

Populism vs. the People: How citizen's social representations of home destabilize national populism's territorial vision.

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Abstract

Can understanding social representations of home unpack the central empty signifier of populism - the “true people”? Nationalist exclusionary forms of populism use home, birthplace and born and bred narratives to frame sections of the population as Other. “Go Home” vans in the UK, Donald Trump’s use of *birther* rhetoric during his previous presidential candidacy and the Sweden Democrats mobilisation of *folkhemmet* (people’s home) to question migrant welfare contributions together illustrate how nationalist populism works. Populism uses threat and insecurity, related to home, to make hegemonic a protectionist and reified worldview of home as stable, bounded and historically continuous. This article examines how populist rhetoric of home compares to people’s actual social representations of home. Using cross-European interviews (N = 76) we find the dynamics of home relate to three social representations - home as a threatened space, home as birthplace and home as a lifespan journey. These are articulated through a dialogical self engaged in transnational and intergenerational dialogue. The evidence of dynamic, dialogical and relationally continuous representations of home point to the value of further examination of alternative social representations of home. This articulation could counter protectionist rhetoric associated with both vertical (ordinary/elite) and horizontal (people/migrant) dimensions of nationalist populism.

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Introduction.

The concept of home receives very little attention within social psychology despite recognition of its sociological and political significance within scholarship engaged with the (in)securities of populist nation-building (Hellstrom & Nilsson, 2010; Rose, 2017; Mitzen, 2018, Mac Ginty, 2019). This absence of interrogation enables the home concept to play a pervasive, implicit, psychological role in the discursive myth-making vital to new nationalism and populism. Imagining *native* non-migrants to be born and bred (Taylor, 2010), and comfortably at home can serve to create threat and insecurity amongst migrants. Equally, narratives of newcomers, understood as outgroup and Other making themselves at home, are used by populist leaders to actively promote threat/security amongst settled citizens around ingroup loyalty. This threat/security rhetoric serves to psychologically *un-home* citizens with some degree of migration-mobility. This divisive logic rests, we propose, in unexamined subtle uses of the home concept and is at the heart of exclusionary forms of populism.

An absence of scholarship on common-sense-making about what constitutes *home* risks serving the interests of new forms of nationalist populism. In particular, the strategic use of threat/security to mobilize some people as the “true people” and migrants as the Other (Mols & Jetten, 2014; 2016, Staerklé & Green, 2018). Home with its association with security, constancy, stability and ordinariness, is a phenomenon which sits at the intersection of both horizontal in-group/out-group dimensions of populism and vertical elite/ordinary dimensions of populism. Along the horizontal dimension only the “true people” can legitimately view themselves at home within the nation-state. Along the vertical dimension an exclusionary sense of home supports the perspective that the corrupt elite have failed to protect the home of the “true people” by allowing liberal levels of immigration. All of which points to the central role an analysis of people’s sense-making on home can potentially play towards unpacking this psychological dimension of populism.

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This article makes the case for the psychological study of the dynamics of home within the context of rising nationalism, populism and xenophobia. It aims to empirically demonstrate, using qualitative analysis, the relationship between how populist leaders' use of home outlined in this introduction relates to how citizens themselves use the concept home outlined in the analysis. The term *dynamics of home* foregrounds the relational, spatial and temporal features of home including self-other relations, boundaries and horizons of home whether past, present, future-orientated, local, national, international or global. The term also attends to the ontological dimension which, as we demonstrate below, relates to two antinomies - independence/dependence and threat/security.

The analysis presented below draws from a cross-European study (Mahendran, 2017, 2018, Mahendran, Magnusson, Howarth & Scuzzarello, 2019) where citizens both migrant and non-migrant were not asked questions on populism but rather were asked questions on subjective categories of belonging, understanding of integration, citizenship and biographical degree of migration. The study asked no direct questions which used the "home" concept, yet participants spontaneously used the home concept when articulating their categories of belonging and integration. It is this emic, bottom-up use of home, as an analytical category, that has the potential to effectively interrogate the top-down use of home by political leaders. Public dialogue on questions of citizenship and belonging, particularly around the home concept, sheds light on both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of populism.

Our theoretical approach to uncovering public dialogue on the dynamics of home uses the plasticity of the dialogical self (Marková, 2003; Zittoun, 2014; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010; Nesbitt-Larking, 2008) which approaches the self as engaged in self-other dialogue via a variety of *I*-positions. This is combined with Social Representations Theory's (SRT) preoccupation with everyday thinking and common-sense rationalities (Moscovici, 1984; Marková, 2003; Staerklé & Green, 2019) informed by meta-representations of what the rest of the public think (Mahendran, 2018;

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O'Dwyer, 2020). Combining these two theories reveals the dynamic relational positionality in people's representations of home.

Empirical studies into populism, including SRT studies, are heavily reliant on survey data potentially underestimating both the multi-positional dialogical capacity of citizens (Mahendran, 2018, and deeply rooted ontological (in)securities of home as intersubjectively experienced. Further, they often reveal very little about the degree of migration of their respondents serving to reinforce a horizontal binary between migrants and *native* non-migrants. Given the horizontal in/out group dimension of populism (De Cleen & Stavrakakis, 2017; Stavrakakis & Jäger, 2017; De Cleen, Glynos & Mondon, 2018), we use stimulus-led interviews introducing an innovative Migration-Mobility Continuum, (MMC) (Mahendran, 2017, 2018; Mahendran, Magnusson, Howarth & Scuzzarello, 2019) which maps people's degree of migration-mobility on to ten biographical positions from generational non-mobility through to serial migration. The migration-mobility continuum enables the analysis to tackle the central question which drives this article; *What is the relationship between nationalist populism's use of the concept of home and social representations of the dynamics of home along the migration-mobility continuum?*

Answering this question involves taking three steps. The first step outlines how populist leaders use implicit/explicit understandings and intense affect associated with home to mobilize an exclusionary Manichean view of the 'true people' versus an Other; be it the "corrupt elite" or immigrant groups. (Mudde, 2019). The second step, entitled *populist attitudes and identifications*, considers the contribution of existing social psychological research to populism studies. We examine what psychological factors are involved when certain individuals identify with populist messages whilst others, in the same material circumstances, do not.

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Finally, the third step entitled *the common-sense of a threatened present* specifically focuses on the creation of hyper-partisanship and its relationship to the spatial and temporal features of the threat/security dimension of populism. The success of populist projects, in relation to the vertical dimension of populism, is in providing a compelling narrative that the priorities of the present - cosmopolitanism, a liberal attitude to immigration - do not relate to a collectively imagined future (Mols & Jetten, 2014; 2016, Brescó de Luna, 2017). In this final step we introduce our dialogical social representational approach including how chronotope (spacetime) can tackle national populism's use of the rhetorical immanence of threat/security tropes. Threat can foreshadow possible futures but equally, as we demonstrate, citizens, when understood as dialogical citizens, have the psychological capacities to widen horizons and shape their futures. A focus on people's agentic representations of home recognises that popular sovereignty may be harmful but equally it remains vital to ameliorate a very real lack of recognition, representations and frustration with "politics as usual" through fostering political movements (Rico, Guinjoan & Andrija, 2017; Hirvonen & Pennanen, 2019; Thomassen, 2019)

1. Using home to mobilize the 'true people'

The emergence of neo/new nationalistic populism since the 2010s proposes that the nationalism occurring in Europe is distinct from earlier forms. Political parties such as Sweden Democrats (SD), Alternative for Germany (AfD) and United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) reject the supranational European Union project, use Islamophobia and a sustained focus on immigration. Nationalist populism, whether within populist or mainstream parties, connects home to threat/security via the implicit or explicit constructions of new common-sense rationalities.

For example, during Donald Trump's previous attempt at the US Republican presidential candidacy (2011) he endorsed the far right-wing Tea Party *birther* movement pressurising President Barack Obama to publish his birth certificate. Such moves which connect nationalism to nativism combine a constitutional rationalism (seemingly reasonable discussions about who has the right to be President)

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with a white-racialized logic around narratives of belonging. According to this logic, those who oppose the birth certificate demand as racist are deemed to be playing the race-card in the face of a reasonable constitutional request. This racialized logic centres the true American people as white. It serves to locate non-whites within ambiguous citizenship even when that citizenship is *jus sanguinis* (by birth) citizenship (Hughey, 2012). Such home-based *birther* narratives percolate into the public sphere through narrative processes of emplotment where stories continually build around characters who are in the public eye. Correspondingly over time they influence public opinion via the public's meta-representational acceptance or rejection of what they imagine the rest of the public think (Mahendran, 2018, O'Dwyer, 2020). In 2009 public opinion revealed only a minority (25%) of US citizens believed Obama was born *outside* the USA, by 2011, only a minority of US citizens (38%) believed he was 'definitely' born *inside* the USA (Hughey, 2012, p.167). Revealing how important the concept of home is to nationalist populist projects.

Populism with its divisive black and white framing offers simple, yet compelling, solutions to complex problems. Whether actor-centred, where populist leaders tend to use certain tropes, styles, and logic (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014; Singh, 2017) or communications-led where discursive and representational projects, typically with rather thin-ideologies, are adopted by politicians (Mudde, 2007; Mols & Jetten, 2014, 2016, Sakki & Petersson, 2015; Staerklé & Green, 2018). Success for nationalist populism therefore ultimately rests on Manichean good/evil mobilisation which populates the empty signifier the "true people" with only some of the citizens.

In her *citizen of nowhere* UK Conservative Party Conference 2017 speech, Prime Minister Theresa May, though overtly less racialized, divided people into citizens of nowhere and citizens of somewhere (Mahendran, 2017). The speech built on May's earlier use of *Operation Vaken* "Go Home" vehicles (2013). Vaken (alert) encouraged citizens to report illegal migrants. In 2017 this hostile environment

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was generalized in the speech to promote a new common-sense binary between rootless ambiguous cosmopolitans, attracted to the freedom of movement associated with European citizenship, and a rooted in-group loyal to home as nation-state.

Go home vehicles, the *citizens of nowhere* narrative and *birther* nativism illustrate how belonging is a matter of intersubjective recognition – even in situations where the person may have citizenship by birth. These emerging common-sense rationalities are key to how new nationalist populism’s use of home intersects both vertical and horizontal dimensions of populism. Along the horizontal dimension, certain citizens become mobilized as an in-group, which defines itself in relation to an outgroup – whose mobility (real or imagined), cosmopolitanism or non-whiteness - can be framed as lacking loyalty and a sense of place. Communications of Populist Radical Right Parties are increasingly relating citizenship to biological-racism and ethnopluralism to make it ambiguous for some. Ethnopluralism essentialises ethnicity, arguing for equality but the need to live separately because of incompatibility (Rydgren, 2005; Odmalm, 2020). Along the vertical dimension, increasing frustration with traditional politics, understood as cosmopolitan, liberal immigration policies and open borders, leads to the emergence of opportunistic leaders, as Rose proposes, who reject the prevailing common-sense, offering followers a new common-sense (Rose, 2017, p.310). This common sense promises secure controlled borders to protect territories pointing to the importance of the home/homeland concept.

The Swedish context, a key context of our study, provides a long-standing explicit use of home within the political concept ‘Folkhemmet’, (the people’s home). The populist Sverige Demokraterna/Sweden Democrats political party (SD) have mobilized folkhemmet associated with the guaranteed securities of a golden age of social democracy, to create welfare chauvinism around a sharp white/black distinction between natives (contributors) and immigrants (non-contributors).

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Sverige Demokraterna effectively reframe themselves as not radical but having mainstream concerns, making use of the opaqueness of the Folkhemmet concept to stress a narrow conceptualization of “the people’s home” as limited to “real Swedes” (Hellstrom & Nilsson, 2010; Rose, 2017). Whilst it is inevitably not possible to directly translate folkhemmet into English, the term ‘folk’ in this context could be taken to have easily exploitable ethnic connotations, rather like the German term “volk”. Positioning home at the centre of an intersection between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of populism.

This strategy connects home to threat/security through three forms of Othering. First, the framing of some groups as deviant; second, the idea of threatening ideology, where being Muslim is seen as ideological rather than religious, and finally the idea of an inner enemy e.g. red-green political parties who promote the ideas of immigrant receptiveness (Sakki and Petersson, 2015). The exclusionist concept of folkhemmet, the people’s home as presented by Sverige Demokraterna becomes acceptable to voters who would not regard themselves as holding populist attitudes or being partisan but feel vulnerable about encroachment of outsiders affecting culturally similar Swedes.

References to “homeland,” “home affairs,” “homefront,” “home office,” and even the ubiquitous “home” tab sitting in the corner of digital screens point to both the primordial ontological aspects of home and its pervasive everyday psychological orientation towards boundary and security. This all adds to the rhetorical success of political implicit/explicit use of home. Political theorists deconstructing such primordial features of home point to “the self-stabilizing qualities of home” (Mitzen, 2018, p.1376) as a site of ontological security. Home is not only the place of routines, it is a private refuge, a place to escape from an uncertain world, it frames sense-making of national and international relations (Kinnvall 2004; Mitzen, 2018; Mac Ginty, 2019). Yet the persuasive threat/security rhetoric of populism does not succeed with everyone even if people have the same political and material circumstances. Which raises the question of what social psychological factors influence the success of populist styles and discourses.

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2. Populist attitudes and identifications.

Attempts to measure populist attitudes have the benefit of transcending context by devising statements concentrating on three dimensions. First, populist statements relating to the people, then pluralist statements relating to viewpoint diversity, and finally elite statements relating to the legitimacy of experts, politicians and business leaders as valid leaders (Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove, 2014; Spruyt, Keppens & Van Droogenbroeck, 2016). We found no questions relating to home within these studies perhaps as an artefact of their reliance on existing measures such as the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS). Such scales measure the individualized expression of attitudes rather than self-other dialogue and overarching narratives which inform those attitudes. This approach, which presents “the people” and “the elite” as antagonistic categories and yet also empty signifiers, is seemingly deliberate as such scholars argue, following Cas Mudde, that this is precisely what populism itself does. It acts as a thin-centred ideology, which uses these empty categories to mobilize more deeply rooted ideologies such as socialism or xenophobic nationalism. Studies into political cognition relate the conflictual thinking style of populism to a sense of vulnerability (Spruyt, Keppens & Van Droogenbroeck, 2016). Raising the question of what specific vulnerabilities result in identification with nationalist populism?

Use of European Social Survey, by Staerklé and Green using a social representations approach foregrounds the role of threat. Social representations theory (SRT) has since its inception concentrated on how the public use anchoring and objectification to develop a common-sense through moving unfamiliar knowledge from reified worlds into consensual worlds (Moscovici, 1984; Marková, 2003; Mahendran, et al, 2019; Staerklé & Green, 2018; O’Dwyer, 2020). In this regard it is ideally suited to national populism’s use of threat/security and past/present/future when discussing home. People who subjectively self-appraise as experiencing both material and symbolic threat are more likely to identify with right-wing populist parties. Staerklé and Green show how social representations of populism as *nation* rests on an anchoring relating to four factors, the material insecurity of no job prospects, the

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physical insecurity of not feeling safe outside, interpersonal trust, and absence of political efficacy, i.e. agency to intervene in political matters (Staerklé & Green, 2018).

Returning to the central question of the relationship between populist representations and the people's representations of home, we introduce a further consideration to what extent is this sense of vulnerability to threat/security tropes related to an individual's own degree of migration-mobility. One of the key design challenges for psychological studies is tackle the binary between the public, categorised as static and migrants categorised as mobile.

3. The common-sense of a threatened present

We propose the relative lack of articulation of people as multi-voiced renders the “true people” an empty signifier or monological, enabling leaders to act, not as representatives, but as “*I-the people*”, removing distance between their own outlook and the people's. Returning to Donald Trump, “No president has claimed a comparably intimate, reliable and immediate (social media) connection with the demos” (Singh, 2017, p.33). Populism's supreme adaptability, its normative thinness, gives it an elastic capacity to attach itself to any ideological prefix. This combines with its mobilisation of hyper-partisanship (Singh, 2017) and antagonistic/conflictual reasoning (Spruyt et al, 2016).

Populist leaders are not opportunistic actors capitalizing on events (exogeneous shocks) to the nation, as Mols and Jetten, show, “they go to great lengths to cultivate threat perceptions” (Mols & Jetten, 2014, p.84; see also Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). These threat perceptions foreground temporality, adopting the *nationalist rhetorical triad* of glorious past, threatened present and bleak futures. This enables leadership to adopt a master narrative frame of a “nation at war” and a “need to be tough” on immigration in order to protect the “homeland” (Mols & Jetten, 2014) and create regeneration towards a collective future for some. What is key for understanding how threat succeeds is that “the future is

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brought into the present through certain ways of reconstructing the past” (Brescó de Luna, 2017 p.282). Such *restoration* projects often rely on a reactionism to emphasize this stalled present and the urgent need for action. Reactionism and related *ressentiment* are affective psychological orientations quite distinct from left/right ideology. These orientations can lead to an attraction to populist leaders, but they may well lead to other actions including grassroots activism or political disengagement (Capelos & Katsanidou, 2018).

Understanding citizens as dialogical potentially addresses the hyper-partisanship mobilized by threat/security inflected populism. We theorize that citizens engage in conflictual thinking under threat/security when experiencing ontological insecurity but retain the plasticity of dialogical selves when ontologically secure. The social psychological concept of dialogical selves (Bakhtin, 1981; Marková, 2003; Zittoun, 2014; Kinnvall & Lindén, 2010, Mahendran, 2018) proposes that individuals conceive, communicate and act in relation to others, anticipating and responding to dialogue using a variety of external *I*-positions, e.g. *I*-migrant, *I*-mother, *I*-patriot, as well as internal *I*-positions e.g. *I*-pacifist, *I*-adventurer, *I*-anxious. As we show below, *I*-positions may contradict each other, but people are able to maintain integrity across such tensions, through tensegrity (Marsico & Tateo, 2017). The analysis presented below extends dialogical-social representations studies by examining how individual narrative’s reveal chronotopes (spacetime) (Mahendran, 2018). This allows us to explore how people’s representations of home relate to populism’s use of a stalled and threatened present.

The idea of chronotope, in politically discursive contexts, assumes that citizen’s meaning-making involves understand events as occurring in time and space in ways that are ideological (Johnson, 2000; Mahendran, 2019; Mahendran, English & Nieland, Forthcoming) for example imagining immigrants as *recent* arrivals into the nation-state simultaneously creates space as closed and a timespan where hundreds of years become condensed as *recent*.

Social representations of home use spacetime chronotopes rather than being reified static and border-defined e.g. house, district, city or nation-state. The analysis shows how temporal home; life course and previous/current/future generations, and the spatial home: locational threat to family, and place of birth

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(both individually and collectively) work together to shape or foreshadow possible selves and imagined futures.

That said, populist communications gain traction by offering a new common-sense which is not easily challenged with sophisticated concepts or expertise. Unfamiliar knowledge is both objectified, in the sense it is made concrete and perceptively real. Abstract seemingly protean migration-mobility becomes understood as a *swarm* of migrants. SRT provides useful explanations of why expertise and an appeal to shared facts are such an ineffective challenge to populism. The rationalism of expertise fails partly because populist communication often takes the form *argutainment* (Saurette & Gunster, 2011) or a straight-talking passionate, direct political style, including the strategic use of bad manners to impatiently champion common-sense against the detachment of expertise (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014).

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen a renewed respect for scientific expertise; however the post-pandemic economic austerity is likely to coincide with rising nationalist populism which directly appeals to our common-sense that in democracies “we-the-people” can shape the future. Unpacking the consensual common-sense of concepts central to new nationalist populism - such as home - along a migration-mobility continuum rather than via the horizontal national/immigrant binary allows the analysis presented below to offer not relativism about shared facts but the common rationalities that underpin them.

Thickening conceptions on how citizens understand the concept of home via social representations and *I*-positionality of dialogical selves could explain why the conflictual framing of populism is so effective at increasing hyper-partisanship amongst citizens and reduces their positional flexibility. Populist projects reify home as stable, monological and historically continuous. People’s social representations of home destabilize this territorial vision by revealing the specific ways in which home is dynamic, dialogical and relationally continuous.

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The present research

The present study was conducted within the context of freedom of movement ratified within Maastricht (1992). The nation-states selected fall between those in Schengen (Germany and Sweden) and those outside it (UK and Ireland). All nation-states involved in the study took relatively high number refugees (for Europe). After France (252,264), Germany (216,973), Sweden (142,207) and the United Kingdom (117,161) were the highest refugee hosting countries at time of fieldwork (UNHRC, 2014) Interviews were conducted in Glasgow and Gothenburg by the lead author and by project collaborators in Dublin, Düsseldorf and London¹ The use of stimulus-materials enabled participants to articulate a variety of dialogical *I*-positions in relation to belonging and related concepts. Part 1 of the face-to-face interview involved sentence-completion of 'I am a part of'. This stem enabled participants to articulate their own categories of belonging. Participants were then asked to explain what they understood by 'integration' and 'citizenship' (both belonging-related concepts). Part 2 involved a stimulus-led approach which enabled participants to debate, as citizens, existing EU policy statements (Mahendran, 2018). The analysis presented below relates to Part 1.

Participants

Semi-structured digitally recorded interviews were carried out in 2012/2013 (N = 74). Range = 45 to 128 minutes, (mean = 88). Interviews in Düsseldorf were conducted in English, and in Gothenburg in English and Swedish. Interviews were translated where necessary and transcribed into English. Adverts in local adult-education colleges facilitated chain sampling from these initial contacts. 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 occupations including people who were unemployed.

¹ Interviews conducted by Kesi Mahendran in Glasgow and Gothenburgh, Helen Arfvidsson in Gothenburg, Ima Jackson in Dublin, Anubhuti Kapoor in London, Nicola Magnusson in Dusseldorf and Rebecca Rotter in Edinburgh as a part of the Placing Ourselves collaboration.

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The study involved an equal number of migrants and non-migrants, who were quota sampled along the Migration-Mobility Continuum (MMC) (Mahendran, 2018). The MMC moves beyond the binary of migrant/non-migrant and public/migrant. It is measured by participants responding to six questions which established their degree of mobility and settlement after which they are then placed along the 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).

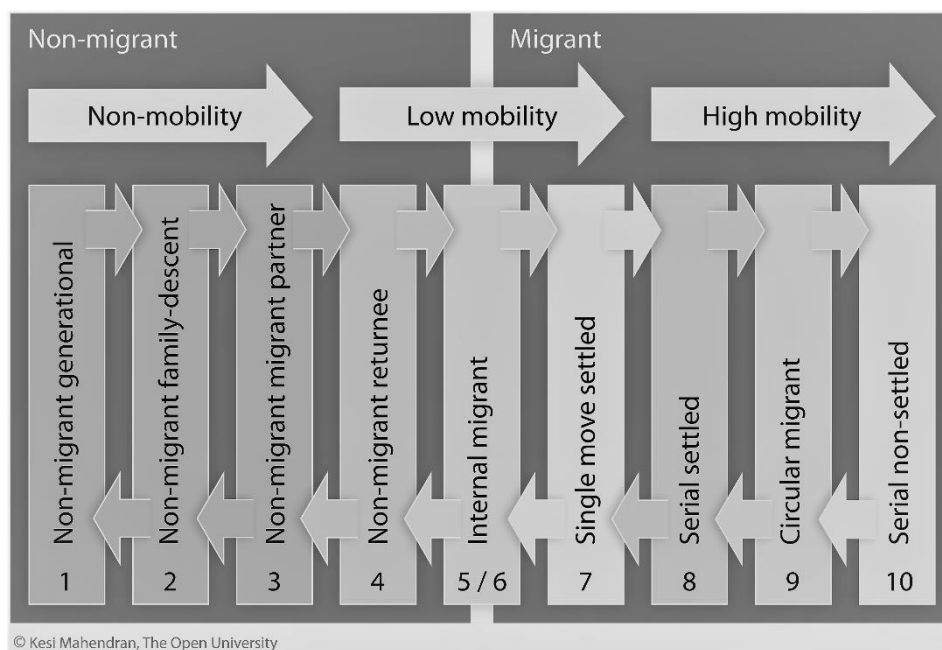


Figure 1. The 10-point migration-mobility continuum (Mahendran, 2018)

Analytical Procedure

Interviews were imported into NVivo 12. Four home-related terms, home, house, village and town, were initially examined as these were the prevalent terms referred to spontaneously by the participants (see Table 1). The term city was referred to explicitly by several questions and wasn't included. Home produced 378 references across 71 interviews which was enabled sufficient depth for the dialogical-social representational analysis

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Table 1.

Three stage search within database.

Search Term	Stage One				Stage Two		Stage Three	
	Home	House	Village	Town	Home	Future	Home	Home
Interviews	71	42	17	34	6	6	6	6
MMC Range	1-10	1-10	1-10	1-10	1	1	1	4-7
Total References	378	161	25	91	31	9	31	58

Dialogical analysis was conducted in three stages. In the first stage all references to ‘home’ were reviewed to identify (i) the dominant MMC position or positions being used. (ii) the key internal and external *I*-positions being used (iii) the multivoicedness used to articulate home. In order to facilitate the social representational analysis we looked at (i) How home related to terms such as us/we/they (Mahendran, 2018), (ii) the chronotopes used (spacetime) e.g. open/closed and past/present/future (Marková, 2000, Mahendran, 2018) and (iii) what common-sense knowledge were being assumed between interviewer and interviewee.

Stage one revealed the two key dialogical processes intergenerational and transnational dialogue. Using NVivo 12’s *coding context* (which provides the full paragraphs where the key word has been used) allows interpretative analysis to include the wider context in order to assess the relationship between home and MMC position. This led to the broad social representational theme around ambiguous citizenship relating to ‘blood and soil’ outlined below particularly among MMC position 7-10. Stage two involved examining how territory (soil) and relationships (blood) were inter-relating in dialogues on home and conceptions of the future. To permit sufficient depth, the entire transcripts of six interviews were selected in Stage two relating only to MMC1 – generational non-mobility - to understand if generational non-mobility would relate more closely to populist representations of home relating to threatened present or imagined futures. In Stage three further analysis involved participants with some degree of mobility positions 4-6 (see Figure 1). This includes internal migrants and citizens who have lived abroad temporarily.

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Analysis

The analysis outlines three social representations relate to threat-security, birthplace, and life course. These representations are supported by different spacetime chronotopes and dialogical *I*-positions which relate to intergenerational and transnational dialogue. These are brought together in Table 2.

Table 2.

Three dialogical-social representations of home and related dialogical I-positions

Social Representation	Transnational Representational Ground	Intergenerational Dialogical <i>I</i> -Positions	Spatial Dimension	Temporal Dimension
Threatened Space	Future-anxiety, Displacement, Expulsion, Mis/Recognition	<i>I</i> -citizen <i>I</i> -other <i>I</i> -transient <i>I</i> -future self	Closed	Synchronic
Life Course	Return, Final resting place, Leave, Arrive, Future home	<i>I</i> -parent <i>I</i> -child <i>I</i> -deceased <i>I</i> -future self	Open	Diachronic
Birthplace	Root, Soil, History, Loyalty	<i>I</i> -citizen <i>I</i> -passport holder <i>I</i> -worker <i>I</i> -past self	Closed	Synchronic

1. Home as Threatened Space.

A key finding of this article is people with higher migration-mobility (MMC 7-10) but not low migration-mobility (MMC1-4) articulate their sense of home through an internalisation of the threat/security frames (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014; Mols & Jetten, 2014).

Extract 1

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LH: I had been here in 2008 on holiday for ten days and was really quite entranced by you know the (.) cities of course and got here and immediately felt at home. It was a very strange feeling. I <never> felt that way in another city. (...) ² So I'm really (.) I'm not sure to this point if this had to do with the city itself or it (.) if it had to do with the culture or if it had to do with the fact that I'd made a crazy move and I was very pleased with myself because I had (.) you know I had successfully done that (.) but u:m (.) you know I really felt at home after the first few weeks (LH³, MMC7, Düsseldorf).

LH arrives home by leaving his country of origin. This sense of being at home relates not to other people, but to a socio-political culture that exists within Germany (Extract 2). LH's sense of home relates both to this culture but equally to his own agentic trajectory of successful risk-taking. Participants, (see below), move between *I*-positions to explore home as the place they were born and home as the place where they can be themselves, where they fit. This movement entails both psychological insecurity and a political threat/security. There is a possibility they could be asked to leave, *un-homed* or positioned as queue jumpers. For LH, as Extract 1 shows, this danger can be removed through official citizenship. Yet Canada is anchored in this dialogue as the "home" country relating to a more hegemonic representation of home as birthplace, discussed below. Despite feeling at home in Germany, LH remains aware that this sense of home carries the threat of expulsion. LH moves between two chronotopes a past time/place (Canada, growing up) and a current one here/now (Germany, as adult) revealing the on-going dynamics of home. Anticipating and shaping the future requires an on-going processing of the past and dialogically responds to the implicit question – why did you leave?

Extract 2

LH: It would be good for me to I think have this official, to have a German ID, to have this (.) you know it's really (.) it is more of a practical thing but I think it's also something in my head where I think 'you know now I'm (.) now I'm settled here. Now there's no danger. Now there's no risk of me being booted out to a place where I don't (.) where I <don't> really feel at home anymore' (...) Canada is a (.) I want to

² The transcription uses the following conventions. (...) denotes section of text removed (.) small pause, (3) denotes 3 second pause before speaking again. * text* denotes laughter when talking.

³ Participants are represented by confidential initials, then MMC number, then city of interview.

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put this in nice words because I really do love my home country and I think that the people that come from my home country are in (.) you know if I were to generalise a very nice sort. But politically very right wing, especially since the last (.) especially for the last twelve years or so (.) um (.) very individualistic (LH, MMC7, Düsseldorf)

Achieving official citizenship does not remove threat/security as citizenship can be rendered ambiguous within populist logic (Hughey, 2012; Odmalm, 2020). Analysis reveals a non-linearity within representations of home which may be vital to counter social representations of threatened space in the sense that citizens consider different futures and different potential homes. In Extract 3, KB who has full UK citizenship, uses the term “issues” to leave open the possibility of future moves. Her narrative contains a sense of uncertainty, phrases such as “I don’t know”, “it depends” foreground the contingencies within her representation of home.

Extract 3

KB: There might be some issues which might affect me, being in England, or going back home, or maybe going to somewhere else. It depends. If for example, I don't know, I'm not thinking about it, I'm just giving a suggestion that, if for example I decided that buying a house in Canada next to my sister and settle there, possible. I've got my home in Sudan still, my father's home, parent's home, in Sudan, but I don't know when I will be there. I'm bound with my family. My family is my husband and children. Where are they going to be, and this is my...in the future I don't know. Seems they are here. (KB, MMC7, London).

Extract 3 shows the extent to which, for some people, home is a relational process. KB uses her relationships with concrete others as a resource to build a sense of home and belonging. This contrasts to Extract 2 which projects an autonomous relational self in relation to generalised others. Together the three extracts reveal the contingencies within a social representation of home as threatened space. Both LH and KB are in the same MMC position, they are single-move settled people (MMC7). Yet to articulate their representations of home, they use their birthplace in a ‘home’ country as a departure point anchoring themselves into the more hegemonic social representation of home as birthplace. Proceeding from this departure point, home has a future-orientation. In terms of spacetime chronotope

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for LH, the shape of the future is focused and confined to Germany as a site of authentic self-expression, for KB the shape of the future is open, contingent and possible.

2. Home as Birthplace.

Calls for people with a perceived migrant background to 'go home' underlines the hegemonic representational importance of ancestral birthplace as a central trope within nationalist populist representations of home. Our participants engage in a dialogue with these hegemonic representations and navigate around this trope to articulate alternative social representations. Extract 4 and 5 both explore death and the idea of a final resting place. The citizens move between the positional differences of the *I*-parent, *I*-migrant positions (Extract 4) and the *I*-son, *I*-child-of-migrant pairing (Extract 5). In terms of chronotope, these moves successfully narrow the future perspectival point to a vanishing point and forecloses the ambiguities of citizenship, revealing the affective intensity of an insecurity around home.

Extract 4

JS: Yes but (in response to interview question on dual citizenship) my citizenship in Finland is about here something more my [puts his hand on his chest] = [KM: in the heart?] yes in the heart and Swedish citizenship is because I live here and (2) I want to be a citizen where I live. It does not have to do anything with my feelings (2) but the other passport and, don't ask me why because I don't know, but Finland I want to be buried there. I'm born there and my passport is very important even if I'm not Finnish either I'm Roma people anyway (1) we don't have any passport. If there was a Roma passport I would like to have that passport (JS, MMC9, Gothenburg).

The performative statement of a final resting place presumes agency to make the decision and a migratory circular narrative (MMC9). Social representation of home as birthplace can be located with *jus sanguinis* (by blood) accounts of citizenship, yet this representation is not entirely about blood lines but also place. JS evokes the idea of a homeland. Anticipating potential accusations relating to the idea of competing loyalties, he carefully caveats this future as not a threat to active

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citizenship in Sweden. Extract 4, JS articulates home using two national citizenship positions *I-Finnish* and *I-Swedish* but neither is considered salient. The *I-Roma* idealistic position (a Roma passport) reveals the relationship between identification, post-national belonging and collective imagining of the future. Taking the opposite perspective, Extract 5, reveals how burying a parent in the new country reduces ambiguity, consolidating citizenship through a transformed relationship with the place.

Extract 5

GB: I was talking to one of the guys on the training course (...) a pivotal point for him when his father died they buried him in Scotland (.) and he suddenly (.) at that point when he buried a member of his (.) own father in Scotland that he suddenly realised my god this is you know (.) my father's now buried in the soil in this country. Up until that point there was always the possibility that they would move back to (birth-country) (GB, MMC2, Glasgow).

In Extract 5, GB side-steps his own story to ventriloquize a friend who has buried his father in Scotland. Use of the word 'my' reveals the extent to which GB becomes identified with this story and the conditions by which one becomes settled. GB's own racialized position as Sikh, Glaswegian (MMC2), continually questions where to call home (discussed below). Across our studies MMC2, showed high levels of ambivalence about belonging (Mahendran, 2017; Mahendran et al, 2019).

3. Home as Life Course.

Our analysis showed the extent to which the concept of home as life course is deeply interrelated to social representations of home as birthplace and also threatened space. Social representations of home as a journey or as a life course, whilst developmental are not stage-related - but are rather transitions between independence, dependence and potential parental dependence that can occur simultaneously.

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Extract 6, shows the extent to which those with low-migration, perhaps because of higher security, recognise the happenstance of where they happen to have been born.

Extract 6

LB: Part of the reason I live here is because I'm born here and my family live here and it was only a few years ago that I left home so (2) I've always been dependent on living where my parents live then and but there is nothing about Gothenburg that has made me feel like wow Gothenburg (.) here I want to stay! It's been more to do with practical reasons like I got a job here or I know people here which is a kind of comfortable factor. (LB, MMC1, Gothenburg)

LB carefully situates her belonging within the socio-economic reality, *I*-worker, *I*-child within a birthplace representation of home, which remains passive voiced. A recent move from the parental home gives the newly independent adult a chance to distance themselves from the conservative aspects of the parental home. Equally the security associated with the MMC1 position is evident in terms like 'comfortable'. Suggesting the psychological importance of 'secure-base' to independence/dependence. The use of 'home' and 'here', suggests the distance between the parental home and her current home is small and manageable. In contrast KX who has moved around 50 kilometres from a small industrial town to Gothenburg, symbolically presents the distance between the parental home and his own home as much greater than the physical reality (Extract 7). Representations of home as a life course, suggest a tensegrity (Marsico & Tateo, 2017) between both "moving on" but simultaneously being tied to birthplace. KX uses two dialogical moves to do this, first he projects beyond his parent's death, *I*-orphan. Second, he takes up an imagined *I*-refugee position, thinking about how it is possible to remain culturally tied to a homeland but equally to be fully integrated into one's present home.

Extract 7

KX: I migrated to my wife in Gothenburg. I belong to N-holm I think even if I dislike some of the things there too. But it was my home for almost 30 years so I (3) maybe I will belong to Gothenburg in the future yeah [KM: yeah] but when I think about things (2) home is where T-strand (in Gothenburg) and maybe when (1) when er (3). Ok you don't think about those things, but when I think about when my parents

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aren't any more, I would maybe I will lose the connection to N-holm (1). It's maybe more about the connection to my parents and they live in N-holm (.). I don't know (...). If I think about other people they can belong to their home country they (.) because of war they move here they still belong to the thinking in their home country but they still can get integrated in Sweden (KX, MMC1, Gothenburg).

It is worth noticing, how KX, a generational non-migrant (MMC1), opens his account of home by adopting a figurative use of *I*-migrant. This dialogical move expands the chronotopic shape of the past to develop a symbolically larger move towards Gothenburg where he met his wife. The diachronic nature of belonging is important here. The imagined event of his parents' passing allows another stage of home and belonging to begin. KX settles the ambivalence he feels about N-holm and his obligations by anchoring his story to a larger familiar story in Europe, the refugee movement story. Such solidarities create potential emancipatory social representations which challenge the black and white certainties of populist accounts of home relating to blood and soil. We found that social representations of home related to imagined future selves (Extract1 and Extract 7) and also to the regret of imagined potential selves. In Extract 8, GB (see also Extract 5) moves from the *I*-husband position to construct an alternative more internal *I*-restless traveller position. GB sustains his detachment from his present self, by using house instead of the more affective concept home.

Extract 8

GB: I chose to decide to get er my to bring someone to this country or to get my identity here because there is an element of security about having a permanent job and a house. But deep down I've got this little fantasy that (.) that actually what I should have done is sell my house. You know just sell it (.) pack in the job and then just travel around the world and just see where my (4) just discover for myself (3) where my roots would settle (GB, MMC2, Glasgow).

The idea of roots settling suggests the idea of arriving home, confronting the *citizen of somewhere* or *birther* narrative of ancestral roots. We found, within the plasticity of the *I*-positional dialogical self, two key dialogues - intergenerational and transnational - which sustained the three social

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representations of home. Together these dialogues foreground the extent to which movement is central to people's representations of home, both in the dialogical sense and the sense of freedom of movement facilitated by the European Union project.

4. Intergenerational Dialogue.

In Extract 9, KB who is settled in London (see Extract 3), responds to the question “are you settled or do you think you will move again?”. Here representations of home are sustained by a series of intergenerational dialogical movements. First taking up the future-position of her children. Returning to the present she then develops an oppositional category between home/holiday.

Extract 9

KB: I believe...my children at the moment (.) they won't decide to go and settle back in Sudan. This is their place, and this is how they feel they were brought here, and that's their home. They love to go to Sudan, visit the...grandparents and the aunties and other things, but like the holiday. They are not thinking about work or to study there. Our house, our home is here. I go and see my relatives frequently, now I'm not bound with children, little ones, so anytime I want to go I can, but I feel, I feel, this is how (.) I can't see myself away from my children, and uhh (3) this is we were (.) they were brought up, and this is where they wanted to stay (...). I'm English (laughs) I'm British, I've got British passport (.) I'm living in England, my home in England, but I always mention I'm not English, I have to mention my root. I have uhh...why I mention my root? Like my daughter might say different. My daughter will say that she is, like, brought up here, she is...although she is, like, not White English, but she is English in her culture and thinking. She can understand things like, more than me, because she opened her eyes in this country (KB, MMC7, London).

When KB reflects on whether England is *her home*, her positional moves relate to freedom/responsibility dilemma - *I-Free-Mover* and *I-Mother*. Her use of the word “but” signals an affective tension expressed as repetition (“I feel, I feel”) between moving on and staying in England. KB sustains this ambivalent citizenship by making a further identity move between I-English/I-Not English identities. Her daughter who “opens her eyes” in England is more English in thinking/culture.

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The articulation of her child as categorically distinct from “White English” introduces the voice of the Other revealing the internalization of a populist racialized logic of white citizens as “true people”, true English. The dialogical nature of contested citizenship is revealed by the comment “I always have to mention”. The many dialogical moves within Extract 9 reveals the extent to which intersubjective recognition involves an on-going negotiation with others.

It is important to note that dilemmatic thinking and the use of intergenerational dialogue was found all along the migration-mobility continuum. In Extract 10, RV in MMC1, i.e. generational non-migrant, presents initially a seemingly unambivalent representation of home, referring to her son, who lives in Germany as ‘coming home’ to the UK. In the context of Germany, both England and Scotland are home. Projecting to a future self in her eighties and the potential dependencies of old age, RV sets up a dialogue between herself and her son, suggesting a future move. Further relationships enter the dialogue and it becomes multi-voiced, with the voices of friends and other children supporting a construction of an *I*-extended grandmother position.

Extract 10

RV: My son in Germany, they’ve bought a lovely house in Norwich. He’s letting it out but he’s (.) they’re coming home in April and they want me to go and live with them. And I says ‘well when I’m eighty, I’ll come and live’ but all my friends and my cousins, ‘oh please’ and wee [friend’s name] ‘Oh RV, no, you cannae go’ coz wee [friend’s child] calls me ‘Granny RV’ (.) eh (.) oh they would be broken-hearted if I went. But [my son], he wants me to go and live with him. But I love Scotland and I love my flat. But I don’t know what like I’ll be at eighty. I could also live in Denmark because I’ve got the families there. (RV, MMC1, Glasgow).

Extract 10 reveals an intense affective love of place but also shows how transnationalism is influencing social representations of home for citizens with no personal migration experience.

5. Transnational Dialogue

We found transnational dialogue across the Migration-Mobility Continuum suggesting the need for a fuller sense of the role of freedom of movement within and beyond Europe. This raises the crucial

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question (mobilised by populist leaders) of whether citizens could indeed be citizens of anywhere /nowhere if their common-sense representation of being at home relates principally to being amongst loved ones.

In Extract 11 QB's response to a question on whether she would move again contains similar intergenerational dialogue as Extract 9 and 10. Equally QB's *I*-British citizen position is used to suggest freedom of movement to settle anywhere in the world. QB (MMC7) illustrates the unfinalizable nature of settlement and transnational horizons. The imagined freedom to move around the world to be near relatives.

Extract 11

QB: E::r (.) I (.) yeah, *this is actually a very personal* and tricky question (2) I love life I'm living just now and my commitments and engagements here as well. Only reason I would move if my children moving and I would be with them. I would like to be with them but it's not (.) er (.) necessary because I left my Mum behind because I <had> to. But this is actually good now as a British citizen, you can travel and you (.) you can settle any place in the world and you don't need, you know, to go through all procedure of applying for settlement. You can go back to Kosova or another country and this is actually is only reason I like to be nearby my children, where they are, but I have three sons and you never know where they are. They can be in three different part of the (.) er (.) world and maybe I (.) I have to travel just to (.) to (.) not stay with them but to be nearby (QB, MMC7, Glasgow).

QB illustrates how dialogical positioning maintains tensegrity (Marsico & Tateo, 2017) by carefully balancing a narrative of the losses, of seeking refuge from the Kosovan war, to the gains – loving life now and having British citizenship. Transnational positioning can relate to the idea of belonging simultaneously to places across the world, as well as the diachronic moves discussed earlier. BV in the final Extract 12 (MMC8, i.e. serial mover now settled), develops the transnational dimension of home further, she constructs it as belonging to “both sides of the world”.

Extract 12

BV: I think my (.) my belonging is almost (.) I feel (.) I feel like I belong to a sort of divided family group as well because my partner's German so we have a transglobal issue *with um* (.) with our families and our (.) our histories. I guess I identify with a lot of people in that I know it's an increasing number of people that (.) that have no obvious home that they will go back to with their family, <to> their family (...) So we're always going to have family on both sides of the world so we're never going to really feel like we're (.) um (1) we're in one place forever because (1) we can never (.) we can never just cut ourselves off from one side of the world (BV, MMC8, Glasgow).

BV, who was born in Australia, uses a key rhetorical move, by placing herself into a transnational group of an “increasing number of people” who have “no obvious home”. Her use of the term obvious suggests the internalization of a hegemonic “born and bred” narrative (Taylor, 2010) which interpolates her sense of home. This is not yet an emancipatory counter social representation as there is a sense of it being a subordinated representation even if it is shared. She moves lightly between going back to family, but also projects forward “we are never” to say that we will not ultimately settle “forever” because family ties stretch to the “other side of the world”.

Together these two processes of intergenerational and transnational dialogue reveal the complexities around citizenship and place when people articulate their social representations of home. Populist leaders who seek to *un-home* assume that insecurity and instability is the preserve of migrants/migrant descent citizens. We found insecurity and instability occurred all the way along the Migration-Mobility Continuum. Those with lower migration-mobility did not use representations relating to threat/security but rather relating to independence/dependence, except when they were interpolated by racialized ‘white’ accounts of belonging e.g. GB in MMC2 (Extracts 5 and 8). This raises the key question for the discussion why nationalist xenophobic populist collective imaginaries of home are gaining traction across Europe and beyond.

Discussion

The article addresses the question *What is the relationship between nationalist populism's use of the concept of home and social representations of the dynamics of home along the migration-mobility*

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continuum? The success of nationalist populism, in the European context, in our view relates to an unexamined appeal to common-sense rationalities via a political style which foregrounds threat/security. This occurs at two levels, first, in the sense of migration threat (for those deemed in-group) and the insecurities where a threatened present serves to foreshadow possible futures. Second, in the internalization of nationalist threat by those who have higher degrees of migration-mobility (MMC 7 – 10). When home is examined explicitly, representations of home contain an existential insecurity for all. The resolution of which, whilst often anchored by a social representation of birthplace, becomes a dynamic, intergenerational, transnational process across the life course.

Social representations of home are dynamic in the sense of changing over the life course, they are also dynamic in the extent to which they relate to movement for everyone along the migration-mobility continuum. People who are generationally non-mobile in terms of their past (MMC1) use dialogical movement taking up the *I*-migrant position for rhetorical purposes. Equally the movement of their children/relatives, particularly post the European Union's Maastricht Treaty, ties them to the future-possibility of movement and becoming a migrant themselves.

New nationalist populism succeeds because the people's actual social representations of home are under-articulated within public spheres. People use a meta-representation of a native, "born and bred" public to insecurely imagine others who are more at home than themselves. This has important social psychological implications in so far as it influences how people shape their own futures.

The three social representations use different chronotopes of home, which relate to the temporal dimension of threatened present central to populist projects (Mols & Jetten, 2014; Brescó de Luna, 2017; Capelos & Katsanidou, 2018) and include spatial considerations, such as foreshadowing and vanishing points. This suggests that future studies extending the work of Mols & Jetten in analysing populist communications would be informed by identifying spacetime chronotopes.

Equally the positional flexibility and capacity for tensegrity (Marsico & Tateo, 2017) demonstrated by dialogical citizens, moving from *I*-position to *I*-position, within the secure space of a psychological

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interview points to the value of dialogical research. Dialogical research can potentially unpack psychological phenomena such as conflictual thinking (Spruyt et al, 2016) and reactionism (Capelos & Katsanidou, 2019). This present study reveals the possible dialogical conditions that reduce positional rigidity associated with hyper-partisanship. Further interventions which enable the public to hear each other as diverse and dissenting dialogical citizens move beyond the requirement for consensus found in deliberative forums and citizen assemblies. This could potentially destabilise *I-the-People* forms of leadership (Singh,2017).

Undoubtedly, an affective sense of threat continues to pervade the people's representations of home in this study. In this regard, the use of the Migration-Mobility Continuum could be a key intervention both as analytical lens but equally as a methodological means of challenging the binary between migrants and non-migrant. This binary remains central to both horizontal and vertical forms of nationalist populism. Investigating the relationship between populist rhetoric of home and people's actual social representations of home re-socialises home. A parameter of this study, is its use of quota sampling along the MMC, rather than the probability sampling associated with attitudinal scales. Yet it begins a much-needed de-reification of both the *public* objectified as static and *home* objectified and anchored as bounded and territorial. We recognise the parameters of this study in analysing emic spontaneous references to home. Our findings represent a preliminary study which makes the case for more psychological studies into the concept of home.

This analysis concentrates on how unexamined hegemonic representations of home support national populism's territorial vision, however there may be value in deeper comparison of how the concept-formation around home is occurring in specific national contexts, particularly ones where left-wing grassroots populism is occurring (Anduiza, Guinjoan & Rico, 2019). The power of 'the people' to articulate their opinions and voices, through conditions of direct democracy, are likely to be increasingly mainstreamed within liberal democracies. Social Representations theory (SRT), particularly in its dialogical form, provides a means to analyse on-going populist appeals to the importance of common sense. Whilst populist politicians have cyclical success during economic downturns, they offer a

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misrepresentation of home that doesn't necessarily 'ring true' with ordinary people. People's actual social representations of home reveal the multi-voiced capacities of the public. They show that, under certain conditions, citizens can "dwell in ambivalence" (Mitzen, 2018, p.1381). It is studies which seek to understand those conditions that will support a populated dialogical common-sense that destabilizes the monological unpopulated common-sense central to both a vertical people/elite and a horizontal people/migrant Manichean logic of populism.

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