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Class, Migration, and Gender: Exploring Intersectional Perspectives of Female Students from a Marginalised Urban Area

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ABSTRACT
This qualitative study examines how spatial intersectionality manifests at the intersection of class, migration, and gender within perspectives of girls from migrant backgrounds in the district of Duisburg-Marxloh, a location heavily stigmatised in the media. Combining spatial intersectionality with performative concepts in feminist geography, the study demonstrates how experiences significantly shape subjective perspectives on space, sometimes leading to action-oriented counter-narratives that challenge dominant external attributions from the hegemonic discourse and open alternative spaces for interpretation. Moreover, the study provides new empirical insights into the spatial perspectives of a group that has been marginalised in geography education research to date. To this end, a qualitative content analysis was conducted, based on three semi-structured group interviews with participants aged 15 and 16. The findings of the analysis show that the interviewed girls are aware of the stigmatisation of their neighbourhood. At the same time, they begin to develop differentiated, everyday and emotionally charged spatial perspectives. This demonstrates that the public and subjective spatial perspectives of Marxloh are in a complex, reciprocal and dynamic relationship. The empirical findings emphasise the importance of educational approaches that are subject-oriented, sensitive to intersectionality, and take local knowledge seriously. Ultimately, this work opens new perspectives for critical, reflexive geography education research.

KEYWORDS
Intersectionality; Spatial Stigma; urban marginalisation; youth perspectives; new cultural geography; interview study.

INTRODUCTION

Urban neighbourhoods marked by poverty and ethnic diversity are increasingly subject to stigmatising media representations and public discourses that construct them as spaces of disorder, cultural alienation, and social failure (Hintermann & Pichler, 2015; Schuster & Höhne, 2017). Such representations not only shape external perceptions but also the everyday experiences and self-images of those who live there – particularly among young people who grow up navigating the tension between how their neighbourhood is publicly portrayed and how they experience it in their daily lives. This phenomenon is especially pronounced in structurally disadvantaged urban areas, where socioeconomic marginalisation and symbolic stigmatisation reinforce one another, creating compounded forms of spatial exclusion (Bernt, 2019; Hanhörster & Woldmann, 2021).

Despite growing scholarly interest in the discursive construction of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the strategies employed by residents to actively cope with, contest, and reinterpret stigmatising spatial attributions remain empirically underexplored (Bernt, 2019; Hanhörster & Woldmann, 2021; Peres da Silva & Lauer, 2018; Thomsen et al., 2025). This gap is particularly evident among young women from migrant backgrounds, a group that occupies a multiply marginalised position at the intersection of class, migration, and gender, yet whose subjective spatial perspectives have received little systematic attention in geography education research. The district of Duisburg-Marxloh offers a compelling and instructive case on this matter. It is one of Germany's urban areas, mostly stigmatised in the media, defined by poverty, crime, and cultural otherness (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2017; n-tv, 2016; Peres da Silva & Lauer, 2018). At the same time the lived realities of its residents and their own readings of the space they inhabit remain largely absent from public debate and academic inquiry.

This study builds on the findings of a previous project by Thomsen et al. (2025), which examined how girls with a migration background experience their living area of Marxloh. That study demonstrated that, despite being aware of the neighbourhood's stigmatisation, the girls actively interpret and redefine it through familiar social networks, emotional ties, and everyday routines. While these findings established subjective reinterpretation, they neither systematically analyse the discursive and performative mechanisms through which the girls challenge dominant spatial narratives, nor did they examine how the intersecting social categories of class, migration, and gender shape these processes. The present study addresses this gap directly. Rather than replicating the previous findings, it advances them by focusing on the spatial patterns of interpretation and appropriation practices through which the girls actively contest, reframe, and reoccupy stigmatising discourses. Here, spatial patterns of interpretation refer to how individuals make sense of and assign meaning to their neighbourhood (Löw, 2001; Massey, 2013), while appropriation practices describe the performative and narrative strategies through which they claim and reshape the space as their own (Butler, 1997; De Certeau, 1984).

By analysing these practices through the lens of spatial intersectionality (Degele & Winker, 2010), the study aims to generate a more nuanced understanding of how class, migration, and

gender interact to shape the subjective spatial perspectives of young women with migration backgrounds in marginalised urban contexts. In doing so, it contributes to critical geography education research and broadens debates on intersectionality, urban stigmatisation, and youth agency. Space is here not understood as a neutral backdrop but as a fundamental dimension of identity formation, self-efficacy, and social participation (Crenshaw, 1989; Massey, 2013; Mecheril & Melter, 2011).

Beyond this background, the study is guided by the following research questions: "What spatial perspectives do young female students living in the intersectionally shaped, disadvantaged urban area of Duisburg-Marxloh develop on their neighbourhood from their own point of view?" (RQ1), and "How do the intersectional factors class, migration, and gender shape these individual spatial perspectives, and through which mechanisms do they become visible in the girls' narratives and appropriation practices?" (RQ2). These questions are closely linked to the study's conceptual framework of spatial intersectionality and focus on the relationship between external attribution and self-positioning. They provide a nuanced analysis of how dominant, stigmatising spatial narratives are experienced, negotiated, and contested by a group that has been largely excluded from geography education research to date.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Background: Spatial Intersectionality between Class, Migration, and Gender

To adequately analyse the subjective spatial perspectives of girls with a migration background, a theoretical framework is needed that considers the complex interplay of social power relations at the intersection of class, migration, and gender while relating to the everyday experiences of the girls in Marxloh (Anthias, 2013; Degele & Winker, 2010). To this end, the following theoretical perspective, combines concepts from feminist geography, socio-spatial educational research, and critical geography education.

Intersectionality as a conceptual foundation

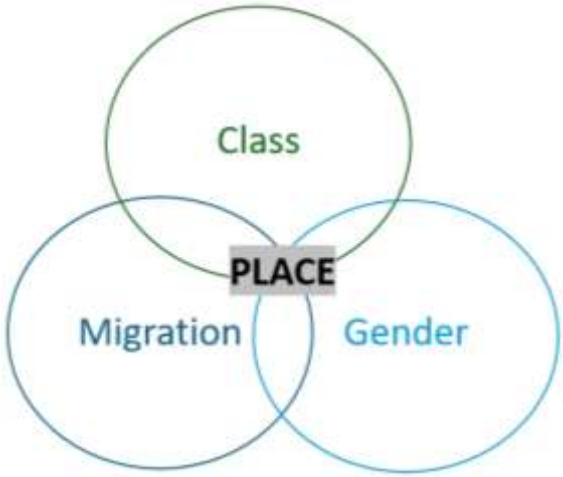
To adequately examine the subjective spatial perspectives of girls with a migration background living in Marxloh, this research adopts an intersectional understanding of social inequality as its central theoretical starting point. This framework enables an analysis that does not treat class, migration, and gender as separate variables but examines their simultaneous interaction and the specific forms of marginalisation that arise at their intersection.

Intersectionality originated in the Black feminist movement in the USA and was introduced by the pioneering legal work of Crenshaw (1989). The concept intertwines social categories in producing complex power relations involving different forms of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989; Degele & Winker, 2010). Different dimensions of inequality affect individuals simultaneously, creating specific positions within social structures (Chebout, 2016). This approach examines intersections and interactions between axes of inequality concerning class, migration and gender (Figure 1). It not only considers who is discriminated against, but also how different power relations influence each other, and the specific positions arising for individuals in social

spaces as a result (Akbulut et al., 2013; Mecheril, 2004). This understanding clarifies that social difference is not simply inherent but socially constructed and experienced concretely in space (Figure 1). It offers new insights into the relationship between individuals, society, and space, providing a novel analytical framework through which socio-spatial inequality can be understood as a potent factor and manifestation of intertwining social power dynamics (Löw, 2016). According to Massey (2013), space thus becomes a central point of interconnection between power, body, and everyday life.

Figure 1.

Spatial intersectionality with selected axes in geography education (own representation).



This research takes an intersectional approach, examining the interactions between class, migration, and gender in relation to their significance for subjective spatial perspectives in the marginalised context of Marxloh. The intersection of these three categories creates spaces characterised by ambivalent affiliations, exclusions, and coping strategies. These everyday spatial practices and patterns of interpretation lie at the heart of context-sensitive intersectional analysis, revealing how the girls interact with local social inequalities as agents capable of acting in space, and systematically examining the effects on their subjective perspectives. The following sub-analyses focus on the three categories of difference: class, migration and gender.

Class in Space: Socioeconomic Inequality and Urban Marginalisation

In current sociological and educational debates, the term “class” is often replaced by the vague expression “social status” (Graf et al., 2022). This narrow understanding of class greatly limits the analytical precision of this category. Intersectional perspectives address this by defining class as a causal structuring relationship which encompasses all socio-structurally anchored differences and injustices (Degele & Winker, 2010; Graf et al., 2022; Kemper & Weinbach, 2009). In this context, classism refers to social mechanisms which deny or deprive people of certain resources, rights, recognition or opportunities for participation based on their supposed class affiliation. These processes unfold in and through spaces. (Kemper & Weinbach, 2009). Economic disadvantage and spatial exclusion are intertwined, generating self-reinforcing effects that permanently

consolidate socio-spatial marginalisation and are used to legitimise social inequality (Bernt & Colini, 2013; Deinet & Reutlinger, 2019).

In a stigmatised neighbourhood such as Marxloh, socio-economic dimensions of social inequality and urban marginalisation become apparent, with class emerging as a key explanatory factor for the negative spatial attributions and stereotypes, affecting the symbolic visibility, social recognition, agency, and self-perception of its residents (Hanemann, 2023; Holm et al., 2022; Kronauer, 2013; Wacquant, 2008). The above-average poverty in the district is a consequence of historical structural changes that began with the decline of the coal and steel industry in the 1970s (Soziale Stadt NRW, 2024). Before this, Marxloh was considered a middle-class residential and shopping area, enjoying prosperity fuelled by its importance as a location for the coal and steel industry (Soziale Stadt NRW, 2024). The decline of the coal and steel industry led to structural change in the district, growing social segregation and spatial concentration of poverty (Soziale Stadt NRW, 2024). Today, Marxloh has above-average rates of long-term unemployment, welfare dependency and housing costs. This material deprivation leads to economic exclusion and promotes symbolic devaluation. In public discourse, Marxloh is constructed as a "problem neighbourhood", with social problems often being individualised and ethnicised (Trubeta, 2022). This confronts the district's residents with double exclusion: they are economically disadvantaged and discursively stigmatised at the same time (Mecheril & Melter, 2011). This experience is reflected in their spatial perspectives (Ahmed, 2006; Kern, 2020).

Clearly, class is not experienced or interpreted in isolation, but always in conjunction with other categories of difference, such as migration and gender (Crenshaw, 1989; Degele & Winker, 2010). The compounding of material deprivation and symbolic devaluation produces a specific form of socio-spatial marginalisation that shapes how residents perceive, navigate, and make sense of their neighbourhood. The following sections focus on these two categories.

Migration in Space: Othering, Segregation and Marginalisation

In the public discourse, migration is often conceptualised through the category of "migration background" (Yosso, 2006). Migration is interpreted as a deviation, giving rise to a practice structured by processes of "othering" (Said, 1978). Othering involves the discursive construction of foreignness and otherness, which essentialises cultural differences and symbolically excludes (Said, 1978). In this context, migration becomes a projection screen for orders of difference, also reflected in the self-positioning of those affected (Mecheril, 2021; Trubeta, 2022). It can result in internalised racism, self-stigmatisation, and a general sense of insecurity in public spaces (Ahmed, 2006; Mecheril, 2021; Said, 1978).

This practice is particularly evident in diverse neighbourhoods like Marxloh, where 78 % of the population has a migrant background, including sizeable communities from Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania (Kronen & Richter, 2014; Stadt Duisburg, 2023). The migration movements can be traced back to the 1960s, when German families left the area due to the aforementioned coal and steel crisis, and migrant workers, particularly from Turkey, moved in (Cöster, 2015). Since the 2000s, internal migration and the eastward expansion of the European Union have increasingly

shaped Marxloh's demographic profile (Stadt Duisburg, 2024). The public discourse attributes the districts' social exclusion to its ethnic diversity (Yosso, 2006). Those affected are blamed for their situation due to their ethnic origin, culture or religion (Bourdieu, 1998). This discursive framing creates an intersectionality of social, cultural and spatial exclusion reflected in the self-perceptions and spatial perspectives of the residents (Wacquant, 2007). Marxloh is not only structurally marginalised, but also symbolically marked as a space of the "foreign". The residents are considered as poor migrants, but also as socially devalued and culturally delegitimised (Ahmed, 2006).

Furthermore it is essential to interweave constructions of migration with gender-related categories (Budke & Schäbitz, 2022; Mecheril & Melter, 2011). The next section focuses on gender as a socially structuring line of difference that affects the subjective spatial perspectives and actual behaviour.

Gender and Space: Feminist Geography, (Un)safe Spaces and Spatial Aesthetics

Adopting an intersectional approach to space reveals that gender is a key analytical perspective for understanding the specific exclusions, attributions, power relations and body politics experienced by females from a migrant background in marginalised urban areas (Kern, 2020; Lutz & Wenning, 2022). The gender perspective is particularly significant because of its ambivalent position between exclusion and appropriation (Helfferich & Klindworth, 2016).

On the one hand, despite formal equality, gender inequalities persist in the 21st century due to patriarchal structures that continue to force women into traditional roles by denying them autonomy and decision-making power (Parikh, 2024). Moreover public spaces are structured along hegemonic norms of masculinity (McLarney, 2010). This influences the use of public spaces as well as their perception of safety, visibility and legitimacy for affected females (Ahmed, 2014; Kern, 2020). Women often experience certain places as potentially "unsafe spaces" (Kern, 2020). This perception strongly influences their behaviour, active participation in public (Ahmed, 2014; Bauer, 2010). They report having a restricted movement radius (Helfferich & Klindworth, 2016). These experiences are an expression of the emotional coding of space. Places are imbued with feelings of fear, vulnerability, exclusion, self-empowerment, belonging and visibility. Girls often do not experience themselves as active subjects in public spaces, but as passive objects of control, observation or evaluation (Bauer, 2010; Kern, 2020). This impacts their self-perception, spatial orientation, and scope for action. It creates a discursive dilemma that navigates discriminatory structures and emancipatory potentials (Said, 1978; Schwarze, 2019).

On the other hand, recent scientific studies have shown that women develop their own perspectives on space through aesthetic practices or affective narratives to challenge entrenched hegemonic concepts of space (Ahmed, 2006; Bauer, 2010; Skelton & Aitken, 2019). These forms of spatial perspective are particularly relevant when social stereotypes and role assignments shape everyday life in a neighbourhood.

Beyond the outlined theoretical considerations of the intersectionality of class, migration and gender, it is particularly important to systematically record and analyse the subjective spatial

perspectives of young girls with a migration background living in the stigmatised neighbourhood of Marxloh. The following empirical section focuses on these perspectives.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employs a qualitative research design to reconstruct the subjective spatial perspectives of girls with a migration background living in Duisburg-Marxloh and to relate their perspectives to the attribution of Marxloh in public discourse. Qualitative approaches are particularly well suited to this research's aims, as they enable the exploration of subjective experiences, complex patterns of interpretation, and individual attributions of meaning within their socio-spatial context (Flick, 2014). Following Werlen (2008) and Löw (2016), qualitative inquiry allows for the capture of the processual and practice-oriented nature of spatial construction in a differentiated manner. The study's design is further grounded in a reflexive, power- and position-conscious understanding of educational research (England, 1994; Rose, 1997), combining perspective-conscious qualitative inquiry with practice-oriented triangulation of perspectives (Caretta & Riaño, 2016; Ortiz Aragón & Hoetmer, 2020).

Research Participants

Participants were recruited in close collaboration with Duisburger Werkkiste, an educational institution based in the neighbourhood. The recruitment followed a purposive sampling strategy guided by the study's theoretical focus on spatial intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Degele & Winker, 2010). Inclusion criteria required that participants self-identified as female, had a personal or family history of migration, resided in Marxloh, and attended a local Gesamtschule[1] in grade 8 or 9. All participation was voluntary, and written parental consent and participant assent were obtained before data collection, given that participants were minors. To protect confidentiality, transcripts were anonymised, direct identifiers were removed, and audio files were stored on password-protected institutional servers in compliance with applicable data protection regulations (GDPR).

A total of seven participants took part in three group interviews. All participants were female, aged 15 or 16, and attended grade 8 or 9 at Herbert-Grillo-Gesamtschule in Duisburg-Marxloh. They had a migration background, with family roots primarily in Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania, reflecting the broader demographic composition of the district (Stadt Duisburg, 2024). This demographic profile corresponds directly to the study's intersectional research variables of class, migration, and gender.

[1] A „Gesamtschule" is a type of comprehensive school in Germany that combines „Hauptschule" (general secondary school), „Realschule" (intermediate secondary school) and „Gymnasium" (academic secondary school) within one institution.

In general, it can be stated that the sample is appropriate for the study's research aims. Focusing on individuals perceived as female enables an analytical examination of gender-specific perceptions of space, as well as experiences of (in)security, exclusion, and appropriation, corresponding to the interests of gender-sensitive educational research (Ahmed, 2014; Kern, 2020). The age group of grade 8 and 9 students is particularly relevant, as this phase represents a significant crossroads in young people's lives: the transition to upper secondary school or vocational training, during which perceptions of place, belonging, and identity play a central role (Bauer, 2010; Gryl & Kanwischer, 2023). In addition, partnering with a local educational institution facilitated access to the target group while ensuring that the data were grounded in everyday experience (Deinet & Reutlinger, 2023). Voluntary participation was required not only for ethical reasons but also because it aligns with the principles of participatory and emancipatory research, which tend to produce more open and reflective contributions from participants (Bergold & Thomas, 2012).

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected through guided, qualitative group interviews. After three group interviews and iterative coding, the research team determined that major recurring themes had stabilised, and additional interviews were unlikely to substantially alter the central thematic structure. The group interview format was chosen because it creates a communicative, peer-oriented setting that is particularly suited to encouraging reflexive and spontaneous narration among young people (Helfferich, 2022). Each interview was based on a thematically structured, theory-driven guide, systematically aligned with the theoretical foundations of spatial intersectionality and the study's research questions (see Appendix, Table 1). The guide was structured into three thematic subfields: (1) subjective spatial perspectives (Löw, 2016; Massey, 2013; Werlen, 2008); (2) performative spatial criticism (Bauer, 2010; Butler, 1997; Kern, 2020; Massey, 2013); and (3) gender coding of space and spatial perspectives by girls with a migration background living in the stigmatised area Duisburg-Marxloh (Akbulut et al., 2013; Kern, 2020; Parikh, 2024; Schwarze, 2019).

To illustrate the operationalisation of these theoretical concepts, some representative questions are provided for each thematic subfield. On subjective spatial perspectives, the participants were asked, for example, "What does Marxloh mean to you?" and “What do you associate with Marxloh?”. On performative spatial criticism, they’ve been asked questions like "Do you think you can change anything about how outsiders perceive Marxloh?" and “Which places would you take outsiders to with the aim of changing their minds?". On gender coding of space, the participants were asked, for example, "Are there places in Marxloh where you feel particularly unsafe?" and “Are there places you deliberately avoid or are not allowed to go?".

All the questions were deliberately formulated in an open-ended manner to avoid leading responses and to allow unexpected themes to emerge. The interview guide was developed in accordance with Helfferich's (2022) recommendations for conducting qualitative interviews with

vulnerable groups. The full interview guide is available as Supplementary Material (see Appendix, Table 1).

Transcripts

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed in their entirety using F4 software (version 2025.3.0). Transcription was performed verbatim in accordance with the guidelines of Kuckartz and Rädiker (2024). This approach is particularly important when working with multilingual or educationally disadvantaged young people, as verbatim transcription preserves emotional and stylistic nuances that would be lost in standardised transcription (Dirim & Mecheril, 2010). Avoiding linguistic smoothing prevented the risk of rendering participants epistemically invisible by imposing inappropriate linguistic norms (Prengel, 2019). All transcripts were manually checked twice to ensure accuracy.

Data Analysis Techniques

Given the exploratory and context-sensitive nature of the study and the use of in-depth group interviews, the analysis followed an information-power rationale rather than numerical saturation rules. The interview data were evaluated using the structured qualitative content analysis developed by Kuckartz and Rädiker (2024). This approach enables the systematic and theory-driven analysis of substantial text volumes, while combining deductive category formation with inductive supplementation (Helfferich, 2022). Initial deductive categories were derived from the theoretical framework and the interview guide (e.g., Category 1: "Everyday Geography-Making in Space (Performativity)"). They were supplemented by inductive categories developed through open coding of the material (e.g., C1.1 "Aesthetic Counter-Narratives"; C1.3 "Re-Framing of Stigmatised Spaces"). To ensure theoretical selectivity, all categories were specified by definitions, anchor examples, and differentiation criteria (see Appendix, Table 2). Two researchers independently coded the transcripts in MAXQDA Analytics Pro (version 24.4.0), holding regular calibration meetings to compare coding decisions and refine categories. A third researcher was consulted in cases of persistent disagreement. Categories were subsequently aggregated into higher-order themes and interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework.

Triangulation of Perspectives

The empirical depth of this study is enhanced by a triangulation of perspectives. In line with power-sensitive, reflexive educational research principles, the academic interpretive framework of the university was systematically expanded through the practical experience and knowledge of Duisburger Werkkiste (Ortiz Aragón & Hoetmer, 2020). Within a two-stage reflection process, selected text passages were first discussed by an internal expert group from the Duisburger Werkkiste in a protected setting, free from the presence of university researchers and without external guiding questions (Caretta & Riaño, 2016). This was followed by a supplementary individual expert interview with a practitioner from Duisburger Werkiste to contextualise and classify difficult passages more precisely (Guest et al., 2017). The aim was to validate scientific interpretations, contextualise implicit levels of meaning, and promote anti-discriminatory, dialogic and participatory research practice (Mecheril & Melter, 2011; Unger et al., 2014). This

form of reflexive interweaving of perspectives contributes to epistemic justice by giving equal consideration to different forms of knowledge (Caretta & Riaño, 2016; Unger et al., 2014).

FINDINGS

The following section presents the findings of the qualitative study. The analysis is based on the structured evaluation of qualitative interview data organised using a deductive-inductive category system, visualised in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Structure tree showing the main category "Everyday Geography-Making in Space (Performativity)" and its associated subcategories at various levels.

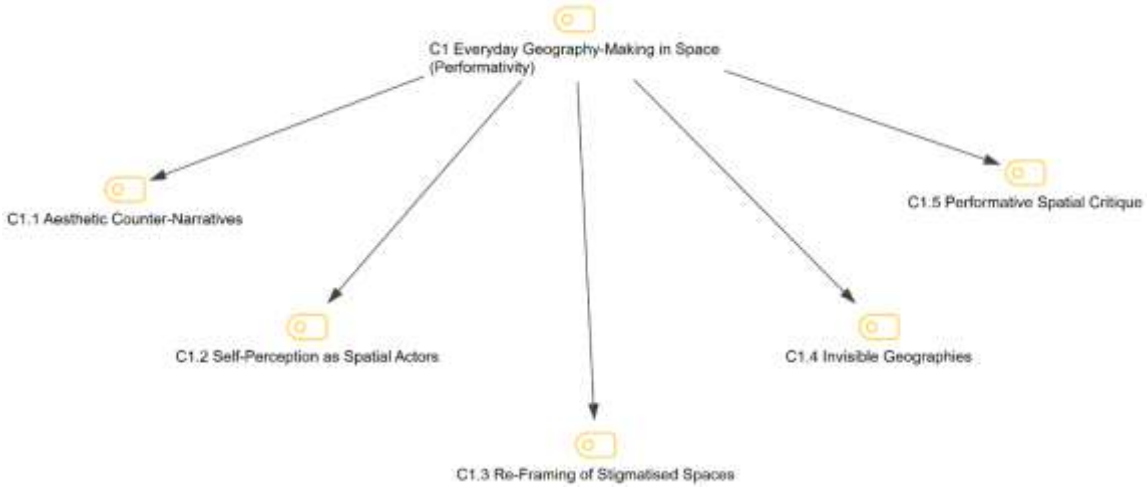


Figure 2 illustrates the structure tree of the main category "Everyday Geography-Making in Space (Performativity)" and its associated subcategories at various levels. The main category captures how the girls actively produce spatial meaning through performative, narrative, and aesthetic practices. It encompasses five subcategories: C1.1 Aesthetic Counter-Narratives, C1.2 Self-Perception as Spatial Actors, C1.3 Re-Framing of Stigmatised Spaces, C1.4 Invisible Geographies, and C1.5 Performative Spatial Critique. These subcategories were developed through a deductive-inductive coding process: the main category was derived from the theoretical framework of spatial intersectionality and performativity (Butler, 1997; De Certeau, 1984; Massey, 2013), while the subcategories emerged inductively through iterative engagement with the material.

The findings presented below are not intended to suggest uniform or deterministic spatial experiences. They reflect prominent and recurrent patterns across the interview material. Individual trajectories vary considerably, shaped by, example given, biographical histories, peer group dynamics, family backgrounds, migration experiences, and personal dispositions. The following sub-sections highlight dominant trends while acknowledging the diversity and complexity of individual perspectives. Findings are presented in direct connection with the study's intersectional research variables class, migration, and gender to demonstrate how these categories jointly shape the girls' spatial perspectives.

a) Self-Perception as Spatial Actors (RQ1)

While assessing the spatial perspectives, the girls develop about their neighbourhood from their own point of view (RQ1) the analysis reveals that the girls consistently position themselves as knowledgeable insiders and active subjects in their district. This self-confident spatial positioning directly contradicts the externally imposed stigmatisation of Marxloh as a deficient space.

The self-understanding is closely connected to the intersectional variable of migration. As girls with a migration background, they occupy a position that is doubly marked in public discourse: as poor and as culturally other. Yet the interviews reveal a striking countermovement. When asked about their connection to the district, one participant explained the depth of her local rootedness in biographical terms: *"I was born there. My parents have a house there and, yes, I live there."* (Z11, 00:08:40, C1.2). Another described the social density of the neighbourhood as a source of strength rather than as a stigma: *"No matter where you go, you know at least ten people or more."* (A7, 00:06:39, C1.2). These statements reflect a class-specific form of local social capital (Bourdieu, 1979) that functions as a resource for belonging and self-assurance in the absence of broader structural opportunities.

At the same time, the self-positioning is not static but develops over time, shaped by biographical experience. One participant described her changing relationship with the district: *"When we first moved here, when I was seven, I thought: why have we moved here? Everything is so ugly here. But the longer I spent here, it got better. It's actually nice."* (A4, 00:21:50, C1.2). This biographical trajectory illustrates that spatial identification is not a given but an active, ongoing process of negotiation, which cannot be understood without considering the structural conditions of class, migration and gender that shape it.

Finally, the performative self-positioning also manifests in the girls' assertion of representative responsibility toward the outside world. Within the conversational context of being asked whether they could change external perceptions of Marxloh, one participant stated: *"If we go somewhere else, we represent Marxloh."* (A7, 00:02:09, C1.5), while another added: *"We should just present Marxloh, because then [external people] will say they're from Marxloh."* (N3, 00:02:38, C1.3). These statements, made in a collective register using the pronoun "we", express a sense of shared spatial ownership and agency that directly challenges the passivity attributed to those affected in dominant discourse.

b) Construction of Aestheticised and Feminised Spatial Imagery (RQ1; RQ2)

This thematic sub-section addresses two research questions: it reveals what spatial perspectives the girls develop (RQ1) and how the intersectional variables class, migration and gender shape these perspectives (RQ2). This sub-section thus bridges the two research questions by demonstrating that the very act of aesthetic spatial imagery construction is itself an intersectionally shaped practice.

The girls' spatial descriptions are strikingly aesthetic and affective in character and notably feminised in their symbolic content. Contrary to the media portrayal of Marxloh as male-dominated, dangerous and dirty, the girls portray their neighbourhood as a beautiful, liveable

place, drawing on imagery of nature, colour, light, and community warmth. This aesthetic register is not incidental but quite the opposite: it constitutes a gendered spatial logic that directly contrasts with the masculine-coded, deficit-oriented narratives dominating public discourse.

In the context of being asked which places they would show to outsiders, participants described specific locations charged with positive affect: *"I would like to show Schwegerpark, because there is always grass and flowers. It is really beautiful in summer; I would really love to show that."* (N3, 00:18:33, C1.1). Another participant elaborated on the seasonal, sensory quality of the mentioned spaces: *"When you go into the park and the sun shines, it is simply perfect."* (A7, 00:16:47, C1.1), while a third added: *"Because it looks so beautiful here in summer. In winter, Marxloh is without trees and not beautiful. But in summer it really comes alive, you need to see the trees, the atmosphere."* (N3, 00:16:44, C1.1). These descriptions of light, greenery, and seasonal vitality stand in contrast to media images of urban decay and disorder and reflect a specifically feminine aesthetic sensibility through which the girls symbolically reclaim their district.

The gender dimension becomes even more explicit in descriptions of the so-called "Bridal Fashion Street" (Weseler Straße). While public discourse typically frames this street as a sign of cultural monostructure and symbolic neglect, the girls reframe it as a site of pride, colour, and belonging. One participant reflected: *"It's honestly really pretty here with dresses [referring to the bridal shops on the main street]."* (N3, 00:12:18, C1.1). This reinterpretation is not only significant as a counter-narrative to stigmatisation but also as a gendered spatial statement: the girls claim a feminised, aesthetically charged reading of a space that dominant discourse renders either invisible or problematic.

The variables of class and migration are also visible in these descriptions. Several participants noted the structural limitations of the neighbourhood's commercial offerings, example given, *"These wedding dress shops take too much away from Marxloh. For example, we don't have many fast-food restaurants."* (A4, 00:09:51, C1.4), while simultaneously finding beauty and value in what exists, example given, "*So, the fact that Marxloh is very multicultural is very nice.*" (S10, 00:12:54, C1.3). This tension between structural impoverishment and subjective aesthetic appreciation illustrates how class and migration shape not only material conditions but also the affective labour required to construct a positive spatial identity within them.

c) Demand for Complexity and Deconstruction of Dominant Narratives (RQ1; RQ2)

While assessing two research questions, RQ1 and RQ2, the analysis examines how the girls actively challenge the monolithic public construction of Marxloh and how the intersectional variables of class, migration, and gender jointly shape this critical impulse. This sub-section thus bridges the two research questions by demonstrating that the very act of demanding complexity is itself an intersectionally shaped practice.

The girls do not simply accept the dominant, homogenising portrayal of their neighbourhood. Instead, they demand a more nuanced perception that recognises the complexity of lived experience. This critical impulse emerges most clearly in discussions about the discrepancy between media representations and everyday reality. When the interviewer raised the question

of external perceptions, one participant offered a socially reflexive response: *"It was actually not as bad as it was portrayed."* (E6, 00:20:36, C1.3), while another went further: *"Maybe, if you want to change the image of the city, you first have to talk to [its residents] or simply try to understand them a little better."* (Z11, 00:28:57, C1.5). Within this same conversational exchange, a third participant added: *"But if [external people would] walk around here a bit, then [they] can also assess the people who are here."* (A4, 00:04:31, C1.4). Together, these statements reveal a collectively shared critical awareness of the gap between representation and reality.

Importantly, this critical impulse is itself shaped by the intersection of class, migration, and gender. As residents of a structurally disadvantaged and ethnically diverse neighbourhood who are simultaneously marked as female and as migrants in public discourse, the girls occupy a position from which the distortion of dominant representations is directly legible. Their criticism is grounded in embodied, intersectional experience rather than in abstract reflection. At the same time, the analysis reveals that their critical awareness does not always translate into structural critique. Several participants acknowledged the neighbourhood's shortcomings while attributing them to individual behaviour rather than systemic conditions: *"These people have made it dirty. If Marxloh looked nicer, people would come here."* (N3, 00:27:56, C1.3). This finding underscores the importance of intersectional analysis: the girls' critical spatial perspectives are simultaneously emancipatory and constrained by the structural positions they inhabit.

d) Agency through Diversity of Perspectives and Narrative Practices (RQ2)

This final thematic sub-section addresses RQ2 directly, examining how the intersectional variables class, migration, and gender shape the girls' spatial perspectives through specific narrative mechanisms and forms of agency. In doing so, it demonstrates that agency in structurally marginalised contexts is not a uniform phenomenon but a complex, intersectionally conditioned practice that simultaneously reflects and resists existing power relations.

The girls' spatial narratives are not merely descriptive but actively productive: they constitute a form of geography-making in which everyday knowledge, biographical experience, and affective attachment are combined to generate alternative spatial meanings. This agency, however, is deeply shaped by the intersectional position the girls occupy. It carries the weight of a triple marginalisation as young women, as migrants, and as residents of a stigmatised, economically deprived neighbourhood. It is precisely from this position that their counter-narratives derive their force.

When asked about positive aspects of the neighbourhood, participants described a vibrant social fabric that contradicts the image of a desolate problem area: *"No matter where you go, you know at least ten people. Everyone knows each other."* (A7, 00:06:39); *"There are really nice people. When we walk past the shops, people who already know us say hello even when we don't go in."* (A4, 00:17:28, C1.1). These descriptions of informal social networks and community warmth reflect a form of social capital that is specific to the class position of residents in structurally disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is a resource that becomes visible only when insiders are allowed to speak.

The desire to leave the neighbourhood, expressed by several participants, example given, *"Yes, I want to move away too."* (Z11, 00:11:55, C1.2), adds an important layer of complexity to the existing picture. The girls simultaneously express belonging and the desire to escape. They are expressing a tension that reflects the specific intersection of class constraints, migration histories, and gender-specific restrictions on spatial mobility. Their counter-narratives are thus best understood not as simple resistance but as a complex negotiation process in which belonging, aspiration, structural limitation, and identity are continuously reworked.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the interviewed girls are active and reflective participants in the spatial processes of their neighbourhood. Their perspectives are shaped at the intersection of class, migration, and gender in ways that produce constraint and agency. The following discussion seeks to theoretically contextualise this dynamic interplay.

DISCUSSION

The preceding analysis reveals that the girls living in Duisburg-Marxloh are neither passive recipients of dominant spatial narratives nor simple sufferers of structural marginalisation. Instead, they emerge as active and interpretive agents who develop performative, affective and relational counter-narratives in response to the stigmatising representation of their neighbourhood (Massey, 2013). This discussion theoretically contextualises each of the presented findings within the broader literature on spatial intersectionality between class, migration and gender, before reflecting critically on the limits and implications of these spatial practices.

a) Self-Perception as Spatial Actors: Between Biographical Rootedness and Structural Constraint

The girls' self-positioning as knowledgeable insiders and representative agents of their district aligns with De Certeau's (1984) characterisation of the tactical practices employed by marginalised groups. Rather than accepting the spatial roles ascribed to them in public discourse, the girls actively claim interpretive sovereignty over their lived space. This is a form of self-positioning as spatial subjects who consciously shape attributions of meaning and value (Ahmed, 2006, 2014). This is consistent with Thomsen et al.'s (2025) earlier finding that, despite awareness of stigmatisation, the girls interpret and redefine their neighbourhood through familiar social networks and everyday routines. The present study advances this finding by demonstrating that such self-positioning is not merely reactive but explicitly performative: the girls actively construct themselves as spokespersons for Marxloh, asserting a representative responsibility that transforms their insider knowledge into a form of spatial agency.

This self-perception, however, must be understood within its intersectional context. The biographical dimension, example given, illustrated by one participant's account of her changing relationship with the district over time, reveals that spatial identification is not a stable given but an ongoing negotiation shaped by the intersection of class, migration, and gender (Bauer, 2010; Gryl & Kanwischer, 2023). As residents of a structurally disadvantaged neighbourhood with limited access to social mobility, the girls' local social capital functions as a compensatory

resource. This finding is consistent with Bourdieu's (1979) analysis of how working-class communities develop strong local bonds in the absence of broader structural opportunities. It is also consistent with more recent work on the role of social capital in stigmatised urban neighbourhoods (Stubbe et al., 2020; Thomsen et al., 2025). At the same time, the collective use of the pronoun "we" in the girls' narratives signals a shared spatial identity that, as Jensen and Christensen (2012) have shown, is characteristic of communities navigating territorial stigmatisation (Jensen & Christensen, 2012).

b) Construction of Aestheticised and Feminised Spatial Imagery: Resistance and its Limits

The girls' construction of an aestheticised, feminised spatial image of Marxloh constitutes what Ahmed (2006, 2014) describes as an affective reorientation toward space: a practice through which familiar environments are charged with positive meaning in deliberate contrast to dominant representations. This is consistent with Butler's (1997) concept of performativity: through repeated acts of aesthetic narration and symbolic reframing, the girls do not merely describe their neighbourhood but actively participate in its symbolic (re)constitution. Similarly, Massey (2013) argues that space is a contingent relational structure, continuously reproduced through social practices. The girls' aesthetic counter-narratives are precisely these kinds of practices.

The girls' feminised spatial perspectives must, however, be critically examined considering current feminist geographical research. By mobilising classically feminine symbols such as nature, colour, warmth, and domesticity, the girls risk inadvertently reinforcing normative gender stereotypes about space and social roles, even as they seek to challenge dominant spatial narratives (Ahmed, 2014; Kern, 2020). This demonstrates that even ostensibly resistant spatial productions are not free from the social attributions they seek to contest. Alternative imaginative spaces that function beyond binary gender attributions appear largely absent from the girls' narratives. This gap points to the limits of informal, everyday resistance in the absence of structural and educational support. As Skelton and Aitken (2019) emphasise, the emancipatory potential of young people's spatial practices requires active pedagogical cultivation to move beyond the reproduction of existing symbolic orders. This tension between the emancipatory force of the girls' counter-narratives and their embeddedness in gendered symbolic systems is a central concern for further research and educational practice to address.

c) Demand for Complexity and Deconstruction of Dominant Narratives: Critical Awareness and its Constraints

The girls' active demand for a more nuanced public perception of Marxloh, calling for dialogue and direct engagement with residents, resonates with broader debates in critical urban geography on the relationship between territorial stigma and resident agency. Wacquant (2007) argued that territorial stigmatisation operates as a self-reinforcing mechanism, shaping not only external perceptions but also the self-understanding of those who inhabit stigmatised spaces. The girls' repeated critical awareness of this discrepancy can be read as a form of resistance to this

mechanism, consistent with Larsen and Delica's (2019) observation that territorial stigma is simultaneously externally imposed and internally contested (Larsen & Delica, 2019).

At the same time, the findings reveal that this critical awareness has structural limits. Several participants attributed the neighbourhood's problems to the behaviour of individual residents rather than to structural conditions of poverty, segregation, and disinvestment. It is a pattern of internalised stigmatisation and intra-group distancing. Thomsen et al. (2025) identified in their earlier study similar mechanisms of internalised stigmatisation and intra-group distancing that can be understood through Bourdieu's (1979) concept of social distinction and Said's (1978) notion of othering as mechanisms of symbolic self-protection in precarious positions. This finding underscores a key insight of intersectional analysis: the girls' critical spatial perspectives are simultaneously emancipatory and constrained by the intersecting structural positions they occupy. As Stubbe et al. (2020) demonstrated, negative media representations of a neighbourhood have lasting effects on the self-image and spatial practices of residents. These effects cannot be countered by individual critical awareness alone but require structural intervention and educational support.

d) Agency through Diversity of Perspectives and Narrative Practices: A Complex and Ambivalent Form of Resistance

The girls' exercise of agency through diverse narrative and performative practices can be theorised, following De Certeau (1984), as a form of tactical spatial production: creative strategies through which marginalised groups confront, modify, and reposition the spatial roles ascribed to them. This tactical dimension is what gives the girls' counter-narratives their political character. They are not merely personal expressions but, as Butler (1997) and Lefebvre (1974) suggest, performative acts of social spatial production through which those affected actively create meanings and co-shape social space in the sense of a symbolic-affective re-territorialisation.

Crucially, however, this agency is neither uniform nor unambiguous. The simultaneous expression of local belonging and the desire to leave the neighbourhood reflects the specific tension between class constraints, migration histories, and gender-specific restrictions on spatial mobility that characterise the intersectional position of the girls. This ambivalence resonates with Born's (2023) finding that territorial stigma produces long-term psychological and social effects that persist even as residents develop strategies of resistance (Born, 2023). Moreover, it resonates with Pinkster et al.'s (2020) concept of the "stickiness" of stigma. This concept describes the way in which negative spatial attributions adhere to residents even when contested (Pinkster et al., 2020). It also aligns with El-Mafaalani's (2020) analysis of the unfulfilled promises of social mobility in post-migrant urban contexts, where young people simultaneously identify with their communities and aspire to transcend the structural limitations associated with them (El-Mafaalani, 2020).

Taken together, the spatial perspectives of the interviewed girls constitute what can be interpreted as a performative reclaiming of everyday space (Ahmed, 2014; Kern, 2020). It is about a subtle, affectively charged, and politically significant form of self-empowerment within a

structurally stigmatised urban environment. Space becomes the bearer of identity concepts, belonging, and gentle resistance: a contingent relational structure continuously reproduced through social practice (Massey, 2013). Yet this reclaiming remains constrained by the very intersectional power structures of class, migration, and gender that make it necessary.

Triangulation of Perspectives

Besides, the analysis was supplemented by triangulation of perspectives. The empirical findings prove to be part of a complex negotiation process involving research, practice and the subjective perspectives of the interviewed girls.

Key similarities are evident in the perception of the discrepancy between the spatial perspectives of those affected and external attributions conveyed by the media. The interviewed girls and the practitioners describe that difference. The practitioners critically assess this discrepancy, identifying it as a starting point for action-oriented, empowering counterstrategies in the district, while the girls implicitly presented counter-narratives based on their own experiences. The central aim within the two cases is to differentiate spatial attributions that dominate the public discourse by offering emotionally charged, life-world-based perspectives: "*That's just the kind of public opinion that unfortunately keeps popping up.*" (Transcript_4, Item 45).

Further consensus is demonstrated by the fact that practitioners of the Werkkiste also recognise the importance of personal contact with local people when it comes to transforming urban spaces in public discourse: "*We have to talk to people so that things change.*" (Transcript_4, Item 33) and "*That's not always possible from the outside. That's why it's even more important that we engage with the local community.*" (Transcript_4, Item 33). These statements reflect the key principle of participatory spatial production: that desired transformation begins with the shared ability to speak (Butler, 1997, 2006; Lefebvre, 1974). It highlights the importance of giving those affected a voice and recognising local knowledge as an equal source (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

Moreover, the role of emotions and physical-sensory spatial experiences was identified as a key similarity, stressing that the district can only be understood through reflection and lived familiarity "*[we need to] talk about it a little more deeply.*" (Transcript_4, Item 34) and "*I think you'll notice it yourself (…) that it's not like that, with all the others who aren't from the district (…)*" (Transcript_4, Item 34). By highlighting the qualitative difference between insider and outsider perspectives, the participants show how embodied experience, and affective attachment can counteract stigmatising discourses. For the practitioners and the girls, themselves, subjective experience is central to challenging publicly reproduced stereotypes and reimagining their own district. These findings are directly connected to current discourses in spatial sociology and educational science, which emphasise the importance of emotionality and empathy when reflecting on stigmatised urban social spaces (Hochschild, 2016; Löw, 2016).

Furthermore, counter-narratives of a liveable Marxloh constructed by the girls meet with explicit approval from the practitioners and are reflected in the practitioners' practice: "*In summer, there's a lot going on. That's where the city is.*" (Transcript_4, Item 32). The practitioners

also present typically feminine spatial attributes such as warmth, liveliness, nature or community as positive qualities of Marxloh: "*The Park, for example, in summer.*" (Transcript_4, Item 43). The triangulation confirms the importance and innovative potential of performative, gender- and diversity-conscious spatial perspectives, consistent with current empirical findings (Budke & Kuckuck, 2017; Gryl & Kanwischer, 2023; Reinfried, 2007).

Overall, the triangulation of perspectives demonstrates that the girls' behaviour in dealing with their district's stigmatisation is part of collective spatial identity work as a locally anchored practice. Looking ahead, the systematic integration of the perspectives from those affected highlights the previously underutilised potential of participatory educational and research formats in socio-spatially disadvantaged contexts.

Limitations

At the same time, this project also contains limitations at an individual level that affect the study's empirical generalisability and conceptual depth. To this end, the following section, critically reflects on the key methodological and content-related limitations of the present study.

Firstly, the non-representative selection of participants is a crucial methodological limitation, severely limiting the diversity of perspectives. This may distort the findings and limit their interpretation and transferability. The voluntary nature of survey participation also implies self-selection. It can be assumed that the survey participants were more communicative or academically engaged, while less visible groups remained underrepresented. Future research should implement specific sampling strategies to ensure a more representative distribution of participants, considering how different factors shape residents' subjective perspectives. This would also allow the theoretical perspective of spatial intersectionality to be further empirically differentiated.

Secondly, it should be noted that the researcher engaged deeply with the personal and biographically charged perceptions and feelings of the interviewed girls. The interviews were conducted in an asymmetrical conversational situation between the interviewer and the interviewees, given differences in age, institutional position and language skills. Accordingly, particular sensitivity is required when interpreting the interview data (Dirim & Mecheril, 2010; Gogolin, 2006). To address this issue more effectively in the future, suitable alternative or complementary data collection formats and low-threshold dialogic settings should be chosen to allow young people to express themselves more effectively and contribute to richer and more differentiated data sets (Bremer & Lange-Vester, 2022; Prengel, 2019).

Another limitation of the research is the intersectional approach to the analysis, which carries the risk of inadvertently reproducing stereotypical or essentialising attributions. To this end, a high degree of sensitivity to structural power relations and logics of representation is required, as well as continuous reflection on one's own research practice (Mecheril & Melter, 2011). It is important to recognise that participatory processes alone do not automatically lead to decolonial or discrimination-critical cognitive processes unless epistemic asymmetries between researchers and subjects are explicitly addressed and consciously reflected upon (Tuhiwai Smith,

2012). The normative implications of interpretations must be considered, especially when the studied individuals are part of marginalised groups themselves. To this end, future work should consider critical, decolonial or community-based research approaches that treat local knowledge as an equally valid source of information to reach epistemic justice (Mecheril & Melter, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

Overall, the identified limitations do not diminish the value of the study but highlight key areas for development. They emphasise that sustainable research on stigmatised neighbourhoods and intersectional spatial perspectives can only succeed if methodological diversity, power-critical reflexivity and the consistent integration of local knowledge are considered together.

CONCLUSION

Beyond the backdrop of spatial intersectionality, this study aimed to analyse the stigmatised and structurally discriminated district Duisburg-Marxloh from the perspective of girls with a migrant background living in the area. The study focused on answering the overarching questions: “What spatial perspectives do young female students living in the intersectionally shaped, disadvantaged urban area of Duisburg-Marxloh develop on their neighbourhood from their own point of view?” (RQ1) and “How do the intersectional factors class, migration, and gender shape these individual spatial perspectives, and through which mechanisms do they become visible in the girls' narratives and appropriation practices?” (RQ2).

The analysis shows that the interviewed girls clearly recognise the dominant, media-influenced stigmatisation of their neighbourhood. Despite structural exclusion, they also develop differentiated, everyday and emotionally charged spatial perspectives that simultaneously express ambivalence, belonging and agency. This demonstrates that public and subjective spatial perspectives are in a complex, reciprocal and dynamic relationship, making an isolated examination of either perspective impossible.

The empirical findings thus confirm that negative media representations of someone’s neighbourhood have lasting effects on the self-image and spatial practices of those affected. Their experiences are shaped by a combination of social belonging, structural marginalisation and gender-specific exclusion. While they are aware of these discourses and begin to reflect critically on the hegemonic attributions, they often lack the concrete structural resources, strategic scope for action and institutional support.

Overall, this study highlights the empirical value of including marginalised young people in spatial education research. The findings suggest that intersectional geography is effective in breaking down stereotypical spatial perspectives and strengthening the agency of young people in stigmatised neighbourhoods.

Implication for Further Research

Based on the reconstructed perspectives, the question arises as to how the action-related forms of appropriation developed by young people can be externalised to challenge and transform existing dominant spatial attributions, thus strengthening their self-efficacy. In this context,

performative practice emerges as a key dimension. The planned follow-up research project builds on this topic by focusing on the performative spatial production of the already interviewed girls. The aim is to raise awareness of these spatial productions in public discourse, presenting them as potential counter-narratives to prevailing, deficit-oriented external perspectives. This will empower the girls, strengthen their self-efficacy, and enable them to develop a positive identity with their home district. Methodologically, the follow-up project builds on a participatory research design that engages young people as active participants to express and communicate their perspectives. The project seeks to foster new approaches to critical geography by linking empirical spatial research with issues of educational equity and amplifying the voices of marginalised groups (Mecheril & Melter, 2011; Unger et al., 2014). Taking those affected and marginalised groups as active producers of space opens a field of research and education that makes existing power relations visible and opens new perspectives for more equitable urban futures.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Guidelines of semi-structured interviews with guiding questions and follow-up questions structured by four thematic subfields (own illustration, based on (Helfferich, 2022)).

Research Interest	**How is Marxloh and its social attributes perceived by local girls with a migration background?**
Research Questions (RQ)	**1. How and why does the students' spatial construction change?** (Fögele & Mehren, 2017) 1.1 Perception of space (phenomenology): How do students describe their perception of Marxloh? Which sensory impressions (e.g., visual, acoustic, or emotional) stand out to them? 1.2 Construction of space (post-structuralism): How do the students define their "own space" in Marxloh? How do the students deal with the public-media construction of Marxloh? 1.3 Power (critical geography): How do the students perceive their role as young girls with a migration background in the Marxloh area (e.g., borders)? Are there specific places in Marxloh where the schoolgirls feel particularly (un-)safe?
General Framework	The group interviews are conducted with seven girls with a migration background living in Marxloh and attending a local school. Before the group interviews begin, name tags are distributed and the seating arrangements are recorded. The participants are also assigned personal composite codes consisting of the first letter of their first name and the day of their birthday as a two-digit number. The codes are recorded with a voice sample in the form of a short round of introductions 'I am Code XY, I am XY years old and I attend class XY at Herbert-Grillo-Gesamtschule in Duisburg-Marxloh'.
Information and orientation phase → Information and creation of a trusting and communication-oriented atmosphere	• First, please introduce yourself • Round of introductions 'I am Code XY, I am XY years old and attend class XY at Herbert-Grillo-Gesamtschule in Duisburg-Marxloh' as a voice sample • Introducing the main topic and clarifying the purpose of the group interview (transparency) ○ Empirical research by Tabea Thomsen (Code T10) as an independent representative of the University of Muenster • Data protection: Audio recording for the subsequent evaluation, anonymization, declarations of consent • Note: evaluation-free space, differentiation from a test situation: what is said is not passed on to third parties (e.g., teachers) and/or evaluated, all personal views and experiences are relevant and valuable; free, open and spontaneous narration is desired, not every word is taken literally

	• Specify basic rules for communication during the group interview to facilitate the establishment of a group norm during the discussion (e.g., respectful interaction, no personal attacks, no right or wrong answers) **Rules for communication** -that only one person can talk at a time, -that you do not talk too long -that you do not speak impersonally and generally, but about yourself and your experiences -that you do not digress, but refer to the topic -that side conversations actually belong in the public sphere of the discussion
Getting started	• Here we go • Tell us whether you have ever dealt with your place of residence at school. When and in which subject has Marxloh ever been a topic?
Main section: spatial perception	• Let's go Inside Marxloh... I would like to talk to you about your home district. • How do you perceive Marxloh (e.g., sounds, smells, architecture)? • What does Marxloh mean to you? • What do you associate with Marxloh (e.g., feelings, memories)? • What positive and negative experiences from your everyday life in Marxloh have stayed in your mind? • What does your everyday life in Marxloh looks like (e.g., leisure activities, work, transportation)? • Where do you spend your free time in Marxloh? Tell us about a typical Saturday. • What do you associate with these places (e.g., feelings)? • What are particularly (un)interesting places for you in Marxloh? • Are there places that you deliberately avoid? Why (e.g., insecurity as young women with a migration background)? • Are there places you are not allowed to go? Why (e.g., boundaries as young women with a migration background)? • We've already discussed your insider perspective at length. However, I am an outsider when it comes to Marxloh. What do you think have I heard about the district so far? • Where does my information about Marxloh come from? • Do you agree with the images and narratives from the media? • Do you think you can change anything about how outsiders perceive Marxloh? Why (not)?

	• Which places in Marxloh would you take outsiders to with the aim of maybe changing their minds? Why? • Which important people for Marxloh would you introduce to outsiders with the aim of changing their minds? Why?
Looking to the future: spatial perception	• Finally, let's take another look into the future together. • What would you like to see for your district of Marxloh (e.g., structural measures)? • What opportunities do you see for yourself to change something in the district? What could this look like in concrete terms?
Come to an end → rounding off, satisfactory conclusion	• Let's conclude all together • Flashlight: name 3 associations that spontaneously come to mind about your home district of Duisburg-Marxloh • Is there anything we haven't talked about that you would like to address? • Thank you for your participation in the group interview

Table 2.
Codebook (own representation based on (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2024)).

C1 Everyday Geography-Making in Space (Performativity)	C1.1 Aesthetic Counter-Narratives	This category is coded when participants create self-confident images that contrast with the dominant Marxloh narrative.	A7: Yes, when you walk into the park, the sun is shining — it's just perfect! #00:16:54-5#
	C1.2 Self-Perception as Spatial Actors	This category is coded when participants actively claim their place in Marxloh or describe their role within the space.	Z11: If you want to change the image of the city, you first must talk to [its residents] or simply try to understand them a little better. #00:28:57-2#
	C1.3 Re-Framing of Stigmatised Spaces	This category is coded when participants consciously reinterpret dominant spatial attributions, which are defined as the common assumptions about how space is experienced and used.	S10: Well, it's great that Marxloh is so multicultural. #00:13:29-1#

	C1.4 Invisible Geographies	This category is coded when participants draw attention to places that are not officially visible or recognised.	N3: Uh, yes, there is a way. #00:14:53-0#
	C1.5 Performative Spatial Critique	This category is coded when participants actively present themselves as capable representatives of the space in public discourse.	A7: […] If we go somewhere else, we represent Marxloh [...] # 00:02:29-7#

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