From polarized we/they public opinion on European Integration towards social representations of public dialogue.

Abstract

Social psychology has established that oppositional we/they categorisation is central to dis/identification with European integration (Hewstone, 1986 Chryssochoou, 2000; Mummendey and Walduz, 2004). As Europe faces fresh uncertainties, e.g. Brexit, this article reveals the multi-positional features of public opinion formation. Drawing on meta-representations approaches it reveals how we/they categorisation moves from oppositional forms towards diplomatic non-oppositional forms when citizens speak about the general public in 'a public capacity' (Dewey, 1927). Two interview-led studies in England, Ireland, Germany, Scotland and Sweden (n = 100) brought participants into dialogue with the ideals of European integration. Analysis reveals six dialogical positions on the general public – avant-garde, advocating, homesteading, distancing, segmenting and progressive. These rest on social representations of the public as having freedom *from* movement, freedom *of* movement and freedom *through* movement. Understanding the public's multi-positional capacities and the interplay between self-world narratives and European integration narratives is one step towards de-polarisation and public dialogue on Europe.

Keywords

Public Opinion, Narrative, European Union, Democracy, Dialogical, Social Representations

Introduction

The fissures within the 2016 UK-EU Referendum and 2017 elections across Europe reveal the extent to which polarized public opinion is determining the parameters of the European Union project. Social psychology has established that oppositional we/they identification and categorization is central to such opinions (Hewstone, 1986 Chryssochoou, 2000; Mummendey and Walduz, 2004). This article contributes towards the broad challenge of de-polarizing public opinion by demonstrating how under certain conditions the public move beyond oppositional we/they categorization towards more diplomatic we/they categorizations.

Drawing on meta-representational approaches the article reveals the central role of speaking in 'a public capacity' to public opinion formation (Dewey, 1927). It asks two questions. How do citizens generalize the general public and how do they position themselves in relation to that public when talking about one vexed dimension of European integration – European citizenship.

Socio-political psychology has established that the formation of a relational self builds on our relations with generalized others in terms of both internalizing their generalized attitudes (Mead, 1934/1970) and our capacity to use group identification and 'we/they' categorization as the basis of social action (Figgou and Condor, 2006; Scuzzarello, 2012; Reicher and Hopkins, 2016). In parallel examinations into the public's EU attitudes are increasingly aware of the extent to which political elites are

able to mobilize polarized we/they identifications for and against the EU (Hooghe and Marks, 2004; Hobolt and De Vries, 2016; Hobolt, 2018).

Such mobilizations, aided by direct democratic social media channels, enable political elites to rhetorically evoke 'the people' or 'the public' as a category of democratic political discourse. Democracy exists in an age where Abraham Lincoln's adage 'democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people' can be enacted with immediacy through Twitter. For example UK Prime Minister Theresa May's immediate response to Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan's support of a second referendum. She states '*We held a people's vote, it was the referendum in 2016. It is now a matter of trust in politicians that we should deliver on the will of the British people'* (@theresa_may September, 20, 2018). Reicher and Portice (2018) show how politicians rhetorically evoke 'ordinary people' to demonstrate both their responsiveness to this political category and their right to lead. As this article shows appeals to 'the people' are not confined to political elites but are also articulated directly by the public.

Existing EU attitude studies focus on single-position positive/negative evaluations of specific attitude objects such as freedom of mobility or European integration (Hewstone, 1986; Hooghe and Marks, 2004; Hobolt, 2018). Overlooking the extent to which such attitudes develop in relation to representations of 'the people' or indeed the 'will of the people'. It is not always clear, therefore, whether such surveys reflects an aggregate of individual attitudes or the organised expression of an emerging political collective.

This article argues that attitudes whether positive or negative are contingent upon collaboratively developed categories, arising out of common myths, shared

understandings and social knowledge, collectively understood here as social representations (Howarth, 2006; Sammut, 2015; Andreouli and Nicholson, 2018). It draws social representations approaches together with dialogical (Bakhtin, 1981; Marková, 2003; Hermans, & Dimaggio 2007; Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010) and narrative approaches (Andrews, 2007; Hammack & Pilecki 2012; Andrews, Kinnvall and Monroe, 2015).

Across all these approaches there is converging consensus on the importance of we/they categorizations. However pro-social dynamics of we/they categorization when acting *for* the other in a *public capacity* remains opaque. To develop the concept of public capacity the article considers deliberative and agonistic models of democracy (Arendt, 1961, Habermas, 1996 Benhabib, 1996; Mouffe, 2013, Rancière, 2010). It then re-centres the analysis by introducing the concept of meta-representations. This refers to the meta-knowledge people hold about the political thoughts and opinions of others on specific issues (Elcheroth, Doise and Reicher, 2011; Staerklé, Clemens and Spini, 2011; Castro and Mouro, 2016).

Meta-representational studies of public opinion formation are then opened out drawing together dialogical-social representational approaches with narrative approaches. The conception of the self as dialogical has particular relevance to political psychology because it foregrounds the self's capacity to take a variety of positions, (I-positions), arising out of our relation to others (Bakhtin, 1981; Marková, 2003; Hermans, & Dimaggio 2007; Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010). Such micro-positioning is contingent upon on-going engagement with macro political narratives (Andrews, 2007; Hammack & Pilecki 2012; Andrews, Kinnvall and Monroe, 2015). Where, as developed below, these positions are understood as contingent upon self-world normative representations of how the world is ordered. (Staerklé, 2013).

The protean-ideational nature of the EU project means that the diverse I-positions, revealed below, are contingent upon macro-narratives about anti-immigration publics, peace narratives (Kølvraa, 2018) and supranationalism (Peitz, Dhont and Seyd, 2018).

The two studies reported here were designed to address the vexed issue of immigration at the outset via a Migration-Mobility Continuum (Mahendran, 2013; Mahendran et al, 2015). This lens refracts mobility into ten positions ranging from generational non-mobility to serial mobility further detailed below (see Figure 1). Asking respondents about their own degree of mobility before questions on European citizenship conceptualises the public as having degrees of mobility. This facilitates and then represents public dialogue beyond the migrant/non-migrant and public/migrant binaries that often frame public opinion research and its representation (Mahendran, 2017).

The parameters of 'enlarged thinking'

Mead (1934/1970) is the natural starting point for any account of the self as constituted in relation to others. In politics, Mead proposes, the individual identifies with "an entire political party taking the organized attitudes of that party towards the rest of the given social community and towards the problems that confront that party in any given situation" (p.156). Mead's formulation on political subjectivity, is useful in emphasizing the dynamic interaction of situation, issue and groups.

The fresh methodological challenge for those interested specifically in public opinion formation is to investigate the nature of such relations when individuals, act as citizens in a 'public capacity'. Dewey in problematizing the public, proposes that if "the consequences of the conversation extend beyond the two directly concerned, that they

affect the welfare of many others, the act acquires a public capacity" (Dewey, 1927/1954, p.13). Publics are not already bounded and constituted groups, rather inchoate publics become constituted in struggles at the boundaries as a distinct form of community life (Dewey, 1927/1954).

Conversations which have a public capacity can occur when individuals are alone with others in mind. In Arendt's formulation this public capacity has the normative requirement to arrive at a consensus. She states "this enlarged way of thinking, […] needs the presence of others 'in whose place' it must think, whose perspective it must take into consideration and without whom it never has the opportunity to operate at all" (Arendt, 1961, p.21). Consequently two considerations arise, how far do the parameters of 'enlarged thinking' extend and *must* enlarged thinking work towards consensus?

Political theorists answer these by appealing to different models of discursive democracy. The tenets of deliberative models, prefigured by Arendt's formulation, require participants to think beyond self-interest and rationally deliberate towards consensus (Habermas, 1996; Setälä, 2017). However feminist critique emphasizes particularity over assumed universal ideals of justice, arguing that the existence of particularities means that some voices will have more power than others in deliberation (Benhabib, 1996). Agonistic models, in contrast, emphasize a polemicist democracy (Mouffe, 2013; Ranciere, 2010). Here the 'will of the people' cannot amount to the opinions of a majority or powerful groups, it exists in its radical form 'in the form of disjunction (…) the structure of which is not aporetic but dissensual', (Rancière, 2010, p. 53-54).

For the present analysis public opinion formation becomes dialogical when it is understood to contain four components. First, the public act with a dialogical capacity to conceive, create and communicate about social reality by keeping others in mind when forming opinions (Marková, 2003). Second, following Dewey and Arendt, when the public act in 'a public capacity' they act *for* the generalised other. Third, public opinion formation is understood to reflect multiple positional identifications. Such positions may well be in tension with each other and yet maintain integrity, see for example 'tensegrity' (Marsico and Tateo, 2017). Fourth, the positions the public take, whether acting towards consensus or dissensus, may be mobilized by and are contingent upon political-narratives and normative representations about how the world is ordered e.g. laissez-faire or social justice related world orders (Staerklé, 2013).

Public-opinion formation as meta-representational.

The next section develops the last two of these four components, I-positional identification and self-world relations, further. In advance of this a new line of inquiry is beginning to understand the extent to which citizens are influenced by the majority opinion climate. Early public opinion studies proposed that fearing isolation from the group identified with, individuals remain silent in public discourse. This reticence leads the majority opinion to further dominate the public discourse in a 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Critics of 'spiral of silence' theory show that these spirals are moderated by the enduring, emerging or transitory nature of the issue (Gearheart and Zhang, 2015).

More trenchant critique has challenged the reduction of public opinion to technocratic public opinion surveys as risking majoritarianism and creating

monological closures by privileging national identity against other group-related identity constructs such as age, gender and socio-economic position. These, amongst others, if salient to citizens can inform dialogical positions in relation to generalized publics (Manners, 2014, Manners, 2018). In developing their focus on meta-representations, Elecheroth et al, (2011) reject 'spiral of silence' theory as exaggerating 'people's desire to be part of the national majority' (p.746) as well as equating a minority position with fears of social isolation.

In the case of Switzerland's membership of the EU, citizens with attitude certainty appear capable of speaking from that position against what they imagine the majority opinion climate is (Matthes, Morrison & Schemer, 2010). This may well relate to the level of security around national sovereignty. For example in the case of Serbians and Croatians articulating opinions on the War of Independence, where security is threatened then dissent against the majority opinion climate risk accusations of not being a true patriot (Penic, Elcheroth and Reicher, 2016).

Studies into meta-representations role in public opinion formation show their contingency on power asymmetries for example between distant scientific expertise and local public knowledge (Castro & Mouro, 2016). Equally these more normative studies are showing the conditions where public opinion can be de-polarized (Portelinha and Elcheroth, 2016). A risk of such approaches is, in following Elcheroth et al, 2011, they cast social representations as 'fundamentally a theory of social conflict', (p. 746) rather than remaining consistent with its origins in public dialogue and public understanding of reified worlds.

In the context of the EU project social identity scholars circumscribe any optimism about the EU acting as a superordinate peace project. Showing that whilst

the EU can act as a superordinate category it can also sharpen cross-national hostilities through in-group projection. Here 'Europe' is characterized by citizen's own national qualities (Mummendey and Walduz, 2004) or is expressed in terms of hierarchies of Europeanness, (Chryssochoou, 2000) or corruption vs enlightenment (Andreouli, Figgou, Kadianaki, Sapountzis and Xenitidou, 2017). Indicating a clear demand to explore underneath we/they categories and uncover shared understandings.

Public opinion formation as dialogical

Public opinion, was noted earlier to become dialogical when the public are able to act in 'a public capacity' with others in mind, acting with awareness that their opinions influence others and using the I-positional identification of the dialogical self towards consensus and dissensus. Dialogical accounts have proliferated across the social sciences (see Zittoun, 2014 for a survey). What they have in common is the extent to which the self-other relations discussed above are seen as constitutive of a dialogical self that is able to take up a I-positional identifications sometimes complimentary sometimes contradictory (Bakhtin, 1981; Marková, 2003; Hermans, & Dimaggio 2007; Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010). These can be internal positions, I-pacifist, I-honest-broker and equally external subject positions, I-neighbour and I-tax-payer. Such positions gain traction and meaning through actual, imagined and anticipated dialogue with others (Bakhtin, 1981; Mahendran, et al, 2015).

The capacity to have others in mind when articulating positions can be related to securitizing of the self in the face of the insecurities arising out of globalisation (Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010). Critically, the ideational nature of European citizenship and integration means I-positions can orientate towards unfinished pasts and unfinished

futures. Foregrounding the extent to which temporal and spatial features of narrative-engagement (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004; Hammack & Pilecki 2012) are key features of dialogical public opinion formation.

As noted above the fourth component to dialogical public opinion formation arising out of the dialogical self's relationship to a social representation of how the world is organised. Such self-world relations may be dominated by an existential threat of globalized deterritorialization and people on the move (Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010) or symbolic and normative representations of caring communities (Salvatore et al, 2018) or belief in a laissez-faire world (Staerklé, 2013).

Research Context

European citizenship

Member-states were selected on the basis of different freedom of movement restrictions at the time of the A8 accession in 2004. Study 1 selected member-states (Sweden and the UK) which offered immediate freedom of movement to newer member-states in 2004 and then in Study 2 (2012) these were combined with Ireland which also waived the 7-year transition period and Germany a member-state which maintained it offering freedom of movement just before the fieldwork period. This is discussed further below. In advance of this, Table 1 indicates attitudes towards European citizenship in 2013 and 2017.

Identifying as a European citizen increases across the two research periods particularly for Sweden. The UK over the same period maintains a deep ambivalence about the EU. Yet, despite the weight of imagined anti-EU publics, 55% of respondents

affirm some degree of European citizenship. Recent public attitudes analysis suggests that the pro-remain position taken in Scotland during the UK-Referendum (62% remain compared to UK 48% remain) has not been sustained. Citizens in Scotland express the same opinions as found in England (Montagu, 2018).

Table 1 around here

Freedom of movement and public opinion

Turning specifically to freedom of movement (see Table 2) this remains highly popular across the selected member-states. Ireland and Sweden show high levels of support for this freedom (88 and 90% respectively). Often understood as a Eurosceptic country, the UK, shows a clear majority support freedom of movement (69%). In the Eurobarometer conducted just before the referendum it was 63%. Germany maintains a consistently popular narrative around freedom of movement over the study period.

Table 2 around here

This ambivalence within public opinion poll data and attitudinal research in the UK given the Brexit outcome suggests the importance of examining the public's multi-positional capacity when discussing freedom of movement. Equally it suggests the need for research which explores how conceptions of European citizenship inter-relate with imaginaries on freedom of movement.

Method

Dialogical Design

Study 1 was conducted in Stockholm and Edinburgh. Study 2 in Dublin, Düsseldorf, Glasgow, Gothenburg and London. The semi-structured interview schedule was designed to create dialogue between EU polices on integration and the participant's positions on citizenship and integration. We were not interested in narrative-biographical accounts and wished to avoid the limitations of closed-response opinion polling, rather we were interested in the conditions under which a diverse set of dialogical I-positional identifications would be expressed. For a fuller account of the rationale see (Mahendran 2013; Mahendran et al, 2015).

In both studies Part 1 asked open questions about what participants understood by the concepts 'integration' and 'citizenship' examining different connotations around these terms in the different cities. Followed by biographical questions establishing participants' socio-legal citizenship status and the nature of their migration-mobility. Part 2 was stimulus-led using EU statements, videos and images on integration. Including the first Common Basic Principle of Immigrant-Integration that "Integration is a two-way process of mutual accommodation between immigrants and residents alike" (Council of the European Union, 2004).

Participant recruitment

The semi-structured interviews, on average 90 minutes long, were conducted in Edinburgh and Stockholm in 2008/2009 (Study 1, N = 24) and Dublin, Düsseldorf, Glasgow, Gothenburg and London in 2012/2013 (Study 2, N = 76). Interviews in Düsseldorf were carried out in English and in Stockholm and Gothenburg in English or Swedish. Adverts in local adult education colleges facilitated chain sampling from these initial contacts. The age ranged from 18 to 74 with an equal number of men and

women. Participants had varying degrees of educational backgrounds and were in a variety of professions including participants who were unemployed.

Sampling via the Migration-Mobility Continuum.

An equal number of migrants and non-migrants were chosen[1]. However to move beyond the binary of migrant/non-migrant and public/migrant participants responded to six questions which established their degree of mobility and settlement along a 10-position migration-mobility continuum (MMC) (see Figure 1). This analytical lens understands mobility as continuous, from generational non-mobility (position 1), to serial movers who plan to move again (position 10). The MMC arose in Study 1 and was used as purposive quota sampling for Study 2.

Figure 1 around here

Steps in developing a dialogical analysis

There were very few explicit references to the public as participants were more likely to use the term 'people'. Participants began to position themselves in relation to generalized others when asked the question *do you consider yourself a citizen of Europe* (Study 1) *a citizen of the European Union (Study 2).*

For the present article the analysis was then confined to responses to this question within three countries Sweden, UK and Germany to allow sufficient depth of analysis. I-positions were mapped including internal and external I-positions. Followed by mapping of both temporal dimension to I-positions i.e. whether respondents positioned themselves as co-present or ahead of the public and spatial dimension, what

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[1] A migrant was defined as a person who had crossed a state border. Individuals who had crossed internal state borders such as moving from England to Scotland were understood as internal migrants as a part of the initial categorisation in Study 1. Individuals who had not engaged in any migration-related mobility were understood as non-migrants this included individuals who a parent or both parents who were migrants.

boundaries did they use national, local, global, supranational, (Marková, Linell, Grossen & Salazar Orvig 2007; Andrews, 2007; Zittoun, 2014).

Analysis – six dialogical positions on the general public

Citizens when articulating their position in relation to the general public employ six positions. The analysis delineates between positions where the public is figurative (concrete) in the dialogue and positions where the public remains implicit and abstracted. The analysis presents each of the six positions in turn. These positions do not reflect a taxonomy or psychological traits or types, rather citizens have the capacity to move between different positions. The positions reveal both oppositional and non-oppositional forms of we/they categorisation as contingent on social representations of the public. (see Table 3).

Table 3 around here

1. Avant-garde position.

Taking the avant-garde position, involves positioning oneself ahead of the public and showing an energetic drive in wanting to shape the public's actions. Analysis shows an absence of concrete figures in such accounts. The public appear abstracted and thinly conceptualised (see Extracts 1 and 2). Within this position an avant-garde 'we' unapologetically places itself ahead of the public in relation to the ideals of European integration. Extract 1, prefigures a resistant public, however it is not a top-down position, resting on an 'elite consensus' – a common criticism of Europhiles. Rather the avant-garde position is an engaged futurist position (See Table 3). To take this position is not to reject the public but to reject the present. This contrasts with Capelos

and Katsanidou (2018) who analyse a reactionist political orientation which rejects the present in favour of the past. The macro-narrative basis of this avant-garde position however can shift. In Extract 1 the position is rooted in peace, security, and freedom through movement, whereas in Extract 2 it is the movement of enlightenment ideas which defines the EU project.

Extract 1.

NM: and are you a citizen to a particular country or do you belong to something beyond a certain country?

IN: I think that I so to speak I am a Swedish citizen but that I also belong to EU and to Europe and I think that whole process is really important for Europe's future and peace. I see the EU as a big peace project and to get there you have to move towards a common market and get the resources that exists in different countries pulled together and to get people to move a bit more as well because that's how you can get people to understand, appreciate and a bigger understanding for others.

NM: So you see yourself as a European citizen?

IN: Absolutely!

NM: Is there anything in particular that makes you feel that way is it the EU concept that you buy or do you have a particular experience that helps you identify yourself as European citizen?

IN: I think my experience of living abroad contributes a lot. As I said I've lived in Milan in Italy I know their culture and how they see things and that's a large contributing factor. I would rather see the bigger rather than the small. In that sense we have it bloody good in Sweden as well and we can help out with a lot especially our dear neighbours in Eastern Europe and make their lives easier and we have a strong tradition of democracy and I think the EU can contribute with establishing and creating more democracy in other countries. *IN, Study 1, Stockholm, MMC4[2].*

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[2] Each participant is labelled with anonymised initials, Study number, City and position on the Migration-Mobility Continuum.

Extract 1 illustrates how public opinion formation arises out of the dialogical self's movement between a variety of dialogical positions - I-peace-promotor, I-Swedish, I-democrat and I-free-mover. Here movement, as freedom *through* movement, is central to European integration's aim of inter-cultural understanding as a dimension of peace. IN's normative social representations places himself ahead of the people 'you have to get the people to move more'. Equally they are contingent on a hierarchy of Europeaness (Chryssochoou, 2000; 2013). Sweden is positioned as having a leadership role in extending democracy to newer European states. The success of this dynamic narrative rests on a *telos* towards peace, where the parameters of generalised publics, relates closely to nation-states.

Within Extract 2, the ideals of European enlightenment are foregrounded to the extent that public are socially represented rather thinly as a 'humanised society'.

Extract 2.

AK: Would you describe yourself as a citizen of the EU?

LX: Yes, yes I would say that I do and I would say that I'm proud to be a European. I'm proud of the European heritage, of Christianity, and of the Enlightenment, recognising that…to qualify that Europe doesn't have a monopoly on Christianity, which was an Eastern religion before it was a Western religion. And on a lot of the things that the Enlightenment brought like science, which was actually thriving in India and other places before it was brought here. Nonetheless, it's a tradition that I identify with, and I believe in the principles of the EU, of subsidiarity, of integration, of cooperation, and particularly, the social charter of the EU. To make quite a clear statement about the need for the regulation of free market systems in order to bring about a more humanised society. And I suppose that's what makes me proud to be a European citizen, in contrast to perhaps someone espousing the American model, the American dream. LX, *Study 2, London, MMC1.*

LX's citizenship rests on abstract universals there is no articulation of a 'we'. Rather European integration is constructed as a 'model' in opposition to the American model (Marková, 2003: Staerklé et al, 2011). Yet claims of Eurocentric achievements are bracketed off as nothing to do with the self-definition of a continent or the EU project, but rather as the movement of ideas 'into' Europe.

Within the parameters of this analysis, the avant-garde position is found to relate to a post-national position but not always a European form of post-nationalism. We also found a one-world narrative where an avant-garde position relates to global citizenship (Mahendran, 2017). The next three positions all employ distancing strategies yet differ in how the citizen positions themselves in relation to 'they' – the general public.

2. Advocating position

When citizens take up an advocating position they are diplomatically often speaking on behalf of a public they regard as either misunderstood or without a voice. Rather than empathy, this is understood as 'outsideness' the Bakhtinian concept of standing *for* the Other (Mahendran, 2017). In Extract 3, ML in Düsseldorf, delineates between a 'they' the public/German football fans and a 'them' people marked as having a visible migrant background.

> ***Extract 3.***
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> ML: He (Özil - a footballer) has been born in Germany but he is of Turkish background and they are very quick, to pointing that out, and it kind of saddens me because in that case you don't allow them to become genuine. *ML, Study 2, Düsseldorf, MMC1.*

ML sets up an oppositional 'they' in order to stand by the Other advocating on behalf of citizens like Özil. TT (Extract 4) also uses a generalized 'they' however in non-oppositional ways, to advocate on behalf of that public. 'The people' dynamically shifts

between people already 'here' and people arriving revealing a sense of the immanence of events. Extracts 1 to 4 reveals how public opinion formation when understood as dialogical is chronotopic in that it contains time-space units. In this case immanence (time) is tied to mobility to foreshadow finite bordered space. Such temporalizing establishes the anti-immigration public as in dynamic interaction with events.

Extract 4.

TT: It is a question of when you have got so many people already, then people think "they should leave, they should leave" and then you have got a problem. When one or say two vote right wing, I mean that ten people vote right wing isn't going to make much difference, but when ten million vote for this then you have got a problem. It comes out that people don't want all these people here. *TT, Study 1, Stockholm, MMC4.*

Extract 4 is a multi-voiced narrative, 'they should leave' 'they should leave' however TT successfully distances herself from taking an anti-freedom of movement position. This is a dialogical form of distancing which suggests alignment with the position of the general public – 'when you have got so many people already'. In contrast to Extract 3, which advocates for people who have a migrant background and distances itself from the general public/football audience, In Extract 4 a part of this advocating position conceptualises 'the people' as responsive and rational actors 'then the people think'.

3. Distancing position

Extract 5 illustrates an oppositional form of distancing from the public. NP uses the trope 'too many migrants' to establish a mediated opinionated public which is discursively constructed rather than constructed by events. Unlike an advocating position this position uses a rhetorical demographic framing of immigration/ freedom of movement as relating to an aging Swedish population.

Extract 5.

NP: If all the population is (…) getting older and older (…). These people start recognising that it's for their own benefits as well. Because it's quite often they see only one side (…). Those who are tax payers now they think that well part of my tax goes just to all these immigrants. *NP, Study 1, Stockholm, MMC8.*

Here the generalised 'they' serves to distance the dialogical self from an inert general non-migrant public - who only see 'one-side'. This self-interested public is positioned as narrowly concerned with taxes and unable to perceive the benefits of immigration. Extract 5 NP rests on a self-world normative representation which privileges a cost/benefit economic rationality (Staerklé, 2013).

4. Homesteading position

To take a homesteading dialogical position towards the public, is a 'we' position. As Extract 6 illustrates, this is a figurative position where the 'we' is bounded by welfare-nation-state. Such a position becomes intensified through the rendition of immigration as an existential threat which requires the self to securitize (Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010). Within this position the general public is social represented as an integrated consensualist public - a discursive citizenry (Habermas, 1996). The homesteading positon can be delineated from both the avant-garde and progressive positions by its conservatism. Here the protected home-space is reliable and constant, rather than evolving (Mitzen and Mattern, 2018).

Homesteading can be understood as a stakeholder position. With Extract 6 the public is figurative and QP is co-present with them. This chronotope looks backwards within finite space, revealing how time and events changes views. The 'our' in Extract 6 locates the public as Swedish resting on a hidden polemic of a people who themselves are settled, established and as such free *from* movement.

Acting to maintain their settled arrangements and potentially unsettled by freedom of movement.

> **Extract 6.**
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> QP: There was a lot of talk a few years ago that people would be coming here to use our welfare but it hasn't turned out this way, so we believed so much about people. *QP, Study 1, Stockholm, MMC1.*

5. Segmenting position

To take up a segmenting position is to generalize the public along a clearly defined differentiation, e.g. ethnicity, or nationality. Participants within the studies, often positioned themselves at the outset of the interview according to their ethnic position and spoke from there. Extract 7 for example offers a self-world view resting on a *world of nations* outlook and the public, given mobility, as multicultural. Here such multiculturalism and national identities suggests an overall view of a differentiated public with different loyalties.

A segmenting, position has much in common with meta-representational accounts of self-other caregorisations arising out of social identity approaches, (Elecheroth et al, 2011). Movement within and beyond the European Union, remains implicit within a segmented position because culture is foregrounded. This position is co-present with the public (see Table 3). It is perfectly possible for a citizen to combine positions, here JL, takes a distancing position but also understands the public as segmented according to their national identity. JL develops an antinomy between himself as Roma within Finnish origins and the Swedish.

> **Extract 7.**
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> KM: Do you consider yourself a member of the European Union?

JS: It doesn't effect on me so much I don't have any parts about it. Because I'm so used to. If I want to go to Germany or if I want to go to London or if I want to go to wherever I want I can go because I have a Swedish and Finnish passport.

KM: And how do you feel about this European Union?

JS: I'm one of those who votes against because I was definitely one of those who want to have our crown (currency) and we don't want to have some Euro-Europe and you see the results now. In Greece in Spain in Italy in France in everywhere (…). I think the thought is a very good thing. [KM: why is it a good thing?] Because I think like the states in USA. I think this is a good thing but we are so far away from that kind of thinking. I don't think you have to have one president, one government and everything in it to get that. So long as England for example or Sweden is outside of the community in the political way and economical way it's never going to be that in real. Yeah sure it's a nice idea but everybody is thinking about themselves anyway they are talking about Europe but they are thinking about Sweden *JS, Study 2, Gothenburg, MMC9.*

JS uses an I-free-mover position however freedom through mobility is represented as idealistic. JS is acutely aware that for many people reality isn't actually like that. Extract 7 demonstrates the extent to which European integration and the freedom of movement associated with European citizenship is delineated and restricted by national self-interest. Here the 'they' of the general public is double-voiced both talking about 'Europe' but thinking about 'national interest'. Equally JS succeeds in positioning himself outside this 'they' – it is they who are 'Sweden'. He takes up the position of the I-Swedish passport holder but delineates it from the nation-state as actor. Clearly identification as Extract 7 illustrates is present across the six positions. Dis/identification with national identity and post-national identity is key to understanding public opinion formation on European integration (Mahendran et al, 2015).

6. Progressive position

The final position rests on a linear progressive narrative where both space and time are infinitely expanding. Extracts 8 uses an open unfinalized 'we' position. In this regard it is in contrast to earlier closed 'we' positions (see Table 3). The public's sense of European citizenship are presented as constituted and transformed by events. The progressive position on the general public like the homesteading position is a stakeholder position. However, critically, it is progressive because the 'we' is not understood as static or free from mobility. Mobility, as freedom through mobility, is presented as progressive.

To sustain the position in Extract 8, a series of I-positional dialogical moves occur, moving from the position of I-son, to I-father to I-friend. This allows for life to have both progress and impermanence. The present of friends, parents and generational peers in the dialogue creates a figurative concrete and relational public. It is worth contrasting these co-present 'we' publics in Extracts 6 and 8 to the abstracted publics found in Extracts 1 and 2 within the avant-garde position.

Extract 8 is placed within a common European 'we-feeling' in contrast to Extract 7. Here the public is seen as engaged in a collective lived experience. There is no explicit antinomy or we/they conflict within this narrative rather there is differentiation with earlier less mobile generations to create a sense of progression. Within Extract 8, NL, rhetorically uses the second-person to create an inclusive generalized public, where the 'we' created includes *you* its audience. However there is perhaps an implicit boundary between European citizens and those outside the EU project.

Extract 8.

NM: Last question for you. So do you which you have already answered but I'll ask you again. Do you consider yourself a citizen of the European Union?

NL: Yeah I think especially for my generation we travelled since we are born we were travelling around and even for my parents it was much more difficult of course after the war there was not much money to travel but also with the borders it was complicated. But um (.) for me (.) we all. I mean today you have friends everywhere and this week we are visiting friends in London and he's German and he's from UK. *NL, Study 2, Düsseldorf, MMC1.*

Understanding the difference between the progressive position and the avant-garde position, suggests the importance of research into narrative engagement with different world orders (Staerklé, 2013).

Discussion

This article demonstrates that when people speak for the other in *a public capacity* (Dewey, 1927/1954) they generalize the public in ways that move from oppositional we/they categorization towards more diplomatic non-oppositional we/they categorizations. The analysis demonstrates the extent to which public opinion formation ahead of the binaries of public opinion polls and voting scenarios is multi-positional. The I-positions of the dialogical self, together with the dialogical shifts in perspectives and voices that occurs in talk, do not require consensus but can work with dissensus with integrity. This multi-positionality is a key process in de-polarizing public opinion.

Under the dialogical conditions of the present studies each positon, avant-garde, advocating, homesteading, distancing, segmented and progressive, reveals a temporal relationship to the general public whether co-present or ahead of the public. Foreground the potential insights of events and the time-space chronotopic dimension of public opinion formation.   Citizens in taking up an advocating or avant-garde

relationship to the general public creates distinct 'they' dialogical relationships which are more diplomatic and non-oppositional. Whereas taking a progressive position, when discussing European integration, creates a dynamic 'we' in-group position as open, unfinalizable and crucially as contingent on events.

By designing studies which bring participants into dialogue with an interlocutor (the researcher) and the ideals of the European integration (via policy-related stimulus materials), citizen's I-positional dialogical capacity and 'multivoicedness' is revealed. The capacity to introduce voices of imagined publics and place oneself outside these voices is a key feature of a dialogical-social representational approach to public opinion formation which is worth investigating further. All of the positions revealed demonstrate the extent to which public opinion formation relates to narrative engagement with the grand narrative of the European Union around integration, ever closer union and freedom of movement. Equally they begin to hint at macro-level global, symbolic and normative social representations of how the world is/or should be ordered (Staerklé, 2013; Salvatore et al, 2018).

Towards a social representation of the public.

Within the analysis a social representation of the public's mobility become generalized as having freedom *from* mobility, freedom *of* movement and finally freedom *through* movement. This suggests, in line with Howarth (2006) that underneath pro/anti EU opinions are social representations operating as shared resources informing polarized public opinions or voting decisions.

Social representation approaches often focus on public understandings of unfamiliar or reified phenomenon. Meta-representational approaches are increasingly able to understand how citizens take into consideration what the public are thinking about a

certain issue (Marková, 2003; Elcheroth et al, 2011; Castro & Mouro, 2016). Now such approaches could usefully turn the lens towards how we, as citizens, develop social representations *of* the public themselves. A key question for both social and political psychology is how do we generalize the generalized other? Specifically in order to understand how the public sets the parameters for European integration social representational research needs to explore how citizens imagine the public's degree of mobility. How do citizens imagine the movement of others – do they presume fellow citizens to be static and free of migration-mobility, think in terms of the freedoms of post-national or generational movement. Or do they recognise that freedom of movement as a right of European citizenship, is something that many citizens in European member states are yet to be included into (Mahendran, 2017).

In this regard the Migration-Mobility Continuum (MMC) provides a valuable analytical lens in examining the individual's degree and nature of migration-mobility. Understanding citizens as having diverse migration-mobility stories serves to unpack current we/they binaries that occurs in discussions of immigration and integration. It begins to reterritorialize debates about public attitudes to immigration which tend to assume, or indeed mobilise, an imagined protectionist consensualist mobility-free *homesteading* public.

Using the MMC within the parameters of the present studies, placed certain situational demands on the participants which are not usually found in public opinion polling. Asking citizens about their degree of mobility encourages a degree of self-reflexivity about conditions of mobility allowing the public to develop more considered positions on immigration and freedom of movement within Europe as they dialogically move between their own mobility and that of other citizens.

Understanding how public attitudes to European integration relates to an individual's degree of migration-mobility, how they generalise the general public and how they positon themselves in relationship to that generalisation, is central to developing a political psychology of European integration.

De-polarizing public opinion

Growing populism across Europe rests on anti-immigration discourse and the ability of political leaders to be understood as speaking for 'the people' against an 'out-of-touch' elite. This analysis, building on meta-representational studies and new advances in dialogical and narrative approaches, shows the value of directly operationalizing, in the design of the studies, a conception of 'publics' when acting in *a public capacity*. Enabling a move beyond the limitations of oppositional and majoritarian technocratic opinion polls, which become monological, towards social representations of public dialogue and the conditions when public opinion becomes dialogical.

Returning to the question of the parameters of citizen's thinking when acting in a public capacity (Dewey, 1927/1954). Public opinion polls are critiqued for overplaying the idea of national borders in the public's thinking (Manners, 2014; Elcheroth et al, 2011). However the present analysis on European citizenship finds that national bordering occurred in four out of the six positions. Two positions *avant-garde* and *distancing* reveal a supranational or post-national position.

A risk of the methodological conditions of the studies is they render each dialogical positions as having equal political influence. It is, of course, recognised that there are tumultuous events and political conditions under which some dialogical positions gain traction and others are supressed. This limitation points to new areas

of research, which are conducted within or replicate volatile election campaign conditions. Equally, it points to the value of conducting reflexive dialogical studies that enable citizens to act in a public capacity on vexed political questions in relatively calm non-politicized settings.

Caution needs to be taken, given the decision to ask questions on mobility and immigrant-integration ahead of questions on European citizenship, in assuming European citizenship relates chiefly to freedom of movement rather than tariff-free trade or other features of the union. Nevertheless the article reveals how when citizens are understood along the MMC they are able to generalise the public in ways which go beyond imagined anti-immigration publics. More broadly, citizen's capacity to position themselves in relation to generalized publics provides valuable insights into dialogical public opinion formation and its potential for de-polarization of public opinion.

Majorities within elections and public opinion polls continually create political mandates within liberal democracies. As this article has shown, just as political elites evoke 'the people' as a category of democratic political discourse so do the public. Understanding the public's dialogical capacity to orientate towards the Other in non-oppositional ways is a route to de-polarizing public opinion and socially representing public dialogue on Europe.

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Table 1 Question: *To what extent do you feel you are a citizen of the EU.* Eurobarometer, (%) May 2013 and May 2017.

Member-State	Yes, definitely		Yes, to some extent		No, not really,		No definitely not		Don't know	
	2013	*2017*	*2013*	*2017*	*2013*	*2017*	*2013*	*2017*	*2013*	*2017*
EU 28	22	28	40	40	24	21	13	10	1	1
Germany	31	39	42	41	17	14	10	6	1	1
Ireland	25	42	43	40	21	13	10	3	1	1
Sweden	27	36	42	40	20	17	10	6	1	0
United Kingdom	19	25	28	30	28	26	23	17	1	3

Source: Eurobarometer

Table 2 Question: *Please tell me whether you are for or against the free movement of EU citizens who can live, work, studies and do business anywhere in the EU*, Eurobarometer, (%) May 2017.

Member State	For	Against	Don't know
EU 28	81	14	5
Germany	89	9	2
Ireland	88	8	4
Sweden	90	9	1
United Kingdom	69	20	11

Source Eurobarometer.

Table 3: Temporal, spatial and relational dimensions of six dialogical positions on generalized publics.

I-position	Temporal Positioning	Spatial Positioning	Relational Positioning
Avant-garde	*Future-orientated*	*Open*	*They*
Distancing	*Static co-present*	*Open*	*They*
Advocating	*Future-orientated*	*Closed*	*They*
Homesteading	*Dynamic co-present*	*Closed*	*We*
Segmenting	*Static co-present*	*Closed*	*They*
Progressive	*Dynamic co-present*	*Open*	*We*

Figure 1: 10-point migration mobility continuum (Mahendran, 2013)
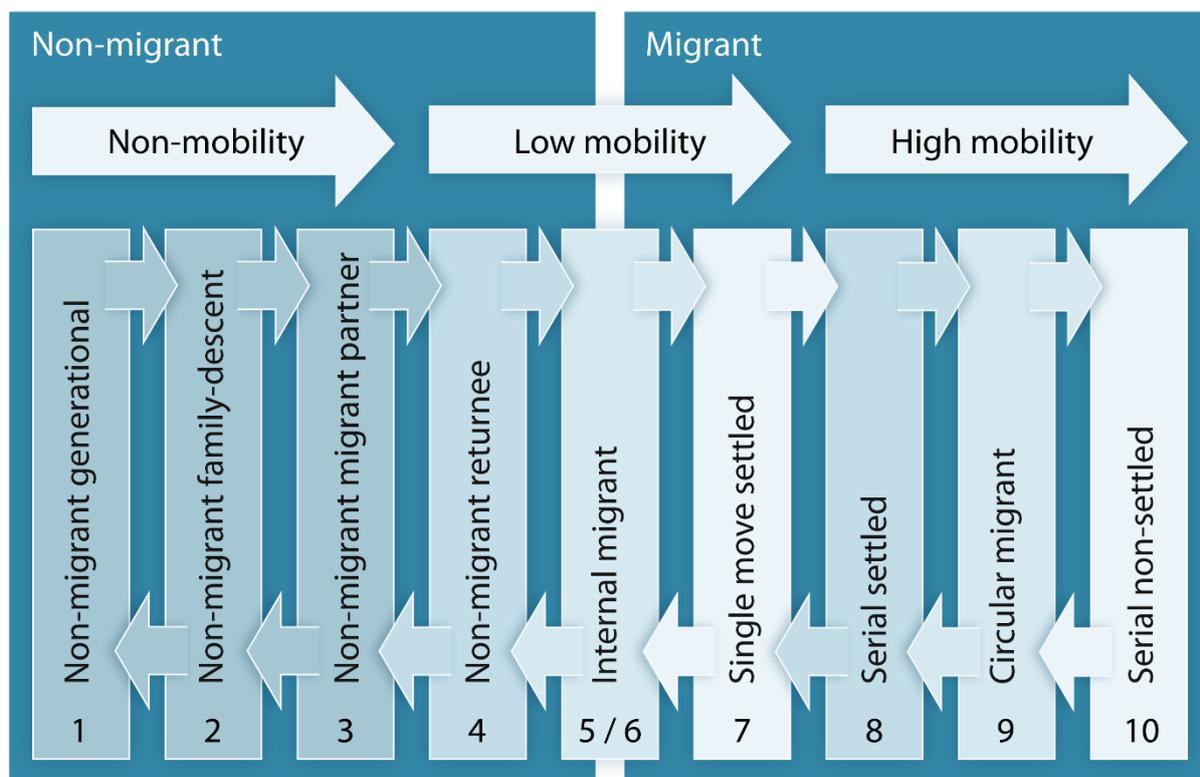
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