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## The nature of ownership: The role of object kind and historical intuitions

Dr. Greta Defeyter

Email: [greta.defeyter@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:greta.defeyter@northumbria.ac.uk)

0191 227 3291

### Abstract:

Researchers across many disciplines have increasingly begun to focus on questions surrounding adults and children's abilities to infer object ownership. Researchers have shown that by age two, toddlers can infer object ownership when not explicitly told (Friedman & Neary, 2008); and recognise ownership transfers from around age three (Kanngiesser, Giersoe, & Hood, in press). However, an issue that is often obscured within the literature has been possible differences between judging ownership of natural kinds versus artifacts. Two studies investigated the relative importance of object kind and object context in adults and 5-to 6-year-olds. In both experiments, participants saw 15 familiar natural kinds and 15 familiar artifacts randomly presented in blocks of 15 objects on a computer screen. The results showed that participants significantly judged more artifacts as being owned compared to natural kinds. However, there were age differences dependent upon the context in which the objects were presented. The results of the current paper are discussed in terms of an historical-narrative account of object ownership (Friedman, Neary, Defeyter & Malcolm) incorporating an account of possible developmental differences in notions of abandonment.