

ARTICLE  
SPECIAL ISSUE

*Borders in Globalization Review*  
Volume 6, Issue 1 (Fall & Winter 2024): 94–108  
<https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr61202421673>

# Border Temporalities of Early Childhood: Diverse Education and Care Arrangements of Cross-Border Commuting Parents

Sabine Bollig \*  
Selina Behnke \*\*

*Based on the distinction between times in childhood and times of childhood, this paper examines the border temporalities of early childhood education and care in the cross-border Greater Region, SaarLorLux. Using a practice-analytical approach to times and borders, and on the basis of qualitative interviews, two types of time-related practices are identified that parents with daily work commutes from Germany to Luxembourg carry out to set up and maintain their children's education and care arrangements (ECAs): rhythmizing and navigating. How borders and childhood times interweave in these activities is presented along three contrastive patterns of ECAs, which demonstrate the different 'border experiences' that cross-border commuting parents make during their use of public services of early education and care (ECEC) in the Greater Region. This not only makes the field of ECEC its own arena of border (dis)integration, but also points to early childhood-specific border temporalities. Building on this, the findings point to the need to expand current inequality-oriented perspectives on border regions and border mobility to include the aspect of childhood and care-related border temporalities.*

Keywords: borders; time; border temporalities; childhood; early childhood education and care; childcare; cross-border mobility; borderlands.

## Introduction: Times *of* and *in* Childhood, Borders, and Childcare

In this article, we examine the relationship between time and borders through the prism of childhood, specifically to the public and private organization of childcare. In doing so, we utilize James' and Prout's (1997) notion that time becomes relevant as a feature of childhood in two ways: first, as a "time of childhood", which refers to the social construction of childhood as a temporal phenomenon per se, expressed through its future-relatedness ("becoming adults") and a respective dense,

age-related chronologization; second, temporality becomes relevant as "time in childhood", according to which "time is used effectively to produce, control and order children's everyday lives" (ibid., 231), subjecting not only the everyday lives of children to the rhythms of the public institutions dedicated to them, but also those of their families. Both references to time are of interest when thinking about border temporalities, as each links childhood to state and nation.

\* **Sabine Bollig**, Dr. phil., Professor of Social Pedagogy, Department for Education, Faculty I, Trier University, Germany.  
Email: [bolligs@uni-trier.de](mailto:bolligs@uni-trier.de) Department website: [Dr. Sabine Bollig](http://www.uni-trier.de/~sozped/bollig) Bluesky Social: [@bolligs.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/bolligs.bsky.social)

\*\* **Selina Behnke**, MA, former research associate, Department for Education, Faculty I, Trier University, Germany.  
Email: [behnke-selina@web.de](mailto:behnke-selina@web.de)



Along with their future-relatedness, children have always been of interest to the state when it comes to securing the future of the nation (Millei & Imre 2017; Venken 2023). Recent increased state investments in education and the care of even younger children should therefore also be understood as crucial sites for the construction and reproduction of national identities, ideologies, and affiliations (Gilliam & Gulløv 2017). This becomes especially apparent as soon as children and their families cross borders and are confronted with different beliefs, attitudes, and identities according to which childhood and “correct” parenting are embedded in the national welfare state institutions (e.g., Barglowski & Pustulka 2018). In this context, the “time policies” (Hagemann et al. 2011) of the different welfare states are of particular importance, as they interweave public and private child-rearing via the time-related regulation of childcare institutions, school, parental leave, and other reconciliation policies, and thus have a high impact on family care practices and associated norms of parenting and gender (Pfau-Effinger 2005).

Research on transnational families (Nyberg et al. 2014), for example, shows how national time policies intertwine with border and migration regimes, influencing transnational family care networks that cross national borders (Kilkey & Merla 2014). That interplay is also crucial for the different “cross-border childcare strategies” (Kusakabe & Pearson 2013) that circularly migrating parents develop, depending on their rhythms of work, childcare, and mobility. Here, as Kusakabe and Pearson (ibid.) show for Burmese migrant workers with young children, the interactions that result from multi-scalar migration regimes, and the differently regulated access to childcare resources at the municipal level, play a particularly important role. Beyond these times *in* childhood embedded into cross-border childcare strategies, Chiu’ and Choi’s (2018) study on the borderlands between China and Hong Kong points out how borders are part of specific times *of* childhood as well. Looking at these borderlands, the authors work out how binational parents on the Chinese mainland seek to shape their children’s “future cultural belonging” (ibid.) by enrolling them in early childhood education and care (ECEC) centres across the border in Hong Kong, which is a strategic use of public childhood institutions in borderlands otherwise best known for older children and cross-border school attendance (e.g., Tessman & Koyama 2019). All these studies therefore indicate that *both* time references—i.e., the times *of* and *in* childhood—are affected by borders, determining also how children are positioned in the mobility and migration patterns of their families, i.e., whether the children cross borders alone or with their parents, commute back and forth, or stay behind permanently.

In the following, we explore these childcare-related border temporalities for a group of border crossers rarely addressed so far: parents who have young children and who commute on a daily basis to work in a neighbouring

country within the European Schengen area. The study area is the so-called Greater Region SaarLorLux, with its sub-regions Luxembourg, Lorraine (France), Wallonie (Belgium), Saarland, and Rhineland-Palatinate (both Germany). With almost 11 million inhabitants, of whom about 250,000 commute daily to work in one of the neighbouring countries, it is one of the European border regions with the highest levels of labour-related cross-border mobility and economic and cultural interdependencies. The central driving force is the economically prosperous Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, almost half of whose workforce is already made up of cross-border commuters (Statistiques 2023), with the proportion of parents, and especially women with young children, constantly increasing (ibid.).

Those parents’ cross-border mobility differs from that of the transnational families and migrant workers addressed above in a couple of ways. First, these cross-border commuter parents only spend their working days in the other country and return to their places of residence every day. Thus, childcare has not necessarily been thought of as a cross-border affair, and we can expect to find complex social, cultural, and temporal constellations that influence whether or not children also commute to attend ECEC services across the border. Second, as a fairly highly integrated European border region (Klatt 2021), the Greater Region is experienced by many of its inhabitants as “borderless”, even though persistent differences in employment opportunities, income levels, and costs of living between states make border commuting—as a “strategic use of the border” (Wille & Nienaber 2020, 10)—attractive in the first place. However, those borders are increasingly diffuse and are embedded in the everyday practices and identities of the inhabitants of the border regions in a variety of ways. Wille and Nienaber (2020) therefore suggest using the term “border experiences” to make visible the heterogeneous material, cultural, linguistic, and affective experiences of those “who ‘inhabit’ the border, meaning those who are entangled in them and who with their (bodily and sensory) experiences or generation of meaning in and through everyday practices, narratives, representations or objects continuously (re-)produce them” (ibid., 10).

It is important to note that this concept of border experiences does not obscure the fact that the power and resource imbalances that constitute social orders are further established, reinforced, or set in motion by these soft borders within the Schengen regime (Gumy et al. 2022). Rather, complex social structures emerge in European border regions, and these also generate and reproduce diversity and inequalities because borders “mean different things to different people and affect different groups differently” (Rumford 2012, 894). As the growing body of research on border temporalities (Little 2015; Hurd et al. 2017) shows, this view on perspectively different borders includes the premise that these become effective not only through

spatial differentiation and relationing, but also through creating certain temporalities and thus enabling a hierarchization of different temporal-spatial orders.

In the following, we ask how these time-related border experiences of commuter parents interweave with the everyday linkages of public and private places that parents assemble and manage on a daily basis to ensure early education and out-of-home care for their children before they reach school age. We call these interlinkages "education and care arrangements" (ECAs) (de Moll & Betz 2014; Bollig 2018). The dynamic processes of setting up and maintaining these ECAs evolve through an interplay of families' different needs, attitudes, and resources, as well as due to national and local regulation of ECEC services and their particular organizational features, e.g., available places, opening times, and enrolment procedures (Bollig et al. 2016; Vandebroek & Lazzari 2014; van Lancker & Ghysel 2016). Therefore, the ECAs already differ significantly in complexity, stability, and quality within national contexts and are heavily impacted by social and regional inequalities (Scholz et al. 2019). Using interview data from parents commuting to work across the Germany-Luxembourg border each day, we explain how cross-border commuting affects these ECAs by analysing their contrastive patterns. As our qualitative data analysis will show, these contrastive ECAs differ substantially in relation to, among other things, the two time-related activities of parents: namely, *rhythmizing* the times *in* and *navigating* the times *of* childhood according to their children's ECAs. In section 2, we present our practice-theoretical understanding of time and borders, and explain how we use it to approach border temporalities as times *of* and *in* childhood. We then (section 3) present the research field and the border spaces of ECEC along the Germany-Luxembourg border within the Greater Region. Section 4 details the methodological approach of our small-scale interview study, the results of which are presented in section 5 via the differentiation of three contrastive ECAs. Finally, we discuss the results with regard to the border temporalities of ECEC in the Greater Region (section 6).

### Rhythmization and Navigation: Childcare-Related Border Temporalities in Practice-Analytical Perspective

In order to examine the distinctive border temporalities in relation to ECEC in the Greater Region, we utilize practice-analytical approaches that generally consider the social as a web of interconnected "nexuses of bodily doing and saying" (Schatzki 2009, 35). Time becomes relevant for these organized nexuses of activities, first, because practices are deeply embedded in time as a socially produced unit of linear sequencing, and this is simply because their actual performance consumes time. In terms of social practices, these nexuses consist

of conventionalized "practice-time profiles" (Shove 2009, 25) that regulate and normalize how much time is available or should be used for particular practices, such as work, commuting, and family life. As practices unfold in the "connective tissues" (ibid.) of larger interlocking practice complexes that allow different practice-time profiles to meet, time as an individual experience, as well as a landscape of temporal orderings, occurs not so much in individual practices, but primarily between them. Blue (2019), in particular, has highlighted the role of temporal entanglements between practices in creating the institutional rhythms that produce social order and inequalities alike (see, for cross-border mobility studies, Kaufmann & Drevon 2022). This becomes effective by placing individuals or whole groups in their everyday activities within or outside these institutional rhythms, such as the "normal" cycles of work and family life that also guide ECEC services, or, to put it another way, the times *in* childhood related to ECEC.

Second, time is also an existential feature of practices, as the three dimensions of temporality—past, present, future—are always simultaneously present in the execution of them. These dimensions form the relative temporal horizon of the respective actions (Schatzki 2009), as the past shapes actions by starting from a certain state; the future shapes actions as they are carried out toward a certain future goal; and the present is the moment in which situated action takes place, and in which future and past come together in action. Temporality thus describes the necessarily actualized histories and futures in social practices, which are tied to spatial paths and arrays. These histories and futures constitute the "timespaces" (Schatzki 2009) of particular human activities that gather in practices, along with discourses, objects, technologies, and architectures, etc. In relation to childcare and child-rearing practices, these time-spaces include material chronological orders and institutional pathways, as well as discursive narratives of the past and future of children. Furthermore, they include the individual "temporal imaginaries" (Broer et al. 2022) and "childhood memories" (Kromidas 2021) that parents activate in navigating their children's past, present, and future within the social practices of public/private childcare and education, or, in other words, the times *of* childhood in ECEC.

The ways in which the above-mentioned time policies of ECEC affect the everyday lives of border-commuting parents thus depend very much on the specific rhythms the parents are subject to in their participation in different practices, e.g., in the daily sequencing of work, mobility, and family times (cf. Drevon et al. 2020), and the respective time horizons they access in and between these practices, for instance, the "specific negotiations of the past and the future" (Broer et al. 2022, 9). With regard to the times *in* and *of* childhood conceived in this practice-analytical way, borders are then experienced essentially as temporal expansions

and compressions as well as gaps, fits/non-fits between different nationally anchored practice complexes, and their respective temporal rhythms and horizons. To explain this, we focus on two activities and the parents’ associated everyday maintenance and decision-making. With the term *rhythmization*, we point to the temporal demands that parents experience through their participation in various practices at the intersection of work, mobility, family life, and childcare, and how parents adapt their daily rhythms to these demands (cf. Devron et al. 2020). These activities include not only everyday synchronizing, clocking, etc., but also the general design of ECAs and the making of decisions related to reconciling the demands of work, mobility, and public and private childcare on an everyday basis. By using the term *navigation*, we draw attention to parents’ processual organization of ECAs in relation to the past, present, and future of their children (Broer et al. 2022), as well as to the particular childhood-related imaginaries and memories (Kromidas 2021) that parents associate with their respective activities and choices. This also includes how they deal with the chronological time profiles of the respective national ECEC services.

### Temporal Border Spaces of Early Childhood Education and Care: Field of Research

Our field of study is the Greater Region, in particular the Germany-Luxembourg borderland, including both of the German states Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland. Work-related cross-border commuting is a widespread and heterogeneous everyday practice there, and according to Wille (2012) the commuters can be broken down into two types. The main type, the “typical cross-border commuter”, centres their life in their country of residence, here Germany, and only commutes to work in the neighbouring country, here Luxembourg. To do so, they use commuter-related infrastructures (e.g., double taxation agreements, cross-border public transport) which help them benefit easily from the high income levels in Luxembourg and the comparatively low cost of living in the surrounding countries. Along this gradient, however, the share of “atypical cross-border commuters” (ibid.) is also steadily increasing. These people moved to Germany from Luxembourg, where they used to live and work, so they now commute across the border to their workplaces. Cross-border residential mobility has in this way become increasingly popular among Luxembourgers, but also among international expatriates who initially migrated to Luxembourg (Boesen 2020). As a result, the proportion of residents who have moved from Luxembourg reaches up to 25 percent in some German villages near the border (ibid.).

Not all young children of these two types of cross-border commuter attend ECEC services in their place of residence. On the contrary, favoured by the increasing harmonization of supply structures and costs between the countries with the EU-wide expansion of ECEC, we have to assume that an increasing number of young children also commute daily to attend ECEC in the neighbouring country. While there is no systematic data on this, in Luxembourg, since 2016, cross-border commuters have been entitled to Luxembourg childcare vouchers (*chèque-services*) which reimburse parents for a large part of the costs of attending a crèche (nursery) or other pre- or after-school services in Luxembourg. In 2020, vouchers for 2,599 children of cross-border commuters were redeemed in Luxembourg childcare institutions (NBL 2021).

Although childcare vouchers have thus themselves become part of the commuting-related infrastructures in the Greater Region, there are still considerable differences between the German and Luxembourgish welfare systems, which, in addition to linguistic and programmatic differences, are particularly evident in the different *national time profiles* of interrelating private and public care for the youngest children. In terms of national reconciliation policies, these differences are noticeable in the different national maternity and parental leave regulations (see Figure 1), which also leads to different standardized ages for entry into childcare facilities. In particular, the shorter parental leave in Luxembourg means that children usually<sup>1</sup> start attending a crèche at the age of four to eight months there, whereas in Germany they only usually do so from the age of one year.

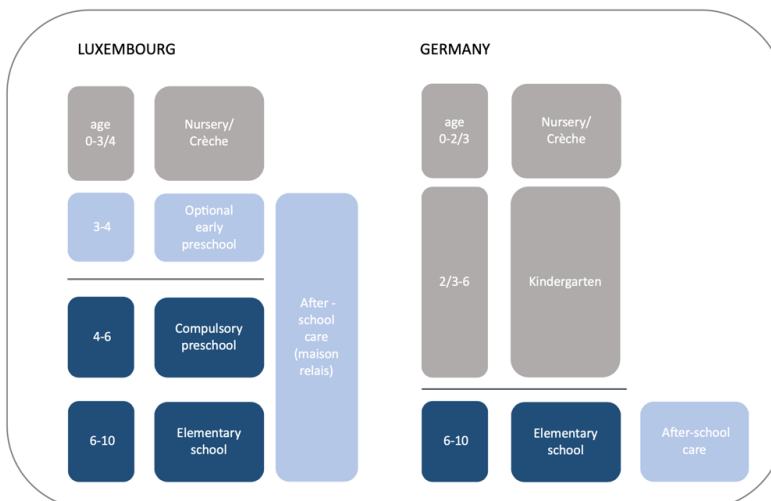
Moreover, as the last row in Figure 1 indicates, the times *in* childhood also differ with regard to the opening times and closing days of the ECEC facilities. With their very flexible offerings, Luxembourg’s crèches are therefore generally more oriented toward the reconciliation problems in the context of the demanding Luxembourg labour market than crèches in the German context.

	LUXEMBOURG	GERMANY (RLP)
Maternity leave	up to 20 weeks	up to 14 weeks
Parental leave	4-6 months (part-time options available), father and/or mother entitled	36 months (part-time options available), father and/or mother entitled
Entitlement to leave days for caring for sick children	12 days at age 0-4, per year/parent 18 days at age 4-13 per year/parent; no adjustments for single parents	15 days per year/parent, 30 days per year for single parents
Enrollment in crèche/nurseries	usually at the age of 4-8 months	usually at the age of 12 months
Opening times of crèche/nurseries	usually 06.30 - 17.30/or 19.00/22.00 no or only very few closing days	usually 07.30 - 17/17.30 approx. 24-30 closing days

Figure 1. Different Work/Care Time Profiles. Source: the authors, based on government data.

However, the different times of childhood embedded in the national ECEC systems are also apparent in the different age chronologies of ECEC provision in general, these also being linked to their positioning in relation to the national school systems (see Figure 2).

These diverse time profiles relate to the different systems of ECEC in the two countries. Luxembourg operates a so-called split system of ECEC, based on a traditional division between more care-oriented facilities (*crèches*, *maisons relais*) on the one hand, and pre-schools (within schools) offered from the age of three—and compulsory from the age of four—on the other. Accordingly, from the age of three, children here often attend both pre-school and after-school care on a daily basis. In contrast, the German ECEC system is a so-called unified system where care and early education is integrated in the same facilities, differentiated only by age. There is the *Krippe* for children under three years and the *Kindergarten* for two- or three- to six-year-olds. These systemic differences result not only in children experiencing a school regime of early education in Luxembourg at a younger age, but also in different, age-dependent time profiles for transitioning to other educational facilities (Bollig et al. 2016; Bollig 2018).



**Figure 2. Different Chronologization of Care/Education Services.** Note that in both countries, family daycare (*Dageselderen*, *Kindertagespflege*) offered by professional childminders is also integrated into the public ECEC system. Source: the authors, based on data from Bollig et al. 2016

### Research Design and Methods of the Pilot Study “Border Spaces of Early Childhood”

In light of these national differences regarding ECEC, we have been conducting an ongoing pilot study titled “Border Spaces of Early Childhood” at the University of Trier since fall 2019. This study explores the field of ECEC in the Greater Region on the basis of secondary data, conversations with informants, and interviews with ECEC providers, heads, and professionals, as well as commuting parents. Within the framework of an affiliated master student research project, from November 2019 to March 2020<sup>2</sup> we conducted 10 guided interviews with parents (two fathers\*, eight mothers\*<sup>3</sup>) who commuted daily to work in Luxembourg and cared for at least one child under the age of six at this time (Bollig et al. 2022).<sup>4</sup> Two families lived in France or Belgium, the other eight in Rhineland-Palatinate (RLP) or Saarland, hence the focus here is on the latter families, living on the German side of the Luxembourg border. We recruited participants through private networks and contacts with professionals. Since our search was also mainly for German- and English-speaking participants, this opportunity sampling led to a comparatively high socio-economic homogeneity of the families in the case set. All interviewees, for instance, had qualified and stable, non-precarious jobs in Luxembourg, with fairly regulated working hours.

As they also all owned the homes they lived in, we can categorize them as belonging to a broad-based middle class, although some of them had already experienced times of less wealth. However, according to other research on the Germany–Luxembourg border area (Boesen 2020) these demographics seem to represent a high proportion of cross-border commuters living on the German side.

We conducted the interviews as semi-guided expert interviews (Döringer 2021). In terms of content, questions were asked about the respective cross-border mobility patterns and activities of the families (Wille 2012); about the parents’ upbringing and their attitudes and beliefs regarding care, embedded in the specific activities involved in searching for, contacting, and selecting ECEC facilities, and the resources they used to do so (social networks, information, finances, etc.) (Mierendorff et al. 2015); as well as about the everyday maintenance of their children’s ECAs in regard to ECEC policies, regional landscapes of ECEC, and organizational features (Bollig et al. 2016). With a view to cross-border experiences and practices, we also asked about differences experienced between the country of work, use of ECEC, and the country of residence, as well as the associated experiences of (un)familiarity which Szytniewski and Spierings (2014) mark as central drivers for differentiated cross-border mobility practices. Qualitative analysis followed the coding procedures of the grounded theory (GT) methodology (Strauß 1987), extended by situational maps (Clarke et al. 2017). With this analysis procedure in mind, the interviews were transcribed in an orthographic and simply smoothed manner (Dresing & Pehl 2018).

In the analytical elaboration of the three patterns of ECAs, we first used GT’s open and axial coding procedure to identify the described practices, strategies, resources,

and trajectories for the everyday maintenance of ECAs, as well as the related parental reasoning patterns, the described border experiences along parental narratives of difference, unfamiliarity, otherness, or alienation, and their verbalised comparisons of the two childcare systems. The codes and categories worked out by that were then transferred in the situational maps we created for each ECA. Those maps helped to visualize and also trace the relations between all the actors/entities (ECEC centers, employers, doctors, vouchers, etc.), resources (networks, finances, languages, etc.), practices (organizing care networks, keeping the child awake in the car, etc.), and discourses (about “career-oriented mothers,” parenting ideals, etc.), which constellate in each ECA. They evolved into arena-related maps, which focused the lines of conflicts that became important for interweaving the situational elements. In that process concepts from borderland research such as “(de-)bordering”, “border surfing”, “regionauts”, or “regionalization” (e.g. Klatt 2021) served as sensitizing concepts in order to subsequently analyse the specific “border experiences” of the individual ECAs in a contrasting manner. In line with the methodology of creating “ideal types” (Stapley et al. 2022) in qualitative research, we then used these case related maps to assemble groups of ECAs that were as homogeneous as possible, although the main aim was to ensure the greatest possible heterogeneity *between* groups, despite the heterogeneity *within* cases and groups that we also found. In the sense of a processual development of the *tertium comparationis* (Scheffer & Niewöhner 2010) we used that contrasting process to develop certain dimensions of comparability and ultimately used the spatial border relations that emerged in the respective ECAs (the local-nationally anchored, the border-related, and the large-regional ECA) to name them. From the outset, however, time-related practical profiles, processes and horizons also proved to be central components of the respective patterns, which we have particularly emphasized in the analysis presented here in accordance with the childhood-related borderline temporalities. Although we have thus followed the methods of differentiating empirical types in qualitative research, we do not claim

to present an empirically based typology as a mode of generalization here (Kluge 2000). The data set would be too small and too homogeneous for that (middle class bias). Rather, the differentiation of different patterns serves primarily to sensitize for contrasts in childcare-related and border experiences, and to explore how different childcare-related border temporalities are related to the social characteristics of families as well (e.g., mother’s commuting, language resources, etc.).

In the following presentation of the analyses, we will therefore follow the three identified patterns, first presenting them with brief tabular information on the families and ECAs grouped in each pattern, then describing the specific character of each ECA pattern and analyzing the associated parental activities of rhythmization and navigation, as well as the border experiences interwoven with them.

### Patterns of Education and Care Arrangements in the German-Luxembourgish borderland

#### *The Local-National Anchored Education and Care Arrangement*

For the ECAs of the first pattern, their anchoring in the local place of residence of the families on one side of the border—here, the German side—is characteristic. Accordingly, the dominant cross-border activity of these families is the work-related commuting of one or both parents, whereas children’s attendance in ECEC services is organized in an “immobile” manner around the place of residence (see Figure 3).

This local anchoring interweaves with biographical continuities in all three families of this pattern. Due to their low cross-border activity beyond work, the parents in this pattern are typical cross-border commuters (Wille 2012) who identify themselves with their “home country”, which is both their place of origin and their place of residence. The central border experience for these parents is therefore the coincidence of the

	Family Air	Family Water	Family Earth
<i>Nuclear family</i>	Father*, 2 Children (4y + 6y)	Mother*+ Father*, 2 Children (1y + 2y)	Mother*+ Father*, 1 Child (1y)
<i>Place of residence</i>	Germany, own house near grandparents	Germany, own house near grandparents	Germany, own house near grandparents
<i>Who commutes?</i>	One parent (father*)	One parent (father*)	Both parents
<i>Commuter type (Wille 2012)</i>	Typical border-crossers	Typical border-crossers	Typical border-crossers
<i>Place of ECEC</i>	Germany	Germany	Germany
<i>Main spoken languages</i>	Family: German Work: English ECEC: German	Family: German Work: English ECEC: German	Family: German Work: English ECEC: German

Figure 3. Set of Families of the ECA Pattern “The Border-Related Education and Care Arrangement”. Source: authors’ own data and illustration.

border between Germany and Luxembourg with the boundaries they set between family and work.

*Father\* Air: So my work life, of course, 100 percent Luxembourg [...].<sup>5</sup> And the rest, leisure time in Germany, of course.*

Accordingly, the experienced rhythmization of border commuting, family life, and using ECEC services for the children here also builds on this strong temporal-spatial separation of family and work. The parents essentially report everyday activities of coordinating, clocking, and synchronizing, and also of decoupling the parents' work and commuting times from those of the children's ECEC attendance. In particular, one single father experiences a rigid daily time regime due to his long commute times, which he handles by working "minus hours" (working fewer hours than contracted) during the day, then compensating for these through home-office activities late in the evening when the children are asleep.

In terms of parents' navigation of their children's ECAs, the local anchoring is also reflected in the self-evidence with which the parents made the decision to use ECEC services near their places of residence. In the case of the Water and Air families, childcare in the country of work was not even briefly considered:

*Interviewer: And for you it was never an option to have your children looked after in Luxembourg somehow?*

*Father\* Water: No, no. No, I would say that our children will go to school in [Germany/city near home] anyway. And that is also a question of the circle of friends and so on. And above all, my wife works in Germany, was now all the time at home, so it would be total nonsense, yes.*

The fact that the child's future as a school pupil in Germany is mentioned here as the first reason, points to how much, from the father's point of view, the children's normal biography is tied to the place of residence and the growing importance of local friendships. Navigating the child's ECAs in this pattern is, thus, characterized by a stable and unchallenged linear mediation of the parents' past and the child's present and future, which is also very much oriented toward the national institutional chronological order on the "family side of the border":

*Father\* Water: We had, we had decided at that time, um, that my wife just definitely stays at home for two years with our first daughter. Because it was important to us that my wife was at home during this important time. Um, and then my first daughter also went to the kindergarten in [place of residence] when she was two years old.*

In this quote, it is the high degree of fit between local/national ECEC offers (kindergarten from ages two to six years) and the actual childcare needs and wishes of

the parents which becomes apparent. This corresponds with the clarity with which even the consideration of cross-border childcare is rejected in the case of two families from this pattern who declared that this "would be total nonsense".

How much this clarity is linked to the employment of the mothers in Germany (and the respective work/care time profiles there) becomes apparent when looking at the third case in this pattern, the Earth family, where the mother is employed in Luxembourg. She is therefore also subject to the associated requirement of coordination between Luxembourgish work/care time profiles and the German ECEC offers. Thus, it very quickly became clear to this mother that the parental leave regulations in Luxembourg—and, as she explicitly points out, the culture of compatibility at her employer there—did not match the offers on the German side. The Earth parents therefore had to make great efforts to find a nursery close to home that would accept their child at the relatively early age of six months. Accordingly, they also briefly considered looking for childcare in Luxembourg. However, there was too much going against this option for them, mainly the long commute in the car, but also the care resources at their place of residence due to the part-time employment (80 percent) of both parents and, most importantly, the involvement of the grandparents in their ECA, "because without them it would be difficult". In addition to these daily routines, the Earth family also took it for granted that their child would start school in Germany. Accordingly, the differentiation between cross-border work and nationally "bounded" family and child life, which is characteristic of this pattern, is also evident in the Earth family.

The strong local anchoring of the ECAs in this pattern also becomes apparent with the fact that the parents did not even have to explicitly identify themselves as a "German family" in our interviews. Rather, this national identification shows up as a high correspondence of "here" and "we" along the claimed linguistic self-evidentnesses, socio-emotional ties, and near-spatial resources. We therefore characterize this pattern as equally locally and nationally anchored, and characterize the border temporalities embedded in this ECA as a stable and linear connection between past, present, and future, with a view to the times of childhood. The times of childhood are thereby moderated, above all, by the central boundary experiences of the temporal-spatial separation of family and work.

### *The Border-Related Education and Care Arrangement*

In contrast to the undisputed anchoring of the children's education and care near the family's place of residence for the first pattern, the parents in the second pattern of ECAs all actively took the opportunity to enrol their

children in ECEC services in their country of work. Cross-border commuting thus became an everyday reality not only for the parents but also for their children, although both sets of parents in this pattern realized over time that their own cross-border mobility patterns did not transfer so easily to their children (see Figure 4).

In both families, the children thus switched from their initial enrolment in crèches in Luxembourg to ECEC services near their place of residence in Germany. In this respect, everyday working and family life, which was initially experienced by the families as equally “borderless”, experienced a generational differentiation in the course of time.

For the active consideration of whether the child should attend a daycare centre in the country of residence or the country of work, the mothers’ occupation and the associated mismatch between parental leave regulations, the compatibility of workplace cultures, and the time and age profiles of the German ECEC have all been crucial:

*Mother\* Green: Yes, um, um, when I was pregnant I looked at the childcare options both in Germany and in Luxembourg [...] and came to the conclusion relatively quickly that if I only had the Luxembourg parental leave available, which is over when the child is nine months old, um, that care in Germany would only be possible with a daycare mum [professional childminder], but I was told relatively quickly that care with the times I had in mind was virtually impossible.*

Thus, both mothers experienced having to choose a crèche in Luxembourg as part of their continued employment, although the wider mobility patterns and resources in the families also favoured these decisions. As one parent in each of the two families had migrated from one country in the Greater Region to another—specifically, both fathers moved from France to Germany—the families not only report an at least bilingual everyday family life, but also very much engage in leisure and everyday activities across borders. Moreover, the fit between the family languages and the language profile in the Luxembourg ECEC services also meant that, from the parents’ point of view, little experience of unfamiliarity was to be expected for the children:

*Mother\* Green: Um, linguistically it was no problem, because he [son] knew French from home as I said, he then [laughs] spoke Luxembourgish with me from time to time, [...] otherwise I don't think he was aware that we were going to another country.*

	Family Red	Family Green
<b>Nuclear family</b>	Mother*+ Father*, 1 Child (2y)	Mother*+ Father*, 1 Child (4y)
<b>Place of residence</b>	Germany, own house	Germany, own house
<b>Who commutes?</b>	Both parents	Both parents
<b>Commuter type (Wille 2012)</b>	Typical (mother*) and Atypical border-crossers (father*)	Typical (mother*) and Atypical border-crossers (father*)
<b>Place of ECEC</b>	Luxembourg then Germany	Luxembourg then Germany
<b>Main spoken languages</b>	Family: German, French Work: English, French ECEC: French then German	Family: German, French Work: English ECEC: French then German

**Figure 4. Set of Families of the ECA Pattern “The Border-Related Education and Care Arrangement”.** Source: authors’ own data and illustration.

Besides this fundamental linguistic mobility resource, the mothers report it as especially attractive that the Luxembourg ECEC is more oriented toward dual working parents, which reflects also in the normative attitudes toward working mothers:

*Mother\* Green: Because clearly the care in Luxembourg is, in my opinion, a lot, by far better [laughs], uh, geared to working parents on both sides, which is still, um, culturally not the case in Germany, um, so there you are actually still being usually still looked at strangely from all sides, um, yes at best, when the mother goes to work full-time.*

However, the explicit comparison between the German and the Luxembourg ECEC services that the mother makes here also points strongly to the optimization calculus that characterizes the cross-border practices of these families in general. In a kind of “border surfing” (Klatt 2021), it seems that a lot of family activities are motivated by comparisons of which side of the border is more worthwhile for shopping, going to the doctor, or doing leisure activities: “you kind of pick the best of everything” (Mother\* Red).

However, over time, the two mothers also experienced significant disadvantages from enrolling their children in Luxembourgish ECEC services. In the case of the Red family, this was mainly due to the fact that grandparents and paediatricians remained located close to the place of residence, which made ad hoc trips between work and home problematic in the often-experienced event of a child’s sudden illness. Furthermore, the mother described the long commuting rides in the car (45 to 120 minutes, depending on traffic) with their child as increasingly exhausting and complicated. As a result, the Red parents decided to get rid of these daily rhythm problems by enrolling their daughter in an ECEC facility near their place of residence when she reached German kindergarten age: “but when she turned two now, I switched to Germany” (Mother\* Red).

In the case of the Green family, on the other hand, it was not the chronological age order of the German ECEC





services that was decisive for the time of the switch, but that of the Luxembourg ones. At the age of three and a half, their son was slowly but surely outgrowing the age-related services of the crèche in Luxembourg, so that Mother\* Green had to decide what came next:

*Mother\* Green: Um, then the school time would have started in Luxembourg, right, so with, with four at the latest he would have had to be enrolled in the Spillschoul (mandatory pre-school), um, and then my German background came to the fore [laughs] and I said, that's too early for me for a school-based education, I don't want that.*

The temporal challenges that both parents describe thus involve not only establishing suitable daily rhythms but also synchronizing the children's ages and stages of development with institutional chronologies. It is interesting how Mother\* Green's statement links the developing situation, of not fitting in, with her own identification as German ("my German background came to the fore").

This shift, from a decidedly "cosmopolitan" self-positioning of the working women to their German affiliation as a mother, is also evident in the case of Mother\* Red. Here, it is primarily the fit of the family's two languages to the Luxembourg ECEC system, initially understood as a resource, that began to be experienced as increasingly "unsuitable":

*Mother\* Red: she (her daughter) actually didn't know any German, because she was here (in Luxembourg) almost the whole day and at home only in the evenings and on weekends, um, she only spoke French at the beginning. And has now only started with the German since she is in Germany in the daycare. And, uh, I had imagined that it would be easier at the beginning.*

Thus, for both mothers, not only did the fit between family/work and ECEC change over time, but also the respective border experiences. In the initially more care-related perspective, the border appeared mainly as a rhythmization requirement and temporal fit of different reconciliation measures that pointed to Luxembourg as the best choice. Over time, however, it transformed into an experience of greater strangeness in pedagogical terms and of school entry appearing on the temporal horizon. In other words, embedded in these dynamic ECAs is a shifting boundary experience along the differentiation of *care* and *education*.

With regard to school in particular, this stronger orientation toward education goes hand in hand with a stronger anchoring at the place of residence. However, early education comes into focus here not only in relation to school, but also in regard to a comprehensive acculturation process:

*Mother\* Red: There is (in the German daycare centre) already more emphasis on it—to give them so the*

*Catholic holidays and traditions and something, um, a bit close. [...] And here, here in Luxembourg, there were somehow, [laughing] I think, 20 children from 18 different nationalities. That was quite a cultural mix.*

The activities of navigating these ECAs are correspondingly characterized by processual reassessments of the needs of parents and children over time, with the original border surfing being replaced by a significant re-anchoring and re-nationalization of the ECAs to the German side. The border between Luxembourg and Germany thus itself becomes temporalized. In contrast to the decision to use a Luxembourg nursery, which was very present-oriented due to its work/care perspective, the further development of the educational perspective here raises primarily future-related questions of cultural belonging. In this context, the mothers no longer identify themselves primarily as working mothers but as Germans, and seem to want to realize this nationalized belonging for their children as well.

However, the extent to which these comparative decisions for the best depend on this age-related temporalization of the border itself is made clear by Mother\* Red, who is pregnant again and is now finding that the best is determined anew with each child since the institutional chronologies also start anew:

*Mother\* Red: Um, yes, the alternative would be to take it back to Luxembourg, but then I would have the same problems as with the other one, so now I am torn.*

In addition to the permanent actualization of welfare-state and generational differences as well as educational and compatibilities-related ones, these ECAs are thus characterized by a constant reference to borders which also mobilizes the times of and in childhood. The rhythmization and navigation activities in these ECAs are embedded in a simultaneous juxtaposition of offers, fits, and affiliations that constellate specifically at particular times. As a result, the ECAs consist of less linear and stable past-present-future designs as different temporal imaginaries unfold in each present, which are very much related to the temporality of the boundaries between care and education itself. Therefore, we refer to these education and care arrangements here as border-related ECAs.

### *The Greater-Regional Education and Care Arrangement*

The third pattern differs from the first two primarily in that these families realize their ECAs in the context of cross-border residential mobility. With regard to the times of childhood, this leads to a particularly open future on the one hand and a future that is stabilized via a strong construction of the past on the other. For this, it doesn't seem to matter whether the children attend ECEC services near their homes or near their

	Family Mars	Family Pluto	Family Jupiter
Nuclear family	Mother*+ Father*, 2 Children (½y and 3y)	Mother*+ Father*, 2 Children (5y + 11y)	Mother*+ Father*, 3 Children (1y, 9y + 11y)
Place of Residence	Germany, own house	Germany, own house	Germany, own house
Who commutes?	Both parents	Both parents	Both parents
Commuter type (Wille 2012)	Typical (mother*) and Atypical border-crossers (father*)	Atypical border-crossers	Atypical border-crossers
Place of ECEC	Luxembourg	Germany	Germany
Main spoken languages	Family: German, Spanish Work: French, Luxembourgish ECEC: French, Luxembourgish	Family: Luxembourgish, German Work: Unknown ECEC: German	Family: Luxembourgish (French, German) Work: German, French ECEC: German

Figure 5. Set of Families of the ECA Pattern “The Greater-Regional Education and Care Arrangement”. Source: authors’ own data and illustration.

parents’ workplaces. Rather, the overarching feature of these ECAs is their intertwining with complex border experiences that can no longer be adequately captured by the binary concepts of immobility/mobility and of being on this side/the other side of the border (see Figure 5).

In the case of the Mars family, which is composed of a German parent and a South American parent, this becomes visible in, for example, a very pragmatic anchoring to their German place of residence. Both moved to the Greater Region because of the job opportunities in Luxembourg, and although the mother\* originates from the region, the issue of where the children will go to school still seems open for the family given the high degree of family mobility the parents report. The choice to use a crèche in Luxembourg was thus made for rather opportunistic reasons, since the crèche is close to the father\*s workplace and fits with the parents’ spoken languages, meaning both can easily exchange information with the childcare professionals. In this respect, it was more the organizational features of the crèche itself, rather than those of the national ECEC system, that were decisive for the selection here.

The situation is somewhat different for the two Luxembourgish families in this pattern. They each represent atypical cross-border commuters who were originally from Luxembourg and then moved to Germany but continue to work in Luxembourg, only now as cross-border commuters. In both families, however, the children attend ECEC services near their place of residence, even though this has been different in the past. In the case of Mother\* Pluto, this was due to the fact that she had already moved back and forth between Luxembourg and Germany twice in the course of relationship changes, and the children initially stayed at the crèche in Luxembourg during the second move. The Jupiter family, on the other hand, first moved from Luxembourg to the German state of Saarland, and then to a village in Rhineland-Palatinate, and in the process “had to leave the nursery (in Saarland) because we are no longer in the same state” (Mother\* Jupiter).

Thus, the central ECEC-related border experience in the Jupiter family does not refer to national borders at all, but to political/administrative borders between German states, which the parents still strategically take into account in navigating their children’s educational journeys:

*Mother\* Jupiter: Uh, yes, so I have the, uh, problem here at the border (between the German states), so above all here in Rhineland-Palatinate, they are so badly positioned (with all-day school) [...], we most likely have to turn it around so that we send the child to Saarland, uh, to elementary school, because here in Rhineland-Palatinate, uh, it is catastrophic.*

Given the length of time the Jupiter family has lived on the German side (10 years), the mother also seems to take it for granted that the children will go to school there. At the same time, it is also very important to her to raise them as Luxembourgers by speaking that language at home and involving them in social and cultural activities with other Luxembourgers. What is remarkable about her statement that “We are a Luxembourgish family” is, however, that she at the same time insists on distinguishing herself from other Luxembourgers—accusing them of having lost their sense of decency and community in the course of the enormous development of prosperity the country has experienced. Family life in Germany therefore seems to enable her to actively distinguish herself from Luxembourg, while at the same time identifying herself as a Luxembourger.

The ways in which these complex cross-border demarcations and identifications are interwoven with the children’s ECAs can be shown particularly well in the example of the Pluto blended family. Here, the first move of the mother to Germany was initially due to financial constraints after she separated from the children’s father:

*Mother\* Pluto: And then I was alone. And I couldn’t afford anything in Luxembourg with the children. I was actually a bit, yes, forced, uh, to go live abroad.*

With this feeling of alienation from her homeland in mind, she now frames her life on the German side much more positively as residential migration to a kind of "better Luxembourg". This is helped above all by the fact that she lives in a municipality near the border where almost "one third of the inhabitants are in fact Luxembourgers", as she explains.

*Mother\* Jupiter: if you speak High German<sup>6</sup> here in the place itself, then they say: "Yes, just speak Luxembourgish." And yes, so you feel very well here as a Luxembourger. You are also integrated here and you can speak your own language much more here, I think, than in Luxembourg. Because there is a lot of French and also many neighbours and you don't even recognize which nationality they are. And then you have to ask, "In which language do you speak?" Or at the children's playground or something. And I think that here, despite all this, you still have the feeling that you are welcome and that you can simply be who you are.*

Part of this comparative identification with the German borderland for Mother\* Jupiter is also a clear rejection of enrolling the children in Luxembourgish ECEC or school. On the one hand, this is part of the family's particular rhythmizing of family life, work, and ECEC, as the lower living costs in Germany allow her to pursue her ideal of part-time employment in order to spend more time with her children "at home". Enrolling the children in Luxembourg ECEC would then be an extra commuting effort: "thus, I don't go there for that". On the other hand, she also shows a clear distrust of the quality of the childcare offerings that have arisen through internationalization in Luxembourg, which she perceives negatively. In the French-speaking private (commercial) crèches in particular, she is certain that standards are not being met:

*Mother\* Jupiter: But I have also looked behind the scenes. And it's out of the question for me to put my child in a daycare centre in Luxembourg. I think the Germans [...] are rather correct.*

Another positive aspect of attending ECEC and school in Germany, for both mothers, is that their children have the opportunity to grow up multilingual to a certain extent, which is still an important identification feature for them as Luxembourgers. However, multilingualism here means having a clear focus on Luxembourgish and German, and only "a bit of French"—because French, in the perception of Mother\* Pluto, dominates the language situation in Luxembourg far more than she would like. In her remembered childhood, this was also different in Luxembourg, which is why, for her, her current place of residence is also positively reminiscent of the place of her own "Luxembourgish childhood": "I grew up there German and Luxembourgish".

For both families, locating their children's ECAs in Germany is thus part of the creation of a Luxembourgish

life, which seems more possible on the German side of the border. Therefore, navigating the times of childhood here does not follow a linear sequencing of past, present, and future. Rather, the present and future of their children are part of a nostalgic reinvention of the past, which enables them to raise their children as Luxembourgers through residential mobility. Boesen (2020) therefore understands this kind of residential migration as a move into a completely new entity: "moving from nation to region" (139). As a cross-border region, this then also consists not simply of territorially separated spaces, but of a "multitude of socio-spatial units" (ibid., 139), in which borders function both as barriers and as bridges, establishing entirely new time-spaces of identification.

As in the case of the Mars family, the mobility patterns of the Pluto and Jupiter families are therefore characterized on the one hand by a downplaying of borders:

*Mother\* Jupiter: That's also a boundary you set in your head. And you have to dissolve that. And, uh, then you can also live much better for yourself.*

On the other hand, they are characterized by their narration of strong, albeit complex, border experiences, which, with regard to their relationship to Luxembourg, are expressed along two oppositional attitudes and desires: "namely that of retreating from the other and that of longing for it" (ibid., 139).

Although this third pattern consists of diversified parental activities and strategies, all the ECAs here have in common that they are no longer positioned in or between nations nor between nationally bounded time references, but in emergent new time-spaces. Along with the mobility practices of the families, the borders themselves also become mobile and allow the families to pursue their own personal projects of belonging and childhood. For the Mars family, the identification as a "mobile family" allows for very pragmatic and temporal anchoring within different parts of the Greater Region, but also for an open future for their children. While in the case of the two Luxembourgish families, their "complex cultural memberships" (Chiu & Choi 2018) are tied to a new socio-spatial unity that emerges from the border and allows an imagined past to be a central time of childhood, linked to their children's ECAs. This is why we characterize all three as greater-regional ECAs. Overall, we see a fairly pragmatic rhythmizing of family life, work, and ECEC, in which the border between Luxembourg and Germany is experienced more as a bridge than as a barrier (by allowing, for instance, the weekly working time to be reduced). However, we see very complex border experiences in the navigational activities of the families, although that does not mean that the ECAs as a daily routine and life-course-oriented arrangement become complex in themselves.

## Conclusion: Border Temporalities of Childcare in the Greater Region

Comparing the patterns of ECAs developed in this article reveals a variety of border experiences (Wille & Nienaber 2020) of families with young children in the Greater Region which contour themselves along the doubly time-related question of where children should attend ECEC services. The border temporalities experienced by commuting parents thus take on a very ECEC-related form:

- In the first pattern, the experienced border coincides with the *time-spatial demarcation between family life and work*, and therefore mostly concerns the adult commuters in the family. The use of public childcare, on the other hand, is part of the more "immobile" private life. Accordingly, the daily rhythmization requirements between work on one side of the border and family life on the other side predominate the experience of border temporalities here. This is in line with the findings of Drevon, Gerber, and Kaufmann (2020), who also point out that, for the Greater Region, everyday commuting is experienced as very stressful in terms of time, especially by parents of young children. However, due to the comparatively strong temporal-spatial division between family life on one side of the border and work life on the other, these ECAs prove to be stable in terms of their own temporal positioning. The parents navigate the past, present, and future of family and childhood here in a relatively unchallenged way, along a linear relationing of the strong temporal-spatial division. Accordingly, the chronological age order of the ECEC offerings here comes into play primarily as a temporal ordering element that does not cause any irritations to the parents' care strategies, but rather creates familiarity and decision-making certainty.
- In the second pattern, the border itself becomes temporalized as it functions as a *life-course-related demarcation line between care and education*. This leads to unstable care and education arrangements for the children of these families, since at the beginning of the use of public childcare, the cross-border rhythmization requirements of working mothers are in the foreground but are replaced over time by stronger requirements of navigating their children's futures. While for the two mothers in this pattern the incompatibility of Luxembourgish and German childcare-related "time policies" (Hagemann et al. 2011) clearly favours the Luxembourg ECEC system at the time of a parent's return to work, they re-evaluate the system differences once again when the educational needs of children become more prominent. Here, the different age orders of the ECEC systems force parents with cross-border ECAs to think about their children's future schooling at a comparatively early stage. With a view to the processes of borderless coalescence of

the population ("borderland integration" Klatt 2021; Gumy et al. 2022) striven for in such border regions, it is particularly interesting that the mothers in this pattern—who both originate from the German side of the border—also perceive that it is a challenge to decide on which side of the border to actively locate their children's cultural affiliation. The generally already very time-related nature of parental child-rearing and care practices (Broer et al. 2022; Kromidas 2021) is thus further dynamized here by the border experiences of dealing with the two time profiles of ECEC, as well as the diverse time policies of work-family reconciliation.

- The third pattern, however, reveals an even more complex temporal structure, as here we see a *transcended border of complex cultural belonging*, which brings the past, present, and future into a new non-linear composition. In the more cosmopolitan orientation of this pattern, this is evident in the very pragmatic use of the different ECEC offerings in the region, which keeps the children's futures open as long as possible, in both spatial and cultural destination. In the rather nostalgic orientation of this pattern in the two Luxembourgish families, the complex border temporalities become apparent as a re-creation of a certain past, which then enables a certain future for the children within the present Greater Region. Even though the parents in this pattern reported fewer demands in navigating ECAs, this is perhaps where we see the most complex navigational activities, which, however, seem much more entangled with complex cultural affiliation and identification practices than with institutional time profiles.

Since these different border experiences of cross-border commuting parents are deeply embedded in the initial establishment and ongoing maintenance of out-of-home education and care for their young children, the ECAs thus prove to be arenas of border region formation in their own right. As such, heterogeneous border regions of early childhood education and care emerge, which take on their specific characteristics in a "connective tissue" (Shove 2009, 19) of different national time policies (compatibility structures, opening hours, and age regulations) and the respective families' commuting and other mobility practices and resources. The perspectivity of the border conceptualized by Rumford (2012) and the associated axes of inequality can therefore already be very clearly observed in our small and comparatively socially homogeneous interview group. According to our data, it seems to make an obvious difference *who* commutes to work—one parent, both, fathers, or mothers—and who among the parents is therefore affected by the time-related gap that opens up between the Luxembourgish family/work time profile and the German ECEC time profile. The migration and mobility history of the families, which and how many languages they speak, how old

the children are, and which social networks the families maintain on which side of the border also seem to play an important role. All this interweaves with the border temporalities of childcare in a differentiating way, as the stabilized, contested, and dynamized times *in* and *of* childhood embedded into the diverse ECAs reveal.

The unequally distributed "cross-border resources"—which Gumy, Drevon, and Kaufmann (2022, n.p.) refer to, when discussing border region populations, as the "social and spatial conditions that lead certain populations to cross borders"—should thus be expanded to include a temporal dimension as well. As our explorative data clearly show, there are not only time pressure issues that cross-border commuters, as well as other long-distance commuters, experience (see Drevon et al. 2020), but also unique border temporalities associated with early childcare and education. The way in which borders intertwine with the temporalities *of* and *in* childhood not only determines whether children in the German-Luxembourgish border region become border crossers themselves, but also changes the cross-border attitudes and practices of parents. This can be observed particularly well in the border-related ECAs, but also in the two Luxembourgish families and their complex practices of bringing up their children in the Greater Region. How exactly such differentiated cross-border temporalities show up in the ECAs of other social groups in the Greater Region, and what other childcare-related cross-border temporalities come to light in a more socially and culturally differentiated interview set, would however have to be shown by further research.

## Endnotes

- 1 "Usually" here refers to common practice known by informant talks and the scarce literature on it (e.g., although there are no age-differentiated data publicly available; in Germany, however, this can be read off statistically: in both Saarland and RLP, children < age 1 may be admitted to ECEC, even if only a few childcare centres explicitly offer this; in RLP, however, only 1.1 percent of children < age 1 attended a so-called Krippe (nursery) in 2021, while in Saarland the figure was 3.6 percent. In RLP, the childcare rate > age 1 rises to 20.6 percent, in Saarland to 34.6 percent (Länderreport Bertelsmann 2022, available at <https://www.laendermonitor.de>).
- 2 The data collection thus took place before the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a temporary closure of the borders between Germany and Luxembourg.
- 3 Following gender-sensitive language that seeks to avoid gender stereotypes, the asterisk (\*) indicates that the terms "mother" and "father" here mark positions and not identities.
- 4 We would like to thank the students of the Master's programme "Organization of the Social" at Trier University for their contributions to this work, especially Carolin Dümmer, Jonas Jutz, and Anne Mootz.

- 5 Square brackets indicate omissions from the original transcript that the authors made for editorial reasons. Round parentheses indicate additions made by the authors for better understanding.
- 6 Luxembourgish and the dialect traditionally spoken in this German region, especially in the villages, are very similar, as both are based on Moselle Franconian. The invitation expressed here to speak Luxembourgish rather than High German is therefore to be understood as an invitation to use the regional language, which is widely understood by both sides, as a common mark of identification.

## Works Cited

- Barglowski, Karolina, and Paula Pustulka. 2018. "Tightening Early Childcare Choices—Gender and Social Class Inequalities Among Polish Mothers in Germany and the UK" *Comparative Migration Studies* 6(1): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0102-6>
- Blue, Stanley. 2019. "Institutional Rhythms: Combining Practice Theory and Rhythmanalysis to Conceptualise Processes of Institutionalisation" *Time & Society* 28(3): 922-950. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17702165>
- Boesen, Elisabeth, and Georg Schnuer (eds.). 2016. *European Borderlands: Living with Barriers and Bridges*. London: Routledge.
- Boesen, Elisabeth. 2020. "Moving from Nation into Region: Experiences and Memories of Cross-border Dwelling in the Greater Region SaarLorLux" in Christian Wille and Birte Nienaber (eds.) *Border Experiences in Europe: Everyday Life—Working Life—Communication—Languages*. Baden-Baden: Nomos. 144-157.
- Bollig, Sabine, Michael-Sebastian Honig, and Sylvia Nienhaus. 2016. *Vielfalt betreuter Kindheiten. Ethnographische Fallstudien zu den Bildungs- und Betreuungsarrangements 2-4 jähriger Kinder*. Belval: Université du Luxembourg. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:12305>
- Bollig, Sabine. 2017. "Approaching the Complex Spatialities of Early Childhood Education and Care Systems from the Position of the Child" *Journal of Pedagogy* 9(1): 155-176. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jped-2018-0008>
- Bollig, Sabine, Selina Behnke, Jonas Jutz, and Anne Mootz. 2022. "Diverse Mobilitäten, multiple Grenzen. Zu den Bildungs- und Betreuungsarrangements grenzpendelnder Familien in der Großregion SaarLorLux" *Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation* 2: 149-165. <https://doi.org/10.3262/zse2202149>
- Broer, Tineke, Martyn Pickersgill, and Sarah Cunningham-Burley. 2022. "Temporal Imaginaries in Accounts of Parenting Practices: Negotiations of Time, Advice, and Expertise" *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 8(1): 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.28968/cftt.v8i1.36212>
- Chiu, Tuen Yi, and Susanne Y. P. Choi. 2018. "Frequent Border-Crossing Children and Cultural Membership" *Population, Space and Place* 25(3): e2153. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2153>
- Clarke, Adele, Carrie Friese, and Rachel Washburn. 2017. *Situational Analysis. Grounded Theory After the Interpretive Turn*. Los Angeles: Sage.

- de Moll, Frederik, and Tanja Betz. 2014. "Inequality in Pre-school Education and Care in Germany: An Analysis by Social Class and Immigrant Status" *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 24(3): 237–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2014.932086>
- Döringer, Stefanie. 2021. "The Problem-Centred Expert Interview. Combining Qualitative Interviewing Approaches for Investigating Implicit Expert Knowledge" *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 24(3): 265–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1766777>
- Dresing, Thorsten, and Thorsten Pehl. 2018. *Praxisbuch Interview, Transkription & Analyse. Anleitungen und Regelsysteme für qualitativ Forschende*. Marburg. Available: [www.audiotranskription.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Praxisbuch\\_08\\_01\\_web.pdf](http://www.audiotranskription.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Praxisbuch_08_01_web.pdf)
- Drevon, Guillaume, Philippe Gerber, and Vincent Kaufmann. 2020. "Dealing with Daily Rhythms: Families' Strategies to Tackle Chronic Time Pressure" *Sustainability* 12: 7193. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177193>
- Gilliam, Laura, and Eva Gulløv. 2017. *Children of the Welfare State. Civilising Practices in Schools, Childcare and Families*. London: Pluto Press.
- Gumy, Alexis, Guillaume Drevon, and Vincent Kaufmann. 2022. "Inequalities in Access to Cross-Border Resources? An Analysis Based on Spatio-Temporal Behaviours in the Cross-Border Area of Greater Geneva" *European Urban and Regional Studies* 29(1): 85–106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09697764211026>
- Hagemann, Karen, Christina Allemann-Ghionda, and Konrad H. Jarausch (eds.). 2011. *Children, Families, and States. Time Policies of Childcare, Preschool, and Primary Education in Europe*. New York: Berghahn.
- Hurd, Madeleine, Donnan Hastings, and Carolin Leutloff-Grandits (eds.). 2017. *Migrating Borders and Moving Times: Temporality and the Crossing of Borders in Europe*. Manchester University Press.
- James, Allison, and Alan Prout. 1997. *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.
- Kaufmann, Vincent, and Guillaume Drevon. 2022. "Introducing Rhythmology in Mobility Studies" *Sustainability* 14(6): 10356. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141610356>
- Kilkey, Majella, and Laura Merla. 2014. "Situating Transnational Families' Care-Giving Arrangements: The Role of Institutional Contexts" *Global Networks* 14(2): 210–247. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12034>
- Klatt, Martin. 2021. "Diesseits und jenseits der Grenze – das Konzept der Grenzregion" in Dominik Gerst, Maria Klessmann, and Hannes Krämer (eds.) *Grenzforschung: Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Studium*. Baden-Baden: Nomos. 143–155.
- Kluge, Susann. 2000. "Empirically Grounded Construction of Types and Typologies in Qualitative Social Research" *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1(1): Art. 14. <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0001145>
- Kromidas, Maria. 2021. "'When I Was a Kid': Childhood Memories, Care Work, and Becoming Mom" *Subjectivity* 14: 36–52. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41286-021-00113-4>
- Kusakabe, Kyoko, and Ruth Pearson. 2013. "Cross-Border Childcare Strategies of Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand" *Gender, Place & Culture* 20(8): 960–978. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.753582>
- LISER—Luxembourg Institute of Socioeconomic Research. 2021. Domestic Employment 1994–2021. [https://www.liser.lu/ise/display\\_indic.cfm?id=601](https://www.liser.lu/ise/display_indic.cfm?id=601)
- Little, Adrian. 2015. "The Complex Temporality of Borders: Contingency and Normativity" *European Journal of Political Theory* 14(4): 429–447. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14748851155848>
- Mierendorff, Johanna, Thilo Ernst, Jens Oliver Krüger, and Anna Roch. 2015. "Auswahl aus Sicht der anwählenden Eltern im Zugang zu Kindertagesbetreuung und Grundschule" *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 61(1): 24–40. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:15263>
- Millei, Zsuzsa, and Rob Imre. 2017. *Childhood and Nation. Interdisciplinary Engagements*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- NBL. 2021. *Nationaler Bildungsbericht Luxemburg 2021*. Edited by LUCET and SCRIPT, Esch-sur-Alzette. <https://bildungsbericht.lu/>
- Nyberg Sørensen, Ninna, and Ida Marie Vammen. 2014. "Who Cares? Transnational Families in Debates on Migration and Development" *Diversities* 16(2): 89–108. Available: [https://newdiversities.mmg.mpg.de/?page\\_id=1742](https://newdiversities.mmg.mpg.de/?page_id=1742)
- Pfau-Effinger, Birgit. 2005. "Welfare State Policies and the Development of Care Arrangements" *European Societies* 7(2): 321–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616690500083592>
- Rumford, Chris. 2012. "Towards a Multiperspectival Study of Borders" *Geopolitics* 17(4): 887–902. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014650045.2012.660584>
- Schatzki, Theodore. 2009. "Timespace and the Organization of Social Life" in Elizabeth Shove, Frank Trentmann, and Richard Wilk (eds.) *Time, Consumption and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge. 35–48.
- Scheffer, Thomas, and Jörg Niewöhner. 2010. "Producing Comparability Ethnographically" *Comparative Sociology* 9(4): 528–536.
- Scholz, Antonia, Katharina Erhard, Sophie Hahn, and Dana Harring. 2019. *Inequalities in Access to Early Childhood Education and Care in Germany. The Equal Access Study*. München: Deutsches Jugendinstitut. Available: <https://www.dji.de/veroeffentlichungen/literatursuche/detailansicht/literatur/27202-die-equal-access-study.html>
- Shove, Elisabeth. 2009. "Everyday Practice and the Production and Consumption of Time" in Elisabeth Shove, Frank Trentmann, and Richard Wilk (eds.) *Time, Consumption and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge. 17–33.
- Spyrou, Spyros, and Miranda Christou (eds.). 2014. *Children and Borders*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stapley, Emily, Sally O'Keeffe, and Nick Midgley. 2022. "Developing Typologies in Qualitative Research: The Use of Ideal-type Analysis" *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221100633>
- Statistiques. 2023 "Regards 06/23—Panorama on the Luxembourgish Working World on the Occasion of May 1st". Available: <https://statistiques.public.lu/en/publications/series/regards/2023/regards-06-23.html>
- Strauss, Anselm L. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Szytniewski, Bianca, and Bas Spierings. 2014. "Encounters with Otherness: Implications of (Un)familiarity for Daily Life in Borderlands" *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 29(3): 339–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.938971>



- Tessman, Darcy, and Jill Koyama. 2019. "Borderland Parentocracy: Mexican Parents and Their Transfronterizo Children" *Journal of Latinos and Education* 18(4): 328-339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2017.1394857>
- Van Lancker, Wim, and Joris Ghysels. 2016. "Explaining Patterns of Inequality in Childcare Service Use Across 31 Developed Economies: A Welfare State Perspective" *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 57(5): 310-337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207152166674>
- Vandenbroeck, Michel, and Arianna Lazzari. 2014. "Accessibility of Early Childhood Education and Care: A State of Affairs" *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 22(3): 327-333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.912895>
- Venken, Machteld. 2023. *Peripheries at the Centre. Borderland Schooling in Interwar Europe*. New York: Berghahn.
- Wille, Christian, and Birte Nienaber (eds.). 2020. *Borders and Border Experiences: Everyday Life—Working Life—Communication—Languages*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Wille, Christian. 2012. *Grenzgänger und Räume der Grenze. Raumkonstruktionen in der Großregion SaarLorLux*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.