# Project WARLUX - Soldiers and their communities in WWII: The impact and legacy of war experiences in Luxembourg



#### Nina Janz

Mapping war experiences of Luxembourgish recruits during WWII

Digital History Seminar, December 7th, 2021







#### **OUTLINE**

- 1. Research Project WARLUX
- 2. Biographical approach / biographical data in the DH
- 3. Mapping? Meaning in using this term
- Data and Sources
- 5. Tools Biographical data with a relational database
- 6. Conclusion and Outlook





# Introduction - Project WARLUX - Soldiers and their communities in WWII: The impact and legacy of war experiences in Luxembourg

- During Nazi occupation in Luxembourg, women and men (born 1920-1927) were concsripted to serve in Reichsarbeitsdienst and Wehrmacht
- aim of the project is: collecting their biographies and individual life paths throughout the war and the post-war period





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#### **CASE STUDY**

- In this case study around 2000 individuals are included: conscripts and additionally their families
- a dataset is to be compared and visualised and linked throughout the war
- Different samples: From different regions and social classes (industrial and rural regions, educated classes etc.)
- Sample: Schifflange
  - industrial town in the south of Luxembourg
  - many workers in the steel industry (ARBED)
  - conscripted (men and women) around 300
  - deserters (or went into hiding) ca. 80
  - KIA/MIA 56

#### **CURRENT STATUS:**

- Data collection is closed
- evaluation, linking (data, documents and persons) is ongoing
- data entries parallel ongoing

#### Background info

- draft for men and women into the Labour Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst, RAD) -23/05/1941
- draft was introduced for the men 30/08/1942





#### Biographical approach

- researching of their biographies and individual stories during the war
- Avoiding stringent categories such as "victims" or "heroes" in national historiography for this group.
- Pursuing the biographical approach by analysing the actor-centred lives and perspectives using personal data and first-person documents (letters, diaries)
- Actor-centred perspective and their active choice of a particular life path following Fickers and Brüll (2019)\*, the situation, the
  context of the actors must be taken into account
- each historical actor has several options in a complex decision-making process; these decisions are not necessarily selfish, nor
  the result of external constraints but are based on a situational logic of doing what seems most appropriate at that moment
  (Schimank, 2015)

<sup>\*</sup>Brüll, Christoph/Fickers, Andreas: Ein Experiment kollektiver Gewissensprüfung. Situativer Opportunismus und kumulative Heroisierung, in: Grenzerfahrungen. Eine Geschichte der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens. Bd. 4: Staatenwechsel, Identitätskonflikte, Kriegserfahrungen (1919-1945), hrsg. von Carlo Lejeune, Christoph Brüll und Peter Quadflieg. Grenz-Echo Verlag, Eupen 2019., 2019.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Schimank, U.: Die Entscheidungsgesellschaft. Komplexität und Rationalität der Moderne. Wiesbaden 2005.

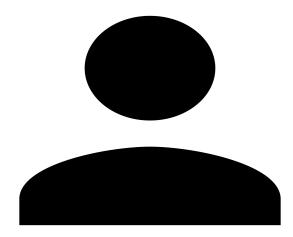




# **Biographical data**

Name
Date of birth/death
Place of birth/death
Address
Gender
Marital status
Profession

. . . . . . . . . .







#### Biographical data

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#### Henri, Grand Duke of Luxembourg

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

H.R.H. Grand Duke Henri Albert Gabriel Félix Marie Guillaume of Luxembourg, was born on April 16th in 1955. He is the ruling sovereign of the country of Luxembourg. He was enthroned on October 7th in 2000. Luxembourg is a country in Western Europe bordered by France, Belgium and Germany. In 2019, Henri's net worth was estimated at around US\$4 billion.<sup>[1]</sup> He is the eldest son of Grand Duke Jean and Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium. Through bloodline, he is directly linked and connected to various European Royal houses, which include; Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Liechtenstein, Portugal and Italy. He is grandson to King Leopold III of Belgium and Princess Astrid of Sweden, godson to King Albert II of Belgium and first cousin to King Philippe of Belgium. The Royal Family of Luxembourg official seat and residence is at the Grand Ducal Palace in Luxembourg City's historic center.

#### Contents [hide]

- 1 Childhood
- 2 Education
- 3 Marriage and family
- 4 Constitutional position
- 5 Euthanasia and constitutional reform controversies
- 6 Role and interests
- 7 Media and publicity
- 8 Waringo report
- 9 Health
- 10 Honours

10.1 National

10.2 Foreign

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#### H.R.H. Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg



#### **Grand Duke of Luxembourg**

Reign 7 October 2000 – present

Predecessor Jean

Heir Guillaume apparent

rime Jean-Claude Juncker

ministers Xavier Bettel

Regency 3 March 1998 – 7 October 2000

Born 16 April 1955 (age 66)

Betzdorf Castle, Betzdorf,





## **Biographical data**

Q All □ Images ♀ Maps □ News ▶ Videos ⋮ More Tools

About 20,000,000 results (0.73 seconds)

Tip: Search for English results only. You can specify your search language in Preferences

https://en.wikipedia.org > wiki > Henri, Grand Duke o...

Henri, Grand Duke of Luxembourg - Wikipedia

Henri is the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. He has reigned since 7 October 2000. Henri, the eldest son of Grand Duke Jean and Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of ...

House: Nassau-Weilburg (official); Bourbon-... Prime ministers: Jean-Claude Juncker; Xa...

Religion: Roman Catholic Heir apparent: Guillaume

Guillaume, Hereditary Grand...  $\cdot$  Maria Teresa, Grand Duchess...  $\cdot$  Berg Castle

https://fr.wikipedia.org > wiki > Henr... · Translate this page

#### Henri (grand-duc de Luxembourg) - Wikipédia

Henri, né le 16 avril 1955 à Betzdorf au Luxembourg, est grand-duc de Luxembourg depuis l'abdication en 2000 de son père, le grand-duc Jean.

Monarque: Jean Lieu de naissance: Betzdorf (Luxembourg)

Date de naissance: 16 avril 1955 (66 ans)

Nationalité: Luxembourgeoise

#### Henri, Grand Duke of Luxembourg (Henri)



Henri is the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. He has reigned since 7 October 2000. Henri, the eldest son of Grand Duke Jean and Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium, is a first cousin of King Philippe of Belgium. In 2019, Henri's net worth was estimated around US\$4 billion. Wikipedia

**Born:** April 16, 1955 (age 66 years), Betzdorf Castle, Betzdorf

Full name: Henri Albert Gabriel Félix Marie

Spouse: Maria Teresa, Grand Duchess of

Luxembourg (m. 1981)

Children: Guillaume, Hereditary Grand Duke of

Luxembourg, MORE

Siblings: Archduchess Marie-Astrid of Austria,

MORE

Guillaume

**Parents:** Jean, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium

**Great-grandparents:** William IV, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, MORE



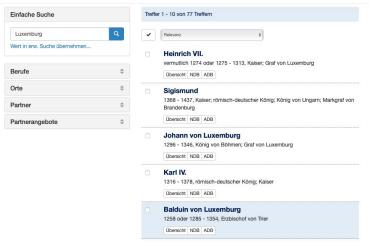


# Biographical data as linked data

# Examples

#### **Dictionaries**

→ deutsche.biographie.de





names, places, professions, networks ......





# Biographical data as linked data

#### Examples

Biographical data of divers wars and conflicts

Civil War personalities (<a href="https://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/c.php?g=288398&p=4496619">https://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/c.php?g=288398&p=4496619</a>)

Database of Yad Vashem (<a href="https://yvng.yadvashem.org">https://yvng.yadvashem.org</a>)

sites with interviews, memoirs, letters.....





# Aim / Challenge for WARLUX?

#### Aim

- → The aim is to represent the personal life experiences of the generation, who were directly affected by the war.
  - life events, life sequences
  - not to follow a fact sheet, but to display the twists and ambiguities

#### Challenge

- 1. analogue not yet digitised
- 2. unstructured data (not linked / no norm data)
- 3. copyright / data protection no access to all data





#### Why Mapping? Why use a "map" for biographical data?

#### map noun

**1a**: a representation usually on a flat surface of the whole or a part of an area

**1b**: a representation of the celestial sphere or a part of it

**1c**: a diagram or other visual representation that shows the relative position of the parts of something

2: something that represents with a clarity suggestive of a map

(https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/map)







#### **Data and Sources for WARLUX**

- → very heterogeneous collection
  - Analogue Data
    - National Archives and communal archives in Luxembourg
      - war period lists, police registrations, civil records
      - compensations, statistics
    - Military Archives
      - personnel dossiers, court cases
      - dossiers of units and battle diaries etc. etc.
    - Private Collections
      - letters, diaries, pictures







## **Digital Data for WARLUX**

Database for the "Enrôlés de Force - Victimes du Nazisme"



"first database" - names and places (like death place) or categories like deserters etc. are not linked → the base for the WARLUX project

http://www.ons-jongen-a-meedercher.lu





# Digital Data for WARLUX

- library catalogue authors (of memoirs, or scholars who have been affected)
- different dictionaries about national "important" or famous people like Author / Writers / Journalists



Biographie

Veröffentlichungen

Will Lentz verbrachte seine Kindheit und Jugend in Nocher. Im Oktober 1942 wurde er zum Reichsarbeitsdienst in Litauen im heute polnischen Gdynia/Gdingen verpflichtet. Im Januar 1943 wurde er in die Wehrmacht eingezogen und kam an die russische Front, wo er im August 1943 desertierte und zu den Russen überlief. Nach fast zwei Jahren in russischer Kriegsgefangenschaft kehrte er am 7. Dezember 1945 nach Luxemburg zurück. Nach dem Krieg übernahm Will Lentz den väterlichen Bauernbetrieb. Von 1964-1988 war er Bürgermeister der Gemeinde Goesdorf.

In seinen letzten Lebensjahren schrieb W. L. seine Kriegserlebnisse nieder. Er wollte Zeugnis ablegen und berichtete von den Fronterfahrungen, der Fahnenflucht, der ihn über Tambow bis an das Schwarze Meer führenden Kriegsgefangenschaft und der Solidarität unter den kriegsgefangenen Luxemburgern, zu denen auch Joseph Schmit zählte. Der Titel verweist auf das gleichnamige Soldatenlied von Wilhelm Hauff, das von Friedrich Silcher vertont wurde. Steh ich in finstrer Mitternacht erschien posthum.

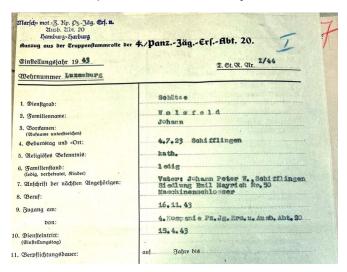
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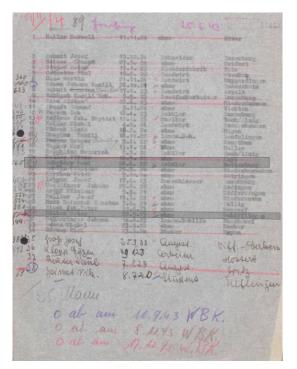




#### **Data for WARLUX**

 biographical data single/personnel dossiers to be queried individually





topic related
dossiers concerned
person could be
mentioned

BArch Pers 15/128200 ANLux CdZ-E-0148





#### **Data for WARLUX - Evaluation tools**

- Digitization process
- OCR, HTR (Transkribus)
- "human eye", manual data entries





#### **Tools - Relational Database**

#### How to translate these sources in data?

#### Relational database

- nodegoat is a web-based research environment for the humanities
- Explore data by means of spatial and temporal visualisations (by lab 1100)
- nodegoat allows us to build datasets based on their own data model and offers relational modes of analysis with spatial and chronological forms of contextualisation.
- By combining these elements within one environment, we are able to instantly process, analyse and visualise complex data sets relationally, diachronically and spatially;
- nodegoat follows an object-oriented approach throughout its core functionalities.
- Borrowing from actor-network theory this means that people, events, artefacts, and sources are treated as equal: objects, and hierarchy depends solely on the composition of the network: relations.
- This object-oriented approach advocates the self-identification of individual objects and maps the correlation of objects within the collective

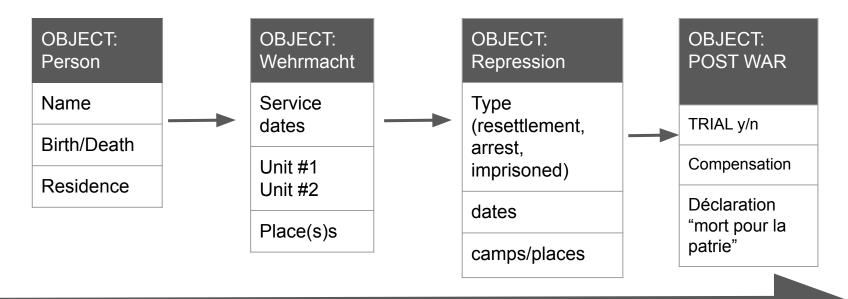






#### DATA MODEL in nodegoat

Life sequences and biographical data to be represented in "objects"

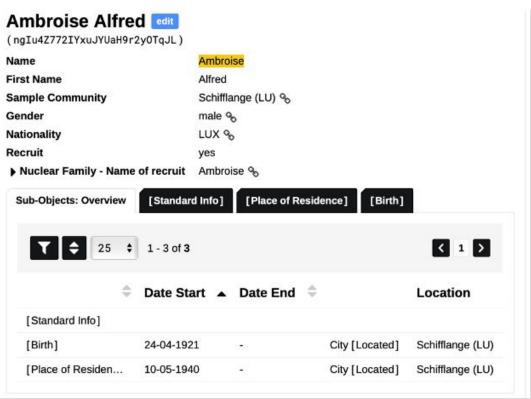






#### DATA MODEL

**Object Person** 







#### DATA MODEL

Object "Person" - lists with short bios, general infos (whereabouts, roles (recruit y/n, gender)

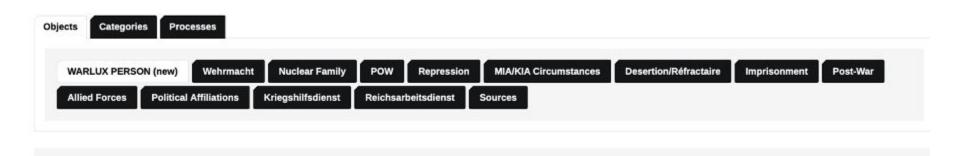
Name	•	First Name	\$ Sample Community $\Rightarrow$	Whereabouts 🕏	Gender 🏺 Research Status 🕏	Recruit 🗘 V
Ackermann		Jos	Schifflange (LU)	returned	male	yes
Adam		Norbert	Merl (LU)	Executed	male	yes
Adam		Ferdinand	Schifflange (LU)	KIA	male	yes
Adam		Henri, Heinrich	Schifflange (LU)	returned	male	yes





#### DATA MODEL

Different "situations" or stations as objects







#### DATA MODEL

# **Object Wehrmacht**





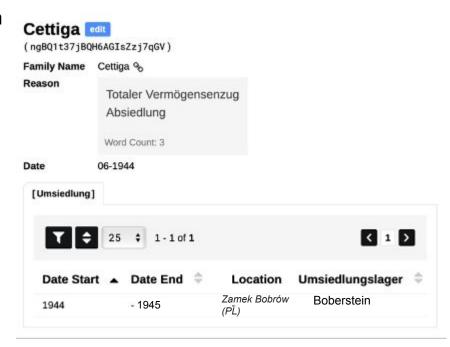


#### DATA MODEL -

"Mapping consequences" - OBJECT Repression

#### Example

- Cettiga, R. deserted
- Family Cettiga is "resettled" (Umsiedlung) to Eastern Europe and their assets withdrawn/seized
- Family (as Object "Nuclear Family) is displayed in the object for "Umsiedlung"
- the camp and the place is linked to other affected families and the conscripted men

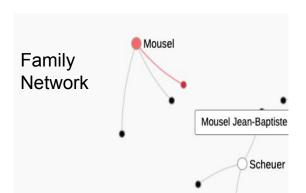


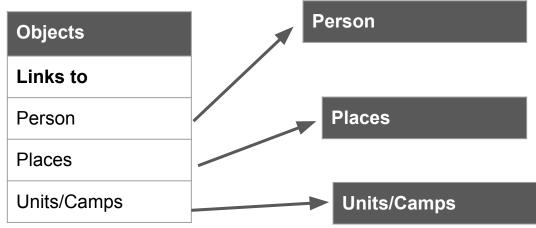




#### **DATA MODEL - LINKING**

 every object (name, "life station" like Wehrmacht, Reichsarbeitsdienst, units, camps, places and comrades and family members are linked









#### DATA MODEL

## each Object and Person are linked

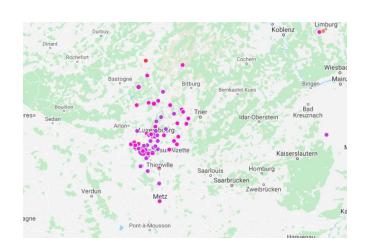






#### **DATA MODEL**

#### Visualizations



Birth places (sample Schifflange)



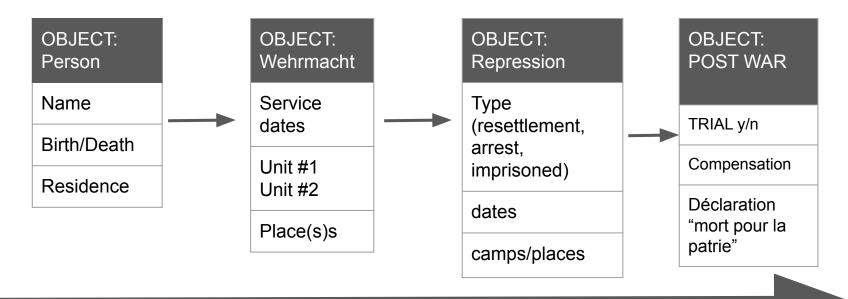
Death places (sample Schifflange)





#### DATA MODEL in nodegoat

Life sequences and biographical data to be represented in "objects"







#### DATA MODEL

- Challenge Single statements and data ambiguities
  - Service Wehrmacht Joining when??
  - After August 1942 ? Before?
- Different dates dependent on the source
  - Ego Doc
  - Nazi doc
  - Post-war doc
- → creating objects regarding the date and then creating scenario\* on the statement (not yet tested)

<sup>\*</sup>as different "versions" of the life narrative





#### CONCLUSION

WARLUX faces to represent or to "translate" the individual and unstructured biographical data into single statements and dates

to avoid a linear structure of individual life stories, the data model has to adapt to unstructured and life models of individuals

in treating different life "stations" or "situations" as equal objects on the same level as the person itself, it gives access to the individual adaptation of the life to an independent and for each individually designed life model rather than a stringent and inflexible schema

But difficulties remain, such as (next to acquiring the data)

- 1.ambiguities of the data
- 2.unstructured data

By using the objects equally and different life chapters/situations and events as a place/mark on a map, we can create a map of life and visualize individual stories.





#### OUTLOOK

Adding different "experience" objects - based on ego-docs

- defining new categorisations as objects? fear, homesickness, death/violent experience?
- → possible solution realization with nodegoat text (transcriptions of the letters) is to be tagged with others names, places and events or objects like units/camps





#### OUTLOOK

#### Creation of linked data?

- publishing/releasing the database
- linking to other catalogues and digital data like
  - previous platform like <a href="http://www.ons-jongen-a-meedercher.lu">http://www.ons-jongen-a-meedercher.lu</a>
  - Wikipedia
  - ANLux
  - Musée National de la Résistance
  - Centre National de la Littérature
  - Bibliothèque National

#### Stay connected with us!









https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/projects/warlux

Blog: "Digital War History" and WARLUX

https://digiwarhist.hypotheses.org