

# The Role of Place in Intergroup Conflicts and Intragroup Solidarity: Recent Advances and Perspectives

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People tend to have strong psychological bonds with places such as neighborhoods, schools, towns, and countries. These people–place bonds can be of different nature (e.g., place ownership, place attachment), develop for different reasons (e.g., first arrival, length of stay), and generate different group dynamics in specific contexts. With this special issue, we sought to advance our understanding of the potential of people–place bonds to divide groups and instigate intergroup conflicts, as well as the potential to stimulate solidarity and cohesion within groups. We bring together ten empirical articles based on quantitative as well as qualitative research conducted in different parts of the world with both majority and minority ethnic groups. Taken together, these contributions highlight both the dark and the bright sides of our connection to places. Finally, we present suggestions for future avenues of research that may advance our knowledge about people–place bonds.

## Public Significance Statement

We discuss the psychological importance of places for people and the ways in which such people–place bonds shape relations between and within groups. By discussing the main research questions and findings from ten empirical articles featured in this special issue, we aim to showcase the recent developments in this field and identify fruitful avenues for future research.

*Keywords:* place, entitlement, collective psychological ownership, intergroup conflict, intragroup solidarity

Despite increased human mobility and connectedness due to new technologies, territories are still important to people. Individuals tend to get attached both to the place where they live and other places that they find meaningful, and places can shape their identity

(Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Hernández et al., 2007; Proshansky et al., 1983). Place identity, in turn, affects how people respond to their environment (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). As objects of people's attachment, places can also become objects of commitment and responsibility (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977), which can be felt individually (Peck et al., 2021) or collectively (Nijs et al., 2024). As a result of place-bonding, people are more likely to engage in stewardship behavior and civic participation aimed at improving the well-being of their community (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Lewicka, 2005; Stefaniak et al., 2017). But people can also feel entitled to a place, and places can become the site of and reason for interpersonal and intergroup conflicts. This means that people–place bonds can have both positive (bright) and negative (dark) implications for the relations between individuals as well as between groups (see also Pierce & Jussila, 2010).

Regarding the dark side of territorial bonds, research shows that, compared to other types of conflict, territorial conflicts are particularly widespread and often long-lasting (Toft, 2014), usually involving neighboring countries or neighboring ethnic groups (Vasquez, 1995), and sometimes even resulting in very unusual national borders (Nikolić, 2019). According to some counts, 124 countries were involved in some form of territorial dispute a few years ago (Metrocosm, 2015). In fact, there is disagreement as to how many countries in total there are in the world, ranging from 196 that are recognized by the United Nations to 237 that are listed on the United States' Central Intelligence Agency Factbook list, which only further attests to the disputed nature of territories. Notably,

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since we launched a call for articles for this special issue in late 2021, the war between Russia and Ukraine has started and the conflict between Israel and Hamas has escalated, rendering the theme of this special issue even more relevant and timely.

Importantly, territorial bonds and the related disputes do not only involve national territories. Both ethnographic (Elias & Scotson, 1965; Verkuyten, 1997) and survey studies (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Martinović, 2020) have shown that residents of neighborhoods tend to reason about entitlements for more established inhabitants as opposed to the “outsiders.” Furthermore, public spaces such as schools (Rieh, 2020), parks (Hocking et al., 2019), and hangout spots (Nijs et al., 2022) are smaller scale places where appropriation, entitlement processes, and intergroup tensions may also be at work. While public spaces such as parks can be arenas that foster interactions between individuals from different groups—the bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000)—they can also be contested spaces surrounded by segregated zones, as in the case of postconflict Northern Ireland (Hocking et al., 2019). Processes of territorialization can also be observed in nonconflict contexts—for instance, research on gangs in the United States demonstrates that the youth have the need for a territory of their own (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974). Spraying graffiti is a way of marking the gang-controlled areas, and conflicts between gangs can occur when boundaries are trespassed.

Regarding the bright side of territorial bonds, involvement such as activism and stewardship behavior can take place locally, for instance, in the form of a clean-up activity in a park (Peck et al., 2021) or the organization of festivities in one’s neighborhood (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Martinović, 2020), but also at the national level (e.g., donations to protect the national landscape and infrastructure; Nijs et al., 2024). Importantly, local territorial activist behavior can also have national and international implications. An example is the series of Occupy protests that spread over the world in 2011, in which the protesters occupied local spaces—parks, squares, and streets—in their fight against national and international inequalities.

In the following sections, we first present a brief overview of the theorizing and literature on two well-researched types of territorial bonds, namely, place attachment and place-related entitlements (i.e., collective psychological ownership of the place with the related autochthony beliefs). In doing so, we consider the bright and dark sides of these people–place bonds. Next, we briefly introduce each of the articles by linking them to the main theoretical concepts, and we summarize the main findings. We conclude this introduction to the special issue by providing directions for future research on people–place bonds and intergroup and intragroup relations.

### Place Attachment and Group-Based Entitlements

People develop various types of bonds with places. Environmental psychologists, sociologists, and human geographers concerned with people–place relationships tend to focus on place attachment, which can be defined as a generally positive emotional bond that an individual develops with a specific place (Hernández et al., 2007; Low & Altman, 1992; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; for a review, see Lewicka, 2011). While it is a connection to place, which captures the feeling of belonging to a place and safety, as well as the willingness to remain in that place (Hernández et al., 2007; Low & Altman, 1992; Scannell & Gifford, 2010), research has shown that depending on its form, place attachment can have distinct consequences for intergroup relations. An “active” type of attachment, which involves a conscious

bond with place and willingness to explore it, is related to openness to outgroup members, while a traditional type of attachment, which is a less conscious bond that develops based on everyday rootedness in the place, is related to a feeling of threat to the place and reluctance to accept outsiders (Wnuk et al., 2023). Likewise, research on place representations and attitudes toward different groups of place users suggests that constructions of place and local belonging may result in conflicts over space and exclusion (Di Masso et al., 2011; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). Historical narratives and collective memory about the territory may also matter for intergroup conflict, as they may serve to (de)legitimize the current social order (Liu & Hilton, 2005).

Next to place attachment, psychological ownership of a place may be considered another type of people–place bond. Psychological ownership implies a sense that the place belongs to people, with the related sense of entitlement and control (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017). The concept of psychological ownership and the related territorial behaviors have received increasing scholarly attention from organizational, environmental, and social psychologists (e.g., Brown et al., 2005; Brylka et al., 2015; Peck et al., 2021; Preston & Gelman, 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2021), as well as anthropologists (Geschiere, 2009). Both the earlier work conducted within the organizational domain (Dawkins et al., 2017; Pierce & Jussila, 2010) as well as the more recent social–psychological (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017) and environmental–psychological research (Matilainen et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2023) stress that people can experience feelings of ownership both as an individual phenomenon—a feeling that “the place belongs to me”—and in relation to the group—a feeling that “the place belongs to my group,” which is referred to as collective psychological ownership (Pierce & Jussila, 2010). Ownership comes along with a set of rights (Snare, 1972), the right to exclude others—the so-called “gatekeeper” right—being the central one (Merrill, 1998), and many intergroup conflicts are being fought around the question of who owns a particular place, with ethnic exclusion, opposition to immigration, and unwillingness to reconcile being common outcomes (Nijs et al., 2024; Storz et al., 2020).

However, (collective) psychological ownership is not only a source of entitlement but also implies perceived (group) responsibility to take care of what is “mine” or “ours.” This is not only because by taking care of what we (collectively) own we are ultimately taking care of ourselves (Martinović & Verkuyten, 2023; Pierce & Jussila, 2010), but also because we feel morally obliged to preserve our property. Such a sense of responsibility can in turn generate processes of intragroup cooperation and solidarity that strengthen cohesion within the group (e.g., prosocial behavior, Jami et al., 2021), but responsibility can also motivate civic involvement and stewardship behavior, such as political participation (Nijs et al., 2024) and proenvironmental behaviors (Preston & Gelman, 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

The feeling that a place is “ours” can, via perceived group rights, result in exclusionary reactions, and, via perceived group responsibilities, in prosocial behavioral tendencies. There is both correlational and experimental evidence for these two routes of collective psychological ownership in relation to three types of territory (country, neighborhood, and local park; Nijs et al., 2024; see also Peck et al., 2021). Furthermore, researchers have also examined the bases for ownership claims, and it has been proposed that collective psychological ownership is derived and inferred from different principles (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017). The most potent one is primo-occupancy or autochthony (Geschiere, 2009), that is, the belief

in entitlements for first-comers (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017). The slogan “We grew here, you flew here” used by White Australians in their protests against the arrival of Middle Eastern immigrants in Australia (Due & Riggs, 2008) exemplifies well the arguments of certain groups of people to claim a territory for themselves and to exclude other groups from accessing it, based on the ingroup being “sons of the soil” (Fearon & Laitin, 2011) or “born from the soil” (Geschiere, 2009). There are many regions where two or more groups disagree about who arrived first or who invested most in the territory, and thus to whom the territory belongs. Prominent examples are the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the conflict between Serbs and Albanians in relation to Kosovo.

How people infer rights to land differs by context and group, and principles other than autochthony are also relevant. Specific groups may feel that they have a right to a place because they have invested in it (e.g., through long-term residence or having worked the land; Nooitgedagt et al., 2021) or because the place was central in the formation of their group’s identity (Gans, 2001; Murphy, 1990; Nooitgedagt et al., 2022). For example, in Chile, the Mapuche indigenous group considers that the connection to their ancestral territory provides them with a specific worldview derived directly from the territory that they inhabit, meaning that being separated from their ancestral territory leads to cultural and identity loss throughout time (Ranjan et al., 2021), a phenomenon that has also been shown among First Nations in North America and that relates to efforts to reclaim back ancestral territory (Giguère et al., 2012). There is also evidence that groups involved in historic territorial conflicts use principles of collective psychological ownership differently to defend their claims to a specific territory. In Chile, the endorsement of autochthony beliefs leads to perceived higher levels of indigenous ownership among both nonindigenous and indigenous participants, but different understandings of investment are used by both groups to assert more territorial rights for their own group (Nooitgedagt et al., 2021).

Research has shown that collective psychological ownership is intimately entangled with social identities, having consequences for relations within and between groups. For example, those who strongly identify with their ingroup place significant emphasis on group-level perceptions and emotions (Mackie & Smith, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). High identifiers are individuals who predominantly view themselves through the lens of their group membership, harbor a deep sense of closeness to their group, display commitment and concern for the group, and take actions in support of the group (Ellemers et al., 2002). Research has also shown that individuals with stronger group identification tend to have a stronger sense of collective ownership, which in turn matters for attitudes toward newcomers in immigrant-receiving countries (Brylka et al., 2015) as well as the willingness to reconcile in conflict regions (Storz et al., 2020). Depending on the content and salience of the “we” and the perceived threat from the given outgroup, however, the consequences of perceived entitlements may be negative or positive. This is because feeling a connection to a place can imply both rigid group categorizations based on ascribed traits like ethnicity as well as more fluid ones based on civic values, resulting in outgroup exclusion or willingness to share the territory with others (see also Brylka et al., 2015). There is also experimental evidence that emphasizing shared territorial ownership in conflict settings (i.e., both rival groups are entitled to the territory to some extent) can foster intergroup reconciliation (Storz et al., 2022).

## Overview of the Contributions

When putting together this special issue, we aimed to cover territorial bonds at different geographical scales of place and examine both place attachment and entitlements, as well as the dark and the bright sides of these bonds. The ultimate collection of articles includes research on territorial bonds with the country, region, neighborhood, and schools conducted in different parts of the world. We present studies from Chile, Cyprus, Germany, Israel/Palestine, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Importantly, the articles in this special issue rely on quantitative as well as qualitative methods and take the perspective of the ethnic majority or of ethnic minority groups, and while most are anchored in psychology, the collection as a whole also includes insights from urban studies, human geography, and anthropology. Most of the contributions (seven articles out of ten) focus on intergroup relations as an outcome of people–place bonds. They examine how collective psychological ownership, autochthony beliefs, and threats to ownership, as well as emotions experienced in contested territories to which people feel attached, matter for intergroup dynamics across different contexts and groups. The remaining three contributions highlight the relevance of places in shaping intragroup relations, and they consider ingroup solidarity, social cohesion, and collective action. Table 1 lists all the contributions and provides an overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches taken. In the following sections, we first introduce the articles that focus on intergroup relations, followed by those examining ingroup-related outcomes.

## The Role of Place in Intergroup Relations

The intergroup consequences of ownership claims and the related autochthony beliefs can differ for members of majority and minority groups, depending on whether the groups live in a country with a clear and dominant ethnic majority or in a settler society, in which indigenous groups are the longest established ones, even though they are minority groups. The first two articles in this special issue are about settler societies.

Maseko and Durrheim (2024) showed that White ownership, as well as social dominance orientation, function as moderators in the link between autochthony beliefs and support for land restitution on behalf of Black South Africans. In a quantitative study in South Africa, they found that White settlers who expressed higher levels of support for autochthony beliefs were more supportive of land reparation measures when they perceived lower White settler ownership and favored group-based equality. Overall, their findings suggest that ownership perceptions and social dominance orientation are crucial in determining whether autochthony beliefs may enhance or weaken support for reparative measures in settler colonies, in particular, in South Africa.

Kuipers et al. (2023) focused on the White settler majority group in New Zealand. They examined whether perceptions of ingroup (settler) and outgroup (indigenous) ownership of New Zealand are differently explained by identification with the settler group (European New Zealanders) and identification with the whole nation (New Zealanders), and how these ownership perceptions are in turn related to attitudes toward two minorities in New Zealand: the Indigenous People and immigrants. The authors showed that settler identification was related to negative attitudes toward both minority groups, via greater perceptions of settler ownership. In contrast,

**Table 1**  
*An Overview of the Articles Included in This Special Issue*

Author (ordered as appearing in this introduction)	Regional context	Sample	Territorial bond	Theoretical approach	Method of analysis	Explanans	Explanandum
Maseko and Durrheim (2024)	South Africa	807 White settlers	Autochthony beliefs; collective psychological ownership	Ideologies and group-based hierarchies	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Autochthony beliefs (predictor); White settler ownership and preference for group-based hierarchies (moderators)	Support for land reparations
Kuipers et al. (2023)	New Zealand	727 European New Zealanders (Pākehā)	Collective psychological ownership	Social identity theory; the psychology of possession	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Settler identification and national identification (predictors); perceptions of settler and indigenous ownership (mediators)	Attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples and immigrants
Yalçın et al. (2023)	Imaginary intergroup context	288 German students (Study 1); 279 German students (Study 2)	Third party's inferences of groups' land ownership	Competition- and threat-evoking essence of ownership appraisals	Experiments	First-arrival (manipulated predictor) and perceived power (mediator, Study 1); group superiority (manipulated predictor, Study 2)	Attributions of ownership to groups
Lee et al. (2023)	Malaysia	130 Malays (Study 1); 240 Malays (Study 2)	Autochthony beliefs	Ideologies and perceived threat from minorities	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Autochthony beliefs (predictor); socioeconomic status (moderator)	Perceived threat; support for racial equality; support for pro-Malay government
Okuyan et al. (2023)	Germany	830 (Study 1), 380 (Study 2), 614 (Study 3) Germans without migration background	Autochthony beliefs	Group-based entitlement and ingroup threat	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Autochthony-based entitlement (predictor); perceived ingroup threat (mediator)	Majority grievance
Ioku and Watanura (2024)	Japan	799 Japanese	Collective psychological ownership	Collective ownership threat; reactive liberal (RL) model	Experiment	Infringement (manipulated predictor); ownership threat (mediator); political ideology (moderator)	Resistance to Japan's support of China's policies
Reid (2023)	Cyprus	5 Greek Cypriots and 6 Turkish Cypriots living close to or working across the Green Line, refugees and family members of refugees	The relationship between emotion and place in a postconflict society	Emotional geographies; place attachment	Qualitative interviews and site visits	Closed border crossing	Negative emotions of refugees and residents who used to cross the border
Penić et al. (2023)	Israel-Palestine	Representative survey of 1,000 adult Palestinians residing in 49 communities across the West Bank and Jerusalem	Communities' physical proximity to the conflicted outgroup	Community cohesion & norms of solidarity; geography of military occupation	Quantitative multilevel analysis of survey data	Proximity to settlements and to surveillance infrastructure (contextual community-level predictors); community cohesion (individual-level predictor); norms of resistance solidarity (individual-level mediator)	Willingness to engage in resistance
Rasse and Rasse (2024)	Chile	A vocational school in the marginalized suburbs of Santiago	School as space for protests	Place appropriation	Ethnography, case study	Appropriation of the school place	Redefinition of citizenship and students' mobilization in the Chilean October 2019
Badilla Rajevic and Olivari (2024)	Chile	19 young protestors from segregated parts of Santiago	The fundamental role of space in the social and political identities of communities	Social identity; mobilization processes in peripheral areas of the city	Qualitative in-depth interviews	The development of social uprising at the neighborhood level (local collective action)	Changed relationship between the local spaces and their inhabitants

national identification was positively related to attitudes toward Māori and immigrants, via higher perceptions of indigenous ownership. This study underscores the importance of considering identification at different levels of abstractions as well as perceptions of both ingroup and outgroup ownership of the territory, when trying to understand intergroup relations in settler societies.

Whereas the abovementioned articles focused on real ethnic groups and their own sense of ownership and entitlement to the territory they inhabit, [Yalçın et al. \(2023\)](#) examined ownership attributions by third parties in an imaginary intergroup context. They conducted two experimental studies (among German participants) in which they focused on the role of perceived group superiority as the underlying mechanism behind ownership inferences. They showed experimentally that for third parties, first arrival serves as an important signal for inferring group-based ownership. The group presented as first-arriver was perceived by third parties as physically more powerful, morally stronger, and owning the territory more than a newcomer group. Newcomers were instead perceived as more threatening than first-arrivers. In a follow-up experiment, the authors showed that physically and morally superior groups, as well as morally inferior groups, were perceived by third parties as owning the territory more than the groups who were physically and morally equivalent with other groups in the environment.

Autochthony is also sometimes a central part of group identity that grants a certain status within society, as is in the case of the Malays, who make up approximately 57.9% of the Malaysian population. In such cases, autochthonous groups may tend to marginalize and exclude others (newcomers or minority groups) in order to preserve the status quo. Across two studies, [Lee et al. \(2023\)](#) investigated how Malay individuals' belief in autochthony relates to their perceptions of threat stemming from racial minorities, their support for racial equality policies, and their support for a government that favors Malays. Both studies revealed that stronger autochthony beliefs were associated with a greater perception of threat from racial minorities and increased support for a pro-Malay government. These findings emphasize the significance of considering autochthony beliefs in understanding intergroup dynamics and the preservation of the existing social order by majority group members who hold special legal status in Malaysia.

Among the dominant group, perceived entitlements to resources and opportunities may also lead to grievance perceptions, that is, a collectively shared perception of being wronged. This is because members of these groups consider their high status as deserved, while the improvement of the disadvantaged groups' status is perceived as undeserved ([Reyna et al., 2006](#)). In three correlational studies, [Okuyan et al. \(2023\)](#) examined the link between autochthony beliefs and grievance perceptions among German participants while also accounting for the role of perceived threat to the ingroup from migrants. They found that Germans who endorsed the idea that first inhabitants of a country deserve more rights than those who arrived later perceived more threats to their ingroup (i.e., Germans without migration background) and, in turn, claimed more majority grievances. In both this and [Lee et al.'s \(2023\)](#) article, perceived threat to the ingroup was the mechanism through which entitlement beliefs among the majority group led to defensive reactions and intergroup tensions.

However, threat from outgroups can take different forms, and apart from the extensively researched realistic and symbolic threats ([Stephan et al., 2015](#)), recent research suggests that groups can

also experience ownership threat—the fear of losing what is “ours” ([Nijs et al., 2022](#)). In a study conducted in Japan and with regards to Japan–China relations, [Ioku and Watamura \(2024\)](#) experimentally manipulated territorial infringement by China in relation to the disputed Senkaku Islands. The authors have shown that infringement elicits higher perceptions of ownership threat and, indirectly, more resistance to Japan's support of China's policies, which can be seen as a reactionary defense to the infringement. The authors also considered the moderating role of political orientation and found that liberals were more inclined than conservatives to respond to the infringement with a heightened sense of collective ownership threat, and therefore they objected more strongly to Japan's support of China's policies.

In contrast to the abovementioned studies and in the context of divided Cyprus, [Reid \(2023\)](#) relied on qualitative data from interviews and site visits when analyzing the effect of borders on Greek and Turkish Cypriots' emotions. She adopted an emotional geography lens and theorized about the role of place attachment. This article includes two case studies relating to, on the one hand, the closed border crossing in Cyprus between the Turkish part and the Greek part of the island during the COVID pandemic and, on the other hand, the partial opening of an abandoned city in the Turkish-controlled area of the island after the main COVID lockdown. The main results showed that these events led to the emergency of negative feelings, such as frustration and fear, both for Turkish and Greek Cypriot participants. This pattern of results highlights the dynamic nature of emotions due to people–place bonds in contested territories and illustrates how the lack of access to places one is attached to may increase intergroup conflict.

### The Role of Place in Ingroup Solidarity and Collective Action

The remaining three contributions in this special issue are dedicated to intragroup solidarity and the resulting collective action and willingness to resist oppression. Just like social identity can motivate people to engage in collective action ([Van Zomeren et al., 2008](#)), so can local identities and ties to local community members.

[Penić et al. \(2023\)](#) presented a study conducted among Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and examined how local community cohesion shapes their willingness to engage in nonviolent civil resistance in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. They found that those living in communities with stronger social cohesion were more willing to resist the Israeli occupation, both directly and indirectly, via perceived norms concerning solidarity with other Palestinians engaging in resistance. They also examined how the spatial system of Israeli settlements and the surveillance infrastructure affect these processes in the context of the West Bank and Jerusalem and showed a negative impact of both the proximity to Israeli settlements and to surveillance infrastructure on community cohesion, perceived norms of solidarity with resistance, and willingness to engage in nonviolent resistance. These results, while focused on nonviolent resistance, ironically correspond with the tragic current events in Israel, where residing near Israeli settlements and checkpoints has likely damaged the sense of social cohesion among the Palestinians and paved the way for violence between Palestinians and Israelis. Note that while the articles by [Lee et al. \(2023\)](#), [Okuyan et al. \(2023\)](#), and [Ioku and Watamura \(2024\)](#) considered perceived (ownership) threat, [Penić et al. \(2023\)](#) captured territorial threat more objectively by modeling the

effect of Palestinians' proximity to Jewish settlements and proximity to Israel's surveillance infrastructure as community-level predictors of community cohesion and willingness to engage in resistance. The authors argued that the geography of occupation undermines trust and solidarity, which is due to increased fear and threat.

The last two contributions focus on the solidarity and political mobilization that emerged during the social uprising that occurred in Chile in 2019. Rasse and Rasse (2024) showed that, during the uprising, schools served as places to foster students' solidarity with the overall movement. In this article, the authors refer to the concept of appropriation, which originates from the 1970s (Graumann, 1976; Korosec-Serfaty, 1976) and relates to processes by which individuals claim ownership of places and change nonmeaningful spaces like neighborhoods or natural areas into meaningful places (Rioux et al., 2017). In this light, the authors showed, through qualitative methodologies, that the school became a significant place of social revindication and organization whereby students organized specific actions aligned with the demands of the social uprising, within and beyond the school's site. They argue that the school thus became a contested place that goes beyond its educational purpose by increasing identification and social cohesion with other cohorts of the Chilean population who participated in the uprising.

The context of the Chilean uprising is also analyzed in the article by Badilla Rajevic and Olivari (2024), who examined how the "awakening" of the youth during these protests happened in peripheral, disadvantaged neighborhoods of Santiago—segregated from the central parts of the city—and changed the relationship between the local spaces and their inhabitants. Local spaces were appropriated by the protesters, who gave them new meanings, and these spaces became sites of collective action, thereby strengthening the young people's territorial bonds. Thus, in this case, engagement in collective action led to stronger connections with places, in particular their specific neighborhood.

### Avenues for Future Research

Considering the overall contributions within this special issue, we see several promising avenues for future research in the field of social, political, and environmental psychology, inspired by the insights of the aforementioned studies. First, we encourage researchers to delve deeper into understanding the comprehensive psychological, social, and political impact of living in contested territories and how the different principles based on which people infer collective psychological ownership and feel entitled to the place may be used differently across contexts to legitimize or question claims to specific territories across time. In this line, we believe that taking into consideration the dark and the bright sides of people–place bonds and how such bonds may either foster conflict or increase social cohesion and societal involvement is of utmost importance.

Second, conducting further research about minority group members' and Indigenous People's perceptions of territorial ownership and guardianship and exploring what these concepts mean to them and how they associate with different ingroup and intergroup outcomes could shed more light on these processes. At the same time, researchers should address how majority group members conceive their entitlement to territory, especially when their claims are contested by different groups based on different principles of

collective psychological ownership of place. Employing a mixed-method approach, by, for example, combining surveys with in-depth interviews or case studies, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of different majority and minority groups' perspectives on people–place bonds. This approach can also facilitate insightful comparisons across various groups and regions.

Third, future investigations can also focus on identifying the conditions under which people–place bonds contribute to the strengthening or improvement of intergroup relations and social cohesion across contexts. Such research can explore the dynamics of community and group mobilization and their role in building and maintaining a sense of belonging and unity within specific regions or territories. This would help understand under which conditions collective action leads to the strengthening of territorial bonds that can also build bridges between members of different groups, thus not only bringing about social change for the disadvantaged groups but also facilitating social cohesion between groups. In conflicted territories, it is important to examine how community belonging and both intra- and intergroup solidarity can be restored and the role that bonds with places can play in this process.

Fourth, whereas most of the contributions to this special issue focused on entitlements such as ownership and the related autochthony beliefs, place attachment as an emotional bond with a territory remained largely underrepresented (but see the contribution by Reid, 2023). Yet, place attachment and place ownership might have opposite effects on intergroup relations. While ingroup ownership of a territory is often related to more troublesome relations with newcomers or rival groups, place attachment need not be harmful (Storz et al., 2020), and especially the active form of place attachment (Wnuk et al., 2023) even has the potential to improve intergroup relations. Future research on people–place bonds would benefit from a more comprehensive understanding of when and why these two types of bonds differently shape both ingroup cohesion and intergroup relations.

In conclusion, we hope that the collections of articles offered in this special issue will motivate scholars to further explore the psychological, social, and political aspects of territorial bonds, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of how our connections to places shape our social world.

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