

Research Project "Partizip"

The Struggle for Participation (1789-1980)



Die Auseinandersetzung um Partizipation

La lutte pour la participation

Funded by the Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR), this large research project spanned 6 years (2009-2015) and brought together colleagues from history, political science and political philosophy. The “Partizip” projects proved a fertile ground for scholarly exchanges as well as public outreach. The social, economic and political participation of various parts of the population were examined both from an actor-centered perspective and with the tools of discourse analysis and political theory. In a context of enormous social transformations, agricultural practices, labour migration and organization, ethnic and gender discrimination, expulsions and recognition of rights were linked to larger questions of democratisation, nation-building and identity formation processes. The output is a large array of scientific articles, collectively edited volumes and seven PhD projects, some still ongoing, some published in the form of monographies.

Phase 1 (2009-2012):

Partizip 1 – Nationenbildung und Demokratie. Die Auseinandersetzung um Partizipation in Luxemburg von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges (1789-1940).

PI: apl. Prof. Dr Norbert Franz and Prof. Dr Jean-Paul Lehnens

Nicht erst seit dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs durchlief die luxemburgische Gesellschaft Transformationsprozesse, die von Neuorientierungen der Wirtschaft und einer starken

Zuwanderung geprägt waren. Neue Bevölkerungsteile trafen auf eine Bevölkerung, deren Identität sich spätestens während des Krieges und im Verlauf der Nachkriegsjahre als eigenes Nationalbewusstsein ausgeformt hatte. Partielle Anpassung und Integration der Immigranten, starke politisch-kulturelle Nationsbildungsprozesse der ursprünglichen Bevölkerung, Vielfalt und Abgrenzung der verschiedenen Teile der Gesamtgesellschaft: eine derartige Situation ist typisch für Einwanderungsgesellschaften. Bereits lange vor die luxemburgische Staatswerdung in den Jahren 1814-1839 reichen Prozesse zurück, die die Gesellschaft dieses Landes ähnlich tiefgreifenden Wandlungen unterwarfen. Diese waren nicht nur mit horizontaler und vertikaler Mobilität der Bevölkerung, mit grundlegenden Umwälzungen der Agrarwirtschaft im Zuge der Erneuerung von Agrar- und Industrieproduktion verbunden, sondern auch mit dem Wandel der rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens.

Hier spielten zum einen die zahlreichen politischen Wechsel eine maßgebliche Rolle: die temporäre Zugehörigkeit des Landes zu Habsburg, Frankreich und den Vereinigten Niederlanden sowie die Eingliederung im Deutschen Bund und Deutschen Zollverein, die gefährdete Souveränität seit 1839, die deutsche Besatzung im Ersten Weltkrieg, die Neuorientierung in der Zwischenkriegszeit, der erneute deutsche Überfall und die sogenannte deutsche 'Zivilverwaltung' Luxemburgs im Zweiten Weltkrieg sowie Befreiung und Neuanfang nach dem Ende des 'Katastrophen-Zeitalters'. Erhebliche Einflüsse auf Politik und Rechtsordnung des Landes gingen aber auch von wichtigen gesellschaftlichen Organisationsformen aus, wie Vereine, Verbände und Parteien, sowie von der tendenziellen Erweiterung der Partizipationsmöglichkeiten immer größerer Teile der Gesamtgesellschaft am politischen Leben des Landes.

Die Erforschung des Zusammenhangs von gelegentlich revolutionär vollzogenem gesellschaftlichem Wandel, wachsender politischer Partizipation, Entfaltung der Demokratie und Nationsbildung in Luxemburg war das Ziel dieses Projektes.

Phase 2 (2012-2015)

Partizip 2 – Social Participation and the Formation of Identity. The struggle for political, economic and cultural involvement in Luxembourg in its European context between 1930 and 1980. PI: apl. Prof. Dr Norbert Franz, Assoc. Prof. Dr Sonja Kmec, Prof. Dr Jean-Paul Lehnens

This project studies the causes, manifestations and limits of social participation in Luxembourg and its neighbouring regions from the 1930s to the late 1970s. It examines the historic origins of the division of contemporary Luxembourg society into citizens and nationals on the one hand, and those who are resident foreigners or who cross the border in order to earn their living on the other hand. It also analyses the processes and functions of social cohesion, which work to counteract this division.

The project's focus is on the creation of the Luxembourg nation as an argument for the independent nationhood of the country and as an instrument of social inclusion and exclusion. In the 1930s the creation of the nation of Luxembourg, which since the 19th century had been repeatedly threatened, then accelerated then delayed, was facing the political 'völkisch' agitation of the Nazis, who considered the Luxembourgers to be part of their 'German ethnic community'. The project begins with the interwar period and then concentrates on the effect of the occupation of the country by German troops and the 'take-over' of Luxembourg and its people by the 'Greater German Empire'. Beyond the period of war and occupation, it examines the competition between the groups of victims in the political sphere and in the domain of memory culture in Luxembourg and its neighbouring countries, which continues until the present day. These groups were resistance fighters, enforced recruits, Jews as victims of the Nazi ideology of racial belonging ('Volkstum') and those opposed to the Nazis for political and ideological reasons. Their struggle for recognition may be seen as a reflection of their own persecution by the Nazis and the crimes of the German army. The project will also examine the boundaries between enforced cooperation and collaboration. Oral history is crucial in complementing and challenging traditional archival material. Filmmaker Loretta Walz conducted interviews with almost 100 people about their WW2 experiences. Their testimonies are both relevant to the study of history of the Occupation and the memory of that period.

A second strand of the project will analyse the processes of mutual segregation and adaptation of these specific Luxembourg identities and cultures of memory in the face of a marked increase in both commuters from neighbouring regions and migrants since the 1960s. This development took place under the influence of the process of European

integration and the transformation of the Luxembourg economy from its 19th century dependence on coal and steel to a far more diversified one, dominated by the service industries. At the same time democracy became more firmly anchored in society. This will be demonstrated on the one hand by the example of women's emancipation, which reached beyond the rights of political participation granted as early as 1919, and on the other hand by the partly institutionalised cooperation between the government and influential sectors of society. It was again the process of European integration which created the framework for these developments, since it strengthened the opportunities for immigrants to participate while at the same time guaranteeing independent nationhood and the creation of the Luxembourg nation state.

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the project examines the forms and extent of participation and representation, the internal and external processes which influence the creation of identity within various groups of society, and the conditions determining social cohesion. The focus is on migrants and members of cultural minorities, those employed in the business and service sectors, and women. A further perspective will be opened by embedding the specifically Luxembourg developments in European and global contexts. Historical comparisons with other European countries and regions will be combined with new approaches which are oriented towards social and cultural spaces rather than political and geographical units and can be understood as entangled histories.