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Sharing as Having

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Abstract

The working paper examines the integration of two theoretical frameworks developed in the SFB projects C01 and C06. Following the merging of these projects, both frameworks now work together in a comparative analysis of sharing and other cooperative ways of relating to objects in Germany and China. The *Weltbeziehungen* approach was effectively utilised in phase 1, while the theory of HAVINGS has emerged as a new outcome from project C01. This working paper presents an integrative perspective, arguing that the *Weltbeziehungen* approach defines the emic perspective on object relationships, while the theory of HAVINGS represents the etic perspective, creating an analytical duality. The theory of HAVINGS views "property" as just one mode within two dimensions: the actions of having and the structural outcomes of having. This multi-modal analysis enhances our understanding of the complexity of evolving *Weltbeziehungen* in various sharing arrangements. HAVINGS influence *Weltbeziehungen*, and *Weltbeziehungen*, in turn, performatively shape HAVINGS. This interaction results in a wide variety of sharing forms, which range from sharing as a means and expression of community building to sharing as appropriation through assetification.

Keywords: theory of havings; sharing economy; emics and etics of sharing

1. Introduction

This working paper aims to develop a theoretical synthesis of two theoretical frameworks that have been utilized or created in the SFB projects C01 and C06 during phase 1: the theory of *Weltbeziehungen* (relationship to the world) (Hollstein et al., 2023; Rosa, 2018) and the theory of HAVINGS (Herrmann-Pillath, 2024).[1] The theory of HAVINGS emerged from research on land property in China, along with the associated social and cultural phenomena. This research led to a critique of standard terminology surrounding property, which inadequately captured the social realities of property practices in Shenzhen. However, while exploring the cultural dimension, we did not delve deeply enough into the values, beliefs, and meanings associated with property. Instead, we primarily examined other cultural practices linked to property, such as the revival of ancestor worship. This approach can be seen as a "meso-level" methodology as compared to C06 "micro-level" approach. Both approaches are qualitative, but the former mainly focuses on structural features of the case, and the associated imaginaries, and the former on the individual life-worlds.

From the former C01's perspective, we are now orchestrating a shift toward the phenomenological viewpoint of the *Weltbeziehungen* approach while maintaining the structural components in the sense of evolving institutionalized practices. Former C06 viewed property as an institution that significantly influences *Weltbeziehungen*, particularly in fostering relationships of care towards objects under certain conditions. The key question of the merged project C06 is how various sharing practices impact these property-embedded *Weltbeziehungen*. The focus is on two dimensions: First, how do sharing practices alter our relationship with objects? Second, do these practices also affect our relationships with other people? For instance, in home-sharing situations, these relationships can take on very different forms depending on the business models of the home-sharing practices and the various motivations of hosts and guests. These observations suggest that combining phenomenological in-depth research with a more precise diagnosis of the structures that facilitate sharing practices is a promising strategy.

In the context of sharing, the concept of "resonant relationships" holds special significance (Rosa, 2018). Sharing can be viewed simply as a functional co-use of an object. However,

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[1] The theory of *Weltbeziehungen* was already posited as one of the theoretical pillars of the SFB, and specifically defined the research strategy in C06: "Making things available: Ownership as an incarnation of our relationship with the world." Investigating specific cases of sharing, such as car- and home sharing, the project focused on how such arrangements affect the relationship between people and objects, such as the valuations, feelings and behavioural stances in relation to a shared flat. In contrast, C01 "Hybrid ownership structures in state capitalism: Ownership-based society, socio-economic differentiation and Governmentality analysed through the example of Shenzhen, China" started out from conventional categorisations of property and noted the inadequacies in dealing with the realities on the ground. Hence, the new theory of HAVINGS is an outcome of that project.

it can also serve as a practice that establishes relationality and empathy, leading to resonance among the individuals involved in the sharing experience, such as in the expression of hospitality. Conversely, a purely functional relationship with the object may dampen the resonance between the person and the object, as the motivation for caring may be reduced.

In this working paper, I propose a conceptual framework that helps us understand and interpret how various structures of “having” influence relationships between people and objects, as well as between the self and others. Additionally, these structures are shaped by, and in turn shape, our *Weltbeziehungen*. Furthermore, they drive the sense-making processes that motivate actions related to “having.”

The emphasis on action serves as a conceptual bridge connecting these two theories. The theory of HAVINGS is influenced by Max Weber’s action-oriented sociology, where analysing meaning is crucial for understanding actions. In this context, the *Weltbeziehungen* approach not only focuses on individual sense-making but also on shared sense-making within social groups and society.

The two approaches represent an analytical duality, examining the same social, cultural, and economic phenomena from two angles: etics and emics (seminally, (Headland et al., 1990)). Traditionally, etics and emics have often been viewed as competing theoretical approaches; however, I consider them to be complementary. The theory of HAVINGS is descriptive-analytical, while the theory of *Weltbeziehungen* is phenomenological. The work of C01 has lacked a phenomenological perspective, and C06 has faced the challenge that the complexity of sharing practices cannot be adequately described within the traditional framework of property institutions. This framework relies heavily on the distinction between property and use and is based on a conceptual framework centred around “rights,” which originated in economics and has widely influenced the social sciences.

This working paper explores the potential of merging the two theories in understanding practices of sharing in two very different social, political, economic, and cultural contexts, Germany and China, the topic of C01 in phase 1 of the SFB. I do not delve into the empirical material but present a theoretical discussion of sharing from the perspective of the HAVINGS theory, since this is currently a desideratum: In phase 1, C01 thoroughly explored the *Weltbeziehungen* view of sharing. In section 2, I discuss the reasons why we should discard the traditional property framework and adopt the theory of HAVINGS, and why the latter is the more adequate partner for the *Weltbeziehungen* approach. Section 3 outlines the basics of the theory of HAVINGS, and section 4 presents preliminary thoughts on how the combination of the two theories can help to improve our understanding of the sharing economy and other forms of cooperative use of objects.

2. From "property" to "HAVINGS"[2]

The discussion around sharing as an alternative to property is influenced by existing theories of property. As Kreiczer-Levy (2015) points out, a common theme in sharing, access, participatory consumption, and collaborative consumption is that people relinquish their desire to acquire property. These alternatives are primarily defined by what they are not: they are "not property." This negative definition has several unfortunate consequences. It implies that these alternatives might inherently lack certain features associated with property, such as the motivation to care for objects (which is one of the key themes in the *Weltbeziehungen* approach, (Rosa, 2023). This assumption raises an important question: how much of the behaviour and mindset linked to property in its current institutional form is directly and exclusively tied to that form? To answer this, we need to step back from specific institutional frameworks and the ideas that accompany them, moving to a more fundamental level of analysis. At this level, property is just one of many ways to relate to objects—each retaining certain functional aspects associated with property as universal elements. Modern property adds characteristics that may not be present in other forms of object relationships.

In other words, does the expression "avoiding property" mean rejecting the entire spectrum of defining characteristics of property, such as the right to exclude others, or does it refer only to avoiding specific aspects of modern property? When using the term "modern" property, I refer to the forms of property that emerged in concert with modern capitalism and diffused worldwide, with deep historical roots in Roman Law (von der Weth, 2024). When discussing sharing from the perspective of *Weltbeziehungen*, a key question arises: do "structural changes of property" or "alternatives to property" pertain specifically to modern property, to property in general, or to the distinction between capitalist and non-capitalist property? This language surrounding property becomes convoluted and analytically vague, complicating our understanding of complex phenomena such as the modern sharing economy.

At the systemic level, it may be misleading to interpret alternatives to property as indicative of transformative change, given what I refer to as the "paradox of sharing." Sharing inherently assumes that someone has property that can be shared or, the other way round, that someone who wants to access the property is blocked from it, so sharing

[2] The term "havings" is a neologism in English. I use the word HAVINGS in uppercase letters when referring to the theory and the conceptual tool case *in toto*, while I use lowercase letters when discussing the structural modes of "havings." The structural modes of havings are outcomes derived from the action modes of having.

it is one mode of giving access. In fact, a critical perspective on sharing arrangements might argue that these practices could exacerbate the divide between those who own property and those who do not. Consequently, this could reinforce the systemic inequalities rooted in what remains a property-based economic system. Sharing is not an alternative, but another manifestation of that system (Eckhardt and Bardhi, 2016). The judgment regarding "sharing" largely depends on our interpretation of the term. The *Weltbeziehungen* perspective helps us recognise the various 1731meanings of "sharing" within the context of the modern "sharing economy" and, for example, community-based sharing as often highlighted in anthropology (Widlok, 2013). However, while this perspective effectively identifies these meanings, it currently lacks a more precise terminology to describe the related institutional aspects.

We can articulate a clearer paradox: without property maintaining its systemic characteristics, the idea of sharing and cooperation as an alternative systemic feature becomes meaningless. This essential connection is often overlooked in contemporary understandings of property, which have fostered a perspective rooted in "possessive individualism," particularly in economic discourse (Macpherson and Cunningham, 2011). The belief that property is a necessary precondition for sharing stems from other intellectual traditions, most notably Aristotle's. He viewed property as essential for cultivating the virtues of a responsible citizen and linked property ownership to actions in the public interest (Miller Jr, 1986). If taken to an extreme, this perspective could be described as "possessive collectivism." Similar ideas are also present in Islamic thought regarding property, where it is considered a blessing from the Supreme that enables the faithful to perform good deeds and adhere to divine commandments (Tripp, 2006). In this context, property is regarded as virtuous in the Aristotelian sense.

A crucial question arises: When we translate Greek or Arabic terms related to what we call "property" by using the term "property," do we unintentionally bias our understanding of their meanings? Many languages have developed their own neologisms for "property" upon encountering the Western, primarily capitalist notion of it—this includes languages like Russian, Japanese, and Chinese. The creation of a new word often indicates the introduction of a new type of social relationship. Therefore, when we apply modern Western terminology to describe different social relationships, we risk distorting their meanings and overlooking essential aspects. Unfortunately, when we search for alternative terms, we discover that modern Western languages fall short; they do not adequately capture the diversity of so-called "property" relationships that exist beyond the context of Western modernity (Brightman et al., 2016). This observation may also apply to the contrasting concepts of "sharing" and "property." Perhaps we have never truly been "modern" in our understanding of property. By using the language of modern property to describe our own societies, we might blind ourselves to the fact that actual practices are not fully captured by these terms. For instance, what does it mean that German couples do not view their economic relationship through the lens of property, only resorting to it in severe conflicts such as divorce (Althaber et al., 2023)? Is this a form of "oblivion" (*Vergessenheit*) of the concept of property (van Dyk et al., 2023), or does it simply indicate that researchers who use property-related language fail to adequately describe actual practices, if only in the sense that they diagnose the practice correctly, but give a wrong name to it?

Much of the current debate about property takes place against the backdrop of 19th-century ideological discussions that led to the emergence and institutionalization of modern property as a central element of the capitalist economic system. Unfortunately, this context has resulted in projecting all the systemic issues of capitalism onto the concept of property. Meanwhile, alternatives like socialism and communism have been framed as attempts to revolutionize property, varied in degree, with extremes seen under Stalinism and Maoism. However, these conclusions overlook the complexities involved. Alternatives to property can be understood as part of other economic systems that diverge from the capitalist logic of accumulation. In other words, if the systemic context changes, certain fundamental aspects of property across all economic alternatives will remain consistent, while others identified as dysfunctional may wither away.

Recognizing this fact presents a significant challenge: our theories of property, especially economic ones, are heavily influenced by the intertwined development of economics and sociology alongside the global spread of capitalism. This historical context within social science leads to the institutional features of property in capitalism being viewed as universal theoretical characteristics, as regularly done in economics (Alchian, 2008). According to Horkheimer's (2011) distinction between two types of theories, we must define a critical theory of property that makes this connection explicit and separates the concept of property from its capitalist ideological frameworks, which contain both affirmative and alternative perspectives. As I have detailed elsewhere (Herrmann-Pillath, 2024), this necessitates a fundamental shift in terminology. The term "property" is closely associated with capitalism, including its earliest forms in antiquity. Therefore, a critical theory of property must shed this intellectual baggage and develop a terminology that helps identify the essential and universal characteristics of the institution behind the ideological facade of capitalism, which still influences all major schools of thought in the social sciences. Even approaches that claim to be "critical" of property often fail to achieve a truly critical examination, as they do not adopt a conceptual framework that questions the established terminologies. A social science that sticks to established terminology reproduces the capitalist systemic frame, whether affirmative or critical.

In this paper, I explore the new insights we can gain by moving away from standard theories of property and adopting a genuinely critical theory of HAVINGS, an English neologism. I use current institutional developments in the sharing economy and related forms, henceforth referred to as "sharing&co," as a testing ground for this approach. Standard theories often take the legal form of property for granted, treating property primarily as a right—characterised by concepts like "property rights" or "bundles of rights." In contrast, the theory of HAVINGS begins with Max Weber's notion of appropriation, emphasising actions rather than structural and institutional givens (which he outlines in the first chapters of 'Economy and Society' (Weber and Tribe, 2019)). Appropriation is one type of action that focuses on acquiring the power to dispose of resources. However, the theory of HAVINGS goes beyond the Weberian framework by examining various modes of having and the associated practices, allowing us to situate specific institutional forms, such as modern property and the emerging alternatives represented by sharing&co. As a result, we can understand sharing&co as a form of having while recognising that the concept of property is a specific structural mode of having that serves different functions across the various practices within that societal domain. The theory of HAVINGS allows us to view property and sharing as integrated institutional assemblages (in the sense of De Landa, 2006).

The theory of HAVINGS, as discussed in the introduction, has its limitations. It primarily functions as a descriptive and analytical category rather than an explanatory theory. Specifically, it serves as a tool for scientific observers to describe certain practices, such as sharing. However, what is lacking is an exploration of how the actors involved perceive and feel during these actions of having. Understanding these subjective experiences is crucial for grasping their motivations and sense-making processes. To address this gap, it is essential to combine the theory of HAVINGS with an approach that explicitly examines the subjective dimension of these experiences. A strong theoretical partner for this purpose is the theory of *Weltbeziehungen*.

We can define the combination of the two theories in terms of the duality of etics and emics, as famously debated between Marvin Harris (1979) and Marshall Sahlins (2000) about the potential for materialist reduction in the study of human behaviour and culture. The theory of HAVINGS reconciles these methodological dualisms by consistently integrating both the etics and emics perspectives when examining the evolution of HAVINGS over time. In the context of sharing&co this means combining an economic perspective with a phenomenological approach, as articulated in the theory of *Weltbeziehungen* (Rosa, 2018). The latter emphasizes the relational nature of HAVINGS and how specific institutional arrangements influence patterns of sense-making and individual emotional responses toward those arrangements. HAVINGS affect all dimensions of our relationships with the world, shaping our connections with both objects and other beings. As classical German idealism has highlighted, HAVINGS—referred to as property—also impact how individuals relate to themselves (Blumenfeld, 2024). Furthermore, HAVINGS pertain to fundamental normative commitments, such as beliefs about what constitutes a good life within a community that shares certain values. In contrast, the economic perspective focuses on the materiality of objects and the means by which people relate to one another, particularly the fundamental transformations brought about by digital technologies. To fully understand how institutional developments like sharing&co unfold within specific social, cultural, and political contexts, it is essential to give equal weight to both methodological perspectives: the etics and emics of HAVINGS.

3. Elements of the theory of HAVINGS

The central theoretical concept that replaces the standard meaning of "property" is "power of disposition." It is important to recognise that the term "property" functions as a total institution in much philosophical and ideological discourse. Additionally, the idea of "property" has influenced practical applications through the concept of "property rights," which appears to allow for a more flexible and adaptable interpretation. This is evident in the various "bundle" theories present across different disciplines (Wilson, 2022). However, I argue that as long as the term "property" is used in these more nuanced contexts, many of its ideological implications will still persist.

3.1 Power of disposition and action modes of having

The concept of "power of disposition" has its roots in economics, particularly in the work of Carl Menger, which was later examined by Max Weber. There exists a genealogical connection to modern institutional economics that distinguishes between "legal" and "economic rights" (Barzel, 2012). This distinction has led to significant conceptual confusion, as the term "right" is inherently tied to legal categories, including customary rights and various informal institutions (Hodgson, 2015). By using "power of disposition" instead of "economic right," we can avoid these complications. Moreover, we can continue to utilise the framework derived from Roman Law to analyse powers of disposition through different types of actions (such as *usus* and *abusus*) that enact this power by altering the state of an object or managing the benefits that come from it. For example, an individual may have the power to use a tool but may not have the authority to sell it to someone else. Therefore, we should refer to a "bundle of dispositional powers" rather than a "bundle of property rights." This distinction is not merely a terminological change, as "power" and "right" are clearly analytically distinct concepts, as systematically developed by Max Weber. The *Weltbeziehungen* approach converges with this approach in arguing that structural change of property includes a move towards mere use of goods, sometimes also referred to as possession (Rosa, 2023). Empirical research has shown that property is just one form how people get rights of use, which appear to be the more fundamental interest; accordingly, preferences having property or other means of use are strongly dependent on socioeconomic contexts and individual circumstances (Rinne et al. 2024).

At the same time, we must consider that even if we focus on the “rights” dimension, this requires acknowledging the social and cultural embeddedness of law in two ways (Benda-Beckmann et al., 2009). First, when transferring Western legal systems to other societies, the actual practices of implementing the law can differ significantly. This point has been made by economists, particularly in the debates around the influential “legal origin” theories (Aoki, 2019; Porta et al., 1998). Second, law-making itself is influenced by various factors of embeddedness, leading to modifications of transferred laws. China serves as a case in point, where the concept of law is ambiguous due to an internal state of “legal pluralism” (Ho, 2022). This pluralism reflects regional diversity in the application of national laws, allowing for the selective application of various practices. In general, the politics of law application at the grassroots level renders the notion of “rights” malleable and contentious, primarily due to administrative intermediation (Benjamin and Raman, 2011; Patil and Fuchs, 2024).

Power is not an inherent right but rather the ability to enact a certain state of the world. Rights are defined as institutional forms of powers of disposition that are enforced by third parties following established rules. In the context of our discussion on sharing&co, it is important to note that power need not be actively exercised. This means that multiple individuals can hold concurrent powers of disposition over an object in certain situations. Conflicts can arise when several individuals attempt to exercise these powers simultaneously and in the same manner. For example, in a family setting, all members might share the same power of disposition regarding an apple on the table, but typically only one member will and can act on that power. If two members attempt to exercise their power simultaneously, a conflict can occur. Realizing the power of disposition happens via an act of *appropriation*, such as grabbing the apple and eating it. It is important to notice that acts of appropriation need not be manifest to confirm havings: I may leave the apple on the desk, and no one else contests my power of disposition. This conflict could be resolved, for instance, by sharing the apple and dividing it into two pieces. Concurrent powers of disposition distributed among several individuals have been a common characteristic throughout history and across various societies, such as feudal land law in Europe—which was a primary target of capitalist property transformations—

and non-feudal land law in Imperial China, where certain general features persist even today in the very different context of socialism. A major aspect of capitalist transformation was to impose a regime of exclusive and unequivocal property on social practices that recognize concurrent, overlapping and shared powers of disposition (for a classical case, see Hong Kong under British rule, Hase, 2013). From that angle, "sharing" powers of disposition is a societal universal, and property an artificial institutional construct.

The example of the apple within a family allows us to introduce two other modes of action beyond appropriation. In this scenario, two family members hold the same power of disposition over the apple, and one of them appropriates it. If the others recognise this action and do not take any counteraction against it, the appropriation is legitimised (which may reflect a larger context of social ordering of power relations, see below). This *recognition* is, therefore, the second essential mode of action related to having. Recognition can also be expressed in inviting the taking of the apple so that this does not even amount to appropriation. The family may also establish certain rules, such as "first come, first served" or consider individual needs. For instance, there could be a rule stating that a member who has already had an apple today cannot have another one. This represents the mode of *assignment* in having.

It is important to note that these arrangements do not change the underlying distribution of powers of disposition. We can say that the family collectively shares the power of disposition over the apple, which legitimises various ways of enacting that power. By recognising another family member's appropriation, the other members express their own power of disposition by granting legitimacy to that act. If this power did not persist, the recognition would be meaningless, as the act of appropriation would simply negate it. This highlights a crucial distinction from property rights theories, which assume that exclusion is a fundamental feature: we wouldn't say that someone who recognises another person's property right expresses her own right to that property. While property rights over an object may be divided among several individuals, each right remains exclusive; this concept is often referred to as "clarity" in the assignment of individual rights (Schlicht, 2018). An exclusive property right on the apple would annul any power of disposition of other family members, whereas the recognition of appropriation expresses this power.

The simple object of the apple can be shared in various ways within a family. The basic idea is that all family members have equal power over the disposition of the apple. However, this is not always the case. For instance, there may be situations where only the oldest male has the authority to decide what happens to the apple, including giving it to someone else. In this scenario, while one person holds exclusive power over the apple, that does not mean this person is the only one who can consume it. On the contrary, having the power of disposition also means being able to assign the apple to another person. This highlights a key difference from typical notions of property: transferring the apple to someone else does not mean relinquishing the power to decide what happens to it. Even when it comes to the mode of appropriation, giving up the apple or destroying it may be a form of appropriating it (Sartre, 2017). This point is important for the analysis of sharing since sharing can also enact appropriation. This is another expression of the paradox of sharing.

When considering the complexity of this discussion, the analytical value of the *Weltbeziehungen* approach becomes clear. To understand the interplay among the three modes of action—appropriation, recognition, and assignment—we must explore the meanings and motivations of the various actors involved. Even identifying a particular act as “assignment” requires an emic perspective, as there is no objective third-party criterion to interpret a specific action. For example, if one family member takes an apple and the others do not openly dissent, this situation could signify an appropriation, as the others may be too intimidated to challenge it, or it could indicate the recognition of a prior assignment. To properly interpret this, we need to understand the family’s history. We might discover that the original assignment was actually an act of usurpation, leaving the others with no choice but to acquiesce. Without a thorough analysis using the *Weltbeziehungen* framework, any analysis of HAVINGS will have many unknowns and ambiguities.

This reasoning also applies to the larger institutional setting in which HAVINGS are becoming structurally stable. Different from the notion of rights, the perspective on powers of disposition clearly recognises their embeddedness into larger social structure of power. The concept of power is closely linked to Max Weber’s idea of “order,” without needing to invoke the specific term “property order.” Order is a fundamental concept that pertains to societal structures into which modes of having are embedded, with power dynamics being just one of its components. For Weber, order is an intersubjective pattern of meanings rather than a fixed institutional structure, which is salient in his complex notion of legitimacy. In a patriarchal society, it might be seen as obvious or “natural” for the father to be given the only available apple in the family. The father doesn’t need to claim it for himself; instead, his wife, as the household manager, might assign the apple to him without asserting any claim to dispositional power. This assignment acknowledges the father’s existing power of disposition. In fact, many modern societies that have adopted legal frameworks of property from Western capitalist cultures often exhibit significant discrepancies between practice and law. For instance, gender-based power structures can influence the distribution of resources in ways that are independent of formal property laws (Rao, 2008). These phenomena require a deep analysis of *Weltbeziehungen*.

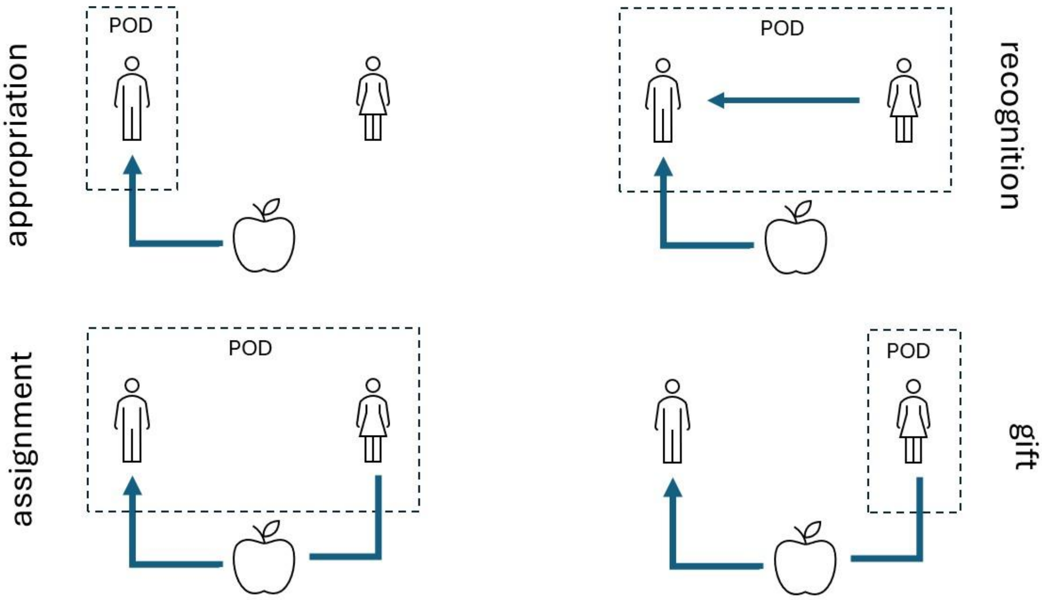

Figure 1: The diversity of HAVINGS and the emics/etics duality

Let me summarise these complex considerations in Figure 1. We consider a scenario where a heterosexual couple has purchased an apple from the market. In Case One, upper left, called "appropriation," the man takes the apple and eats it without asking the woman. He exercises his power of disposition (POD) and acts on it. It is important to note that this situation may involve a legal right: the man might have used his own money to buy the apple, which could make him the legal holder of the POD. No conflict arises from his appropriative act in this case. This does not necessarily require a title but rather implies that there is mutual consent between the couple that each has a separate budget and can dispose of it independently. Thus, the act of appropriation was already initiated by the purchase, and his eating of the apple merely realises the exercise of the POD.

In the upper right scenario labeled "recognition," the couple views the purchase as a joint action, resulting in shared POD. These shared powers may stem from jointly managing their budget, so the man does not have unequivocal authority over the purchase. While he still picks up the apple and eats it, the woman nods in agreement, acknowledging his action. This recognition, however, also reinforces her own power of disposition, even though she does not consume the apple. Alternatively, she might start to quarrel over the unauthorised appropriation; both actions reflect the shared POD. In this context, traditional gender roles may play a part, often favouring male priority in making the decision to grab the apple. Another scenario, in the lower right, arises in which the man eats the apple, but the woman is the one who bought it and holds the power of disposition. In this case, she might hand over the apple to the man as a "gift." Finally, in the lower left, the couple may have joint powers of disposition and agree on assigning the apple to the man exclusively. Alternatively, not shown here, they may agree to share the apple by slicing it into two halves. We consider this scenario in the next section.

3.2 Exclusion and rivalry

The example of the apple highlights a crucial aspect of conventional property theory, which is also relevant to the theory of HAVINGS: the concept of exclusion. While the power to dispose of an item is not inherently exclusive, the way it is exercised can and often must be exclusive. Exclusion is not only relevant in appropriation; the wife's assignment of the apple to her husband excludes other family members from it. Exclusion can only be meaningfully discussed in relation to the idea of rivalry in use. This concept is tied to the economics of public goods. Rivalry is essential for understanding sharing, since without rivalry, sharing does not involve a necessary intentional action. The key point is that the physical characteristics of the items we possess and the ways we manage them significantly affect the institutional forms of HAVINGS. Consequently, changes in material properties—such as those brought about by technological advancements—can alter these forms without necessarily changing the fundamental aspects of HAVINGS. However, as we shall see, at the same time the subjectivity of the *Weltbeziehungen* matters.

This observation highlights the need to clarify the concept of sharing, which occurs within a material context. For instance, sharing an apple involves taking a knife and cutting it into pieces. However, sharing can also refer to a state in which individuals hold something in common, such as sharing a flat. It is crucial to distinguish between the etic and emic perspectives of sharing. From an etic perspective, an external observer examines a specific pattern of relationships between objects and individuals and concludes that the individuals share the object by simultaneously exercising control over it. This perspective refers to sharing as a state; for example, individuals in a room can be said to share the air. If the air becomes scarce, a need may arise to find ways to actively share it, bringing sharing as an action into focus. The first situation would not be captured by the emic perspective on sharing, which focuses on how agents perceive the situation. The emic perspective addresses the meaning behind their actions and how they evaluate the outcomes of those actions. Sharing, understood as an intentional action, involves recognising the concurrent control that individuals have over resources. In situations where there is potential rivalry over shared resources, individuals must agree on a method for resolving it. Therefore, mechanisms of exclusion are essential to sharing rivalrous goods, as illustrated by the couple sharing an apple.

As shown in Figure 2, we can observe the same physical action of dividing an apple, but the meaning may differ drastically depending on the context. In the scenario on the right, both the man and woman have POD, and the only way to enact both is by dividing the apple, unless one party chooses to ignore the other's POD. In the left-hand scenario, the two individuals share the POD. Consequently, they agree to divide the apple as a means of enacting it. In this case, the act of sharing may not only represent their physical action but also expresses their mutual affection and the shared POD. This example illustrates that the institutional analysis of sharing must be combined with the concept of *Weltbeziehungen*. In the right-hand scenario, there may be no meaningful connection between the two individuals. In contrast, the left-hand scenario may show a strong resonance not only between the two individuals but also with the apple, which serves as a medium for expressing that resonance.

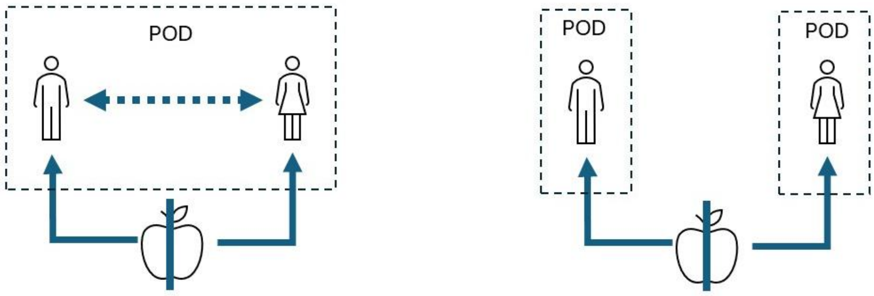

Figure 2: *Weltbeziehungen* in sharing an apple

The emics perspective suggests that our relationships with the world can influence the meaning of sharing. Imagine a group of people gathered in a room with fresh air (Figure 3). From an etics perspective, breathing fresh air does not necessarily indicate sharing since there is no rivalry. Still, physically, we can diagnose "sharing" the air in the room (left-hand diagram). However, if the group engages in a coordinated breathing exercise, they might perceive their individual breaths flowing through the room and being inhaled by others, and vice versa (right-hand diagram). This shared experience may lead them to interpret their time in the room as a form of sharing air through their collective breathing activity. In other words, there are material determinants of sharing, but there are also sensemaking determinants. In the right-hand case, people interpret the physical sharing without rivalry as a way to establish resonant world relationships among them, perhaps even literally coordinating the rhythm of their breathing.

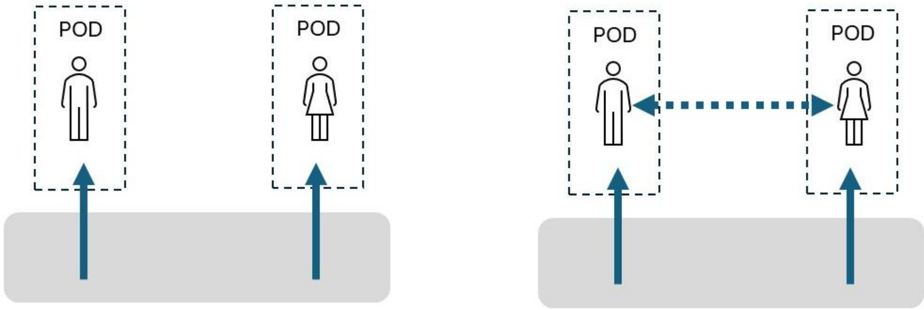

Figure 3: Sharing without rivalry of enacting POD

Exclusion is not solely determined by property as an institution or by the technical features of an object; rather, it arises from the necessity to manage conflicts over objects when competing powers of disposition are exercised simultaneously. This is particularly relevant in situations where exercising a power of disposition results in the consumption of an object, as is the case with an apple. We also need to distinguish between factual exclusion and institutional exclusion: If I drive the car, I factually exclude all others from driving it. If I have the exclusive right to drive it, I can exclude others even when not driving. However, as stated in the paradox of sharing, this right also gives me the right to share it.

It is important to differentiate between an object and the means used to provide it, and the distinction between factual and institutional exclusion matters here. A streaming platform factually serves as a non-rivalrous public good: When it offers a song to the public, there is typically no rivalry among individual acts of listening, as long as the data traffic works smoothly (Figure 4).

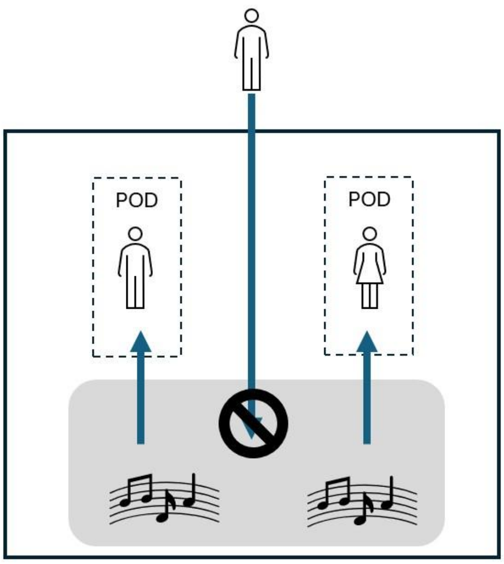

Figure 4: Sharing on a music streaming platform

This means that sharing occurs from the etics perspective, but not from the emics perspective, thus putting the previous example of fresh air on its head. An individual who streams a song does not intentionally share it with thousands of other listeners, even though, from an etics viewpoint, those thousands of listeners are sharing the streaming experience. However, maintaining and managing the platform, along with purchasing the products it makes available—such as songs and their copyrights—incurs significant costs. In particular, preserving the non-rivalry of listening requires ever more investment in technological infrastructure, such as data centres. This leads to familiar challenges associated with producing public goods, which are typically addressed by restricting access to the platform and by charging access fees. Hence, institutional exclusion is the condition for sustaining the production of the public good economically, turning it into a club good. All these aspects are well known from economic theorizing about “clubs” (Anderson et al., 2004).

From a property perspective, platforms can be structured in various ways, primarily as privately owned companies or as cooperative collectives where members hold fractional property (Pasimeni, 2020). These options exist within the current legal framework. Similar technological setups may facilitate different institutional arrangements concerning the powers of disposition. For instance, car sharing can be provided by a company that owns the vehicles or by a cooperative in which all members have shared ownership. In this scenario, the carpool functions as a club good, where individual cars are allocated exclusively. However, if the pool is sufficiently large, there may be no rivalry in using a car. In this case, the focus shifts from the car itself to the entitlement to use a car.

In conclusion, exclusion is not a characteristic unique to modern property and must be differentiated into factual and institutional exclusion; rather, it is a widespread phenomenon in HAVINGS that reflects the specific relationships between people and objects. Additionally, the material, economic, and even institutional factors associated with these HAVINGS allow considerable flexibility in shaping how sharing is structured. This openness is familiar in discussions surrounding the commons, where traditional economic perspectives, primarily influenced by Ostrom (Ostrom, 2015), dominate, often radically put into question by anthropologists (Wagner and Talakai, 2007). Alternative viewpoints focus on the transformative potential of “commoning,” which alters relationships with the object and can even change the object itself (Helfrich and Euler, 2021; Raman and Denis, 2025).

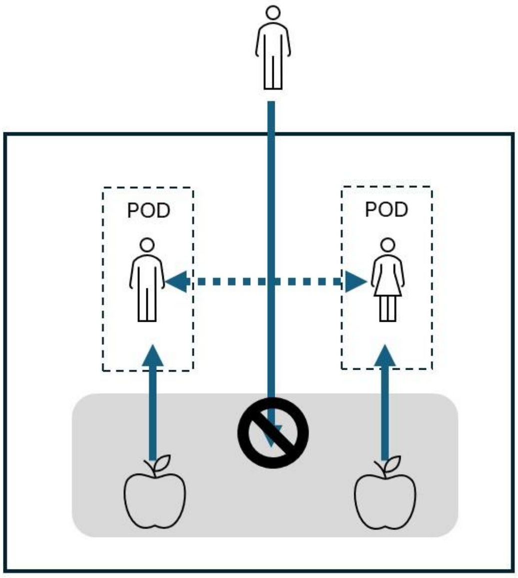

Figure 5: Sharing in the commons

Whereas Ostrom discusses the framework of property rights (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992), the HAVINGS perspective allows for a distinction between various institutional forms of organizing layered powers of disposition within the commons while maintaining a principle of exclusion characteristic of club goods. For example (see Figure 5), a fruit orchard can be arranged as a communal garden, providing everyone access to the apples. While the orchard may be abundant, the apples still exhibit the physical property of rivalry. Therefore, non-members of the commons are excluded, while members can negotiate various forms of sharing, which might include property rights elements, such as the right to sell a certain quantity of apples in the marketplace. Another option is to share the orchard as a commons, which could involve denying the right to sell and emphasising communal activities in sharing the harvest. This latter arrangement can be analysed in terms of HAVINGS but not through the lens of property rights. It is also noteworthy that the same institutional arrangement, the commons, can reflect very different relationships to the world.

3.3 Structural modes of HAVINGS

In the theory of HAVINGS, we examine issues of materiality and institutional arrangements through the lens of structural modes of HAVINGS. One such mode is *property*, which is defined as the institutional framework for exercising powers of disposition within the broad context of markets. This generally refers to acts of alienation, which can be evaluated in monetary terms. Alienation occurs through markets; however, institutions can enforce market valuations without markets mediating alienation. A key example of this is inheritance. Inheritance represents a form of alienation that operates independently of markets. Yet, when a universal inheritance tax is imposed, the act of alienation becomes linked to monetary values. This situation can place an heir in a difficult position, potentially forcing them to reject the inheritance if they cannot pay the associated tax.

The distinct role of monetary valuation of property establishes a clear distinction between wealth and property, which we will explore in terms of assetification. Many forms of property come with a title, highlighting the distinction between having the object itself and having the title to it. For instance, a shareholder in a company has a property title but does not have property of specific physical objects of the company. Titles are often created to represent the monetary income generated by an object, making it an asset that can, in turn, be appropriated. This concept becomes particularly important when considering developments such as car sharing through commercial platforms, which transform private cars into assets, allowing them to appropriate the vehicles without altering the underlying property relationships.

Another structural mode of HAVINGS is *possession*, which refers to the enacted power of disposition. It is important to note that property does not necessarily imply possession, a distinction that is crucial for analysing potential alternatives to property (Emerich, 2017). For instance, a landlord has a house in the property mode, but a tenant has possession of it. Both the landlord and tenant have powers of disposition, but these powers differ due to their distinct structural roles. Or, a shareholder holds a fractional share of a company but does not own its premises or equipment. Here, possession becomes a complex issue, as it is distributed across different hierarchical levels within the company. Although the CEO may be viewed as the ultimate possessor, the actual possession typically lies with the workers. These aspects are also significant when considering the sharing arrangements of objects, particularly those that comprise multiple elements, such as a furnished house.

Finally, diverging from standard legal interpretations (Honoré, 1961), I introduce *ownership* as a structural mode of relationality between an individual and an object, particularly when the object becomes part of the individual's identity (without using this terminology, the separate mode is well acknowledged in the literature on property, see e.g. Keenan, 2015; Radin, 1982). From this perspective, a tenant may not only possess a home but also regard that home as an essential aspect of their personhood or extended self (Belk, 1988). This notion, albeit confusingly, is often referred to as "property" in German constitutional law (Kingreen, 2016). In the theory of HAVINGS, this interpretation of property signifies ownership as a distinct structural mode of havings.[3] Ownership

[3] For the different writung of HAVINGS/havings, see footnote 2.

manifests in various forms, with possession aligning with relationality; for instance, the workers mentioned earlier may develop a sense of ownership over their workplace through long-term possession. This concept of ownership is crucial for analysing specific forms of sharing&co.

Ownership is a fundamental concept that clearly illustrates the connection between the theory of HAVINGS and the theory of *Weltbeziehungen*. Similar to discussions about sharing, ownership highlights the performative aspects of these relationships. On the one hand, ownership, particularly in terms of psychological ownership, is shaped by individual perceptions and interpretations. On the other hand, legal disputes over Indigenous property claims demonstrate the tangible and structural aspects of ownership, often grounded in beliefs about the integration of people and their landscapes (Chao, 2022; Povinelli, 2016). This perspective reflects an ontology that differs significantly from Western notions of property (Lieber and Rynkiewich, 2007). Therefore, it is important to recognise that ownership has both emic and etic dimensions and hence counts as structural mode.

The examples illustrate that the three structural modes of HAVINGS are independent of one another, as recognised in legal contexts. For instance, a thief may possess stolen goods, which is legally acknowledged, but their claim to property depends on whether the lawful proprietor objects. This distinction is particularly relevant in discussions about squatting, highlighting how modes of action and structural modes of HAVINGS interact. If a property owner does not object to the occupation of their house for a certain period, many legal systems will eventually recognise the occupant's possession as legitimate property that the original proprietor can no longer contest. This shift can be explained by the way prolonged occupation strengthens the occupant's claim to ownership. Moreover, in Western legal philosophy, there is a strong emphasis on the idea that property should be used productively, suggesting that negligence on the part of the property holder can lead to moral disqualification of their claim to property.

The distinction between structural modes is crucial when analysing sharing&co arrangements, as in the case of streaming services. For instance, a user of a streaming service does not own the music in a traditional sense; however, she can listen to a song anytime without restrictions. This experience can create a sense of ownership, often referred to as "psychological ownership" in the literature (Dawkins et al., 2017). This concept leads to interesting variations in how users exercise their dispositional powers over the music (Sinclair and Tinson, 2017). A user may be hesitant to share a song through simultaneous listening, preferring to share it only with friends. Additionally, the phenomenon of fandom suggests that knowing how many others listen to the same song can enhance the user's feeling of ownership over it. In summary, not having property may lead to greater freedom in how one uses and arranges songs. For instance, users create playlists and personal arrangements, investing their own effort into the platform, which enhances its appeal to them and, often, to others as well (Malte Janzing, personal communication). Streaming thus evolves into early forms of participatory consumption, allowing individuals to engage with songs without actually owning them.

We can illustrate the three structural modes of havings using a Venn diagram (Figure 6). This diagram reveals distinct concurrent patterns that define specific powers of disposition and the resulting forms of agency (indicated by the numbers; for more details, see (Herrmann-Pillath, 2024). Additionally, it highlights the unique forms of embeddedness associated with these structural modes.

- *Property* represents the structural mode of powers of disposition within markets, aligning with the rise of modern property through legal codifications in the 19th century. A key feature of this mode is the power to alienate an object and gain monetary benefits from it. In many sharing and cooperative arrangements, however, property as defined here does not belong to the users.
- In contrast, possession is embedded in a broader economic context and includes non-market situations, such as possession in companies or families. For example, users of a shared flat are possessors but not proprietors.
- Ownership relates to the societal context, emphasizing the relationality between individuals and objects. A tenant of a rented flat may not be the owner; for instance, if she views the flat as a temporary stay due to a job assignment by her company, she may not identify with ownership. Even if she purchases the flat, she might not adopt an ownership perspective if she sees the market as flexible enough to resell it anytime, potentially even speculating during a real estate boom.

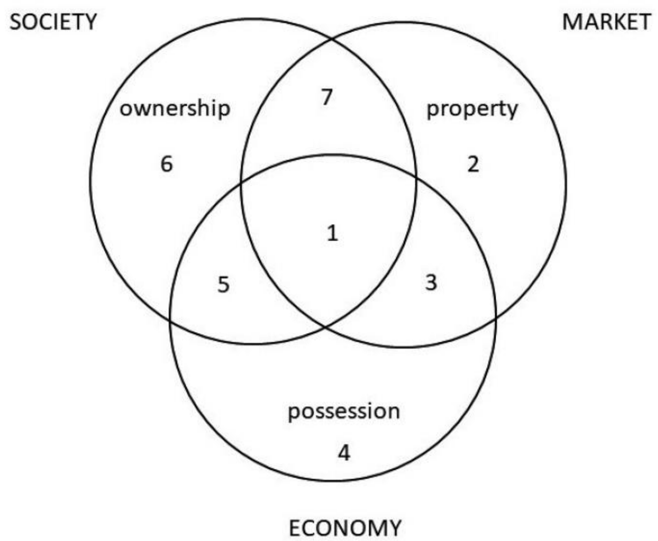

Figure 6: Embeddedness of structural modes of havings

3.4 Putting the elements together

In summary, we can outline the action modes of having and the structural modes of havings in a diagram that will help us analyse various forms of sharing&co (Figure 7). The specific combination of these modes creates a distinct pattern of dispositional power. For instance, possession can coexist with appropriation, but this is not always the case. A child may appropriate an apple and possess it, or a mother may assign the apple to the child, who obediently recognises her decision. Similarly, sharing&co can take on different combinations of modes, which are influenced by the material economic characteristics of the good in terms of rivalry and the available technology for provision.

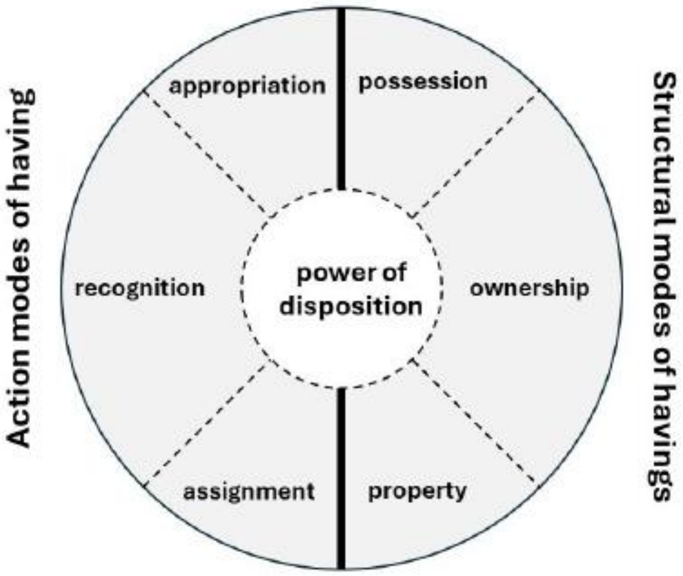

Figure 7: Action modes of having and structural modes of HAVINGS as determinants of dispositional power

When considering the two dimensions of modes, the same principles apply as with structural modes; they combine independently from one another. Furthermore, they interact meaningfully with one another. For example, a structural mode can encourage certain action modes. This concept is well established in standard property theory, where it is often argued that the structural mode of property promotes a sense of care. From the perspective of HAVINGS theory, care is a form of appropriation that contributes to the creation of ownership (Brightman et al., 2016). This idea suggests that appropriation extends beyond the Weberian definition, incorporating elements highlighted by Sartre (Sartre, 2017): appropriation does not solely involve an exclusive possessive act (the "grab"), but also entails developing ownership as an embodied relationship between the individual and the object. This perspective aligns with personhood theories of property (Blumenfeld, 2024; Radin, 1982). As a result, we can identify a pattern of HAVINGS that combines appropriation and ownership without the need for formal property rights. For instance, when a fan streams a song multiple times, they appropriate the song and become an owner. Although they are not a proprietor, they can be considered a possessor as long as access is continually available and requires little effort.

An important observation for analysing sharing&co is that the simultaneous enactment of all forms of HAVINGS does not necessarily enhance the powers of disposition. In fact, ownership can sometimes restrict the ability to transfer property. This creates a significant point of conflict between Indigenous views of land ownership and Western perspectives (McNeil, 2017). Even when Indigenous people retain or acquire property of their lands, they often exclude the possibility of alienation, as they consider ownership to be linked to their genealogical groups. This distinction can also be observed in European history, particularly with institutions like *fidei commissum*. Ownership is frequently seen as a product of the relational ties that a group has to an object, such as a valuable watch passed down through generations. However, this does not always translate into a greater or lesser ability to dispose of the property. Additionally, limiting the dispositional power of the current holder, also referred to as the steward of the land, was a strategy to restrict creditors' powers in cases of land forfeiture.

4. Sharing&co as complex configurations of modes of HAVINGS

4.1 Sharing and community: HAVINGS in triadic relationships

Let us start by looking at a simple scenario involving two people, such as one individual sharing her car with another (Figure 8). My friend asks to borrow my car for a quick shopping trip, and I happily agree. This means that I am temporarily transferring possession of my car to her, which gives her certain rights to use it. However, these rights are temporary, as she is obligated to return the car to me afterwards (left-hand diagram). Now, let us say that she is my romantic partner (right-hand diagram). In this case, I may feel a strong commitment to sharing my car, which leads to an emerging sense of shared ownership. I might express my willingness to let her use my car whenever she needs it. My partner trusts my promise and feels as though she has a stake in the car, regardless of who is currently in possession of it. The power of disposition over the car is effectively shared between the two of us, reflecting the emotional bond we have. The legal property relation does not matter here, I remain the only proprietor. As we see, modes of HAVINGS and *Weltbeziehungen* closely interact in creating a distinct pattern of distributed powers of disposition. Property only counts in the case of conflicts, when the emotional embedding breaks down, although even then people may need expert advice to exert their property (as in divorce) (Althaber et al., 2023).

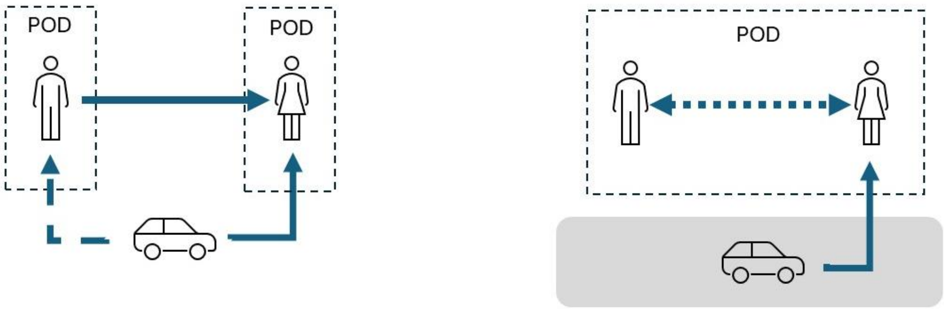

Figure 8: Two forms of sharing a car

Sharing can occur within a family or any community where it is based on mutual understanding and agreed-upon rules. Everyone has the opportunity to use the car, but there are specific guidelines in place to prevent conflicts among group members. Importantly, this arrangement does not necessarily mean that the group members own fractional shares of the car. In many families, only one individual holds legal property of the car. However, this does not grant that person the freedom to use the car as they please, such as selling it on a whim. The key reason is that ownership is viewed collectively: it is regarded as the "family car."

In the theory of HAVINGS, it is important to consider various arrangements from the perspectives of different family members, which requires including the perspective on *Weltbeziehungen*, thus highlighting the necessary analytical duality. For example, in a traditional family, the father may view cars as a male domain, while other members recognise that as a social fact, which is also institutionalised in the father being the proprietor of the car. Yet, as in the case of the romantic partner, ownership is shared in the family. Sharing ownership within the family could imply that the father is responsible for driving the children to school events. As a result, children might have a sense of authority over the car, gaining temporary rights to use it as they are recognized in this role. We can identify their modes of HAVINGS as in Figure 9. The children (if underage) cannot appropriate the car and possess it temporarily, but they are recognized as owners. In this sense, we can speak of vicarious possession when the father drives the kids to school.

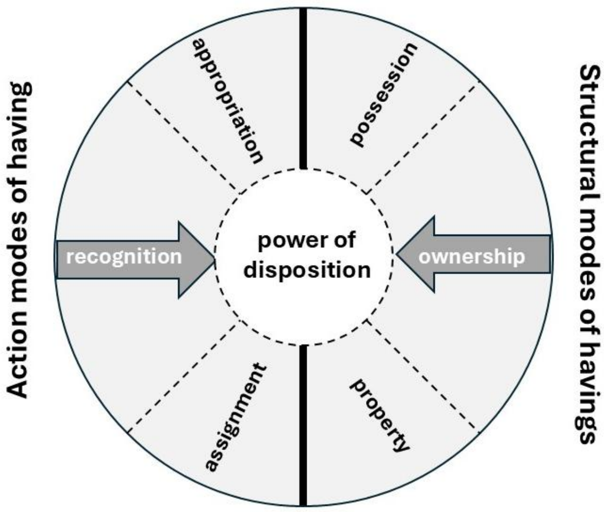

Figure 9: Children as owners of family car

This example illustrates the importance of the *Weltbeziehungen* perspective: understanding relationships and their significance is crucial for analysing the modes of HAVINGS. For instance, a child's insistence on getting a ride can be interpreted as an act of appropriation. Alternatively, even if the child does not explicitly demand it, there may be a shared recognition that the father is morally obligated to temporarily assign the car to the children, which includes his role as the driver. In Figures 9 and 10, we could show this by highlighting the respective action modes of having. If we look at the father, the interesting observation is that he has a strong position at first sight, as he combines all three structural modes "in one hand", even to the extent that he does not need to take appropriative action nor depends on assignment (Figure 10). Yet, the paradox of sharing applies with a vengeance: It is this concentration of powers of disposition which also enables him to assign the car to others, and this might even be a moral obligation.

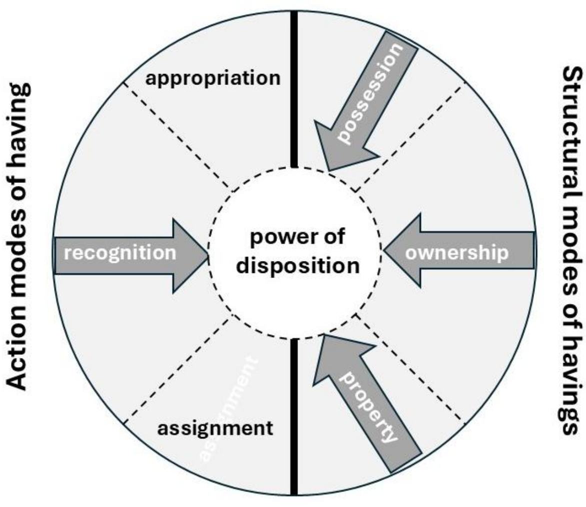

Figure 10: Father as proprietor of family car

Understanding the family case requires looking beyond a simple dyadic framework to consider the family as a third entity, even though it lacks formal status. The family is involved through two modes: the action mode of recognition and the structural mode of ownership. The father's position is often ambivalent and is influenced by larger societal power structures. He may be viewed as the full owner of the car, with recognition from all family members, or as a steward of the family, suggesting that the car shouldn't be owned solely by him. Stewardship arises from recognition, but the family may also hold legal property status, such as when it comes to real estate or a company. The latter case is shown in Figure 11. A steward does not appropriate an object and has no property; she is assigned to possession, and her role is grounded in ownership which is effectively shared with other family members.

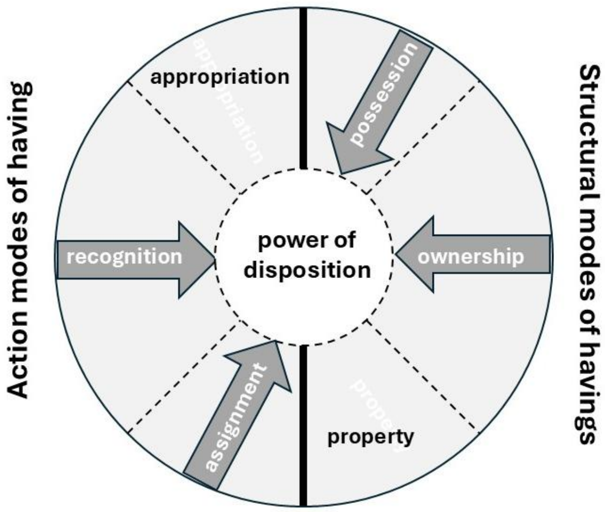

Figure 11: Stewardship of family estate

These two scenarios significantly differ in how powers of disposition are allocated and do not necessarily stem from formal institutions. In similar societal contexts, one family may follow a patriarchal structure while another may implicitly adopt a stewardship structure. This difference cannot be easily identified from an etic perspective; instead, it requires an emic viewpoint. Nonetheless, as in the car sharing example, the etic perspective does emphasize the exclusivity of car use. Complex arrangements of modes of HAVINGS arise from the fact that a car can only be used for one ride at a time, excluding other potential uses.

The example of a family illustrates various types of arrangements where HAVINGS are mediated by a community. This concept is applicable to several institutional forms of collective ownership, such as fractional property (Pasimeni, 2020). For instance, a neighbourhood might establish a carpool where the vehicles are shared among its members. This arrangement adheres to the standard property framework since the neighbourhood purchases the cars and acts as the legal proprietor, especially in terms of excluding non-members from using the vehicles. Individual members may be considered fractional proprietors in the sense that they hold shares in the carpool and can participate in collective decisions regarding the cars' use. However, this is not the only possible arrangement. For example, the neighbourhood could function as a legal entity, meaning that membership is automatically linked to residing within the community, even only short-term.

The carpool functions as a club good. Property rights help distinguish between community members who are proprietors and those who are not, but they do not govern the relationships among the members themselves. Even when it comes to fractional ownership, members do not own individual cars outright. Instead, this setup is typically referred to as "access" (Kreiczer-Levy, 2015). Members have the right to be assigned a car based on rules that are accepted by all participants. These rules dictate how cars are allocated within the neighbourhood. In principle, these arrangements exhibit all the characteristics of commons as analysed by Elinor Ostrom (2015). Thus, Ostrom's general principles for effective and functional commons are applicable here. This includes the shared values and commitments of the members, which further highlights the emic perspective.

The neighbourhood context creates a sense of ownership among members regarding their cars. Although individual possession is exclusive, members view their car usage as a shared resource within the community. This sense of ownership fosters a feeling of responsibility, even if individuals do not own the cars outright. Users of cars feel a moral obligation to the community to care for their vehicles—this includes responsible handling and keeping them clean. This sense of ownership leads individual users to perceive their relationship with the car as a form of sharing with other community members, rather than merely accessing a collectively owned asset, even if they do not directly share the vehicle. If the neighbourhood were to establish a ride-sharing system alongside carpooling initiatives, members could register their need for a car and specify the purpose of their request. Rides could then be announced on a digital platform, allowing other members to join. The sharing may occur in two ways: either the member who has claimed access to the car has the right to share it, or they may feel an obligation to share it with others.

The specific patterns of powers of disposition can vary significantly based on the particular combination of action modes of having and structural modes of havings These patterns are not fully encompassed by traditional legal definitions of property. Furthermore, the commonly held distinctions between standard property and alternative forms are becoming increasingly irrelevant. The commons as understood by Ostrom (see previous discussion of critical assessments by anthropologists) represents a type of HAVINGS that encompasses formal property in relation to non-members, while also retaining certain elements of standard property in internal relationships. For example, possession may be assigned exclusively to individuals, such as when providing temporary access to cars in a carpool. This arrangement is sometimes inaccurately described as property rights (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992); however, it is more accurate to refer to it as distributed powers of disposition in the structural mode of possession.

We can summarize these complex configurations by highlighting an ideal model of commons structure, where the commons is treated as a legal entity that holds property (Figure 12). This legal entity is recognized as the proprietor, yet it does not possess or own the property itself. Consequently, the commons cannot exercise powers of disposition, even though it is the formal origin of these powers. Instead, these powers are enacted through a political process of community decision-making, most importantly, assigning partial powers to members which are manifest in possession. Hence, as Ostrom has elaborated in detail, the functioning of a commons depends on its embeddedness in wider structures of societal and political power relationships.

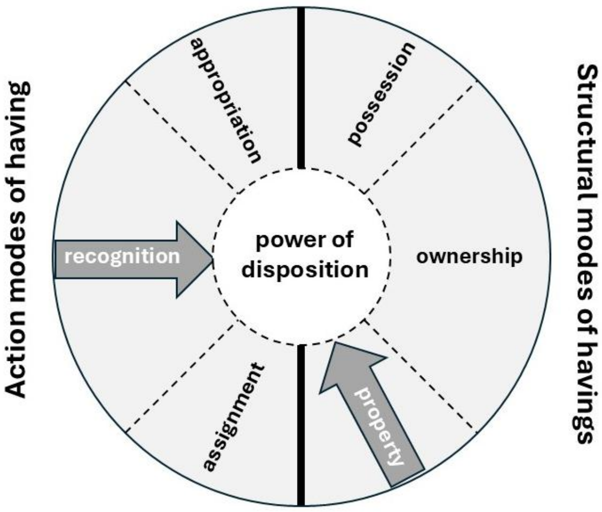

Figure 12: Commons as legal person

As we see, members are effective stewards of the commons when they also regard the commons as their own, in the mode of ownership (Figure 13, left-hand). This is not necessarily the case: if they are not owners, they may have incentives to appropriate the commons, which is labelled the “tragedy of the commons” (Figure 13, right hand). In sharing arrangements with common pool elements, this manifests in a lack of care, for example, when users in bike-sharing arrangements mishandle the bikes.

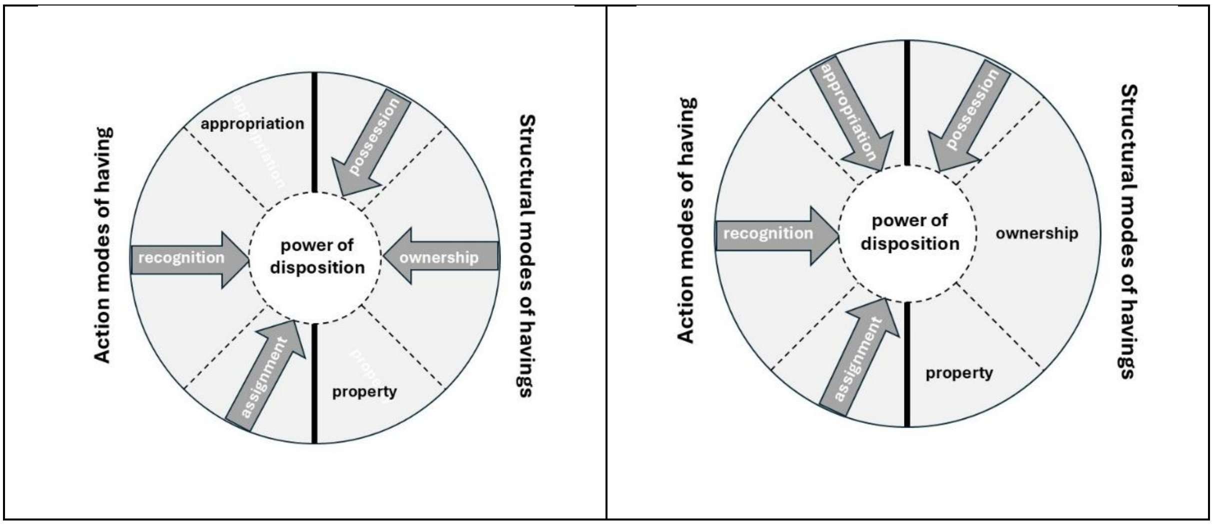

Figure 13: Members of commons: Stewards with ownership (left) and opportunists (right)

4.2 Commercial platforms and the assetification of HAVINGS

Let us explore a scenario where no community mediates sharing, as seen from an etics perspective. When someone shares a ride with a stranger, the stranger temporarily shares possession of the vehicle but gains minimal powers of disposition, as they cannot change the direction of the ride. In contrast, when a proprietor offers a taxi service to other users, customers obtain powers of disposition through a service contract, even if it is informal. This service contract allows for the temporary use of the car and the driving service. Moreover, there are instances where individuals who share rides aim to create a temporary community with their passengers, thereby establishing a context of temporary ownership. For example, some car owners may adopt hitchhiking as a regular practice. Imagine an urban community that has developed a local culture of hitchhiking, where everyone is expected to offer free rides to those in need standing by the roadside: Hitchhiking can be viewed as a cultural medium for creating social capital through the nurturing of weak ties within a dynamic network of shared rides ((Widlok, 2013) refers to this as "sharing in"). This practice enhances people's understanding of the local diversity and, at times, leads to more lasting acquaintances.

This discussion highlights the various ways resources can be shared in a dyadic context and how property can lead to assetification. For example, when a car owner offers their vehicle for rent as a taxi and charges a fee, they transform the car into an asset. This situation creates a fundamentally different relationship compared to a hitchhiking scenario. In the *Weltbeziehungen* perspective, assetification can alter not only the owner's relationship with the car but also their sense of self. The feeling of ownership may lessen, and the owner may start to view themselves as an entrepreneur. Despite these changes, the car remains ontologically intertwined as both a physical object and an asset. However, we observe that in the case of assetification, the role of appropriation is ambiguous. The proprietor does not need to appropriate the material object, but in order to generate income from assetification, the proprietor must engage in actions that could be considered appropriative, such as seizing market opportunities. The two scenarios are illustrated in Figure 14. In the case of a car proprietor who loves to offer rides to strangers as an expression of sociality (left), both the driver and the guest recognise the proprietor's property and even may develop a temporary stance of shared ownership, so that the proprietor may even take a detour to take the guest to his home. In the case of deploying the car as a taxi, ownership dilutes, and the proprietor takes a distinct step of appropriating his car as an asset.

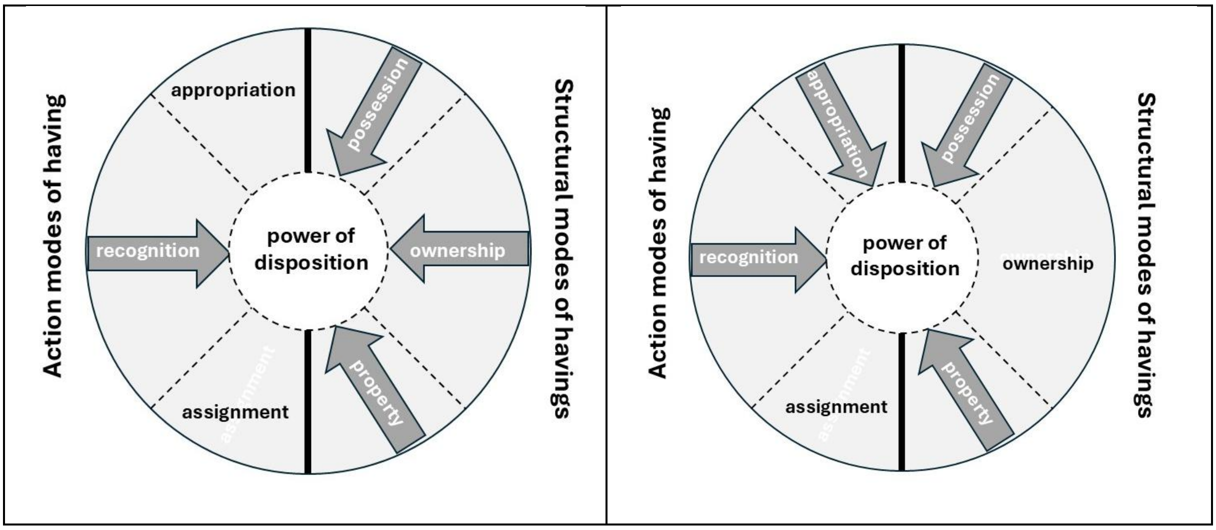

Figure 15: Car proprietor in the hitchhiking (left) and taxi (right) configuration of modes

The distinction between the car as an object and as an asset is important since the current holder of the property may not necessarily be the driver of assetification, as in the modern "sharing economy" where various alternative intermediating entities exist, particularly digital platforms that connect car users with drivers offering their private cars for rides. Much of the discussion around sharing economy platforms tends to focus on these triadic relationships (Benoit et al., 2017). It is important to distinguish between emics and etics in this context. The term "sharing" is controversial because, in fields like anthropology, it is closely tied to the concept of community (Fiske, 1992). Sharing fosters a sense of community, and community, in turn, necessitates sharing. For instance, when a host shares a meal with a guest, it creates a sense of community, temporarily accepting the guest as part of the family. Being part of a family often involves sharing meals. This perspective on sharing highlights the intentionality behind the act and suggests a gift relationship, as the person who shares is giving up something of their own. Interestingly, some commercial platforms leverage this spirit of community as a marketing strategy. However, the notion of community can be ambiguous. It might refer to the entire network of providers and users or to the smaller, emerging communities formed during the actual sharing interaction, like in the case of hitchhiking. For example, a person who offers their flat to guests through a platform may hope to create a temporary community during their stay, which could even endure beyond that visit (Katzer et al., 2024).

Starting from an abstract triadic structure, we can see various forms of triadic intermediation relating to different modes of HAVINGS. Let us first examine a commercial platform that intermediates the use of an object, such as a car, between owners and users. On the user side, the conditions are simple (Figure 16): the user enters a contractual relationship with the platform and gets temporary possession of the car, which might or might not also include the driver's service; via the contract, temporary power of disposition is assigned to the user.

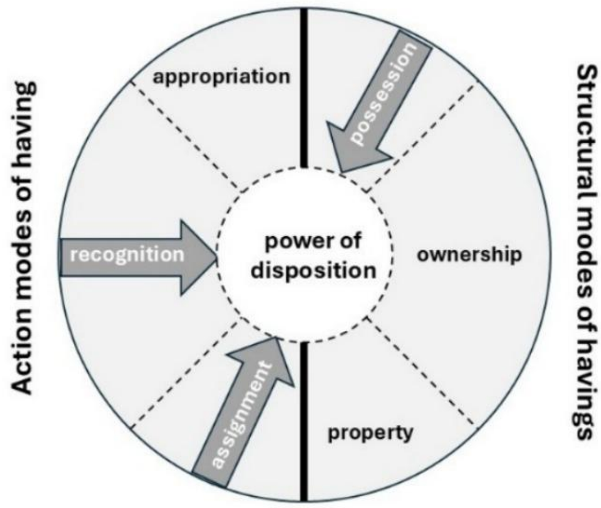

Figure 16: User in car sharing

What is the status of this platform? At first glance, the platform is neither the proprietor nor the owner of the car, and it does not even possess the object. Users of the platform agree to pay for the intermediation service. However, considering the legal disputes regarding the status of Uber drivers, if intermediation requires drivers to fulfil tasks assigned by the system, this suggests they are sharing some powers of disposition, potentially to the extent that these powers are systematically transferred to the platform. In this case, the platform effectively appropriates the cars, presenting a form of shared possession exercised through the system's interactions with drivers.

This discussion again highlights that, beyond formal arrangements, the concept of powers of disposition suggests that structural aspects of power, which extend beyond direct triadic relationships, are significant in determining the distribution of such powers. When a platform possesses strong market power, it can diminish the powers of disposition of proprietors, compelling them to adhere to the directives of the powerful company. In other words, if the platform mainly allocates the use of the cars that are the property of the drivers, this means that the platform appropriates the cars.

Interestingly, the same applies to music streaming services (Jantzing, personal communication). The traditional concept of copyright begins with acknowledging the ownership of a creator over their work, effectively turning that creation into a form of property that allows for assetification. However, if streaming platforms gain too much power, creators might find themselves forced to relinquish control of their work to these platforms. While the platforms may have possession of the content, they do not actually acquire property. However, they appropriate the object of the copyright, such as a song, and further enhance its assetification.

In general, formal property does not guarantee that proprietors have complete control over their property. This phenomenon can manifest in various ways. For instance, structural imbalances in the labour and housing markets may require flat owners to share their spaces with others to generate additional income. This situation can be seen as renting or subleasing their housing. However, when a platform acts as an intermediary, it can partially appropriate that space if the original owner is obligated to accept all rental contracts facilitated by the platform. This scenario differs from a dyadic situation where the host is compelled to share their flat; in this case, the host's dispositional power remains intact, and the only concern is the negotiation power influenced by market imbalances. Conversely, due to market imbalances, the platform can leverage its market power to gain dispositional control over flats that are still property of hosts.

The platform-based sharing of cars primarily refers to the interaction between the car owner and the user. One consequence of this arrangement is that the owner may lose or fail to develop a meaningful ownership relationship with the car (Henning, 2023). To understand this dynamic, we can differentiate between the car as a physical object and its status as an asset. Generally, property implies the potential to view objects as assets, meaning they can serve as sources of income. From this perspective, we can say that the platform acquires control over the asset but not the physical object itself. This idea also applies to situations like leasing real estate. Interestingly, the platform gains control over the rental income from real estate without actually becoming the proprietor. In this case, property owners may lose some control over their properties when they decide to treat their homes as assets to generate income. This transformation may stifle any emotional bonding to the home, following a logic that was seminally explored by Simmel (2009) in considering the impact of monetization on human psychology, and is a key claim made by the *Weltbeziehungen* approach to structural change of property (Rosa, 2023).

A notable analogy can be drawn between this scenario and a key institution of modern capitalism: the stock market. In this context, shareholders are considered proprietors of a company, even though they do not physically possess the company's material objects; rather, they have shares that represent their property in the company's assets. This arrangement limits their power to make decisions, which is a defining characteristic of managerial capitalism. However, if shareholders were to acquire a majority of shares, the dynamic could shift, granting the majority shareholder the authority to engage directly with the company in a more tangible way. Interestingly, and different from the previous argument, even minority shareholders can develop a sense of ownership toward the company, despite lacking any significant decision-making power. Their loyalty to the company fosters this personal connection, which may be nurtured by factors such as the company's location in shareholders' hometowns.

In the example of housing, the platform can be viewed as implicitly acting as a "shareholder" of the housing stock owned by many small property owners. In this case, the "share" is represented by the contract that requires these property owners to operate according to the platform's system—a governance structure—and to pay a portion of their income, similar to a dividend, to the platform (Figure 17).

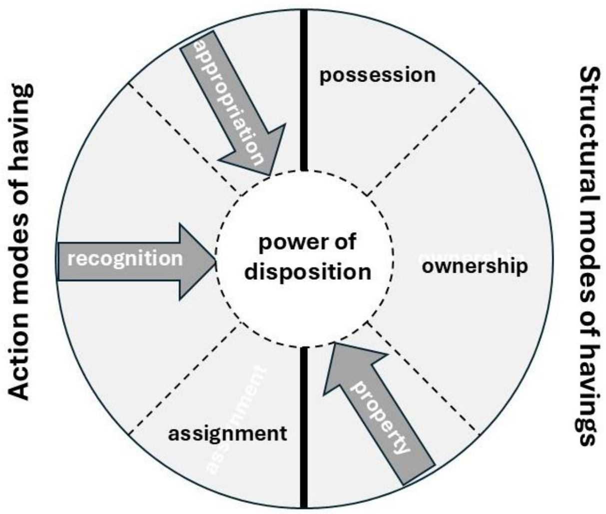

Figure 17: Platform appropriating the assetified home via digital governance

Platforms can activate an ownership mode, exemplified by a platform created by a well-known car brand that exclusively offers vehicles from that company. Users can access different cars for various purposes, such as a sports car for leisure activities or a van for moving furniture. In these scenarios, users demonstrate a relational connection to the brand, often referred to as "psychological ownership" (Lee et al., 2019). To enhance this ownership mode, the platform might introduce a special membership status that distinguishes users who merely possess the car from those who actively consider themselves as user-owners. In both situations, users do not actually have property of the vehicles. Unlike neighbourhood-based carpools, the term "sharing" should be used cautiously for these arrangements unless there is a strong element of community formation and exclusivity in the relationship with the vehicle. This exclusivity could be evident if a luxury car company establishes a business model where only members of their carpool can access a variety of models flexibly. The most extreme version of such an arrangement could involve transforming the luxury car manufacturer into a cooperative, where users also become owners and fractional proprietors.

This discussion presents an intriguing variation of configurations of HAVINGS, as the platform is the proprietor of the cars but does not prioritize retaining possession of the vehicles. Instead, allowing users to maintain possession is the key to generating profit. The concept of ownership is complex in this context. On the one hand, ownership is significant for users because it fosters loyalty to the platform, which in turn enhances the profitability of the business model. On the other hand, the platform's proprietors may also feel a sense of ownership over the brand, a phenomenon often seen in family businesses.

4.3 HAVINGS and complex object assemblages

The topic of housing is more complex than previously discussed due to the concept of assetification. This means that the specific arrangements for access and sharing apply to the entire set of components that make up a housing unit. This set includes not only the building and living space but also all the amenities, such as bathrooms and kitchens, along with their fixtures. Depending on the arrangement, it may also include furniture and kitchenware. It is important to understand that home-sharing rarely involves simply offering an empty room to a guest. On the guest and user side, the analysis of what is available and shared is straightforward and follows a pattern similar to car-sharing. However, for the host, the situation is more complicated and heavily context-dependent. For understanding this complexity, the *Weltbeziehungen* approach is analytically indispensable (Katzer et al., 2024).

If we assume that the host is also the proprietor, we can consider that she relates to the apartment in three different structural modes simultaneously (Figure 18). This means that her status does not require any appropriative action nor is she assigned to her position by anyone. In terms of possession, sharing implies that she exercises her dispositional power to grant another person temporary co-possession.

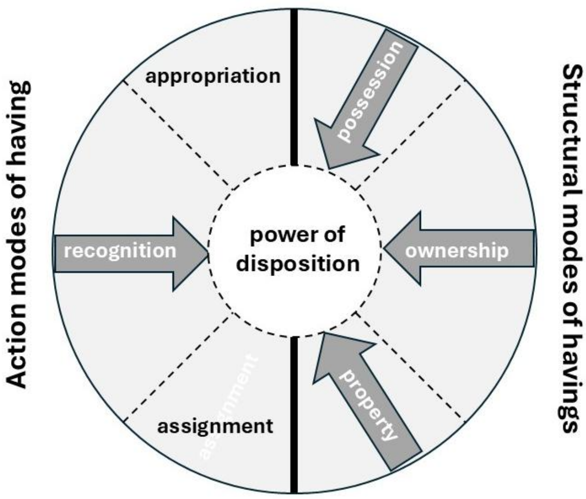

Figure 18: Host's HAVINGS in home-sharing (host is proprietor)

This situation is different when the host is a tenant rather than a proprietor. A tenant possesses the space but does not have property rights. Additionally, the tenant may not have the same relationship with the flat as an owner would. This distinction is significant because the nature of sharing affects how ownership is perceived. If the host does not charge the guest, the property status is irrelevant; the host is simply sharing possession and, therefore, their dispositional power over the space. There are important nuances to consider, such as whether the host provides the guest with a key. If the key is not provided, the host retains complete control over access. If the host is a tenant and charges the guest, this arrangement resembles a sublease. In this case, if we treat the property as an asset, the tenant partially appropriates it. This is one reason why landlords often prohibit subleasing in their rental agreements. In other words, sharing the flat can be seen as an act of appropriation vis-à-vis the landlord and can unilaterally impose a sharing arrangement if the tenant profits from it. Interestingly, German jurisprudence recognises the variants in considering an assetifying use of subleasing as illegal (a regular business of short-term leases), whereas subleasing, say, to a relative in need of accommodation is possible, which would reflect legal recognition of both possession and ownership.

As we observe, similar arrangements can carry very different meanings when viewed in different contexts. Regardless of the relationship with the guest, the sharing behavior of the host has distinct implications for the landlord (Figure 19).

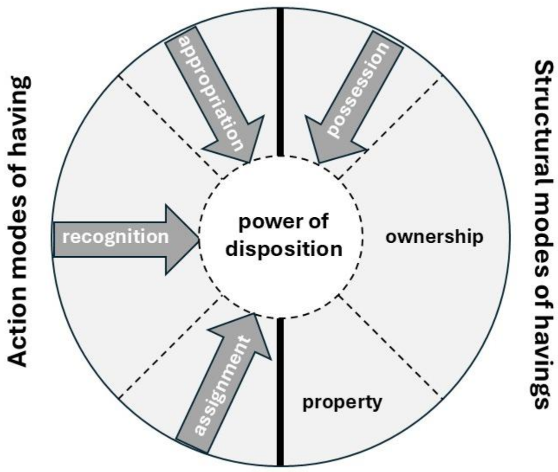

Figure 19: Host's HAVINGS in relation to landlord: sharing as appropriation

This analysis suggests that the process of assetification in shared flats may weaken traditional ownership relationships. For instance, hosts might increasingly depersonalise certain areas of their flats. From the perspective of the guest, sharing the space only implies a temporary co-possession arrangement. This can involve different components of the flat. For example, a host may provide a room with a washbasin but restrict access to the bathroom and kitchen. If kitchen access is granted, it raises another question: is the kitchen considered the property of the host or the landlord? In the latter case, it is an integral part of the flat. These distinctions are important because they can shape ownership relations, which are often implicit in discussions of privacy. For instance, we need to differentiate between scenarios where a tenant installs a standard kitchen versus one where a tenant invests in a personalised kitchen to foster a sense of ownership over the flat. Both have implications for sharing as a relationship: The host who shares a personalised kitchen may have aspirations to nurture a temporary community relationship with the guest.

5. Conclusion

The concept of sharing&co cannot be adequately analyzed by simply categorizing it as "not property" even if users may frame their motivation in that way. When viewed through the lens of the theory of HAVINGS, property is just one structural mode of having, allowing us to examine specific arrangements within a multi-dimensional space of modes. Sharing represents a distinct constellation of HAVINGS, effectively functioning as a pattern of distributed dispositional powers. In the literature surrounding sharing and related concepts, there are numerous debates regarding the nature of these arrangements.

Questions arise about whether they constitute genuine sharing, if they are merely variations of capitalist practices, or if the idea of “non-property” is simply a reflection of an uneven distribution of property and wealth in society. The theory of HAVINGS provides a clear and concise framework for analysing this diverse array of arrangements.

One advantage of the theory of HAVINGS is that it focuses on dispositional powers rather than rights. Rights are always influenced by power dynamics, as the saying goes, “might makes right.” In contrast, HAVINGS are shaped by a Weberian understanding of social order. Even if formally similar rights exist, they can lead to very different HAVINGS based on the specific social and political context (North et al., 2009). The theory of HAVINGS effectively addresses complex grassroots situations, especially in contexts like legal pluralism and the divergence of cultural practices from formal law. The diversity of perspectives is acknowledged in alternative “bundle of rights” theories, which can complicate the distinction between various levels of analysis, such as legal and social practices (Benda-Beckmann et al., 2006). In contrast, the theory of HAVINGS provides a coherent set of analytical tools in a more straightforward manner.

However, we have also seen that the theory has limitations since we cannot adequately grasp the emics of HAVINGS. Without combining with the theory of *Weltbeziehungen*, the complexity of phenomena such as the sharing economy cannot be understood. At the same time, the theory of HAVINGS allows to project the highly differentiated results of *Weltbeziehungen* analysis on schemes of institutional assemblages that match in complexity, different from the coarse and simple conventional language of property. We can understand phenomena such as appropriation without property in the streaming industry, or we can explain why, in the same industry, users may develop ownership of music without property.

The theory of HAVINGS combined with *Weltbeziehungen* analysis is most appropriate for taking cultural and societal context into account. The comparison between Germany and China in the SFB project C06 will be the proof of the pudding.

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Sonderforschungsbereich/Transregio 294

STRUKTURWANDEL DES EIGENTUMS

The working paper examines the integration of two theoretical frameworks developed in the SFB projects C01 and C06. Following the merging of these projects, both frameworks now work together in a comparative analysis of sharing and other cooperative ways of relating to objects in Germany and China. The Weltbeziehungen approach was effectively utilised in phase 1, while the theory of HAVINGS has emerged as a new outcome from project C01. This working paper presents an integrative perspective, arguing that the Weltbeziehungen approach defines the emic perspective on object relationships, while the theory of HAVINGS represents the etic perspective, creating an analytical duality.

The theory of HAVINGS views "property" as just one mode within two dimensions: the actions of having and the structural outcomes of having. This multi-modal analysis enhances our understanding of the complexity of evolving Weltbeziehungen in various sharing arrangements. HAVINGS influence Weltbeziehungen, and Weltbeziehungen, in turn, performatively shape HAVINGS. This interaction results in a wide variety of sharing forms, which range from sharing as a means and expression of community building to sharing as appropriation through assetification.

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