Identity Construal Processes In a Multicultural Context: The Role of Migration Status and Personality Factors

Maria Stogianni & Elke Murdock
University of Luxembourg
contact: maria.stogianni@uni.lu

uni.lu
UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG

INTRODUCTION

Luxembourg hosts a growing number of people of foreign background, including 1st and 2nd generation immigrants, expatriate employees with temporary working contracts, and daily commuters from the neighbouring countries who are employed in Luxembourg (Eurostat, 2011). Exposure to different cultural worldviews and switching between languages are normal everyday occurrences in this country. These culture contact situations have particular implications for the development of identity. Previous research findings suggest that salience of national identification is heightened within this multicultural context (Murdock, Hirst, & Ferring, 2014) while other findings provide evidence that new, shared identities can emerge in highly diverse areas (van de Vijver, Blommaert, Gkoumasi & Stogianni, 2015). However, these identities may vary in salience across individuals (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). It is evident that contextual and personality factors influence in-group identification (Johnson, Morgeson, & Hekman, 2012). For example, Sagiv, Roccas and Hazan (2012) found that Big Five personality factors correlated with national identity.
To date, most studies have focused on social and contextual factors that influence national identification processes, neglecting the role of individual difference variables. Therefore, we were interested to investigate to what extent certain personality factors affect identification with the host country.

Aims of the present study
• **To gain a better understanding of the factors influencing the national identity construal process within such a multicultural environment**. We investigated differences in identification with the host country among several immigrant groups living in Luxembourg, focusing on individual difference variables and demographic characteristics that affect identification patterns.
• **To assess the importance of superordinate identification within this multicultural context**.

SAMPLE

159 young adults from diverse ethnic backgrounds participated in the survey (M_{age} = 26.03 , SD = 10.08, range = 62).

Prior to the analyses, participants were classified in different groups according to their migration status.

The sample consisted of 1st generation immigrants (35.8%), 2nd generation immigrants (33.3%), and offspring of mixed couples with one migrant parent (30.8%).

Most participants reported having the Luxembourgish citizenship (69.2%), 64.2% were born in Luxembourg and 40 listed more than one natioanlity. 13.8% of their mothers and 17% of their fathers were also born in Luxembourg.

Groups	Country of Birth Participant	Country of Birth Parent 1	Country of Birth Parent 2
1st generation	Not-Lux	Not-Lux	Not-Lux
2nd generation	Lux	Not-Lux	Not-Lux
mixed	Lux	Lux	Not-Lux

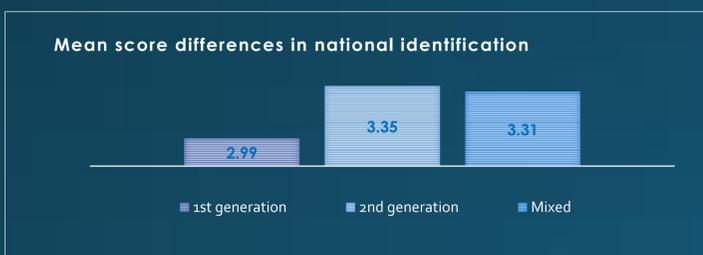**Gender (%)**

0.6
30.8
68.6
■ female ■ male ■ other
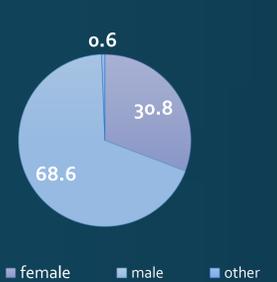
MEASURES

Participants completed online self-report questionnaires available in two languages (French and German). The questionnaires were translated by native speakers and checked by a group of multilingual psychologists.
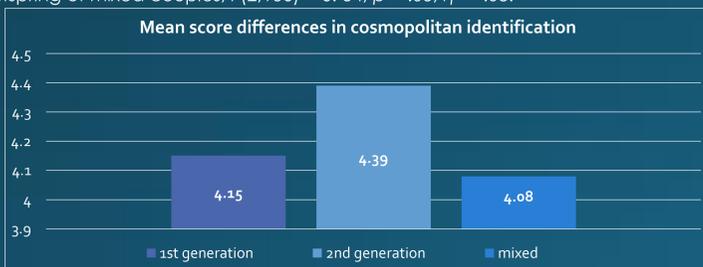
➢ **General Self-Efficacy Scale** (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995, a = .824)
10 items, e.g. "It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals"; 4-point Likert scale (1 = not at all true; 4 = exactly true)

➢ **Personal Need for Structure Scale** (Thompson, Naccarato, Parker, & Moskowitz, 2001, a = .751)
7 items, e.g. "It upsets me to go into a situation without knowing what I can expect from it"; 6-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree; 6 = completely agree)

➢ Identification with Luxembourg was assessed with the **Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure** (**MEIM**; Phinney, 1992, a = .887)
12 items, e.g. "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group", 5-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree; 5 = completely agree)

➢ **Cosmopolitan Identity Scale** (Saroglou & Hanique, 2006; van de Vijver et al., 2015, a = .588)
The scale assesses transnational identification and beliefs about global citizenship, 7 items, e.g. "I identify more strongly with humankind in general than with members of my own ethnic group", 5-point Likert scale (1 = very slightly/not at all; 5 = totally)

RESULTS

• Luxembourgish identity was less strongly endorsed by 1st generation immigrants, $F(2, 156)$ = 3.211, $p < 0.5$, η^2 = .04.

Mean score differences in national identification

2.99 (1st generation) 3.35 (2nd generation) 3.31 (Mixed)

■ 1st generation ■ 2nd generation ■ Mixed

• Cosmopolitan identity was strongly endorsed by all immigrant groups (M = 4.21, SD = .48).
• 2nd generation immigrants scored significantly higher than 1st generation immigrants and offspring of mixed couples, $F(2,156)$ = 6.34, $p < .05$, η^2 = .08.

Mean score differences in cosmopolitan identification

4.15 (1st generation) 4.39 (2nd generation) 4.08 (mixed)

■ 1st generation ■ 2nd generation ■ mixed

Correlations for 1st generation immigrants, 2nd generation and mixed

Notes: *p < .05. **p < .01.	1	2	3
1. National identity	1	.355** .123 -.151	.103 .258 .103
2. Cosmopolitan Identity	.355** .123 -.151	1	.208 .137 .148
3. Self-efficacy	.103 .258 .103	.208 .137 .148	1
4. Personal Need for Structure	-.006 .308* .182	-.317* -.028 -.245	.220 -.045 .078

Regression analyses for Variables Predicting National Identity Commitment, National Identity Exploration and Cosmopolitan Identity

Variable	National Identity Commitment			National Identity Exploration			Cosmopolitan Identity		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Self-Efficacy	.317	.179	.139	.311	.176	.141	.210	.09	.182*
Personal need for structure	.247	.094	.208*	.029	.093	.025	-.111	.047	-.181*
R^2	.059			.020			.069		
F	4.806*			1.59			5.755**		

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

DISCUSSION

This empirical study explored national identification processes in 3 groups with different migration experiences and investigated the role of individual difference variables (self-efficacy and personal need for structure). The results indicate that identification patterns are affected by migration status. Luxembourgish and cosmopolitan identity vary in salience across individuals with different migratory background. Second generation immigrants endorse cosmopolitan identity significantly more strongly than 1st generation migrants or those with mixed parentage. Possibly, the process of enculturation, which 2nd generation migrations face, is conducive to also developing a superordinate identity.
In this study we also investigated the relationship between different identity components (national and cosmopolitan identity) and personality factors. National identity was positively related to cosmopolitan identity in the case of 1st generation immigrants. Those who perceive themselves as citizens of the world identify strongly with the host country. Self-efficacy perceptions positively predicted cosmopolitan identification and personal need for structure did so negatively. On the contrary, personal need for structure predicted national identity commitment. It seems that self-efficacy can predict identification with multiple social groups while those with a high desire for structure tend to identify strongly with one ethnic group. We conclude that dispositional variables and migration status are important predictors of identification patterns.

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