

People may experience and relate to places in which they live in different ways. The bonds that people develop with places may have consequences not only for the individuals themselves, but also for these places and other place users, including other residents. Place attachment and psychological ownership are two types of bonds that people may develop with the same place, such as country, town, or neighbourhood, which have distinct features. While being attached to a place involves the emotional bonding with a place, the feeling of ownership relates to the sense that a place belongs to 'me' and implies the right to decide about that place. In this project, we examine the implications of these two bonds for place-protective attitudes and behaviours.

The aim of this project is to investigate the mutual relations between place attachment and psychological ownership of a place, and their different implications for pro-environmental behaviours and openness to newcomers in the place of residence. We treat pro-environmental behaviours and opposition towards newcomers as place-protective reactions that deal with two different aspects of the place in question. The first is concerned with the quality of the place in physical terms, and the latter with its social aspect.

Following earlier work, we assume that psychological ownership of a place has an exclusionary potential, which tends to be absent for place attachment. At the same time, both place attachment and psychological ownership imply responsibility for one's environment, which may result in willingness to protect it or improve it. The project will address three major questions: 1) What is the relationship between place attachment and psychological ownership? 2) What are the implications of both these constructs for pro-environmental behaviours and opposition to newcomers? 3) What is the role of perceived responsibility and the perceived right to decide about the place in underlying these relations? We will study these processes in the context of the city and town of residence.

To address the above research questions, we will employ diverse research methods, which will consider the causal nature of the above relationships. Experimental studies, interventions, and a longitudinal study will be conducted, which will allow to test causality, while ensuring that the obtained results are externally valid. The results will enrich both the social psychology of intergroup relations and environmental psychology dealing with people-place bonds, by showing the different implications that connections with the local environment may have for behaviours aimed at protecting the physical condition of that place as well as for local cohesion. We also expect that our findings will offer important practical implications regarding the psychological factors that may promote openness to newcomers and pro-environmental behaviours. Creating inclusive communities, which take care of their local environment, is important from a societal point of view and can be part of local urban policies.