



**"Urban gaps in small cities in the "Upper Middle Rhine Valley"
- How to address urban vacancies with Citizen Science?!"**

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I. Vacancy & Urban Gaps

Definition

- no uniform definition of vacancy

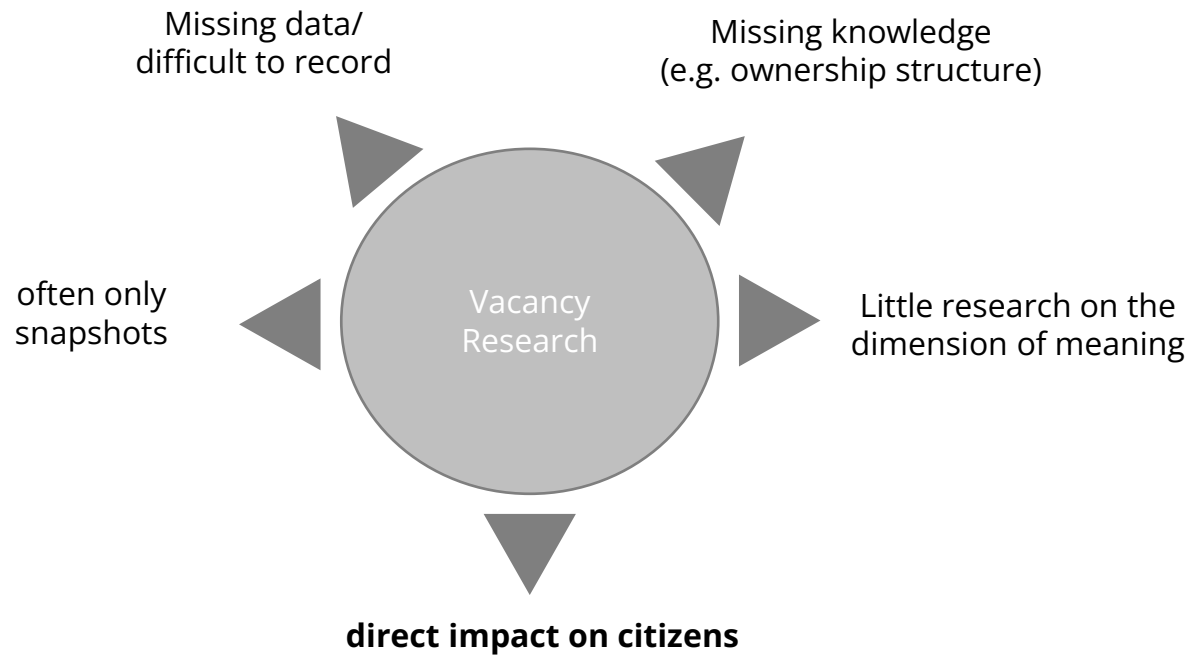
Urban Gaps

- all types of vacancy (residential, retail, etc.)
- isolated vacancy/building gaps
- Vacancy that characterises the townscape



Category	fluctuating vacancy	structural vacancy	speculative vacancy	dysfunctional vacancy
Definition	offered for rent	Lack of demand	deliberately kept away	Construction-related defects
Vacancy period	< 3 months	> 6 months	unclear	several years

II. Citizen Science & Vacancy Research



=> Citizen Science as solution??

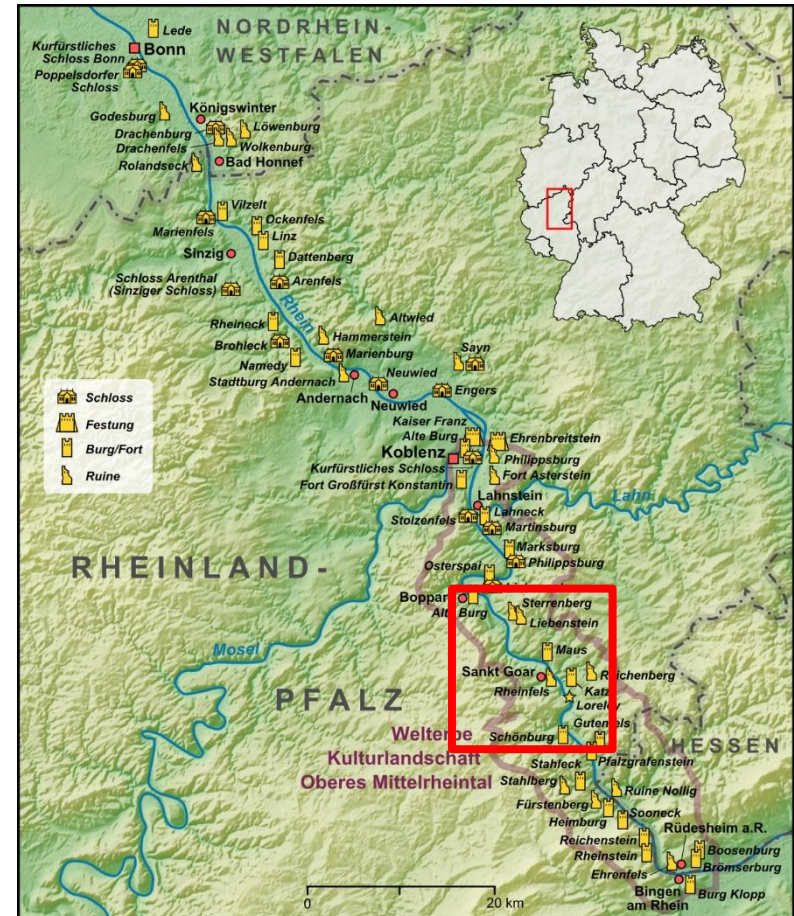
III. The Upper Middle Rhine Valley

- 4 municipalities (1.500-3.000 Inhabitants)
- well-known wine-growing Region
- Summer tourism
- Unesco World Heritage Site (since 2002)

- ❖ declining Population
- ❖ rising vacancy rates (up to 19%)
- ❖ little scientific research/data



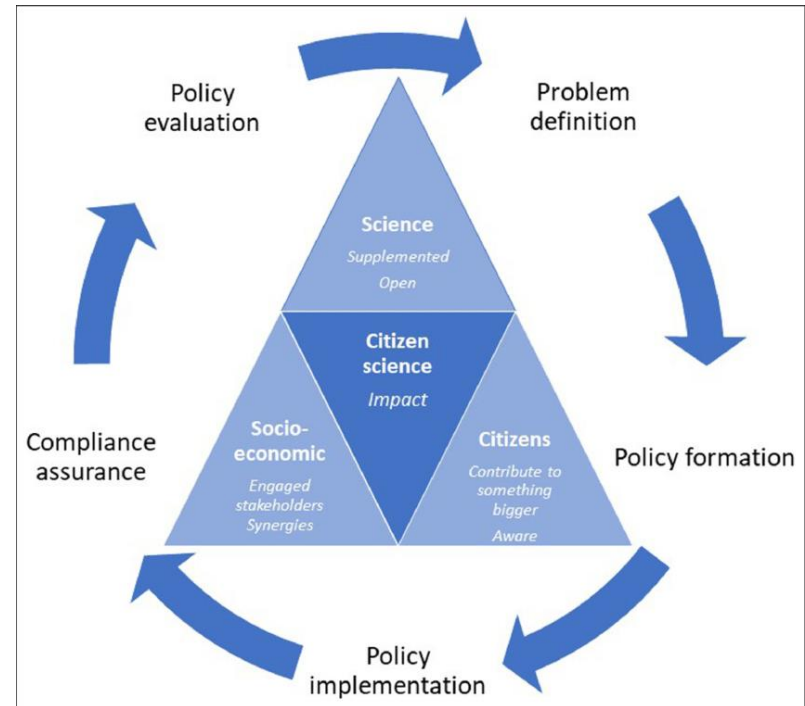
Quelle: <https://www.swr.de/swraktuel/rheinland-pfalz/koblenz/20-jahre-unesco-welterbe-oberes-mittelrheintal-100.html>



IV. Methods – Citizen Science Approach

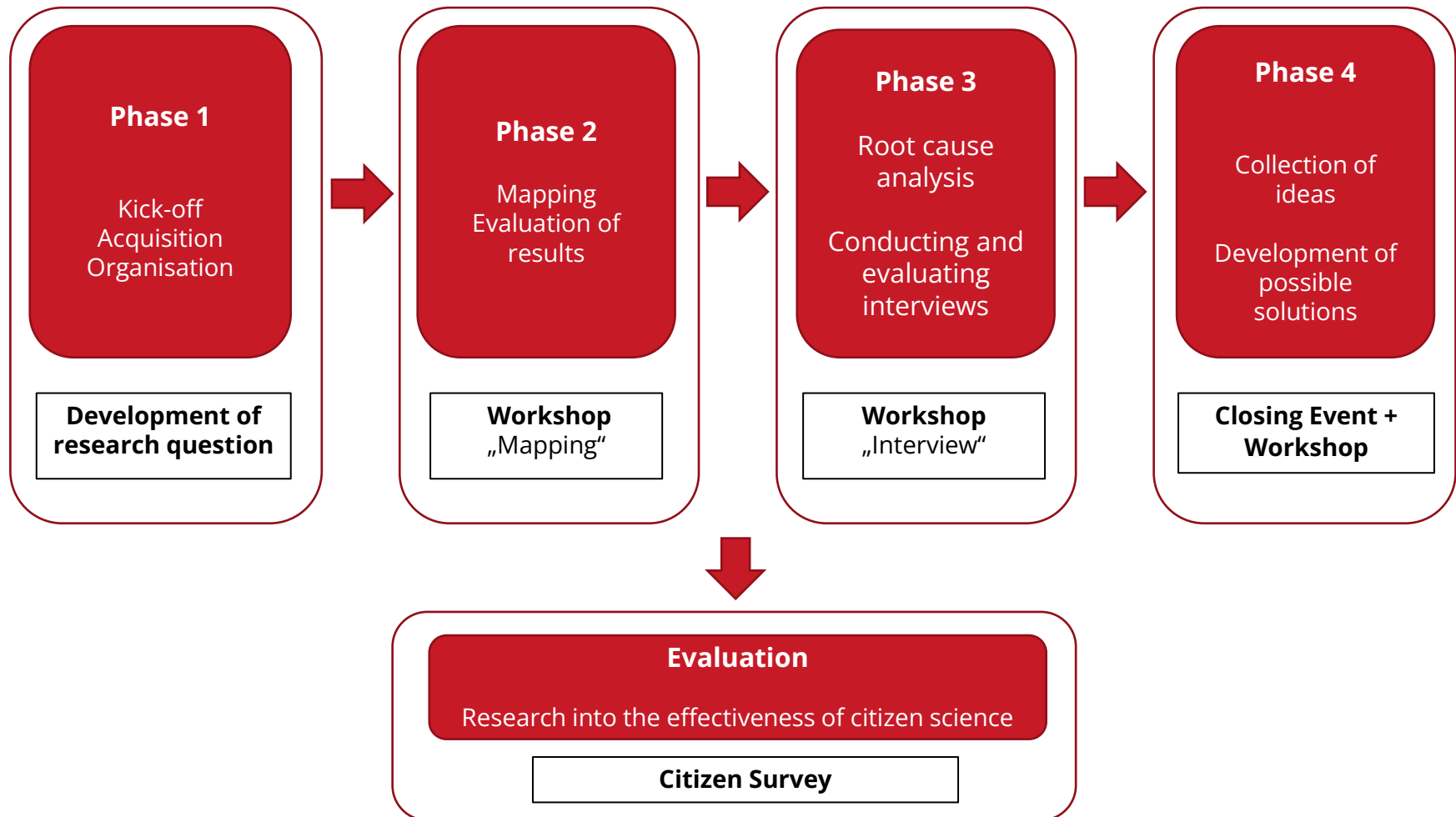
Principles of Citizen Science (Robinson et al. 2018)

- **Active involvement** in the entire research process
- Collaboration on **equal terms**
- **transparent** Communication + Feedback
- Citizen Science as **participation tool**
- **freely** accessible Results

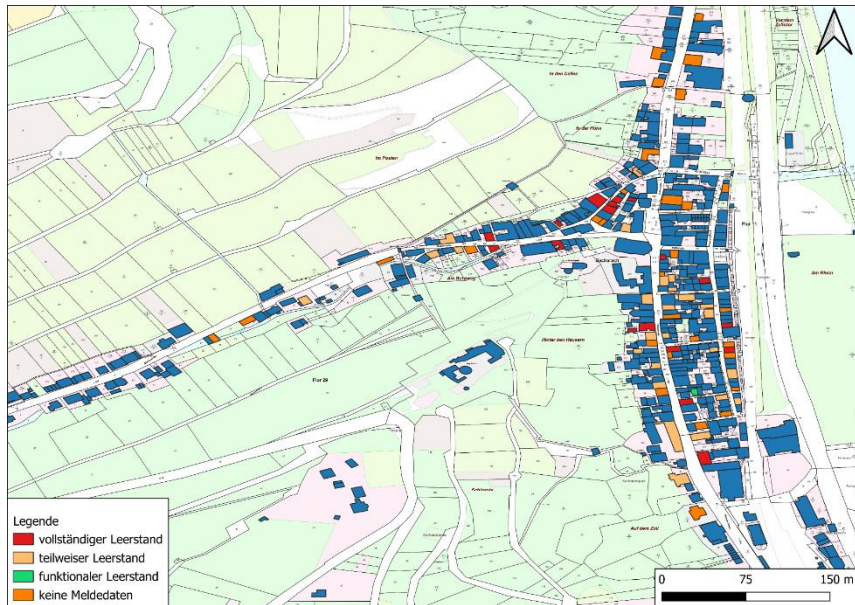


Source: Turbe et al. 2019

IV. Methods – Citizen Science Approach

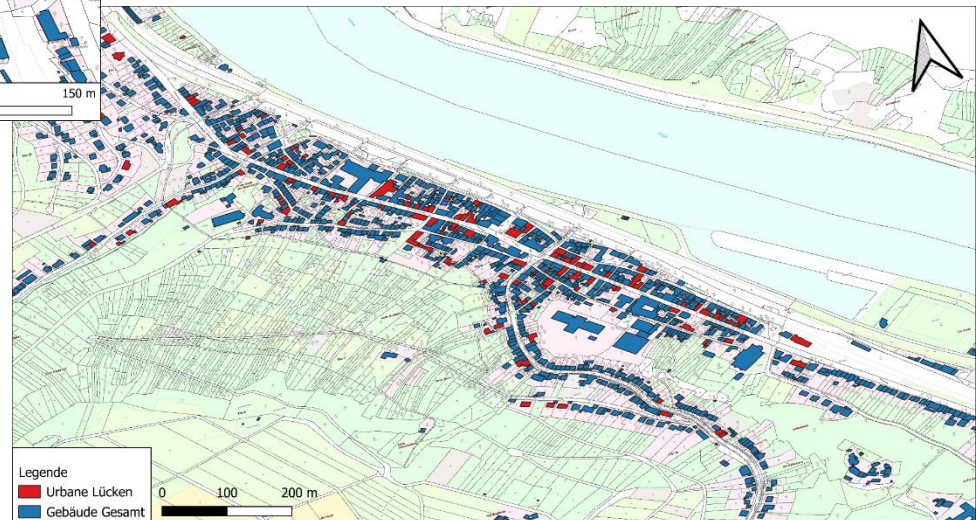


V. Results - Mapping



- 40% of vacant properties are **characteristic of the townscape**
- 61% of vacant properties are in **need of renovation**
- 60% residential use; 30% retail/commercial -> often mixed use

Outskirts	Transition area	Town centre
18%	12%	70%



V. Results - Interviews

Causes for vacancy

- Lack of financing for renovation
- Conflict of interest
- unresolved ownership issues
- Lack of ideas for use
- Lack of infrastructure/amenities in the municipality



=> Lack of exchange/communication



V. Results – Ideas/Solutions

Culture

- Rehearsal rooms for musicians/artists
- Museum (e.g. for regional history)
- Rooms for clubs/events



Work/Living

- Living space for students
- Welcome rooms for new residents
- Co-Working Spaces



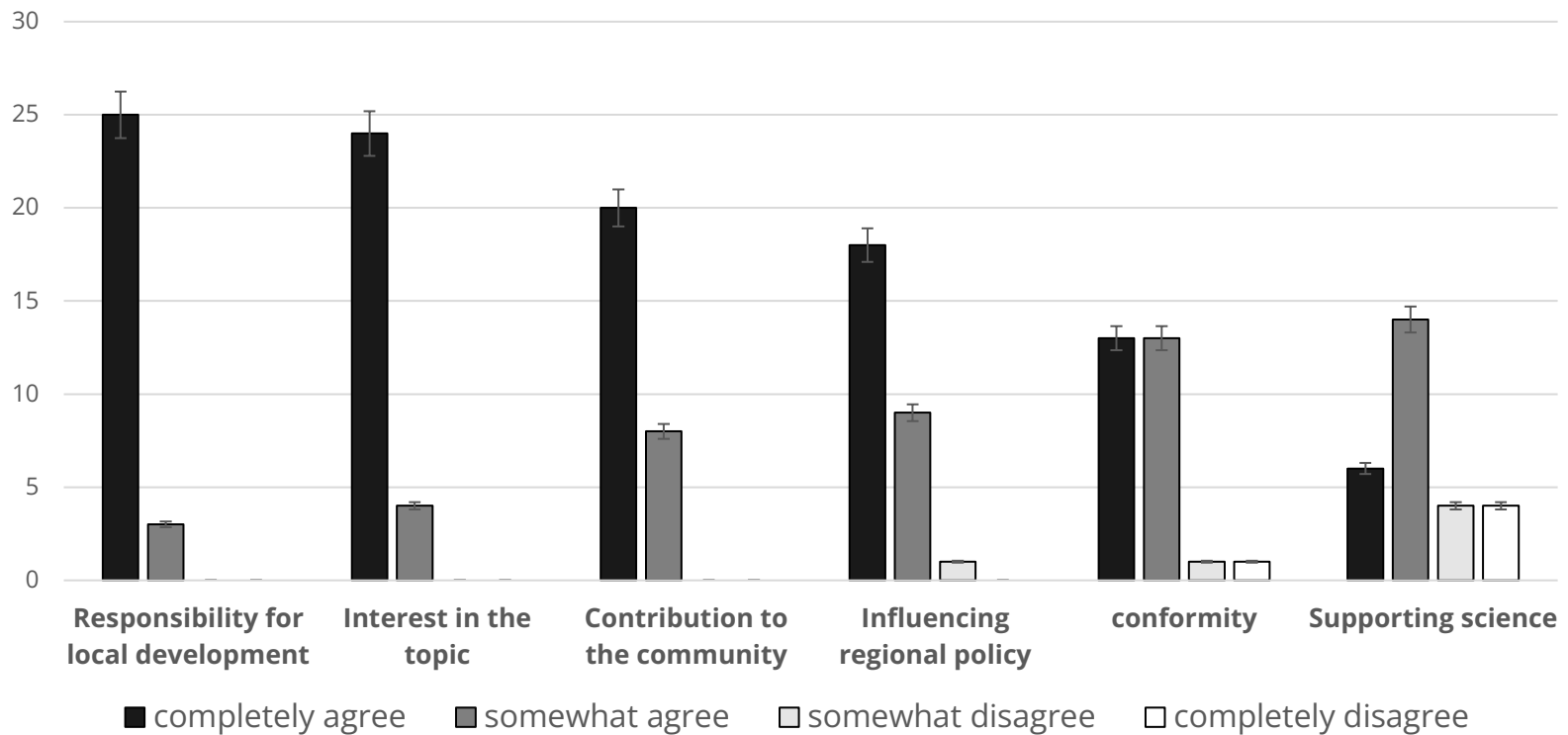
Commercial

- Pop-Up-Stores
- Alternating small businesses (e.g. craftsmen)
- Themed accommodation (e.g. wine hotel)
- Regional mini-outlet for local products



IV. Results – Motivational Aspects

Reasons for participation



VI. Discussion: Citizen Science & Vacancy

Challenges	Potential
unknown distribution of roles	motivation + participation
Conflicts of interest (e.g. politically)	valuable access to knowledge
sociodemographic factors	needs-oriented research

Future Research:

Greater involvement of marginalised groups?

Maintaining participation after the project?



➤ Thank You for your attention!!

VII. References

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