3. Space and Identity Constructions Through Institutional Practices

Fabian Faller, Heike Mauer, Bernhard Kreutz, Elena Kreutzer,
Wilhelm Amann

3.1 POLICIES AND NORMALIZATIONS

The investigation of processes of social structuration in this volume concentrates on processes of spatial and identity construction. Along with media- and subject-related aspects (see chapters 4 and 5), the research also focuses on normalizations and policies. These refer to 'strategic' practices collective actors use to produce specific spatialities and identities considered to be 'desirable'. This chapter deals with the analysis of such processes of construction and attempts to examine the respective policies and normalizations practised to produce spatial and social categorizations. The aim is to determine the mechanisms and characteristics of spatial and border constructions, to provide some concepts for their analysis and, to a lesser degree, identity constructions that are brought about by social actors. The empirical and theoretical focus is thus on social processes of attribution.

Policies and normalizations as attributions and their appropriations contain various dimensions of power. Power here is understood, in the sense of governmentality studies, as a phenomenon manifesting itself at the levels of self-governing and/or being governed (see Füller/Marquardt 2009). It is seen as a "productive authority for shaping reality"[1] (Gertenbach 2012: 116) and thus enables a constructivist approach to questions of spatial and identity constructions in border areas. Since the questions this chapter seeks to analyse explicitly address power relationships and negotiation processes, this Foucauldian perspective – presented in more detail below – appears to lend itself particularly well to the task. Each of the four case studies presented here is concerned with a specific field of power which in each case varies in intensity and emanates from different actors. The contributions focus in particular on the negotiation processes of those fields of power in which attributions, normalizations and power relationships play

---

1 | Personal translation of: "[...] produktive Instanz der Gestaltung von Wirklichkeit."

a relevant role. However, the case studies do not in every instance show these aspects as clearly defined areas; instead, there is as a rule a certain degree of overlap and simultaneity. Concepts such as power, governmentality or processes of normalization thus carry varying weight. The common approach of the case studies in this chapter is their focus on border areas where negotiation processes can be observed especially clearly as governmental, i.e. as self-regulating. For instance, traditional forms of government are abandoned and the inhabitants of these border areas engage in a variety of forms of migration which promote the idea of self-regulation. Actors in cross-border contexts are therefore suitable examples for studying governmentality processes because they continually practise them. The term 'actors' here expressly refers not only to elites or normative authorities, but also to persons who make constitutive use of differences depending on the available resources.

The first case study presented here traces the boundaries related to the construction of "spaces of (im)morality" due to the problematization of prostitution in Luxembourg around 1900. At the same time, it analyses the logics of power at work in these construction processes. The following study about castles examines how the hegemonial and social practices emanating from them constituted spaces and their boundaries by means of strategies that continuously changed across the centuries. At the same time, it examines in which ways castles represented the rule of the nobility and what conclusions we may draw from them concerning the nobility's identity constructions. The third case study understands bioenergy regions as constructs of social negotiations. It analyses the emergence of structures and processes that are revealed when the practices of economic actors relate back to policies and normalizations. The final study sheds light on physical, social and semiotic constructions of space. It examines the media discourse on migration in the *Luxemburger Wort*, Luxembourg's most widely circulated daily newspaper, as well as the cross-border expansion of this discourse to the two neighbouring regions of Saarland and Lorraine, or to the entire border region of SaarLorLux, in the period under consideration, i.e. from 1990 to 2010.

The underlying concept of these case studies – the distinction between the logics of power of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality (see below) – serves as a guideline for our collaborative work and should not be understood as static. The social and space-related categorizations inherent in institutional agency are accessed through appropriate analytical approaches and revealed with the aid of expert interviews and text analysis.

3.1.1 Heuristics: A Foucauldian Approach to Power Analysis

One thing has already become clear from this brief overview of the subjects under investigation here: they are extremely diverse. Not only are different periods of history examined (the Middle Ages, recent history and the present), but also

different social phenomena (prostitution, castle development, the energy sector, public media). A particular concern of our group of researchers coming from very different disciplines (gender studies, history, geography and literary studies) was to find a common theoretical approach to these heterogeneous fields of study. We concluded that a power analysis approach drawing on the work of Michel Foucault lends itself particularly well to analysing normalizations and policies that enable social actors to create constructions of 'desirable' spaces and identities.[2]

For our interdisciplinary research context and the disparate subjects of investigation, the often criticized ambiguity of Foucault's analysis of power[3] has proved to be exceedingly rewarding. It enables us to refer to a common frame of analysis with a consistent terminology and at the same time to emphasize specific features where necessary.

Regarding the complexity of Foucauldian power analysis, one should bear in mind that Foucault continued to develop it while turning to the study of governmentality and government.[4] This more advanced analysis of power, which Foucault began to use in the mid-1970s, enables an even more subtle differentiation of power phenomena than his previous distinction between discipline, as the only 'productive form of power', and a juridical sovereign power, understood as primarily repressive. With the addition of governmentality, phenomena of power can now be more precisely analysed on the basis of the different types of their functional logic, the techniques and strategies they utilize, and the alliances into which these forms of power enter in historical constellations (see Lemke 2008: 261; Lemke 1997; Gertenbach 2012: 112ff.).

Before connecting this perspective with the subjects investigated in the case studies, we will briefly outline our interpretation of Foucauldian power analysis along its central axes of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality.

At the centre of the logic of power of *sovereignty* is law, which distinguishes what is permitted from what is forbidden and couples forbidden actions to a penalty. Foucault also calls it a "juridical" or "prohibitive" form of power. Sovereignty establishes the sovereign-subject axis, demanding obedience from the latter. Sovereignty exercises a regulatory function by setting basic norms, a function which is negatively determined, however, since order can only arise if what is forbidden is actually prevented. With reference to spatial action patterns,

---

2 | An initial systematization and synthesis of Foucault's analysis of power that this section draws on can be found in Reckinger 2013.

3 | Lemke (1997: 15-23) provides an overview of criticisms of Foucault.

4 | Foucault uses the term governmentality primarily in his lecture series "Security, Territory, Population" (1978-79) (Foucault 2007 [2004]). Previously he only speaks of the problem of "biopower" (Foucault 2003 [1997]: lecture of 17 March 1976). In later lectures, the term of governing increasingly replaces that of governmentality (see Foucault 1997, 2000 [1981], 1982 [1982], 1988 [1984]). In the following, these terms – if not otherwise indicated in the case studies – will be used as synonyms.

sovereignty aims at dominion over a territory or at the assertion of law in a territory (see also in the following Foucault 2007 [2004]: Lectures 1 and 2).

By contrast, *discipline*, as another logic of power, focuses on what is to be done in a binding sense. While the 'juridical' form of power allows for the indeterminate, discipline gives clear instructions for action so that the indeterminate remainder is forbidden (Foucault 2007 [2004]: 46). At the same time, discipline broadens the binarity of what is allowed and forbidden by adding a third element: the delinquent person. Disciplinary techniques accordingly aim at controlling individual physical bodies. The practices used for purposes of control are intended to act both preventively on the total population and correctively on offenders. At the same time, discipline makes a basic distinction between normal and abnormal. The norm – the predefined ideal – forms the basis which makes it possible to stipulate what is normal and abnormal in the first place. To express this primacy of the norm in terminological form, Foucault designates the operation of disciplinary techniques as "normation" (Foucault 2007 [2004]: 57).

The logic of power of *governmentality*, for its part, is closely connected to security mechanisms. While discipline regulates "by definition [...] everything" (Foucault 2007 [2004]: 45) and aims at letting nothing escape its notice, security grants leeway (*laisser faire*). At the same time, governmentality departs from the sovereign/subject axis and relates to the population. Instead of norms, prohibitions and delinquent bodies, the governmental logic of power takes the whole of society as its reference. In this way it enables governing (in contrast to obedience and control). Security mechanisms are not interested in individual (criminal) cases, but rather their effects on society as a whole and their statistical predictability depending on a local, historical context and on social milieus. In the process, the social costs of delinquency and prosecution are also calculated. This makes it possible to enquire into the economically and socially acceptable limitations of undesirable phenomena such as crime, disease, poverty etc. Instead of defining boundaries by what is permitted or forbidden, the bounds of the acceptable are defined by an average. Hence security mechanisms reverse the approach of discipline: instead of stipulating beforehand a norm which defines individuals as normal and abnormal, it first determines the normality of the distribution – the normal distribution. Subsequently, regulatory policies are employed to optimize the reality thus ascertained. That is why Foucault refers to the operation of the apparatuses of security as normalizing.

The concepts of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality can be brought together into an analytical framework as in Table 1, which is of heuristic benefit for the case studies that follow.

	Sovereignty	Discipline	Governmentality
Definition of the problem of power	How can dominion over a territory be exercised?	How can bodies be disciplined and controlled?	How can influence be exerted on social development so as to encourage what is desired and limit what is not?
Instruments and techniques of exercising power	Laws and juridical instruments which lead to isolated instances of obedience	Control mechanisms and disciplining techniques which are to be used on individual subjects and by means of which a distinction is made between what is normal and what is abnormal	Apparatus of security: calculations of probability and risk in relation to the entire population
Form of the exercise of power	Setting norms/ prohibitive	Normative/ controlling	Normalizing/ optimizing
Goal of the exercise of power	Asserting the law in a territory by actually preventing what is forbidden	Bodies/subjects function according to a predefined norm	(Self-)government/ regulation of the population

Table 1: Dimensions, functional logic, techniques and strategies of Foucauldian power analysis, following Füller and Marquardt (2009: 88)

The terms 'governmentality' and 'government' also exhibit additional constitutive facets. "And by 'government' I mean the set of institutions and practices by which people are 'led', from administration to education", Foucault summarizes (1991 [1981]: 176), although – as shown – not primarily power of authority or disciplinary normalizations, but normalizing and regulatory "procedures and techniques [are

used] which have a guiding effect on human behaviour"[5] (Gertenbach 2012: 111). Here, an analytical distinction must be made between the political technologies described above (for example, security mechanisms) and technologies of the self. Governmentality can thus be described as a process of transformation and a (re) formation of statehood, in whose wake the power regime of government becomes more significant than that of discipline and sovereignty (see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 108-110). However, it is characteristic of this process

"that state formation or political structures and subjectivation are seen as mutually dependent processes (see Lemke 2008) which act in both directions: from technologies of domination to technologies of the self and vice versa, from technologies of the self to technologies of domination"[6] (Reckinger 2013: 3).

Foucault's approach to technologies of the self constitutes a crucial expansion of power analysis. The analysis of technologies of the self makes it possible to consider, with regard to the constitution and action of subjects, elements of power and domination based essentially on freedom (and expressly not on discipline and control) (see Soiland 2005: 12-18). At the same time, Foucault develops a historical genealogy of modern knowledge of government and its specific rationality in relation to state formation.[7] In addition, governmentality provides an analytical framework for specifying various forms of governing, that is, the variable interplay of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality (see for instance Füller and Marquardt 2009: 87).

Foucault himself emphasizes that the analytical separation of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality does not mean that they are necessarily mutually exclusive:

"The territorial sovereign became an architect of the disciplined space [...] and almost at the same time, the regulator of a milieu, which involved not so much establishing limits and frontiers, or fixing locations, as, above all and essentially, making possible, guaranteeing and ensuring circulations" (Foucault 2007 [2004]: 29).

---

5 | Personal translation of: "[...] Prozeduren und Techniken [zum Einsatz kommen] welche steuernd auf das menschliche Verhalten einwirken."

6 | Personal translation of: "[...] dass Staatsformierung bzw. politische Strukturen und Subjektivierung als sich gegenseitig bedingende Prozesse angesehen werden (vgl. Lemke 2008), die in beide Richtungen wirken: von den Herrschaftstechnologien zu den Selbsttechnologien und, umgekehrt, von den Selbsttechnologien zu den Herrschaftstechnologien."

7 | In the lectures series "History of Governmentality", he elaborates on this from antiquity to early modern times and finally ends with an analysis of neoliberalism (Foucault 2007 [2004], 2008).

Sovereignty, discipline and security refer here to differing logics of the exercise of power over territory and subjects, which can occur simultaneously as political technologies. He explicitly postulates no chronological evolution, which would have a society of sovereignty at its beginning, superseded by a society of discipline and leading to a society of government.

Instead, our analysis proceeds within a 'triangle' described by Foucault: "Sovereignty, discipline and governmental management, which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism" (Foucault 2007 [2004]: 107-108).

The following case studies refer to this analytical triangle in order to identify logics of power in the construction of space, limits and identities through policies and normalizations, and to be able to identify them in their relation to one another. This includes an empirical examination of the complexity of the resources and techniques on the part of the holders of power. To this end, the power regimes identified above are "not understood as mutations which supersede one another teleologically, but rather studied specifically in their simultaneous imbrications and modes of interaction"[8] (Reckinger 2013: 9-10). Accordingly, the triangle is not equilateral, but dynamic, depending on the object studied and the empirical shaping of the power relations. This is expressed in Fig. 1 as an asymmetrical triangle.
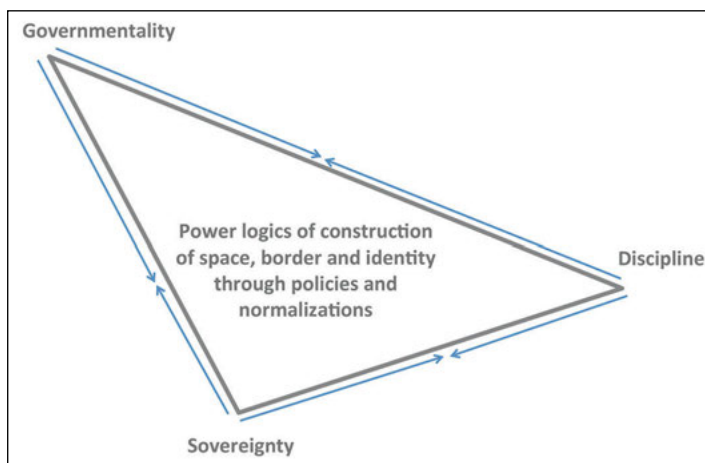

Figure 1: Power logics of construction of space, border and identity through policies and normalizations (own representation)

---

8 | Personal translation of: "[...] nicht als sich jeweils teleologisch ablösende Mutationen begriffen, sondern gerade in ihren zeitgleichen Überlappungen und Interaktionsweisen erforscht [...]."

The three interwoven analytical approaches to policies and normalizations each focus on a partial aspect of power issues and do not yield a coherent picture until they are considered together. Not every case study examines all the dimensions or interrelations of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality; instead, each treats key aspects, which permit conclusions to be drawn concerning the characteristic polymorphous structure of power relations. The concrete research work in this context includes discourses as well as materialities (see Gertenbach 2012: 118) and relates them to legal and institutionalized forms of control, taking account of the "formation of spatial knowledge"[9] (Füller and Marquardt 2009: 91 and 93).

By taking up the problem of prostitution c. 1900, the study on spaces of im/morality refers first to the sovereignty/discipline axis, since "commercial fornication"[10] (Mémorial 1855) was a punishable offence in the Grand Duchy at the time. However, it is shown that use was simultaneously made of governmental logics of power, which contributed to a 'government of the population' and a sexual 'self-government' by means of security mechanisms and self-conduct.

The case study on castles examines these logics of power under the aspect of sovereignty, as instruments of hegemonial spatial construction and representation, using the canton of Vianden as an example, and enquires how the political and social practices emanating from and centred on a castle constituted hegemonial spaces and their boundaries.

In the context of biogas production, the relation of sovereignty and governmentality becomes clear by reference to the structurally affirmative practices of biogas producers. Here the question arises as to how actors deal with policies and normalizations and how this constitutes an energy region. The relations between discipline and governmentality are shown in the biogas producers' subversive work of constitution, in particular the changes in established practices of biogas production.

Finally, the current discussion of migration in the media in Luxembourg is examined by means of a content and discourse analysis. The focus of this case study lies on the sovereignty/discipline axis. The study analyses the relation between sociopolitical debates and their semantic implementations on the part of the journalists and editors of the most widely circulated Luxembourg daily newspaper, the *Luxemburger Wort*, from 1990 to 2010.

---

9 | Personal translation of: "[...] Formierung von räumlichem Wissen."

10 | Personal translation of: "[...] Gewerbsmäßige Unzucht."