THE STATE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP:
INTEGRATING AND EXTENDING A CENTURY OF RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

People develop feelings of ownership for a variety of objects, material and immaterial in nature. We refer to this state as psychological ownership. Building upon and extending prior scholarship we offer a conceptual examination of this construct. After defining psychological ownership, we address "why" it exists and "how" it comes into being. We propose that this state finds its roots in a set of intra-individual motives (efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place to dwell). In addition, we discuss the experiences that give rise to psychological ownership and propose several positive and negative consequences of this state. Our work provides a foundation for the development of a comprehensive theory of psychological ownership and the conceptual underpinnings for empirical testing.

Expressing a ‘classical’ Western perspective, Rousseau (1950) suggested that ‘civil society’ most likely began when a person fenced off a plot of ground and took it into his/her head to claim ‘this is mine,’ while others accepted this assertion. Recognizing the psychology of ownership, Etzioni writes that ownership is a "dual creation, part attitude, part object, part in the mind, part 'real'" (1991: 466), and Heider (1958) observes that ‘attitudes of ownership’ are common among people. Consistent with these views, economic psychologist Leon Litwinski (1942) and social psychologist Lita Furby (1991) offer the thesis that there is a 'psychology of mine and property' that attaches itself to objects. These perspectives provide a new lens with which to view possession, property, and ownership. We refer to this lens as psychological ownership, a cognitive-affective state that characterizes the human condition.

Scholars from various disciplines have been interested in the genesis of possessive tendencies and the psychology of mine and property (e.g., Etzioni, 1991; Furby 1991; Litwinski, 1942, 1947). Some have offered a genetic explanation for the emergence of such psychological states (e.g., Burk, 1900; Darling, 1937), others have argued that they are the product of socialization practices carried out in society (e.g., Furby, 1976; Kline & France, 1899), while a sociobiological (cf. Buss, 1990; Wilson, 1975) perspective envisions a combination of both biological tendencies toward territoriality and accepted social practices. The psychology of ownership has been studied in a variety of contexts including child development (e.g., Isaacs, 1933; Kline & France, 1899), consumer behavior (Belk, 1988), among the elderly (Cram & Paton, 1993; Kamptner, 1989), within the customs and practices of different societies (Kline & France, 1899), from the perspective of holding land and having a house “with four walls” (Duncan, 1981; Porteous, 1976), across different socio-economic strata (Rochberg-Halton, 1980), within the philosophical discussions of ‘being’ (Heidegger, 1967; Sartre, 1943), and finally, in the workplace (Dirks, Cummings, & Pierce, 1996; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001; Pratt & Dutton, 1998).

We integrate and build on these diverse literatures in developing one conceptual perspective on psychological ownership. We focus on several questions that are central to the establishment of the construct and that still need to be addressed in a systematic manner, including the meaning of psychological ownership, the genesis of this state, and the conditions under which it manifests itself. Our examination is particularly informed by the work of James (1890) and Prelinger (1959) on objects perceived to be part of the self and not-self, Etzioni's (1991) work on the objective and subjective aspects of ownership, Heider's (1958)

reflections on attitudes of ownership, the work on self-identity and the psychology of mine (e.g., Rochberg-Halton, 1980; Litwinski, 1947), as well as the research on the feelings of 'mine' and 'me' in developmental psychology (cf. Furby, 1991).

We expand past research on the psychology of ownership in two major ways. First, after presenting the theoretical foundations for our work, we articulate the motivation for (i.e., the individual functions served by) psychological ownership. Thus, we address the question *why* individuals come to feel ownership, which has not been done in a systematic manner before. Second, we explicate the human experiences that result in the emergence of psychological ownership, thus exploring the questions *what* factors cause individuals to experience these feelings, and *how* this psychological state is achieved. In addition, we provide initial insight into what can and cannot be owned psychologically (i.e., the objects or targets of ownership), as well as, the process through which psychological ownership emerges. Finally, we discuss the effects of this state on individuals.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this part of the paper, we lay out the theoretical foundations for our examination of psychological ownership. We begin with a brief review of extant research on the psychology of ownership suggesting that this psychological state exists as a part of the human condition.

Psychological Experiences of Ownership

There is diverse literature that suggests that the psychology of possession[1] is well rooted in people socialized by a Western heritage[2]. The psychological aspects of ownership have been explored by anthropologists, psychologists, social psychologists, geographers, philosophers, animal behaviorists, consumer behaviorists, historians, artists, and students of life-span development, among others. Cram and Paton (1993), for example, in their discussion of possessions as part of the extended self, note that it is common to witness the debilitating effects associated with the movement of the elderly from their homes to nursing facilities. They attribute these effects to the separation of the individual from their possessions, in which much of the self has become interwoven. Developmental psychologists suggest that the feelings of 'mine' and the close connection between 'me' and 'mine' emerge because of the toddler's innate motive to control objects and to be effectant (cf. Furby, 1991). Among young children at play, one can often observe strong reactions -MY car, ME!- when a child picks up another child's toy (cf. Isaacs, 1933; Levine, 1983).

According to Dittmar (1992), it is common for people to psychologically experience the connection between self and various targets of possession such as homes, automobiles, space, and other people. Possessions come to play such a dominant role in the owner's identity, that they become part of the extended self (cf. Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992). Mann writes, "What I own feels like a part of me" (1991: 211). Sartre (1943/1969), in his treatise on "being and nothingness," notes that "to have" (along with "to do" and "to be") is one of the three categories of human existence and that "the totality of my possessions reflects the totality of my being … I am what I have … What is mine is myself" (p. 591-592). Likewise, James (1890) commented on the fine line between ‘me’ and ‘mine’:

> a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his cloths and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his land, and yacht and bank account. All these things give the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die, he feels cast down (p. 291-292).[3]

While ownership is generally experienced as involving person-object relations, it can also be felt toward non-physical entities such as ideas, words, artistic creations, and other people. Isaacs (1933), for example, observed feelings of ownership among children towards nursery rhymes and songs -- they were ‘theirs’ if they heard them first and no one else had a right to sing or hear them without their permission. It is common for young children, Isaacs (1933) notes, to feel that things were ‘theirs’ if they had “used or mentioned them first.” Heider (1958) discussed the conflicts among scientists as to the parentage of ideas or inventions (Isaacs, 1933). The feelings of ownership towards various objects have important and potentially strong psychological and behavioral effects. The growth of possessions, for example, produces a positive and uplifting effect (Formanek, 1991). Possibly as a result of self-enhancing biases, invested effort, controllability, and social approval, owned objects appear to be more attractive and rated more favorably than objects which are not owned (Beggan, 1992; Nuttin, 1987). Similarly, the sense of ownership that people develop towards their homes typically results in preoccupation with decoration. Home is often extolled in song, poetry, and proverb (Porteous, 1976). The loss of possessions, on the other hand, leads to "... shrinkage of our personality, a partial conversion of ourselves to nothingness" (James, 1890: 178), and feelings of depression (Formanek, 1991).

In summary, both past research and social practice suggest that the feelings of ownership are part of the human condition, these feelings can be directed toward a variety of objects, and they have important consequences for the individual.

Psychological Ownership: Construct Definition and Elaboration

We conceptually define psychological ownership as that state where an individual feels as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is 'theirs' (i.e., it is MINE!). Elaboration of the construct represented by this definition highlights a number of distinguishing features. First, the sense of ownership manifests itself in the meaning and emotion commonly associated with 'MY' or 'MINE,' and 'OUR[4].' Psychological ownership answers the question –"What do I feel is mine?" and its conceptual core is a sense of possession (Wilpert, 1991) towards a particular target (e.g., the products of one's labor, toys, home, land, significant others). Second, psychological ownership reflects a relationship between an individual and an object (material or immaterial in nature) in which the object is experienced as having a close connection with the self (Furby, 1978a, 1978b; Litwinski, 1942; Wilpert, 1991), becoming part of the 'extended self' (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992). As Isaacs notes, "... what is mine becomes (in my feelings) a part of ME" (Isaacs, 1933: 225).

Third, the state of psychological ownership (i.e., mine-ness and/or our-ness) is complex and is comprised of a cognitive and affective core. It is a condition, of which one is aware through intellectual perception. It reflects an individual's awareness, thoughts, and beliefs regarding the target of ownership. This cognitive state, however, is coupled with an emotional or affective sensation. Feelings of ownership are said to be pleasure producing per se (cf. Beggan, 1992; Furby, 1978a; Nuttin, 1987; Porteous, 1976) and are accompanied by a sense of efficacy and competence (White, 1959). The affective component becomes apparent in the feelings that arise when others lay claim to objects for which one feels a sense of personal ownership (e.g., Those ideas are MINE!) or collective ownership shared with a group (e.g., That garden space is OURS!).

Our conceptualization of psychological ownership helps highlight its distinction from legal ownership. Recognizing this distinction, Etzioni (1991) notes that property and ownership are both real, as well as, psychologically experienced as they exist in the 'mind.' Although possibly related, legal and psychological ownership differ in some significant ways. For example, legal ownership is recognized

foremost by society, and hence the rights that come with ownership are specified and protected by the legal system. In contrast, psychological ownership is recognized foremost by the individual who holds this feeling. Consequently, it is the individual who manifests the felt rights associated with psychological ownership. Furthermore, psychological ownership can exist in the absence of legal ownership, as noted by Furby (1980), Isaacs (1933), and Etzioni (1991), among others. Finally, people can legally own an object (e.g., automobile, home), yet never claim the possession as their own - "it never seems to belong to me" (McCracken, 1986: 79). According to McCracken (1986), under these conditions the individual simply fails to claim the object as 'theirs' because they do not find personal meaning in the object's symbolic properties, a necessary precondition for the experience and claiming something as ‘mine. In a similar fashion, the responsibilities associated with legal and psychological ownership differ. The responsibilities that come with legal ownership are often an outgrowth of the legal system, while those associated with the psychological state stem from the individual, his/her feelings of being responsible and acts of ‘claiming’ (asserting) the non-owned as ‘mine.’

In the next section, we explore the genesis of psychological ownership. Thus, we ask the question “why” does this state exist.

THE GENESIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

Why do people develop feelings of psychological ownership? What are the 'roots' of this psychological state? What individual motives become served through this feeling?

While no comprehensive taxonomy or empirical evidence currently exists that resolves the genesis question, several scholars have speculated on this issue and have suggested different reasons for ownership and its accompanying psychological state. Some have approached this question by looking for the meaning of and role played by possessions in people’s lives (Rochberg-Halton, 1980; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Richins (1994), for example, suggested that possessions are valued for utilitarian, enjoyment, interpersonal, identity, financial, and appearance-related reasons. Dittmar noted that possessions play several important roles; in addition to serving a classical economic utilitarian value, they also "shape our consciousness, our self-awareness and our perception of the world" (1992: 65). Porteous (1976) offered that there are three satisfactions which derive from ownership: (1) control over space per se; (2) personalization of space as an assertion of identity; and, (3) stimulation (achieved, for example, by thinking about, using, improving, or

defending one's possessions/territory). It has also been argued (e.g., Ardrey, 1966; Duncan, 1981; Porteous, 1976; Weil, 1952) that possessions help create ‘a place,’ symbolically captured by the concept of ‘home,’ and its capacity to provide the individual with a context in which to dwell, a sense of psychic comfort, pleasure and security (cf. Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1967; Steiner, 1978).

Within this diversity, there appear to be two schools of thought on the genesis of psychological ownership. The first group of scholars takes a biological perspective and fixes the origin of psychological experiences of ownership in the individual’s innate genetic structure (McDougall, 1923/1908). The second group takes a social (cultural) constructionists view and focuses on the socialization practices and rituals carried out in different societies (McCracken, 1986).

Representing the ‘nature’ side of the argument, many believe that the human condition is characterized by an innate need for possession (cf. Ardrey, 1966; Burk, 1900; Darling, 1937; Hall & Wiltse, 1891; 1937; Porteous, 1976; Kline & France, 1899; Weil, 1952). Baldwin (cited by Litwinski, 1942), for example, suggests that possessive and property-related behavior is an instinct. He writes: "Even with animals one finds the recognition of *meum* and *tuum* and that not only with regard to other individuals like the young of the family, but equally with regard to things. The bird claims the nest and the whole tree as its own. Certain birds like magpies even appropriate useless objects and consider them as their own" (see Litwinski, 1942: 36). Ellis (1985) notes that the primitive drive to possess is revealed even in laboratory rats and pigeons who often prefer food which they ‘earned’ (by pressing levers in a Skinner box) instead of the same food freely available elsewhere. Similarly, possessive behavior of children is commonly observed at a very early age and at times prior to their use of words with possessive or ownership references (Ellis, 1985). Litwinski (1942) notes that with children, the impulse to act possessively and assert claims of ownership develops very early - "It must be considered as an innate tendency though, in spite of the fact that doubtless it owes much of its strength, as well as the direction which its development takes to example and social education" (p. 36). Similarly, McDougall (1923/1908) states that "The impulse to collect and hoard various objects is displayed in one way or another by almost all human beings, and seems to be due to a true instinct." (p. 75). Recently Ellis (1985) concluded his review of the literature on possessions and property by noting that possessive behavior appears to be universally present in all human societies and is most evident in references to self and one’s own personal space. He also notes that ownership is not a uniquely human

phenomenon, as there are “some neurological processes that humans share with other primates … [that] must cause us to claim property and generally honor the claims of other social group members” (Ellis, 1985: 129-130).

Beaglehole (1932), on the other hand, argues that there is very little, if any, evidence supporting the notion of an innate ownership instinct. While possessions appear to serve a variety of functions such as satisfying people's needs for security, food, and reproduction, they are not an end in and of themselves (Rudmin, 1990a, 1990b). Similarly, Dittmar (1992) suggests that biology may play a role, but not an overriding one. "Social and cultural factors significantly influence how people relate to their material possessions" (Dittmar, 1992: 36).

The ‘nurture’ side of the argument is articulated by the human development scholars (cf. Furby, 1978b; Lewis & Brook, 1974; Levine, 1983; Seligman, 1975) who suggest that ownership and its psychological state is experienced early in the development process. For the young child, the differentiation between self and not-self correlates with control (cf. Furby, 1978b; Lewis & Brook, 1974; Seligman, 1975) --objects that can be controlled come to be considered as part of the self, and those which cannot fall within the not-self region. It is also through a parent's education (e.g., "not yours, don't touch;" "go and get your ball;" “bring back your bucket, which the little boy has stolen from you") that the little child comes to consider objects as their own (Litwinski, 1942). Accompanying maturation and an awareness of social relationships, people move to experiences of ownership involving more complex three-way relationships (i.e., self-object-other). As a result, individuals begin to think of possessions in terms of *meum et tuum* (this is mine and not yours; that is yours and not mine).

Concurring with Dittmar (1992), we suggest that both biology and social experiences play a role in shaping people’s relations to their possessions. Based on the above discussion, we propose that the roots of psychological ownership can be found, in part[5], in three human motives: (a) efficacy and effectance, (b) self-identity, and (c) ‘having a place.’ This taxonomy departs from, and advances, existing research on motives in several ways. First, it focuses only on the motives that psychological ownership fulfills, as opposed to motives fulfilled by legal ownership, such as the instrumental or utilitarian functions. Second, it integrates prior research by providing a complete, yet parsimonious taxonomy of the motives that psychological ownership fulfills. For example, in addition to fulfilling the basic needs of efficacy and effectance, self-

identity, and having a place in which dwell, these motives serve associated functions such as stimulation, providing security, comfort, personal history, pleasure, and interpersonal. In that sense, we have attempted to provide parsimony by capturing the elemental motives. Each of the three motives for psychological ownership will be explored in greater detail below.

Efficacy and Effectance

Isaacs states that the desire to own "can only be thought of in terms of power --or rather, of powerlessness" (1933: 225). The motive for possession is in large part being in control --having the means to satisfy "my need as *mine*"; possessions enable the person to feel safe when they are "mine to have and to hold" (Isaacs, 1933: 225). Having, therefore, becomes an end in itself, it becomes an issue of "power or powerlessness;" hence, the psychological consequences of these states. The ultimate meaning of ownership is the fusing of the target of ownership with the self. 'To have' is to take into oneself, this being the literal and ultimate form of control and possession (cf. Dittmar, 1992).

In her review of individual-centered explanations for the process by which material possessions become a part of the extended self, Dittmar (1992) refers to developmental theory and the work of Furby (1978a, 1978b, 1980). This work postulates that the motivation for possession stems from the individual's need for effectance and ability to produce desired outcomes in the environment (cf. White, 1959). "Possessions," she notes, "have an instrumental function --they make possible certain activities and pleasures. In other words, they enable one to effect desired outcomes in one's environment. The importance of this instrumental factor at all ages ... is provocative ... The results here suggest possession may be one manifestation of effectance motivation in that a central feature of possession is the ability to affect and control the object in whatever way one wishes" (Furby, 1978b: 60).

White (1959) argues that part of the human condition is revealed by the individual's exploration of the environment, which in turn is driven by the effectance motive, that is, the individual's desire to interact effectively with his/her environment. The effectance motive is aroused by differences in the environment and is sustained when one's actions produce further differences. The motive subsides when a situation has been explored to the point that it no longer presents new possibilities. Exploration of, and the ability to control, one's environment gives rise to feelings of efficacy and pleasures, which stem from "being the cause" and having altered the environment through one's control/actions. In addition to producing intrinsic pleasure,

control over the environment may produce extrinsic satisfaction as certain desirable objects are acquired. Beggan's (1991) research provides further evidence that possessions serve to satisfy individuals' control motivation.

Similarly, Furby (1978) suggests that there is both intrinsic and instrumental functions served by possessions. The motivation for, and the meaning of, ownership is embedded in an effectance or competence motive. The desire to experience causal efficacy leads to attempts to take possession of objects in one's environment. Building upon White's (1959) work, she proposes that the control of objects through ownership is pleasure producing *per se* and leads to perceptions of personal efficacy. Furby also states that possessions come to be part of the extended self because "they express a person's ability to exert direct control over the social and physical environment" (Dittmar, 1992: 58). Thus possessions are important to individuals because they are instrumental for exercising control over the physical environment and over people (Furby, 1978a). Control over the physical environment stems from control of the object, control over the use of the object, and use of the object as a mechanism to exert control over other parts of the environment. Social control stems from being able to regulate others' access to or use of one's possessions.

Based on the discussion above, we propose that psychological ownership is grounded, in part, in the motivation to be efficacious in relation to one's environment. Due to the innate need for feelings of efficacy and competence, individuals are propelled to explore and manipulate their environment. These person-environment interactions may result in the exercise of control and subsequent feelings of personal efficacy and competence. Through this process, "possessions and self become intimately related" (Furby, 1991: 460).

Self-identity

Numerous scholars have suggested that, in addition to serving an instrumental function (efficacy/effectance motive), possessions also serve as symbolic expressions of the self and that there is a close connection between possessions, self-identity, and individuality (e.g., Abelson & Prentice, 1989; Dittmar, 1992; Mead, 1934; Porteous, 1976). Drawing on this research, we propose that ownership helps people come to define themselves, express their self-identity to others, and maintain the continuity of the self across time.

Coming to know thyself. The symbolic interactionism and the social constructionism perspectives (e.g., Mead, 1934) provide valuable insights into the process of self-identity and its connection with

possessions. Identity is at the interface between the individual and society. An individual develops a sense of self-identity as a result of viewing oneself from the perspective of how others view us. Self-awareness is the outcome of reflection (Dittmar, 1992; Mead, 1934).

Possessions play an important role in the process of self-understanding and self-identity because of the meaning and the importance ascribed to them by society (McCracken, 1986; Mead, 1934). Through an interactive, cyclical, and reinforcing process, individuals come to find pleasure, comfort, and self-understanding in their relationship with certain objects. In other words, possessions are brought into the realm of the extended self as the individual interacts with them in search of self-knowledge and meaning. As pleasure and comfort are found in one's interactions with objects, the socially shared meaning ascribed to those objects gets internalized and becomes part of the individual's self-identity (McCracken, 1986). "Personal possessions," according to Dittmar, "come to objectify aspects of self-definition" (1992: 85). Thus, through exploration of their environment and through experiencing an object, people learn something about it, as well as about themselves, as they are closely linked. This nearness suggests that the person and object are one (Dittmar, 1992).

It is, therefore, through our interaction with our possessions, coupled with a reflection upon their meaning that "…our sense of identity, our self-definition, are established, maintained, reproduced and transformed"(Dittmar, 1992: 86). It is through the interactive process with one's possessions that they provide a space, comfort, autonomy, pleasure, and opportunity that facilitates the development and cultivation of one's identity (Kron, 1983; Saunders, 1990) as they are symbols of self (Cooper, 1976).

Expression of self-identity to others. As suggested by researchers in different fields including anthropology, consumer behavior, and psychology, possessions play a significant role in social interaction (Dittmar, 1992; McCracken, 1986). In addition to affording power over others, they communicate the individual's identity to others, hence achieving recognition and social prestige. Thus, objects can objectify the self (Dittmar, 1992). In objectively telling who we are, what we do, and who or what we might become, things can act as signs of the self and role models for its continued cultivation (Rochberg-Halton, 1984: 339).

People collect and publicly display a myriad of different objects as symbolic expressions of their self-identity (Dittmar, 1992). Examples include clothing and automobiles, location and type of home owned along with its interior and exterior decoration, pictures, awards, degrees, and certificates publicly displayed

on office walls. The self expression appears to be most revealing in the realm of consumer goods. Items that we purchase and display serve as symbols expressing personal values, qualities, attitudes, education, social affiliations, and accomplishments (Levy, 1959). People frequently express concern with how others will view them in relation to certain possessions (Munson & Spivey, 1980). Furthermore, consumers work to match their image with the image of the typical user of a particular product (Grubb & Hupp, 1968; Sirgy, 1985).

Maintain the continuity of self-identity. Possessions are psychologically meaningful for yet another self-identity perspective -- as a way to achieve a continuity of the self (e.g., Kamptner, 1989, 1991; Price, Arnould & Curasi, 2000; Rochberg-Halton, 1980). Possessions provide people with feelings of comfort, an emotional connection between themselves and their past. As suggested by Cram and Paton (1993), "Possessions are repositories of memories of one's self identity in the past ..." (p. 19). For example, as people get older, their past reflected by mementos, photographs, diaries, letters, and gifts from others becomes an increasingly important part of their self-identity (Cram & Paton, 1993; Rochberg-Halton, 1984). Possessions may even afford a sense of security (Dittmar, 1992). If they are lost or taken away, individuals may experience an erosion of the sense of self (e.g., James, 1890; Kamptner, 1989). In contrast, preserving possessions allows an individual to maintain a sense of continuity through those items that have become symbolic extensions of their selves.

Thus, it could be proposed that the motivation for ownership and psychological ownership is, in part, grounded in self-identity. Arising out of the dynamics associated with coming to know thyself, expressing self-identity to others, and maintaining it across time, people become psychologically attached to objects and integrate them into their self.

Having a Place

To have a place is, according to the French political philosopher Simone Weil (1952), an important "need of the human soul" (p. 41). A number of scholars have linked this need to feelings of ownership (cf. Ardrey, 1966; Darling, 1937, 1939; Duncan, 1981; Porteous, 1976; Weil, 1952). Weil, for example, claims that property (i.e., private and collective) along with order, liberty, freedom of opinion, truth, obedience, and responsibility are "vital needs of the soul, ... the soul feels isolated, lost, if it is not surrounded by objects which seem to it like an extension of the bodily members" (1952: 33).

Similarly, Ardrey (1966), Lorenz and Leyhausen (1973), and Porteous (1976) have argued that individuals have an innate territoriality need, that is, a need to possess a certain space. 'Home,' according to J.D. Porteous, "is 'the territorial core,' 'a preferred space, and a fixed point of reference' around which people structure their daily lives" (Kron, 1983: 23). Drawing upon the work of environmental psychologists D. Geoffrey Hayward, Kron (1983) states that 'home' is a place of refuge and one's roots.

Ardrey suggests, people have an inherent drive to gain and to defend an exclusive property. For Darling (1937, 1939), territory is in essence a psychological expression. It is because of this need that people devote significant amounts of time, energy, and resources to acquire, protect, decorate, and display their homes. Duncan (1981), in her discussion of home ownership, also speaks of it as a psychological phenomenon that may have roots in human needs. The home, she suggests, is an object of ownership that may serve the human need for having a place -- my place. Porteous (1976) too argues that 'the home' is important because it provides the individual with both physical and psychic security. In support of this notion of 'home providing a sense of security,' Mehta and Belk (1991) described how immigrants retained and used possessions as 'security blankets' providing them with a sense of place as they adapted to their new environments. Drawing upon the Jungian concept of the sanctity of the threshold as a universal phenomenon, Porteous (1976) claims that the personification of owned objects (e.g., the home) serves to promote security, identity, and individualism, each of which is important because it represents freedom of self-determination.

Porteous (1976) provides us with insight into the concept of home and the three territorial satisfactions (i.e., control over space, personalization of space as an assertion of identity, and stimulation) that derive from the possession of territory. While initially talking about the home in terms of geographical space including four walls on a plot of land, he acknowledges that such places as the village, compound, or neighborhood (which he acknowledges as collectively owned) also serve as a home or a home base for some people, thereby helping to fulfill their territorial needs. He further suggests that home can also be thought of from the perspective of a fixed point of reference around which the individual structures a significant portion of his/her reality. Psychologically, possessions that come to be experienced as home are those in which the individual has, in all likelihood, made a considerable emotional investment (Porteous, 1976). It might be suggested, therefore, that it is those possessions in which an individual finds a strong sense of identification that come to be regarded as home -- my place.

Interpreting the work of Heidegger and Polanyi, Dreyfus (1991) notes that when we inhabit something, that something is no longer an object for us, instead it becomes a part of us. For Heidegger and Polanyi this is called 'dwelling in' or 'inhabiting. According to Polanyi, people may dwell in, that is, come to feel at home, even in their language. As people develop their 'home base,' they become psychologically attached (e.g., come to feel at home in one's language, in one's country, in one's things) to a variety of objects of material or immaterial nature. In many of these possessions they may find a special place, one that is 'their's,' that is familiar, that provides some form of personal security. Thus, we suggest that the motivation for psychological ownership is, in part, grounded in having a home, a place of one's own.

To summarize, the feelings of ownership allow individuals to fulfill three basic human motives -- efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place (home). These motives, therefore, are among the reasons for experiencing feelings of ownership. Each motive facilitates the development of psychological ownership, as opposed to directly causing it to occur.

In the next section, we will focus on the experiences that lead to this psychological state, thus addressing the question *how* does psychological ownership emerge. What are the paths down which people travel that give rise to these feelings? What are the 'routes' to psychological ownership?

KEY EXPERIENCES

Thus far, we have proposed that the phenomenon of psychological ownership is rooted in a set of human motives and that individuals can develop feelings of ownership for a variety of objects so long as these objects allow these motives to operate and to be satisfied. In this section, we propose three major experiences (i.e., routes, paths, mechanisms) through which psychological ownership emerges -controlling the ownership target (object), coming to know the target intimately, and investing the self into the target.

Controlling the Ownership Target

As previously suggested, control exercised over an object eventually gives rise to feelings of ownership for that object (Furby, 1976a; McClelland, 1951; Rochberg-Halton, 1980; Sartre, 1943). In her control model of ownership, Furby (1978a) argues that the greater the amount of control a person can exercise over certain objects, the more they will be psychologically experienced as part of the self. To develop this proposition, she builds upon the work of White (1959) and McClelland (1951). White's (1959) work focused on the motive for environmental exploration, control, and subsequent feelings of efficacy.

McClelland (1951) developed the idea that much like parts of the body and control over them, material objects that can be controlled come to be regarded as part of the self. While recognizing individual differences in terms of importance of possessions for personal identity (e.g., Sampson, 1978), Prelinger (1959) provided support for the proposed relationship between self and control over objects. Specifically, he found that objects over which the respondent had control, could manipulate, or objects by which she/he could be affected, were more likely to be perceived as parts of the self than objects for which neither was the case. Similar findings have been provided by Dixon and Street (1957).

Control also was found to be a core feature of ownership by Rudmin and Berry (1987) in their studies of ownership semantics. They found that ownership means the ability to use and to control the use of objects. While causality was not explicitly addressed, their work seems to suggest a causal path. Those objects over which individuals exercise the most control are the ones most likely to be perceived as theirs. This is consistent with the thinking of Prelinger (1959), Furby (1978), and Tuan (1984). Similarly, Lewis and Brook (1974) and Seligman (1975), in their earlier work in human development, have argued that through the exercise of control objects become associated with the self, and those objects which are controlled by others or those which cannot be controlled are not a part of the individual's sense of self.

Finally, Ellwood (1927) suggested that a key concept might be 'use.' Those objects which are habitually used by an individual become assimilated into the user's self. As noted by Furby (1978a) use of an object can be seen as the exercise of control over that object. Furthermore, access to use of an object gives a person control over others and their access to the object -- "That over which I exercise ... control becomes a part of my sense of self" (Furby, 1978a: 322-323).

Coming to Intimately Know the Target

James (1980) suggested that through a living relationship with objects, individuals come to develop feelings of ownership for those objects. Supporting the notion that feelings of ownership emerge from a lived relationship with objects, Beaglehole (1932) too argued that by knowing an object (person or place) passionately (intimately) it becomes part of the self.

Commenting on the processes through which feelings of ownership likely emerge, Weil states "All men have an invincible inclination to appropriate in their own minds, anything which over a long, uninterrupted period they have used for their work, pleasure, or the necessities of life. Thus, a gardener, after

a certain time, feels that the garden belongs to him" (1952: 33). People come to find themselves psychologically tied to things as a result of their active participation or association with those things. The gardener, for example, "comes to be rooted in the garden," as a result of working the garden and becoming familiar with its needs. Through this process of active association, knowledge develops and the gardener comes to feel that it is his [hers], that he/she is one with the garden - grounded in and with it (Weil, 1952: 33-35). Sartre (1943) and Furby (1978b) have also suggested that there is an associational aspect to ownership. Something can be mine, in my feelings, by virtue of my being associated and familiar with it.

Consistent with the above, Beggan and Brown (1994) and Rudmin and Berry (1987) suggested that through the process of association we come to know objects. The more information possessed about the target of ownership the more intimate becomes the connection between the individual and that target. According to James (1890), a part of our feelings about what is ours stems from living close to, getting to know, and experiencing things around us. Thus, the more information possessed about the target of ownership, the more things are felt thoroughly and deeply and in the process the self becomes attached to (one with) the object. Along the same lines, Beggan and Brown's (1994) research found that individuals tend to frame issues of ownership as a function of an association between themselves and the object.

Rudmin and Berry (1987) noted that "ownership is linguistically an opaque concept," its meaning is difficult to grasp outside of looking intra-individually -- "After all, a stolen apple doesn't look any different from any other" (Snare, 1972: 200). They suggested that attachment provides part of the meaning of ownership and that attachment breeds familiarity and knowledge. Thus, psychological ownership reflects an intimate relationship or a psychological proximity of the owner to the owned. Citing Horwicz (1878), they noted that we tend to prefer our own possessions to others, even others of a similar kind (cf. Beggan, 1992; Nuttin, 1987) because "we know them better, realize them more intimately, feel them more deeply" (translated by James, 1890: 326).

Investing the Self into the Target

The work of Locke (1690), Sartre (1943), Rochberg-Halton (1980), among others, provides us with insight into the relationship between work and psychological ownership. As part of his political philosophy, Locke (1690) argued that we own our labor and ourselves, and therefore, we are likely to feel that we own that which we create, shape, or produce. Through our labor, we not only invest our time and physical effort

but also our psychic energy into the product of that labor. Sartre (1943) even suggested that buying an object was simply another form of creating an object as it too stems from the fruits of our labor. Thus, that which stems from our labor, be it our work or the widget that we make, much like our words, thoughts, and emotions are representations of the self. The most obvious and perhaps the most powerful means by which an individual invests him/herself into an object is to create it. Creation involves investing time, energy, and even one's values and identity. "Things" are attached to the person who created them because they are his/her product, they derive their being and form from his/her efforts; hence, the individual who has created them owns them in much the same way as he/she owns him/herself (Durkheim, 1957). The investment of an individual's self into objects causes the self to become one with the object and to develop feelings of ownership towards that object (Rochberg-Halton, 1980). This sense of ownership can develop between workers and their machines, their work, and the products of their labor (Beaglehole, 1932). In other vocations, individuals may feel ownership for the products they create through scholarly pursuits (academics), organizations they found (entrepreneurs), or bills they draft (politicians). The investment of the self allows an individual to see their reflection in the target and feel their own effort in its existence.

Lastly, we expect that responsibility for a target, either perceived or real, leads to feelings of ownership. As the person is held or feels responsible for a target he/she begins to invest him/herself into that target through the energy, care, and concern expended. A mentor-protégé relationship is one example of this phenomenon. The mentor feels responsible for the protégé's development, and hence invests their energy, time, emotion, and even their own values, in the protégé. For better or worse, this is likely to result in the mentor coming to think of the other person in terms of 'their' protégé. Social recognition of this relationship tends to further reinforce the fact that people see themselves in the target.

THE EMERGENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

In this section we will provide some insight into additional factors influencing the emergence of psychological ownership. We propose that the potential for the development of this state resides in both the target and the individual and that its emergence and manifestation is also strongly influenced by situational forces. We will also address some complexities related to the joint effects of the different roots and routes in the context of the process by which feelings of ownership emerge.

Target Factors

While there have been many attempts to identify the targets to which individuals become psychologically tied (cf. Kamptner, 1991; Rochberg-Halton, 1980; Rudmin & Berry, 1987), there does not appear to be a 'theory of ownership targets,' nor widespread acceptance of a particular classification scheme of ownership targets. What has emerged from this work is the recognition that culture and personal values shape what can and cannot be owned (Furby, 1976); the nature and character of the most valued possessions changes throughout the individual's life-span (Kamptner, 1991); males tend to identify with objects that involve physical interaction and activity, while females are more inclined to associate with more contemplative, expressive and symbolic objects (Kamptner, 1991; Rochberg-Halton, 1980); and those items that are controlled, known intimately, and/or flow from one's self are likely to be items for which a psychology of mine emerges. In addition, ownership appears to attach itself to a wide variety of targets: work (Holmes, 1967), tools (Ellis, 1985), physical/material objects (Dittmar, 1989; Isaacs, 1933; Prelinger, 1959) some of which are action-oriented (e.g., sports equipment) and others are more contemplative in nature (e.g., photos, books, mementoes), ideas (Isaacs, 1933; Prelinger, 1959), relationships/people (e.g., copulatory partners and offspring) (Ellis, 1985; Prelinger, 1959; Rudmin & Berry, 1987), space/territory (Rudmin & Berry, 1987, body parts (Rudmin & Berry, 1987), ingestibles (Ellis, 1985), creations (Locke 1694; Rudmin & Berry, 1987), and sounds (e.g., nursery rhymes) heard (Isaacs, 1933).

The conceptualization presented in this paper can aid in informing our thinking on targets of ownership, and on what can and cannot be owned. Building on our discussion of the roots and routes to psychological ownership, we suggest that the degree to which an individual will actually develop feelings of ownership for a target will be affected by specific target attributes, which influence (a) the potential of the target to satisfy the three motives serving as foundations of psychological ownership, and (b) the capacity of the target to facilitate or impede the routes through which the feelings of ownership emerge. Thus, attributes like attractiveness, accessibility, openness, and manipulable render the target more-or-less subject of psychological ownership. At a minimum, the target must be visible and attractive to the individual, it must be experienced by the individual, and it must capture the interest or attention of the individual. In general, targets with attributes such that they can satisfy the motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and/or having a place (i.e., the roots of psychological ownership) are better candidates for psychological ownership.

The target must be manipulable because only then will it be capable of potentially serving the need for efficacy and effectance. It needs to be attractive, socially esteemed, and self-revealing if the individual is going to employ it to serve the self-identity motive. Finally, the target needs to be open (available, receptive, hospitable) to the individual because only then will it enable the individual to find a home within it.

Furthermore, viable targets of ownership are those whose attributes can facilitate the acts of individuals controlling, coming to know, and/or investing the self into them (i.e., the routes to psychological ownership). For example, from the 'control' perspective, it may be more difficult for an academic to develop feelings of ownership for the entire university than for one's research program, as the latter is more subject to one's control. Similarly, it is unlikely that professors will feel the same level of psychological ownership for undergraduate versus doctoral students, simply because of the different degree to which they come to know these two groups of students and the amount of themselves invested in them.

Individual Factors

As argued above, the individual is ready for psychological ownership due to the innate motives for efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place to dwell. While these motives are universal, we anticipate that there will be individual differences in this process. First, individuals will differ on the strength of motives, both across individuals and within individuals across times. This will result in varying likelihood of developing feelings of ownership across individuals, or even within a single individual at different points in time. Second, personality will have an impact as well. Based on Winter, Steward, Klohen, and Duncan's (1998) argument that traits channel the operation of motives toward differential behavior, we suggest that traits will affect how an individual goes about pursuing relationships with ownership objects, and the types of objects deemed suitable. For example, extroverts may prefer to pursue targets through social means compared to introverts. Or, people high on the 'openness to experience' dimensions of personality may be more willing to consider a greater variety of targets compared to those low on this dimension. Individuals with Machiavellian and authoritarian personalities may prefer to pursue targets via the exercise of control and power, rather than through the development of a close and intimate relationship or through an investment of the self. Finally, people with a strong sense of self (i.e., high self-esteem and/or actualized individuals) may pursue intrinsic targets, while those with a weaker self-concept may be more prone to seek materialistic targets (Kasser & Ryan, 1993).

Personal values make certain objects more-or-less esteemed (Pelham, 1991). Different attributes are important for different people and different types of objects are 'sought' by individuals, as a result. From the perspective of the self-concept, individuals may strive to increase feelings of self-worth by attempting to legally or psychologically possess items of greatest importance to them. Ownership is one means to boost self-evaluations and self-esteem; hence, individuals are likely to feel ownership over those objects considered to be most important according to their personal values. For example, individuals whose perceptions of self-worth are predicated on intellect, or who are part of cultures that value intellect, may seek to feel ownership over targets that reinforce this attribute (e.g., books, pieces of art). Finally, and as noted earlier, an individual may legally own some object, but not feel a sense of ownership for it. This condition may exist when the object is not a source of effectance and efficacy, is not associated with one's self-identify, and/or a place within which to dwell, even though it might have been purchased with hard earned cash and is controlled and known.

Process

In reality, the process by which psychological ownership emerges is associated with a complex interaction between all the elements of our theory discussed above – roots, routes, target factors, and individual factors. While the full examination of all possible interactions between these elements is beyond the scope of our paper, here we offer some ideas of these complexities.

The first question along these lines concerns the relationship among the three roots of psychological ownership (i.e., efficacy and effectance, identity, and having a home). While we examined these intra-individual functions served by the psychological state of ownership as conceptually distinct, we suggest that they are not totally independent of one another. Thus, the need for a place to dwell, although independent from the need for efficacy and effectance or self-identity, once satisfied, may reinforce the others. For example, an individual may well feel more efficacious within the confines of one's 'home' than in less familiar surroundings. Similarly, an individual's self-identity can be served (defined, communicated to others, and/or maintained) through expressions of one's 'home,' a relationship acknowledged by Mehta and Belk (1991). They suggest that immigrants tend to cherish possessions because they simultaneously provide the individual with a feeling of security (a need satisfied by having a familiar place in which to 'dwell'), while simultaneously serving to reinforce continuity in their identity.

Furthermore, we suggest that the three roots of psychological ownership are complementary and additive in nature. Thus, ownership may emerge as the result of any one, or any subset, of these needs. For example, an individual may feel ownership when he/she has a strong efficacy and effectance motive, even though the identify motive might be non-active. Consequently, stronger and a more intense sense of ownership is likely to emerge when two or more of the three roots are active and served.

Similarly, we suggest that the three routes to psychological ownership (i.e., control, intimate knowing, and investment of self) are distinct, complementary and additive in nature. Any single route can result in feelings of ownership independent of the others. However, the feelings of ownership for a particular target will be stronger when an individual arrives at this state as a result of traveling multiple routes (e.g., intimate knowing and controlling) rather than just one route. The routes do not have a multiplicative relationship, as that would imply if any one of the routes does not occur, then ownership would not emerge.

At present, it is not clear whether some routes are more effective at generating psychological ownership than others. We speculate that the routes of control and investing self in the target have the potential to be most effective. One reason is that the research and theory reviewed earlier suggests that these routes tend to be particularly effective at bringing the target within the self region. A second reason is that, among other effects, controlling and investing self have the potential to also result in coming to know intimately. Said differently, a by-product of controlling an object or investing the self in that object is coming to know the properties of that object. For example, the writing of a manuscript, crafting a sculpture, or building a house is likely to result in a detailed and in-depth understanding of the product of one's creation. We note that this does not mean that coming to know is not independent of the other routes; one can come to know an object intimately without either creating or controlling it. Hence, because investing self and controlling can lead to the other route, and because we posit that the routes have additive effects, we believe that the former may have a greater overall effect than simply coming to intimate knowing of the target.

An important question regarding the emergent process concerns the amount of time that it takes for this psychological state to develop. At the cognitive level, we suggest that an individual may come to recognize that a particular target is 'theirs,' rather quickly. Consider the case of acquiring a puppy and the amount of time it takes to come to the realization that there are additional responsibilities. Yet, for this feeling

to fully develop and blossom to the point where it manifests itself as a complete cognitive/affective state integrated into the self-concept, the process may well be lengthy, dynamic, and reiterative in nature.

Herein lies one of the distinctions between legal and psychological ownership. While individuals become legal owners of a piece of property at the very moment they acquire it, it may take quite some time before people begin to feel this property as theirs. Although there may be exceptions, sufficient control, intimate knowing, and/or investment of the self are unlikely to emerge quickly. For example, one of the authors observed that truck drivers in a local mine did not feel ownership for the trucks that they operated until a new company policy was implemented, which assigned each driver to a particular truck. Only after that, and with the passage of time, did the drivers begin to change their attitudes and behaviors towards the trucks--from use and abuse to care and maintenance. They gradually began to refer to their trucks as 'my' truck, to clean its interior, and to attend to mechanical maintenance. One driver even named his truck and spent his own money to have this name painted on the doors. As this example shows, psychological ownership can emerge in the absence of legal ownership. It most likely emerges through a lengthy and iterative process. Investing the self into the target eventually gives rise to feelings of ownership for that target. Feelings of ownership lead the individual to make personal sacrifices on behalf of the target, which, in turn, generates even stronger feelings of ownership.

We note, however, that legal ownership may facilitate and speed-up the emergence of psychological ownership because it allows the individual to explore the three routes leading to this state. It provides the right to control or change the target, more-or-less, at one's own will, the right to explore and to come to intimately know, and the right to invest the self into the target of possession. The lack of legal ownership may in some cases provide a more precarious form of ownership, as an individual has to avoid violation of the law (physical barriers, customs and social practices) in order to exercise one or more of the three routes to psychological ownership. In the absence of legal ownership, one may also have to contend with a greater fear of separation, claim of ownership by the legal owner, and loss of the object.

Another means by which the process of psychological ownership is further facilitated are the 'possession rituals' in which people engage. According to McCracken (1986), rituals such as displaying, showing off, using, and personalizing possessions facilitate the movement of the culturally prescribed meaning of objects to the individual's self-identity. Accompanying these acts, the individual frequently

‘claims’ the object as theirs. Claiming is both an "assertion of territoriality through ownership" and an "attempt to draw from the object the qualities that have been given to it" by society as part of one's self-identity (McCracken, 1986: 79). Through such rituals, especially those of using, spending time with, reflecting upon, and displaying, the individual may find it a comfortable place in which to dwell, and ultimately claim it as 'mine.’

Finally, we note that feelings of ownership for a particular target do not necessarily last forever. They can dissipate, as people no longer feel a sense of ownership for some targets that were once integrated into the self-concept. We suggest that this decoupling process is associated with the same forces that produced the psychological state of ownership. Thus, the origin for the decoupling is to be found in changes in the roots, routes, characteristics of the target, the individual, and the interaction among them. For example, a change in an underlying motive (e.g., a redirected sense of efficacy and effectance, a change in self-identity, or the emergence of a new place in which to dwell) may serve as a catalyst for the removal of a target from the citadel of the self. The disappearance of one or more of the routes to ownership (e.g., loss of control, increased unfamiliarity, withdrawal of the self from the target) will contribute to such decoupling as well. Similar decoupling effects will emerge as targets become less visible, attractive, manipulable, open, or receptive. Finally, individuals may go through a number of formal rituals (e.g., estrangement, divorce, devaluation, hostility, depersonalization) in an effort to decouple one’s cognitive and emotional attachment to certain previous targets of psychological ownership.

Context

Up to this point the emergence of psychological ownership has been described void of context, yet it is reasonable to suggest that situational forces influence this process and the end state. We note that there are substantial cross-cultural differences in orientation to land and ownership among Scandinavians of a North Germanic heritage from that of their Sami brethren to the far north. Furthermore, cross-cultural psychology highlights differences in the conceptualization of the self across people and regions of the world (Earley & Erez, 1993; Hsu, 1985; Joy & Dholakia, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), as well as differences in socialization practices that result in collectivistic versus individualistic ownership experiences (Furby, 1976). Finally, O’Driscoll, Pierce, and Coghlan (2001) report significant differences in feelings of ownership as a function of work environment structure.

We suggest that our conceptualization of psychological ownership may serve as a foundation for a more systematic examination of contextual factors. While we anticipate that a wide variety of contextual elements will have an effect on the emergence of psychological ownership, we focus our discussion on two main aspects –structural and cultural.

Structural aspects of the context, such as laws, norms, rules, and hierarchy may promote or prevent individuals from developing feelings of ownership in several ways. Some insights into the structural aspects of context and its implications for the operation of the motives discussed earlier can be gained by employing a framework presented by Mischel (1973). His work speaks to the role of the situation and an individual's dispositional state in the determination of individual behaviors. From a social-psychological perspective, structural factors operate creating 'strong' or 'weak' situations (Mischel, 1973), which in turn impact the emergence and display of individual differences and attitudes. To help understand the interaction of individual differences and situational factors, Mischel (1973) suggested that 'strong' situations constrain or homogenize behavior thereby restricting the expression of individual differences. As a consequence, individual differences as revealed by one's dispositional state are likely to play a limited role in determining whether and how psychological ownership will develop. Weak situations, on the other hand, will afford the individual with greater opportunity to define the meaning of events, generate responses, and to reveal oneself and engage in such behaviors. Thus, it is reasoned that the motives for psychological ownership will be less likely to express themselves and psychological ownership will be less likely to emerge under strong (e.g., highly structured) as opposed to weak situations.

Furthermore, structural context may limit the opportunity to engage in the key behaviors leading to psychological ownership (controlling, coming to know, investing the self). The metaphor of 'fences' that get placed around objects can be used to illustrate this idea. There are many different types of boundaries that stand between and individual and a potential target of ownership. These fences (structural factors) prevent the control, coming to know, and the investment of the self, thereby blocking the fulfillment of one or more of the motives for ownership through the 'fenced in' object. Fences, such as, physical barriers, boundaries, laws, property rights, governance structures, customs, and mores of a society, limit the degree to which an individual can come into contact with certain targets, thereby affecting the degree to which the target can be controlled, known, and/or the recipient of one's investment. As an example, organizational sociologists and

psychologists have discussed how "mechanistic" (bureaucratic) organizational structures involving a rigid hierarchy, division of labor, centralization, formalization, and standardization limit the expression of self-direction and self-control (Argyris, 1957; Berger & Cummings, 1979; Hage, 1965; Weber, 1947). As a consequence of such structure, the behaviors that result in psychological ownership will be curtailed, thereby limiting the likelihood of psychological ownership developing. Consistent with this idea, O'Driscoll, et al. (2001) found a negative relationship between work environment structure, and the level of personal control experienced by organizational members and the strength of their psychological ownership for the work that they do and for the employing organization. They also report evidence suggesting that control acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between work environment structure and psychological ownership.

The cultural aspects of a social context will also have a significant impact on the phenomenon of psychological ownership. For the purposes of this paper, we employ Hofstede's definition that suggests that culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one human group from another" (1980: 25). There are two theoretical reasons for which we believe culture will have an effect on psychological ownership. First, psychological ownership is very tightly linked to the concept of self and the concept of self, in turn, is in part socially prescribed and affected by culture (cf. Erez & Early, 1993). Cross-cultural psychology offers multiple conceptualizations of the self that are the product of cultural values and beliefs, for example, independent versus interdependent self (Triandis, 1994), dominating nature versus in harmony or submissive to nature (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952), 'dong' versus 'being' (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952), and ascriptive- versus achievement-oriented (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), among others. Second, psychological ownership is partly 'learned' through socialization practices, which again are culturally determined. For example, Furby (1980) reports that toddlers in 'total care' kibbutzim have fewer struggles over objects than those in 'day care' kibbutzim, and children whose parents take things from them often display the same taking behavior, while children whose parents are frequent givers display giving behavior in their play with others. Thus, culture is an important condition that needs to be examined to better understand the phenomenon of psychological ownership. Reflected in traditions, customs, norms, mores and beliefs in a society, culture shapes the individual's self-concept and values with regard to control, self-identity, self-expression, ownership, and property.

Integrating research on culture with our work, we propose that culture will have an impact on all elements of our framework of psychological ownership -- the construct itself, roots, routes, targets, individuals, and process. It is possible, for example, that while possessive feelings are universal, individuals from different cultures attribute different meaning to possessions in terms of viewing them as part of their extended selves. In some cultures possessions may play a more central role in the self-definition than in others. Therefore, feelings of ownership may be present to a different extent in different cultures.

Cultures may also differ with respect to the salience of the various ownership motives or roots. The 'efficacy and effectance' motive might be more salient compared to the 'having a place' motive in individualistic than in collectivistic cultures (Hofstede, 1980), in cultures characterized by a 'doing' versus 'being' orientation, and in more deterministic cultures which generally assume dominance of people over nature (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952). The 'identity' motive, especially those aspects of it that relate to the continuity of the self, is likely to be more salient in cultures with a longer-term 'past-future' orientation (e.g., Hong-Kong, South Korea) than in cultures that are more focused on the present (e.g., USA) The other aspect of the self-identity motive -- expression of self-identity to others – will be more important in cultures with a collectivistic orientation (as people care about how others perceive them) as well as in cultures with an ascription versus achievement orientation (Trompenaars &Hampden-Turner, 1998). Cross-cultural differences could also be suggested with regard to the routes to psychological ownership. As one moves from more deterministic and 'doing' cultural orientations to more fatalistic and 'being' orientations, there will be a shift from the 'control' and 'investment of self' route to the 'getting to intimately know' route.

Furthermore, different targets and different characteristics of potential targets of psychological ownership may become more salient in different cultures. At a very basic level, the types of targets towards which people develop feelings of ownership will depend on where the self-concept of individuals in a given society primarily resides. For example, more familial, collectivistic, relationship-based cultures are said to be oriented much more towards friends and family, while others derive their self-concept primarily from their personal achievements and successes. Accordingly, we can expect that the former will tend to develop feelings of ownership primarily towards social targets like people and family, while the latter would be more focused on their work and material possessions that speak to these achievements. Consistent with this, it has been found that different cultures attribute different meaning to work and work has a different centrality in

people's lives (MOW, 1987). Furthermore, material targets (e.g., cars) are perhaps more salient than idealistic targets (e.g., idea) in masculine (i.e., materialistic) cultures compared to feminine (i.e., relation) cultures (Hofstede, 1980). Finally, manipulability of the target is more important in cultures that believe in the dominance of people over nature (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952; Trompenaars &Hampden-Turner, 1998).

With regard to the process of emergence of psychological ownership, we suggest at least three contextual effects. First, the importance of legal ownership for the emergence of psychological ownership may vary across contexts. In settings characterized by developed formal institutional arrangements regarding possessions and property rights (e.g., USA), which are also reflected in the cultural values towards property, legal ownership might be more important for this state to occur. In other environments, where property rights are less respected and enforced, legal ownership is likely to be less critical. Second, culture will also affect the time it takes for psychological ownership to develop. Cultures with a longer-term orientation will likely need a longer time of interacting with the potential target (through controlling, coming to know, and investing the self) before an individual comes to perceive this target as their extended self. In contrast, people with shorter-term orientation will likely develop feelings of ownership more quickly. Third, we suspect that longer-term orientation will also result in more lengthy, difficult, and painful decoupling of the individual from targets for which he/she felt ownership. In contrast, in more dynamic, shorter-term oriented cultures individuals will likely get in and out of these psychological relationships with targets much more frequently and less painfully. Social practice provides substantial evidence supporting these ideas. For example, people in the US seem to be moving across places, organizations, and relationships, and switching between targets of psychological ownership much more often than people from other countries, for example, France and Japan. A question remains as to the depth of the feelings of ownership that these differences invoke.

Examining cultural effects is important not only for practical reasons, such as understanding the existing cross-cultural differences. It is also instructive for the further theoretical development of our conceptualization of psychological ownership. Recognizing the variety of psychological experiences related to ownership across cultures may lead us to suggest, for example, that an important aspect of the construct of psychological ownership is its locus or form – that is, the level at which this feeling resides – being defined as individual versus collective. Theoretically, it could be argued that the more the self-concept is tied to the collective entity (as in collectivistic cultures like Japan and China), the more psychological ownership will be

defined as a collective, shared feeling. In contrast, in individualistic cultures (e.g., Australia, USA), the feeling of ownership will tend to be experienced at the individual level. There is some limited empirical evidence in support of such propositions. For example, in a ten-country study, (Kostova, 1996) found that people form collectivistic countries (e.g., Portugal) made a very clear distinction between two sets of words that described ownership -- 'we' and 'our,' on the one hand, and 'I' and 'mine,' on the other. The levels of collective psychological ownership captured by the 'we' items were significantly higher than those captured by the 'I' items. This distinction was insignificant in other countries like USA and France, which have been characterized as more individualistic.

In sum, studying contextual impacts on psychological ownership has the potential for both to provide significant knowledge and understanding of cross-country differences and to push the theoretical development on the construct further.

EFFECTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

The psychological state of ownership is not without consequences. In this section, we discuss some of its effects on the individual. Visions of a parent taking extreme personal risk to protect their child suggest positive effects. Images of a young child refusing to share mommy's lap with a newborn sibling, historical accounts of people who have gone to war for land that they felt to be 'rightfully theirs,' and murders committed out of jealousy, however, remind us that there is a dark side to strong feelings of ownership.

A Positive Side to Psychological Ownership

There are a myriad of positive and constructive behaviors associated with feelings of ownership for a target. Among those, we will comment on acts of citizenship, personal sacrifice and the assumption of risk, and experienced responsibility and stewardship.

Citizenship. Drawing on past research, we propose that psychological ownership is positively associated with citizenship behavior [i.e., behavior that contributes to the community's well-being, is voluntary and is intended to be positive in nature, for which there is no promised or implied *quid pro quo* (Organ, 1988)]. Behavior is, in part, a function of one's self identity, as individuals create and maintain their sense of self by initiating stable patterns of behavior that infuse roles with personal meaning (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Therefore, when individuals feel ownership for a social entity (e.g., family, group, organization, nation), they are likely to engage in citizenship behaviors towards that entity. This link has been

suggested also by empirical research reporting a positive and significant correlation between psychological ownership and citizenship behavior in a cooperative living arrangement (VandeWalle, Van Dyne, & Kostova, 1995).

Personal sacrifice and the assumption of risk. The willingness to assume personal risk or make personal sacrifice on behalf of a social entity is another important outcome of psychological ownership. While such behaviors are part of role requirements in rescue teams, military, police, and fire fighting organizations, they are important and also occur in other situations where they are not obligatory. For example, members who are willing to step forward and "blow the whistle" (e.g., report unethical behavior, illegal acts, or malfeasance) are taking personal risk and making a sacrifice for the well being of their organizations. We propose that such behaviors will be prompted by feelings of ownership for the target (e.g., organization). It is, after all, the situation where the target has been brought into the citadel of the self, and its impairment results in a diminution of the self. Thus, when individuals become cognizant of events that are detrimental to the health and well being of their organizations, they will assume the risk to "blow the whistle."

Experienced responsibility and stewardship. Psychological ownership for a particular target may also promote feelings of responsibility that include feelings of being protective, caring, and nurturing and the proactive assumption of responsibility for that target. When an individual's sense of self is closely linked to the target, a desire to maintain, protect, or enhance that identity will result in an enhanced sense of responsibility (Dipboye, 1977; Korman, 1970). Addressing the cooperative ownership arrangement (e.g., food, electrical, housing, agricultural cooperatives), Kubzansky and Druskat (1995) theorize, that when ownership sentiments arise the owner is transformed in relationship to the organization, and responsibility for the organization is a likely outcome.

Closely related to experienced responsibility are the feelings of stewardship where individuals feel responsible as the caretakers of a property, even though they are not the legal owners. As recently proposed by Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997) in their stewardship theory, in certain situations when individuals feel like stewards they are motivated to act in the best interest of the principals rather than in their personal interests. We suggest that psychological ownership is likely to create such situations. That is, when

individuals feel psychological ownership, they may feel as though they are the "psychological principals" or stewards and act accordingly.

A Dark Side to Psychological Ownership

At times, psychological ownership may have a dark side. Much like the overly possessive child, individuals may be unwilling to share the target of ownership with others or they may feel a need to retain exclusive control over it. Such behaviors, in turn, will likely impede cooperation. People may also become preoccupied with enhancing their psychological possessions and may become, for instance, obsessed with improving their "toys," at the cost of their family or community. Within the context of the transition from totalitarian to democratic states, political and military leaders may resist interventions that empower their citizenry. As societies attempt to make the transition to democracy, leaders will be called upon to transfer authority, to share information and control. A high degree of ownership felt by these leaders for the current state could trigger the negative side of possessiveness inhibiting the implementation of the institutions demanded by a democratic society.

Research on materialism reveals another potential malady. 'Having' (i.e., a consummatory orientation), as opposed to 'being' (i.e., an experiential orientation) commonly distracts the individual from actualization and is associated with distress (Fromm, 1976). As noted, Kasser and Ryan (1993) observed that the pursuit of extrinsic possessions and financial success is often associated with the absence of psychological adjustment and well being. Similarly, Deci and Ryan's (1985, 1987) work on intrinsic motivation leads us to speculate that the pursuit of control over extrinsic objects that may result in psychological ownership, will at the same time cause a diminution in the self-concept, as the locus of control is shifting from within to outside the self.

Psychological ownership may also lead to deviance behaviors defined as voluntary behaviors that violate group norms and threaten the well being of the group and/or its members. Individuals separated against their will from that for which they feel strong ownership (e.g., due to a restraining order, divorce, estrangement), may engage in deleterious acts such as sabotage, stalking, destruction, or physical harm as opposed to letting others control, come to know, or immerse the self into the target of ownership. We do not suggest, however, that psychological ownership will necessarily lead to dysfunctional effects. Instead, we propose that it may lead to such effects, if certain conditions are in place. While the full exploration of such

moderating conditions is beyond the scope of this paper, we envision that they will be related to some personality characteristics (e.g., high need for personal control, authoritarian personality), as well as, to the combination of the particular motives (i.e., roots) and routes that have lead to the feelings of ownership. For example, when the primary motive for the ownership experience has been efficacy and effectance and the primary route to it – control, the effect may be more dysfunctional than when the primary motive has been identity and the primary route -- getting to know the target intimately.

Psychological ownership may also be associated with personal functioning maladies. There are times when the feelings of ownership can lead an individual to feel overwhelmed by the burden of responsibility. In addition, when people witness the radical alteration of targets, which they perceive as being 'theirs,' they may come to feel personal loss, frustration, and stress. These effects find their origin in the lack of control over what once was theirs (cf. Bartunek, 1993). According to James, the loss of possessions can lead to "the shrinkage of our personality" (1890: 178), or even to sickness and giving up upon the will to live in extreme cases (Cram & Paton, 1993).

Mixed Effects

It has also been observed that feelings of ownership have a number of effects, some of which are, at times, positive and at times negative in nature. As a final part of our discussion, we note that this state can produce complicated effects when it comes to the promotion and resistance to change.

There are many occasions in which we are exposed to changes being made to objects that are part of our lives (e.g., renters make changes to the apartments they rent; spouses make changes to the houses in which we live; bosses make changes to the jobs that we perform; co-authors make changes to the sentences that we write). Some of these changes are welcomed and supported, while others are resisted. In their psychological theory of change, Dirks, Cummings, and Pierce (1996) argued that psychological ownership provides insight into why, and the conditions under which, individuals both promote and resist change. The authors propose that there are three categorizations of change: self-initiated versus imposed, evolutionary versus revolutionary, and additive versus subtractive, each of which has different psychological implications. Individuals may be positively oriented to some types of change and negatively disposed to other types based on the strength of their feelings of ownership for the target of change. They are likely to promote change of a target towards which they feel ownership when the change is self-initiated (as it reinforces the individual's

need for control and efficacy), evolutionary (as it tends to promote the individual's sense of self-continuity), and additive (as it contributes to the individual's need for control, self-enhancement, and feelings of personal efficacy). On the other hand, individuals are likely to resist change of a target of psychological ownership when the change is imposed (as it is seen as threatening an individual's sense of control), revolutionary (as it is a threat to self-continuity), and subtractive (as it takes away or diminishes the core of that to which the individual has attached him/herself) in nature.

DISCUSSION

Possessions, secured in a special place labeled 'mine' emerge in children at a very young age (Klein & France, 1899; Isaacs, 1933). From childhood throughout life, 'mine' plays a significant role shaping and maintaining our self-identity, providing a place in which to dwell, and making us feel efficacious. Reflecting upon the psychology of mine, Rudmin (1994) writes:

> "Mine" is a small word. It is deceptive in its power and importance. It controls our behavior, but we rarely notice, as we move about our world restricting ourselves to narrow walkways and to those places for which we have keys (55).

It has been our intention to integrate a number of diverse literatures developed over the last century (e.g., from subdisciplines of psychology, as well as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, child development, geography, and organizational behavior), which present different insights on psychological ownership. By integrating and further extending these literatures we are able to offer a conceptual framework that can serve as the building block for the development of a comprehensive theory of psychological ownership. Building on previous work, we provide a lens into the meaning of psychological ownership and present a definition for this state. Central to our conceptualization is the discussion on the genesis of this state, which addresses the question "Why do people develop feelings of ownership?" We argued that the existence of psychological ownership can be explained by three intra-individual functions --efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and the need for having a place – that are served by this state and are, therefore, among the reasons for an individual to experience it. Identifying these 'roots' is key to understanding the processes, through which psychological ownership emerges and was central to our consequent theoretical development.

In summary, we focused on the antecedents and consequences of psychological ownership, as well as some moderators and boundary conditions that influence its emergence. We proposed that this state results from control, intimate association, and/or the immersion of the self into the target of ownership. It is through

each of these ‘routes’ that the individual comes to feel that they are tied to (one with) the target. We further argued that psychological ownership will have both positive and negative consequences for the individual. On the positive side, it is likely to lead to assumption of responsibility, caring, protection, nurturance, stewardship, and a willingness to make personal sacrifices and assume risk on behalf of the target. On the negative side, it may lead to alienation, frustration, and stress. Radical change or destruction of objects for which there are strong feelings of ownership can result in a diminution of one's self concept, adverse health effects, and feelings of normlessness and powerlessness. Recognizing both the positive and the dark side of this state suggests that there maybe a limit to what constitutes a “healthy” level of psychological ownership. Since what creates and maintains psychological ownership is, for example, control over things, one can easily envision that too much control can lead to undesirable behaviors. Individuals simply cannot psychologically own everything and the felt need to do so perhaps could be viewed as a form of pathology. We view our treatment of the consequences as an important addition to the literature on psychological ownership, as most of extant work has focused on different roots and routes.

Developing this basic model further, we specified three groups of additional moderating factors that influence the emergence of psychological ownership. Characteristics of the individual, the potential ownership target, and the context, affect this process by enhancing or impeding its development. Thus, the state of psychological ownership, while potentially latent within each individual, does not necessarily always occur and is not equally strong across individuals, targets, and situations. It is determined by a complex interaction of a number of intra-individual, object-related, and contextual factors. In this paper, we elaborated primarily on the separate effects of these factors and addressed some of the joint effects between the different roots and routes.

What needs to come next? We offer several directions for future theoretical development and research based on our work. First, further inquiries should examine a more complete set of interactions between the factors leading to the emergence of psychological ownership, such as interactions between individual and contextual characteristics, and between routes, individuals, and context. Dealing with these complexities would pose a rather challenging conceptual task and one that would need to be addressed in a systematic manner. To this end, one could theorize on these effects by ‘holding constant’ one or more of the factors that come into play. This could be achieved, for example, by extending the model presented here to

address the emergence of psychological ownership in particular type of situation and context, or for a particular type of ownership targets. Such an approach to theory development could lead to the application of the 'building blocks' that we provided to different disciplinary areas (e.g., child development, consumer behavior, organizational studies, cross-cultural studies). In this sense, the framework presented here can be viewed as one step in the process of developing a theory on psychological ownership within the diverse literatures out of which our ideas had their origin.

Second, a potential direction for theoretical development in the future could be a more in-depth examination of the link between psychological ownership and the self-concept. In this paper we drew upon previous work that has related the self-concept to the psychology of possession referring to scholars such as James (1890) who suggested that there is a complex and often indistinguishable relationship between that which an individual calls 'me' and that which is considered 'mine, and Cooley (1968), who argued that things that we know well and over long periods of time are brought into the citadel of the self and are asserted as a part of the self. It could be suggested, however, that there are additional possibilities for incorporating previous work on the self-concept (e.g., Campbell, 1990; Gecas, 1982; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979) to strengthen further the theoretical underpinnings on psychological ownership. For example, one could explore further the observation that the self-concept is multidimensional in nature. Two important dimensions of the self-concept, self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1978) appear to be related to psychological ownership through the motives of efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place in which to dwell. These motives serve the psychological owner's self-concept. Disentangling further the relationship between the different dimensions of the self-concept and psychological ownership might be an interesting theoretical venue. Related to this is the possible theorizing on the links between psychological ownership (the routes, in particular) and the self-regulatory mechanisms, such as self-consistency, self-enhancement, and self-protection, which have been linked to serving the self-concept (cf. Dipboye, 1977; Korman, 1970, 2001).

Finally, it might be insightful to challenge and/or extend our theorizing on the roots of psychological ownership by incorporating the idea of the elasticity of the self. It might be that psychological ownership occurs partly because the boundaries of the self are intrinsically elastic. This state may simply reflect the natural ability of the self to extend and contract its boundaries, to treat aspects of the external environment as

if they were an aspect of the self with the same feelings, burden of responsibility, pleasure, rights, and obligations as physical attachments and owned objects (Albert, 1995). Thus, we would like to encourage the exploration and development of an understanding of the dynamics associated with an elastic self wrapping itself around an object and coming to feel it as a part of the self.

In addition to the directions for future theoretical development suggested above, we acknowledge the need for empirical testing and research on psychological ownership. The framework presented here provides the underpinnings for a number of hypotheses and suggests directions for empirical inquiry. As a first step, there is a need for the development and validation of a measurement instrument of psychological ownership. Following this very important step, efforts can be taken to begin empirical testing.

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ENDNOTES

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[1] Consistent with the work of others (cf. Dittmar, 1992; Furby, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1980), we tend to equate feelings of possession with feelings of ownership. Accordingly, in this paper, we use the terms interchangeable.

[2] In this paper, the literature that we review and the perspective that we offer is that of a Western tradition.

[3] We note the dated and sexist language in this quotation. We have included this script for its overall conceptual contribution to the theme of our work.

[4] From a Western and individualistic cultural tradition, 'our' in form is a double possessive. It implies that the object of possession has a connection with the self (my), while simultaneously having a possessive relationship with one or more other individuals. 'She is OUR daughter,' quite simply means that she is both 'MY' daughter, as well as the daughter of her mother. Thus, a dual possessive, in which case she is also ‘OUR’ daughter, a collective target of possession. Finally, we acknowledge that there may be certain cultural conditions that block individualized experiences of ownership, in which case there is no ‘my’ simultaneously experienced with the experience of ‘our.’

[5] We acknowledge that there are different perspectives (e.g., biological, social construction, sociobiological) from which one can view and explore this very complex phenomenon --psychological ownership. We will offer an intra-individual perspective to illuminate one important perspective and process.