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Doing Identity in Luxembourg
Subjective Appropriations – Institutional Attributions – Socio-Cultural Milieus

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Luxembourg – international financial center, European administrative center, destination country for immigration? This empirical study provides insights about a society that has hitherto largely eluded scientific investigation and observes the processes of identity construction in globalised conditions.
The interdisciplinary team of authors exposes the processes of subjective appropriations and institutional attributions at work in the fields of languages, spaces, perceptions of self and others as well as everyday cultures, and identifies for the first time socio-cultural milieus in the Grand Duchy. The findings of the three-year research project uncover the ambivalences and dynamics of a multicultural and multilingual society.

In the **IPSE Research Unit** (Identités, Politiques, Sociétés, Espaces) at the University of Luxembourg, researchers address topics of social relevance. Particular emphasis is put on the analysis of social and cultural identity construction processes.

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1. Preface

Rachel Reckinger, Christian Schulz, Christian Wille

So what exactly is it that typifies the Luxembourgers? This is the question we were faced with again and again over the past years whenever there were reports about the work on this book. Apparently the enterprise to research socio-cultural identities has created expectations that we cannot but disappoint. For the aim of this book is not to specify what makes up the supposedly 'typical' Luxembourgers, but rather to investigate identity structures at various levels of social life. More specifically, this involves examining processes of appropriation or attribution performed by the subjects themselves as well as by public institutions. Such processes, of which researchers frequently only manage to catch a snapshot glimpse, were revealed in different sectors of society within the context of Luxembourg society. Hence, it was not so much Luxembourg with its particular conditions and features that provided the starting point for the following chapters, but rather the question as to what kinds of socio-cultural identities can be found there and how they are articulated. Adopting this perspective makes all the more sense if one considers the diversity created by labour migration, the multilingual context or the international interdependency and therefore the pluralisation of identity options within Luxembourg society.

This book is the outcome of a three-year research project entitled: "IDENT – Socio-Cultural Identities and Identity Policies in Luxembourg". The idea for the IDENT project emerged in 2006 while establishing a research unit (Unité de Recherche) named "IPSE – Identités, Politiques, Sociétés, Espaces" (UR IPSE) within the faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education of the University of Luxembourg. The acronym "IPSE" already points to the research unit's orientation: it primarily addresses the field of identity constructions and examines these from different topical perspectives and with interdisciplinary approaches. The IDENT project, besides other activities of the newly established research unit, provided an excellent framework to prove the efficacy of the UR IPSE.

For instance, over 20 researchers from twelve different disciplines[1] were involved in this major project whose added value – as will be shown – lies in the topical and methodological diversity of approaches to the research subject. During the three-year work on the project crossdisciplinary – by no means always uncomplicated – learning processes were initiated which are reflected in the contributions of this book. Essential for this was the curiosity, openness and above all the courage of the researchers involved to also enter unfamiliar territory and assert themselves there. The interdisciplinary collaboration has not only broadened the researchers' outlook but has, equally important, also contributed to the supportive character of the IDENT project. For instance, the numerous thematic teams and internal workshops which convened and took place regularly and were always result-oriented provided a framework within which the colleagues became increasingly better acquainted on a professional as well as a personal level. This also promoted the cooperation in other contexts of day-to-day research work and strengthened the self-image of the IPSE research unit. This brief glimpse into the genesis and the workings of the IDENT project will help the readers to classify the contributions of this book, which in terms of academic discipline follow what appears to be (as yet) unconventional methodological-conceptual paths. For the more than 20 authors who come from at least four different national university systems it is precisely this that constitutes the specific merit of their collaboration, which they intend to refine and develop further in other projects of this kind.

The results of the identity research presented here relate to the following subject areas: Languages, Spaces, Perceptions of Self and Others as well as Everyday Cultures. They are preceded, in chapter 2, by a detailed explanation of the IDENT project architecture in conceptual, methodological and research-practical terms, which serves as a guideline for the chapters that follow. Chapter 3 centres on a discussion of socio-cultural milieus, applied for the first time to the context of Luxembourg society and elaborated with the help of illustrative profiles the authors will subsequently refer to. In chapter 4, language-related identities in different socio-cultural environments and their public forms of expression are examined, as well as the public debate about languages in the print media. Based on a constructivist approach, chapter 5 profiles the 'Luxembourg region', tracing the various contours conferred on it on various levels by the tourist discourse, and contrasts it with the spatial identity structures of Luxembourg's resident population. In Chapter 6, the subsequent investigation of visual and linguistic images or perceptions is carried out within an interdiscursive-theoretical framework revealing mechanisms of identity structure in the areas of industry, culture and migration. Finally, in chapter 7, consumer and gender identities as well as alterity relations are examined from the angle of everyday cultures, on the basis of a praxeological culture concept.

1 | Essentially, these are: English Studies, Gender Studies, Geography and Spatial Planning, German Studies, History, Intercultural Communication, Luxembourgish Studies, Media Studies, French Studies, Sociology and Visual Arts.

Chapter 8 comprises a final survey of the research results that draws conclusions on processes of identity formation in Luxembourg and in the dynamic field of attributed and appropriated identities.

Special thanks are due to all those without whom the IDENT project would not have been possible or who have helped support and assist it. This includes all those inhabitants of Luxembourg who took part in our quantitative and qualitative surveys and those persons who provided us with advice and practical support during the different project phases, especially: Ralf Bläser, Pascale Fack, Daniel Gardemin, Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, Charles Margue, Antonella Di Pasquale, Jürgen Pohl, Michael Vester and many others who are not mentioned by name. For their generous support of this enterprise, we would like to thank the University of Luxembourg, respresented by its Vice-President for Research, Luciënne Blessing, as well as the Dean of the Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education, Michel Margue. Last but not least, we would like to thank our publisher for the professional cooperation and also our translators who have rendered a multilingual[2] manuscript containing the ideosyncrasies of different academic fields and university traditions into a French, German and English version.

2 | The participating researchers were free to write their contributions in the language of their choice.