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Citizenship, young people and political engagement:

How young people make sense of their role as citizens in Scotland and the Netherlands

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

5th August 2019 Christine Huebner

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not exist without the young people who participated in the research and engaged in it with enthusiasm, enduring my seemingly endless number of questions about the meaning of citizenship. I am indebted to them for their patience and openness, the time they gave and the fun we had.

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Abstract

Citizenship has become a catchphrase in debates about young people's political engagement. In many of these debates, citizenship is defined as a practice, often based on things that adults do. It remains unclear how young people understand citizenship and how they make sense of their role as citizens. In an effort to contribute new evidence to debates about youth political engagement this study explores how young people ascribe meaning to the role of the citizen. It builds on an understanding of citizenship as a multifaceted and contested notion: one that goes beyond conceptions of citizenship as a practice to also involve ideas of citizenship as a status and as a feeling, and one that explicitly acknowledges the tensions and trade-offs that are inherent in the concept.

Based on exploratory in-depth and repeated interviews about conceptions of citizenship with 46 young people aged 15 to 18 years in Scotland and the Netherlands, this study provides a thick description of young people's views on citizenship, the role identity, belonging, and engagement play in it, and how young people experience and navigate the challenges that come with citizenship. The study finds that many young people are ill at ease with ideas of citizenship as a status in terms of civic rights and duties, because these are not yet relevant and rarely useful for them. Instead, many young people choose to make sense of citizenship as a feeling of home, an understanding that is based on belonging and recognition. This view, however, is difficult to navigate in pluralized societies and for young people who prefer multiple and flexible identities. The problems young people have with civic rights and duties as well as with being recognized as citizens in their communities have profound consequences for how they view their role as citizens and how they decide to become engaged in politics.

These findings raise new questions on youth political engagement that have to be discussed in the context of youth participation and youth transitions as well as in relation to wider questions on the power and agency of young people.

Keywords: citizenship; young people; political participation; civic engagement

Lay Summary

Young people are often considered as not-yet-citizens and as not sufficiently engaged as citizens. Citizenship has become a catchphrase in debates about young people and their civic and political engagement. While there are many expectations about young people and what kinds of citizens they should be, it is largely unclear how young people themselves understand citizenship and how they make sense of their role as citizens. In an effort to contribute new evidence to debates about youth political engagement this study explores how young people make sense of the role of the citizen. In doing so, the study looks at citizenship from various angles: as a practice, but also as a status and as a feeling. It explicitly acknowledges that citizenship is a socially constructed and contested notion that comes with tensions and inherent trade-offs.

Based on interviews about conceptions of citizenship with 46 young people aged 15 to 18 years in Scotland and the Netherlands, this study provides a thick description of young people's views on citizenship, the role identity, belonging, and engagement play in it, and how young people experience and navigate the challenges that come with citizenship. The study finds that many young people are ill at ease with ideas of citizenship as a status in terms of civic rights and duties, because these are not yet relevant and rarely useful for them. Instead, many young people choose to make sense of citizenship as a feeling of home, an understanding that is based on belonging and recognition. This view, however, is difficult to navigate in pluralized societies and for young people who prefer multiple and flexible identities. The problems young people have with civic rights and duties as well as with being recognized as citizens in their communities have profound consequences for how they view their role as citizens and how they decide to become engaged in politics.

These findings raise new questions on youth political engagement that have to be discussed in the context of youth participation and youth transitions as well as in relation to wider questions on the power and agency of young people.

Note on Transcription

This thesis features extracts from my conversations with young people. Throughout the text, direct quotes from participants are written in italics and double quotation marks. All quotes represent the language of the young people as closely as possible, including jargon and filler words (true verbatim). Within quotations the following punctuation indicates:

- single quotation marks (‘) for the participants’ expressions of direct speech,
- ellipsis (‘…’) for a deliberate pause in the participant’s speech,
- ellipsis in brackets (‘(…)’) for omissions from the quote that are not relevant in the particular context, and
- square brackets (‘[ ]’) for editorial comments.

Statements in Dutch are translated by the author. All original statements in Dutch are provided in Appendix 2.

Glossary

Advanced Higher	The Advanced Higher is an optional qualification in the Scottish secondary education system. It is normally taken by students aged 16-18 years after they have completed Highers, the main university entrance qualification in Scotland (Scottish Qualifications Authority, 2009).
Albert Heijn	Largest Dutch supermarket chain, named after the founder of the first store (Stichting Albert Heijn Erfgoed, n.d.).
Amnesty	Referring to Amnesty International, a non-governmental organisation campaigning on human rights. Amnesty supports a large number of self-organised youth groups, many of which are based in schools throughout the UK (Amnesty International UK, 2017).
Black Pete	Black Pete (Dutch: Zwarte Piet) is a character in Dutch folklore, part of the annual celebration of St Nicholas (Sinterklaas). St Nicholas' Eve is celebrated on the evening of 5th December when presents and sweets are distributed to children. Traditionally, Black Pete is argued to be black because he is a Moor from Spain. The character is usually portrayed by white Dutch people, who put on blackface make-up, curly wigs, and bright red lipstick. In recent years, the character has become the subject of controversy on postcolonial racism (Rodenberg & Wagenaar, 2016).
CDA	Christian Democratic Appeal (Dutch: Christen Democratisch Appèl), a political party in the Netherlands. The CDA formed in 1977 and has participated in all but three governments since then. Christian values are at its core, but the party favours the integration of minorities into Dutch culture and has Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu members of parliament. The CDA is supported predominantly by religious voters, both Catholics

	and Protestants. In the past the CDA has functioned as a centrist party, attracting people from all classes and religions (Van der Brug et al., 2009).
Maatschappelijke dienstplicht	Proposal for a compulsory civil service for young people (Dutch: maatschappelijke dienstplicht) that was part of the CDA's and the Christian Union's election campaign in 2017. In an increasingly individualistic society, CDA and Christian Union argued this would promote a sense of community among young people (Den Hartog & Hoedeman, 2017). The proposal was later introduced in an amended form as a voluntary civil service, which is one way for young people up to the age of 21 to obtain the mandatory starting qualification (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2018).
Model United Nations	Model United Nations (also Model UN or MUN) is an educational simulation of the United Nations. Participants, known as delegates, are assigned countries or other political organisations to represent in simulations of international political and diplomatic negotiations. They attend conferences and are placed in committees, where they formulate positions for debate staying true to the actual position of the body they represent. MUN is often offered as an extra-curricular activity at middle school, high school, and college/university levels (German Model United Nations (DMUN) e.V., n.d.)
Modern Studies	Civic education subject in Scottish secondary schools. Modern Studies follows a multidisciplinary approach to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish, UK, and international contexts (Andrews & Mycock, 2007; Maitles, 2000).
NHS	National Health Service (short: NHS) is the UK's publicly funded healthcare system. Access to healthcare is "predominantly free at the point of use" and available to legal UK residents regardless of nationality (Robson, 2016, p. 3). At

	the founding of the NHS in the UK in 1948, three separate institutions were created serving Scotland, England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. In the context of this study, 'NHS' usually refers to the NHS Scotland.
Occupy	The Occupy movement was an international socio-political movement that expressed opposition to social and economic inequality. Started in New York in 2011 with a protest against economic inequality and the degree of control exerted by large corporations, the movement spread across the globe and local protests often had different and specific aims, resulting in an incoherent scope overall (Fletcher, 2014).
SAAS	Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) is an executive agency of the Scottish Government. It administers the exemption of tuition fees for Scottish students who are eligible for free Higher education, as well as bursaries, supplementary grants, and applications for student loans.
Scottish Youth Parliament / MSYP	The Scottish Youth Parliament is a democratically elected body aiming to represent Scotland's young people. Elections are held every two years, in which young people from all across Scotland stand as candidates to become Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs). MSYPs range in age from 14 to 25 and represent constituencies in all 32 local authorities throughout the country, and several national voluntary organisations. The SYP meets three times a year (Scottish Youth Parliament, 2015).
Scouts	Members of the Scout Association, a movement that aims to support young people aged 6 to 25 years in their development so that they may play constructive roles in society. Scouting is taught using the Scout method, which incorporates an informal educational system that emphasizes practical activities in the outdoors, shared experiences, rituals, and 'good citizenship' (Mills, 2013).

UCAS	The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is a UK-based organisation whose main role is to operate the application process for British universities.
VWO	A track in the Dutch secondary education system (Dutch: voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs), which upon successful completion allows admission to Dutch universities. After leaving primary school, pupils in the Netherlands are enrolled in different types of secondary schools, according to their academic ability. The VWO is the most advanced option: a six-year course with a final exam that serves as a matriculation exam (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2016). It is attended by roughly a fifth of all Dutch students in secondary education (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), 2016).
Zero hours contract	A zero-hours contract is a type of work contract between an employer and a worker, where the employer is not obliged to provide any minimum working hours, while the worker is not obliged to accept any work offered (Government Digital Service, n.d.).

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Young people's engagement as citizens has increasingly come into the spotlight. In politics, in the media, and in research there is an ongoing debate about how well (or not) young people do as citizens. Some characterise young people as apathetic and alienated citizens, who are not interested in community issues and "turned off" by politics (Park, 2004, p. 34; see also Pirie & Worcester, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Others counter this narrative, arguing that young people are critical and newly engaged citizens instead – a part of the population that is transforming our understanding of the role of the citizen (Dalton, 2006, 2007; Norris, 2002). Young people are claimed to spark electoral 'youthquakes' (Sloam et al., 2018; Sloam & Henn, 2019) and to drive protest movements such as 'Black Lives Matter' and #FridaysForFuture (Campbell, 2018; Haunss et al., 2019; see also Pickard & Bessant, 2018; Sloam, 2013). Some have even been tempted to announce "a new era for youth political engagement" (Wybron, 2017).

In these debates 'citizenship' has become a catchphrase: scholars and policy makers alike employ the concept to investigate and, ultimately, avert a looming crisis of political legitimacy. The role young people play as citizens and how they engage in their communities is framed as a prophecy for the future. Young people are portrayed either as the saviours and re-invigorators or as the final nail in the coffin of established democracies. Norris (1999, 2002) describes them as 'critical citizens', who value democratic ideals and exert pressure on governments and democratic institutions to live up to those ideals, while Foa and Mounck (2017) blame nothing less than the erosion of some of the most mature democracies on the youngest generation's lack of engagement as citizens.

In whatever fashion, this crisis narrative (O'Toole, 2004) comes with a sense of urgency that has served as justification for a variety of measures aimed at addressing young people's engagement as citizens. In 1997, the European Commission initiated a programme to identify what exactly fosters democratic citizenship and political engagement among young people (Audigier, 2000; Osler & Starkey, 1999). In the wake of an emphasis on active citizenship the United Kingdom witnessed the introduction of compulsory civic education in England under New Labour and also in the Netherlands the European Commission's programme resulted in a debate about the role of civic education in the curriculum (Onderwijsraad, 2003). In the lead up to the 2017 Dutch parliamentary election proposals for a compulsory citizen service for all Dutch young people made a comeback in the Netherlands ('maatschappelijke dienstplicht', see Glossary), while in Scotland the Scottish government declared 2018 the 'Year of the Young People' as measure to bolster young people's voice in debates on decisions that affect them (Education Scotland, 2017).

What these debates about young people's citizenship do not answer – and also measures such as mandatory citizenship education or a compulsory citizen service do not – is what kinds of citizens young people are or want to be. In much of the research and policy on youth citizenship it remains unclear what 'citizenship' means exactly, let alone what it means to young people. Citizenship is an ambiguous and inherently contested concept. And yet, those who refer to citizenship in policy and research often imply a shared understanding of the concept. In empirical studies, in particular, the underlying assumptions and norms of what makes for a 'good citizen' remain unexplored. Some scholars argue that citizenship has been employed in a catch-all manner all too often, leaving it void of any meaning (c.f. Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Gaventa, 2002; O'Toole, 2004). Ultimately, what matters for debates about young people's roles as citizens are not so much the implicit assumptions about citizenship, but how young people assign meaning to the concept.

This thesis seeks to investigate just that. It is about young people and their ways of making sense of citizenship and political engagement. Together with young people in Scotland and the Netherlands, I investigate how they themselves look at the many things they are claimed to be: Are they sufficiently engaged as citizens? What does engagement mean to them and how do they view the role of the citizen? What kinds of citizens are these young people and what kinds of citizens do they want to be?

1.1 Competing stories about young people as citizens

Young people have been claimed to be many different kinds of citizens. They are characterised as disengaged, disillusioned, and alienated citizens (Park, 1999; Pirie & Worcester, 2000; R. D. Putnam, 2000). They are claimed to be passive, standby, or monitorial citizens (Amnå & Ekman, 2014; Schudson, 1998), critical citizens (Norris, 1999), or engaged sceptics (Sloam & Henn, 2019, p. 122). And they are also portrayed as newly empowered citizens (Bennett, 2008; Dalton, 2007; Norris, 2002), radically democratic citizens (Isin & Wood, 1999), and as everyday makers (Bang, 2003; Li & Marsh, 2008; Marsh et al., 2007). Out of all these different and contradicting claims, what kinds of citizens are young people really? Or rather, which kinds of young people do these characterisations really suit and why?

The view that young people are disengaged and passive citizens has been argued to be a misrepresentation that is mainly purported by the media, at least in Britain (Russell, 2004). In an effort to counter this narrative, scholars conjure up the picture of young people as newly empowered and newly engaged citizens, who are active in voluntary groups and elite-challenging political action, who support and care for others, and are eager to form their own opinions (Bennett, 2008; Dalton, 2006, 2007; Norris, 2002). According to Bennett (2008; see also Loader, 2007; Vromen, 2003; Wallace, 2001), the crisis narrative on youth citizenship overlooks the impact of processes of individualisation and self-actualisation on and the spaces that new technologies open up for young people's expressions of citizenship. Instead of crisis, it is more accurate to speak of young people as newly empowered and newly engaged citizens. Dalton (2006) shows how a new form of citizenship is prevalent among the youngest generations: one that emphasises engagement and that is distinct from understandings of citizenship based on duty that prevail among older generations.

Others instead focus on young people's measurable withdrawal from institutions of democratic citizenship – electoral politics, political parties, trade unions, and religious associations – and claim that young people are 'standby' (Amnå & Ekman, 2014), 'monitorial' (Schudson, 1998), or 'critical citizens' (Norris, 1999). Rather than being actively involved in their communities, it is argued that young people care about their role as citizens but decide to passively monitor what happens in the public sphere and only become active when they deem it necessary. Schudson (1998) introduced the concept of the 'monitorial citizen', who is interested in politics and community issues, has a high level of efficacy, but nevertheless displays low levels of engagement, at

least in formal institutions. While there seems to be little evidence for a 'monitorial' type of citizenship along the lines of what Schudson suggests (Hooghe & Dejaeghere, 2007), Amnå and Ekman (2014) find a similar type of citizen among young people in Sweden, calling it 'standby citizen', and similarly Norris (1999) identifies young people as 'critical citizens' based on cross-national data. These young people are found to be interested in and knowledgeable about community issues, yet more critical of the political system and less likely to engage as citizens. It is argued that instead of constantly engaging in formal institutions, critical, standby, or monitorial citizens choose to observe what happens in their communities and only become active whenever they feel it is necessary, often in ad hoc ways.

Yet again others maintain that young people use radically different ways of engaging as citizens and that this kind of engagement is rarely measured in existing research. Instead of engaging in mainstream public life, young people are believed to forge new roles as citizens and develop alternative forms of agency (Weller, 2007). Through 'small-scale acts of citizenship' (Weller, 2007, p. 130) and engagement outside of formal political processes, for example on an everyday and ad hoc basis, in their local communities, as volunteers, or in grassroots networks (Marsh et al., 2007), young people establish themselves as 'everyday makers' (Bang, 2003; Marsh et al., 2007) and as 'radically democratic citizens' (Isin & Wood, 1999; see also Smith et al., 2005).

All of these theories of youth citizenship build on implicit assumptions: that citizenship is about the relationship between citizens and the state; that citizenship is a practice; that citizenship is about place and the local community. Yet, it is not at all clear if these assumptions hold for young people and their understandings of citizenship – or rather, for which kinds of young people they may hold. What is more: the available evidence for these theories is either sparse or conflicting. There is little empirical research that focuses on the meaning of citizenship, let alone on how young people make sense of the concept. According to Lister, "there remains an imbalance between theoretical and empirical advances in our understanding of citizenship" (2007a, p. 57). Rather than building on implicit assumptions about young people's views of citizenship, research should address questions about citizenship with young people:

> "Especially when applied to young people, the content of citizenship has to be broadened (…) We have to ask new questions about citizenship and civic engagement and explore how youth themselves define their citizenship."
>
> (Lindström, 2010, p. 56)

1.2 Aims of the research

Despite the topic's prominence, there are still relatively few empirical investigations of young people's perspectives on citizenship to date. With this project I set out to fill this gap and find answers from young people themselves on how they understand and experience their roles as citizens. To move debates about youth citizenship forward and contribute new evidence on young people's engagement as citizens, this project takes a step back from theories about young people as alienated or newly engaged citizens and focuses on the understanding of citizenship among young people themselves. What do young people have to say about the many claims about their role as citizens or citizens of the future? What do they expect of themselves as citizens? And according to young people, what makes for 'a good citizen'? These are just some of the questions I had in mind at the beginning of this project. Together with groups of young people, I set out to answer research questions on:

1. how young people understand citizenship, if at all, and what elements young people build on in their understanding of citizenship;
2. how young people experience and navigate the tensions inherent in citizenship; and ultimately,
3. how far young people's conceptions of citizenship impact their motivations to be engaged in their communities and in political decision making.

Throughout this project I placed emphasis on uncovering how young people relate to their communities. With this, I aimed to find out whether or not young people hold distinct conceptions of citizenship based on where they identify as citizens and how these impact and are impacted by experiences with political engagement. I could not summarise what this project is about better than Sem (16), one of the participants:

SEM: *"[It is] about what you think a citizen is. A citizen can be someone who is a decent person, or someone who helps, or someone who walks on earth. There are just different opinions about it. If someone asks a question with the word 'citizen' in it, you have to decide for yourself what that is. And then your answers may differ."*[1]

These different answers are exactly what I set out to explore with young people. Based on young people's impressions of and ideas on citizenship, this project delivers new insights that allow to re-evaluate some of the conflicting evidence and raise new questions about young people, citizenship, and political engagement.

1.3 Researching citizenship with young people

Based on repeated, in-depth interviews with 46 young people, aged 15 to 18 years – one-to-one or in small groups of friends – this project provides a thick description of young people's views on citizenship, the role identity, belonging, and engagement play in it, and how young people experience and navigate the challenges that come with citizenship.

I worked with young people in Scotland, where the recently lowered voting age in Scottish (but not British) elections and young people's engagement with the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence provide a unique case for studying young people's citizenship. To be able to compare the views of young people growing up in this unique environment, I chose to also work with young people in the Netherlands: another small, Northern European country with a somewhat similar political culture as Scotland, but whose young people have not had the reflexive opportunity of a referendum nor the experience of early enfranchisement. With this comparative design I was not necessarily looking to evaluate hypothesized differences, but rather for a level of insight that would not be possible otherwise (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2012). I was also aiming to investigate the impact of cultural meanings and of the context of young people's political socialisation on their conceptions of citizenship.

All conversations with young people took place in the Netherlands and in Scotland between December 2016 and April 2018. It is worth noting what happened with regard to youth citizenship during this time – not only because relevant events certainly impacted how I engaged with questions of youth citizenship, but also because they shine through much of what the young people say. During all the time that I was engaged in the research, there was a constant back and forth in the narrative on young people and their engagement as citizens. I wrote the first proposal for this project just after the 2014 European elections, when turnout among the youngest voters reached a new absolute low in the Netherlands and the UK (Freedman & Sgueo, 2015; Pall, 2014). In the same year, I witnessed how engaged young people in Scotland were in the campaign prior to the referendum on Scottish independence, including newly enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds (c.f. Breeze et al., 2017; Eichhorn, 2014, 2018). This observation puzzled me and exploring it further was one motivation for coming to the University of Edinburgh to start this project.

Just one year later, in autumn 2015, young people's involvement in refugee relief and in the Black Lives Matter movement shook up perceptions of youth civic engagement. Witnessing the outspokenness and involvement of young people in these movements added issues of inclusion and exclusion and the concept of rights claiming to my already long list of questions. In 2016, the UK narrowly voted to leave the European Union and Donald Trump was elected as president of the United States. These two events were enough for public commentary to swing back to a 'These young people cannot be bothered with politics'-narrative, only for it to return to a celebration of newly engaged young people with the 2017 UK general election and its (debated) 'youthquake' (Prosser et al., 2018; Sloam et al., 2018). However, a similar 'youthquake' did not occur in the 2017 Dutch parliamentary election, which took place only weeks prior to the UK general election and which generated a low turnout among the youngest voters (Schmeets, 2017).

Against this backdrop of a constant back and forth in the narratives about young people's engagement as citizens, I conducted more than 70 hours of conversations with young people about their understandings of citizenship and what they think about the many claims about young people's engagement as citizens. I spoke at least twice to every one of the 46 participants, and with some I spoke three or four times, sometimes with months in between our conversations. This offered both me and the participants ample time to explore views on citizenship and reflect on how different understandings of citizenship impact young people's engagement as citizens. Over the course of the research, I got to know many of the participants well and became a part of their social worlds.

Throughout this project, especially in writing this thesis, it was important for me to give voice to young people. This is one reason for why I decided to conduct in-depth qualitative research with young people, even though I embarked on this project as a trained quantitative researcher. Early on I noticed how quantitative data on young people and their roles as citizens builds on vastly different conceptions of citizenship and often on exactly those implicit assumptions which I sought to explore young people's views on. My aim of giving voice to young people is also the reason why 40 per cent of the findings chapters (5-7) are made up of statements taken directly from my conversations with young people. While this might seem a lot, there are things that I just could not have expressed any better than the participating young people themselves.

1.4 Key terms

Language matters for debates about young people and citizenship. A fair amount of the disagreement about young people and their levels of engagement as citizens arises from an imprecise and unclear use of words: What do we mean when we speak about citizenship? What counts as engagement? And who exactly are young people? These concepts that can be understood in vastly different ways. Therefore, it is worth explaining what I mean when I use terms such as citizenship, engagement, community, and young people.

Citizenship

When I set out to work on this thesis I faced the challenge of wanting to explore conceptions of citizenship with young people, while also needing some sort of a working definition of citizenship at the same time. What would my exploration of the concept focus on and what implicit assumptions on citizenship did this bring into the research? I settled on viewing citizenship as a socially constructed and essentially contested concept; its meaning is always a matter of debate. The relationship between individual citizens and their political community is reflected in understandings of citizenship and how it is enacted (Conover, 1995). Thus, for the purpose of this project, citizenship is viewed as a dynamic link between political communities and the individuals that constitute it (based on Isin & Turner, 2002). How debates about citizenship can play out and what they imply for young people and their role as citizens is discussed in detail in chapter 2. What is worth pointing out at this point already, however, is that this is a study of youth citizenship in two democratic communities. In Scotland and the Netherlands citizenship is so bound up with understandings of democracy that it almost always means ‘democratic citizenship’. As such, citizens have a stake in determining how the role of the citizen is defined.

Engagement

When it is viewed as a dynamic link between communities and the individuals that constitute it, citizenship inherently raises questions about what sort of community citizens want to live in. To be meaningful, citizenship requires citizens to have an opinion on how they want to live together and to pursue this vision. It is through the citizens’ involvement in and their claims on the community that this link is constituted. In this sense, civic engagement can be understood broadly, as a catch-all term for

any involvement or activity we seek out in our role as citizens. Even though, ultimately, I am interested in young people's political participation, I deliberately adopt this broad view of practising citizenship: civic engagement covers any kind of activity directed at influencing the way of life in our communities. It can revolve around, but is not limited to, being actively involved in communities, claiming new and extended rights, discussing how to best live together, and exerting influence on policy and lawmakers.

Communities

What are the communities that citizens relate to? When it comes to questions of citizenship, many intuitively point to the nation state as the principal community. This, however, is an assumption that does not necessarily hold, as we will see in chapter 2 – especially not for young people (c.f. Kallio et al., 2015; O'Connor, 2005; Paulgaard, 2002; Ross, 2019). Citizenship can relate to communities much smaller or larger than the nation or the state and citizens can identify with multiple communities, depending on the goals they decide to pursue together (c.f. Barber, 1984; Falk, 1994; Habermas, 1994). What is more: how I define communities in the context of this project is undeniably tinted by the places in which I decided to study conceptions of citizenship. While it might not be too controversial to describe the Netherlands as a country, state, or nation, writing about Scotland in comparison is a lot more difficult. Is Scotland a country, a society, a nation? This discussion alone could have easily filled a chapter in this thesis (c.f. McCrone, 2001). However, because this is not the main focus of this project and because I set out to explore how Scottish and Dutch young people themselves make sense of their communities – no matter whether that is the state, the nation, or something completely different – I decided to go with 'communities' in the broadest sense. This is why, for the purpose of this project, the communities that citizens relate to and their boundaries are deliberately left open for exploration. The findings of this exploration are discussed in detail in chapter 6.

Young people

Finally, even what is meant when we speak of 'young people' is not at all trivial. Who exactly counts as young and what constitutes youth is a matter of debate. A substantial amount of the controversy around youth engagement is based on measurements among young people in different age brackets and on the assumption that young people have a unique, homogeneous, and eventually measurable way of looking at the world. Youth is often understood in relation to childhood and adulthood.

Children are assumed to grow into adults, and youth is simply viewed as a passing phase in this development. This interpretation gives rise to concrete (and to some extent unavoidable) definitions of youth on the basis of development and biological age, but also to sociological accounts of youth as a “performative or processual identity” (Valentine, 2003, p. 38). The latter seek to distinguish childhood and youth from adulthood on the basis of behaviours and competences, whereby being autonomous and acting responsibly is seen as the standard among adults that children and young people are growing into. This view of youth makes sense of young people as not-yet-adults. It implicitly assumes that young people view the world, including citizenship, in less adult, more childish ways (i.e. less competent, less responsible, or less mature ways). These performative definitions of youth are at the heart of deficit understandings of youth citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003) and we will see in chapters 2 and 3 what the consequences of this view of youth are.

Even though ultimately and for practical matters I also I had to go with some sort of an age-based definition of young people, the justification for which is detailed in chapter 4, I tried stay away from assumptions about youth as an objective reality and of young people as a homogeneous group. In order to not limit the research to normative or adult views of citizenship and be able to explore young people’s conceptions of citizenship, it was important for me to view young people as people like any other, with the only possibly distinctive feature their experience of being younger (and older) than others. I asked all young people, for example, how they describe themselves – whether as adults, young adults, teenagers, children, or other – and what it is that makes them identify as such (Mayall, 2000).

In line with this view of youth, I also chose the term ‘young people’ deliberately. I use it throughout this thesis and do not substitute it with other expressions that are often applied synonymously. Contrary to ‘adolescent’ or ‘young adult’, the term ‘young people’ does not assume that they are still growing up or growing up to eventually become adults. Rather, it allows to acknowledge the multitude of stages and situations that young people can find themselves in and recognise that the transition from youth to adulthood is not always one-directional or strictly linear, and sometimes not even a transition at all. In the context of this research, it is also important to emphasise that, while young people might share the experience of being younger than others around them, just like people of other ages, they all have a variety of experiences. There is nothing homogeneous about young people, just because of their youth.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis engages with questions on citizenship and young people in eight chapters. Chapter 2 introduces citizenship as an inherently contested concept and provides an overview over its theoretical foundations and in-built tensions. Broadening perspectives on citizenship and viewing it as an ambiguous and dynamic concept that revolves around more than just the citizen-state relationship is the basis for this thesis. In chapter 3, this broader conception of citizenship allows me to discuss evidence on young people's experiences of citizenship beyond the mainstream literature, which tends to present young people only as either disengaged or newly engaged citizens. Chapter 4 offers a description of doing research with young people on citizenship, and on doing so when it is explicitly defined as a multifaceted and contested notion.

The three chapters on findings from my work with young people – chapters 5, 6, and 7 – focus on young people's experiences of citizenship when it is viewed from different angles. Chapter 5 describes how the young people who participated in this study look at citizenship as a status – a formal or legal concept that focuses on the rights and responsibilities, but also on the freedom and equality of the individual. In chapter 6, I examine the participating young people's experiences of an alternative conception of citizenship: citizenship as a sense of belonging. It is in this chapter that questions of belonging and identity, and young people's views of the relation between the individual and their communities are discussed. Chapter 7 brings together some of the aspects of young people's views on citizenship-as-a-status and citizenship-as-a-sense-of-belonging, pointing towards their impact on young people's willingness to become engaged as citizens. This chapter describes how the participating young people look at their role as citizens in their communities and at citizenship as a practice.

Ultimately, chapter 8 draws all of these strands of evidence together and offers an evaluation of what the findings might mean for questions of youth citizenship: What kind of citizens are young people and what kinds of citizens do they want to be? It is in this final chapter that I raise a number of new questions on citizenship, young people, and political engagement.

Chapter 2

INTRODUCING CITIZENSHIP AS A CONTESTED NOTION

2.1 Introduction

It is no surprise that there are many unanswered questions about young people and citizenship: firstly, because citizenship in and of itself is a complex concept that is full of tensions; and, secondly, because it is especially complicated to make sense of in relation to young people. Citizenship is an ambiguous and inherently contested concept. There is never just one understanding of it; rather, its meaning has always been a matter of debate. According to Crick, "citizenship can carry significantly different meanings. It has no 'essential' or universally true meaning" (2000, p. 3). It is complex, dynamic, and evolving, precisely because its meaning is constantly negotiated. How people speak about citizenship reflects their expectations for the relationship between individual citizens and their communities (Conover, 1995).

Young people do not usually feature in debates about citizenship – unless these are focused on questions of civic education and on how to raise virtuous future citizens. Seen as distinct from autonomous and responsible adult citizens, young people and their experiences rarely matter for theories of citizenship. Discussions about the meaning of citizenship in relation to young people are few and far between, and that even though their status and role as citizens is not at all straightforward. Are young people full and equal citizens? Or are they "citizens-in-the-making" (Marshall, 1950, p. 25)? What kind of conceptions of citizenship can we expect among young people? And which questions about citizenship do we have to ask?

This chapter introduces theoretical questions of citizenship that are relevant in relation to young people. I will argue that, in particular when it comes to young people, citizenship can be understood not just in terms of status, rights, and responsibilities, but also in terms of identity, inclusion, and power. As a socially constructed concept, citizenship always involves trade-offs: between freedom and equality, between inclusion and exclusion, between the individual and the community, and ultimately, between structure and agency. We can make sense of these trade-offs by using different frameworks, or analytical lenses, to look at citizenship – liberal, communitarian, or civic republican ways of thinking. However, each of these theoretical notions greatly simplifies the challenges that come with citizenship, in particular in individualistic, pluralistic, and allegedly more globally connected societies. Tracing the debates on citizenship is important groundwork to make sense of how young people might look at their role as citizens.

2.2 Debates about citizenship without young people

Theories of citizenship do not usually consider young people. Citizenship was never conceived with young people in mind. In many ways, it is a concept of adulthood. In much of its history, citizenship goes back to responsible and independently acting adults: publicly engaged Athenians and Spartans, armed free men in medieval cities, property-owners in 17th century Britain, or the French and American revolutionaries. And even though over time debates about citizenship have focused on inclusion, these have only tangentially related to young people's citizenship.

2.2.1 Responsible and morally autonomous citizens

Citizenship as a concept is closely related to autonomy and responsibility. For this understanding, it does not matter whether we trace the origins of the concept to ancient Greece or Rome (Heater, 1999; Pattie et al., 2004; Preuss, 2003), to the practices and institutions of early city life (Pattie et al., 2004, p. 6; Prak, 1997), or to the social and political struggles of the 17th and 18th century (Bellamy, 2004; Brubaker, 1992; R. M. Smith, 2002). In ancient Greece or Rome, citizens were those, who could afford the status and took responsibility in government. In medieval cities, they were the ones who possessed their own property, livelihood, or weapons and took

responsibility for protecting and caring for others. And in the social and political struggles that came with the Enlightenment, citizens were those who fought, more or less violently, for their own liberty and to break up the absolutist practices of the *ancien régime*.

These perspectives on the development of citizenship, in particular the debates of the Enlightenment, illustrate that the concept is about moral autonomy and universal rights. Hume and Kant had very different ideas on the origin of morality (Denis, 2008), but their conclusions were remarkably similar: both established that moral considerations motivate autonomous government. For Hume and Kant the corollary of moral reasoning was that collective decisions are more insightful and just than an individual's rule. It follows that individuals are morally autonomous and have a universal right to make decisions. Based on individual liberty and moral autonomy, this argument marks the birth of the modern democratic citizen. Government was seen as a constant struggle between personal liberty (as the ultimate goal of civil society) and authority (necessary to confine personal liberty vis-à-vis fellow citizens). For Hume and Kant, democratic citizenship, hence, was not so much an intellectual epiphany, but the necessary outcome of an increased ability for moral reasoning and the resulting pursuit of the distribution of justice (Shaw, 2008). In this way, the ideas of the Enlightenment manifested the argument in favour of granting widespread civil rights and the status of autonomous citizens.

When childhood and youth are defined as social and relational concepts, for example in terms of dependence on and protection through others, and citizenship is based on individual responsibility and moral autonomy, young people cannot be considered citizens by definition (Stasiulis, 2002). Early ideas of the concept never included those who were not considered independent, self-sufficient, or able to take responsibility for their own actions. What is more, because citizenship as a status is absolute – it is either achieved or not – there is no middle ground for young people. No matter how far they are on their way to becoming independent and autonomous citizens, those who have not yet fully achieved the status are excluded from it. Some even go as far as arguing that terms such as 'adult' and 'child' are the equivalent of 'citizen' and 'alien' (Schapiro, 1999, p. 717).

2.2.2 T.H. Marshall and citizenship as a universal right

Throughout the 19th and 20th century, debates about citizenship were no longer primarily about status in terms of property ownership or personal liberty. They were first and foremost about who belonged to the citizenry and which rights were associated with citizenship. According to Marshall (1950), citizenship was the result of a cumulative struggle for universal civil, political, and finally social rights. Central to his view is the concept of equality. Marshall's definition of citizenship required that "all who possess the status [of citizen] are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (p. 84). The ultimate goal of citizenship was not merely individual liberty, but full participation in society. Marshall defined citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community" (1950, p. 28).

For Marshall, this meant that all citizens should be able to live according to the standards of the society. He imagined citizenship to evolve in stages: based on civil citizenship (18th century), political citizenship (19th century) and, ultimately, social citizenship (20th century). These were distinct stages in the progression to a truly egalitarian and universal notion of citizenship. In an effort to tackle problems of social inequality in modern class society, Marshall's definition explicitly included citizens' rights to social security (p. 101), healthcare, and the right to education (p. 81).

Citizenship was fundamentally about equality for Marshall. In a lecture on power in 1969, he explains that civil rights have to be at the core of definitions of citizenship as they form "the basis of political and social pluralism" (Marshall, 1969, p. 145). For Marshall, civil rights were a form of power vested in the individual. Without guaranteed and universal civil rights there is no way to avoid that one group assumes authoritarian power over another. Political and social rights alone would not be able to achieve that. It is in this sense that Marshall's notion of citizenship is liberal and rights-focused. He ascribed fundamental agency to the individual as the bearer of civil rights.

Despite its emphasis on equality, Marshall's notion of citizenship is still fundamentally a concept of adulthood. For Marshall, children and young people were not yet full members of the community. Rather, they were to be seen as future citizens. Children and young people's only social right was the right to be educated, "to stimulate the growth of citizens in the making" (Marshall, 1950, p. 25). Or rather, as Marshall put it, "it should be regarded, not as the right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated" (1950, p. 25).

2.2.3 Differentiated rights and inclusive citizenship

It is exactly this idea of the autonomy and agency of the individual that some take issue with. Universalist, rights-based conceptions of citizenship are argued to mask existing inequalities. On paper, people might have the status of equal citizens, but that does not automatically mean that they have equal access or power to impact the direction of the community. Feminist conceptions of citizenship, hence, emphasise that the concept must be about more than a status and a set of rights. As a concept of human relations, citizenship must be about interdependence. Mouffe (1992, p. 4) describes a notion of citizenship that allows the individual to act "as a citizen, who conceives of herself as a participant in a collective undertaking."

Because modern societies are pluralist and individuals always members of different communities with competing interests and different conceptions of the common good, citizenship is best defined on the basis of this disagreement and as a way of bringing diverse groups of citizens together. For Mouffe, citizenship thus becomes an active exercise, where disagreement is constantly negotiated. In contrast to Marshall (and other liberal theorists), her radically democratic understanding of the concept does not seek to establish consensus regarding the standards of society. Instead, it defines the practice of disagreement and negotiation as the act of citizenship.

Initially an argument for the inclusion of women, this radically democratic view of citizenship as a practice can also explicitly include children and young people. Lister (2003, 2007b) argues for a differentiated universalism, which recognises the agency of children and young people as citizens – even if they might choose to express it differently from adults. When children and young people are granted autonomy and agency, recognition and respect in their communities, they can be considered citizens by practice, even if the law still sets them apart. In contrast to citizenship that is based on status and rights, civic participation, according to Lister, plays out on a continuum that allows for much more differentiation in terms of citizenship.

Cultural pluralists, such as Young (1989) and Kymlicka (1995), go further than that. For them, citizenship should not be reducible to the practice of negotiating differences. Instead, to be truly inclusive citizenship needs a differentiated design from the outset, where different societal groups are treated to different sets of rights. Kymlicka's notion of multicultural citizenship reserves special representation rights to particular groups: "a multicultural state will include both universal rights, assigned to individuals

regardless of group membership, and certain group-differentiated rights or 'special status' for minority cultures" (1995, p. 6). Instead of being citizens-in-the-making, young people could be treated to different sets of rights or a different version of citizenship altogether. Elizabeth Cohen calls this 'semi-citizenship' (2005, 2009), where there are different bundles of rights and responsibilities that children and young people can exercise at different points in their development.

However, this kind of differentiation and radical pluralism is ill at ease with an understanding of citizenship in terms of equality and "a common culture" (Turner, 1994, p. 165). It runs in the danger of constraining the full cultural participation, and thereby the de facto equality of citizens. This is particularly concerning in relation to the status of young people, who – when treated to a childhood version of citizenship – may end up as quasi-citizens, able to express their views in tokenistic forms of participation, but not truly being heard (Lister, 2003; Weller, 2007, p. 159).

2.3 Theoretical questions about citizenship

These debates about citizenship illustrate how multi-faceted the concept is. Citizenship relates to concepts as complex and contested as power, identity, and morality. It is socially constructed and, as such, always involves a struggle between authority and individual liberty, inclusion and exclusion, universalism and particularism. What we mean when we speak of citizenship is related to the trade-off between liberty and equality, inclusion and exclusion, individual and community, power and agency. Independent of the actual practice of citizenship, these trade-offs raise inherent, theoretical questions about citizenship as a concept.

2.3.1 Questions of autonomy: Freedom versus equality

The Enlightenment ideals of freedom and equality remain at the core of theoretical issues with citizenship. Is the concept first and foremost concerned with the freedom of the individual or rather with equality among people? On the one hand, citizenship was first devised as a means to protect individuals and communities and distribute power. The origins of the concept show how early ideas of citizenship were borne out of a need for protection and the pursuit of individual freedom. People were to be free from the influence of others and have a right to make their own decisions. Today still,

when asked about the meaning of citizenship, many people first recall civil rights such as freedom of speech, the right to own property, and the right to vote (Conover, 1995; Conover et al., 1991).

On the other hand, not the least T.H. Marshall showed that citizenship is about more than just civil rights. For Marshall the ultimate aim of citizenship was the equality of citizens in civil, political, and social terms. Equality can be seen as the breeding ground for reciprocity and generalized trust, but also for self-legislation in the Kantian sense: we are more likely to accept each other's decisions when we respect one another as equals and share the same experiences (Preuss, 2003). Hence, to be meaningful, citizenship requires that citizens take an active share in each other's lives and provide for everyone in a society to achieve a similar standard of living (Marshall, 1950). Anderson went as far as suggesting that citizenship in itself may have an equalising role "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail" (1983, p. 16). Even if only imagined, the solidarity among fellow citizens lets us feel closer to one another than we might actually be.

In citizenship-speak, 'freedom' and 'equality' correspond to 'rights' and 'responsibilities' - or 'equality of opportunity' and 'equality of outcomes'. Basic civil rights provide people with equal opportunities by protecting them from arbitrary power. Civic duties, on the other hand, are designed so that citizens take an active share in each other's lives and eventually enjoy equal outcomes. Citizenship comes with both at the same time. It is always an expression of the struggle to strike a balance between personal liberty, or equality of opportunity, and protection, or freedom and equality of outcomes (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 11).

There is a gradient of freedom and equality – or rights and responsibilities – in citizenship that can go to either extreme. On one end of the extreme, there is the virtue of passive or private citizenship, where citizens have no responsibilities and – in turn – enjoy only the most basic civil rights. This kind of citizenship is a success in itself: private citizenship places "certain basic human goods (security, prosperity, and freedom) within the grasp of nearly all, and that is nothing less than a fantastic human achievement" (Macedo, 1990). On the other end of the scale, communitarians call for active citizenship where citizens' obligations to care for the community take precedence over their rights. In its most radical form, the communitarian notion of citizenship rejects individual rights and suggests that we can only be deemed citizens

if we take an active part in the elimination of all inequalities (Dwyer, 2003; Lister, 2003).

Questions about rights and responsibilities are particularly relevant for young people's citizenship. Children and young people are commonly viewed as passive citizens, placed far towards one end of the freedom-equality continuum (Lister, 2007b, p. 696f.). While they wait to become active citizens in the future, they enjoy basic civil rights as citizens, but these often remain tied to the private realm. Even though they are citizens by status, young people are often excluded from public spaces and denied any agency as active citizens (Lister, 2007b; Weller, 2007). The lack of the right to vote is only one illustration of this restriction. Without opportunities to take an active role in the community, young people enjoy only partial or a particular type of citizenship.

2.3.2 Questions of belonging: Inclusion versus exclusion

Young people's exclusion from some aspects of citizenship illustrates how the concept is fundamentally related to the question who belongs. Or in other words: who is part of the citizenry and who is not? On the one hand, children and young people can claim citizenship by virtue of their membership of the community. On the other hand, however, their relationship with the community can be different from that of adult citizens, who are connected through the full set of rights and responsibilities. Lister goes as far as comparing questions of young people's citizenship to those of denizens, who have a permanent residence status, but are without formal citizenship, in particular without the right to vote (2007b, p. 704).

In its essence, citizenship is about inclusion and exclusion. Being a citizen allows to be included in a group, whereas non-citizens are excluded. Brubaker argues: "Although citizenship is internally inclusive, it is externally exclusive" (1992, p. 21). Thus, citizenship is a means for demarcation. It is essentially about boundaries: it reinforces existing borders, discriminates people, and forms little subgroups of insiders and outsiders. Brubaker (1992) distinguishes two different interpretations of citizenship-as-exclusion: citizenship can either be about boundaries of territory (meaning anyone in a specific territory is entitled to the rights and obligations of citizenship) or about exclusion from civic rights (meaning anyone may enter the

territory, but is excluded from certain rights and practices such as suffrage or holding an office).

Questions of inclusion and exclusion raise a theoretical issue of citizenship: the issue of endogeneity. “Citizenship is both an instrument and an object of closure” (Brubaker, 1992, p. 34). From this perspective, citizenship does not defy a certain circular logic. It is a basis for and outcome of identification; a qualifier for rights and a mechanism for restriction. Today, a common condition for citizenship is residence in the territory; at the same time access to territory is usually restricted (Brubaker, 1992). In theory, this automatically makes citizenship endogenous, producing a self-perpetuating group that is closed in membership. The issue of endogeneity also persists when citizenship is contingent upon active participation. Here it is a particular problem for young people: when it depends on participation in the community, citizenship often excludes young people. That is because young people can be recognised as citizens through active participation; yet, they are often not afforded the right (or capacity) to participate until they are recognised as citizens (Lister, 2007b, p. 701).

As a means for inclusion and exclusion, citizenship is commonly understood as a concept of the state. It is often defined as the singular and formal relationship between individuals and the state (Heater, 1999, p. 115). Citizens are German, Dutch, or British and those who do not have any citizenship are ‘stateless’. States have a territory and their monopoly to power within that territory allows for citizenship to exist. The exclusion that state-citizenship entails, it is argued, is a necessary element to guarantee the rights of citizens within. Hence, an institution like the state is what renders possible inclusive and democratic citizenship in the first place (Delanty, 1997, p. 293). Is it possible then to speak of citizenship outside of states? And for citizens to have multiple and flexible allegiances?

The traditional citizenship-state relationship has increasingly come into question – not only because dual, parallel, and multi-tiered citizenships have become (and to some extent have long been) a reality (Heater, 1999, p. 115), but also because it is argued that citizenship is about much more than just the formal citizen-state-relationship. According to Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999), citizenship also concerns relationships between individuals. It provides perspectives on identity, social relations, and group membership. Citizenship would be more meaningful and analytically useful if it were

understood in terms beyond the state, “in relation to multiple formal and informal citizenships” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 9).

When it is understood in these broader terms, citizenship can be viewed as the outcome of basic human processes of identification and belonging. Being included in an in-group such as a citizenry is crucial for people to solve their need to belong (A. D. Smith, 1991). Identifying with a community provides a basis to make sense of the world around us and to make meaningful decisions (Kymlicka, 1995; Sindic, 2011). Identification with a community also gives meaning to the common good (Conover, 1995), provides the scope for reciprocity and distributive justice (Habermas, 1994) and thus, ultimately, for democratic legitimacy (Scharpf, 1996). This is the case because it is always easier to answer the question whether we will help ourselves than whether we will help others (Reicher & Haslam, 2009).

As an identity, citizenship is a much more elastic – and arguably more complicated – concept than its purely formal alternative. Citizens can identify as members of a state just as they can feel as citizens of their local region, the world, or any other informal group. In fact, Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) argue that it is precisely when citizenship is understood as an identity that space for multiple and flexible allegiances as citizens and citizenship beyond the state opens up. This is because citizenship based on individual perceptions of similarity and difference can acknowledge different positions of individuals and groups within the society and also focus on the similarity of humanity as a whole.

2.3.3 Questions of identity: The individual versus the community

Citizenship as a matter of identity raises a whole new set of questions. These are still somehow about boundaries: identity, or a sense of self, rests on categorisations and the perception of similarities and difference (Jenkins, 2014, p. 18). But where citizenship as a status emphasises inclusion and exclusion, questions of identity focus on what makes for a social category, or a community, in the first place. In this sense, citizenship always relates to the fundamental question of identity: who are ‘we’? As something that is very much at the core of human identity, the communities we form are stable and pervasive social structures. Yet, at the same time what makes the community is symbolic, imagined, and entirely subjective (A. P. Cohen, 1985). Thus,

even though communities and the rules they impose are a real part of people's lives, it is, ultimately, individuals who make the community by "thinking about it" (A. P. Cohen, 1985, p. 98) – that is by imagining similarities, creating shared symbols, and ascribing importance to the community. While for the members of a community their allegiance might feel as to something that exists objectively and independently of the individual – a place or a nation, for example – it is the members who ultimately create that reality and the customs, norms, and behaviours that come with it.

The difficulty with this definition is that people can have different ideas about what makes a community and yet take them for objective (Anderson, 1983; Condor, 1996; Jenkins, 2014). If all we needed to describe communities was knowledge about their boundaries, this would make it easy to ascribe identities and classify people as citizens on the basis of objective criteria (Huddy, 2001, p. 142). What makes citizenship in terms of identification and belonging to communities so tricky is that categorisations are not necessarily objective. As an identity, citizenship can be determined by citizens themselves or by others, deliberately or intuitively. While some similarities – not unlike Brubaker's characterisation of boundaries (1992) – can be recognized on the basis of objective criteria, such as a shared territory or having grown up in the same location, others are established in terms of perceived similarities (ethnicity, gender, professions, social class) or on the basis of emotional attachments and shared values (Yuval-Davis, 2006). What is more, not all communities have the same subjective importance for people (Huddy, 2001). Some are nothing but a shared name that can be experienced differently, while others have profound consequences for our experiences and behaviour (Jenkins, 1994, 2014, p. 46 f.).

Identification and belonging are dynamic processes that can depend on the individual, on others, and sometimes even on the context. Some identifications can be considered as remarkably stable, such as ethnicity or gender (Huddy, 2001), while others are entirely performative, reflecting "an emotional investment and desire for attachment" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Some identities are based on external categorisations – what kind of badge others put on us – and some we determine ourselves. Identification does not even have to be a wholly conscious and reflexive process. Much about our identities can be determined by what we take for granted and have learnt to do naturally – habits, traditions, language, cultural practices. At times, our identities as citizens can seem banal and "melt into the background" (Billig, 1995, p. 50), but they can also be consciously activated and foregrounded. Drawing

on research with young people, Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) argue that individuals use identities to different extents, emphasising them at times, but also consciously resisting or challenging aspects of categorisation.

Thus, is citizenship as an identity a concept of the individual or of the community? Herein lies the puzzle: only the individual can hold citizenship, yet citizenship can only exist in a community. On the one hand, citizenship is an individual status that comes with an individual identity, individual rights and claims (to protection, welfare, participation). On the other hand, however, citizenship describes us as members of a community. Our inclusion into the citizenry depends on conformity to group norms and any claims we make need to be recognised by the community. Thus, citizenship is not a universal right and inclusion not solely about the individual. There is a lot of weight to the community and the social structure around individuals.

As an identity, citizenship is about the sense of self and a sense of community. Identities gathers meaning from social interactions. When it comes to questions of identification, according to Jenkins (2014, p. 40), “the individual and the collective are routinely entangled with each other.” “Citizenship is about how individuals relate to the whole” (Crick, 2000). It describes (and to some degree shapes) the relationship of a person to the community (Conover, 1995). In this way, citizenship is about how individuals are embedded in and defined by the community they are a part of (Isin & Wood, 1999).

Is citizenship identity the same as national identity?

Questions about citizenship, identity and community raise another issue: Is citizenship as an identity the same as national identity? Colloquially, citizenship and national identity are often used interchangeably. Many have answered the question on the meaning of the community by turning to the nation (for example, Herder, Fichte). Thus, being a citizen means identifying as a member of the nation. Historically, this identification has been shown to arise from loyalty to and trust in a beneficial ruler. In the nation, the basis for citizenship is a form of generalized trust that all citizens act as a beneficial ruling body (Preuss, 2003). Thus, “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1983, p. 7). For citizenship to be meaningful, everyone must be trusted to be able to take meaningful collective decisions. In this sense, the nation can be seen as the quintessential community for

citizenship as it amounts to much more than mere self-interest. It is about “the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life” (Renan, 1882).

On the other hand, however, Brubaker (1992) illustrates how this kind of trust is not necessarily linked to national identity: long before the idea of the nation, people were loyal to and shared the principles of citizenship in medieval cities, guilds, or religious communities. Habermas, in fact, argues that “citizenship was never conceptually tied to national identity” (1994, p. 23). Instead, the link between the nation as a pre-political community and citizenship as its political counterpart came about rather accidentally when, after the French Revolution, it was appropriated to claim the right to political self-determination (Habermas, 1994, p. 24). This proves another point: it is an assumption (albeit a widespread one) that citizenship can only exist in the nation. Instead, the nation as a boundary for belonging appears to be arbitrary. Just like citizenship has to be disentangled from the state, so does national identity (McCrone & Kiely, 2000).

However, until today national and citizenship identities are so deeply intertwined that they often overlap – or at least seem to facilitate each other. A brief look at the example of Britain and Scotland illustrates this complex relationship: Scottish national identity is evidently different from being a British citizen and Scottish people have been shown to explicitly disentangle “their political commitment to British citizenship from questions relating to their subjective identity” (Abell et al., 2006, p. 207). Yet, a majority of people in Scotland claims a dual identity as Scottish and British citizens (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2009, p. 72), and the two identities can be seen as mutually reinforcing (Torrance, 2018)

2.3.4 Questions of power: Structure versus agency

All of these questions on citizenship – those on autonomy, on belonging, and on identity – eventually amount to issues of structure and agency. Is citizenship first and foremost an empowering institution or is it about social control? Whether we look at conceptions of citizenship in the medieval city, at the revolutions of the Enlightenment, or at Marshall’s debate about social inequalities, the development of citizenship is inextricably linked to the distribution of power. How much power is vested in individuals and how much in the social structures surrounding them? Being a citizen

always means assuming some degree of agency, while being subjected to social control at the same time.

It has been argued that citizenship was devised as a concept of agency (Marshall, 1969). By giving rights and a status to individuals as citizens, they were first liberated from the arbitrary distributions of power and, later, from the external constraints of political and social inequality. At the core of this understanding is the idea that citizenship is a concept of self-determination. When people are morally autonomous, the smallest possible unit of judgement is the individual citizen. Individual citizens hold the right to express an opinion, challenge and impact the direction of the community (Isin, 2009, p. 372). In this way, citizenship empowers people to become agents of their own interests and is, thus, a concept of individual agency.

The liberation of the individual and the dispersal of power, however, has resulted in a world where the individual as an agent is essentially powerless. While it can be argued that citizens today have more room for self-determination than ever before, this, in turn, also means that effectively as individuals they have less power. “The very capacity of groups of notional equals to collectively govern themselves is also a capacity for the group, the wider society and its various institutions to dominate the individual” (Hearn, 2012, p. 35). In other words: where everybody holds a little share of power, the force to impact change is ultimately vested in the collective, not the individual.

We have already seen how citizenship is not just about individuals, but about individuals *in their communities*. Power resides in the collective and the high degree of solidarity and social interdependence between members of the community (MacIntyre, 2013). Being a citizen, thus, also means to adapt to the ways of the community, to integrate and assimilate (Isin, 2009, p. 372). Citizenship is as much about being recognized as a legitimate member of the community as it is a status of the individual (Bloemraad, 2018). It imposes moral obligations and carries a prescriptive, strictly normative dimension that can better be termed citizenship-as-desirable-activity (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). In exchange for their rights of residence and protection, citizens have a number of obligations: for example, to respect the freedom of their fellow citizens, to remain loyal to their community, and to participate in collective decision making. The duties associated with citizenship relate to solidarity

and the protection of the common good: "…as members we are connected to other members by virtue of our shared interest in a common good" (Conover, 1995).

Questions of structure and agency are particularly coming to the fore, when citizenship is understood in terms of processes of identification. In the previous section, we have seen how tangled up individuals and the community are when it comes to questions of identification. Depending on who takes precedence, the individual or the community, citizenship as an identity can feel achieved or ascribed (Huddy, 2001, p. 137 f.). As an achieved identity, a personal and deliberate choice, citizenship can be a symbol of individual agency and perceived to be empowering. As an ascribed identity – an external categorisation – it can signal the power of the existing social structure and the culture, habits, and practices that come with it (Williams, 2000, p. 55). This can be experienced as secure, but also as limiting of individual agency.

In the same way, viewing citizenship as an identity also frames issues of similarity and difference in terms of structure and agency. While the community can limit the space to be different, when citizens have the freedom to be different, this can limit the power of the community (Werbner & Yuval-Davis, 1999). In other words, where citizenship provides more space to be different, citizens might view citizenship more as a matter of agency, and less as of community.

2.4 Three approaches to making sense of citizenship

Most of the questions about citizenship that I raised here are inherently contested. Whether precedence is given to freedom or equality, the agency of the individual or the structure of the community can only be answered coherently in the context of a particular understanding of the world. Questions such as what kind of community we want to live in and what makes for a good citizen are inherently ontological. Much of our experience of citizenship is shaped by how we answer the fundamental questions about our role as individuals in the communities we are a part of.

Three competing theories of citizenship can help make sense of these issues and provide a language to discuss them: liberal, communitarian, and civic republican notions of citizenship. Depending on the framework in which we speak of citizenship

there is a stronger emphasis on either the status of the individual, the feeling of belonging to a community, or the practices within said community.

2.4.1 Liberal ideas or citizenship-as-status

Liberals emphasize the universalistic nature of citizenship as a status of the individual. Liberal theories are a direct outcome of the struggle for the legitimate distribution of power. They focus on negative liberty: citizens are to be free from arbitrary power. Universal civil rights grant them this freedom. Liberals view individuals as the sole bearer of rights. Citizens are morally autonomous. Each individual is assumed to be independent and capable to reflect and choose his or her conception of what is good (Macedo, 1990; Oldfield, 1990). It follows that the community does not prescribe what is good; what is desirable behaviour is determined by the interests of the individual. The community is neutral; it is a mere protector of rights and in the service of the individual (Beiner, 1995).

We can simplify the liberal notion of citizenship to view it as **citizenship as status.** From status, it is derived that individuals and their political community are tied together contractually on the basis of rights and responsibilities. Citizenship-as-a-status comes with rights (e.g. to make use of institutions of law and policing, holding a passport, using consular assistance, the right to vote, and access to welfare institutions) as well as responsibilities (e.g. paying taxes, military service, in some countries active political participation as in compulsory voting). Viewed as a status, citizenship is often used synonymously with holding a passport or being assigned membership in a state. In this sense, it is often understood as a passive, merely legal concept.

Liberal ideas of citizenship include children and young people only from the moment they act as morally autonomous and responsible citizens. Strictly speaking, this means that until young people are autonomous and capable of independent judgement, they have no contractual relationship with their communities, or only by proxy through their parents or adult guardians.

2.4.2 Communitarian ideas or citizenship-as-a-sense-of-belonging

The starting point for communitarian notions of citizenship is a critique of the fundamental liberal assumption that individuals are autonomous and independent (Mouffe, 1992; Walzer, 1990). Instead, communitarians assume individuals to be social beings whose need to belong is an integral part of their identity. This social interdependence makes people indivisible from their communities and gives rise to a deep sense of solidarity, reciprocity, and loyalty. The feeling of belonging and attachment to a community is strongest when it has developed over time, because a common history, shared traditions and practices as well as common activities constantly reinforce it (MacIntyre, 1984; Sandel, 1998). Over time, shared practices and values emerge from the traditions and habits of the community, as seemingly objective criteria and more out of a sense of duty and moral obligation to the community than in the sense of liberal civil rights. The communitarian notion of citizenship builds on this sense of belonging and duty: citizenship is defined as "a form of social solidarity" (Turner, 1997, p. 9). This is what makes political communities socially cohesive and motivates people to participate in collective decision making. In this sense, for communitarians citizenship is rather a feeling than a set of rights.

The communitarian notion of citizenship implies that at the core of **citizenship is a sense of belonging**, because individuals identify with their political community by sharing a feeling of being in the right place. Citizens are emotionally involved in and share a meaningful sense of attachment to the community on the basis of a common history, shared values, traditions and practices, and a conception of the common good. This sense of belonging is considered a prerequisite for 'active citizenship': if it is missing, so, too, is a sense of solidarity and – with that – citizenship in the active sense (Mouffe, 1992; Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 12). In this way, citizenship-as-a-sense-of-belonging is considered to be a question of collective identity, solidarity, and loyalty.

There is no reason to assume that children and young people cannot be included in communitarian understandings of citizenship. By virtue of their membership in and interdependence with the community, young people are citizens just as anyone else. As long as they share a sense of belonging and adhere to the same values, traditions, and practices, young people are recognised members of the community.

2.4.3 Civic republican ideas or citizenship-as-practice

In contrast to both liberals and communitarians, civic republicans address the element of agency and view citizenship in terms of active participation (Delanty, 1997). Neither the individual nor the community takes precedence (Beiner, 1995). Instead, civic republicans assume individuals to be both indivisible from their political community as well as agents of what they believe to be good. In the civic republican understanding, the citizen is allowed and even requested to challenge the status quo on the basis of what he or she believes to be right. In this way, citizenship becomes a practice. It requires mutual respect for differing conceptions of what constitutes the common good, a shared understanding of the rule of debate, and an arena that discussion can take place in (Habermas, 1992). In addition to basic civil rights (such as freedom of speech, economic and political participation), the expectation to participate in debates of the common good also gives rise to a range of other civic duties: the citizen must serve the political community, defend it whenever it is threatened, actively deliberate its values and understanding of the common good, and ensure its continuity over time (Oldfield, 1990). Even though often claimed to be non-normative, civic republican ideas of citizenship can better be termed citizenship-as-desirable-activity (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994).

Thus, for **citizenship as practice** individuals are assumed to have agency and relate to their political community through specific joint practices, for example participation in collective decision making (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Preuss, 2003). This understanding hinges on the individual's awareness of communal issues and a shared definition of participation or good civic behaviour. Other elements of this dimension are the practice of solidarity to fellow citizens and the practice of civic values.

Children and young people are considered as citizens-by-practice as soon as they assume agency in the community. When viewed as a practice, it is often assumed that citizenship can be taught and learnt. Therefore, this view is often used to serve definitions based on competency and justify measures of civic education. However, it requires careful consideration of what 'assuming agency' means and which capacities citizens need to demonstrate.

Table 1. (Simplified) typology of theories of citizenship

	Liberal	**Communitarian**	**Civic republican**
Understanding	Citizenship-as-status	Citizenship-as-sense-of-belonging	Citizenship-as-practice
Focus on	Rights & responsibilities	Identity	Participation
Citizenship developed from	Revolution, political / social struggle	Religious communities and practices	Early city life and urbanisation
Assumes the individual to be	Autonomous, independent	Social being, indivisible from its community	An agent of the community
What is good is determined by	The individual	Shared values, traditions	Active deliberation in the community
The political community is	Neutral, a mere protector of rights, in the service of the individual	At the core of/instrumental to human identity	Constituted of individual citizens, non-instrumental, good in itself
Key question	Does the community protect my rights?	What to do to ensure that shared values are continued?	What can I do for the community?
Considering young people	…from the moment they are autonomous	…as recognised members of the community	…when they assume agency in the community

Sources: Beiner, 1995; Bellamy, 2004; Delanty, 1997; Isin & Turner, 2002; Oldfield, 1990; R. M. Smith, 2002; Turner, 1990, 1997

These notions of citizenship greatly simplify our understanding of the concept and provide a language to speak about its contestations. They help us view citizenship as a dynamic link between individuals and their communities. This link can be constituted in terms of a status, by means of a feeling or through common practice (Conover, 1995; Osler & Starkey, 2005). In other words, citizenship can be about rights and responsibilities (“citizenship-as-a-status”), but it can also be felt (“citizenship-as-a-feeling-of-belonging”) or practised ("citizenship-as-practice").

Status, feeling and practice are all present in understandings of citizenship to some extent (Preuss, 2003). The three elements can be viewed as interrelated and reinforcing (Bloemraad, 2018, p. 4). In the clear-cut form as I present them here these distinct models of citizenship can only exist theoretically (Delanty, 1997). Kymlicka notes that, according to Bikhu Parekh (1990, p. 702) “citizenship today ‘is a much more differentiated and far less homogeneous concept than has been presupposed by political theorists’” (as cited in Kymlicka, 1995, p. 174). As an empirical concept, our understanding of citizenship is most likely a blend of liberal, civic republican and communitarian notions (R. M. Smith, 2002).

2.5 Future directions of citizenship and its tensions

Citizenship is a heterogeneous, some might even say elusive concept that is changing constantly. When we view citizenship as the relationship between individuals and their communities, this means that, if understandings of the individual and the community change, so does the understanding of citizenship. Social processes such as individualisation, pluralisation and social fragmentation, but also globalisation and migration are thought to challenge prevailing conceptions of citizenship (U. Beck, 1986; Bennett, 2012; Giddens, 1991; Isin & Wood, 1999). The underlying mechanisms of these social changes are not my primary concern here and much better elaborated elsewhere (see for example, Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

What I am interested in is what happens to citizenship and, in particular, what being a citizen means to those growing up in these more individualistic, pluralistic, and allegedly more globally connected societies. Earlier in this chapter, we have already seen how, over time, theoretical debates on citizenship have come to focus more on inclusion. The concept has not only been broadened. It has been argued that conceptually citizenship is being stretched into different directions – geographically, legally, and as a means to representation – and maybe even beyond its capacity (Heater, 1999, p. 156).

2.5.1 The problematic trade-off between the universal and the particular

One difficulty for citizenship in fragmented and pluralised societies is the tension between the universal and the particular – or liberal and communitarian notions of citizenship. Liberals, emphasizing the universality of citizenship and the power of the individual, on the one hand, threaten the idea of community, while communitarians jeopardize the freedom of the individual. We have seen that, in theory, citizenship is just as much a concept of the individual as of the community. It always involves a trade-off between the interests of individuals and the welfare of the community as a whole. In return for their loyalty, citizens can expect a basic degree of freedom and autonomy. In order to hold citizenship as a personal status, citizens need to integrate into and share the values of the community. In other words, the agency of the individual is only potent when combined with the power of the collective.

In rather homogeneous communities the tension between liberal and communitarian notions of citizenship is manageable. The interests of individuals and the community are likely to be aligned. It is possible for individuals to identify with the community and pledge loyalty to its values, while the community can accommodate the interests of individuals. Heterogeneous and pluralistic societies, however, by definition have to deal with a range of different interests. Citizens are less likely to share an understanding of values and the common good. As a consequence, the trade-off between the interests of the individual and those of the community becomes more and more difficult to resolve.

Simply prioritizing individual rights over community values or the other way around, however, does little to help resolve the liberal-communitarian deadlock. Neither liberal nor communitarian accounts of citizenship are suited to the reality of pluralistic societies. Universal notions of citizenship-as-a-status more often than not remain empty, while communitarian ideas of citizenship-as-an-identity eventually become overbearing. This is because societies are neither an “aggregation of individuals” nor “a conjunction of identity-constituting groups” (Beiner, 1995, p. 14).

The particular problem of formal, legal notions of citizenship, which view citizenship solely as a set of rights and emphasize individual autonomy, universal rights, and the equality of individuals, is that they often remain fairly empty in reality. Firstly, in many cases the idea of individual justice remains a ‘hollow promise’ in practice (Bloemraad, 2018, p. 7). Even if citizens enjoy equality de jure, there are lots of factors that remain

unregulated and impact people's ability to act as citizens de facto. Despite the promised equality of citizens by status, racial, ethnic, religious, or class-based discrimination, for example, can nevertheless make people second-class citizens in practice. Isin and Wood go as far as arguing that liberal ideals "have served as masks to disguise forms of discrimination, oppression and misrecognition based on class, gender, race, ethnicity, age and ability" (1999, p. vii). Ultimately however, what matters might not so much be people's de facto inequality, but how just and equal people perceive their status as citizens to be.

Secondly, citizenship-as-a-status becomes meaningless when it is not exclusive to a community, i.e. when there are no boundaries to citizenship. In theory, liberal notions maintain that citizenship can be universalized ad infinitum. Where the smallest autonomous unit of moral judgement is the individual, all people should eventually be equal and hold the same rights. Our understanding of modern human rights can be viewed as an expression of this universalization of citizenship; another is the fact that a number of rights are granted even to non-citizens today (Bloemraad, 2013). Both of these practices eventually render the idea of citizenship as an exclusive status meaningless. If everyone enjoys the same rights just by virtue of being human, there is no reason to be loyal to and perform duties for a community anymore.

With the idea of citizenship-as-an-individual-status at risk of becoming meaningless altogether, many have claimed that citizenship needs to be reinvigorated as a concept of community. In a statement delivered to the House of Commons in July 2007 former Prime Minister Gordon Brown said "… we must give new life to the very idea of citizenship" (HC Deb, 2007). And according to Chantal Mouffe (1992, p. 3),

> "the notions of citizenship and community have been stripped of much of their content by liberal individualism, and we need to recover the dimension of active participation that they hold in the classical republican tradition."

The gap left by radically liberal conceptions of citizenship was to be filled with an emphasis on loyalty, duty, and shared norms and values, giving priority to the community over the rights of the individual. According to new communitarians there can be no radically individualist community, for every agreement on the relationship between people is ultimately established on the basis of "some quite different normative and evaluative concept" (MacIntyre, 2013, p. 9). For this reason, communitarians maintain that we need to emphasize the role of particular identities

in our understanding of citizenship. In order for citizenship to be meaningful, citizens need a common sense of identity, mutual respect, an understanding of shared values and communal duties. These form the basis for reciprocity, distributive justice and, ultimately, active citizenship.

The problem with this idea of citizenship-as-loyalty-to-a-particular-community is that it runs in the danger of either becoming overbearing for the individual or just as meaningless as radically liberal conceptions of citizenship. On the one hand, the kind of loyalty and equality of citizens within one community that new communitarians build on, is unrealistic in today's pluralistic societies, where individuals may identify with more than one community or no community at all. Citizenship was devised as "a singular, bilateral relationship" between the individual and the community (Heater, 1999, p. 115), but may have become a myth, for several possible reasons. Firstly, an increase in global migration yields groups of people who may be loyal to more than one community. There are a number of countries today, in which it is possible to hold multiple citizenships, and, at the same time, people's legal citizenship does not necessarily correspond to the community they feel loyal to (Sindic, 2011). Secondly, citizenship-as-an-identity may remain implicit, because it is not sufficiently invoked (Billig, 1995) or because individualisation is giving rise to cohorts of people – particularly among younger generations – who do not make sense of their identity in terms of collective identities at all (Fenton, 2007, p. 336).

The question thus is: What are the overarching shared norms and values of all these groups of people who do not share a collective identity today? If forced onto people, as in conceptions of 'active citizenship', the communitarian view of citizenship easily becomes patronising, putting the liberty of the individual at risk. On the other hand, if we allow for ideas of citizenship, where people can identify with multiple and diverse social groups, we may end up with an understanding of citizenship that does not feature any commonality at all, just difference. Conceptions of radically pluralistic citizenship, such as Chantal Mouffe's (1992) or Will Kymlicka's (1995), acknowledge that people can have complex and changing identities, that they have multiple loyalties, and that identities are socially constructed, but not always equally essential (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 12). However, defining citizenship-as-loyalty in the context of such a multifaceted understanding of identity may lead us to focus solely on particularism, but unable to establish any commonalities (Beiner, 1995). Where individuals have multiple loyalties and express them through membership in different

groups and changing social movements, there is no room to imagine a common good, no shared idea of norms and values, only competition. “Consequently, citizen identities may be based on only partial conceptions of the common good, if at all” (Conover, 1995, p. 138). Not only is there no shared understanding of citizenship; also those who do not identify with any of the dominant social groups eventually remain marginalized (Conover, 1995).

2.5.2 Citizenship-as-a-practice to the rescue?

To resolve the liberal-communitarian impasse and give new meaning to citizenship in fragmented and pluralistic societies many have called for a revival of citizenship as a practice (Beiner, 1995; Habermas, 1992; Isin, 2009; Kymlicka, 1995; Mouffe, 1992). Their argument goes like this: When faced with a plurality of interests, defining citizenship as the practice of debating exactly these different interests can reconcile and unite the various groups who form a citizenry in pluralistic and fragmented societies and account for the distribution of rights and resources. This argument has given rise to multiple variations of the classic civic republican notion of citizenship-as-a-practice. Habermas’ idea of a ‘deliberative democracy’ (1992) can be viewed as a derivative of this theme as well as, to some extent, Mouffe’s radical democratic citizenship (1993) or Kymlicka’s multicultural citizenship (1995).

In this modern variety, citizenship is still related to social and political struggle. In contrast to ideas of citizenship as a status, however, where citizens hold rights as definitive outcome of struggle, citizenship-as-a-practice is about the process of negotiating and struggling for rights itself. Citizenship, it is thus argued, is performative: an act of rights claiming rather than rights holding (Isin, 2017; Isin & Wood, 1999; Zivi, 2012). Much of this idea of citizenship as rights claiming is based on Hannah Arendt’s understanding of what being political means: to engage in the act of persuasion itself, without an expectation of being able to control the outcome (Arendt, 1958). It is the idea that as political beings we claim and negotiate rights rather than viewing them as definite. This is a conception of citizenship in terms of human agency: instead of using rights as trumps, the ability to claim civil rights as such is the ultimate trump (Marshall, 1969; Zivi, 2012).

This view accepts that democracy is not stable, but an ongoing project of negotiating who holds which kinds of rights and what kind of society we want to live in. By making sense of citizenship as a process rather than a statement or judgement, citizenship-as-a-practice aims to avoid normative statements of what the good society should look like (Isin & Wood, 1999). Its ambition is to reconcile competing claims of the individual and the community by allowing both to make claims “on polities, people and institutions” (Bloemraad, 2018, p. 6). Thus, citizenship as rights claiming resolves questions of identity. It is a concept of the individual as well as the community. When viewed as rights claiming citizenship not only becomes a practice in the civic republican tradition, it also becomes self-reinforcing: "We come to see that, through the practice of rights claiming, individuals learn to be and shape the meaning of democratic citizenship and community" (Zivi, 2012, p. 117).

However, there are inherent problems with this view of contemporary citizenship, too. Viewing citizenship as the practice and process of negotiating rights assumes that there is a single political community or single public sphere where this negotiation can take place. But what exactly is the community that citizenship is performed in and that claims are made on? “The problem with such a view is that it assumes a unitary and singular conception of political community” (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 9). While it can be argued that the nation state used to act as this community and provided the platform for negotiation, with multiple loyalties and multicultural societies this cannot be easily assumed anymore today. To overcome this problem Habermas has argued for a European public sphere as the realm for negotiation (1994); others maintain that the ultimate community that claims are made on is the global community of all human beings (Falk, 1994; Held, 1999). This potentially worldwide sphere of citizenship, however, is vast – arguably too vast. According to Derek Heater, to be concerned with the rights claims of all human beings and the infinite number of combinations of individuals and sub-communities “is literally impossible for one individual” (1999, p. 76). “An individual’s resources of spare time, energy and money are minuscule in relation to the colossal scale” (Heater, 1999, p. 77). When viewed in this way, rather than empowering, citizenship can quickly become overwhelming.

A second, and closely related, problem with this view of citizenship as a practice is that it fails to resolve conflicts of power and agency. When viewed as a perpetual process without any definite outcomes or normative judgements, citizenship is in danger of becoming meaningless. This is because there is a persistent tension

between rights and recognition (Bloemraad, 2018) or, in other words, empowerment and domination (Isin, 2009). By making a claim on the community the claims maker exerts agency, but in order for these claims to be meaningful, there has to be some sort of power vested in the community's other actors to recognize these claims. Without recognition, the act of rights-claiming quickly becomes futile. However, it is hardly imaginable for communities to recognize claims makers and their claims without a particular normative understanding of equality and life in the good society. Indeed, Koopmans et al. (2005) show that even an understanding of citizenship as claims making is always embedded in a particular national discourse and the associated social norms. Where there is no agreement on particular social norms, there is no power to recognize particular claims vis-à-vis others. In such a case, Koopmans and colleagues argue, citizenship becomes "contested" (2005) and ultimately ineffective. This casts doubt on the idea that, even in the form of a practice, citizenship can ever be universal and non-normative. Power, it is argued, is precisely vested in the particular, while the universal remains powerless. In response to Martha Nussbaum's appeal for a cosmopolitan education and worldview as the basis for citizenship, Hilary Putnam maintains that "in the absence of such concrete ways of life, forms of what Hegel called *Sittlichkeit*, the universal maxims of justice are virtually empty" (H. Putnam, 1996, p. 94).

Lastly, both problems raise the question where power and agency are situated in this conception of citizenship-as-a-practice. While in a narrow and normative understanding, citizens can be viewed as constrained by the social structures that recognize their claims, it can just as well be argued that, if viewed as a universal practice, citizenship-as-claims-making puts too much agency with the individual as the claims maker. Where there is no counterpart holding the power to recognize such claims, the onus to apply and enforce rights claims is entirely on the claimant with very little structure and acknowledgement around them. Ong has illustrated how in such a case citizenship becomes an entirely "flexible" notion, which only benefits those who have the means "to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (1999, p. 6) – in the case of her study rich Cantonese individuals using citizenship flexibly for economic power and political security. The corollary is that, in a world where citizenship is understood as a universal practice, those claims makers who do not have the means to handle citizenship flexibly, end up powerless and without any meaning to their agency.

2.6 Summary and conclusions

This chapter summarised theoretical debates on citizenship. It has defined citizenship as a multi-faceted and contested concept that does not only revolve around status, rights, and responsibilities. Citizenship can also be viewed as an identity, a feeling of belonging, or as a practice. Citizenship always involves trade-offs: between freedom and equality, between inclusion and exclusion, between the individual and the community, and ultimately, between structure and agency. As a socially constructed concept, citizenship is not static, but dynamic and ever changing.

This is important when we look at what being a citizen means to young people. Not only do young people not usually feature in debates about conceptions of citizenship. As a socially constructed concept, citizenship is also always subject to social change. When it is defined as the relationship between individuals and their communities, it is reasonable to assume – or rather, naïve not to assume – that what being a citizen means will be different for people who have grown up in different contexts. Citizenship might mean something different to those growing up in today's more individualistic, pluralistic, and allegedly more globally connected societies than to previous generations just as it might mean something different to young people growing up in different countries or circumstances.

This chapter has provided the language that we need to speak about citizenship and its inherent tensions in relation to concepts as complex and contested as autonomy, identity, power and agency. I will use this language in the next chapter, in particular the concepts that are at the core of citizenship – status and equality, inclusion and exclusion, power and agency – to summarise existing evidence on young people's conceptions of citizenship.

Chapter 3

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CONTESTED MEANINGS OF CITIZENSHIP

3.1 Introduction

So far, we have seen that citizenship is a multifaceted and contested concept. We can start to make sense of it when we break it down into its constitutive elements – status, identity, and practice – and uncover its inherent tensions and trade-offs. This is particularly useful when it comes to debates about citizenship and young people.

Much of the literature on youth citizenship is occupied with questions of citizenship as a practice. Instead of looking at citizenship from different angles, this 'mainstream' research (Marsh et al., 2007; O'Toole et al., 2003) seeks answers only as to whether or not young people are good – in the sense of active and engaged – citizens. It misses out on explaining why young people become engaged or turn towards different forms of engagement. Aspects of citizenship that revolve around status and equality, identity and belonging, power and agency remain largely unaccounted for.

There is some research outside the mainstream, which engages with aspects of youth citizenship other than engagement, providing insights into young people's views of citizenship as status or as a feeling of belonging. However, little of it explicitly combines perspectives on the different elements of citizenship or focuses on their trade-offs and the challenges these pose for young people. This chapter outlines which kinds of questions on young people and citizenship are discussed in the literature. Much of it refers to 'citizenship' but means vastly different things. By unpacking the different conceptions of citizenship that existing research on young

people as citizens is based on, we can start to make sense of the relevant evidence on youth citizenship and determine which areas need further insight.

First, I will give an overview over the mainstream literature, which focuses on young people's engagement. This research understands citizenship largely as a practice, but leaves open questions on young people's status, identity, and agency as citizens. Some of these open questions are addressed by research on youth citizenship outside the mainstream, but its evidence is spread far and wide, spanning different theoretical frameworks. By sorting the available evidence in the context of questions of identity and belonging, status and equality, power and agency, I will present what is known about the particular challenges that young people face in their understanding of citizenship and which questions need further insight.

3.2 The 'mainstream' literature on youth engagement

The vast majority of research on youth citizenship portrays young people as either disengaged or newly engaged citizens. Much of it revolves around Putnam's thesis of declining social capital. Putnam found young Americans to be markedly less involved in social and political life than previous generations; he described them as 'disengaged citizens' (1995, 2000). Since civic and political engagement are crucial for the functioning of democracy, according to Putnam (1993), their decline among young people must point toward a looming crisis of democratic legitimacy.

The severity of this scenario serves as a justification for an enormous amount of research on young people's citizenship. Some even argue it is its "single most important *raison d'être*" (Hirzalla, 2010, p. 4). In response to Putnam's argument, an entire stream of research seeks to demonstrate that young people are either disengaged citizens or the opposite – far from disengaged. Those countering Putnam's argument routinely portray young people as 'newly engaged citizens', arguing that instead of being alienated, young people build on different citizenship norms and are forging new ways of engagement (Dalton, 2006, 2007; Henn et al., 2002; Marsh et al., 2007; Norris, 2002, 2003).

Most of this research on young people and their engagement in social and political life falls into one of two camps: the proponents and opponents of the 'disengaged youth'-narrative. These camps have also been called the 'civics deficit' versus 'new

engagements'-theses (Harris et al., 2007), the 'apathy' and the 'anti-apathy school' (Phelps, 2012, p. 288) or, the 'conservative lament' and the 'postmodern celebration' (Buckingham, 2000, p. 349). Taken together, this research is sometimes referred to as the 'mainstream' literature on youth participation (Marsh et al., 2007; O'Toole et al., 2003), because it is firmly grounded in conventional assumptions of democratic engagement.

3.2.1 Young people as disengaged citizens

Following Putnam's argument, many investigations initially focused on measuring young people's declining levels of engagement as citizens (Clarke et al., 2003; Dekker, 2002; Park, 1999; Pirie & Worcester, 2000; Russell et al., 2002; Wilkinson & Mulgan, 1995). This research portrays young people as disengaged and passive citizens, who are withdrawn from social and political life (Pirie & Worcester, 2000). In comparison to older generations, young people are reported to be less likely to vote, to demonstrate lower levels of knowledge about politics and trust in institutions, and declining levels of membership in political parties, trade unions or civil society organisations (Kimberlee, 2002; Park, 1999; Russell et al., 2002; Wilkinson & Mulgan, 1995). A key reason for this decline is argued to be the weakening of feelings of civic duty among the youngest generations (Clarke et al., 2003, p. 62). In line with Putnam, Russell et al. conclude that "the connection between young people and the democratic state is more fragile than in the rest of the electorate" (2002, p. 12).

From this research, it is not quite clear whether the observed decline in civic engagement is an effect particular for a specific birth cohort or generation of young people or rather an effect of age over the life cycle (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003). On the one hand, evidence suggests a robust connection between democratic responsibility, in terms of actual levels of participation in elections, civic groups, or organised political life, and levels of educational attainment, which increase over the life course (Nie et al., 1996; Quintelier, 2007). As an effect of education that is related to age, young people can be expected to be less involved compared to older adults but become more engaged as citizens over the life course.

On the other hand, Putnam and supporters of his theory tend to conclude that what they observe is not just an effect of age, but a lasting generational issue. Due to

socialisation effects specific to particular birth cohorts, young people will never reach the levels of engagement found for previous generations. Indeed, evidence suggests that when it comes to civic values and attitudes to civic engagement, e.g. political apathy, differences between young people and older adults are primarily an effect of belonging to different birth cohorts (Van Deth & Elff, 2000). This cohort effect can either be a result of overall value change (Inglehart, 1977, 1997) or have to do with political generations that draw on particular socialising experiences during their coming-of-age as citizens (Mannheim, 1952, compare also Grasso, 2014). For supporters of Putnam's thesis, this often means that declining levels of engagement need to be countered by a re-invigoration of citizenship that specifically targets young people, for example through civic education in schools (Blunkett, 2001; Crick, 2002; Galston, 2001).

3.2.2 Young people as newly engaged citizens

Many scholars reject the 'disengaged youth' narrative, arguing that it represents a narrow and conservative understanding of citizenship. What is being measured is merely the expectation that citizens are engaged in organised social and political life, but that might not be what constitutes citizenship for young people (Henn et al., 2007, 2002; Marsh et al., 2007; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). Dalton argues that, in times of broader changes towards self-expression values, it would be naïve to assume that citizenship norms stayed the same (2006, p. 1). Rather, what is being measured is an outdated conception of citizenship. This argument is in line with theories of citizenship, which hold that, as a socially constructed concept, citizenship has changed and broadened in meaning over time, which we have come across in the previous chapter.

Instead of broad civic disengagement, it is suggested that today's young people build on a different understanding of citizenship. Young people are portrayed as newly engaged citizens, who turn away from duty-based conceptions of citizenship and collective action in formal institutions, and instead prefer more autonomous forms of engagement that give a direct say and influence to the individual (Dalton, 2006). Inglehart and Welzel's theory of value change and their projected rise of self-expression values shines through much of this work (2005). Young people are characterised as "empowered individuals" (Bennett, 2008, p. 3), who value personal expression and making own choices more than collective action.

Drawing a distinction between duty-based citizenship and engagement-based citizenship norms, Dalton (2006, 2007) finds that, in contrast to older generations of Americans, who understand citizenship first and foremost in terms of the duty to vote, to obey the law, and not to evade taxes, young people view good citizenship not as a duty, but rather in terms of being active in voluntary groups and elite-challenging political action, supporting and caring for others, and forming own political opinions. While this new understanding of citizenship may, according to Dalton, "contribute to the erosion of electoral participation" (2006, p. 8), young people effectively shift citizenship norms towards direct forms of engagement, such as volunteering, demonstrations, and boycotts.

Similarly, in a study of citizenship in Britain, Pattie et al. find the lowest levels of respect for the law and for the duty to vote among the youngest age groups (2004, p. 70). However, instead of claiming wide-ranging alienation, they conclude that citizenship is transforming to include more individualised participation and engagement in "micro-politics" (Pattie et al., 2004). This interpretation is based on theoretical expansions of citizenship as a concept that emphasise the agency of the individual. As we have seen in chapter 2, ideas about the transformation of citizenship often build on the premise that being a citizen is about more than just the formal relationship with the state (as enacted through voting, for example) and can include personal interpretations and performative acts of rights-claiming. Likewise, for the Netherlands, Dekker concludes that instead of a decrease in levels of engagement, it is more accurate to speak of a shift in forms of engagement: away from electoral and party politics towards activism and protesting (2002).

Indeed, when the measurement of civic engagement includes cause-oriented, unconventional, or elite-challenging actions, young people are, in fact, found to be more active in these than previous generations. Norris reports that, although young people are less involved in institutional politics, they are more likely to engage in issue-groups, to sign petitions or to join boycotts than older people (2003). For Britain, Pattie et al. (2004) find that, out of all age groups, young people are least likely to vote or to belong to political organisations, but most likely to discuss politics in informal networks, such as friendship groups. New forms of engagement also arise from a variety of modes of communication, lifestyle issues, and new technologies and media (Bennett, 2003). They can include online networks and online activism (Bennett &

Segerberg, 2012), digital engagement and social media citizenship (Loader, 2007; Xenos et al., 2014), or forms of political consumerism (Stolle et al., 2005).

Although research that portrays young people as newly engaged citizens builds on the idea of generational change, it is not quite clear if what these studies are showing is indeed a replacement for declining forms of engagement over time. Firstly, with so many possible ways for citizens to be engaged in social or political life, civic engagement becomes an even more elusive concept. In the least, it is worth asking what really counts as engagement and whether the different forms of engagement that are measured in these studies are comparable to one another and over time. Secondly, even if we assume that these measures of engagement are indeed comparable (for example in terms of effort, commitment, or impact), that does not mean that all of them are a product of generational replacement. Indeed, there is some evidence that the mechanisms of change over time are not quite the same for different forms of civic engagement. The decline in engagement in formal political institutions, for example, is partly attributable to an effect of the life cycle and partly to broader patterns of value change (Grasso, 2014; Quintelier, 2007). Increases in some forms of cause-oriented, unconventional, or elite-challenging actions outside of formal institutions, in contrast, are measured for specific cohorts of people and related to the particular political circumstances of their coming-of-age (Grasso, 2014; Norris, 2003; Van Deth & Elff, 2000).

3.3 Questions that the mainstream literature does not answer

Even though this so called ‘mainstream’ literature has coined much of the field of youth citizenship research, there are a number of questions on young people and citizenship that it leaves unanswered. Much of the literature in the mainstream misses out on explaining how young people become disengaged or why they turn towards different forms of engagement. It does not give insight into how young people experience citizenship and navigate its changing landscape. The research focuses entirely on the agency of the young people and their demand for citizenship and engagement, leaving aside potential barriers to participation and supply factors that might be entirely outside of the young people’s locus of control (Mycock & Tonge, 2014; Sloam, 2010; Sloam & Henn, 2019). And although research following the ‘newly engaged citizens’-narrative significantly broadens the conventional understanding of

citizenship, it does not go beyond conceptions of citizenship as a practice. By primarily comparing the young to older generations and solely focusing on forms of engagement, young people's unique experiences and challenges with their status and inclusion as citizens remain unexplored. The following questions on youth citizenship deserve a closer look.

3.3.1 How and why do citizenship norms change?

The 'mainstream' literature's focus on proving or disproving the 'disengaged youth'-narrative comes at the expense of robust accounts of how conceptions of citizenship are changing (Phelps, 2012). There is a general lack of clarity on the process of how and why conceptions of citizenship are changing. One question is how far new forms of engagement are replacing traditional commitment to political institutions and civic practices (Amnå & Ekman, 2014; Phelps, 2012). Despite decreases in turnout, for example, many young people continue to recognize voting as a civic duty (Dalton, 2006). Also, voting remains by far the number one activity young people mention as element of citizenship (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 127). New forms of civic engagement, such as online activism, political consumption, or channels for cause-oriented engagement, are just being forged and it is uncertain to which extent they compensate the decline in traditional forms of civic and political engagement.

What we are witnessing might be merely – or firstly – a proliferation of ways in which young people assign meaning to citizenship. According to Thorson (2015, p. 25), it is more realistic to assume that "new forms of engagement – political consumption, for example, or sharing a presidential candidate's photo on Facebook – co-exist with practices like voting and volunteering in the community". Hustinx et al. (2012) suggest that young people's accounts of citizenship are the result of "*expanding* and *diversifying* repertoires" of civic and political participation (2012, p. 110). In their study of Belgian and Dutch university students, they find traces of at least five different types of young citizens, including a group of 'civic omnivores'. These young people engaged in a variety of formal and informal ways and deliberately blended "old/institutionalized and new/individualized forms of participation" (Hustinx et al., 2012, p. 99).

3.3.2 How do young people experience citizenship?

Research that focuses on proving or disproving theories on young people as engaged and disengaged citizens misses out on exploring the unique experiences young people make as citizens, precisely because of their youth. Even though studies on young people as 'newly engaged citizens' go a long way to broaden conceptions of citizenship and civic engagement (e.g. Dalton, 2007; Pattie et al., 2004), they nevertheless treat young people to a conception of citizenship that revolves around participation in what could be called an 'adult world'. In this sense, also empirically citizenship remains largely a concept of adulthood. It is symptomatic that most evidence presented in support of young people as either engaged or disengaged citizens is based on quantitative research that compares young people's experiences to those of adults. In many of these studies, age is viewed merely as a factor that influences citizenship expectations, but not as a unique experience.

With age reduced to an independent variable, young people's unique experiences and any variation between them remain unexplored. This is particularly problematic considering how vastly different experiences of youth can be. It is argued that there are many more routes into adulthood nowadays than one or two generations ago, because formerly stable institutions that young people depend on in their journey through youth – families, labour markets, communities – become more fluid (Cieslik & Pollock, 2002; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Just as conceptions of citizenship change over the life cycle (Wallace, 2001, p. 18), the changes in these formative institutions and, consequently, the experiences that young people make throughout their youth, are likely to also bring about different conceptions of citizenship among young people.

Researchers who seek to address this lack of youth specific conceptions of citizenship stress that studies of youth citizenship have to explicitly include young people's narratives on how they make sense of the concept (Lister et al., 2003; Marsh et al., 2007; O'Toole, 2003; Skelton & Valentine, 2003; Weller, 2003). This also requires different research methods, first and foremost methods of qualitative inquiry and those that are designed to involve young people (Marsh et al., 2007, p. 59 f.). Citizenship has to be defined according to young people and in such a way that it relates to young people's everyday experiences. Combining focus groups with interviews, Marsh and colleagues (2007), for example, focus on the experience of politics as a lived experience that can shape up differently across the life course and by different kinds young people.

3.3.3 Is citizenship just about engagement?

A problem with this paradigmatic view of youth citizenship is that it is a rather tidy, binary way of looking at the concept (Thorson, 2015, p. 10). All of the literature summarized above revolves around young people's civic and political engagement. No matter whether young people are characterised as 'disengaged' or 'engaged citizens', the research suggests a particular conception of citizenship: that of citizenship-as-practice. It is firmly grounded in an understanding of citizenship that requires active engagement. For Sloam, for example, citizenship is expressed through civic and political engagement – a definition which disregards interpretations of citizenship as a status or as a feeling (2012, p. 4). Dalton defines citizenship even narrower, as "a shared set of expectations about the citizen's role *in politics*" (2007, p. 21, my emphasis). In his study of changing citizenship norms, he deliberately disregards aspects of citizenship as legal status or issues of identity and belonging (2007, p. 22).

Thus, from the outset, the question in most of the 'mainstream' research is not what constitutes citizenship for young people, but rather whether or not young people are good – in the sense of engaged – citizens. This is a normative perspective on youth citizenship. Instead of exploring to which extent civic and political engagement feature in young people's conceptions of citizenship, most research starts with the premise that "young people's civic engagement and participation are democratically important and desirable" (Hirzalla, 2010, p. 4). Due to the focus on citizenship-as-practice, this approach, firstly, loses sight of other elements of citizenship – status, rights, and identity. Secondly, it misses out on recognizing how citizenship practices are inherently related to aspects of autonomy, community and belonging, and to how young people define and exercise their role as citizens.

There are scholars who accept that citizens do not have to be active at all times. Amnå and Ekman outline how passivity does not necessarily need to be negative; instead, it could be a sign of system trust (2014). Even though in their analysis of young people in Sweden they, too, find groups of 'unengaged' and 'disillusioned' citizens, they also discover a group of young 'standby citizens', who are interested in politics, but not active in it to-date. These standby citizens, they argue, become involved in politics momentarily and on a project basis rather than continuously and in formal institutions. With their general willingness to become engaged standby citizens are similar to Schudson's 'monitorial citizen' (1998): a growing group of people, who display low

levels of formal participation, but are interested in politics and have a high level of political efficacy. Schudson argues that even though monitorial citizens avoid institutionalised forms of participation, they use their political interest (and likely knowledge) to be critical observers of society and to become active in elite-challenging political action whenever they feel it is necessary. These theories of passive citizens, however, lack empirical evidence (Hooghe & Dejaeghere, 2007) and robust accounts of when and why passive citizens decide to engage (Amnå & Ekman, 2014, p. 277 f.). Also, they still focus on questions of engagement – just in the negative sense, leaving questions of status, identity and belonging aside.

3.4 Young people's experiences of citizenship as a contested notion

In the previous chapter we have seen that citizenship is a multifaceted concept. It regulates how individuals and communities relate, how people live together, and shape their politics. However, there are different ways to make sense of this relationship, and thus, of citizenship. It is not just about engagement; citizenship also always involves rights, responsibilities, and feelings of belonging. These different perspectives create natural tensions; citizenship always involves trade-offs between freedom and equality, inclusion and exclusion, structure and agency.

The mainstream research, which only looks at citizenship-as-engagement, is stuck when it comes to finding explanations for the 'paradox of participation': how can it be that, despite rising levels of educational attainment, engagement seems to be in decline among young people (Cammaerts et al., 2014; Pattie et al., 2004; Sloam & Henn, 2019)? Young people should be best equipped to be critical and act as engaged citizens, because they have more knowledge and resources than any previous generation. Yet, "young citizens are the most likely to criticize the state of their political systems and apparently disengage from them" (Cammaerts et al., 2014, p. 648). In order to find explanations for this paradox, we might have to broaden our view on young people and citizenship and include interpretations of citizenship as a status and as a feeling of belonging in the research.

Deconstructing citizenship into its elements is particularly useful when it comes to young people and their experiences of citizenship, because it highlights not only the different aspects that are important for people to make sense of their role – and

ultimately – engage as citizens, but also the concept's inherent challenges. In their transitions into adulthood, young people grapple with exactly these tensions. Even though they might not use the term citizenship in their everyday language, young people are found to care about their status and role as citizens and the issues citizenship relates to (Hart, 2009; Lister et al., 2003; N. Smith et al., 2005).

Some research has looked at youth citizenship from angles other than just as a practice, but the literature on this is surprisingly sparse, spread out, and grounded in different theoretical frameworks. There are studies that investigate youth citizenship from feminist (Lister et al., 2003; N. Smith et al., 2005; Wood, 2014), geographical-spatial (Kallio et al., 2015; Weller, 2003), and institutional-legal perspectives (Bloemraad, 2013; Miller-Idriss, 2006; Myers, 2010). Young people are found to be seen and treated as second-class citizens. To counter this marginalisation, they choose to determine different requirements for their status as citizens. Inclusion in their communities and a sense of belonging are more important for young people than engagement in the public sphere. Viewing citizenship as a 'way of life' rather than as a legal status, however, brings new problems for young people and their desire to independently shape parts of their life. When they do not feel recognised and heard, young people can come to feel powerless and find new ways of defining their role as citizens.

3.4.1 Status and equality: Young people as second-class citizens

As a static concept, citizenship has long been viewed as a synonym for 'adulthood' (Benedicto & Morán, 2007, p. 602; Lister, 2007a, p. 54; Mycock & Tonge, 2012, p. 140). Being a citizen is dependent on things adults do. For example, citizens are granted rights and, in return, are expected to work, pay taxes, or vote. Defined in terms of rights and responsibilities, citizenship is a fixed and binary status that is afforded to people who fulfil the requirements and duties it sets out. This view of the concept is based on liberal as well as social contractual theories of the citizen, where the basis for civil rights lies in the autonomous and independent judgement of individuals. Since, in practice, it is hard to measure what exactly constitutes autonomy and independence, citizenship rights are granted based on subjective "ages of consent" (Gifford et al., 2014, p. 83) – in other words, when young people are judged to mature enough of legal adulthood. As such, the inclusion of young people as full

and equal citizens depends on institutions and practices that recognise young people as adults – age, marriage, tax paying, working, or voting.

With this conception of citizenship – as long as they do not yet do what adult citizens are expected to do – young people are seen as future citizens, not as equal citizens. Until they reach a certain age, they have no or only partial access to citizenship rights (such as access to welfare benefits, minimum wage, the right to vote or to stand for office). For example, in the Netherlands as well as in Scotland young people do not have the same labour market rights as adult citizens, e.g. in terms of minimum wage, up until the age of 22 and 25 respectively. What is more: young people are not only excluded *de* jure, but also *de facto*. On the one hand, rights to formal political participation, such as the right to vote or the right to stand for office, exclude young people before they reach a certain age. On the other hand, political actors are found to be failing to include young people in their programmes and longer-term agendas (Mycock & Tonge, 2012; Sloam & Henn, 2019).

As not-yet-citizens, it is thought that young people have to grow into their roles as citizens, and be stimulated in that growth, for example in the family or through civic education. This manifests a 'deficit model' of youth citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003), in which young people are best described as 'semi-' or 'proxy citizens' (Wallace, 2001, p. 14). According to Wallace, as long as youth is seen as a "transient phase" (2001, p. 27), there is little incentive to campaign for the rights of young people, simply because waiting to get older will change young people's status.

For young people, viewing citizenship as a fixed, binary status that is dependent on the achievement of adulthood can be problematic. It has been argued that this view sets young people apart as citizens-in-making and marginalises them in several ways. Firstly, it is not always clear what young people are striving towards and what exactly they have to achieve to become full adult citizens. For one, markers of adulthood are not consistent and different rights are allocated to young people at different ages (Mycock & Tonge, 2012). There is no specific point in time when young people formally become citizens (N. Smith et al., 2005, p. 427). Further, adulthood is increasingly fluid and adult citizen identities are constantly negotiated (Flanagan et al., 2012; Gifford et al., 2014; Skelton, 2002; Thomson et al., 2004). Due to a proliferation of adult lifestyles and trajectories, there really is no adult norm for

citizenship (Skelton, 2002). It thus remains largely unclear when young people become full citizens and what they have to do to achieve this status.

Secondly, it has been claimed that it is not so much citizenship that depends on adulthood, but rather adulthood that is contingent on citizenship (Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Flanagan et al., 2012; Gifford et al., 2014). Young people grow into their roles as autonomous and responsible members of the public as they learn how to and acquire the confidence to act as citizens (Benedicto & Morán, 2007, p. 618). It is thus not through formal acknowledgement that young people are endowed with citizenship as a status. Rather, they gradually assume the role of the adult citizen through the accumulation of experiences with citizenship and civic engagement in their communities (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 173). Indeed, research by Ballard et al. (2019, p. 1148) suggests that civic activities such as voting or volunteering offer young people critical opportunities that positively influence their transitions into adulthood in terms of educational attainment, professional earnings, and health behaviours.

In this sense, the issue with young people and citizenship might not be about achieving the autonomy and independence that is thought to define adulthood and, with that, citizenship, but rather about creating opportunities for young people that allow them to learn and experience what it is like to act as citizens. When citizenship is defined in static terms and citizenship practices – voting, standing for office, paying tax – are reserved for future adults only, young people are being given a hard time trying to assume the roles of independent adults, and thus, citizens (Flanagan et al., 2012). What follows from this view of citizenship, at best, is that young people are left to their own devices when it comes to figuring out how to acquire the necessary skills and the confidence to act as citizens. At worst, they are lacking any opportunities to gain the necessary skills and to practice citizenship in their communities (Flanagan et al., 2012, p. 45).

Conceptions of citizenship as an adult status are found to exclude young people not only in theory, but also in practice. In their study of citizenship with 16 to 23 year olds, Lister et al. (2003) find that many young people base their definition of citizenship on ‘respectable economic influence’ – that is on employment, paying taxes, having a family, owning a house. All of these are essentially markers of adulthood and difficult to attain for young people. The ‘respectable economic independence model’ of citizenship is argued to exclude current generations of young people, who are in

education for longer and more often affected by unemployment or casualised contracts (N. Smith et al., 2005; Wallace, 2001). Similarly, Tuorto (2014) finds that young Italians who are not in stable employment, are working precariously and living in the parental home beyond the average age are less likely to turn out to vote than their peers leading stable, adult-like lives in independent households.

Young people are well aware of this exclusion. On the one hand, O'Toole et al. find that many of their 16 to 25 year old participants "believed that they were excluded from, or marginalised within, mainstream politics *because they are young*" (2003, p. 355, emphasis in the original). On the other hand, aside from formal politics, young people are also found to feel excluded from everyday public life. For many of the participants in Hart's study of youth citizenship (2009, p. 654), "how they were treated and interacted with in their everyday lives was fundamental to their sense of inclusion as citizens". Already at the age of 14 to 16, the majority of Hart's participants describes experiences of discrimination and age-based exclusion, which left them feeling disrespected and isolated within their communities. Young people report being stereotyped and discriminated against solely on the basis of their age by, for example, bus drivers, shopkeepers, and the police (Hart, 2009). Similarly, France (1998) reports that in particular young people in poverty felt excluded by their communities due to a lack of opportunities for paid labour and respect for their culture and lifestyles. Of the young people in Lister et al.'s study, even those who had obtained formal citizenship rights, e.g. by virtue of their age, effectively felt like 'second-class citizens' (Lister et al., 2003, p. 242). They defined this as being dependent on parents or benefits, not in paid work, not exercising responsibility or not contributing to society, e.g. as tax payers or consumers (Lister et al., 2003, p. 242).

What is more, 'second-class citizen'-experiences impact young people's willingness to become engaged in their communities and in politics. According to Smith et al., "formal politics was perceived to be relevant only to waged, tax-paying employees, with their own houses, families and cars" (2005, p. 435) – in other words, to first-class citizens. Instead of being victimized, however, France (1998) finds that young people who feel excluded <u>choose</u> not to become involved in the community, because they see no opportunity to shape their environment and thus think engagement is "a waste of time" (1998, p. 106). Similarly, the young people in Hart's study thought adults would not listen to them anyway, and chose not to become politically active, even if it was about an issue they cared about (2009, p. 653 f.). This finding is replicated in

quantitative surveys (Henn & Foard, 2012, 2014), which report that a majority of young people in Britain feel powerless, in particular those who are marginalised in multiple ways. Young people sense that they have little say in what happens in government or public life and increasingly believe that they are not being treated fairly.

There are indications that young people choose to define citizenship differently, because they consider (or want to consider) themselves equal citizens. Out of all 110 participants in Lister et al.'s study (2003, p. 241), 40 per cent clearly saw themselves as citizens, regardless of age or status. Only the younger and otherwise marginalised young people thought of themselves as second-class or partial citizens. In order to be able to identify as full and equal citizens, young people are thought to avoid economic, formal legal, or political definitions of citizenship and prefer to view anyone as citizen who cares for others (Benedicto, 2008; Lister et al., 2003; N. Smith et al., 2005). In addition to 'respectable economic influence', young people rely on a conception of citizenship that is based on a positive contribution to society (Basit, 2009, p. 733). This can include anything from contributing to the community to being responsible and helpful, doing good, not engaging in criminal activity and not being selfish. Similarly, a number of other studies report that in their understanding of the role of the citizen young people place an emphasis on solidarity, community involvement and care for others (Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Dalton, 2006; Hart, 2009; Miller-Idriss, 2006).

Instead of viewing citizenship as a fixed status – in terms of being a citizen or not – it has been suggested that it would be more helpful to look at young people's conceptions of citizenship as a process, in terms of becoming a citizen (Benedicto & Morán, 2007). This idea of citizenship, which has appeared under the labels of 'lived citizenship', 'everyday citizenship', or 'citizenship of becoming' (Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Gifford et al., 2014; Hall et al., 1999; Kallio et al., 2015; Lister et al., 2003; Wood, 2014), is argued to be in conflict with traditional conceptions of citizenship in terms of economic and formal political rights and responsibilities (Gifford et al., 2014, p. 95; N. Smith et al., 2005, p. 431). When it is defined as a process, in relational terms, and as care for others, citizenship can be practiced in private spaces, by children and young people, and to different extents (E. F. Cohen, 2005; Lister, 2007a). Citizenship then is no longer a binary status, where citizens have all rights and responsibilities and aliens or non-citizens hold none. Rather, young people can be further or not so far yet in their citizenship trajectories.

Elizabeth Cohen argues that, especially with regard to young people, citizenship should be seen as a continuum rather than as a binary status (2005, 2009). It could be split into bundles of civil, social and political rights and responsibilities, so that young people can exercise some forms of citizenship while still growing into others. However, this would bring the concept dangerously close to normative definitions of citizenship that rely heavily on what is agreed to constitute civic practices or 'good citizenship' (Hall et al., 1999, p. 504). Based on her study with youth from ethnic minority backgrounds in the US, Bloemraad (2013) emphasizes how, ultimately, young people need at least some citizenship rights in order to be able to act as equal citizens. Legal citizenship remains the strongest basis for inclusion, because it can be mobilized as a claim against other exclusionary notions of citizenship.

3.4.2 Inclusion and exclusion: Young people and their communities

Belonging to communities is extremely important for young people in general and in their understanding of citizenship. Several studies outline how highly young people value the sense of belonging and commitment to a community and how important inclusion and recognition are for them (Basit, 2009; Colombo, 2010; France, 1998; Hart, 2009; Miller-Idriss, 2006). It is argued that feeling recognized, included, and respected is crucial for young people when making sense of their identity as citizens and in their transition into adulthood (Hutson & Jenkins, 1989). Firstly, communities offer a familiar environment and can provide young people with a sense of security (France, 1998, p. 103). Secondly, commitment to a community and its values offers a stability and guidance with regard to what is considered desirable behaviour (France, 1998; Miller-Idriss, 2006). In other words, it is easier to learn new things when someone tells you how it is best done; this also holds true for citizenship.

For many young people, a sense of belonging is pivotal in their conceptions of citizenship, and more important than status, rights, or responsibilities (Basit, 2009; Hart, 2009; Miller-Idriss, 2006). In a study of German young people, Miller-Idriss finds that they understand citizenship as a place where they can feel they belong; commitment and recognition were key to their conceptions of citizenship (2006, p. 554). This is especially true for young people of dual ethnic heritage, according to Basit's study of young people in Leicester (2009, p. 734). Due to the importance of belonging Hart finds that at most of the young people in her study seek to be included

in communities and value the recognition, familiarity, and respect they experience in them (2009). The importance of belonging is underpinned by the premium young people place on solidarity, participating in and actively contributing to the community (Benedicto, 2008; Lister et al., 2003). Sloam suggests that a sense of belonging is directly related to young people's likelihood to be engaged as citizens (2007). He finds that, in contrast to young activists, disengaged young people were far less likely to feel a strong sense of belonging to their communities; they identified almost exclusively in terms of friends and family, but not with the wider community (Sloam, 2007, p. 555).

However, belonging to communities is not only important for young people; it can also be hugely problematic. When belonging and commitment become entry criteria for citizenship, the concept is potentially much more exclusive than when legally defined. It can be perceived as unattainable and oppressive (Colombo, 2010; France, 1998; Miller-Idriss, 2006). Young people are repeatedly found to define behavioural and attitudinal – rather than formal-legal or ethnic – criteria for inclusion into the citizenry. According to Miller-Idriss, for young people in Germany people have to speak German, do German things and commit to the German way of life in order to be German citizens (2006, p. 554). Learning the language, adopting Italian customs and expressing a desire and interest to be Italian were also defined as key by young people in Italy (Colombo, 2010, p. 137). Lister et al. conclude that, just as young people's willingness to prioritize citizenship duties over right, this behavioural and attitudinal understanding suggests that young people have a predominantly communitarian understanding of citizenship (2003, p. 251).

When citizenship comes down to commitment, the desire to belong, and a 'way of life', it is no longer an individual right. In their longing for inclusion and recognition young people rely on their communities to accept them. The need for recognition that comes with an understanding of citizenship in terms of belonging can, at times, clash with young people's agency to take control over their own lives. In the case of a conflict, communities – and the social order they impose – can be perceived as hierarchical and oppressive. France finds that, even though they valued recognition, the young people who participated in his study were "critical of community life" and felt restricted by "the way things should be done" (1998, p. 103). Wanting to have some form of control over their lives, the young people created their own identities and lifestyles, but found themselves unable to reconcile these with the norms of the

community. As a consequence, they experienced “conflict and feelings of exclusion” (France, 1998, p. 104), which had a direct impact on the young people’s willingness to take on community responsibilities.

On the one hand, France’s research highlights how important the inclusion of young people can be for how they view themselves and act as citizens. On the other, however, it might underestimate young people’s agency. Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) show that young people who identify with particular subcultures – in their case, punks and rockers – have strategies to selectively resist categorisations and conformity. Instead of consistently stressing their belonging to these communities, the young punks and rockers would sometimes deliberately emphasise their individuality or how they are “just the same as everybody else” (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995, p. 124). Thus, in combination with creative strategies of emphasising similarities and difference, belonging to communities can also be a way of expressing agency for young people.

This idea is supported by the fact that many young people do not only seek recognition in their local communities; they are found to develop complex and multiple identities as citizens (Basit, 2009; Colombo, 2010; Kallio et al., 2015; O’Connor, 2005; Osler & Starkey, 2003, 2005; Ross, 2019). In spatial terms alone, young people are comfortable to identify with several and varied combinations of places, from the local to the global. In his study of young people’s constructions of political identities in a variety of locations across Europe, Ross finds that, wherever he went, young people reported multiple identities of political allegiance and seemed to navigate these seamlessly and tacitly (Ross, 2019, p. 275). Similarly, when asked to map where their life took place and what places or regions are important to them, young people in Finland referred to a variety of combinations of local, regional, national, continental, or global maps (Kallio et al., 2015, p. 104 f.).

Additionally, young people draw on friends, families, lifestyle choices and interests in their development of multiple and varied social identities (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 99; Weller, 2007, p. 169). In Basit’s study of young people in Leicester, many participants described their identities in terms of ethnic characteristics, e.g. being British, but immediately qualified this by referring to other aspects of their identities, e.g. dual heritage, religious denomination, or individual characteristics. The young people showed “an interesting mix of certainty and ambiguity with regard to their

identities" (2009, p. 730). The multiplicity of their identities was particularly important for minority ethnic young people, who were keen to emphasize their dual heritage in the description of their identities (Basit, 2009, p. 736).

Young people's hybrid and complex identities can be seen as a way of exerting agency and navigating problematic aspects of inclusion and exclusion. Based on research with the children of immigrants in Italy, Colombo reports that young people – not only those with dual heritage – use their multiple identities as "'political' tools" (2010, p. 149) to purposefully signal equality and, at the same time, contrast themselves. Creating additional configurations of equality and difference helps them develop an independent sense of self and allows them to make new claims for inclusion and exclusion. Ross (2019, p. 266) argues that this is precisely the mechanism that is at work when young people of mixed origin claim a broader European identity. Paulgaard (2002) shows how young people in rural Norway combine elements of local culture with foreign aspects that they come in contact with through the tourism industry to create unique identities. They use their hybrid identities to mark out differences, e.g. from the young people in neighbouring villages (Paulgaard, 2002, p. 101). Similarly, a study about identity among Irish young people finds that they rely on both a global culture, predominantly taken from music, sports, and the media, and elements of local culture to make sense of their identities (O'Connor, 2005). While the local was important in the present, the Irish young people invoked the global primarily in relation to lifestyles and interests and when speaking about their future adult plans, for example when planning to go to university, travel or live abroad (O'Connor, 2005, p. 15).

Developing additional civic identities, in particular as global citizens, can provide young people with new opportunities for inclusion and to create scenarios of equality and difference (E. F. Cohen, 2005, p. 223). Accordingly, it has been found that references to global citizenship are more often made as an aspiration rather than a fact (Myers, 2010; O'Connor, 2005; Osler & Starkey, 2003). Myers reports that of the young people who participated in a summer school on global citizenship, many saw global citizenship as a moral commitment (2010). They looked at their role as potential global citizens with the ambition to address global problems, such as poverty or climate change, at its core, but were pessimistic about their ability to act as global citizens. The participants' in Ross' study who claimed a global identity did so in order to emphasise inclusiveness and resist other forms of categorisation, commonly

stating that “we’re all human” (2019, p. 271). The same was true for the young people’s motivations to identify as Europeans, albeit to a lesser extent. Also, Grundy and Jamieson conclude that for young people in Scotland being European was about “a vision of Europe that has yet to be fully realized” (2007, p. 676).

However, concluding that young people are emerging global citizens would fail to acknowledge the multiplicity and complex entanglement of their identities, which also include local and national elements (Bourn, 2008, p. 55). Jamieson cautions that young people might only be able to meaningfully experience belonging to these large and abstract communities through interactions in smaller communities that are taken as representations of the whole (2002, p. 513). The young people in Osler and Starkey’s study adopted aspects of global citizenship, but only in addition to local and national identities (2003, p. 252). They were also found to be “more likely to understand how to respond politically to local issues, than to injustices or inequalities in other parts of the world.” Also, young people might need a specific set of skills or resources in order to access these additional identities. Feeling like a global citizen, for example, can depend on access to a global consumer culture, knowledge of languages, and travel experiences.

3.4.3 Power and agency: Powerless or empowered young citizens?

Young people are found to avoid political conceptions of citizenship (Lister et al., 2003; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Few identify the right to a voice and to be involved in political decision-making as elements of citizenship (Lister et al., 2003, p. 239) and for most young people politics has little to do with citizenship (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Joining a political party or engaging in political discussions are activities that young people deem least important for the citizen. Activities in communities and participation in social movements, such as environmental or human rights organisations, are somewhat more likely to be associated with citizenship (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 79).

It is argued that young people prefer non-political conceptions of citizenship due to their severe lack of political efficacy (Marsh et al., 2006; O’Toole et al., 2003; Sloam, 2007; Weller, 2007). When it comes to political decision making young people are found to feel frustrated, powerless, and excluded. They are disillusioned with the

political system, lack trust in politicians, and complain that they are unrepresented in political decision making (Henn et al., 2002; O'Toole et al., 2003; Sloam, 2007; Weller, 2007). Proponents of the 'newly engaged young citizens'-narrative argue that young people's frustration only pertains to conventional politics and that young people engage and are empowered in different ways (Dalton, 2006, 2007; Norris, 2002). Instead of a general lack of efficacy, what young people are thought to be low on is only external political efficacy – that is the belief that politicians and the political system are responsive to citizens' claims (Amnå et al., 2004; Balch, 1974). As a result of high levels of internal efficacy – that is the belief in their own ability to voice opinions and influence political processes – young people choose to engage in different forms of political and community participation (Norris, 2002). However, Amnå et al. (2004) report that internal efficacy tends to be closely and positively associated with conventional citizenship and understandings of the role of the citizen in terms of conformity and duty. In addition, Sloam finds that young people are similarly sceptical about the efficacy of conventional and non-conventional political activities (2007, p. 558 f.). Conventionally engaged, newly engaged, and disengaged young people alike express negative feelings about the political system (Sloam, 2007, p. 558) and Weller even speaks of a "general air of despondency" among young people, regardless of their degree of activism (2007, p. 159).

Feeling powerless and excluded from political decision making and a general lack of efficacy – internal and external – directly impact young people's willingness to engage as citizens (Marsh et al., 2007; O'Toole et al., 2003; Weller, 2007). Although they are found to be interested in political issues (Henn & Weinstein, 2006, p. 522; Henn et al., 2002, p. 174), supportive of democratic principles (Cammaerts et al., 2014; Nieuwelink et al., 2016), and confident in the electoral process in general (Henn & Weinstein, 2006; Torney-Purta et al., 2001), young people nevertheless demonstrate low actual levels of participation compared with older cohorts (Fieldhouse et al., 2007; Russell et al., 2002).

While the feeling of exclusion might simply be a life cycle issue – young people are feeling powerless, because they are young, but this feeling will subside as soon as they grow up – there seems to be a lasting effect in how today's young people choose to deal with their exclusion: by turning away from collective political action (Clarke et al., 2004; Grasso, 2014; Quintelier, 2007; Van Deth & Elff, 2000). According to Furlong and Cartmel, even though young people still value community and seek

solutions to collective problems, their political participation has become more individualized (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007, p. 135). A consequence of their perceived exclusion from democratic decision making is that young people "frequently seek personal solutions to problems" (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007, p. 137). Morán and Benedicto (2016) argue that, precisely because young people do not form part of the public sphere in the same way as adults do, their practice and status of citizenship are misaligned and their lack of power as citizens results in individualized participatory experiences. And also according to Weller, "at the heart of participants' frustration lies the differential in power and status of (adult) 'professionals' who are generally regarded as full citizens who educate, mould and sometimes dominate young citizens-in-the-making" (2007, p. 160). Even though they care about political issues and want to be involved in decision making, young people are found so deeply sceptical about collective action that Pattie et al. wanted to call them "atomised citizens" (2004, p. 275) and Sloam and Henn characterise them as "engaged sceptics" (2019, p. 122).

So, it might be precisely in response to their perceived exclusion that young people choose to make sense of their role as citizens differently. Weller's research illustrates how young people are "committed political actors" (2007, p. 168) and, instead of engaging in formal politics, develop new forms of agency. The young people in her study forge numerous new ways to practice citizenship and act as political agents in their communities, for example, informally in the school, by claiming public spaces, or by maintaining local hangouts for young people. Weller argues that such 'small-scale acts of citizenship' (2007, p. 130) emphasize young people's willingness to become engaged outside the mainstream democratic institutions and establish them as radical democratic citizens (Isin & Wood, 1999). Similarly, Bang argues that, when they feel excluded from the political process, people are forging new roles as citizens and two new types of citizen emerge: the expert citizen and the everyday maker (Bang, 2003; Bang & Sørensen, 1999). While expert citizens accumulate the necessary resources to influence the formal political process, for example by forming grassroots networks and embracing political activism as a lifestyle, everyday makers have no intention to influence formal political processes. In order to solve community problems, they choose to bypass conventional politic and become involved ad hoc, at the community level and in informal networks (Bang & Sørensen, 1999). Although Bang's theory was not explicitly modelled on young people, the everyday maker is found to be particularly prevalent among them (Li & Marsh, 2008). Instead of going through what they

perceive to be authoritative and exclusive formal processes, young 'everyday makers' seek new ways of influencing the politics that affect their lives outside of formal institutions, for example in their local communities, volunteer networks, or on an ad-hoc basis (Marsh et al., 2007). Thus, in their pursuit of different ways of practicing citizenship young people might be bringing about a new form of "do-it-yourself"-citizenship (Thorson, 2015) and chiefly contribute to the observed proliferation of modes of participation (Hustinx et al., 2012; Norris, 2003).

Instead of being newly empowered and efficacious young citizens, however, young people might be exposed to a whole set of new challenges by this "do-it-yourself"-citizenship and the proliferation of modes of engagement. There seem to be great variety of definitions of citizenship and no shared expectations of what a good citizen should do (Thorson, 2015; Tonge & Mycock, 2010). With greater freedom to define the role of the citizen, there is also little common ground with regard to citizenship norms and hardly any guidance for young people on what is expected of them as citizens. As a consequence, citizenship norms are reduced to the smallest common denominator – being nice, helpful and responsible. And while some young people might take this lack of expectations as an excuse to not get involved in their communities at all (Hart, 2009, p. 654; Thorson, 2015, p. 6), others might simply be unable to cope with the task of forging new modes of citizenship and civic engagement. What is more, empowerment is also way of shifting the responsibility to define shared norms from the community to the individual (Wallace, 2001, p. 25). Thorson thus cautions that "our excitement about these broadening realms of opportunities for individuals and groups to act must be tempered with concern that young citizens are given little institutional resources or guidance for how to figure it all out in this time of do-it-yourself politics" (2015, p. 28).

3.5 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter, we have come full circle exploring what kind of evidence exists on young people and the different elements of citizenship – status, feeling and practice. While most research focuses on youth citizenship in terms of engagement, investigating only young people's practices as citizens, few other studies also explore the importance of young people's status as citizens, their feelings of belonging, and inclusion in their communities.

What is obvious after this discussion of the literature: citizenship is not at all easy to make sense of for young people. Their conceptions of citizenship and the unique experiences they make as citizens relate to all elements of the concept – status, feelings, and practices. According to Jones and Gaventa, “the way in which people understand themselves as citizens is likely to have a significant impact on their rights and obligations and on whether they participate, in what form and why” (2002, p. 13). If we want to understand how young people make sense of their role as citizens and navigate the challenges of citizenship, we need to look at the concept holistically from all three angles and also keep in mind the tensions and trade-offs between status, feeling, and practice.

In chapter 2, we have seen that these trade-offs are well discussed in theory. Yet, these “debates have an air of unreality about them, because they are being conducted in what is virtually an empirical void” (Conover et al., 1991, p. 801). In an effort to add empirical evidence to debates about youth citizenship, I set out to explore how young people make sense of their role as citizens and how they navigate the tensions that are inherent in citizenship as a concept. The next chapter outlines how I designed this research with citizenship explicitly defined as a multifaceted and contested notion.

Chapter 4

RESEARCHING YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF CITIZENSHIP

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have highlighted the need for a wider understanding of citizenship, especially when it comes to young people: one that involves conceptions of citizenship as a status, feeling, and practice and one that explicitly acknowledges the tensions and trade-offs that are inherent in the concept. In order to go beyond claims of young people being either engaged or disengaged citizens, what is needed are empirical insights into broader conceptions of citizenship, how young people articulate and experience these. Broadening the view on citizenship will raise new questions that are relevant to how young people see their own role as citizens and, ultimately, help re-evaluate the 'paradox of youth participation'.

This project is designed to do just that: to provide empirical insights into youth citizenship that build on wider understandings of the concept and recognise its tensions. It is designed to explore how young people make sense of their role as citizens, if at all, and how they experience and navigate the tensions between conceptions of citizenship as a status, a feeling and a practice. Rather than solving the paradox of youth participation, I intend to provide an empirical basis for new questions about young people and citizenship that move the debate beyond normative accounts of whether or not young people are good, as in active and engaged, citizens.

To raise new questions, I set out to explore citizenship together with young people and explicitly as a multifaceted and contested notion. I conducted repeat in-depth

interviews, one-to-one or in small groups of friends, with 46 young people, aged 15 to 18 years. All conversations took place between 2016 and 2018 with young people in Scotland and the Netherlands, two small Northern European countries with somewhat similar political cultures yet diverging recent developments that are relevant to young people and their status as citizens.

On the basis of more than 70 hours of conversation with young people, this project provides a thick description of how young people ascribe meaning to citizenship as a concept and of the role identity, belonging, and engagement play in their understandings of citizenship. Instead of building on a particular notion of citizenship, this project is designed to leave room to explore:

4. how young people understand citizenship, if at all, and what elements young people build on in their understanding of citizenship;
5. how young people experience and navigate the tensions inherent in citizenship; and ultimately,
6. how far young people's conceptions of citizenship impact their motivations to be engaged in their communities and in political decision making.

This chapter offers a rationale for and description of the approach used to address these research questions. I explain why I chose to conduct repeated in-depth conversations with young people, why I chose to work with young people in Scotland and the Netherlands, and how I approached young people to invite them to participate. I present the participants, give details about the nature of our conversations, how the participants experienced these, and how I analysed the data, before reflecting on the research and discussing its limitations and what I would do differently.

4.2 Designing the research

This project is designed in response to the existing literature on young people and citizenship. As we have seen in the previous chapter much of this literature builds on diverging and somewhat vague conceptions of what it actually means to be a citizen, in particular for young people. Some of it is based on narrow understandings of citizenship, revolving around things adults do as citizens, while other research employs definitions so broad that it is difficult to identify any shared expectations on what citizenship is about. With this project I set out to approach citizenship anew, in

an exploratory way, and as a multifaceted and contested notion. I wanted to learn how young people ascribe meaning to the concept, what role identity, belonging, and engagement play in their understanding of it, and how young people experience and navigate the challenges that come with these different elements of citizenship.

I was thus careful to avoid narrow ideas about citizenship. Following Isin and Turner (2002), I view citizenship broadly, as a dynamic link between political communities and the individuals that constitute it. Key in this understanding is that we accept that, firstly, citizenship is an ambiguous, non-static concept and, secondly, its meaning is constantly negotiated by individuals in relation to the communities they belong to. It can be constituted in terms of rights and responsibilities ("citizenship-as-a-status"), but citizenship can also be felt ("citizenship-as-a-sense-of-belonging") or practised ("citizenship-as-practice", broadly based on Osler & Starkey, 2005). In the context of this project a community can be any group whose members connect to each other or act together in pursuit of common goals (Ross, 2007). It can relate to a geographic location (e.g. Scottish, British) or to a social group (e.g. class, age, gender, religion). Individuals can identify with multiple communities, depending on the goals they decide to share and pursue together, and they can relate to several communities at the same time (e.g. identifying as both British and Muslim). Thus, for the purpose of this project, the meaning of citizenship and the boundaries of the community are deliberately left open for exploration.

What follows from this view of citizenship as a dynamic, negotiated concept is, firstly, that its meaning is reflected in how young people practice *and* articulate it. Merely observing and measuring how citizenship is practised, as is often done in research focusing on young people's participation as citizens, would not be enough. Instead, I wanted to explore both how young people talk about citizenship, how they negotiate and ascribe meaning to it, and how they experience citizenship in the context of their lives. For this purpose, I used a mix of interviews and ethnographic elements in the design of this project. Secondly, with citizenship understood as a concept whose meaning is dependent on the experiences of individuals in their communities, I wanted to get an idea of conceptions of citizenship in different contexts, in particular different political cultures, where young people grow up having different experiences. Thus, this project is set up as a qualitative comparative analysis of conceptions of citizenship among young people in Scotland and the Netherlands. In the following I will explain these research design choices in more detail.

4.2.1 Conversations about citizenship

To explore citizenship as a multifaceted and contested notion and understand how young people assign meaning to it, I conducted repeated, in-depth interviews with young people, one-to-one or in small groups of friends. Speaking with young people about citizenship offered opportunities to discover aspects of the concept together ("participant-as-philosopher"). It allowed me to treat young people as competent experts in their subject area, who helped me uncover the meaning they assign to citizenship as a status, a feeling and a practice. Qualitative interviews are particularly suited to research questions which assume that understandings are created through interactions between people (Mason, 1996, p. 38). My view that citizenship is essentially negotiated assumes exactly that. I thus set out to conduct conversational interviews with minimal structure that would enable me to uncover many different discourses around citizenship. By outlining broad themes to explore, but not fully structuring them, interviews ended up being "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 2000, p. 84). This approach was vital to leave room for the young people to decide which direction they wanted the conversation to go and for me to explore their views of citizenship as a concept.

We have seen in the previous chapters how complex citizenship is; conversations about it can quickly become overwhelming. It has been put forward that young people are unable to articulate their understandings of the concept. In a study of citizenship among 18 to 34 year olds, Andolina et al. found that asking young people about their views of citizenship yields little evidence, because the concept is perceived negatively and does not have "broad resonance" (2002, p. 194). Experts in youth civic engagement explicitly warned the research team of that study to avoid mentioning the concept 'citizen' altogether (Andolina et al., 2002, p. 191). Similarly, the view that that young peoples' discourses on, and practice of, citizenship are aligned has also been challenged. From their study, Andolina et al. concluded that, if young people did talk about citizenship, they mostly referred to legal conceptions, while they enacted a much broader form of citizenship through their practices. In particular, proponents of an understanding of citizenship as an 'everyday' or 'lived' experience (c.f. Hall, Coffey, & Williamson, 1999; Harris et al., 2007; Wood, 2014) often assert that speaking to young people is not an appropriate method to learn about their experiences of citizenship. Instead of interviews or focus groups, which typically exclude the

experiences young people make in everyday life, it is argued that ethnography and observations are better suited to the study of citizenship (Hall et al., 2008, p. 1024).

With these challenges in mind I sought to find ways to get young people to talk about citizenship and to evaluate how they make sense of the role of the citizen. I decided to conduct several interviews with the same young people, sometimes with months in between. This allowed the participants and me plenty of time to build rapport and to approach citizenship from various angles and at whatever pace comfortable. It also afforded me the opportunity to treat young people as competent experts, who could take as much time as they deemed necessary to give me an impression of their view of citizenship. I chose to approach young people through schools and to remain embedded in the context of their schools throughout the research, so that our encounters took place in an environment that the participants were familiar with as a part of their daily lives. I left the decision over when and where we would ultimately meet for conversations, including outside of school, to the young people, however. Similar approaches are employed by Marsh et al. (2007; also O'Toole, Marsh, & Jones, 2003), who conducted focus groups to explore, and follow-up interviews to investigate, the meaning young people assign to politics, and Miller-Idriss (2006), who combined repeat interviews with ethnographic observations in the school context to research conceptions of citizenship among German working class youths.

Taken together, the repeat interviews and the school context added an element of ethnography, in that it allowed me to establish strong connections with the young people who participated. Over the course of our multiple interactions – from an initial school workshop to the second or third interview a few months later – I got to know the participants and became a part of their social worlds. The combination of methods also allowed me to invest substantial amounts of time and to treat young people as equal citizens, who were in full control of decisions over how often, for how long, when and where we would meet for our conversations, so that I could adequately learn about their views on citizenship. Especially valuable was the time in between conversations which allowed both me and the participants to reflect on the topics and arrive at the next conversation with further questions and ideas on their understanding of citizenship. Repeat interviews also gave me some room to be pragmatic about arranging conversations with individuals and in small groups of friends. I invited all interested young people to bring friends along to the first conversation, which reduced barriers to participation and widened my recruitment. Paired interviews with friends

have been shown to induce interest, reduce dropout rates, make especially young participants more comfortable, and, thus, help establish rapport (Michell, 1999). While the first conversations would often be conducted in a group of friends (two or maximum three young people), I conducted subsequent interviews individually wherever possible.

Ultimately, I look at individuals as cases in my study design and analysis, for I assume that citizenship, and in particular identity and belonging as one of its constitutive elements, is something that individuals make sense of for themselves. While many other studies of young people's citizenship are based on focus groups (c.f. Hart, 2009; Lister et al., 2003; O'Toole, 2003) or on case studies of particular locations (France, 1998; Kallio et al., 2015; Weller, 2007), I wanted to concentrate on one participant at a time and gain a deeper understanding of how they make sense of their identities and constitute meaning in citizenship as individuals.

4.2.2 Conceptualising young people

Who exactly counts as 'young' can be a matter of debate. There is a variety of definitions of youth, ranging from strictly age-based to physiological or psychological, psychosocial, cognitive, ecological, and cultural definitions. 'Young people' can refer to children, adolescents, teenagers, or young adults aged anywhere between 10 and 35 years (Eurostat, 2009; Graham, 2004) and the majority of the research reviewed in the previous chapter focuses on young people aged 14 to 29. For the purpose of this research I focus on young people between 15 and 18 years of age. There are three reasons for this that are closely related to my aim of exploring citizenship as a status, an identity, and a practice.

We have already seen in the previous chapter how markers of adult citizenship as a status can be widely different. There is no clear process of acquiring the status of adult citizen and rights and duties are allocated to young people at different ages (Mycock & Tonge, 2012), most somewhere between the ages of 16 and 18. To evaluate young people's experiences of their roles as citizens and as "citizens-in-the-making" (Marshall, 1950) I decided to focus on 15 to 18 year olds. This age range covers young people's experiences of citizens as well as their transitions into formal citizenship-as-a-status. Similarly, most Western societies currently define a minimum

age of 16 or 18 years for participation in formal political processes. By focusing on 15 to 18 year olds, I create opportunities to talk to young people about both their inclusion and participation in political processes as well as their exclusion from them. Lastly, 15 to 18 years is also a particularly interesting age to explore questions of identity and belonging, or citizenship-as-a-feeling. According to psychologists, a crucial stage in the formation of an adult identity falls into this period (Coleman, 2011; Graham, 2004). At age 15, most young people are considered to have developed the capacity for empathy and autonomous action while being in the process of developing parts of their identity at the same time. It is in this time that young people are thought to develop a comprehensive understanding of what others might think and need. This period is decisive for young people in learning to identify their roles in the family, in school, among their friends, and in their communities.

In addition to these theory-driven reasons, it was also a pragmatic choice to focus on 15 to 18 year olds. At this age, most young people are still enrolled in secondary education, which provides an avenue to access a broad range of young people. Working with young people, who are, or have recently been, in secondary education is also helpful in being able to contribute to debates on civic education and to evaluate the view that civic education is key for young people on their path to become citizens. Moreover, most 15 to 18 year olds are mature enough to take decisions about taking part in research. Given appropriate briefing, they have the capacity to understand the research process and the agency to decide whether or not they want to participate. They can also decide which experiences and opinions they want to share.

4.2.3 Research locales

To sample thoughts on citizenship from different contexts and cultures, I worked with young people in Scotland and in the Netherlands. Scotland offers a unique case for studying young people's citizenship: the referendum on Scottish independence in September 2014 and the associated lowering of the voting age to include 16 and 17 year olds in the franchise changed the status of young people as citizens and mobilised them to connect to a political issue as never before (Breeze et al., 2017; Huebner & Eichhorn, 2020).

While this context offers a unique and interesting environment to learn about young people's views of citizenship, I was concerned Scotland might be somewhat too unique a case to raise broader questions, which speak to the general 'paradox of youth participation' – a phenomenon that is prevalent in many Western democracies, as we have seen in the previous chapter. So I wanted to compare my findings to those in another environment, one that was similar to Scotland, but has been less turbulent with regard to youth citizenship in recent years and where young people have different experiences as citizens and while growing up.

I chose to work with young people in the Netherlands: a small, Northern European country, which – not unlike Scotland – has a strong civil society, providing ample opportunities for citizenship, and which has seen rapid and extensive secularisation in previous decades, away from its Calvinist tradition with a substantial Catholic minority. In contrast to young Scots, however, young people in the Netherlands have neither had the reflexive opportunity of a referendum nor did they experience early enfranchisement. On the contrary, while for Scotland it can be argued that the voting age reform contributed to a view of young people as equal citizens well before age 18, Dutch young people are witnessing a public debate that focuses on protecting and infantilising them at least until age 18, the legal age of majority in the Netherlands.

Scotland

When I decided to start this project, I wanted to do research on young people's citizenship in Scotland – which was also the reason why I came to the University of Edinburgh. Scotland is a prime candidate for the exploration of youth participation and citizenship. In 2012 it was decided that young people from age 16 would be allowed to vote in the referendum on Scottish independence, and as of 2015, 16 and 17 year olds are included in the franchise for all Scottish and local elections. These legislative changes came with a broader debate about the inclusion of young people in the citizenry that also saw political parties and the media change their outlook. The BBC, for example, created a panel of 16 and 17 year olds from across Scotland to increase the presence of young people in their programming (BBC Scotland, 2014) and the Scottish Conservative Party changed its stance on the lowering of the voting age, voting in favour of it (Davidson, 2015).

Scotland is thus a unique case for the study of young people's citizenship. There is now a cohort of young Scots who are allowed to vote at age 16 in Scottish elections, while being denied this right in UK-wide elections and referendums until they turn 18, and who have experienced the turbulent period of the referendum campaign and British politics thereafter. In particular the lead-up to the 2014 Scottish independence referendum created an environment that mobilised young people: through voter registration drives, targeted campaigns, discussions at home and in the classroom. It has been suggested that the experience of being able to vote in the Scottish independence referendum has had a profound impact on young people's intentions for political engagement (Eichhorn, 2017) and in their transitions into adulthood (Breeze et al., 2017). Young Scots who had experienced the referendum were found to be more likely to engage with politics – i.e. to vote, write to a member of parliament, sign petitions, participate in demonstrations, boycotts, engage with a variety of news sources (Eichhorn, 2017) – and to see their own engagement as increasingly autonomous and bound up with their development into independent adults (Breeze et al., 2017). It is unclear, however, how sustained this referendum effect is on young people's long-term engagement with politics, what it means for young people's identities and views on citizenship and for younger cohorts, who missed the one-time opportunity to vote in the referendum and have subsequently been disenfranchised in the UK's general elections (2015 and 2017) and in the referendum on EU membership (2016).

Not only do the legislative changes and the unique situation of young people in Scotland offer a variety of interesting issues to explore; but Scotland's distinctive position within the UK and related issues of independence and devolution make it a particularly interesting case for the exploration of how young people define citizenship and relate to their political communities. It has been suggested that young people develop strong Scottish identities based on conceptions of political, rather than ethnic, communities (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2009), although the civic-ethnic distinction is arguably more fluid than often suggested (MacCormick, 1996). From a comparative study of young people in Manchester and Edinburgh, Grundy and Jamieson conclude that there may be an effect of Scotland's devolution on "the citizenship engagement of young people in Edinburgh" (2004, p. 243).

The Netherlands

A quite different case from Scotland, the Netherlands have not had comparable debates about the inclusion of people younger than 18 years in political processes and adult society more broadly. If anything, Dutch young people have witnessed a limitation of their rights over the past decades that can best be described as 'infantilisation' (De Winter, 2003). Dutch youth policy has, in many respects, focused on protecting young people, and effectively excluded them from many adult experiences (Coussée et al., 2011). Under 18 year olds face restrictions (or are protected, depending on the point of view) on the labour market in terms of the minimum wage and the maximum number of hours worked and in 2013 the Dutch parliament decided to increase the legal age for consumption of all types of alcohol from 16 to 18 years. The legal voting age for all elections in the Netherlands is 18 years. Unlike Scotland the Netherlands has not seen a national debate about the lowering of the voting age in recent decades (Van der Kolk & Aarts, 2010). Young people in the Netherlands can thus be expected to have quite different experiences regarding their civic rights and inclusion in the political community compared to young Scots.

Aside from its approach to young people as citizens, the Netherlands offers many interesting perspectives on conceptions of citizenship. The country has been called "a laboratory for debates surrounding citizenship" (Hurenkamp et al., 2011, p. 206). On the one hand, it has a traditionally strong civil society, providing abundant opportunities for engagement of citizens at the local level. The Dutch are found to prefer conceptions of citizenship that focus on commitment, responsibility, caring for others, and engagement in communities; rights and political practice are secondary for citizenship (Hurenkamp et al., 2011). On the other hand, in recent decades the public debate in the Netherlands has been dominated by questions of formal-legal citizenship and its requirements in terms of identity, loyalty and commitment. A consensus among political elites gave rise to one of the most ambitious agendas on multiculturalism in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s (Koopmans et al., 2005), but this effort was not uncontested. The dispute over multiculturalism and its undesired consequences resulted in assimilationist policies (Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010) and a focus on the question of what a person needs to do in order to qualify as Dutch. In the wake of this debate, the Netherlands has, for example, introduced mandatory citizenship tests (Van Oers, 2010) and has made it a formal task for schools to provide education for active citizenship and social integration (Bron & Thijs, 2011).

Last, but not least, doing research in the Netherlands was not only a matter of identifying an interesting case for research on citizenship and one that is similar to, but different from Scotland. It was also a pragmatic choice. Having lived and worked in the Netherlands before engaging in this research meant that I was familiar with the context, culture, and political debates and that I speak the language fluently.

4.3 Accessing young people

In order to fulfil my aim to explore and raise new questions on young people's understanding of citizenship, I set out to gather a range of ideas from young people with different experiences and backgrounds. I did not strive for representativeness, but rather for depth and new ideas on how different young people ascribe meaning to citizenship. In my strategy for recruiting young people to participate in the research, I thus sought to maximise diversity in terms of their experiences and possible views on citizenship. A second aim for my strategy to access young people was to build strong connections with them, so that I would learn about their views in depth and they would be comfortable participating in repeated conversations.

4.3.1 Through secondary schools

I approached secondary schools in and around a city in the east of Scotland – let us call it Easthaven – and a city of similar size, located in the west of the Netherlands – I will call it Westertoun. Schools offered a good compromise for accessing many young people and young people from a range of backgrounds. In the Netherlands, more than 70 per cent of young people between 15 and 18 years are enrolled in some form of secondary education (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), 2016, p. 32), while this proportion is between 60 and 80 per cent in Scotland, depending on whether we look at pupils in their ultimate or penultimate year of high school (S5 or S6, own calculations based on Scottish Government, 2017). Besides reach, accessing young people through schools had further advantages. On the one hand, the school is an environment at the heart of young people's daily lives; doing research in the school context therefore helped to give the research legitimacy and an air of normality for the participants. On the other hand, the school context also allowed me to explore issues in the context of education, in particular views on civic education.

While most Scottish schools are comprehensive, in the Netherlands young people follow different educational streams based on their abilities from age 12. This meant that I had to make a choice which kind of schools to approach. I reviewed publicly available data on student numbers, socio-economic background of students, and average passing rates in both countries (DUO, 2016; Scottish Government, 2016). I also browsed school websites to find out about the locations, subjects offered and extra-curricular activities, before short-listing schools that would give me access to a wide range of young people in terms of their academic and socio-economic background as well as their interests (based on extra-curricular activities). For example, I looked for schools with a representative proportion of students receiving free school meals (in Scotland) or comparable kinds of subsistence and schools whose offering of extra-curricular activities included activities that could be considered political (such as volunteering, debating societies, Model United Nations, Amnesty International groups, etc.), but also sports or cultural activities.

I contacted all schools on my shortlist, relying on personal contacts or referrals from colleagues wherever possible, but I also approached schools without prior personal contact, e.g. by mail, email, contacting them at conferences, or through Twitter. Important gatekeepers were, for example, heads of school, teachers, former or current pupils. I offered a 45-minute workshop to all schools, either as part of a class or as an extra-curricular activity. In total I reached out to eleven schools, nine in Scotland and two in the Netherlands; all schools were mixed-sex. To protect the anonymity of pupils and staff, all schools and all participants carry pseudonyms in this project.

These are the schools I worked with in Easthaven, Scotland:

(i) *Greenfield High School*: a non-denominational, council-run school with a diverse student body, hailing from affluent and less affluent parts of the inner city. More than 20 percent of Greenfield High School's students identify as from minority ethnic groups.

(ii) *Elmridge High School*: a non-denominational, council-run school in a commuter town just outside of Easthaven. Elmridge High draws students from affluent commuter towns as well as less affluent suburbs at the outskirts of Easthaven. Most students are classed as White-Scottish; only 5 to 10 per cent identify as from minority ethnic backgrounds.

(iii) *Rosewell Academy*: an independent school with a large part of the student body hailing from affluent and upper middle-class backgrounds. Students come from all parts of the city and are diverse in terms of their national, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

And in Westertoun, the Netherlands:

(iv) *Noordwest College*: a non-denominational, public school in an inner-city location drawing students from middle-class boroughs as well as more affluent suburban commuter towns. Its student body is diverse, with at least 20 per cent hailing from minority ethnic backgrounds, but less diverse than the general inner-city population of Westertoun. The school offers bilingual education in Dutch and English and the students included in the research all followed the pre-university track (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs, short VWO, see Glossary).

In addition, a number of participants in Scotland joined the project from schools I had not visited, after hearing about it from friends. They came from these schools:

(v) *St Alfa's High School*: a Roman Catholic, council-run school with students from all parts of the city. The student population is diverse in terms of their family background; more than 20 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Although many come from Catholic families, less than half of the student body identify as practising Catholics themselves.

(vi) *Southside High School:* a non-denominational, council-run school drawing students from affluent and middle-class parts of the inner city.

(vii) *North Beach Academy*: a non-denominational, council-run school in a commuter town. The student body is diverse, including middle class and children from more affluent households. Less than 10 per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

4.3.2 In-class workshops

To introduce myself and my research I conducted in-class workshops in four secondary schools. The workshops allowed the young people to meet me, and for me to invite them to participate in my research and gather some initial prompts for our

conversations. Offering a workshop also proved helpful for convincing teachers as institutional gatekeepers to support my research. To fit the regular school schedule I designed workshops to last around 45 minutes and offered to take over a class or a group of students in an after-school activity.

In the workshops I set out to explore “issues that young people care about”. I deliberately did not mention the topic of my research – citizenship – so as not to scare off young people who might find this a difficult term. After introducing myself, I asked workshop participants – in groups of two or three – to share some things they cared or felt passionate about or wanted to see changed in their surroundings. I framed this as a question posed by a foreigner who did not grow up “around here” and did not know the realities of people “like them”. This allowed me to leave it open what participants defined as “around here” (Condor, 2010). That could be the school, community, city, country, Europe or the world. Students discussed these questions in small groups for roughly ten minutes while collecting all issues as notes and posting them on a wall. Afterwards, I encouraged participants to share and discuss the issues they had come up with in the plenary group. At the end of the workshop sessions I asked who would be willing to participate in further conversations about these issues. I gathered the contact details of all interested workshop participants.

What was discussed during the workshops is not included in the data for this project, because the workshops were not designed as a data collection tool and participating students were not explicitly asked for their consent to being part of the research. Nevertheless, the workshops proved useful beyond my primary aim of accessing potential participants. They allowed me to gather background information about the school community and issues that young people cared about. With these in mind, I was well equipped with individual starting points for follow up conversations, for example: “In the workshop you mentioned you cared about XYZ. Tell me how you came to care about this.”

Through these introductory workshops I made contact with 78 young people, 38 in Scotland and 40 in the Netherlands. Immediately after each workshop, I reached out to all participants who had decided to leave their contact details. I approached interested participants via email, text message or Facebook chat, depending on their preference, and invited them to participate in an individual or small-group conversation on a day of their choice. It was entirely up to the workshop participants,

(i) whether or not they wanted to give me their contact details, and (ii) whether or not to accept my invitation. Although recruitment of participants might have been easier had I relied on schools and teachers to encourage participation, I wanted to reduce issues of power and the authority of adults (David et al., 2001); it was important for me to allow young people to consent to participating independent of class participation or the influence of a teacher.

4.3.3 The participants

A total of 46 young people participated in the research. 39 of the 78 workshop participants (50 per cent) reacted to my invitation and agreed to participate in the research. An additional seven participants joined the research without having participated in any of my workshops, after hearing about it from one of their friends. This sample includes 20 young people based in Scotland and 26 in the Netherlands. At the time of the first interview, all participants were between 15 and 18 years old, with more than half of them aged 16. At the time of our first conversation, all participants were in secondary education. A few of them finished their last year of school over the course of our repeated conversations. 15 participants were male and 31 female.

The group of participants is by no means a representative sample of young people in Scotland or the Netherlands. I did not strive for representativeness, but for depth and new ideas about how young people experience citizenship. As much as possible, I tried to access participants with a range of backgrounds and experiences that I expected to be related to how they made sense of citizenship. For example, the group of participants comprises young people from a variety of national backgrounds. Not all were White-Scottish or White-Dutch; some had family in or had themselves spent a part of their lives in a different country, some held citizenship in countries other than the UK or the Netherlands, and some held dual citizenship. Many young people spoke more than one language fluently and, when asked where they were from, said they had roots in several countries. While most said they were not religious or did not mention that they identified with a certain faith in any of our conversations, there were 12 participants who said that they actively followed a faith and another ten who grew up in religious households, but did not actively practise their family's faith themselves or at least not much. Most young people for whom faith played a role were of a

Christian denomination, but also a few were Muslims and Buddhists. The participants had a range of experiences in terms of politics and engagement. Few said about themselves that they were not at all interested in politics and could not imagine becoming involved in politics or civil society later in life, while two were heavily involved in political institutions. Some had a background in community involvement, for example as youth leaders in their church, representatives at school or were active in non-governmental organisations.

To protect my participants' identities I assigned pseudonyms to all of them. This is either an alias they had chosen for themselves or – in case the participants preferred me to pick a pseudonym on their behalf – a name that reflects the participant's gender and cultural origin. An overview of the participants and some key characteristics is provided in Table 2.

4.4 Collecting young people's views

I explored my research questions with each young person in the group of participants. Participating in the research meant that young people would meet me for several conversations, either alone or together with a friend, and that we would chat about topics such as identity, community, belonging, and, ultimately, citizenship.

4.4.1 Preparing for interviews

The interviews were designed as "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 2000, p. 84) and included a mix of questions and narrative elements. Instead of outlining a full interview schedule, I chose a flexible and conversational approach to make sure that the young people felt comfortable talking to me without being too self-conscious or feeling interrogated (Heath et al., 2009, p. 82). Following Condor's (2010) approach to exploring issues of identity I designed my interviews as 'chats' and tried to make them as informal as possible. To avoid a pattern of 'yes/no' answers, the young people were encouraged to speak freely about issues they cared about and how they felt 'around here'. Together we explored citizenship from various angles: as a status, a feeling, or a practice.

Table 2. Overview over all participants and some key background data

#	Name	Sex	Age[1]	Country	School	Denomination[2]	Languages	Where from[3]	Passport(s)
1	Amy	f	17	SCO	Elmridge High School	None	English	Scotland	British
2	Ashlain	f	16	SCO	Southside High School	Orthodox (family)	English/Russian	Scotland & Russia	British/Russian
3	Ben	m	16	SCO	St Alfa's High School	Catholic (family)	English	Scotland & Ireland	British/Irish
4	Connor	m	17	SCO	Rosewell Academy	Christian (family)	English	Scotland	British
5	Damian	m	17	SCO	Rosewell Academy	Orthodox	Greek/English	Cyprus	British
6	Emily	f	16	SCO	Greenfield High School	Christian	English	Scotland & Nigeria	Nigerian
7	Emma	f	17	SCO	Greenfield High School	Not stated	English	Scotland	British
8	Farah	f	16	SCO	St Alfa's High School	Muslim (family)	English	Scotland & Sudan	British
9	Hamish	m	16	SCO	Rosewell Academy	Protestant	English	Scotland	British
10	Hannah	f	18	SCO	Greenfield High School	Protestant	English	Northern Ireland	British
11	James	m	17	SCO	Greenfield High School	Protestant	English	Scotland	British
12	Joana	f	16	SCO	St Alfa's High School	Catholic (family)	English	Scotland & Latvia	Portuguese/Latvian
13	Joseph	m	15	SCO	Rosewell Academy	Catholic	English	Scotland	British
14	Katie	f	17	SCO	Elmridge High School	None	English	Britain	British
15	Lauren	f	16	SCO	North Beach Academy	None	English	Scotland	British
16	Matthew	m	15	SCO	Rosewell Academy	None	English	England	British
17	Megan	f	17	SCO	Greenfield High School	Not stated	English	Scotland	British
18	Rachel	f	16	SCO	Greenfield High School	Not stated	English	Scotland	German
19	Ross	m	18	SCO	Elmridge High School	Catholic (family)	English	Scotland	British
20	Sophie	f	17	SCO	Rosewell Academy	None	English/French	Britain	British/German

[1] At the time of our first interview
[2] Some young people grew up in a religious household, but do not actively practise their family's faith. These are marked with (family).
[3] Self-defined

#	Name	Sex	Age[1]	Country	School	Denomination[2]	Languages	Where from[3]	Passport(s)
21	Alex	m	17	NL	Noordwest College	Orthodox	Greek/English/Dutch	Greece	Greek
22	Amber	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
23	Amira	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/Turkish/English	Turkey & Netherlands	Dutch/Turkish
24	Anouk	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Buddhist (family)	Dutch/English	Indonesia & Netherlands	Dutch
25	Elena	f	15	NL	Noordwest College	Orthodox	Dutch/Russian/English	Ukraine & Netherlands	Ukrainian/Dutch
26	Fleur	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
27	Malou	f	15	NL	Noordwest College	Christian (family)	Dutch/English/Chinese	Netherlands	Dutch
28	Lars	m	16	NL	Noordwest College	None	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
29	Laura	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Catholic (family)	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
30	Lieke	f	17	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
31	Lotte	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
32	Lynn	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
33	Nora	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
34	Maria	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Christian	Dutch/English	Kenya & Netherlands	Dutch
35	Mariam	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Muslim (family)	Dutch/English/Urdu	Pakistan & Netherlands	Dutch/Pakistani
36	Max	m	17	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
37	Melissa	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Javanese (family)	Dutch/English	Suriname & Netherlands	Dutch
38	Merel	f	15	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
39	Niels	m	15	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
40	Robin	m	15	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
41	Romy	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
42	Sanne	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Not stated	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
43	Sem	m	16	NL	Noordwest College	Muslim	Dutch/Turkish/English	Turkey & Netherlands	Dutch/Turkish
44	Tess	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	None	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
45	Tim	m	15	NL	Noordwest College	None	Dutch/English	Netherlands	Dutch
46	Vera	f	16	NL	Noordwest College	Buddhist	Dutch/English	China, Indonesia & Netherlands	Indonesian

Similar to approaches employed by Bloemraad (2013), Breeze et al. (2017), and Thorson (2015), I asked the young people to recount experiences in their communities, with engagement, or political issues they cared about. This encouraged the participants to talk about experiences and to use their own words, so that I only had to 'follow the course of associative thinking' (Lane, 1962, p. 9, as cited in Condor, 2010, p. 9). I probed with more specific questions until I felt we had sufficiently explored citizenship from that angle. This conversational approach was crucial to building rapport with the young people and for my aim to uncover meaning in their representations of citizenship. It allowed me to stick to the participants' own use of language and helped me – as much as possible – to avoid bringing too many of my own assumptions about particular conceptions citizenship into the research.

I did not expect to reach a point of saturation, as it is often referred to by other qualitative researchers with exploratory aims (for example Strauss & Corbin, 1994). My aim for depth in uncovering how young people constitute meaning in citizenship meant that throughout the repeated interviews I continued to discover new nuances in the way young people made sense of citizenship and at different points in time. In addition, events that I had no control over influenced the way the young people reflected on citizenship, such as the unexpected early call for elections in the United Kingdom in 2017. Instead of saturation in terms of participants or interviews, I thus strove for saturation in terms of the ways through which we approached citizenship in our conversations. I constructed the interviews so that I could sample a range of ways in which young people constitute meaning in citizenship. This meant that we approached citizenship in various different ways, as a status, an identity, or a practice. The goal was to reach a point of saturation for the ways in which each participant could make sense of the concept from different angles.

This flexible and conversational approach to interviewing arguably required more thorough preparation than a more structured interview schedule. Starting from the theory, I developed a topical guide that consisted of themes through which the participants and I could possibly explore the concept. The themes were: (i) belonging and identity, (ii) young people's understanding of citizenship as a status, identity or practice, (iii) young people as citizens, (iv) citizenship and engagement, (v) context and institutions for learning about citizenship. I then followed Mason's (1996) strategy, developing mini research questions for each of these themes. For each of these, I phrased a number of possible interview questions. I chose not to align all questions

into a set interview schedule but devised a range of ways to move from topic to topic, depending on how conversations would go. This flexible approach ensured that I was ready to adapt to the various ways in which participants might talk about citizenship and, ultimately, be able to discover new ideas and emergent themes as we went along. My interview strategy was to get to know the participant, build rapport, discuss identity and belonging to communities, and elicit spontaneous ideas on citizenship in the first conversation, before reflecting on the meaning of citizenship in depth and exploring its relation to identities, engagement, and concrete practices. However, few conversations followed this outline. Most conversations took a completely different order of topics. I tried to make sure that I covered all five themes at the end of my repeated conversations with each participant and also invited the young people to bring up anything they felt was related but that we had not talked about at all.

Before engaging in any fieldwork, I tested my topical guide, and my fieldwork strategy in general, in several scoping interviews with young people, teachers, and youth workers as well as two pilot interviews with young people. The scoping interviews helped me gather feedback on logistical issues of managing the fieldwork, such as the timing and locations for interviews, on incentives for young people, and on the context in the schools that I was embedded in. I used the pilot interviews to test possible interview questions, learn more about which flow would work, and improve on the logistics of managing conversations. From these pilot conversations I gathered that knowing something about the participants and their views prior to the first meeting would make it easier to establish rapport. This discovery was a big factor in the design of the in-class workshops, where I met most of my participants for the first time. I also learnt that starting from questions on concrete issues and experiences (such as elections, experiences of community engagement or public debates) offered good inroads into the discussion of more abstract concepts, such as identity or belonging.

4.4.2 Conducting repeated, in-depth interviews

I conducted two or three conversations with each participant, either individually or in a small group with their friends. Follow-up conversations took place between a few days and up to five months after the initial conversation. For these I would usually come prepared with specific questions to fill the gaps in my understanding of how the young people looked at citizenship and I would ask the participants to reflect more on

the issues and concepts we spoke about. If a third conversation took place, it was usually a few months after the first. To see if young people had developed their attitudes, we would discuss some of the questions again or reflect on recent events, such as elections.

In total, I conducted 68 conversations with young people over the course of 14 months: 33 initial interviews and 35 follow-up conversations. All conversations took place between December 2016 and April 2018. Interviews lasted between 25 minutes and 1 hour 45 minutes, with an average of 55 minutes. The majority of conversations (38) were conducted one-on-one. A little less than half of the conversations were with groups of two or three friends and fourteen participants chose to speak to me alone in all meetings. Since it was completely up to the young people to decide whether or not to bring friends along to an interview, there was no split on gender. 12 participants chose to come with a friend of another gender, while 20 brought along friends of the same gender. All interviews with Scottish participants were conducted in English, while the Dutch participants had a choice of Dutch or English. Most participants in the Netherlands were fluent in English, but the majority felt more comfortable talking to me in Dutch (20 out of 26). The interviews were conducted in a location and at a time entirely of the participants' choosing. I would often meet participants in an empty classroom or the school library. However, some participants preferred meeting in public spaces, for example in cafés or outdoors, and some visited me at the university. Most conversations took place in free periods or directly after the end of the school day, which contributed to embedding the research in the school context. I audio-recorded all conversations and refrained from taking notes during the interview. Instead, to reflect on the interview I would usually write detailed notes from memory on each individual participant's views immediately after the end of a conversation. At the end of our last conversation I offered each participant a gift certificate to the value of £10 or €10 in combination with a personal note as a token of my appreciation for their time. Even though I assume that word about this kind of incentive did get around in the schools I worked with, I deliberately did not mention it in the invitation or workshop to avoid potential issues of incentivisation (Heath et al., 2009, p. 37).

At the end of our final conversation I asked each participant how they had felt participating in the research. Most said that they enjoyed it, because they liked being asked about their opinions, although some also found the experience slightly intimidating. A number of participants commented on the informal tone and setting of

our conversations and how that made them comfortable to say what they spontaneously associated with a topic. Romy (16, NL), for example, said *"it was spontaneous, so not really difficult"*[4] and her friend Lynn (16, NL) agreed: *"I think we both just said what we thought and didn't necessarily think 'Hmm, what would you think?'"*[i]

Some young people said that they did not often get an opportunity to express what is important to them in the same way as they did during our conversations. Rachel, Emma and Tim, for example, said they liked sharing their opinions and appreciated the opportunity "*to vent about what was important"* (Emma, 17, SCO) and Ross (18, SCO) said: *"It was nice to have the chance to just be like 'This is what I care about.'"* Several participants stressed that taking part in research like this empowered them, because it offered them, especially those who were not yet enfranchised, a way to express their views: *"This, for example, I'd say. If there's more research being done among young people, that's a little bit of power, because (…) you can say things, give your opinion"*[ii] (Niels, 15, NL).

Many participants found some questions difficult to answer initially but were surprised to find that they were able to discuss them at length. Those especially who thought that they were less opinionated going into the conversations said they liked how the questions made them think about issues and consider (or reconsider) their opinions. Reflecting on our conversations, Ashlain (16, SCO), for example said: *"I don't know why, but I came out of the meeting thinking about and I was just like 'Hmmm, I never thought about it that way. But I really like that idea.'"* Some said that citizenship was a topic they had rarely thought about prior to participating in the research, but that my questions helped them articulate their thoughts. Hamish (16, SCO), for example: *"It was good to talk about it. In some ways it's the first time where I verbally talked about those sort of things, 'cause most people, when you try to have a conversation about what citizenship means, they're like 'Oh, I think I've got to do something.'"*

Several participants said that – in contrast to merely reading or thinking about it – talking about abstract topics, such as citizenship and politics, forced them to think

[4] Original statements translated from Dutch. All original statements in Dutch are provided in the Appendix. Translations by the author. See note on transcription for details on the representation of the participants' direct speech.

explicitly about how to express their opinions, Connor (17, SCO), for example: *"(…) because it's something that you think about like in your head and you never really speak it out loud, you don't really need to have it into like proper, good English, because it just all makes sense to you and that's all that matters."* Some even mentioned that after our conversation they discussed these topics at home with their families. One participant, Lieke (15, NL), took inspiration from our conversation to write a term paper about citizenship, articulating her thoughts on citizenship tests. However, some participants also said that they found some of my questions difficult to answer, especially the more I probed on abstract notions. Some said they found our conversations philosophical and very deep. Emma (17, SCO), for example, felt that we "*worked through"* very difficult topics together in our conversations. Damian (17, SCO) wished for less inquisitive questioning and Matthew (15, SCO) said he felt self-conscious being recorded.

Reflecting on the order and purpose of the workshop and our repeated conversations, most participants said they enjoyed the workshop in particular, because – in contrast to class discussions, where the teacher typically introduces the topic – the workshop offered an opportunity to talk about anything they cared about and to hear what their classmates deemed important. Merel (15, NL) liked the workshop *"because there were no restrictions. So it was like "Anything you think is important". It was really surprising to hear what other people think of when you ask them 'What do you think is important?'"*. This variety in opinions in the workshop facilitated the start of our conversations. About the setup of the fieldwork and its stages Emma (17, SCO), for example, said that she thought it well thought-out and enjoyed getting to know me in the workshop first, making it "*less terrifying"* to meet me again. She also liked being interviewed together with one of her friends first, as it made her more comfortable. Emma noticed that the duo-conversation stimulated debate, that by interjecting and finishing thoughts her friend helped her form and express her opinions, but that she particularly enjoyed having our last conversation one-on-one, without her friend present. Robin (15, NL) said the same, thinking that the interaction with his friends in our first conversation elicited different kinds of answers than our final conversation, which we had one-on-one. Farah (16, SCO) enjoyed how the repeated conversations gave us ample time to talk about a lot of different things in the repeated conversations: *"And you've asked like a lot of important questions and sort of just let us go on tangents."*

4.4.3 Ethical considerations

Because I was working with young people, many of whom had never previously participated in research, it was particularly important to me to be considerate of their agency and ideas. Throughout the research, I sought to treat the young people as competent experts, involving them in decisions on research design and seeking their consent throughout the multiple stages of the project. In several scoping interviews and in all school workshops, I asked the young people how they would design the research. I took on most of the ideas the young people expressed. Based on their feedback, for example, I let participants choose the location and timing of conversations, and I left it to the participants to decide if they wanted to bring along friends.

This last aspect especially made the fieldwork more difficult for me as the interviewer, because it meant that most of the time I had no idea how many people would come or who to expect. However, it allowed me to treat the young people as agents and it also inadvertently turned them into gatekeepers. By encouraging participants to bring along friends, I gained access to more young people, who otherwise would probably not have participated. It also meant that the young people had a stake in the success of the research. This approach was not without problems though: gatekeeping relationships with participants are often deemed informal (Reeves, 2010), where the consequence of informality is the lack of clear processes. For example, the dual role of young people as participants and gatekeepers forced me to constantly trade off my recruitment aims against my research aims. I struggled to engage in an exploratory discussion with the participants, initially avoiding the term ‘citizenship’, while also wanting to be precise about the nature of the research when engaging young people as gatekeepers. In the beginning, I tried to strike a balance between treating young people as participants and gatekeepers at the same time, but later I reverted to only engaging participants as gatekeepers after we had finished our conversations.

Similarly, I deliberately chose to have young people approach me to arrange participation (rather than me, the researcher, or their teachers approaching them) and also to conduct interviews outside of school times. This was to ensure that young people would be fully able to decide whether or not to participate in the research, excluding – as much as possible – the implicit authority of adults in the school context (David et al., 2001) and the occurrence of assumed consent given by teachers on behalf of the young people (Heath et al., 2009, p. 32).

Consent and ethical approval for the project were sought from the university faculty's ethics committee (review no. 226871), local councils, participating schools and teachers. I also applied for and was accepted into the Enhanced Disclosure scheme for working with children and young people from Disclosure Scotland. I sought consent from parents of some of the participating young people, for example those Scottish participants who were under the age of 16. In the Netherlands, I was asked by the head of school to seek parental consent from all participants regardless of their age. I prepared information sheets for parents (and consent forms for parents of those participants who were underage) that were self-explanatory and contained clear contact details, so that the young people could take them home. Most importantly, however, I sought consent from the young people themselves. Consent forms and information sheets were designed with young people in mind, with the aim of clarity, but without being patronising. Regardless of their age, young people were seen as competent decision makers (Heath et al., 2009, p. 30). I gave out information sheets and consent forms at the initial workshop, so that young people could take them home and look at them in detail whenever they wanted to. This also gave young people the chance to read the information on the project before deciding whether or not they wanted to take part in the research. At the beginning of our first conversation, I would again explain the research process and what I would do with the data, and ask the young people for questions and their written consent.

This was to tick the boxes of the formal ethical requirements; however, I did not feel that these rather static procedures in advance of doing the research sufficiently fulfilled the participants' need for information and my need to reflect on emerging issues while doing the research. Throughout our interaction, I continued to discuss my aims and the procedures of the research with the young people (sometimes referred to as 'process consent', Heath et al., 2009, p. 25). I gathered feedback and suggestions from each participant at every stage, before and after our repeated conversations. Throughout my work with them I would also remind the young people of the rules of the research, of their rights, and that it was up to them to decide whether or not to continue participating and what they wanted to share with me. From the fact that a number of young people decided not to continue participating or not to answer certain questions I conclude that most participants indeed felt informed and sufficiently able to say 'No'.

4.5 Working with the data

Interview transcripts constitute the majority of the data. The audio recordings of all conversations with young people were transcribed verbatim in the language they were conducted in (Dutch or English). The transcripts reflect the young people's language, including local dialects, specific jargon, stoppages and filler words. References to other people, teachers, school names or locations, which might identify respondents and fieldwork locations, were anonymised throughout the transcripts. In addition, I considered all field notes and summaries from background conversations with teachers, school staff and youth workers as well as pictures I had taken during the fieldwork as data.

This resulted in data that are multi-stranded and messy. Firstly, because I conducted several interviews with the same participants at different times and in different constellations, the views of one participant would end up dispersed over multiple transcripts and supplemented with field notes from various background conversations and observations. Secondly, given my flexible and conversational approach to interviewing, topics would come up in different parts of an interview and across the various conversations and notes related to one participant. Participants would express contradictory views in different conversations or report a change of mind on a topic. Thus, my first step was to review all data I had gathered and to familiarise myself with the breadth of it. I treated every individual participant as a case and organised all data into a database, where all interview transcripts and field notes related to each participant were accessible in one location. All entries in this database were anonymised and any references to personal or identifiable information were subsequently deleted from all research documents.

After organising my data, I repeatedly went through the transcripts and notes, indexing different topics and the instances in which participants talked about them. I sorted these topics into an early analysis framework according to the key themes that I had set out to explore and some new themes that had emerged throughout the fieldwork (see Appendix 1). A key step in structuring my data was to produce précises for each participant. These participant-level summaries condense the opinions each young person voiced in the various conversations I had with them. The précises are structured in line with the main themes in the early analysis framework, include mainly participants' quotations, and also capture background details and observations about the participants. These précises were the key to treating each individual participant's

experiences as substantive and they allowed me to respect the integrity of the individual young people and their agency as citizens throughout the analysis.

From the précises, I was able to draw up thematic charts and explore and compare the positions of participants on individual themes. I repeatedly went back to the interview transcripts, sharpening both the précises as well as the thematic charts on each topic with every reading. I paid special attention to different topics that emerged in the conversations in the Netherlands and in Scotland, ensuring that the analysis framework reflected unique topics that had been brought up by young people in one country only (and their original words and language). Only after these steps did I apply detailed thematic coding using qualitative data analysis software (QSR's NVivo) to all interview transcripts and compared data on specific questions raised by the literature.

Throughout the analysis, I approached the data as substantive, using it as a way to understand the way participants look at citizenship as a status, feeling, or practice. In doing so, I focused on interpreting what participants said in the context of their background and inferring how they ascribe meaning to the concepts we discussed (Mason, 1996, p. 109). In another reading of the data, I focused on what participants said about citizenship literally and reflected on how they framed and presented their answers to me to investigate the process of how they ascribe meaning to concepts such as citizenship and engagement.

The comparative design of the research further meant that I treated cases as cross-sectional. Focusing on individual young people as cases, I classified all cases in my analysis database according to a variety of categories that were either identified as important from the theory, played a role in the design phase, or emerged throughout the fieldwork and analysis, before comparing and contrasting groups of young people. I analysed if groups of young people and young people with certain characteristics had similar or different views on citizenship.

4.6 Reflections and limitations

From the description so far, it could seem that this project was a walk in the park, turning out exactly as I envisioned it. It was not. While doing qualitative comparative research seemed like a fantastic idea considering my research questions, I found the reality of it extremely complex. I never reached a point where I felt I had sufficiently

explored the topic. The exploratory nature of the project and my choice of repeat interviews meant that with every new conversation I discovered new aspects about young people's views on citizenship, and I could easily have continued doing that for another decade. Being close to the young people who participated in the research and becoming a part of their social worlds was crucial for the depth of our conversations, but it also meant that I found it difficult to leave the fieldwork stage behind. I kept in touch with many of the participants, hearing what they were up to after leaving school, for example, and sometimes this added perspectives to how I interpreted what they had said earlier.

The data that results from my approach was multi-faceted, messy, and complex. The young people would frequently contradict something they had said in an earlier conversation and, quite naturally, over time their views would change. This is not unexpected, given my assumption that citizenship is a concept that is contested and constantly negotiated. However, it made the process of analysing data complex for there were countless possibilities of slicing, analysing, and interpreting the data. In the end, the data did not only afford cross-country or cross-sectional comparisons, but also allowed me some insights into the participants' views over time. In interpreting the data I found it particularly difficult to deal with the inevitable uncertainty about how much of the young people's conceptions of citizenship were unique to their age (life cycle effect) and how much was an effect of the period and environment they were growing up in (cohort effect). In theory, this problem could easily be alleviated by designing a longitudinal and multi-cohort study, but the complexity of my much simpler project already hints at the difficulties that such a research design would bring about (c.f. Henderson et al., 2007, p. 11).

Previously I have outlined the benefits of accessing young people through schools and the particular advantages that being embedded in a school context brought to my research. However, accessing young people through schools also came with a number of difficulties, many of which I did not expect when planning the research. In Scotland in particular, schools and teachers were not at all open to the idea of welcoming a researcher into their classroom. While some schools immediately indicated that they would not be working with me and are thus not included in the study, others signalled interest initially (and some enthusiastically so), only for that to come to nothing after months of conversations. Although I heard about similar experiences from other researchers and have plenty of hypotheses why that could be

the case, I did not receive an explanation from the schools or teachers themselves. To my surprise, my experience was completely different with schools in the Netherlands, which I found to be inviting, open to research, and extremely supportive. In practice this meant that over the period of a year and a half I contacted almost all secondary schools in and around Easthaven in Scotland and had participants from various different schools, while in Westertoun I was able to be embedded in and focus entirely on one school, Noordwest College, and work with an entire cohort of pupils. This allowed me to reach a particular depth in the work with the young people there, to learn about the impact of everyday experiences and civic education on their conceptions of citizenship to an extent that I did not achieve in Scotland. However, because the provision of civic education at Noordwest College is somewhat unique in the Dutch context, I have to acknowledge that my results are unique to the context of that school. To protect the anonymity of my participants and that of the teachers, who worked with me there, I chose to anonymise both the school and the city.

The exploratory aim of the research made this project particularly susceptible to impact from my personal position. Even though I set out to explore new views on the meaning of citizenship, I inevitably brought my own views to the research. Like many of the participants I constantly reflect on multiple identities: in the context of this research, for example, I am a researcher, an academic, a teacher, a woman, and a European. Over the course of the fieldwork I learnt to use my different positions for the benefit of the research goal (Reinharz, 1997). For example, my fluency in both English and Dutch and my experience with life in Westertoun in the Netherlands as well as Easthaven in Scotland allowed me to present myself as an insider and outsider in both locations. Most of the time I did not say much about my own background initially, leaving the participants to assume that I had a similar background to them. Later I would reveal that in many ways I was not, in fact, an insider, which afforded me the opportunity to ask questions that would otherwise seem obvious, for example, details about the young people's communities and the nature of their attachment to them. While undoubtedly useful I found this difficult at times, given the close relationships I had built with the participants. As a researcher I was also keen not to make false claims about being able to do advocacy for the issues the young people cared and talked to me about. While I understand that, especially from the point of view of young people who feel marginalised, my research is highly political, I was wary of giving the impression that I could deliver solutions to some of the concrete political

issues we discussed, such as the lowering of the voting age or the inclusion of young people's views in civic education.

One aspect of my identity, which I never passed over, was the fact that I was obviously not young in the same way as the participants. On the one hand, this was key to treating young people as experts in their own lives and not making assumptions about their experiences as citizens. It was also an important aspect in having them explain things to me – such as their use of the media – which I had experienced very differently when I was their age. On the other hand, my position as an adult had drawbacks. In combination with being a researcher, it automatically made me an authority, whereas I wanted to be viewed as someone who had to be taught how young people viewed the world. While being embedded in the school context was a deliberate choice for accessing young people and had major advantages for how I could learn about their views, it also meant that I was at times viewed as a teacher. This was especially a problem at Noordwest College in Westertoun, where I was able to establish good relationships with the teachers (and thereby learnt a lot about the school context that I otherwise could not have learnt), but as a consequence was also seen as close to the teachers by the participants. It took some explaining to subvert that image and build rapport with the participants, so that rather than recounting what they had learnt they would feel comfortable in revealing their views on controversial topics, such as the use of drugs at school for example. To aid this, I actively pursued scheduling interviews outside of the school building and school hours with the participants from this school, but, ultimately, I will never know to what extent I succeeded in convincing the participants to share their secrets with me.

4.7 Up next

The following chapters are based on the conversations I had with the participating young people. They give an account of how young people ascribe meaning to citizenship as a concept and of the role that status, identity, belonging, and engagement play in their understandings and experiences of it. They are structured around citizenship-as-a-status, -as-a-sense-of-belonging and -as-a-practice, because these are recognisable elements that many of the participating young people build on in their understandings of citizenship. Each chapter will describe how young people experience and navigate the tensions inherent in that particular view of citizenship.

Direct quotes from the interviews feature heavily in the chapters to come, to illustrate how young people choose to speak about citizenship and to preserve the integrity of their views and the language they use to articulate them as much as possible. Each chapter will open with a vignette of one or several young people whose views of citizenship are characteristic and who represent some of the experiences and challenges many other young people have expressed throughout the research. In addition to providing an impression of the conversations I had with the young people, opening each chapter with a vignette is also a deliberate analytical choice. In light of the complexity and messiness of the data, this is my attempt to convey the variety of views among young people, while preserving some of their nuance and respecting the young people's agency and their integrity as individuals.

Chapter 5

CITIZENSHIP-AS-STATUS
"I AM A CITIZEN, BUT I CAN'T DO MUCH WITH IT"

5.1 Introduction

Hamish is 16 and lives in a suburb of Easthaven in Scotland. He is a Christian and very engaged in his church community, where he takes responsibility for various youth groups. Hamish considers himself proudly Scottish and is *"more of a socialist"*, but citizenship is independent of his national identity or political views for him. According to Hamish, *"citizenship is more a formal thing. I think citizenship is not really to do with... it's what I identify more with a country than with a nation, if that makes sense?"* Hamish says he has a "*legalistic"* understanding of the concept. For him, citizenship is about *"the paperwork that says you are a citizen."*

The most important role of the citizen, according to Hamish, is to carry out their statutory duties. A citizen is anyone "who fulfils the duties of being a citizen, like voting, like other things, like taking part in the judicial system, being part of the jury." All citizens have equal rights and *"will keep the laws, will, eh, take part in democracy."* Hamish believes in laws, such as compulsory voting, because they help formalise the duties of the citizen and make citizens equals, including young people. Other, informal ways of qualifying citizenship are restrictive for Hamish. About world citizenship, for example, he says: *"I think being a global citizen is actually quite patronising to young people. It's always like 'Oh, you should be good and do this. Be a good global citizen!'"* Speaking about good and bad citizens is deeply problematic for Hamish. He feels that that this kind of distinction creates a sense of inequality: *"But I think like a good citizen is hard to define, because everybody in their mind will have a different view of, well,*

what should a citizen do. It's something, it's not linear." Instead, citizens *"deserve to be treated equally. Like there's no hierarchy of citizens to me. We're all just citizens."*

Age, at least according to Hamish, does not affect young people's status as citizens: *"Like I don't think your age should affect your citizenship."* According to Hamish, adult citizenship is just a benchmark that young people have to wait to reach: *"I think once… I think once you get to 18, where you can pretty much do everything, eh, compared to everybody else, I think that's when you kind of reach the benchmark."* Even though he would personally have liked to be able to vote in all elections at age 16, not being able to vote is not a major problem for Hamish. *"So while it's… not being able to vote, it doesn't make you less of a citizen*."

In the same way as Hamish views citizenship as a status, the concept also means something '*legally'* to Katie and Amy, both 17, from Elmridge, a small town near Easthaven in Scotland. The two are very interested in political issues: both chose to follow Modern Studies – the Scottish equivalent of civic education – as an elective. Amy wants to study politics at university and Katie acts as a deputy head pupil at her school. Unlike Hamish, however, Katie and Amy only have a vague understanding of citizenship as a status. When I ask them what citizenship might mean, Amy says: *"I dunno, not really. Like…I think it means something, like weirdly like legally it means something to me."* Katie agrees and adds that citizenship is not of great importance to her: *"Yeah, I'd say the same. Like it's not something I know a lot about because I've never really had to think about it."* The two admit that they have no idea which concrete rights or duties are associated with citizenship as a status. Amy states: *"No, I have no idea."* and Katie believes *"that people who have to go through the citizenship process do know that, but I don't personally, no."*

Being a citizen is not yet relevant to Katie's and Amy's life. When I ask the two if they would describe themselves as citizens, Katie explains that she does not find great meaning in being a citizen and Amy says that until recently she had never considered herself a citizen:

I: *"Would you describe yourself as citizens?"*

KATIE: *"I mean from a legal point of view yes, probably, because I, I mean I am a citizen of the UK. But I don't find any great like identity in that. I wouldn't, you know, I wouldn't go out of my way to determine I am a British citizen 'cause I, that doesn't mean much to me personally."*

AMY: *"I hadn't really thought about it until like filling out like official forms like for my driver's licence and for UCAS [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in the UK]. And they're like, 'are you a UK citizen?' I'm like, 'oh yeah, I am'. Like I never really thought about it before because it doesn't really make a difference. So like again like Katie said, like I would just kind of say it, like if someone asked I'd be like, 'oh yeah I am' but I don't, I don't feel any…like…I just don't think it's that important. Like I never think about it."*

Amy and Katie do not feel that they have much of a stake in their citizenship, because being a citizen is not yet relevant to their lives. It is a status they know they have, but that is not very useful to them. While it is clear that citizens have responsibilities in their communities, Katie and Amy do not feel committed to that. Amy explains: "*I see when people are like, 'I like contribute to it', like I think it makes sense. But like I dunno if I feel that I much like buy into it."* Citizenship does not mean much to Katie and Amy, because it is just something they were born into. They argue that this feels very different for communities which they choose to be a part of, such as their school, choir, or church community.

KATIE: *"I, I think it's like when, you know, things like the fact, yeah I did, I choose to still be school and, you know, I choose to go along to choir and stuff. That kind of stuff, it makes you feel like there's more weight in belonging there because it's not just something you happened, you know, I didn't just happen to stumble across that. It's something that I chose to be there, so being there means something to me. And I contin-, I choose to continue to go back and spend time with these people, so belonging there means something more than just the place I was coincidentally born in."*

Katie explains that, for her, belonging to her school is a choice, because she could have left school at age 16, but instead decided to continue and complete another year of secondary education.

While for Hamish citizenship as a status is important, because it is associated with rights and responsibilities that make citizens equals, this view of citizenship means nothing to Katie and Amy. For the two citizenship is something rather vague. Being a citizen is not yet important to their lives and they feel they do not have much of a stake in their citizenship. Hamish's clear understanding of citizenship as a status is very much an exception among young people. Like Katie and Amy, most interviewees have only a vague idea of what citizenship might mean formally. For them citizenship as a status is not yet relevant. Citizenship rights are difficult to grasp for the participating young people of this study and a number of them have very broad ideas about their

responsibilities as citizens. Ultimately, it is often unclear for the participating young people what citizenship as a status is good for. This is also because young people cannot exercise some of their civil rights and, as a consequence, a number of participants do not feel treated as full and equal citizens. When they feel unable to act as autonomous citizens, for most interviewees their status as citizens is simply not yet useful.

This chapter deals with young people's views of liberal, rights- and duty-based conceptions of citizenship as a status. It examines how the participating young people make sense of citizenship as a concept of the individual and in relation to notions such as freedom, autonomy, and equality. Unlike Hamish, other interviewees do not have a concrete idea of what it means to have the status of a citizen. Just as for Katie and Amy, civic rights and responsibilities carry very little meaning for most of the participating young people. There are several reasons why citizenship as a status is such a vague, not-yet-meaningful concept for young people. In this chapter, I describe the problems the participating young people have with citizenship as a status, how this view of citizenship can leave them feeling as partial or not-yet-citizens, and what kind of strategies they have for dealing with these problems.

5.2 Vague understandings of citizenship-as-a-status

Like Amy and Katie, most interviewees know that they are citizens by status, but when it comes to explaining what this means they are grasping for answers. In many of the conversations, when I asked about the meaning of citizenship, young people admitted that they *"don't really know"*[iv] (Lieke, 15, NL).

Some young people have a basic understanding that citizenship is something formal or legal. Sophie (17, SCO), for example, says: *"For me that always has the like legal connotation of like… it's like a really official thing."* Others know citizenship as the equivalent of holding a passport or having a nationality. For Tim (15, NL), for example, 'passport' and 'citizenship' are the same thing: "*Dutch passport. Or citizenship. Yes, that's roughly the same for me.*"[v] Nora (16, NL) knows that she, too, is a citizen because she has *"a passport, a Dutch passport"*[vi] and for Alex (17, NL), *"there's the legal aspect to it, of course. You can get a passport as a citizen and your ID and getting your papers and registering to your local community."*

For a majority of the participating young people, however, citizenship in a formal sense is not something that is hugely relevant for their lives. Citizenship does not mean much for Connor (17, SCO) *"'cause it's never been an issue."* And for Sophie (17, SCO), it is "*not something that I think about that often, 'cause it is just legal, 'cause it doesn't affect me in any other way*". Many young people know citizenship only as something that affects others, immigrants or refugees, for example. When I ask her about citizenship, Laura (16, NL) first thinks of *"refugees, because, of course, you hear a lot about, for example, the integration test and about 'When will they be a citizen?'"* And similarly, Joseph's (15, SCO) first thought goes back to a discussion with his mother about the *"Rohingya people of Myanmar, who had their citizenship revoked"*. Sophie (17, SCO) says that she started thinking about citizenship more after Brexit, *"because people are worried about like – you know – having visas to visit the mainland and things like that."* However, for Sophie, this is something that affects others, but not so much her: "*But it's not something that I really… I don't really need to worry about."*

Those who grasp for meaning in citizenship as a status believe that citizenship "*is something passive, not active"*[vii] (Tim, 15, NL). Citizens enjoy rights, such as free education, the right to a fair trial, or protection when abroad – *"rights that others don't have"* (Hamish, 16, SCO). Some associate citizenship with the authority of the state or the government. Damian (17, SCO), for example, says that it is the state that provides security and freedom to its citizens – and only those who have been assigned citizenship, not mere residents. Similarly, for Romy (16, NL) citizenship means that there are *"things that you get from your country, or from the government in any case"*[viii] and Alex (17, NL) believes that it is *"a government or a state that protects the rights of people"*.

For few of the interviewed young people, it is clear that citizenship rights are granted in return for citizens to perform certain duties. Lars (16, NL), for example, says: *"Well, where there's a duty you also always have a right (…) the government then has the right to your duty. The community has the right to the duty that you have to perform."* Alex (17, NL) describes this relationship as a *"social contract between the people and the government".* Similarly, Niels (15, NL) believes that citizens have responsibilities, because they are in a relationship with the government:

NIELS: *"Kind of, look, it's a kind, eh, relationship. Kind of 'You give and you take'. The government gives you things, such as healthcare, education, that kind of things, and then it is also important that you give."*[ix]

Young people who have some idea of citizenship as a status often distinguish civic responsibilities from social expectations, morals, and norms. For Tim (15, NL), for example, *"there are, of course, societal expectations, such as not to throw thrash out onto the street or something like that, but that's something different from a civic responsibility."*[x] Speaking of good citizens is pointless for young people when thinking of citizenship as a status: *"It's just like a really weird idea 'cause they're just like a human like everyone else"* (Amy, 17, SCO). Citizenship is universal concept; anyone who is assigned citizenship as a status is equal before the law and automatically a good citizen. *"If they are law-abiding, they are a good citizen."* (Damian, 17, SCO). Bad citizens, in contrast, can exist: those who do not follow the laws of the country, where they hold citizenship. According to Robin, however, even an obvious offence does not lead to a loss of citizenship: "*Of course it's not always casual small talk, sometimes you horribly insult someone. Then you are not immediately no longer a citizen*."[xi]

5.3 Why citizenship-as-a-status does not mean much to young people

There are a number of reasons why, as a status, citizenship can be such a vague concept for young people. In many cases, citizenship rights and responsibilities are neither salient in nor relevant to the lives of the participating young people. Because the law often bars young people from exercising statutory civic duties, such as voting or paying tax, a number of participants are unsure what they do to justify their status as citizens while being young. As a consequence, they have few concrete ideas about the legal provisions associated with citizenship. In addition to vague ideas about civic rights and duties, there is a lot of uncertainty among the participating young people about which entity grants and protects civil rights and who exactly can access the benefits of being a citizen. Taken together, it is often unclear for young people what their status as citizens is good for.

5.3.1 Citizenship rights difficult to grasp for young people

Among the participating young people few have a concrete idea of the formal rights that are associated with citizenship. In our conversations, not many young people name concrete legal provisions that they have access to as citizens. When I ask whether citizens hold any specific rights, Amy and Katie (both 17, SCO), for example, are not able think of anything initially:

I: *"What do you get for being British citizens? Do you have particular rights?"*

AMY: *"I dunno."*

KATIE: *"I don't really know."*

Citizenship rights are simply not salient for these young people. Amy says that she does not know which rights come with her citizenship: *"I don't know like the actual legal rights you get from being a British citizen."* After some probing, Katie realizes that as a citizen she has access to healthcare and education: "*Yeah, if I think about it I do associate that with kind of being a citizen because I think of why I get free education and why I don't have to pay to go to Uni. And why I don't have to pay if I go to the doctor."* However, Katie explains how she does not usually think about her civil rights. It is only because I asked her that she was thinking about concrete rights: *"So I think I do associate it with citizenship but only if I think about it in detail. If I think about why I have that I do, but not naturally."* Civil rights are something that they have never been in touch with. It is also quite symptomatic that Katie's spontaneous associations with rights are Scottish, not British provisions, even though she prefers to think of herself as British. This illustrates how little meaning Katie finds in concepts such as civil rights and the state and that, for her, they are not necessarily related.

While Amy and Katie admit that they do not usually think about their concrete rights, other interviewees grasp for meaning by referring to very general things such as respect, freedom, or equality. When I ask for examples of citizenship rights, Vera (16, NL), for example, says, after some thinking: *"Rights as a citizen? Hmm, you shouldn't... I think we should be equal, just respect each other, just not think bad of others."*[xii] Similarly, Ben (16, SCO) cannot think of anything specific but freedom: *"Yeah, I mean there's… there's just… I mean if you compare us to Saudi Arabia, then everyone has got a lot more freedom."* A number of participants also refer to human rights, even though they add that these apply to all people regardless of their citizenship status. Lauren (15, SCO), for example, mentions that citizens have the

rights *"bound by the European Court of Human Rights"* and, when I ask Ross (18, SCO) what rights citizens have, he says: *"Like usually you have the UN rights, but they are everywhere."*

Unlike Hamish, very few interviewees refer to concrete civil rights, such as the right to legal protection or to a fair trial, freedom of religion, or social rights, such as access to social security. After some probing a number of young people mention their right to free education and healthcare. In Scotland, like Katie, several participants believe that citizenship gives access to free education and to the National Health Service (NHS). Some Scottish participants also refer to their right to free higher education in Scotland, although they are unsure about the concrete access criteria as there is no Scottish state, and hence, no Scottish citizenship. Similarly, some of the young people interviewed in the Netherlands mention their right to education and freedom of speech as legal provisions associated with Dutch citizenship. For Laura (16, NL), for example, freedom of speech is an important right of the citizen, even though she admits that she rarely ever thinks about that in daily life. On the contrary, European rights, such as freedom of movement, are mentioned neither in Scotland nor in the Netherlands.

5.3.2 Young people have problems with civic duties

Just as citizenship rights are a difficult to grasp for the participating young people, so are the concrete duties that citizens have. In theory, it is clear that citizenship comes with responsibilities. However, unlike Hamish, most participating young people do not have a concrete idea what these responsibilities are and how young people can exercise them in practice. While for Hamish fulfilling duties is the most important role of the citizen, others struggle with this way of looking at citizenship. In contrast to Hamish, they attach much less importance to responsibilities as part of the formal role of the citizen, often because they themselves cannot fulfil many of these civic duties.

When the participating young people consider civic duties, they mostly come up with responsibilities that are limited to adults. Like Hamish, many interviewees consider voting a responsibility of the citizen. For some others, obeying the law and paying taxes are also part of the citizen's duties. Alex (17, NL), for example, says: *"Well, I suppose you have to participate in elections. That's important. And referenda. (…) Other than that, yeah, I suppose simply obeying the laws, paying your taxes, ehm."*

Few young people also consider working, studying, and consuming as things that citizens are expected to do. According to Elena (16, NL) citizens have to *"work and make money, you kind of have to do that"*[xiii] and for Amira (16, NL) "*having a job makes you a citizen.*"

When the role of the citizen is defined in terms of voting, paying taxes, or working, young people cannot act as citizens, because their age bars them from fulfilling these duties. As a consequence, a number of interviewees are not quite sure what they do to justify their status as citizens. Anouk and Lars (both 16, NL), for example, struggle to define the civic duties that young people have:

ANOUK: "But what are their duties as teenagers?"
LARS: "Yeah. That's a good question."
ANOUK: "Because they can't pay taxes, they don't vote."

5.3.3 It is unclear what citizenship is good for

For many of the participating young people, citizenship does not only lack relevance in terms of rights and responsibilities. There is also a lot of uncertainty among them about who has access to citizenship, which community or entity grants and protects civil rights, and who exactly citizens are committing their duties to. While for Hamish it is clear that citizenship is associated with a country and its laws, others are not sure which entity grants and protects civil rights. These uncertainties can further contribute to young people's vague understanding of citizenship as a formal status. Ultimately, they also create doubts about the worth of citizenship for young people.

When talking about civil rights, many participants express doubts about who exactly counts as a citizen and has access to civil rights. Melissa (16, NL), for example, is not quite sure what distinguishes someone who lives in the Netherlands from a Dutch citizen: *"Um, yes, if you just live in the Netherlands, then I think you're a Dutch citizen?"*[xiv] And Amy (17, SCO) is uncertain about who actually has access to the NHS, so the right to free healthcare, in the UK: *"So I think it's, I think everyone, I imagine everyone who lives here. I don't know if you need British citizenship or not to get the NHS, I've never found out."* She is unsure about the right to free higher education in Scotland, too:

AMY: *"Yeah. No, I have no idea. All I know is like I think you have to live here for like two years before you can apply to SAAS [Student Awards Agency for Scotland]. Or before you can apply to SAAS you have to live here for three years?"*

The uncertainty about access to citizenship rights extends further to questions about residents and non-citizens. In the same way as Amy is not sure if people need British citizenship to access free healthcare, Tim (15, NL) is uncertain who holds citizenship rights in the Netherlands. The fact that many of his classmates do not hold Dutch passports, yet have the same rights as citizens, is confusing for him:

TIM: *"Basically a Dutch passport is proof of your citizenship, but I'm not an expert in law and stuff, so I won't know... you know? I mean, we've got plenty of people out there who have Indonesian passports or something, you know? Then I think you're still a Dutch citizen. I don't know how that works in the Netherlands."*[xv]

Tim's uncertainty goes back to the fact that nowadays many non-citizens hold the same or similar rights as citizens. This is also an issue for some participants in Scotland. According to Damian (17, SCO), residents *"enjoy most of the rights that a citizen has."* For Damian, the only difference between citizens and residents is the right to vote in elections and to serve in the armed forces – both rights that do not apply to many young people*. "The key difference here is that what a citizen has is that they have the ability to vote in elections and they have the ability to sign up for the armed forces"* (Damian, 17, SCO).

Some participants have first-hand experiences with being non-citizens, while still having access to almost all civil rights. Vera (16, NL), for example, does not have a Dutch passport, but has so far not experienced any disadvantages of her non-citizenship. The only restriction she knows of – the fact that she will not be able to vote in the Netherlands – is *"not yet relevant"*[xvi] for her. Instead, having a non-Dutch passport is advantageous for the things she currently wants to do, visiting her family in Indonesia, for example: *"If I had a Dutch passport, it would be more difficult for me to go to Indonesia. I don't know exactly how it works, but for now it's just easier for me"*[xvii] (Vera, 16, NL). The other way around, Elena (16, NL), who would be eligible for a passport in her mother's home country, Ukraine, is not quite sure what the advantages of that would be:

ELENA: *"Yeah, I don't know. I'd have to look into it first. Now I'm more like 'I want a double passport, because I also feel Ukrainian.' But I want to see what*

it means to - if I have it - what I can and cannot do, because I'm not going to take it just because I like to show it to people with whom I'm friends or something."[xviii]

Some young people are also not quite sure which entity grants and protects the rights of the citizen. Niels (15, NL) is hesitant whether his rights as a citizen – the right to healthcare, to education, and to a fair trial – are laid down in *"the Dutch law book, or the Westertoun law."*[xix] This is particularly a problem for those who associate citizenship first and foremost with human rights. While in theory any human being should have human rights, it is clear for young people who associate citizenship with human rights that some governments are better at protecting these rights than others. Nora (16, NL) knows that human rights are *"not always complied with, in countries such as Africa, for example, but they should be there."*[xx] And also for Vera (16, NL), human rights should be universal, because every country has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but she explains:

VERA: *"…but if you look at prescriptively, as in how it should be, you'll find out how many people don't actually adhere to it. How many countries there are where it's not the same as here, even though we have the same rights. Just... That there are so many places where people just don't have rights."*[xxi]

These uncertainties about access to and the rights associated with citizenship make it a vague concept for many young people, one that is difficult to understand. This lack of clarity is particularly problematic, because it poses questions about the worth of citizenship. If it is not exclusive or clearly limited in terms of access, citizenship as a status might be seen as worthless, as Damian (17, SCO) captures:

DAMIAN: *"Because if it isn't, you are just a resident of that country. You are not necessarily a citizen, to which it then becomes something like – if you may say – a passport or the idea of a citizen to be pretty much worthless by saying 'Even those who simply live here, but are not citizens can have the exact same privileges as those who are citizens.' You pretty much make the whole idea of citizenship to be pointless, which is something that happened to the Roman Empire in the very end."*

5.4 Problems young people have with citizenship-as-a-status

Uncertainty about the meaning of citizenship as a status is not the only problem some of the participating young people have with the concept. In addition to their vague understanding of rights and responsibilities, a number of interviewees outright reject the idea that citizenship as a status should be tied to statutory duties. What is at the core of the concept for Hamish – citizenship-as-a-duty – is very difficult to come to terms with for other young people. They feel it goes against their idea of freedom and agency. What is more, for these young people, citizenship as a concept of equality and the autonomy of the individual is a hollow promise. Many of them are well aware that for them full and equal citizenship is a scenario of the future. These young people feel they should be equal citizens; their status as citizens should not be affected by age. In reality, however, many participants have experienced forms of age-based discrimination. Their rights as citizens have been violated on the basis of age. As a consequence, many participating young people feel excluded from citizenship; they feel as not-yet-citizens.

5.4.1 Some young people are ill at ease with citizenship-as-a-duty

We have already seen how some young people struggle with definitions of citizenship that depend on responsibilities. While most participants have excessively broad ideas about civic duties, some are deeply uncomfortable with the notion that in order to be considered a citizen they have to fulfil duties at all. While Hamish sees duties as a great equaliser, because every citizen has the same responsibilities, for other participants citizenship-as-a-duty goes against their need for self-determination and individual liberty. These young people do not want to be forced to perform civic duties. Instead, they want to decide for themselves how to act as citizens.

For Ross (18, SCO), for example, citizenship as a duty is a really difficult concept that he cannot quite come to terms with. Ross knows that citizens have responsibilities, but he cannot think of anything other than obeying the law and paying tax. He is ill at ease with the idea that citizens are expected to perform other kinds of duties: *"I don't think, I don't personally think there's anything expected except from like 'Ok, you're a citizen now. Follow the laws. If you work, pay tax. If you…' That's really it."* However, he admits that citizens must have responsibilities beyond paying tax and following the law, because if these were the only civic duties any holiday maker could be

considered a citizen. *"If you're a holiday maker in a country you're not a citizen (…), even though you, you still follow the laws. And if you buy stuff you still technically pay tax in the country."* Nevertheless, Ross struggles to define other responsibilities of the citizen: *"So I think it's like, I can't really think of anything else."*

Also Emma (17, SCO) is torn about citizenship-as-a-duty. Even though she would most certainly agree with Hamish's social contractual view of citizenship and has high expectations for what citizens should do to contribute to their communities, civic duties are a moral, and not necessarily a legal obligation for her: "*Like there's a duty, but that duty isn't laid down by law. It's just like a moral obligation, like to be like a nice person."* Emma admires Clement Attlee, the leader of the British Labour Party and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1945 to 1951. For her, Attlee personifies the ideal of the good citizen, because he performed his duty and served his fellow citizens almost to the extent of self-abandonment:

> *EMMA:* *"He was like a guy who gave so much of himself and he like put people in his cabinet he didn't necessarily agree with. (…) I would say he was a good citizen because he did it for everybody. And he had these values and he actually did something with them to help not just himself or his career or whatever, but because he genuinely believes in like providing these things for people, so they could all fulfil themselves as individuals, like collectively, like by helping each other as individuals."*

However, Emma and her admiration for Clement Attlee are also a good example of why duty-based citizenship is deeply problematic for her. Even though she admires Attlee's commitment, Emma would not be willing to give up so much of herself to serve her country. Freedom is an important concept for Emma and she struggles to reconcile it with her idea of civic duties: *"If you really want to live in a democracy, if you don't really wanna give that up and like be... Like if you don't wanna give up your freedom, then you have a duty to fight for it. Which kind of makes it sounds like that's not a free choice."* To Emma, it seems that being a citizen is a lifelong commitment that cannot be taken half-heartedly. With this kind of burden, citizenship-as-a-duty becomes a dilemma of responsibility and individual liberty for her.

While Emma and Ross visibly struggle with the idea that citizenship as a status is conditional upon the fulfilment of civic duties, other participants fully reject citizenship-as-a-duty. According to Tim (15, NL), the idea that citizens have an active role to fulfil is authoritarian: "*No. I also think it is a bit of an authoritarian construct, to say 'If you are this or if you do this, you are no longer a Dutch citizen'. That is nonsense."*[xxii]

Sophie (17, SCO) feels equally uneasy about forcing people to do certain things in order to attain citizenship: *"I don't know, because if they don't feel particularly passionate about citizenship, then I guess they wouldn't want… like I don't know specifically what, but like it's hard to expect people to do things."* Instead of a duty, citizenship should be a universal status that does not depend on the fulfilment of certain conditions. For Robin (15, NL), the idea that citizens could lose their status, for example if they do not fulfil their duties, is unfathomable: "*The fact that you are a citizen can never be taken away from you. That's just not possible*."[xxiii] As Emma, Robin thinks that citizenship responsibilities are *"more a kind of goal, then a requirement"*[xxiv] – in other words, a moral rather than a legal obligation. In this sense, what makes citizenship universal and equalising for Hamish – the fact that all citizens have statutory duties – is precisely what other young people see as limiting the universality of citizenship as a status.

5.4.2 Full and equal citizenship is a concept of the future

One reason why some of the participating young people are reluctant to view citizenship as a legal status in terms of rights and responsibilities lies in the fact they are acutely aware that by these standards they are not citizens yet. If it were truly universal, citizenship should not be affected by age. Yet, in practice some of the participating young people do not feel treated as full and equal citizens. They cannot exercise certain rights and responsibilities and this makes their status as equal citizens a scenario of the future. Because they are not able to act on it yet, most interviewees view their status as citizens simply as not very useful. What is more, some feel treated unfairly and excluded from their communities in what should be their rights as citizens and few even feel guilty about being not-yet-citizens.

A number of the interviewed young people tell me that they feel like partial citizens or not-yet-citizens. Because they cannot yet exercise all the rights associated with the status, citizenship is a useless status for them. Lauren (15, SCO), for example, feels like a partial citizen, because she does not have the same rights as adults: "*I mean, I feel like a citizen, but I feel like a partial citizen in a way that I don't have the same rights as everybody else."* Similarly, Maria (16, NL) knows that she may have citizenship legally, but the status is less 'official' and not yet very useful for her: *"I am a citizen, but I can't do much with it. I am just a citizen. And if you're an adult, you can*

vote. And then you add something. And then you're not a better citizen, or something like that, but a bit more official."[xxv] Romy (16, NL) explains how the fact that she cannot do anything with her citizenship makes her feel less like a citizen: *"I do feel like a Dutch citizen, because - as I just said - I get certain things and have certain rights as a result. But because I can't do anything with it, I feel less like a Dutch citizen."*[xxvi] And according to Hamish (16, SCO), for young people full and equal citizenship is *"just another stage (…) There's just that point where you're able to fully access being a citizen."*

While Lauren, Maria, Romy, and Hamish their citizenship status is simply not yet useful, other young people feel guilty about being a not-yet-citizen. They believe that it is their fault that they are not full citizens yet. While he waits to become an equal citizen, Damian (17, SCO), for example, feels *"guilty"* about the fact that he does not really contribute in the same way as adult citizens do. Becoming a full citizen, to Damian, *"would be quite important to me. In that, whenever it comes to it, I just feel as if I am just leeching and it gives me quite a guilty feeling."* For Katie (17, SCO) a part of the reason why young people are not equal, "*proper*" citizens yet lies in the fact that citizenship is such a vague concept for them. According to her, once young people fully understand what being a citizen is about, they will attain equal status: "*Once you have more of an awareness as to what it actually means to be a proper citizen, that's what you are, you are a proper citizen. And the responsibilities and rights that come with that are granted to you as you get older and understand the importance of them."* And Emma has the idea that she could be an equal citizen if she only learnt how to articulate her citizenship and act like a full citizen: *"I feel like I do, but I'm having difficulties to articulate it. So on the one hand I feel like I'm a citizen in that I'm just part of the state and I'm part of like the society. But thinking about it I'm maybe not the citizen I want to be. Like I don't live up to the values that I uphold.*"

5.4.3 Young people can feel treated unfairly and excluded as citizens

The participating of this study do not only express that they feel as partial citizens; some have had experiences that left them feeling treated unfairly and excluded from their communities. Some young people tell me about instances of age-based discrimination, in which they felt their rights as citizens were, in fact, violated. For example, a number of interviewees in the Netherlands and in Scotland say that,

because of their age, they are sometimes followed by security guards in stores or not allowed to enter supermarkets. Anouk (16, NL), for example, explains:

ANOUK: *"Like we went to the Albert Heijn [supermarket] and we were thrown out, only because there is a rule that pupils can't go to the Albert Heijn in a certain time period, which is also very weird, very irritating. Because we're not that much different from the rest. It's only… well, we're also just customers. So I thought it was very weird that we couldn't go. And others could, only because of our age."*

While not being allowed to enter a supermarket can be seen as an annoying, but harmless rule, there are laws in place that young people experience as the same form of age-based discrimination. Amy (17, SCO), who has had her own fair share of being followed around supermarkets by security guards, explains how the supermarket experience does not even bother her much. She sees that as a normal part of being a teenager: *"I feel like, just like being a teenager out and about, especially in such like a small community you kind of are automatically judged."* But what really annoys her is the fact that she will not be able to vote in a general election until she is 21 years old – for her as a citizen this is simply unfair:

AMY: *"I'll not be able to vote until I'm like twenty one just because of how it worked out. It just means that like we don't really get a say until we're quite old which I think's quite annoying cause like it just means like if we are prepared we don't get to vote on like, on like a big important part of the like political system just because we're too young."*

What is more, these kinds of age-based discrimination can have a profound impact on whether or not young people feel included in their communities. With rules in place that make young people feel treated unfairly and discriminated against, equality as citizens becomes a hollow promise. Amy speculates that when communities do not protect the young people's rights, these experiences of unfair treatment can, in turn, make young people less willing to perform duties in their communities:

AMY: *"I get like how people kinda feel like they wouldn't really want to help 'cause they're like, 'well if you don't like me why would I want to like help out?' - if that makes sense? (…) I know like some people like don't feel involved in the community 'cause they feel looked down on which just makes them not wanna like be around them."*

For the participants who feel treated unfairly it is particularly difficult to understand why they have access to some aspects of citizenship, but not to others. It can even be argued that it is this kind of differential treatment that makes them perceive

citizenship as unfair for young people in the first place. According to Joseph (15, SCO), *"at 16 you can do a whole list of things: you can join the army (…) You can be sent off to war to fight in Afghanistan, then, well why can't you make a decision about who's running the country?"* For some of the Scottish interviewees, the lowering of the voting age contributes to their experience of partial citizenship. Katie (17, SCO), for example, cannot wrap her head around why she can vote in Scotland, but is not allowed to do so in the UK: *"Yeah, I think it's difficult because like obviously in kind of smaller Scottish local elections we can vote but we can't in bigger like UK wide things."* For Connor (17, SCO), the fact that he cannot vote on Westminster policies feels like unfair treatment*: "Like it's, it's crazy. You could be living by yourself at 16, married, with a child, but you can't vote for any, like any of the housing policies or anything like that. Like I don't know – it just seems crazy."* And Hamish (16, SCO) would rather see the voting age in Scotland go back to 18 than continue to live with what he calls an imbalance in democratic practice:

> *HAMISH: "Eh, I think, eh, pff, I think I'd support a move to either lower it to 16 for the general elections or put the council and Scottish elections back up to eighteen. Just so that that's a level playing field. This also means that people in England and Wales - I think, maybe the Welsh 16 year olds can vote? – eh, but it means that the English 16 year olds certainly, they don't get to vote in their council elections. But then the Scottish one do. And that's not fair. It's not part of a balanced democracy in that case."*

While the Scottish case is certainly unique due to the difference in the legal voting age between Scotland and the rest of the UK, participants in the Netherlands similarly report experiences of not being treated as equal citizens. Niels (15, NL) feels that there are a lot of obligations that are restricting young people in their freedom to work and to act as autonomous citizens: "*For example, that at 15 you can work until 7 pm at most and for a lot of things that you need permission from your parents and such things."*[xxvii] The fact that he can work and pay taxes, but not vote feels just as unfair to Niels: *"I think it's a bit weird, that it's because of age, because that's... most people say 'All people under the age of 18 are not responsible enough to vote'. But I mean people under 18 go to school, a large percentage works. Basically, we also pay taxes. But we don't have a voice."*[xxviii] A debate about mandatory civil service for young people, which went on during my fieldwork in the Netherlands, provides another striking example. The Christian Democratic Party tabled plans for a compulsory civil service for all Dutch young people. These plans really hurt Lars (16, NL): *"Do you know about CDA's [Christian Democratic Appeal] plan for mandatory civil service?*

(…) I think that's - it sort of hurts. It really hurts." They make him feel as if he were "*not part of the civilisation"*. While adults are autonomous citizens and allowed to decide freely what they want to do with their lives, according to Lars, a law on mandatory civil service would deprive young people of that kind of freedom. Autonomy as citizens would become a hollow promise to young people.

LARS: *"But in our eyes it's more like 'You're not part of the civilization. You're doing something wrong. We have to fix that. We're going to destroy the plans you had for your own life after school and you're going to do mandatory civil service'."*

5.5 Strategies for dealing with problems with citizenship-as-a-status

Among the young people interviewed for this study, there are only few, who – like Hamish – have a coherent understanding of citizenship in terms of status, rights, and responsibilities. For most participants, these things have little relevance for their lives and can even be experienced as exclusive of young people in general. Citizenship rights are simply not salient for these young people, and citizenship-as-a-duty clashes with their desire for agency. It is unclear for some of the young people which community grants rights to them as citizens and why many non-citizens also have rights. If we acknowledge these uncertainties in and problems with citizenship-as-a-status, it does not come as a surprise that – like Katie and Amy – other participating young people, too, do not find much meaning in formal or legal conceptions of citizenship. Because their status as citizens is neither meaningful nor useful, these young people simply do not spend much time thinking about their rights and duties as citizens.

Some participants report that they deal with the problems they face with citizenship-as-a-status simply by waiting. Instead of addressing their unfair treatment and lack of access to citizenship rights, they plan to do nothing other than wait until they get access to all rights as citizens. According to Hamish (16, SCO), adult citizenship is just a benchmark that young people have to wait to reach. With time they will develop into citizens automatically. Once young people are full and equal citizens, all problems they had with feelings of exclusion from the citizenry and unfair treatment will cease:

HAMISH: *"I think once… I think once you get to 18, where you can pretty much do everything, eh, compared to everybody else, I think that's when you kind of reach the benchmark."*

In the same way, Katie (17, SCO) believes that she will feel more included and more like a citizen once she does things that adult citizens do, working, for example:

KATIE: *"I think it's possible that once I'm like working I might feel that way, kind of like part of something bigger like within the country than just my life but not entirely sure."*

In the meantime, the most common strategy of dealing with the problems that come with citizenship as a status is to not make sense of citizenship in terms of rights or responsibilities at all. Unlike Hamish, many of the interviewed young people prefer to think of citizenship less formally, more in terms of a sense of belonging and as a behavioural concept. Joana (16, SCO), for example, thinks that citizenship as a status is just used formally: *"Like I've never seen someone say 'I'm a citizen of China'. This just sounds weird and awkward and too formal really."* Even though she is aware of the legal basis of citizenship, Joana prefers to make sense of citizenship as sense of belonging, a feeling of home, or being part of a community:

JOANA: *"I mean I think I could define it in like a law sense, like being like a member of a state or a country. But I think a citizen is just belonging or being part of something."*

This is also how other participants solve their dilemma about not being old enough to fulfil civic duties, like voting or paying tax, for example. By broadening their ideas about the role and responsibilities of the citizen, these young people develop an understanding of citizenship that is broad enough to include teenagers as equal citizens, in spite of their age. Lauren (15, SCO) explains that her definition of civic duties – *"partaking in society, just being involved in your local community, helping others around"* – might not be strictly legal. But, at least, this definition allows for young people to also be considered as civic equals: *"Young people are still citizens here because they partake in society even if they can't legally vote. So I think that's…it blurs the line legally and how I feel about it."* According to Lauren, it would, of course, be better to include these broader duties in a written constitution, so people can be held accountable, but even without that there is an expectation for citizens to fulfil these duties:

LAUREN: *"Definitely by, including that in the constitution or something it would be more effective and people could… hold people accountable to it. But I think without it people are still, still remain [citizens], you know, it's a, it's not a written in stone thing. So you have rights and responsibilities but they're not legally bound."*

Like Lauren, in our conversations, many others outline civic responsibilities that go far beyond the statutory duties Hamish defines. According to Robin (15, NL), for example, *"you are already a citizen if you give someone a hug, for example."*[xxix] He adds that – just like working – caring about others can be an important duty of the citizen: *"Whether you make someone else happy or produce income for your country - I think they both make you a citizen."*[xxx] Ben (16, SCO) believes that citizens can fulfil their role "*even just [by] like joining clubs around the community*" and similarly Matthew (15, SCO) says: *"Yeah, just like taking part in local customs, stuff like that. Like going to like bars and chatting to local people."* For Lynn (15, NL), citizens could be involved in "*sports or a party"*[xxxi] and according to Malou (15, NL) citizens *"just do activities there, go to movies, have friends here."* Ben (16, SCO) explains why he thinks *"just in general, you know, mixing with everyone, talking to everyone"* makes someone a citizen:

BEN: *"In a sense I feel like even grannies going out to play bridge with their friends of an evening is, eh, participating as part of the community. Because, you know, that's helping old people have their social life."*

Some of the interviewed young people go even further than Joana. Instead of defining citizenship formally and in terms of rights and responsibilities that hold people accountable, they prefer to view it as an entirely intuitive and subjective status. A citizen can be anyone who decides that they feel like a citizen. Mariam (16, NL), for example, believes that citizenship is something she determines herself: *"Other people don't really have a say in it. It's really up to you. (…) it's inside. I think I'm here now and so I'm a citizen of the Netherlands."*[xxxii] In the same way, for Melissa (16, NL), a citizen is anyone who chooses to identify as a citizen and is proud of their citizenship. How these young people explain and make sense of citizenship as a behavioural concept and in terms of a sense of belonging will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

5.6 Summary and conclusions

This chapter examined how young people make sense of their status as citizens. Among the participants of this study there is a lot of uncertainty about the statutory rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship. Since most of the things they can think of are reserved for adults, a number of interviewees are not quite sure what

they do, as teenagers, to justify their status as citizens. Many feel that young people can be seen as citizens by virtue of their informal participation in society, but this is not part of what they believe to be the generally accepted definition of citizenship as a status.

For most of the participating young people, citizenship as a concept of equality, autonomy, and individual justice is an idea for the future at best, a hollow promise at worst. Many believe that, because of their age, they are not considered as civic equals. Compared to adult citizens, they feel not treated as equal citizens and perceive to have a very different relationship with their communities because they are young. Without equal treatment and full access to civil rights and duties, some young people do not even feel as 'citizens in the making' (Marshall, 1950, p. 25), but rather as citizens-in-waiting. Some even experience their status as a form of partial or second-class citizenship. Citizenship as a concept of autonomy is largely empty for many of the participants in this study, which may give the impression that young people can be considered as passive citizens. They have trouble accepting ideas of citizenship as a duty and have only vague ideas about what citizenship is good for.

Yet, the way the interviewed young people choose to deal with these problems with citizenship as a status and the reasons they give for their problematic relationship with citizenship in terms of duties suggest another possible explanation. Rather than as passive citizens, young people can be viewed to have a different idea of citizenship – one that recognises their agency outside of formal rights and responsibilities and allows them to be included as civic equals regardless of age. To deal with their lack of formal status, many of the participating young people prefer to make sense of citizenship in much broader terms, as a sense of belonging and in terms of behaviours. When civic duties are defined in a moral, rather than a legal sense, for example, based on intuitive behaviour, young people can feel included as citizens in their communities, without access to voting rights or adult civic duties. What these broader conceptions of the role of the citizen and citizenship as a sense of belonging mean to the young people who participated in this study will be the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 6

CITIZENSHIP-AS-BELONGING
"CITIZENSHIP IS LIKE A FEELING OF HOME"

6.1 Introduction

Lars, 16, lives in a small village just outside of Westertoun in the Netherlands. He volunteers with the Scouts and helps a local family who came to the area as refugees. His family are loyal voters of the Christian Democrats, but he rather considers joining the youth wing of D66, a social-liberal party. Even though he grew up in a Christian family, Lars would not say that he himself is religious.

For Lars, citizenship is much more than a status. Hamish's definition of the duty-fulfilling, law-abiding citizen is not enough for him: *"Oh, if you only care about yourself you might still do those things, like follow the law. And pay your taxes. But saying that's a good citizen is a bit harder, I would say."* Instead, for Lars, citizenship is all about feeling at home in and part of a community. Lars describes being a citizen as *"when you get the feeling that the other members of that community want to you to be part of the community."* Citizens are not just required to fulfil their duties, but to *"do their duties and feel accepted and be accepted."* Citizenship, for Lars, is not just a status; it is about a sense of belonging, recognition, and a way of life. *"So that's also a thing where you feel at home. People accept you. People see you as a part of them."*

When it is about a sense of belonging, citizenship can be about many things: it can be an identity and a feeling of home, it can be about social relations and group membership, about shared values and a common culture, recognition and commitment, intuition and desirable behaviour. For Lars, citizenship is very much a two-way street. It depends on belonging and recognition on the one hand, on

commitment and desirable behaviour on the other. In order to be recognized as a citizen, according to Lars, it is expected *"that you actually want to be part of the community"*. In turn, citizens who feel accepted and at home will be loyal and committed to their communities. Lars believes that citizens who feel a part of their communities are intuitively motivated to be involved, for example *"to do civil work, like voluntary work. It's not mandatory, but I think it helps with the acceptance part."*

It is quite convenient for Lars to view citizenship as a sense of belonging. On the one hand, this view allows him to identify as a full and equal citizen, despite his age. On the other hand, viewing citizenship as a feeling of belonging also affords him the possibility to identify with multiple and different kinds of communities. Lars feels like a Dutch citizen and as a citizen of Westertoun, but he adds that these are not his only allegiances: *"Well, I still feel like a citizen of Westertoun. It's just not just as a citizen of Westertoun."* There are a number of other communities where Lars identifies as a citizen: "*Now I feel like I'm 'hamstering', like the Albert Heijn reclame [slogan of a Dutch supermarket chain]: 'Get as many as you can.' [laughs] No, ehm… Yeah, like definitely Dutch, but also European*." In addition to being a Dutch, European, and a citizen of Westertoun, Lars also identifies as a global citizen and as a citizen of the internet.

Even though citizenship as a feeling is very intuitive for Lars, he also realises that there are many potential problems with this way of making sense of the concept. One issue, for example, is that when citizenship is about belonging, it depends on other people and their acceptance and it is not always clear what makes someone a citizen. Even if he is committed to his communities, Lars does not always feel recognised as a citizen in them. Given how important it is for Lars to belong, this really hurts him. What is worse, Lars does not really know what he needs to do to be accepted. In light of proposals for a mandatory citizen service for young people in the Netherlands ('maatschappelijke dienstplicht', see Glossary), for example, Lars says:

LARS: *"I really get the feeling like we [young people] are a separate group that somehow, according to them [politicians], we are not good citizens. I think that's - it sort of hurts. It really hurts. (…) Because we're not participating. But I don't know what they want me to do in order to participate more. (…) All of their arguments are sort of like 'We're not good enough citizens. We're not participating.' And you get the feeling that we're not accepted truly."*

Lars' view illustrates the crucial role of belonging and recognition in young people's understandings of citizenship. Unlike Hamish's ideas on citizenship as a status, the way Lars sees citizenship as a relational concept and a feeling is in no way unique. Both in the Netherlands and in Scotland, the majority of participants in this study preferred to think of citizenship in terms of a sense of belonging.

When it is about a feeling of home, citizenship is a very intuitive concept – more a way of life and a behaviour than an official status. Citizens are those who identify with their communities, intuitively embrace their way of life, and strive to make them better. This way of looking at citizenship provides the participating young people with a sense of stability and guidance on how to behave as citizens. It also affords them the possibility to identify as full and equal citizens, when they do not yet have access to all formal rights and responsibilities. However, Lars is also not the only one who senses that citizenship in terms of belonging and identity can be problematic. For some of the participants, citizenship as a feeling of belonging is less intuitive than they would like it to be. When it is more about attitudes and feelings than rights and status, citizenship can be ambiguous, ill-defined, and full of tensions. The participants of this study have different strategies to deal with the uncertainty and conflict that comes with citizenship as a feeling.

This chapter is about the fundamental role of belonging in young people's understandings of citizenship. It provides a detailed look at how the young people who participated in this study make sense of citizenship as a relational concept and a way of life, and how, for many of them, citizenship is related to them as individuals and the communities they are a part of. I outline the problems that some young people have with citizenship in terms of belonging and which strategies they use to deal with the tensions and conflicts this understanding of the concept brings.

6.2 Citizenship as a sense of belonging

In both Scotland and the Netherlands, a majority of the participating young people does not refer to citizenship as a status. Merel (15, NL) does not think citizenship is *"an official label that you can stick on anyone, like 'You're a citizen of here'."*[xxxiii] Also for Robin (15, NL), it is "*nothing official.*"[xxxiv] Young people's ideas about citizenship often go beyond that of an official status. Like Lars, many interviewees prefer to make

sense of citizenship in terms of belonging and recognition. For Joseph (15, SCO), for example, citizenship is not so much about rights and responsibilities, but rather about *"a sense of belonging and a feeling"*. Citizens are those who feel accepted and at home in their communities. In this sense, citizenship is about feeling safe, at home, and at ease. Sanne (16, NL) believes that "*it's a sort of feeling of home, where you're a citizen*"[xxxv] and also for Connor (17, SCO) *"it's like the community that you feel at home or at ease in."* According to Vera (16, NL), anyone who feels at home in their community can be considered a citizen: "*I mean, if you start thinking about yourself like this, like, "Yes, I belong here. This is my home. And I feel like a Dutch citizen,' I think, 'then you're usually already a Dutch citizen.*"[xxxvi]

When it is not just a formal or legal status, but about identification and belonging, citizenship can be a very flexible concept – one that allows young people to identify as full and equal citizens regardless of age and rights held. In chapter 5, we have already seen that for some of the participating young people citizenship becomes easier to deal with when it is based on broader ideas about the role and responsibilities of the citizen. As Lauren (15, SCO) explained, her definition of citizenship might not be strictly legal, but, at least, it allows young people to identify as civic equals: *"Young people are still citizens here because they partake in society even if they can't legally vote. So I think that's…it blurs the line legally and how I feel about it."* Like Lauren, other participants, too, prefer to view citizenship in terms of belonging and partaking in their communities. Citizenship, for them, is about feelings, identity, and a sense of being in the right place, and not about a formal status. Max (17, NL) says: *"I am a citizen. I don't really contribute to society, but I feel like a citizen."*[xxxvii] Ben (16, SCO) explains: *"Perhaps I'm speaking beyond legal citizenship, but I think of citizenship as far as identifying with the country."* And Joana (16, SCO) says: "*I mean I think I could define it in like a law sense, like being like a member of a state or a country. But I think a citizen is just belonging or being part of something."*

Belonging is important for these young people, because it provides them with clarity and stability on how to behave. When they feel part of a community, citizens share a way of life, are accepted by and relate to others without problems. This is why for Melissa (16, NL) belonging as a citizen means to rarely ever feel annoyed or insecure: *"Yes, I just feel very much at ease and all that. Ehm, yes, I am never like 'Oh, this is quite annoying'. (…) I don't really have that. I do feel really at home and all that."*[xxxviii] In this sense, to be a citizen can also mean to feel safe somewhere. Malou (16, NL)

explains: *"When I for example went to Asia and I… I didn't feel safe there, I… yeah, I felt Dutch because in Holland you almost always feel safe."*

For some of the young people, a sense of belonging is a fundamental part of citizenship, because it is the basis of any reciprocity and moral agency. According to Connor (17, SCO), belonging is important "'c*ause you're not gonna want to be a citizen if you feel like you don't belong."* Being accepted as part of a community affords young people clarity about how to behave, how to relate to, and communicate with the people around them. According to Ross (18, SCO) being a part of a community and sharing its values is important for knowing *"how to like operate socially, like be nice, like be pleasant."* For some, feeling part of a community is even the basis for civic engagement. Damian (17, SCO), for example, thinks that those who feel more strongly about their community will also be more engaged in its political sphere: *"If you are feeling more proud of being part of this country, it shows that you care about it and how it is going to end up. So as a result of caring about it, you are going to engage in the political sphere."* And Sophie (17, SCO) believes that people who feel they do not belong might be less motivated to vote or fulfil other civic duties, such as jury service.

SOPHIE: *"Like it might be that one of the reasons why they [other people] don't vote is that they actually aren't bothered about what happens to their country, because they don't feel particularly like sentimental towards it. So with other things, like I don't know specifically what, but like the jury service and stuff, like they might not… even if – like I don't know if I'd do – but even if someone felt like they should do it, like there's an expectation for them to do it, they might not agree, because they don't care."*

Being a part of a community is also hugely comforting for some of the participants. It provides them with a sense of stability: *"I guess because it gives such a big sense of stability (…). It's not like things changing all the time"* (Connor, 17, SCO). Emma (17, SCO) thinks that without clear identities young people could easily be 'a bit lost in the world': *"So like… if not, you don't know about your own culture, your own family, your own heritage, then you're a bit lost in the world."* Ultimately, according to Lauren (15, SCO), everyone strives to be accepted by other people and be 'in harmony with themselves':

LAUREN: *"It's what's socially acceptable and what you kind of strive to be because you want… a lot of people are motivated by impressing other people or being in harmony with themselves."*

6.2.1 Citizenship and recognition

Who is belongs as a citizen and who does not can depend on a multitude of aspects – some more objective and tangible than others. In chapter 2 we learnt that citizenship is always about the individual and the community. It describes the relationship between of individuals and the communities they are a part of, how citizens imagine, are embedded in, and defined by their communities. In this sense, citizenship always comes with a trade-off with regard to who defines this relationship – the individual or other people in the community. For some of the participating young people, it is the community that takes precedence. For them, being a citizen is fundamentally about recognition through others in their communities. Who is a citizen and who is not can depend on seemingly objective criteria, such as a shared language, place, or culture, or on behaviour and more subjective cultural codes. For others, citizenship is more of an individual and subjective identity that solely rests on where the individual identifies and feels as a citizens. For these young people, the individual takes precedence and citizenship-as-an-identity can be a form of expressing agency.

Not just for Lars, but for a number of participants, being accepted by others is a key requirement for citizenship. According to Lynn (16, NL), people who are not accepted in their communities will not feel they belong: "*If you are accepted by other people who feel Dutch, I think you will feel Dutch, too. But if you are not accepted, then you might think 'What am I doing here?' I think."*[xxxix] Anouk (16, NL) explains how someone cannot be a citizen without being recognised by other people:

ANOUK: *"So it depends on people surrounding you. If they see you as someone who is a part or a citizen of the place. Because otherwise if nobody sees you that way, but you do, I'm not sure if you could even call it a citizen, if you're then a citizen."*

For young people like Lars, Lynn and Anouk, citizenship depends on recognition. To be recognised, citizens have to share a language, a heritage, social relations, culture, or values. For some of the participating young people, speaking a common language is a key requirement for citizenship, because it helps citizens to relate to others in their communities. Lars (16, NL) explains: *"So I think in order to participate it's not necessary, you don't have to completely be able to speak Dutch. But in order to be accepted, I think, you have to."* And also for Joana (16, SCO), speaking the local language is important:

JOANA: "The biggest thing is learning the language, because you can't come into a country, speak your mother tongue - whether that's Swahili or something like French - and then expect to be integrated when you can't even fully communicate."

Being recognised as a citizen can also be indispensably linked to knowledge of a place and its culture. In addition to sharing a language, some participants feel recognised in their communities, because they have grown up there and know their way around. For Ashlain (16, SCO), for example, there is a direct and concrete link between origin, place, family, and citizenship:

ASHLAIN: "Our roots are here. Our families are here. We will always come back because it's our home and our origin. I guess that kind of links back to identity and belonging and that all interlinks with citizenship as well."

When they grow up in their communities, citizens automatically learn all things that are important to be accepted, according to Amber (16, NL): *"Because, yes, you just learn, just what you do in the Netherlands starting in primary school. You're slowly building that up".*[xl] In reverse, this also means that it is very difficult to achieve citizenship without having grown up or having lived in a place for a long time. Ross (18, SCO) believes that only *"if I'd spent enough time in the different country I would probably feel like a citizen. If I'd like, like twenty years or something cause it's still technically longer than I've been a Scottish citizen. But it would take more time, I would think, to become a definite citizen, like in your mind, of a different country not being like born there."* This is also how Matthew (15, SCO) looks at citizenship:

MATTHEW: "Probably it really depends on how long I was living there for. If I was living there for 30 years and I'm like really into the community and I know loads about the country – yes, you could probably become a citizen. But if you're only living there for like five years and it's only a temporary move, probably not. Like it takes a long time to like fully, fully invest into a country and a community."

For some young people it is also important that – in addition to sharing a place and a language – citizens embrace the culture of their communities and are aware of its unwritten rules and shared norms. Joseph (15, SCO) explains that for him, citizenship *"is definitely a feeling that you, you grow up with or that you develop over time. You are a citizen for where you are born, where you grew up, but also the culture which you grow up with, you know?"* And also according to Vera (16, NL), "*you are a decent citizen when you integrate in the culture.*"[xli] When it is about adherence to cultural

norms in addition to language and place, it can be very complex and, at times, subjective to determine who is a citizen and who is not. Ross' statement above about knowing *"how to like operate socially"* already indicates how citizenship in terms of belonging can be based on both objective and subjective criteria at the same time. Citizens are expected to do what is 'normal' in their communities, according to Merel (15, NL), for example, citizenship *"is just behaving according to the norm, I would say".*[xlii] It does not need to be outlined what is normal behaviour. Citizens intuitively know how to behave. They act on the basis of "*common sense*", "*etiquette*", or "*basic human decency*". For Lynn (16, NL), citizenship ultimately comes down to *"behaviour that unites you."*[xliii] Seen in this way, citizenship becomes entirely dependent on behaviour and less on status or objective criteria.

6.2.2 Citizenship as a subjective identity

There are other young people who think that it would be much better if – instead of on the basis of recognition and subjective cultural codes – citizenship were determined by where people themselves feel they belong. Mariam (16, NL) explains:

> *MARIAM: "Maybe you were physically born here and all that, but [there should be another option] for people who don't really feel at home here, who maybe feel that they have their strings not here, but somewhere else. [It should be] Somewhere you are supposed to belong."*[xliv]

For these young people, citizenship is more of an individual and subjective identity that depends on how strongly the individual citizen feels about and identifies with their communities. It is still about a sense of belonging and a feeling of home, but it is the citizens themselves who determine where they belong. Mariam (16, NL) says that, for her, citizenship is not about where someone was born, but about their feelings: *"I do think it's about your feelings. If you feel Dutch, then I think you are a citizen of the Netherlands. Even though you were born in Germany, if you no longer have anything to do with Germany."*[xlv] This is also how Tess (16, NL) sees it. For her, people can be citizens *"when they themselves want it. I think that if they feel similar to me and they just like it here [they can be citizens]."*[xlvi]

Citizenship, for these young people, becomes less of an external category and more of an achieved identity. Instead of being dependent on recognition, it is more important that citizens choose to identify with and commit to their communities. For Max (17,

NL), this way of looking at citizenship makes things pretty simple: *"If you feel that you are a citizen, then you are a citizen."*[xlvii] Also Ben (16, SCO) believes that citizenship makes most sense as an individual feeling. Thinking of his father, Ben says: *"He feels absolutely nothing towards England, even though he was born there, but, you know, he would still say that he's a Scottish citizen. It really shows that it's super personal for the individual, I think."*

When it is a personal and deliberate choice, citizenship-as-a-feeling can be a way of expressing individual agency. The young people, who make sense of citizenship as a subjective identity, prefer to identify as citizens on the basis of individual actions, and not based on categorisations of other people. Max (17, NL), for example, says: *"I think a person should be judged, or appraised, for the actions and ways of thinking you have. Not just because he is Turkish, or any other nationality. That's it."*[xlviii] This is why for young people like Max, anyone can be a citizen, who is willing to identify with a community and relate to other people. Joseph describes this kind of citizenship as similar to being a fan of a football club: *"You could talk about it like it was football as well. You know, you could be part of a community of people who all support the same football club, even if you're, even if you're somewhere far away like America or Singapore, then you can still be a Liverpool fan."* And Ben explains how for him also immigrants can be considered citizens, as long as they identify and feel at home.

> *BEN:* *"I think it's just that you identify… You know, like some people might say the people who've come here - immigrants who've come - and they haven't, you know, gone into real work or whatever, I don't see why they shouldn't be considered as citizens, just because they haven't worked here. So long as they've integrated and they've, you know, they feel like they're at home here, then I don't see why they shouldn't be considered citizens."*

6.2.3 Citizenship as a way of life instead of civic duty

No matter whether belonging depends on desirable behaviour and recognition or on individual commitment, when young people make sense of citizenship in terms of belonging, being a citizen is more than just a status: it is a way of life. Rather than being about autonomy and status, citizenship becomes a behavioural concept. When it is about a sense of belonging and desirable behaviour, citizenship does not rely on statutory rules and duties – at least no formal, written ones. Instead, the young people who participated in this study make sense of citizenship intuitively and as a way of

life. This understanding gives rise to a broad range of possible civic practices, many of which revolve around the treatment of other people. The young people who view citizenship in terms of a sense of belonging place a premium on positive contributions to their communities, on solidarity and caring for others.

The key to understanding how these young people make sense of the role of the citizen when citizenship is about a sense of belonging is that they expect citizens to instinctively act for the good of the community. For the young people, who prefer to make sense of citizenship as a feeling of home, contributing to the communities they feel a part of is an intuitive and obvious element of their role as citizens. This is because they expect citizens who feel at home in their communities to be naturally motivated to conform to and uphold their values. Joana (16, SCO) explains that *"being a citizen of something is something that you're strong, like you feel strongly about and that you're passionate about."* Among the participants of this study, there are many who assume that citizens intuitively signal that they want to be part of the community by following its culture, norms and values. According to Joseph (15, SCO), as a citizen "*you have to try and love that country and also do your best to uphold its values."* In this sense, to be a citizen means to identify with and embrace the culture of a community.

Those who view citizenship as dependent on acceptance and recognition through others also place particular emphasis on how citizens relate to one another. For them, citizenship is not limited to a certain set of responsibilities, such as voting in elections or respecting laws. Instead, the role of the citizen is crucially about solidarity, the treatment of other people, and about making a positive contribution to the community as a whole – in whatever way possible. For Ashlain (16, SCO) citizenship is about *"constant contribution to society. In a positive way."* Positive contributions to society can include anything from volunteering, respecting and caring for others to being nice and helpful or simply not being selfish. According to Lynn (16, NL), the role of the citizen pervades many aspects of social life: *"It is not only to do with politics. It is also about culture and simply all of society and sport."*[xlix] Citizens are "*just people who try and involve themselves*" (Joana, 16, SCO), *"just people who help other people. And care about other people"* (Lauren, 15, SCO), and those who are *"doing things without having to be asked*" (Farah, 16, SCO).

However, citizenship-as-belonging not being about specific and concrete civic duties does not mean that citizens can do as they please. In contrast to its legal version, citizenship as an informal and relational concept is based on unwritten rules: things that citizens are expected to know and do intuitively. Joseph (15, SCO) is slightly confused when I ask him about the duties of citizens: *"[What] citizens do or are? That's an interesting question. Because I suppose there is no real thing that one citizen should do."* Citizens who identify with and feel at home in their communities do not need statutory duties. They instinctively behave like other people in their community for their sense of belonging. Almost all interviewed young people can name things that are not really duties, but that are "*socially acceptable*" (Lauren, 15, SCO). They refer to behaviour that *"doesn't require explaining"* (Damian, 17, SCO), norms and rules that people have been *"taught by your parents who have been taught by their parents who have been taught by their parents, all bound by society"* (Lauren, 15, SCO): that you should "*not litter the streets*" (Amira, 16, NL), that you should "*eat with your knife and fork"* (Lauren, 15, SCO), that you should *"just 'Be nice to everyone'"* (Ross, 18, SCO), for example.

6.2.4 Multiple and flexible citizenships

As an informal and relational concept, citizenship is very flexible – in fact, much more flexible than citizenship-as-a-status. When it depends on a sense of belonging – in particular, when citizens themselves determine where they feel they belong – citizenship is elastic and can accommodate multiple and different kinds of allegiances. This comes in handy for those participants, who often identify as citizens of multiple and flexible communities and who want there to be some flexibility when it comes to determining

In the introduction to this chapter, we have already met Lars, who joked that he might come across as someone who is hoarding civic identities like a hamster. Like Lars, there are other young people who identify as citizens of several communities. The young people who participated in this study identify as Dutch, Scottish, and British citizens, but they also feel like citizens of Westertoun and Easthaven, as citizens of their region or neighbourhood, as citizens of Europe, and the world. Mariam (16, NL) identifies as both a citizen of Westertoun and as a world citizen: *"I think I am a real citizen of Westertoun, but I also think that everyone is a citizen of the world. So both,*

actually."[i] Also Ross (18, SCO) prefers to see himself as a Scottish and a world citizen at the same time: *"So there's definitely a sense of, there's this country's citizenship, but sometimes it just doesn't matter if you've got a whole world to live in. So, I do sort of feel like global citizenship has become a big thing."* And according to Lynn (16, NL), people are not only citizens of a country, but *"you can also be a citizen of the school, or of the city."*[ii] For Lynn, even if you do not identify as a citizen of a country, "*you are in fact still a citizen, because you live on this planet. You exist."*[ii]

What is more: for young people, civic identities are not necessarily limited to places. The participants of this study also identified as citizens of online communities, interest groups, their schools, sports clubs, religious of church communities, or even as citizens-of-the-internet. For Megan (17, SCO), where she belongs as a citizen is about "*everywhere you're a part of… and the little like part of you, like there's the world and then there's Scotland, and then there's Easthaven, and then there's like our school and our friend group. And just like all these little things that get from everything you're a part of."* And also Hamish (15, SCO) says: "*I would definitely identify with [the school] community. And then I'd identify with other Christians as well. And then I'd identify as being European, and then being British, and then being Scottish."*

Some young people want there to be no limits as to where and in how many communities they can identify as citizens. Vera (16, NL), for example, has Chinese roots, an Indonesian passport, and has grown up in the Netherlands. She says: *"I might be Chinese and a Dutch citizen, and I feel Indonesian too."*[iii] Melissa (16, NL) feels Dutch and Surinamese, but each for different reasons. She feels Dutch, because this is where she grew up, and Surinamese, because she is attached to the culture and traditions: *"Because, um, I think because I grew up in the Netherlands. But also a bit with the Surinamese culture. But because I grew up here, I learned Dutch things. So then I have, I'd say, a bit of a mix of both."*[iv]

Most participants are also perfectly comfortable with the idea that people can be citizens of several communities. For Ashlain (16, SCO), people can identify as citizens of more than one place: "*Yeah, I think you can belong to more than one place. It just depends on the person and their own view."* Also Max (17, NL) is totally open to the idea of having two citizenships: "*Yes, it's what you feel, I think. If you feel that you belong to both, you belong to both. And if you feel that you belong to one, then to one.*

I don't think you should be limited, like that."[lv] Farah (16, SCO) even says that it 'sucks' that citizenship is often uniquely assigned:

FARAH: *"It also kind of sucks for where your passport dictates, you know. So it's like if you don't get your Irish passport, you can't be… you can't feel… like you can't be an Irish citizen, even though you feel like one."*

Farah's statement already hints at the tension that can arise when young people view citizenship as an informal and relational concept. Who determines what makes someone a citizen, when it is not a uniquely assigned status, but subjective and a sense of belonging? As a legal status, citizenship can feel ascribed to and forced onto young people. But also when it depends on recognition through others, citizenship can be experienced as restrictive – a categorisation that depends on other people and that young people have no influence over. Joana (16, SCO), for example, feels that she is often categorised by others and that her citizenship is 'forced' onto her:

JOANA: *"I think it should be something that you decide yourself. But quite often it is forced on, forced upon you. Like because by law I am Portuguese, because my dad is Portuguese. But that shouldn't be how things work. I should have a say in what it is, in what my citizenship is. And I think all too often it is just thrust upon us, like people just assume sometimes or they just say 'Ok, where are you from? Ok…' and then they just categorise you as something you're not."*

However, even for those young people who want to view citizenship as a subjective and entirely individual identity, the concept will never be just determined by themselves alone. Robin (15, NL) explains how he might want to go about his citizenship flexibly and identify as a citizen of several places, but he will still always remain a Dutch citizen by status:

ROBIN: *"I am a citizen of the Netherlands, whether I like it or not. But I can also feel at home somewhere else. I can also feel like a citizen of Westertoun. I can also feel like a citizen of Zambia, who knows."*[lvi]

6.3 Young people's problems with citizenship-as-belonging

The tension between citizenship as a status and citizenship as a sense of belonging is just one of a number of problems that the participating young people run into when they choose to view citizenship as an informal and relational concept. This shows: even if it might be easier for young people to make sense of citizenship in terms of a

sense of belonging than as a status, it is not without problems. When it is about recognition and identity, being a citizen is not quite as straightforward as many of the young people who participated in this study would like it to be. Defined only in terms of identification and unwritten rules, citizenship is full of ambiguities: what constitutes belonging? Who belongs as a citizen and who does not? And who decides who can belong and who cannot?

This ambiguity is where the problems with citizenship as a sense of belonging start. There is a lot of uncertainty among the participants about what citizens need to do in order to belong. Many of the interviewees lack concrete ideas about what constitutes belonging and what they share with other people in their communities. As a consequence, some have very minimal definitions of what makes someone a citizen, but they can think of a hundred and one ways not to belong. For many of the participating young people, it is extremely difficult to navigate citizenship as a feeling and an identity and some have experienced conflict with regard to where they feel they belong. Some young people feel they are not accepted as citizens and others disagree with the way things are done in their communities. For some, citizenship in terms of belonging can even feel restrictive. Ultimately, when citizenship is viewed as an identity and in terms of relations with other people, for young people there is a constant tension between their need to belong and their desire to take control over their own lives.

6.3.1 Ambiguities on what to do to belong

When citizenship is a feeling of home and an identity, by definition, there is no unambiguous way to define what makes someone a citizen and what citizens need to do to belong. The young people who participated in this study cannot think of concrete things they share with other people in their communities. There is a lot of uncertainty as to what citizens need to do to feel they belong. So as not to be too restrictive, some participants come up with very minimal definitions of what constitutes belonging.

The story of Amira and Sem (both 16, NL) illustrates just how ambiguous citizenship in terms of belonging can be. The two are from Westertoun in the Netherlands, and they are twins. They were born in the Netherlands to parents of Turkish descent. Both speak Dutch with each other, at school and with their friends, but Turkish with their parents at home. I spoke to Amira and Sem individually about where they feel they

belong. Both prefer to look at citizenship in terms of a sense of belonging. However, despite them growing up as siblings, the criteria that they believe make them belong are entirely different. While Amira says she feels *"more Dutch than Turkish"*, Sem is adamant that he would always choose his Turkish identity over his Dutch one.

AMIRA: *"I always say that I'm Dutch. And I think it's just because I've lived here all my life. I speak Dutch better than I speak Turkish. I was born here in Westertoun. I've been here all my life and I've been around Dutch people all the time. So I think I feel more Dutch than Turkish."*

SEM: *"I would.... I want.... I am Turkish and when my Turkish passport is gone, I am kind of Dutch. But I want to call myself Turkish, I feel Turkish."*[lvii]

For Amira, how others recognise her and where she is accepted as a citizen is important. Amira identifies as Dutch, because the Netherlands is where she grew up, where she speaks the language, where she knows her way around, and relates to people (Dutch people that is): "*I don't have Turkish friends. I do… most of my friends are Dutch. My best friend is Dutch."* According to Amira, her brother Sem should feel equally, if not more, Dutch. Because he is tall, blonde, and has fair skin, Amira thinks Sem should not feel very accepted in Turkey: *"Well, I think he… for example, in Turkey, I think he feels like he doesn't fit in because he is like… he's the only one with blonde hair and blue eyes and a light skin. And he's very tall."*

However, the way Sem thinks about his citizenship is nothing like Amira imagines it. Even though he was born and might be recognised as a citizen in the Netherlands, Sem does not feel Dutch: "*I was born here. But I don't feel Dutch. (…) I didn't grow up the Dutch way. The only thing that could make me Dutch is my looks. Because I don't really look Turkish."*[lviii] Unlike his sister, Sem identifies as Turkish on the basis of adherence to cultural norms: *"I am proud of where I come from. I have many ties with it. I have two houses there, I go there every year. I like to be there. I speak Turkish almost fluently. I like it a lot."*[lix] For him, what is important and makes him feel Turkish are his language skills and also the fact that he is a practising Muslim.

Many of the young people who participated in this study cannot really say what constitutes their belonging. Hamish (16, SCO), for example, finds it difficult to be serious about what someone needs to do to be Scottish: *"Ehm, you need to dress in a kilt and you need to walk around saying 'Ayeee'. Have a highland cow in your backgarden [laughs]. That's a difficult question."* He ends up explaining that

citizenship is about being similar to other Scottish people, but that there is not a defined list of criteria:

HAMISH: *"I think you can be quite diverse. There's not really a list of criteria I'd say. I'd say it's just once you become more like Scottish people then you are more Scottish. And then that counts you as being Scottish."*

Like Hamish, other interviewees also find it difficult to think of concrete things that they share with other people in their communities. All they see is how different people are from one another. Lauren (15, SCO) cannot come up with anything specifically Scottish: *"And I can't think of anything specifically Scottish because I think Scotland is very diverse and divided between, there always seems to be a class war."* Also for Connor (17, SCO) the amount of difference outweighs what people might have in common: *"Like the amount of like how different people are and how it's all… I don't know, it's just very different. Like being Scottish doesn't assign you a personality trait."*

Identifying what it is that Dutch people share is not any easier for those young people who participated in this study in the Netherlands. Even though she thought about it after our first conversation, Vera (16, NL) does not know what it means to feel Dutch: *"I don't really know what that is, to feel Dutch, to be honest. (…) I wouldn't know what 'the Dutch identity' is. Tulips? Cheese? I don't know, man!"*[lx] And also Maria (16, NL) cannot think of anything concrete that Dutch people share:

MARIA: *"Speaking the language, loving cheese, just... I like Dutch food very much. But yes, I also like foreign food. But... I don't know. Just a little... I'm going to do some research on that, because what is stereotypical Dutch? I don't know either."*[lxi]

Due to the lack of distinct criteria for belonging, some young people have very minimal definitions of what makes someone a citizen in terms of belonging. For Merel (15, NL) and Anouk (16, NL), it is enough for citizens to merely *"be there"*[lxii] and to "*live in peace*". Lauren (15, SCO) says that *"a citizen is anybody that, you know, lives here, wants to live here. You don't even have to live here."* According to Matthew (15, SCO), you are a citizen "*if you like come here and you're like very social and you like really get on well with people*" and for Ben (16, SCO) being a citizen means "*just helping out and making everyone… making life easier for everyone else."* For Malou (15, NL), citizenship is about *"just doing activities there, going to movies, having friends here"* and for Amira (16, NL), *"going to school and having a job makes you a citizen*."

6.3.2 There are countless ways not to belong

When it is based on feelings, desirable behaviour, and unwritten rules, there can be a hundred and one ways for citizens not to belong. For most of the participating young people, it is much easier to think of ways to be excluded from citizenship than of ways to be recognised as a citizen. Many have experienced what it is like not to belong and for some, where they feel they belong does not align with where others recognise them as citizens.

When citizenship is about behaviour and a particular way of life, there can be a hundred and one ways not to belong. Anything that deviates from "*normal*"[lxiii] (Lotte, 16, NL), "*civilized*"[lxiv] (Lynn, 16, NL) and "*neat, not really extreme*"[lxv] (Tess, 16, NL) behaviour can be a reason to be excluded from citizenship: being selfish, isolated, or disrespectful; being unemployed, homeless or without an education; not caring enough about other people; not wanting to be a part of or not supporting the community; not being actively involved in it. For Ross (18, SCO), someone cannot be a citizen who *"doesn't like treat people in a country the way like they would treat, like the way they don't treat everyone else in the country."* Lauren (15, SCO) believes that someone who is *"selfish or, eh, you know, or deprives other people of other stuff (…) they're pretty bad citizens."* And also *"if you isolate yourself from the rest, then you are probably, I think, less of a citizen"*[lxvi], according to Lynn (16, NL). Emma summarizes that not actively supporting the values of the community already makes for a bad citizen: *"If you wanna be part of this society and you don't do things to approve it, then that makes you a bad citizen."* And for Sanne (16, NL), it is enough to not support the local football club: *"I mean, if you support Oostertoun FC, you can't be a citizen of Westertoun – that just won't work."*[lxvii]

With so many potential ways to be excluded, many participants have experienced what it is like not to belong. Malou (15, NL), for example, does not really feel at home in her neighbourhood, because she feels judged there whenever she does something that deviates from the norm: *"I sort of feel at home there, but I also don't because if you do something different, like if you dye your hair purple or green or something, you get judged really fast."* Damian (17, SCO) also felt excluded from his school community, because of his political views:

DAMIAN: *"Say someone who maybe doesn't really identify with the whole narrative that is being pushed on them, i.e. the far left narrative, (…) what does happen is that they end up becoming victims of social ostracism. And they*

become, basically because of them expressing at least one right-wing view, they end up becoming social outcasts. Which is something I have experienced twice in a row in two schools."

Some young people have been told by others that they are not really a part of their communities, Anouk (16, NL), for example: *"Sometimes people would call me Chinese or something. Or sometimes people ask you 'How does it feel to have a brown skin?' And I was like so freaked out, because it was so, such a weird question. That's weird and it's not true."* Like Anouk, Amira (16, NL) has been told by her friends that she does not really look Dutch and that she speaks Dutch with an accent: *"Well, I've been told last week that my Dutch really has a Turkish slang. Like my Dutch, you can hear that my Dutch isn't perfect or something. And I don't know why my friend told me that, but I already asked my other friend and she told me I don't look a hundred percent Dutch."* And also Farah (16, SCO) has met people who have been trying to tell her that she does not belong in Scotland:

FARAH: *"I've been told actually a lot more recently as well that I'm not Scottish. Like I was born here and I've been raised here my entire life. (…) And I know that part of me is African as well, but I do fully feel Scottish. But people have been like trying to convince me otherwise, because of the culture that I grew up in, like at home, even though I was still here. Uhm, so, but yeah, uhm, so that's something that sort of riles me up."*

Especially for those young people who expressed multiple and flexible identities, viewing citizenship in terms of belonging can be problematic. While they cannot really imagine how to be a citizen without any sense of belonging, some of them do not feel they belong anywhere, Alex (17, NL), for example: *"I don't really identify with any community to be honest. Yeah. No, not really."* Also Ashlain (16, SCO) struggles to determine where she belongs: "*I've been between Russia and Scotland (…) So I can't say that really I associate with one more than the other because they both mean a lot to me. One's got my home and the other's got my family. I can't really say I associate with one."* And Joana (16, SCO) notes how citizenship in terms of belonging is especially difficult for migrants: *"But I think for migrants especially citizenship is a hard thing for them. To say that they're… citizenship is a hard thing for them to define. And say where exactly they feel like they are citizen."*

6.3.3 Tensions between the need to belong and young people's agency

With so much ambiguity and potential for exclusion, many participants visibly struggle with their need to belong. Citizenship as a feeling of belonging is often at odds with young people's agency and their desire to take control of their own lives. As a relational concept, citizenship always contains elements of both the individual and the community, agency and structure. This creates a tension that is difficult to reconcile. For the young people who participated in this study, there is a constant trade-off between their need to belong on the one hand and their desire to decide where they belong and express themselves as individuals on the other.

On the one hand, we have seen how important it is for young people to feel accepted and recognised in their communities. It provides them with stability and structure. On the other hand, however, young people who participated in this study are apprehensive about being categorised based on the communities they belong to. Despite the importance of belonging and recognition, some feel uncomfortable about being categorised and potentially stereotyped by others based on their belonging. Connor (17, SCO), for example, thinks it is unfair when people are reduced to the community they belong to: *"Like when you say 'Oh, I'm Scottish', in someone's mind that immediately triggers exactly what they're like, because that's… that's just completely unrealistic, because even if you're from the same country or even if you're from the same city, you're not gonna… like it's so different*." In the same way as Connor, Sem (16, NL) would like to disapprove of the kind of stereotyping that comes with belonging. However, he also realises that it is an integral part of being a citizen and that he still likes to feel that he belongs.

SEM: *"In theory, I completely agree. I think if you belong to a country, you always have a reason to go against someone else because 'he comes from here' and then you can give your opinion about that instead of about who he really is. But at the same time I am proud of where I come from."*[lxviii]

When it depends on shared values and adherence to communal norms, citizenship can limit young people in their agency to take own decisions. Some participants are conflicted about their feelings of belonging, because what their communities deem right runs counter to what they themselves believe is right. Malou (15, NL), for example, does not really want to feel at home in her neighbourhood, because she disapproves of the way things are done there: *"I live in the Northern part of Westertoun, which is a really rich part and everyone is white and there are principles*

that everyone should play hockey. And I don't like that because I hate hockey and everyone is always talking behind their backs." This is particularly the case for some of the young people who identify as Christians. Joseph (15, SCO), for example, struggles with his identity as a Christian: *"Christianity is one of the biggest problems I have, because I am a Catholic, but then there's so much about it that... I mean partially my viewpoint is that creationism is so completely flawed that I don't believe it."* Joseph also has issues with the churches' views on homosexuality: *"Ehm, so, it's things like that, which make me become very conflicted with the churches' views."* As a result, he says *"most of my ideas are sort of a mix of Catholicism and also my own personal viewpoints on certain things."* Rachel (16, SCO) uses the example of the death penalty to argue how communal morality and a person's own ethics can, at times, be in conflict with one another:

RACHEL: "Mmhmm although there's different kinds of morality, I think. Like cause some people think that everyone should think the same, like as in the most amount of people agree with it, then that means it must be the right thing to do. But I don't really think that because there were a lot of people who thought that the death penalty was a great idea. And I still don't think it's right. So even if the majority of people thought it was right I would still think it was wrong. And that wouldn't make me wrong. So…I think that everyone needs to decide what they think is right for themselves."

A number of participants visibly struggle to make sense of the need to belong to a stable community and their desire to take control over their lives and make their own decisions. According to Connor (17, SCO), "*obviously there's a point where what you believe is right, or what you believe is morally right, comes into contact with like political ideas. So that is like an issue."* Emma (17, SCO) explains how hard it is to reconcile her ideas of freedom with her understanding of citizenship in terms of belonging and desirable behaviour:

EMMA: "But like you're always a citizen, unless you decide clearly that you're like 'I don't wanna be part of this society.' Then like nobody can force you to be part of this society. Otherwise you're stripping people of their freedom. But if you wanna be part of this society and you don't do things to approve it, then that makes you a bad citizen."

In contrast to others, Emma also does not believe that belonging is a necessary requirement for citizens to become engaged in their communities. She feels that regardless of recognition and belonging, people should be motivated to engage on the basis of their global citizenship:

EMMA: "So like I don't think…feeling Scottish has anything to do with like…how responsible I feel to be engaged in politics. And like…having, I think that kinda goes back to the global citizenship thing of like it doesn't matter who you feel you are in terms of identity. Like there's, like that's my personal belief of like we should all help each other out."

6.4 How young people deal with tensions between structure and agency

The young people who participated in this study deal with this tension that comes with citizenship as a sense of belonging in one of two ways. For some, belonging to a community is extremely important; they become "fierce" over their identities, emphasising their belonging to one community over another. Others draw strength from the ambiguities that come with citizenship in terms of belonging. For them, being recognised as a member of one particular community is less important and they prefer to view citizenship as an individual and subjective identity. This way of looking at citizenship opens up space for young people to declare different kinds of identities as citizens and to create new scenarios of equality and difference. The young people who view citizenship as an individual identity often emphasise what they have in common with other people regardless of citizenship. Many of them identify as global citizens, emphasising the importance of universal values and human rights.

6.4.1 Some young people become "fierce" over their identities

For Joana (16, SCO), where she belongs is a really difficult question. Even though she holds a Portuguese passport, Joana does not identify with Portugal: *"Ehm, I don't feel Portuguese, don't speak the language, not really. I went on… I went to Portugal on holiday a couple of times, but I don't connect to it."* Her family is spread out over Scotland, Latvia, Portugal, and other places. She feels she cannot really *"be a citizen of a country, just because if you look back at our roots, we're pretty much everywhere."* Joana has decided to resolve the tension that comes with her multi-faceted identity by emphasizing her belonging to one community – Scotland. To know where she belongs is really important for Joana, and her identity means a lot to her: *"Like my identity is really something that I am quite fierce over."* Even though others might not view her as Scottish (because her last name does not sound Scottish and she does not have a Scottish accent, she says), Joana has declared Scotland her true home.

JOANA: "But I do feel part of Scotland, I do feel a citizen of Scotland, just because I'm like, I'm integrated into the culture and I've just grown up here and I just really identify with the people, identify with… just I feel Scottish when I go away to another country."

Scotland is everything Joana imagines a community to be: *"Like the majority of Scottish people I've met, they're absolutely the most amazing heart-warming people."* It is particularly tight-knit: *"It's like, it's like a pack of wolves, like they just fit. Like Scottish people, they just fit together, they belong together."* Yet, at the same time, the Scottish community is also inclusive within: *"But I think the beauty of Scottish culture is it tries to put everyone together. Like you can't leave anyone out."* According to Joana, there are particular *"Scottish morals"* and when Scottish people have problems with one another, *"they'll still be civil towards each other."* To make sense of her Scottishness, it helps Joana to contrast Scotland with England.

JOANA: "I think to say that you're British is to say that you believe in the Queen and that you believe in the monarchy and the whole being Protestant. I'm Catholic, come from a Catholic family – uhhh, not really part of that. And then on top of that English people, they tend to be more secular and I'm not bothered at all. And then on top of that, what some of the LEAVE politicians said during the campaign was just atrocious. Like they, they used migrants and immigrants as a scapegoat in order to, in order for their campaign to win."

Joana is not the only one who resolves the tensions in citizenship as belonging by becoming 'fierce' over her identity. Like Joana, Lauren (15, SCO) is also quite good at pushing aside any doubts about her Scottishness. Lauren (15, SCO) is fully aware that by other people's standards she would not be considered Scottish: *"You know, I had my first potato, tattie – it's called a tattie scone, but I call it potato scone – like last year. And I don't go to a chip shop. You know, these things that are Scottish I don't really do."* Nevertheless, Lauren has chosen to identify as a Scottish citizen – so much so that she chooses to invoke John Knox to make a statement about her identity (without qualifying any further why): *"Of course, I am a Scottish citizen! Well, I would never, well, I wouldn't call myself British. Like Knox, I'm Scottish."* Lauren is active in Scottish politics and even though she realizes that she does not really relate to other Scots, who might have grown up in different circumstances, Lauren wants to make Scotland a better place: *"I am a Scottish citizen because I strive to make Scotland better."*

Also Maria (16, NL) chooses to focus on one identity – the Dutch one – even though some of her roots are in Kenya. Maria would never consider herself half-Kenyan: *"When someone says: 'Where are you from?' I just say 'Netherlands'. I'd never say 'I'm half Kenyan' or something."*[lxix] It is important for Maria to emphasise how Dutch she is: *"And well, I've always felt completely Dutch, with everything. And people always call me 'cheesed up', because I'm a kind of totally Dutch. Except for my skin colour, I'm 100 per cent Dutch. (…) I'm just proud to be Dutch."*[lxx] Even though Maria chooses to focus on her Dutch identity, she does recognise that the colour of her skin might make her less Dutch in the eyes of others. Nevertheless, or even because of that, Maria feels so Dutch that she considers it important to defend Dutch traditions like that of children's character Black Pete, a black-faced man with curly hair and bright red lips who assists with the delivery of presents to children around Christmas time. While many Dutch people consider the figure to be a token of postcolonial racism, Maria disagrees:

MARIA: *"Those people [who are against Black Pete] also think that when you are of colour, you are automatically against it. But my father is very dark, but he just likes Black Pete. And he doesn't think it's racist at all."*[lxxi]

6.4.2 Others emphasize their individuality and universal values

Among the participants of this study there are other young people who embrace the ambiguities that come with citizenship when it is defined as a sense of belonging and draw strength from them. Mariam (16, NL) has experienced a lot of tension around her feelings of belonging. She could identify as Dutch and Pakistani, but Mariam struggles with both identities. She is uncomfortable in her role as Pakistani:

MARIAM: *"I am Pakistani. My parents think, like many people in Islam, that men stand higher than women. I am not really a feminist, but I am someone who believes in equal rights. (…) In recent years I had a lot of struggles with it."*[lxxii]

And Mariam does not feel accepted as Dutch either:

MARIAM: "And then I went to VWO[5] in a class where I was the only brown girl. And the only one from the South, the only one who had grown up there and so on. I felt special, not really connected with them."[lxxiii]

However, instead of continuing to struggle with the question where she belongs, Mariam has learnt to value the different parts of her identity. She realises how her particular situation has given her a special skill: she can fit in and empathize with both cultures. As a consequence, Mariam finds herself more open-minded than most other people. She now prefers to emphasize how unique her multiple and ambiguous identities make her:

MARIAM: "I don't know. I see that I am different from the rest, but I can empathize with others. You can be two people, but still one, in a way. It's funny, actually, how you can be two people. But you also notice more perspectives about other things, so you are your own person. I think it's funny and unique. Many people don't have that. If you grew up in a society where you only think about one thing, either you are very open minded, or narrow minded. And that you suddenly go somewhere else and suddenly feel very different. But I think it comes with time, that you can finally see two sides."[lxxiv]

Mariam does not agonise over the ambiguity in her belonging. Instead, she draws strength from her multiple and ambiguous identities and uses them flexibly to fit in and distinguish herself from different communities, as she sees fit.

MARIAM: "Because, I don't know, my cousin […] he's always like, 'You've really become cheesed-up.' And that's just... yes, it is true, but I can now, I'd say, I can do both [fit into the Dutch and the Pakistani community]. Because if my cousin, for example, had to talk to someone else, in a civilised manner, he just couldn't do it. So I'm really glad that I can do both."

With this skill, it is also somewhat less important for Mariam which particular community she belongs to. She does not feel the need to share much with other people in order to relate. The fact that she is human and a citizen of the world is enough: *"I also think that everyone is a citizen of the world."*[lxxv] As a consequence, Mariam particularly cherishes universal values, such as human rights:

MARIAM: "But it always comes down to the same thing, I don't understand how people can't see that: Everyone is a human being, everyone deserves the

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[5] Voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs (VWO), the pre-university track in Dutch education, see Glossary.

> *same rights. You were born here, or there, but you come back to the same thing. People always think so deeply about that, but it's actually very simple. I don't understand how people don't see that, but this is my feeling. I do understand, if you have a culture or faith, I have it myself, people twist and turn the words from what it is."*[lxxvi]

There are more young people like Mariam, who deal with tensions around their belonging by focusing on their flexible identities, individuality, and on universal values. Max (17, NL), for example, understands that, in theory, citizens should feel they belong to one community. But for him, that is not an option: *"I get what the books say about what a citizen is, it is easier to go with that. But if you ask me if I feel as a citizen… I feel a citizen of this world, nothing else."*[lxxvii] These young people often view citizenship and belonging more as an individual achievement than as an external categorisation. For Katie (17, SCO), for example, national identities are meaningless: *"I don't know, I don't think there's a lot of weight in a nationality."* She would rather have people value her as an individual than as a member of a particular community: *"Like I don't think that the fact I'm British makes any difference to who I am."*

Instead of struggling with the ambiguities that come with citizenship in terms of belonging, they draw strength from them and navigate different citizenship identities intuitively and flexibly. Many identify with several communities at the same time and with things that unite people all over the world. Ashlain (16, SCO) perceives identities as dividing, also because in her opinion they often come with political issues and exclusion: *"It's always like 'I'm Russian', 'I'm Scottish', 'I'm American'. They're such kind of dividing labels."* Ashlain would much rather see people united and helping each other, regardless of labels: *"I think if everyone identified with each other then we wouldn't have any, any problem yeah as far as war goes or anything. So that would be great."* When citizenship is about behaviours and social relations, for young people, their multiple allegiances are a way of expressing individual agency.

6.5 Summary and conclusions

This chapter showed how a number of the young people who participated in this study prefer to make sense of citizenship in terms of an identity and as a sense of belonging. Rather than as a status that comes with formal rights and responsibilities, many choose to view citizenship as a feeling of home, because it affords them to identify as full and equal citizens despite not having access to all rights associated with

citizenship. When it is about a sense of belonging, citizenship is a behavioural and relational concept. Being recognised as a citizen is based on other people's judgement and on identifying with and embracing the culture of the community. Citizens are expected to know and intuitively adhere to what is considered socially acceptable behaviour in their communities. Unwritten rules and moral duties guide young people in their search for how to act as and become good citizens.

When it is viewed in terms of a sense of belonging and as an individual and subjective identity, citizenship is a very elastic concept. It can be more or less individually determined. For some of the young people, where they feel a citizen can be entirely self-determined and citizens can belong to multiple and flexible communities. Many are comfortable with the idea of multiple citizenships, either in parallel or nested, and relate citizenship to communities smaller than or far beyond the state. These young people also identify as citizens of their school, church, or sports club, as citizens of their local communities, as citizens of the world, or even as citizens of the internet. They exercise a degree of agency by creating a sense of achieved identity. In doing so some place an overly high emphasis on their national community, treating it as a comradeship that matches all of their individual values. Others choose to emphasise their individuality and their belonging to multiple and flexible communities, including a universal community of human beings.

Citizenship in terms of belonging is arguably more difficult to navigate for young people than when it is understood in terms of a status. As a behavioural and relational concept, citizenship is constantly negotiated between individuals and their communities. For the young people who participated in this study, this view of citizenship comes with a perpetual tension between social control and individual agency. There are few concrete guidelines on what citizens need to do to belong. As a consequence, they can find it hard to say what makes someone belong and there are a hundred and one ways not to be recognised as a citizen. When they are made to feel like they do not belong, young people can end up feeling powerless and unrecognised.

Chapter 7

CITIZENSHIP-AS-PRACTICE
"YOU'VE GOT TO FIGHT FOR YOURSELF"

7.1 Introduction

I first met Emma at an event on the lowering of the voting age. Emma is 17, she grew up in Easthaven and is in her last year of school at Greenfield High School. Emma is very interested in a variety of political issues, first and foremost human rights and the rights of minorities. For her Advanced Highers, Emma decided to do Modern Studies, the Scottish equivalent of civic education. She is one of only two students at her school to choose this elective. She runs the Amnesty group in her school and has also started an initiative to raise awareness on mental health among young people. About her family, Emma says they are all *"quite Scottish"* and also *"quite politically engaged"*. Even though Emma says she is *"Scottish first"*, she also feels quite connected with Britain.

EMMA: *"It's not that I don't feel British. It's just that I feel Scottish first (…) But that doesn't mean that I don't feel like the connection with like the rest of Britain. Like we share a lot of culture and history."*

For Emma, citizenship is very much an active practice. Citizens have to be engaged in their communities: *"There's like one thing really: you have to be part of it."* Emma has great expectations for how citizens should fulfil their role: *"Ehm, probably like consume ethically. Ehm, educate yourself. Stand up in the face of injustice. Like always be aware of what's going on. Involve yourself in debate, like listen to other people's points of view. Like empathize."* She believes that, in a democracy, citizens

are expected to express themselves, to negotiate, and to fight for their interests – for her that is the essence of democratic citizenship.

EMMA: *"I don't know if I'm explaining it very well, but like you have a responsibility to be active politically, to assemble and to organize, to talk about things and to educate yourself. Otherwise that political body that you want, dissolves and you're left with nothing. And you've given up your freedom. Like you've given up your political freedom by not fighting."*

However, Emma realises that, as a citizen, she does not live up to her own expectations: *"Not that I'm saying I do this, like I don't go out and involve myself like I should."* She feels that, as a citizen, she is somewhat a disappointment to herself: *"So on the one hand I feel like I'm a citizen in that I'm just part of the state and I'm part of like the society. But thinking about it I'm maybe not the citizen I want to be. Like I don't live up to the values that I uphold."* Even though she regularly signs petitions, for example, Emma doubts their efficacy. Signing them makes her feel like a 'slacktivist', rather than a serious activist: *"Yeah, I feel like sometimes I sign petitions and I feel like a slacktivist in that I care a lot about these issues, but I don't do much."* Protests, she feels, are important, but also potentially problematic, because they can be incoherent and then become ineffective:

EMMA: *"Yeah, I think protests are important... But I don't know I feel like… like with Occupy and that there wasn't like an aim, like there was an aim but it wasn't coherent enough, ehm, and it just kind of like falls apart (…) because they don't want themselves to be seen as undemocratic or whatever, so, I feel it is a bit of a hard one…"*

Even though she knows that trade unions exert collective power, Emma is not a member: *"Like…I don't think I know anybody my age who's in the trade union. I'm not in the trade union."* She shows some form of resignation in light of her perceived efficacy:

EMMA: *"I probably should be, I'm on a zero hours contract. Like they mess me about so much at my work but it's all kind of like you just take that. That's just the way things are. You've got to fight for yourself to get all these things but actually these, these collective efforts are how we have got things for ourselves in the past."*

A part of the problem, for Emma, is that citizenship has changed somewhat compared to, for example, when her father grew up. She believes that being a citizen is different today, less community-based and less about local politics:

EMMA: "But I know my dad was like quite politically engaged, like even like younger than like we are now, but I feel like it was different then 'cause (…) it was maybe more community-based, whereas now like there is no sense of community on like a smaller, a local level."

Emma struggles to make sense of her engagement for global issues, such as human rights, and Amnesty International. It feels like a contradiction to her that she fights for the rights of people in other countries, while she does not claim rights for herself and her local community:

EMMA: "With like Amnesty and stuff, I felt like I was focusing so much on things that were not happening just in my country, that were … and I didn't understand like how people lived here (…) I feel like I'm a big bag of contradictions today."

Even though with her expectations and levels of engagement Emma is certainly an exception, the problems she has with performing her role as a citizen are not. They are a good illustration of how many of the young people I spoke to for this project view citizenship as a practice. As for Emma, for the majority of them it is clear that every citizen has a role to play. However, it is less clear how young people can exercise this role. For the young people who participated in this study, citizenship as a practice is not a duty, but more a matter of individual agency. Many have an 'It is up to you'-attitude to citizenship, which brings about a number of problems for them as citizens, first and foremost a big gap between power and agency of young people as citizens.

In this chapter, I describe how the young people who participated in this project look at their roles as citizens. Many of the problems they have with citizenship-as-a-status and citizenship-as-a-feeling of belonging – questions of equality and recognition, the tension between the need to belong and self-expression – make a reappearance in this chapter. That is because these problems have a profound impact on how the young people think about and feel they can make claims as citizens. As a practice, citizenship comes with *"a sense of individuality"* (Lars, 16, NL). Yet, the young people who participated in this study ascribe far more agency to themselves as citizens than they effectively have. They feel a severe lack of efficacy as citizens. Far from being empowered, the young people appear isolated, hesitant, and not at all willing to make compromises. Their multiple and flexible ideas about belonging make it hard for young people to define how they can have an impact. Some phrase such high expectations for themselves as citizens that they are set up for disappointment, while others settle

for only the most minimal definitions of the role of the citizen – being nice and respectful, voting and talking about politics.

7.2 Young people's views on citizenship as a practice

Like Emma, most of the participating young people say it is important that citizens take an active role in their communities. According to them, contributing to the community is key for citizenship. However, it is not quite clear how exactly citizens can contribute. Some of the participants struggle to define what is expected of them as citizens. As a consequence, many have an 'It is up to you'-attitude, where the role of the citizen can range from being social and giving somebody a hug to engagement in democratic processes. For these young people, citizenship practices are a matter of choice and individual agency. While it should not be obligatory for citizens to be involved in their communities, doing so is in their own interest. Active citizenship, thus, is a desirable activity, because it helps with recognition and is a form of self-expression.

7.2.1 For young people everyone has a role as a citizen

In general, the idea that citizenship is a practice resonates with the young people who participated in this study. Contributing to the community is central in their understanding of citizenship and almost all young people I spoke to shared Emma's expectation that citizens are to take an active role. According to Romy (16, NL), *"every citizen has a role that we should be doing."*[lxxviii] Sem (16, NL) is adamant that, as a citizen, *"you are here to do something. If you do nothing, I don't think you are a citizen."*[lxxix] Also Joana (16, SCO) believes that citizens have to be active in their communities:

JOANA: *"It's like everyone pitches in. Like if you want to be part of anything, you have to take an active role. You need to do something. You can't just put your claim on it and, eh, not do anything for it."*

For these young people, being a citizen means to contribute to society. According to Amira (16, NL), *"being a citizen isn't really a feeling. It's more like what you do daily and what you contribute to society."* This is also how Ashlain (16, SCO) defines

citizenship: *"Define citizenship? Ehm, constant contribution to society."* Sem (16, NL) explains that, for him, citizens are those who contribute to and have an effect on community life:

SEM: *"When I think of a citizen... I think of someone who is there and helps out, who contributes to something. You have an effect on something. And you have an effect on others. For me, that really is a citizen."*[lxxx]

Contributing is an important part of citizenship, because it is what creates the community in the first place. Together citizens determine what makes for a community and how they want to live together. Sanne (16, NL) describes it as an experience of being in this together: "*You've come up with a system together, perhaps not on a big scale, but you have something going (…) And then you're just a citizen of that. You are a part of it.*"[lxxxi] For Romy (16, NL), it is the citizens who keep the community together: "*You are a part of something and so you have to keep the whole together kind of.*"[lxxxii] This, in turn, means that one is a citizen by means of contributing to the community, its continuation and success. Robin (15, NL) believes that you are a citizen *"if you do your best to make the Netherlands a better place"*.[lxxxiii] That is also how Farah (16, SCO) sees it:

FARAH: *"Yeah, I just like I see it as you're a citizen, you're in the country, you're sort… you're with the people, you're integrated in that. And I see that you do kind of have to give a little as well (…) You can give into the community, whether that's by working or whatever other way, you can give. Yeah, but that's sort of how I see citizenship."*

7.2.2 But it is not clear how citizens can exercise their role

Even though many of the young people agree that every citizen has a role, they struggle to define what this role entails exactly. Grasping for meaning, the participants come up with vastly different ideas on how citizens can fulfil their role and become engaged in their communities. Joana (16, SCO) tries to explain it, but all she can settle on is that active participation for the citizen could be 'anything':

JOANA: *"You're not just like 'Oh, I'm part of this' and then just lurching in the background doing nothing, you have to take an active role – whether that'd be a presentation, whether it be… I don't know… just anything."*

For the young people of this study, citizenship as a practice can vary from giving someone a hug, working, consuming and paying taxes, to volunteering and political

engagement. Engagement as citizens is vaguely about relating to other people and to the community. Some are trying to make sense of citizenship as a practice in terms of "*the treatment of other people"* (Ben, 16, SCO). A number of participants tell me that it is enough for citizens to relate to other people and participate in communal life. According to Sem (16, NL), for example, "*you are an ideal citizen if you really strive to have an effect on other people (…) when you really do something for others.*"[lxxxiv] Ben (16, SCO) argues that citizens can fulfil their role "*even just [by] like joining clubs around the community.*"

What is striking is that most of the activities these young people think of are limited to their local communities and the people they are in immediate contact with. For Matthew (15, SCO) the citizen's role is about being involved in the local community: *"Yeah, just like taking part in local customs, stuff like that. Like going to like bars and chatting to local people."* According to Robin (15, NL), *"you are already a citizen if you give someone a hug, for example."*[lxxxv] He adds that caring about others around can be just as important a contribution as a citizen as working or paying taxes: *"Whether you make someone else happy or produce income for your country - I think they both make you a citizen."*[lxxxvi] Ben (16, SCO) explains why he thinks *"just in general, you know, mixing with everyone, talking to everyone"* counts as a contribution and makes someone a citizen:

BEN: *"In a sense I feel like even grannies going out to play bridge with their friends of an evening is, eh, participating as part of the community. Because, you know, that's helping old people have their social life."*

For other participants, the role of the citizen is more about their contributions to the community as a whole. They believe that working, studying, consuming, and paying taxes are key ways for citizens to exercise their role. According to Melissa (16, NL), "*if you are a student, for example, then that is your role in society. And yes, that makes you just as well a citizen, a part of society."*[lxxxvii] And also Amira (16, NL) argues that *"for example, going to school and having a job makes you a citizen*." Ashlain (16, SCO) explains that a citizen is *"somebody that's learning there in like the country or living there, residing there, has a spouse there, employed, pays taxes and fees."*

For some of the young people, consuming is an important part of citizenship, because it is a way for citizens to contribute to the community's economic and commercial life. Amira (16, NL) explains that consuming can be part of the citizen's contribution,

"'cause, yeah, things need to be bought, some things. And daily things, going to the supermarket. That's also a way you contribute." What is more, in contrast to working, consuming, and thereby paying taxes, is something that also young people do. Lauren (15, SCO) says: *"I still, well, I pay taxes on like chocolate [laughs]. So I do pay tax, I feel like a citizen in some ways."*

Some of the young people view citizenship explicitly as a democratic practice. Maria (16, NL) believes that being a citizen is all about expressing an opinion: "*Just take the thing with voting. Then you add something, like: 'I think this, or I think that'. (…) So I think that's what a citizen is a bit."*[lxxxviii] Also according to Hamish (15, SCO), citizenship has to do with, *"ehm, also things like democracy."* For him, being a citizen is about being involved in democratic decision making: "*I think like you really got to take part to be a proper citizen, if that's what you wanna call it. I think you have to be engaged in what makes the decisions and play a part in expressing your view. Because that's… 'cause your view is part of that, is part of that country or that nation."* For Damian (17, SCO), citizenship is about expressing one's views and impacting the direction of the community:

DAMIAN: *"Essentially being able to express your views - that is one. Another is being able to be using your vote, your cast, to be using your cast to be able to have a chance to make an impact, to be deciding on which direction the country is going."*

In our conversations, a few participants admit that they are merely grasping for meaning, because they do not really know what the role of the citizen is. After struggling with different and vague definitions, Ashlain (16, SCO) concedes that she cannot describe the tasks of the citizen: *"Being a citizen is being part of that change in society a little bit, providing for it. I don't really know how to describe that… yeah."* Amira has a hunch that she is not the only one who has difficulties with the role of the citizen:

AMIRA: *"I think I'm not the only one who doesn't really know the definition really of it, but it's because we never talk about it. I mean I think everyone is a citizen of a country, like for example the Netherlands, but it isn't really something that we tie a definition with. Like 'Oh, this is the definition of being a citizen'."*

For Alex (17, NL) it is clear that what is expected of the citizen can be different, depending on who you ask. Alex believes that the sheer variety of possible definitions

is what makes citizenship such a difficult concept: *"Pffff, I mean, I mean you can be a citizen with… I mean, you can be a citizen from many different aspects (…) So I mean that's why it's also very hard to define such things like as a citizen."* For Ashlain (16, SCO), this uncertainty about the role of the citizen is really problematic:

> ASHLAIN: *"Well, it would be good if we had some understanding of what it was [laughs]. Ehm, because it's like not really understanding what you're signing up for, in a way, you know? Just like 'What is it?' It's such an important factor, like 'Oh, you can't reside here for more than like three years if you don't have the citizenship', you know? And it's just like 'Ok then. What is it and how do I get it?'"*

7.2.3 Practising citizenship as a matter of individual agency

In Chapter 5, we have already seen how difficult conceptions of citizenship in terms of duties can be for young people. Statutory duties are sometimes experienced as limiting, and this also holds for citizenship as an active practice. Just like they have problems with the idea of statutory civic duties, many of the young people who participated in this study also prefer citizens not to be obliged to be active in their communities. Even though it is clear for them that, as citizens, they all have a moral duty and an active role to play, these young people are much more comfortable when they frame this role in terms of choice and individual agency. This way, citizenship as a practice becomes less of an obligatory duty, and more of a desirable activity and the young people have choice over how to perform their role as citizens.

For some of the participating young people, citizenship practices should be all about choice: it is every citizen's individual decision whether or not to become actively involved in the community. According to Laura (16, NL), active citizenship is always about individual motivation: *"And then I find, I'd say, that it's hard for someone to say like 'Yes, now you're obliged to help in society' because that's still, yes, kind of your choice."*[lxxxix] For Nora (16, NL), citizens should not be obliged, but want to be involved: *"I wouldn't think that you have to do a lot. It's more if you want to."*[xc] Joana (16, SCO) thinks about citizens' engagement in politics and argues that *"it is everybody's individual choice. I mean just because you don't engage in politics, doesn't mean they're not a citizen."* And Ross (18, SCO) believes that citizens cannot be forced to act politically or to be engaged in their communities. He says: *"I, it'd just be like, I know a lot of people who do volunteering. And they're just great for doing it, but I*

would say there's no definite obligation." For Ross, all citizens can really be expected to do is act with decency:

ROSS: *"You can't expect, I'd say like the one thing you could like expect from people is decency. (…) Well you can't like force anyone to vote or force anyone to partake in the conversation, 'cause maybe they're just not into that. I definitely would not say you have to like expect and force them to do x, y, and z politically. Definitely not."*

Even though engagement in the community is not compulsory, a number of young people still expect citizens to become involved – not so much out of a sense of duty, but rather out of a sense of belonging and as a matter of individual agency. In Chapter 6, we have seen how important it is for the young people of this study to belong to and to identify with their communities. In order to be accepted in and shape their communities, it would be foolish for citizens not to be engaged. The young people believe that it is easier for citizens to feel they belong when they are active in their communities. According to Lars (16, NL), citizens can, for example, *"do civil work, like voluntary work."* He adds:

LARS: *"It's not mandatory, but I think it helps with the acceptance part. Someone who does volunteering or who's a volunteer will get accepted way faster than somebody who just stays at home."*

Romy (16, NL) argues that citizens can *"be a part of something by helping other people, by voting, by being social."*[xci] And also Katie (17, SCO) believes that engagement and belonging always go together, which is something she has observed in her local community.

KATIE: *"I think that people who are part of something make an effort to do good, like within, like I don't know, within, you know, the school or within the community. I found a lot of people who are like part of, I dunno, the church or something, they find that they're much more part of the community and do a lot of good stuff outwith just, you know, going to church every Sunday. And I think that that's a really good way to get people involved because, you know, that kind of church environment is, makes people much more likely to involve, involve themselves in community."*

For many of the participating young people, citizenship is first and foremost motivated by recognition and self-expression. They have an 'It is up to you'-attitude when it comes to citizenship as a practice: nothing is required, but citizens should consider becoming involved, because it is in their own interest to do so. This particularly applies to engagement in democratic decision making. Anouk (16, NL), for example, says: *"If*

you don't vote, I'd only think you're not helping yourself." For Joseph (15, SCO), civic engagement, for example voting, is not mandatory, but kind of self-evident: *"I think if you don't vote, then you… not like you lose citizenship of your country, but you become a less important person. Because if you don't vote, then no one really cares what you think."* He explains why expressing one's views is what makes people citizens in the first place. For him, citizenship is a democratic practice and always about assuming some degree of agency.

JOSEPH: *"If, say the values of Scotland is for me like you know a free, sort of left-wing democracy, then that's the values you should try and uphold, because, you know, if you don't do that and you let other people control that for you, you know, other forces, you sort of defeat the point to be a citizen of that country because you're not doing anything to uphold the values of that country."*

7.3 Young people's problems with citizenship-as-a-practice

For the young people in this study, the question how citizens can contribute to and make claims on their communities is only the starting point for their problems with citizenship as a practice. Just like citizenship practices are all about individual agency, most forms of engagement that these young people can come up with have an air of individuality about them. The agency these young people attribute to themselves as citizens, however, is not even remotely matched by the power they believe to have – or rather not to have. For almost all forms of engagement in democratic processes the young people who participated in this study perceive a severe lack of efficacy. They are also deeply sceptical about collective action and feel that, as citizens, they have to *"fight for themselves"* (Emma, 17, SCO). Given the flexible ideas these young people have about belonging to multiple communities, this lack of efficacy is only exacerbated by questions on what is the community that recognises their claims.

7.3.1 Young people feel a severe lack of efficacy

When they think about citizenship in terms of a democratic practice, many participants feel a severe lack of efficacy. Most doubt that their views are being recognised in the democratic process and there is a serious mismatch between power and agency. Even if they want to carve out new ways to express their views as citizens, the young people's willingness to become engaged is compromised by doubts about the impact

they can have. Without any hope to change things, for some of the young people the whole idea of expressing their views and trying to have an impact on their communities seems futile.

Many of the interviewed young people tell me that they feel powerless, mostly because they are young. They feel unrepresented, not listened to, and not taken seriously. No matter how much she cares about issues, Ashlain (16, SCO) feels she does not have any power to affect change, because, as a teenager, she has no voice:

> *ASHLAIN: "And I don't have the power to change it. I don't know how… I'm not in the position to change it. I… frankly speaking I don't really have much of a voice, especially with the teenager stereotypes."*

Also Malou (15, NL) thinks that young people, in general, lack the power to change things: *"Well, because we're young, we don't have power to change the outcome of elections or something. And we can't vote either, so…"* And while Joana (16, SCO) is enthusiastic about getting involved in all sorts of action, she nevertheless doubts she could achieve anything: *"Yeah, I've got mixed feelings, because I'd love to be part of everything. It's just I don't think I'd be taken seriously. I don't think I would get that far."*

The young people's lack of efficacy pervades all levels of citizenship – the local, the national, and the global. It is maybe less surprising that they feel powerless in the light of global challenges. Vera (16, NL) would like to do something about the conflict in Syria, but she knows that she has no power: *"I have no power. I cannot, for example, just walk around Syria and say 'This has to stop' and then they stop. So, in that way I don't have the power to stop it."*[xcii] But the participants of this study also report feeling excluded and not taken seriously in their national and even local communities. Mariam (16, NL), for example, does not think being able to vote in national elections will change anything about her level of influence: *"I don't think so. You can vote, but the Netherlands does what it wants."*[xciii] And even in their school communities, where there are institutions like the student council or head pupils to relay young people's concerns, most participants say they feel powerless and not listened to. Tim (15, NL) believes there is nothing he can do to achieve change at his school: *"I disagree with some of the things that are going on here at school, but there is little I can do about it."*[xciv] And for Lotte (16, NL), even institutions like the student council are powerless, because nobody listens to the student representatives:

LOTTE: *"Yes, that's the idea that students can give a voice, but that's not being listened to at the same time. You know, you should be able to influence what happens at school, but in the end it's what they [the teachers] want."*[xcv]

The young people's perceived lack of efficacy extends to almost all forms of political engagement. It is striking that this is particularly noticeable for engagement outside of formal democratic institutions, such as signing petitions, online activism, or ethical consumption. Even though young people of this study often mention these forms of political participation as legitimate ways of taking action, they have severe doubts about the impact they can achieve with them. Sophie and Connor (both 17, SCO), for example, regularly sign petitions online, but they doubt that this has much of an impact.

SOPHIE: *"I don't know – I just sign petitions and all, but that's not necessarily gonna make that huge of an impact."*

CONNOR: *"Well, I do petitions as well. But I agree, like sometimes… sometimes it's the realisation that we need them, but sometimes it does nothing (…)."*

SOPHIE: *"I sign like a lot of petitions. Like the ones I mainly sign are like environmental, but I guess that's still like not necessarily doing something. But it's like using my voice or whatever."*

Sophie (17, SCO) does not only regularly sign petitions; she has also been *"to like a few like demonstration-kind of things."* However, Sophie does not have much hope for achieving anything other than raising awareness with her attendance. She sees demonstrations more as a way to *"like making people like politically active, like not necessarily making a change, I don't know."* A lack of efficacy is also part of the reason why Katie (17, SCO) does not to think much of protesting: *"There's almost not such a big benefit to them as the amount of, I don't know, like hassle they cause almost."* Even though campaigning has less of that problem, Katie is not convinced of its effectiveness either: *"Obviously like, you know, like campaigning and stuff's obviously really important but I don't know how necessary it is to let people know that, you know, I'm a feminist."* What stands out is that joining forces with other feminists is not something that has occurred to Katie or that she believes to be useful. Romy (16, NL) would consider speaking to politicians directly, to her MP, for example, but she doubts that they would listen to her: *"Yes, you can, you can talk to them, but I don't think they'd listen to you much. I think they're going to say 'Oh well, but you're the only one'."*[xcvi]

With so little hope to ever achieve anything, for some young people the whole idea of expressing their opinion can seem futile. According to Lotte (16, NL): *"I can state my opinion, but nothing is going to happen. So yes, I also think of, yeah, I could do something, but then it is not really useful."*[xcvii] Romy (16, NL) believes their lack of efficacy to be the main reason why young people are less active in their communities:

ROMY: *"Look, if you have the feeling that you can't do much about it, then you'll lose all interest in it. When it doesn't matter if I follow it or not, then why should I follow it? I think that's also a reason."*[xcviii]

7.3.2 Young people are sceptical about collective action

For the young people who participated in this study this severe lack of efficacy is not their only problem with citizenship as a practice. Some of the young people are also deeply sceptical about collective action. Even though they imagine that they could achieve a lot more together with other people, they are reluctant to engage in collective action. With their understanding of citizenship as an individual practice that is mainly about expressing one's own interests, these young people do not have much leeway to make compromises. They do not want to join political parties or participate in demonstrations, for example, unless they fully and wholeheartedly agree with all of their aims and positions. The idea that living together in a community and negotiating joint values requires a degree of compromise does not feature often. Rather, for these young people, citizenship always comes with *"a sense of individuality"* (Lars, 16, NL). Collective action does not suit them; it is either unimportant, not effective or even problematic.

A number of participants find it difficult to come to terms with collective action. Most acts of citizenship are individually motivated – even when they take place together with other people. Lars (16, NL), for example, would consider joining a political party, because it might increase his influence: *"Well, that's how you can sort of increase your influence, I think. Like change it how you would want the world to be. In this case your community."* However, Lars doubts that *"there will be a single political party that will ever fully align with your views."* The young people who participated in Scotland have similar reservations when it comes to political parties representing their views. Katie (17, SCO), for example, does not think she will ever join a political party:

KATIE: *"I don't think I would, no. I think that I would be more of a, a floating voter… and kind of go with what I… Like I mean I'll always be more inclined to the*

left but I don't think I'd ever be so loyal to a party that I'd actually join it because… you know, sometimes I will disagree with what they're saying and I'll want to vote elsewhere."

It is not only political parties though that these young people take issue with. Protests are similarly problematic. Some young people would only take to the streets, "*if something happens to us and not to others"* (Lars, 16, NL) and "*if there is something I really believe in and am sure I agree with*"[xcix] (Robin, 15, NL). Max (17, NL) says that he cannot really imagine a situation where he "*will be rallying in the streets*"[c], because he does not feel he belongs anywhere that strongly or believes in anything so much to protest for it. He only mentions one possible exception: human rights. *"It must be something very universal, a Human Rights change or something like that"*[ci] (Max, 17, NL). And even if, for her age, Emma (17, SCO) is somewhat of a veteran activist, she, too, has a problem with protests that gets in the way of participating in them. It is that aims of protesters are often not clear or coherent enough:

EMMA: "Like with Occupy and that there wasn't like an aim, like there was an aim but it wasn't coherent enough, ehm, and it just kind of like falls apart if you don't have like the will to go far enough."

Not only does collective action not suit these young people; some also consider it ineffective. Katie (17, SCO) is *"a little bit on the fence about"* protests, because she feels they can be *"counterproductive"* and *"not such a big benefit as the amount of, I don't know, like hassle they cause."* For Megan (17, SCO), protests are not more than *"kind of a nice way of people coming together (…) kind of a way of showing solidarity but it's not really… it's not necessarily making a huge difference."* Laura (16, NL) believes that youth organisations of political parties might be kind of fun, but certainly not influential: *"But yeah, I don't know, I've never noticed that they had any influence in any case."*[cii] And for Matthew (15, SCO), no form of collective action is ever promising to be effective, because views are always fragmented: *"Because there are so many different political views that people hold. Like it just, it just kind of fractures people. (…) And they kind of just fight."*

A consequence of their views on collective action is that these young people appear atomised and not at all willing to make compromises. Some feel that they have to act alone as citizens, because they will never find a group to adequately represent them. Lars believes he might be better off starting his own party: "*So if you truly want your views to be represented, you sort of have to do it yourself."* According to Emma (17,

SCO), as a citizen, *"you've got to fight for yourself."* For others, the consequence is not to become engaged in their communities at all. Matthew (15, SCO) has the same idea as Lars, but believes that he, rather than start an initiative of his own, will "*probably not work in politics"*:

MATTHEW: "Because like there isn't really a specific political party that I particularly identify with. So maybe I will, I might just get fed up and create my own, you know, group, if I really get annoyed. But yeah, probably not work in politics."

Like Matthew, Katie (17, SCO) does not think she would ever want to become active in organised politics: *"You know, things like campaigning and lobbying people and like running as a candidate or something, I don't know that I'd ever get actively involved in that."*

7.3.3 What is the community that claims are made on?

There is another problem that adds to young people's perceived lack of efficacy as citizens: the question where they can make claims as citizens. In chapter 6 we have learnt just how flexible the young people who participated in this study can be in their ideas of the communities they belong to. When it comes to the spaces in which citizenship is practised, however, this flexibility creates a problem: what is the community that recognises young people's claims? Like Emma, other participants too are at a loss when it comes to the question where they can make claims as citizens. Some struggle to define what is the community in which they can act as citizens and others realise that where they would like to make claims might not be where they have a chance to be recognised.

For Alex (17, NL), which community to make claims on is really the crux of his engagement as a citizen. Alex does not identify much with his local community, Westertoun, or with the Netherlands. He prefers to see himself as Greek, because Greece is where his family is from. He also identifies as European and he feels a strong sense of belonging to a community of global citizens. Alex is really interested in all sorts of political issues. His problem is not only about not knowing how to get involved. Alex also struggles with the question where to get involved: *"So yeah, the question then becomes 'What is a citizen?', but also to what government."* Alex knows

that it would probably be best to become involved at a small level, for example in local politics.

ALEX: *"Well, I think if you ever want to start being influential, you need to start small. You can't go immediately and try… I mean, if an average citizen like me is gonna think 'Oh, I want to be politically active, but only influencing the EU parliament.' Good luck, you're never gonna do that. You need to start small and you need to start with your local community, I suppose. You know, getting to know the members there, like the mayor and the city council. And then, you know, gradually progressing and becoming more and more active."*

However, because he does not identify much with the community he lives in, Alex is really not interested in local politics:

ALEX: *"I mean, to be honest, I am not that engaged in my local community. It's not something that… Which is a bit ironic, you know, because if you start being engaged to do politics, you need to start small. (…) But yeah, community politics is not that something in my area of interest."*

As a global citizen, Alex would much rather influence global issues: *"I wanna do it at an international level, being engaged in politics."* But Alex knows that his aspirations to do politics on a global scale are not realistic, because there is no global community or world government there to recognise his claims.

ALEX: *"The thing is that if you use the term global citizen it's very… I don't know, it's a very abstract concept. Because usually if you are a citizen, you participate sort of in a certain government, or you are part of a certain government. There is no global government, so how are you a global citizen then? So that's the problem there."*

Among the participants of this study, there are more young people like Alex, who struggle with the question of where to place their claims, in order for them to be recognised. Lars (16, NL) feels helpless about his efforts to do something against climate change: *"Well, global issues they seem like something you cannot really do something about. So, I cannot solve climate change on my own or something. So there you, I think, I don't know what I should do to help."* He thinks that this would be very different, if he wanted to be engaged in his local community: *"But locally it's of course way easier to help somebody, help somebody personally."* Megan (17, SCO) would like to voice her opinion about Donald Trump becoming president of the United States, but she realises that she probably does not have much legitimacy or success in doing so in the UK:

MEGAN: "'Cause it's like, if it's happening here, probably being part of the community means that you have more say in it and it's easier to like object to things, whereas like something that's happening in Washington, like I've never even been to America."

Together with Emma, Megan (both 17, SCO) also discusses how there is *"kind of a divide between like local politics and… like national or international politics"*, which makes the whole act of engaging even more problematic:

EMMA: "I don't know what I think about like local things, I don't know what's happening down the road. But like if he asks me what happens in America or like somewhere like halfway across the world, I'm like 'These are all my opinions.' So I feel like that can be a problem, but I know more about what happens like in the American Congress than in the Scottish Parliament, but... I feel, cause like, yeah, like America affects everybody, but the Scottish Parliament may be a bit more relevant to my life."

MEGAN: "Yeah, I feel we probably should know more about what's going on here."

EMMA: "Yeah, it's not like we could do anything to affect how people vote in America like… but I can use my voice here, but then I don't know anything about it. Well, I do know stuff about it, but like… I feel like I should take more time to… you know what I mean?"

A number of participants recognise that where they can engage as citizens is not all that easy to define. For Joseph (15, SCO), citizens should obviously become engaged in the country they identify with, but what this country is can be a matter of definition: *"I suppose I would say that someone should always try and help their country, but then I suppose that it depends on again who you would identify with as your country."*

Particularly for the young people who participated in this study in Scotland, what they identify as their country and where they feel their claims are recognised is an important question. For Sophie (17, SCO), it is not a trivial one:

SOPHIE: "Yeah, I think it's quite a difficult question. Like I'm not sure…. I don't know how to word it (…) But in terms of politics, I think, obviously it depends on like if we're from Britain or like Scotland, but ehm, I don't know."

Ross (18, SCO) believes that where he formally is a citizen and where he feels he can make political claims is not the same:

ROSS: "Like legally, I am a citizen of Great Britain, because that's where you get like your passport. You don't get a Scottish passport. (…) But I can politically affect Scotland more than I can affect Great Britain as a whole."

And Emma even thinks that this peculiarity is what makes citizenship fundamentally problematic for her:

EMMA: *"Like the political lines of the country make it kind of impossible to make everybody an equal citizen. So like whilst I feel a citizen of the UK in that I live here and that's like a part of my heritage, I feel more of a citizen of Scotland in the sense that I can actually be engaged here and my voice is worth something."*

7.4 The smallest common denominator of practising citizenship

In the absence of clear expectations for the role of the citizen and concrete communities in which citizenship is practised and claims are recognised, there is not much that guides young people on how to become engaged and have an impact as citizens. Some of the participants of this study have such unattainably high expectations for the good and active citizen that they fail in their own ambitions. Others phrase only minimal expectations for citizenship from the start. The only effective way to act as a citizen that most of the young people of this study can agree on is voting. Participating in elections, according to these young people, is a good way to express an opinion and make claims on a community. Not having the right to vote, however, deeply frustrates many of them. Without voting rights, for the young people of this study, the smallest common denominator of practicing citizenship is being aware of and speaking to others about political issues.

7.4.1 Young people's overly high expectations and the 'imagined citizen'

Some of the young people phrase such high expectations for the good and engaged citizen that they are set up to fail in their own ambitions. The ideal citizen, they imagine, is involved in the community and in political issues, cares for the neighbours as well as about global issues, is sensitive to the concerns of other people, empathises, supports, and fights for rights with a life's worth of dedication. Emma (17, SCO) is the one who expresses this most clearly. She expects the ideal citizen to:

EMMA: *"Ehm, probably like consume ethically. Ehm, educate yourself. Stand up in the face of injustice. Like always be aware of what's going on. Involve yourself in debate, like listen to other people's points of view. Like empathise."*

In light of these high expectations, Emma fails to live up to this ideal: *"I'm maybe not the citizen I want to be. Like I don't live up to the values that I uphold."* Even though less clearly, this kind of negative self-judgment also shines through in the narratives of other interviewees. Lars (16, NL) believes that, at age 15, volunteering with the Scouts, being engaged in Model United Nations conferences, and helping a local refugee family is not enough to live up to his expectation of the good citizen. Because he has not joined a youth political organisation yet, Lars says, as a citizen, he is *"a bit lazy"*. And for Lauren (15, SCO) even her activism in a political party is sometimes not enough to fulfil what she believes are other people's expectations of her as a good citizen:

LAUREN: "I think you can be somewhat involved technically but in reality you can't because there's so much expected of you. There's so many meetings to go to. There's people saying, 'you didn't campaign enough in the last election, oh what's happened to you'. Things like that. Now you can just not let that get to you, but it's not that easy."

While for Emma, Lars, and Lauren, their utopian vision of the ideal citizen is an incentive to become more active themselves, for others these high expectations can seem so unattainable that they do not become engaged at all. Emma wants to do more, write to her local politicians more often, and learn more about how to impact political debates. Lars is making concrete plans to join the youth organisation of a political party soon. And Lauren dedicates even more of her time to campaigning and doing politics, even if that jeopardises her grades in school. For others, the utopian expectations of what being an ideal citizen would mean for their lives are rather discouraging. When Megan (17, SCO), for example, hears about her friend Emma's expectations, she says they are not realistic for her. Megan would rather not dedicate so much of her life to being a good citizen as Emma defines it:

MEGAN: "Yeah. I don't know. I just feel like when I think about it realistically I'm not going to… Like I wanna know enough that I need to know about what's going on. But I'm not going to live my life always thinking about everything. I just want to get a job, start a family and do what everyone ends up doing, like without really…"

7.4.2 "Voting's really the main thing we can do"

The only thing most participants can agree on as a good way to practise citizenship is voting. For Ross (18, SCO), *"voting's really the main thing we can do"* and also

Joana (16, SCO) says that *"voting is one of the most important things you can do."* As an individual activity, voting is also less affected by problems of collective action and the young people feel that it is an effective way of influencing democratic decision making processes. Malou (15, NL) believes that voting matters, because "*you really do choose the people who govern your country"*[ciii] and Ashlain (16, SCO) thinks that *"voting is a very big deciding factor. If you vote, I'd say yes, that is part of being a citizen, because you are actively conveying your opinion and your kind of part of change on society."* As one of only few participants, Ross (18, SCO) was already allowed to vote in local elections and the experience made him feel empowered:

ROSS: *"Like the local elections that I took part in, like my vote helped to like lower the majority that a party held, which was like, I felt quite proud about. Like 'I've helped changing this.'"*

Voting is the smallest common denominator that these young people feel everyone should be able to agree on. For many, it is also a sort of minimum requirement of good citizenship. Matthew (15, SCO) believes that the least any citizen can do is vote: *"Yeah, I think everybody should like at least try and vote, even if they go and spoil the ballot."* In contrast to other ways of engaging in politics, voting is really something most people can do, according to Merel (15, NL): *"I think there are a lot of ways to influence this, apart from voting. But I think that all the people who do that also vote."*[civ] Even Tim (15, NL), who says that the idea of civic duties is *"an authoritarian construct"*[cv], is convinced that voting is something every citizen should do: *"But it must be emphasized that it is a societal duty, that it is actually something a citizen should do: to vote."*[cvi] And for Joseph (15, SCO), voting is the 'minimum requirement' for citizenship: *"I think voting is a minimum requirement."*

With all the importance the young people assign to voting for the role of the citizen, it can be very frustrating for them not to be able to vote. While he followed the Dutch parliament elections closely, Alex (17, NL) says he was upset that he was not allowed to vote: *"Well, I was 17. So even if I had the citizenship I still couldn't vote. But, I mean, yeah, I was not really annoyed, but I would say kind of upset, because I thought that my vote maybe would have made a difference."* Hamish (15, SCO) feels frustrated that he will have to wait for a long time until he gets to vote in a UK general election:

HAMISH: *"Well, I was quite frustrated when she [Theresa May, UK prime minister 2016-2019] called the 2017s [2017 General Election]. I was like 'It's gonna take even longer until I get to vote'."*

Not being allowed to vote makes the young people who participated in this study feel powerless and excluded from democratic citizenship. For some, it is even a reason not to follow and care about issues in the first place. Romy (16, NL), for example, says: *"Yes, and that is also because we are not allowed to vote. It does not feel as if we are involved at all. And because of it I am not going to do my best to be involved either."*[cvii] Niels (15, NL) expresses how not being able to vote makes him feel and isolated excluded from collective power:

NIELS: *"Most of the time a vote is kind of power, that you have a little bit of power. In the Netherlands, there are 16 point something, well, 17 million people, who then each have a little bit of power, a collective kind of power. A kind of pyramid. And we are not in the pyramid. That only happens when we are 18. Then our vote really has a value in that... in that."*[cviii]

Considering his lack of voting rights, it was difficult for Joseph (15, SCO) to justify why he followed the 2017 UK General Election: *"If you can't vote, it's very hard to, you know, be like 'I'm gonna learn all about this' and then watch the General Election float past you and you're like 'Well, I wish I could vote' and you can't do anything about it."* As long as she cannot vote, Amy (17, SCO) has given up on engaging in politics altogether: *"Yeah I mean I couldn't vote, so like I didn't talk about it that much cause I was like, 'well I can't, I have no power, I can't vote in anything'."* And also Lynn (16, NL) feels that without the right to vote there is no point in considering to get involved in politics: *"We do not yet have the right to vote, so... it does not make much sense."*[cix]

7.4.3 For many young people speaking about politics is enough

For young people, who cannot formally weigh into political decision making yet, following and talking about politics with other people can seem like the only options they have. In the absence of voting rights and with their doubts about the efficacy of other forms of engagement, some of the participants of this study feel that the only way they can express their opinion as citizens is by speaking about it to other people. Sem (16, NL) says: *"We cannot vote yet, but we can give our opinion. We cannot give it down on paper and hand it in, but we can talk about it with others."*[cx]

Like Sem, other interviewees, too, believe that talking to others, for example friends or family members or in school, is an effective way of expressing an opinion and influencing decisions in their communities. For Sanne (16, NL), one way to be involved

is to *"express your opinion, talk to people about that"*[cxi] and Anouk (16, NL) believes it is *"just saying what you stand for, I guess. Talking to other people. Giving your opinion about it. I think that's it."* Ross (18, SCO) agrees that *"just like chatting. That's probably, that's a very good way"* to express an opinion and Sophie (17, SCO) thinks *"even just talking about it is like quite effective."*

Especially for those young people, who define it mainly as the expression of interests, talking to other people counts as an effective way to practise citizenship. According to Tess (16, NL) talking about politics is effective "*because then you convince someone and they tell someone else. And then you spread the word."*[cxii] Tim adds that *"basically even talking to other people about politics is to express your opinion, changes something, because you are talking to someone else and as much as possible change each other's opinion."*[cxiii] Talking to others is seen as a good alternative to formal political participation, such as signing petitions, protesting or joining a political party, which many young people are sceptical about as we have seen above. Alex (16, NL) says that not everyone can be expected to protest for their beliefs; there have to be ways to be involved for those who want to be less active:

ALEX: *"I don't think that we should go rally just to show how politically active they are, you know, and how they wanna change the world. Because, I think, simply by discussing this and being aware and then being part of a decision process of government is enough."*

For some of the participants even just following and understanding political matters counts as engagement. Connor (17, SCO) believes that it *"makes you realize – we were talking about this on the way here – like it makes you realize what your values are and what you actually stand for again."* And for Damian (17, SCO), too, just following politics is extremely important *"because all what politics is, it is - depending on where one stands within the system – politics, for some, could be being able to discuss it."* Joana (16, SCO) thinks that *"even then just researching"* is important, too: *"Because as long as you know what we're talking about, you won't spread lies or like rumours or gossip to other people."* And Niels (15, NL) feels he is involved politically because "*I read the newspaper. So I have, I say, an opinion about political, political things that are happening here."*[cxiv] And for Vera (16, NL), it is enough to be aware of issues, even if she cannot impact change: "*Whether you can change it is a different story, but just the fact that you are aware of it happening, that's what matters to me."*[cxv]

7.5 Summary and conclusions

Throughout this chapter, we have seen how problematic it can be for young people to find their place as active and engaged citizens in their communities. The challenges that the young people who participated in this study experience with their status as citizens and that they face in relation to their view of citizenship as a sense of belonging play a big role in this. The young people of this study place a premium on solidarity in their communities, while also emphasising the agency of the individual citizen. This amplifies tensions that are inherent in citizenship as a concept: between the individual and the community, between structure and agency.

While it is clear for most of the participating young people that citizens have an active role to play, how young people can fulfil this role is much less clear. There is a lot of uncertainty about how citizens, and in particular young citizens, can contribute to their communities. The young people of this study have rather vague ideas about what exactly is the role of the citizen. Even if many are motivated to become engaged and want to carve out new spaces for their role as citizens, they are often at a loss when it comes to determining how to do so and how to do it effectively. The young people I spoke to in this study feel a severe lack of efficacy for most forms of engagement, in particular those outside of formal democratic institutions. In addition, there is a deep-seated scepticism about the efficacy of collective action and the young people are uncertain about where to place their claims as citizens. There is a constant tension between the young people's ideals of civic engagement through collective action, on the one hand, and their need for autonomy and their desire to express own interests on the other.

Without effective ways of engaging in their communities and expressing own interests, the young people who participated in this study often fail to fulfil their own, sometimes overly high expectations for the role of the citizen. There is a substantial gap between the agency they ascribe to themselves as citizens and the scope and power they feel they actually have. For many participants, voting and speaking to others about issues remain the only effective ways to be engaged as citizens that they can agree on.

Chapter 8

DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to unpack the meaning of citizenship and political engagement with young people and to contribute new arguments to debates about youth citizenship. If democracies are under pressure to change (Norris, 1999) or even destined to fall apart because of young people's lack of engagement as citizens (Foa & Mounk, 2017), then that deserves a closer look and, in the least, a word from young people themselves. Are young people really withdrawing from their role as active citizens? Or are they creating new forms of citizenship? And if so, why?

This study provided a thick description of how young people make sense of citizenship and why. In the previous chapters, we learnt how the young people who participated in this project view citizenship: not often as a status, but rather as a sense of belonging and in terms of positive contributions to their communities – in whatever way possible. For a number of the young people, citizenship is a subjective and relational concept that can be expressed through a wide variety of civic practices. It is mostly a matter of individual agency. We have also seen how full of uncertainty and tension citizenship as a concept can be for young people and what kind of an impact these tensions have on how and why young people make choices about their engagement as citizens.

This study's unique contribution to debates about youth citizenship is precisely in this how and why. The narratives and experiences collected over the course of this project allow for preliminary answers on how young people make choices about their engagement as citizens and for a re-evaluation of claims that are driving debates

about youth citizenship. They give an insight into how young people see themselves as citizens, what kinds of citizens they are and want to be, and what they struggle with in their experiences of citizenship. While this chapter focuses on the broader findings from my work with young people in Scotland and the Netherlands, it is also important to emphasise at this point again that the narratives collected for this study illustrate that no two young people are the same. While they might share the fact that they are younger (and older) than others and might generally find citizenship a concept that is difficult to deal with, just like people of other ages, the young people who participated in this study recount a variety of experiences with citizenship.

This chapter offers a summary of the study's key findings and an evaluation of what they might mean for questions about youth citizenship: Are young people passive citizens or even turning away from democratic practices? Or are they creating new forms of citizenship? Many of the findings hold for both the young people who participated in this study in Scotland and in the Netherlands. The comparison of experiences among Scottish and Dutch young people delivered mostly similarities and only few differences, which are discussed in this chapter. Finally, the depth that this study offers on young people's narratives allows me to raise a number of new questions about youth and citizenship: questions on where to start looking to sort out how citizenship norms are changing over time; how the places that young people grow up in impact their views of citizenship; what these results mean for educational and social class differences; and what role religion and secularisation play in young people's conceptions of citizenship.

8.1 Key findings on how young people view citizenship

Even if the word 'citizenship' might not be in most young people's daily repertoire, the young people who participated in this research clearly related to and engaged with questions of citizenship: that is, with questions of autonomy, identity and belonging, of power and agency. The young people were enthusiastic to engage in the research and appreciated the opportunity to think about citizenship. Some even felt empowered by participating and said that they enjoyed discussing questions that they do not usually get a chance to articulate their thoughts on. This is a finding in itself and it runs somewhat counter to other research with young people (Andolina et al., 2002; Hall et al., 2008). From these studies it was concluded that citizenship is not relevant to

young people's lives. In contrast, my findings suggest that, at least for some young people, citizenship is far from irrelevant, even though it might not be easy for them to deal with. Especially as a status, citizenship can be full of uncertainties for young people. However, the young people who participated in this study related to and cared deeply about the concept and the questions it raises, especially if the potential meaning of citizenship is broadened beyond that of a merely formal or legal status. In this sense, my findings are more in line with other studies conducted with young people that make use of broader conceptualisations of citizenship (Hart, 2009; Lister et al., 2003; N. Smith et al., 2005). It is the multi-faceted operationalisation of citizenship in terms of status, identity, and practice, and the particular design of this research, inviting the young participants to think about and discuss conceptual issues from a multitude of angles and at length in repeated interviews, that makes for the specific findings of this study.

8.1.1 Citizenship is full of uncertainties for young people

For young people, citizenship can come with a lot of uncertainty. Throughout the interviews, I found the participants of this study to be often struggling with the concept and, to some extent, grasp for answers, in particular when I asked about citizenship as a status and the concrete relevance of citizenship to their own lives. For many interviewees, citizenship was unclear in terms of a status, but it also came with a lot of uncertainty when it was viewed as a sense of belonging and as a practice. However, this uncertainty is not to be confused with meaninglessness. In contrast, questions of citizenship were full of meaning for the young people of this study – just that this meaning is ambiguous, contradictory, and at times difficult to reconcile with their real-life experiences.

Citizenship was particularly difficult for the young people to come to terms with as a binary status that involves the award of statutory rights and responsibilities. I used Hamish's clear-cut definition of citizenship as a status to open chapter 5, precisely because his account was so exceptional. We have seen that most other participants did not have such a clear understanding of citizenship as a concept of equality and autonomy, simply because this does not match their experience as young citizens. Many of the interviewed young people had only vague ideas about the statutory rights and responsibilities of citizens, as these were often considered not yet relevant to their

lives. This gave the young people the impression that they can only access citizenship in full once they are (and are considered) adults. Rather than as 'citizens in the making' (Marshall, 1950, p. 25), based on their own accounts, the young people of this study may better be described as citizens-in-waiting.

There are a lot of formal restrictions that limit young people in their autonomy as citizens – so many, in fact, that some interviewees struggled to justify why they, as teenagers, should be viewed as full and equal citizens. It was particularly difficult for the participating young people to wrap their heads around why they have access to some parts of citizenship, but not to others. Most were well aware of the fact that different rights are allocated to them at different ages (Mycock & Tonge, 2012) and, in the case of the right to vote at 16 in Scotland, even on the basis of where they live and have grown up. However, it was not at all clear how these rights contributed to make them into full and equal citizens. As a result, when viewed as a status, it was unclear for many of the participants in this project what citizenship is good for and what they can do to be considered as full and equal citizens.

One consequence of the uncertainty about their own status as citizens is that the young people of this study often preferred to view citizenship not in terms of an endowed status at all, but rather as a sense of belonging. Because they identify and want to be recognised as citizens, they chose to define citizenship in terms of feelings and behaviour instead of as a status. Rather than defined in fixed and binary terms of statutory rights and responsibilities, for these young people, the role of the citizen is contingent on adherence to unwritten rules, intuitive behaviour, and commitment to the community's way of life. In contrast to other studies that report a similar finding (Basit, 2009; Hart, 2009; Miller-Idriss, 2006), this study adds a possible explanation as to why young people prefer this way of looking at citizenship. In fact, as reported in chapter 5, Lauren (15, SCO) states her reason outright: because she cannot yet vote but sees herself as a citizen, she considers citizenship to extend beyond legal rights and responsibilities to *"partaking in society, just being involved in your local community, helping others around"*. Viewing citizenship as a sense of belonging affords her and other young people the possibility to identify as full and equal citizens, even when they do not yet have access to all aspects of this status. Because for young people like Lauren citizenship is not primarily about autonomy and the formal citizen-state relationship, but about relationships between people, this way of looking at the concept may be more suited to recognising young people's agency as citizens

(Lister, 2007b; Werbner & Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 4). This finding might resonate with those who suggest that – especially in relation to young people – citizenship should not be viewed as a fixed status and a concept of adulthood at all. Rather, it should be viewed as a gradual process of gaining experience: with civic engagement young people increase their confidence to bear themselves as citizens (Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Flanagan et al., 2012; Gifford et al., 2014).

However, viewing citizenship as a relational concept and a gradual process does not make it any less difficult. When it is viewed as a trajectory and about the relationships between people that young people develop, citizenship is no longer a concept of autonomy or a formally defined status. Instead, it is about communal norms, conformity, and recognition through others (Bloemraad, 2013, 2018). For the young people who participated in this study, citizenship in terms of a feeling of belonging came with a lot of uncertainty, precisely because it was so subjective and dependent on others. Instead of being able to define for themselves how to act as citizens and what makes for a 'good' citizen, citizenship was perceived as outlined by the social structures young people grow up in. Some of the young people who participated in this study struggled with the extent to which social control impacted their role and recognition as citizens. They found it difficult to say what someone needed to do to belong and some had experienced what it is like not to belong in one way or another. Citizenship in terms of a trajectory and relations between people lacks clarity with regard to the institutions and practices that turn young people into citizens. Where citizenship as a status clearly defines when and on which condition citizenship rights and responsibilities are endowed, this kind of citizenship depends on common sense and intuitive behaviour, and there are lots of ways for young people not to qualify as citizens.

A relational and subjective view of citizenship in terms of belonging and recognition gives rise to a broad range of civic practices. Like others (Basit, 2009; Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Dalton, 2006; Hart, 2009; Miller-Idriss, 2006), I find the young people who participated in this study to place a premium on solidarity, helping and caring for others, and a positive contribution to the community – in whatever way possible. The young people in this study who preferred a relational understanding of citizenship made sense of their engagement as citizens in terms of *"the treatment of other people"* (Ben, 16, SCO). Civic practices, for them, included anything from helping and caring

for others to being involved in local customs, going to the pub, or even just giving someone a hug.

In addition to more traditional ideas about democratic practices, such as voting or expressing an opinion, this understanding of citizenship gives rise to a huge repertoire of conceivable civic practices, or what Weller (2007, p. 130) called ‘small-scale acts of citizenship’. When it is about both relationships between people and the relationship between citizens and the state, civic and political engagement can revolve around being nice and helpful to others just as well as around participation in elections and democratic decision making. To some extent, this wider understanding of citizenship and, in particular, of forms of civic and political engagement might be at the heart of the finding that young people display “expanding and diversifying repertoires” of civic and political participation (Hustinx et al., 2012, p. 110; see also Pickard, 2019; Thorson, 2015; Weller, 2007).

However, such broad conceptions of civic practices further add to the prevailing uncertainties among young people about what qualifies them as citizens. While some of the young people who participated in this study approached civic and political engagement with a ‘Whatever works for you’-attitude, others openly expressed their insecurity about making choices along the enormous scale of what could be considered civic engagement. This uncertainty can be interpreted as the direct result of a structural lack of institutions that allow young people to gain the necessary experience and guide their process of becoming citizens (Flanagan et al., 2012). It is not so much citizenship as a concept that is unclear to young people, but what they need to do to become – and be recognised – as citizens.

8.1.2 Young people and the tension between structure and agency

The uncertainty that young people of this study experienced about their role as citizens and how to execute it was only exacerbated by a persistent tension between structure and agency. More often than not, the young people’s desire for agency, autonomy, and self-expression was at odds with how we have seen them to experience citizenship: not as an individual status, but in terms of belonging, adherence to communal norms, and recognition. Citizenship, for the young people in

this study, comes with a constant trade-off between the individual and the community, the universal and the particular.

On the one hand, the young people who participated in this research clearly placed an emphasis on the agency of the individual citizen. Citizenship, for them, was often motivated by self-expression and contingent on the individual citizen's positive contribution to their communities. This is very close to how modern democratic citizenship was once theorised – as a concept of individual agency (Marshall, 1969; Shaw, 2008; Turner, 1997). A key part of this way of looking at citizenship, for the young people, was that it comes with an 'It is up to you'-attitude. According to them, engagement as citizens is not obligatory, but it is in the interest of the individual citizen to be involved in order to influence the future direction of their communities. As a result, I found the participants to struggle with ideas of citizenship-as-a-duty. The young people did not want to act as citizens because they are obliged to do so, but because they themselves decide to.

On the other hand, the young people's lack of formal status and their relational view of citizenship do not really leave much room for individual agency. Firstly, citizenship as a concept of equality and autonomy is nothing but a future promise for young people. As reported from other studies (France, 1998; Hart, 2009; Lister et al., 2003; O'Toole, 2003), the participants in this project, too, often saw themselves as partial or second-class citizens. Some even felt guilty about being not-yet-citizens. Many told me that they felt stereotyped, lumped together, and to some extent penalised, for being young. Even though this study is by no means representative, it is worth pointing out that this finding holds for almost all young people who participated, no matter whether they were from privileged or less privileged backgrounds, attended an independent or a council-run school, were active in their communities or not. In contrast to the participants in France's (1998) and some of those in Lister et al.'s (2003) studies, none of the young people who participated in this project were selected on the basis of any form of marginalisation other than being young.

What is more, the interviewees who were actively and extensively involved in institutional politics or in their communities – Lauren (15, SCO), Farah (16, SCO), and Lars (16, NL), for example – nevertheless said they felt like second-class citizens. It seems that even the experience of being engaged in what they perceive as adult ways of doing citizenship does not prevent these young people from feeling unequal. I found

it particularly striking when Lars (16, NL), who, by virtue of his broad civic and political engagement could well be qualified as a virtuous and well-integrated citizen, said that discussions such as the one about a mandatory civil service for young people in the Netherlands made him feel as if he were "*not part of the civilisation"*. Lars' example indicates that young people's perceived exclusion may be directly related to the prevalence of the so-called 'deficit model' of youth citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003, p. 245), which assumes young people to be less capable citizens who have to be educated and stimulated in their growth into full and equal citizens. This view of young people's citizenship is perceived to be condescending. The young people of this study report *"being talked down to"* (Matthew, 15, SCO) and deliberately underestimated in their capability to take responsibility for themselves and others in their communities.

In addition to the lack of formal status, young people's understanding of citizenship in terms of a sense of belonging also has an effect on their perceived scope for individual agency. On the one hand, when it is defined as a feeling and in terms of intuitive behaviour, young people's citizenship depends on recognition through others in their communities (Bloemraad, 2018). This shifts the meaning of citizenship far towards one end of the continuum between individual and community, or agency and structure: towards that of the community and the power of its social structure. When it is defined in terms of belonging, citizenship becomes prescriptive, carrying a distinct moral obligation (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). Just like the young people in France's (1998) study, the participants in this project experienced conflict whenever what is deemed acceptable in their communities ran counter to their own beliefs. Some felt deeply uncomfortable about being categorised and potentially stereotyped based on their belonging. Others told me that they experienced conceptions of citizenship in terms of behaviour as 'patronising' (Hamish, 16, SCO). As a result, there was a persistent tension between the young people's need for agency, autonomy, and self-expression on the one hand and their desire to be recognised as citizens and to feel a sense of belonging in their communities.

On the other hand, the very subjective view of citizenship as a sense of belonging also makes it a particularly flexible concept that affords young people new opportunities for expressing individual agency. In chapter 6 we have seen that most of the young people in this study preferred multiple and flexible identities as citizens – often in addition to their Dutch, Scottish, or British citizenship. It is particularly telling that – unlike reported in other studies (e.g. Basit, 2009; Colombo, 2010) – I find not

only young people with mixed backgrounds to identify as citizens of several and different kinds of communities. Also for young people who describe themselves as from entirely Dutch or Scottish families – Lars (15, NL) or Ross (18, SCO), for example – it seemed perfectly reasonable to identify as citizens of other kinds of communities. According to Joseph (15, SCO) and Robin (15, NL), people can even identify as citizens of places they have never been to. Throughout the group of participants, I find young people who claimed to feel as citizens of their school, church, or local communities, as citizens of interest groups, online communities, or as citizens of the world. Some of these civic identities were more important in the present, others were more of an aspiration than a fact (c.f. O'Connor, 2005; Paulgaard, 2002).

When they felt they were denied equal citizenship by status, the young people used their multiple and flexible identities to create new scenarios of equality and difference that allow them to feel as equal citizens in different contexts (Colombo, 2010; Paulgaard, 2002). Oftentimes the young people made sense of their additional civic allegiances as a personal and deliberate choice – in other words, as achieved rather than ascribed citizen identities (Huddy, 2001, p. 137 f.). For young people, this can be an important way of exerting individual agency. By selectively resisting identities that feel ascribed to them and emphasising what they have in common with others around the world instead, the young people who participated in this study found new ways to feel included in communities and empowered at the same time (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995).

8.1.3 Impact on young people's engagement as citizens

The uncertainties over their status as citizens and the tension young people experience with regard to their own agency as citizens can have profound consequences on their engagement. The ways in which the young people of this study understood citizenship did not only impact the range of options for what they considered as civic and political engagement, but also how they made choices along this enormous scale. The most important consequence is that there was a substantial gap between the agency the young people expected themselves to have as citizens and the scope for action they really experienced having.

With the large number of possible ways to become engaged as citizens that a relational understanding of citizenship offers, for the young people of this study, civic and political engagement became a matter of individual choice. In chapter 7, we have seen that for many of the young people citizenship was about individual agency. Not only was engagement entirely individually motivated, as citizens, the young people also wanted to make their own choices on how to express their interests. While the enormous range of civic practices and their 'It is up to you'-attitude to civic and political engagement gave young people an impression of self-reliance and autonomy, this also made them appear atomised. This tension is also reflected in the findings of other studies. Although Pickard lauds this self-reliance and young people's "Do-it-ourselves" (DIO) approach to political participation (2019, p. 2), others are more sceptical. According to Thorson, young people's do-it-yourself approach to politics is merely a reflection of the fact that, for young people, "citizenship and political engagement is characterized by a vague, swirling notion of multiplicity, choice, uncertainty" (2015, p. 26). Furlong and Cartmel describe the civic and political engagement of young people as an individualised experience (2007, p. 135). In line with that, I find that the young people who participated in this study preferred individualised forms of action. Many expressed a deep-seated scepticism about the efficacy of collective action. Similarly, making compromises, claiming rights on behalf of others, and engaging in collective action rarely featured in their self-determined repertoires of civic action.

When it is an individualised experience, however, civic engagement can feel very difficult and inefficient. In chapter 7, I illustrated the severe lack of efficacy that the young people of this study perceived in their role as citizens, or rather, citizens-of-the-future. Many participants made sense of their perceived powerlessness as a direct outcome of their youth, their lack of status and recognition as citizens, and their lack of capability and knowledge. Few reflected on the fact that feeling powerless also relates to how young people choose to become engaged (or not engaged) as citizens. Emma (17, SCO) was one of the few and probably the most explicit in realising that she has less power as a citizen, because she chooses to not engage in collective action: "*You've got to fight for yourself to get all these things but actually these, these collective efforts are how we have got things for ourselves in the past."*

Taken together, the individualised experience of citizenship and the young people's perceived lack of power made citizenship-as-a-practice entirely performative for them.

Without any expectation of being able to control the outcome, for some of the young people of this study it felt like it did not matter much how they fulfilled their role as citizens, as long as they did something. This and the enormous variety of possible civic practices – voting in elections, influencing public matters, helping and caring for others, going to the pub, even just talking about politics, giving someone a hug, or simply not being selfish – made for an 'It is up to you'-attitude towards civic and political engagement among the participating young people (c.f. Thorson, 2015). Some had minimal expectations for the role of the citizen: for them, it was enough to obey the law and be nice to people (c.f. Tonge & Mycock, 2010). Others, in contrast, had such high expectations of themselves as citizens that they can only fail to fulfil them.

Even if the young people of this study were willing to engage in their communities and wanted to carve out new spaces for what can be considered good civic practice, they seemed uncertain and alone in figuring out how to do that. This points in the direction of previous arguments that young people are not less willing to engage as citizens, but rather they are experiencing a lack of necessary guidance and institutions that support them in their engagement and their transitions into citizens (Flanagan et al., 2012; Gifford et al., 2014). We have seen how, for the young people who participated in this study, much uncertainty comes with diversifying repertoires for the meaning of citizenship. Out of all the possibilities they have, the burden to define the role of the citizen and what can be considered good civic practice rests entirely on the young people.

Ultimately, it is reasonable to assume that some young people will be better at coping with this burden than others and will find it easier to make sense of the vast array of choices on how to act as citizens. Only the most motivated or the most self-confident of young people will be able to forge their own ways of being good citizens and becoming actively and effectively involved in their communities. In a way, seeing already involved and highly motivated young people such as Lars or Emma, for example, struggle with citizenship as a practice does not bode well for future prospects of youth citizenship.

8.2 Comparative perspectives

These findings hold widely, for young men and young women, for young people from council-run and independent schools, for those in Scotland and in the Netherlands. My choice of young people's quotes was first and foremost guided by the concepts derived from the literature. And yet, the statements used to illustrate my argument throughout chapters 5, 6, and 7 highlight how similar different kinds of young people from both research locations were in their views on citizenship. For most issues, there are just as many statements from young people in Scotland as those in the Netherlands, from young women as from young men, and from young people of different cultural background. When I designed the research, I wanted to get an idea of conceptions of citizenship in different contexts, in particular different political cultures, where young people grow up having different kinds of experiences. If anything, I hoped to achieve a level of insight on young people's conceptions of citizenship through the comparative design that would not be possible otherwise (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2012). What then did the comparative research design deliver?

8.2.1 Mostly similarities

Even though I expected to find differences in the way young people in Scotland and in the Netherlands make sense of their role as citizens, I found mostly similarities. In chapter 4, I described the legislative and wider changes that occurred in Scotland with regard to the rights and status of 16 and 17 year olds. Due to the lowering of the voting age and the associated inclusion of young people in the dialogues of political parties and the media, I assumed that the Scottish young people would feel more recognised as civic equals in their communities than their Dutch peers. I also expected that Dutch participants would consider the age barrier of 18 as a significant marker for their citizenship, especially since it had recently been re-affirmed as the legal age for consumption of all types of alcohol. I assumed that young people in the Netherlands would feel as citizens-in-the-making, while for young people in Scotland there would be more ambiguity in their transitions into equal citizenship.

Contrary to my expectation, the ways in which the participating young people experienced citizenship and its tensions in Scotland and the Netherlands were very similar. I found the Scottish and the Dutch young people to equally feel as citizens-in-

waiting. Despite differences in legislation and public debates between the two contexts, the Scottish participants did not seem to struggle any less with their status as citizens – or rather, as future citizens – compared to their Dutch peers. If at all different, I found the young people in Scotland to be somewhat more aware of the perceived injustice in their status as citizens in the making. The lowering of the voting age for Scottish, but not British elections was the number one example interviewees in Scotland raised to illustrate the ambiguities and tensions in their status as citizens.

This is quite a remarkable finding, albeit not a difference. It shows that even a change in legislation that includes 16 and 17 year olds in the electorate, as it happened in Scotland, does not necessarily change young people's experiences of citizenship. In fact, for some of the participating young people being granted the right to vote at 16 in some elections merely augmented their perception of being seen as partial, not-quite-equal citizens. This finding could be very specific to the particular cohort that engaged in the research. Due to their age many of the young people I interviewed in Scotland had just missed the opportunity to cast a vote in the referendum on Scottish independence (2014), in the Scottish Parliament election and the referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union (both in 2016), and the subsequent 2017 General Election. Compared to these votes, some participants perceived the first election they were allowed to vote in – the 2017 Scottish local election – as less important. It remains to be seen how applicable this finding is to future cohorts and young people in different contexts, but if found widely applicable, this would pose a number of new questions for legislative measures, such as the selective lowering of the voting age.

In addition to the different legislative circumstances, I was also prepared to find some variation in the way the young people made sense of citizenship as a concept of community. The unique position of Scotland within the United Kingdom, I assumed, would make for debates of citizenship and its boundaries, and would bring up questions of the meaning of citizenship as a state or non-state concept. In the Netherlands, in contrast, I expected that, by and large, most of the participating young people would identify as Dutch citizens, and maybe additionally, as Europeans. To my surprise, I found none of these differences. The Dutch and the Scottish participants equally questioned the boundaries of citizenship, identifying as citizens of their city, region, or local community and as global citizens in addition to being Scottish and Dutch. Both in Scotland and in the Netherlands, the young people who

participated in this study spoke about universal human rights and invoked a global or Western culture to illustrate what unites them with others around the world. Ideas of European citizenship played no role – neither in Scotland nor in the Netherlands. When asked, many of the young people did say they identified with Europe, but as a civic identity this was far from salient for them (c.f. Grundy & Jamieson, 2005).

8.2.2 Some differences

In contrast to these similarities, the differences I found between the young people and their experiences of citizenship were subtle. Based on my understanding of life in the Netherlands, I expected Dutch young people to think about citizenship in terms of questions of inclusion and exclusion more than the young people in Scotland. I was prepared to launch into debates about multiculturalism and the meaning of fragmented identities for citizenship. Indeed, issues of inclusion and exclusion were somewhat more prominent in my discussions with young people in the Netherlands than in Scotland. Given their diverse backgrounds, there were more participants among the Dutch group that had experienced exclusion and being made to feel like they did not belong. One consequence of this was that interviewees in the Netherlands seemed keener to emphasise their multiple and flexible identities as citizens of a variety of communities compared to their Scottish peers.

Issues of inclusion and exclusion also meant that more participants in the Netherlands than in Scotland viewed citizenship as a sense of belonging and as a relational concept. In contrast to their Scottish peers, the Dutch young people were more willing to state that citizens have responsibilities beyond what is set out by the law. Some said that citizenship required being able to speak Dutch, adherence to Dutch customs, and following common patterns of 'normal' behaviour. A number of Dutch interviewees also made a direct connection between the Dutch word for 'civic' – 'burgerlijk' – and its meaning: sharing a middle class mentality (Velde, 2008). For some, being *"neat"* and *"not really extreme"*[cxvi] (Tess, 16, NL) was thus more important in order to feel they belong than, for example, being engaged in the community or following the law.

The young people who participated in the study in Scotland, in contrast, found it somewhat easier to identify as Scottish – mostly in distinction from being English.

Many of them said they felt *"very Scottish".* In contrast to participants in the Netherlands, the young people in Scotland were also somewhat more willing to talk about belonging and citizenship in terms of Scottishness and pride for Scotland as their political community. Few said that they did not feel Scottish at all: only five of the twenty participants in Scotland identified as British (Katie, Sophie), English (Matthew), Northern Irish (Hannah), or Greek (Damian) rather than Scottish.

A discussion that underpinned many of the young people's ideas of citizenship in the Netherlands, but was entirely absent in Scotland, was that of inequalities by educational attainment. Many of the Dutch participants described patterns of discrimination based on education that extended to their experience of citizenship. Knowledge and capability played a big role for their conceptions of good and active citizenship. For example, the young people I met in the Netherlands would repeatedly discuss ideas of a capability test to regulate access to citizenship. This discussion was entirely absent among the young people in Scotland, where instead it was emphasised that all citizens were to be seen and treated as equals, regardless of educational attainment. All of the young people I worked with in the Netherlands followed pre-university secondary education and many said they felt advantaged in their recognition as future citizens compared to peers who followed other educational tracks or forms of vocational training.

8.3 Re-evaluating claims of youth citizenship research

These findings allow for a re-evaluation of claims that are commonly made about youth citizenship. Are young people disengaged and alienated citizens? Or are they newly engaged and empowered citizens, who simply choose to express themselves differently as citizens? This study's findings suggest that both claims may be true – or neither. Young people are certainly building on broader and more flexible conceptions of citizenship that allow them to feel included in their communities as equal citizens. However, the findings also illustrate how problematic these broader conceptions of citizenship can be for young people and that they leave them far from empowered. Going beyond other studies of youth civic and political engagement, the narratives collected in this project allow for new perspectives on young people's relationship with citizenship.

8.3.1 Are young people turning away from citizenship?

This study's findings show that young people are not turning away from citizenship – or at least not willingly. The young people who participated in this study were far from disengaged or even alienated as citizens. Throughout this project, we have seen that they identified as citizens and were keen to engage with questions of citizenship. These young people wanted to be seen and treated as civic equals. Not being recognised as citizens deeply frustrated them. The young people placed an emphasis on caring for others and contributing to the community. Mostly importantly, most of them agreed that every citizen has an active role to play in their communities. This demonstrates that the young people of this study are neither deliberately passive citizens (Pirie & Worcester, 2000) nor monitorial citizens, who have a high level of political efficacy, but intentionally choose not to become engaged (Schudson, 1998).

Nevertheless, no matter how engaged young people might want to be, de facto they could still be less active as citizens than older citizens or previous generations of young people, even if that is not the result of a general alienation from democratic citizenship. We have seen in chapter 7 that some of the young people who participated in this study were not as active and engaged as they themselves wanted to be. Few even expressed a feeling of failure when it comes to fulfilling their own expectations for the role of the citizen. On the surface, much of what the young people told me is reminiscent of Amnå and Ekman's (2014) 'standby citizens': citizens who are interested in civic matters, have high levels of system trust, but only rarely become actively involved in their communities. However, in contrast to Amnå and Ekman's study (2014, p. 277 f.), the young people's accounts from this project also allow for an evaluation of the question when and why young people choose to become engaged as citizens. In chapter 7, we have seen how much the young people of this project struggled with different forms of civic and political engagement and, in particular, with collective action and their own expectations of what makes for a good citizen. The narratives that this project delivered clearly illustrate the frustration, and to some extent desperation, these young people felt about their perceived lack of scope for effective action as citizens.

Rather than choosing when to become engaged, it might be more accurate to conclude that young people have a plethora of reasons *not* to become engaged as citizens, or, as Lauren (15, SCO) put it, a lot of *"excuses not to do it."* The uncertainty that comes with citizenship as a status and with making choices along the continuum

of conceivable civic practices, the scepticism that young people in this study voiced about collective action, their reluctance to make compromises, and their perceived lack of efficacy as young citizens (both internal and external) are all potential factors that can keep young people from engaging. When these youth- or demand-centred factors are then additionally joined by supply side factors, e.g. politicians and political parties failing to address young people and the topics that are important to them (Hay, 2007; Mycock & Tonge, 2012; Sloam, 2010; Sloam & Henn, 2019, p. 46), it seems almost remarkable that there are still young people who overcome these barriers and decide to become engaged.

So, instead of characterising young people as standby citizens, who selectively choose to become engaged, my findings suggest that for some young people it is more accurate speak about barriers to their engagement as citizens and a lack of guidance. In this sense, statements such as Sloam and Henn's "The 2017 General Election demonstrated that young people will engage in electoral politics if the conditions are right." (2019, p. 2) might have to be turned around to read: the 2017 General Election offered conditions that made it less difficult for young people to become involved. In particular circumstances, for example, when the available choices align with their individual preferences and when young people have the impression that their engagement *does* make a difference, they can be seen to become engaged as citizens – or rather, more young people become engaged than what we would expect under prevailing circumstances.

This way of looking at youth citizenship might not only help make sense of the substantial fluctuation in the electoral participation of young people. It might also provide a viable explanation for the 'paradox of participation' (Cammaerts et al., 2014; Pattie et al., 2004; Sloam & Henn, 2019). The key to understanding why, despite rising levels of educational attainment, engagement seems to be in decline among young people is in recognising the different conceptions of citizenship that young people have and the resulting tension between power and agency. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the uncertainty over their status as citizens and the substantial gap between the agency the young people who participated in this study expected to have as citizens and their realistic scope for action acted as barriers to their engagement. It can be assumed that young people's emphasis on individual agency is stronger with rising educational attainment, while the same does not hold for their

scope for action. A widening gap between agency and power adds to young people's levels of frustration and their perceived lack of efficacy as citizens.

8.3.2 Are young people creating new forms of citizenship?

If young people are not turning away from citizenship, are they then creating new interpretations for the role of the citizen and new forms of civic and political engagement? The best answer that this study offers is 'Well, maybe'. We have seen that indeed the young people in this study thought about citizenship not in terms of duties, but as a matter of agency and a form of self-expression. This lends support to Dalton's theory (2006, 2007) that young people are turning away from duty-based conceptions of citizenship. Going beyond Dalton's work, the findings of this study add a reason why: because young people attach great importance to their agency as citizens and are ill at ease with the idea that citizenship is contingent on the fulfilment of duties. This research cannot answer questions regarding the development of this tension over time. The young people who participated in this project clearly put an emphasis on agency, but it is not clear whether or not this is more of an emphasis compared to older people or previous generations of young people.

However, that young people have problems with duty-based citizenship does not necessarily mean that they easily create new forms of citizenship. The severe lack of efficacy and the barriers to engagement that the participants in this research perceived suggests that they are certainly not the newly engaged and empowered young citizens that some imagine them to be (Bennett, 2008; Norris, 2002). Throughout this study we have seen how problematic and full of tensions citizenship can be for young people and how this impacts how they consider becoming engaged as citizens. It might be that the increase in alternative forms of engagement – cause-oriented, unconventional, and elite-challenging actions – that is consistently being measured among young people in other studies (Bennett, 2003; Dekker, 2002; Loader, 2007; Norris, 2003; Stolle et al., 2005; Xenos et al., 2014) is nothing more than young people's pursuit of alternative ways to action.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting that, in contrast to research that portrays young people as newly engaged citizens, this study shows that young people's frustration and their perceived lack of efficacy extends to all levels and forms of civic and political

engagement. I found it particularly striking that the young people of this project expressed the same levels of frustration about their lack of efficacy and perceived distance to local politics as they did regarding national or supra-national issues. The participants were frustrated about their lack of impact in decision making processes even in their schools or local communities. To some extent, this finding adds question marks to theories that portray young people as locally engaged 'everyday makers', who focus on engagement at the community level and choose to bypass conventional politics to find ad hoc solutions to individual problems (Li & Marsh, 2008; Marsh et al., 2007). At least for the participants of this study, there was little to no difference in how they evaluated their engagement and scope of action as citizens between local, national, and supra-national levels.

The young people also showed a staggering lack of efficacy, in particular, with regard to what others have called new or alternative forms of engagement. Even though many said that they indeed engaged in petitions, demonstrations, or forms of online activism, the participants of this study expressed severe doubts about the effectiveness of this kind of engagement. This finding is in line with Sloam (2007) and Weller (2007), who reported similarly high levels of scepticism and frustration among traditionally engaged, newly engaged, and disengaged young people alike. At the same time, the young people in this research also showed the highest levels of confidence in their efficacy when voting in elections, certainly an institution at heart of traditional conceptions of citizenship.

So are young people shifting citizenship norms and forms of engagement as citizens towards direct action (Dalton, 2006)? In their pursuit of alternative ways of action young people might indeed add new, alternative, and individualised forms to their repertoire of civic action and this might even bring about new forms of engagement, for example in the digital realm (Loader et al., 2014; Vromen et al., 2015; Xenos et al., 2014) or with regard to political consumerism (Stolle et al., 2005). However, this does not necessarily mean that young people consider these new forms of action as worthwhile as other forms of engagement or that alternative forms of civic engagement are destined to replace traditional commitments to political institutions and formal civic practices. In contrast, the importance that the participants in this study placed on voting as a way of being engaged as citizens relative to other, newer forms engagement, highlights that institutions of traditional citizenship are not per se considered unimportant. Also, the fact that young people like Emma (17, SCO)

consciously referred to their online political engagement as ‘slacktivism’ suggests that some young people themselves have doubts about the potential of alternative ways to become engaged as citizens. This indicates that indeed these new forms of civic and political engagement might be a long way from meaningfully replacing traditional forms of engagement.

Ultimately, what can be considered as effective, desirable, and worthwhile engagement as citizens is a complex question. The results of this study demonstrate that young people are well aware of the complexity of this question and are trying to make meaningful choices along the enormous scale of what could be considered civic and political engagement. If citizenship is changing, the only thing that can be stated with certainty is that young people seek out broader conceptions of citizenship and engagement, and those that focus on relations between people in addition to relations between citizens and the state.

8.3.3 Young people as citizens in the making?

If we take young people for citizens, who are willing, but often unable to engage, what does this mean for approaches to youth citizenship in general? Throughout this study, we have seen how the young people’s distinct lack of status and recognition as citizens played a significant role in how they decided to become engaged in their communities. While the young people emphasised and demanded to be recognised as autonomous agents in their communities, the uncertainty they experienced over their formal, and partial, status as citizens and their relational view of citizenship limited their room for individual agency.

Much in these findings can be attributed to approaches to citizenship as a fixed and endowed status that view young people as citizens of the future or citizens in the making (Marshall, 1950, p. 25). Previously in this chapter, I argued that young people’s status as partial citizens or citizens-in-waiting is one aspect that is at the heart of their perceived inequality and limited scope for action. Some of the statements collected from the young people who participated in this research suggest that the ‘deficit model’ of youth citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003, p. 245), which assumes young people to be less capable citizens who have to be educated and

stimulated in their growth into full and equal citizens, is to blame for young people's problematic relationship with citizenship.

Does this mean that – in reverse – granting young people full autonomy and equality as citizens would tackle the tensions inherent in young people's experiences of citizenship? Viewing young people as future citizens or citizens in the making is just one extreme on a continuum that spans possible views on youth citizenship. At the other end, there is the no less extreme point of view that young people simply *are* full and equal citizens and should be treated as such. According to Bloemraad (2013), and following Marshall (1950), equal legal status and the treatment of young people as full and equal citizens remains the strongest basis for their inclusion. However, this position has been criticised for it views young people as identical to adults, thus failing to acknowledge their unique relationship with citizenship (Lister, 2007b, p. 715 f.). Endowing young people with the same rights and responsibilities for engagement as citizens might create new inequalities, simply because, as we have seen throughout this study, young people face barriers to participation that go beyond their lack of access to civic rights and responsibilities.

Rather, in particular with regard to young people, citizenship should be seen as a continuum or a trajectory instead of as a binary status (E. F. Cohen, 2005, 2009; Lister, 2007b). When citizenship is split into different domains – civil, social, political rights, and also formal and informal practices in the local, national, global domain – young people can exercise some parts of the role of the citizen, while still growing into others. The selective lowering of the voting age or the inclusion of young people into local decision-making processes can be viewed as examples of this qualified way of thinking about youth citizenship.

The findings of this study clearly show, however, that this kind of qualifying access to citizenship alone cannot solve young people's problems with the concept. Because the young people who participated in this study did not only view citizenship as a status, but placed importance, in particular, on the nature of their relationships with others in their communities, merely giving them access to parts of citizenship does not automatically imply that they felt empowered and recognised as citizens. The experiences of the young people who were interviewed in Scotland illustrate this wellDespite having access to the right to vote at age 16 in some elections, a number of the Scottish participants nevertheless felt like partial citizens and expressed a deep

sense of frustration about this experience. What is more, providing them with the right to vote in Scottish, but not in British elections, made the Scottish participants even more aware of the injustice that is inherent in this qualified approach to youth citizenship.

Therefore, it is worth emphasising that – in relation to young people – citizenship should not be viewed as a fixed status that is tied to the exchange of rights in return for certain practices and the achievement of subjective markers of adulthood at all. Instead, it might be more helpful to conceptualise citizenship as a process in which young people acquire the necessary experience, skills and confidence act as members of the public. This 'citizenship of becoming' (Benedicto & Morán, 2007; Gifford et al., 2014) is as much about the recognition of young people as full and equal members of their communities as it is about young people gaining the necessary confidence to view and bear themselves as citizens. Young people's experiences in the campaign for the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence illustrate this. Because their access to political rights came with a broader societal debate about the inclusion of young people in the citizenry, the lowering of the voting age in Scotland also supported young people in their development of personal autonomy and in their transitions into independent adulthoods (Breeze et al., 2017; Huebner & Eichhorn, 2020).

Ultimately, for young people, the key to issues of citizenship lies in their recognition as civic equals in their communities as much as in acknowledging their ways of engaging as autonomous and responsible citizens – in whatever way and at whichever level they choose to do that.

8.4 Open questions and further research

This project provides a lot of depth to evaluate claims about youth and citizenship, but at the same time there are questions that it cannot answer, most notably those on the development of citizenship norms over time. Whether expectations for the role of the citizen have indeed been changing and why is possibly the one question that is most relevant to scenarios on young people's future as democratic citizens (c.f. Alexander & Welzel, 2017; Sloam & Henn, 2019, p. 124). This study, as any cross-sectional research, cannot provide substantive answers to this question, but it can point into

directions on where to start looking for explanations. To evaluate whether what we are witnessing is an effect of age over the life cycle or of generations and the particular circumstances that young people grow up it is paramount to separate effects of time from those of youth as an experience itself.

In addition to questions left unanswered, this project also raises a number of new puzzles, indicating avenues for further research on young people and their experiences of citizenship. Throughout the research I struggled with the question how generalizable these findings are beyond the young people who worked with me and the places and circumstances they were growing up in. As a qualitative, in-depth investigation of youth citizenship, this project was never designed to produce generalizable insights, but these would be required for broader evaluations of questions on young people as citizens. Given the importance of identity and belonging for conceptions of citizenship, what is the role of place in how young people view their role as citizens? And how do young people's backgrounds, in terms of social class, their knowledge, and educational attainment impact these findings? My conclusions on the particular importance of structure and agency for young people's conceptions of citizenship also raise questions about the role of religion and secularisation in the development of citizenship norms over time.

Finally, there are questions that are undoubtedly relevant to debates about youth citizenship, but that I have not looked at in detail in this project: these are questions on the role of civic education, for example, on the impact of the media and young people's media usage on their conceptions of citizenship. In light of the findings I report in this study, all of these questions warrant further research.

8.4.1 Life cycle or cohort effect?

This is the question that is most relevant to conclusions on the paradox of participation and to evaluate hypotheses of young people's future as democratic citizens: What kind of effect – life cycle or cohort effect – do these results capture? In other words: Which part of young people's struggles and strategies of dealing with citizenship is specific to their youth and what is specific to this generation of young people and will stick with them throughout the life course? For any sort of prediction on the future of democratic citizenship and the role of the citizens across generations, it is paramount

to sort out what is an effect of the life cycle and what is specific to this particular cohort of young people.

The question of life cycle versus cohort effect is one that the research design for this project – and any cross-sectional research design for that matter – cannot sufficiently answer. It is most likely that the answer is that conceptions of citizenship are both a matter of the life cycle as well as specific to the generation. Some of the conceptions of citizenship reported in this study are likely be specific to the participating young people's age and status in their communities. Other findings will likely be the result of the particular context and time, in which the young people I spoke to have grown up and learnt to make sense of citizenship.

The narratives collected over the course of this project provide some indication of where to start looking in order to sort out the question of life cycle versus cohort effect. On the one hand, I found young people to have problems with citizenship because of their lack of status and the various age restrictions that are placed on access to citizenship at the moment. This is likely to be a life cycle issue – or at least young people presume it to be. I asked all participants how they expected to be engaged as citizens in the future, once they would be considered adults. Assuming that they would have less problems as adult citizens, most anticipated to be widely engaged in their communities. Remarkably, also all young people – without exception and regardless of how sceptical they were as young citizens – were convinced that, as adult citizens, they would be voting in elections.

On the other hand, the way today's young people look at and frame questions of citizenship – as a matter of individual agency, motivated by self-expression, and in terms of relations between people – are likely to be a result of the specific circumstances they grew up in. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) show how, over generations, the moral values that are at the core of conceptions of democracy and democratic citizenship have evolved. The rise self-expression and emancipatory values, they argue, fundamentally changed the meaning of democracy – and so likely that of democratic citizenship (see also Alexander & Welzel, 2017). Following this line of reasoning, young people's increased emphasis on agency and the resulting tensions that come with citizenship are specific to this, and following generations and might stick with them over the course of their lives.

These lines of thought can prove helpful in disentangling the different parts of a likely effect of time on young people's conceptions of citizenship. However, to answer the question on life cycle or cohort effects substantively it is necessary to follow young people and their conceptions of citizenship over time and, most importantly, through their transition into adulthood. Only a longitudinal approach, for example a regular follow up with the participants of this project in two, five, or ten years, would be able to deliver further insights into the issue of cohort versus life cycle effect.

8.4.2 The importance of place for conceptions of citizenship

Just like for questions on effects over time, the results of this study also do not allow for generalisations beyond the particular places in which the data were collected. As this is a qualitative analysis, where I aimed for depth rather than breadth, the young people who participated in this study cannot be considered representative of any larger population of young people, either in Scotland or the Netherlands, or even just outside of their local or school communities. However, as Weller concluded from her study of teenage citizenship on the Isle of Wight, with regard to young people's experiences of citizenship "space matters" (2007, p. 171). Given the importance young people place on identity and belonging in their conceptions of citizenship, it has to be assumed that the way they make sense of where they belong and the communities they grow up in matter for their conceptions of citizenship.

The young people who participated in this research were all from urban or sub-urban communities. While I can only assume that they all had access to and were exposed to the culture and diversity of a large city, what they certainly all missed was the experience of life in remote rural or tight-knit small-town communities. When it comes to conceptions of citizenship this does not necessarily have to be a trivial side note. It has been argued that the experience of life in rural and urban communities has become so different that this divide creates new political fault lines, shaping much of people's attitudes to and engagement as citizens (Goodhart, 2017; Jennings & Stoker, 2016).

In particular, Goodhart (2017) holds that where people live shapes their civic and political identities: those from rural or small-town communities often contend themselves with their ascribed identities, have a deep sense of belonging to a specific

place and a socially conservative outlook. In contrast, those from urban environments tend to not really feel a sense of belonging anywhere, emphasising cosmopolitan or achieved identities instead and prioritising socially liberal values. Following this theory, it could be argued that this study represents only the views of young people who view themselves as citizens of anywhere. What speaks against this is that the young people in this study did not *only* emphasise their achieved or aspired citizen identities, but instead had complex and nested feelings of belonging (c.f. Ross, 2019). In contrast to Goodhart's theory, it seems that young people can very well be citizens of somewhere and citizens of anywhere at the same time.

In addition to urban-rural specificity, the results might even be specific to the school level, a community that many of the participants strongly identified with. In Scotland, I worked with young people from a number of and very different schools (council-run and independent, inner-city and sub-urban, non-denominational and Roman Catholic). This diversity allowed me to gauge the extent to which school-specific circumstances impacted young people's views and experiences. In the Netherlands, however, all my participants went to the same school, Noordwest College. Throughout my stay there, I grappled with the question how much in the Dutch young people's experiences was specific to the school environment and its provision of education, in particular the special bilingual track the students followed, and the broad provision of civic education at the school.

It is therefore important that further research on conceptions of citizenship among young people includes careful comparisons of young people from urban and rural communities as well as young people from different kinds of locations. When re-analysed with a specific focus on comparative aspects of space and types of communities, even the data that I collected over the course of this project might offer first insights on how young people growing up in distinct communities experience their role as citizens.

8.4.3 Knowledge, social class and education

Beyond place, to what kind of young people do the findings of this project apply? The other obvious distinction that is often implied in theories of civic and political engagement is one of knowledge, education, and social class (c.f. Beck & Jennings,

1982; Verba & Nie, 1972). With higher social status and educational attainment people are assumed to be better equipped to engage in and express their opinion on civic and political issues. Especially given how bound up citizenship is with matters of agency, it has to be assumed that the relationship between educational attainment, social class, and the rise of self-expression values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) also plays a role for conceptions of citizenship.

The data collected for this project cannot be used to assess relationships between education, social class, and conceptions of citizenship. For my focus was on establishing depth and building rapport in my work with the young people, I did not collect any background data on the young people regarding their social class or family background. In contrast to other studies of youth citizenship (c.f. Colombo, 2010; France, 1998; Lister et al., 2003; Miller-Idriss, 2006), the young people in this project were also not specifically selected on the basis of any form of potential marginalisation other than being young. However, clearly all of the participating young people were interested enough in citizenship and political issues to engage in the research. If they already have trouble with the concept and perceive barriers to their engagement as citizens, this does not bode well for the way other, less interested young people might make sense of citizenship. While it might very well be that the participants in this study reported uncertainty about citizenship precisely *because* they were so interested in and engaged with the concept, it seems more plausible that other young people, too, perceive these, and other, barriers to participation. Further research needs to consider distinctions in social class and levels of educational attainment – or rather, in the case of young people, different educational tracks – in order to assess how these impact conceptions of citizenship.

8.4.4 The role of religion and secularisation

There were not many young people from religious backgrounds in the groups of participants for this study. Even if some were growing up in religious households, most young people stated that they did not actively follow a faith. However, for some faith played a big role: for Hamish (16, SCO, Protestant), Damian (17, SCO, Orthodox), Hannah and James (both 17, SCO, Protestant), Alex (17, NL, Orthodox), Maria (16, NL, Protestant), and Elena (16, NL, Orthodox), for example (compare Table 2). I noticed that these young people differed from their non-religious peers in some of

their views on citizenship. Just like Hamish (16, SCO), as illustrated in chapter 5, the young people who actively followed a faith seemed to experience less trouble with conceptions of citizenship that are governed by rules and regulations or a strict interpretation of communal values.

There were not enough young people from religious backgrounds in the sample of this study to substantively evaluate questions about the role of religion and secularisation. However, citizenship is so bound up with issues of identity, belonging, morality, and agency that any analysis of people's understanding of the concept – no matter whether they are young people or not – inevitably raises questions about the type of communities, including religious communities, they belong to as citizens. Faith, in general, and – in the Western context – Christianity, in particular, represents a source of moral development and community building that is argued to be a prerequisite for citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995; Sindic, 2011). The development of modern citizenship was significantly impacted by religious practices and institutions (Turner, 1990): active in the administration and education of the population, churches and parishes enforced moral rules, thereby instilling respect for the law, obedience to authority, and a shared understanding of what is good behaviour.

In increasingly secular societies young people, who are growing up without strong ties to religious communities, might experience citizenship differently from those who actively follow a faith. There is no research on the role of religion for young people's conceptions of citizenship to date. However, some introductory work by Hemming and Madge (2018) suggests that non-religious identities provide young people with greater degrees of agency. This, in turn, would also likely impact their experiences of citizenship. With conceptions of citizenship closely linked to issues of power and agency, identity and morality, religious and non-religious young people might report different expectations for their role as citizens, based on varying degrees of agency. They might also rely on different sources for civic and moral education. Evaluating questions about the role of religion for young people's conceptions of citizenship substantively – for example, qualitatively with groups of religious and non-religious young people or quantitatively, e.g. based on the British Youth on Religion Study – provides promising avenues for further research.

8.5 Concluding remarks

During our final meeting, I asked each of the young people who participated in this project what they wanted me to write about and others to take away from reading this thesis. Most of them had a clear message: that young people want to be taken seriously as citizens; that they care about the world and the state that it is in; and that they want to be asked their opinions and be included as full and equal citizens. Farah (16, SCO) summarised this aptly:

> *FARAH: "I think 'Don't underestimate the opinions of a young person'. Ehm, we know a lot more than what comes across. Don't believe the stereotype of a teenager. Like we may do reckless and fun things, but that doesn't mean that our opinions aren't valid or that we don't care about the world that we live in, the state that we live in, the country that we live in, and that we don't want to make change. Just ask us a question and you might be surprised by what you find out."*

Throughout this thesis, I demonstrated that – at least according to the young people who participated in this study – the key issue with youth citizenship is not so much young people's inadequacy, lack of engagement with, and not-yet-readiness for the big questions that are at the heart of citizenship. Instead, the issue might be in the way young people make sense of citizenship and how they feel they can (or cannot) fulfil their role as citizens. Citizenship is always a matter of debate and young people want to be included in this debate. For a variety of different reasons, however, they feel uncertain and rather left alone in figuring out how to deal with the variety of meanings citizenship can take and how to be engaged as citizens in their communities. Beyond the avenues for further research outlined above, these findings raise a number of questions also with regard to prevailing youth policy, on the way young people are supported in their transitions into adulthood, and on measures of civic education.

What then do the findings of this study mean for the future of citizenship? The protagonists of chapters 5, 6, and 7 told me what they have been up to after our last conversations and what their plans for the future are. This might provide us with some food for thought and with an insight into what the future (and ideally, future longitudinal research) might hold for these young people and their views on citizenship. Hamish (16 at the time of our first interview, now 17, SCO) left school at age 17 to take time out and work *"a normal job"*. Despite his full-time job in a coffee shop he is still unhappy about not being treated as a full adult. At work, he is subject to legislation on

the protection of young people in the workplace and the lower minimum wage for young people. What is worse for Hamish though: as a consequence of the timing of recent elections and the differential voting age in Scotland and the UK, he has still not been eligible to vote. He is now a keen supporter of a lower voting age for all UK-elections. Hamish is still very engaged in his church community as a youth leader and he also started volunteering as a football referee. He is preparing to study Politics and Economics at university but does not yet know what career to pursue afterwards.

Lars (16, now 18, NL) finished high school and is preparing to study Information Science at a Dutch university. Despite the importance Lars placed on belonging, he is eager to leave his community and move to a different city to go to university, but leaving the Netherlands seems too big a step just yet. Lars is still very active as a volunteer in his community, taking on even more responsibility now that he is older and considered more of an adult. He voted in recent local and European elections but did not put into practice his other political ambitions. Lars regrets not having joined a political party but considers it too time-consuming.

Even though Emma (17, now 19, SCO) most eloquently expressed her doubts about the role of the citizen and how she is able to fulfil it (or not), her development might be the most remarkable of them all. Despite her reservations regarding the sacrifice it takes to achieve democratic change, Emma went on to become a civil rights campaigner. She even started engaging in measures of civil disobedience to achieve change. Emma campaigns for stronger legislation in support of environmental protection while studying at a university in Scotland.

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Appendix 1. Early analysis framework

(I) BELONGING AND IDENTITY:

- how important identity and belonging are for young people
- how young people describe themselves and their identity
- which labels young people are happy with
- which political / geographical communities they feel they belong to
    - whether or not they are happy with labels such as their
        - city
        - region
        - nation/country
        - Europe
        - the world
- what it is that they share with other people from these communities
    - what makes them feel they belong to these communities
- [for Scottish participants I probed in particular]
    - feelings of Scottishness
    - what makes someone/them Scottish
- [for Dutch participants]
    - what it means to be Dutch
    - what makes someone/them Dutch
    - young people's views on Mark Rutte's open letter from January 2017 ('Doe normaal') and what a normal Dutch citizen does

(II) CITIZENSHIP:

- whether or not young people use the expression 'citizenship'
- in which context / when they use the expression
- how young people define what a citizen/ citizenship is (spontaneous definition)
    - what a citizen does
    - who a citizen is
- difference between residents and citizens
- possibility of speaking about good/bad citizens
    - what makes someone a good citizen
    - difference good citizen – good person
- rights/responsibilities as a citizen
- importance of having an agreed definition of citizenship
- what citizenship is related to
    - citizenship-as-a-status
    - citizenship-as-feeling
    - citizenship-as-a-practice
- young people's views on citizenship tests
- what someone can be a citizen of
    - local citizenship

    - national/state citizenship
    - European citizenship
    - world/global citizenship
- whether or not dual / multiple citizenships are
    - possible
    - should be allowed
    - [for Scottish participants] Scottish vs. British citizenship
- other possibilities of citizenship
    - citizen-of-the-internet
    - citizen of a church community
    - citizen of the school

(III) YOUNG PEOPLE AS CITIZENS:

- whether or not young people
    - feel as citizens
    - not feel as citizens
    - what makes young people feel a citizen
    - when they feel a citizen
- what young people do as citizens
- young people's views on the term 'citizen-in-the-making' or 'future citizen'
- feelings of adulthood/teenagers
    - what makes young people adults or not yet adults
    - what it means to be a young person
- what young people expect to do as citizens when they are adults
- feelings of political efficacy among young people
    - in which context do young people believe they can make a change
    - probed specifically for the school
        - student council
        - student paper
        - informally through speaking with teachers/head teacher

(IV) CITIZENSHIP & POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT:

- what counts for young people as
    - political engagement
    - civic engagement
- how important are political / civic engagement for the concept 'citizenship'
- views on whether or not political or civic engagement should be compulsory for citizens
    - young people's views on compulsory voting
    - [for Dutch participants] views on the recent proposal for compulsory social service for all Dutch young people (maatschappelijke dienstplicht voor jongeren)
- young people's views on differences between political/civic engagement
- young people's views on

    - politics
    - politicians
    - activists
- what young people are active in themselves (politically)
    - voting
    - demonstrating
    - signing petitions
    - writing/speaking to representatives
    - speaking to others about politics
    - ethical consumption
- whether or not young people consider now or in the future
    - political engagement
    - civic engagement
- what young people think they will do as adults in the future
- what young people think about the statement
    - 'young people are not interested enough in politics'
    - 'young people do not know enough about politics'
- young people's views on the lowering of the voting age

(V) YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLITICAL ISSUES:

- the issues young people
    - find important, pay attention to
    - would act on
    - why these issues are important
- young people's earliest political memories
- [for Scotland]
    - memories of indyref 2014
    - views on Scottish independence
    - what they think most other young people think about Scottish independence
- how young people get information on political issues
    - newspapers
    - TV
    - online media
    - social media
    - speaking to others
- young people's views on fake news
    - how young people deal with fake news
- young people's views on the role of social media
- young people's use of social media
    - Facebook
    - Twitter
    - Instagram
- whether or not young people use social media
    - to learn about political issues

    - to post about political issues
- [for Dutch participants]
    - how young people looked for information in recent elections
    - their participation in school mock elections
    - how they made up who to vote for in the mock election
- [for Scottish participants] views on and participation in local council elections

(VI) CIVIC EDUCATION:

- how do young people learn about citizenship
- where young people currently learn about citizenship
- civic education in school
    - whether or not young people want to learn/talk about citizenship in school
    - what young people want to learn about citizenship in school
    - subjects in school that touch upon issues around citizenship
    - comparison of citizenship with other subjects
    - whether or not civic education should be compulsory in school
    - [Scotland only]
        - views on citizenship class
        - views on the Dutch Global Politics class
    - [Netherlands only]
        - views on Global Politics
        - comparison of Global Politics with Maatschappijleer
- other locations where young people learn about citizenship
    - family
    - youth groups
    - church
    - other institutions

(VII) CITIZENSHIP AND RELIGION:

- whether or not young people have a faith/ consider themselves religious
- what young people think about faith
- whether or not there is a link between citizenship and faith

Appendix 2. Original Dutch Quotes

[i] “Over wat jij vindt dat een burger is. Een burger kan zijn iemand die netjes is, of iemand die meehelpt, of iemand die op aarde loopt. Er zijn gewoon verschillende meningen over. Als iemand een vraag stelt met het woord 'burger' erin, moet je zelf bepalen wat dat is. En dan kan je antwoord verschillen.“ Sem, 16

[ii] “Nee, het was spontaan, dus dan is het niet echt lastig.” Romy, 16, NL; “Nee, volgens mij hebben we allebei gewoon gezegd wat we dachten en niet per se helemaal gingen bedenken ‘Hmm, wat zou jij ervan vinden?’ of zo.” Lynn, 16, NL

[iii] “Ja, bijvoorbeeld dit, zeg ik maar. Als er voort aan onderzoek wordt gedaan bij jongeren, dat is wel een klein beetje macht, want dat is meer… (…). Je kan dingen zeggen, je mening geven.“ Niels, 15

[iv] “Nee, ik zou het eigenlijk niet weten.” Lieke, 15

[v] “Nederlandse paspoort. (…) Of citizenship. Ja, dat is ongeveer hetzelfde volgens mij.” Tim, 15

[vi] “Een paspoort hebben. Nederlands paspoort.” Nora, 16

[vii] “Voor mij is citizenship iets passiefs, niet actief.” Tim, 15

[viii] “(…) dat je dingen krijgt van je land, of in ieder geval van de regering.” Romy, 16

[ix] “Soort van, kijk, het is een soort, eh, relatie. Soort van ‘You give and you take’. Van de regering geeft jou dingen, zoals bijvoorbeeld gezondheidszorg, scholing, dat soort dingen, en dan is het ook belangrijk dat je dan geeft.” Niels, 15

[x] “Er zijn natuurlijk maatschappelijke verwachtingen, zoals geen afval op straat gooien of zo, maar dat is iets anders dan een maatschappelijke plicht.” Tim, 15

[xi] “Maar het is niet allemaal koetjes en kalfjes, soms scheld je iemand verrot. Dan ben je niet meteen geen burger meer.” Robin, 15

[xii] “Rechten als burger? Je moet niet… ik vind dat we wel gelijk moeten zijn, gewoon elkaar respecteren, gewoon niet slecht van de een denken.” Vera, 16

[xiii] “Werken en geld verdienen, dat moet je soort van.” Elena, 16

[xiv] “Ehm, ja, als je gewoon in Nederland woont, dan vind ik je wel een Nederlandse burger” Melissa, 16

[xv] “In principe is een Nederlands paspoort bewijs van je citizenship, maar ik ben geen expert in law enzo, dus ik zal niet… weet je wel? Ik bedoel, we hebben hier genoeg mensen rondlopen die dan een Indonesisch paspoort hebben ofzo, weet je wel? Dan ben je volgens mij nog steeds een Nederlands citizen volgens mij. Ik weet niet hoe dat werkt in Nederland.” Tim, 15

[xvi] “Nog niet relevant, op zich.” Vera, 16

[xvii] “Het heeft te maken met... als ik een Nederlands paspoort zou hebben, dan zou ik wat moeilijker naar Indonesië kunnen. Daar heeft het mee te maken. Ik weet ook niet precies hoe het werkt, maar voor nu is het gewoon makkelijker voor mij om een Indonesisch paspoort te houden.” Vera, 16

[xviii] “Ja, ik weet het niet. Ik zal me eerst erin verdiepen. Nu ben ik meer van “Ik wil een dubbele paspoort, omdat ik ook Oekraïens voel.” Maar ik wil even kijken wat het allemaal inhoudt om - als ik het heb – wat ik wel en niet kan doen, want ik ga het niet nemen puur omdat ik dat leuk vindt om te laten zien aan mensen met wie ik bevriend ben ofzo.” Elena, 16

[xix] “Ja, de recht, in het Nederlands wetboek, of de Westertounse wet.” Niels, 15

[xx] “Ik bedoel, je hebt gewoon mensenrechten. Die heb je altijd, dus… Niet dat die altijd worden nageleefd, zoals bijvoorbeeld in landen zoals in Afrika, maar ze zouden daar wel moeten zijn.” Nora, 16

[xxi] “Maar als je dan kijkt naar prescriptive, als in: hoe het moet zijn, kom je erachter hoeveel mensen zich er eigenlijk niet aan houden. Hoeveel landen er zijn waar het niet hetzelfde is als hier, ook al hebben we dezelfde rechten. Gewoon... Dat er zoveel plekken zijn, waar mensen gewoon geen rechten hebben.” Vera, 16

[xxii] “Nee. Ik vind het ook een beetje een autoritair construct, om dan te zeggen ‘Als jij dit bent of als jij dit doet, dan ben je geen Nederlandse burger meer.’ Dat is onzin.” Tim, 15

[xxiii] “Het feit dat je burger bent, zal nooit van je afgenomen worden. Dat kan gewoon niet.“ Robin, 15

[xxiv] “Ik denk meer dat het een soort doel is, dan een requirement.” Robin, 15

[xxv] “Je bent sowieso al burger... Ik ben wel een burger, maar ik kan er niet zoveel mee. Ik ben gewoon burger. En als je volwassen bent, dan kun je stemmen. En dan voeg je ook wat toe. En dan ben je niet een betere burger, ofzo, maar wat officiëler, ofzo.“ Maria, 16

[xxvi]“Ik voel me wel als Nederlandse burger, omdat – zoals ik net zei – ik bepaalde dingen krijg en zo en bepaalde rechten heb daardoor. Maar doordat ik nix eraan kan passen, zou ik me minder Nederlandse burger voelen.” Romy, 16

[xxvii] “Nee, ik juist niet door de overheid, want zeg ik maar, al die verplichtingen, die ze nu eerst de hele tijd omhoog tillen, met leeftijden enzo. Bijvoorbeeld dat je op je 15 maximaal tot 7 uur ’s avonds kan werken en voor heel veel dingen dat je toestemming nodig hebt van je ouders enzo.” Niels, 15

[xxviii] “Ik vind het een beetje raar, dat het aan leeftijd ligt eigenlijk, want dat is… de meeste zeggen zo van “Alle mensen onder de 18 zijn niet verantwoordelijk genoeg om te stemmen.” Maar ik bedoel mensen onder 18 gaan naar school, een groot

percentage die werkt. In principe betalen we ook gewoon belasting. Maar we hebben geen stem." Niels, 15

[xxix] "Ik vind dat je al een burger bent als je bijvoorbeeld iemand een knuffel geeft." Robin, 15

[xxx] "Als je iemand anders blijdschap doet, of voor je land inkomen produceert. Ik vind ze allebei iets dat je burger maakt." Robin, 15

[xxxi] "Sport of bijvoorbeeld een feest." Lynn, 16

[xxxii] "Andere mensen hebben niet echt een zegje erin. Het ligt echt bij jezelf. Maar toch, andere mensen kunnen naar je kijken en denken dat je gewoon Nederlander bent waarmee ze kunnen praten. Maar het zit van binnen. Ik denk dat ik nu hier ben en dus burger ben van Nederland." Mariam, 16

[xxxiii] "Ik denk niet dat dat officieel een label is dat je op iemand kan plakken, zo van 'Je bent een burger van hier'." Merel, 15

[xxxiv] "Maar het is toch niet officieel." Robin, 15

[xxxv] "Dus het is ook zo'n soort van thuis gevoel daar, waar je een burger bent." Sanne, 16

[xxxvi] "Ik bedoel, als je jezelf al zo over na gaat denken, zo van 'Ja, ik hoor hier thuis. Dit is mijn huis. En ik voel me een Nederlandse burger.' dan ben je meestal al een Nederlandse burger, vind ik." Vera, 16

[xxxvii] "Ik ben een burger. Ik contribute niet echt aan society, maar ik voel me een burger." Max, 17

[xxxviii] "Ja, ik voel me gewoon heel erg op mijn gemak en zo. Ehm, ja, ik denk niet zo van 'Oh, dit is best wel vervelend'. En als ik naar een ander groepje zou gaan, dan zou ik precies hetzelfde voelen. Dat heb ik niet echt. Ik voel me wel echt thuis en zo." Melissa, 16

[xxxix] "Als je wordt geaccepteerd door de andere mensen, die zich Nederlands voelen, denk ik dat je Nederlands gaat voelen. Maar als je niet wordt geaccepteerd, dan denk je ook wel van 'Ja, wat doe ik hier?' denk ik." Lynn, 16

[xl] "Want, ja, dat leer je toch gewoon een beetje, gewoon wat je allemaal doet in Nederland op de basisschool. Dat bouw je langzaam op." Amber, 16

[xli] "Je bent een fatsoenlijke burger als je jezelf opneemt in de cultuur." Vera, 16

[xlii] "Het is gewoon gedragen naar de norm, zou ik zeggen." Merel, 15

[xliii] "Ja, wel gedrag wat je vereent." Lynn, 16

[xliv] “Misschien ben je fysiek hier geboren en al die dingen, maar voor mensen die hier niet echt voelen dat ze hun strings misschien nog ergens anders hebben. Ergens waar je wel hoort te zijn.” Mariam, 16

[xlv] “Ik denk wel dat het aan je gevoel ligt. Als u zich Nederlander voelt, dan denk ik dat je citizen van Nederland bent. Ook al ben je in Duitsland geboren, als je niks meer met Duitsland te maken hebt.“ Mariam, 16

[xlvi] “Ik denk wanneer ze het zelf willen. Ik denk dat ze, als ze gewoon zo voelen zoals ik, dat ze het gewoon fijn vinden hier.” Tess, 16

[xlvii] “Als je voelt dat je een burger bent, dan ben je een burger.” Max, 17

[xlviii] “Ik vind dat een person ge-judged moet worden, beoordeeld worden, van de acties en denkwijzen die je hebt. Niet alleen omdat hij Turks is, of elke andere nationaliteit. That’s it.” Max, 17

[xlix] “Het is niet alleen maar met politiek. Het is ook met cultuur en gewoon überhaupt de samenleving en sport.” Lynn, 16

[l] “Ik denk wel dat ik een echte Westertounse burger ben, maar ik denk ook dat iedereen een citizen of the world is. Dus beiden wel, eigenlijk.” Mariam, 16

[li] “maar je kan ook een burger zijn van de school, van de stad.” Lynn, 16

[lii] “Ik denk dat je in feit gewoon nog een burger bent, omdat je op deze wereld leeft. Je bestaat.” Lynn, 16

[liii] “En nu dus met Indonesië, ik ben dan misschien Chinees en een Nederlandse burger, ik voel me ook Indonesisch.” Vera, 16

[liv] “Omdat, eh, ik denk omdat ik in Nederland ben opgegroeid. Maar wel ook een beetje met die Surinaamse cultuur. Maar omdat ik ook hier ben opgegroeid, heb ik ook weer Nederlandse dingen geleerd. Dus dan heb ik, zeg ik maar, een beetje een mix van beiden.” Melissa, 16

[lv] “Ja. Het is wat je voelt, vind ik. Als je voelt dat je bij alle twee hoort, hoor je bij alle twee. En als je vindt dat je bij eentje hoort, dan bij een. Ik vind niet dat je limited mag zijn, zoals dat.” Max, 17

[lvi] “Maar ik denk dat dat hetzelfde is met gevoel. Ik ben nou eenmaal burger van Nederland, of ik het nou wil of niet. Maar ik kan me ook ergens anders bij voelen. Ik kan me ook burger van Westertoun voelen. Ik kan me ook burger van Zambia voelen, wie weet.“ Robin, 15

[lvii] “Ik zou... Ik wil... Ik ben Turks en als mijn Turkse paspoort weg is, ben ik een soort Nederlander. Maar ik wil me wel Turks noemen, ik voel me Turks.” Sem, 16

[lviii] “Ik ben hier geboren. Maar ik voel me niet Nederlands. (…) Ik ben niet Nederlands opgegroeid. Het enige dat me Nederlands zou kunnen maken, is mijn uiterlijk. Want ik lijk niet echt Turks.” Sem, 16

[lix] “Maar tegelijkertijd ben ik wel trots op waar ik vandaan kom. Ik heb er veel banden mee. Ik heb twee huizen daar, ik ga er elk jaar heen. Ik vind het leuk om er te zijn. Ik spreek bijna vloeiend Turks. Ik vind het heel leuk.” Sem, 16

[lx] “Ik dacht er echt een week geleden nog aan, zo van: "Wat is de Nederlandse identiteit?" Tulpen? Kaas? Ik weet het niet, man!” Vera, 16

[lxi] “De taal spreken, van kaas houden, gewoon... Nederlands eten vind ik heel lekker. Maar ja, ik vind buitenlands eten ook lekker. Maar... Ik weet het niet. Gewoon een beetje... Ik ga daar een beetje onderzoek naar doen, want wat is nou stereotype Nederlands? Ik weet het ook niet.“ Maria, 16

[lxii] “Er zijn” Merel, 15

[lxiii] “Normaal zijn” Lotte, 16

[lxiv] “Dat je beschaafd bent soort van.” Lynn, 16

[lxv] “Dat je heel, zeg ik maar, netjes enzo bent. Niet echt extreem, zeg ik maar.” Tess, 16

[lxvi] “Maar ja, wat ik net zei, als je je afzondert van de rest, dan ben je waarschijnlijk, vind ik, minder burger.” Lynn, 16

[lxvii] “Ik bedoel, als je Oostertoun FC support, kan je geen burger van Westertoun zijn, dat kan gewoon niet.” Sanne, 16

[lxviii] “Ik ben het helemaal met hem eens, eigenlijk. Ik vind dat je bij een land hoort, heb je altijd wel een reden om tegen iemand anders te gaan want 'hij komt hier vandaan' en dan kun je daar je mening over geven in plaats van wie hij echt is. Maar tegelijkertijd ben ik wel trots op waar ik vandaan kom.” Sem, 16

[lxix] “Als iemand zegt: ‘Waar kom je vandaan?’, zeg ik gewoon ‘Nederland’, ik zal nooit zeggen ‘Ik ben half Keniaans ofzo’.” Maria, 16

[lxx] “En naja, ik voel me altijd helemaal Nederlands, tot en met. En mensen noemen me altijd verkaasd, omdat ik soort van helemaal Nederlands ben, behalve mijn kleur ben ik helemaal Nederlands, zo een beetje. Maar ja, ik ben gewoon trots om Nederlander te zijn.” Maria, 16

[lxxi] “Die mensen denken ook dat als je donker bent, er dan automatisch tegen bent. Maar mijn vader is heel donker, maar hij vindt Zwarte Piet gewoon leuk. En hij vindt het helemaal niet racistisch.” Maria, 16

[lxxii] “Ik ben Pakistaans. Mijn ouders vinden, net als veel mensen in de Islam, dat mannen hoger zijn dan vrouwen. Ik ben niet echt een feminist, maar wel iemand die

in equal rechten gelooft. (…) Ik had er de laatste jaren heel erg struggles mee.“ Mariam, 16

[lxxiii] “Ja, omdat ik in de eerste op de Havo zat en daar zaten wel Marokkaanse meisjes. Dat was wel anders. Ik voelde me een met hun. En toen ging ik naar VWO in een klas waar ik het enige bruine meisje was. En de enige van Zuid, de enige die daar was opgegroeid enzo. Ik voelde me apart, niet echt een met hun, maar ik vond het niet erg. Ik kan wel overal toepassen, als ik iets niet leuk vind zeg ik er iets van en ik houd er niet van om drama te maken van dingen. Het neemt zoveel energie om boos te zijn. Dus ik vergeet het gewoon. Dus ik voel het wel, maar ik ben niet apart ofzo. Ik ben gewoon blij met wie ik ben. Dat laat ik ook aan anderen zien. Het is beter om uniek te zijn, dan hetzelfde als iedereen.” Mariam, 16

[lxxiv] “Ik weet niet. Ik zie dat het verschillend is dan de rest, maar je kan je inleven in anderen. Je kan met twee mensen zijn, maar een komen, in a way. Wel grappig, eigenlijk, hoe je twee personen kan zijn. Maar je merkt ook meer perspectieven over andere dingen, dus je bent wel je eigen persoon. Ik vind het grappig en uniek. Veel mensen hebben dat niet. Als je bent opgegroeid in een samenleving waar je alleen maar over een punt nadenkt, of je bent heel open minded, of narrow minded. En dat je opeens ergens anders naartoe gaat en je je opeens heel apart voelt. Maar ik denk dat het met de tijd komt, dat je uiteindelijk twee kanten kan zien.” Mariam, 16

[lxxv] “Ik denk ook dat iedereen een citizen of the world is.” Mariam, 16

[lxxvi] “Maar het komt altijd op hetzelfde neer, ik snap niet hoe mensen dat niet kunnen zien: Iedereen is een mens, iedereen verdient dezelfde rechten. Je bent daar geboren, of daar, maar je komt op hetzelfde neer. Mensen denken daar altijd zo diep over, maar het is eigenlijk heel simpel. Ik snap niet hoe mensen dat niet zien, maar het is wel zo voor mijn gevoel. Ik snap wel, als je een cultuur hebt of geloof, dat heb ik zelf ook, mensen draaien woorden om van wat het is.” Mariam, 16

[lxxvii] “Ik begrijp het wat het boek zegt dat een citizen is, het is simpeler om dat te doen. Maar als je vraagt of ik me citizen voel... Ik voel me citizen van deze wereld. Niets meer.” Max, 17

[lxxix] “Ja, dat is ook precies wat die tekst in Nederlands zei. Over dat, als je, ehm, als je vergeet dat je een rol hebt als burger, dan wordt je beschaafdheid minder. Dus dat je… elke burger heeft een rol, die we eigenlijk zouden moeten doen.” Romy, 16

[lxxix] “Je bent er om iets te doen. Als je niets doet, vind ik je niet bepaald een burger.“ Sem, 16

[lxxx] “Als ik aan een burger denk... Denk ik aan iemand die er is en helpt, die ergens aan toebrengt. Je hebt effect op iets. En je hebt effect op anderen. Dat is voor mij wel echt een burger.” Sem, 16

[lxxxi] “Zo van je hebt samen een systeem gemaakt, misschien niet zo’n big scale, maar you have something going en ja, het is op een hele kleine schaal een soort van stad. En dan ben je daar gewoon een burger van. Je bent er een deel van.” Sanne, 16

[lxxxii] “Je maakt een deel ergens van uit en dus moet je het geheel bij elkaar houden soort van.” Romy, 16

[lxxxiii] “Als je je best doet om Nederland een betere plaats te maken.” Robin, 15

[lxxxiv] “Volgens mij ben je ideale burger als je echt streeft naar effect op andere mensen. Als je het alleen voor jezelf of je familie doet, ben je niet echt een ideale burger. Maar als je echt iets doet voor anderen, volgens mij ben je dan best een ideale burger.“ Sem, 16

[lxxxv] “Ik vind dat je al een burger bent als je bijvoorbeeld iemand een knuffel geeft.” Robin, 15

[lxxxvi] “Als je iemand anders blijdschap doet, of voor je land inkomen produceert. Ik vind ze allebei iets dat je burger maakt.” Robin, 15

[lxxxvii] “Als je leraar bent, dan is dat, ja, wie je bent. Maar als je bijvoorbeeld student bent, dan is dat je rol in de samenleving. En ja, dat maakt je gewoon een burger, als je deel uitmaakt van de samenleving.” Melissa, 16

[lxxxviii] “Zeg maar met dat stemmen, dan voeg je iets toe van: "Ik vind dat, of ik vind dat" en dat kan ik nu ook zeggen, maar heb ik niet zoveel inspraak daarin.” Maria, 16

[lxxxix] “En dan vind ik dat, zeg ik maar, je moeilijk kunt zeggen zo van ‘Ja, nu ben je verplicht om te helpen in de maatschappij’ want dat is toch, ja, soort van je keuze.” Laura, 16

[xc] “En voor de rest zou ik niet denken, dat je heel veel moet doen. Het is meer als jezelf wilt.” Nora, 16

[xci] “… deel uitmaakt door andere mensen te helpen, door te stemmen, door sociaal te zijn.” Romy, 16

[xcii] “Ik heb geen macht. Ik kan niet bijvoorbeeld zomaar in Syrië lopen en zeggen ‘Dit moet ophouden’ en dan stoppen ze. Nee. (…) Dus in die manier heb ik geen kracht, om het te stoppen.” Vera, 16

[xciii] “Ik denk het niet. Je kan wel stemmen, maar Nederland doet toch wel wat het zelf wil.” Mariam, 16

[xciv] “Ik ben nog steeds oneens met sommige dingen, hoe het hier op school gaat, maar daar kan ik weinig aan doen.” Tim, 15

[xcv] “Ja, dat is dus de bedoeling dat leerlingen een stem kunnen geven, maar daar wordt dezelfde tijd niet naar geluisterd. Weet je, je hoort dan te kunnen beïnvloeden wat er gebeurd op school, maar uiteindelijk is het toch wat ze zelf willen.” Lotte, 16

[xcvi] “Ja, je kan, je kan wel met ze praten, maar ik denk niet dat ze daar heel erg na luisteren, denk ik. Ik denk dat ze gaan ‘Maar ja, jij bent er maar een’.” Romy, 16

[xcvii] “Maar ik kan dat wel zeggen, maar er gaat toch nix gebeuren. Dus ja, dan denk ik ook van, ja, ik zou wel iets kunnen doen, maar het heeft toch niet echt nut. En dat is dan, zeg ik maar, een klein voorbeeld, maar dan, ja…” Lotte, 16

[xcviii] “Kijk, als je toch het gevoel hebt, dat je daar niet zo heel veel aan kan doen, dan raak je pas al je interesse daarin kwijt. Als het toch geen invloed heeft als ik het volg, dan waarom zou ik het volgen? Ik denk dat dat ook een reden is.” Romy, 16

[xcix] “Als er iets is waar ik echt hard in geloof en zeker weet dat ik het er mee eens ben, dan wel ja.” Robin, 15

[c] “Ik zie mezelf niet zomaar op straat lopen.” Max, 17

[ci] “Anders moet het iets heel universals zijn, Human Rights changing ofzo.” Max, 17

[cii] “Maar ja, ik weet niet, ik heb nooit iets gemerkt van dat ze invloed hadden of zo in ieder geval.” Laura, 16

[ciii] “Ja, je kiest toch wel echt voor ja de mensen, die je land regeren.” Malou, 15

[civ] “Ik denk dat daar behalve stemmen een hoop manieren zijn, om dat te beïnvloeden. Maar ik denk dat alle mensen, die dat doen, ook stemmen.” Merel, 15

[cv] “een autoritair construct”, Tim, 15

[cvi] “Maar er moet wel benadrukt worden dat het wel een maatschappelijke plicht is, dat eigenlijk wel iets is wat een burger hoort te doen: te stemmen.” Tim, 15

[cvii] “Ja, en dat dat ook komt omdat wij niet mogen stemmen. Ja, het voelt er niet alsof wij daarin betrokken zijn überhaupt. En dan ga ik ook niet mijn best doen om erin betrokken te zijn.” Romy, 16

[cviii] “Ehm, zeg ik maar, meestal is een stem is soort van macht, dat je een klein beetje macht hebt. Zowel het in Nederland zo is van, ja, er zijn 16 punt, naja, 17 miljoen mensen, die dan een stukje macht hebben, een collectief soort van macht hebben. En dan nog een keer soort van steeds hoger, een soort piramide. En wij zitten niet in de piramide, zeg ik maar. Dat gebeurt pas als we 18 zijn. Dan heeft onze stem ook echt een waarde in die… in dat.” Niels, 15

[cix] “We hebben nog geen kiesrecht, dus… het heeft toch niet heel veel zin.” Lynn, 16

[cx] “We mogen nog niet stemmen, maar we mogen wel onze mening geven. We mogen het niet op papier geven en inleveren, maar we mogen het er wel met anderen over hebben.” Sem, 16

[cxi] “Nou, ik zou zeggen, je mening uiten, praten met mensen daarover en zo.” Sanne, 16

[cxii] “Je kunt het natuurlijk met andere mensen over hebben, want dan overtuig je dan iemand en die vertelt het dan weer aan iemand anders. En dan spreid je het wel.” Tess, 16

[cxiii] “Ja, en in principe zelfs met andere mensen in gesprek gaan over politiek is al je mening uiten, veranderd ook iets, omdat je in het gesprek gaat met iemand anders en zo ook mogelijk elkaars mening veranderd.” Tim, 15

[cxiv] “Ehm, maar ik, ja, en ik lees de krant. Dus ik heb, zeg ik maar, wel een mening over politieke, politieke dingen, die hier gebeuren.” Niels, 16

[cxv] “Of je het nou kan veranderen, dat is een ander verhaal, maar gewoon het feit dat je aware bent van het fact dat het gebeurt, dat vind ik wel belangrijk.” Vera, 16

[cxvi] “(…) burgerlijk is gewoon dat je heel, zeg ik maar, netjes enzo bent. Niet echt extreem, zeg ik maar. Gewoon alles zo doet zoals gewoon de wet zegt.” Tess, 16