

Cross-border Residential Mobility of People Working in Luxembourg: Developments and Impacts

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Introduction

The integration of the European Union and the freedom of movement inside the Schengen area have had deep impacts on mobility in border regions. One region that has been especially influenced is the Greater Region Saar-Lor-Lux. This region comprises Luxembourg, the German federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, Lorraine in France and Wallonia in Belgium. According to the Observatoire Interrégional du Marché de l'emploi, 213,400 people inside this geographical area live and work in two different countries. They constitute one-quarter of the total number of cross-border commuters inside the European Union (UE27) (OIE, 2014).

Luxembourg is the economic driving force of the Greater Region. The attraction of the Luxembourgish labour market not only leads to high commuter rates but also to a steady demographic increase, and therefore also to an increase in real estate prices near the Luxembourgish border. These important cross-border flows create interdependencies between territories. Indeed, the Luxembourgish economy relies on the cross-border workforce that constitutes about 44percent of the salaried population. Half of these cross-border commuters come from France, a quarter from Belgium and the last quarter from Germany. Luxembourg provides employment to many people living on the other side of the border. In the French region of Lorraine, one in ten employees has a job outside France. In northern Lorraine, near the border, this proportion is significantly higher and can be as much as 80percent for some small villages in the immediate vicinity of the border (Belkacem and Pigeron-Piroth, 2015). This phenomenon is structural and has many consequences for territories on both sides of the border with regards to economic development, spatial planning and so on. This specificity of the cross-border situation needs to be taken into account when exploring these territories (Belkacem and Pigeron-Piroth, 2012).

The cross-border residential mobility we are studying in this chapter is linked to Luxembourg and its economic role within the Greater Region. Analyzing residential mobility is complex, because there are many explanatory factors and interactions between them. Factors linked to housing (e.g. size, type, geographical location) can cause the mobility, but so can familial

ones (marriage, divorce, birth of children) as well as the characteristics of employment (type of activity, sector of activity) and its localization (place of work, distance from home to work). Moreover, our case study is specific because of its cross-border focus. The borders create differentials (especially in housing prices and the availability of housing) that can explain the moves to the other side of the national border. Furthermore, residential moves and daily commutes from home to work are interrelated, and moves are often the result of striking a balance between residential mobility and commuting (Pigeron-Piroth, 2008). Each factor influences the others. On the one hand, good connections (by public transport, by motorways etc.) favour longer distance daily journeys from home to work and extend the residential area of the commuters. When anchoring to a place is really important, long commutes can be an alternative to residential moves. Travel time often tends to be taken as the relevant factor rather than geographic distance. On the other hand, the burden of the commutes can cause a residential move closer to the place of work. Our chapter analyzes the developments of the cross-border residential mobility of people working in Luxembourg and living in the neighbouring countries, from quantitative as well as qualitative perspectives.

State of the Art

Nowadays, there is wide spread consensus in the social sciences and humanities that borders should not be understood as given lines on a map but as socially constructed realities. With this, bordering, including de-bordering and re-bordering, has become an important research concept relating to processes along borders that are mainly influenced or heightened by globalization. Having been established in the mid-1990s, this approach is now very well developed in border studies (e.g. Laine, 2012; Newman, 2006; Paasi, 2011; Sendhardt, 2013; Van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer, 2005). Bordering separates and brings together. Borders allow certain expressions of identity and memory to exist while preventing others. They are open to being contested at the level of state and in everyday life (Paasi, 2011, p.62). Thus, borders can disappear and other (new) borders appear, and these 'processes of de-bordering and re-bordering are not exclusionary, but occur simultaneously' (Laine, 2012, p.51).

This conceptual reorientation implies a change in research focus 'shifting from border territories to border behaviour' (Terlouw 2012, p.353). The notion of 'border surfers' describes one such behaviour that is constituent of de-bordering processes. Border surfers are 'very specific groups of transnationals [that] base their way of life on profiting from the different opportunities on both sides of the border through regular border-crossing' (Terlouw, 2012, p.354). As an ideal case study Terlouw (2012) presents cross-border residential mobility which is a research topic that has gained in importance, especially since the 2000s. It

deals particularly with people who move to a neighbouring country while still working in their home country. Christian Wille (2012) calls these people ‘atypical cross-border commuters’ since, unlike typical cross-border commuters, they live abroad and commute to their country of origin for work. Several cross-border areas in Europe have been analyzed with respect to residential mobility: for example, the Belgian-Dutch (e.g. van Houtum and Gielis, 2006), the Danish-Swedish (e.g. Jagodic, 2012), the French-Swiss (e.g. Rérat et al., 2011), the German- Dutch (e.g. Strüver, 2003; van Houtum and Gielis, 2006; Gielis and van Houtum, 2012), the German-Luxembourgish (e.g. Carpentier, 2010; Nienaber and Kriszan, 2013; Wille, Schnuer and Boesen, 2014; Nienaber and Frys, 2015; Roos et al., 2015), the German-Polish (e.g. Jonda, 2009; Balogh, 2013; Nienaber and Kriszan, 2013), the Italian-Slovenian (e.g. Jagodic, 2012) , or the Slovakian-Hungarian border (e.g. Hardi, 2008). This list is not complete and can provide only a small insight into a research topic that is increasing in importance at the same time as the phenomenon of cross-border residential mobility increases in Europe, where the internal borders are losing their barrier effects.

From the booming country of Luxembourg, cross-border mobility takes place into all three neighbouring countries: Belgium, France and Germany – especially into the rural areas. Brosius and Carpentier (2010) analysed settlements in all these three countries and came to the conclusion that municipalities like the German town of Perl, where many Luxembourgers already live, will gain even more Luxembourgers in what they regard as a continuing trend – a so-called chain migration. The main reasons for moving across the border into neighbouring countries are financial (real estate prices constitute the main reason for 50percent of people), family related (family formation, etc.) or cultural (e.g. school system, language skills) (Carpentier, 2010). Housing prices are indeed higher in Luxembourg than in the surrounding border regions of Germany, Belgium and France. Becoming a home-owner is the second most cited main motivation (11 percent). For 10 percent, growth in the size of the household (through marriage, etc.) was the most important factor, and for 7 percent separation was of primary importance, showing that familial reasons are also important in the decision to move. A qualitative research study in 2009/2010 demonstrated that while cheaper living and real estate costs are the main reasons for moving to the neighbouring German municipality of Perl, Luxembourgers who moved to the other side of the national border are still deeply rooted in their home country and in their work in Luxembourg. This attitude works against integration into the new residential town (Frys and Nienaber, 2011).

Methodology

In the following, we will give a more detailed account of the recent development in cross-border mobility from Luxembourg into the neighbouring borderlands. In a first step, large

quantitative datasets are analysed for the purpose of stocktaking, as well as to study the main evolutions and characteristics of cross-border residential mobility. We used data files from the social security system of Luxembourg¹ to identify residential cross-border moves. All the people working in Luxembourg (including the cross-border commuters) who are registered in the Luxembourgish social security system are taken into account. This means that the data presented in this chapter do not count non-working individuals (for example, children or retired persons). Since the individuals included in the sample have moved to or from Luxembourg whilst continuing to work in Luxembourg it can be reasonably assumed that they relocated within commuting distance. The data, therefore, are not concerned with residents who relocated to or from Luxembourg and also changed their country of employment. The variables are socio-demographic (age, nationality, etc.), geographic (place of residence) and economic (sector of activity, etc.).

To analyze the development of the phenomenon of residential mobility around Luxembourg, different longitudinal data files for three-year periods (from 1995 to 2013) were constructed. The first period is 1995-1998 and involves 178,450 people working in Luxembourg in March 1995 *and* in March 1998. The last period is 2010-2013 with 301,450 people. This comparison of six periods allows us to measure the evolution of residential moves for people working in Luxembourg over the last twenty years, in keeping with a previous study we conducted for the period 1995–2005 (Pigeron-Piroth, 2008).

We then focused on another file containing 195,000 people working in Luxembourg in March 2003 *and* in March 2013. For each of them, the place of residence in 2003 as well as the characteristics can be compared to the ones ten years later. People living in Luxembourg in 2003 and living abroad in 2013 were thus analyzed in detail.

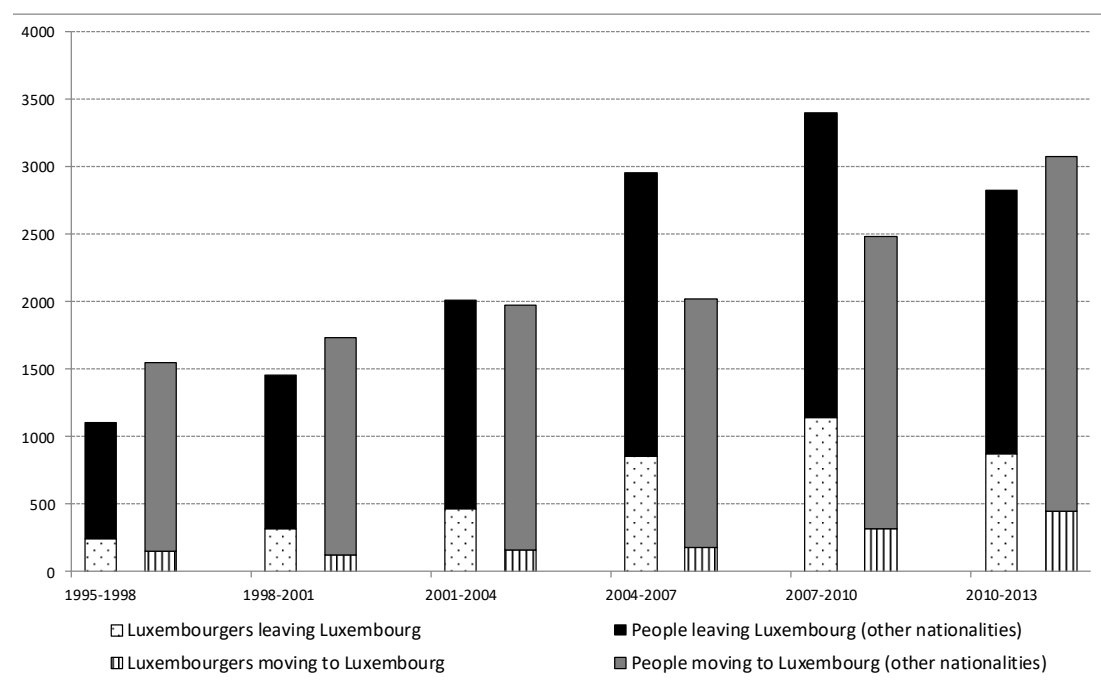
This quantitative information is supplemented by qualitative guided interviews, to provide a deeper, more individualized view of factors such as reasons for migration. Forty qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried out with people of Luxembourgish nationality living in Perl between 2009 and 2012. These interviews were transcribed and then analyzed using content analysis methods.

¹ Inspection Générale de la Sécurité Sociale (IGSS) and Centre Commun de la Sécurité Sociale (CCSS).

Development of Cross-Border Mobilities between Luxembourg and Its Neighbouring Regions

From 1995 to 2013, six three-year periods were used to study the development of residential moves for people working in Luxembourg. The residential mobilities were identified by comparing the country of residence in year Y and in year Y+3.

Figure 1: Development of residential mobilities for people working in Luxembourg (three-year periods)



Source : University of Luxembourg, IGSS/CCSS (data).

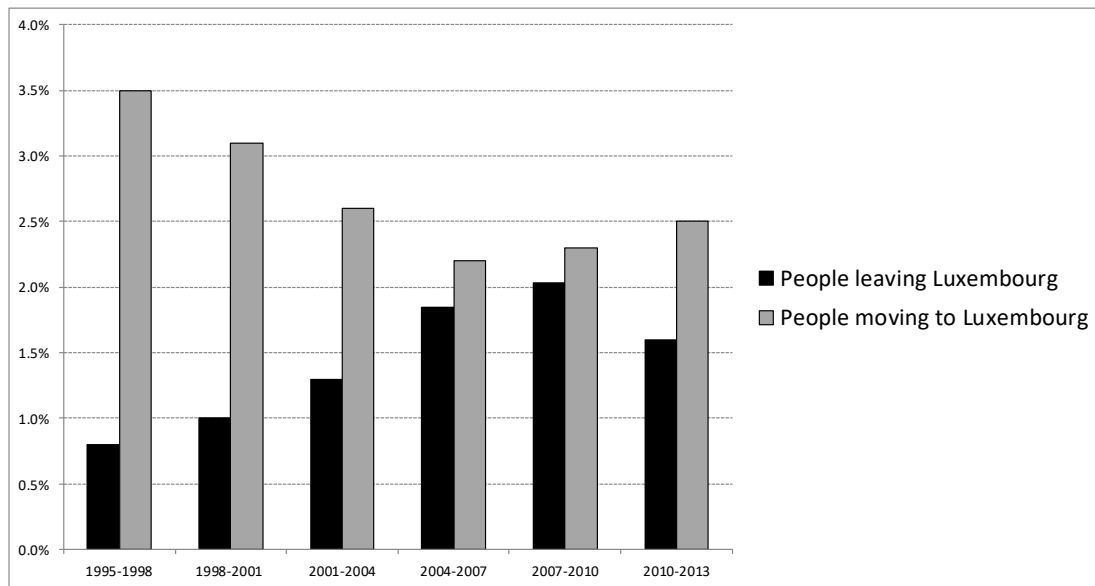
This graph shows the number of residential moves from Luxembourg to Germany, France and Belgium, and the reverse movement from abroad to Luxembourg (Figure 1). In the two first periods, the majority of cross-border residential moves for people working in Luxembourg was oriented towards Luxembourg. But in recent periods, the trend has changed in the direction of the neighbouring countries. Indeed, from period to period, people working in Luxembourg and leaving it to settle abroad has been increasing. During the period 2007-2010, concerned by the economic crisis, a maximum number of 3,500 employed people (including 1,100 Luxembourgers) left Luxembourg. This is more than three times the number in the first period. However, the last studied period (2010-2013) is characterized by two specificities: a decrease in departures from Luxembourg (for the first time) and an increase in people settling in Luxembourg. The new settlements abroad decreased in comparison to the previous periods, especially for the moves to Germany for Luxembourgers and Portuguese,

the latter constituting the most important group of foreign residents in Luxembourg. Does this last period indicate a new trend after the huge increase in the two previous periods? The number of people moving to Luxembourg is increasing from period to period, and became higher than the number of outmovers in the years 2010-2013. Part of this recent movement (15 percent) is due to Luxembourgers who lived abroad and then came back to Luxembourg (this aspect will be developed in the following section).

To better understand this growing trend, it is also relevant to express the developments as a percentage of the overall population, that is, of the 'potential movers' (Figure 2). The period 2007-2010 appears with the maximum percentage of settlements abroad (2 percent of the resident population working in Luxembourg), before showing a decrease in the following period. Thus during the last period studied (2010-2013), 1.6 percent of the people living and working in Luxembourg left to settle abroad while 2.5 percent of the cross-border commuters moved to Luxembourg.

Figure 2 also suggests an inverse relationship between the evolution of the percentage of people leaving and moving to Luxembourg, implying that at least in some circumstances that reduce the rate of people moving to Luxembourg might also be relevant to those leaving Luxembourg. Structural factors would be good explanatory starting points to explore this inverse relationship, since, for example, rising real-estate prices in Luxembourg and better cross-border infrastructure would explain both a decrease in people moving from the borderlands to Luxembourg *and* an increase of people leaving Luxembourg. Such factors would be interesting starting points for further investigation. This suggests that, in addition to traditional explanatory factors (like the characteristics of housing, familial factors, etc.), these residential moves are likely linked to the distances and travel times between home and work and the housing prices in the Greater Region as a whole. The next part of this chapter will centre on residential mobility from Luxembourg to the neighbouring countries, with a view to gaining better insight into the characteristics of these new cross-border commuters.

Figure 2: Development of residential mobilities for people working in Luxembourg (three-year periods) in percent



Source : University of Luxembourg, IGSS/CCSS (data).

People Leaving Luxembourg and Becoming Cross-Border Commuters (2003–2013)

This section focuses on a period of ten years. People who worked in Luxembourg in March 2003 *and* in March 2013 were identified, as well as the characteristics of those people within this group who moved from Luxembourg to one of the neighbouring countries between these two dates. Out of 195,195 persons working in Luxembourg in 2003 and ten years later, we identified 5,150 people leaving Luxembourg but continuing to work there.² That means that 4 percent of the people living and working in Luxembourg in 2003 moved to settle abroad during the subsequent ten-year period and still lived abroad in 2013. This is much more than during the period 1995–2005, in which 2 percent of working residents moved abroad (Pigeron-Piroth, 2008). The residential moves are almost evenly split between the three bordering countries: most are to Germany (35 percent), then France (34 percent) and finally Belgium (31 percent). By contrast, during the period 1995–2005 most of the departures from Luxembourg were to France (43 percent), while 26 percent chose Germany. The attractiveness of Germany increased greatly up to 2010. The population leaving Luxembourg

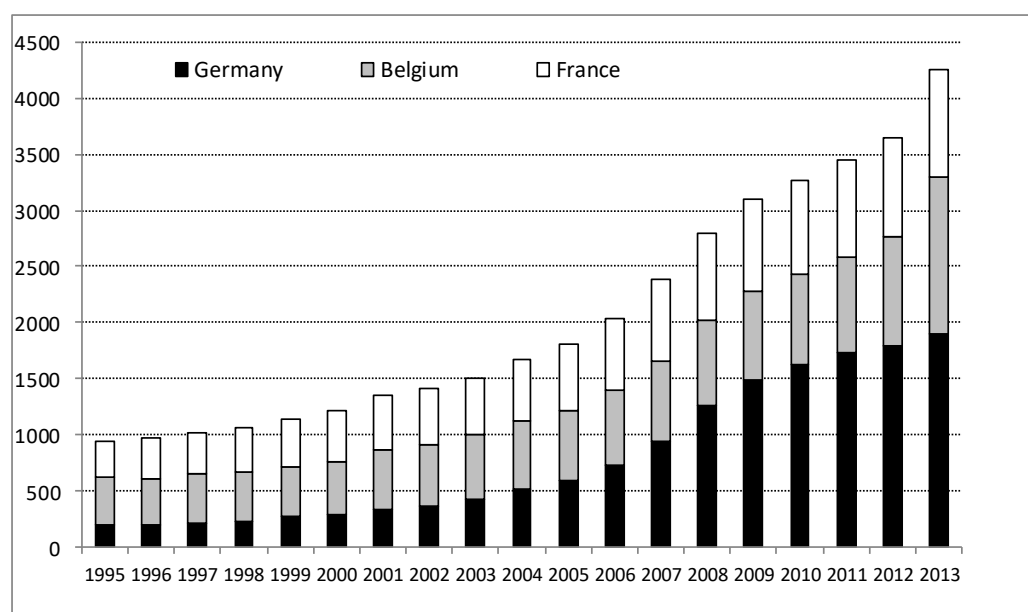
² The total number of residential moves in this period is in fact greater; we are studying only those who worked in Luxembourg both in 2003 and 10 years later. All the people who were not working in Luxembourg in 2003, or who stopped working in Luxembourg between 2003 and 2013 as well as non-workers, are not taken into account in this analysis.

is not homogeneous, and the choice of the new country of residence varies according to nationality (Figure 5).

Luxembourgers Leaving Luxembourg

The majority of people moving abroad between 2003 and 2013 were Luxembourgers (35 percent).³ This residential mobility involves a change of status for them: they become cross-border commuters to their own country of origin. Some authors consider them as ‘atypical’ cross-border commuters because their commute across the borders is not common and is linked more to the real-estate situation than to the labour market (Wille, 2012). The number of Luxembourgers living abroad and working in Luxembourg has increased greatly in recent years (Figure 3).⁴ However, they represent less than 3 percent of the population of cross-border commuters, whereas at the French-German border, the German employees living in France (Moselle-Est) and working in Germany (Saarland) constitute one-third of the cross-border commuter flows (OIE, 2014).

Figure 3: Luxembourgers living in Germany, France and Belgium and working in Luxembourg



Source : University of Luxembourg, IGSS/CCSS (data)

3 The nationality taken into account is the nationality of the people in 2003, before the move. Indeed, during this period of ten years, 8,000 people actually changed their nationality (for 94 percent, this was to become Luxembourgers), as a result of an easier access to Luxembourgish nationality (Loi du 23 Octobre 2008 sur la nationalité luxembourgeoise).

4 Part of the evolution between 2012 and 2013 in Belgium is due to changes in nationality: many Belgians acquired Luxembourgish nationality.

The Luxembourgish candidates for residential cross-border mobility are of great interest for the real estate agencies, which engage in strategic advertisements of properties on the other side of the border (Figure 4). The poster advertising new buildings in France (left hand side of Figure 4) was situated inside the main station of Luxembourg-City, through which a large number of people pass each day. The main message was ‘live close to Luxembourg’. Indeed, the agency SODEVAM proposed various new construction projects in France, near the Luxembourgish and German borders and close to the main motorways. The second advertisement (right-hand side) offers apartments in the German municipality of Perl, promoted, built and sold by a Luxembourgish company.

Figure 4: Advertisements across the borders



Source: own pictures

Germany is indeed the most frequently chosen country of residence for Luxembourgish leaving Luxembourg (more than two-thirds) (Figure 5). This can be explained by the similarity of the language and the proximity to Luxembourgish already settled there (who attract new Luxembourgish), among other factors. Before the move, most of the Luxembourgish leaving Luxembourg were living in the capital or in the south of the country. After the move, in 2013, 12 percent of those who moved live in Perl, a small German town close to France and Luxembourg, and a further 11 percent live in four other German towns near the border (Mettlach, Freudenburg, Merzig and Wincheringen). A special focus on Luxembourgish living in Perl is included in the following section.

Figure 5: Country of residence in 2013 for people leaving Luxembourg, according to nationality

Nationality	Country of residence in 2013 (in %)			Total
	Belgium	Germany	France	
Belgian	89.1	3.4	7.4	100.0
German	4.2	91.0	4.8	100.0
French	13.3	4.9	81.8	100.0
Italian	34.2	18.1	47.7	100.0
Luxembourger	14.2	67.6	18.2	100.0
Portuguese	24.1	12.3	63.6	100.0
others	21.4	46.4	32.2	100.0
total	30.8	35.2	33.9	100.0

Source : University of Luxembourg, IGSS/CCSS(data)

Base : People working in Luxembourg in march 2003 and 2013, living in Luxembourg in 2003 and abroad in 2013.

Most of the Luxembourgers leaving Luxembourg work in public administration, or transport and communication. The Luxembourgish employees who are the most likely to move abroad are those from the transport sector (mainly the state railways), the construction sector and industry. By contrast, civil servants, farmers, the self-employed and those in liberal professions are less involved in such moves.

French, Belgians and Germans

After the Luxembourgers, the main nationalities of people leaving Luxembourg are French (21 percent) and Belgian (21 percent). The German people constitute just 6.5 percent of the population leaving Luxembourg to settle abroad. These people lived in Luxembourg in 2003 (they either previously relocated to Luxembourg or they were born in Luxembourg) and left Luxembourg between 2003 and 2013. The new country of residence is closely related to their nationality: 82 percent of the French employees leaving Luxembourg decided to settle in France, 89 percent of the Belgians in Belgium, and 91 percent of the Germans in Germany (Figure 5). The settlement of the French employees in France is less geographically concentrated in one municipal area close to the Luxembourg border. They mainly choose bigger municipalities that are readily accessible by train or motorways (such as the municipalities of Thionville and Hettange-Grande), and not directly on the borders. In Belgium, there is a concentration of cross-border migrants in the city of Arlon, close to the Luxembourg border (19.5 percent of the people who moved to Belgium lived here in 2013). The Germans leaving Luxembourg settle in the city of Trier (15 percent) rather than the municipality of Perl (8 percent), which was, however, mainly chosen by Luxembourgers.

Finance, services and trade are the main sectors of activity of French and Belgian people leaving Luxembourg. German people leaving Luxembourg mainly work in the financial

sector as well as in the trade and industry sectors. Salaries, working hours, place of work and accessibility to work are some of the factors linked to the activity in Luxembourg that can explain the move abroad. The liberal and self-employed professions are underrepresented in the population leaving Luxembourg, regardless of their nationality.

Portuguese

As already mentioned, Portuguese residents are the largest group of foreign nationals living in Luxembourg; they constituted 16 percent of the population in 2015 (STATEC). Their numbers in Luxembourg began increasing in the 1970s when many Portuguese were fleeing the dictatorship in Portugal and were looking for work and better living conditions.

The Portuguese are the fourth main nationality involved in cross-border residential moves from Luxembourg to the neighbouring countries in the period under review (2003–2013): 9 percent of the people leaving Luxembourg are Portuguese. They generally choose French-speaking countries: 64 percent of them lived in France in 2013 and 24 percent in Belgium. Most of them settled in French municipalities directly on the border. They mainly work in the construction sector, followed by the service sector and trade.

The Move Back to Luxembourg

We will conclude our overview by looking at the move back to Luxembourg for Luxembourgers who live abroad (and work in Luxembourg) and tracing its development from period to period. Taking into account the six periods of three years (from 1995–1998 to 2010–2013), the number of Luxembourgers moving to Luxembourg is increasing, as is the percentage they constitute, especially for the two most recent periods. During the first period (1995–1998), about 150 Luxembourgers working in Luxembourg and living abroad in 1995 moved to Luxembourg. They constituted 9.5 percent of the population moving to Luxembourg. In the last period (2010–2013), more than 400 Luxembourgers moved to Luxembourg from abroad and constituted approximately 14 percent of the total population moving to Luxembourg. The two last periods we studied show an increase in the number (and the percentage) of Luxembourgers moving to Luxembourg. Among the population of Luxembourgers living abroad in 2010 and working in Luxembourg, 14.5 percent of them moved to Luxembourg between 2010 and 2013.

Some of the characteristics of this population during this last period (2010–2013) can be pointed out. Most of these people lived in Germany in 2010 and precisely nine percent lived in the town of Perl before their move to Luxembourg. Their main places of residence, after the move in Luxembourg in 2013 are the city of Luxembourg and the main municipalities of the south (30 percent live in the five most populated cities of Luxembourg). In 2013, the

average age of this population was 39 years,⁵ and a clear majority were men (61 percent). Most of them work in public administration and in the social sector (39 percent) and, in fact, they are overrepresented in these sectors in comparison to the Luxembourgers who lived abroad in 2010 and 2013.

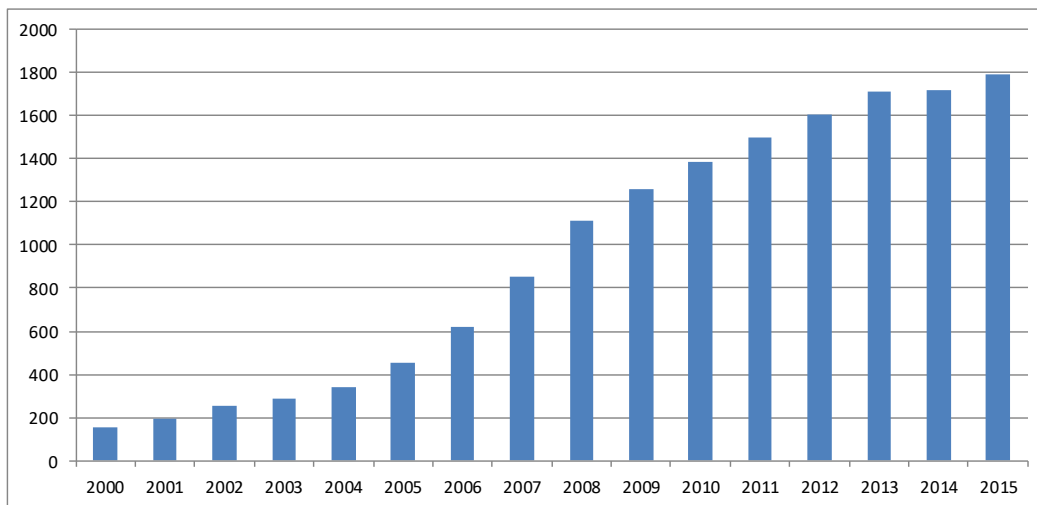
Having given a general insight into the recent development of cross-border residential mobility and the complex constitution of the group of those who move from Luxembourg to a neighbouring border region, we now turn to the motivations for these moves. We will do this by turning to one specific locality, the German municipality of Perl, and we will see that in the cross-border area under study, real estate prices do not constitute the sole explanation for residential mobility. Family, schooling, commutes and other factors have to be taken into account as well in order to understand the cross-border moves. The town of Perl, one of the main destinations for Luxembourgers moving abroad, is an interesting case study, where the motivations and the new lives of these new cross-border commuters were analysed by using data stemming from qualitative interviews. The study in question did not envisage the whole group of new residents from Luxembourg but, as already mentioned above, was explicitly focused on persons with Luxembourgish nationality.

Booming Border Municipalities – The Example of Perl

Perl is a small town in the German-Luxembourgish-French border triangle. Between 2005 and 2007, the growth in the Luxembourgish population in this town was remarkable (between 30 percent and 40 percent each year) (Figure 6). This development can be partly explained by easier access to Luxembourg via a motorway and bridge crossing the Moselle River which finished construction in 2003. After 2008, the Luxembourgish population in Perl continued to grow, but more slowly, especially in recent years. On 1 January 2015, among the 8,920 registered inhabitants of Perl, 20.1 percent had Luxembourgish citizenship. They made up 64.6 percent of all foreign nationals in the municipality. The unofficial numbers might be even higher, as it is possible that a significant number of Luxembourgers do not register in Germany. They often remain registered in Luxembourg to continue to qualify for access to Luxembourg's social welfare support and public services, especially unemployment pay and schooling for their children, as many interviewees explained.

⁵ The average age in 2013, while the actual moves can have taken place before 2013.

Figure 6: Development of Luxembourgish nationals living in Perl (2000-2015)



Source : University of Luxembourg, Municipality of Perl (data)

Inside the municipality of Perl, the 14 villages are affected by the phenomenon of Luxembourgish migration to a greater or lesser degree, the most affected villages being Perl-Münzingen (30.4 percent of Luxembourgish), Perl-Sinz (26.6 percent) and Perl-Perl (25.0 percent).⁶ The age structure, the family structure and the employment situation of the people interviewed are heterogeneous. People with young children were among the interviewees as well as retired individuals who came to Germany to stay in an elderly home. Luxembourgish earning only the minimum wage in Luxembourg were represented, as were highly skilled professionals.

The reasons for the move across the border to Germany are diverse. During the qualitative interviews, however, real estate prices were mentioned very often and can be seen as one of the main factors, or even the main factor, in the decision-making process for the cross-border move.

Reasons for choosing Perl are also diverse: family reunification ('Our granddaughter lives over there,' Interview 30; 'My son bought a house here in Perl and that is why I moved here,' Interview 26); the already existing large Luxembourgish community in Perl (mentioned during several interviews, e.g. interview 26); no language barrier as the dialect spoken in Perl is closely related to the Luxembourgish language (mentioned by many interviewees, e.g. interviews 17, 21, 30); no cultural distance between Luxembourgish culture and the culture in the region in and around Perl (e.g. interview 29); the German-Luxembourgish Schengen-Lyzeum (a German-Luxembourgish secondary school created in 2007 where pupils from both Luxembourg and Germany are educated in their respective national curricula and school

⁶ Data from the municipality of Perl.

system or in a merged bilingual schooling system); the landscape (e.g. interview 27); and good transport connections to Luxembourg (e.g. interviews 20, 26).

These numerous reasons for moving to Perl do not, however, imply that the bonds to the interviewees' former place of residence have diminished. The results of our qualitative interviews show that those who have moved still maintain many or all of their personal contacts in Luxembourg. As for contacts in Perl, the picture is varied. While some of the interviewees stated that they did not have any contact with non-Luxembourgers in Perl, others said that they have contacts with both Luxembourgers and non-Luxembourgers, and some also stated that they have even more contacts among Germans (see also Nienaber and Kriszan, 2013).

Overall, the qualitative data show that the group of Luxembourgers who moved to Perl is not a homogenous group. They differ in age, family status, reasons for moving and networks with Luxembourgers and/or non-Luxembourgers, and they also differ in terms of their willingness to have contact with the local population, to engage in local clubs and associations and to do their routine daily shopping on the German or on the Luxembourgish side of the border.

Analysing all the Luxembourgers moving abroad, Carpentier and Gerber (2012) mentioned their attachment to Luxembourg: 46 percent of their daily activities still take place in Luxembourg after the move. In comparison, only one-fifth of the Germans leaving Luxembourg maintain activities – other than work-related ones – in Luxembourg after the move. As for the Belgians and the French who move away from Luxembourg, the numbers are somewhat higher: one-quarter and one-third, respectively.

Another aspect to be mentioned concerns the increasing number of people who decide to move back to Luxembourg, as shown in the quantitative analysis. An issue that might contribute to this decision is the feeling of not being welcome at the new place. 'The local people in Perl think that the Luxembourgers destroy the infrastructure here because we have more money to build more luxurious homes than they build,' (Interview 19). The same interviewee also gives another reason why people move back to Luxembourg: 'Yes indeed, the retirement pension is problematic. The taxes⁷ are much higher here and therefore you do not have any money left later on. That is why many people sell their houses shortly before retirement and go back to Luxembourg' (Interview 19).

The interviews thus illustrate that the reasons for moving back are as varied as the reasons for the initial move and thereby confirm one basic result of the detailed comparative analysis of

⁷ This person mentions taxes on salaries and pensions.

the demographic data: namely, the insight that residential migration is a complex phenomenon that cannot be understood as a simple linear development.

Conclusion

More and more cross-border labour and residential moves are being observed in border regions. The Greater Region is one of the borderlands that is most affected by cross-border labour mobility. Residential cross-border mobility has also increased in the Greater Region. Associated with this is the move out of Luxembourg to the Belgian, French or German borderlands, especially for Luxembourgers, who become atypical cross-border commuters. While the Luxembourgish cross-border commuters constitute only 3 percent of the total population of cross-border commuters, their increase in these last few years deserves our full attention.

This chapter examined the development of this phenomenon of cross-border residential mobility, focusing on people in the last 20 years who left Luxembourg and moved to neighbouring countries but still work in the Grand Duchy, providing some insights about this form of mobility from its very beginning. Since 2000, the number of people working in Luxembourg and leaving it to settle abroad has been increasing (especially until 2007–2010). However, the last period we studied (2010–2013) reveals a decrease in the departures from Luxembourg, which remains to be validated (or invalidated) by analysis of the subsequent periods.

Focusing on people working in Luxembourg in 2003 and ten years later, we identified some of the main characteristics of those who moved. Due to the heterogeneity of this population, these characteristics are not easy to summarize. Luxembourgers constitute the bulk of people settling abroad (35 percent) and becoming (atypical) cross-border commuters. More than two-thirds of them chose Germany as their new country of residence, in both small towns directly at the border (like Perl and Wincheringen) and bigger ones near the border (Mettlach, Merzig). Luxembourgers constitute 20% of the population of the town of Perl (8,900 inhabitants) and 30% in the village of Perl-Münzigen.

The qualitative interviews reveal the difference in the real estate prices as the main reason to settle abroad, even though the motivations are frequently various and multiple, including family-related, cultural (language, schooling, etc.) and geographical (proximity, accessibility, etc.). Accessibility to Luxembourg, notably the proximity of train stations and motorways, is one of the main factors that influences the choice of the new place of residence. The interviews also show that the decision for living abroad is not necessarily definitive. Reasons for moving back can be relationships with the local population, burdens of the commutes or

concerns about retirement. These are relatively new phenomena that will have to be investigated in future research. To mention just one aspect, only a few cross-border commuters are retired (in comparison to the total number of cross-border commuters), but there will be more and more in the future. Thus, in 2013, 28.4 percent of the pensions paid by Luxembourg are given to people living in France, Germany and Belgium (i.e. to former cross-border commuters) (Social Security of Luxembourg), but this proportion is increasing from year to year.

To conclude, we would like to briefly return to our opening remarks on general conceptual developments in the realm of border studies, regarding the question in how far the rise in cross-border residential mobility can be seen as contributing to a process of debordering. More specifically, are those who participate in this process ‘border surfers’, people who act upon the principle of profiting ‘from the different opportunities on both sides of the border’ (Terlouw, 2012, p.354)? An important result of our quantitative analysis, which mainly consisted of the comparison of different three-year periods in an overall timeframe of nearly twenty years, was that it shows how difficult it is to arrive at a general assessment of the demographic developments and their impact on bordering processes. The same holds true for our qualitative study. Here we see that motivations and causal factors are diverse and complexly interrelated. This means that the individual actors, the persons or families who take up residence on the other side of the border, do not only behave as border surfers in the strict sense mentioned above – seeking opportunities on both sides of the border – but also rely on other qualities. To put it differently, it means that the properties they are looking for on one side and the other are far from being constant. They depend upon, among other things, the development of the family and the changing needs of its members, but can also be affected by what living abroad actually offers these surfers – in certain cases, the experience of not being welcome.

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