**Qualitative methodologies in the study of citizenship and migration:
Introduction to the special issue**

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Abstract

This special issue brings together contributions on citizenship from social psychology. The six papers that make up the special issue focus on different cases but they all share in common: (i) a focus on studying citizenship and migration albeit different aspects and in different contexts; (ii) an approach to citizenship from the 'ground', focusing on the ways in which social actors understand, negotiate and enact citizenship; (iii) the use of qualitative research to study citizenship and migration; (iv) and a social psychological perspective. Expanding on recent contributions on the study of citizenship in social psychology (Condor, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2015), the contributions in this special issue display a preoccupation with social actors' *own orientations towards citizenship* in particular, using mainly discursive methods to analyze them.

Keywords: citizenship, migration, social psychology, qualitative research, discourse

Introduction

Citizenship constitutes a contested, almost elusive, concept that signifies many different and potentially contradictory things (Condor, 2011a). It usually connotes the 'status of individuals in relation to a political unit' (Olson, 2008, cited in Condor, 2011a). Such a broad definition means that citizenship can include different dimensions, such as legal status, rights, political processes and participation and also a sense of belonging (Bloemraad, 2000; Bosniak, 2000). As it can be easily understood such a broad definition that entails these dimensions means that they can often complement each other or produce tensions (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008). One of these tensions, increasingly nowadays, is the tension between citizenship (or universal citizenship) and migration. One of the main arguments put forward is that globalization forces may lead to a de-nationalised, universalistic form of citizenship (Bosniak, 2000; Ong, 2007). Nevertheless, this does not mean that migrants do not meet new boundaries and exclusions. In supranational organizations, such as the European Union, internal boundaries seem to wane but at the same time mobility is not governed by the same standards for everyone everywhere; a constant process of re-bordering is witnessed as new, internal and external boundaries are built to stop migrants or refugees (Joppke, 2008; Kofman, 1995). These practices are based on systems of control as well as differentiations that create a hierarchy among migrants who are already within the borders of a transitory/receiving nation state (Foucher, 1998; Cohen, Humphries & Mynott, 2002; Fassin, 2011; Yuval Davis, 2011). Thus, the practices related to bordering 'are integral to contemporary citizenship' (Muller, 2010: 76; Anderson, Gibney & Paoletti, 2011; Papadopoulos, Chalkias & Fratsea, 2013) and citizenship policies, through 'differential inclusion', become one of the most important mechanism in the processes of production of marginalization and exclusion of immigrants (see also Papadopoulos et al., 2013).

Within the sphere of Western liberal democracies civic values seem to be widely accepted, not only in the academic realm, but also in everyday politics, to the extent that some researchers talk of a ‘civic zeitgeist’ (Halikiopoulou, Mock & Vasilopoulou, 2013). These values seem to be so prominent, that even radical right parties that champion the exclusion of immigrants base their arguments in civic premises, arguing that they are the ones who truly defend tolerance, democracy and equality (Halikiopoulou, Mock & Vasilopoulou, 2013; Σαπουντζής, 2013). In the UK complaint letters written by members of a local community on the establishment of ‘new age travellers’ in the region justified their (rhetorical) exclusion on the grounds that ‘new age travellers’ do not fulfil their civic duties and do not contribute to the local community (Barnes, Auburn & Lea, 2004). Often states that want to display their progressive liberal profile can demonstrate some form of ‘civic’ tokenism: they may grant some citizenship rights to minority groups but refrain from giving all citizenship rights. It is argued for example that while certain states might be willing to acknowledge rights of cultural expression and access to welfare, they might be quite reluctant to give political rights that might shift power relations within the society (Ariely, 2011).

Within this special issue we aim to examine the ways in which people negotiate citizenship and boundaries between citizens and non-citizens in the course of verbal interaction. After the explosion of citizenship studies in the ‘90s that was noted by Kymlicka & Norman (1994), citizenship as a research topic has started to attract attention within the discipline of social psychology. Although there were some pioneers whose work reflected these concerns and some research programmes which aimed at facilitating civic participation, citizenship did not establish itself as an ongoing research topic within social psychology (Stevenson, Dixon, Hopkins & Luyt, 2015). What is more, psychological traditions such as Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and the Community Psychology of citizen participation which placed emphasis on the notion of citizenship used the term in rather restrictive sense omitting the wider socio-political context within which it has taken shape (Stevenson et al., 2015). The lag of socio-psychological research on the topic seems quite odd as Condor (2011a) argues, since many of the phenomena we examine as social psychologists are to an extent similar to the concerns addressed by theorists and researchers who study citizenship. Apart from the individual papers that occasionally appear in various socio-psychological journals, special issues around the theme of citizenship started to emerge in journals such as *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *Psychologica Belgica*. Taking into consideration the titles of the journals mentioned begs the question: why would citizenship be a plausible subject matter for ‘Qualitative Psychology’ in particular? In the following few pages we will try to address this question, providing answers first to two other, probably related questions: What contribution can social psychology make to the study of citizenship (which to a large extent has been already answered by other researchers) and what citizenship as a concept has to offer to social

psychology. Finally, we will locate the contributions of the articles included in this special issue to answering these three questions.

Social psychology and citizenship

Recently it is often argued that socio-psychological research can offer useful insights to the study of citizenship. These arguments highlight the way citizenship has been studied in the social and political sciences claiming that to a large extent these sciences advocated a state-centred institutional prism, focusing on policy-making or on institutional settings (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2015). In addition it is also claimed that both policy makers and theorists use top-down approaches where, at the level of policy making, programmes are introduced to “educate” proper citizens, while theorists and researchers examine whether people comply with taxonomies of abstract civic standards (Condor, 2011a). In contrast, socio-psychological accounts of citizenship can highlight the ways in which social actors both understand *and* perform citizenship in everyday encounters. It seizes then to be an abstract notion and it is treated as integral to a persons’ subjectivity, enacted in different contexts (Stevenson, Dixon, Hopkins, Luyt, 2015). Several approaches view citizenship as a form of identity which leads to action and may have real consequences for the people involved in the specific social situation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sanchez-Manaz & Klein, 2003; Isin, 2009). A sizeable body of research comes from the study of Muslim’s identity in the UK and the rise of islamophobia in the wake of September the 11th and the various terrorist attacks across Europe. Part of this research demonstrates the misrecognition of British Muslims who are often positioned as Muslims and not as Britons by British majority members. Having their civic identities negated their participation to the public sphere was constrained and thus led to their exclusion and to limitations on how they should perform their Britishness (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011). In the case of airports it has demonstrated that being identified as a Muslim, and thus as a possible security threat, and not as a British citizen, leads to the Muslims exclusion, since this misrecognition leads them to physical and psychological retreat and inhibits behaviours that could be seen to comprise essential acts of citizenship (Blackwood, Hopkins & Reicher, 2015).

Other research projects, noticing the top-down approach to the notion of citizenship often used in political and social sciences, aimed to examine the ways in which official policies and naturalization processes are being understood and negotiated by the people involved, both migrants and citizenship officers. These projects usually focus on the interplay between official discourses and the way these are reproduced and used by people in certain contexts. Andreouli and Howarth (2013) have examined the way people who applied for citizenship in the UK take up the notion of “earned citizenship” which is implicitly present in the naturalization policies, demarcating immigrants who “deserve” citizenship (usually skilled migrants of high social status) from undeserving immigrants (unskilled migrants). Their work stresses the interplay of official policies and lay representations of citizenship, noticing that negotiation of identities in specific contexts is often restricted by the way identities are constructed

in official state policies. Moreover, citizenship officers often constructed images of “good”, “worthy” immigrants which were juxtaposed to images of “bad”, “opportunistic” immigrants, depending on the content of the British identity propagated in different contexts (Andreouli & Dashtipour, 2014). These projects demonstrate that state citizenship policies may have an impact on how people understand their identity, but this does not mean that people accept them in a uniform fashion, reproducing the official policy: meaning is often negotiated and debated in interactions in different contexts.

Citizenship and social psychology

The above arguments may cast light on the potential contribution of social psychology on the study of citizenship. From the standpoint of social psychology though another query quite understandably may arise: to what extent our scientific domain may profit from the addition and a new concept? Or, in other words, what new insights may citizenship bear to social psychology? Condor stated that if we face “dilemmas and disagreement as inevitable, and often productive, features of everyday citizenship, social psychological perspectives also have the potential to rehabilitate the image of the citizen” (Condor, 2011, p. 198). Although this argument concerned social psychology’s contribution to the study of citizenship, reversing it we could claim that treating citizenship as an analytic notion in social psychology could potentially help the discipline to re-politicize the social subject. Of course we do not claim that social and political psychology did not pay attention to political issues. Nonetheless, the emphasis has been laid mainly on the individual and his cognitive abilities which allow him/her to act as a citizen (Barnes, Auburn & Lea, 2004; Condor & Gibson, 2007). It is often argued that such an individualistic view does not take into consideration the social forces or settings that underpin our identities as citizens (Prilleltensky, 1994; Sapountzis & Vikka, 2015). On the other hand theories of group relations such as Self Categorization Theory (SCT) often do not consider the specific socio-historical context that shapes the meaning of identities and treat them as interchangeable categories (Billig, 1995). Moreover, according to SCT people categorize themselves most of the times in a dichotomous way: either as group members or as individuals¹.

The notion of citizenship can potentially help us to overcome the one-sided emphasis of previous socio-psychological research. To see how this can be done we should remind ourselves of some of the different aspects the notion entails: among others a sense of belonging, duties and obligations (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008) and a relation to a state (Olson, 2008). In other words, citizens share a horizontal comradeship (Sindic, 2011) which blurs differences in status or financial background (Marshall, 1950/1992). Nevertheless, within the context of liberal democracy citizens are also individuals. Condor and Gibson (2007) have illustrated how young people in

¹ This process is the outcome of meta-contrast ratio, where people cognitively judge the similarities and differences between categories in order to adopt one (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994).

the UK draw from both values of individual rights and communitarian duty, both hallmarks of modern liberal democracy: on occasions they distinguished “between rights to hold an opinion, rights to voice an opinion and rights to act on an opinion” (p. 136). The second important aspect of citizenship as described above is the relation to the state, vertical citizenship. As such it designates also a relation to the formal institutions of civic society. Social psychologists have already advocated the need to incorporate the role of institutions in shaping our subjective understanding of citizenship (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Elchereth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). The aforementioned researchers though do not claim that certain meanings of the social world are imposed onto people precluding thinking. On the contrary, especially researchers working within the social representations paradigm argue that the reified universe of social representations and the consensual everyday sphere of representations are linked together and the reified universe can set the agenda of what is relevant for making sense of our identities (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013). This certainly leaves room for deliberation, argumentation and disagreement in the process of making sense of our everyday identities. Of course as the thesis of Ideological Dilemmas (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, & Rapley, 1988) posits, philosophies, and we assume official policies, carry their own contradictions. Gray and Griffin (2014) for example argue that the currently used citizenship test in UK implicitly advances different conceptions of what is a British identity, while Condor (2011b) has demonstrated how political discourses that celebrate multiculturalism also carry potentially exclusionary connotations. The above argument suggests that citizenship as a research topic can potentially help us as social psychologists to accommodate three different levels of analysis, namely individual, social and institutional without collapsing the one into the other.

Conclusion: Why a Qualitative psychology in the study of citizenship

The general aim of this Special Issue of Qualitative Psychology is to examine the ways in which people understand, negotiate and enact citizenship in discourse. The special issue aims to contribute to the developing social psychology of citizenship (see inter alia Condor, 2011a; Stevenson et al., 2015) by drawing on recent qualitative research in social psychology focusing in particular on intergroup relations (integration regimes, inclusion and exclusion) and polity membership (identity, belonging and social citizenship).

The six articles address a range of issues in citizenship studies: social citizenship and immigration (Gibson, Crossland & Hamilton); cultural citizenship and immigration (Varjonen, Nortio, Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti); spatialized understandings of citizenship (Stevenson & Sagherian-Dickey); immigrant integration, multiculturalism and citizenship (Figgou); immigration, citizenship and social inclusion (Sapountzis & Xenitidou); and national history, citizenship and immigrants’ rights (Kadianaki, Andreouli & Carretero). Four of the articles discuss interview data (Figgou; Varjonen et al., Stevenson & Sagherian-Dickey; Sapountzis & Xenitidou). Two articles present

qualitative data gathered through online posts (Gibson & Hamilton; Kadianaki et al.). Three articles draw on qualitative research in Greece, one in Finland, one in the UK and one in Northern Ireland. Notwithstanding the different contexts, all of the authors display a concern over the tensions inherent in everyday understandings and experiences of citizenship in concrete social encounters and all of the contributions share an empirical emphasis on discourse.

While the emphasis on discourse may suggest focusing on a single theoretical paradigm as the basis for the social psychology of citizenship (such as Sanchez-Mazas & Klein, 2003), the articles exemplify variation, reflecting not only the complexity in everyday understandings and experiences of citizenship but also in the social psychological understandings of the concept. Five out of the six articles engage with discursive psychology in one way or another but do so exemplifying a variety in the ways in which everyday understandings of citizenship are discussed, as by focusing on the social patterning of background normative conceptions we begin to locate their ideological underpinnings in-context (Wetherell, 1998). Varjonen et al. draw on principles of discursive psychology focusing on the action orientation of talk (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and the implications and consequences of different descriptions for cultural citizenship. Gibson et al. employ a discursive-rhetorical approach (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Billig, 1987) in order to analyse how assumptions concerning the psychological have been woven into contemporary welfare regimes. Figgou's analysis uses tools and concepts from rhetorical (Billig, 1987) and critical discursive social psychology (Wetherell, 1998) as part of a social psychological approach that considers citizenship and multiculturalism as contextually bounded social action. Stevenson and Sagherian-Dickey draw on critical discursive social psychology (Wetherell, 1998) to investigate how accounts of personal experiences are both shaped by the broader political context of Northern Ireland *and* serve to perpetuate or transform this context. Sapountzis and Xenitidou draw on rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1987), critical discursive social psychology (Wetherell, 1998) and the thesis of Ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988), and employ tools from discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) in the analysis of the possible asymmetries between ethnic majority discourses on citizenship and those of immigrants. Finally, one article (Kadianaki et al.) uses a naturalistic qualitative approach and thematic analysis to study the interconnection between representations of history and representations of citizenship.

Each article engages in a discussion of the concept of citizenship drawing on existing work outside social psychology (Marshall, 1950; Isin and Wood, 1999; Isin & Neilsen, 2008; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Lister, 2003), but also systematically engaging with contributions from within social psychology of citizenship (see *inter alia* Shotter, 1993; Barnes, Auburn & Lea, 2004; Haste, 2004; Condor, 2011a; Gibson, 2009; Gibson, 2011; Gibson & Hamilton, 2009; Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Gray & Griffin, 2013). Specifically, some authors acknowledge Marshall's (1950/1992) seminal work on citizenship and his definition

of citizenship as a 'claim to be accepted as full members of the society' (p. 6). Others acknowledge the criticisms on his tripartite distinction between civil, political and social citizenship but also that more recent approaches to citizenship entail these distinctions. For example, Isin and Wood's (1999) definition which treats of citizenship as: cultural, civic, economic, social and subjective – citizenship as '*both* a set of practices (cultural, symbolic and economic) and a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity' (p. 4, italics in original). Some authors also refer to Isin and Wood's (1999) definition of citizenship as 'competent membership in a polity' (p. 4), in particular discussing the association of citizenship with competency. Other authors draw on approaches to citizenship as *both* a hierarchy of statuses related to processes of inclusion and exclusion (Hansen & Weil, 2000) *and* as protest politics and claims making practices by marginal, activist groups (Isin, 2009). Finally, authors also draw on work that approaches citizenship through a distinction between ethnic and civic (Brubaker, 1992; Joppke, 2003), in order to engage in a discussion of the ways in which these are used 'in action'.

From social psychology, Shotter's (1993) work is drawn upon as an early social constructionist approach to the study of citizenship in social psychology, highlighting the complexity, ambiguity and ambivalence of 'citizenship in action'. In this line of work, discursive approaches to the study of citizenship in social psychology are commonly drawn upon from the authors of this special issue. In particular the approach to citizenship as a highly contested and elusive concept and a view of it as active practice (see *inter alia* Condor, 2011), focusing on understandings of citizenship 'on the ground' but also on the relationship between everyday accounts, institutional discourse and social theory on citizenship (see *inter alia* Andreouli, & Howarth, 2013; Gibson & Hamilton, 2011; Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2015; Andreouli, Kadianaki, & Xenitidou, in press), negotiating participation, belonging, inclusion and exclusion (Barnes, Auburn & Lea, 2004; Haste, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005; 2007; Gibson, 2009; Gibson, 2011; Condor & Gibson, 2007; Andreouli & Dashtipour, 2014; Gray & Griffin, 2014; Stevenson, McNamara & Muldoon, 2014).

The approaches above are provided by discursive and rhetorical developments in social psychology. Authors' engagement with them indicates a dynamic dialogue between social science at large and social psychology specifically on the topic of citizenship, springing in recent years and highlighting the contribution social psychology can offer the study of citizenship. Specifically, qualitative social psychology can cast light on the ways in which lay actors understand and negotiate the meaning of citizenship in various contexts and on the different ideologies and philosophies of citizenship they draw upon, but not in a top-down fashion: it pays attention to the ways in which lay actors actively engage them to achieve local interactional goals but also for more distal, macro-social purposes. In this way it may open a new way to accommodate old dichotomies such as individual/society focusing

on the relevance of and intersections between particular social categories implicated in the study of citizenship and immigration.

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