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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Heterotopias of Citizenship as Spaces of Otherness: The Fluid Boundaries Between We and They

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Abstract

Heterotopia is a neologism proposed by Michel Foucault to describe specific cultural and discursive spaces that mirror real life, yet stand in opposition to it. I propose to look at heterotopia through the lens of youth citizenship that is presented in different forms of self-identification in the discursive practices of the selected youth organisations. The article analyses the discursive language of six Ukrainian youth organisations that appear as spaces of *their own*, drawing on Foucault's notion of heterotopia. The task of the article is to examine how these contemporary heterotopias are identified through the language and specific keywords used by their members and how this language defines the space in which their members function, as well as gain insight into the categories of We and They, including their role in self-identification and the delineation of boundaries between the different heterotopias. In this article, I argue that the contexts of the use of the categories We and They with which young people name themselves and separate themselves from non-members of the organisation, have a strong influence on their citizen participation strategies. The empirical results show that organizations position and locate themselves as political and community acting-spaces—heterotopias of citizenship—that have responsibilities and act in accordance with their mission. Although the forms of citizen participation they use vary, their ultimate mission seems to be the same, and may be related to a sense of insecurity caused by a political threat from the Other.

Keywords Heterotopia · Youth citizenship · Strangeness · Otherness · We · They

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Introduction: Heterotopias as Places of the Others

In the 1960s, Michel Foucault first used the term *heterotopias* to describe spaces (whether physical or symbolic) that were different in some way to the rest of the space we inhabit. As examples of such spaces, Foucault gives prisons, ships, cemeteries, brothels, and many others. The otherness of these places is observable on two levels. Firstly, they bring together Others who are either there of their own volition or by compulsion; these Others are often marginalised and excluded from society for their physical or psychological condition, actions or views. Secondly, Otherness manifests itself at the level of the discursive practices that operate in that place. For Foucault, language and the way of speaking play a key role here. Therefore, these are not necessarily physical places but places-texts, which are delimited not only by physical boundaries but primarily linguistic ones. These are systems of meaning that are placed in complex and intentionally created linguistic structures.

The study of heterotopia is more closely associated with disciplines such as philosophy, and cultural studies, rather than with youth studies. Moreover, this concept "has not been applied in studies on the structure of communitarisation in the context of citizenship" (Ostrowicka, Wolniewicz-Slomka 2022:2529). While heterotopia is not a widely used concept in youth studies, it can provide a theoretical framework for understanding how young people engage with and shape spaces that deviate from the norm, and how these spaces influence their experiences, identities, and social interactions.

In what follows, I propose to revisit Foucault's concept of heterotopia by using the framework of citizen participation (analysing the examples of six youth organisations from Ukraine), considering heterotopia as a political and community-acting space with its own linguistic structure. In order to explore this phenomenon in more depth, I will first turn to the notion of citizenship and explain why it is a spatial, heterotopic concept and, finally, I will move to the analysis of the categories of We and They in the statements of selected youth organisations. I see citizenship as a methodological framework that separates the heterotopia from the outside world and, at the same time, defines the form of being of the members of the heterotopias I have studied. The aim of this article is to answer the following research questions: (1) How do members of studied organisations negotiate their identities and sense of belonging through the categories "We" and "They"? (2) What values do they consider pivotal in shaping the dynamics of heterotopias of citizenship, and how do these values influence notions of identity (We) and social cohesion within these spaces? In this article, I will argue that youth organisations use of the categories "We" and "They" have a strong influence on their citizen participation strategies. This article aims to connect philosophical reflections on heterotopia and citizenship to the Ukrainian context.

Heterotopias of Citizenship: A Theoretical Framework

In *Of Other Spaces*, Foucault distinguishes six basic principles of heterotopia (Foucault 1986), which will be an important thread in the following discussion. The first principle is that heterotopias exist in every culture, but we should not speak of some

unified formula of them. This multiplicity of forms can, however, be divided into two categories: heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviation. The second principle of heterotopia is that it has a social function but, at the same time, with no fixed position in the culture of which it is a part. The third principle is that a heterotopia can juxtapose different spaces that are incompatible with each other. The fourth principle is that heterotopia is heterochthonous, that is, guided by its own time. The fifth principle of heterotopias is that they "always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at one and the same time" (Foucault 1986:26). The final, sixth principle encompasses the two functions that heterotopia performs: on the one hand, it makes the illusory nature of the real world visible; on the other, it creates a model of an ideal, perfectly measured world that may exist.

In analysing the space of youth organizations as heterotopias, I draw attention to three principles mentioned by Foucault. The first principle, which speaks of heterotopias of crisis and deviation, refers to the context in which organizations operate. The first category, which Foucault associates with primitive societies, are sacred or forbidden places whose space is destined for certain categories that are *in crisis* (e.g., boarding school as a place to facilitate the crisis of adolescence). Nevertheless, according to the philosopher, some heterotopias of crisis can even be found today. Among the examples that still remain in our everyday life, Foucault also mentions military service. The deviancy of heterotopias that Foucault writes about (e.g., hospitals, prisons), which is often used in a pejorative sense in everyday language, has a slightly different overtone here. By using this term in the analysis of youth organisations, I mean a positive deviance understood according to Jerzy Kwaśniewski as consisting of the following four factors: (1) deviation from the generally accepted norm; (2) rebellion against conformity and the search for more demanding role models; (3) non-egoism; and (4) the potential for social change (Kwaśniewski 2012). Although I argue that the organizations I study are spaces of positive deviance, we are nevertheless also dealing with heterotopias of crisis (by the fact that the work of the studied organisations is tightly immersed in the political context of the country).

The second principle (Foucault's fifths) which speaks about simultaneous openness and closeness (e.g., cemetery, library), shows that the borders between different heterotopias are rather boundaries, both physical and symbolic.

The third principle (Foucault's sixth) which talks about the possibility of creating an ideal model of the world, also linked, as will be seen later, to the imagining of the space of youth organizations as an ideal, better place. Keeping these three principles in mind, I will turn to the concept of citizenship, including youth citizen participation.

Meanings of Citizenship

The concept of citizenship does not appear with the beginning of the nation-state but has a long history in philosophical and political thought. Aristotle considered human a *political animal* (zoon politikon) and was convinced that political participation was not so much a human choice as a natural stage on the path of human's attainment of

the fullness of their humanity, which is the pursuit of the highest goal—the good of the community (Aristotle 1999). Humanity is, therefore, the determinant of the citizen, but citizenship is also the determinant of the human being. Human equals citizen. A citizen in Aristotle is first and foremost a member of the democratic polis, as a political community but also as a physical place, bounded by the walls of the city. Of course, not all inhabitants of the polis were citizens and, therefore, were not seen to possess the same humanity. Women, slaves, metics and children were not considered citizens and, thus, were not fully seen as human. However, it is inappropriate to focus on an analysis of ancient citizenship in terms of equality and diversity, criteria that for us today are the basis of a democratic society, but it is important to point out that—in addition to its communal and political nature—Aristotle's citizenship also has educational significance. The task of each citizen, for Aristotle, is to strive for the good of the community, which is achieved through continuous learning and the education of new citizens.

Several centuries later, Immanuel Kant reflects on the possibility of going beyond the boundaries of the polis and being a citizen of the world: a cosmopolitan. The philosopher acknowledges that this is only possible on the condition of being guided by general law. But the Kantian project, although a very important step forward in understanding the nature of citizenship and the rights of citizenship, has, in my view, its greatest flaw—Kantian world citizenship "shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality" (Kant 1983:118). In turn, hospitality, according to the German philosopher, is only a "right to visit" and is only possible when the host remains the host and the guest remains the guest. So, the We-They dichotomy is very much present here.

If, on the other hand, we pay attention to the citizenship of young people, we can observe that throughout history, young people have played important roles in advocating for social and political change, and their contributions have been critical in advancing the cause of citizenship and democracy. Nevertheless, modern society views youth in three rather opposing categories—as a social problem, as a vulnerable group and as a hope for a better future (Black, Walsh 2021:330). If it comes to a youth citizenship, this term refers to the ways in which young people participate in and contribute to their communities and society as active and engaged citizens. Citizenship education plays a critical role in shaping young people's understanding of citizenship and increases their feeling of personal responsibility (Westheimer, Kahne 2004:245). Studies show (Gould et al. 2011) that when young people receive high-quality civic education, they are more likely to participate in citizenship activities and take on leadership roles. But does this education only take place at school? What is the role of youth organizations in this process?

Citizenship and Youth Organisations

Youth citizenship can be seen as a three-dimensional structure (Wood 2022:4) that includes categories of youth *becoming* citizens (includes importance of representation, status and life course), youth *being* citizens (includes issues of belonging, identity and membership) and youth *doing* citizenship (participation, agency, activism,

rights). Work on citizenship links it to empowerment, suggesting citizenship "should be seen as practice, rather than outcome, and it is essential that those engaging with young people in their citizenship provide them the space to foster their empowerment in their context" (Brodie-McKenzie 2020:10). It is impossible to be or become citizen without doing citizenship, so the practice (a process) is critical. The space where citizenship is enacted also plays a pivotal role. By examining varied youth organizations, particularly youth-led and youth-driven organisations, as active political spaces that speak with their own voices, we have the opportunity to move "towards youth-led concepts" (Bowman, Pickard 2021: 494), away from an adult-centered understanding of citizenship and the world in general. The methodology I used in this study was motivated by this very belief.

Like in any other country, youth citizenship in Ukraine is a vital aspect of its democratic process and societal development. Youth participation (often unconventional) had been an important and dynamic aspect of the country's social and political landscape (Tereshchenko 2010). Ukrainian youth played a crucial role in the Orange Revolution (2003–2004) and the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014). They were at the forefront of demanding closer integration with the European Union and voicing opposition to corruption and authoritarianism in the government. Ukrainian youth have been actively engaged in grassroots activism, creating and participating in various civil society organizations and movements (Редзюк 2020). They have been advocating for human rights, democracy and social justice issues. Although Ukrainian youth have faced challenges in influencing political events, they have also seen opportunities for change and have been instrumental in pushing for reforms and progressive policies.

In an attempt to clarify such multi-level nature of the concept of citizenship on the example of the work of youth organisations from Ukraine, the research proposes to examine citizenship through the lens of the concept of heterotopias by examining three principles discussed above. This method reveals the complex nature of citizenship: the simultaneous projection of past, present and future and the presence of different types and functions of space. The aim of this text is to look at the categories of We-They as constituting a seemingly sharp binary opposition that is at once fluid and porous, and whose members do not exist without the other.

Methodology

This article is the result of an analysis of the statements of six selected youth organisations from Ukraine. The organizations were all selected according to the principle of media visibility. The geography of these organisations connects the West of the country with the East, but each of them has gained a nationwide reach in a fairly short period of time, and some also go far beyond the borders of Ukraine with their activities. The study includes an analysis of various types of publicly available texts: charter documents, press releases and social media posts from 2018. This year was chosen for the study in connection with important events for Ukrainian citizens: the celebration of the 100th anniversary of statehood in Ukraine. I analysed all statements published by the studied organizations in 2018 on their social media

or organization websites. A total of 234 text documents were analysed using the ATLAS.it program and, in the case of the Ukrainer organisation, eight coded videos with their Snapchats (31 documents in total).

The codes with which I coded each organisation's statements and social network posts are (1) Community/nation/state—we/us/our and (2) community/nation/state—them. Both codes were determined before the collection of material began. The first code refers to the content in which members talk about the organisation or about themselves as members of the organisation, but also refer to other communities. The second code refers to content in which members of youth organisations speak about various groups of others. Others are understood here as all those who are not members of the organisation.

"Who, if Not Us? When, if Not Now?": Heterotopias of Crisis

The selected organisations could be thought of across a spectrum from those that are youth led/youth driven, to those that target young people as members. Each of them was founded at different time (the oldest, Plast, has been active since 1911, while the youngest, the Ukrainer, has been present since 2016/2017), but some similarities will be seen below, namely, that each of these organisations was founded in response to certain historical events or even rather in response to a crisis. Hence, it is useful to consider the emergence and genesis of youth organisations in relation to political events occurring in the country, as I will do in the following description of the selected youth organisations. In many cases, we can speak of a youth response to a threat to the statehood of the country, that is—going back to Aristotle—the response of citizens in defence of their political community and their own citizen rights. It was the youth, especially after 1991 (i.e., Ukraine's independence), who were "the catalysts of revolutionary processes aimed at getting rid of the remnants of the Soviet past" (Редзюк 2020:19) (Table 1).

The oldest of the organisations studied is the Plast (in Ukrainian: Пласт) National Scout Organisation, which was founded in 1911 in Lviv as a Ukrainian reaction to the growth of Western scouting. The emergence of this organisation was unlikely to have been caused by political events but was rather the result of the adaptation of an innovative Western model of youth education; nevertheless, the members of the Plast were active participants in the First World War and the struggle for independence (in 1918, to which this research project is dedicated) (Kostura, 2020).

Table 1 Selected organisations (source: own elaboration)

Organisation	Founded	Scope	No. of documents analysed
Plast	1911	National, diaspora	93
YNC	2001	National	8
FRI	2003	National	48
BUR	2014	Local, later national	14
YC	2015	National	33
Ukrainer	2016	National, international	33 + 8 coded videos

After many years, during the now independent Ukraine of 10 years, namely, in 2001, the Youth Nationalist Congress (YNC; in Ukrainian: Молодіжний Націоналістичний Конгрес) emerged, which was founded in Kyiv on the initiative of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The early 2000s was a time when Ukraine was still building its cultural and political identity after gaining independence in 1991. This was a time of economic crisis, mass emigration, and youth-driven anti-government social movements, the most famous of which undoubtedly was the Ukraine without Kuchma campaign, which was directed against the then Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma who was accused of ordering the kidnapping and murder of opposition journalist Georgi Gongadze (Kuzio 2005).

Another historical thread that contributed to the emergence of the Foundation of Regional Initiatives (FRI) (in Ukrainian: Фундація Регіональних Ініціатив) organisation was the Orange Revolution of 2003. When the presidential elections were rigged in favour of the pro-Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovych, people took to the streets to fight for their democratic rights. According to documentation, the FRI was founded in 2002 in Uzhhorod, Transcarpathia, but it was the outbreak of the Orange Revolution that should be considered a milestone in the development of the organisation's large-scale activities. The FRI was also one among the first youth and non-youth organisations to start a new direction in the development of a civil society in Ukraine, namely, the direction of European integration (Редзюк 2020:99).

The emergence of three more organisations was part of the contemporary course of history that begins with the 2013–2014 Revolution of Dignity, the occupation of Crimea, and the war in the Donbass, and continues to the present day as a full-scale war.

Build Ukraine Together (BUR, in Ukrainian: Будуємо Україну Разом) is an organisation that begun as an initiative of Lviv student-architects who went to the bombed-out Kramatorsk in 2014 to rebuild it. Presented as a youth organisation, however, BUR brought together not only young people, but as they themselves refer to their member: "We call them BURchyks, although there are among them both four-year-old toddlers and those already in their 60 s"[1] (BUR, |Facebook post). Nevertheless, the driving force of the organisation remains the student youth, which is why it is considered a youth organisation in this paper.

A year later, in 2015, an organisation called the Youth Corps (YC, in Ukrainian: Юнацький Корпус) was founded in Kyiv. The YC differs from other organisations in that its activities are aimed at school youth and even children (the age of the participants is 9–17 years). The organisation was founded upon the initiative of the leader of the Azov regiment and focuses on the patriotic education of school youth. In the case of this organisation, we see that the youth are not so much the driving force of the organisation here but rather its target group. This difference will become more apparent when analysing the We-They category.

And, finally, is the Ukrainer, being the youngest of the surveyed organisations, which was born as a media project in 2016 and has been operating as an organisation

[1] All translations from Ukrainian are my own unless indicated otherwise.

since 2017. The organisation does not position itself as a youth organisation; instead, the driving force of the organisation is, as in the case of BUR, student youth.

As we can see, the studied organisations have different formats and tasks, some of them identifying themselves as nationalist or patriotic, while others as activist or volunteer organisations, as media, etc. Here again I return to Foucault's claim that there is no single form of heterotopia and that their social function is variable. Thus, in this article I will not set myself the task of analysing them comparatively. Instead, I would like to focus on their perceptions of themselves and others through the use of the We and They categories in order to see the possible common and different features of talking about themselves.

We Are the Community, We Are the Responsibility

The research indicates that a common feature appearing in the statements of each organisation is the self-identification of We through the notion of a community, a group with shared values and, consequently, a common mission and responsibility for achieving this mission:

> We are a community of volunteers that already has more than 1,500 young people from all over Ukraine and the world. We take responsibility and explore unknown corners of Ukraine. (BUR, |Facebook post);
> [...] what is important for all members of the Foundation for Regional Initiatives (FRI): values, intellectual development, proactivity and idealism, creativity, travel, like-minded people all over the country, and the desire to make positive changes in the city and society. (FRI,|Facebook post)
> […] for me personally [says a member of the YNC, IL] it is not just an organisation; it is a circle of faithful, honest, courageous people who are united by one goal and idea (YNC, website post);
> Our goal is to serve society. (YNC, website post).

The Ukrainer describes its mission in a slightly different way. It is not so much about changing Ukrainian society or serving it, but rather about understanding who that society really constitutes. "That's why we started to create the Ukrainer, a media project that aims to understand and articulate exactly who WE are and communicate this to the world in an accessible media form" (Ukrainer, website post). Thus, We appears on two levels here: We as the Ukrainer, and We as Ukraine (Ukrainians). Here, getting to know Ukraine means getting to know oneself and articulating one's identity. And, as put by the members of the organisation in their entries, work for the organisation is work for the benefit of Ukraine:

> We research Ukraine and transform this research into useful and visual material that is already freely used in education, presentations of the country's regions, and our tourism potential abroad. Therefore, by investing any resource in the Ukrainer, you are investing in Ukraine! If you feel that the project addresses an important issue, you have the opportunity to support it and influence its future. (Ukrainer, website post)

As it can be seen, the statements of all the organisations allude to the Aristotelian good of the community as the highest goal of the citizen. This perception of We is an example of the organization as a form of positive deviance—non-egoistic, working for social change. This also alludes to Foucault's sixth principle of heterotopia which refers to the creation of an ideal world. However, in the case of the analysed organisations, despite looking very ambitious (in several cases referring to a changing society, to a better future for Ukraine, and to responsibility), it is nevertheless not sufficiently articulated, giving a sense of loftiness, not concreteness.

Some organisations describe their own We communities by depicting individual members of the organisation. It is no longer the general We, the community, but the individual, the person by name, who nevertheless forms the community of We. This can be seen most clearly in the stories of the Ukrainer, whose activity is precisely to show the Ukrainer and Ukraine as a community as active, socially, politically, and artistically engaged individuals from different corners of the country. Other organisations (with the exception of the YNC and the YC) also speak to audiences through the voices of their individual members who have succeeded and who "can do like everybody else". One of the Plast members says:

> At the age of 13, I went to the Zvytyaga formation camp. (...) we were wading through a lake, we did a lot of running and had to crawl, it was quite cold. (…) So, when at one point I had to crawl, I stopped and said: "Enough, I can't do it anymore". Then we had a long conversation with the commandant, the whole camp ran on, and the commandant stayed with me and made me go through all the tasks just like the other campers. I came back to the camp last, lagging very far behind, but at that moment I knew clearly: "I can, like everyone else". Many years later, we met the commander of that camp at another volunteer project where I was already a leader, and that is the amazing sense of community that the Plast gives" (Plast, website post).

In the case of the YC, which is very different from the other organisations not only in terms of the age of its participants (school youth 9–17 years of age) but also in terms of the methodology of its work and the way it talks about itself, the We form also has its own mission, but it is not entirely clear who this form refers to:

> We need to explain to the younger generation that the land on which they were born and currently live is their home, which they must protect and defend, and see prospects for development. It is the accomplishment of this task that will help to protect the Ukrainian state from violations of its sovereignty (YC, website post).

As can be observed, in this case, the We are the ones who *have to explain to the younger generation* what actions must be taken to defend statehood. This organization clearly presents itself as a heterotopia of crisis, choosing militarization strategies as survival and defence strategies. The picture of the We in the case of this organisation is still very fuzzy and unclear: are they the educators, the board of the organisation, the adult members of the organisation or adults in general? The answer to this question cannot be found in the analysed texts. It seems that the young people

that the organisation's activities target are not really the *We* of the organisation but the *They*. On the other hand, what can be seen here is the shaping of one's own Self, which, it is worth emphasising, does not identify itself through the prism of belonging to an organisation, through the use of a pseudonym, which also does not refer to any values of either the organisation or personal values: "I am *Snezhka* because the T-shirt had Snezhka (a brand of building materials—UP) written on it, explains the secret meaning of the call sign of one of the "corps" (YC, media publication).

Also one of the most evident ways that organisations position themselves compared vis-à-vis Others is referring to themselves as a group (We), as opposed to an individual (You). In the document describing the activities of the FRI, sentences aimed at such a You can be found:

> WE are the same young people as YOU. We live next door to you and walk the same streets. We study and work just like you. We ride the same public transport with you and read the same books as you. Besides, we repeal anti-student resolutions and laws in our leisure time and force MPs to keep their promises. (FRI, website post).

What is also interesting in this example is how the members of the organisation, on the one hand, emphasise that they are *the same* as everyone else (You), but in the next sentence we read that they are not quite so because there is some added value that they have by being members of the organisation. This can be understood in two ways that do not necessarily contradict each other: on the one hand, the organisation encourages youth by saying that everyone can do what BUR members do while, on the other hand, this form of talking about oneself as a community with a mission relatively often has a resonance of superiority in the documents analysed. The examples given below illustrate this perfectly:

> "Who, if not us? When, if not now?" (FRI, Facebook post); or "We defend the interests of the youth. We always help each other and are a company of equals. We—a better future for Ukraine" (FRI, website post), or "We must change our society now" (Plast, Facebook post).

In addition to the mission and belonging to a community of similar values and interests, the members of the organisation (most noticeable in the case of the FRI) consider community involvement as a good start and an investment in a professional or political career by gaining experience, widening their circle of contacts, and learning to communicate with decision-makers at different levels. It is also noteworthy here that the way they speak about themselves indicates a self-confidence (both as a group and also as the individuals comprising this group) that borders on a sense of self-importance, ambition, and orientation towards a future individual application of the competences and habits acquired through the community:

> We are young guys and girls, rarely older than 30. In our mobile phones are the numbers of the mayor and his deputies, the region's leading journalists, socially responsible businessmen, most local MPs, and all the rectors. We won't spend the night in a hotel in any Ukrainian city or European capital because we have true friends everywhere who are happy to welcome us. (…) Our CVs do not fit on three pages. Our organisational experience,

> network, and reputation would be the envy of most working business managers or party functionaries. Local employers are ready to fight for us and political forces dream of seeing us in their structures. We fulfil ourselves every day, living a colourful and satisfying life! (FRI, website post).

Nevertheless, talking about oneself in such an elitist way does not seem exclusionary here; on the contrary, most organisations declare their openness to new members: "Any of YOU can become a superhero. Join the Plast, conquer new spaces, overcome all obstacles, and become a member of the Great Superhero Organisation" (Plast, website post).

When describing an open organisations, which are undoubtedly those that operate thanks to volunteers (BUR, FRI, Plast and Ukrainer), it is also important to pay attention to how the We category is used in their materials or social media posts aimed at potential members of the organisation. In the quote from the FRI website given above, it is very apparent that communication takes place at the We-You level, and by using the word "you", the organisation is appealing to a specific person in such a motivating way: "Change starts with you!" (FRI, Facebook post). Nevertheless, such openness on the part of the organisation does not mean accepting everyone without any selection process. This is where the fifth characteristic of heterotopia that Foucault writes about is very evident: it is simultaneously closed and open, isolated, but also penetrable. The boundaries between We and They in the case of the analysed organisations appear to be *porous*, so that we can speak not so much of borders as of borderlands, which become so-called *third places* (Soja 1996), where the often conflicting binary oppositions of We and They are blurred and a space of communication and cooperation is created.

The most important criterion for joining the organisation is having the right values:

> If our vision, mission and goals match yours, we are on the right track! We invite you to join this process and organise a BUR camp in your city. The first step is to fill in this questionnaire. The second is to participate directly in our camp to make sure this is exactly the project you want in your city (BUR, Facebook post).

The conviction that only suitable people with the relevant values and views get into the organisation and, therefore, trust in the admission criteria and in the intentions of newly admitted members causes the members of the organisation to perceive their own We as simply being *cool people* who will sooner or later join a community of like-minded people: "It's just that all of Katia's friends and acquaintances are cool, and cool people sooner or later end up in the BUR" (BUR, Facebook post).

They as Friends, They as Intruders

The We category never exists in isolation from its opposition, the They category. In turn, the They category is a collective term for the categories of strangeness and otherness, which are often used as synonyms. However, I believe that the distinction between these categories is crucial because the attitudes of We towards the Stranger and towards the Other differ.

For Bernhard Waldenfels, strangeness has a topological character and is related to having or not having some specifically designated space of the so-called *own place*. The philosopher distinguishes three characteristic features of strangeness that are the characteristics of space, property and manner (Waldenfels 2007: 6), which always exist in tandem with their oppositions: (1) external in opposition to internal; (2) other in opposition to one's own; and (3) different in opposition to oneself.

The category that identifies the We is the category of *own place*, which youth organisation physically or symbolically possesses and through which it interacts with Others and Strangers. The notion of one's own place occurs in very different ways in the statements of the analysed organisations. In the case of the FRI, they speak of the places from which the members of the organisation originate and to which they invite others (cities, towns, villages or even districts). However, in many cases, the *own place* category extends to the whole country. This is very evident when the members of the organisation interact with young people from other countries. The attitude towards Others and Strangers in these cases is one of hospitality and care, and a cultural exchange takes place here. The members of the FRI also speak about this:

> Eight boys and girls from Minsk came to learn about Ukrainian history, the Naddniprianshchyna region's industry and the FRI's hospitality. We took them to several museums, led a workshop on petrykivka painting, organised a performance for them titled Wandering Poets on Chairs, and held several historical lectures. On our part, what was most interesting was to hear the Belarusian language, to hear about the student protests and to learn their opinion that there are very beautiful girls in Ukraine (FRI, Facebook post).

An interesting case of an encounter between We and They, where They appear as Others but are similar to Us, is the situation described on Plast social media when the "members of Legion 21 met Hungarian scouts. The Hungarian scouts are called Czerkies. They have their own 'udals' [breakdown by age – IL], as does the Plast" (Plast, Facebook post).

This threshold that separates the Self (or We) from the Stranger (or Strangers) is a guarantee of security, of maintaining one's own order within *one's own place*. However, the moment the Stranger enters the space of the Self (or We), two realities collide. In the texts I analysed, I found only one instance of such a sharp clash between the We and the Stranger; nevertheless, this case perfectly illustrated how strangeness is transformed into a threat. This is the case described in the social media of the FRI organisation. The organisation was holding a lecture at one of its centres on the usage of feminitives,[2] which was disrupted by the representatives of right-wing organisations. Let me quote the whole story:

[2] Feminitives (in slavic languages) are "feminine nouns denoting women, formed from monosyllabic masculine nouns denoting men, and are paired with them. If we were to roughly translate them into English, we would have gendered nouns such as teacher and teacheress, author and authoress, historian and historianess, aviator and aviatoress, etc." (Barrier-Free Initiative 2021).

> At the beginning of the event, about 12 molodykiv (young men, here, in a negative sense - IL.) entered the hall and introduced themselves as members of the organisations Carpathian Sich and Sokil. They immediately started shouting, insulting the speaker, and their actions completely disrupted the event. They reacted aggressively to the organisers' remarks and used insulting words. No requests worked on the aforementioned group of people, so the organisers were forced to suspend the event to ensure the safety of the participants. Later, a post appeared on the Carpathian Sich Facebook page, which directly confirmed that the event was deliberately disrupted. Furthermore, its content raises concerns about possible further obstructions of our activities (FRI, Facebook post).

In this case, They appear as a decidedly negative category, a danger that brings with it destruction, and a threat. Strangers invade the *own place* of We, disrupt the order, offend and undermine the authority of the host. The organisation's reaction to this seems to be a logical act because of the values it advocates. The FRI has come up with an official letter signed by like-minded friendly organisations, firmly stating its position, and referring to the constitutional rights of freedom of thought and speech:

> The FRI strongly condemns the actions of those who, under the guise of patriotic slogans, disrupt legitimate educational activities aimed at the all-round development of Ukrainian youth. We oppose violence as a way of resolving conflicts and are categorically against the monopolisation of cultural discourse in our country, particularly that all Ukrainian citizens have a constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of thought and speech. (FRI, Facebook post).

Therefore, in this case, the We-They interaction is not an act of hospitality but a threat to the values of the organisation, a rivalry of opinion and even a rivalry of gender. This is why it was highlighted that these were *molodyks*, young men who prevented a feminist-oriented event from taking place. Again, reaching back to Waldenfels, we see that this first, very spatial form of interaction with strangeness takes place here, when the internal collides with the external. In this case, the boundary between the two heterotopias (Us as FRI and Them, the members of the organisations Carpathian Sich and Sokil), as in the spatial, symbolic and perceptual sense, is very clear. As a result, a form of citizen participation consistent with the organization's values is to publicize this situation as one that violates human rights, and to take action to prevent similar incidents by appealing to the law.

In the analysed material, we find another interesting example where the category of They is used in a negative sense. It concerns the statement of the members of the YNC in Sumy who "left a *black spot* for a pro-Russian party 'Ours'" (YNC, Facebook post). Here, *They* are political opponents, pro-Russian forces that are perceived as a threat to statehood and national identity. As is well known, the *black spot* was sent by the pirates as a sign that one had been cursed or marked for death. The use of this term in a new context, especially in view of the occupation of Crimea and the war in the Donbass, indicates the resolute position of the members of the organisation who in this way want to define and defend the borders of *their own place*, which for them, in this case, constitute the borders of the whole of Ukraine. In this case,

They, the pro-Russian party, are not the Strangers, who are separated by the border but the Others who are already inside the country, are *ours* (as citizens of the country), who hold pro-Russian views and are, therefore, not-We.

The third use case of the They category directly relates to the We category as it is a form of talking about oneself. "They are 682 pairs of eyes who see differently but look in one direction. (…) They are the odd ones out. They—students, pupils, cooks, accountants, historians, dancers, singers, runners, teachers, travellers, actors, crane operators, artists, unemployed, pilgrims, and musicians" (BUR, Facebook post).

They is also used in a research that have been conducted by one organisation to get to know its members better. However, since it is only a form of speech and we only encounter this form in the case of one organisation, it is exemplary, and that use of the We category as a form of talking about oneself is notable as it is uncommon.

Discussion and Conclusions

Despite the large literature on youth citizenship and youth participation, this article provides a unique perspective on Ukrainian youth organisations as spaces of heterotopia where civic participation has become a form and a way of self-identification. Echoing Brodie-McKenzie's (2020) idea that youth citizenship is not an outcome but a process, I show how this process takes place in the heterotopic spaces of the selected youth organisations and how this process is manifested through the language they use. The results show that, indeed, as Redziuk (2020) noted in his study, the space of Ukrainian organisations is a place where the country's political transformation is taking place, and young people play a crucial role in it.

In this text I aimed to answer the following research questions: (1) How do members of studied organisations negotiate their identities and sense of belonging through categories We and They? (2) What values do they consider pivotal in shaping the dynamics of heterotopias of citizenship, and how do these values influence notions of identity (We) and social cohesion within these spaces? The research showed that each of the analysed organisations speaks of itself as a community that has responsibilities and acts in accordance with its mission. Some of the analysed organisations, notwithstanding the very clear identification of We, are open to others and the recruitment of new members is an important part of their activities. Others, on the other hand, seem to be rather closed to others or their new member recruitment process is less publicly mediated. Nevertheless, all of them consider having the right values in place as critical for existing and potential members. All the organisations speak of a common purpose or even mission that unites their ambitious Selves into a community of active We. For organisations that identify themselves as nationalist or patriotic, secularisation and the defence of national sovereignty are such missions. For the rest of the organisations, the mission is the development of a responsible civil society and the promotion of the country (both internationally and within its borders). The two organisations that position themselves as patriotic-nationalist are oriented towards the internal training of their own—to militarisation. They can, in some sense, be referred to as being closed to others or at least more selective. Other organisations build their

activities not on militarisation but on responsibility, social activism, and a shared vision of the future of Ukraine: an open, democratic country where human rights, equality and diversity are respected. One organisation (the oldest of the whole group) is situated somewhere in the middle between those two extremes and combines both these paths.

Returning to the Foucaltian distinction between heterotopias of deviation and heterotopias of crisis, the Plast, the YNC and the YC as the organisations with the most visible militarisation component can be considered as heterotopias of crisis. Therefore, militarisation is a form of a response to the crisis for them, which, in this case, is the threat of statehood and Russian aggression. This is most evident in the example of the YC (which began its activities after the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Donbass), whose primary activity is the military training of schoolchildren carried out during camping trips. What appears here is not only a symbolic space but also a physical space intended for the people that belong to this bigger heterotopia, in the space of which the training takes place and where outsiders cannot enter. It is also a heterochronic space, which has its designated time (for the duration of the camp). On the other hand, comparing these organisations with others that do not have this militarisation component within their structures at all (the FRI, BUR and the Ukrainer), and represent rather heterotopias of positive deviation (using Foucault's and Kwasniewski's ideas), the element of heterotopia of crisis is still present in each of these organisations in one form or another and depends on the historical events in the country where citizens belong to these very different heterotopias.

Some organisations draw on "We" categories to defend themselves from strangers, while others show hospitality to strangers based on democratic values. Therefore, both groups share a common mission: the good of the community, the only difference being the methods used to achieve this goal. For one, it is the militarisation of society, which in modern times (and I am writing these words at a time when a full-scale war is taking place in Ukraine) seems to be the most justifiable strategy aimed at the country's survival, and resistance to Russian aggression. On the other hand, we have organisations that are guided by democratic values in their activities, showing Ukraine as a progressive, European country that also has its own unique flavour.

The important thing here, therefore, is not to contrast these organisations in terms of their viewpoints, and even less to undertake the task of determining whose strategy is better, but to find the common features that can bring these young people together in joint action to rebuild Ukraine after the war. Thinking of themselves as a community that is responsible for the future of Ukraine, whose geographical borders are being violated but whose We-borders naturally expand to the borders of the country in a situation of war, seems to be one such feature on which further dialogue must be built. As far as the linguistic issue is concerned, changes are also taking place here, with the emergence of war slang, often not devoid of humour, which no longer belongs to particular heterotopias but is becoming nationwide: *to macronite* or *to chornobite* (Sheftalovich 2022), to name just two such neologisms. In times of full-scale war, the boundaries between the We and They of the studied organisations become very fluid; many young people from the organisations described above have joined the Armed

Forces of Ukraine where they fight as *We* against the *They*—the occupants. Many are also involved in volunteer work for the military and for displaced people. While conducting a comparative analysis of the discourses of youth organisations before and after 24 February 2022 could enhance comprehension of heterotopias of crisis and their strategies, this scope lies beyond the confines of this paper.

The analysis indicates the organizations can be conceived of political and community-acting spaces, which suggest they are evident of heterotopias of citizenship. Framing participation narratives with both "Us" and "Them" in mind (as valuable difference, but not opposition) can promote cooperation and dialogue between young people from different heterotopias of citizenship and decision-makers to achieve a common goal.

This article advances our understanding of youth engagement in citizenship and the role of youth organizations in Ukraine by introducing the concept of *Heterotopias of citizenship*. My research not only uncovers the hidden and unconventional aspects of youth citizenship but also sheds light on the potential for fostering more inclusive and participatory forms of engagement. As such, this work contributes to the ongoing discourse on youth studies, citizenship, and the potential for social change within youth organizations.

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Declarations

Conflict of Interest The author declares no competing interests.

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