

The France Strategy

The Development and Role of Governance Borderlands

ABOUT

Cross-border cooperation – once a policy field negotiated primarily on a national level – now increasingly occurs in and between border regions. Regional cross-border strategies such as the **France Strategy** (adopted by the state of Saarland in 2014) emphasize the pivotal **role of local municipal actors** for the conception, coordination and implementation of the policies, however, their valuable experiences and expertise regarding cross-border cooperation often remain implicit.

ABSTRACT

Based on the assumption that “multilingualism is the basis for economic prosperity in an increasingly globalized world”¹, the France Strategy seeks to turn its peripheral location from a disadvantage into a long-term political, cultural, and economic asset. The Strategy implies a double significance of local (municipal) actors which serve both as the foundation for its conception, and as indispensable actors for its successful implementation. The research project thus has a dual interest and goal:

1. to make the expertise of local municipal actors from the Saarland and Lorraine (in particular the département Moselle) accessible for the future coordination of regional cross-border policies.
2. to trace the development and role of ‘governance borderlands’, conceptualized as overlapping “spaces where the everyday realities of boundaries are played out”² within the framework of multilevel cross-border governance (see Figure 2).

KEY MOMENTS (see Figure 1)

January to February 2020: Pretest of semi-structured expert interviews with German (Saarland) and French (département Moselle) mayors and district administrators

March to April 2020: Online questionnaire for German and French mayors

May to September 2020: Further semi-structured expert interviews with mayors and district administrators

November 2020: Report & policy paper for administrative experts

Until March 2022: further analysis and interpretation for dissertational project

METHODOLOGY

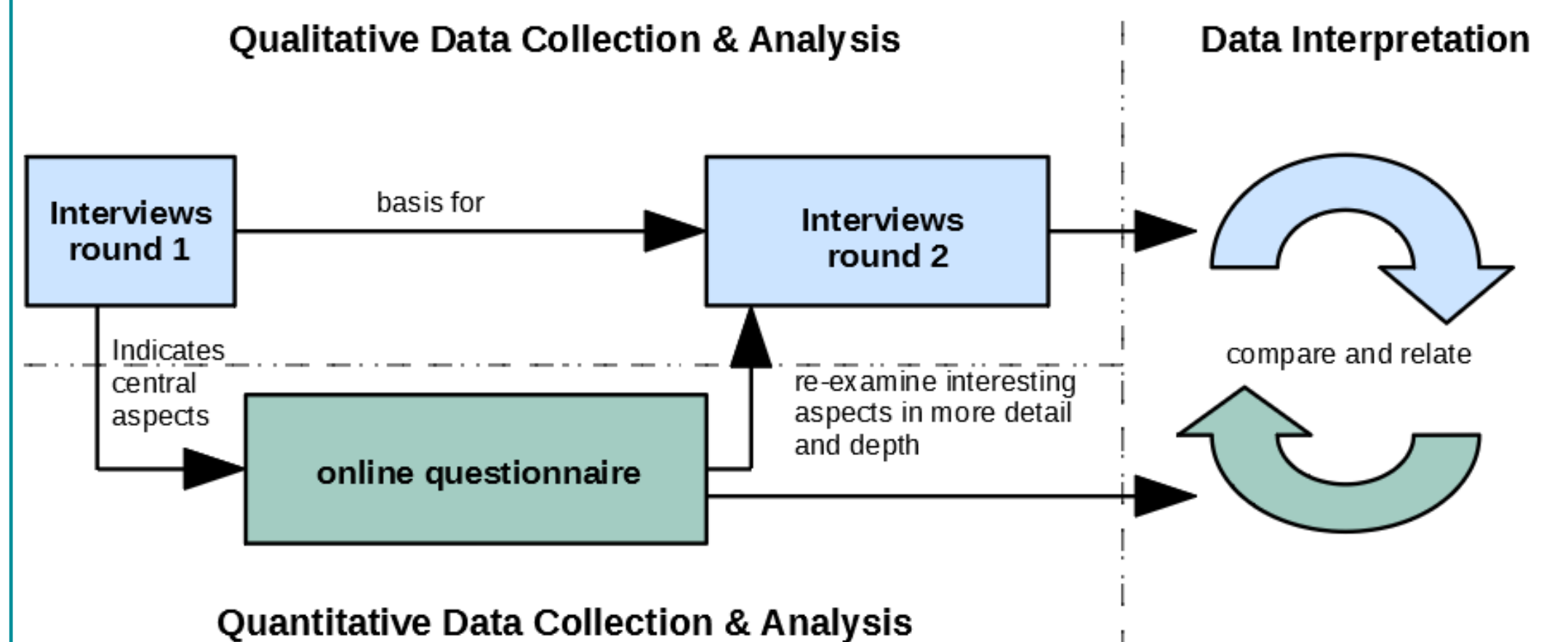


Figure 1: Research approach – sequential triangulation of qualitative methods (expert interviews) and quantitative methods (online questionnaire) (own representation)

KEY CONCEPTS

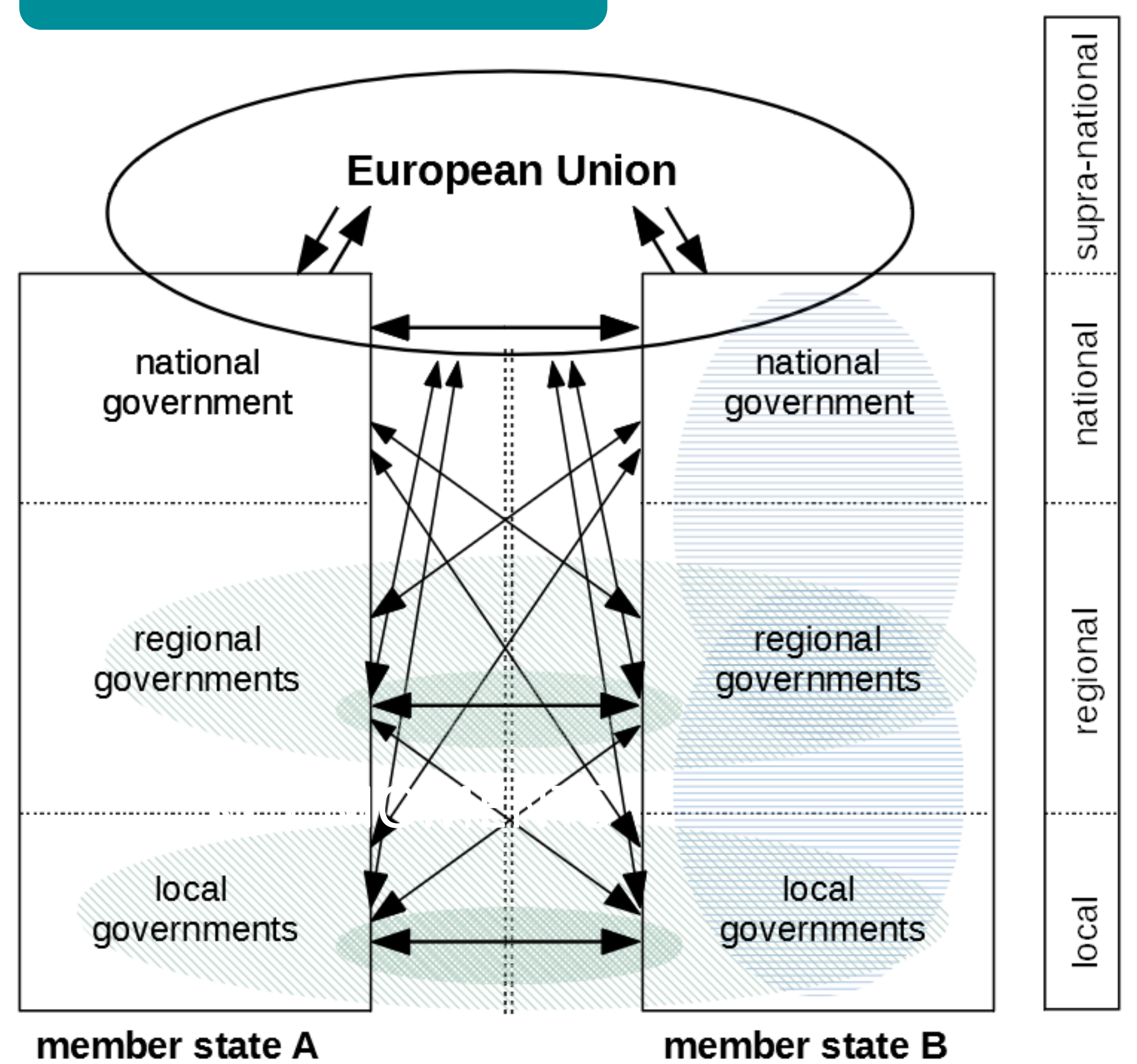


Figure 2: Preliminary visualization of borderlands within multilevel cross-border governance (own representation)

¹ Ministry for Finances and Europe. 2015. France Strategy Saarland - At a Glance.

² Morehouse, Barbara J. 2004. Theoretical Approaches to Border Spaces and Identities. In *Challenged Borderlands: Transcending Political and Cultural Boundaries*, ed. Vera Pavlakovich-Kochi, Barbara J. Morehouse and Doris Wastl-Walter, 19–39. Aldershot: Ashgate.