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Property rights determine who owns what. Trade is very difficult if it is unclear who owns what or if property rights are not enforced. For this reason, many scholars argue that property rights and their enforcement are essential to economic prosperity. A distinction can be made between a legal and psychological approach to property rights. A legal approach to property rights considers how the rules of property rights are codified in law while a psychological approach focuses on how humans tend to think about property rights intuitively.

The two approaches seem to diverge if more unconventional goods are considered. This thesis consists of four studies that investigate how consumers perceive unconventional goods in different contexts. The aim of these four studies combined is to gain a better understanding of consumers' perception of property rights, which not only furthers relevant theories but also provides practical recommendations to policy-makers and managers.

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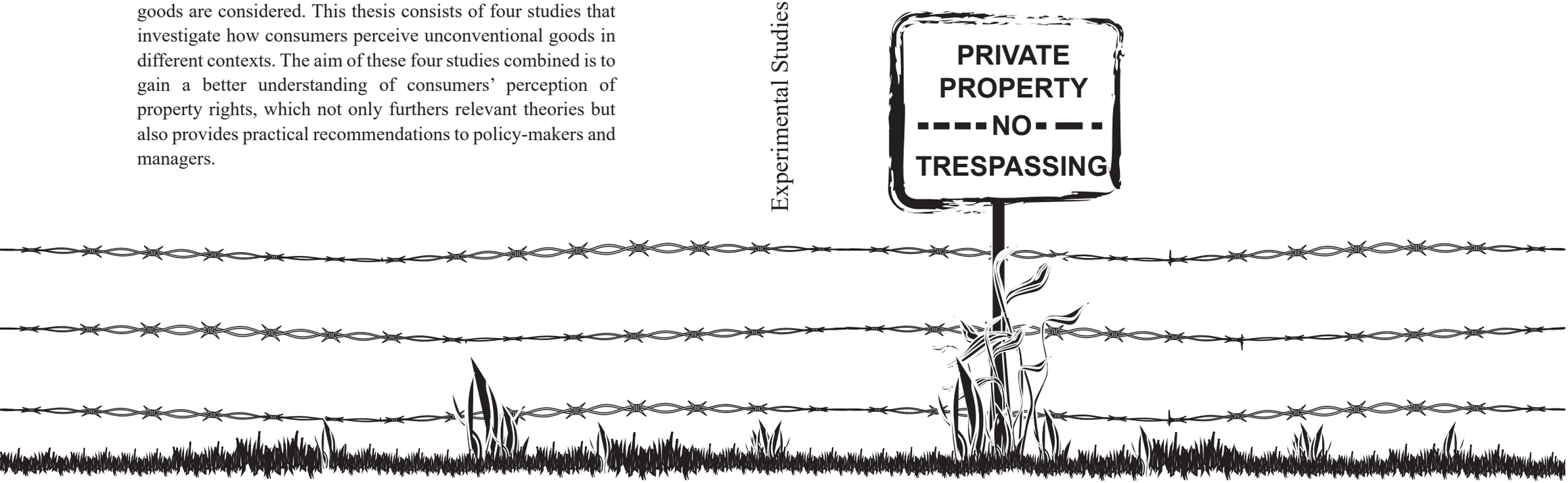

Experimental studies on the psychology of property rights

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aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam

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prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex

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possible explanations of the phenomenon at hand. The fruits of this collaboration are presented in chapter four. The fifth chapter is the result of my collaboration with Sander Onderstal whose positive and can-do attitude motivated me immensely. Sander's deep knowledge of mechanism design helped me gain a better understanding of how economic theory can be used to improve people's lives.

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