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Intergenerational Dynamics and Youth Citizenship: A Scoping Review (2010-2024)

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Intergenerational Dynamics and Youth Citizenship: A Scoping Review (2010-2024)

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Abstract

In a time of democratic uncertainty, digital transformations, and generational divides, understanding how citizenship is experienced and transmitted across generations has become increasingly relevant. To map this interdisciplinary field and identify key themes, trends, and gaps, a scoping literature was conducted, covering peer-reviewed literature produced between 2010 and 2024. Following a thematic analysis of 143 articles, six core themes emerged: intergenerational learning as democratic renewal; trauma, well-being, and belonging; digital citizenship as social justice in practice; migration, identity, and transnational belonging; creative expression as civic participation; and structural and systemic approaches to citizenship. These themes disclose citizenship as a relational, intergenerational, and digitally mediated process, co-constructed through dialogue and exchange across generations and cultural contexts.

Keywords: intergenerationality, youth citizenship, citizenship narratives, scoping review, qualitative thematic analysis

1 Introduction

Citizenship is forged across multiple public and private spheres, extending beyond school and family. It is shaped by social experiences, a sense of belonging to specific groups

(geographic, social, or cultural), shared memories, meanings shared across generations, and media consumption (Aroldi 2011; Aroldi and Colombo 2013; Brites 2015, 2017; Corsten 1999). When it comes to youth citizenship, adult role models and the family are central (Brites 2017), as they can have a significant — and often underestimated — impact on how young people form their opinions and perspectives on citizenship (AUTHOR, 2022a). In this sense, youth citizenship does not blossom in isolation. It also develops through intergenerational dynamics. Although intergenerational dynamics in formal educational contexts have already been the subject of extensive reflection and discussion (e.g. (Crosnoe and Elder 2002; Field 2013; Orte et al. 2018)), non-formal and informal learning environments, as well as intergenerational relationships with educators and community figures, have received comparatively little attention in the literature, despite their potential influence on civic identity formation (Allaste et al. 2022). This invites further examination of how research has explored the relationship between intergenerational dynamics and youth citizenship across different contexts and settings. To address this, we conducted a scoping literature review (Arksey and O'Malley 2005) on intergenerationality, youth citizenship, and citizenship narratives. The review maps the relationship between intergenerational dynamics and youth citizenship (including digital citizenship), identifies key themes and trends, and highlights gaps and opportunities for future research.

1.1 Why intergenerational dynamics matter for youth citizenship

Empirical research has systematically demonstrated that intergenerational relationships — those generated within families, communities, or broader social structures — play a fundamental role in shaping how young people develop civic values, a sense of political effectiveness, and engage in democratic life (Binder 2020; Sarrasin et al. 2022; Ursin et al. 2021). Family constitutes one of the most significant contexts for these intergenerational dynamics. Research shows that the transmission of media attitudes, political orientations and beliefs, and civic values within family contexts is among the most consistently documented findings in the citizenship socialisation literature (Borkowska and Luthra 2022). However, what passes between generations within families is never straightforwardly reproduced. These values, experiences, and beliefs are creatively and critically reinterpreted, renegotiated, and sometimes resisted. In contexts of migration and

social change in particular, these processes become even more complex, as the civic identities young people build are shaped simultaneously by family heritage, community background, and the mediated public spheres they inhabit (Loh et al. 2025). In other contexts, such as educational ones, tensions such as mistrust, power imbalances, and cultural gaps can also hinder positive intergenerational outcomes, emphasising the importance of developing conditions that support genuine exchange rather than assuming it will occur naturally (Hartley et al. 2021; Wilson et al. 2024). Although intergenerational dialogue can be challenging, promoting cross-generational discussions and reflection on citizenship can foster mutual respect, empathy, and a shared sense of responsibility among age groups (AUTHOR, 2022a). Such intergenerational interactions can also help close social, technological, and educational gaps, foster civic attitudes and values, and strengthen social cohesion (Amaral et al. 2023; Leek and Rojek 2022; AUTHOR, 2022c, 2022a, 2022b). Furthermore, intergenerational dynamics are not unidirectional. Young people do not merely absorb civic norms transmitted by older generations; they actively contribute to intergenerational learning, challenge pre-established structures, and advance intergenerational justice (Wilson et al. 2024). This reciprocity is particularly evident in topics related to digital media, climate activism, mental health and well-being, and social justice, where young people have demonstrated a significant capacity to influence adult perspectives, political discussions, and institutional practices (Kapeke et al. 2023). Understanding intergenerational dynamics as conversational and interactional rather than as a one-way transmission of values and knowledge is, thus, essential to any account of how youth citizenship is formed and supported.

1.2 How youth citizenship, the digital environment and intergenerational dynamics are interconnected

The liberalisation of the internet, as well as the rise of digital media and online socialisation platforms — such as social media and conversational platforms — has reshaped the relationship between citizens, participation, and the public spheres. While some scholars warn that media alone cannot counter political apathy and may even threaten civic engagement (Sunstein 2018; Vaidhyanathan 2018), others argue that digital platforms have contributed to redefining democratic participation, providing new spaces for the exchange

of ideas and the expression of civic voices (Dahlgren 2009; Jenkins et al. 2016; Loader and Mercea 2011). In a landscape where information is increasingly conveyed via screens (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2009), citizenship and participation have long since transcended the barriers of physical spaces and institutional forms. Protests and rallies witnessed in recent years, including Black Lives Matter and Fridays for Future, demonstrate that, despite the striking diversity of backgrounds, youth tend to actively engage with local and global issues that directly impact their lives and social and political contexts (Sloam 2014). They tend to participate and engage in civic life through more fluid, creative, and less institutionalised processes, frequently relying on digital media to organise, communicate, and amplify their voices (Banaji and Moreno-Almeida 2020; Dahlgren 2009, 2013; Garcia et al. 2019; Jenkins et al. 2016). Younger generations appear to reconceptualise citizenship itself, perceiving (and experiencing) it as a less institutionalised and more informal mode of civic engagement. However, they often question the impact of their voice, particularly when expressed through traditional forms of participation (AUTHOR, 2022c, 2022a). Digital spaces have also introduced a new and increasingly central dimension to social dynamics. Rather than functioning as a separate domain, digital environments expand and blur the boundaries between online and offline life, hosting new forms of intimacy, solidarity, and identity exploration that feed back into everyday relationships (Soh et al. 2024) — including intergenerational ones. Social media affordances, in particular, support new types of community development, norm-setting, and emotional alignment, providing the basis for shared identities that extend across physical and virtual contexts (Lüders et al. 2022). As Bruns (Bruns 2023) and Schüssler et al. (Schüßler et al. 2021) suggest, digital platforms function as relational structures that overlap online and offline audiences, mediating mutual sharing and user autonomy in ways that make every relationship, to some degree, a platformed (and performative) one. This reconfiguration comes with a certain degree of tension. While online practices can foster empathy and peer support, they can also intensify self-presentation pressures, social comparison, and new forms of relational avoidance, making interpersonal bonds somewhat ambiguous (Santiago-Torner et al. 2026). In these digital settings, social dynamics necessarily involve different generations. Young people navigate these dynamics alongside older generations, who have different digital experiences and expectations. Research on digital media practices suggests that digital

environments can nonetheless serve as meaningful spaces for intergenerational exchange and civic identity formation (Gallardo-López & Villaraviz 2021). Altogether, these findings point to a broader and more pressing argument: that effective civic formation in a world being shaped by new socialisation dynamics and challenges cannot be achieved by any single generation acting alone. The literature highlights the importance of creating participatory spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and shared action across generations to promote social cohesion, address contemporary challenges, and ensure democratic resilience (Sarrasin et al. 2022; Wilson et al. 2024).

2 Current study

Despite the growing literature on citizenship and participation, and on the relationship between citizens, digital media, and intergenerationality, key dimensions of this field remain underexplored. These are the main aspects addressed by the project [ANONYMISED PROJECT], an initiative conducted in [ANONYMISED COUNTRY]. The project explored how citizenship is learned, shaped, and lived across generations in today's digital world. Anchored in participatory action research that combines community-based methods with ethnographic features, the project mainly focused on valuing and amplifying diverse voices, from young people (15-24) and influential adults in their lives — e.g. parents, grandparents, and community leaders — in communities spread across the country. To address four interconnected questions — how intergenerational dynamics shape the construction of citizenship; how digital technologies mediate citizenship experiences across generations; how adult figures influence young people's civic opinions and perspectives; and what role intergenerational relationships play in non-formal and informal learning environments — the [ANONYMISED] project was structured across three mutually complementary phases. This paper draws on the first phase: a scoping literature review (Arksey & O'Malley 2005) mapping peer-reviewed literature at the intersection of these themes. The research questions that guided this review were "How has research explored the relationship between intergenerational dynamics and youth citizenship — including digital citizenship? Which are the key themes, trends, and gaps?".

3 Methodology

3.1 Scoping review (SoRe) framework

Given the interdisciplinary nature of research on youth citizenship, intergenerationality, and citizenship narratives, a scoping review was considered the most appropriate methodological approach for this study. Unlike systematic reviews, which primarily aim to assess the effectiveness of interventions or synthesise evidence addressing narrowly defined research questions, scoping reviews are designed to map the breadth and diversity of existing literature, clarify key concepts, identify methodological approaches, and reveal knowledge gaps within emerging or heterogeneous fields (Arksey & O'Malley 2005; Grant & Booth 2009; Munn et al. 2018). This approach is particularly adequate to research domains characterised by conceptual plurality and methodological diversity, where studies originate from multiple disciplines and employ a wide range of theoretical and empirical perspectives. In view of the issues under consideration, the study included peer-reviewed publications from the social sciences in general, the communication sciences, education and political science. The review followed the five-stage framework proposed by Arksey & O'Malley (Arksey & O'Malley 2005), encompassing five main steps: (1) identifying the research question; (2) identifying relevant studies; (3) selection of studies; (4) data charting; and (5) collating, synthesising, and reporting results. To enhance methodological transparency and reporting quality, the SoRe was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al. 2018). The objective of this review was to provide a comprehensive overview of how intergenerational dynamics have been addressed and investigated in relation to youth citizenship (including digital citizenship) over 15 years, to gain a broad perspective on the development of the subject. The years were selected based on the project's implementation period, with the review covering 2010 to 2024. Besides, with its extension, it captures the body of academic production emerging alongside the expansion of digital media, platform-based communication, and contemporary debates surrounding youth participation, intergenerational relationships, and digital citizenship.

3.2 Search strategy

The search was conducted across Web of Science, Scopus, and ERIC, complemented by the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) to increase the retrieval of open-access peer-reviewed publications. Together, these databases offer broad coverage of research in communication, education, political science, and the wider social sciences, encompassing publications from across diverse contexts — from the Global North to the Global South. The search was conducted between March and April 2025 and included studies published between January 2010 and December 2024. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English, Portuguese, or Spanish were considered, in line with the research team's language capabilities. Search terms were organised around six key conceptual domains derived from the research questions: citizenship, youth, intergenerationality, digital citizenship, media and information literacy, and digital media. Within each domain, synonyms and related concepts were combined using Boolean operators (AND/OR) and adapted to the indexing requirements of each database. The complete search strings are presented in Figure 1.

(citizenship OR "civic engagement" OR "political participation" OR "civic identity" OR "digital citizenship")

AND

(youth OR "young people" OR adolescent OR teenager OR "young adult" OR student OR "Gen Z" OR millennial)

AND

(intergeneration OR "cross-generation" OR multigeneration OR "generation gap" OR "intergenerational solidarity" OR "intergenerational relations")

AND

("media literacy" OR "information literacy" OR "digital literacy" OR "media education" OR "digital competence" OR "critical literacy")

AND

(narrative OR storytelling OR discourse OR framing OR "social media" OR "digital media" OR "online platform" OR internet OR platform)

Figure1. Search string used during the search process

3.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To support the search and selection process, eligibility criteria were established prior to the review. This helped ensure consistency and transparency throughout the study selection

process and eliminated publications that came across as irrelevant. The complete inclusion and exclusion criteria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria

• Published between 2010 and 2024
• Articles from peer-reviewed scientific journals
• Written in Portuguese, English or Spanish
• Articles available in full text
• Studies focused on citizenship (or digital citizenship) issues from an intergenerational perspective or intergenerational populations or young people and older people, or intergenerational interactions.
• And which address at least one of the following topics:
  ○ MIL in relation to civic or social practices
  ○ Experiences of citizenship
  ○ Intergenerational solidarity or civic engagement
	• Articles published outside of the period range (2010 and 2024)
	• Grey literature, editorials, dissertations, or book reviews
	• All articles written in other languages other than Portuguese, English or Spanish
	• Articles subject to closed access and unavailable in the authors' University database
	• Studies in which the intergenerational dimension is not included, neither as part of the intervention nor as part of the reflection
	• Studies that do not mention or explore citizenship
	• Articles that do not address (or reflect on) intergenerational or civic dimensions
	• Studies that focus exclusively on traditional media
	• Studies that focus exclusively on elderly care or family relationships, without a perspective of civic/digital engagement

3.4 Study selection process

The study selection process followed the PRISMA-ScR framework (Tricco et al. 2018) and comprised four sequential stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. A total of 1,483 records were initially identified across the four databases. After removing duplicates, unreadable records, and other non-eligible[1] entries (n = 846), 637 records proceeded to title and abstract screening. Following this stage, 299 articles were retained for full-text assessment. Twelve studies were excluded because their full texts were unavailable, leaving 287 articles eligible for detailed evaluation. After applying the

[1] In this stage, duplicated studies and those published in other languages other than Portuguese, English and Spanish were considered non-eligible.

predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria related to the articles' subject matter, 143 studies were included in the final corpus for analysis. Reasons for exclusion were documented at each stage of the review process. The complete study selection procedure is presented in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 2).

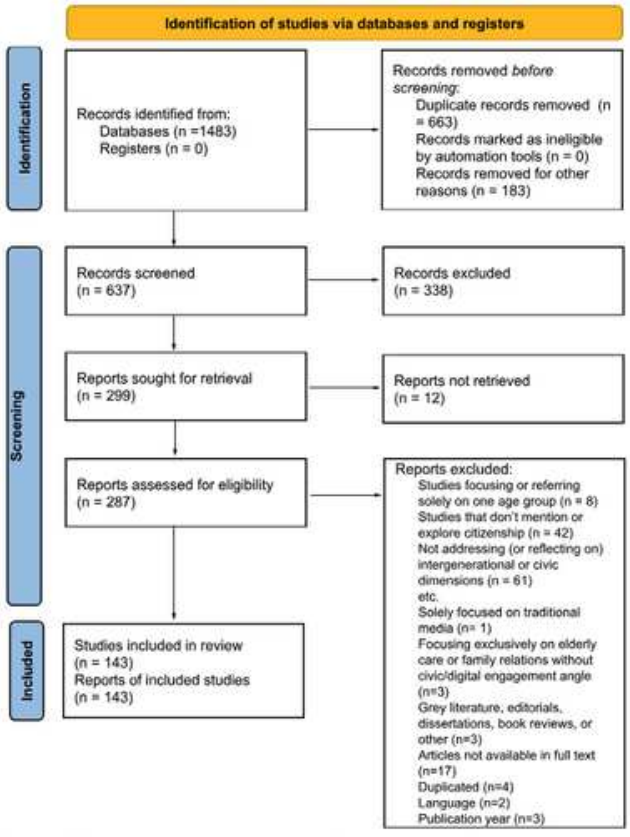


Figure 2. PRISMA-ScR flowchart of screening process

The initial screening process was coordinated by the responsible researcher (RR) — a researcher with expertise in communication studies. Subsequently, the screening and eligibility assessment were conducted collaboratively by the RR and two additional researchers (a PhD student and a master's student, both from communication sciences). Titles and abstracts were independently assessed by at least two members of the research team against the predefined eligibility criteria. Articles considered potentially relevant proceeded to full-text review. Where uncertainty arose, studies were provisionally classified as Maybe and underwent an additional round of assessment. Any disagreements

were resolved through discussion among the three researchers until consensus was reached, ensuring consistency, transparency, and methodological rigour throughout the selection process.

3.5 Data extraction and charting

Following study selection, the included articles were systematically charted using a structured data extraction matrix developed in Google Sheets. The charting process was iterative, allowing the research team to refine categories where necessary while maintaining consistency throughout the review, in line with recommendations for scoping review methodology (Tricco et al. 2018). For each study, bibliographic information (e.g., authors, year of publication, journal, and disciplinary area) was recorded, along with methodological characteristics such as study objectives, research design, theoretical framework, methods, sample characteristics, and geographical context. The matrix also captured the main concepts addressed (e.g., citizenship, digital citizenship, youth citizenship, intergenerationality, and media and information literacy), the type of intergenerational interaction examined, the role attributed to digital media, and the main findings, research gaps, and emerging trends identified by the authors. The resulting database enabled a systematic comparison of studies and provided the analytical foundation for both the descriptive mapping of the literature and the subsequent thematic synthesis.

3.6 Data analysis and synthesis

After completing the charting process and an initial quantitative analysis, the extracted data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) based on the full texts. The research team engaged in an iterative process of coding and comparison to identify recurring patterns of meaning across the included studies. The analysis sought to develop an interpretative synthesis of the themes emerging from the relationship between intergenerational dynamics and youth citizenship (including digital citizenship), and to examine how these have been conceptualised and investigated during the specified timeframe. Initial descriptive codes were progressively grouped into broader conceptual categories through continuous discussion among the researchers. This process resulted in six overarching themes, as portrayed in Table 2 that structure the presentation of the findings: (1) intergenerational learning as democratic renewal; (2) trauma, well-being, and

belonging; (3) digital citizenship as social justice in practice; (4) migration, identity, and transnational belonging; (5) creative expression as civic participation; and (6) structural dynamics and systemic approaches to citizenship.

Table 2. Themes and descriptions

Theme	Description
Intergenerational learning as democratic renewal	Cluster that gathers works that examine how intergenerational learning functions as a practice of democratic renewal, moving beyond unidirectional knowledge transmission towards reciprocal exchange and co-creation of meaning. Initial studies explore how shared narratives, oral histories, and cultural memory mediate intergenerational dialogue and how these processes challenge generational boundaries through mutual recognition and collective knowledge-building.
Digital citizenship as social justice practice	Cluster of studies examining how digital citizenship is practiced and theorized across communities, with a focus on the intersections between access, competence, and critical engagement. Studies in this cluster address how youth and marginalized groups utilize digital participation across age groups, how mobile and social media affect civic participation, and how new digital information literacies augment or constrain equitable civic engagement.
Migration, identity, and transnational belonging	Cluster that gathers studies that analyze how migration and transnational experiences shape identities, civic agency, and a sense of belonging. Studies in this cluster explore how diasporic and mixed cultural backgrounds influence civic participation, identity negotiation, and transnational solidarity. Central themes include tensions between formal and legal notions of citizenship and the lived, membership-based significations of national identity, citizenship, and belonging.
Structural and institutional dimensions	Cluster of studies examining the structural and institutional conditions that enable or constrain civic participation. Studies in this cluster analyze how formal institutions, policy frameworks, and organizational practices shape opportunities for engagement and collective action. Attention is given to how inequalities are reproduced or challenged within schools, community organizations, and other civic spaces, and how institutional cultures mediate access to resources, representation, and power.
Creative expression as civic practice	Cluster that gathers studies examining how civic participation manifests and is supported as a form of artistic, cultural, and creative expression. Research in this cluster explores how the arts function as a medium for critical dialogue, resistance, and community-building, focusing on activities such as theatre, music, visual arts, and storytelling. Studies examine how creative practices foster civic

Theme	Description
	imagination, challenge dominant narratives, and generate new vocabularies, challenging deficit narratives and augmenting subcultural capacities.
Trauma, healing, and belonging	Cluster that gathers studies examining how historical, collective, and embodied trauma shape intergenerational experiences of belonging and civic agency. This cluster explores how memories of violence and displacement influence civic identities and how practices of remembrance, memorialisation, and healing can open possibilities for justice and community repair. Attention is given to how practices of healing and acknowledgement mediate the relationship between traumatic experience and civic participation.

The studies were categorised by theme into three groups: main theme, secondary theme and "latent" theme. Combining a scoping review with reflexive thematic analysis enabled the study to move beyond a descriptive mapping of the literature towards an interpretative understanding of the dominant conceptual directions, and knowledge gaps characterising this interdisciplinary field.

4 Findings

The final corpus comprised 143 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024[2], representing an interdisciplinary body of research on youth citizenship (including digital citizenship), intergenerationality, and related concepts. This section provides a descriptive overview of the literature by examining temporal and geographical distribution, disciplinary contexts, methodological approaches, sample characteristics, and publication trends. Together, these indicators illustrate how the field has evolved over the past 15 years.

4.1 Temporal and geographic distribution

The temporal distribution of the literature reveals a clear expansion of scholarly interest over the last fifteen years. Although studies were published throughout the review period, research activity increased noticeably from 2019 onwards, with more than half of the included articles published during the 2020s. The highest publication output was recorded in 2021 (14%), followed by consistently high output through 2024 (9.8%). This upward

[2] The full dataset is available at Figshare with this link [ANONYMISED LINK]

trajectory reflects the growing academic attention devoted to youth citizenship and intergenerational dynamics in response to accelerating digital transformation, increasing social and political polarisation, and renewed concerns surrounding democratic participation and civic engagement. The geographical distribution of the studies highlights a strong concentration of research within Europe, which accounts for 39.9% of the included studies, followed by North America (21%) and Asia (11.9%). A further 11.9% of the studies adopted transcontinental perspectives spanning multiple continents, while research conducted in South America (7.7%), Africa (2.8%), and Oceania (3.5%) remains comparatively limited. The geographical profile of the literature suggests that knowledge production on intergenerational citizenship remains concentrated in the Global North, despite growing recognition that citizenship practices and intergenerational relationships are shaped by diverse cultural, political, and social contexts. This uneven distribution points to the need for greater geographical diversity in future research.

4.2 Disciplines and quartile distribution

Although the search strategy included specifically Communication Sciences, Education, Political Sciences, and Social Sciences in general, the final corpus included studies from adjacent disciplinary areas, such as Psychology, Medicine, and Arts and Humanities. This reflects the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the topics under research and is itself a substantive finding of the SoRe. It points to the dispersed and fragmented character of the literature at the intersection of intergenerationality, citizenship, and digital media. Studies from these adjacent fields were retained where they met the eligibility criteria, regardless of their disciplinary origin. Social Sciences constitute the dominant disciplinary field, accounting for 41.96% of the included studies, followed by Arts and Humanities, Medicine, Psychology, and other disciplinary areas. At the same time, the review reveals a high level of scholarly quality and visibility: 58.7% of the articles were published in first-quartile (Q1) journals, indicating that questions surrounding youth citizenship, intergenerational relationships, and democratic participation have become increasingly prominent within leading international academic publications.

4.3 Methodological approaches

In 9% of the papers, the methodological approach was not specified. Qualitative methodologies predominate in the literature, accounting for 53.9% of the included studies, whereas quantitative (24.5%) and mixed-methods approaches (12.6%) are less frequently employed. This methodological profile reflects a relevant characteristic of the field: one that privileges studies that are smaller in scale, more context-specific, and more focused on meaning, experience, and process than on measurement and generalisation. Particularly in the analysed corpus, a set of works emerged in which researchers prioritised understanding of lived experiences, civic identities, and intergenerational relationships through interviews, ethnography, observation, and other qualitative methods. Interviews and surveys were the two most frequently employed data collection techniques, appearing in 46% and 39% of the studies respectively, while observational and ethnographic approaches also featured prominently — 23.8% and 14.7% of the studies, respectively. Collectively, these findings suggest that scholarship, even if still anchored in more traditional collection methods — such as surveys — is largely seeking to go beyond generalised data collection to understand the meanings and practices associated with citizenship.

4.4 Involvement of intergenerational samples

Most studies (79.7%) involved participants from more than one generation, confirming that intergenerational interaction is the field's main analytical focus. Among these, studies involving three or more age groups were particularly common (57%), reflecting a growing tendency to conceptualise citizenship as a relational process that extends beyond parent/child or youth/older-adult dynamics. Regarding the contexts in which intergenerational interactions were examined, structured programmes or interventions (in formal or non-formal contexts) represented the largest category (38.5%), followed by family (35%) and community-based contexts (38.5%). By contrast, relatively few studies focused exclusively on digitally mediated interactions (7%), despite the growing centrality of digital environments to contemporary civic participation. Overall, these descriptive findings portray a research field that continues to privilege face-to-face and community-based forms of intergenerational engagement while only beginning to explore the implications of digitally mediated relationships for citizenship across generations. In 17.5%

of the studies, even when intergenerational groups weren't involved, they included a reflexive focus on intergenerational dynamics, approaches, and relationships.

4.5 Themes under study

Following reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006), six interconnected themes were identified, reflecting the diverse ways intergenerational dynamics have been examined in relation to youth citizenship across different disciplinary, geographical, and social contexts. The qualitative thematic synthesis provides a deeper understanding of the main patterns emerging across the 143 studies. Although presented separately for analytical clarity, these themes should not be understood as independent categories. Instead, they collectively construct a broader narrative of the literature, illustrating how research has progressively conceptualised citizenship as a multifaceted phenomenon shaped through learning, wellbeing, participation, mobility, creative expression, and structural conditions. This narrative reflects the complexity of intergenerational citizenship, with individual studies frequently contributing to more than one thematic area.

4.5.1 Intergenerational learning as democratic renewal

Intergenerational learning as democratic renewal is the most prominent thematic axis identified in the review, encompassing 56 studies (39.2%). Across the reviewed literature, intergenerational learning is consistently conceptualised as a process through which civic knowledge, values, and participation are developed through interactions between different generations. Rather than portraying citizenship as knowledge acquired exclusively through formal education, the studies emphasise the importance of dialogue, collaboration, and shared experience across educational, family, community, and participatory settings. A recurring pattern across the literature is the emphasis on structured intergenerational initiatives, including school-based projects, community programmes, mentoring initiatives, and participatory activities (e.g. (Baschiera et al. 2019; Ferreira 2021)). These actions frequently present opportunities for younger and older participants to exchange perspectives, discuss shared social concerns, and engage collaboratively in civic and community-oriented practices. Across these contexts, intergenerational learning was associated with increased mutual understanding, civic participation, social responsibility, and the development of democratic competencies. Participatory media initiatives described

in the studies by Mouchtari et al. (2015) and Palmer (2016) illustrate how collaborative media production can create spaces where participants define and communicate their own experiences while recognising the knowledge and perspectives of other generations. The reviewed studies also reveal that intergenerational learning was rarely conceptualised as a one-way transfer of knowledge from older to younger generations. Instead, several authors describe reciprocal learning processes in which participants alternate between the roles of educators and learners, particularly regarding digital skills, media practices, and community participation (e.g. Baschiera et al. 2019; Chen 2018). Other studies (Cornejo et al. 2020; Torres-Hernández et al. 2023; Robinson & Gottlieb 2019) similarly emphasise dialogue, collaborative knowledge production, and the exchange of lived experiences as central components of intergenerational learning. These studies consistently portray learning as a relational process shaped by the different experiences, skills, and social positions that each generation brings into civic interactions. Although educational settings represent an important context for intergenerational learning, the literature extends well beyond formal schooling. Family relationships, neighbourhood initiatives, cultural organisations, and community projects are frequently described as spaces where civic values, social responsibilities, and democratic practices are negotiated across generations (Barken & Davies 2020; Vozab 2023).

4.5.2 (Digital) Citizenship as social justice practice

(Digital) Citizenship as social justice practice was identified as the third emerging theme, encompassing 44 studies (30.8%). Within the studies included in this theme, citizenship is conceptualised as an active social practice through which individuals and communities negotiate rights, responsibilities, participation, and social justice. While many examine these processes within digital environments themselves, the literature also analyses citizenship across educational, community, and civic contexts, highlighting the diverse ways in which participation is enacted and experienced. A recurring pattern in the reviewed studies is the understanding of citizenship as a set of skills, attitudes, and behaviours expressed across social, educational, and political domains (Gallardo-López & Villaraviz 2021; Almeida et al. 2022). Across these contexts, citizenship is outlined through practices of dialogue, collaboration, advocacy, and participation in issues affecting local and wider

communities. Rather than focusing exclusively on institutional forms of political participation, the literature frequently examines everyday civic practices through which individuals engage with social concerns and contribute to collective life. Another prominent dimension within this theme concerns the role of digital environments in shaping contemporary forms of participation. Studies such as those by Capello & Siino (2023) and Rubenzer (2015) describe digital platforms as spaces where civic voices are amplified, social justice claims are articulated, and collective mobilisation becomes possible. At the same time, this literature documents the exclusionary dimensions of digital participation, particularly unequal access to technologies, a lack of digital skills, and uneven opportunities for participation (Yildiz et al. 2020). In this sense, digital citizenship is present across the reviewed studies as both an enabling and unequal terrain of civic practice. Additionally, citizenship is linked to media and information literacy and to broader social justice questions. Rather than presenting digital literacy as a technical competence, studies frame it through the lens of critical literacy, equitable access, and the capacity to actively participate in digital democratic processes (Yeh et al. 2013). Other studies (e.g Alfrey et al. 2020; Cheng et al. 2022; Gruenewald et al. 2015) underscore the role of intergenerational learning in supporting technical, social, and civic integration, particularly when younger and older participants exchange digital skills, media practices, and everyday experiences.

4.5.3 Migration, identity, and transnational belonging

Thirty-four studies (23.8%) were included in the third theme — *Migration, identity, and transnational belonging*. Across these studies, the theme focuses on how migratory experiences, diasporic trajectories, and transnational connections shape citizenship practices and senses of belonging across generations. The studies further examine citizenship as a lived and relational experience, influenced by family histories, cultural identities, mobility, memory, and attachment to multiple places. Migration pathways and family backgrounds emerge as significant factors shaping intergenerational civic engagement across the reviewed studies. Research on migrant and diasporic communities shows that young people's understandings of citizenship are shaped by family narratives, cultural heritage, community networks, and experiences of inclusion or exclusion within

host societies (Miri & Emmery 2024; Terriquez & Kwon 2015). Across these contexts, civic participation is frequently connected to questions of identity, recognition, and belonging, rather than being limited to formal political status or institutional participation. The literature also highlights the intergenerational transmission and negotiation of values within migrant and transnational families. A variety of works (e.g. Kallis et al. 2020; Schmid et al. 2023; Wong 2019) explore how political values, cultural practices, religious identities, and memories of displacement are transmitted, reinterpreted, or contested across generations. In these studies, identity is presented as continuously negotiated between family heritage, community expectations, and the social and political contexts in which young people live. Moreover, the relationship between cultural preservation and adaptation emerges as another key dimension. Studies by Mhurchú (2016) and Kallis et al. (2020), focusing on migrant, diasporic, indigenous, and postcolonial communities, describe how individuals and groups navigate the tension between maintaining cultural traditions and responding to new civic, institutional, and social realities. Across these contexts, transnational belonging is frequently associated with participation in networks, communities, and practices that extend beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.

4.5.4 Structural dimensions and systemic approaches

The theme *Structural dimensions and systemic approaches* encompassed 30 studies (21%) as either a primary or secondary theme. Across the reviewed literature, this theme captures the organisational, institutional, political, and socio-economic conditions that shape how citizenship is practised and experienced. This means the studies comprising this theme examine citizenship through the broader systems that enable, constrain, or organise civic engagement. Institutions and policy frameworks play a significant role in shaping opportunities for participation across the reviewed literature. Several studies (e.g. boyd 2019; Borkowska & Luthra 2022; Hegeman et al. 2010) describe how civic engagement depends on institutional arrangements, educational systems, public policies, and organisational support structures that either facilitate or limit participation. These studies examine citizenship in relation to the distribution of resources, access to decision-making, and the capacity of institutions to recognise different groups as legitimate civic actors. The reviewed studies also highlight structural inequalities that affect participation across age,

class, race, gender, migration status, and other social positions. Research addressing youth participation, migrant communities, undocumented young people, post-conflict contexts, and transnational families shows how power relations influence who can speak, who is heard, and whose participation is recognised (Braddock & Del Carmen Gonzalez 2010; Këllezi et al. 2024). Across these contexts, citizenship is described as shaped by unequal access to recognition, representation, and institutional responsiveness. Another recurring dimension concerns the role of educational institutions and community-based structures. Several studies position schools, universities, civic programmes, and community organisations as important spaces where citizenship is learned, practised, and mediated between individual experience and broader social structures (Borkowska & Luthra 2022; Rossi et al. 2016). At the same time, the literature also documents gaps between formal commitments to participation and the everyday conditions required for meaningful civic engagement.

4.5.5 Creative expression as civic practice

Theme 5 — *Creative expression as civic practice* encompassed 18 studies (12.6%). Across the literature, creative practices — including storytelling, digital narratives, cinema, arts-based methods, participatory media, games, and cultural expression — are examined as ways through which individuals and communities express civic identities, communicate experiences, and participate in social life. Creative practices are frequently presented as meaningful forms of civic engagement rather than as mere illustrative or educational tools. A recurring pattern across the studies concerns the use of narrative and storytelling as civic practices. Several studies describe storytelling as a means through which participants articulate personal and collective experiences, challenge dominant representations, and make visible voices that are often marginalised (Ho et al. 2021; Mouchtari et al. 2015; Palmer 2016). In these studies, narrative practices are connected to media literacy, intercultural dialogue, recognition, and the construction of shared meanings across generations and communities. The reviewed literature also highlights the role of artistic and cultural practices in addressing social injustice, exclusion, and historical memory. Studies focusing on cinema, community arts, and participatory cultural production, such as those by Gutiérrez (2016), Sani & Quaranta (2014), and Westling (2022), show how creative

expression can connect individual experience with broader social and political contexts. Other studies emphasise how creative methodologies can support the participation of young people and vulnerable communities by creating accessible spaces for expression, reflection, and collective engagement (Marchezini et al. 2017). Alongside arts-based and narrative practices, some studies examine interactive and experiential approaches, including serious games and gamified interventions, within a broader tradition of creative expression and practice, in which learning and behaviour change occur through embodied engagement, experimentation, and rehearsal rather than through direct instruction alone. These approaches are used to address complex civic and digital issues, such as online identity, cybercrime, digital vulnerability, and intergenerational digital divides (e.g Zanchetta et al. 2022). Within the scope of these works, creative and experiential methods are described as supporting dialogue, empathy, and participation in ways that differ from conventional civic education or formal political engagement.

4.5.6 Trauma, wellbeing, and belonging

This theme encompasses 17 studies (11.2%) as either a primary or secondary theme, covering matters related to trauma, wellbeing and belonging. Across the literature, these concepts are consistently examined as interconnected dimensions of intergenerational citizenship, highlighting how relationships between generations shape experiences of care, resilience, identity, and participation. Rather than treating wellbeing or belonging as individual experiences or outcomes, the studies frequently situate them within broader family, community, and social relationships. A recurring pattern across the literature is the association between positive intergenerational relationships and enhanced wellbeing, social connectedness, and feelings of belonging. Across educational, community, and family settings, meaningful interactions between younger and older generations are described as creating opportunities for mutual support, recognition, and inclusion. These relationships appear to be particularly relevant for individuals experiencing social isolation or marginalisation, with several studies (e.g., Paterson-Young et al. 2024; Cherian 2021) highlighting the role of intergenerational encounters in strengthening social ties and fostering a sense of shared community. Alongside these processes, belonging emerges as a recurring concept that connects interpersonal relationships to civic participation. Studies,

such as the ones by Rana & Lara-Cooper (2021) and Wood & Loveridge (2024) show that civic agency is not exercised in the abstract but is grounded in the relational spaces — family, community, cultural, and religious — where individuals, including those from diverse and multicultural backgrounds develop a sense of being recognised and included, and from which participation becomes both possible and meaningful. Similarly, studies included in this theme highlight the importance of community-based initiatives that respond to locally experienced challenges, such as disaster preparedness, environmental action or even sociodemocratic (Tang & Cheng 2021), illustrating how participation in collective initiatives contributes to strengthening relationships between generations while reinforcing attachment to communities and places. The reviewed studies also examine how experiences of trauma are transmitted, negotiated, and understood across generations. Rather than conceptualising trauma purely as an individual psychological experience, the literature tends to situate it within broader family histories, collective memories, and shared social experiences. Studies exploring the legacies of conflict, political violence, migration, and forced displacement describe storytelling and intergenerational dialogue as important mechanisms for sharing and interpreting experiences across generations (Këllezi et al. 2024; Paterson-Young et al. 2024). In these contexts, memory is presented as an important dimension of intergenerational relationships, linking personal experiences with collective histories and community identities.

5 Discussion

The scoping review conducted within the [ANONIMISED] project offers a multifaceted picture of how intergenerationality in relation to citizenship have been studied over the past 15 years, displaying both the conceptual richness of this field and its structural limitations.

5.1 Citizenship as a relational and intergenerational practice

One of the most consistent findings to emerge from this review is that citizenship, across the literature of the past 15 years, is not as an individually acquired competence but a relational practice built between generations and never in a one-way direction. It appears instead as something intersectionally built between people — across age, experience, and generational position — rather than in one direction. This is most evident in thematic

cluster 1 – Intergenerational learning as democratic renewal, which accounts for the largest share of the corpus. Rather than framing civic learning as something transmitted unidirectionally from adults to young people, the literature increasingly documents reciprocal exchanges, situated at the intersection of various identity markers, legal frameworks, and social statuses, in which different generations alternate between the roles of educator and learner. A closer look at the collected data reinforces this pattern, as 79.7% of included studies involved intergenerational samples, and among these, the majority (57%) combined more than two age groups rather than a simple youth-older individuals. Such findings suggest not only that researchers are increasingly working with the full complexity of generational relations rather than reducing them to a binary between youth and older adults, but also that citizenship is conceptualised as co-constructed across generations rather than transmitted across them.

5.2 Digital technologies as mediators

This relational understanding of citizenship extends into the digital domain. The review found that digital technologies are rarely treated as a separate sphere of civic life or as a neutral infrastructure. Rather, where digital practices appear in the corpus, they tend to be analysed as mediating forces that shape access, recognition, and participation in ways that frequently reproduce existing inequalities alongside new opportunities, for all generations involved. A closer methodological look underlines this aspect, as only 7% of studies analysed (exclusively) interactions occurring in digital contexts. Most studies situate digital practices within broader relational, community, or institutional settings — a pattern that may reflect a scholarly understanding that physical and digital spaces are no longer separate domains but form a continuous, interconnected ecosystem of civic life. Rather than treating online participation as a distinct object of study, researchers appear to be following their subjects into the hybrid spaces where citizenship is actually lived.

5.3 Geographic concentration and epistemic asymmetries

The geographic distribution of studies indicates a significant concentration of knowledge production in the Global North, with Europe and North America together accounting for over 60% of the included literature. This pattern, while broadly consistent with global trends in academic publishing, is particularly consequential for a field whose central object

— intergenerational citizenship — is shaped by histories, institutions, and social relations that vary substantially across regions of the world. Contexts from the Global South, when present, were frequently framed through the lens of migration or post-conflict healing, rather than as sites of citizenship practice in their own right, where citizenship is actively and ordinarily practised. Furthermore, the predominance of Quartile 1 publications, themselves concentrated in the Global North, may point to a broader structural issue: knowledge production in this field is shaped not only by publishing hierarchies but by the uneven distribution of research funding, institutional capacity, and academic infrastructure that makes sustained empirical work on intergenerational citizenship possible in some contexts and not others. These conditions risk reinforcing rather than challenging the very asymmetries that a critical study of citizenship and its dynamics should question.

5.4 Traditional methodological vs a call for innovation

The methodological profile of the analysed corpus points to a tendency towards conventional research approaches, with interviews, surveys, and observational studies accounting for the majority of the methods employed. Qualitative approaches are predominant (53.9%), with interviews and surveys/questionnaires each used in over a third of studies. Despite growing theoretical interest in participatory and creative forms of citizenship, more innovative methods remain marginal to the field's research practice. Innovative and participatory methods remain comparatively rare: ethnographic methods appear in 14.7% of studies, and arts-based methods, including digital storytelling, photovoice and creative products, in only 7.7%. Workshops, specifically, were identified as a method in just 1.4% of studies. The relative scarcity of ethnographic, arts-based, and participatory approaches reflects a deeper epistemological problem: the extractive logic of conventional data collection sits in contradiction with a field that theorises citizenship as relational and co-constructed. This aspect seems particularly relevant given what this field claims to study — intergenerational solidarity, participatory citizenship, and creative civic expression — phenomena that are not easily accessible through methods designed for individual, decontextualised responses. More innovative methods, such as digital storytelling, photovoice, and participatory workshops, shouldn't be understood as alternatives to rigour, but as viable options for capturing the depth and complexity that the

field's own theoretical commitments demand. Their absence suggests that methodological conservatism, shaped in part by the publishing and funding structures discussed above, is limiting the field's analytical reach.

5.5 Thematic gaps

Two broader patterns emerge from the analysis, pointing to where the field needs to go. The first concerns the relationship between digital citizenship research and the infrastructural conditions that shape it. Despite the volume of work produced since 2020, the literature has not yet developed sustained critical engagement with platform governance, algorithmic dynamics, or the effects of surveillance capitalism on young people's civic agency, nor on how these infrastructural conditions mediate the intergenerational dynamics through which civic participation is negotiated and transmitted. Literature still tends to treat digital technologies as tools, overlooking their role as political environments with their own logics of inclusion and exclusion. The second concerns what counts as citizenship in the first place. The field's persistent focus on institutionalised forms of participation has left largely unexamined the creative, artistic, and cultural practices through which people, from different generations, negotiate civic identity in everyday life. Further gaps arise. The geographic concentration in the Global North, the underdeveloped intersectional analyses, and the near-complete absence of perspectives on disability and LGBTQ+ identities reflect the same epistemic asymmetries that shape which citizenship experiences are considered relevant for study and which remain outside the field's analytical frame. All in all, a field that understands citizenship as a relational, intergenerational, and mediated process should pursue research designs, geographic reach, and conceptual frameworks adequate to that understanding.

5.6 Limitations and Future Directions

Even if the scoping review served its initial purpose of improving understanding of this field of knowledge and the scientific production of the past 15 years, several limitations must be considered. First, the search strategy relied on a defined set of keywords combined with Boolean operators, which inevitably excluded studies that address the same phenomena using different conceptual vocabularies. Relevant work produced outside the lexical conventions used in the search string may not have been captured. Second, the

restriction to English, Portuguese, and Spanish content, while justified by the team's linguistic competencies, introduces a further layer of exclusion. Given that Europe accounts for nearly 40% of the corpus, the absence of literature produced in other European languages may have excluded potentially relevant work. Third, the four selected databases privilege peer-reviewed journal articles. Relevant conceptual contributions published in book chapters, edited volumes, or grey literature were not represented in the corpus. Finally, the thematic analysis, while conducted through a rigorous and collaborative process, was carried out within a single institutional context, which introduces the possibility of interpretive blind spots, particularly regarding non-European framings of citizenship and intergenerationality. Looking ahead, several directions for future research arise. The temporal boundary of this review captures a period of significant transformation in both digital media environments and civic life. The literature produced from 2021 onwards may be the focus of particular attention in future studies. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated shifts in social relationships, including intergenerational ones, digital practices, and civic participation. A focused review of post-pandemic literature would offer a more precise account of these transformations. Besides this, the rapid development of generative artificial intelligence since 2022 represents a frontier that the current review didn't fully address. How AI-generated content mediates intergenerational civic narratives, shapes young people's understanding of citizenship, and reconfigures the relationships between generations in digital environments are questions that will require further empirical and theoretical reflection. Finally, the SoRe also highlights the opportunity to move beyond aggregated global patterns. Differences between countries in demographic ageing rates, welfare state structures, and democratic traditions shape intergenerational relationships. Future comparative studies should be designed to explore how these structural factors intersect with citizenship practices across generations, offering new and significant opportunities to advance the field's knowledge.

6 Conclusions

This scoping review highlights the growing recognition of intergenerational citizenship as a relational and co-constructed process, shaped through reciprocal exchanges between generations rather than through the unidirectional transmission of civic knowledge and

values. Across the literature, citizenship emerges as a multifaceted phenomenon developed through intergenerational learning, shaped by experiences of care, resilience, identity, and participation, as well as by organisational, institutional, political, and socio-economic conditions. The findings further show that digital technologies play an important mediating role in intergenerational citizenship, creating opportunities for engagement while also reproducing existing inequalities. At the same time, the review identifies significant limitations within the field, including the marginal representation of Global South perspectives, and the continued reliance on traditional methodological approaches despite increasing theoretical interest in participatory and creative forms of inquiry.

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