

The bright and dark sides of immigrant-origin minorities' perceptions of host-country ownership in multi-ethnic societies

Statements as 'this country is also ours' are increasingly used by immigrant-origin minorities to claim ownership of a country. The belief that the country is 'also ours' appeals to the notion that, therefore, 'we', in this case immigrant-origin minorities, are entitled to claim certain rights but also required to assume responsibilities. For instance, this rhetoric of (shared) country ownership was used by political party DENK in their campaign for the two most recent national elections in the Netherlands. The perceived rights and responsibilities that follow from immigrants-origin minorities' ownership feelings can, respectively, motivate negative and positive outcomes. Hence, immigrant-origin minorities' perceptions of country ownership can have both a dark and a bright side.

Recent studies among native-origin majority populations have shown that perceived ownership is related to exclusionary attitudes toward newcomers (Brylka et al., 2015) and radical right-wing voting (Olivo Rumpf et al., 2024). However, on the bright side, perceived ownership is conducive to higher willingness to actively contribute to local organizations (Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Martinovic, 2020), to donate to or volunteer for organizations that protect the national heritage (Nijs et al., 2024), and increase engagement through a higher sense of collective responsibility (Nijs et al., 2024). In the current project, we offer an important new angle on perceived ownership by considering the perspective of immigrant-origin minorities.

First, we focus on the implications of the bright side of perceived ownership. Immigrant-origin minorities tend to be less involved in civic activities such as voting and organizational membership as compared to native-origin majority populations (Bloemraad & Schönwälder, 2013). This is undesirable from a democratic perspective as more inclusive representation not only reflects the principles of fairness and equal opportunity but also enhances the legitimacy and responsiveness of democratic systems. Based on the findings among native-origin majority populations, perceived country ownership has the potential to act as a catalyst for civic involvement among immigrant-origin minorities.

Second, we consider the implications of the dark side of perceived country ownership. While literature on anti-immigrant sentiments usually focuses on its breeding grounds among native-origin majority populations, we have insufficiently considered that immigrant-origin minorities can also harbor negative sentiments toward other ethnic minorities and toward newcomers (Marrow et al., 2019). For instance, in the USA, immigrants represent a non-negligible part of the far-right electorate, as was the case, for example, with Cubans in the USA voting for Donald Trump. A focus on perceived ownership likely offers relevant insights into what motivates negative inter-minority relations between established immigrant-origin minorities and newcomers such as recent refugee groups.

In this project, we introduce perceived country ownership as a novel and potentially relevant explanation of immigrant-origin minorities' civic participation and negative intergroup attitudes. We will consider multiple immigrant-origin minorities as well as migration generations across different contexts, such as the Netherlands and the USA. In this way, we can capture the variations in country ownership perceptions influenced by immigrant-origin minorities' cultural backgrounds, migration histories, and socio-economic factors. We employ a multifaceted methodological approach combining cross-sectional and longitudinal survey data, and survey-embedded experiments.