



Migration and Conviviality: Living with Difference in Luxembourg

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Abstract

In recent years, the social sciences and humanities have been increasingly interested in diversity and everyday life. Rather than focusing on the negative aspects of diversity, such as the lack of social cohesion, interethnic conflict and segregation, they have gradually turned to studying concrete examples of intercultural communal life. This new perspective is reflected in expressions like ‘prosaic multicultural’ or ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ and, most importantly, in the notion of ‘conviviality’. The article explores diversity and ways of living together in Luxembourg. Referring to examples from various research projects, it offers an exploratory journey into understanding how difference is being constructed, experienced and negotiated in everyday encounters. Luxembourg shows historical and sociocultural particularities that make it an interesting case for comparison. These particularities can be summarised in a series of seeming opposites. Luxembourg is very small but superdiverse. It is highly urbanised but shows persistent rural social structures. It has no colonial past but is nevertheless part of considerable global historical entanglements. It combines a high degree of traditionalism with equally remarkable cosmopolitan traits. The article concentrates on two dimensions that can be characterised as visible versus invisible moments of diversity: the importance of multilingualism and the impact of non-European immigration on national multicultural. By distinguishing the visible and the invisible and thus linking research on conviviality to explorations of the relation between perception and social recognition, we hope to contribute to the debate on conviviality and especially to the question of how it relates to power inequalities and conflict.

Keywords Migration · Conviviality · Multilingualism · Post-colonialism · Visibility · Multidisciplinary research

Introduction

In recent years, the social sciences and humanities have been increasingly interested in diversity and everyday life, i.e. in everyday practices of living together *with/in* difference — and not *in spite of* difference. Rather than focusing on the negative aspects of diversity,

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such as the lack of social cohesion, interethnic conflict and segregation, they have gradually turned to studying concrete examples of intercultural communal life. This new perspective is reflected in expressions like ‘prosaic multicultural’ (Amin, 2002) or ‘everyday multiculturalism’ (Wise & Velayutham, 2014), ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ (Noble, 2009) and, most importantly, in the notion of ‘conviviality’.

The present article explores ways of living together in Luxembourg. Referring to examples from five research projects, we undertake an exploratory journey into understanding how difference is being constructed, experienced and negotiated in everyday encounters. While similar experiences of difference relating to migration phenomena can be observed in other contexts as well, Luxembourg presents a number of historical and sociocultural particularities that make it an interesting case for comparison. These particularities can be summarised in a series of seeming opposites. Luxembourg is very small but superdiverse. It is highly urbanised but shows persistent rural social structures. It has no imperial or colonial heritage but is nevertheless part of considerable global historical entanglements. It combines a high degree of traditionalism with equally remarkable cosmopolitan traits, both these aspects being particularly evident in the country’s linguistic reality.

The present article will concentrate on two of these dimensions and on moments of diversity that are characterised by different degrees of social visibility in everyday life as well as in public discourse, research and politics. These are, firstly, multilingualism and, secondly, the impact of non-European immigration on national multicultural and notions of diversity. While linguistic diversity is acknowledged in general discourse and politics and promoted as a characteristic of Luxembourg society, non-European elements continue to be a peripheral and largely invisible aspect of diversity. By distinguishing the visible and the invisible, we aim to connect research on conviviality to the exploration of the relation between perception and social recognition (Brighenti, 2007). This nexus is promising with regard to the structural conditions of conviviality, i.e. to the question of how everyday encounters are linked to power relations and social inequality (Adloff, 2019; Costa, 2019). It allows a view on the practices and ‘tools’ of encounter that takes into consideration the diversity of subject positions in the social field: who and what can or should be seen in certain spaces and who and what remains invisible.

While most studies on diversity and conviviality concentrate either on a specific locality — be it a city, a neighbourhood or a local grocery store — or on a particular group, our approach to Luxembourg’s superdiversity is broader in scope in that we bring together the results of investigations from various disciplines (geography, psychology, education and cultural anthropology), each focusing on a different type of migrant or local: recently arrived and long-established migrants, autochthonous Luxembourgers and those with migrant family background, southern European labour migrants and global cosmopolitans.¹ With this compilatory and comparative work, which also implies a variety of methodological approaches, we do not, however, intend to give a comprehensive picture. Nor do we aim to provide profound introductions to conceptual debates on conviviality and social visibility. Rather, we want to draw attention to the fact that the social contexts of encountering difference can also differ greatly, and that these differences — regarding both socio-spatial and normative structures — are linked to the element of visibility.

¹ The research projects in question were conducted by colleagues of the ‘Migration and Inclusive Societies’ (MIS) consortium at the University of Luxembourg. <https://mis.uni.lu/>.

Luxembourg — A Non-Metropolitan Superdiverse Immigration Society

The grand duchy of Luxembourg is a very small country whose recent history is characterised by an extraordinary economic and demographic dynamic. This dynamic has essentially been created by immigration. While this is particularly true for the period after 1970, the first significant immigration waves had already reached Luxembourg in the second half of the nineteenth century when the steel industry began to flourish in the south of the country. Luxembourg's long and multifarious history of immigration resulted not only in remarkable demographic growth but also in the emergence of a distinctively diversified population, which makes this country an interesting case for the study of migration and diversity.

After a long and intermittent process of what can be described as 'classical' labour immigration, a second phase began at the end of the 1960s when immigration was no longer mainly related to industrial labour and therefore no longer concentrated in the heavy industry region in the country's south. Whereas the most prominent immigrant group during the first period were Italians, the second phase was largely dominated by migrants from Portugal.² Currently, about 16 per cent of the country's population are of Portuguese nationality.³

With the economic transformation of Luxembourg that began in the 1970s, a new type of immigration became increasingly important, namely the influx of qualified labour for the developing service industries, including the finance sector. This international and global immigration has shaped the composition of the population of the city of Luxembourg, the capital and only large city of the country, in particular. Today, 70 per cent of its inhabitants are non-Luxembourg nationals from more than 160 countries. However, the overall population of the country also shows a remarkably high proportion of non-nationals; currently, they amount to more than 47 per cent of the residents (STATEC, 2022, p. 11).

In addition to the partially simultaneous immigration phenomena described above, the Luxembourg labour market has attracted a steadily growing number of daily commuters since the end of the 1980s. In 2019, almost 45 per cent of its overall workforce were 'borderlanders' from the neighbouring countries.⁴ The case of Luxembourg thus exemplifies that migration, as a historically variable phenomenon, must be studied in its connection with other forms of mobility and equally variable notions of sedentariness.⁵ Luxembourg society thus brings together different types of migrants — first-, second- and third-generation immigrants, newcomers who stay for the length of a work contract and those who come for the working day — with an autochthonous population that is both highly influenced by migration and cultural diversity and characterised by a strong sense of national distinctiveness.

Apart from its extraordinary demographic development, Luxembourg presents other characteristics that are important with regard to immigration processes. One particularity, which has already been hinted at, is that the national diversity of the population exists alongside

² Portuguese immigration to Luxembourg has been intermittent since the late 1960s; on the most recent wave in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, see Hartmann-Hirsch and Amétopé (2021).

³ Inhabitants with Portuguese background who possess a double nationality — Portuguese and Luxembourgish — do not figure as Portuguese citizens in official statistics.

⁴ On work commuters in the Greater Region SaarLorLux, see Wille (2012).

⁵ This insight has gained importance especially in historical research on migration; see, e.g. the special issue on 'Migration, Mobilität und Sesshaftigkeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 44(2) (2018).

persisting rural socio-spatial structures. Aside from Luxembourg City, which is growing rapidly and in 2012 attained the rank of ‘big city’ with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the country’s urban agglomerations are limited to three rather small middle cities and several rural towns of seldom more than 5000 inhabitants.⁶ In Luxembourg, diversity is thus a distinctive feature of small towns and rural communities. Grevenmacher, an old wine-growing town at the Moselle river with roughly 5000 inhabitants, is a good example; it is home to 84 nationalities, and more than 40 per cent of its total population are non-Luxembourgish citizens.⁷

Another distinctive feature of Luxembourg is its multilingualism. The country has three official languages, which means that education, the media and other domains of public life rely on the simultaneous use of Luxembourgish, French and German.⁸ While the country’s linguistic diversity is appreciated as an element of national particularity and a factor of economic and sociocultural development, the revaluation of Luxembourgish, which belongs to a West Central German dialect continuum, is ongoing and led to its recognition as national language in 1984.⁹ For significant parts of the foreign population, this peculiarity entails exceptionally high efforts at adaptation (cf. Fehlen et al., 1998), as will be illustrated below.

Finally, the country is also unusual in that, despite its extraordinarily high proportion of foreign residents and the sociocultural complexity described above, it presents a ‘unique but powerful example of successful European immigration’ (Parsons & Smeeding, 2004, p. 3). In contrast to neighbouring countries, anti-immigration attitudes, expressed in violence or political organisations, are largely absent in Luxembourg (Fetzer, 2011). Due to reforms of the Luxembourg law on nationality, including the adoption of the right to dual or multiple citizenship in 2008, as well as to anti-discrimination legislation, Luxembourg ranked as the country with the most significant improvements in its integration policies in the European Union’s Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX Index) in 2019. These new policies reveal that Luxembourg recognises itself as a permanent country of immigration (cf. <https://www.mipex.eu/luxembourg>).

However, the Luxembourg migration ‘success story’ cannot only be attributed to recent political reforms and integrative measures. It is widely seen as being related to the high degree of cultural and, not least, religious proximity between native Luxembourgers and immigrants, which results from an immigration policy that aimed at maintaining cultural homogeneity by restricting access to the country to migrants from predominantly Catholic Western European countries.¹⁰ Yet, this exclusivist policy was compromised when, in the 1970s, the growing group of immigrants of Portuguese nationality also comprised people from Africa, especially the Cape Verdean Islands. A clear step towards diversification was taken in the 1990s, however, when Luxembourg accepted refugees from former Yugoslavia, including persons of Muslim faith. Since then, the Muslim minority has been growing due to the arrival of refugees from Near Eastern and Middle Eastern countries and of French immigrants of North African origin.¹¹ In recent years, the number of migrants from non-European countries, including sub-Saharan African countries, has similarly increased.

⁶ The formal degree of urbanisation, defined as the overall proportion of inhabitants living in cities, is nevertheless in Luxembourg one of the highest in Europe. <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/249029/umfrage/urbanisierung-in-den-eu-laendern/>. On the country’s sub- and peri-urban scenery, see Hesse (2014).

⁷ <https://gemengen.lu/web/2020/03/24/grevenmacher-mise-sur-le-miseler-way-of-life/>

⁸ For a more nuanced description of Luxembourg polyglossia, see Hoffmann (1996).

⁹ On the political importance of Luxembourgish, see, i.a. Hoffmann (1996) and Garcia (2018). On the relation between (super)diversity and language, see Budach and de Saint-Georges (2017).

¹⁰ For a general assessment of the impact of this culturalist immigration policy, see Fetzer (2011).

¹¹ The proportion of the countries inhabitants of Muslim faith is estimated at 3.2% (cf. Pirenne, 2017).

This brings us to recent debates and new research perspectives, which can be seen as offering a counterpoint to the alleged success story in as much as they focus explicitly on the economic and social situation of the country's non-white population and present a rather bleak picture of this situation. In the 2018 'Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Being Black in Europe', Luxembourg ranks among the countries with the highest rates of experiences of racially motivated discrimination and violence. The rates concerning people from Africa in particular were nowhere higher than in Luxembourg (European Agency for Fundamental Rights/FRA, EU-MIDIS II, 2018, p. 37). The publication of the report prompted an immediate political reaction and has increased the public awareness of the problem. The latter has also been enhanced by global developments ranging from the latest civil society movements (notably 'Black Lives Matter') to more longstanding changes in academic scholarship on colonial and postcolonial relations in societies without (former) colonies such as Switzerland (Lüthi et al., 2016; Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015) or Finland (Vuorela et al., 2009). Studies on migration and diversity in Europe were mostly dedicated to former metropolises such as Great Britain and France. It is, however, important to understand that migration phenomena and the ensuing sociocultural diversity in countries like Luxembourg, which were only marginally involved in the colonial enterprise, may also be related to longstanding and wider-ranging colonial and postcolonial mobilities and relationships.

Conviviality — A New Outlook on Living Together with/in Difference

The notion of conviviality owes its recent success essentially to Paul Gilroy's critique of British liberal multicultural policies and related concepts such as integration and social cohesion. While these concepts are generally seen to be inextricably connected to (post) colonial dichotomous identity constructions, it is, according to Gilroy, important to turn to the largely ignored everyday multiculturalism that exists 'alongside tales of crime and racial conflict' and has been created by immigrants and their descendants: '... an unruly convivial mode of interaction in which differences have to be negotiated in real time' (Gilroy, 2006, p. 39). Gilroy defines conviviality as '... a social pattern in which different metropolitan groups dwell in close proximity, but where their racial, linguistic and religious particularities do not – as the logic of ethnic absolutism suggests they must – add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication' (Gilroy, 2006, p. 40). In this convivial culture, the exposure to otherness, while not being without conflict, can foster civic and ethical virtues (Gilroy, 2005, p. 438) and constitute the generative ground for 'ludic cosmopolitan energy' and 'democratic possibilities' (Gilroy, 2004, p. 154).

Gilroy's brief descriptions of everyday multiculturalism hint at important aspects of conviviality without, however, offering a clear conceptual elaboration. A number of scholars have since tried to develop the notion by reflecting, for instance, on its relation to difference and the simultaneity of everyday conviviality and ethnic/racial inequalities and conflict (Valluvan, 2016; see also Heil, 2015a). Other authors are primarily concerned with clarifying the structural and material conditions of conviviality (see, i.e. Costa, 2019; Morawska, 2014; Hinchliffe & Whatmore, 2006). A further problem resides in the normative dimension of conviviality as it transpires in Gilroy's notion of a spontaneously and organically developing multiculturalism that emerges as an alternative to multicultural policies grounded in (post)colonial racial hierarchies. This dimension is also present in more recent elaborations that have tried to develop conviviality as an analytical tool while at the same time presenting it as a desirable social state that can fail, as reflected for instance in Heil's notion of

the fragility of conviviality and fragile convivial spaces (Heil, 2015a; see also Nowicka & Heil, 2015).¹²

Several scholars have tried to offer an overview of the rapidly growing field of conviviality that some identify as one of the latest ‘turns’ in the humanities and social sciences (Hemer et al., 2019; Neal et al., 2013), while others see conviviality as a travelling concept that inevitably aggregates conceptual inconsistencies (Lapina, 2016).¹³ We do not pretend to completely avoid these inconsistencies in the following presentation. While understanding conviviality as a social reality — living together in/with difference — and pleading for intensified empirical research on instances of this reality, we also try to contribute to understanding basic social processes that are both brought about by and constitutive for living in/with difference. In doing so, we touch on questions of desirability and normativity.

Most studies on conviviality are based on empirical research in highly diverse social contexts, the typical setting being encounters in public spaces: the high street, the local grocery shop or the urban park (Laurier & Philo, 2006; Valluvan, 2016; Lapina, 2016; Radice, 2016; Wessendorf, 2016; Heil, 2020). Other researchers have been interested in conviviality at the workplace and in and around school.¹⁴ A further domain of study are religious practices and shared sacred spaces.¹⁵

In the following article, we consider some such spaces, including relatively private spaces, and ask whether, here as well, conviviality can be fruitfully applied. By offering brief insights into a multiplicity of encounters in very diverse sociocultural and spatial contexts, we hope to throw light on the variability of the concrete interactions that take place in everyday living together with/in difference as well as on the socio-structural factors that determine this variability. We argue that the impact of these factors on conviviality can be approached by considering the problem of social visibility. Visibility is not reciprocal and balanced but typically uneven and asymmetrical and linked to relations of inequality and power; it is therefore susceptible to being used to shape and modify these relations (Brighenti, 2007). If conviviality is somehow related to ‘indifference to difference’ (Amin, 2012) — whether that is understood as an ethos, a competence or a habitus — this does not mean that difference is not seen. Rather, it implies certain culturally informed ways of seeing on the one hand and ways of revealing and attaining a degree of visibility that provides a sense of being socially recognised on the other. Our paper builds on research into diverse experiences of being (in)visible and striving for (in)visibility that were explored by analysing interviews as well as communal and individual modes of expression.

¹² For a thoughtful analysis of these conceptual weaknesses, especially of the implicit normativity of the notion, see Blokland and Schultze (2017). They propose the concept of ‘public familiarity’, which describes ‘a setting that provides ways of knowing incrementally about others’ without, however, implying social belonging to this shared space of everyday encounters (ibid p. 260).

¹³ For a general overview, see Nowicka and Vertovec (2014) and Wise and Noble (2016); see also the brief introduction to the topic in Heil (2015a).

¹⁴ On conviviality in the workplace, see Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2011), Karner & Parker (2012), Rzepnikowska (2017), Sanchez (2016), and Wise (2016), and on everyday interaction and ‘micro-social geographies of conviviality’ in and around schools in superdivers Sydney and London, respectively, see Noble (2013) and Vincent et al. (2016).

¹⁵ Scholars are above all interested in the impact of political conflict on sharing and tolerance, e.g. in Palestine, northern Africa and the Balkans (cf. Barkan & Barkey, 2015; Bowman, 2012; Campbell, 2022; Hayden, 2002, 2012); see also recent debates on religious ‘exopraxis’ (Fliche, 2018 and Perl, 2018).

Exploring Everyday Conviviality Part I: The Lens of Language and Multilingualism

Language and multilingualism are highly visible in Luxembourgish society: in the public space, in public discourse and policies, in the media, in schools and in the workplace. Locals are socialised into a complex tissue of language policies and practices around the use of multiple languages that underlie social relations and are highly sectorial. At first, newcomers to the country, immigrants and transborder workers tend to be puzzled by this multilingualism and its rules.

Officially, the country is trilingual, with French and German as official languages and Luxembourgish — since 1984 — as the national language. Used mainly as an oral language in the past, Luxembourgish has a relatively short history as a written language and is still in an ongoing process of codification and standardisation. At the same time, there is increasing political pressure to give Luxembourgish more status and institutional power. French and German — the languages of Luxembourg's two large and socioculturally influential neighbours France and Germany and also spoken in the neighbouring region of Wallonia in Belgium — have been and still are very important in Luxembourg but with shifting functional roles and power. French counts as the language of public administration, the language of law and the main language in many work contexts. However, with the growing globalisation of Luxembourg's financial and services sector and the increasing internationalisation of its workforce, English as a language of work is on the rise. German seems to be losing importance overall, but still has a dominant position in schools, at least in the public system, having been the main language of early literacy instruction since 1839, with some interruption, although that picture is beginning to diversify with international schools (both public and private) offering the curriculum and early literacy instruction in a variety of languages, including French, English and Portuguese, the language of the largest immigrant group in Luxembourg.

People growing up in Luxembourg are learning Luxembourgish, German and French during their years at school — albeit to different levels of competence and comfort — in addition to possibly one or two more languages that they speak at home. On the one hand, they are socialised into a multilingual habitus that feels normal, in which, for many, Luxembourgish is an important component that identifies people as local or 'from here'. On the other hand, Luxembourgers are aware of the current shifts in dominance and the arrival and increasing importance of new residents and their languages, which they receive with mixed enthusiasm.

People new to the country are often surprised by the level of multilingualism mastered and practiced by the average person born in Luxembourg, with or without family roots in another country. Since language and multilingualism are so present in daily encounters and public discourse, newcomers start to quickly grasp their role and the hierarchical position of particular languages. This, however, does not completely resolve the challenge of making choices and establishing priorities regarding which language to learn first and with whom to socialise and how. In what follows, this process will be illustrated by perspectives on difference and living together from three groups of people: (1) younger and older Luxembourgish locals without a (recent) migration history; (2) young professionals, mostly from European (EU) background migrating to Luxembourg for a first work experience; and (3) highly internationally mobile people with experience of living in various countries. The analysis shows how these three groups — despite their difference in background and social status — engage with languages and multilingualism as means of social visibility through which conviviality is being negotiated.

Luxembourg's societal context has changed dramatically over the past decades. The population is growing rapidly, and the proportion of foreign nationals has increased steadily. We will begin by exploring the views of Luxembourgish mothers and their adult children — collected in interviews¹⁶ — concerning this increasing cultural diversity. Looking at two generations, we find that experiences can differ considerably (see Bichler et al., 2020). While the younger generation seems to embrace contact with people from different backgrounds and nationalities as 'normal', the older generation appears to find the increase in diversity and difference more challenging to live with.

To illustrate this, we will focus on an exchange between a daughter and her mother. Having been to public primary school where the number of non-Luxembourgish nationals has steadily increased over the past decades, the daughter (Christine,¹⁷ 28 years) says that in school, there were never only Luxembourgers and that for her 'it would be weird if there were suddenly only Luxembourgers around'. Her experience with cultural diversity extends beyond school into the realm of her leisure activities: 'I mean, I'm in a music group and there it is also very mixed, I don't know I think Luxembourg would not be the same if it was not so mixed'. This statement underlines a feeling of normality, carrying a positive undertone that echoes public policy discourse celebrating cultural diversity. The mother (Marianne, 54 years), however, does not share such positive feelings and notes with regard to immigration and the increasing diversity in Luxembourg that 'it is too much. The country is too small to be letting so many people in'. She thereby disapproves of state policy on migration 'as they [the government] have taken them all in'.

Although the daughter seems more open and accustomed to cultural diversity in her personal realm and spheres of socialisation and does not perceive linguistic diversity as 'a problem', she does feel that the high number of foreigners in some places is an issue: 'When I'm walking around in the city, I ask myself "Where am I here?" (...) As one doesn't hear any Luxembourgish in the streets'. Here, the presence and sound of the Luxembourgish language — or rather its absence — identify the place as disorientating, foreign and not Luxembourg. While there is tolerance for other languages — e.g. German and French as the main languages of instruction in public schools — the lack of Luxembourgish in the urban public space is felt as a marker of foreignness (see also Fehlen, 2009; Murdock, 2016). These brief statements show that exploring attitudes to multilingualism can provide us with a crucial analytical lens, offering insights into more complex dynamics and ambiguities and helping to differentiate the rather schematic and superficial view of a generational divide.

The daughter also disagrees with certain — presumed — elements of national language policy, about which she notes: 'I think it is now requested that if one wants to become a pre-school or primary school teacher, I think one even has a course in Portuguese. And I think that is a bit exaggerated'. This notion of exaggeration also comes through in the comments of members of the first generation, such as the statement of another mother (Laurence, 59 years), who notes the following: 'We already have to use foreign languages too much; if you go to a shop or restaurant or bistro, you have to speak French 90 per cent of the time'. The woman deplores the impossibility of using Luxembourgish in shops and restaurants and

¹⁶ This data comes from a study on the relations between Luxembourgish and Portuguese adult children and their parents living in Luxembourg funded by a grant from the Fonds National de la Recherche Luxembourg; C12/SC/4009630/IRMA/Albert — Intergenerational Relations in the Light of Migration and Ageing (cf. <https://www.fnr.lu/projects/intergenerational-relations-in-the-light-of-migration-and-ageing/>).

¹⁷ The names of all interview partners have been changed.

thus points to an important feature of Luxembourgish society and economy. As many sectors in the service industries rely on francophone transborder workers who commute daily from France or Belgium, the language they use to provide their services to customers is mostly French. While people growing up and going to school in Luxembourg can be assumed to have a sufficient knowledge of French, the question is clearly not one of comprehension but one of identity, of Luxembourgish locals being unhappy with the fact that service workers in their country do not address them in what they feel is their native language.

The fact that this is not about language competence in the narrow sense also becomes clear when the same mother explains (Laurence, 59 years): ‘Yes, especially if you have a sociable evening. And if you have to spend the whole evening speaking a foreign language, it’s also exhausting’. While conviviality in the private realm sometimes involves different languages, this conviviality is ‘exhausting’, and Luxembourgish is claimed to have a special place in this sphere, for reasons of ease and comfort.

Conversely, the presence of Luxembourgish and the ability to speak it seem, to some extent, to either mask difference (such as ethnic origin) or to create a certain ‘indifference to difference’ (Amin, 2012). This becomes clear when the Luxembourgish daughter we have already met above describes one experience in particular: ‘There’s a girl in my music group, she basically grew up with me; for me she is [Luxembourgish], once she said “well, [my name is] Cordeiro”. Ok I could have thought of it myself. “Well yes, I’m Portuguese” – “You are Portuguese?”. OK. It would never have occurred to me that she or her parents, that this is a Portuguese family’.

The above example demonstrates that difference — here, the national background of the family — can be masked by the fact that a person speaks Luxembourgish. In the case of the classmate, it is the family name that reveals her background, apparently causing astonishment to our interviewee: ‘She has always spoken Luxembourgish, right from when we were still small children, and I don’t know, I never noticed [that she was Portuguese]’. The sudden awareness of her Portuguese background and feeling of surprise are remarkable for two reasons. On the one hand, the episode suggests how powerful Luxembourgish can be in this context, overriding possible sources of difference. On the other hand, it shows that acceptance and appreciation of diversity are questionable and often more of an ideological than a practical nature in as much as they implicitly rely on an exclusive commonality, the (putative) common mother tongue.

While both generations frequently encounter other cultures and nationalities, older participants point explicitly to foreigners as a different group, whereas for younger participants cultural diversity has become a defining feature of Luxembourg, whereby a person’s ethnic or cultural origins appear to have become just one trait among others. However, on closer inspection, this picture appears too simplistic. While multilingualism is part of daily life for both the older and the younger generation, Luxembourgish plays a vital role for local Luxembourgers in underpinning their identity and emotional comfort. The acceptance of difference is premised on Luxembourgish and its presence in interactions and the physical space, and there is a limit to what is acceptable in terms of multilingualism and who produces or requires it. Finally, while Luxembourgish seems to offer a pathway towards ‘indifference to difference’, its foundations are not solid and may mask lines of ethnic and linguistic difference and differentiation only temporarily and under specific contextual conditions.

Shifting our focus and perspective to the complex world of work in Luxembourg, we see a very different picture. The presence of Luxembourgish and other languages of work varies according to the sector and the availability of a local or non-local, international workforce. As another daughter who participated in the study (Marie, 31 years) notes, there is a big

divide, at least in some sectors, between international workers and the Luxembourgish local population: ‘[...] I have many foreign friends and acquaintances who I notice know only foreigners in Luxembourg. Also, I have often been told when I have got to know people that I was the first Luxembourgish they have met, after having been there for a year [...] I also hear people say that “at work there is no Luxembourgish, so where can we meet one?”’.

The Luxembourgish labour market is strongly departmentalised, with some segments accessed only if specific language criteria are met. Competence in the three national languages is required to work in public sector jobs, a requirement that only a very few foreigners meet. In many international companies, the language of work is English (IT, logistics, banking, etc.) or French (law, insurance, etc.). French also prevails in the fields of gastronomy and retail, while German is important in most craft industries. As a result, the public sector is dominated by Luxembourgish natives, whereas the private sector is more mixed. Within the private sector, competence in one of the national languages is usually required, while competence in more than one is considered a bonus. Luxembourg is also home to several European institutions — including the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Auditors, Eurostat or the European Investment Bank — where EU language policies apply.

With this overall picture in mind, let us now examine the situation of young professionals, mostly from EU countries, who move to Luxembourg for work, often for their first position abroad or first position full stop.¹⁸ While Luxembourg might not have been their first choice of destination, and might be something of a blind spot before arriving here (Leonardo), all interviewees agree that their working environment in Luxembourg is extremely international. Echoing an observation made by many, one young professional states the following:

Well nobody is from Luxembourg, [...] So I have ehm [...] so, [Zsofia] was from Hungaria, [...] [Ralf] German, [Martin] Netherlands, [Thomas] Netherlands, [Irina] Russian, I have from Australia, I have from Greece, I have from Senegal, [...] eh, Belgium, France and that’s eh, and eh the UK. [...] So, we are [...] and Romanian, so we are like [...] an international place (Christina).

Here, the identification of the workplace as ‘international’ is also based on the absence of local Luxembourgish and Luxembourgish. Given that workplaces are a primary space of linguistic and cultural socialisation for newly arriving young international professionals, it is significant that the linguistic resources that circulate and can be accessed in these spaces are mostly English and French, while Luxembourgish is often unavailable.

Young professionals appear to mingle well in such internationally mixed workplaces. They often socialise in English, while a lack in linguistic proficiency — such as a lack of fluency in French — can act as a barrier to encounters and to enabling social relationships and group building.

My company recruits a lot of people at the same time. So, it was easy to ... to mingle and eh [...] meet new people [...], but eh then again, it’s easier to click with eh people that don’t speak French [...], because you’re in the same eh, position, like, [...] trying to figure out what’s happening. So I hang out with eh people from Romania, Philippines, [...] even Belgium. [...] They are more open than

¹⁸ This data was collected in the H2020 Project MOVE, funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 649263 (cf. <http://move-project.eu/>).

Fren [...] French people, but I do find it harder to, to actually bond with eh [I: French] yes (Greta).

Here, French people are perceived as less open and more difficult to approach but also as more 'local' and knowledgeable compared to international co-workers who still have to figure out 'what is happening'. The linguistic grouping French-speaking versus non-French-speaking might not have the same relevance in all social domains. While the interview passage indicates that it can preclude the possibility of socialising in the work sphere, other social spaces seem to function as loci of mundane conviviality involving learning and practicing languages. One young professional notes:

'... luckily, I was in a flat share, because that allowed me to meet people. That was a really good thing, I mean, besides being with other nine people, which, yeah, you might think: Oh, must have been hell. All in all, it was not hell at all because I met many French people, so I had a chance of improving my French. And nice people as well, I mean I am still in contact with some of them, that maybe moved to France, or are still here. And so that allowed me to, like integrate more, integrate with Luxembourgers, which I did, did, I haven't done, because they are a bit closed. Don't you think so? I mean they tend to stick to themselves' (Leonardo).

In other cases, workplaces are more mixed, including international co-workers and local Luxembourgers. However, in these cases, contact with local Luxembourgers tends to remain restricted to the work context, while socialising outside of the workplace happens rarely, and exposure to Luxembourgish remains minimal, as English and French dominate as the languages of work.

I have many Luxembourgish colleagues. I mean, they are ok. But just they hang out with other Luxembourgers, like on Saturday night, Friday night, they do not ask you to hang out with them. They simply don't (Leonardo).

This echoes the viewpoint shared earlier by the Luxembourgish interviewees, who do not seek out spaces from which Luxembourgish is absent for leisure-time activities. From the perspective of young international professionals, this leads to the creation of several bubbles in which people with different linguistic repertoires socialise.

In a way it's like a country which is, which can be broken down in bubbles. There is the Luxembourgish bubble, where Luxembourgish [people] live and prosper, thrive, have their own thing, now there's the foreigner's bubble where foreigners live, escape from their countries to land in Luxembourg and thrive at least for a while, do their thing and maybe move again to other shores. Yeah. [...] They [Luxembourgers] want to keep it [that way]. But I think it's a self-defence mechanism. I mean, I kind of agree with that because I can see their perspective, if you merge too much, then you risk of losing your identity, like cultural identity. For example, if you get married to a French, man or woman, what language would you speak in your family? Luxembourgish or French? [...] Certainly not Luxembourgish. (Leonardo).

This quote is interesting for several reasons. It observes the existence of 'bubbles' based on the linguistic repertoire of speakers, but it also acknowledges their *raison d'être*. The international co-worker bubble is built on the supposedly transient nature of their stay and the idea of a temporary, limited commitment to the new host country. On the other hand, there is a degree of understanding, on the part of young international co-workers, for the reluctance of Luxembourgers to engage with foreigners. The reason for this is an

acknowledgement of the complex linguistic situation in which Luxembourgers find themselves and in which they have to juggle many competing linguistic demands. This includes having to carve a space for French, German, English and, of course, Luxembourgish, which they are concerned to maintain as a marker of (cultural) identity while at the same time acquiescing to a range of other linguistic demands. From that perspective, both bubbles, the international and the Luxembourgish, are seen as legitimate parts of an aggregate of interrelated spheres of conviviality, produced by a historically complex multilingual, but rather conservative and inward-oriented society, which is transforming into a superdiverse, international and urban society. However, the above quote also reproduces a monolingual ideological view which assumes that choosing one language means having to give up another. It exposes a certain ignorance about the Luxembourgish reality and the important efforts that mixed and non-mixed Luxembourgish families undertake to cater for their children's multilingual education, including, for instance, multilingual daycare centres, lessons in Luxembourgish, afternoon activities in English or courses in Portuguese.

Our reflection on multilingual conviviality in Luxembourg and the ways it is perceived is now complemented by briefly mentioning a third perspective — that of Japanese women in Luxembourg.¹⁹ Persons of Japanese origin make up a very small percentage of the country's total population²⁰; nevertheless, they represent an interesting group in view of the fact that they are confronted with the contrast between the relatively homogeneous Japanese culture and the cultural diversity that prevails in Luxembourg and other European countries. All project participants are married to someone of European but non-Luxembourgish origin. All are mothers, have left Japan as adults and lived in at least one other country before coming to Luxembourg. While information on the educational background of interview partners was not explicitly collected, it can be assumed that these women have a relatively high level of formal education. They are active members of the Japan Luxembourg Association, and they have Japanese friends as well as friends of different nationalities in Luxembourg. For the purpose of this article, we will focus on the experience of Yua. Presented with a series of visual primes²¹ to understand practices of cohabitation — among them representations of parks, a typical urban street, public transport, historic monuments, national monuments, pedestrian areas, etc. — Yua first picks the Red Bridge, an iconic building in Luxembourg²² and an example of how language and public space intersect in important ways. Yua states,

‘Actually, I go to language school. I am learning French. I take the bus and see this one [the Red Bridge]. When I first arrived in Luxembourg [...] I didn't know much about Luxembourg and I checked it out on YouTube. And here [on the Red Bridge] it is written “Let's make it happen”, and I got a good impression. “Let's make it happen” is English. [...] it is not in Luxembourgish. So that a lot of people understand they wrote “Let's make it happen”. Yeah, that is good. My husband says, “In Luxembourg you should do something otherwise it will never happen.” [Laughing]. But I like this’.

¹⁹ This study was conducted as a bachelor project and explored the cultural identity construction of eight Japanese women who had moved to Luxembourg using visual primes and semi-structured interviews (Campill, 2020).

²⁰ 0.30% of the population of Luxembourg City (Ville de Luxembourg, 2021).

²¹ Fifteen images of Luxembourg were presented on a tablet, and participants were asked to pick the three images which, for them, were most representative of the city. They were then asked to explain their choices; see also Murdock and Campill (2021).

²² The bridge connects the older part of Luxembourg with the commercial developments of the new European quarter on the Kirchberg. It is painted red and referred to as ‘the Red Bridge’. The advertising slogan of Luxembourg *Let's make it happen* is presented on the side of the bridge.

This quote is interesting for a number of reasons. Yua mentions her willingness to learn French and to invest in valued linguistic capital that is promoted by official language policies and Luxembourgish state institutions. They recommend learning French to economic migrants who wish to enter the labour market. On the other hand, Yua welcomes the presence of English in the public linguistic landscape. She interprets the ‘Let’s make it happen’ as a greeting to newcomers and international people who do not understand Luxembourgish. She sees it as encouragement and an invitation to take the initiative, to become an active part of Luxembourgish society. Addressed in English, Yua feels welcomed into what she assumes to be an open society that has a place for her. Her willingness and ability to read this message as a promise is further emphasised by the fact that she sticks to her positive interpretation in spite of the critical or slightly ironic undertone in her husband’s comment.

The examples discussed in this section show how the participants in our research use language and multilingualism as a framework to understand Luxembourgish society and as a compass to navigate its complex structure. They all seem confident that their linguistic tools — even if partial and incomplete — are appropriate in the sense that they allow certain forms of mundane conviviality. However, the ambiguities that emerge from Luxembourg’s complex linguistic history, combined with new aspects of multilingualism connected to recent forms of mobility, are not always apparent to newcomers. This is especially true with respect to the complicated status and function of French. While newcomers consider it difficult to socialise with both French and Luxembourgers, they do perceive the openness of Luxembourg society to English — through its presence in the linguistic landscape, particularly in Luxembourg City, for instance. The use of English is seen as a very natural way to bond for Luxembourg’s international community, in the context of both work and leisure. While more contact with Luxembourgers is desired by the newcomers in principle, in practice, they readily adjust to living in their respective bubbles. Providing a rationale based on an understanding of language as being both an economic and identity investment, they try to make sense of and justify the existence of bubbles as a mode of ‘living together while being apart’. On the other hand, local Luxembourgers, especially those of the younger generation, regard themselves as able to bridge that gap. Here, however, language, namely the common use of Luxembourgish, acts as a strong but, as the example shows, also insufficiently reflected bonding force.

Exploring Everyday Conviviality Part II: Non-European Immigration and the ‘Invisibility’ of Difference

In the first part of our analysis, we examined language and multilingualism as highly visible phenomena in Luxembourg, not only in the sense that they are publicly discussed and are an issue in political and cultural discourse but also in the sense that people present themselves and are recognised via the use or non-use of language in all kinds of social relationships and everyday encounters. We now turn to aspects of diversity that are notably absent from public discourse in Luxembourg, namely non-European immigration and the difference it generates — and this in spite of the grand duchy’s numerous global historical

entanglements, its involvement in the Belgian Congo (Moes, 2012) and its significant demographic and economic exchange relations.²³

For a considerable amount of time, non-European immigrants remained a largely invisible element of the country's diverse society. We are thus confronted with what has been described elsewhere as a 'postcolonial paradox', namely the fact that visible minorities become invisible in the sense that they are treated, and feel themselves to be treated, as non-existent (cf. Boubeker, 2010). This paradoxical invisibility is particularly striking in the grand duchy of Luxembourg, where, in contrast to former colonial metropolises such as France or Great Britain, non-European immigration and the diversity that ensues were supposed to be non-existent and are therefore, one might assume, all the more remarkable.

This brings us to Luxembourg's former immigration policy and its regulating function. As mentioned above, access to the country was, until the 1970s, restricted to southern Europeans considered to be culturally and religiously 'close' to Luxembourgers, and this had the ironic effect of encouraging immigration from Africa. This part of Luxembourg's immigration history — including the country's acquiescent collaboration with an internationally largely isolated colonial regime — has long been neglected both in public debate and in the narrow field of migration research. In what follows, we highlight how this neglect and the social invisibility that comes with it are being experienced, challenged and in part also perpetuated by members of the immigrant groups in question.

While the examples shed light on fundamental historico-structural frameworks of conviviality, we are mainly interested in inquiring into the conditions for and possible forms of being and becoming visible in everyday encounters. By approaching conviviality from this conceptual perspective, we are arguing for a more thorough appreciation of empirical research into the everyday. Studies on conviviality have in part been critiqued as indulging in 'descriptive naivety' (Valluvan, 2016, p. 205) and a 'fetishisation of the everyday' (de Noronha, 2022, p. 6) while neglecting wider social and political structures. Although this criticism may be justified in certain cases, it must be emphasised that the description and analysis of everyday encounters are indispensable if we are to understand both the socio-structural conditions and 'tools' for living together with difference and what might be described as the individual 'habituation' to difference that relies on, or is at least supported by, certain tools. Referring to 'tools' in the basic understanding of Illich as 'purposely shaped social devices' (Illich, 1973, p. 17), we might think of the linguistic framework discussed above that is based, i.e. on a national educational system.²⁴ In the following, we will touch on the much discussed field of (urban) spatial structures (cf., i.e. Amin, 2008) as well as on media and modes of creative expression.

Our examples focus on Cape Verdean migrants in general and a pair of friends with Cape Verdean and Portuguese backgrounds respectively. In both cases, we investigate the problem of social (in)visibility by looking at particular forms of cultural expression. The first example offers an introduction to Cape Verdean funeral culture and collective forms of mourning, while the second looks at digital creation and filmmaking as a medium of personal self-reflection and mutual visibilisation.

In the Western context, practices of grief and mourning are mainly associated with specific spaces such as cemeteries. However, recent work on funeral cultures emphasises

²³ Today, one of the most important contingents of Luxembourgish nationals outside the country is in Brazil — an effect of the law on Luxembourg nationality from 2008 that encouraged the descendants of emigrants who left Luxembourg in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to recover their Luxembourgish nationality.

²⁴ Cf., however, the understanding of 'tools' proposed by Back and Sinha, which, although referring to Illich, has individual capacities and attitudes such as attentiveness and curiosity in mind (Back & Sinha, 2016).

that such practices are dynamic and involve multiple places — an insight conveyed by the notion of the ‘deathscape’ (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2010). Deathscapes, and the related amalgamation of public and private encounters, are extremely variable due to individual needs and orientations but also, as the following example will show, to cultural exigencies. The example of Cape Verdean funeral practices in Luxembourg is interesting in that it highlights an aspect that studies on the diversity readiness of modern urban deathscapes (Maddrell et al., 2020; Westendorp & Kmec, 2023) rarely deal with, namely the conviviality of mourning.

While few in number, Cape Verdeans nevertheless constitute an important population group in that for a long time they were virtually the only non-European immigrants in Luxembourg.²⁵ The first immigrants to arrive in the grand duchy from the Cape Verdean Islands came in the early 1970s as Portuguese citizens — that is as somewhat unexpected and unwanted African-Europeans (Bauer et al., 1974; Laplanche & Vanderkam, 1991; Kollwelter, 2005). While their number has been steadily growing, Cape Verdeans have remained a largely invisible social group. Until recently, they were not only absent from the country’s political scene, but their popular culture — music, dance, cuisine, etc. — also remained more or less invisible. The same is not true for the religious domain insofar as the ecclesiastical life of a number of parishes is essentially maintained by their Cape Verdean (and Portuguese) members. For some time now, Cape Verdeans have also been visible in the country’s graveyards. The following description is based on the results of narrative interviews conducted in the framework of a research project dedicated to material culture and spaces of remembrance in Luxembourg and the Greater Region (RIP), including individual practices and experiences related to bereavement and mourning among Cape Verdean people.²⁶

Religious diversity was, until recently, more or less inexistent in Luxembourg’s migration society, because religious conformity, i.e. adhesion to Roman Catholicism, was considered to be a precondition of harmonious immigration processes. While the vast majority of Cape Verdean migrants fulfil this fundamental condition, their funeral culture is anything but adapted to Luxembourgish standards. Cape Verdean deathscapes can be described as remarkably extended in more than one respect. Ceremonial mourning takes place at the cemetery but also in the private space of the deceased person’s home. It is not limited to a short ceremony but stretches over a period of more than a week, with daily evening prayers in the family home, and it exceeds the narrow circle of close relatives and friends in that hundreds of people come together to accompany the dead and his/her family in the ritual process (Boesen, 2019, 2023).

This multidimensional extension entails that ceremonial mourning has an impact on neighbours and passers-by, i.e. ‘strangers’. This is all the more true as the expression of bereavement and pain is particularly intense. The essential form of mourning is a ritualised lamentation called *choro*. It comprises highly stylised violent crying and laments directed

²⁵ In 2011, inhabitants of Cape Verdean origin (persons with Cape Verdean citizenship as well as persons who have at least one parent with Cape Verdean citizenship) numbered 8.358 persons (Jacobs et al., 2017, p. 20).

²⁶ Interviews have been conducted with ten persons (seven women and three men) of different ages and socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Financial support was received from the Fonds National de la Recherche Luxembourg, grant agreement no. C14/SC/8333105 (cf. <https://transmortality.uni.lu/>).

at the deceased, recalling his/her qualities and moments of his/her life, and is accompanied by other bodily expressions, gesticulation and vehement movements.²⁷

Here, in an apartment, there are always problems because of the noise, there are people who cry. In our culture [*chez nous*], if someone dies, we cry a lot, we cry a lot. We try to respect [the neighbours] but it is not easy. If you are in another country, you always try to respect the customs there, but it is difficult. Not to cry at all is impossible. (Fernanda).

I can't expect to go home [to the Cape Verdean islands] in order to cry properly for my mother, to cry *comme il faut* because here in Europe the neighbour will say: "Oh là là, this is disturbing" (Anna).

These brief passages from interviews with two Cape Verdean women give us an idea of what negotiating difference means in the present case: a struggling between almost physical expressive needs and social considerations, i.e. between emotional and aesthetic satisfaction on the one hand and 'respect' for the susceptibility of others, their lack of appreciation and understanding on the other. Apart from this — and less explicitly expressed in the above quotations — negotiation also takes place with the dead, for example with the mother mentioned by Anna who has to accept that proper lamentation for her death is delayed. Here, we are confronted with a dimension of difference that for many Cape Verdeans is not subject to negotiation with others. The belief in the presence of the dead and ensuing attitudes and practices are to remain invisible, and effort is made to conceal them from Luxembourgish neighbours.²⁸

The analysis of Cape Verdean funeral culture in Luxembourg suggests a different perspective on what might be described as tools of conviviality or convivial knowledge. Conviviality is often related to (successful) negotiation in the sense of a process of translation.²⁹ Our example shows that negotiation can also be understood as striving for a certain degree of (in)visibility, of (not) being perceived and recognised for specific qualities and/or manifestations. Turning to a more normative perspective, one might ask whether living together with/in difference does not require the habituation to being exposed to the impenetrability or opacity (Glissant, 1997) of the other.³⁰

While the example of Cape Verdean mourning rituals seems to suggest that conviviality can exist alongside and even depend on a lack of visibility, our final example discusses possibilities and particular tools for making the invisible visible. It engages with racism and discrimination in Luxembourg and explores how digital creation can bring issues that have long been hidden or absent from public discourse to a broader audience. We will hear from two graduate students (and co-authors of this text), a young woman of Cape Verdean background (Stéphanie) and one of Portuguese descent (Melany), both of whom were born to immigrant parents, on what it has meant for them to grow up 'black' and 'white'

²⁷ Cf. Saraiva (1998), Mendes (2003), Da Veiga Correia (2009). Within the confines of the present context, the internal diversity of Cape Verdean funeral culture (cf. Paim de Bruges Fêo Rodrigues, 2002) cannot be considered.

²⁸ Cf. Heil (2014), on the 'buffer zones' created by migrants from Casamance in Catalonia with regard to part of their ceremonial life.

²⁹ Cf. Gilroy (2006), Heil (2015a), Nowicka and Vertovec (2014), Nowicka and Heil (2015). These processes are rarely described and analysed in detail, exceptions being, i.e. Heil (2015b) and Valluvan (2016).

³⁰ See also Hansen on the notion of 'reclusive openness' (Hansen, 2000).

in Luxembourg. As part of their master's programme,³¹ both women made the invisible visible in a double way, by reflecting critically and exchanging views on their individual experiences and by creating a digital story in which they presented their reflections to the public (to see the film, please go to <https://vimeo.com/489016367>). Making the invisible visible thus involved a multistage process. The interaction and cooperation between the two women consisted of an ongoing discussion anchored in everyday experiences of tension and conflict that shape convivial living, with a particular focus on skin colour and its (in)visibility. They take as their starting point broader issues related to colonialism and the way in which Portuguese involvement in colonialism is negotiated on Luxembourgish ground. The two young women carry the memory of and struggle with the colonial heritage of places and people they feel close to. They discover how this struggle shapes Luxembourgish society today, urging us to look beyond the focus on language, integration and who counts as an immigrant, instead sensitising for hidden layers of difference that create power structures, imbalances and social inequality in Luxembourg and elsewhere.

Stéphanie and Melany met as students in the master's programme. They bonded over difficult discussions of a complicated past and became very close friends.

Melany: Her family is from Cape Verde and mine from Portugal. In that respect we already had a lot "in common" ... Portugal colonised the islands where she and her family are originally from. [...] While we have these discussions about racism, we are on the same level, although our ancestors have created or have been subjugated to a racial hierarchy – that is why we are "cut from the same cloth".

Working on the film project, they continued their discussions of these issues.

Stéphanie: Being Cape Verdean, being Portuguese, realising "brainwashing" on both sides. [...] being "coloniser" – brutalities that were erased in telling history – and being "colonised" – things my ancestors have suppressed and that were transmitted from generation to generation [...].

Stéphanie lived for a period in Lisbon where she followed the work of black activists fighting racism. She explains that their exchange on these experiences was also helpful for Melany in that it allowed her to know more about 'the other side' of her home country. Before, she had been increasingly aware of racism in Luxembourg and Belgium but less so in Portugal.

Stéphanie: I also shared with her what I often perceived when I was surrounded by Portuguese people here in Luxembourg, for example that many Black people I know were often insulted by Portuguese children. [...] She shared with me her experiences in her family and how she is constantly trying to make them aware that, as she says, they are racist.

Melany: ... we are very open about our experiences and feelings, which makes our friendship very special to me. I learnt a lot through Stéphanie, and I am ever grateful to have had all of these discussions with her, albeit my "white guilt" that has been growing ever since, as I try to research more about Portugal and its colonialist past and present.

³¹ Masters in Learning and Communication in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts.

In the film, two carefully interwoven narratives surface, one relating the experience of difference and racism from a Black person's perspective and the other from a white person's perspective. The film scenes are embedded in a dialogue that takes place between the two friends as they walk through the forest. As 'a trip down memory lane of our childhood', it serves as a 'metaphor for the journey of deconstructing or decolonising our minds', Melany says. In this supposedly neutral place — the forest — they find a space in the film to acknowledge and bridge difference in everyday life. Through creative dialogue, a sense of connection, dependency and interdependency develops between the two women (cf. Boisvert, 2010, p. 60). The forest in the film becomes a stage for making painful memories and difficult questions visible.

This first-hand experience of critical dialogue is reworked in the multicultural university classroom where 'everybody is safe and nobody is safe' (as Stéphanie says, citing Pratt, 1991), enabling students to take risks and confront difficult issues. As Melany puts it, '... this feeling of shame and guilt [can] be used as a motor for my deconstruction process and help[ing] me take different perspectives on "subjective" matters such as my ancestors' past'. Stéphanie concludes that 'such discussions have a healing effect because actually history is not concluded'. Work of this kind enables to make visible the invisible layers and aspects of everyday conviviality where, as Meissner and Heil put it, 'we can get closer to a sense of change that is forward-looking, cognisant of historicity, and enabling [...] a platform from which to acknowledge and critique power asymmetries in contexts of superdiversity' (Meissner & Heil, 2020, p. 4).

Conclusion

In this text, we have discussed instances of living together with difference in the rapidly changing, superdiverse context of Luxembourg. Drawing on a range of research projects, we aimed to show how different ways of living together coexist and are mutually entrenched in the tissue of a complex and dynamic societal makeup. To structure this kaleidoscopic view, we adopted two lenses of observation and analysis that reflect constitutive and complementary aspects of conviviality in Luxembourg and possibly beyond. We took (1) examples around issues of multilingualism, a dimension of difference that is highly visible in the sense of having a strong presence in both public spaces, discourse and policy and everyday encounters and individual practices, and contrasted them with (2) examples around issues of difference related to non-European immigration and (post)colonial entanglements that, on the contrary, have remained highly invisible. In choosing this comparative perspective, we aimed to show that living with difference can entail diverse interpretational frames, aspirations and respective strategies. We have demonstrated that multilingualism plays an important role in Luxembourgish society as both a reality that is essential in structuring particular social spheres (e.g. the labour market, schools and leisure activities) and as an interpretive device that people from different backgrounds — locals and newcomers — use to make sense of these structures in their individual experiences of conviviality. Building on previous and recent language socialisation, language seems to offer a lens that people of different backgrounds feel comfortable and confident to use, hypothesise and interpret, even in new situations. Even if individual linguistic skills are incomplete, language is a tool or interpretive device that allows people to navigate the social and cultural landscape with which they are confronted in their daily lives.

While issues of language diversity have for some time already been brought to the fore in general discourse, differences related to non-European immigration have only recently been recognised and become part of a wider public debate. It was therefore interesting to investigate how groups directly affected by questions of cultural difference connected to (post)colonial migration perceive encounters with difference in Luxembourg. Our last two examples outline the range of possible attitudes and strategies in this field. At one end of the spectrum, we find that conviviality can imply maintaining a degree of invisibility in certain areas (e.g. spiritual beliefs and practices) and concomitant exposure of others to opacity or impenetrability, while at the other end, we are presented with new tools for making visible (e.g. digital filmmaking) that turn into media of everyday encounters and conviviality.

The aim of our compilatory endeavour was not to produce a thorough comparative analysis of the cases presented. Rather, the simultaneous view on a range of contexts and modes of everyday encounters with difference was meant to highlight the importance of broad empirical research on conviviality. In the present case, this empirical foundation has inspired reflection on the mutual illumination of conviviality and visibility, which in turn has led to a more realistic understanding of the notion of tools of conviviality.

Author Contribution EB and GB wrote the introductory parts and the conclusion; ‘Exploring conviviality part 1’ was written by IA, BN and EM and is based on material stemming in part from the work of SB and MC; and ‘Exploring conviviality part 2’ was written by EB and GB and is based in part on material stemming from the work of SD and MN.

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Availability of Data and Materials The data that support the findings of this study are available from the co-authors, but restrictions apply to the availability of these data based on research ethics-related data protection protocols.

Ethics Approval The present article is based on empirical studies that were in accordance with the ethical standards of the University of Luxembourg. Those studies that were financed by third-party funding were approved by the Ethics Review Panel (ERP) of the University of Luxembourg (IRMA: ERP-15-001; MOVE: ERP-15-019; RIP: ERP 16-001).

Consent to Participate Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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