

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# “(The story of) This country is ours!” The territorial and epistemic dimensions of collective psychological ownership among the national majority and immigrants

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This study examines collective psychological ownership (CPO) of a country on two dimensions: territorial ownership (CPO-T)—the traditional conceptualisation of CPO as ownership over physical land and borders—and our newly introduced term, epistemic ownership (CPO-E)—ownership over national narratives and symbolic borders. Using a quota-representative sample of ethnic majority Finns ( $n = 1,000$ ) and panel data from second-generation immigrants ( $n = 1,239$ ) in Finland, we examined how these dimensions manifest across groups, which arguments allow ownership claims, and how ownership claims are related to perceived determination of rights and responsibilities towards Finland. Results confirmed that CPO-T and CPO-E represent distinct dimensions. Collective investment was associated with a higher level of ownership across both dimensions and groups. Majority members' sense of ownership was also associated with higher levels of intimate knowledge, while control was associated with a higher level of perceived ownership within the minority population. For majority Finns, CPO-T was associated with perceived exclusive rights, whereas CPO-E was associated with collective responsibility. Among second-generation immigrants, both dimensions were associated with perceived rights, but not responsibility. These findings demonstrate that understanding country ownership requires examining both territorial and epistemic dimensions whereby they serve different functions for majority and migrant groups' claims of belonging.

**Keywords:** collective psychological ownership, collective epistemic ownership, territorial ownership, intergroup relations, second-generation immigrants

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Claims of national ownership have gained prominence in Western societies amid reassessing colonial legacies and increasing diversity; reflecting collective psychological ownership (CPO)—a sense that “this is ours” (Pierce & Jussila, 2010). Research has applied this concept primarily to territorial entitlement (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017), focusing on collective territorial ownership (CPO-T), or ownership over geopolitical spaces defined by borders. This approach neglects how national ownership extends to intangible elements defined by symbolic borders binding communities together (Anderson, 1983/2006). We address this gap by introducing the term collective epistemic ownership (CPO-E), referring to group members’ perception of collectively owning cultural knowledge, meanings, and narratives. When people declare “this country is ours”, they refer not only to the geopolitical territory but also to what country “means”—the shared narratives and symbolic content defining a nation.

Previous research has primarily examined CPO among dominant majority group members who often use territorial ownership claims to justify excluding “non-owners” (e.g., Martinović & Verkuyten, 2024). While research has acknowledged Indigenous and ethnic minorities’ moral and legal ownership claims in post-colonial contexts (Verkuyten, 2024) and examined CPO among Indigenous groups such as the Mapuche in Chile (Nooitgedagt et al., 2021), other ethnic minorities’ (e.g., immigrant groups) claims to ownership remain largely ignored. As Brylka and colleagues (2015) argued, people with immigrant backgrounds may claim CPO of their new home country based, for instance, on their contributions. We extend this by highlighting the epistemic injustice limiting access among people with an immigrant background to not only feel a sense of co-ownership of the country in which they live, but also as co-authors of the national narrative (i.e., the

story of that country). Through two studies conducted among ethnic majority Finns (Study 1) and second-generation immigrants (Study 2), we investigate how territorial and epistemic dimensions of ownership manifest and shape intergroup relations in Finland and relate to exclusive determination of rights (hereafter referred to as “rights”) and collective responsibility (hereafter, “responsibilities”).

Finland offers unique advantages for this research as a culturally homogeneous society with recent immigration history and foreign-born population among the EU’s lowest (9.3%; Eurostat, 2024). This distinguishes our research from studies in more diverse societies with longer histories of intergroup ownership negotiations. Additionally, historical territorial disputes with Russia—including Finland’s period under the Russian Empire until 1917 and the cessation of territory after the Winter War (1939–1940)—created a unique dynamic where majority Finns may experience a persistent threat to territorial ownership. This perceived threat may intensify claims of being the country’s rightful owners through control, knowledge, and contribution arguments. The Russia–Ukraine war has further intensified ownership threats (Nijs et al., 2022) in Finland, a country with a history of a traumatic conflict and as the EU’s country with the longest Russian border. This context highlights the importance of understanding how both majority and minority population groups construct territorial and epistemic ownership claims (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2024).

### 1.1 Collective Psychological Territorial and Epistemic Ownership

Collective psychological ownership (CPO) captures an individual’s perception that a target of ownership belongs to their group—the psychological experience of “this is ours” (Pierce & Jussila, 2010; Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017). This concept originated in the psychology of possessions (Furby, 1978, 1980), arguing that a sense of personal ownership is fundamental to how people orient themselves within their social

environment. This psychological phenomenon extends beyond material possessions to include intangible entities such as ideas and creative works (De Dreu & van Knippenberg, 2005; Toma et al., 2013), a distinction that parallels our territorial and epistemic dimensions.

Possessions extend the self (Dittmar, 1992), fulfilling needs related to efficacy, self-identity, and having one's own place (Pierce et al., 2001). Psychological ownership may diverge from legal ownership, although legal ownership often facilitates psychological ownership (Merrill, 1998). While psychological ownership operates at an individual level ("my house"), collective psychological ownership elevates this to the group level ("our country"). Pierce and Jussila (2010, p. 812) introduced collective psychological ownership to signify the collectively held sense (feeling) that this target of ownership is collectively "ours", anchoring it in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Research has demonstrated the relevance of CPO across various contexts of intergroup relations and conflicts (e.g., Nooitgedagt et al., 2022). However, such research has not distinguished between the territorial and epistemic dimensions of ownership we propose. Instead, previous studies have explicitly focused on territorial disputes in regions with ongoing conflicts (Kosovo: Storz et al., 2022; Israel/Palestine: Warnke et al., 2023) or examined ownership more holistically. For instance, items used in Nooitgedagt et al. (2021), such as "*How much does Australia belong to [group]?*" or "*To what extent do you consider each of the following groups the rightful owner of Australia?*", address country ownership more generally, potentially encompassing both physical territory and less tangible elements like laws, culture, and infrastructure. Because countries are not merely physical spaces nor abstract targets of possession, but instead are imbued with meanings, narratives, and shared understandings, adding an epistemic dimension into the analysis of collective ownership of a country

provides a more nuanced framework to better capture the full complexity of group-based perceptions of ownership.

In this study, we introduce collective epistemic ownership (CPO-E) to capture how groups claim possession over collectively constructed knowledge and narratives—the intangible elements defining collective identity. We conceptualise CPO-E in national contexts where groups assert possession over "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983/2006) built through shared narratives. Social epistemology demonstrates how knowledge is collectively constructed (Chaparak, 2023), with cultural narratives shaping a group identity (Archakis & Tzanne, 2009) and constructing a national identity (van Alphen & Carretero, 2015). Following Pierce and Jussila (2010), CPO-E is thus a product of social interactions through which shared cultural knowledge and narratives ("our story") become part of the group's extended sense of "us".

## 1.2 Ownership Activators: Understanding the Pathways to Collective Psychological Ownership

Following Pierce and colleagues' (2001, 2003) framework, we examine three ownership activators through which CPO develops: collective control, collective intimate knowledge, and collective investment. These pathways may contribute differently to territorial (CPO-T) versus epistemic (CPO-E) dimensions and vary between majority and minority groups. These activators refer to common experiences connecting group members, strengthening their interdependency, and enabling consensus regarding collective ownership (Giordano et al., 2020; Pierce & Jussila, 2010; Verkuyten, 2024). Importantly, the structural context may present obstacles to experiencing key behaviours (controlling, knowing, and investing), deactivating the development of psychological ownership. While organisational structures can undermine ownership among employees (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003), group status differences and epistemic injustice must be considered when

examining the routes to collective ownership among majority and immigrant minority groups.

### 1.2.1 Collective Control

The ability to exercise influence and control are essential components of ownership given that they give rise to feelings of ownership of an object and allow objects to integrate with oneself (Pierce et al., 2001; Rudmin & Berry, 1987). Collective control refers to a group's perceived influence over matters affecting them. For majority groups, control often operates as implicit entitlement rooted in historical dominance (Phillips & Lowery, 2018), potentially less psychologically salient than other activators. Among minority groups, collective control might represent a more explicit aspiration, reflecting efforts to gain voice despite marginalisation (Carter et al., 2023).

### 1.2.2 Collective Intimate Knowledge

People develop feelings of ownership through knowledge gained via active engagement with the target possession (Pierce et al., 2001; Rudmin & Berry, 1987). Majority groups develop intimate national knowledge through intergenerational socialization (Sani et al., 2009), reinforced by educational systems prioritizing majority perspectives (Archakis & Tzanne, 2009). Minorities develop knowledge through cultural adaptation, creating bicultural insights (Berry, 1976) despite often facing challenges in recognising their knowledge as legitimate (Fricker, 2007).

### 1.2.3 Collective Investment

Targets become attached to those who created them through their efforts (Pierce et al., 2001). Majority groups' investment claims typically stem from historical foundations and ancestral labor (Verkuyten, 2024), while for minorities, investment represents a contemporary pathway through recent contributions (Brylka et al., 2015; Nooitgedagt et al., 2022).

These activating experiences align with frameworks distinguishing between ethnic

citizenship (based on ancestry and birth) and civic citizenship (based on participation and contribution) (Brubaker, 1990; Reijerse et al., 2013). Ethnic frameworks privilege majority ownership claims, while civic frameworks enable minorities' inclusion through participation (Leong et al., 2020).

## 1.3 Implications of Collective Psychological Ownership

Research shows that CPO creates a collective possession mindset capable of uniting groups through stewardship (Peck et al., 2021) and dividing them through exclusionary attitudes (Nijs et al., 2024; Selvanathan et al., 2021; Scarborough & Xu, 2025). CPO mediates between ownership activators and group outcomes in organisational contexts (Giordano et al., 2020; Pierce et al., 2020) but has not been studied in relation to country ownership across majority national and immigrant groups.

The distinction between territorial and epistemic dimensions established in this research raises interesting questions regarding how groups claim country-specific rights and responsibilities. For majority groups, CPO-T likely is associated with the exclusive determination of rights vis-à-vis borders and national futures, stemming from historical power positions. This aligns with research linking territorial ownership to autochthonous claims (Nooitgedagt et al., 2022), far-right populism (Nijs et al., 2021), and responses to intergroup threats (Nijs et al., 2022, Study 2).

While country ownership connects to perceived responsibilities over the target possession (Nijs et al., 2024), we argue that this will become a specific role of CPO-E. Epistemic ownership is deeply intertwined with group identity because narratives define collective identity and provide meaning. When group members perceive ownership of defining narratives, they develop a responsibility towards maintaining them because threats to these narratives represent threats to the group's distinctiveness, continuity, and positive self-image (Nijs et al.,

2024; Pierce & Jussila, 2010).

For majority members, territorial ownership might thus be more strongly related to marking behaviours by reinforcing the determination of rights to control entry to the group of owners, while epistemic ownership might foster responsibility for the future of the country in terms of maintaining national narratives. For minority members, CPO-T claims might develop through active participation rather than an historical presence, while CPO-E claims might represent efforts to shape evolving national narratives. This parallels research showing how majority groups use exclusionary ethnic markers while immigrants rely on civic markers when defining a sense of national belonging (Leong et al., 2020). Thus, ownership might vary based on a group position and an historical relationship to a national belonging. For minority members, both CPO-T and CPO-E might be more strongly connected to claims of a shared determination of rights rather than collective responsibilities, with their ownership claims serving primarily to establish legitimate participation in national decision-making instead of a responsibility to maintain existing narratives.

#### 1.4 Present Research

This research extends previous work on collective ownership by examining its understudied epistemic dimension alongside territorial claims as well as by comparing the activating experiences underlying and functions of these two ownership dimensions across both majority and minority populations. Our primary objective is to introduce the concept of collective epistemic ownership (CPO-E) and to empirically differentiate it from collective territorial ownership (CPO-T), as distinct dimensions of collective psychological ownership (CPO) of a country across groups. We conducted two studies examining (1) whether CPO-T and CPO-E are empirically distinct, (2) how theoretical ownership activators (collective control, intimate knowledge, and investment) relate to

both dimensions, and (3) how these dimensions relate to the perceived determination of rights and responsibilities among ethnic majority Finns (Study 1) and second-generation immigrants (Study 2) in Finland. We address the following research questions (RQ) and one hypothesis, registered at the Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/pb5xv>):

**RQ1:** Are CPO-T and CPO-E empirically distinct dimensions?

**Hypothesis (H1):** CPO-T and CPO-E are distinct dimensions of CPO, each with unique content.

**RQ2:** How are ownership activators (collective control, intimate knowledge, and investment) associated with CPO-T and CPO-E among majority and minority groups?

**RQ3:** How are CPO-T and CPO-E related to perceived rights and responsibilities, and do they mediate relationships between ownership activators and these outcomes?

## 2. STUDY 1

Study 1 examined collective psychological ownership among members of the Finnish national majority (i.e., Finnish-speaking ethnic Finns). Previous research has documented country ownership claims among majority groups in connection with autochthony and an historical presence (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017), territorial ownership vis-à-vis perceived exclusive determination of rights (Nijs et al., 2021), stronger opposition to newcomers (Martinović & Verkuyten, 2013), and a higher level of perceived collective responsibility (Nijs et al., 2024). These relationships are intensified when majority groups perceive ownership threats (Bagci et al., 2023; Ioku & Watamura, 2024) and when they strongly identify with their nation (Brylka et al., 2015; Storz et al., 2020). However, less is known about ownership activators and feelings over national narratives and cultural knowledge.

Pursuant to the general research questions outlined above, Study 1 investigated ethnic

majority Finns' territorial and epistemic ownership claims, the ownership activators (collective control, intimate knowledge, and investment) related to their ownership claims, and their relationship to perceived ownership as well as their rights and responsibilities to their country.

## 2.1 Methods

### 2.1.1 Participants and Procedure

Data from majority Finns ( $n = 1,000$ ) were collected in April 2023 by Kantar Public, with ethical approvals from Utrecht University (22-1891) and the University of Helsinki (19/2023). A power analysis for our structural equation model, anticipating a small to medium effect size of 0.15, with a desired power of 0.80, nine latent variables, and 27 observed variables at a probability level of .05 indicated a minimum required sample size of 849 participants to detect the expected effects (Soper, 2025). Our actual sample size exceeded this requirement. Participants were adults of Finnish descent (born in Finland, Finnish as a first language, and ethnically Finnish parents) who completed an online survey. The sample was quota representative of the Finnish population, weighted to be representative of the Finnish population's age, education, and gender distribution: 47.0% men, 52.7% women, and 0.3% others ( $Mage = 49.3$ ,  $SD = 16.5$ ), with education levels corresponding to the matriculation examination/vocational diploma ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ ). Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics.

### 2.1.2 Measures

All measures were back-translated from English to Finnish using 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise indicated. The McDonald's omega ( $\omega$ ) indicated a good to excellent internal consistency across measures. CPO-T and CPO-E items for both study 1 and 2 are listed in Table 2.

*Collective territorial ownership (CPO-T)* was measured using three items adapted from

previous studies (Nijs et al., 2021; Pierce et al., 2017). In the Finnish language, the word "country" ("*maa*") also translates to "land" or "territory", strengthening a territorial interpretation of ownership. After a brief introduction, participants responded to statements like "We Finns own this country" ( $\omega = 0.90$ ).

*Collective epistemic ownership (CPO-E)* was measured using three items modified from Pierce et al. (2017), which assessed the collective possession of Finland's national narrative. After a brief introduction to story ownership, the majority sample responded to statements such as "The story of this country is the story of us Finns" ( $\omega = 0.87$ ).

*Collective ownership-activating experiences.* Following Pierce et al.'s (2001, 2003) framework, we measured three ownership activators using three items each: "We Finns have influence over the things that affect us as Finns" (*collective control*,  $\omega = 0.90$ ); "We Finns are intimately familiar with what is going on in this country" (*collective intimate knowledge*,  $\omega = 0.91$ ); and "We Finns have worked hard for this country" (*collective investment*,  $\omega = 0.92$ ).

*Exclusive determination of rights.* We used three items adapted from Nijs et al. (2021) to assess the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed that Finns can claim exclusive rights to Finland. The items included statements such as "[Finns have] the exclusive right to decide matters that concern Finland" ( $\omega = 0.91$ ).

**Table 1***Demographic characteristics of the participants in the majority and minority sample*

Characteristic	Majority sample (n = 1,000)	Minority sample (n = 1,293)
<b>Age</b>		
M (SD)	49.3 (16.5)	35.6 (17.3)
Median [Min, Max]	52.0 [18.0, 84.0]	33.0 [18, 83]
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	470 (47.0%)	557 (45.0%)
Female	527 (52.7%)	682 (55.0%)
Other	3 (0.3%)	0
<b>Education Level</b>		
Comprehensive school	126 (12.6%)	Primary school grades 1–6: 1 (0.08%) Primary school grades 7–9, grade 10, middle school: 48 (3.9%)
Matriculation examination/vocational diploma	559 (55.9%)	Short vocational education: 87 (6.7%) Higher vocational diploma: 96 (7.4%) Matriculation examination: 283 (21.9%)
Bachelor's degree	187 (18.7%)	Bachelor's degree: 230 (17.8%)
Master's or certificate degree	101 (10.1%)	Master's degree: 446 (34.5%)
Doctoral or other professional degree	13 (1.3%)	Doctoral degree: 48 (3.7%)
Other	14 (1.4%)	0

*Note.* All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

**Table 2***Final Scale Items for Collective Psychological Ownership Measures*

Dimension and items	Majority Finns (Study 1)	Second-Generation Immigrants (Study 2)
CPO-T Prompt	<i>Think about your house, car, work space, or some other item that you own or co-own with someone, and the experiences and feelings associated with the statement 'THIS IS MINE/THIS IS OURS!' The following questions have to do with the feeling of collectively owning a country, Finland. Indicate the degree to which you personally disagree or agree with the following statements.</i>	<i>The following questions are about the feeling of sharing ownership of a country, Finland and your perceptions on how much ethnic Finns are willing to share Finland with other people living in Finland. As someone with a diverse cultural background living in Finland, please assess each statement from your standpoint.</i>
CPO-T Item 1	We Finns own this country.	People with diverse cultural backgrounds own Finland as much as ethnic majority Finns.
CPO-T Item 2	This country belongs to us Finns.	This country belongs also to people with different cultural backgrounds.
CPO-T Item 3	I feel as though we Finns own this country together.	Not only ethnic majority Finns, but also people with diverse cultural backgrounds, own this country.
CPO-E Prompt	<i>Now think about the idea or story that you created or co-created with someone, and the experiences and feelings associated with owning that idea or story. The following questions have to do with the feeling of collectively owning the story of a country, Finland. Indicate the degree to which you personally disagree or agree with the following statements.</i>	<i>Now, think about the idea or story that you created or co-created with someone else. Remember how you felt about owning that story or idea. The next questions are about shared ownership of Finland's story. As someone with a diverse cultural background living in Finland, please assess each statement from your standpoint.</i>
CPO-E Item 1	The story of this country is the story of us, Finns.	The story of Finland is not only a story of ethnic majority Finns, but also the story of people with diverse cultural backgrounds living in Finland.
CPO-E Item 2	This country represents the legacy of us, Finnish people.	Finland's legacy not only represents ethnic majority Finns but also people, who have diverse cultural backgrounds.
CPO-E Item 3	Only we, the Finnish people, are able to tell the true story of Finland.	Not only ethnic majority Finns, but also people with diverse cultural backgrounds, are able to tell the true story of Finland.

*Note.* All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

*Collective responsibilities.* Perceived collective responsibility was assessed through three statements based on Nijs et al. (2024) focused on the shared duty of Finns. These items included statements such as “We Finns have a duty to take care of our country” ( $\omega = 0.92$ ).

*Control variables.* We controlled for national identity and place attachment, given that these characteristics appear related to but constitute independent predictors of majority groups’ exclusive determination of rights and responsibilities to a country (Martinović et al., 2024). These constructs were captured using three items each, which included “I feel strongly Finnish” (*ingroup identification*,  $\omega = 0.86$ ) and “I feel attached to Finland as a country” (*place attachment*,  $\omega = 0.81$ ).

We further controlled for sociodemographic characteristics, including gender (0 = *men*, 1 = *women*), age (in years), and education (ranging from 1 = *comprehensive school* to 5 = *doctoral or other professional degree*).

### 2.1.3 Deviations from Registration and Analytical Approach

We registered the analytical approach for Study 1 (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/PB5XV>). While the registration only covered the majority sample analyses, we subsequently applied the same analytical strategy to the minority population sample (see Study 2). Furthermore, we initially planned to report Cronbach’s alpha for reliability, but ultimately decided to use McDonald’s omega ( $\omega$ ) since it provides more accurate estimates of reliability when the factor loadings are not equal across all items within a scale, which was the case for our data.

### 2.1.4 Analyses

All analyses were conducted using the R statistical software program, version 4.4.2 (R Core Team, 2024), employing the packages *dplyr* v1.1.4 (Wickham et al., 2022), *lavaan* v0.6-19 (Rosseel, 2012), and *semTools* v0.5-6 (Jorgensen

et al., 2021). We evaluated the model fit using multiple indices as recommended in the structural equation modelling literature. For an acceptable model fit, we used the following criteria: for Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), values  $\geq 0.95$  indicated a good fit ( $\geq 0.90$  an acceptable fit); Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) values  $< 0.05$  indicated a close fit ( $< 0.08$  a reasonable fit); and Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values  $< 0.08$  indicated a good fit. To assess multicollinearity, we used the variance inflation factor (VIF) where values  $< 5$  indicated acceptable levels (Chatterjee & Simonoff, 2013; O’Brien, 2007). To assess normality, we examined the skewness and kurtosis values, using conventional cutoffs of 2.0 for skewness and 7.0 for kurtosis (Curran et al., 1996). For model comparisons, we used scaled chi-square difference tests. The path coefficients were assessed for statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ) and effect size, with standardised coefficients around 0.1, 0.3, and 0.5 indicating small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

While our primary analyses focused on models including both CPO-T and CPO-E dimensions simultaneously (as presented in the main text), we also conducted additional robustness checks using separate models examining CPO-T and CPO-E individually as mediators. We performed these supplementary analyses to verify that the observed patterns of relationships remained consistent when each dimension was considered in isolation, thus providing additional support for our theoretical framework. The detailed results of these separate mediator models are available in [Supplementary Online Materials \(SOM\) D and E](#).

## 2.2 Results

### 2.2.1 Parallel Analysis (PA) and Model Comparisons

We employed parallel analysis using the minimum residuals method to assess the CPO construct's dimensionality, which indicated a two-factor solution (eigenvalues: 4.01, 0.30). Subsequent factors displayed minimal to negative eigenvalues, reinforcing the two-factor structure comprising CPO-T and CPO-E (details in SOM B). For model validation, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) with a maximum likelihood estimation and robust standard errors were performed, comparing a separate but correlated factors model against a single-factor model. A separate model, treating CPO-T and CPO-E as correlated yet distinct factors, showed a superior fit ( $CFI = 0.962$ ,  $TLI = 0.953$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.043$ ,  $SRMR = 0.041$ ) compared with the single-factor model ( $CFI = 0.935$ ,  $TLI = 0.923$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.055$ ,  $SRMR = 0.041$ ). This confirmed the distinctiveness of the constructs and supported our hypothesis (H1), leading us to adopt the separate model as our final solution. Factor loadings for both dimensions were strong and significant (see Table 3).

### 2.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics appear in Table 4, where the mean scores on a 1–7 scale generally reflect moderate to high agreement across constructs. Both dimensions of CPO indicated strong perceptions of territorial and epistemic ownership among majority Finns. The correlations in Table 5 show a strong positive association between CPO-T and CPO-E ( $r = .805$ ) and statistically significant relationships with their activators and outcomes.

Before the path analyses, skewness and kurtosis of variables were assessed (details in SOM A). Most variables fell within normal ranges, although collective responsibility items showed a high kurtosis (3.07 to 4.13), justifying our use of robust estimation methods.

### 2.2.3 Structural Modelling

Prior to model testing, we conducted a variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis to assess the multicollinearity among variables and controls. All VIF values fell under the threshold of 5, indicating acceptable multicollinearity levels (see SOM C). The model demonstrated a good fit to the data ( $CFI = 0.962$ ,  $TLI = 0.953$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.043$ ,  $SRMR = 0.041$ ), for more details see SOM B. For direct effects see Figure 1, for indirect and total effects see Table 6.

Our analysis revealed distinct patterns regarding how ownership activators related to the ownership dimensions. Collective investment strongly associated with perceived collective ownership along both the CPO-T and CPO-E dimensions. In addition, collective intimate knowledge also consistently and positively associated with CPO, although with more modest coefficients. Interestingly, collective control did not significantly associate with either dimension of CPO, contrary to our initial theoretical expectations. The model accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance for both dimensions of collective psychological ownership (for CPO-T,  $R^2 = 0.506$ ; for CPO-E,  $R^2 = 0.675$ ). The model also explained a substantial amount of variance in rights ( $R^2 = 0.509$ ) and responsibilities ( $R^2 = 0.506$ ).

The relationships between the two dimensions of ownership and the outcomes showed distinct patterns. CPO-T exhibited a strong association with the exclusive determination of rights. CPO-E also showed a significant association with the exclusive determination of rights. For collective responsibilities, CPO-E showed a significant association, while CPO-T's relationship with responsibilities was not statistically significant. The model explained over 50% of the variance for both rights ( $R^2 = 0.509$ ) and responsibilities ( $R^2 = 0.506$ ), indicating that the ownership dimensions and ownership activators together strongly associate with these collective ownership perceptions.

**Table 3**

*Factor Loadings for the Separate but Correlated Factors Model (Final Measurement Model) of the Majority and Minority Samples*

Item	Majority Sample (Study 1)		Minority Sample (Study 2)	
	CPO-T	CPO-E	CPO-T	CPO-E
CPO-T 1	0.89	-	0.84	-
CPO-T 2	0.91	-	0.93	-
CPO-T 3	0.82	-	0.94	-
CPO-E 1	-	0.91	-	0.91
CPO-E 2	-	0.92	-	0.94
CPO-E 3	-	0.76	-	0.80

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables in the Majority and Minority Samples*

Variable	Majority ( <i>n</i> = 1,000)		Minority ( <i>n</i> = 1,239)		Range
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Collective Control	5.03	1.51	5.20	1.46	1–7
Collective Intimate Knowledge	5.08	1.50	5.42	1.42	1–7
Collective Investment	5.91	1.21	5.51	1.43	1–7
CPO-T	5.54	1.60	5.65	1.49	1–7
CPO-E	5.66	1.49	5.56	1.52	1–7
Exclusive Determination Rights (RIC)	5.19	1.65	5.54	1.45	1–7
Collective Responsibility	6.19	1.16	6.14	1.13	1–7
Ingroup Identification	5.81	1.34	4.14	1.90	1–7
Place Attachment	5.55	1.50	5.99	1.35	1–7
Age	49.49	16.55	35.74	17.26	18–84 and 18–83
Education	2.10	0.94	2.88	1.02	1–5
Gender	0.51	0.50	0.48	0.50	0–1

*Note.* Descriptive statistics were based on manifest mean scores. All statistics are calculated using non-missing data and incorporate sampling weights.

**Table 5***Model-Implied Correlations Between Latent Variables in the Majority Sample (Study 1)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Collective control	—	.71***	.53***	.47***	.48***	.40***	.35***	.36***	.36***
2. Collective intimate knowledge		—	.62***	.56***	.61***	.54***	.38***	.42***	.36***
3. Collective investment			—	.66***	.80***	.59***	.67***	.58***	.49***
4. CPO-T				—	.81***	.67***	.51***	.52***	.43***
5. CPO-E					—	.66***	.61***	.57***	.46***
6. Exclusive rights						—	.54***	.46***	.37***
7. Collective responsibilities							—	.51***	.43***
8. Ingroup identification								—	.82***
9. Place attachment									—

*Note.* Correlations presented are derived from the model-implied covariance matrix using `lavInspect()` and `cov2cor()` functions in `lavaan`. These correlations represent relationships between latent constructs while accounting for measurement error. Statistics were based on the weighted data. All correlations were statistically significant at the level  $p < .001$ .

Our analysis of indirect pathways indicated that collective investment was significantly and indirectly associated with rights through both CPO-T and CPO-E. Collective intimate knowledge also significantly and indirectly associated with rights through CPO-T marginally but non-significantly through CPO-E. The indirect associations between ownership activators and responsibilities remained generally weak, with only collective investment emerging through a marginally significant and indirect association through CPO-E.

Across all associations, combining the direct and indirect pathways revealed that collective investment exhibited a strong overall relationship with both rights and responsibilities. Collective intimate knowledge positively associated with rights, but negatively associated with responsibilities, suggesting a complex relationship between collective intimate knowledge and perceived responsibilities.

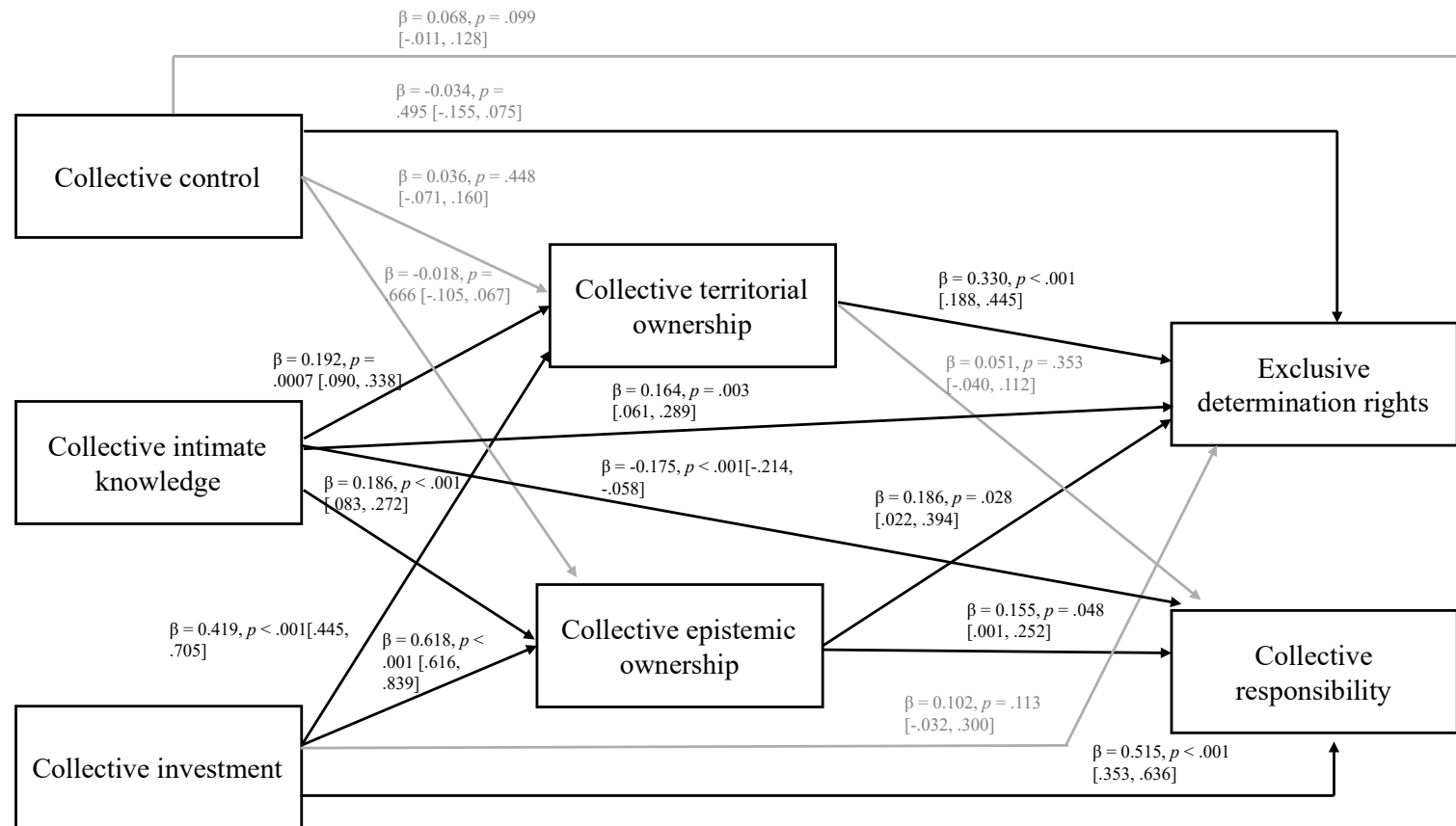
The separate models which include either only CPO-T or only CPO-E as mediators appear in SOM E. These single-mediator models provide further support for the relationship patterns observed in the full model.

### 2.3 Discussion of Study 1

Study 1 confirms the empirical distinction between the territorial and epistemic ownership dimensions, aligning with theories on physical and symbolic nationhood (Brubaker, 1996; Anderson, 1983/2006). These findings reveal crucial insights into the psychology of the majority. Specifically, majority population Finns anchor ownership in historical investments and accumulated knowledge, reflecting naturalised entitlement consistent with autochthony beliefs (Nooitgedagt et al., 2022; Verkuyten, 2024) rather than via contemporary control.

**Figure 1**

*Direct Associations of Ownership Activators with Collective Psychological Ownership, Rights, and Responsibilities (Majority Sample, Study 1)*



*Note.* The figure displays standardized path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) for direct effects only. Solid black arrows indicate statistically significant paths ( $p < .05$ ); gray arrows indicate non-significant paths. Exact  $p$ -values are provided when  $p > .001$ . Values in brackets indicate 95% confidence intervals.



**Table 6**

*Indirect and Total Effects of Ownership Activators on Collective Psychological Ownership, Rights, and Responsibilities (Majority Sample, Study 1)*

	Effect	$\beta$	SE	95% CI LL	95% CI UL	p
Indirect Effects on Rights via CPO-T	Collective Control	0.012	0.019	-0.023	0.052	.458
	Collective Intimate Knowledge	0.063	0.023	0.022	0.113	.003
	Collective Investment	0.138	0.043	0.098	0.266	< .001
Indirect Effects on Rights via CPO-E	Collective Control	-0.003	0.009	-0.022	0.014	.669
	Collective Intimate Knowledge	0.035	0.019	0.000	0.074	.052
	Collective Investment	0.115	0.07	0.014	0.289	.031
Indirect Effects on Responsibili- ties via CPO-T	Collective Control	0.002	0.003	-0.004	0.007	.556
	Collective Intimate Knowledge	0.010	0.011	-0.009	0.025	.375
	Collective Investment	0.022	0.023	-0.022	0.064	.347
Indirect Effects on Responsibili- ties via CPO-E	Collective Control	-0.003	0.006	-0.014	0.009	.680
	Collective Intimate Knowledge	0.029	0.018	-0.004	0.049	.093
	Collective Investment	0.096	0.05	0.000	0.184	.050
Total Effects on Rights	Collective Control	-0.025	0.061	-0.150	0.090	.627
	Collective Intimate Knowledge	0.262	0.060	0.161	0.398	.001
	Collective Investment	0.354	0.068	0.334	0.601	< .001
Total Effects on Responsibilities	Collective Control	0.067	0.037	-0.015	0.131	.122
	Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.136	0.040	-0.185	-0.027	.009
	Collective Investment	0.632	0.067	0.476	0.738	< .001

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Exact p-values are provided when  $p > .001$ .

The distinct functions of these dimensions are theoretically significant: territorial ownership facilitates boundary maintenance through exclusive rights (Nijs et al., 2024; Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Martinović, 2020), while epistemic ownership fosters collective responsibility, representing a novel finding indicating that narrative ownership may create a stewardship orientation. This distinction offers practical pathways for fostering inclusion by emphasising shared narratives rather than territorial claims, potentially reducing exclusionary tendencies while maintaining a commitment to the national welfare. Furthermore, these findings establish a foundation for examining how these dimensions may function differently among minority groups.

### 3. STUDY 2

Study 2 examines how second-generation immigrants in Finland experience territorial and epistemic ownership of their home country. While Study 1 established distinct dimensions for CPO-T and CPO-E among majority population Finns, understanding these dimensions in minority groups is crucial. Second-generation immigrants may develop ownership through different pathways, occupying a unique position between the majority and first-generation immigrants (Leong et al., 2020; Martinović & Verkuyten, 2024). Second-generation immigrants have never known any other home country, yet may face challenges in being fully accepted as citizens (Reijerse et al., 2013). Their ownership experiences parallel the formation of their identity, balancing majority narratives with their communities' perspectives (Schwartz et al., 2013).

Previous CPO research has not focused on immigrants' rights to claim CPO of their home countries (for one exception, see Brylka et al., 2015). Moreover, minorities' rights to claim epistemic ownership have not been considered. This fosters "hermeneutical injustice" (Fricker, 2007), whereby majorities dominate national narratives, for instance linking American identity with whiteness (Devos & Banaji, 2005) and

European identities with Christianity (Smeekees et al., 2011).

Studies in contested territories demonstrate that minorities develop distinct ownership patterns. For instance, Palestinian citizens of Israel demonstrate more varied ownership perceptions compared with Jewish Israelis (Warnke et al., 2023), while Serbs in Serbia show a greater openness to shared ownership than Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo (Storz et al., 2022). Understanding how minorities develop epistemic ownership is crucial since it may provide an additional pathway for claims of belonging.

Following Study 1's framework, we next examine the dimensions of CPO-T and CPO-E among second-generation immigrants, including ownership activators and relationships with perceived rights and responsibilities.

#### 3.1 Methods

##### 3.1.1 Participants and Procedure

The minority population data were collected in Finland from April 22 to May 17, 2024, through Åbo Akademi's Gen2 panel, consisting of second-generation immigrants with at least one parent born outside Finland. The panel is weighted to be representative of the second-generation immigrant population in Finland vis-à-vis gender, age, and region of residence. This study, approved by the University of Helsinki's Ethical Review Board (88/2023), initially contacted 2,257 participants. Due to survey length, many participants did not complete it, resulting in 1,265 eligible participants (56.05% of the original sample) after removing those with incomplete responses. We also excluded three participants whose parents were both Finnish-born and another 23 participants who selected "Other" for gender due to statistical concerns, whereby the small group size would have resulted in unstable statistical estimates in our analyses and prevented meaningful group comparisons on gender.

The final sample of 1,239 participants consisted of 682 (55.0%) women and 557 (45.0%) men,

with a mean age of 35.6 ( $SD = 17.3$ ). Most participants (96.3%,  $n = 1,193$ ) self-identified as Finnish, whereas 33.6% ( $n = 416$ ) chose “Other” as their cultural background. Among those who chose “Other” as their cultural background, 15 did not specify their background, while 401 did, with respondents most frequently self-identifying as German ( $n = 42$ ), English/British ( $n = 27$ ), and European ( $n = 18$ ). In terms of multicultural background selections, 8 respondents (0.6%) reported no background, 853 (68.9%) selected one, and 378 (30.5%) indicated two backgrounds. Comparing our final analytical sample to the original panel of 2,257 respondents, we noted a similar gender distribution (54.0% women in the full respondent group versus 55.0% in our final sample) and education levels (55.0% with a tertiary education in the full respondent group versus 56.0% in our final sample), indicating that our analytical sample maintained a good representativeness of the survey population despite the necessary exclusions due to incomplete data. The minority participants represented were relatively young adults ( $M = 35.7$ ,  $SD = 17.3$ ), which was slightly higher in the initial panel ( $M = 38.1$ ,  $SD = 17.7$ ). Table 1 provides a breakdown of participants’ demographic characteristics.

### 3.1.2 Measures

All scales were back-translated from English to Finnish. While measuring the same theoretical constructs as in Study 1, the measures here were adapted specifically for the minority perspective rather than being direct equivalents. Responses relied on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise noted. The McDonald’s omega ( $\omega$ ) indicated a good to excellent internal consistency across all measures.

*Collective territorial ownership (CPO-T)*. Unlike the majority sample measures which assessed direct ownership claims, the minority sample responded to relationally framed items acknowledging their shared ownership of the country alongside the majority population,

such as “People with diverse cultural backgrounds own Finland as much as ethnic majority Finns” ( $\omega = 0.92$ ).

*Collective epistemic ownership (CPO-E)*. Similarly, the minority sample responded to items that framed narrative ownership in relation to the majority group, such as the following: “The story of Finland is not only a story of ethnic majority Finns, but also the story of people with diverse cultural backgrounds living in Finland” ( $\omega = 0.91$ ).

*Collective ownership activators*. Following Pierce et al.’s (2001, 2003) framework, we measured three ownership activators using three items each. While conceptually measuring the same constructs as in Study 1, the minority sample items were adapted to focus on the experiences of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. We measured collective control with items such as “People like me, with diverse cultural backgrounds, have influence over things that affect us” ( $\omega = 0.88$ ). Collective intimate knowledge included items like “People like me, with diverse cultural backgrounds, are intimately familiar with what is going on in this country” ( $\omega = 0.92$ ). We assessed collective investment using items such as “In general, we, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, have contributed a lot to this country” ( $\omega = 0.89$ ).

*Exclusive determination of rights*. We measured this construct using three items adapted from Nijs et al. (2021), such as “We, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, have the right to decide about matters concerning Finland” ( $\omega = 0.76$ ).

*Collective responsibilities*. We assessed the concept of collective responsibility through three statements based on Nijs et al. (2024), such as, “We have the duty to take care of Finland” ( $\omega = 0.86$ ).

*Control variables*. We used the same controls as in Study 1. More specifically, we used ingroup identification and place attachment to

examine the association of collective psychological ownership with perceived rights and responsibilities over the country independently from that of emotional bonds with one's group and physical locations, respectively (Martinović et al., 2024). We measured ingroup identification through three items focusing on participants' heritage identities: "I strongly feel attached to my [e.g., Russian, Estonian, etc.] identity" ( $\omega = 0.85$ ). We measured place attachment similarly to the majority sample through three items, such as "I feel attached to Finland as a country" ( $\omega = 0.85$ ). We also controlled for gender (0 = men, 1 = women), age (in years), and education level (ranging from 1 = comprehensive school to 8 = doctoral or other professional degree).

### 3.1.3 Analyses

While the original registration covered only the majority sample analyses, we applied the same analytical strategy to the minority sample. All analyses were conducted using the same analytical tools and we evaluated the results using the same criteria as presented in Study 1.

## 3.2 Results

### 3.2.1 Parallel Analysis (PA) and Measurement Model

A parallel analysis of the minority sample reaffirmed a two-factor structure for CPO-T and CPO-E, with eigenvalues of 3.99 and 0.54, respectively, for the first two factors. Subsequent factors resulted in negative eigenvalues (from -0.06 to -0.23), supporting the distinctiveness of these constructs (details in SOM B).

In the measurement model, the correlated factors model revealed an excellent fit ( $CFI = 0.972$ ,  $TLI = 0.966$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.044$ ,  $SRMR = 0.041$ ), outperforming the single-factor model ( $CFI = 0.911$ ,  $TLI = 0.894$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.077$ ,  $SRMR = 0.050$ ). This confirms our hypothesis (H1) and aligns with the findings from Study 1, indicating that the separate but correlated CPO-T and CPO-E factors model accurately represents ownership perceptions across both the majority and minority groups. Factor loadings were significant

( $p < .001$ , ranging from 0.794 to 0.942) with a lower correlation between CPO-T and CPO-E ( $r = .694$ ) compared with the majority sample (see Table 7).

### 3.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for all variables in the minority sample dataset appear in Table 4. The mean scores on the 1–7 scale indicated moderate to high agreement across constructs, with collective responsibility receiving the highest rating ( $M = 6.1$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ), followed by place attachment ( $M = 6.0$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ). Both CPO dimensions showed relatively high mean scores at levels comparable to the majority population sample, suggesting strong ownership perceptions among second-generation immigrants as well. In addition, we also observed significant correlations between both ownership dimensions, ownership activators, and outcomes, see Table 7.

### 3.2.3 Structural Modelling

In the minority population sample, we tested a similar structural equation model as in Study 1, examining associations between (1) ownership activators (collective control, collective intimate knowledge, and collective investment) as independent variables, (2) collective ownership dimensions (territorial [CPO-T] and epistemic [CPO-E]) as mediators, and (3) perceived rights and responsibilities as dependent variables. The full model demonstrated a good fit with the data ( $CFI = 0.959$ ,  $robust CFI = 0.965$ ,  $TLI = 0.950$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.048$ , 90% confidence intervals [CI] 0.046–0.051,  $SRMR = 0.055$ ). The model accounted for a moderate proportion of the variance for both dimensions of collective psychological ownership (for CPO-T,  $R^2 = 0.373$ ; for CPO-E,  $R^2 = 0.394$ ). The model also explained 41.4% of the variance in rights ( $R^2 = 0.414$ ) and 33.9% of the variance in responsibilities ( $R^2 = 0.339$ ).

Table 8 summarises the indirect and total effects, while the direct effects appear in Figure 2. Regarding associations between ownership activators and ownership dimensions, collective

**Table 7***Model-Implied Correlations Between Latent Variables in the Minority Sample (Study 2)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Collective control	—	.51***	.37***	.24***	.26***	.36***	.38***	.03ns	.30***
2. Collective intimate knowledge		—	.80***	.46***	.46***	.46***	.33***	.17***	.10ns
3. Collective investment			—	.57***	.61***	.53***	.38***	.21***	.11ns
4. CPO-T				—	.69***	.54***	.31***	.24***	.03ns
5. CPO-E					—	.54***	.34***	.24***	.10ns
6. Exclusive rights						—	.67***	.22***	.13***
7. Collective responsibilities							—	.18***	.41***
8. Ingroup identification								—	.08ns
9. Place attachment									—

*Note.* Correlations presented are derived from the model-implied covariance matrix using `lavInspect()` and `cov2cor()` functions in `lavaan`. These correlations represent relationships between latent constructs while accounting for measurement error. Statistics were based on weighted data. All correlations except those marked as “ns” were statistically significant at the level  $p < .001$ .

investment showed a strong association with both CPO-E and CPO-T. Unlike in the majority population sample, collective control was significantly positively associated with both CPO-T and CPO-E, while collective intimate knowledge was negatively associated with CPO-E.

The relationships between ownership dimensions and outcomes also revealed sample-specific patterns. In contrast to the majority population sample, both CPO-T and CPO-E were significantly associated with rights. However, neither dimension revealed significant associations with responsibilities.

Our analysis of indirect pathways in the minority sample revealed several significant relationships. For rights, collective investment was significantly and indirectly associated with both CPO-T and CPO-E. Collective control was marginally significantly and indirectly associated

with both dimensions, while the indirect association with collective intimate knowledge was not significant with either ownership pathway.

For the indirect pathways to responsibilities, we observed no statistically significant mediational relationships. The total effects in the minority sample revealed that collective investment maintained a strong total relationship with both rights and responsibilities. Collective control significantly and positively was related to both outcomes, while collective intimate knowledge was not significantly related to outcomes. For a detailed summary of the coefficients and confidence intervals, see Table 8. The separate models which include either only CPO-T or only CPO-E as mediators appear in SOM E.

### 3.3 Discussion of Study 2

Study 2 extends ownership research to second-generation immigrants, supporting the

**Table 8**

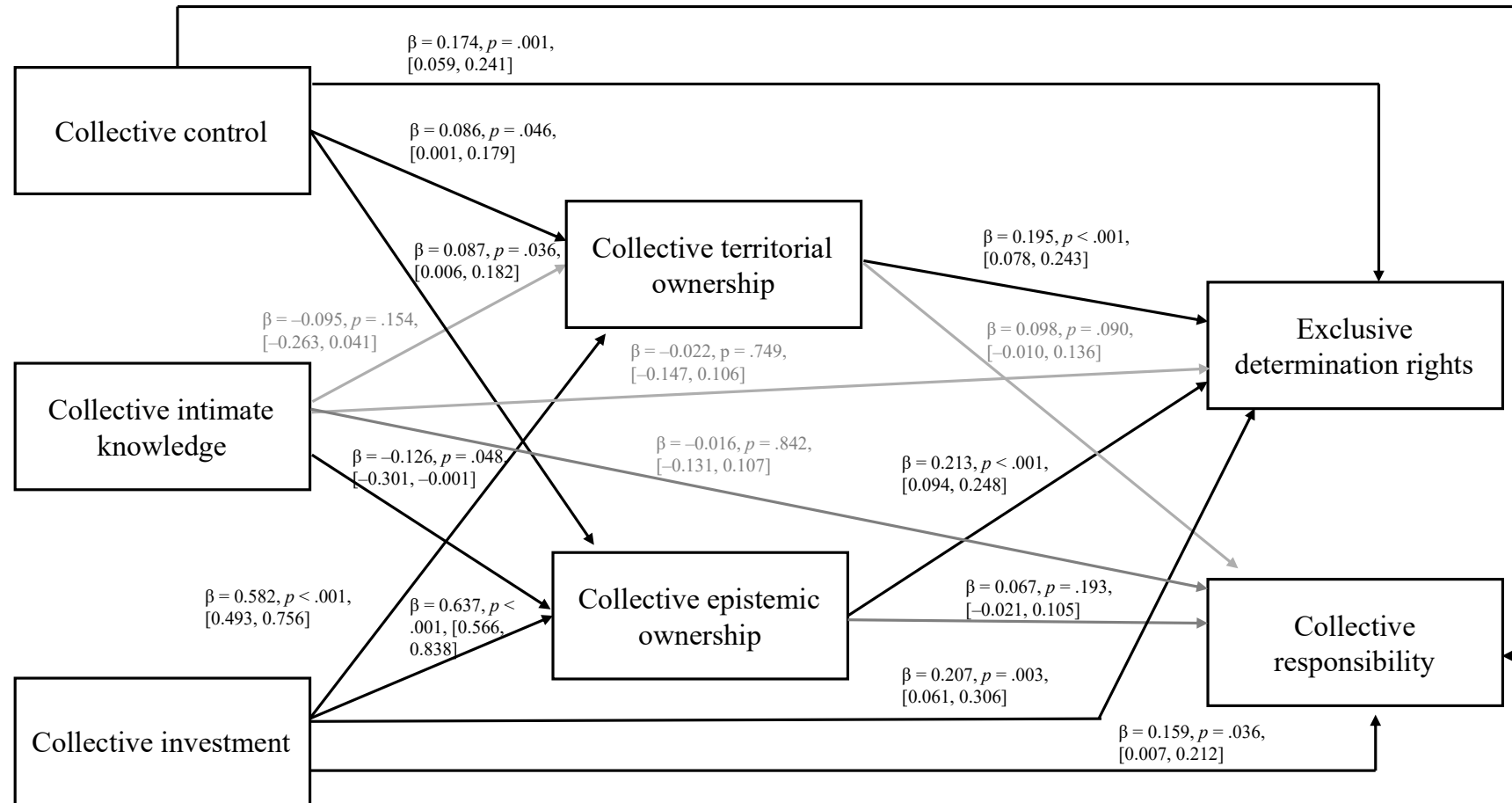
*Effects of Ownership Activators on Collective Psychological Ownership, Rights, and Responsibilities (Minority Sample, Study 2)*

Effect	$\beta$	SE	95% CI LL	95% CI UL	<i>p</i>
Indirect Effects on Rights via CPO-T					
Collective Control	0.017	0.009	-0.001	0.030	.062
Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.019	0.013	-0.043	0.007	.160
Collective Investment	0.114	0.031	0.047	0.154	< .001
Indirect Effects on Rights via CPO-E					
Collective Control	0.019	0.010	-0.001	0.033	.066
Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.027	0.015	-0.054	0.003	.076
Collective Investment	0.136	0.034	0.062	0.178	< .001
Indirect Effects on Responsibilities via CPO-T					
Collective Control	0.008	0.006	-0.002	0.014	.164
Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.009	0.008	-0.019	0.005	.237
Collective Investment	0.057	0.034	-0.007	0.085	.093
Indirect Effects on Responsibilities via CPO-E					
Collective Control	0.006	0.005	-0.003	0.011	.264
Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.008	0.008	-0.018	0.005	.270
Collective Investment	0.043	0.033	-0.015	0.074	.197
Total Effects on Rights					
Collective Control	0.209	0.049	0.083	0.277	< .001
Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.067	0.071	-0.204	0.075	.366
Collective Investment	0.457	0.065	0.275	0.531	< .001
Total Effects on Responsibilities					
Collective Control	0.201	0.042	0.052	0.218	.001
Collective Intimate Knowledge	-0.034	0.061	-0.144	0.094	.676
Collective Investment	0.259	0.051	0.078	0.278	< .001

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. Exact *p*-values are provided when *p* > .001.

**Figure 2**

*Direct Associations of Ownership Activators with Collective Psychological Ownership, Rights, and Responsibilities (Minority Sample, Study 2)*



Note. The figure displays standardized path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) for direct effects only. Solid black arrows indicate statistically significant paths ( $p < .05$ ); gray arrows indicate non-significant paths. Exact  $p$ -values are provided when  $p > .001$ . Values in brackets indicate 95% confidence intervals.



territorial–epistemic distinction while revealing how minority population groups claim country ownership through pathways distinct from those among majority populations (Brylka et al., 2015).

Among minorities, agency emerges as crucial, whereby collective control was significantly associated with ownership claims, reflecting their need to establish a sense of belonging through active participation rather than through an historical presence. Conversely, the negative association between intimate knowledge and epistemic ownership suggests that minority populations with deeper societal familiarity may recognise their exclusion from national narratives, reflecting “hermeneutical injustice” (Fricker, 2007).

Importantly, minority population’s psychological ownership was associated only with the determination of rights, not with responsibilities—a pattern contrasting with majority population findings and revealing how social position shapes ownership functions. This difference aligns with previous research showing how minority groups emphasise civic rather than ethnic markers of belonging (Leong et al., 2020). However, the investment–rights pathway highlights the contribution of recognition as critical to minority population civic integration (Allen et al., 2021), challenging theoretical frameworks that assume ownership functions similarly across groups regardless of social position.

#### 4. GENERAL DISCUSSION

This research advances our understanding of collective psychological ownership in two ways. First, we introduce the term collective epistemic ownership (CPO-E) to capture how groups develop and maintain ownership over intangible elements of national property. While previous research on psychological ownership of countries has largely focused on territorial claims (Nooitgedagt et al., 2022; Storz et al., 2020), our findings show that “country

ownership” also consists of feelings of shared narratives and cultural knowledge. We observed high correlations between these dimensions ( $r = .805$  for the majority population;  $r = .694$  for the minority population), which could reasonably support treating them as a single construct of generalised ownership of a country. Indeed, both dimensions share activators—particularly collective investment—suggesting overlapping psychological processes. However, we argue that distinguishing between territorial ownership (focused on physical borders) and epistemic ownership (focused on national narratives) provides greater theoretical precision and explanatory power. Second, by examining CPO-T and CPO-E among majority Finns (Study 1) and second-generation immigrants (Study 2), we demonstrated how these dimensions fulfil distinct functions for groups differing in terms of historical status and power relations. This distinction significantly extends psychological ownership theory beyond its traditional focus on physical spaces and territories, providing a more nuanced framework for understanding intergroup dynamics in diverse societies.

Collective investment was consistently associated with ownership across both psychological ownership dimensions and groups, suggesting a fundamental role in the development of psychological ownership. However, majority Finns’ ownership was further anchored in intimate knowledge, aligning with autochthony beliefs (Verkuyten, 2024) and ethnic citizenship (Bloemraad, 2017). This knowledge-based ownership connects to perceived collective continuity—the sense of maintaining unbroken historical connections to place and narrative (Sani et al., 2007). Conversely, minority members’ ownership reflected active participation and control, resonating with civic and cultural citizenship theories (Kuttner, 2015; Stevenson, 2010), investment beliefs (Nooitgedagt et al., 2021), and concepts of collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

The complex relationship between intimate knowledge and epistemic ownership among minority populations suggests that their distinct ownership pathways involve challenging dominant narratives (Budarick, 2021; Mora, 2014), highlighting hermeneutical injustice (Fricker, 2007) and minority group agency (Masocha, 2015). These findings demonstrate how structural position fundamentally shapes ownership processes.

Our results also highlight how the dimensions of territorial and epistemic ownership distinctly link to group identity and claims of belonging (Jetten & Wohl, 2012). When groups report high collective investments (both groups), intimate knowledge (majority), or control (minority), they also tend to report higher collective psychological ownership. This complex nature of ownership—encompassing both physical spaces and shared narratives—provides a framework for understanding how different groups develop and express their claims to a sense of national belonging (Pierce & Jussila, 2010).

In addition, the dimensions of territorial and epistemic ownership exhibited distinct patterns of associations with perceived rights and responsibilities over the country among each group. More specifically, among majority Finns, territorial ownership revealed notable associations with exclusionary rights claims, aligning with research on how dominant groups anchor ownership to a physical territory (Storz et al., 2020; Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017), while epistemic ownership was associated with collective responsibilities. For second-generation immigrants, both territorial and epistemic dimensions were notably associated with perceived rights, suggesting multiple pathways to establishing a sense of belonging through civic participation (Lardier et al., 2021), although neither dimension was strongly associated with responsibilities.

These results indicate that different elements of ownership motivated group behaviours in

the majority and minority populations. Majority groups' exclusionary attitudes appear linked to their marking and defending behaviours (Nijs et al., 2022), placing the territorial ownership earned through investments and a historical presence at the centre of their perceptions as rightful owners. The relationship between epistemic ownership and collective responsibilities found in this study signals a novel finding, suggesting that feelings of ownership over national narratives may be responsible for a more caring orientation toward a country and for a willingness to take and share moral responsibility over its future. Our findings among the immigrant population we examined, by contrast, appear to suggest that a preoccupation with recognising their tangible contributions to, agency of, and epistemic rights in a society serve as a gateway to shared ownership of the country accompanied by shared rights to determine its future. Simultaneously, second-generation immigrants appear to experience difficulties in taking responsibility for the country's future. This could reflect their contested ownership, which limits their concern for a target possession—that is, as more of a given or taken responsibility for a target, either perceived or real, which can also strengthen feelings of ownership (Pierce et al., 2001).

To summarise, this research advances our understanding of psychological ownership in several important ways. By distinguishing between territorial and epistemic dimensions of collective psychological ownership, we advance previous research which has primarily examined ownership of physical spaces and territories. Our findings demonstrate how majority and minority groups' ownership perceptions may be reflected in different psychological pathways—that is, majority groups may rely on knowledge and historical continuity while minority groups may emphasise control and investment—challenging universal assumptions in ownership theory implicitly centred on dominant group experiences. Additionally, by revealing distinct relationships between

ownership dimensions and perceptions of rights and responsibilities in majority and minority populations, we offer a novel theoretical framework for understanding how territorial and epistemic elements of national belonging shape intergroup dynamics. These contributions position our two-dimensional model of collective psychological ownership as an important advancement for analysing belonging, recognition, and power relations in diverse societies.

#### 4.1 Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations warrant consideration. While our large samples provide robust findings, the cross-sectional design limits our ability to make causal inferences about relationships between ownership and rights as well as responsibilities. Although responsibility may evolve from and strengthen ownership (Pierce et al., 2001), we employed theoretical models from recent research (Verkuyten, 2024) and experimental evidence (Nijs et al., 2024, Study 3). In addition, our focus on second-generation immigrants may not fully capture diverse minority population experiences since we did not account for racial background or country of origin. Furthermore, measurement differences between groups, while necessary due to co-owner status, may have influenced the observed pattern of results. Finally, Finland's relatively homogeneous culture and recent immigration history may limit the generalisability of our findings to more diverse societies. Future research should, therefore, explore CPO-E across different national contexts with complex migration histories, determining how marginalised groups navigate dominant epistemic frameworks while developing ownership and tracking CPO-E development longitudinally during periods of competing epistemic claims.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This research introduced and empirically validated collective epistemic ownership as a distinct dimension of psychological ownership of

a country, extending beyond traditional territorial claims to include ownership over shared narratives and meanings that define national identity. Our findings demonstrate how these dimensions may serve different functions for majority and minority groups, advancing our theoretical understanding of psychological ownership while offering insights on how to foster inclusive approaches to national belonging in diverse societies.

## 6. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no competing interests.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 8. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors - ZS, IJL, RE, BM and TN - were involved in conceptualising the study. BM and IJL were in charge of data collection, RE conducted preliminary analysis of the data, ZS did the final analysis and wrote up the results section. ZS and IJL drafted the first version of the manuscript, to which all authors provided critical revisions.

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