

## **Young people's experiences of citizenship in relation to place: A case study of three rural communities in Germany**

Janina Suppers, University of Waikato, jsuppers@waikato.ac.nz

Bastian Vajen, Leibniz University Hannover, vajen@idd.uni-hannover.de

### **Abstract**

Young people's experiences of citizenship play a significant part in shaping their citizenship norms and practices. While young people's experiences as citizens have been explored in the literature, the places they live, which shape their experiences, are often not considered. Using qualitative case study evidence in the form of 13 focus groups (n=35) and 21 interviews with secondary school students aged 13-17 from three rural communities in Germany, this research contributes to our understanding of how place is related to young people's experiences of citizenship. Findings suggest that place acted as a reference point when participants discussed their citizenship practices. Furthermore, place determined the citizenship spaces participants encountered and acted as a lens through which current citizenship issues were interpreted.

**Keywords:** citizenship, young people, rural communities, citizen norms, citizen practices, place

There is concern in public discourse and academic literature regarding the health of democracies, particularly the role of young citizens in democratic societies. These concerns are based on differences in citizen norms and practices being observed in comparison to other age groups and previous generations of young people, including a decrease in formal participation, later attainment of typical markers of adult status, and declining availability and use of civic infrastructure (Flanagan et al., 2012; Flinders et al., 2020). One significant factor in taking up citizenship activities in democratic societies is how young people experience their role as citizens

(Conover, 1995). In this research we aim to develop our understanding of how young people experience citizenship in relation to the places they inhabit. We focus on young people aged 13-17 because they are a unique group that differ from other young people because of the unique spaces they are excluded from (e.g. voting) and have access to (e.g. secondary school) which influences their citizenship experiences significantly. To explore the role of place in young people's citizenship experiences, we carried out case studies with young people in rural communities, which have traditionally been neglected in research which often focuses on urban youth or does not discuss place in relation to young people's experiences (Adolfsson & Coe, 2022; Waterson & Moffa, 2016). This is problematic because place shapes citizenship due to its influence on what young people deem appropriate citizenship norms, which practices young people believe citizens have access to and the citizenship spaces young people are exposed to (Adolfsson, 2024; Robson et al., 2007; Suppers, 2023). The case studies introduced here are Anderberg, Stolpe and Lohstedt, which are rural towns and their surrounding villages in the German counties of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Lower Saxony. Anderberg, Stolpe and Lohstedt are pseudonyms. We used pseudonyms for towns, schools and participant names to protect participants' identities. To guide our investigation, we developed the following research question: "How is place related to young people's citizenship experiences?"

### **Young people's experience of citizenship in connection to their places**

To understand young people's role in democratic societies, scholars are exploring young people's citizenship perceptions (Lister et al., 2003; Wood, 2022) and practices (Abs & Hahn-Laudenberg, 2017; Pickard, 2022; Schulz et al., 2018; Suppers, 2022a) as well as factors contributing to participants' engagement in democratic societies, including citizen norms (Bennett, 2003; Reichert, 2016; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a) and citizenship education (Achour & Wagner, 2020; Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Sant, 2019). With this paper we contribute to this scholarly debate by exploring an often overlooked aspect in previous research, namely how young

people's place is connected to their citizenship experiences, using three rural case study communities in Germany. In the following section, we define place, citizenship spaces and citizenship experiences. We also summarise the existing literature on young people's citizenship experiences in relation to place and how we aim to contribute to existing literature on contextualised notions of citizenship.

Place has received increasing attention in the literature since the spatial turn in the social sciences and humanities (Anderson et al., 2010). Place is often referred to as an elusive concept due to its multiple aspects including social, temporal and geographic dimension (Cresswell, 2015; Massey, 2005). The social dimension of place recognises a person's place within a group hierarchy in terms of their gender, race, class or culture, thus, affecting their access and opportunities, for example, to different citizenship practices (Anderson et al., 2010; Cresswell, 2015; Preston, 2003). The temporal dimension of place refers to places being shaped by specific experiences which are temporally bound, such as current community issues affecting the perception of a place. Massey (2005) describes this as place "won't be the same 'here' when it is no longer now" (p. 139). The geographic dimension of place refers to the spatiality of where participants live and how this affects their experiences but also norms, practices, memories and emotions:

As we experience a place we experience an intertwining of ourselves with that place; an intertwining of memories, both personal and collective, with the physicality of place. This interlacing of place and memory can be said to infuse memory with physicality, and place with mentality. (Booth, 2008, p. 299)

Place is "deeply woven into the fabric of who we are" (Preston, 2003, XVI) and, as a result intertwined with the actions we take:

[Place] is meaningfully constituted in relation to human agency and activity. A humanized space forms both the medium and outcome of action, both constraining and enabling it. (Tilley, 1994, p. 10)

Thus, we perceive place as connected to people's geographic, social and temporal position and experiences and, therefore, as a concept that needs to be understood beyond statistical characteristics (Woods, 2009). In this research we explore the role of place for young people's experience of citizenship through the context of three rural case study communities. As a result of the way we perceive place, we explore these communities through some statistical factors such as where the communities are and how many people live there but mainly focus our attention on young people's experiences of their places (Nelson et al., 2021).

Citizenship spaces are the different venues within which young people experience citizenship. These spaces may include schools or community organisations that provide opportunities for youth to express their views, participate in decision-making, and engage in collective action and, thus, are significant for shaping their citizenship experiences (Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010). The concept of citizenship spaces is rooted in the idea that citizenship is not confined to legal status or formal institutions but is actively practiced and experienced in everyday life (Isin & Nielsen, 2008). We argue that citizenship spaces are shaped and experienced differently by young people depending on the places they inhabit because they afford different social, temporal and geographic realities. Community services such as the voluntary fire brigade and volunteering in clubs (*Vereine* in German) are, for example, important pillars of many rural communities in Germany which would not exist otherwise due to the low population density in these areas (Gensicke 2014; Kleiner and Klärner 2019). As a result, community service may be a more visible and accepted citizenship space in rural communities than urban centres in Germany.

We use citizenship experiences as an umbrella term including citizen norms and practices. Citizen norms are ideas about what roles citizens have in a democracy and what qualities, attitudes, and behaviours are required from them (Abs & Hahn-Laudenberg, 2017; Dalton, 2008). Citizen norms can act as a vision for society and, thus, influence citizens' choice of preferred citizenship activities:

For some, a commitment to democracy is a promise to protect liberal notions of freedom, while for others democracy is primarily about equality or equality of opportunity. For some, civil society is the key, while for others, free markets are the great hope for a democratic society. For some, good citizens in a democracy volunteer, while for others they take active parts in political processes by voting, protesting, and working on political campaigns. (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b, p. 1)

Exploring citizen norms and how young people have developed these visions for democracy can provide insights into their intentions to participate in democratic systems, which can in turn help us understand how to keep democratic systems healthy (Almond & Verba, 1963; Bolzendahl & Coffe, 2013). Citizenship practices refer to the activities citizens engage in, that influence the state, address community issues, are politically motivated, serve the community, or relate to community decision-making (Suppers, 2022a; Theocharis & van Deth, 2018; Verba and Nie, 1972). For this research we use the term citizenship experiences including both norms and practices as our goal is to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of place in how young people understand and engage in citizenship, rather than having an interest in causal relationships between citizenship norms, practices and place.

The concept of young people as citizens is contested, as their status as neither child nor adult leads to ambiguity (Wood, 2022). Between the dependency of childhood and the perceived

independence of adulthood, young people are confronted with differing expectations and opportunities regarding their citizen roles (Flanagan, 2013; Pole et al., 2005). Including but not limited to criminal responsibility, the ability to vote or compulsory school attendance, but also the weight of their voice in public debates or their communal participation, the citizenship rights, -duties and -practices of young people are characterised by an “in-betweenness” status (Benedicto & Moran, 2007; Miranda et al., 2020). Thus, Wood (2022) characterises young people as being citizens, becoming citizens, and doing citizenship, highlighting their membership in a community, their marginal status and their active participation at the same time. Additionally, the literature suggests a range of typologies to explain young people’s citizenship experiences including, amongst others, Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004a) personally responsible, participatory and justice-oriented citizens, and Bennett’s (2003) dutiful and actualising citizens. Both typologies appear to perceive citizens on a continuum from dutiful citizens (personally-responsible, dutiful) to actualising citizens (justice-oriented, actualising) which has shaped much of the current citizenship debate and underpins many key quantitative citizenship studies such as the International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (Abs & Hahn-Laudenberg, 2017; Schulz et al., 2018) and a range of qualitative studies (Castro, 2013; Patterson et al., 2012; Sim et al., 2017). Based on applying dutiful and actualising citizen ideals, many studies find that young people prefer dutiful citizen ideals including obeying laws, maintaining economic stability for their families, volunteering and voting in elections than actualising citizen ideals (Kennedy et al., 2008; Schulz et al., 2018). It should be acknowledged that some studies have recently argued for a shift towards actualising citizenship including a diversification of citizens’ participation repertoires and perceptions as part of shifting democratic systems (Bennett, 2003, Flinders et al., 2020).

While the previously outlined models are useful to understand and categorise young people’s vision for society, these models often overlook that citizenship is a socio-cultural construct and

as such is deeply embedded in young people's place (Adolfsson, 2024; Akar, 2018; Orman & Demiral, 2023; Reichert, 2016). As previously discussed, aspects of young people's place that may shape their citizenship experiences include social, temporal and geographic dimensions such as the countries they live in and are from, their socio-economic background, their cultural characteristics and current citizenship issues. In addition, place may shape young people's vision for democratic societies and citizens. Rural young people, for example, may develop different citizen ideals than their urban peers due to their exposure to unique rural issues (e.g. remoteness), unique access to rural-specific activities (e.g. community clubs) and restrictions from some urban-centric citizenship activities (e.g. protests) (Adolfsson 2024; Robson et al., 2007). Previous studies have explored aspects of young people's citizenship in relation to their place including young people's activist citizenship in urban centres (Lam-Knott, 2020; Percy-Smith et al., 2019), young people's citizenship in relation to their socio-economic background and values (Arya, 2022), young people's engagement around specific political issues such as environmental action (Pickard, 2022; Orman & Demiral, 2023; Salo, 2020), young people's lives in rural communities (Antes, 2022; Benchekroun et al., 2022; Waterson & Moffa, 2016; Weller, 2009) and country level difference between young people's citizen conceptualisations (Goering, 2013; Miranda et al., 2020; Schulz et al., 2018).

In relation to young people in rural communities, previous studies have shown the impact of schools and social centres on young peoples' conception of citizenship due to their role as a place of community (Adolfsson, 2024; Leisa & Chiodo, 2007; Trelle & van Hoven, 2016). Furthermore, research suggests that students in rural communities tend to understand citizenship as a service to others in their community, with less emphasis put on the political aspect of citizenship, although this also influenced by the age of students (Leisa & Chiodo, 2007). Much of the existing literature on rural young people's citizenship is focused on isolated aspects of

citizenship such as activism or volunteering (Suppers, 2023; Kleiner, & Klärner, 2019; Quéniart, 2008), on young people who are already politically engaged (Adolfsson, 2024) or does not address the role of place “...rendering the experiences of youth in other places invisible” (Adolfsson & Coe, 2022, p. 2). Furthermore, existing research on young people in rural areas often focuses on topics such as aspirations, education opportunities, leisure, friendship and values (Antes et al., 2022; Benchekroun, 2022) rather than citizenship. This is especially true for Germany, where such studies mostly focus on Eastern Germany and cover topics like everyday disadvantages and outmigration (Meyer, 2020). This is a missed opportunity because being an engaged citizen can positively affect young people’s sense of belonging to their local communities and prevent rural outmigration (Baylina & Rodó-Zárate, 2020).

### **Rural communities and citizenship education in Germany**

As different rural characteristics can influence citizenship experiences (Waterson & Moffa, 2016), it is therefore important to describe rural regions in Germany. While an urban-rural divide exists regarding aspects such as population growth, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, access to public infrastructure and fast internet, there are also pronounced differences between western and eastern Germany. For example, in rural regions in East Germany stagnation of population and a slower GDP growth are much more common compared to the rest of Germany (Deppisch et al., 2022). Differences between northern and southern Germany do not exist to such an extent and are better framed as regional core–periphery distinctions with strong economic regions, more prevalent in southern Germany (Heider, 2023; Maseland, 2014). Subjective social status differences between urban and rural areas are rather weak, especially when compared to other countries such as France (Vigna, 2023). Overall, 98% of the German population, for example, can reach supermarkets or general physicians within 10 minutes by car, while 78% need 30 minutes or less to reach them by foot, highlighting that access to essential services is still generally secure for people in rural areas (Deppisch et al., 2022).

Additionally, civic education, which can influence young people's ideas about citizenship (Reichert, 2016), shows regional differences (Kenner, 2020). Due to German federalism, citizenship education is controlled by federal states, which leads to various different subjects being taught throughout Germany and to a bigger influence of regionally successful political parties on the extent and content of the subject (Lange, 2008; Kenner, 2020). In the case study county of Lower Saxony, citizenship education is taught as *Politics, Politics & Economics* as well as *Social Science* in different school types. In the case study county of Baden-Wuerttemberg it is taught as a newly developed citizenship subject called *Gemeinschaftskunde* (Social Studies).

### **Methods and case studies**

This research aims to analyse young people's citizenship experiences and spaces in relation to place. To do this, we used qualitative methods aiming to understand young people's experiences and perceptions of their roles as citizens (Creswell, 2009; Hopwood, 2004). Our methods included 13 focus groups with 35 secondary school students in Baden-Wuerttemberg and 21 interviews with secondary school students in Lower Saxony (n=21). All participants, as well as their legal guardians, gave informed consent to participate. Ethical approval was granted by relevant authorities, such as our Universities' Education Ethics Committee and the state school board. We recruited young people with different backgrounds regarding their age, gender, migratory background, socioeconomic status and school form.

We collected data in three case study communities, Stolpe and Lohstedt in Lower Saxony and Anderberg in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Two types of focus groups were conducted with 35 students from Anderberg (Year 8-10) including 8 focus groups led by researchers and 5 focus groups led by Year 10 students who co-created and carried out focus groups with their peers.

Participation of students in this part of the data collection was initiated by the researcher, but involved shared decisions with students who were part of the research process (Hart, 1997; Schäfer, 2012). For more methodological insights on student-led focus groups, refer to Suppers (2022b, p.115). All focus groups were conducted using Zoom ® and included questions about participants' perceptions of good citizenship, their engagement in citizenship activities and their experience of citizenship activities. After using open questions about participants' citizenship experiences and spaces, we probed participants further, asking them about specific citizenship spaces including online spaces, their community and their school. Focus group data was first structured by coding those participant comments related to their citizenship experiences and spaces. In the second step, we analysed data using reflexive thematic analysis, using strategies suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022).

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 students from Lower Saxony (Year 11) in a three-step process using virtually oriented tasks (Schäfer, 2012), including (1) adapted structure laying technique (Scheele & Groeben, 1988), (2) concept mapping (Kinchin et al., 2010) and (3) semi-structured interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). In the beginning of interviews, students were asked to write down everything they thought about when they heard the term "citizen". Then they were asked to organise their items on a new sheet of paper, to group terms based on relatedness as well as importance to them and create a concept map. Subsequent interviews covered central elements of citizenship, processes of inclusion and exclusion, and their own role as citizens. All data was audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using qualitative content analysis (Guest et al., 2011; Mayring, 2015).

All participants attended Year 8-11 at a secondary school (including a *Realschule*, *Gymnasium* and *Integrierte Gesamtschule*) in Stolpe, Lohstedt or Anderberg. We selected three different

German regions which, regarding certain quantifiable variables such as population density, exhibit elements of rurality in the German context, but we were more interested in the way the place the students inhabit was perceived by them and how they related it to citizenship experiences. All three towns were located in regions with solid infrastructure and economic opportunities, with Lohstedt and Stolpe being located in rural-urban fringes or peri-urban zones (Heider, 2023; Qviström, 2018). Our participants were aged between 13 and 17 years with 47% of our participants identifying as male, 52.6% identifying as female. Some participants (0.4%) have not shared this information with us. Participants attended Year 8 (12.2%), Year 9 (31.6%), Year 10 (17.5%) and Year 11 (38.7%). Participants' hometowns included the three case study towns, and surrounding villages, characterised by rurality including high agricultural yield and low population density. Out of the 42 participants who shared data on their hometowns, 45.2% lived in a village (less than 7,000 inhabitants), 28.6% lived in a small town (7,000-25,000 inhabitants) and 26.1% lived in a medium town (25,000-59,000).

### **Findings: How is place related to young people's citizenship experiences?**

Place was related to participants' citizenship experiences through, firstly, acting as a reference point when discussing their citizenship experiences, secondly, by determining the citizenship spaces they encountered and, finally, as a lens through which current citizenship issues were interpreted. As follows these three themes, which we developed based on our analysis of focus groups and interviews, are shared.

*Participants often used their local places as a reference point when discussing their citizenship experiences*

Participants' citizenship experiences were embedded in their local places which was evident in the many instances of participants mentioning their local communities when discussing citizenship experiences. Participants predominantly referred to their local community by using words such as town (*Ort*), municipality (*Gemeinde*), local clubs (*örtliche Vereine*), village (*Dorf*) or their school.

They [good citizens] shouldn't always just complain and not do anything. If they complain, they should say something or somehow collect signatures or let the municipality know they don't think it's ok how they are acting. (Maren, Y8, Anderberg)

I was also a volunteer in the church for a long time and helped other people... We also have a lot of extracurricular activities here [at school]. So I think here as a citizen... it feels to me as if I am here in my small circle and have certain tasks or also do what I enjoy, that I help other people and these kind of things. (Samira, Y11, Lohstedt)

I feel like a citizen of my village, also because of clubs and everything, you do a lot here, you have more to do with everyone here and in [next big town, location of the school], its just-, like something bigger (Swantje, Y11, Stolpe)

As evident in these comments, participants contextualised their citizenship in their local places even though we asked them about being a citizen in general, using questions like: "Which skills and characteristics do good citizens have?" or "How do you participate as a citizen?". Some participants also mentioned their country or Europe as a point of reference for their citizenship experience, as evident in the following comments.

As a citizen, you don't just live in one city. For example, I'm from [big city, other part of Germany], I've just moved here, and of course I would also say I'm a citizen of Stolpe, I'm also a citizen of [the district], but someone who lives in Germany is, in my opinion, a German citizen and not of a certain city. (Stella, Y11, Stolpe)

I would describe myself as European [citizen] to be honest. Because my father and my mother both have a migration background...My mother comes from Poland and my father from Spain, so they both moved here at a very young age and that's why I always find it relatively interesting when someone asks me about my nationality, because theoretically I'm Spanish, German and Polish and that's why I would describe myself as a European overall and not just as German (Adrian, Y11, Lohstedt)

### ***Participants' citizenship spaces are embedded in their place***

Participants discussed citizenship experiences in multiple overlapping spaces that were predominantly embedded in their local place including school, everyday spaces, their municipality or town, and beyond their municipality. In addition, participants mentioned online spaces as a further space for citizenship, which appeared unrelated to their place. The spaces, mentioned by participants are listed in **Table 1**, along with examples from focus groups and interviews.

### **Table 1: Spaces for young people's citizenship experiences in relation to their rural places**

School spaces for citizenship included the form class, lessons, extracurriculars and the student council. Form class translates to *Klasse* in German which is a system by which students are taught in small groups of 20-30 students from the same year. Students typically stay in their form class throughout their time at school which often leads to the development of a sense of

community and, thus, can be an important space for citizenship. School-based citizenship was often carried out collectively with classmates, the student council or teachers. It was also often discussed in relation to negotiating school-based power-relationships, as evident in Magda's comment regarding dress regulations (Table 1). Everyday spaces include the supermarket and participants' homes. Citizenship within the everyday space was often discussed as a collective endeavour including family members and peers. The municipality appeared to be a particularly important space for participants including contexts such as the town council, community clubs, church, social institutions such as retirement homes, the voluntary fire brigade and the swim lifesaving club (which is part of the nation-wide German Life Saving Organisation, called *DLRG*), and public spaces. Community clubs appeared to be particularly important spaces for participants as they were frequently mentioned in connection to their citizenship experiences. They included sports clubs, music clubs and horticulture clubs. A few participants mentioned citizenship spaces beyond their municipality which included attending protests in cities surrounding their villages or towns and, as discussed within the previous theme, identifying as a citizen in Germany, Europe and the world. Many participants mentioned that protests were often inaccessible to them because of the distance to big towns, as described by Zoe (Y10, Anderberg): "Protests are mostly in a city that is not easy for me to get to...". Online spaces were the only citizenship space, mentioned by participants, that did not appear to be connected to their local place. This space included social networking platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, YouTube, gaming servers and websites for accessing information on political issues.

### ***Participants contextualise (global) citizenship issues in their local places***

Participants discussed some national and global citizenship issues by contextualising them in their local places. The first contextualised citizenship issue, mentioned by participants, was the COVID-19 pandemic, discussed in relation to the concepts of solidarity and freedom of speech:

...as a good citizen you shouldn't be selfish during crises and say 'I won't wear a mask' because masks don't protect you but they protect others...it's really not that bad to wear a mask. We also have to wear them for six hours during school. (Magda, Y10, Anderberg)

The other day my brother, a few friends and I went out at night to take down anti-Corona posters. We saw them at a primary school in Anderberg...freedom of expression is good but that was too far. I think it's illegal to put them on there because they have to be approved, especially with young children (Maria, Y10, Anderberg)

Now during COVID, or with other diseases, that you simply support each other or that you simply bring something from supermarket for the neighbour or something like that. I think that's also important and necessary, maybe in a democracy but also in life in general, that you can give something back to other people. (Samira, Y11, Lohstedt)

Instead of talking about the COVID-19 pandemic as a general citizenship issue, participants referred to local citizenship practices, norms and experiences like experiencing the norm of solidarity by having to wear a mask at school or by describing a sort of activist citizenship practice.

A second wider citizenship issue participants contextualised in their local place included environmental concerns:

Jona: Keeping the environment clean...if you see a mattress in the forest and there is no person around who looks like they would sleep on the mattress, that you take it and dispose of it.

Tilo: We live in the forest and people drive past in their cars and throw their rubbish out of their windows...

(Y9 researcher-led focus group, Anderberg)

This conversation indicates that Jona and Tilo have experienced environmental concerns first-hand in their local place in form of littering and, thus, discussed keeping the environment clean as an important citizen skill. A third citizenship issue, contextualised by participants in their local community were elections and community decision-making which were discussed in connection to school elections, local community elections, mayoral elections and decisions around community buildings:

Jen: ...what do you think should be changed?

Theo: ...the decision-making right also for kids, actually that's a bit over the top, for youth, that they can be part of decisions about things, that they aren't always left out of each small decision. I think in Sendringen [a small village nearby] I heard that this small shop there is being renovated and children and youth were not allowed to be part of the decision. I think everyone should be allowed to participate in decisions...

(Year 9 student-led focus group, Anderberg)

As Theo's comment shows, the need for change was contextualised in issues relevant to his local community, such as the renovation of a community building. This comment also shows

that negative experiences of local municipal decision-making processes can influence participants' experience of who can be a citizen, as well as available and acceptable citizenship practices and norms. Furthermore, some participants also referred to global and national citizenship issues and discussed them on an abstract level such as presidential elections in the United States or health issues, or with limited reference to their local environments, such as migration and granting asylum for refugees.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

This research examined young people's experiences of citizenship in relation to place. In addition, this research contributed to our understanding of young people's citizenship in rural communities which is currently underrepresented in the literature (Adolfsson & Coe, 2022; Waterson & Moffa, 2016). Our analysis, firstly, indicated that place played an important role in participants' experiences of citizenship by serving as a reference point to develop citizenship norms and practices and by predetermining accessible and appropriate spaces to participate for citizens. Our findings also suggested that the spaces within which participants described their citizenship were often closely connected to their place, predominantly small rural communities. An exception to this was the online space which did not appear to be directly related to participants' places. This is supported by literature such as Granow and Scolari (2022) who propose that their participants did not differ in their use of Tik Tok® according to geographical location. Exploring the connection between online citizenship spaces and place, would, however, be an interesting area for further exploration. Gray (2009), for example, suggests that the internet plays an important role for young people from rural communities in accessing information about activist causes that are less prevalent in rural communities than in urban centres, such as LGBTQ+ rights. As for the other citizenship spaces, identified in this research (school, every-

day spaces, municipality, beyond municipality), participants appeared to make connections between their citizenship and local place independently from interview and focus group questions which were posed in general terms, asking about their citizenship experiences without referring to their local areas. This supports the idea of citizenship as a socio-cultural construct embedded in citizens' social worlds (Akar, 2018; Orman & Demiral, 2023). We argue that current citizenship research, particularly large-scale quantitative studies, such as the International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (Schulz et al., 2018) which are influential on youth policy-making, could benefit from an inclusion of more contextualised, place-based measures in research on young people's citizenship which according to our findings has a key impact on young people's experience of citizenship. Currently these studies predominantly include de-contextualised and urban centric measures for citizenship such as "blocking traffic" which leads to a misrepresentation of some young people's citizenship norms and practices. This is particularly true for young people from rural places. The spaces indicated in this case study could be a starting point for considering a wider range of citizenship spaces to be added to future research. It should be acknowledged that the spaces identified in this research originated from a case study in three rural communities in Germany and, thus, may not represent rural places elsewhere, meaning the spaces we suggest might need to be adapted for different regions in Germany or countries in the world. Furthermore, future research could include items that allow participants to not only reflect on citizenship experiences in general, but also to highlight what it means to be a citizen in their unique local community. This might include using follow-up questions to allow participants to reflect on a wider range of citizenship experiences than they initially considered part of their citizenship concepts. This approach proved useful in our research. Connected to this, it seems relevant for future studies on young people's citizenship

experiences to include information on participants' places including social, temporal and geographical aspects (Cresswell, 2015; Massey, 2005) through both statistical characteristics and participants' perceptions (Nelson et al., 2021; Woods, 2009).

Second, our findings indicate that participants' local places acted as a lens through which they interpreted (global) citizenship issues. Participants' citizenship experiences were, for example, affected by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as by environmental and democratic concerns. Some participants described these events as negative citizenship experiences, which restricted their rights and, thus, their ideals of democratic citizenship. This is connected to past studies suggesting that engagement in citizenship activities, or in this case exclusion from citizenship activities, may impact citizens' conceptualisations of their roles in society (Quintelier & van Deth, 2014). This could be an area for further consideration, highlighting place as an important intersectional factor influencing young people's citizenship next to more widely researched aspects such as gender, socio-economic background and race. It would be interesting to explore further how place interacts with the aforementioned intersectional factors in relation to young people's citizenship experiences.

Third, this research provides insights into young rural people's citizenship experiences and spaces. This was not the aim of this research and further case studies or potentially comparative studies with urban communities would be needed to make an in-depth contribution to understanding young people's rural citizenship. However, some interesting observations were made. For example, our findings indicate that community clubs play a vital role in rural young people's citizenship experiences. This extends previous research that describes community clubs in rural Germany as important citizenship spaces for young people, particularly in relation to volunteering and practicing decision-making (Antes et al., 2022; Kleiner & Klärner, 2019;

Suppers, 2023). Similarly, many participants appeared to engage in churches as spaces for citizenship which appears to be another unique feature of rural communities. Churches, especially in rural Germany, are characterised by higher church membership than urban centres (Grözinger & Matiaske, 2014).

Finally, for educational processes, the results of this research highlight the importance of actively including young people's contextualised political experiences as part of citizenship education and allowing students to reflect on the citizenship experiences they have already had and how else they may want to participate in the future. This appeared particularly relevant for frustrating political experiences that elicited fear or negative responses. Our analysis indicates that negative citizenship experiences and absent consultation such as the example of participants not being involved in national elections or the decision on what happens to a local community shop, can shape young peoples' experiences of democratic citizenship and their role as citizens. We suspect that societal crisis situations, like COVID-19 or the war in Ukraine may have a similar effect (Vajen et al., 2023). Students may, thus, benefit from further reflecting on current (global) citizenship issues and interpret them in and beyond their local contexts, in their citizenship education lessons. We, furthermore, suspect that crowded citizenship curriculum documents and low citizenship education contact time at school are hindrances to these goals.

#### **Data availability statement**

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

#### **Funding statement**

The authors have not received any funding for this research.

### **Conflict of interest disclosure statement**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### **Ethics approval statement**

Ethical approval for this research was granted by relevant authorities, such as the authors' Universities' Education Ethics Committee and the state school board.

### **References**

- Abs, H.J., & Hahn-Laudenberg, K. (2017). *Das politische Mindset von 14- Jährigen: Ergebnisse der International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 [The political mindset of 14-year-olds: Results of the ICCS 2016]*. Waxmann.
- Achour, S., & Wagner, S. (2020). Ungleicher Zugang zur politischen Bildung: „Wer hat, dem wird gegeben“. [Unequal access to political education: “The ones who have, will receive”]. *DDS – Die Deutsche Schule*, 2020(2), 143–158.  
<https://doi.org/10.31244/dds.2020.02.03>
- Adolfsson, M. (2024). Place and Youth Political Action: How Place Shapes Political Action in Rural Sweden. *YOUNG*, 32(2), 125-141.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/11033088231218844>
- Adolfsson, M., & Coe, A.-B. (2022). Understanding how place is addressed in research on young people's political action: Cases from Sweden. *Journal of Youth Studies*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2144715>

- Akar, B. (2018). Reframing approaches to narrating young people's conceptualisations of citizenship in education research. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(3), 414–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1396532>
- Almond, G.A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton University Press.
- Anderson, J., Adey, P. & Bevan, P. (2010). Positioning place: polylogic approaches to research methodology. *Qualitative Research*, 10(5), 589-604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794110375796>
- Antes, W., Wenzl, U., & Wichmann, S. (2022). *Jugend im Ländlichen Raum Baden-Württembergs. Aufwachsen-Mitgestalten-Leben [Youth in rural regions of Baden-Wuerttemberg. Growing-up - participating - living]*. Jugendstiftung Baden-Württemberg. [https://studie.land/wpcontent/uploads/2022/01/Studie\\_Land\\_220110.pdf](https://studie.land/wpcontent/uploads/2022/01/Studie_Land_220110.pdf)
- Arya, D. (2022). Imagining the future under capitalism: young people involved in environmental activism in an economic crisis. In Batsleer, J., Rowley, H., & Lüküslü, D. (Eds.), *Young People, Radical Democracy and Community Development (pp.45-59)*. Bristol University Press.
- Baylina, M., & Rodó-Zárate, M. (2020). Youth, activism and new rurality: A feminist approach. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 79, 189–196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.08.027>
- Benchebkroun, R., A. Keating, C. Cameron, and P. Curtin. 2022. Growing Up in Coastal Towns: Intergenerational Perspectives From NE Lincolnshire. London: UCL Centre for Global Youth
- Benedicto, J., & Luz Morán, M. (2007). Becoming a Citizen. *European Societies*, 9(4), 601–622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616690701314085>

- Bennett, W. L. (2003). Civic Learning in Changing Democracies: Challenges for Citizenship and Civic Education (Working Paper #4). *Centre for Communication & Civic Engagement*. [https://cjmd.com.uw.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2020/11/bennet\\_civic\\_learning\\_in\\_changing\\_democracies.pdf](https://cjmd.com.uw.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2020/11/bennet_civic_learning_in_changing_democracies.pdf)
- Benchekroun, R., Keating, A., Cameron, C., & Curtin, P. (2022). *Growing up in coastal towns: Intergenerational perspectives from NE Lincolnshire*. <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10160222/1/Growing-up-in-coastal-towns-emerging-findings-2022.pdf>
- Biesta, G., & Lawy, R. (2006). From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: overcoming individualism in research, policy and practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(1), 63–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640500490981>
- Bolzendahl, C., & Coffé, H. (2013). Are “Good” Citizens “Good” Participants? Testing Citizenship Norms and Political Participation across 25 Nations. *Political Studies*, 61(S1), 45–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12010>
- Booth, K. (2008). Risdon Vale: Place, memory and suburban\_experience. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 11(3), 299-311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790802559700>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis. A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Castro, A.J. (2013). What makes a citizen? Critical and multicultural citizenship and preservice teachers' understanding of citizenship skills. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 41(2), 219-246
- Conover, P.J. (1995). Citizen Identities and Conceptions of the Self. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 3(2), 133–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.1995.tb00032.x>
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications
- Cresswell, T. (2015). *Place an introduction*. WILEY Blackwell.

- Dalton, R.J. (2008). Citizenship norms and the expansion of political participation. *Political Studies*, 56(1), 76–98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00718.x>
- Deppisch, L., Osigus, T., & Klärner, A. (2022). How Rural is Rural Populism? On the Spatial Understanding of Rurality for Analyses of Right-wing Populist Election Success in Germany. *Rural Sociology*, 87(S1), 692–714. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12397>
- Flanagan, C.A. (2013). *Teenage citizens: The political theories of the young*. Harvard Univ. Press.
- Flanagan, C., Finlay, A., Gallay, L., & Kim, T. (2012). Political Incorporation and the Protracted Transition to Adulthood: The Need for New Institutional Inventions. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 65, 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsr044>
- Flinders, M., Wood, M., & Corbett, J. (2020). Anti-politics and democratic innovations. In S. Elstub & O. Escobar (Eds.), *Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance* (pp. 148–160). Edward Elgar.
- Gensicke, T. (2014). Bürgerschaftliches Engagement in den ländlichen Räumen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Strukturen, Chancen und Probleme. Sekundäranalyse auf Grundlage des Freiwilligensurveys der Bundesregierung [Civic engagement in rural areas in Germany – Structures, changes and problems. Secondary analysis of the German volunteering survey]. *TNS Infratest Sozialforschung*
- Goering, E.M. (2013). Engaging Citizens: A Cross Cultural Comparison of Youth Definitions of Engaged Citizenship. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 1(3), 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2013.010306>
- Granow, V.C., & Scolari, J. (2022). TikTok – Nutzung und potenzielle der kurzvideo-plattform [Use and potential of the short video platform Tik Tok]. *Media Perspektiven*, 4, 166–176.

- Gray, M.L. (2009). Negotiating identities/queering desires: Coming out online and the remediation of the coming-out story. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(4), 1162–1189. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01485.x>
- Grözinger, G., & Matiaske, W. (2014). The direct and indirect impact of religion on well-being in Germany. *Social Indicators Research*, 116, 373-387.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M., & Namey, E.E. (2011). *Applied thematic analysis*. SAGE.
- Harris, A., J. Wyn, and S. Younes. 2010. “Beyond Apathetic or Activist Youth ‘Ordinary’ Young People and Contemporary Forms of Participation.” *Young* 18, no. 1: 9–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/110330880901800103>.
- Heider, B., B. Scholz, S. Siedentop, J. Radzyk, J. Rönsch, and S. Weck. 2023. Ungleiches Deutschland – Sozioökonomische Disparitäten 2023 – Wissenschaftlicher Hintergrundbericht [Unequal Germany – SocioEconomic Disparities in 2023 – Scientific Background Report]. Berlin: FES.
- Hopwood, N. (2004). Research design and methods of data collection and analysis: Researching students' conceptions in a multiple-method case study. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 28(2), 347-353.
- Inin, E.F. & Nielsen, G.M. (2008). *Acts of Citizenship*. Zed Books.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Kennedy, K.J., Hahn, C.L., & Lee, W. (2008). Constructing Citizenship: Comparing the Views of Students in Australia, Hong Kong, and the United States. *Comparative Education Review*, 52(1), 53–91. <https://doi.org/10.1086/524306>
- Kenner, S. (2020). Politische Bildung. Citizenship Education in Germany from marginalization to new challenges. *Journal of Social Science Education*, 19(1), 118–135.

- Kinchin, I.M., Streatfield, D., & Hay, D.B. (2010). Using Concept Mapping to Enhance the Research Interview. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9(1), 52–68.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691000900106>
- Kleiner, T.-M., & Klärner, A. (2019). *Bürgerschaftliches Engagement in ländlichen Räumen. Politische Hoffnungen, empirische Befunde und Forschungsbedarf (Thünen Working Paper 129) [Voluntary work in rural communities. Political hopes, empirical findings and research needs]*. Thünen Institut für Ländliche Räume.  
[https://literatur.thuenen.de/digbib\\_extern/dn061365.pdf](https://literatur.thuenen.de/digbib_extern/dn061365.pdf)
- Lam-Knott, S. (2020). Reclaiming urban narratives: spatial politics and storytelling amongst Hong Kong youths. *Space and Polity*, 24(1), 93–110.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2019.1670052>
- Lange, D. (2008). Citizenship Education in Germany. In V.B. Georgi (Ed.), *The making of citizens in Europe. New perspectives on citizenship education* (pp. 89–95). Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung.
- Leisa A. Martin & Chiodo, J. (2007). Good Citizenship: What Students In Rural Schools Have To Say About It. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 35(1), 112-134,  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2007.10473328>
- Lister, R., Smith, N., Middleton, S. & Cox, L. (2003). Young People Talk about Citizenship: Empirical Perspectives on Theoretical and Political Debates, *Citizenship Studies*, 7(2), 235-253, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362102032000065991>
- Maseland, R. (2014). Does Germany have an East–West problem? Regional growth patterns in Germany since reunification. *Regional Studies*, 48(7), 1161-1175.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. Sage.

- Mayring, P. (2015). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken* (12., überarbeitete Auflage). [*Qualitative content analysis: fundamentals and techniques (12th edition)*]. Beltz Verlag.
- Meyer, F. (2020). Navigating aspirations and expectations: Adolescents' considerations of outmigration from rural eastern Germany. In *Aspiration, Desire and the Drivers of Migration* (pp. 124-141). Routledge.
- Miranda, D., Castillo, J. C., & Sandoval-Hernandez, A. (2020). Young Citizens Participation: Empirical Testing of a Conceptual Model. *Youth and Society*, 52(2), 251-271.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X17741024>
- Nelson, K.S., Nguyen, T.D., Brownstein, N.A., Garcia, D., Walker, H.C., Watson, J.T., & Xin, A. (2021). Definitions, measures, and uses of rurality: A systematic review of the empirical and quantitative literature. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 82, 351-365.
- Orman, T.F. & Demiral, S. (2023). Youth environmental citizenship formation: Struggled political subjectivities and everyday experiences of young people in Turkey. *Children & Society*, 37(5), 1337-1355. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12778>
- Patterson, N., Doppen, F., & Misco, T. (2012). Beyond personally responsible: A study of teacher conceptualizations of citizenship education. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 7(2), 191-206.
- Percy-Smith, B., McMahon, G., & Thomas, N. (2019). Recognition, inclusion and democracy: learning from action research with young people. *Educational Action Research*, 27(3), 347–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1577149>
- Pickard, S. (2022). Young environmental activists and Do-It-Ourselves (DIO) politics: collective engagement, generational agency, efficacy, belonging and hope. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 25(6), 730-750. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2046258>

- Preston, C. (2003) *Grounding Knowledge Environmental Philosophy, Epistemology, and Place*. University of Georgia Press.
- Pole, C., Pilcher, J., & Williams, J. (2005). Young People in Transition: Becoming Citizens? An Introduction. In C. Pole, J. Pilcher, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Young People in Transition: Becoming Citizens?* Palgrave Macmillan.
- Quéniart, A. (2008). The Form and Meaning of Young People's Involvement in Community and Political Work. *Youth & Society*, 40(2), 203-223.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X08314261>
- Quintelier, E., & Van Deth, J.W. (2014). Supporting democracy: Political participation and political attitudes. Exploring causality using panel data. *Political Studies*, 62(S1), 153–171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12097>
- Qviström, M. (2019). Peri-urban landscape studies. In P. Howard, I. H. Thompson, E. Waterton, & M. Atha (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to landscape studies* (pp. 523–534). Routledge.
- Reichert, F. (2016). Students' perceptions of good citizenship: a person-centred approach. *Social Psychology of Education*, 19(3), 661–693. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-016-9342-1>
- Robson, E., Bell, S., & Klocker, N. (2007). Conceptualizing agency in the lives and actions of rural people. In R. Panelli, S. Punch, & E. Robson (Eds.), *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth*. (pp. 135–148). Routledge.
- Salo, U.M. (2020). Forest as a specific place for girls and their green criticism. *Children's Geographies*, 19(4), 407–418. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2020.1804529>
- Sant, E. (2019). Democratic Education: A Theoretical Review (2006–2017). *Review of Educational Research*, 89(5), 655–696. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319862493>

- Schäfer, N. (2012). Finding ways to do research on, with and for children and young people. *Geography*, 97(3), 147-154.
- Scheele, B., & Groeben, N. (1988). *Dialog-Konsens-Methoden zur Rekonstruktion subjektiver Theorien: Die Heidelberger Struktur-lege-Technik <SLT>, konsensuale Ziel-Mittel- Argumentation u. kommunikative Flußdiagramm-Beschreibung von Handlungen. [Dialogue-consensus methods for the reconstruction of subjective theories: The Heidelberg Structure-Laying Technique <SLT>, consensual goal-means-argumentation and communicative flowchart description of actions]*. Francke.
- Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Losito, B., Agrusti, G., & Friedman, T. (2018). *Becoming Citizens in a Changing World. IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study. 2016 International Report*. IEA. <https://www.iea.nl/publications/study-reports/international-reports-iea-studies/becoming-citizens-changing-world>
- Sim, J.B.Y., Chua, S., & Krishnasamy, M. (2017). “Riding the citizenship wagon”: Citizenship conceptions of social studies teachers in Singapore. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 63, 92-102.
- Suppers, J. (2022a). Young people’s citizenship activities at and beyond school - exploring a new theoretical framework with empirical data from a rural community in Germany. *Journal of Youth Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2131381>
- Suppers, J. (2022b). Emerging dimensions of young people’s citizenship activities and the role of citizenship education: a mixed-methods case study from a rural municipality in Germany. PhD thesis, University of York.
- Suppers, J. (2023). Young People's Activism in Rural Communities: A Mixed-methods Case Study with Young People from a Rural Municipality in Germany. In Wright, K. and McLeod, J. (Eds.) *Childhood, Youth and Activism: Demands for Rights and Justice*

- from Young People and their Advocates (Sociological Studies of Children and Youth, Vol. 33)*, Emerald Publishing Limited, pp. 127-146.
- Theocharis, Y., & Van Deth, J.W. (2018). The continuous expansion of citizen participation: A new taxonomy. *European Political Science Review*, 10(1), 139–163.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773916000230>
- Tilley, C. (1994). *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*. Berg.
- Trell, E.M., van Hoven, B. (2016). Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective. In Kallio, K., Mills, S., & Skelton, T. (Eds.) *Politics, Citizenship and Rights. Geographies of Children and Young People*. Springer.
- Vajen, B., Bohnenstengel, L., & Lange, D. (2023). Der Krieg in der Ukraine – Die Vorstellungen und Emotionen von Schülerinnen und Schülern. *GWP – Gesellschaft. Wirtschaft. Politik*, 72(2), 205–216. <https://doi.org/10.3224/gwp.v72i2.09>
- Verba, S., & Nie, N.H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Vigna, N. (2023). Subjective social status in places that don't matter: Geographical inequalities in France and Germany. *European Societies*, 25(5),  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2022.2163276>
- Waterson, R.A., & Moffa, E.D. (2016). Citizenship education for proactive democratic life in rural communities. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 11(3), 213–230.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197916648286>
- Weller, S. (2009). Exploring the spatiality of participation: Teenagers' experiences in an English secondary school. *Youth & Policy*, 101, 15–32.
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004a). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2), 237–269.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312041002237>

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004b). Educating the “Good” Citizen: Political Choices and Pedagogical Goals. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(2), 241-247.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096504004160>

Wood, B.E. (2022). Youth citizenship: Expanding conceptions of the young citizen. *Geography Compass*, 16(12), e12669. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12669>

Woods, M. (2009). Rural geography: blurring boundaries and making connections. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(6), 849–858. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508105001>

**Table 1:** Spaces for young people’s citizenship experiences in relation to their rural places

<i>Spaces for citizenship</i>	<i>Participant Quotes</i>
School: form class, lessons, extracurriculars & student council	Magda, Y10, Anderberg: “Many teachers have often told me that it is not okay to wear cropped tops. I was often threatened that I would have to wear the school sweater or something. And I've never done that before because I disagree with that...I also think that I'm not responsible if others can't keep their eyes to themselves.”
Everyday spaces: peers, family & supermarket	Katja, Y8, Anderberg “...I tend to buy organic. So whenever I’m in front of the egg shelf, I make sure that they’re organic or there’s an organic label on it because then I also feel more comfortable when I buy it.”
Municipality: council, clubs, church, social institutions & public spaces	Samira, Y11, Lohstedt: “It's just that you should get involved. I was also a volunteer in the church for a long time and helped other people...So I think here as a citizen...it feels to me as if I am here in my

	<p>small circle and have certain tasks or also do what I enjoy, that I help other people....”</p>
<p>Beyond municipality: city, country, Europe &amp; world</p>	<p>Ansgar, Y11, Lohstedt: “So I think it [being a citizen] depends on who you are talking to. When I'm abroad, I like to think of myself as an EU citizen...When I talk to friends from Germany, I'm usually from [big city] because nobody knows Lohstedt. Yes, and otherwise if you talk to locals, then it is Lohstedt. I wouldn't say I'm an EU citizen all the time, I would differentiate.”</p>
<p>Online: social networks (Twitter, Instagram), gaming servers, websites &amp; YouTube</p>	<p>Sofie, Y10, Anderberg: “...there was a server on Discord [a public server from a game community] and a few things happened there that weren't quite right, it was something to do with sexism...we got together with about 200 people to tell the organisers that it's not ok. And that has changed, but it took a month or two before we even got through.”</p>