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Research Article

"'I Would Say I Am Austrian but …' - Multiple Spatial Belongings and Hybrid Identities among Young People in Vienna, Austria"

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Abstract

Young people who live in or attend school in Vienna grow up in multicultural environments, as immigration has shaped the Austrian society over the last decades. In public debates, migrants and their descendants are repeatedly called on to "*integrate*", while their feelings of belonging to Austria are questioned. Drawing from discussions on hybrid and multiple identities, this study explores the spatial dimension of identity constructions of students in Vienna aged between 14 and 19 years. Quantitative data from a comprehensive online survey and qualitative data from group discussions reveal that multiple spatial belongings on different scales are the rule and not the exception among young Viennese. Furthermore, on a national level, participants identify with Austria to a much larger extent than with any other country. Findings emphasise the need for a mixed-methods approach when researching questions of identity constructions. Fieldwork experiences furthermore show that young people are highly interested in discussing the topic, as they are confronted with these issues on a daily basis.

Highlights:

- An online survey and group discussions examine young adults' spatially informed identities in a comprehensive way

- Austria is the main national reference point, however the local level remains an important spatial anchor

- In migration societies like the Viennese or the Austrian, spatially hybrid identities seem to be the norm rather than the exception

- Students do not seem to be tattered when negotiating identities between various spatial, cultural and socio-ethnic elements

1. INTRODUCTION

In Austria, migrants and their descendants are continually called upon to "*integrate*" into an Austrian "*we*", which however remains undefined. At the same time, those that are called upon in this way are often excluded from a national, regional, or local "*we*"-group in situations such as electoral participation (see Bauer, 2015). Who the societal "*we*" is and who the "*others*" are is steadily negotiated and cannot be defined easily in migration societies like the Austrian. Especially young people with migration backgrounds[1] are interrogated about their spatial belonging(s). Their feelings of belonging are often challenged in both the society of origin (of their parents/ grandparents) and the society of arrival alike (Anthias, 2002; Ghorashi et al., 2018; Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016; Horst et al., 2020).

Drawing on these discussions, this article presents findings from a study[2] on young adults' identity constructions and contributes to the ongoing debate about adolescents' feelings of (spatial) belonging (Antonsich, 2016; Erdal and Strømsø, 2021; Horst, 2018). Considering the fact that contemporary Viennese society is to a great extent shaped by migration, we argue that young adults use multiple spatial references on various scales for their identity constructions (see Wessendorf, 2019). Thus, the key aim of the paper is to (qualitatively and quantitatively) examine the notion of space in the construction of the young adult self. In the following, we analyse the spatial reference points that young people in Vienna use to construct their own "*selfhood*" and hence, how place identity, i.e. an emotional attachment to spatial references, is developed. Selected results from a mixed-methods approach identify the spatial dimensions in the construction of adolescents' identities. From a survey questionnaire, we (re)construct two groups for further comparison: those with singular and those with multiple spatial belongings. For those groups we investigate what kind of spatial entities and what scales (e.g. neighbourhood, city, etc.) are important. We use findings from group discussions to get a clearer picture of what it actually means to them to belong to one or more spatial entities. Language will be highlighted as one marker of hybrid (spatial) identities among adolescents (Mecheril, 2010) to establish spatial "*selfhood*" and "*otherness*".

The focus on adolescents is particularly important as the construction of an own identity is a key task in this phase of life (Erdal and Strømsø, 2021; Jones, 1999). This also includes the challenge to develop feelings of belonging to the place/country of residence, which is even more challenging in the case of migrant youth whose membership in the society they live in is publicly questioned and debated (Gaigg, 2020; Leszczensky and Gräbs Santiago, 2015). With this paper, we present a cross-sectional view on the status quo regarding young adults spatially informed identities according to their own assessment for the under-researched context of Vienna (i.e. Gürses et al., 2001; Hafez, 2017; Vietze et al., 2018).

2. BRINGING VIENNA AND MIGRATION INTO CONTEXT

Contemporary European societies and particularly urban centres have undergone significant demographic changes, as migration became more important over the decades and had major effects on the composition of the population in general and in classrooms alike (Gruber, 2018; Khan, 2021).

Austria is and always has been a country both of immigration and emigration (Fassmann and Münz, 1996). In 2018, about 35.9% of the Viennese (in total: 1.888.776 people) and 18.8% of the Austrian population (in total: 8.837.707 people) were foreign-born (Bauer et al., 2018). The ten most important countries of origin in Austria in 2018 can be traced to the 1960s recruitment agreements (*guestworker* agreements) with Turkey [% of the total Viennese Population in 2018: 3.5%] and Yugoslavia, as well as to the fall of the Iron Curtain and to the Yugoslav Wars [Serbia: 4.7%; Poland: 2.6%; Bosnia and Herzegovina: 2.5%]. Joining the EU and the Schengen Agreement in the 1990s as well as the enlargements of the EU to Eastern European countries [Germany: 2.7%; Romania: 1.7%] during the 2000s further contributed to the pattern. Since then, in addition to a further Europeanisation, a diversification of migration

flows from all over the world to Austria can be observed [Syria: 1.2%; Russian Federation: 0.9%; and Afghanistan: 0.9%].

3. SPACE AND IDENTITY

Since the "*spatial turn*" (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2010; Soja, 1989; Thrift, 1996) in the social sciences, it became very popular in geography to reflect on the connections between identity and place (Casey, 2001; Cresswell, 2015). Place identity describes a concept developed from environmental psychology in the 1980s, where it is argued that the self-identity is not restricted to the self and to others, "*but extends with no less importance to objects and things, and the very spaces and places in which they are found*" (Proshansky et al., 1983, p. 57). Thus, place identity creates a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010) to a certain space or more specifically to everyday places[3] (Agnew, 2011). Since then, many concepts similar to place identity (e.g. "*place attachment*" Gerson et al., 1977; "*sense of place*" Hummon, 1992; "*place dependence*" Stokols and Shumaker, 1981) have evolved, which are mostly used interchangeably. Yet, a comprehensive appraisal of these concepts has not been made to date (Peng et al., 2020). Place identity can also be interpreted as a part of social identity (Turner, 1982), as for instance national or ethnic identity, but does neither overlap with the latter nor are these concepts mutually exclusive.

Place identity is first developed on a local scale, e.g. apartment block, neighbourhood, etc., where everyday life takes place in interactions with individuals and their surroundings (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Weichhart et al., 2006; Wessendorf, 2019). It can however be transferred or extended vertically to higher scales, such as city, nation, etc. (Erdal, 2020; Proshansky et al., 1983). Usually place identity is activated due to certain circumstances and situations, and it usually oscillates between various scales (Lewicka, 2011).

Proshansky et al. (1983) conceptualised place identity as part of personal identity, but place becomes equally important for the development of collective identities (Antonsich, 2010; Easthope, 2009). Place creates feelings of community and constitutes social cohesion when someone identifies with significant places. Therefore, similarity within a group is constructed when the same place is occupied and the feeling of belonging to a spatially anchored group is established (Stets and Burke, 2000).

"*Imagined communities*" (Anderson, 1983) are the basis for the constitution of nation-states or national identity. What it means to be "*Austrian*" for instance is in this sense negotiated among persons who feel part of this imagined community through a cultural system of representations (Hall, 1996). A common history, language, or other relevant characteristics cultivate a form of spatial belonging. Conversely, place identity can misleadingly be attributed to persons and may create stereotypes or othering (Weichhart et al., 2006), especially through language or dialects.

Newer strands of these theoretical concepts (Hall, 1996; Smith and Leavy, 2008) reject essentialist interpretations and are linked to discursive and constructivist approaches, where identity is being discussed as fluid and as continuously being constructed. In this line of thinking, place identity is a result of discourse and negotiation practices (Bamford et al., 2014; Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). Scholars argued that we live in an age of deterritorialisation ("*ethnoscapes*" Appadurai, 1996), placelessness (Relph, 1976) and disembedding ("*Entankerung*" Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1990), driven by migration and globalisation, with hybridity and relationality being the characterising terms (Usher, 2002). Nonetheless, the "*revival*" of spatial belonging or for that matter place identity (Castells, 2010; Werlen, 2017) can be interpreted as counter-tendency to these megatrends. Place(s) – we argue – is an even more important identity-establishing category now, providing a frame of reference for eroding identities. As a result of this increasing connectedness, not only multiple identities, but so-called (spatially informed) hybrid identities ought to occur.

4. HYBRID IDENTITIES

In societies largely shaped by migration, spatial and cultural reference points are assumed to tend towards hybridisation (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). The concept of hybridity explains multiple belongings within a cultural context (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996). It is argued that (post)modern nations can be conceptualised as culturally hybrid due to processes such as globalisation. Moreover, identities are to be understood as hybrid and the intertwining of cultural elements – such as language(s) – in processes of identity construction as the norm in a globalised world, especially with reference to migrants and their descendants. The idea that migrants' identities are built on the nexus of two or more societies that are linked in transnational networks, and that they incorporate cultural elements from different sources, is widely referred to in transnationalism research (Gilmartin, 2008; Glick Schiller et al., 1995). Migrants create and live in "*transnational social spaces*" (Pries, 2008), which are decoupled from the geographical space and which unravel new patterns of socialisation. Due to their migration (and related) experiences, they draw from multiple cultural contexts in their identity constructions. Hence, it is possible to simultaneously use multiple (spatial) entities as reference points for one's own identification, which provides the theoretical basis for having more than just one spatial anchoring of the individual place identity.

The concept of hybrid identities coexists with other theoretical debates that focus on the role of migrants, their descendants, and their cultural belonging within arrival societies (see for overview: Canan 2015). Culture (and identities) emerge(s) as a process on the basis of social relations "*in-between*" various spatial and cultural reference points. One's identity is a relative position in a discursive process of representation and negotiation across biographical, socio-spatial, and ethno-cultural reference points. Thus, culture and identities are in constant state of flux and change. Consequently, unique, dynamic, and positional forms and aspects of human identity emerge (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997).

5. SAMPLES AND METHODS

To explore the role of spatial entities and language in adolescents' identity construction processes, we used a mixed-methods approach. The analysed data originates from two different samples: an online survey, which was directed to all students undergoing secondary education in Vienna, and group discussions with students from three classes.

5.1 Quantitative Method: Survey

The survey was submitted online to all of the 230 institutes of secondary education[4] in Vienna in 2017. Teachers were asked to distribute the link among the young adults aged between 14 and 19 at the time. The final data set consisted of a sample with N = 1,372 valid responses, which is 1.7% of the 82,313 students in that age group in 2016/17 (BMBWF, 2017).

Overall, 53.7% were female, 44.2% were male and 2.1% stated "*other*" as gender. With a mean age of 16.5 years (SD = 0.34), the sample is relatively homogenous regarding age. 80.9% of the respondents were born in Austria and 96.2% hold Austrian citizenship. 47.4% of the adolescents' mothers and 44.8% of the fathers were born in Austria. If either the young adults themselves were born and/or the mother and/or the father was born abroad it is considered migration background[1]. Following the German (DeStatis, 2018) and European Migration Network (2019) definition, 60.7% thus have a migration background.

The survey was distributed to the schools before group discussions took place. Among others, questions regarding language, religion, country of birth (own, mother, father), etc. were asked. In this paper, we focus on the analysis of those questions exploring the role of place identity, (multiple) spatial belonging(s), and language in young adults' identity constructions.

First, the respondents could place themselves spatially in national contexts according to their belonging to *imagined communities* by checking pre-given categories and additionally

ranking them. In addition to 95 pre-given national categories, it was possible to add other categories or indicate that one does not identify with the given. The possibility of expressing multiple belongings on a spatial (in this case national) level was the basis for reconstructing two groups of young adults in the sample: those declaring that they belong to just one (singular) and those with hybrid (multiple) identities based on the national scale. In order to display these identities graphically, the responses were "*mapped*" in a scatterplot based on rank and frequency.

Second, young adults were asked to assess the cognitive dimension of spatial belonging, e.g., "*I see myself as Austrian*". The statements were altered to address feelings of spatial belonging on different levels, namely the residential area, the city, the country, and Europe as a whole. These categories were measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. In open questions, the adolescents had to indicate which languages they used when speaking with their families or friends.

Differences between the two groups (singular or multiple spatial belonging/s) were assessed with ANOVA and Chi^2 (χ^2)-tests regarding their attachment to different spatial scales and also for the questions regarding choice of languages spoken among family members and/or friends.

5.2 Qualitative Method: Group Discussions

Altogether, 79 students from three classes from different schools participated in eight group discussions. Schools were chosen based on prior cooperation, heterogeneous class composition regarding the participants' migration backgrounds, socio-economic status, and place of residence. In addition, schools were picked from different areas in Vienna; one school is located in a district with higher socio-economic status and characterised by a high share of highly skilled internationals and expats, and two schools are located in different districts with a high share of Southern-European migrants and comparatively lower socio-economic status. However, the young adults did not necessarily live in the area of their schools because for secondary education, students are free to apply to schools all over Vienna.
The participants were also aged between 15 and 19 years. 57.0% of the students were male, 43.0% female and approximately two thirds had a migration background.

The group discussions were complimentary to the survey and were carried out in order to gain a deeper understanding of young adults' (spatial) identity constructions and how they negotiate these processes and practices among their peers. For this article, we analysed the group discussions using content analysis (Krippendorf, 2018).

All group discussions lasted between fifty and ninety minutes and were moderated by the project team. Following the literature (i.e. Bloor et al., 2001; Kitzinger, 1995), the number of participants was kept low, with groups of between eight and ten participants. To avoid bias in the group discussions, these students were excluded from the preceding survey.

To encourage the participants to speak frankly about their identity, the participants' teachers did not attend the group discussions. The so-called "*identity-head*" picture (Hintermann et al., 2018, p. 62) was used as stimulus to start discussions. The illustration shows the profile of a drawn head, containing various symbolic representations of potential identity markers, e.g. hobbies, religion, food, etc. Students had the opportunity to raise and discuss any topic related to their identity and belonging. Hence, topics in the survey and topics during group discussions do not fully overlap. One example is the distinction between urban and rural identities that was intensely discussed in the groups but not mentioned in the survey. Moderators only intervened by rephrasing questions, summarising standpoints, or opening up a new topic when the discussion between the participants reached a deadlock.

6. FINDINGS

In the following, results from the online survey regarding quantitative dimensions of spatial belonging and group discussions' emerging topics on identity construction are presented separately. A synopsis of both will be discussed in the conclusions.

6.1 Online Survey

6.1.1 Singular and Multiple Spatial Belongings

First, respondents were asked to (not) identify with one or more pre-given national categories and additionally rank them. On this basis, two groups were constructed for further investigation containing members with singular and multiple spatial belongings respectively. We used representations of *imagined communities* because the discussion is structured along the lines of national belonging in Austrian public debates.

In total, 97 different countries were ticked off. 61.7 % (846) marked more than one national reference. The most common combinations were: Turkey-Austria (3.4% within multiple national belongings), Serbia-Austria (2.6%), Austria-Turkey (2.5%), Austria-Serbia (2.4%), Austria-Germany (2.0%), Austria-Europe (2.0%), Croatia-Austria (1.5%), Bosnia-Herzegovina-Austria (1.5%), and Egypt-Austria (1.3%). However, 36.7% (504) of the young adults reported that they had only one national belonging and 1.6% (22) from the sample stated having no spatial reference points for place identity at all. On average, adolescents have 1.88 national belongings.

Figure 1. Spatial self-placement of young adults in Vienna (N = 1,372) (i.e. Table 3 in Annex)
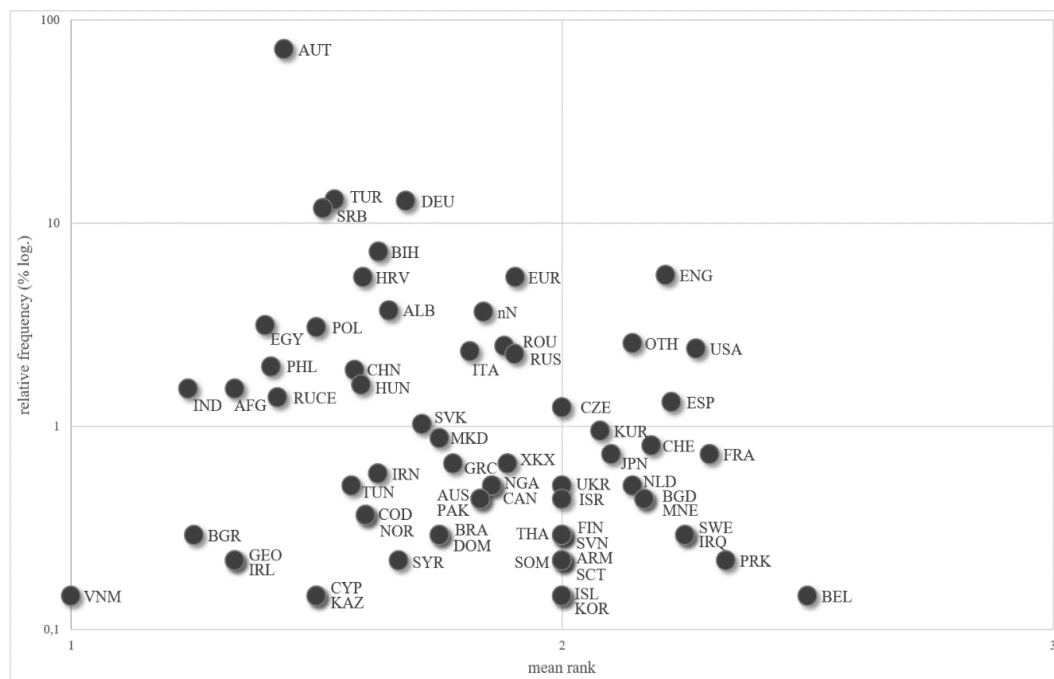
Figure 1 shows the spatial self-placement of the young adults along national categories, which are located according to mean rank (x-axis) and frequency (y-axis log.) (see Moscovini, 1961). Every young adult had the possibility to rank up to three categories of their spatial belonging(s). Regardless, the frequency is based on the sample size (1,372) and not the total amount of filled-out categories (2,592). Austria (AUT mean rank [m.r.] = 1.43; frequency [f.] = 71.21%) is the most important spatial reference on a national scale among young adults in

this study in relation to the overall frequency. With 71.21%, Austria has the highest number of mentions (977 in total). The rank of 1.43 indicates that more young adults see Austria as their primary source of spatial identification than any other category. In other words, if they have multiple spatial belonging, Austria is more likely to be mentioned first. About 64.7% (632) of respondents ranked Austria first, 27.3% (266) in second and 8.1% (79) in third place. Only nine countries[5] (Vietnam, India, Bulgaria, Ireland, Georgia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Philippines, and Chechnya) are the main spatial reference points other than Austria with the m.r. < 1.43 (Table 3 in Annex).

Beside Austria, there are only three countries, namely Serbia, Turkey, and Germany, that reach more than the benchmark of 10% in frequency and simultaneously were mentioned between 1 and 2 regarding their mean rank (SRB m.r. = 1.51; f. = 11.81%; TUR m.r. = 1.54; f. = 13.05%; DEU m.r. = 1.68; f. = 12.83%). However, these three country references rank far behind Austria in frequency and hence do not challenge its quantitative importance in terms of spatial belonging for the young adults in Vienna. Other important countries are Bosnia and Herzegovina (m.r. = 1.63; f. = 7.22%) as well as Croatia (m.r. = 1.59; f. = 5.39%), reaching over 5% in frequency and ranking between 1 and 2. On a supranational level, Europe is a key reference point (m.r. = 1.91; f. = 5.39%). However, the mean rank of 1.91 allows the interpretation that young people more often see Europe as a second reference for spatial belonging rather than as a first reference. These results can also be understood as representations of the main immigration flows to Austria from Ex-Yugoslavia, Turkey, and EU-Member States starting in the 1960s. The variables "*migration background*" and "*multiple spatial belongings*" correlate moderately (r = .481, p = .000), which also suggests other influences for multiple spatial belongings. No national belonging (nN) (m.r. = 1.84; f. = 3.64 %) corresponds to the category "*I have no feelings of belonging to any nation*" in the survey and represents all respondents (1.6 %) who did not identify with any spatial entity on a national scale.

6.1.2 Scales of Spatial Belonging

The analysis of the Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) reveals that respondents show high approval rates towards all the spatial scales they were presented with (Table 1). In total, the young adults agreed (aggregated: 1 "*strongly agree*" to 3 "*slightly agree*") with seeing themselves mostly as European with Mean (M) = 5.15 (88.6% of respondents), as Austrian with M = 4.46 (73.8 %), as part of their residential area, neighbourhood, etc. with M = 4.30 (76.5 %), and least as Viennese with M = 4.06 (66.0 %). The category "*Europe*" received the strongest approval rates: 60.7% of all young adults *strongly agreed* with the respective statement.

Table 1. Scales of place identity according to singular or more national belongings (N = 1,372)

Items	Total (N = 1,372)		One National Belonging (N = 504)		Two or More National Belongings (N = 846)		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	t
Res. Area, Neighbourhood etc.	4.30	1.41	4.23	1.43	4.39	1.36	2.02*
Vienna	4.06	1.74	4.23	1.86	3.97	1.65	2.59**
Austria	4.46	1.72	4.93	1.72	4.19	1.65	7.87***
Europe	5.15	1.33	5.27	1.29	5.11	1.33	2.23*

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

When comparing the two groups, differences on each spatial scale become evident. The approval rates from the adolescents with singular spatial belonging are slightly higher on the "*city*", the "*nation*", and the "*European*" level than those with multiple spatial belongings. The only exception can be identified on the smallest scale, where adolescents with multiple belongings to a greater extent agree with being part of their residential area, neighbourhood etc., with $M_{singular} = 4.23$ (73.6 %) and $M_{multiple} = 4.39$ (79.6 %). On the city level, young adults with singular belonging seem to be more closely connected with Vienna [$M_{singular} = 4.23$; 68.9 %] than those with multiple belongings [$M_{multiple} = 3.97$; 65.0 %]. The same applies to the national and supra-national level: those with singular national belonging identify with the concept of Austria and Europe to a greater extent than those with multiple belongings do; Austria: $M_{singular} = 4.93$ (79.2 %) vs. $M_{multiple} = 4.19$ (70.8 %) and Europe: $M_{singular} = 5.27$ (90.1 %) vs. $M_{multiple} = 5.11$ (88.2 %). The difference between the two groups is most evident on the national scale. Young adults with singular national belonging not only more strongly agree with feeling Austrian, but this category also has the biggest statistical effect among all given scales and is highly significant ($t = 7.87$, $p = .000$). All comparisons between these two groups on the other scales show smaller effects but also are significant.

6.1.3 Spatial Belonging and Language

Language is considered a cultural marker of identity and is interwoven with other aspects of identity, especially in connection with migration (Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain, 2013; Regan et al., 2016). An open question in the survey enquired about the language usage of respondents when speaking within their families and when being among their friends (Table 2).

Table 2. National Belongings and Language (N = 1,372)

Items	Language Family			Language Friends		
	Total	Singular National Belonging	Two or More National Belongings	Total	Singular National Belonging	Two or More National Belongings
	(N=1,372)	*(N=504)*	*(N=846)*	*(N=1,372)*	*(N=504)*	*(N=846)*
German only	47.7%	73.6%	31.4%	73.3%	81.2%	67.9%
German and Others	8.9%	3.9%	12.1%	14.4%	9.3%	17.9%
Others and German	7.4%	3.8%	9.8%	6.1%	4.9%	6.9%
Others only	35.6%	18.7%	46.1%	5.5%	4.4%	6.3%
Total[6]	99.6%	100.0%	99.4%	99.3%	99.8%	99.1%

$\chi^2(4) = 226.5$, $p = .000$, $V = 0.41$ $\chi^2(4) = 29.9$, $p = .000$, $V = 0.15$

Results show noticeable differences between the language(s) spoken at home and the language(s) spoken among friends. "*German only*" (47.7 %) and "*other languages only*" (35.6 %) are the two most important categories when comparing the total shares of the language(s) spoken within the family, while German is the dominant language used among friends. 73.3% of the respondents state that they speak "*German only*" with their friends. The categories "*other languages only*" (5.5%) as well as "*Others and German*" (6.1 %) are of minor importance. The second highest share of languages spoken among friends is "*German and Others*" (14.4%).

The significant differences in the languages spoken between singular or multiple national belongings are bigger within families ($\chi^2(4)$ = 226.5, p = .000) than among friends ($\chi^2(4)$ = 29.9, p = .000). The effect size (V) between the two groups is intermediate (V = 0.41) regarding languages spoken in families and small (V = 0.15) when speaking with friends. By tendency, the adolescents rather speak "*German only*" within the family when having a singular national belonging (German only$_{singular}$ = 73.6%; German only$_{multiple}$ = 31.4%). The shares of "*other*" languages spoken within families tend to be higher when respondents have multiple national belongings (Others only$_{singular}$ = 18.7%; Others only$_{multiple}$ = 46.1%). Although the shares differ, German stills seems to be the language that is spoken by a majority within families. It is either used as the only language or mixed with other languages. In percentages, this amounts to 81.3% with singular national belonging and 53.3% of those with multiple national belongings.

The picture changes when we shed a light on the languages spoken among friends. German is the primary language spoken among friends, irrespective of the issue of singular or multiple national belonging(s). The respondents with singular national belonging however score higher in the category "*German only*" than those with multiple national belongings (German only$_{singular}$ = 81.2%; German only$_{multiple}$ = 67.9%). The significance of German becomes even more explicit when all three categories are considered where German is mentioned, the total share amounting to more than 90% in both groups (Singular = 95.4%; Multiple = 92.8%). Only 4.4% and 6.3% respectively of the young adults speak only other languages with their friends.

Speaking German and other language(s) or vice versa is more characteristic for the group with two or more national belongings and is more common in communicating with friends (24.8%) rather than within the family (21.9%). Nonetheless, the shares for mixed language usage can be considered high for the group with singular national belonging too, scoring 7.7% within the family and even 14.2% among friends.

6.2 Group Discussions

As findings from the survey show, multiple spatial belongings constitute an important part of young adults' identity. Quantitative data, however, cannot answer the question of what it means to belong to a certain spatial entity. Consequently, group discussions were analysed to gain insight into how students reflect on matters of spatial, ethnic, and cultural belonging, as well as on the concept of identity. For this article, we only consider results relevant to spatial identity formation and the role of language.

Generally, findings from the group discussions indicate that the idea of belonging to a spatial entity is a major topic in the lives of adolescents. It was discussed extensively and proved itself to be chiefly connected to the notion of multiple national belongings. Spatially informed hybrid identities were strongly addressed in the context of nationality and citizenship. Generally, participants acknowledge the hybridity of their own identities, largely informed by their own migration experiences or migration background.

> *"I would say … I would say I am Austrian, also because I have the Austrian citizenship. I live in Austria; therefore, I also speak German. But I would also mention that I have Croatian roots, for instance. Because I think that is important and it defines me."* (GD7/Q1)[7]

> *"On the one hand it is Turkey, right, where you come from, because my parents grew up there, because you simply originate there. And on the other hand, it is where you were born, where you grew up, where you live, go to school, everything."* (GD3/Q2)

> *"It depends how you yourself think about it. […] I grew up here, was born here, but I am also … have Serbian roots, um, if you say, yes, I am Serbian or I am Austrian."* (GD8/Q3)

Feelings of belonging to Austria are connected, on the one hand, with Austrian citizenship, the official recognition of being part of the nation. As the student (GD7/Q1) put it: "*I am Austrian because I am an Austrian citizen*". On the other hand, their everyday lives account for their Austrian identity. They were born here, grew up in the country, they know how to cope with

everyday life, and have the knowledge to interpret the everyday situations they encounter in their lifeworlds.

The participants sum up the way of spatial belonging not only within one scale level, but they highlight the importance of the local level in multiple ways. They divide Vienna by its districts and reproduce common stereotypes attached to different districts. People living in "rich" districts with a high socio-economic status are frequently compared to those living in districts where inhabitants predominantly have specific migration backgrounds or lower economic status (GD5/Q4).

"I notice that above all because I live in the 16th district and the 16th district doesn't have such a good reputation, because some areas in the 16th are already, well, I don't know, problem areas. […] When people say, yes, I live in the 16th district, it is always generalised, so to speak. And then everyone always thinks that the whole 16th district is so full of drug dealing or something, although in reality that's not the case. Because like everywhere, there are nicer neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods where it's not so bad." (GD5/Q4)

Growing up in their residential areas creates familiarity and in turn a sense of local belonging. Knowing their way around the neighbourhoods makes them feel comfortable (GD5/Q5). Another factor (GD5/Q6) that contributes to the development of a sense of local belonging are familiar people, including neighbours and friends. Seeing the same familiar people in the neighbourhood or the residential building on a daily basis fosters social familiarity, even if the students do not know these people personally. Living close to their friends is another important factor on the local level. Spatial proximity and the possibility of meeting easily and quickly play a crucial role in reinforcing social interactions in residential neighbourhoods. The students seem to be emotionally more distant to other neighbourhoods due to a lack of familiarity, which in turn creates a sense of non-belonging or strangeness.

"To me, my district is somehow very important. I feel somehow foreign in other districts. I don't know why. The people there are also somehow different. It seems that way to me." (GD5/Q5)

"Or, for example, um, in your district you have your neighbours and you meet them every day. ... [Y]ou get used to seeing each other every day and so on. I think when you're in another district … it is difficult to build up this rhythm, and this close relationship with each other." (GD5/Q6)

Further, discussants make a notable distinction between "*coming from*" a country and being "*born*" in a country when talking about their spatially informed identities. If there is a hierarchical structure between the two categories, it has not been reflected during the discussions. "*Coming from*" a country, however, is related to their families' countries of origin. The students with migration backgrounds express strong connections to these home countries (see GD7/Q1; GD3/Q2; GD8/Q3). Literature offers some possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, migration might spatially separate families and at the same time bring them emotionally closer together through transnational family-based connections to various reference-persons both belonging and not belonging to their family and nation (Kämpfe, 2019). Second, transnationality "*decouples the concept of 'home' from a distinct physical location and instead positions it as a mobile concept in relation to multiple social fields of attachment and belonging*" (Ní Laoire et al., 2010, p. 157). Third, these feelings of belonging can be categorised as "*biographizing attachment*" (Mecheril, 2003) and can be interpreted as "*a strong attachment to their respective parental culture*" (Schmitt, 2010, p. 172).

Two other main themes were identified that were given special attention during the discussions in relation to spatial and hybrid identities: "*identity and similarity*", and "*cultural attributes*".

"*Identity and similarity*" respectively were strongly framed by a discourse separating urban from rural entities. This discourse often had stereotypical characteristics. Quantitative data indicate that young adults identify much stronger with Europe and the nation than with smaller spatial entities such as the city (Vienna) or their neighbourhoods (see Table 1). Qualitative data however suggest that similarity and difference are constituted by other spatial entities than those suggested in the survey. A feeling of "*being urban*" is meaningful to adolescents and makes a difference. Being urban seems to be a special form of identity.

"Well, maybe you are more open-minded when you have grown up in Vienna and you have more experiences with crowds of people or you get in touch with other people and people who think differently and there is such an exchange and you get along better with a crowd of people. Because for instance, if somebody has grown up in a small village and comes to Vienna for studying at university, they might have difficulties to get along. Because it is different from life in a village and vice versa." (GD1/Q7)

"And they [people from rural areas] have other perspectives than people who live in a city." (GD1/Q8)

"If you look at it, how children behave who grow up in Salzburg for instance, compared to Vienna. Like the place where my father originates, the people there are completely different from those in Vienna. He is from a small village in Salzburg." (GD1/Q9)

In fact, participants in the group discussions have much in common with young adults from other spatial entities, regardless whether they are urban or rural: they are about the same age, attend school, listen to the same music, and play the same games on their smartphones. Nevertheless, students mention primarily that which distinguishes them from young adults – or people in general – who live in the countryside. Whereas most of the participants grew up in urban environments or at least commute to Vienna on a daily basis, growing up in a rural area marks a strong difference as explained in the quotes above. The urban identities constructed thus, as distinct from rural identities, seem to be more important among the groups than the identification with Vienna itself.

A similar differentiation process applies, for example, when students talked about their residential districts (see GD5/Q4). On a general level, students (re)produce common stereotypes of districts and local areas in Vienna but at the same time distance themselves from these stereotypical images when it comes to their own residential neighbourhoods. In addition, they critically reflect ascriptions to their residential district by others who do not live there.

Students link their feelings of spatially hybrid belonging to places, concepts of nation, and *cultural attributes* – mainly customs and language –, but rarely explain what culture means to them (GD5/Q10). Some interpret "*culture*" as national food, festivities or behaviour, e.g. punctuality, while others describe hybrid cultures anchored in constructed national entities as traditions and religious festivities such as Easter, Christmas or other (nation-specific) festivities (GD8/Q11).

"Well, I think … I was born here and I assimilated. But still, I don't forget my culture. I still hold on to these traditions although I adapted to everything here in Austria. I still don't forget my culture, though." (GD5/Q10)

"I, for instance, I celebrate Serbian festivities with my parents because my parents are from Serbia and moved here. However, I myself was born here and I also celebrate Austrian Christmas, which is on another day than in Serbia. I also celebrate Easter, also the Austrian one and with my parents the Serbian Easter." (GD8/Q11)

Similarly, speaking German or the national language of the country of origin (of their families) is essential for identifying with the constructed national culture(s) and therefore constitutes a main marker in terms of (multiple or hybrid) spatial belonging(s).

"Because you are fluent in both languages of both countries. Well, you know the culture […]. How should you feel attached to a country if you don't know the language?" (GD3/Q12)

"[…] but when I, for instance, talk to somebody who speaks my mother tongue, I feel more connected to the person than to somebody who speaks Turkish for instance, and me, I talk Romanian." (GD8/Q13)

Connecting language and culture as markers of (multiple or hybrid) spatial belonging(s) can be explained by "*habitual effectiveness*", which is "*the framework and the ability to function in a certain culturally defined space*" (Schmitt, 2010, p. 166). Not only can language be identified as an important aspect of spatial belonging(s), but also more generally as a marker for group belonging or social cohesion.

"(Student 1) Well, most of the time we talk German […].
(Student 2) Six hours in school, then at home and with friends. About most of the time.
(Student 3) You talk German more often with your brothers and sisters but not really with the parents." (GD4/Q14)

Which language the discussants use largely depends on whom they talk to. Multilingual students for example use German when talking to siblings as well as to friends in- and outside of school (see GD4/Q14), while they use their first languages when they speak with their parents or grandparents. Here, the results from the group discussions correspond with those from the survey.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has explored the spatial dimension of the identity construction of students aged between 14 and 19 in Vienna, according to a mixed-methods approach. Feelings of belonging to a spatial entity are not only important from an individual point of view, but might also affect society more generally, for instance in case of political or electoral participation. Deriving from results of the online survey, we differentiated two groups of adolescents according to their own spatial self-placement: those with singular and those with multiple spatial belonging(s) based on the national scale. We furthermore analysed the different use of spatial reference points and scales within these two groups, particularly focussing on the role of language. Findings from group discussions served to exemplify the factors and elements that are meaningful to young people in Vienna for the formation of multiple spatial belongings or hybrid identities, e.g. social relations, language, etc.

The young adults' place identity becomes effective on various scales. Contrasting results on the supra-national scale, especially the European scale, which enjoyed the highest approval rate in the survey, proved particularly interesting. However, the participants did not mention Europe during the group discussions as a notable spatial reference point. It can be assumed that the ongoing Brexit debate in public, and possibly during classes at the time when the survey and the group discussions took place, have influenced this high degree of approval to "*Europe*" as a spatial category for their identity construction. This also suggests that a European identity can be activated when directly addressed but seems to be too abstract and too (emotionally) distant for adolescents to refer to themselves.

Results from the survey show that the smallest spatial category (neighbourhood, residential area/district, etc.) is the most important spatial entity for young adults holding multiple spatial belongings. We assume that the local scale is more prominent among young adults having multiple spatial belongings, because it is the tangible environment that can be seen, in contrast to their internationally anchored, hybrid identities (see Hopkins, 2010). Conversely, the categories of nation and city constitute the more important reference points for young adults with only singular spatial belonging. The biggest difference between the two groups is visible on the national scale, resulting from the fact that two or more national categories are being used for the construction of the own identity. This emphasises the importance of the national dimension for creating difference.

Our findings indicate that spatial dimensions are meaningful for (hybrid) identity constructions on all scales as they come into effect simultaneously or successively and may not be limited to one scale only. Thus, we suggest that identities are always to be interpreted in a spatially hybrid manner, regardless of migration or ethnic backgrounds. Language is important as a cultural marker for establishing place identity and can be interpreted as a connecting element between multiple spatial belongings. In contrast to public and political debates, in which the obligatory use of German is discussed and required also during breaks at school (i.e. Erkurt, 2020; Repplinger & Budke, 2018), our results clearly show that speaking German represents common ground for communications among family members and friends. However, outcomes from the survey and the group discussions are concise and reveal that a mix of German and other languages is spoken and is linked with multiple belonging(s).

Results from the group discussions show very clearly that the young adults do not consider it necessary or even possible to choose between two or more cultural options but rather draw from different sources for the formation of their own spatially informed, hybrid identities. They hardly ever describe their own multiple identities as difficult or tattered. Building a hybrid identity and combining multiple national, cultural, and/or socio-ethnic elements, which eventually lead to feelings of multiple spatial belongings, seems to be a feasible way of living as a young person in a multicultural environment.

Overall findings rather clearly show that multiple identities are nothing exceptional but rather the rule when living and growing up in a society vastly shaped by migration. The majority of our study participants identifies with more than one spatial entity formed by their ethnic, cultural, and national backgrounds. They thus live in spatially hybrid and multi-lingual lifeworlds. It can be assumed that these results are not unique for the context of Vienna but very common for all societies shaped by migration. We suggest further research on this topic regarding young adults in different contexts, as they are highly impressionable in this early phase of life. Results further indicate that adults form spatially hybrid identities regardless of migration background or citizenship, an observation that should be investigated further. Other factors contributing to multiple spatial belongings and hybrid place identities, such as holidays, having friends aboard, virtual environments, etc., might give further insights into the construction of spatially informed identities.

Lastly, we wish to reflect on Austrian citizenship legislation, which treats dual citizenship as a highly irregular case of formalising hybrid and multiple spatial belongings. From a legal perspective, young adults must fit their hybrid spatially informed identities into the rigid category of only one citizenship. This legal marker of spatial belonging on the one hand enables electoral or political participation but on the other is also a mechanism furthering societal and political exclusion. The legal dimension only reflects the lifeworlds of young adults to some extent, which calls for adjustments.

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NOTES

1. In Austria, the following definition of migratory background is used by Statistics Austria (2019): *Migration background is established when both parents are foreign-born.* According to this definition, 45.3% of young adults participating in the online survey have a migration background, dived into 16.5% first generation (young adult is foreign-born) and 28.8% second generation (young adult was born in Austria).
2. MiDENTITY-Project: "*Mediating migrant societies – Tracing the spatial constructions of transnational identities between the poles of selfing and othering among young adults in Vienna.*" https://fdz-gw.univie.ac.at/en/forschen/projekt-midentity/ (31.05.2021)
3. Human geography makes a distinction between space and place. Location or space (Tuan, 1977) is seen as a measurable point and describes "*the where*". Place on the other hand is "*[…] a particular location that has acquired a set of meanings and attachments*" (Cresswell, 2015, p. 1), deriving from meanings, practices, negotiations and discourses (Agnew, 2011).
4. Types of schools in the Upper Secondary Level [ISCED3-4]: Upper Cycle of Secondary Academic School (AHS Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule Oberstufe), College for Higher Vocational Education (BHS Berufsbildende Höhere Schule), School for Intermediate Vocational Education (BMS Berufsbildende Mittlere Schule), Part-Time Vocational School (Berufsschule und Lehre, Duale Ausbildung), Pre-Vocational School (Polytechnische Schule), Add-On Course (Aufbaulehrgang) (see https://www.bildungssystem.at/en/).

5. Countries with m.r. < 1.43 (see Table 3) have very low frequencies, only representing a few actual mentions. 17 countries that did not reach the 0.1%-mark (one mention) in frequency are not displayed in the scatterplot.
6. A rounding error and omitting answers do not always equal 100%.
7. Group Discussions are quoted as follows: GD1 – GD 8 = group discussion 1 – 8; Q1 etc. = Quote 1 etc. refers to the number of the respective quote from the group discussion in the text.

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ANNEX

Table 3. Spatial self-placement of young adults in Vienna (%), sorted by relative frequency (N = 1,372)

Spatial Reference Points	ISO Code	Mean Rank	Relative Frequency (%)	Spatial Reference Points	ISO Code	Mean Rank	Relative Frequency (%)
Austria	AUT	1.43	71.21	Netherlands	NLD	2.14	0.51
Turkey	TUR	1.54	13.05	Ukraine	UKR	2.00	0.51
Germany	DEU	1.68	12.83	Canada	CAN	1.86	0.51
Serbia	SRB	1.51	11.81	Nigeria	NGA	1.86	0.51
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	1.63	7.22	Tunisia	TUN	1.57	0.51
England	ENG	2.21	5.54	Bangladesh	BGD	2.17	0.44
Europe	EUR	1.91	5.39	Montenegro	MNE	2.17	0.44
Croatia	HRV	1.59	5.39	Israel	ISR	2.00	0.44
Albania	ALB	1.65	3.72	Australia	AUS	1.83	0.44
No national belonging	nN	1.84	3.64	Pakistan	PAK	1.83	0.44
Egypt	EGY	1.40	3.13	D.R. of the Congo	COD	1.60	0.36
Poland	POL	1.50	3.06	Norway	NOR	1.60	0.36
Others	OTH	2.14	2.55	D.P.R. of Korea	PRK	2.33	0.35
Romania	ROU	1.88	2.48	Iraq	IRQ	2.25	0.29
Unites States	USA	2.27	2.41	Sweden	SWE	2.25	0.29
Italy	ITA	1.81	2.33	Finland	FIN	2.00	0.29
Russia	RUS	1.9	2.26	Slovenia	SVN	2.00	0.29
Philippines	PHL	1.41	1.97	Thailand	THA	2.00	0.29
China	CHN	1.58	1.90	Brazil	BRA	1.75	0.29
Hungary	HUN	1.59	1.60	Dominican Republic	DOM	1.75	0.29
Afghanistan	AFG	1.33	1.53	Bulgaria	BGR	1.25	0.29
India	IND	1.24	1.53	Armenia	ARM	2.00	0.22
Chechnya	RUCE	1.42	1.38	Scotland	SCT	2.00	0.22
Spain	ESP	2.22	1.31	Somalia	SOM	2.00	0.22
Czechia	CZE	2.00	1.24	Syria	SYR	1.67	0.22
Slovakia	SVK	1.71	1.02	Georgia	GEO	1.33	0.22
Kurdistan	KUR	2.08	0.95	Ireland	IRL	1.33	0.22
North Macedonia	MKD	1.75	0.87	Belgium	BEL	2.50	0.15
Switzerland	CHE	2.18	0.80	Iceland	ISL	2.00	0.15
France	FRA	2.30	0.73	South Korea	KOR	2.00	0.15
Japan	JPN	2.10	0.73	Cyprus	CYP	1.50	0.15
Kosovo	XKX	1.89	0.66	Kazakhstan	KAZ	1.50	0.15
Greece	GRC	1.78	0.66	Vietnam	VNM	1.00	0.15
Iran	IRN	1.63	0.58				