	2015/05/14
Revised Letter of Information & Consent		2015/05/14
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Script	2015/04/25
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Student Email	2015/04/25

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer, on behalf of ~~Rita~~ Hinson, NMREB Chair or delegated board member

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

Erika Basile	Grace Kelly	Mina Mekhail	Vikki Tran
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This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

Appendix B Sample Recruitment Flyer



Looking for Study Participants!

Project Title: Ownership Attitudes and Moral Reasoning

Is **stealing** *always wrong*?
 Are we *morally obligated* to **share** with others?

What sorts of moral guidelines do you use to answer these kinds of questions?

You are being invited to participate in a research study looking at how people's attitudes toward *owning things* (e.g., property, possessions, ideas) may relate to the various ways people think about moral problems. It includes a survey about people's opinions on various social issues relating to property ownership, as well as a section in which people are asked to share their views on various "moral dilemmas."

If you are a student (graduate or undergraduate) at Western or its affiliates and are **18 years of age or older**, then you are eligible to participate. The study is entirely **ONLINE**, so it can be completed at your convenience, and uses a web-based survey with the following URL link:

For more information, please contact Robert Nonomura ()

Appendix C Survey and Letter of Information

Western SocialScience

Letter of Information

Project Title: Ownership Attitudes and Moral Reasoning

Principal Investigator: Dr. Charles Levine, Associate Professor, Sociology, Western University

Co-Investigator: Robert Nonomura, BA, Sociology, Western University

Co-Investigator: Dr. Scott Schaffer, Associate Professor, Sociology, Western University

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THIS STUDY!

Letter of Information

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research.

1. Purpose of this Study

You are being invited to participate in a research study looking at how people's attitudes about "owning" things may relate to different moral perspectives about "right" and "wrong." This study includes various hypothetical scenarios and asks participants to respond to questions with their own judgments about what they believe morally *ought* to be done by the characters in the scenario. It also includes various questions about participants' feelings toward the things they own, and their views on various social issues.

You are eligible to participate if you have access to the internet, are a student at the University of Western Ontario (or its affiliates), and you are 18 years of age or older.

2. Research Procedures for this Study

You will be asked to complete a web-based survey which includes a series of questions about your views on various types of "property ownership," as well as various social issues. You will be given a variety of different multiple-choice questions that ask you about your opinions on these things. Again, we do not assume that there are "correct" or "incorrect" responses to these questions and your responses will remain completely anonymous, so please feel encouraged to answer as sincerely as possible.

You will also be given a few hypothetical scenarios, in which characters in these scenarios are faced with a "moral dilemma" about what they *ought* to do. You will be asked to describe what you believe is the morally "right" thing to do, and to provide reasons for your views in a text box. We do not assume that any responses you give should be considered "correct" or "incorrect"; what we are interested to know is *why* you personally believe that what you tell us is the morally "right" thing to do. If you do not want to answer a specific question or you do not understand it, please leave it blank. The survey should take 30-40 minutes to complete, depending on how much detail you provide in response to the moral dilemmas.

3. Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. You can skip any questions on the survey. Participation in this study does not disqualify or prevent participation in other studies.

4. Inquiries and Risks

You are free to ask questions about the study or survey at any time. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

If you do experience distress during the survey, there are counselling resources both online (<http://www.mindyourmind.ca/>) and on-campus (http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html) that are available to help you.

5. Benefits from the Study

This study has no known benefits to the participants. However, your participation will help us gain insight into how attitudes toward ownership may be related to moral cognition. Participants will be helping to contribute to knowledge on the topic, which may help inform relevant policies.

6. Compensation

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

7. Confidentiality

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. No

What is the highest level of education you have **completed**? (Please choose the most appropriate)

- Less than high school diploma
 High school graduate, or equivalent
 College/Community college graduate
 University graduate
 Post-graduate (e.g., Masters, Doctorate)
 Other (Please specify)

What is your current area of study? If you are completing a double-major, please select all that apply.

[Note: If you are unsure of which option to select, please click "Other" and manually input the most appropriate area/discipline of study.]

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine and Dentistry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Theology/Religious Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Sciences (incl. Nutritional Sciences) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information and Media Sciences | |

The last few questions were about *your* education and background. Now we would like to know a few things about your **parents'** education and current occupation.

What is the highest level of education your **mother** has completed? (Please choose the most appropriate)

- Less than high school diploma
 High school graduate, or equivalent
 College/Community college graduate
 University graduate
 Post-graduate (e.g., Masters, Doctorate)
 Other (Please specify)

What is the highest level of education your **father** has completed? (Please choose the most appropriate)

- Less than high school diploma
 High school graduate, or equivalent
 College/Community college graduate
 University graduate
 Post-graduate (e.g., Masters, Doctorate)
 Other (Please specify)

Which of the following best describe your **mother's** current occupation?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Management occupations | <input type="radio"/> Skilled trades, transport, and equipment operators and related occupations |
| <input type="radio"/> Business, finance and administration occupations | <input type="radio"/> Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations |
| <input type="radio"/> Natural and applied sciences and related occupations | <input type="radio"/> Occupations in manufacturing and utilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Health occupations | <input type="radio"/> Domestic duties and/or Homemaking |
| <input type="radio"/> Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services | <input type="radio"/> Not currently working |
| <input type="radio"/> Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport | <input type="radio"/> Other/Prefer Not to Say |
| <input type="radio"/> Sales, retail, and service occupations | |

Which of the following best describe your **father's** current occupation?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Management occupations | <input type="radio"/> Skilled trades, transport, and equipment operators and related occupations |
| <input type="radio"/> Business, finance and administration occupations | <input type="radio"/> Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations |
| <input type="radio"/> Natural and applied sciences and related occupations | <input type="radio"/> Occupations in manufacturing and utilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Health occupations | <input type="radio"/> Domestic duties and/or Homemaking |
| <input type="radio"/> Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services | <input type="radio"/> Not currently working |
| <input type="radio"/> Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport | <input type="radio"/> Other/Prefer Not to Say |
| <input type="radio"/> Sales, retail, and service occupations | |

Part B: Moral Dilemmas

In this next section you will be presented with two (2) fictional scenarios in which characters encounter a "moral dilemma": a case where they are faced with various possible actions and must determine what they "ought" to do.

Here we would like to know your opinion on what the morally "right" thing to do is, and, in particular, your reasons for that opinion.

You will be provided a text box where you will be asked to provide additional details explaining your moral beliefs about what the character "ought" to do in this situation. We do not assume that any responses you give should be considered "correct" or "incorrect"; **what we are interested to know in this study are your reasons for why you yourself believe that this is what ought to be done.**

MORAL DILEMMA #1

Let's imagine that in London, ON, a young woman was near death due to a rare, life-threatening illness. There was one drug that doctors knew might save her that a pharmacologist in London had recently discovered. The pharmacologist was charging \$10,000 for the drug, ten times the amount of what it cost to produce.

The sick woman's husband, "Terence," had been to everyone he knew to ask if he could borrow the money, but he had only been able to come up with half of the money the pharmacologist was asking for. In desperation, Terence went to see the pharmacologist. He told the pharmacologist that his wife was dying and asked the pharmacologist to sell the drug to him for less, or let him pay later. The pharmacologist, however, refused.

After attempting every legal option, Terence was thinking about stealing the drug.

Should Terence steal the drug?

- Yes
 No

Why or why not?

Does Terence have a duty (to his wife) to steal the drug?

- Yes
 No

Why or why not?

Suppose the person who was dying is not his wife but a stranger. Should Terence steal the drug for the stranger?

- Yes
 No

Why or why not?

MORAL DILEMMA #2

The Eriksons were a working class family. Mr. Erikson's job did not pay very much and Mrs. Erikson had to take care of their six children. Anna, the oldest child, found an after-school job at a bakery to help the family make ends meet. The owner of the bakery, who was quite well off, was very strict and insisted that unsold goods be sold at discounts the next day. One day two very hungry homeless people came to the bakery asking for a bit of food because there were no food banks or shelters in the town.

It was obvious to Anna that these people were truly hungry and in need, and she was inclined to give them the unsold baked goods at the end of the day. She was, however, afraid that if the owner found out, she would probably be fired, and she doubted that she would be able to find a new job to support her family.

Do you think Anna should give the homeless people some of the baked goods?

- Yes
 No

Why or why not?

If Anna does give them some food, would this be the same as stealing?

Would it be fair that the homeless people get baked goods for free, while other customers have to pay for them?

- Yes
 No

Why or why not?

Part C: Social Attitudes

In this section we would like get your opinions about different types of social, political, and technological change. For each question, please choose the response that comes closest to your own feelings.

Some people argue that if the human race is to flourish and survive peacefully, people from all cultures, races, and religions must cooperate in a global agreement about military disarmament. How do you feel about this?

- It is an unrealistic and dangerous goal that we should not attempt.
 I am doubtful that it could ever be achieved, and the risks aren't worth it.
 I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
 I think that it is something we must try to achieve as soon as possible.
 It is something that we must achieve immediately.

Some people think that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer groups (LGBTQ) are fighting too hard for what they think is equality and that they are hurting traditions such as marriage and the family. What do you think — are LGBTQ groups fighting too hard for what they think is equality?

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, in some ways.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- No, I don't think so.
- No, definitely not.

The last question concerned the issue of LGBT groups, But what about women's groups? Are women's groups fighting too hard for what they think is equality?

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, in some ways.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- No, I don't think so.
- No, definitely not.

Some people believe in something called "emotional intelligence": a form of intelligence that allows a person to understand and relate to the needs and feelings of others. What do you think of this notion?

- I think it is very overrated.
- I am somewhat skeptical of it.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue
- I think there is something to it.
- I believe that it is something that deserves considerable attention.

Some people argue that most modern work environments are too impersonal and that in their concern for efficiency and profit, they will be harmful to the psychological well being of those who work in them. What do you think — are today's work environments harmful or beneficial to one's psychological well-being?

- They are very harmful.
- They are somewhat harmful.
- They are neither harmful nor beneficial.
- They are somewhat beneficial.
- They are very beneficial.

Some people argue that the legal system has become too tolerant of people who break the law and that this is responsible for such things as higher crime rates. Given such issues as capital punishment and longer prison sentences, do you think that the law needs to impose harsher punishments on criminals?

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, in some ways.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- No, I don't think so.
- No, definitely not.

Some people believe that to be truly "free," a person must be independent of the will of all other people. What do you think of this notion — are people better off when they are completely independent of others?

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, in some ways.
- They are neither better nor worse off.
- No, I don't think so.
- No, definitely not.

Some people argue that the government has become too passive in regulating business and economic institutions. What do you think — should politicians do more to regulate the market exchanges that occur within society?

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, in some ways.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- No, I don't think so.
- No, definitely not.

Some people believe that successful people have an obligation to "give back" to society for the success they have achieved. What do you think — do successful people "owe" something to society or others who are not as successful?

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, in some ways.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- No, I don't think so.
- No, definitely not.

Some people feel that if a union goes on a labour strike, outside workers should not be prevented from taking up the jobs that have been vacated. What do you think — does a person have the right to take on a job vacated during a labour strike?

- No, definitely not.
- No, I don't think so.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- Yes, in some ways.
- Yes, definitely.

Some people believe that it is wrong for companies to manufacture their products in poorer countries with low working standards, in order to save money. What do you think — are these companies taking unfair advantage of their workers?

- No, it is the employee's choice to work at that job.
- No, I don't really think it is unfair.
- I'm somewhere in between on this issue.
- Yes, I think it is somewhat unfair.
- Yes, companies like that should not be allowed to operate.

If Canada were to have a federal election today, which of the political parties would you vote for?

- Bloc Québécois
- Green Party
- Conservative Party
- New Democratic Party
- Liberal Party
- Other (please specify/explain)

Part D: Ownership

This final series of questions has three (3) sections. Please click the response that most closely reflects your personal attitudes and values.

(1/3): In this section we are interested in your attitudes and beliefs about various social practices related to the ownership and control of resources and property.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Note: there are sometimes various nuances to these issues; for this section, please select the response that reflects your "general" attitude toward the particular statement.

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I should be able to do whatever I want with the land I own, within the confines of the law, regardless of how it may affect my neighbours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Damaging (or defacing) private property is never a legitimate form of political protest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The idea that anybody actually "owns" property is an illusion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I should have the right to deny others from using anything I own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I have worked hard for the things I own, then I deserve them for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The public should be afforded greater influence over the decisions of private corporations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Without the right to hold and defend our private property against criminals, society would fall into chaos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In order to improve the lives of poor people, rich people should be taxed more than they currently are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public services such as parks, community centres, and transportation are important for a well-functioning society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If a person needs something that I own but do not need, I have the obligation to share it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(2/3): In this section we would like to know about your attitudes relating to various things that you own, or hope to own.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am less likely than most people to lock things up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry about people taking my possessions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never discard old pictures or snapshots	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I travel I like to take a lot of photographs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy having guests stay in my home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rather buy something I need than borrow it from someone else	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't get particularly upset when I lose things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Renting or leasing a car is more appealing to me than owning one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy sharing what I have	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy donating things to charities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It makes sense to buy a lawnmower with a neighbour and share it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(3/3): There is a lot of talk these days about what the aims of this country should be for the next 10-15 years. Below are some goals that different people say should be given top priority.

Would you please rank each of the following goals according to which ones you yourself consider most important in the long run? (1 = most important, 2 = second-most important, and so on.)

- Maintaining order in the nation
- Give the people more say in important government decisions
- Fighting rising prices
- Protecting freedom of speech

Thank You

Thank you for completing this survey. As described in the Letter of Information, your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

We sincerely appreciate your contribution to this study. If you would like further information about the project, or have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Robert Nonomura

Appendix C (continued): Moral Dilemmas

Instructions

In this next section you will be presented with two (2) fictional scenarios in which characters encounter a “moral dilemma”: a case where they are faced with various possible actions and must determine what they “ought” to do.

Here we would like to know your opinion on what the morally “right” thing to do is, and, in particular, your reasons for that opinion.

You will be provided a text box where you will be asked to provide additional details explaining your moral beliefs about what the character “ought” to do in this situation. We do not assume that any responses you give should be considered “correct” or “incorrect”; what we are interested to know in this study are your reasons for why you yourself believe that this is what ought to be done.

MORAL DILEMMA #1

Let's imagine that in London, ON, a young woman was near death due to a rare, life-threatening illness. There was one drug that doctors knew might save her that a pharmacologist in London had recently discovered. The pharmacologist was charging \$10,000 for the drug, ten times the amount of what it cost to produce.

The sick woman’s husband, “Terence,” had been to everyone he knew to ask if he could borrow the money, but he had only been able to come up with half of the money the pharmacologist was asking for. In desperation, Terence went to see the pharmacologist. He told the pharmacologist that his wife was dying and asked the pharmacologist to sell the drug to him for less, or let him pay later. The pharmacologist, however, refused.

After attempting every legal option, Terence was thinking about stealing the drug.

1. Should Terence steal the drug?

Why or why not?

2. Does Terence have a duty (to his wife) to steal the drug?

Why or why not?

3. Suppose the person who was dying is not his wife but a stranger. Should Terence steal the drug for the stranger?

Why or why not?

MORAL DILEMMA #2

The Eriksons were a working class family. Mr. Erikson's job did not pay very much and Mrs. Erikson had to take care of their six children. Anna, the oldest child, found an after-school job at a bakery to help the family make ends meet. The owner of the bakery, who was quite well off, was very strict and insisted that unsold goods be sold at discounts the next day. One day two very hungry homeless people came to the bakery asking for a bit of food because there were no food banks or shelters in the town.

It was obvious to Anna that these people were truly hungry and in need, and she was inclined to give them the unsold baked goods at the end of the day. She was, however, afraid that if the owner found out, she would probably be fired, and she doubted that she would be able to find a new job to support her family.

1. Do you think Anna should give the homeless people some of the baked goods?

Why or why not?

2. If Anna does give them some food, would this be the same as stealing?

Please explain your answer.

3. Would it be fair that the homeless people get baked goods for free, while other customers have to pay for them?

Why or why not?

Appendix D Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from OLS regression models predicting Moral Autonomy Score (MAS) for Moral Dilemma 1

	Model 1-1 (n=133)	Model 1b-1 [†] (n=95)	Model 2-1 (n=94)	Model 3-1 (n=95)
Property Attitude Scale (PAS) (Private = Higher)	-0.466*** (0.137)	-0.568*** (0.152)	-0.612*** (0.171)	-0.534** (0.183)
Age			-0.752 (0.403)	-0.819* (0.405)
Gender (Female)			-8.262 (7.106)	-10.912 (7.258)
Education (<High School)				
Post-Secondary			-1.973 (8.665)	-2.010 (9.022)
Post-Graduate			3.738 (8.589)	3.039 (8.722)
Faculty Type (Humanistic)			-1.595 (6.706)	-0.466 (6.750)
Religion (Abrahamic)				
Atheist/Non-Affiliated			-4.124 (6.583)	-2.817 (6.655)
Non-Western Religion			-13.327 (11.182)	-9.135 (11.393)
Possessiveness				0.147 (0.171)
Non-Generosity				-0.358 (0.201)
Constant	65.712*** (7.460)	72.308*** (8.408)	106.036*** (18.016)	107.165*** (19.128)
Pseudo R2	0.0739	0.1215	0.1209	0.1312

Note: PAS is based on a possible score of 0–100

[†]Regression includes only respondents with no missing data *p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001

Appendix E Regression coefficients (and standard errors) from OLS regression models predicting Moral Autonomy Score (MAS) for Moral Dilemma 2

	Model 1-2 (n=133)	Model 1b-2† (n=95)	Model 2-2 (n=95)	Model 3-2 (n=94)
Property Attitude Scale (PAS) (Private = Higher)	-0.704*** (0.136)	-0.735*** (0.151)	-0.724*** (0.171)	-0.678*** (0.184)
Age			0.163 (0.402)	0.102 (0.408)
Gender (Female)			8.517 (7.079)	6.444 (7.305)
Education (<High School)				
Post-Secondary			3.019 (8.632)	3.827 (9.081)
Post-Graduate			-0.545 (8.556)	-0.678 (8.779)
Faculty Type (Humanistic)			6.419 (6.680)	6.962 (6.794)
Religion (Abrahamic)				
Atheist/Non-Affiliated			-6.537 (6.558)	-5.921 (6.698)
Non-Western Religion			7.434 (11.139)	10.621 (11.467)
Possessiveness				0.144 (0.172)
Non-Generosity				-0.273 (0.202)
Constant	89.160*** (7.392)	92.391*** (8.347)	79.330*** (17.947)	79.547*** (19.252)
Pseudo R2	0.1636	0.1957	0.1854	0.1831

Note: PAS is based on a possible score of 0–100

†Regression includes only respondents with no missing data *p≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001

Curriculum Vitae

ROBERT NONOMURA

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Sociology*, Western University, London, ON. 2018
 Supervisor: Charles G. Levine
 Social Inequality Exam, 2014
 Committee: Sam Clark (Chair), Catherine Corrigan-Brown, Scott Schaffer
 Sociological Theory Exam, 2013 (*with Distinction*)
 Committee: Michael Gardiner (Chair), Scott Schaffer, Charles Levine
 Research Apprenticeship, 2014
 Mentor: James Côté
- B.A. Honours Specialization Sociology*, Western, London, ON. 2010

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed

- 2018 Nonomura, Robert. “‘Committing Sociology’ as a Value-Commitment,”
Canadian Review of Sociology. (doi: 10.1111/cars.12199)
- 2016 Nonomura, Robert. “Political Consumerism, and the Participation Gap: Are
 Boycotting and ‘Buycotting’ Youth-Based Activities?” *Journal of Youth Studies*.
 (doi:10.1080/13676261.2016.1206861)
- 2014 Nonomura, Robert. Book Review: “Guyland: The perilous world where boys
 become men,” *McGill Sociological Review*. 4: 113–115.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2015–2016 Social Science and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship
- 2014–2015 Ontario Graduate Doctoral Scholarship
- 2013–2014 Ontario Graduate Doctoral Scholarship
- 2012–2013 Ontario Graduate Doctoral Scholarship
- 2011–2015 Western Graduate Research Doctoral Scholarship
- 2011 Graduate Alumni Award, University of Western Ontario
 (Highest GPA in Sociology Graduate Department 2010–2011)
- 2010–2011 Western Graduate Research Masters Scholarship
- 2010 Dean’s Honour List, BA, Faculty of Social Science, *University of
 Western Ontario*
- 2009 Dean’s Honour List, BA, Faculty of Social Science, *University of
 Western Ontario*
- 2006 Western Scholarship of Distinction

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

Course Instructor

University of Western Ontario

Summer 2018	Controversies in Sociology (1026F)
2017–2018	Survey of Sociological Theory (2240E)
Fall 2017	Modern Social Theory (3404F)
Winter 2016	Modern Social Theory (3404G)
Fall 2016	Modern Social Theory (3404F)
2015–2016	Survey of Sociological Theory (2240E)

Kings University College

Winter 2016	Contemporary Social Theory (2271B)
Fall 2015	Foundations of Social Theory (2270A)

Teaching Assistantships

University of Western Ontario

Winter 2015	Survey of Sociological Theory (2240E)
Fall 2014	Statistics for Social Analysis (2205a)
Fall 2014	Foundations of Social Theory (2770a)
Winter 2014	Contemporary Social Theory (2771b)
Fall 2013	Foundations of Social Theory (2770a)
2012–2013	Survey of Sociological Theory (2240E)
Winter 2012	Contemporary Social Theory (2771b)
Fall 2011	Foundations of Social Theory (2770a)
2010–2011	Social Inequality (2239)

Kings University College

2012–2013	Introduction to Sociology (1020)
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Teaching Awards

2014	Graduate Student Teaching Award, Society of Graduate Students, \$500
2012	Graduate Student Teaching Award, <i>Nominee</i> , Society of Graduate Students
2011	Graduate Student Teaching Award, <i>Nominee</i> , Society of Graduate Students

Teaching Training

2017	Teaching Mentorship Program for Graduate Students, UWO Teaching Support Centre
2016	Future Professors Workshop, UWO Teaching Support Centre
2015	Fall Perspectives on Teaching Conference, UWO Teaching Support Centre
2015	Winter Conference on Teaching for Graduate Students, UWO Teaching Support Centre
2011	Teaching Assistant Training Program, UWO Teaching Support Centre

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- 2018 “Name-Based Discrimination and Resume Whitening: How Do Second Generation Immigrants Understand and Navigate ‘Anticipated Discrimination’ in the Canadian Labour Market?” with Awish Aslam, *XIX International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology*, Toronto, ON.
- 2017 “Name-Based Discrimination in the Canadian Labour Market” *Society for the Study of Social Problems 67th Annual Meeting*, Montreal, QC.
- 2017 “Investigating Moral Reasoning and Attitudes Toward Private Property: Implications for Fromm’s theory of ‘Having’ and ‘Being’” *Canadian Sociological Association 52nd Annual Meeting*, Toronto, ON.
- 2017 “Value Neutrality and Social Science” (Panelist), *Canadian Sociological Association 52nd Annual Meeting*, Toronto, ON.
- 2015 “The Sociologist as Curator: Reflections on an Organic Sociology Project.” *Society for the Study of Social Problems 65th Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 “The Sociologist as Curator: Reflections on an Organic Sociology Project.” Symposium for Early Career Theorists, *Canadian Sociological Association 50th Annual Meeting*, Ottawa, ON.
- 2015 “Knowledge By Whom? Public Sociology as a Curatorial Project.” *Engage 15th Annual Sociology & Anthropology Graduate Student Conference*. Guelph, ON.
- 2014 “Political Consumerism, Youth and Adulthood: Does Age Predict Odds of Boycotting/“Buycotting” in Canada?” *Society for the Study of Social Problems 64th Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA.
- 2014 “Is There a Place for Critical Theory in the ‘New’ Sociology of Morality?” *Canadian Sociological Association 49th Annual Meeting*, St. Catharines, ON.
- 2014 “Political Consumerism, Youth and Adulthood: Does Age Predict Odds of Boycotting/“Buycotting’?” *Canadian Sociological Association 49th Annual Meeting*, St. Catharines, ON.
- 2014 “The Sociologist as Curator: An Exploratory Project in “Organic” Public Sociology.” *6th Annual Sociology Graduate Student Conference*. London, ON.
- 2013 “Science of Morality, Moral Science, Or Both? Toward a Dialogical Sociology of Morality.” *Society for the Study of Social Problems 63rd Annual Meeting*, New York, NY.
- 2013 “Science of Morality, Moral Science, and What’s Missing from the ‘New’ Sociology of Morality.” *5th Annual Sociology Graduate Student Conference*, London, ON.
- 2013 “Science of Morality, Moral Science, and What’s Missing from the ‘New’ Sociology of Morality.” *Engage 14th Annual Sociology & Anthropology Graduate Student Conference*.” Guelph, ON.
- 2012 “De-Fetishizing the Authentic: A Critical Analysis of ‘Authenticity’ in Youth Culture.” *Canadian Sociological Association 47th Annual Meeting*, Waterloo, ON.