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Skill Development at the Nexus of the French and German Educational Models: The Case of Luxembourg

Recent research on small (and micro) states points out that these “cannot insulate themselves from global economic pressures individually,”¹ which “calls for greater flexibility in the approach of small states to the development and utilisation of their own human resources,”² with people being “the greatest resource of many small states.”³ Although Luxembourg – as a very small country – is mostly ignored in comparative education and political economy research, it is of substantive conceptual interest as a multilingual and multicultural country located centrally in Western Europe and a founding member of the European Union.⁴ With a population of just under 550,000 (and a foreign population of 45.3 percent), Luxembourg is a small country by European standards, but it is nonetheless still in possession of a highly differentiated and extremely complex national vocational education and training (VET) system.⁵ This chapter describes this system and its current development, especially in the wake of the major vocational training reform of 2008 that was initiated in the context of a thorough reform of

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- 1 Tavis D. Jules, “Educational Exceptionalism in Small (and Micro) States: Cooperative Educational Transfer and TVET”, in: *Research in Comparative & International Education* 10 (2015) 2, pp. 202–222, in particular p. 202.
 - 2 Mohammed Kazim Bacchus, “The Education Challenges Facing Small Nation States in the Increasingly Competitive Global Economy of the Twenty-First Century”, in: *Comparative Education* 44 (2008) 2, pp. 127–145, in particular p. 127.
 - 3 Crossley, “The Advancement of Educational Research”, op. cit. (note 2), in particular p. 251.
 - 4 Luxembourg’s three official languages are German, French, and Luxembourgish. Luxembourg City is seat of important European institutions and considered one of the capitals of the European Union.
 - 5 This chapter builds on a recent contribution to Luxembourg’s National Education Report (Graf and Tröhler 2015, in German). We would like to thank Thomas Lenz, Jos Bertemes, Justin J. W. Powell and Matias Gardin for their insightful comments and feedback.

the whole educational system, following the OECD emphasis on competences.⁶ The reform of elementary education was passed in 2009 and evaluated in 2012 with the advice to be revised in its fundamentals.⁷ Another reform of secondary schooling has – due to heavy opposition by the unions – been suspended in 2009, reformulated in 2013 and is still pending. The 2008 reform for VET is currently also being revised (however, the new revision of the law has been rejected by the State Council in May 2015). This VET reform aimed at modernizing Luxembourg's skill formation system and addressed the question of what specific challenges Luxembourg's VET system faces and what opportunities it has, given the country's size and its strongly-pronounced international elements and influences.⁸ Given its deep confidence in (large-scale) evidence-based education policy and the consistent emphasis on a particular national identity and cultural otherness, expressed in its trilinguism, Luxembourg administers a constant balancing act between the global and the local, translating global (EU, OECD) policy recommendations into the particular national idiosyncrasy.

The chapter primarily deals with the upper secondary level of the school system, first, because it addresses the core of basic vocational education, and, second, because at this level a specific model of vocational training (partly) exists, namely the so-called dual apprenticeship training. This corporatist dual model combines vocational schooling (mainly state-based) with training in the workplace. Dual apprenticeship training is also common in a few other European countries (in particular Switzerland, Germany, and Austria) and once again being praised in the current educational debate on the low levels of youth unemployment that have become associated with it.⁹ Since there is hardly any research on this subject in

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- 6 Katerina Ananiadou & Magdalen Claro, "21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millennium Learners in OECD Countries", in: *OECD Education Working Papers* 41 (2009), pp. 1–33.
 - 7 Daniel Tröhler, Andreas Hadjar, Thomas Lenz, Peter Voss & Ragnhild Barbu, *Rapport d'Expertise sur le Bilan de la Réforme de l'École Fondamentale* (Walferdange: University of Luxembourg, 2012); Daniel Tröhler, Andreas Hadjar, Thomas Lenz, Peter Voss & Ragnhild Barbu, *Forschungsbericht zur Überarbeitung der Bilans intermédiaires in der Luxemburgischen Grundschule* (Walferdange: University of Luxembourg, 2013).
 - 8 At this point, it would also be possible to speak about transnational or global influences. See Daniel Tröhler & Thomas Lenz (eds.), *Trajectories in the Development of Modern School Systems: Between the National and the Global* (New York: Routledge, 2015) for a discussion.
 - 9 Marius R. Busemeyer, *Skills and Inequality: Partisan Politics and the Political Economy of Education Reforms in Western Welfare States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Luxembourg,¹⁰ the chapter will first describe the VET system and then analyze education policy sources and expert interviews.¹¹

The core argument is that Luxembourg's location between the larger European nations of France and Germany is constitutive of skill development in this small state. On the one hand, Luxembourg continuously borrows educational models and principles from its two large(r) neighbors – which both represent major European models of skill formation.¹² Thus, in Luxembourg's skill formation system, elements from these two big states get 'mixed,' although they are not necessarily complementary. On the other hand, Luxembourg compensates its smallness through impressive levels of cross-border activity with neighboring subnational regions in France, Germany, and Belgium – including the cross-border provision of training. Thus, relating to one of this book's core arguments, namely that small states may act rather big in certain areas (see introduction), we find that Luxembourg partly compensates its small size through direct cooperation with neighboring countries – in this way enlarging the scope and capacities of its educational system far beyond its national borders.

The first section describes Luxembourg's VET system with a focus on the different types of training, the political and administrative governance of the system, and the VET reform of 2008. This presentation is rather detailed, given the general lack of dense descriptions of the Luxembourgish skill formation system, which is often neglected in international comparative work due to its small size. Subsequently, key international elements and influences are discussed, and in the last section, we present some conclusions on skill development in a small European state at the political, economic, and cultural crossroads of two larger ones, namely France and Germany.

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- 10 A possible reason for this is that due to the country's exceptionally strong economic performance, some of the structural problems in Luxembourg's VET system received very little attention until recent years (see Paul Milmeister & Helmut Willems, "Hilfen für gering qualifizierte Jugendliche zwischen Schule und Berufswelt in Luxemburg", in: *Unterstützungsangebote für benachteiligte Jugendliche zwischen Schule und Beruf. Expertisen aus der Schweiz, Deutschland, Luxemburg*, ed. by Paul Milmeister & Helmut Willems (Luxembourg: Universität Luxemburg, 2008), pp. 153–205, in particular p. 202.
- 11 The interviews were conducted with experts or key stakeholders in the context of Luxembourg's vocational training system. All interviews took place in Luxembourg. Interview LU1: 9 May 2014; Interview LU2: 2 June 2014; Interview LU3: 11 June 2014.
- 12 Justin J. W. Powell, Nadine Bernhard & Lukas Graf, "The Emerging European Model in Skill Formation: Comparing Higher Education and Vocational Training in the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes", in: *Sociology of Education* 85 (2012) 3, pp. 240–258.

Vocational Training in Luxembourg: An Introduction

Forms of Training and Participation Rates

Like many other countries, Luxembourg has a binary or two-tracked system at the secondary level, which consists of two areas that are institutionally separate in many respects: the university-oriented general secondary schools (*secondaire générale*) and the more practically VET-oriented schools (*secondaire technique*). In the school year 2012/13, 12,958 students were enrolled in the more prestigious *secondaire générale* (33 percent) and 26,627 were enrolled in a *secondaire technique* (67 percent).¹³ 80 percent of the students at the more prestigious classical secondary school are of Luxembourgish origin and only 20 percent foreign-born, while in the less prestigious technical secondary school foreign-born students make up almost 50 percent of an age cohort.¹⁴ Accordingly, the social, cultural and political relevance of VET is secondary, somewhere between the relevance in France (low) and in Germany (high).

Table 4 illustrates a differentiation in the *secondaire technique* area at upper secondary level. In addition to the *régime technique*, which provides direct access to higher education via the *Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques*, it is important to note the structural division into the *formation professionnelle initiale* and *formation professionnelle de base*. The *formation professionnelle initiale* is in turn divided into two, namely the 4-year *Diplôme de technicien* (DT) and the 3-year *Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle* (DAP). The *formation professionnelle de base*, on the other hand, leads to the *Certificat de capacité professionnelle* (CCP). As Table 4 shows, there is also a difference between the *régime de la formation technicien* and the *régime profesonelle*, with the former including the DT and the latter the DAP and the CCP.

13 MEN, *Les Chiffres Clés de l'Éducation Nationale 2012–2013* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (MEN), 2014).

14 MEN, "Band 1: Sonderausgabe der Chiffres Clés de l'Éducation Nationale 2013/2014", in *Bildungsbericht Luxemburg 2015* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (MEN), Service des Statistiques et Analyses & Université du Luxembourg, Faculté des Lettres, des Sciences Humaines, des Arts et des Sciences de l'Éducation, 2015).

Table 4: VET Programmes in Luxembourg at the Upper Secondary Level (*Secondaire Technique*)¹⁵⁺¹⁶

		Formation professionnelle initiale		Formation professionnelle de base
Régime	<i>Régime technique</i>	<i>Régime de la formation technicien</i>	<i>Régime professionnel</i>	
Qualification	<i>Diplôme de fin d'études secondaire techniques</i>	<i>Diplôme de technicien (DT)</i>	<i>Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle (DAP)</i>	<i>Certificat de capacité professionnelle (CCP)</i>
School level [year]	10–13[4]; or 10–14 [5] for health & social work	10–13 [4];	10–12 [3]	10–12 [3]
Access to tertiary level (e.g. university)	Direct access	Via additional preparatory modules	Via additional preparatory modules	Indirect, by changing to DAP
Access to master craftsman training	Via one year of professional experience	Via one year of professional experience	Via one year of professional experience	Indirect, by changing to DAP

There are different opinions about whether the *régime technique* with the *Diplôme de fin d'études secondaire techniques* should be thought of as part of the vocational or the general secondary education system. The *régime technique* is a form of training involving full-time schooling with internships and concluding with the award of the *Diplôme de fin d'études secondaire techniques*, which is formally equivalent to the *Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires* awarded via university-oriented general secondary schools (*secondaire générale*); both certificates offer access to university. If the *régime technique* is therefore categorised as providing general education with a focus on natural and human sciences, the proportion of Luxembourg's adolescents who take part in vocational training is about 40 percent of a cohort.¹⁷ The 'remaining' VET system then consists, first, of the *régime de la formation*

15 Own depiction, inspired by MEN, "Les Chiffres Clés", op. cit. (note 338).

16 CEDEFOP, *Spotlight on VET Luxembourg 2012/13* (Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), 2013).

17 See III. to VIII. in Table 4.

technicien and the associated DT, a predominantly full-time schooling type (with internships) that encompasses about 14 percent of a cohort. Second, there is also a type of dual apprenticeship, the *régime professionnel*, which is based on two places of learning, the *Lycée* and the *entreprise*. Hence, the DAP is offered either as a dual apprenticeship or within a full-time schooling depending on the training occupation. By contrast, the CCP is only offered as part of a dual programme. The CCP is aimed at all those who did not get access to the DAP or the DT. It began as a form of training for young people with learning difficulties. It would be interesting to examine to what extent the CCP is associated with stigma effects and, thus, disadvantages during individuals' subsequent search for employment. Table 5 lists the various qualifications for the 2012–2013 school year and indicates the numbers of people taking each qualification.

Table 5: Qualifications at Secondary Level, 2012–2013 School Year¹⁸

	Qualification	Absolute	Relative	Main format
I.	<i>Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires</i>	1486	36.6%	Full-time school
II.	<i>Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques</i>	934	23.0%	Full-time schooling (with internships)
III.	<i>Diplôme de technicien (DT)</i>	576	14.2%	Mainly full-time
IV.	<i>Certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle (CATP)*</i>	861	21.2%	Dual or full-time school
V.	<i>Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle (DAP)*</i>	103	2.5%	Dual or full-time school
VI.	<i>Certificat de capacité manuelle (CCM)**</i>	64	1.6%	Dual
VII.	<i>Certificat de capacité professionnelle (CCP)**</i>	29	0.7%	Dual
VIII.	<i>Certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle (CATP)**</i>	4	0.1%	Dual
	Total	4057	100%	

18 Own depiction based on MEN, own percentage calculations. MEN, "Les Chiffres Clés", op. cit. (note 338), in particular pp. 36 and 53. Since the school year 2010–2011, the CATP has been successively replaced by the DAP. The CCM and the CITP are being successively replaced by the CCP since the school year 2010–2011.

The Political and Administrative Governance of VET

The drafting of bills for vocational training is the task of the *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse*, which has general responsibility for financing the school-based portion of vocational training. In Luxembourg's education system, in addition to the tasks for which the national education ministry is responsible, there are some issues regulated at the local level.¹⁹ However, this does not mean that Luxembourg has a kind of educational federalism. The state covers the employer's share of social costs for apprentices and additionally reimburses a portion of salary costs for apprentices educated in the dual system (DAP: 27 percent; CCP: 40 percent),²⁰ which is the point where the cooperative approach to governing Luxembourg's vocational training system by the government, social partners, and economic interest groups becomes particularly evident.²¹ The latter groups are organized in the different *Chambres*, the employers' chambers (Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Crafts and Chamber of Agriculture) as well as the Chamber of Workers. These chambers contribute their part to designing the various training programmes.²² The VET reform of 2008 further strengthened the influence of the chambers.²³ The chambers are hence involved in the relevant VET governance processes. They are regularly consulted on matters of vocational training and they are, for example, represented in the *Conseil économique et social du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* and the *Comité de coordination tripartite*.²⁴

19 J. Pull, "Luxembourg", in: *Die Schulsysteme Europas*, ed. by Hans Döbert, Wolfgang Hörner, Botho von Kopp & Wolfgang Mitter (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider, 2004), pp. 289–301.

20 Marion Biré & Claude Cardoso, *Luxembourg. VET in Europe – Country Report* (Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and ReferNet, 2012), in particular p. 38.

21 Siggy Koenig, "Luxembourg", in: *The Education Systems of Europe*, ed. by Wolfgang Hörner, Hans Döbert & Botho von Kopp (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. 470–485, in particular p. 476.

22 Milmeister & Willems, "Hilfen für gering qualifizierte Jugendliche", op. cit. (note 334), in particular pp. 184–185.

23 Biré & Cardoso, "Luxembourg", op. cit. (note 344), in particular p. 11.

24 CEDEFOP, "Spotlight on VET Luxembourg 2012/13", op. cit. (note 340).

The VET Reform of 2008

In Luxembourg, the political sphere has high standards regarding the quality of vocational training for the graduates of the less prestigious technical track of secondary education with its disproportionate part of immigrants: “Vocational training is not the last choice if nothing else works out. It is simply too demanding.”²⁵ This statement reflects the orientation towards the value of practice-oriented education in Germany and other countries with dual training systems.²⁶ However, there are differing opinions among the Luxembourgish actors regarding the worth and perceived value of the different training programmes in the *secondaire technique*. In general, the requirements for most courses at upper secondary level are high to very high, which should prevent a “*Nivellement vers le bas*” (race to the bottom), but which in many cases leads to a higher dropout rate and prolonged training periods. The VET reform from 2008 aimed to counteract this problem without lowering the high standards for VET. Interestingly, the drivers of these reforms are rather similar to those in other countries with dual VET systems.²⁷ However, one key difference is that Luxembourg relies heavily on the expertise of VET experts from Germany but also Switzerland in developing these VET reforms,²⁸ which do not enjoy the same social, cultural, and political relevance in Luxembourg across all strata of youth.

The three key elements of the 2008 reform of vocational training were (i) a competence- and work-process-oriented approach (rather than one based on subjects and disciplines), (ii) a modular design based on building blocks and partial qualifications, and (iii) the systematic connection of company and school-based learning phases – and generally the increased integration of required operational knowledge in the training regulations.²⁹ The reform applies to training

25 D’Lëtzebuurger Land, “Ich will den Bildungskrieg beenden” (Interview with Claude Meisch, 29 April 2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.gouvernement.lu/3680051/25-meisch-land?context=3422896>.

26 Karl Ulrich Mayer & Heike Solga (eds.), *Skill Formation: Interdisciplinary and Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

27 Lukas Graf, *The Hybridization of Vocational Training and Higher Education in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland* (Opladen: Budrich, 2013).

28 Dieter Euler & Irmgard Frank, “Mutig oder übermutig? – Modularisierung und Kompetenzorientierung als Eckpunkte der Berufsausbildungsreform in Luxemburg”, in: *Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis* 5 (2011), pp. 55–58.

29 MEN, *Recueil des Outils pour la R à l’Usage des Enseignants et des Formateurs en Entreprise* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (MEN), 2011).

programmes for CCP, DAP, and DT, and it was originally planned to implement the changes successively in the period from 2010 to 2015.³⁰ But, in practice, some problems have emerged that need to be corrected by adjusting the reform concept; these also relate to the efficient organisation of the modularised structure.³¹ Currently it can be stated that the proportions of students who drop out of training (about 30 percent) or do not complete it in the standard time (also about 30 percent) have remained almost unchanged despite the reform,³² which is the reason of the need for a reform of the reform. The ministry has taken up this challenge. Hence, for example, the evaluation criteria were lowered to some extent to make it easier to pass the modules. Even before the reform, students had the option to make up for modules in a fourth training year.³³ The theme of VET reform will be taken up again in the final section.

International Elements and Influences in VET: Challenges and Opportunities

The Emergence of the Luxembourg Vocational Training System at the Interface Between the German and French Models

The emergence of Luxembourg's vocational training system goes back to two different developments: In the craft field, the vocational training system originated from the guilds, while it emerged in the industrial technical field in the context of industrialization since the early 20th century.³⁴ The first Apprentices Act was proposed in 1927 by the Chamber of Crafts and was adopted by parliament in 1929. The system was reformed directly after World War II, and attending a vocational school was made a compulsory part of the process. Another important step was the Act on Technical Secondary Education from 1979, which for the first time unified the various existing forms of training within one system. This history, the presence of the dual training principle, and also the important role

30 MEN, "Les Chiffres Clés", op. cit. (note 338); Euler & Frank, "Mutig oder übermutig?", op. cit. (note 352).

31 Daniel Tröhler, *NESET Country Report: Luxembourg* (Cardiff, Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training (NESET), 2014), particularly p. 6; SEW, *Dossier Formation Professionnelle* (Luxembourg, Syndikat Erziehung und Wissenschaft (SEW), 2014).

32 MEN, "Les Chiffres Clés", op. cit. (note 338), in particular p. 118–120.

33 D'Lëtzebuurger Land, "Ich will den Bildungskrieg beenden", op. cit. (note 349).

34 W. Huck, "Luxemburg", in: *Internationales Handbuch der Berufsbildung*, ed. by Uwe Lauterbach (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1995), pp. 1–52, in particular p. 28.

the various chambers play in the political and administrative governance of the apprenticeship system suggest similarities to developments in German-speaking countries,³⁵ as the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) has also highlighted.³⁶

However, there are some elements of Luxembourg's VET system that are clearly more similar to the French system, particularly given that, in both models, VET programmes are to a significant extent state-organized. In both countries – France and Luxembourg –, the central government exerts a significant influence on educational policy (which is reinforced in Luxembourg by the relative smallness of the country). An expression of this is the fact that since 1994, all newly established secondary schools in Luxembourg are required to offer both the classical upper secondary education as well as the range of vocational training programmes of the *secondaire technique* to mitigate negative effects of social selectivity by spatially merging the different school types.³⁷ The related idea of the “*Lycée* for all” and the relatively high proportion of students who receive school leaving certificates that allow them to attend university (see I. and II. in Table 5) point to parallels with the French educational system. The *Brevet de technicien supérieur* represents another similarity to the French model.³⁸ This model of vocationally-oriented short courses at the tertiary level originated in France.³⁹ The proximity to the French system is also seen in the strong internship orientation of the full-time vocational training programmes (see also discussion in the outlook).

The Problem of Critical Mass: Cross-Border Education as a Solution

The high degree of differentiation of the VET system – in Luxembourg there are training programmes for around 120 occupations – is often talked about as a good way of dealing with the very diverse student body.⁴⁰ Simultaneously, this strong differentiation can be considered problematic, not least because of the small

35 Marius R. Busemeyer and Christine Trampusch (eds.), *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

36 CEDEFOP, *Spotlight on VET Luxembourg 2012/13*, op. cit. (note 340), in particular p. 4.

37 Koenig, “Luxembourg”, op. cit. (note 345), in particular p. 480.

38 Interview LU 3 (11 June 2014).

39 Justin J. W. Powell, Lukas Graf, Nadine Bernhard, Laurence Coutrot & Annick Kieffer, “The Shifting Relationship between Vocational and Higher Education in France and Germany: Towards Convergence?”, in: *European Journal of Education* 47 (2012) 3, pp. 405–423.

40 Koenig, “Luxembourg”, op. cit. (note 345); D’Lëtzebuenger Land, “Ich will den Bildungskrieg beenden”, op. cit. (note 349).

number of students and the associated difficulties in obtaining adequate class sizes for specialized training programmes – a challenge that Luxembourg shares with other small nations. In addition, there have also been discussions on whether the high number of specific job designations should be bundled together into broader occupational profiles in light of the increasing flexibility of the labor market and the resulting frequent job changes.⁴¹ The smallness of the country also requires a close cooperation with the neighboring countries and regions, since due to the small number of students, not all highly specialized occupations can be taught in Luxembourg.⁴² In line with this, there are a variety of cross-border dual apprenticeships, in which the theory-based part of the programme is carried out in neighboring countries and the company-based part in Luxembourg.⁴³ Accordingly, there is a close exchange between the responsible authorities in Luxembourg (in particular between employers' chambers and the Ministry of Education) and the relevant institutions in neighboring countries.⁴⁴ This cross-border cooperation can be considered an example of the more general inclination and capacity of small states to rely on regional networks in their effort to find solutions to policy challenges.⁴⁵

Pupils from Immigrant Backgrounds and the German-Speaking Vocational Education System

Looking at the relatively early separation between technical and classical academic education at the age of 12, the Luxembourgish education system can be described as highly selective.⁴⁶ This early selectivity is particularly problematic in the context of Luxembourg's diverse social structure, since it offers children from an immigrant background fewer opportunities to adapt to the very specific and multilingual education system. Hence, the proportion of learners without Luxembourgish citizenship is much higher in the *secondaire technique* (44.2 percent) than in the *secondaire générale* (20.0 percent).⁴⁷ A specific example of this is the proportion of students with Portuguese citizenship: it is about 28 percent in the *secondaire technique*, but only 7 percent in the *secondaire générale*. By contrast, young people with Luxembourgish citizenship make up 80

41 Ibid.

42 Koenig, "Luxembourg", op. cit. (note 345), in particular pp. 471 and 481; Biré & Cardoso, "Luxembourg", op. cit. (note 344), in particular p. 9.

43 Interview LU2 (2 June 2014); Interview LU3 (11 June 2014).

44 Huck, "Luxembourg", op. cit. (note 358), in particular p. 50.

45 Jules, "Re-Reading the Anamorphosis", op. cit. (note 26), in particular p. 8.

46 Koenig, "Luxembourg", op. cit. (note 345), in particular p. 474.

47 MEN, "Les Chiffres Clés", op. cit. (note 338), in particular p. 30.

percent of students in the *secondaire general* and 55.8 percent of students in the *secondaire technique*.⁴⁸ An additional barrier is that most programmes in Luxembourg's VET system are taught in German while the majority of socioeconomically less advantaged migrants come from Romance-language-speaking families. This reduces their chances of successfully completing a vocational training programme compared to native Luxembourgish students.⁴⁹ For this reason, students from Romance-language-speaking parental homes sometimes complete training in France or Wallonia (i.e. the French-speaking part of Belgium)⁵⁰ – although the vocational training in these countries focuses more on full-time schooling.

Discussion and Outlook

When considering the specifics of vocational education in Luxembourg, one is almost inevitably struck by the multiple links of the national system to the international context. An example of this is the ongoing ideological influence of the dominant training systems of the neighboring countries – in particular the state-centered model in France and the social partnership model in Germany.⁵¹ We have shown that a certain *bricolage* ('mix-and-match') of different elements and educational ideals can be found in Luxembourg's vocational training system,⁵² which contributes to the strong differentiation in diverse educational paths at the secondary level. Moreover, strong international connections (and dependencies) also emerge as a result of the relatively small number of individuals in the highly-differentiated education system, which means that in Luxembourg some training programmes can only be offered in cooperation with actors and institutions from neighboring countries. At the same time, the very international and heterogeneous student body in Luxembourg's multilingual education system is an enormous challenge, especially in the field of vocational training, absorbing a large percentage of foremost socially underprivileged, often immigrant youth. So, for Luxembourg's vocational training system, a worthy aspiration may be to ensure that the apprenticeship system neither becomes a dead end for academically

48 MEN, "Les Chiffres Clés", op. cit. (note 338), in particular p. 16.

49 Interview LU3 (11 June 2014).

50 Milmeister & Willems, "Hilfen für gering qualifizierte Jugendliche", op. cit. (note 334), in particular p. 181.

51 Wolf-Dietrich Greinert. *Mass Vocational Education and Training in Europe* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005) (=CEDEFOP Panorama Series, 118).

52 Interview LU2 (2 June 2014), Interview LU3 (11 June 2014).

talented but socially and/or linguistically disadvantaged students with an immigrant background nor an educational option that is unattractive for practically-gifted and -talented Luxembourgers for reasons of prestige. This in turn would require a policy-boosted change in the cultural self-perception of a more and a less prestigious secondary school track, a closer and more efficient collaboration between the partners in VET, a preferential treatment of companies offering vocational training in governmental contracts, and the end of the circumstance that the state and the communes offer no vocational apprenticeships at all. Additionally, to develop appropriate solutions in light of these cultural-policy and inequality-related issues, more international comparative research seems essential.

An additional area meriting more in-depth analyses involves assessing the impact of the vocational educational reform of 2008. At present, the reasons for a number of potentially problematic developments in the system are unclear. It should be discussed, for example, whether the move towards modularization has led to an unintended fragmentation of the already small-sized vocational training system, which would go against the occupational principle and the coherence of the occupations in question. In this context, the question also emerges of how the number of occupations and training modules could be adjusted to the context of a small country with a limited number of potential participants. This is also the reason why policy borrowing from larger nations can sometimes turn out to be detrimental, given that smaller nations may lack the critical mass of people to support a highly fragmented system. It should also be discussed whether existing integration projects – in which the connections between the modules are to be established – must be further developed.⁵³ Another relevant factor may be the ‘evaluation compulsion’ or ‘evaluation inflation’ promoted by international organizations such as the OECD.⁵⁴ In this context, the sharp focus on controlling outputs is a point to be criticized, as under certain circumstances, it can lead to an underestimation of the importance of instruments of input control, such as curriculum development or teacher training.⁵⁵ Problem-oriented basic research would be able to investigate such factors in detail and would be able to formulate concrete recommendations for action.

53 SEW, *Dossier Formation Professionnelle* (Luxembourg, Syndikat Erziehung und Wissenschaft (SEW), 2014).

54 Euler & Frank, “Mutig oder übermutig?”, op. cit. (note 352), in particular p. 58.

55 Daniel Tröhler, *NESET Country Report: Luxembourg* (Cardiff: Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training (NESET), 2014), in particular p. 11.

However, the key here is that such research should bear in mind the specifics of Luxembourg's small size and its location between the larger European nations of France and Germany – which has resulted in a *bricolage* of elements of the educational models from both countries. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the mechanisms of educational policy diffusion in detail,⁵⁶ more generally, such borrowing is considered to be legitimate due to the geographic, socioeconomic, and historical proximity of Luxembourg to France and Germany as two of the most influential educational models in continental Western Europe.⁵⁷ This, in conjunction with Luxembourg's small size, means that the country is unlikely to develop an 'autonomous' national educational model – but is more likely to keep drawing extensively on external reference frames, resulting in a range of hybrid characteristics within its skill formation system. As such, research into small states seems to be naturally drawn to conceptualizations that go beyond the study of education within the still common "methodological nationalism."⁵⁸ This then draws attention to the complex institutional configuration of education in small states and calls for a critical examination of the patterns of interaction between such different institutional components.

At a conceptual level, the case of Luxembourg, located at the nexus of the French and the German models, points to the tendency of small states to orient themselves towards the educational systems of dominant nations within their vicinity (if available). At the same time, it is important to note that the institutional elements that are mixed may not always be complementary – especially in the case of small states that offer fewer regional niches for policy innovation. On a more positive note, small states are in a position to compensate their small size through direct cooperation with neighboring countries – in this way enlarging the scope and capacities of their educational system far beyond their national borders.

56 Frank Dobbin, Beth Simmons & Geoffrey Garrett, "The Global Diffusion of Public Policies: Social Construction, Coercion, Competition, or Learning?", in: *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007), pp. 449–472; Anna Rohstock & Thomas Lenz, "A National Path to Internationalization: Educational Reforms in Luxembourg, 1945–70", in: *History of Schooling: Politics and Local Practice*, ed. by Carla Aubry & Johannes Westberg (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 108–126; Matias Gardin, "Fortschritt und Verantwortung, Education as a Rallying Cry in Luxembourg's General Elections of 1974", in: *History of Education* 45 (2015) 5, pp. 638–652.

57 Greinert, "Mass Vocational Education", op. cit. (note 375); Powell, Bernhard & Graf, "The Emerging European Model", op. cit. (note 336).

58 Robertson & Dale, "Researching Education", op. cit. (note 66).

This, in turn, can be seen as a case of “educational geostrategic leveraging”⁵⁹ or, in this context, small states’ strategic capacity to act rather big in certain areas. In Luxembourg, a key instance of this is cross-border educational provision. This cross-border provision may also cater to specific migrant groups within the country who sometimes find it easier to advance their educational careers in those neighboring regions in which they face fewer cultural and language barriers. In sum, the specific relationship of a small state to the greater region in which it is embedded is both a potential problem – for instance, when incompatible institutional elements get mixed within a narrow policy space – and an opportunity – when this situation can be exploited to draw on the comparative strength of the nearby educational models and, thus, helps to create institutional innovation.

59 Tavis Derick Jules & Patrick Ressler, “What Can be Learned from Small (and Micro) States? ‘Educational Geostrategic Leveraging’ and the Mechanisms of the Fourth Industrial Revolution – The Internet of Things and Disruptive Innovation”, in: *Island Studies Indian Ocean* 2016 (2016), pp. 27–35.

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'Intelligent Society and Economy'

Edited by Tavis D. Jules & Patrick Ressler

 PETER LANG
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Statue surmounting Frankfurt main station (1883-1888)

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