Fortschritt und Verantwortung! Education as a rallying cry in Luxembourg’s general elections of 1974

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ABSTRACT
Education became a rallying cry in Luxembourg’s general elections of 1974. For the first time in the country’s post-war history, the Socialists and Democrats entered the government, with new plans for education. The unbroken rule of almost 30 years by the Christian Democrats was over. New ‘global’ educational concepts were employed to introduce changes in the national curriculum, the aim being a transformation from an elite to a mass system of participation. One of these changes was the idea of the comprehensive school, which divided the electorates, parties and press respectively. Yet, this fundamental change has received little attention in the academic literature. What were the differences between the parties when it came to education policy? By intersecting politics, globalisation and education, this paper examines the impact of the election events of 1974 on Luxembourg’s political discourse. The conclusion points to the central role the parties played in the proliferation of new educational norms.

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Introduction

In her thought-provoking The Politics and Economics of Comparison, Steiner-Khamsi invites researchers of international education to explore how the language of globalisation has been used as a valuable rhetorical tool to introduce new policies into national education systems, especially since the early 1960s.1 ‘I would like to suggest that, whenever there is a change in policy, we should assume that a reference to “globalization” or “international standards” was made’, she asserts. ‘Somewhere along the way to a decision, policy actors most likely resorted to either one or both of these references to accelerate change.’2 In other words, the significance of globalisation to national education agendas should not be underrated, especially in relation to reform, and it is the complex relationship between the

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1 Gita Steiner-Khamsi, ‘The Politics and Economics of Comparison’, Comparative Education Review 54, no. 3 (2010): 323–8.
2 For the term ‘globalization optique’, see Stephen Carney, ‘Negotiating Policy in an Age of Globalization: Exploring Educational “Policyscapes” in Denmark, Nepal, and China’, Comparative Education Review 53, no. 1 (2009): 63–88. Carney argues that ‘nation-state and system studies of education must be informed by understandings of the nature of globalization and especially the new imaginative regimes that it makes possible. Educational phenomena in one country case must thus be understood in ongoing relation to other such cases’ (p. 63).

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‘national’ and ‘global’ that should be given greater attention when new educational practices are discussed. In this paper, I argue that Steiner-Khamsi’s statement also raises a number of important questions concerning the new role of education in West European political realms of the early 1970s. Whereas I have previously explored Finnish and West German educational developments during this era, also more recently in reference to globalisation, my purpose is now to extend this research to one of the smallest nation-states in Europe, namely the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Politically, the justification for Luxembourg as a case study is twofold. First, education became a powerful rallying cry in Luxembourg’s general elections of 1974. Just like in the majority of European countries during the Cold War, different ‘global’ educational concepts such as socialisation and differentiation, equality of opportunity, self-determination and participation, responsibility and cooperation, lifelong learning, democratisation and integration, and rationalisation and individualisation, were buzzwords used to mobilise the divided electorates. They were employed to introduce changes in the national curriculum. Second, whereas the Christian Social People’s Party (CSV) – which had ruled the country uninterruptedly since 1945 – was ousted from office, the Luxembourg Socialist Workers’ Party (LSAP) entered the government with completely new plans for education. As their senior partner, the Democratic Party (DP) formed a coalition with the LSAP, and attempted to gain a firmer foothold in Luxembourg’s political system by placing education, particularly the controversial idea of the comprehensive school (polyvalente integrierte Gesamtschule), high on its agenda. By challenging the former hegemony of the CSV, the new coalition thus signalled fundamental changes in Luxembourg’s post-war history.

Methodologically, this study analyses election manifestos of the three parties in 1974, and identifies their specific electoral and ideological strategies with regard to education and curriculum developments. Here, the term ‘globalisation’ is broadly defined as ‘the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa’, or ‘those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society’. Against this background, the following research question will be answered: As carriers of different socio-political ideas incarnated in dynamic politicians, what were the similarities and differences between the LSAP, DP and CSV when it came to education policy? The election manifestos as sources are complemented by a selection of press articles around the year 1974: a number of writings from the daily papers Luxemburger

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1Matias Gardin, ‘Higher Education in Crisis: Post-war Lessons from Finland and West Germany’, Journal of Contemporary European Research 11, no. 2 (2015): 196–211.
2Matias Gardin, ‘Globalization in Finnish and West German Educational Rhetoric, 1960–1970’, in Trajectories in the Development of Modern School Systems: Between the National and the Global, ed. Daniel Tröhler and Thomas Lenz (New York: Routledge, 2015), 183–96.
3Guy Linster, ‘L’élan de 1974 à 1979’, Forum 316 (2012): 53–5.
4See, for example, Francis Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part II), in École et vie, no. 3 (Luxembourg: Syndicat national des enseignants, 1974), 91–100, or Joachim Raffert, ‘Bildung – werden wir sie noch brauchen?’, in École et vie, no. 3 (Luxembourg: Syndicat national des enseignants, 1974), 83–6.
5LSAP, Fortschritt und Verantwortung: Aktionsprogramm der Luxemburger Sozialisten (Esch-sur-Alzette: Imprimerie Coopérative Luxembourgeoise, 1974).
6DP, Demokratisch Partei: Programmzüge und Optionen 1974 (Luxembourg: DP, 1974).
7Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 64.
8Martin Albrow, ‘Introduction’, in Globalization, Knowledge and Society: Readings from International Sociology, ed. Martin Albrow and Elisabeth King (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 9.
Wort (closely affiliated to the CSV), and Tageblatt (closely affiliated to the LSAP), and the weekly paper D’Lëtzebuerger Land, are examined. Here, attention is paid to the role of mass media in interpreting specific education policies to the public, and how the different newspapers reacted to and accelerated the political divisions. Did the new international environment – or ‘globalization optique’ to use Carney’s vocabulary – have an effect on the way the parties and press were to contribute towards educational change? By intersecting partisan politics, global considerations and education, this paper ends with an assessment of the impact of the 1974 general election campaigns on Luxembourg’s public and political discourse.

These questions are also interesting for international audiences, since they deal with similar educational issues – whether failed or successful reforms – that took place in a number of European countries during the 1960s and 1970s. In this sense, although the implementation of comprehensive schools was unsuccessful in Luxembourg, the country’s reform proposals surrounding more equal opportunities form part of the wider European movement, which demanded democratisation and social integration in the sphere of education. As authors such as Susanne Wiborg have shown, the success or failure of implementation depended largely on domestic power struggles; social and political factors which either undermined or accelerated change. What were these ‘endogenous factors’ in Luxembourg?

The parliamentary elections of 1974 coincided with the beginning of the global economic crisis, which led to the restructuring of the traditional iron and steel industries in the south of the country, rising levels of immigration and unemployment, demographic crisis and reorganisation of labour. Whereas European integration had taken a decisive step by establishing the Merger Treaty of 1965, new forms of education were equally to play a crucial role in the new international order, which required urgent increases in educational investment. It was in this changed structural context of society – and as its result heated political climate – that the comprehensive school idea became controversial in Luxembourg when it was placed on the political agenda in 1974. Looking at the three election manifestos superficially against this background, it seems as if the parties come across as remarkably similar. The use of vocabulary and phrasing – repetitive, unapologetic and flamboyant throughout – appears alike, yet a closer investigation reveals radically different connotations attached to the same concepts. In this respect, different moral views, values and ideologies relating to education and social justice – ‘the good society’ – are of crucial importance.

11The political orientation of D’Lëtzebuerger Land is less obvious, for the paper claimed it did not belong to either the Right or Left camp. However, it took an active part in educational debates by allowing both views in its coverage, and is thus included in this study as a more independent source.

12See, above all, Susanne Wiborg, Education and Social Integration: Comprehensive Schooling in Europe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

13Ibid., 211. See also, Achim Leschinsky and Karl Ulrich Mayer, ‘Comprehensive Schools and Inequality of Opportunity in the Federal Republic of Germany’, in The Comprehensive School Experiment Revisited: Evidence from Western Europe, ed. Achim Leschinsky and Karl Ulrich Mayer (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 13–39.

14For example, see Guy Thewes, Les gouvernements du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg depuis 1848 (Luxembourg: Service information et presse du gouvernement, 2011), 186–9.

15OECD, Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning (Washington, DC: OECD Publications, 1973).

16Of course, there were already developments towards the comprehensive school idea in Luxembourg long before 1974. However, it was not until the 1974 elections that the issue was fully acknowledged by the political parties.

17Michael Shalev, ‘Class Politics and the Western Welfare State’, in Social Policy Evaluation: Social and Political Perspectives, ed. Shimon Spiro and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 27–50.
for analysis, for ‘They describe the practical arsenal of politics … in which not only specific policy objectives and paths, but also the self-image of the political system, the political class and social conflicts, are very clearly expressed and contested’.18

**Revolutionary vs. evolutionary education**

The first apparent difference between the parties can be drawn between revolutionary and evolutionary education. The LSAP and DP shared a belief in the productive forces of education. In other words, they endeavoured to change society through schooling, and thereby aimed at solidarity, emancipation and social integration – via the introduction of the comprehensive school for instance19 – while the CSV believed in education’s potential in mitigating social cleavages, and by that, had their goal in social stability.20 Gradual reform of the existing system became an important electoral strategy for the CSV, which was in line with the general ideology of Christian Democracy, as Van Kersbergen suggests: ‘Christian democracy’s model was in no sense an attempt to create universal solidarity. Rather it was a procedure for moderating societal cleavages while reinforcing social groups and group identities … to gain as broad support as it could possibly obtain.’21

Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that, at least before 1974, the CSV was not against all those ‘revolutionary’ education policies pushed forward by the DP and LSAP. Albeit being cautious, the party at times sympathised with some of the ideas of the comprehensive school, and the creation of uniform technical secondary education. To take an example, Pierre Frieden’s views on this were published in *Luxemburger Wort* on 19 January 1974:

> One should also not obstruct rash alternative solutions. The comprehensive school is for sure a school model worthy of discussion, even if there are increasing, serious objections against it. But whoever says today that nothing but the integrated comprehensive school brings the solution to our educational problems must be as wrong as the one who wants nothing but a rigid continuation of the existing school forms.22

Put differently, for the CSV progress was to take place at a slower speed, based on a step-by-step approach, cooperation and gradual evolution, not on experimentation or a ‘revolutionary overthrow’ of the existing system, as suggested by the future governing parties.23

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18 Thomas Mergel, *Propaganda nach Hitler: eine Kulturgeschichte des Wahlkampfs in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1990* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), 12, 14. *Sie beschreiben das praktische Arsenal der Politik … in der nicht nur spezifische politische Ziele und Wege, sondern auch das Selbstbild des politischen Systems, der politische Klasse und die gesellschaftlichen Konflikte sehr klar ausgedrückt und umkämpft werden.* All translations from French and German in this paper are my own.

19 See Tageblatt, ‘Die Gesamtschule im Gespräch’, October 28, 1972, 11, or Robert Krieps, ‘Discours lors du Congrès pédagogiques de l’Association Européenne des Enseignants’ and ‘Je ne regrette rien’, in Robert Krieps: (1922–1990): démocratie, justice, culture, éducation, ed. Franz Fayot and Marc Limpach (Esch-sur-Alzette: Le Phare, 2009), 471–7, or Linster, ‘L’élan de 1974 à 1979’, 53–5.

20 CSV, *Grundsatz- und Aktionsprogramm: angenommen auf den ausserordentlichen Kongressen der CSV vom 22. Dezember 1973 und 26. Januar 1974* (Luxembourg: Sankt-Paulus-Dr., 1974), or *Luxemburger Wort*, ‘Die Komplementarklassen im Gespräch’, June 30, 1974, 22, or *Luxemburger Wort*, ‘Öffentliche Schule in Gefahr – Offener Brief an alle Eltern als Brief an die Redaktion von einem Professor des öffentlichen Unterrichts’, February 6, 1975, 17.

21 Kees van Kersbergen, *Social Capitalism: A Study of Christian Democracy and the Welfare State* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 239.

22 Pierre Frieden, ‘Kommt die Gesamtschule?’, *Luxemburger Wort*, January 19, 1974, 7. ‘Man soll auch nicht vorschnelle alternative Lösungen verbauen. Die Gesamtschule ist sicher ein diskussionswürdiges Schulmodell, auch wenn es ernst zu nehmende Einwände gegen sie gibt. Wer aber heute bereits sagt: Nichts als die integrierte Gesamtschule bringt die Lösung unserer Bildungsprobleme, muß ebenso unrecht haben wie der, der nichts als ein starrer Weiterdauern der bestehenden Schulformen will.’

23 CSV, *Grundsatz- und Aktionsprogramm: angenommen auf den ausserordentlichen Kongressen der CSV vom 22. Dezember 1973 und 26. Januar 1974*, 37–40. See also, *D’Lëtzebuerger Land*, ‘Où est le tronc commun?’, October 15, 1971, or *D’Lëtzebuerger Land*, ‘Table Ronde sur l’enseignement avec les partis politiques’, May 10, 1974, 2.
In principle, the CSV believed in equal opportunities as a democratic right, but it believed even more firmly in educational pluralism (*Pluralismus*), freedom of choice and individual (or family) liability; again, as a means towards social stability, and as its end-product, national progress.  

For the CSV, the restructuring plans posed by the DP and LSAP were overly hasty, lacked clearly defined outcomes, and needed more time for maturation. In the eyes of the CSV, more research was needed to evaluate whether or not the reforms would work in Luxembourg. In this sense, the CSV acted as the moral guardian of Luxembourg’s educational traditions: ‘Is it not that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush?’

By contrast, the LSAP claimed that in implementing reformative and progressive policy, and radical transformation of schooling conditions, the state and economy should also act responsibly and democratically, to safeguard genuine equality of opportunity. That is to say, by guaranteeing good educational levels for all pupils, the state could act as a lever to reduce those inequalities produced by the market. There were new societal demands attached to education, as trade unionist René Gregorius summarised the situation: ‘One goes to the doctor for his health. So he should go to teachers and educators for his education.’

The DP supported the views of the LSAP but added that a closer link between education and economics should be warranted, which followed from the talent reserve discussions of the early 1960s. By ensuring the use of those talents still lying idle, i.e. utility maximisation the state could maintain a more productive workforce.

In its election manifesto (*Fortschritt und Verantwortung: Aktionsprogramm der Luxemburger Sozialisten*) – formulated by Robert Goebbels and Lydie Schmit – the LSAP also criticised the authoritarian structures of Luxembourg’s education system. The party saw the current system as being contaminated by the influence of the CSV, which stemmed from larger socio-economic power relations. The CSV as the party of conservative capitalism and supporter of large foreign conglomerates (such as banks) was mentioned. Thus, the major goal of the LSAP was ‘to uncover the actual power relations in our society, and thereby to show that the socialist social order can only be achieved by changing the balance of power’, for ‘Our society is dominated by capitalism’. Therefore, the party also believed in radically changing society through education. The CSV, under the presidency of Nicolas Mosar, in turn prioritised current labour market demands, scientific knowledge, technical progress and economic growth. Although the party manifesto (Grundsatz-
Aktionsprogramm der CSV) could be seen as fairly progressive at the time, at least in the sense that there were constant references to democratisation, equality of opportunities, tighter interplay between social policy and education, and the new role of women, there was no mention of the comprehensive school as a genuine alternative to the current four-tier system of secondary education.

With regard to the curriculum, Francis Hierzig, Secretary General of the General Federation of Luxembourgish Teachers (Fédération Générale des Instituteurs Luxembourgeois, FGIL), pointed out that 'A meaningful comparison [of different school subjects] requires profound curricular research, as it has never been done before in our country'. The LSAP stressed the importance of political education in civic studies (Gesellschaftslehre), which would consist of history, social studies and geography, and be taught four times per week between the fifth and tenth grades. The goal was to teach pupils social competences, cooperation and tolerance, improve creative and practical working, and encourage independent thinking, i.e. learning should be not just about gaining pure 'knowledge', but also about changing of attitudes and behaviour through participation in society (Mitbestimmung), cooperation (Zusammenarbeit) and personal independence (Selbständigkeit): 'Thus, the employee citizens must not be limited to the periodic exercise of the right to vote. Rather, it must be ensured that the population permanently participates in the political decision making and objective political information of the state and communities.' Social emancipation in education was to be understood in this context as 'the ability to recognise dependencies, to understand heteronomy, in order to be free to determine oneself, and thus to be able to realise oneself ... to get to know the phenomena behind social and individual reality and their dependence on needs, interests, authority and economy.'

The above – in stark contrast to the CSV, which claimed that educational reforms must stem from (and reinforce) ‘actual’ societal conditions – was linked to a fierce separation between the church and society: 'The Socialists [LSAP], however, actively disapprove of any abuse of religion for power political purposes.' For them, in democratic socialism (demokratischer Sozialismus), it was naive to assume that capitalism would correct itself when it came to education policy, but optimal conditions for the realisation of equality, democracy and solidarity would have to be created by policy edicts: 'But it would be unrealistic to assume that the capitalist society would reform itself voluntarily, against one's
better judgement perhaps, and grow into socialism. In the upper secondary school (Lycée), previously unknown art and music education (Kunst- und Musiksektion) should be incorporated in the curriculum. In their manifesto (Programmpunkte und Optionen 1974), headed by incoming Prime Minister Gaston Thorn, the DP also insisted that current citizenship education (Bürgerkunde) was too limited and should be substantially expanded to include consumer education (Konsumentenbildung), in order for the pupils to learn about new economic models and employment relations, meet the demands of modern productive forces, and recognise their future potential and shortcomings.

In addition, the reform proposals surrounding the comprehensive school implied a complete revision of the existing curriculum: demands for more flexibility and broader lesson plans, interaction between different subjects, course-based programmes, full-time schooling (Ganztagsschule, journée continue), common core syllabus (Kernfächer, tronc commun), employment studies (Arbeitslehre, matières travaux manuels), and a large number of optional and specialisation modules tailored to individual needs. At a European level, meanwhile, more comprehensive curricula were being rendered mandatory for future labour market mobility:

Schools should be concerned about the motivation and aspirations of young people, who for the most part are under-motivated and unsure about their educational goals. While taking contemporary realities into account, they must discover what gives the pupil a sense of participation, and then provide guidance in an educational sense.... Labour mobility requires a type of education that has no specific orientation and avoids narrow specialisation.

Democracy, progress and responsibility

The second distinction between the parties can be made between the concepts of ‘democracy’, ‘progress’ and ‘responsibility’. By ‘democracy’, the LSAP argued for the better educational representation of the masses, i.e. the current system was seen as serving only the minority interest (Goebbels and Schmit called this ‘half-democracy’, halbe Demokratie). For the purpose of democratisation, it was important to them that the education system could better represent the large majority (a process they termed ‘real democracy’, echte Demokratie). By writing that Luxembourg’s developments should not be studied in isolation from other nations because of the small size of the country, in the comprehensive school they saw an essential tool – a long-awaited chance – to promote social democracy in the Grand Duchy, and by that, to contribute towards democratisation of education. Being also against the educational pluralism promoted by the CSV, the DP in turn stressed the importance of

42ibid., 3. ‘Es wäre aber illusorisch anzunehmen, die kapitalistische Gesellschaft würde sich von selbst reformieren und freiwillig, aus besserer Einsicht etwa, in den Sozialismus hineinwachsen.’
43For instance, see Guy Linster, ‘Damit die Reformen zum Tragen kommen: Auch nach dem 10. Juni Sozialisten im Erziehungsministerium. “Ein Aktuell um Sonndeg” – Gespräch mit Staatssekretär Guy Linster’, Aktuell um Sonndeg, June 3, 1979, 2.
44DP, Demokratesch Partei: Programmpunkte und Optionen 1974, 58.
45Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part II).
46Council of Europe, Conseil de la coopération culturelle, rapport annuel 1973 (Strasbourg: Conseil de l’Europe, 1974). ‘Les écoles doivent se préoccuper des motivations et des aspirations des jeunes qui, pour la plupart, sont sous-motivés et incertains de leurs objectifs éducatifs. Tout en tenant compte des réalités contemporaines, elles doivent découvrir ce qui fait naître chez l’élève un sentiment de participation et ensuite orienter celui-ci dans un sens éducatif…. Un type d’enseignement sans orientation précise, évitant une spécialisation étroite, est une condition préalable de la mobilité de l’emploi…’
47LSAP, Fortschritt und Verantwortung: Aktionsprogramm der Luxemburger Sozialisten, 5.
48Ibid.
49Ibid., 28.
collective planning (*Gesamtplanung*), a comprehensive approach (*Gesamtkonzeption*), and speedy abolition of all financial hurdles for the benefit of greater educational equality at all school levels. The comprehensive school was seen as the party’s long-term objective (*Fernziel*) to realise these goals.

Meanwhile, the CSV favoured a slow and cautious speed of change, freedom of choice and reforms based on well-established models rather than on quick fixes and experimentation. Yet, the party had already recognised the acute need for reform under the former Frieden, Werner-Cravatte and Werner-Schaus governments: ‘Nobody is arguing that there are no deficiencies in education, like in other societal branches and institutions, and that changes and improvements are possible and necessary.’ But, typical of the Grand Duchy, it was important first to follow the implementation of the reforms abroad, and then assess their potential applicability to Luxembourg. In this ‘global’ frame, German-speaking literature was particularly and frequently cited to catch up with the newest developments in educational research. From Sweden, the Alva-Myrdal-Report of 1971 was acknowledged. Austrian examples were mentioned in reference to special classes and their problem solution. For more cross-national perspectives, the Annual Report of 1973 by the Council of Europe was discussed. Given the huge German influence on Luxembourg’s primary education system, it is no surprise that French-speaking literature was often only mentioned in passing. In short, globalisation was used as a prism through which domestic reforms were justified, to accelerate change and pressure the current system, viewed as outdated or out of touch with reality.

By ‘progress’, the LSAP referred to the urgent need to modernise Luxembourg’s education so as to bring the system into line with ‘international standards’. The party was especially worried about the country’s alleged backwardness and lack of permeability (*Durchlässigkeit*) when compared with other countries, which in its view had been caused by the long rule of the CSV. They were against the notion that talent was somehow innate or unchangeable, but rather was conditioned by learning and socialisation processes – ‘the social milieu’ (*soziales Milieu*) – which in the current system was characterised by an ‘unjustified typification’ (*ungerechtfertigte Typisierung*). The DP added a more ‘global’ dimension to this by claiming that ‘Fifty years of conservative education policy has brought only partial adjustments. Global reforms are no longer to be avoided.’ Indeed, foreign developments and keeping up with international advances seemed of crucial importance for the DP, such as when the

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50 *DP, Demokratesch Partei: Programmpunkte und Optionen 1974*, 58–60.
51 Ibid., 57, 60.
52 *CSV, Grundsatz- und Aktionsprogramm: angenommen auf den ausserordentlichen Kongressen der CSV vom 22. Dezember 1973 und 26. Januar 1974*, 38.
53 *Frieden, ‘Kommt die Gesamtschule?’*, 7. ‘Niemand bestreitet, daß im Schulwesen wie in allen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen und Einrichtungen, Mängel vorliegen und daß Änderungen und Verbesserungen möglich und notwendig sind.’
54 For example, Bernischer Lehrerverein, *Gesamtschule: praktische Aspekte der inneren Schulreform* (Bern/Stuttgart: Haupt, 1972), or Herbert Stubenauch, *Die Gesamtschule im Widerspruch des Systems, Zur Erziehungstheorie der integrierten Gesamtschule* (Munich: Juventa, 1972).
55 See Raffert, ‘Bildung – werden wir sie noch brauchen?’, 84–5.
56 See Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part IV), 65.
57 Ibid., 75.
58 For the role of ‘global standards’, see Steiner-Khamis, *The Politics and Economics of Comparison*, 324. For policy borrowing and lending, see Carney, *Negotiating Policy in an Age of Globalization: Exploring Educational “Policyscapes” in Denmark, Nepal, and China*, 63.
59 *LSAP, Fortschritt und Verantwortung: Aktionsprogramm der Luxemburger Sozialisten*, 27.
60 Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part I), 8, 21.
61 *DP, Demokratesch Partei: Programmpunkte und Optionen 1974*, 57. ‘Fünfzig Jahre konservativer Erziehungspolitik haben nur Teilanpassungen gebracht. Globalreformen sind nicht länger zu umgehen.’
comprehensive school was under discussion: ‘Globally, all these adjustments prepare the way towards the comprehensive school.’

The CSV put less emphasis on global trends, and focused more on specific Luxembourgish issues, such as the unusual language situation, by laying stress on educational pluralism, albeit that the party also recognised the need for cooperation at (and even partial harmonisation of) secondary levels. Yet, at the core of the CSV’s programme stood the staunch preservation of free choice, the need for private schools and their state aid: ‘The free choice of school should not only be allowed but also made materially possible. Therefore, in the context of a private school law, state aid should be granted to private schools.’ This followed the initiative ‘Equal chances’ (Chances égales), led by Christian Democratic Member of Parliament Georges Margue. Simultaneously the LSAP, being anti-religious and campaigning against tax-financed private schools (which were also supported by the Catholic Church), highlighted the importance of public schools: the ‘[b]asic requirement for a democratic education system is first of all the public school, which is the best protection against forced opinion and the most appropriate preparation for the democratic activities of our institutions.’ The party saw the private school as an antithesis of progress and modernisation, social inclusion and mobility, risk management, fair competition and equal life chances. To complement this outlook, the DP campaigned for more complementary classes for migrant children (e.g. in French), smaller class sizes and increased opportunities in further education.

By ‘responsibility’ the CSV referred to increased personal responsibilities and family duties: ‘It [the party] is committed to ensuring that citizens are permitted to act through objective information and political education as critical, active and self-responsible people.’ The LSAP saw it quite differently. By ‘responsibility’ it meant, above all, a responsible state and economy. While the party mentioned the need to rationalise state bureaucracy and economy, it also added that this should be done with a social conscience, given the current global economic crisis. In this sense, the LSAP spoke of ‘reasonable rationalisation’ (vernünftige Rationalisierung). At a more general level, this was coupled with the rejection of Luxembourg as a tax haven favoured by foreign business (again, seen as being sustained and even reinforced by the CSV), which now endangered the country under the influence of ‘authority-impaired production forces’ (autoritätshörige Produktionskräfte).

In education policy, ‘The Socialists [LSAP] want the progressive realisation of a polyvalent, an integrated comprehensive school, which will incorporate the so-called “second cycle”, with differentiated learning and support groups, today’s complementary and pre-vocational

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62Ibid., 59. ‘Global zielen alle diese Anpassungen darauf, der integrierten Gesamtschule den Weg zu bereiten.’
63CSV, Grundsatz- und Aktionsprogramm: angenommen auf den ausserordentlichen Kongressen der CSV vom 22. Dezember 1973 und 26. Januar 1974, 38–9.
64Ibid., 40. ‘Die freie Schulwahl soll nicht nur gestattet, sondern auch materiell ermöglicht werden. Deshalb ist auch den Privatschulen staatliche Hilfe im Rahmen eines Privatschulgesetzes zu gewähren.’
65Linster, ‘L’élan de 1974 à 1979’, 60.
66LSAP, Fortschritt und Verantwortung: Aktionsprogramm der Luxemburger Sozialisten, 27. ‘Prinzipielle Voraussetzung eines demokratischen Unterrichtswesens ist zuerst die öffentliche Schule, die die beste Sicherung gegen Meinungszwang u. die geeignetste Vorbereitung auf die demokratische Tätigkeit unserer Institutionen ist.’
67DP, Demokratisch Partei: Programmpunkte und Optionen 1974, 57–9.
68CSV, Grundsatz- und Aktionsprogramm: angenommen auf den ausserordentlichen Kongressen der CSV vom 22. Dezember 1973 und 26. Januar 1974, 80. ‘Sie [die Partei] setzt sich dafür ein, daß sich die Bürger durch objektive Information und politische Bildung als kritische, aktive und selbstverantwortliche Menschen betätigen können.’
69LSAP, Fortschritt und Verantwortung: Aktionsprogramm der Luxemburger Sozialisten, 11.
70Ibid., 27.
school classes, and also the lower levels of middle and secondary education.\textsuperscript{71} The DP, in turn, favoured closer links between education and economic life and, consequently, pushed both for the harmonisation of technical secondary education and for the coming of the comprehensive school. It was maintained that a better and broadly educated workforce, and cooperation between secondary institutions, formed an essential precondition of and contributed to macro-economic efficiency.\textsuperscript{72} As part of this, the party warned against too early tracking (\textit{Auslese}), and the concomitant social, political and economic risks linked to inequity: ‘Equality is not just a financial problem, but presupposes a democratically conceived school…. In this integrated comprehensive school, the variety of previous school forms with their vertical separation walls disappear. The new education path is applied horizontally and this prevents the premature selection of pupils.’\textsuperscript{73} On 3 March 1975, the \textit{Tageblatt} also reported how the ‘global’ catchphrase was ‘integration through differentiation’: ‘It [the comprehensive school] is just a starting point, creating the conditions without which a democratic school is not feasible, namely, integration of all students of the age cohort and differentiation as a means of integration.’\textsuperscript{74}

Being sceptical about this ‘idealism’, because of a lack of concrete evidence for the new school’s superiority, the CSV announced: “The question is: Can we sustain the quality of our school leaving certificates, if we suddenly have all school forms united organisationally under one roof? Because here we have a problem which cannot be swung away with empty pathos.”\textsuperscript{75} Or, as an anonymous \textit{Lycée} teacher complained in the \textit{Luxemburger Wort} on 6 February 1975: ‘So why destroy the current system, without knowing by what will you replace it with, and without improving the other school types (middle and vocational education)?’\textsuperscript{76} For many, perhaps unsurprisingly, the new school would lead to the lowering of standards (and thus cause problems at university entry levels), greater social inequality (since low-scoring pupils would not get the appropriate help they needed), and explosive expansion of private schools (following from the decreased standards of public schools).\textsuperscript{77} The answer to this critique from the Left was to emphasise ‘less controversial’ global developments: differentiation and individuality in teaching would mean that pupils should have an option to deepen their knowledge in optional subjects, ensuring also that more advanced learners would benefit from the new system and its curriculum.\textsuperscript{78} Later differentiation (\textit{spätere Differenzierung}), individual support (\textit{individuelle Förderung}), and a decrease in

\textsuperscript{71}ibid., 30. ‘Die Sozialisten wollen die progressive Verwirklichung einer polyvalenten, integrierten Gesamtschule, die, als sogenannter “zweiter Zyklus”, mit differenzierten Lern- und Fördergruppen, die heutigen Komplementar- und Vorberufsschulklassen, sowie die Unterstufen des Mittel- und Sekundarunterrichts umfassen wird.’ The ‘second cycle’ here refers to the first three years of secondary education.

\textsuperscript{72}DP, \textit{Demokratisch Partei: Programmpunkte und Optionen} 1974, 59–60.

\textsuperscript{73}ibid. ‘Chancengleichheit ist nämlich nicht nur ein finanzielles Problem, sie setzt eine demokratische konzipierte Schule voraus.... In dieser integrierten Gesamtschule verschwindet die Vielfalt der bisherigen Schulformen mit ihren vertikalen Trennwänden. Der neue Bildungsweg ist horizontal angelegt und verhindert eine frühzeitige Selektivität unter Schülern.’

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Tageblatt}, ‘Zum Gesamtschulmodell des CLEC’; March 3, 1975, 44. ‘Sie [die Gesamtschule] ist nur ein Ausgangspunkt, sie schafft die Voraussetzungen, ohne die eine demokratischer Schule nicht realisierbar ist, und zwar: – die Integrierung aller Schüler einer Altersklasse – die Differenzierung als Mittel zur Integrierung.’

\textsuperscript{75}Frieden, ‘Kommt die Gesamtschule?’; 7. ‘Die Frage ist: Bleibt die Qualität unserer Schulabschlüsse erhalten, wenn wir einmal alle Schulformen unter einem Dach organisatorisch vereinigt haben? Denn hier geht es um ein Problem über das man sich nicht mit leerem Pathos hinwegschwängen kann:’

\textsuperscript{76}\textit{Luxemburger Wort}, ‘Öffentliche Schule in Gefahr – Offener Brief an alle Eltern als Brief an die Redaktion von einem Professor des öffentlichen Unterrichts’, 17. ‘Warum also das jetzige System zerstören, ohne zu wissen, durch was man es ersetzt und ohne daß dadurch die andern Schultypen (Mittel- und Berufsschulunterricht) verbessert werden?’

\textsuperscript{77}ibid.

\textsuperscript{78}See for example \textit{Tageblatt}, ‘Zum Gesamtschulmodell des CLEC’, 44.
social distance (soziale Distanz) between different social groups would be methods used to ensure an increase in the equality of opportunity (Chancengerechtigkeit).\textsuperscript{79}

On part of the CSV, particular attention was also drawn to the so-called ‘complementary classes’ (Komplementarklassen) – a kind of continuation of the primary school track at the post-primary level alongside the middle school (Mittelschule), vocational institutions (Berufsschulen) and Lycée – which were mostly composed of working-class children from migrant backgrounds who were thought to have an ‘insecure future’ in the proposed new order. For example, in 1974, the Luxemburger Wort asked: ‘What should happen to the pupils of these classes in the planned merger of post-primary education? Will they also be integrated? Or will there perhaps be, necessarily, a kind of sidetrack set up inside the comprehensive school for each pupil who does not meet the set minimum requirements?’\textsuperscript{80} On a different note, the LSAP recognised that, for many children attending these classes, failures in life and education were just the ‘continuation of the fate of their parents’ (Fortsetzung des Schicksals ihrer Eltern),\textsuperscript{81} a situation which needed attention, since these pupils often left school after reaching the age of 16. In 1973, for example, 4000 young Luxembourgers attended these classes.\textsuperscript{82}

It would, however, also be too simplistic to conclude that the DP and LSAP formed a united front against the CSV. In effect, as the Tageblatt wrote in 1972, the new school also faced criticism from the Left of the political spectrum: ‘Will the children be as well prepared for university as before? Will the famous trilingualism of our middle school students be maintained? Can we cope with this expensive school?’\textsuperscript{83} This was coupled with scepticism on the part of the working classes, industry and trade unions: ‘Does industry require difficult examinations, when its needs are met by specialists? Are there not already many working-class children in our post-primary schools?’\textsuperscript{84} These comments were partially directed towards the ‘Circle Connecting Critical Teachers’ (Cercle de Liaison des Enseignants Critiques, CLEC), which complained that, in accordance with the DP and LSAP, ‘The school is not an island of neutrality in a class society characterised by economic, political and cultural domination of the minority.’\textsuperscript{85}

Formed by public school teachers who petitioned for the rapid realisation of the comprehensive school, and who were supported by the FGIL, the CLEC further expounded that with failure rates of over 30% in primary schools (and rejection rates of over 60% in the Lycée), the current system had become economically and pedagogically unsustainable, posed unreasonable demands for pupils and teachers and thus needed radical reform: ‘The

\textsuperscript{79}Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part I), 24.
\textsuperscript{80}Luxemburger Wort, ‘Die Komplementarklassen im Gespräch’, 22. ‘Was soll in der vorgesehenen Fusion der post-primären Schulen mit den Schülern dieser Klassen geschehen? Werden auch sie integriert werden? Oder wird, notwendigerweise, vielleicht innerhalb der Gesamtschule, eine Art Abstellgeleise eingerichtet werden für jene Schüler, die selbst den gestellten Minimalanforderungen nicht entsprechen?’
\textsuperscript{81}Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part IV), 65.
\textsuperscript{82}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83}Tageblatt, ‘Die Gesamtschule im Gespräch’, 11. ‘Werden die Kinder noch ebenso gut auf die Universität vorbereiten als bisher? Wird die berühmte Dreisprachigkeit unserer Mittelschüler beibehalten? Kann diese teure Schule von uns verkraftet werden?’
\textsuperscript{84}Ibid. ‘Verlangt die Industrie schwere Examina, wenn ihre Bedürfnisse an Spezialisten gedeckt sind? Sind doch noch viele Arbeiterkinder auf unseren postprimären Schulen?’
\textsuperscript{85}Cited in André Hoffmann, ‘Le CLEC, une expérience unitaire de réflexion critique’, Forum 316 (2012): 52. ‘L’école n’est pas un îlot de neutralité dans une société de classe caractérisée par la domination économique, politique et culturelle d’une minorité.’ See also, Mario Hirsch, Chancengleichheit: Utopie und Notwendigkeit. Bilanz einer Analyse der gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhänge des Reformvorhabens “tronc commun”, D’Lëtzebuerger Land, December 2, 1977, 5, or D’Lëtzebuerger Land, ‘Die Schule als Politikum’, December 2, 1977, 7.
basic evil of our school system, the equality of opportunity, is in that case not alleviated.\textsuperscript{86} Breaking down of all institutional barriers in the lower levels of secondary education (i.e. grades seven to nine, or 'second cycle') – and therefore also class, gender, ethnic, regional and other divisions – was seen as an answer to this dilemma, an issue that had reached its zenith in the public discourse of the early 1970s: ‘This intolerable situation persists as we cling onto the separation that characterises our school system and has its consequence in premature selection.'\textsuperscript{87} Not all teachers, however, shared the same concerns. To safeguard their position, the ‘Association of Secondary School Teachers’ (Association des Professeurs de l’Enseignement secondaire et supérieur, APESS) joined forces with the CSV and opposed comprehensive school reform.\textsuperscript{88} To maintain the selective nature of the Lycée, many secondary school teachers, such as François Thill, Pierre Lech and Jean-Pierre Kraemer, campaigned against the alternatives of the LSAP and DP. However, after 1974 it was also claimed that the left-wing paper, Tageblatt, had intentionally discredited and politicised the APESS, which in principle had always been an apolitical and professional organisation.\textsuperscript{89}

Here, it must be also underlined that the conservative wing of the CSV, surprisingly silent in the first half of the 1970s, had by 1979 grown substantially stronger, and become more radical in character. For instance, on 24 March 1978, it was argued in the D’Lëtzebuerger Land that the comprehensive school – now a ‘socialist doctrine’ (doctrine socialiste), based on a ‘utopian reform’ (réforme utopique) or ‘collectivist equalisation’ (égalisation collectiviste) – would lead to a slow ruin of Luxembourg’s education system.\textsuperscript{90} It would set unreasonable pedagogical requirements for teachers and their training, disadvantage more talented pupils given its heterogeneous clientele, and be impossible to manage because of its large size and complicated organisational structure.\textsuperscript{91} This would cause further problems for students in foreign universities (due to their having gained lower skills compared with their counterparts in other countries), and ignore the contribution and value of national elites:

It has become a national reality that our graduates permanently lose contact with other universities and the elite schools of neighbouring countries…. The trouble is that we are not at all in a hurry to put the cart before the horse, to tolerate the sabotage of our youth and the future of our country. And that is why we say no, and we will say it again and always.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{86}Tageblatt, ‘Zum Gesamtschulmodell des CLEC’ 44. ‘Das Grundübél unseres Schulsystems, die Chancengleichheit, wird in diesem Fall nicht gelindert.’ See also, Hoffmann, ‘Le CLEC, une expérience unitaire de réflexion critique’ 52.

\textsuperscript{87}André Hoffmann, ‘Welche Schulreform?’, Zeitung vum Lëtzebuerger Vollek, May 24, 1974, 21. ‘Cette situation intolérable persiste tant que nous nous cramponnons au cloisonnement qui caractérise notre système scolaire et à la sélection prématuée qui en est la conséquence.’

\textsuperscript{88}FGIL, ‘Die Gesamtschule in der Diskussion. Diskussionsrunde der “Femmes Libérales”. Pédagogik und Politik: Für oder wider die Gesamtschule’, in Journal des instituteurs: périodique de la Fédération générale des instituteurs luxembourgeois (Luxembourg: F.G.I.L., 1977), 18–19.

\textsuperscript{89}François Thill, ‘L’APESS vue à travers la presse de gauche de 1976–1979’, in APESS. Bulletin spécial 75e anniversaire, no. 3 (Grevenmacher: APESS, 1980), 112–18.

\textsuperscript{90}D’Lëtzebuerger Land, ‘Lettre à l’éditeur. Non à l’école globale’, March 24, 1978, 4. See also, Guy Rewenig, ‘Gerechtigkeit aus der Retorte?’, D’Lëtzebuerger Land, July 15, 1977, 8, or Guy Rewenig, ‘Grundschule auf dem toten Gleis? Zu den inhaltlichen Problemen der Gesamtschuldebatte’, D’Lëtzebuerger Land, July 22, 1977, 6.

\textsuperscript{91}Hierzig, ‘Einführung in den Fragenkreis der integrierten Gesamtschule’ (part IV), 72–4. See also, D’Lëtzebuerger Land, June 24, 1977, 7, or D’Lëtzebuerger Land, December 2, 1977, 7.

\textsuperscript{92}D’Lëtzebuerger Land, ‘Lettre à l’éditeur. Non à l’école globale’, 4. ‘Nationale devenait réalité, nos bacheliers perdraient définitivement le contact avec les universités et autres grandes écoles de nos pays voisins…. Le malheur est que nous ne sommes pas du tout pressés de vouloir mettre la charrue devant les bœufs, de tolérer qu’on sabote notre jeunesse et l’avenir de notre pays. Et c’est pourquoi nous disons non, et nous le disons encore et toujours.’
Conclusion

For Levin, most of the problems facing education reforms have to do with their structural aspects, which are fairly easy to change through policy edicts. Nevertheless, he sees little optimism for any groundbreaking alterations since ‘the changes have been deeply influenced by dominant ideas rooted in the economic systems such as managerialism, choice, markets, and incentives’. By intersecting politics, globalisation and education, this paper has assessed the impact of the general elections of 1974 on Luxembourg’s public and political discourse. When we look at education policy there in 1974, it is perhaps no surprise that the election manifestos of the LSAP, DP and CSV stem from Levin’s larger socio-economic power relations: education policy at this time became connected to wider conflicts and trends in society. As bearers of different ideologies, the parties showed very different approaches to education. Then, as carriers of these different socio-political ideas incarnated in dynamic politicians, what were the similarities and differences between the LSAP, DP and CSV when it came to education policy?

In Luxembourg’s political discourse of the early 1970s, a strong belief that education could and should change society dominated the political landscape from the viewpoint of the LSAP and DP, their major aim being a transformation from an elite to a mass system of participation. The mind-set of the CSV was different: the aim of education was not to change society but to reconcile those societal conditions seen as already given. This is not to say that the CSV was somehow less ideological in its views, but simply that its relationship to change was circumscribed by a very different stance to policy altogether. This distinction was also purposefully translated into new curriculum proposals, as the parties applied their specific moral values to education: the importance of political education in civic studies (LSAP), consumer education (DP), and technical progress and scientific proficiency (CSV). In other words, the LSAP and DP aimed at the changing of attitudes. They saw the comprehensive school as a miniature of society, which would teach tolerance, cooperation and mutual respect, while the CSV stressed ‘knowledge’ in a more traditional sense, and saw the new school as a threat to individual freedom, parental choice and pluralism.

In the parliamentary elections of 1974, electoral strength also depended on the appeal of the parties’ narrative over new forms of education, such as the comprehensive school, while the new role of the mass media – especially the emerging influence of the left-wing paper, Tageblatt – helped to polarise the heated political environment in favour of the LSAP and DP, and to challenge the dominance of the right-wing paper, Luxemburger Wort, affiliated to the CSV. It thus follows that the parties and press played a central role in the proliferation of new educational norms, values and moral concepts. The different newspapers reacted to and accelerated deepening political divisions, while for the parties, the new international environment provided an additional opportunity to introduce and accelerate change. The support of the DP in 1974, in turn, enabled Robert Krieps (Minister for National Education, LSAP) and Guy Linster (Secretary of State for National Education, LSAP) to push through controversial education legislation towards the end of the 1970s. Thus one of the success stories of ‘1974’ was the creation of uniform technical secondary

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93Ben Levin, ‘Governments and Education Reform: Some Lessons from the Last 50 Years’, Journal of Education Policy 25, no. 6 (2010): 740.
94See Thomas Lenz and Peter Voss, ‘Zwischen Politik, Polemik und Partizipation. Schule und Schulreform im Tageblatt’, Tageblatt, October 16, 2013.
education, the *Lycée technique* (by the law of 21 May 1979),\(^\text{95}\) and the first integrated cycle of common core syllabus, *tronc commun* (by the law of 23 April 1979),\(^\text{96}\) albeit that the failure of the implementation of the latter after 1979 could be explained as part of a general refusal to move far too quickly, especially on the part of the CSV under Education Minister Fernand Boden.\(^\text{97}\) Although the comprehensive school never materialised in Luxembourg, the political discourse of 1974–1979 opened up the former education system by paving the way towards democratisation of education. For example, one of the milestones of 1979 could be seen in the later abolition of the complementary classes, which were absorbed by technical secondary education.

To conclude, whereas I have recently argued that globalisation put strong pressure on national education systems during the Cold War of the 1960s and 1970s,\(^\text{98}\) the case of Luxembourg in 1974 seems to suggest almost the complete opposite. In Luxembourg, it was *globalisation* that was employed to *justify domestic reforms*, not the other way around, as has been proposed by previous literature.\(^\text{99}\) In this respect, this paper has challenged the notion that global reforms were made legitimate by using domestic rhetoric, or ‘to paint these innovations with a specifically national brush’, as Rohstock and Lenz have it.\(^\text{100}\) Rather, globalisation was used as a matrix through which national reforms were justified, in order to put pressure on Luxembourg’s own system, often viewed as backward or in need of thorough reform. This was particularly true regarding the policies of the DP and LSAP, while the CSV more often resorted to nationalistic arguments to play down the calls for change. Education therefore came to exist in the critical conjuncture between ‘domestic’ and ‘international’. Ultimately, the endless and emotional rhetoric of 1974–1979 surrounding the new school form – its global dimensions, curricular changes, broad press coverage and partial institutionalisation in 1979 – radicalised the conservative wing of the CSV, which aided the party back into office in 1979. In a word, opposition had a strategic role to play. It helped to swing the LSAP and DP to the political Left, even if this was not necessarily what the CSV had originally intended, at least in the sense that it forced the party to re-evaluate some of its education policies for the 1980s.

All this was largely in line with similar developments in many other European countries.\(^\text{101}\) The topic therefore also has contemporary relevance for larger audiences, since it deals with issues surrounding education’s relationship to democracy and equal life chances, and how these concepts were understood in fundamentally different ways by different political forces. This study thus agrees with Wiborg in that ‘there is a need to return social inequality to the top of the agenda as societies have become increasingly unequal. Globalization has engendered forces that have dislocated traditional bonds, fragmented societies, and reinforced conflict and division.’\(^\text{102}\) However, it is worth mentioning that, especially in

\(^{95}\) See Chambre des Députés, ‘Loi du 21 mai 1979 portant 1. organisation de la formation professionnelle et de l’enseignement secondaire technique 2. organisation de la formation professionnelle continue’, Chambre des Députés, http://eli.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/1979/05/21/n1 (accessed September 4, 2014).

\(^{96}\) See Chambre des Députés, ‘Loi du 23 avril 1979 portant création d’un premier cycle intégré de l’enseignement postprimaire (*tronc commun*)’, Chambre des Députés, http://eli.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/1979/04/23/n2 (accessed December 10, 2014).

\(^{97}\) Linster, ‘L’élan de 1974 à 1979’, 55.

\(^{98}\) Gardin, ‘Globalization in Finnish and West German Educational Rhetoric, 1960–1970’, 183–4.

\(^{99}\) Rohstock and Lenz, ‘A National Path to Internationalization: Educational Reforms in Luxembourg, 1945–1970’, 108–26.

\(^{100}\) Ibid., 116.

\(^{101}\) For example, see Achim Leschinsky and Karl Ulrich Mayer, eds., *The Comprehensive School Experiment Revisited: Evidence from Western Europe* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999).

\(^{102}\) Wiborg, *Education and Social Integration: Comprehensive Schooling in Europe*, 3.
comparison with Germany and the Scandinavian countries, for instance, legislation took place quite late in Luxembourg, perhaps given the pervasive role of Christian Democracy in the country. In Germany, where partial implementation occurred, the first comprehensive schools were built in the mid-1960s. In Scandinavia, where total transformation took place, this was already in place in the early 1960s. In relation to contemporary proposals for comprehensive school reform in other European countries, such as the Dutch polarisation of liberals and social democrats in this regard,103 the example of Luxembourg also shows how educational change can indeed be introduced and then reversed politically in a very short time period.

Ultimately, the 1974 battles over the direction of education are perhaps best understood as a historical sequence of events that were marked by both change and persistence. It did make a difference which party took office and which was eventually thrown out. Politics mattered. Or, to be more precise, political parties differed in their education practices. The more the Left pushed for reform, it seems, the more the Right defended the existing system, which accelerated the radicalisation of party politics from both sides of the political spectrum: the ideological gap between the parties grew wider. This contributed to a polarisation of party policies, intra-party volatilities and an unoccupied political centre, untypical of Luxembourg’s post-war politics. To understand these fragmentations helps us to comprehend why the search for national integration through educational equality was – and continues to be – such a contested endeavour.

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103See Hilda Amsing, Linda Greveling and Jeroen Dekker, ‘The Struggle for Comprehensive Education in the Netherlands: The Representation of Secondary School Innovation in Dutch Newspaper Articles in the 1970s; History of Education 42, no. 4 (2013): 460–85.