

About the Decline of Repair of Consumer Objects

Stefan Krebs

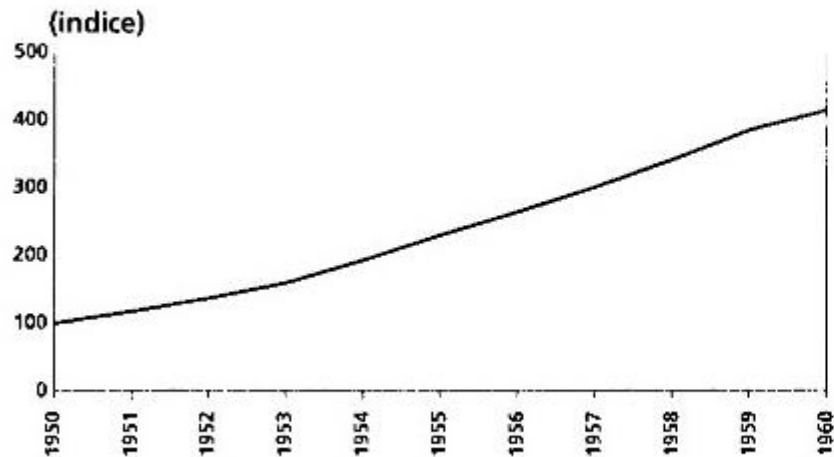


- Thesis of „Decline of Repair“ since the 1970s
 - Rise of Western throwaway societies caused a decline of repair of private consumer goods
 - Reversal of the ratio of material and personnel costs in the transition from scarcity to affluent society



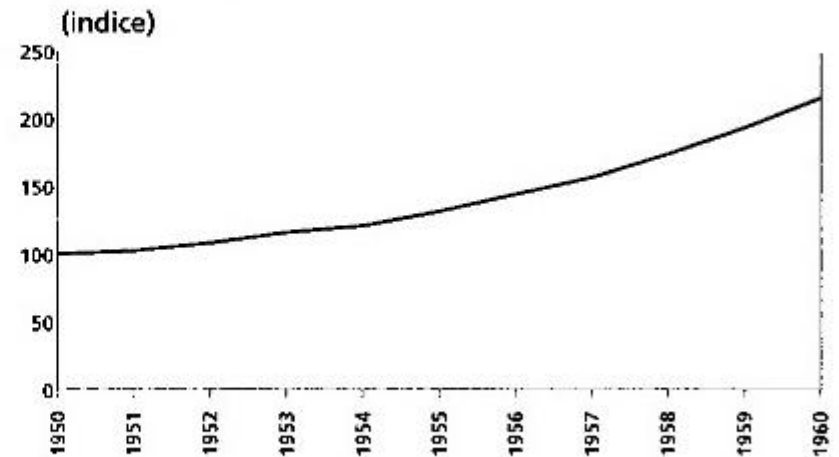
Pour 1 000 habitants	Voit. automobiles (1972)	Postes de radio (1970)	Postes de télévision (1971)	Téléphones (1971)
Luxembourg	289	463	207	324
Allemagne (RFA)	253	318	272	226
Belgique	223	350	209	210
France	256	316	214	171

Evolution du nombre de voitures particulières et commerciales 1950-1960



(Source: *Statistiques historiques 1839-1989*, op. cit., série brute, p. 305)

Evolution du nombre des raccordements téléphoniques 1950-1960



(Source: *Statistiques historiques 1839-1989*, op. cit., p. 320)

Luxembourg as advanced consumer society



Statec studies for 1971-1979 and 1977-1985

	1972	1975	1982	1986
Repair businesses	244	232	190	203
thereof cobblers	76	64	45	44
thereof carages	129	133	118	120
Repairers	634	634	632	-



Deindustrialisation and structural change

- Steel crisis 1975 and the rise of the service industry
- Less unemployment and lower public dept
- Consumer spending on transport and communications grew faster than spending on food, clothing and shoes, and nominal incomes



Family budgets and repair spendings

Repair expenditure (in %)	1953/54	1963/64	1977	1986/87
for shoes and textiles	0,83	0,61	0,06	0,31
for means of transportation	0,22	0,69	0,75	1,44
Overall	1,67	2,03	1,33	2,18



Summary

- 1) Luxembourg was one of the most advanced consumer societies in the 1970s and 80s
- 2) The repair sector did not decline but rather stagnated (taking the reclassified garages into account the sector even expanded)
- 3) Luxembourg families spent more on repairs in 1987 than in the three decades before



Conclusion

- Repair paradox: in the 1980s Luxembourgers spent more on repair than before but they had less consumer items repaired
- Thus, there was no decline of repair but a profound structural change in repairing

