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National Identification and Intergroup Attitudes Among Members of the National Majority and Immigrants: Preliminary Evidence for the Medial Role of Psychological Ownership of a Country

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Abstract

In this study, we examined whether psychological ownership of the country one lives in (in this case, Finland) mediates the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes among majority and minority group members (N = 647; Finns, n = 334, Russian-speaking immigrants, n = 313). Consistent with our predictions, both majority group members and immigrants whose national identification was strong experienced greater psychological ownership of Finland; as expected, this relationship was more pronounced among majority group members. Higher psychological ownership, in turn, was associated with less positive attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants among majority Finns but more positive attitudes towards Finns among immigrants. The findings also showed that among immigrants, the relationship between national identification and psychological ownership is likely to be reciprocal, with national identification similarly mediating the association between psychological ownership and attitudes towards members of the national group. No support for such reciprocity between national identification and psychological ownership was found among members of the majority group.

Keywords: psychological ownership, national identification, intergroup attitudes, immigrants

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In social psychological research on immigration, intergroup relations between majority members of the receiving societies and newcomers have been typically approached through intergroup attitudes, with ingroup identification being amongst their most important predictors (e.g., Jasinskaja-Lahti, Mähönen, & Liebkind, 2012; Leong & Ward, 2011; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005; Stoessel, Titzmann, & Silbereisen, 2012). Most recently, researchers have attempted to identify mediators of this relationship. The anthropological concept of autochthony (Gressier, 2008), a belief in the indigeneity and nativeness of one's group, has been introduced to explain how high ingroup identification among majority members may lead to more negative attitudes towards an outgroup (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013). Similar negative attitudinal ramifications have been proposed for place identity and/or place attachment (for a distinction, see e.g. Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007).

The concept of autochthony relates to feelings of ownership derived from the belief of primary occupancy of a territory (Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005; Gausset, Kenrick, & Gibb, 2011) and, therefore, is relevant only for indigenous people and national majority group members in nation states. However, we suggest that immigrants also develop feelings of possession towards their new homeland, although ties with the place generated by newcomers are different from those generated by majority group members (Hernández et al., 2007). As immigrants cannot claim primary occupancy of a host country, their bonds with the new homeland have to derive from a more psychological sense of belonging (see Sindic, 2011) to mainstream society. In this paper, we propose that regardless of whether one is a member of the national majority group or an immigrant, possessive feelings towards the country can be approached through the concept of psychological ownership (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001, 2003). In organisational psychology, this concept classically refers to employees' sense of possession of their companies (e.g., Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). In a similar vein, we argue that this concept can be used to capture peoples' sense of how much their country belongs to them and their ingroup.

Building on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), and on previous research on autochthony by Martinovic and Verkuyten (2013), in the present study we investigate the role of psychological ownership in predicting intergroup attitudes of majority Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants towards each other. More specifically, we aim to show the value of including psychological ownership in the analysis by corroborating its role as a mediator in the association between national identification (i.e., identification as a Finn among majority members and identification with Finnish society among immigrants) and intergroup attitudes in a majority-minority context.

Context of the Study

Until the early 1990s, Finland was known as a country of emigration rather than a destination for immigrants (Pitkänen & Kouki, 2002). In the last two decades, however, the number of foreign-born nationals in Finland is rising and by now it exceeds 289000 individuals (i.e., 5.3% of the total population; Statistics Finland, 2014). Russian-speaking immigrants from Russia and former Soviet republics constitute the numerically largest foreign-born group in the scope of both the country (Statistics Finland, 2014) and the Helsinki metropolitan area (Simoila, Väistö, Nyman, & Niemelä, 2011).

Russian speakers also represent one of the oldest ethnic minorities and their presence can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century when the territory of what today is Finland was conquered by Tsarist Russia and the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland was established. The Russian rule over Finland lasted until 1917 when the country gained independence. The presence of Russians was marked again in 1939 when the Winter War started and the conflict prolonged into the Continuation War, both resulting in Finnish territorial losses to the Soviet Union. Although Finland did not formally become a part of the Eastern Bloc, its post-war politics and trade were both influenced by the Soviet state (e.g., Allison, 1985).

In spite of a relatively steady immigration of Russian-speakers from Russia and post-Soviet republics to Finland, Russian-speaking immigrants remain a target of continuous prejudice and their standing in the Finnish ethnic hierarchy is low (Jaakkola, 2009). At the same time, Russian speakers are quite a unique immigrant group in the Finnish national context. Specifically, due to the history of being Finland's rulers and a longstanding presence in the country, Russian speakers may develop psychological ownership of Finland more easily and more naturally than representatives of other immigrant groups. We therefore acknowledge that the historical circumstances between Finland and Russia/the Soviet Union may considerably influence the intergroup context of the present

study by facilitating a sense of ownership of Finland among Russian-speaking immigrants. In this respect, the situation of newcomers whose countries of origin have no previous connections to Finland differs from the context examined in the present study.

National Identification and Attitudes Towards the National Majority

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), identification with social groups is considered to be the main source of ingroup favouritism and outgroup derogation, accompanied by negative outgroup attitudes. Although many studies so far have shown that high ingroup identifiers display less positive attitudes towards outgroup members (e.g., Hodson, Dovidio, & Esses, 2003; Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001; Reynolds et al., 2007), not all research succeeded in showing this direct relationship or argued for its more complex nature (see, e.g., Turner & Reynolds, 2001). The inevitability of this association being negative was questioned by, for example, Hopkins (2001); he suggested that it is not a strong national identity as such that leads to prejudice, but rather its content, which may either facilitate or inhibit negative outgroup attitudes. One example of such identity content is ethnic versus civic identity representations (Smith, 2001), which define national belonging as based on either a shared ancestral origin or participation in society and citizenship, respectively. According to previous studies (Meeus, Duriez, Vanbeseleare, & Boen, 2010; Pehrson, Vignoles, & Brown, 2009), particularly ethnicity-based identity representations are associated with less positive attitudes towards immigrants in plural societies.

Social identity theory's assumption about ingroup identification being linked to ingroup favouritism (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) means that individuals who highly identify with the national group hold more positive attitudes towards other individuals perceived as co-nationals. This prediction is not only relevant for members of dominant groups (e.g., Mummendey et al., 2001), but also for immigrants identifying with mainstream society (e.g., Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009; Stoessel et al., 2012). Importantly for the present study, Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) proposed in their common ingroup identity model that by changing the perception of boundaries between social groups and focusing on more inclusive group memberships within a given social context, individuals become identified with a superordinate ingroup that also embraces members of former outgroups. Such inclusive superordinate identification, in turn, leads to more positive attitudes towards members of other subgroups within the superordinate ingroup (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; see also Levin, Sinclair, Sidanius, & Van Laar, 2009; Stone & Crisp, 2007).

In the present research context, the association between national identification and intergroup attitudes can be expected to differ among majority Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants due to the different content of their national identification. Specifically, majority group members often define national identity and national belonging in ethnic terms, and individuals not sharing the same ethnic origin, for instance immigrants, are perceived as national outgroup members (see, e.g., Hopkins, 2001; Meeus et al., 2010; Pehrson et al., 2009; Varjonen, Arnold, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2013). Due to rather ethnic and essentialist views on national belonging among Finns in Finland (Varjonen et al., 2013), they are, therefore, likely to perceive Russian-speaking immigrants as outgroup members and their national identification is expected to be reflected in more negative attitudes towards these immigrants.

Contrary to the majority group, national identity of ethnic minority members is based rather on a civic definition (see Smith, 2001), which in line with the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) is shared with members of the majority group. Russian-speaking immigrants' national identification therefore can be regarded as a superordinate identity achieved through a process of negotiating one's position within Finnish society in relation to others (Deaux, 2006), especially the majority group. Such superordinate identification can be expected to predict

more positive attitudes towards members of the national majority (e.g., Verkuyten & Khan, 2012). Moreover, as will be discussed next, we propose psychological ownership to be a potential mediator of the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes among both majority Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants.

Psychological Ownership

Psychological Ownership of a Country

The concept of psychological ownership builds on humans' sense of possession (Furby, 1978) and is argued to satisfy three basic human needs (Pierce et al., 2001). The first of them is efficacy and effectance, experienced as a feeling of control over the environment, ability to change it, and satisfaction felt from the outcomes of one's actions towards the environment. The second need, self-identity, is expressed as a need to define oneself and others in a given social context. The third need of having one's own place is manifested in possessing a certain space into which energy and resources are invested. Psychological ownership can be felt and demonstrated in various social environments towards both tangible objects and intangible entities, providing that the context enables at least one of the aforementioned universal human needs to be fulfilled (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). Although psychological ownership has recently been investigated mainly with reference to work environment (e.g., Chi & Han, 2008; Mayhew, Ashkanasy, Bramble, & Gardener, 2007; Pierce, O'Driscoll, & Coghlan, 2004; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), the concept has been utilised within the fields of social and behavioural sciences for more than a century (Pierce et al., 2003), proving its universal nature and applicability to different social settings.

The fact that the concept of psychological ownership has thus far been applied in research on small-scale social contexts such as companies does not negate its relevance in more complex social settings. As a national context of a country potentially enables individuals to fulfil the needs underlying the psychological sense of possession, the concept of psychological ownership is applicable also in this setting (see Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). In the case of political and geographical unities, such as countries, psychological ownership can be defined as a sense of possession of one's country of origin or residence. Importantly, both natives and immigrants can feel effective in their country and experience the sense of control over their actions and their outcomes in the given national setting in different life domains. They can also define themselves with reference to the national context and its different social actors, both institutional and non-institutional. Lastly, in the national context, individuals can experience psychological possession of a certain physical space: owned or rented estates which are invested in and altered according to their will, own businesses requiring versatile input, as well as places of recreational or voluntary charity activities. Hence, we argue that the concept of psychological ownership can be applied also at the national level to all individuals residing in a certain country, regardless of whether they are natives, historical minorities, or immigrants. In addition, bringing psychological ownership to social psychological research on immigration seems to be a valuable addition to previous research on related constructs discussed in the following.

Distinctiveness From Other Related Constructs

On theoretical grounds, it has been argued that ownership, although interconnected with a range of other psychological concepts, is a distinct construct with distinct practical implications (Olckers & du Plessis, 2012; Pierce et al., 2001; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Of main importance to this paper are the distinctions between psychological ownership and concepts such as identity/identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), place attachment and place identity (e.g., Hernández et al., 2007; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Lewicka, 2010, 2011), commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), and autochthony (e.g., Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005; Gausset et al., 2011; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013).

Although self-identity is a dimension of psychological ownership (Avey, Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans, 2009), the conceptual differences between *identity/identification* and psychological ownership are, nevertheless, deeply rooted. The former concept derives from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), relates to the question "Who am I?", and refers to both the personal and the social level of one's identity. While personal identity builds on individual characteristics, social identity is linked to one's membership in various social groups. Therefore, identity defines who an individual is, or more specifically, who the individual perceives her- or himself to be in a particular situation and a given social context of interaction. The concept of psychological ownership, in contrast, derives from the psychology of possession and addresses the question "How much this organisation/country/etc. belongs to me?" (see Olckers & du Plessis, 2012; Pierce et al., 2001; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). It is, thus, not referring directly to personal or social identification but rather to one's sense of possession of, for instance, an organisation or a country. This sense of possession and feelings of ownership are, however, to some extent interconnected with self-identity which is one of their basis. They may also be viewed as a form of manifestation of one's self-concept (Pierce et al., 2003). The two constructs, nevertheless, differ also in the underlying motivation, with needs of attraction, affiliation, and self-enhancement fostering identification, but not psychological ownership (Olckers & du Plessis, 2012; Pierce et al., 2001).

The sense and feelings of possession of a place distinguish psychological ownership from two largely overlapping (see, for example, Lewicka, 2010, 2011) concepts of *place attachment* and *place identity*. Place attachment is defined as an affective bond established by individuals with specific locations where they feel comfortable and wish to stay. Place identity relates to self-categorisation in terms of belonging to a specific place (e.g., Hernández et al., 2007; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Lewicka, 2010). As Scannell and Gifford (2010) propose in their three-dimensional model of place attachment, all its dimensions focus on emotional ties between an individual and a place. The personal dimension includes memories, experiences, and symbolic meanings the place has for people attached to it. The process dimension relates to the development of emotional bonds with the place supported by cognitive processing and affect-driven behaviour securing the closeness to the place of attachment. The place dimension embraces physical characteristics of the place, including desired resources, as well as its social aspects concerning relationships with other residents and the development of social identity. Therefore, place attachment as a construct almost exclusively builds on *emotions* experienced and further processed with connection to a certain place. This emotional processing results in the development of affective ties between the individual and the place. Place identity, in turn, as viewed and operationalised by Lalli (1992), embraces the relationship between an individual and a place as based on continuity of personal life, familiarity of the place, commitment and attachment to it, as well as on evaluative comparisons with other places. Defined this way, place identity can be considered as one, related to personal experiences with one's closest environment, an aspect of self-identity (Lalli, 1992); therefore, it can also be seen as a specific aspect of psychological ownership. However, as a concept, psychological ownership stresses the feelings of possession more than place identity does.

The concept of *organisational commitment* answers the question of whether one should maintain his or her membership in an organisation. It is defined and expressed as a desire to stay affiliated with the organisation and motivated by the needs of security and belongingness and values held by an individual (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Olckers & du Plessis, 2012). Organisational commitment, therefore, differs from the concept of psychological ownership, particularly when it comes to its motivational grounds. Also, the behavioural consequences of commitment and psychological ownership vary. While the question of commitment may result in an intent to either leave the organisation or to stay, feelings of ownership are followed by using rights and responsibilities connected to the object of possession, willingness or resistance to change the object, and refusal to share this object with others

(e.g., Olckers & du Plessis, 2012). The distinctiveness between these two concepts was also corroborated empirically in the study of Mayhew et al. (2007).

Autochthony is an ideology referring to feelings and beliefs of ownership of a certain territory derived from its primary occupancy, along with all corresponding rights and entitlements, including the exclusion of strangers (see Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013, for a discussion). As Martinovic and Verkuyten (2013) note, autochthony as a concept is relevant to groups that *dominate* over a certain territory but that do not necessarily have to be indigenous. Moreover, for the national majority group, claims of being the primary occupants of a geographical area serve as a basis for limiting the social participation of those who arrived later. In this sense, the idea of autochthony can be used to exclude others, just as the ethnic representation of national identity can. However, as shown by Martinovic and Verkuyten (2013), autochthony is qualitatively different from essentialist views on national belonging and refers to the entitlement to decide about one's own country without looking on those who were not there first. Psychological ownership, on the contrary, does not build on the perception of being a primary occupant of a land and it can be formed by anyone, including immigrants, as long as its underlying needs are fulfilled (see Pierce et al., 2001). Some overlap between these two concepts is, however, still possible: As autochthony builds around the claims of territorial ownership, it may be perceived as a specific, although limited manifestation of psychological ownership of a country. Nevertheless, the sense of possession of a country that constitutes autochthony has different roots than the sense of possession that is encompassed by psychological ownership.

In sum, the literature review clearly demonstrates that the differences between psychological ownership and other related constructs concern predominantly the theoretical background of these concepts, but also their motivational grounds and behavioural consequences. Self-identity and its dimension of place identity are only one aspect of psychological ownership of a country, which additionally encompasses the perception of life efficacy in the national context and possessiveness towards the country one resides in. Similar distinctions can be made between place attachment, autochthony, and psychological ownership. Place attachment is grounded predominantly in emotional processes facilitating the development of ties with a place and autochthony builds on primary occupancy of a certain territory. Psychological ownership, however, embraces the perception of effectiveness in everyday life, categorisation in a given social context, and feelings of possession towards a place. Self-identity and commitment, in turn, differ from psychological ownership mainly in regard to needs that drive these identification processes and are satisfied by their realisation. Specifically, identification builds on the needs of attraction, affiliation, and self-enhancement and commitment builds on the needs of security, belongingness, and compatibility of values with other individuals. These needs differ from the needs underlying psychological ownership. Next, we will suggest that psychological ownership needs to be considered to explain the opposite relationships between national identification and intergroup attitudes among majority and minority group members.

Psychological Ownership of a Country Among Majority and Minority Members

The relationship between national identification, psychological ownership and intergroup attitudes can be theoretically explained by using the group engagement model of Tyler and Blader (2003). These authors see group identification (i.e., self-categorisation, pride, and respect towards a group) as an antecedent of the willingness to engage in and cooperate with the group. The idea that identification is needed for a deeper sense of belongingness to emerge suits well not only the national majority group but also immigrants. Thus, a positive relationship between national identification and psychological ownership can be expected for both majority members and immigrants (cf. Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006).

Importantly, although the application of psychological ownership of a country is as much relevant to members of the national majority as to immigrants, in some aspects psychological ownership is likely to work differently among members of these groups. First, a majority-minority difference in the strength of its association with national identification is expected. Specifically, in an ethnically rather homogenous nation state like Finland, it is easier for majority group members than for immigrants to claim membership in the national ingroup and feel possession of the country. Also, as discussed earlier, the content of national identity differs between majority group members and immigrants: While national identity and ethnicity overlap among majority members, they are not interconnected among immigrants. Thus, the relationship between national identification and psychological ownership can be expected to be stronger among majority group members than among immigrants.

Second, in regard to the consequences of psychological ownership for intergroup attitudes in a majority-minority context, they are expected to differ between majority and minority groups as well. In their recent study on autochthony among native Dutch and its role in the formation of prejudice towards immigrants, [Martinovic and Verkuyten \(2013\)](#) showed that autochthony not only was positively linked to prejudiced outgroup attitudes but it also mediated the association between majority members' national identification and negative attitudes towards outgroups. Specifically, those members of the Dutch majority who identified more strongly with their national ingroup scored higher on autochthony which, in turn, was related to more prejudice towards immigrants. In line with these findings, psychological ownership of a country among members of the national majority group is expected to be negatively associated with attitudes towards immigrants. For immigrants, however, stronger psychological ownership of a host country is expected to be linked to more positive attitudes towards members of the national majority group (see [Beggan, 1992](#)). The reason for this majority-minority difference in how psychological ownership is related to intergroup attitudes may be attributed to different meanings of ownership among members of the majority group and immigrants. For majority group members, ownership of their country, which is to some extent anchored in primary occupancy (autochthony), is linked to the perception of immigrants as a national *outgroup*. For immigrants, ownership of their new homeland, based on everyday participation in mainstream society, is related to the perception of hosts as national *ingroup* members. Hence, the attitudinal consequences of such oppositional perceptions of psychological ownership among members of majority and minority groups will also differ.

In the present paper, we argue that psychological ownership of a country not only differs conceptually from national identification, but also that it mediates the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes, and that this mediational relationship is different for majority and minority group members. Following the conceptual and methodological distinctions, we approach psychological ownership as feelings of possession held by members of the national majority group and immigrants towards the country they live in. National identification, in turn, is approached as pride and happiness derived from being a member of the national group. We claim that especially in the case of non-natives, only after seeing oneself as a member of society and rating this group membership positively, it is possible to develop feelings of possession towards the country and see it as at least partly one's own. This is why we test the possible mediational role of psychological ownership also among minority members: Does it explain the previously found positive association between immigrants' national identification and attitudes towards the national majority (e.g., [Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009](#); [Stoessel et al., 2012](#))?

Aims and Hypotheses of the Study

The proposed model of the relationships investigated in this study is presented in [Figure 1](#). Based on social identity theory ([Tajfel & Turner, 1979](#)), we expect that group status (majority vs. minority) will moderate the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes, so that it will be negative for majority Finns but

positive for Russian-speaking immigrants (*Hypothesis 1*). We also expect that this association will be mediated by psychological ownership of Finland among members of both groups, with psychological ownership being a negative mediator among majority group members but a positive mediator among immigrants (*Hypothesis 2*). Specifically, national identification is expected to be positively associated with ownership of Finland for both Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants. Psychological ownership of Finland, in turn, is expected to be negatively related to attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants among members of the national majority group but positively associated with attitudes towards Finns among immigrants. Finally, we expect that the positive relationship between national identification and ownership of Finland will be stronger for majority Finns than for immigrants (*Hypothesis 3*).

The cross-sectional character of our data does not allow us to draw definitive conclusions about the direction of the association between national identification and psychological ownership in the proposed model. There are some earlier studies (e.g., Johnson et al., 2006) suggesting that psychological ownership serves as an antecedent of identification. Thus, we also examine an alternative reversed model, in which psychological ownership of Finland is a predictor of intergroup attitudes and national identification is a potential mediator of this relationship. By examining the alternative model we will be able to better understand and discuss the relationship between national identification and psychological ownership when studying intergroup attitudes in a majority-minority context. Both models will be tested controlling for the effects of gender (0 = male; 1 = female), age, years of education, intergroup contact (0 = no or little; 1 = much), and intergroup friendship (0 = no or few friends; 1 = many friends). All these variables were previously found to be important predictors of outgroup attitudes among both majority and minority group members (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

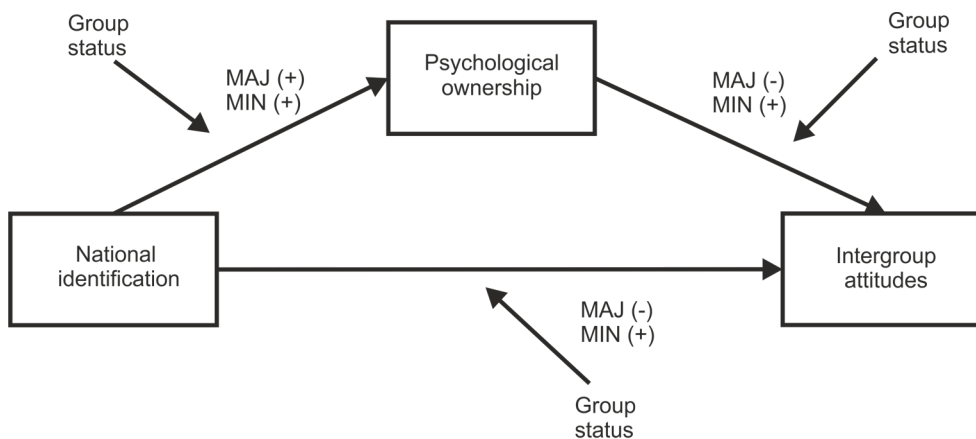


Figure 1. The proposed model of the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes moderated by group status (majority vs. minority). MAJ = Finns; MIN = immigrants.

Method

Participants and Procedure

This study was carried out as part of the international project Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies (MIRIPS), coordinated by John Berry (see Berry, 2012). Data analysed in the present study comes from the MIRIPS-FI project based on a postal survey which included a variety of social psychological measures related to

immigration and acculturation (e.g., national and ethnic identification, support for multiculturalism, acculturation attitudes). The survey was conducted between June and November 2012 among a representative sample of Finnish majority members and Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland. Participation in the study was voluntary and confidential. Participants were sampled via the Finnish National Population Register Centre. Members of the national majority were all Finnish-speaking, born in Finland, and residing in the country at the time of the survey. Immigrants all spoke Russian as their mother tongue, were born in the former Soviet Union or the Russian Federation, and had moved to Finland no later than January 1, 2008.

The ethno-linguistic background of the majority group participants was confirmed with a question about their parents' ethno-cultural background (Finnish/other) and mother tongue (Finnish/other). Self-reported ethnicity of the minority group respondents indicated that 56.8% identified as ethnic Russians, while the rest declared mixed ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Russian-Ukrainian or Russian-Jewish). About half (59%) of the minority group participants hold either Finnish or dual Russian and Finnish citizenship and declared at least good Finnish language skills (48.3%). The response rate to the survey was 33.5% for the majority and 39.0% for the minority sample. Data analysed in this paper comes from the final sample of 647 participants (Finns: $n = 334$, 57% female; Russian-speaking immigrants: $n = 313$, 77% female). When compared to the initial sample, the final subsamples were regionally representative but were not representative regarding gender and age: In each subsample the respondents were older than the non-respondents and the ratio of men to women was smaller in the respondents' sample.

Measures

We used the same measures for both the majority and the minority group participants. The response scale for all individual items in all measures ranged from one (*completely disagree*) to five (*completely agree*). Participants were given questionnaires in their mother tongues, Finnish or Russian. The Russian-language questionnaire was translated by two independent native speakers of the Russian language.

National identification (Finnish identification among majority members and identification with Finnish society among immigrants) was measured with two items tapping affective aspects of identification. The items, adapted from Mlicki and Ellemers (1996) and Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) (see also Kisselev, Brown, & Brown, 2010; Meeus et al., 2010) were "*I am happy that I am a Finn*" and "*I am proud that I am a Finn*" for the national majority group and "*I am happy that I am a part of Finnish society*" and "*I am proud that I am a part of Finnish society*" for the immigrants. For both majority and minority group members the items correlated strongly with each other (Pearson's $r = .53$, $p < .001$ and $r = .75$, $p < .001$, respectively) and were aggregated into a single scale, with higher scores denoting stronger national identification among members of both groups.

Psychological ownership of Finland at the individual and group level was measured with two items adapted from the Psychological Ownership Scale of Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) originally used in the organisational context. While the first item was identical for participants from both groups ("*I feel that Finland is my country*"), the other item for Finns was "*I feel that Finland is our country*" and for immigrants "*I feel that Finland is also our country (of Russian immigrants)*". For both majority and minority group members the items correlated strongly with each other (Pearson's $r = .76$, $p < .001$ and $r = .75$, $p < .001$, respectively) and were aggregated into a single scale. The higher scores the participants obtained, the more they perceived Finland as a country belonging to them and their respective ethnic ingroup.

Intergroup attitudes were measured with an eight-item scale previously used in the present intergroup context by [Jasinskaja-Lahti and colleagues \(2009\)](#). The items for the scale were: "I have positive attitudes towards Russian immigrants/native Finns", "In my opinion, Russian immigrants/Finns are annoying" (reverse-coded), "I will accept with pleasure a Russian immigrant/a native Finn as a friend", "In my opinion, Russian immigrants/native Finns can be as nice as native Finns/Russian immigrants", "My attitude towards Russian immigrants/native Finns is the same as towards Finns/Russians", "I cannot imagine (if I were single) that I would date a Russian immigrant/a native Finn" (reverse-coded), "I am wary of Russian immigrants/native Finns" (reverse-coded), and "I would like to spend as much of my free time with Russian immigrants/native Finns as with Finns/Russian immigrants". Higher scores indicated more positive attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants among majority Finns and towards Finns among Russian-speaking immigrants ($\alpha = .92$ for Finns and $\alpha = .71$ for immigrants).

Analytical Procedure

Missing data on all variables used in this study was imputed using the hot deck method (e.g., [Myers, 2011](#)). In order to show the empirical distinctiveness of national identification and psychological ownership of a country, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with *Mplus*, version 7. Due to skewed distribution of some variables (e.g., national identification), the robust maximum likelihood (MLM) estimator was used in CFA instead of the maximum likelihood (ML) estimator (see [Byrne, 2012](#)). The hypotheses of the present study were tested with an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression-based path analytical framework described by [Hayes \(2013\)](#) with the PROCESS tool for SPSS. The OLS regression-based path analysis was chosen over the structural equation modelling approach because it provides more accurate estimations of *p*-values for the regression coefficients in relatively small data sets, especially when the variables deviate from a normal distribution (see [Hayes, 2013](#)). The significance of the indirect effects was assessed with 95% bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals based on 10 000 bootstrapped resamples (e.g., [Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007](#)). This strategy overcomes biases in statistical inference which occur when the normal theory approach (Sobel test) is applied to statistics which sampling distribution is not normal ([Hayes, 2013](#); [Preacher et al., 2007](#)). As recommended by [Hayes \(2013\)](#), all regression coefficients in the study are reported in an unstandardised form (*B*).

Two separate regression analysis were run to test the moderated mediation hypotheses where group status (0 = majority, 1 = minority) was used as a moderator of the direct and indirect paths in the model. First, psychological ownership (*Me*) was regressed on all control variables, national identification (*IV*), group status (*Mo*), and the interaction of national identification and group status (*IV*Mo*). Second, intergroup attitudes (*DV*) were predicted by all control variables, national identification (*IV*), psychological ownership (*Me*), group status (*Mo*), and the interactions between national identification and group status (*IV*Mo*) and psychological ownership and group status (*Me*Mo*). The analysis of the alternative model with psychological ownership as a predictor of intergroup attitudes and national identification as a mediator of this relationship was conducted accordingly.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study are presented in [Table 1](#). Participants from the two groups did not differ regarding their age ($t = 0.91, p = .364$). Relative to majority Finns, Russian-speaking immigrants were more highly educated ($t = -3.48, p < .001$). This is not surprising, considering that Russian speakers are the

most educated immigrant group in Finland. Both majority Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants reported rather high levels of national identification and ownership, although the means were significantly higher for the majority group than for the immigrants ($t = 13.79, p < .001$ for national identification and $t = 11.69, p < .001$ for ownership). Intergroup attitudes were more positive among Russian-speaking immigrants than among majority Finns ($t = -16.18, p < .001$). For the majority group, national identification was positively associated with ownership, while the correlations between these two variables and the dependent variable were both negative. Among the immigrants, national identification was positively associated with ownership and both of these variables correlated positively with intergroup attitudes. In regard to the control variables, years of education and intergroup friendship correlated positively with intergroup attitudes among both majority members and immigrants, whereas intergroup contact was associated with more positive intergroup attitudes only among majority Finns.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for the Variables Used in the Study among Majority (n = 334) and Minority (n = 313) Members

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Pearson's <i>r</i>							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Majority										
1. Gender (0 = male)	---	---	1	-.01	-.03	.00	-.07	.09	-.02	.03
2. Age	45.87	13.75		1	-.11*	-.13*	-.15**	-.03	.21***	-.09
3. Years of education	14.28	4.78			1	.04	.07	-.09	-.05	.20***
4. Contact (0 = no or little)	---	---				1	.16**	-.03	-.08	.14*
5. Friendship (0 = no or few friends)	---	---					1	-.07	-.14**	.19***
6. National identification	4.63	0.72						1	.63***	-.17**
7. Psychological ownership	4.40	0.82							1	-.25***
8. Intergroup attitudes	3.38	0.98								1
Minority										
1. Gender (0 = male)	---	---	1	.01	.16**	.04	.15**	.07	.04	.04
2. Age	44.94	12.22		1	-.09	-.09	.06	-.07	.02	.04
3. Years of education	15.38	3.20			1	.14*	-.02	.11	.12*	.12*
4. Contact (0 = no or little)	---	---				1	.18**	.14*	.09	.10
5. Friendship (0 = no or few friends)	---	---					1	.26***	.19**	.12*
6. National identification	3.71	0.95						1	.46***	.30***
7. Psychological ownership	3.62	0.88							1	.32***
8. Intergroup attitudes	4.37	0.52								1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The result of CFA conducted among both groups showed that national identification and psychological ownership of a country, although interconnected with each other, are empirically distinct social psychological constructs. For both the majority and the minority members, the model with two latent factors fitted the data well ($\chi^2(1) = 0.24, p = .624$ and $\chi^2(1) = 0.58, p = .448$, respectively). All goodness-of-fit indices reached satisfactory values for both the majority (comparative fit index (*CFI*) = 1.000, Tucker-Lewis coefficient (*TLI*) = 1.016, root mean square error of approximation (*RMSEA*) = 0.000, and standardised root mean square residual (*SRMR*) = 0.003) and the

minority group ($CFI = 1.000$, $TLI = 1.008$, $RMSEA = 0.000$, and $SRMR = 0.005$). The results of CFA are depicted in Figure 2. Goodness-of-fit indices of an alternative model with all four items forced to load on a common factor were unsatisfactory (Majority: $\chi^2(2) = 14.35$, $p < .001$; $CFI = 0.956$, $TLI = 0.868$, $RMSEA = 0.136$, and $SRMR = 0.040$; Minority: $\chi^2(2) = 8.45$, $p = .015$; $CFI = 0.980$, $TLI = 0.941$, $RMSEA = 0.101$, and $SRMR = 0.034$). As shown by a significant chi-square difference test of $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 11.82$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$ for the majority and $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 7.00$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$ for the immigrant group, the alternative model with one factor presented a significantly worse fit than the model with two factors.

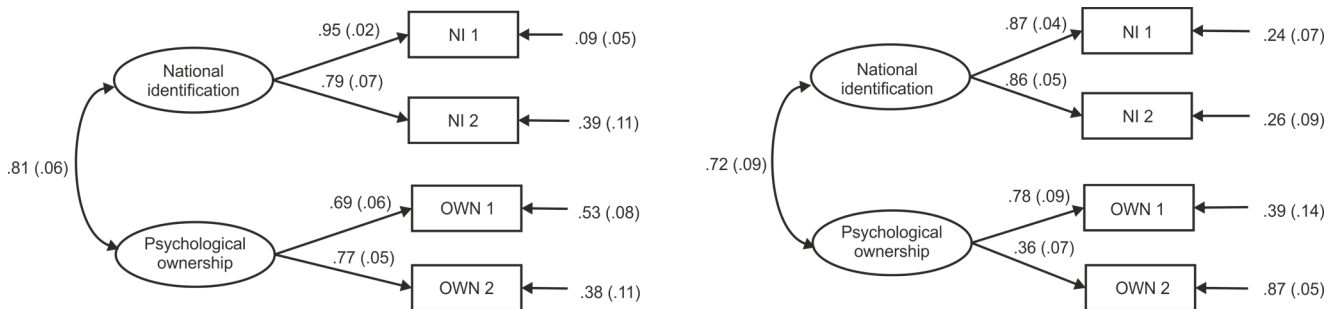


Figure 2. Results of CFA for items measuring national identification and psychological ownership of Finland among majority Finns (left) and Russian immigrants (right). All parameters are significant at $p < .05$.

Testing of the Proposed Model

The regression coefficients for the proposed model are presented in Table 2. Contrary to H1, the direct association between national identification and intergroup attitudes turned out to be non-significant for both majority Finns ($B = -0.01$, $p = .886$) and Russian-speaking immigrants ($B = 0.08$, $p = .121$).

In line with H2, the indirect effect of national identification on intergroup attitudes via psychological ownership of Finland was statistically different from zero among members of both groups. Specifically, the indirect effect equalled $B = -0.20$, 95% CI (-0.323, -0.094) for majority members and $B = 0.05$, 95% CI (0.016, 0.087) for immigrants. As indicated by the test of equality of the conditional indirect effects (*index of moderated mediation*; see Hayes, in press), the indirect effect of national identification on intergroup attitudes which occurred via psychological ownership of Finland was significantly stronger for the majority group than for the immigrants: $B = 0.25$, 95% CI (0.138, 379).

As shown by a statistically significant R^2 change, due to the interaction between national identification and psychological ownership being entered to the model ($\Delta R^2 = .02$; $F = 19.36$, $p < .001$) H3 was also supported. The simple slope analysis revealed that the positive association between national identification and ownership of Finland was indeed stronger for majority Finns ($B = 0.73$, $p < .001$) than for immigrants ($B = 0.43$, $p < .001$). Graphical presentation of the simple slope analysis is depicted in Figure 3.

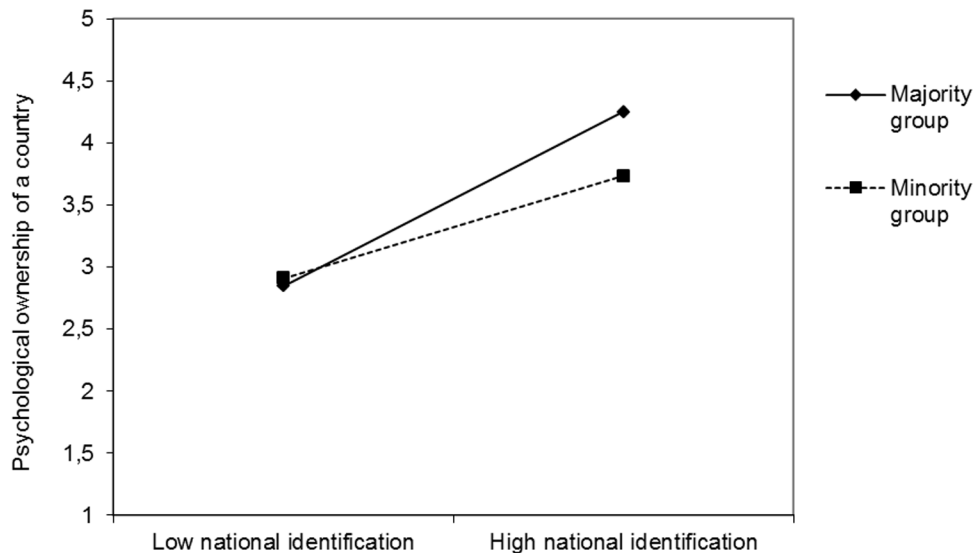


Figure 3. The moderating effect of group status (majority vs. minority) on the relationship between national identification and psychological ownership of a country.

Therefore, the obtained results show that higher national identification was associated with stronger psychological ownership of Finland among both Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants, although this relationship was stronger for majority Finns. Experiencing stronger psychological ownership of the country was, in turn, associated with more negative attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants among members of the national majority but more positive attitudes towards majority Finns among immigrants. The model produced the same results also without controlling for the effects of the socio-demographic variables.

Table 2

Model Characteristics for the Conditional Process Analysis of the Indirect Effect of National Identification on Intergroup Attitudes via Psychological Ownership for Majority Finns ($n = 334$) and Russian-Speaking Immigrants ($n = 313$)

	Ownership (Me)		Attitudes (Y)	
	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	0.47	0.31	4.02***	0.33
Gender (0 = male)	-0.07	0.06	0.03	0.06
Age	0.01***	0.00	0.00	0.00
Years of education	0.01	0.01	0.03***	0.01
Contact (0 = no or little)	-0.03	0.07	0.17*	0.08
Friendship (0 = no or few friends)	0.01	0.07	0.18*	0.08
Identification (X)	0.73***	0.05	-0.01	0.08
Group (0 = majority) (Mo)	1.05**	0.30	-1.16**	0.35
Identification x Group (X*Mo)	-0.30***	0.07	0.09	0.09
Ownership (Me)	---	---	-0.27***	0.07
Ownership x Group (Me*Mo)	---	---	0.39***	0.09
R^2	.44		.37	
F change for R^2	62.95***		37.08***	

Note. X = independent variable. Mo = moderating variable. Me = mediator variable. Y = dependent variable.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Testing of the Alternative Model

To investigate more closely the nature of the relationship between national identification and psychological ownership in the development of intergroup attitudes, an additional analysis was conducted in which an alternative model was examined. In the alternative model, psychological ownership of a country was an independent variable, national identification was a mediator, and intergroup attitudes were a dependent variable. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

In the alternative model, the indirect effect of psychological ownership of Finland on intergroup attitudes occurring through national identification turned out to be non-significant among members of the national majority: $B = -0.01$, 95% CI (-0.099, 0.090). Among immigrants, however, this indirect effect reached statistical significance and its strength was comparable to the strength of the indirect effect in the originally tested model: $B = 0.04$, 95% CI (0.004, 0.085). In addition, the direct effect of psychological ownership on intergroup attitudes was significant among both majority and minority members, so that psychological ownership of Finland was negatively associated with majority Finns' attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants ($B = -0.27$, $p < .001$) but positively with immigrants' attitudes towards the majority group ($B = 0.11$, $p = .037$).

Table 3

Alternative Model Characteristics for the Conditional Process Analysis of the Indirect Effect of Psychological Ownership on Intergroup Attitudes via National Identification for Majority Finns (n = 334) and Russian-Speaking Immigrants (n = 313)

	Identification (Me)		Attitudes (Y)	
	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	2.31***	0.26	4.02***	0.33
Gender (0 = male)	0.12*	0.06	0.03	0.06
Age	-0.01**	0.00	0.00	0.00
Years of education	0.00	0.01	0.03***	0.01
Contact (0 = no or little)	0.05	0.07	0.17*	0.08
Friendship (0 = no or few friends)	0.23**	0.07	0.18*	0.08
Ownership (X)	0.59***	0.05	-0.27***	0.07
Group (0 = majority) (Mo)	-0.24	0.27	-1.16**	0.35
Ownership x Group (X*Mo)	-0.11 [†]	0.07	0.39***	0.09
Identification (Me)	---	---	-0.01	0.08
Identification x Group (Me*Mo)	---	---	0.09	0.09
R^2	.47		.37	
F change for R^2	71.22***		37.08***	

Note. X = independent variable. Mo = moderating variable. Me = mediator variable. Y = dependent variable.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

The main findings of this study supported our predictions that the effect of national identification on intergroup attitudes in majority-minority context is indirect and occurs through psychological ownership of a country among both majority Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants. Specifically, higher national identification was associated

with stronger psychological ownership of Finland among both majority and minority members and this association was especially strong for members of the majority group. Stronger ownership was, in turn, associated with less positive attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants among majority Finns but with more positive attitudes towards members of the majority group among immigrants. Therefore, as expected, the valence of the indirect effect differed between the groups.

First of all, we wish to link the result showing the mediational role of psychological ownership in the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes in the majority-minority context to research on the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). According to our results, higher national identification among members of the national majority group is associated with stronger ownership of a country and, in turn, with less favourable attitudes towards immigrants. The negative valence of this indirect effect among majority Finns is not surprising, as in Finland national identity is quite strong (e.g., Finell, 2012; Pehrson et al., 2009) and based on rather ethnic and essentialist representations of Finnishness (Varjonen et al., 2013). Such an understanding of national identity and national belonging excludes immigrants from the national ingroup and interferes with the development of a superordinate national ingroup as proposed in the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Hence, as far as belonging to the national ingroup is concerned, for members of the majority group immigrants remain outgroup members. This perception subsequently makes members of the national group perceive the country as belonging only to them and their ingroup and results in more negative attitudes towards immigrants, the outgroup.

In contrast to members of the national majority group, national identification makes immigrants perceive the host country as their own, and consequently, see members of the national majority group in a more positive light. Interpreted within the framework of the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), psychological ownership answers to the question why national identification understood as identification with larger society (superordinate identity) is associated with positive attitudes towards host nationals. Namely, initial self-categorisation as a member of Finnish society makes immigrants feel not only that they are a part of Finland, but also that Finland belongs to them. Thus, through these positive feelings of belongingness and possession, immigrants' ingroup enlarges to also include majority Finns. These results illustrate that in countries where national identity and national belonging are often equalled with common ethnic ancestry, immigrants need to seek for psychologically more meaningful ties with the nationals than those based on ethnicity. While identification with society acts as a first bond between immigrants and hosts, psychological ownership strengthens this connection (see also Sindic, 2011, on psychological citizenship). This way of developing a sense of belongingness seems to be especially promising in cases when host society is characterised by ethnic homogeneity and recent immigration (for differences between nation states and settler societies, see Sam & Berry, 2006, pp. 253-400).

The results showing that the sense of possession of a country plays a different role in the association between national identification and intergroup attitudes among majority and minority group members also echo and extend the earlier findings of Martinovic and Verkuyten (2013) on the role of autochthony in the dynamics of anti-immigrant prejudice among majority Dutch in the Netherlands. In their study, the authors showed the detrimental role of the majority group's perceived entitlement to their homeland on the relationship between national identification and attitudes towards immigrants. This pattern of results was also corroborated in the present study for psychological ownership of a country among members of the national majority group. In contrast to the majority group, however, in the case of Russian-speaking immigrants the role of psychological ownership of Finland was beneficial for the immigrants' attitudes towards the hosts. As discussed in the introduction, we argue that this majority-minority dif-

ference in how psychological ownership of a country affects the relationship between national identification and intergroup attitudes derives from the differences in experiencing both national identification and ownership towards the homeland. Specifically, ethnicity-based national identification of majority group members *excludes* immigrants from being entitled to psychologically owning the host country. Conversely, civic-based national identification of immigrants is *inclusive* and facilitates an inclusive understanding of psychological ownership of a country which is extended to the majority group. Thus, in light of the results of this study the point made by Hopkins (2001) regarding the importance of the content of national identity when predicting attitudes towards ethnic outgroups seems to receive partial support.

The lack of previous research and the use of cross-sectional data in the present study limits, however, unequivocal conclusions about the causal interference between national identification, psychological ownership of a country, and intergroup attitudes. Our results obtained from the examination of the alternative model suggest that among immigrants, the relationship between national identification and psychological ownership can be reciprocal. Even though national identification and psychological ownership were found to be empirically as well as theoretically distinct constructs, their role seems to be quite similar in that one enhances the other as a predictor of positive attitudes towards host nationals. The evidence of a possible reciprocity between national identification and psychological ownership is, however, not surprising, as in previous studies psychological ownership was found to predict identification (Johnson et al., 2006).

Despite complex interrelations with national identification and attitudes towards hosts, the role of psychological ownership in the formation of intergroup attitudes cannot be undermined. Besides its mediational role, psychological ownership of a country emerged as a significant direct predictor of immigrants' attitudes towards the national majority group. The lack of reciprocity between national identification and psychological ownership among members of the majority group can be explained as follows: National identification built on common ethnic ancestry facilitates the perception of the home country as one's own, whereas feelings of possession towards the country do not need to reinforce initially strong national identification. The results of the alternative model again suggest different functions of psychological ownership of a country among majority and minority members. While psychological ownership of a country reinforces *exclusion* of non-natives among members of the national majority group, it enforces *inclusion* of the hosts among immigrants. These findings should, however, be further examined and possibly confirmed with data other than cross-sectional. Thus, longitudinal studies with at least three measurement points or experimental studies manipulating the level of psychological ownership by changing the inclusiveness of a country (e.g., scenarios depicting the ethnic vs. civic character of the national context) are needed to establish the causal direction between these constructs in future research.

In light of our results, fostering a sense of psychological ownership of a country among immigrants seems to be crucial for their successful integration, especially in European nation states where national belonging is often defined in ethnic terms (e.g., Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010). One way to enhance psychological ownership among newcomers could be to emphasise the importance of their emotional and civic attachment to the host society, rather than to focus on cognitive aspects of self-categorisation as a member of the majority group. Specifically, fostering pleasant feelings and pride elicited by perceiving oneself as a member of host society can be easier than developing a meaningful self-categorisation as a member of an ethnically defined national majority group. Strengthening emotional attachment to mainstream society among immigrants could, for example, be achieved by promoting three pillars of civic national belonging (Smith, 2001)—equal social participation of all citizens including

immigrants, promotion of rights and obligations of residents, and facilitation of the citizenship route—in everyday social practice.

Emphasising the civic character of contemporary diverse societies can be a promising strategy also for changing the content of national identification and the understanding of psychological ownership of a country among members of national majority groups. Interventions aimed at majority group members should, therefore, focus on altering the representation of national identification and ownership of a country to be more inclusive for all ethnic groups. In light of our findings showing that for majority members the positive association between national identification and psychological ownership in predicting intergroup attitudes is particularly strong, the aforementioned intervention aims are likely to be achieved even by promoting inclusive national identification alone. As shown by the results obtained from the testing of the original and the alternative model among members of the national majority group, inclusive national identification could reinforce inclusive psychological ownership of a country; the reversed path from more inclusive ownership to more inclusive national identification is less likely. In order for it to be a successful strategy, promoting civic identities among majority and minority members should be, however, a systemic process involving representatives of all levels of decision making in society: authorities, professionals engaged in direct work with minority and majority members, and finally, members of these groups themselves. The outcome of such interventions, namely more positive intergroup attitudes, can be expected to contribute to less problematic everyday interactions between hosts and immigrants and to foster acculturation processes in diverse societies.

The results obtained in the present study corroborate and bring together previous research showing the interrelationships between ingroup identification, psychological ownership, and attitudes towards ingroup and outgroup members (e.g., [Beggan, 1992](#); [Johnson et al., 2006](#); [Mummendey et al., 2001](#)). To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first one to show the value of applying the concept of psychological ownership of a country when explaining the dynamics of national belonging among both majority members and immigrants. Nevertheless, the study has some limitations concerning the robustness of its findings. A relatively small indirect effect of national identification on attitudes towards the national majority occurring through psychological ownership among minority members indicates that ownership is only one possible mediator of the relationship in question. Therefore, one recommendation for future research is to expand the proposed model with other factors previously found to be linked to immigrants' outgroup attitudes: for instance, perceived discrimination (e.g., [Jasinskaja-Lahti, Mähönen, & Ketokivi, 2012](#)) or intergroup permeability (e.g., [Leong & Ward, 2011](#)). Also, the brief measures used to tap psychological ownership in this study may not have reflected the complexity of this construct entirely. Thus, in future research we recommend developing measures which would not only distinguish psychological ownership from other similar constructs but also reflect it more accurately. This can, for instance, be done by including more than two items to the measuring scale: Each of the three underlying needs of psychological ownership of a country (categorisation, life efficacy, and immersion in the given national context) could be measured with at least three items, resulting in a nine-item scale.

Future Directions

Our choice of Russian-speaking immigrants, although relevant in the Finnish national context where these immigrants are the most numerous group of newcomers, limits the generalisability of the obtained results. Due to the historical connections between Finland and Russia, feelings of possession towards Finland may be more natural among Russian-speakers than other immigrants who come from countries historically not linked to Finland. Hence,

more research among other immigrant groups in different national contexts is needed in order to fully validate the applicability of psychological ownership of a country in social psychological research on immigration.

National identity can be differently manifested in different immigration contexts. Future research is, thus, needed to examine 1) under which circumstances majority group members can extend their psychological ownership of a country also to immigrants, and 2) whether this process predicts more positive attitudes towards newcomers. More future research investigating different antecedents of psychological ownership among immigrants, as well as its role in psychological and socio-cultural adaptation to receiving societies is recommended.

We also encourage research which would explicitly link psychological ownership of a country with superordinate national identification (cf., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). In the light of our results, the latter seems to play an important role for the development of psychological ownership among immigrants. It also may be a potential remedy for making the association between psychological ownership and attitudes towards immigrants positive among majority members. Thus, studies focusing on the perception of commonality between majority members and immigrants in terms of national belonging and how this commonality possibly moderates the relationship between psychological ownership and attitudes towards immigrants seem to be relevant.

Notes

i) Data from MIRIPS-FI was previously utilised in another study which investigated the relationship between Russian-speaking immigrants' (ethnic) identification and attitudes towards the national majority group: Mähönen, T. A., Brylka, A., & Jasinskaja-Lahti, I. (2014). Perceived ethnic superiority and immigrants' attitudes towards multiculturalism and the national majority. *International Journal of Psychology*, 49, 318–322.

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Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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