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Repercussions of draft evasion and desertion on
Luxembourgish families during the Second World War -
An analysis of wartime power dynamics and targeted
repression

Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of Luxembourgish young men enrolled in the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* and Wehrmacht during the Second World War. It explores the repressive measures imposed on them by the Nazi authorities, focusing on the underlying mechanisms, ideological frameworks and objectives, as well as the roles and interactions of various power structures involved.

It is the first investigation in Luxembourg historiography to look at these families as a distinct group of actors. Although the existing national and international literature addresses aspects related to their experiences, such as forced resettlement, the information remains highly fragmented and often lacks depth. By broadening the analytical scope, drawing together scattered insights and consolidating the whole into a unified framework, the investigation challenges oversimplified national discourses and positions the Luxembourg case in broader international academic debates on the topic.

The historical events are studied from both a top-down and bottom-up perspective, using an actor-centred approach and drawing on a diverse range of sources. Through the analysis of the various perspectives these sources provide, and the incorporation of methods from digital and public history, the research offers a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of desertion and draft evasion on families, uncovering the multilayered dynamics that shaped their experiences.

The study reveals that the repressive and punitive measures were strongly shaped by the broader ethnic policies of the Nazi regime. It observes a distinction between measures that affected all types of families, and those specifically targeting ethnic German families. They were based on complex networks of collaboration and the delegation of responsibilities between various centres and levels of power, which pursued the broader objectives of the Nazi regime, but also acted in their own interests. Although these actions took place at the intersection of the military and civil spheres, the civil authorities played the dominant role. At the family level, the observed multiplicity and diversity of individual experiences challenge simplistic binary categorisations often found in national and international narratives.

In addition to this historical investigation, this thesis also critically examines the constraints of historical research on the Second World War in Luxembourg, particularly related to the difficult access to sources. Largely shaped by these constraints, the thesis contributes to ongoing debates on the importance of ensuring a more democratic and transparent access to contemporary sources.

Keywords: World War II, Luxembourg, “forced conscription”, desertion and draft evasion, *Absiedlung*, *Sippenhaftung*, archive accessibility

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*“Si tu sais méditer, observer et connaître,
Sans jamais devenir sceptique ou destructeur,
Rêver, mais sans laisser ton rêve être ton maître,
Penser sans n’être qu’un penseur;
Si tu peux être dur sans jamais être en rage,
Si tu peux être brave et jamais imprudent,
Si tu sais être bon, si tu sais être sage,
Sans être moral ni pédant.”*

(Extract from the French translation of the poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling, translated by André Maurois.¹)

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¹ Rudyard Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1910).

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(The figures from the individual articles are not represented in this list.)

List of Abbreviations

ANLux - Archives nationales du Luxembourg
ARBED - Aciéries Réunies de Burbach-Eich-Dudelange
BArch - Bundesarchiv
BNL - Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg
CDREF - Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur l'Enrôlement forcé
CDRR - Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Résistance
CdZ - Chef der Zivilverwaltung
CET - Comité d'encadrement de thèse
CNL - Centre national de littérature
DAF - Deutsche Arbeitsfront
DSHSS - Doctoral School for Humanities and Social Sciences
DUT - Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhandgesellschaft
EKL - Einsatzkommando Luxembourg
FEDEF - Fédération des Enrôlés de Force
FNR - Fonds National de la Recherche
GDPR / RGPD - European General Data Protection Regulation
KZ - Konzentrationslager
LPPD - Ligue luxembourgeoise des prisonniers et déportés politiques
MNRDH - Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains
NSDAP - Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
NSV - Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt
OKW - Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
POW - Prisoner of War
RAD - Reichsarbeitsdienst
RKF - Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums
RSHA - Reichssicherheitshauptamt
RM - Reichsmark
TBP - Thesis by Publication
VdB - Volksdeutsche Bewegung
VoMi - Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle
WASSt - Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1. Introduction

30 August 1942. This date marks a pivotal moment in the history and memory of the Second World War in Luxembourg, one whose consequences are central to this research. On this day, alongside the regions of Alsace and Lorraine, the German civil occupation regime in Luxembourg (*Zivilverwaltung* – CdZ), headed by the *Gauleiter* of the Koblenz-Trier administrative division, Gustav Simon (1900–1945), announced the introduction of compulsory military service for Luxembourgish men born between 1920 and 1924.² The law was later extended to men born between 1925 and 1927.³ Conscription was preceded by six months of mandatory labour service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst* – RAD) during which the young men received paramilitary training and were assigned to various types of work within Germany, often near the Eastern Front.⁴ Labour service had already been introduced on 23 May 1941 for young Luxembourgish men and women between the ages of 17 and 25.⁵ Although the statistics vary and need to be considered with caution owing to the potential for conscious or unconscious bias, it is estimated that out of a total population of 293,000 people, over 11,000 young men were “forcibly conscripted” to the RAD and the Wehrmacht.⁶ Approximately 3,000 of them were killed in action or went missing, while 3,500 others deserted or evaded conscription.⁷

The introduction of conscription was in line with the National Socialist regime’s broader policy to incorporate Luxembourg into the German Reich and “re-Germanise” its population, considered to be of “Germanic” ethnicity.⁸ Gustav Simon clarified this as follows in a speech to the leadership of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung* (VdB), a Luxembourgish National Socialist organisation, in September 1942: “Blood must [stay] with blood, what is German must ultimately be united into

² Verordnung über die Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg vom 30. August 1942 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 31 August 1942, 253.

³ Anordnung über Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1925 vom 25. März 1943 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 27 March 1943, 44; Anordnung über Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1926 vom 8. Dezember 1943 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 11 December 1943, 272; Anordnung über Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1927 vom 14. Juli 1944 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 14 July 1944, 105.

⁴ Peter M. Quadflieg, “Zwangssoldaten” und “Ons Jongen”. *Eupen-Malmedy und Luxemburg als Rekrutierungsgebiet der Deutschen Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Aachener Studien Zur Wirtschafts- Und Sozialgeschichte 5 (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2008), 110.

⁵ Verordnung über die Reichsarbeitsdienstpflicht in Luxemburg vom 23. Mai 1941 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 6 June 1941, 232.

⁶ The ambiguity of the statistics regarding “forced conscriptions” is due to numerous factors, including significant differences in the original sources that were used, the unclear and diverse selection criteria during the compilation of the statistics – certain individuals were for example counted in multiple municipalities – and the influence of the post-war patriotic narrative, which led to certain figures being presented differently. The importance of exercising caution when handling this data was also discussed during the Warlux workshop on 14 October 2021; see Nina Janz, “Workshop report: Zwangssoldaten, Malgré-Nous, Zwangsrekrutiert? – Terms, Numbers and Statistics”, *C²DH*, accessed on 11 October 2024 (https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/fr/thinking/workshop-report-zwangssoldaten-malgre-nous-zwangstrekrutiert-terms-numbers-and-statistics#footnoteref1_mw9uqps); Georges Als, “La deuxième guerre mondiale et l’évolution de la population luxembourgeoise (1940-73)”, *Bulletin du Statec*, XIX, 9 (1973), 294–295 and 298; Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe: die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940-1945* (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1985), 177–178.

⁷ It is estimated that around 3,614 women were forcibly conscripted to the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*; Als, “La deuxième guerre mondiale et l’évolution de la population luxembourgeoise (1940-73)”, *op.cit.*, 295.

⁸ Norbert Haase, “Von ‘Ons Jongen’, ‘Malgré-Nous’ und anderen. Das Schicksal der ausländischen Zwangsrekrutierten im Zweiten Weltkrieg.” in *Die anderen Soldaten: Wehrkraftersetzung, Gehorsamsverweigerung und Fahnenflucht im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, edited by Norbert Haase and Paul Gerhard (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), 168; see also Sarah Maya Vercruysse and Nina Janz, “The “long arm” of the military justice of the Wehrmacht – A case study on Luxembourgish desertions”, due to be published in *Military Justice in Modern History: The Adjudication of War and Violence in a Globalizing World*, edited by Kelly Maddox, Tino Scholz and Urs Matthias Zachmann (Berlin: De Gruyter, [2025]), 3.

one large German state, even if it was once independent for 100 years”.⁹ In the same speech, delivered in the wake of major protests against the introduction of military service across the country – followed by severe retaliatory measures from the German authorities – he further stated:

“Young Luxembourgers are very much like a person who is being taught to swim. He stands before the deep water and is afraid of the wet element because he has never been in it. In the end, the swimming instructor has no choice but to give him a push and throw him in. He then takes him aside and lets him practise, and after he has been in a few times, he can swim, moves confidently in the water, and ends up being passionately enthusiastic about this new sport. It will be the same with compulsory military service. Once these young people have been trained for three months, we will let them go on leave, and you will hear and see how proud they are that they were allowed to become soldiers of the greatest and proudest armed forces on earth.”¹⁰

The Gauleiter’s predictions were, however, not borne out. Resistance to conscription persisted among the population, with a notable increase in the number of desertions and draft evasions from mid-1943 onwards. Those who fled were believed to receive help and support from relatives and other locals, prompting the German authorities to intensify their focus on the latter.

1.1. Research focus and research questions

This PhD thesis investigates the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of Luxembourgish labour service recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers, and more particularly the repressive actions taken by the National Socialist authorities against them. The history of “forced conscription” holds a central place in Luxembourg’s collective memory and historiography because of the large number of citizens affected. Despite the need for further scholarly investigation into the individual experiences, narratives and decisions of enrolled men, little attention has so far been given to the impact of conscription on the lives of the individuals they were compelled to leave behind: their families.

Given this substantial research gap, numerous aspects concerning the lives and coping mechanisms of these families and local communities remain unexplored.¹¹ How did communities manage to function in the absence of those who were recruited? What categories can be formulated to elucidate the emergence of new roles and survival strategies? Did conscription

⁹ “Blut muss zu Blut, was deutsch ist, muss endlich in einen großen deutschen Staat zusammengefasst werden, auch wenn es einmal 100 Jahre unabhängig gewesen ist.” Quotation from Gustav Simon’s speech to the leadership of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung* in Luxembourg, 13 September 1942, Archives nationales du Luxembourg (ANLux), CdG-003.

¹⁰ “Die jungen Luxemburger gleichen sehr einem Menschen, dem das Schwimmen beigebracht werden soll, er steht vor dem tiefen Wasser und hat Angst vor dem nassen Element, weil er nie drin gewesen ist. Es bleibt zum Schluss dem Schwimmmeister nichts anderes übrig, als ihm einen Stoss zu geben und ihn hineinzuworfen, er nimmt ihn dann an die Angel und lässt ihn üben, und wenn er ein paar mal drin gewesen ist, kann er schwimmen, bewegt sich sicher in den feuchten Element und ist schließlich leidenschaftlich begeistert von diesem neuen Sport. So wird es auch sein mit der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht, wenn diese jungen Jahrgänge einmal drei Monate ausgebildet sind, lassen wir sie in Urlaub kommen und sie werden hören und sehen, wie stolz diese jungen Menschen sind, dass sie Soldaten der grössten und stolzesten Wehrmacht der Erde werden durften.” Quotation from Gustav Simon’s speech to the leadership of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung* in Luxembourg, 13 September 1942, ANLux, CdG-003.

¹¹ Juliane Tatarinov, Nina Janz, Denis Scuto, and Lars Wieneke, “WARLUX: Soldiers and Their Communities in WWII: The Impact and Legacy of War Experiences in Luxembourg.” FNR CORE research project application form (unpublished). Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR), 2019, 30-31.

have an impact on the role and position of women in society? What economic repercussions did enrolments have on relatives? In a first attempt to fill this gap, this doctoral research initially focused on the diverse forms of assistance and repression employed by the National Socialist administration towards these families. The objective was to examine whether there were variations in treatment and whether any patterns or categories of families could be discerned. Subsequently, in light of the available source material and considerations about the feasibility of the research due to unforeseen developments that will be discussed further throughout this chapter, the focus was moved to the punitive measures implemented by the National Socialist administration in dealing with the families of deserters and draft evaders in particular. This shift further resulted in the PhD evolving into a cumulative thesis composed of four articles.

Three primary research questions have guided this investigation: What consequences did desertion and draft evasion have on the immediate family members of Luxembourg labour service recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers? What role and influence did the various levels and spheres of power exert in the punishment of these families and how did they interact? To what extent were the repressive measures influenced by and adapted to the broader ethnic policies of the National Socialist regime? The study also addresses the post-war categorisations of these families as, on the one hand, in both national and international literature, these families were considered victims of “family liability” or *Sippenhaftung*, a practice used by the National Socialist regime to hold an entire family or group collectively responsible or liable for the actions of one of its members.¹² On the other hand, in Luxembourg post-war narrative, they were also portrayed as a homogeneous group that unanimously resisted the Nazi occupier by helping their deserter relatives. Although sometimes used simultaneously in the existing literature, these two narratives and categorisations are contradictory and incompatible, implying on the one hand innocence and on the other resistance. Can these categories therefore be used effectively? Or should they be reviewed?

The study builds further on the existing literature and complements aspects that have not yet been developed. It seeks to inform international academic debates on the topic by integrating the Luxembourg case, which has so far been largely overlooked. Furthermore, as indicated above, it aims to provide a scientific foundation and add nuance to existing, sometimes oversimplified, national discourses. For instance, as will be demonstrated in the following section, the current knowledge in the country on the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on families has thus far been limited to one of the measures, namely forced resettlements (*Absiedlung*). Although this was indeed central, other aspects, such as dispossession, have thereby been overlooked. In addition, existing interpretations have been influenced by the post-war national narrative, developed and closely guarded by victim associations, which sought to portray “forced conscripts” as heroes and later as victims and martyrs.¹³ Desertion was presented as a general heroic intention of *the* “forced conscripts”. The decision not to desert was justified as an act of resistance and patriotism aimed at protecting the family and wider population from what was

¹² Matthias Weidemann, *Geschichte der Sippenhaftung: Das Einstehenmüssen von Verwandten* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002), 4–5; Johannes Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes: ideologische Grundlagen, Umsetzung, Wirkung*. Schriftenreihe der Forschungsgemeinschaft 20. Juli 1944 e.V 20 (Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2015), 47–48.

¹³ Eva Maria Klos, “Umkämpfte Erinnerungen. Die Zwangsrekrutierung im Zweiten Weltkrieg in den Erinnerungskulturen Luxemburgs, Ostbelgiens und des Elsass (1944–2015)” (PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg and Universität Trier, 2017), 7, 9 and 12.

believed to be an inevitable retaliation.¹⁴ This aspect was also very present in the multiple discussions held over the course of this research with the descendants of conscripts, and is exemplified by the reaction of the *Fédération des Enrôlés de Force* to an article in the newspaper *The Sun* regarding Jean-Claude Juncker's father, who was also forced to fight in the Wehrmacht:

"We firmly denounce the idea that forcibly enrolled Luxembourgers fought for Hitler and therefore supported Nazi ideology. What is certain, however, is that they sacrificed themselves so that their families would not be deported. They were certainly not Nazi sympathisers."¹⁵

As part of the effort to enhance scholarly and political discussions and deepen the understanding of the Second World War in Luxembourg, it also became evident during the research that a critical analysis of the challenging circumstances within which historical research on this period is conducted in the country was essential. For several decades researchers have encountered and reported a multitude of obstacles and difficulties, predominantly concerning the accessibility of sources. Persistent – even growing – challenges have also significantly influenced this study and are consequently critically examined throughout the thesis.

In light of the German and Luxembourg legislation on archives, the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the agreements made with the Luxembourg National Archives (ANLux), the majority of the names and data in this manuscript are pseudonymised.¹⁶ Full names are provided in instances where the individual in question was a public figure or where permission was granted for their inclusion.

1.2. The Warlux project

The doctoral research forms part of the FNR CORE project "WARLUX: Soldiers and their communities in WWII: The impact and legacy of war experiences in Luxembourg". This project was funded by the Luxembourg National Research Fund (*Fonds National de la Recherche* – FNR) and conducted at the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) between March 2020 and March 2024. It was overseen by Professor Denis Scuto, who was also the principal supervisor of the PhD thesis.

The project was a collaborative effort involving three researchers: one postdoctoral researcher and two doctoral researchers. Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, emergency funding was received from the FNR to hire a Ukrainian scientist who would collect testimonies from Ukrainian refugees in Luxembourg. This research ran parallel to the main project. Midway through the project, one of the doctoral researchers chose to conclude their contract.

¹⁴ Ibid., 69, 345-346 and 349.

¹⁵ "Nous dénonçons avec fermeté l'idée selon laquelle les Luxembourgeois enrôlés de force ont combattu pour Hitler et ont donc soutenu l'idéologie nazie. Ce qui est sûr, par contre, c'est qu'ils se sont sacrifiés pour que leurs familles ne soient pas déportées. Ils n'étaient certainement pas des sympathisants nazis." Quotation from "Les enrôlés de force n'étaient pas des nazis", *L'Essentiel*, 30 June 2014 (<http://www.lesessentiel.lu/fr/news/story/13660389?redirect=mobi>); Klos, "Umkämpfte Erinnerungen," *op.cit.*, 48–49.

¹⁶ Loi du 17 août 2018 sur l'archivage [...], accessed on 1 October 2024 (<https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2018/08/17/a706/jo>); Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), accessed on 16 October 2024 (<https://gdpr-info.eu/>).

Subsequently, another researcher was brought on board but departed shortly thereafter, necessitating a readjustment of the planned tasks among the two remaining researchers. Following the contract termination of Dr Nina Janz, the postdoctoral team member, prior to the project's completion, the doctoral researcher of this study took on the responsibility of finalising the project. These unforeseen changes in the team, as well as the significant investment of the doctoral researcher at project level, contributed to the aforementioned modification of the research focus of the doctoral study.

Aligned with the aims of the doctoral study, Warlux was designed to provide a critical examination of the established narratives in Luxembourg's historical discourse regarding "forced conscripts", in order to foster "a self-awareness of the country's complex role in WWII".¹⁷ In the previously mentioned societal master narrative, this group is regarded as a united, homogeneous social entity, categorised in binary terms such as "forced recruit", "volunteer", "deserter" or "draft evader".¹⁸ These concepts emphasise a dichotomy of "good" and "evil", guilt and innocence, excluding the more complex realities of individual situations. As Philippe Joutard rightly observes, it is the historian's task not to question the past in terms of the present – or rather the needs of the present – but from the context in which it happened.¹⁹ By looking at the personal wartime experiences of those involved and giving room to their individual stories, motivations, reactions, choices, scopes of action and coping strategies, the project aimed to challenge standardised categories and bring to light the multiplicity and diversity of war experiences in the country. The experiences of conscripts and volunteers from the industrial town of Schiffange in the south of Luxembourg were specifically explored as a case study. This micro-historical, bottom-up approach also aligns with international historiographical trends in which greater focus is placed on the day-to-day life of "ordinary" people and communities (*Alltagsgeschichte*).²⁰

The project has numerous outcomes. An overview can be found on the project website (<https://warlux.uni.lu/>), which outlines the research activities, collected data, organised events, outreach activities, publications and key findings. In addition to this website, three other outcomes deserve a separate mention here.

In February 2021, the team launched a call for contributions through various national media outlets with the aim of collecting ego-documents from the young men and families affected by conscription. This call was followed by a nationwide crowdsourcing campaign during which the researchers, with approval of the University of Luxembourg's Ethics Review Panel and the help of two student assistants, visited the families, selected and digitised the documents, and prepared them for further research. The files were carefully inventoried and work began on transcribing them. Every contributor signed an agreement with the University setting out the

¹⁷ Juliane Tatarinov, Nina Janz, Denis Scuto, and Lars Wieneke, "WARLUX: Soldiers and Their Communities in WWII: The Impact and Legacy of War Experiences in Luxembourg." FNR CORE research project application form (unpublished). Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR), 2019, 11; "2023 Annual Report: Researching Luxembourg soldiers and their communities in World War II – WARLUX", *C²DH*, 2024, accessed on 16 October 2024 (<https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/report/2023/warlux>).

¹⁸ Klos, "Umkämpfte Erinnerungen," *op.cit.*, 125.

¹⁹ Philippe Joutard, *Histoire et mémoires, conflits et alliances* (Paris: La Découverte, 2015), 16.

²⁰ Detlef Vogel and Wolfram Wette, "Einleitung," in *Andere Helme – andere Menschen? : Heimerfahrung und Frontalltag im Zweiten Weltkrieg : ein internationaler Vergleich*, edited by Detlef Vogel and Wolfram Wette (Essen: Klartext, 1995), 7; Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

terms of use of the data in accordance with the GDPR and the Luxembourg data protection law. This campaign led to the creation of a unique digital collection containing over 5,000 (*Feldpost*) letters, 20 diaries, memoirs and photographs. The collection remains under the supervision of the C²DH and has also been made available to other university researchers and students. A detailed account of the entire process can be found in Nina Janz's article: *The participatory aspect of creating a collection on WWII*.²¹

Over the four years, the team also constructed a detailed relational database in order to structure and analyse the data collected during the research.²² This database includes information on the biographies and war trajectories of over 304 enrolled young men from Schiffange and of 263 family units that could be linked to them. It also contains a detailed inventory of the digital war letter collection, as well as 163 transcribed letters. For data protection reasons this database cannot currently be made public. A condensed version is, however, available on the aforementioned website. The methodology chapter of this thesis elaborates further on the structure and use of this database in the study.

In addition to several workshops, the researchers organised an international conference, "The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)", on 26-28 October 2022. During this conference the experiences of non-German nationals in the German armed forces and labour organisations were discussed, as well as the use of biographical sources to study these soldiers' war experiences.²³ The conference proceedings have been published by De Gruyter in December 2024.²⁴

2. Literature review and research gaps

The consequences of draft evasion and desertion on families of non-German labour service recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers, as well as their forced resettlements, has to some extent been addressed in previous studies. The following chapter will provide an overview of the current state of research by looking separately at the Luxembourg and international literature. The international literature section will specifically review works focusing on the military and desertion, as well as on Nazi Germany's ethnic and resettlement policies in occupied territories.

²¹ Nina Janz, "The participatory aspect of creating a collection on WWII: Collecting ego-documents from Luxembourgish recruits and their families." *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics*, XXV, 2 (2023), 81-103.

²² More information on the database can also be found in: Nina Janz, "Mapping biographies in a Relational Database. Biographies of Luxembourgish soldiers in the Second World War" in *Biographical Data in a Digital World 2022*, edited by Eero Hyvönen et. al. (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2024).

²³ Sarah Maya Vercruysee, "Conference report – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)", *H-Soz-Kult*, accessed on 16 October 2024 (<https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/fdkn-135744>).

²⁴ Nina Janz and Denis Scuto, eds., *The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024).

The historiography on the occupation of Luxembourg and the “forced conscriptions” in the country has already been thoroughly documented in a wealth of recent publications.²⁵ Consequently, this chapter will not revisit these topics, and focuses on contributions that offer analytical or argumentative value. Nonetheless, these broader studies, whether explicitly mentioned here or not, played a significant role in shaping the researcher’s comprehension of Luxembourg’s wartime situation.²⁶ Additionally, the literature on Luxembourg’s national narrative and memory culture related to the Second World War has been separately addressed in the fourth article of the thesis.

2.1. Luxembourg historiography

This doctoral research represents the first investigation in Luxembourg historiography that focuses on the families of soldiers and recruits as a distinct group of actors. While such a specific angle has not been the subject of extensive study in the existing literature, previous research has provided valuable insights into various aspects of these families’ wartime experiences. The investigation expands upon this pre-existing knowledge base. The existing body of research predominantly dealt with the effects of desertion and draft evasion on families through the lens of forced resettlements, grouping the families of deserters and draft evaders with all individuals subjected to forced resettlement. As a result, the historiographical overview presented here primarily addresses this particular aspect.

The literature can be classified into three main categories. These align with the specific research focus of the respective works. The first, and most extensive, category consists of studies focusing on broader aspects of the occupation of Luxembourg in which the subject is addressed in dedicated subsections or as brief mentions. The second category includes studies that focus entirely on the forced resettlements. The third category encompasses literature that addresses specifically the “forced conscriptions”.

In the broad corpus of literature dealing with the occupation of Luxembourg, Paul Dostert’s doctoral study from 1985 on German occupation politics in the region stands as the first academic exploration of the consequences of desertion, draft evasion and forced resettlements.²⁷ Compared to previous publications which are mostly based on personal experiences of witnesses, this study is founded on an extensive examination of administrative documents from

²⁵ For extensive historiographies on the Second World War in Luxembourg, please consult Marc Schoentgen, *Arbeiten unter Hitler: NS-Sozialpolitik, Deutsche Arbeitsfront und Herrschaftspraxis im besetzten Luxemburg am Beispiel der Schwerindustrie 1940-1944*, *Études luxembourgeoises / Luxembourg-Studien* 16 (Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2021); Vincent Artuso, *La collaboration au Luxembourg durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, 1940-1945: accommodation, adaptation, assimilation*, *Études luxembourgeoises / Luxembourg-Studien* 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2013); Denis Scuto, “Mémoire et histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg: réflexions sur une cohabitation difficile” *Hémécht: Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte* 58, 4 (2006), 499–513; Benoît Majerus, “Besetzte Vergangenheiten - Erinnerungskulturen an den Zweiten Weltkrieg in Luxemburg — eine historiografische Baustelle,” *Hémécht: Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte - Revue d'Histoire Luxembourgeoise* 64, no. 3 (2012), 23–43.

For an overview of the existing literature on “forced conscriptions” and their memory culture in Luxembourg, please consult Klos, “Umkämpfte Erinnerungen”, *op.cit.*

A comprehensive overview of literature on resistance was provided by Elisabeth Hoffmann in her PhD thesis Elisabeth Hoffmann, “La mémoire de la ‘Résistance’ au prisme d’une histoire comparée des associations d’anciens résistants du Luxembourg, de l’Alsace, de la Moselle et de la Belgique de l’Est (1944-2017)” (PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg and Université de Lorraine, 2018).

²⁶ These publications are included in the bibliography at the end of this manuscript.

²⁷ Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, *op.cit.*

Luxembourgish and German archives, supplemented by international literature. Although it is not the central focus of his investigation, Dostert intermittently addresses the subject across three chapters: in the context of the broader ethnic policy of the Luxembourg civil administration, in relation to the imposition of military service and strategies to deter draft evasion, and as a general measure to exclude undesirable population groups. Although the author provides intriguing specifics on certain events, his analysis maintains a broad perspective with a Luxembourg-centric view. Subsequent scholars have made significant use of this study's findings, either basing their analysis entirely on it, such as Matthias Wallerang in 1997, or building further upon it with additional source material.²⁸ This work remains to this day a fundamental reference for studies on the occupation period and forced resettlements in Luxembourg.

The forced resettlements are also discussed in dedicated chapters in various edited volumes on the occupation period. To mark the 70th anniversary of the introduction of compulsory military service in Luxembourg, the *Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Rheinland-Pfalz* organised a symposium on the topic *The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg under German occupation 1940 to 1945*. In the connected volume published in 2013, Marc Gloden, a former researcher at the Luxembourg *Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Résistance* (CDRR), provides a comprehensive summary of forced resettlements and the corresponding dispossessions based on the existing literature.²⁹ The focus remains on the measure as part of the occupation policy and the collective experience of all resettled individuals rather than specifically the families of deserters and draft evaders. Contrary to what might be expected, Norbert Franz's contribution on "forced conscriptions" in this volume does not address desertions or their consequences.³⁰ In the 2021 edited volume of the *Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains* (MNRDH), which provides an overview of the state of historical research on the Second World War in Luxembourg, Marc Gloden reworked his synthesis, incorporating some additional details while preserving the same approach and core insights.³¹ In her chapter on the deportation of Luxembourgish women to the Flußbach and Ravensbrück concentration camps, Lena Haase addresses a different aspect.³² She includes figures of women who were deported to these camps for aiding and abetting desertion, a perspective that differs from the dominant one.

Nevertheless, a substantial part of this group of literature briefly alludes to the consequences of desertion and draft evasion from the perspective of forced resettlements, each time departing from the main research focus. These references, though concise, offer insightful information that

²⁸ Mathias Wallerang, *Luxemburg unter nationalsozialistischer Besatzung: Luxemburger berichten* (Mainz: Gesellschaft für Volkskunde in Rheinland-Pfalz, 1997).

²⁹ Marc Gloden, "Die Umsiedlung luxemburgischer Staatsangehöriger ins Reich 1942-1945," in *Das Großherzogtum Luxemburg unter deutscher Besatzung: Fachtagung, 10. Mai 2012*, edited by Dieter Schiffmann (Mainz: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Rheinland-Pfalz, 2013), 36–54.

³⁰ Norbert Franz, "Die Zwangsrekrutierung für Wehrmacht und Reichsarbeitsdienst in Luxemburg - ein NS-spezifisches Unrecht?," in *Das Großherzogtum Luxemburg unter deutscher Besatzung: Fachtagung, 10. Mai 2012*, edited by Dieter Schiffmann (Mainz: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Rheinland-Pfalz, 2013), 56–75.

³¹ Marc Gloden, "Zur 'Wiedereindeutschung' ins Reich: die Umsiedlungen von 1942-1945 - Une rééducation au cœur du Reich: les transplantations de 1942 à 1945," in *Le Luxembourg et le Troisième Reich: un état des lieux - Luxembourg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 620–633.

³² Lena Haase, "Verfolgung – Verhaftung – Verschleppung. Die Deportation von Luxemburgerinnen nach Flußbach und Ravensbrück," in *Le Luxembourg et le troisième Reich: un état des lieux - Luxembourg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 648–663.

this research has been able to build upon. It is notable that the majority of these studies originate from Master's dissertations and PhD theses, which may or may not be published.

Benoît Majerus, Nadine Geisler and Vincent Artuso, each shortly address forced resettlements in their studies on local administrations and collaboration during the war. While Benoît Majerus' 1999 dissertation examines the role and collaboration of the local group leaders (*Ortsgruppenleiter*) of the VdB based on a detailed analysis of post-war investigations and trial records against collaborators and war criminals, Nadine Geisler's 2004 dissertation briefly focuses on the role of the higher administrative level of district leaders (*Kreisleiter*).³³ Vincent Artuso's PhD thesis on collaboration raises the topic specifically within the context of military service and high desertion rates, exploring the role of collaborators in denouncing families and searching for deserters.³⁴ In addition, Marc Schoentgen points in his PhD thesis to the position of the ARBED steel company and members of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAF), while Elisabeth Hoffmann contextualises the topic within the postwar era and the representation of forcibly resettled families within the resistance association *Ligue luxembourgeoise des prisonniers et déportés politiques* (LPPD).³⁵ Marie-Paule Jungblut and Fabio Spirinelli both briefly address the specific aspect of the confiscation of assets of the forcibly resettled within the framework of their respective research on the *Landesmuseum* – the State Museum in Luxembourg which was renamed during the occupation – and its collaboration with the *Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhandgesellschaft* (DUT), the private company responsible for handling the assets of all forcibly resettled individuals within the Reich.³⁶

In addition to studies dealing with the occupation, certain published works focus entirely on forced resettlements. As mentioned at the start of this review, the majority of this literature consists of books and testimonies written by people who experienced resettlement themselves and articles published in newspapers and smaller magazines.³⁷ In the vast corpus of published and unpublished memoirs authored by affected individuals and their relatives, many of whom were related to deserters or draft evaders, the focus is generally on their experiences during resettlement, with little detail about the preceding processes.³⁸ The works of contemporary

³³ Benoît Majerus, "Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction...: les degrés de l'implication dans la collaboration avec l'Allemagne nationale-socialiste à travers l'exemple des Ortsgruppenleiter luxembourgeois" (dissertation, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1999); Nadine Geisler, "Les Kreisleiter au Luxembourg pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale" (Master dissertation, Université de Nancy II, 2004); she also contributed an article based on her Master dissertation in the aforementioned edited volume of the *Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains* (MNRDH); Nadine Geisler, "Les Kreisleiter au Luxembourg pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale," in *Le Luxembourg et le troisième Reich : un état des lieux - Luxembourg und das Dritte Reich : eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 230–243.

³⁴ Artuso, *La collaboration au Luxembourg durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, 1940-1945*, *op.cit.*.

³⁵ Schoentgen, *Arbeiten unter Hitler*, *op.cit.*; Hoffmann, "La mémoire de la 'Résistance' au prisme d'une histoire comparée des associations d'anciens résistants du Luxembourg, de l'Alsace, de la Moselle et de la Belgique de l'Est (1944-2017)", *op.cit.*.

³⁶ Marie-Paule Jungblut, "La spoliation des biens culturels au Luxembourg: le Landesmuseum Luxembourg pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale," in *Des musées au-dessus de tout soupçon*, edited by André Gob (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007), 206, 210 and 212; Fabio Spirinelli, "Staging the Nation in an Intermediate Space: Cultural Policy in Luxembourg and the State Museums (1918–1974)" (PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg, 2020), 393–394.

³⁷ Isabelle Medinger, "Die schwere Entscheidung, das Land nicht zu verraten : Zwangsrekrutierung und Deportation." *Tageblatt*, 104 (6 -7 May 1995), 8; Émile Dennewald, "Aus der Kinderperspektive: Umsiedlung einmal anders." *Letzburger Sonndesblad*, 120: 35-41 (1987), No. 35, 6; No. 36, 13; No. 37, 13; No. 38, 13; No. 39, 15; No. 40, 15; No. 41, 14; Émile Krier, "Deutsche Umsiedlungspolitik in Luxemburg." *Luxemburger Wort*, 145, 214 (17 September 1992), 6; Association des déportés politiques, *Émsidlung ("Um-/Absiedlung") zu Lëtzebuerg: 1942-1945 : de Programm vun der massiver Nazi-Deportatioun fir Lëtzebuergger Familien* (Luxembourg: Association des déportés politiques - Amicale vun den Emgesidelten, 1989).

³⁸ Marc Trossen, "Verluere Joëren": *85 Luxemburger Zeitzeugen des Zweiten Weltkriegs berichten : Zwangsrekrutierte, Refraktäre, Deserteure, Resistenzler, aber auch Kollaborateure, Kriegsfreiwillige...*, 4 vols. (Luxembourg: Les Amis de l'Histoire, 2015); Aimé Knepper, *Les réfractaires dans*

witnesses Evy Friedrich and Marie-Madeleine Schiltges, both published in the late 1980s, are distinct in nature and hold a specific place in the historiography as they contain a more detailed investigation, including copies of original sources as well as an unprecedented comprehensive overview of each individual resettlement camp.³⁹ Building upon the lists from the *Livre d'Or de la Résistance Luxembourgeoise de 1940-1945*, which was published in 1952, these books also offer comprehensive name registries of the individuals who were resettled.⁴⁰ Daily experiences during resettlement were also at the centre of Liz Braun's 2015 Master's dissertation on the resettlement camps of Leubus and Schreckenstein and Jeff Schmitz's contribution to the 2020 exhibition catalogue of the *Centre national de littérature* (CNL) regarding literary and intellectual life in Luxembourg during the Second World War.⁴¹

The most prominent work in this regard, is Gilles Kartheiser's book from 2013, which is based on his 2010 Master's dissertation.⁴² With the aim of bringing this group of war victims out of a certain oblivion within Luxembourgish historiography, he made a first detailed analysis of their history, drawing from national and international literature as well as oral history accounts and Luxembourgish sources. Considering the forcibly resettled as part of the resistance, he made a numerical and demographic analysis of this group as a collective unit. Relying on information found in multiple sources, including both original transport lists and previously published lists – such as those of the earlier mentioned *Livre d'Or* and the works of Evy Friedrich and Marie-Madeleine Schiltges – he created a detailed registry of 4,165 forcibly resettled individuals with their transportation details. He also provided an overview of experiences during resettlement based on oral testimonies. Although the lists and analysis contain many gaps, this research laid a foundation for further studies.⁴³ Together with the work of Paul Dostert – and to a certain extent also the works of Evy Friedrich and Marie-Madeleine Schiltges – this book is regarded as one of the country's fundamental references on the subject.

While the aforementioned studies do consider forced resettlement in the context of the growing number of desertions and draft evasions, only very few specifically examine it within the military context of “forced conscription”. However, even in these investigations, the analysis tends to be concise and focused on specific research angles, as exemplified by the contributions of André

les bunkers (Luxembourg: Éditions Saint-Paul, 2004); Warlux Digital Collection, Collection L.N. : d'Émsiedlung vun der Famill Streicher-Hoffmann vun Aasselbur; Warlux Digital Collection, Collection M.W. : Oemsiedlungsgeschicht.

³⁹ Marie-Madeleine Schiltges, *Die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg 1942-1945* (Ettelbruck: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1988); Evy Friedrich, *Als Luxemburg entvölkert werden sollte: Geschichten und Geschichte der Umsiedlung (1942-1945)* (Luxemburg: Kripler-Muller, 1987).

⁴⁰ Nicolas Bosseler and Raymond Steichen, eds., *Livre d'or de la Résistance luxembourgeoise de 1940-1945* (Esch-sur-Alzette: H.Ney-Eicher, 1952).

⁴¹ Liz Braun, “Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien während des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Das Leben in den Umsiedlungslagern anhand der Lager Leubus und Schreckenstein” (Master dissertation, University of Luxembourg, 2014); Jeff Schmitz, “Das Trauma der Umsiedlung und sein Niederschlag in der Luxemburger Erinnerungsliteratur am Beispiel des Lagers Schreckenstein,” in *Luxemburg und der Zweite Weltkrieg: literarisch-intellektuelles Leben zwischen Machtergreifung und Epuration*, edited by Claude D. Conter (Mersch: Centre national de littérature, 2020), 427–471.

⁴² Gilles Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942-1945: von der numerischen und namentlichen Erfassung bis zur Beschreibung des Lagerlebens anhand von Zeitzeugenberichten* (Saarbrücken: AV Akademikerverlag, 2013); “Rapports de recherche / Forschungsberichte,” *Hémecht: Revue d'histoire luxembourgeoise. Zeitschrift für luxemburger Geschichte* 64 (2012), 110–112.

⁴³ The doctoral researcher expresses her gratitude to Gilles Kartheiser for sharing part of his quantitative data, which was a tremendous help in the initial stages of this research. Although very valuable, this register could only be used to a certain extent in this study as it contains many gaps. For instance, certain transports and names of individuals examined in this research were not included. It also lacks information on subsequent transports of families to other camps after their initial relocation. Furthermore, for certain families there was an indication if they were related to a deserter or draft evader. However, no distinction was made between deserters and draft evaders, as they were all labelled “*Refraktäre*”, meaning draft evaders. For various families this notification was also missing.

Hohengarten.⁴⁴ In his innovative analysis of the military service and desertions of young men from Eupen-Malmédy and Luxembourg, Peter Quadflieg also refers to the punitive measure of forced resettlement imposed on the families of deserters.⁴⁵ For this analysis, he employs some military documents but primarily relies on the work of Dostert. In contrast, Eva Maria Klos' doctoral research intermittently addresses the topic throughout her work in relation to the postwar memory culture surrounding "forced recruits".⁴⁶

It is evident that in Luxembourgish historiography, since research on the topic began in the 1980s, the repressive measures taken against the families of deserters and draft evaders have been incorporated into research on the broader resettlement policy targeting "unreliable" individuals, without taking into account the specific situations in which these families found themselves. Various other aspects such as the investigations conducted at deserters' residences, interrogations of their families, deportation to concentration camps of those sentenced for participating in desertion, and the financial and social consequences of desertion, are rarely or never addressed. In addition, the analysis of forced resettlements often lacks depth and is characterised by repetitive narratives that draw from previous publications and similar sources. Aspects such as the roles of different levels of authority, the multiple organisations involved, and the specifics of dispossessions remain underexplored. Moreover, the studies centre on Luxembourg without situating the experiences of deserter families in a global context, an approach more commonly found in international studies.

2.2. International historiography

In the international scholarship, and particularly in German literature, the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on families, as well as the forced resettlement of ethnic Germans, have been the subject of numerous publications. These studies mainly offer interesting perspectives on the overarching ideological frameworks and contextual backgrounds. They also examine situations in other annexed or occupied territories such as Austria, South Tyrol and Slovenia. They sometimes even include short references to Luxembourg. The subsequent analysis of international literature is separated in publications on "forced conscription", military justice, desertion and draft evasion which include information about the repercussions on families, and studies on wider Nazi German ethnic and resettlement policies.

Over the past decade, there has been a growing body of research on the "forced conscription" of ethnic Germans into the Wehrmacht. For instance, in 2015, Thomas Grischany examined the integration of Austrian soldiers into the German army.⁴⁷ Similarly, Ryszard Kaczmarek studied the complex perspectives and relationships of Polish "forced conscripts" based on ego-documents.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ André Hohengarten, "Die Luxemburger Zwangsrekrutierten," in ... et wor alles net esou einfach : Questions sur le Luxembourg et la Deuxième Guerre mondiale : contributions historiques accompagnant l'exposition, edited by Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg X (Luxembourg: Musée d'histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, 2002), 244–257; André Hohengarten, "Die Zwangsrekrutierung der Luxemburger in die deutsche Wehrmacht – Dossier: eine Arbeitsmappe", *Histoire & Mémoire. Les cahiers du CDREF* 1 (2010), 1–32.

⁴⁵ Quadflieg, "Zwangssoldaten" und "Ons Jongen". *op.cit.*

⁴⁶ Klos, "Umkämpfte Erinnerungen", *op.cit.*

⁴⁷ Thomas R. Grischany, *Der Ostmark treue Alpensöhne: Die Integration der Österreicher in die großdeutsche Wehrmacht, 1938-45* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015).

⁴⁸ Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Polen in Der Wehrmacht* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017).

Following international conferences focusing on this subject, multiple edited volumes have been published. These works contain interesting comparisons across the occupied and annexed territories, placing the whole in a broader and more complex framework. The 2016 publication *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich: 1939-1945*, published after study days held on 5 and 6 October 2012 at the *Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Homme* in Strasbourg and at the Alsace-Moselle Memorial in Schirmeck, was the first to offer such a comprehensive scientific examination of the phenomenon, including studies on both eastern and western occupied and annexed territories.⁴⁹ The Czech publication by Zdenko Maršálek and Jiří Neminář also includes such an international comparison, but focuses more on the Eastern European regions in Czechoslovakia and Slovenia.⁵⁰ Despite the potential to include the impact of conscriptions and desertions on local communities and families in these publications, the issue remains largely unaddressed, with only brief references to the forced resettlements of deserter families or their deportation to concentration camps. The 2024 Warlux publication on *The impact of war experiences in Europe* aligns with the ongoing trend of comparative studies, featuring for the first time two articles entirely devoted to the repercussions of desertion and draft evasion on local communities and relatives.⁵¹

While the subject is largely overlooked in broader research on “forced conscription”, it has received growing attention in studies focusing on the Nazi military justice system and desertion from the 2000s onwards.⁵² This interest coincides with the growing body of critical research on the Wehrmacht and the military justice system following the German “Wehrmacht exhibition”.⁵³ The first part of this exhibition was displayed in Germany and other German speaking regions in Europe between 1995 and 1999 and the second part between 2001 and 2004. The studies mostly address the broader institutional and bureaucratic processes related to desertion, as well as the repressive measures – encompassed by the term *Sippenhaftung* – imposed on relatives of deserters in other occupied territories, providing valuable insights for comparison.

In the 2003 work, *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz: Urteilspraxis – Strafvollzug – Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich*, Maria Fritsche provides an analysis on how family liability was applied to the

⁴⁹ Frédéric Stroh and Peter M. Quadflieg, *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich: 1939–1945. Die Zwangsrekrutierung in den vom Dritten Reich annektierten Gebieten : 1939–1945* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017).

⁵⁰ Zdenko Maršálek and Jiří Neminář, eds., *Zwangsrekrutierte in die Wehrmacht. Mobilisation – Widerspruch – Widerstand – Gedächtnis in der schlesischen, tschechischen und slowenischen Perspektive* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, v.v.i., 2021).

⁵¹ Sarah Maya Vercruysse, ““Desertion leads to resettlement” – The consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of Luxembourgish soldiers (1942-1945)”, in *The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)*, edited by Nina Janz and Denis Scuto (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024), 241-278; Konrad Graczyk, “Beihilfe zur Fahnenflucht in der Rechtsprechung der deutschen Sondergerichten auf den besetzten Gebieten Polens (1939-1945)”, in *The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)*, edited by Nina Janz and Denis Scuto (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024), 279-301.

⁵² Yet again, not all studies address the topic in detail and many only make cursory references to it as observed in the following publications: Magnus Koch, *Fahnenfluchten: Deserteure der Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg - Lebenswege und Entscheidungen* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008); Christian Hartmann, *Von Feldherren und Gefreiten : Zur biographischen Dimension des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, Zeitgeschichte im Gespräch 2 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2008); Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmachtjustiz 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2005); Hannes Metzler, *Ehrlös für immer? : die Rehabilitierung der Deserteure der Wehrmacht : ein Vergleich von Deutschland und Österreich unter Berücksichtigung von Luxemburg* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2007).

⁵³ For an overview of the recent historiography of the Wehrmacht, the Nazi military justice system and desertion, see Peter Pirker and Kerstin von Lingen, “Einleitung – Deserteure: Neue Forschungen zu Entziehungsformen, Solidarität, Verfolgung und Gedächtnisbildung,” in *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, Krieg in der Geschichte 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023), XI–XXXIV.

families of persecuted Austrian Wehrmacht deserters.⁵⁴ This analysis was part of her larger study on Austrian deserters and draft evaders, which was published a year later. In the book, she delves more deeply into the topic, dedicating an entire chapter to the social environments of deserters.⁵⁵ Her critical analysis of the punitive actions against these families, grounded in military court records and original documents from the German Military High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, OKW), was pioneering and served as a basis for numerous subsequent studies.⁵⁶

In 2006, Norbert Haase examined the strict functioning of the military justice system towards the end of the war.⁵⁷ This included an analysis of the expanded use of family liability, including a reference to Luxembourg, a topic he explored more thoroughly than in his 1991 article on “forced conscriptions”.⁵⁸ Notably, both Maria Fritsche and Norbert Haase situate the application of family liability on families of deserters in the period following the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Hitler of 20 July 1944, when it was more formally institutionalised in the military and used on a larger scale. However, this policy had already been in effect against ethnic German soldiers and their families since 1942.

In his recent work on deserters from the Wehrmacht, Stefan Kurt Treiber employs a distinctive approach, investigating the diverse backgrounds of 999 deserters, their motivations, and the broader implications of their actions.⁵⁹ While briefly mentioning the application of *Sippenhaftung* against the families of Luxembourg and Slovenian deserters, he provides an insightful examination of the financial consequences that had the potential to impact all families of deserters with the termination of their entitlement to *Familienunterhalt*, a type of family support. This connection had previously only rarely been made when discussing the consequences of desertion on families.⁶⁰

Going back to a conference organised by the universities of Innsbruck and Vienna in September 2021, the recently published book *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS: Entziehungsformen, Solidarität, Verfolgung* contributes to the ongoing scholarly dialogue on desertion.⁶¹ It includes three articles that provide more detail on the repercussions of desertion on social environments and families, highlighting the subject’s growing prominence in

⁵⁴ Maria Fritsche, “...haftet die Sippe mit Vermögen, Freiheit oder Leben...”. Die Anwendung der Sippenhaft bei Familien verfolgter Wehrmachtsoldaten,” in *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz. Urteilspraxis – Strafvollzug – Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich*, edited by Walter Manoschek (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2003), 482–491.

⁵⁵ Maria Fritsche, *Entziehungen: Österreichische Deserteure und Selbstverstümmelter in der Deutschen Wehrmacht* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2004).

⁵⁶ To mention just a few: Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmachtjustiz 1933-1945*, *op.cit.*; Metzler, *Ehrlos für immer?*, *op.cit.*; as well as the later discussed works of: Norbert Haase, “Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges,” in *Terror nach Innen. Verbrechen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, edited by Cord Arendes, Edgar Wolfrum, and Jörg Ziedler, *Dachauer Symposien zur Zeitgeschichte* 6 (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2006), 80–102; Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, *op.cit.*; Robert Loeffel, *Family Punishment in Nazi Germany: Sippenhaft, Terror and Myth*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁵⁷ Haase, “Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges”, *op.cit.*.

⁵⁸ Haase, “Von ‘Ons Jongen’, ‘Malgré-Nous’ und anderen”, *op.cit.*.

⁵⁹ Stefan Kurt Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge? Deserteure der Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2021).

⁶⁰ Other publications have also written about family support in the past. However, these have tended to focus on the wider military and societal context, rather than specifically on the consequences of desertion. For instance, Manfred Oertel provided a detailed explanation of family support for Wehrmacht soldiers in Eichholtz Dietrich’s detailed work on the German war economy; Manfred Oertel, “Kapitel VIII - Die Kriegsfinanzierung.” In *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945*, edited by Dietrich Eichholtz (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Saur), 1999, 689-690.

⁶¹ Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, eds., *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS: Entziehungsformen, Solidarität, Verfolgung*, *Krieg in der Geschichte* 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023).

contemporary research. Two of these articles build further on their authors' earlier, more in-depth studies, which are also reviewed here given their importance to the field.

In her article on Slovenian soldiers, Brigitte Entner presents her investigation on the "forced conscription" and desertion of Carinthian Slovenes.⁶² She includes paragraphs on the impact of desertions on the soldiers' relatives, detailing their forced resettlement, deportation, weekly house searches, and property confiscations. This article draws upon her memorial book which contains brief biographies of more than 550 Carinthian Slovenes who were killed under Nazi rule.⁶³ It also features stories of deserters and draft evaders, illuminating the struggles their families faced.

Marta Verdorfer's contribution moves to another region and looks at the military service and desertion of soldiers from South Tyrol, including a detailed discussion on the penalties imposed on their relatives as from 1944.⁶⁴ For this study, Verdorfer used the publication of the pioneering oral history project she helped carry out in the 1990s, *Verfolgt, verfemt, vergessen: lebensgeschichtliche Erinnerungen an den Widerstand gegen Nationalsozialismus und Krieg, Südtirol 1943-1945*.⁶⁵ This seminal work was instrumental in bringing to light the experiences of South Tyrolean deserters and so called *Sippenhäftlinge*⁶⁶. It remains a key reference for studies focusing on desertion in South Tyrol and also for research into the consequences of desertion on family members. Maria Fritsche has for instance drawn upon this significant body of work in her previously mentioned investigations.

Finally, the article by Peter Pirker and Aaron Salzmann discusses the actions of the Special Court of Feldkirch in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg against accomplices of desertion, as well as the application of family liability by the Special Court of Innsbruck.⁶⁷

The works of two authors will be mentioned separately in this historiographical overview as their research focuses specifically on the subject of family liability during the Nazi regime, including its application on the relatives of deserters and draft evaders. Originating from comprehensive doctoral research, both studies were subsequently published and offer a detailed examination of this aspect of National Socialist policy.

In his study, Australian historian Robert Loeffel examines the utilisation of *Sippenhaftung* by the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945.⁶⁸ He considers family liability as an instrument of terror that the

⁶² Brigitte Entner, "Slowenische Soldaten: Organisierte Flucht innerhalb der Reichsgrenzen?," in *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, *Krieg in der Geschichte* 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023), 51–64.

⁶³ Brigitte Entner, *Wer war Klara aus Šentlipš/St. Philippen?: Kärntner Slowenen und Sloweninnen als Opfer der NS-Verfolgung: ein Gedenkbuch* (Klagenfurt: Drava Verlag, 2014).

⁶⁴ Martha Verdorfer, "Desertion in der mehrsprachigen Grenzregion Südtirol," in *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, *Krieg in der Geschichte* 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023), 65–80.

⁶⁵ Pirker and von Lingen, "Einleitung – Deserteure," *op.cit.*, XXIII; Leopold Steurer, Martha Verdorfer and Walter Pichler, *Verfolgt, verfemt, vergessen: lebensgeschichtliche Erinnerungen an den Widerstand gegen Nationalsozialismus und Krieg, Südtirol 1943-1945* (Bozen: Edition Sturzflüge, 1993).

⁶⁶ Defined by the authors as " [all] men and women [...] who had to endure imprisonment due to kinship or assistance for deserters" Quotation from Steurer, Verdorfer, and Pichler, *Verfolgt, verfemt, vergessen, op.cit.*, 14.

⁶⁷ Peter Pirker and Aaron Salzmann, "Wehrdienstentziehungen an der Reichsgrenze: Die Verfolgungspraxis des Sondergerichts Feldkirch im regionalen Vergleich," in *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, *Krieg in der Geschichte* 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023), 259–279.

⁶⁸ Loeffel, *Family Punishment in Nazi Germany, op.cit.*; this book is based on his PhD thesis Robert Loeffel, "Sippenhaft in the Third Reich: analysing the spectre of family liability punishment against opposition in Nazi Germany 1933-1945" (PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2004).

regime had already begun using from its early days. In a dedicated chapter, he explores the Wehrmacht's specific application of the principle against ethnic German deserters, portraying it as a deterrent strategy used specifically by the military to discourage desertion. The analysis fails to examine the underlying mechanisms and procedures, which in practice reveal that this interpretation is too narrow. The research does shed light on the repercussions faced by the families of deserters in regions such as Luxembourg, Alsace and South Tyrol, but again it is lacking an extensive analytical discussion. While Loeffel offers intriguing perspectives, his research is not without its faults as it tends to oversimplify the information and jump to conclusions. This has also drawn criticism, notably from historian Johannes Salzig.

Johannes Salzig's work offers a thorough examination of the wider phenomenon of *Sippenhaftung*.⁶⁹ He portrays it as a repressive measure against relatives of opponents of the National Socialist regime in order to combat resistance. Published a year after Loeffel's work, he also examines *Sippenhaftung* in a broader light, going beyond the scope of the failed assassination attempt of 20 July 1944 and considering it as an integral part of the Nazi regime since 1933. He enriches the discourse with a substantial theoretical foundation and extensive details of the principle's intricacies, using official documentation from National Socialist authorities and written records by affected individuals. He also dedicates a chapter to the enforcement of *Sippenhaftung* on Wehrmacht soldiers' families, but only after July 1944.

When exploring the effects of desertion and draft evasion on the families involved, particularly their forced resettlement, it is essential to view these events in light of the National Socialist regime's ethnic and racial policies (*Volkstumspolitik*) and broader resettlement policy (*Umsiedlungspolitik*). While the historiography on these subjects is vast, the state of research was extensively analysed in 2022 by historian Alexa Stiller.⁷⁰ Therefore this report will not retrace the literature that has influenced this area of research in detail.⁷¹ Instead, it will focus on Stiller's pioneering work, which constitutes a significant contribution to the field.⁷²

In her comprehensive study, which encompasses two volumes and 1,454 pages, Alexa Stiller meticulously examines the German ethnic policy and the practices of inclusion and exclusion of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die*

⁶⁹ Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, op.cit..

⁷⁰ In her historiographical overview Alexa Stiller divided the literature on Nazi ethnic policy into three sections: The first section comprises the literature analysing the organisations involved, such as the RKF. The second section concerns the annexed and occupied territories in which this policy was implemented, including the incorporated eastern territories, Alsace and Lorraine and Slovenia. The third section deals with individual aspects of the policy, such as the resettlement and Germanisation policy; Alexa Stiller, *Völkische Politik: Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939-1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022), 15-28.

⁷¹ To mention a few which have also been important in this particular study: Robert Lewis Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy, 1939-194: a History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); Lothar Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973); Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003); Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische "Volkstumsarbeit" und Umsiedlungspolitik 1933-1945: Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Siedlerauslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2013); Michael Fahlbusch, Ingo Haar and Alexander Pinwinkler, eds., *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Akteure, Netzwerke, Forschungsprogramme* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017); Michael Wedekind, "Volksgemeinschaft', NS-Raumpolitik und Migrationsverhältnisse: Südtiroler Umsiedlungsplanungen (1939-1945)," in *Nationalsozialistisches Migrationsregime und "Volksgemeinschaft"*, edited by Jochen Oltmer, Nationalsozialistische "Volksgemeinschaft" 2 (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012), 265-294.

⁷² This work has also been awarded with the Herbert Steiner-Preis; Wolfgang Schieder, "'Völkische Politik" – Eine empirische Untersuchung der nationalsozialistischen Siedlungspolitik von Alexa Stiller," *Neue Politische Literatur* (2024), 1-9.

Festigung deutschen Volkstums – RKF) and its affiliated agencies. Through a detailed analysis of a wide range of sources, she offers new perspectives on the policy's three primary areas: the settlement policy, which focuses on the resettlement of ethnic German groups; the expulsion policy, which links the ethnic policy to the Nazi regime's extermination policy; and the Germanisation policy.⁷³ Within every area, she examines the ideological frameworks, the goals and institutional mechanisms as well as how they were implemented and ran parallel in the regions she studied: Western Poland, Alsace-Lorraine and Slovenia. Interestingly, she also mentions Luxembourg several times but clarifies at the beginning of the book that she could not deal with it in more detail due to the already extensive comparison and the large amount of records she had to examine.⁷⁴

This doctoral study does not intend to unravel the application of the National Socialist ethnic policy in Luxembourg as Stiller did, but rather seeks to build upon her work and enrich the ongoing discourse. The historiographical overview presented shows that the discussions surrounding these ethnic and racial policies, forced resettlements, the enforcement of *Sippenhaftung* on Wehrmacht soldiers' families and the operation of the military justice system are highly relevant today. The territory of Luxembourg is frequently referenced, yet the depth of analysis is often limited and the information fragmented. This thesis aims to contribute to this emerging discourse by providing a more unified examination of these topics in relation to Luxembourg, thereby contributing to both national and international discourses.

3. Source material and source accessibility

In addition to the existing literature, this study also relies on a wide range of primary sources. The following section will first provide general information regarding the source corpus, the collection of the source material and the challenges related to source accessibility. Then it will move to a detailed overview of the sources identified by institution. The evaluation of the selection criteria and the analysis and usage of the sources in the research process will be presented in the next chapter on methodology.

3.1. *Collection of the source corpus*

The collected primary sources consist of institutional and personal documents from various Luxembourgish and German archives, libraries, museums and private collections. The corpus includes mostly administrative documents, judicial files, witness statements, legal texts, newspaper articles and ego-documents from both the war and post-war period. In the initial stages of the investigation, sources on both repressive and support measures were collected.

⁷³ Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 12.

⁷⁴ "Luxemburg gehörte ebenfalls dazu, denn auch dort bestimmte das Ziel der "Eindeutschung" die Politik. Angesichts der schier unendlichen Menge der Archivalien und des ohnehin schon umfassenden Vergleichs der genannten acht Territorien war es mir leider nicht möglich, Luxemburg in die Untersuchung zu integrieren." Quotation from Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 13.

With the changing research focus, the emphasis lay primarily on repressive measures. As for the broader project, the experiences of the families from Schiffflange were examined in more depth as a case study. The sources include information about the organisational structures and the decision-making processes regarding the measures imposed, while also providing insights into the individual experiences of the researched families.

It is important to note that during the collection process, the researcher identified sources for both the general project and the doctoral research simultaneously as the investigations ran in parallel. Although the sources for the Warlux project focus more on the experiences of the conscripts than on their families, they also proved important for the doctoral research as the experiences of both groups cannot be entirely separated. Those relevant to the doctoral research are therefore also mentioned here. The majority of the documents had not yet been digitised and were consulted on site.

The research showed that the sources are widely dispersed across Luxembourg and Germany. As a result, a considerable amount of time was dedicated to identifying and locating them. The researcher does not claim to have identified all the relevant sources on the subject. However, the extensive range of documents that could be located, identified and accessed within the available timeframe is reflected in the research. In addition, it is important to note that the available documentation contains significant gaps due to war damage, intentional destruction by the Nazis at the end of the war, and the considerable fragmentation of wartime documents across the country and continent over the years.⁷⁵ For example, complementary material – sometimes originating from the same original collection – was found dispersed over different Luxembourg archives, and over Luxembourg and German archives, as will be clarified in the overview.

3.2. Source accessibility

Accessing the located material posed numerous challenges, particularly for sources within Luxembourg. These challenges included the lengthy procedures for drawing up data agreements to access the archives of private and public stakeholders and partners, such as the Luxembourg municipalities, the previously mentioned *Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains* and the *Fédération des Enrôlés de Force*. Unfortunately, in several instances, the partner decided not to sign the agreement and not to give legal access to their collection.⁷⁶ In order to collect ego-documents from the Luxembourg population, approval from the universities' Ethics Review Panel had to be obtained and required multiple administrative steps. Furthermore, the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly hindered access to national and international archives during the first year of research. Relevant collections at the Luxembourg National Archives also turned out not to have been inventoried yet, making their accessibility difficult or impossible within the timeframe of the research. Thanks to the valuable assistance

⁷⁵ "Discover the Warlux database", *Warlux*, accessed on 27 August 2024 (<https://warlux.uni.lu/data?language=en>).

⁷⁶ As will be elaborated below this was the case for the archives of the municipality of Schiffflange and the archives of the *Fédération des Enrôlés de Force*.

and work of the archival staff, the researcher was able to access some of these files upon specific request.

In addition, the Luxembourg Archival Law of 17 August 2018 has significantly impacted the accessibility of public sources in the country. As Article 16, section 3 of the law stipulates, the protection periods for documents containing individual information relating to the private, family, professional or financial life of a natural person are “25 years after the person’s death if the date is known, 75 years from the date of the most recent document if the date of death is unknown or if determining it would require a disproportionate administrative effort”.⁷⁷ The closure period is a hundred years for documents covered by tax secrecy.⁷⁸ Given the archivists’ restrictive interpretation of this legislation and the presence of personal data (of individuals with unknown dates of death) in most historical documents relating to the Second World War and the post-war period – especially those consulted in the context of this research –, a large portion of the documents remain closed today. Another challenging aspect of the law is section 4 of Article 16, which states that the same closure periods apply to inventories of names.⁷⁹ Given the often sensitive nature of the collections and the continued need to protect the personal data of the individuals involved – even when they died several years previously –, crucial inventories, such as those regarding the individual files of the *Office des Dommages de Guerre*, the *Office des Séquestres*, *Criminels de Guerre* and *Affaires Politiques*, are not publicly accessible. The existence of certain records in these collections can be verified by archival staff if specific names and birth dates of individuals are provided to them, but this means that the researchers already need to know which files they are looking for.

Despite the continued closure of numerous documents concerning the Second World War, researchers can apply for a special dispensation (*demande de dérogation*) to consult them, a request which is often granted. Nevertheless, given the large number of dispensations to be applied for and the length of the procedure, researchers often refrain from starting the process and seek alternative sources or see themselves obliged to adapt their research. To illustrate, in the case of the *Landratsamt Esch/Alzig* collection, 384 of the 553 identified files required a derogation.⁸⁰ Moreover, the doctoral researcher’s request to consult the war damages files of the researched conscripts and their families took one year, as shown in the following timeline:

⁷⁷ “[...] vingt-cinq ans après le décès de la personne concernée, au cas où la date de décès est connue; soixante-quinze ans à compter de la date du document le plus récent inclus dans le dossier au cas où la date de décès n’est pas connue ou la recherche de la date de décès entraînerait un effort administratif démesuré” Quotation from Loi du 17 août 2018 sur l’archivage [...], accessible online, (<https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2018/08/17/a706/jo>), 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ These challenges were also communicated by the doctoral researcher during the discussion day on access to archives in Luxembourg on 9 February 2023. This event was organised by the Ministry of Culture, the ANLux and the C²DH with the aim of initiating a critical analysis of national legislation on archives: “Journée d’échanges à Neimënster entre les professionnels du secteur des archives et représentant de la recherche au Luxembourg”, Le gouvernement luxembourgeois, 10 February 2023, accessed on 21 August 2024 (https://anlux.gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites.gouvernement%2Bfr%2Bactualites%2Btoutes_actualites%2Bcommuniques%2B2023%2B02-fevrier%2B10-journee-echanges-neimenster.html).

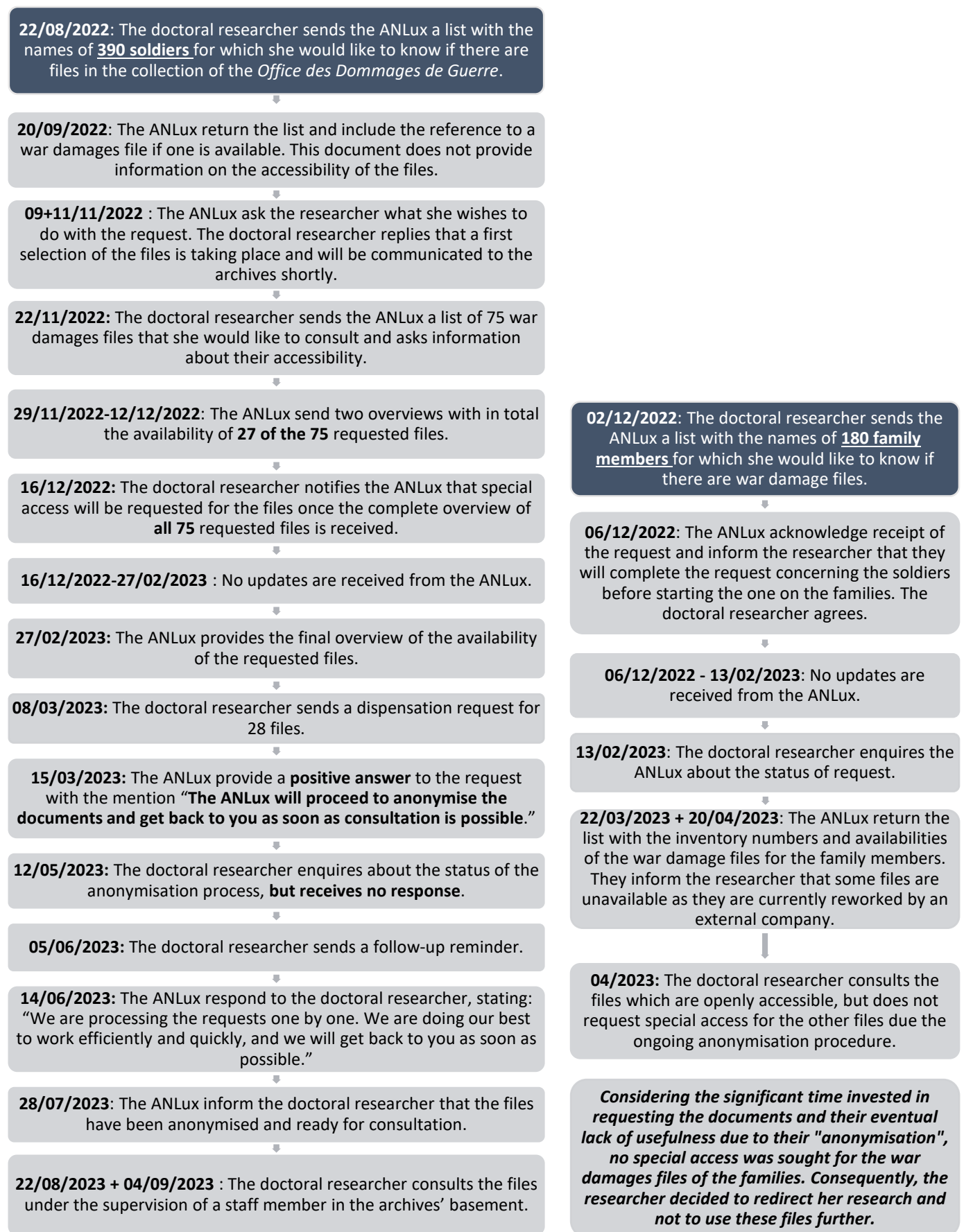


Figure 1: Timeline of the request to consult war damages files at the ANLux

As this overview indicates, five months of the procedure were spent on the digitisation and “anonymisation” of the files. Without prior communication or legislative changes, the ANLux initiated this new procedure in March 2023 for files whose communication deadline had not yet expired and for which special access had been requested and already granted to the researcher. After several additional months of waiting, the digitised files could be consulted in a newly dedicated room in the archives’ basement, under continuous supervision of a staff member. Throughout the consultation, multiple archival staff members took turns to ensure the researcher was never left alone in the room and no pictures were taken of the documents. The heavily manipulated and redacted documents proved to be unusable for research. Although the procedure was reversed in November that same year, valuable time and energy had been lost in this process.⁸¹

It goes without saying that these long and complex bureaucratic procedures to obtain access to contemporary sources in the country weigh heavily on both researchers and archivists, potentially resulting in incomplete research and jeopardising the researchers’ autonomy. The difficulties encountered meant that the research angle had to be adapted on multiple occasions and research avenues had to be abandoned. However, this situation also provided opportunities for innovation, growth and out-of-the-box thinking, and contributed to a more resilient and adaptable research approach. Given the significant impact of source accessibility on the research outcome – and on historical research dedicated to the contemporary history of the country more generally today – it was decided to include a deeper analysis of this aspect in a separate article within this doctoral thesis.⁸²

To provide a comprehensive and transparent view of all the source material identified during this research, the researcher has compiled a detailed overview. This also includes a more in-depth account of the obstacles encountered and the avenues that were unsuccessful or discontinued. The aim of this is not only to clarify the source research conducted within the broader research process, but also to pass on this knowledge for possible future research. The overview is structured in a similar manner to the literature review, with the material categorised according to its provenance in Luxembourg and international institutions.

⁸¹ This procedure directly impacted the consultation of war damage files and *Affaires Politiques* files for which the researcher had already received a derogation. On this subject please also consult: Benoît Majerus, “Qu’est-ce que les Archives Nationales ont-elles à cacher ?,” *Notebook*, 30 August 2023, accessed on 25 July 2024 (<https://majerus.hypotheses.org/1454>); Marlene Bucher, “Interview / Historiker Benoît Majerus: “Was hat das Nationalarchiv zu verbergen?”,” *Tageblatt*, 31 August 2023 (<https://www.tageblatt.lu/headlines/historiker-benoit-majerus-was-hat-das-nationalarchiv-zu-verbergen/>); Marlene Bucher, “Umgang mit Akteneinsicht Nationalarchiv äußert sich zu Vorwürfen von Historiker Benoît Majerus”, *Tageblatt*, 5 September 2023 (<https://www.tageblatt.lu/headlines/nationalarchiv-aeussert-sich-zu-vorwuergen-von-historiker-benoit-majerus/>).

⁸² To name a few researchers who also mention these issues: Denis Scuto, “Archivgesetz: Eng Rei Froe stinn op”, *Fräie Mikro*, *Radio 100,7*, 27 November 2018 (<https://www.100komma7.lu/article/wessen/archivgesetz-eng-rei-froe-stinn-op>); Elisabeth Wingerter, “Law, Order and Postwar Purge in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (1944 - 1955): Transitional Justice and Redistribution through the Example of Justice, Gendarmerie and Police” (PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg, 2021); Blandine Landau, “A la recherche des juifs spoliés : pillages et “aryanisation” au Luxembourg pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale”(PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2024); Majerus, “Qu’est-ce que les Archives Nationales ont-elles à cacher?,” *op.cit.*.

3.3. Overview of the sources: Luxembourg records

3.3.1. Archives nationales du Luxembourg (ANLux)

Most of the official sources for this doctoral research were found in the ANLux, dispersed over various archival fonds. These fonds were mostly accessible through the online catalogue. However, as mentioned above, extensive collections were not represented here for reasons of data protection or because they had not yet been fully inventoried. The existence and relevance of certain collections would not have been known without the invaluable exchange of knowledge among researchers, the goodwill and assistance of some archivists and a dose of perseverance and luck. Very helpful in this regard were also previous studies and the contribution of Corinne Schroeder, Head of the Contemporary Section, in the 2021 edited volume of the *Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains*.⁸³

Chef der Zivilverwaltung (CdZ) (1940-1944)

The archival fonds of the *Chef der Zivilverwaltung* (archival identifier “CdZ”), comprising in total over 720 linear metres, holds documents that were used, received or produced by the Nazi administration in Luxembourg during the war years.⁸⁴ The organisation of the documents is based on the original extensive structure of this administration. As Corinne Schroeder pointed out, it is important to keep in mind that for reasons of accuracy certain structures are included in the inventory, even though their archives have disappeared.⁸⁵ Over the course of the Warlux project and this doctoral research, documents originating from a multitude of sub-fonds and series were consulted and utilised.

In general, documents from the military and labour service offices facilitated the identification of the recruits and soldiers in the Warlux research sample and provided information on their trajectories, conscription details, requests for dismissal or acquisition of German nationality. Documents from the *Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitspolizei* on the other hand provided information on desertions and draft evasions, including wanted lists and documentation on searches and investigations of the Security Police. Files from the main department of the CdZ included the regulations and directives imposed in the country. Documents from the local administrations and different Nazi organizations, such as the National Socialist People’s Welfare (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, NSV) and the VdB, provided insights into daily life under occupation and the roles of the various layers of administration and authority.⁸⁶

For this research, the records from the citizenship service (*Staatsangehörigkeit*), the *Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhandgesellschaft* (DUT) and the *Landratsamt Esch/Alzig* proved to be particularly relevant. The records from the *Staatsangehörigkeit* provided information on the

⁸³ Corinne Schroeder, “Les sources relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux Archives nationales,” in *Le Luxembourg et le troisième Reich : un état des lieux – Luxemburg und das Dritte Reich : eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée national de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 940–956.

⁸⁴ Schroeder, “Les sources relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux Archives nationales,” *op.cit.*, 941.

⁸⁵ This is the case, for example, for the archives concerning the local group (*Ortsgruppe*) of Schiffflange; Schroeder, “Les sources relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux Archives nationales,” *op.cit.*, 941.

⁸⁶ The archives of the NSV also provided specific information on support measures for families of RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers.

identity of forcibly resettled families in Luxembourg, as well as their possible acquisition of German citizenship “upon revocation” (*Auf Widerruf*) and their employment in the Reich. The archives of the DUT on the other hand cover the confiscation, administration, valuation, sale and rental of assets of forcibly resettled families. These archives are widely dispersed across various archival fonds and series and contain large gaps.⁸⁷ Within the fonds of the CdZ, files from this company were found in the series of the *Stillhaltekommissar für das Organisationswesen*,⁸⁸ the archives of the *Landratsamt Diekirch* and the general organisation department of the CdZ, sub-series “*Polizeiverwaltungsangelegenheiten*”.

The *Landratsamt Esch/Alzig* series encompasses historical material on various aspects of this regional body’s governance. The documents related to the monetary support that families of labour recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers received – including individual applications and payment cards from Schiffange families – as well as documentation on the citizenship of inhabitants proved to be promising.⁸⁹ During the investigation, these records were not fully inventoried. Although they had been inventoried in the past, they were still classified under their old reference code and required re-inventorying. Consequently, they could only be consulted through the physical card catalogue at the reception of the archives, which at the time did not provide a comprehensive overview of their content. An agreement was made with the archivists that the researcher would request the files she thought would be relevant for her research. Following this request, a re-inventorying of the requested files would be performed by the archives. This process also included a reassessment of the protection periods of all the documents in accordance with the Archival Law. As a result, the majority of the documents, which were previously openly accessible, were now closed again and required a derogation for reasons of personal data protection and tax secrecy. The entire process of re-inventorying, verification and granting access to the requested files took many months. In total, 94 files from this collection were consulted, following the obtaining of a derogation for 62 of them. The researcher is very grateful for the assistance and patience of the archivists in providing her with access to these documents. The series was entirely re-inventoried in April 2024 and has since been made available in the online catalogue.

Ministère des Finances, Office des Dommages de Guerre and Office des Séquestres

The records of the Ministry of Finance (archive identifier “FIN”), the *Office des Dommages de Guerre* (archive identifier “DG2DOS”) and the *Office des Séquestres* (archive identifier “SEQDOS”) also played a crucial role in this investigation, providing information on the financial aspects and consequences of the war. Key sources include the accounting books of the CdZ at the *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit* for 1940-1943, which contain detailed bank statements of two DUT accounts, the war damages files of conscripts and their families and files from the *Office des Séquestres*

⁸⁷ A detailed account on the recovery of these archives after the war can be found in the following document: Transcript of a letter from the public security service to the Ministry of Justice, 15 November 1944, ANLux, FIN-10340.

⁸⁸ This NSDAP office was responsible for the *Gleichschaltung* – meaning consolidation according to Nazi ideology and policy – and liquidation of legal entities such as organisations, associations and clubs in Nazi-occupied territories.

⁸⁹ Unfortunately, due to the changing research focus, the relevance of some of these documents – such as the family support files – diminished over the course of the research.

containing information on the “movable and immovable property belonging to individuals subject to a confiscation, seizure, or dispossession measure by the occupant”.⁹⁰

Two documents, FIN-10340 and FIN-10341, dated 1944 and 1948, are particularly noteworthy in this regard. They indicate that in 1944 the *Office des Séquestres* was in possession of the index cards and individual files of the DUT.⁹¹ These later served as reference material for the *Office des Dommages de Guerre* in its investigations of war damages claims by forcibly resettled families, as evidenced by the written comments found in the compensation records of some of these families.⁹² These documents are expected to hold great significance for researching asset confiscations of families of deserters. However, despite numerous efforts, extensive searches and enquiries with archival staff, they could not be located. The attempt to verify their existence in the individual records of the *Office des Séquestres*, by providing the archivist with a list of names and birth dates of resettled individuals, proved to be fruitless. A search in the war damages files also yielded no results. A dossier filed under the DUT’s name in the *Office des Séquestres* did, however, provide valuable general information about the company.⁹³

Because of the accessibility challenges discussed above, only a limited number of war damages files for the researched conscripts and deserter families could be examined.⁹⁴ Although these documents convey a specific institutional post-war setting and were designed for the sole purpose of receiving compensation, they constitute a significant historical resource as they provide insights into the loss, confiscation and looting of property, as well as witness statements and information on wartime experiences. Some of these war compensation files were also discovered in the municipal archive of Schifflange, a subject that will be addressed below.

Fonds des cours et tribunaux – Affaires Politiques and Criminels de Guerre

The courts and tribunals collection holds the *Criminels de Guerre* and *Affaires Politiques* files of the Luxembourg and Diekirch District Courts. These were constituted shortly after the war in connection with the trials held against war criminals and collaborators. Although some of these sensitive files are openly accessible, many require a derogation.

⁹⁰ Some additional information: The *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit* was also called “la banque de la spoliation” in the 2009 report of the Commission spéciale pour l’étude des spoliations des biens juifs au Luxembourg pendant les années de guerre 1940-1945. The war damages were intended to provide financial assistance to those in need and to war victims in terms of personal property, real estate and physical injuries; Final report of the Commission spéciale pour l’étude des spoliations des biens juifs au Luxembourg pendant les années de guerre 1940-1945, *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, 2009, accessible online (https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/communiqués/2009/07-juillet/06-biens-juifs.html), 26; Schroeder, “Les sources relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux Archives nationales,” *op.cit.*, 946.

⁹¹ These documents also refer to a distinct division within that Office responsible for handling the liquidation of affairs of the DUT, the *Stillhaltekommissar* and the *Abteilung Emigranten und Judenvermögen*; Letter from the *Office des Séquestres* to the Ministry of Finance, 16 November 1948, ANLux, FIN-10340; Handwritten note regarding an interview with Mr. J.W. of the *Office des Séquestres*, 9 July 1945, ANLux, FIN-10341.

⁹² These files contain the mention “Décompte DUT à faire” or “renseigné par dossier DUT”; War damages file of Thilges Heinrich, ANLux, DG2DOS-03025 nr. 26233; War damages file of Scheuer-Oppermann Gaspar, ANLux, DG2DOS-02534 nr.47590.

⁹³ Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhand Ges., ANLux, SEQDOS-0064 no. 1644.

⁹⁴ From the list of 180 family members sent to the ANLux, 66 war damages files were identified, 30 of which were ultimately able to be consulted. However, 21 of these files were from 1940-1941 regarding war damages from the invasion and evacuation of the country and proved to be irrelevant for this research.

As the name indicates, the war criminal files (archive identifier “CdG”) contain documentation on trials involving non-Luxembourgers, primarily German nationals accused of war crimes.⁹⁵ The trial against the district leaders Wilhelm Diehl, Adolf Schreder, Valentin Eibes and Karl-August Venter was thoroughly analysed as it includes investigations of the resettlement process and asset confiscations.⁹⁶ In addition to the documentation related to the process itself, the files contain a large number of original wartime documents from various administrations. They also contain post-war investigations into the different entities involved, as well as witness statements from both officials and impacted families, including a large number of the investigated families from the case study.

In contrast to the war criminal files, the *Affaires Politiques* files (archive identifier “CT”) contain material related to individual investigations and trials, generally conducted against Luxembourgers accused of collaborating with the National Socialist authorities.⁹⁷ In the context of the Warlux project, individual files of Luxembourgers who were accused of having joined the Wehrmacht on a voluntary basis were analysed.⁹⁸ Post-war investigations and trials carried out against (public) figures from Schiffange and the Esch/Alzig region were also identified. These were expected to hold additional information on the residents of the town and on the implication and role of certain individuals or institutions in the forced resettlements and asset confiscations. Unfortunately, the consultation of these files was hampered due to the “anonymisation” procedure of the National Archives.⁹⁹ In view of the length of the procedure and the adjustment of the broader research strategy, no additional access was requested.¹⁰⁰

As outlined in previous research, these files must be analysed with caution. Compiled shortly after the war for juridical inquiries, their primary function was to determine the crimes committed by the investigated individuals. This involved selecting and processing documents explicitly for this purpose. The selected wartime documents were for example often used to specifically describe crimes and were hence taken out of their original context. The researcher therefore cross-referenced the information from these files with other sources during the analysis.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Schroeder, “Les sources relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux Archives nationales,” *op.cit.*, 948.

⁹⁶ The files of this trial, catalogued under inventory number “CdG-003”, were consulted on microfilm, spread across 21 reels. Each reel including over 800 pages. Upon obtaining special access to these documents, the ANLux informed the researcher that the information found in these documents had to be anonymised and any annotations cited as “ANLux, CdG-003”. Although the researcher recognises that this complicates the precise location and identification of the referenced files, she had to adhere to these requirements.

⁹⁷ “CT-02-01 Affaires politiques (Sous-fonds)”, *Archives nationales du Luxembourg*, accessed on 28 August 2024 (<https://query.an.etat.lu/Query/detail.aspx?id=642658>).

⁹⁸ These files contain information regarding the alleged motivations behind these soldiers’ enlistment, as well as details about their family backgrounds. Furthermore, they include testimonies from neighbours, colleagues and other members of the local communities concerning the individuals and their families. These files helped to contextualise the choices and decisions made by these individuals and offer a more comprehensive understanding of their life circumstances. This was particularly the case for file CT-03-01-01123 concerning N.K. who enlisted voluntarily but later deserted and whose family was forcibly resettled.

⁹⁹ The first requested files, related to the *Ortsgruppenleiter* of Schiffange (Peter Anheuser, ANLux, CT-03-01-05421) and the *Amtsburgermeister* of Esch/Alzig (Josef Kohns, ANLux, CT-03-01-04323), were almost entirely redacted and made unreadable.

¹⁰⁰ The researcher originally planned to also request access to the *Affaires politiques* and *Criminels de Guerre* files of specific individuals related to the ARBED steel plant, the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAF), the RKF and the DUT.

¹⁰¹ Wingerter, “Law, Order and Postwar Purge in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (1944 - 1955)”, *op.cit.*, 38; Majerus, “Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction”, *op.cit.*, 12-13; Ismee Tames, “Digitale Ontsluiting van het Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging: Mogelijkheden en Onmogelijkheden.” *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis*, 2 (2020), 304.

Archives of the Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur l'Enrôlement forcé (CDREF) and the Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Résistance (CDRR)

The archives of the *Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur l'Enrôlement forcé* (CDREF) and the *Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Résistance* (CDRR) encompass a wide range of historical material on the Second World War in Luxembourg.¹⁰² They contain numerous donations from private individuals pertaining to their family members who were conscripted, as well as original wartime documents on forced resettlements originating from regional administrations, the RKF and the DUT. This includes for example the original transportation lists. These archives were transferred to the ANLux after the closure of the respective centres in 2016.¹⁰³ Despite the fact that these documents were previously accessible for consultation and have been used in previous research – such as that by Gilles Kartheiser and Eva Maria Klos –, their current accessibility is limited because they have not been fully inventoried and because of the new closure periods introduced by the Archival Law. Based on the findings of this earlier research, the summary documents created at the time of the transfers (*bordereaux de versement*) and the generous assistance of one of the archivists, the researcher was able to identify a number of relevant files for Warlux and the doctoral research.¹⁰⁴ For the doctoral study, special access was requested and received for eight files, including the original transportation lists.¹⁰⁵ For the Warlux project, the focus of the research was ultimately shifted to alternative sources – particularly those from the crowdsourcing campaign – given the considerable time and effort that would have been required to access the relevant documents.

Other collections

During the investigation, certain archival fonds were identified which contain only a small number of files, or where relevance was unclear and access generally challenging. For instance, in the collection “*Documents concernant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*” (archive identifier “DH-IIGM”) – which contains a wide array of WWII documents contributed by private individuals –, only a small number of documents related to “forced conscriptions” and forced resettlements were examined. The collection “*Alweraje*” (archive identifier “FD-235”) – a resistance group from Schiffange – contained very interesting background information on the wartime situation and local administration in the town. Furthermore, in order to gain a broader understanding of the repatriation of conscripted and resettled Luxembourgers, a number of general documents from the *Commissariat du rapatriement* (archive identifier “CR”) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (archive identifier “AE”) were consulted. However, due to the uncertain relevance of these files

¹⁰² This material was collected by the respective centres from their creation in the early to 2000s until 2016. For more information on the roles and functions of these centres, please consult: Loi du 20 décembre 2002 portant création d'un Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Résistance [...], accessed on 29 August 2024 (<https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2002/12/20/n12/jo>); Loi du 4 avril 2005 portant création d'un Comité directeur pour le Souvenir de l'Enrôlement forcé; d'un Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur l'Enrôlement forcé, accessed on 29 August 2024 (<https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2005/04/04/n1/jo>).

¹⁰³ Meeting notes of the Commission des Institutions et de la Révision constitutionnelle, 11 May 2016, accessed on 10 October 2024 (<https://www.chd.lu/fr/meeting/6860>), 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ The summary documents are incomplete and therefore unable to provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of the archive contents.

¹⁰⁵ These eight files are closed until dates between 2059 and 2092.

and the time-consuming process required to identify individual records and obtain the necessary derogations, these collections were not analysed further.

The archives of the ARBED steel group in the fonds *Arbed [Aciéries Réunies de Burbach-Eich-Dudelange]* were also considered for examination to better understand the position and potential involvement of the company in the measures taken against deserter families.¹⁰⁶ The vast archives of ARBED, extending over 4.5 linear kilometres, present challenges in terms of accessibility. There are three published inventories of the archives, made in 1998 by Monique Kieffer, which concern the period 1870-1940.¹⁰⁷ Based on information provided by the archivist working on this fonds, the inventory of files after 1940 has not yet been completed, and the entirety of the company's archive for this period has not yet been transferred. With the help of the archivist, some initial files were able to be consulted and provided valuable insights. A more comprehensive investigation of these archives would be of scientific interest. However, such an undertaking would require substantial time investments from both the archival personnel and the researcher, involving efforts to locate, identify and inventory the relevant files. For this reason, information about the company and industry's involvement were sought in other collections and publications.¹⁰⁸

3.3.2. Municipal archives

During the process of defining a precise research sample for the project and the doctoral research, the Warlux research team conducted visits to numerous municipal archives across Luxembourg. The municipal archives of Beckerich, Troisvierges, Clervaux, Weiswampach, Echternach, Esch-sur-Alzette and Schiffange in particular were subject to extensive search efforts. As the project evolved, it was decided to focus exclusively on the case study of the town of Schiffange. For this research, the municipal archive of Esch-sur-Alzette also continued to be relevant, given the wartime incorporation of Schiffange into the municipality of Esch as from 1 July 1941.

The municipal archive of Schiffange holds a significant number of relevant documents for this investigation, including materials that supplement inaccessible folders in the ANLux. For instance, there are at least four folders containing war compensation files, among others from conscripts and their families for damage to personal property and real estate, as well as physical injuries. Additionally, a substantial number of wartime payment cards related to family support payments for families of soldiers and RAD recruits from the town were discovered. This material complements some of the more extensive individual dossiers on family support already identified in the ANLux. Unfortunately, with the shift in research focus, they became less relevant for this research. Furthermore, certain documents played a critical role in the identification of the

¹⁰⁶ For example, certain families working in the steel plant lived in company-owned houses. It would have been interesting to understand what happened to these houses once the families were resettled.

¹⁰⁷ Monique Kieffer, *Les archives de la division d'Arbed Esch-Schiffange (1870 - 1940): inventaire* (Luxembourg: CRP-CU), 1998; Monique Kieffer, *Les archives de la division d'Arbed-Dudelange (1882 - 1940): inventaire* (Luxembourg: CRP-CU), 1998; Monique Kieffer, *Les archives de l'administration centrale d'Arbed (1911 - 1940): inventaire* (Luxembourg: CRP-CU), 1998.

¹⁰⁸ One of the alternative plans was to obtain information on the influence of ARBED through the *Affaires politiques* files of the directors of the company and of the DAF, but access to these files was also hindered.

families. For example, a folder containing information on “Special allowances for families whose support is part of the Wehrmacht or the Reichsarbeitsdienst”¹⁰⁹ (dated 1944-1945) provided a detailed overview of the members of each household. Additionally, the financial records of the water distribution company for the first trimester of 1941, coupled with a document listing families residing in houses owned by ARBED, were instrumental in verifying the addresses of the town’s residents.

From the start of the project in 2020, the project collaborators maintained a close collaborative relationship with the municipality, seeking access to the archives within the confines of the legal frameworks. It is important to note that Article 4, paragraph 4 of the Archival Law states that “municipalities, joint municipal authorities [*syndicats de communes*] and public establishments of municipalities are not subject to the provisions of this law, with the exception of the provisions of Chapters IX and X [...]”.¹¹⁰ These chapters lay down provisions for the disclosure of public archives and the information given to data subjects and complaints. Consequently, the closure periods set out in Article 16 also apply to municipal archives. To obtain access to the files and establish clear guidelines, the researchers proposed drafting an agreement with the municipality, but this was not pursued. In 2021, the mayor granted written consent, allowing access to specific folders which include personal and sensitive data and pertain to the RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers from the town. Following additional discoveries, obtained under the supervision of the then newly hired municipal archivist, the municipality verbally requested that an agreement be drawn up in September 2022. They stipulated that the information found within their archives should not be disclosed for the time being. Despite several reminders, however, they decided not to sign this agreement, which has created uncertainty and ambiguity about the permitted use of these files in the research.

The municipal archive of Esch-sur-Alzette was consulted at the beginning of the project. The town did not have a dedicated archivist at that moment and the documents were dispersed over different buildings.¹¹¹ According to a town official, many documents had already been transferred to the *Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains* for better storage. While relatively limited in quantity, the relevant documents found here include a notebook featuring a list of soldiers from the region who deserted from the German army, alongside individual records of residents from the municipality, including some from Schiffange, originating from the civil registry office.

3.3.3. Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (MNRDH)

The MNRDH collection houses a vast array of wartime documents, including material temporarily gathered from various archives such as those in Esch-sur-Alzette and Schiffange. The researchers

¹⁰⁹ Originally titled *Allocations spéciales aux familles dont le soutien fait partie de la Wehrmacht ou du Reichsarbeitsdienst*.

¹¹⁰ “Les communes, les syndicats de communes et les établissements publics des communes ne sont pas soumis aux dispositions de la présente loi à l’exception des dispositions des chapitres IX et X [...]” Quotation from Loi du 17 août 2018 sur l’archivage, *op.cit.*, 3.

¹¹¹ In the meantime, the municipality has hired an archivist. All archive documents are being inventoried to increase accessibility.

built a good relationship with the museum staff and signed an agreement with the institution to facilitate the exchange of documents and information within a clear framework.

Their extensive collection on World War II encompasses wartime documents from both civil and military authorities. Notably, it includes the individual *Wehrstammbblätter*, containing information on the registration of conscripts and volunteers from Esch-sur-Alzette and Schiffange. Additionally, the *Fahnenflüchtigenkartei*, a registry created by the German civil authorities of the (presumed) deserters and draft evaders from these localities, provides personal details of these young men and their close relatives. The collection also holds 120 records of assistance from the NSV's *Hilfswerk Mutter und Kind*, including those of 20 families of RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers from the research sample.¹¹²

3.3.4. Lëtzebuerg City Museum

At the Lëtzebuerg City Museum, the discovery of three substantial folders containing hundreds of wartime documents has brought to light the local police investigations against deserters and draft evaders in the Esch/Alzig district. These records – a significant portion of which pertains to deserters and draft evaders from Schiffange – include interrogations of close family members and details of the searches carried out to locate fugitives. While caution and a critical mindset are needed during the analysis of these sources, they hold immense significance for this research. When coupled with military court files, post-war interrogations of the same families, memoirs and other witness statements from the post-war period, they offer valuable insights into the procedures followed by civil and military authorities after a desertion and the way in which the relatives were involved in this. Furthermore, they illuminate the circumstances surrounding the flight and the impact of these events on the local communities, as well as the immediate consequences for the relatives back home.

The collection reached the museum through the donation of a private individual who had kept the documents at his residence for several decades. In the meantime, these files have been transferred to the ANLux, where they were included in the aforementioned archives of the *Landratsamt Esch/Alzig* in April 2024.

3.3.5. Private collections

In order to obtain more information on the individual experiences of the families in the research sample, the investigation also focused on private collections and ego-documents. Despite initial considerations, it was ultimately decided not to conduct oral history interviews with former “forced conscripts” and forcibly resettled individuals because of their advanced age, the

¹¹² These files contain information on the assistance these families received from the NSV between 1941 and 1944 in the form of food, clothing, domestic help and baby and childcare products. This documentation was also used in the author's blog post : Sarah Maya Vercruysse, “Families of Luxembourgish Wehrmacht recruits during the Nazi occupation and the impact of local authorities and National Socialist organisations on their everyday lives”, *Denken Ohne Geländer*, 5 October 2022, accessed on 10 October 2024 (<https://haitblog.hypotheses.org/3525>).

considerable time that has elapsed since the war and the strong influence of the national narrative on wartime memory in the country.¹¹³

The archives of the *Fédération des Enrôlés de Force* (FEDEF), which are currently housed at the Hollerich railway station in Luxembourg City, contain personal documents such as letters, photographs, postcards, diaries, and memoirs of individuals who were “forcibly conscripted” or resettled during the war. They also contain official wartime documents relating to these subjects, as well as post-war materials relating to the repatriation of soldiers. In addition, the archives feature documents from the association itself. An agreement between the FEDEF and the C²DH was drawn up 2021 for the consultation and use of these documents. However, despite extensive discussions, consensus could not be reached on the terms, resulting in the document remaining unsigned and the archives legally inaccessible. The database on the FEDEF website was however very helpful for the identification of the conscripts in the Schiffange research sample and also provided some material on these individuals.¹¹⁴

As outlined in the introduction of this thesis, the public outreach and crowdsourcing campaign of the Warlux project provided the researchers with a unique digital collection of wartime correspondence. Although this collection contains an enormous wealth of content, only a limited number of memoirs and letter exchanges related to desertion and forced resettlement were deemed relevant for this study. The documents primarily focus on life during resettlement, offering less insight into the events leading up to it or other aspects. The collections of the families L. and W. were used the most. Access to these files, as well as the entire collection, is permitted for other researchers and university students, subject to approval from the principal investigator of the Warlux project, Denis Scuto. In connection with the Warlux Forum Z event in February 2023 (Forum Z is a C²DH public platform aimed at enhancing critical and open discussions on contemporary Luxembourgish and European history), a new call for contributions was launched at the initiative of the doctoral researcher, with the objective of specifically appealing to the population in and around Schiffange.¹¹⁵ Despite the general response, no documents relevant for this study were shared.

3.3.6. Other Luxembourg institutions

The digital platform eLuxemburgensia, which hosts the digitised printed heritage of Luxembourg with full-text search capabilities, facilitated a comprehensive examination and analysis of numerous newspaper articles. The relevant articles, primarily sourced from the *Escher Tageblatt* and *Luxemburger Wort*, were published between 1942 and 1944. The search engine was also employed to retrieve articles containing additional information about the research subjects themselves by entering their names.

¹¹³ A point also raised by historian Henry Wehenkel in an interview in 2017; Adrien Thomas, “Grand entretien avec l’historien Henri Wehenkel (2/2) - « Ruses de Sioux »,” *Lëtzebuurger Land*, 22 December 2017. (<https://www.land.lu/page/article/711/333711/FRE/index.html>).

¹¹⁴ Fédération des enrôlés de force, “Ons Jongen a Meedercher, Victimes du Nazisme”, online database, *Ons Jongen a Meedercher*, accessed on 10 October 2024 (<http://www.ons-jongen-a-meedercher.lu>).

¹¹⁵ “Forum Z”, C²DH, accessed on 20 October 2024 (<https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/forum-z>).

At the *Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg* (BnL), over 180 memoirs related to “forced conscriptions”, desertions and forced resettlements of Luxembourgers were digitised for the Warlux project. The DH Lab in the C²DH played a significant role in scanning these memoirs and applying optical character recognition (OCR) to facilitate immediate in-text searches. This functionality allowed for specific searches within the documents, including the names of research subjects, towns and keywords. The same procedure was applied to the relevant articles published in *Rappel*, the periodical of the *Ligue luxembourgeoise des Prisonniers et Déportés Politiques* (LPPD), also available at the BnL. Between 1946 and 2006, over a hundred short articles on forced resettlements and their remembrance after the war were published in this periodical, featuring name registries, stories of specific historical events and personal accounts from those directly affected.¹¹⁶

To find more information on daily life in Schiffange during the occupation, the researcher contacted the *Archives diocésaines de Luxembourg* in the initial months of the study. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, communication and document consultation were conducted through email correspondence. The relevant documents primarily facilitated the identification of the town’s residents. Similar to the aforementioned document from the water distribution company discovered in the municipal archives of Schiffange, the census registers (*Stammrollen*) created during the war also played a significant role in identifying and locating the families within the town.

Finally, the archives of the *Administration du cadastre et de la topographie* were considered for research into dispossessions of families. It was believed that land registry extracts (*matrices cadastrales*) and records of property exchanges from this period could provide more information on the houses, businesses and other properties confiscated by the DUT. Direct access was not possible for data protection reasons and the need for a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). Consequently, this avenue could not be pursued either.¹¹⁷

3.4. Overview of the sources: International records

3.4.1. Federal Archives of Germany – Bundesarchiv

The source material found in the different sections of the German Federal Archives proved to be indispensable for the investigation. It not only complemented the sources found in Luxembourg, but also offered new perspectives that were crucial to the study. Due to the COVID-19 crisis the access to these files was hampered for several months. After being on the waiting list for a year, the researcher was finally able to consult them in January 2023. In addition to the archival material as such, this study also draws on sources from this institution, as well as from the former

¹¹⁶ In 1990, the LPPD republished the *Livre d’or de la Résistance luxembourgeoise* of 1952 within this periodical under the title, “*Livre d’or des camps: KZ an Émsiäldong*”; *Rappel : organe de la Ligue luxembourgeoise des prisonniers et déportés politiques*, 5–6 (1990); *Rappel : organe de la Ligue luxembourgeoise des prisonniers et déportés politiques*, 1-61 (1946-2006).

¹¹⁷ These difficulties were also experienced by other researchers. More information on this can for instance be found in Landau, “A la recherche des juifs spoliés”, *op.cit.*.

Central State Archive of the German Democratic Republic (ZStA Potsdam), which have been published in collected editions of documents.¹¹⁸

Berlin – Lichterfelde

In Berlin Lichterfelde, the main focus of the investigation centred on sources related to forced resettlements. The archival records of the *Reichskommissar für die Festigung Deutschen Volkstums* (archive identifier “R 49”), the *Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhandgesellschaft* (archive identifier “R 1702”) and the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (archive identifier “R 59”) provided crucial insights not only into the general organisation of resettlements in the Greater German Reich (*Umsiedlung*), but also on the specific forced resettlements in Luxembourg, Alsace and Lorraine (*Absiedlung*).¹¹⁹ The collections also contain specific documents on the families from the Schiffange research sample. For example, the archives of the RKF contain statistics on resettlements to and from Luxembourg between 1942 and 1944, along with individual cards – sometimes with pictures – created just before the transportation of the families. Additionally, a select number of files from the *Reichssippenamt* (R 1509), *Reichsministerium des Innern* (R 1501), and *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit* (archive identifier “R 8120”) provided insightful documents concerning the broader contexts and consequences of forced resettlements, such as dispossessions and citizenship questions.

Freiburg – Military Archive

The Military Archives in Freiburg supplied documentation from the Wehrmacht and military justice system concerning the treatment of ethnic German deserters and draft evaders, along with the corresponding procedures to be followed. They also offered specific documentation pertaining to Luxembourg, including statistics on desertion rates and directives on managing the growing number of desertions. Surprisingly, only a limited amount of information regarding the punitive measures taken against the families of deserters was found here.

In addition to these more general documents which provide a contextual background, the primary sources of interest in these archives are the military court files of individual deserters from Luxembourg. These files furnish details about soldiers, their experiences in the army and the context of their desertion, as well as insights into the searches to find them and the collaboration between various military and civil authorities in this process. They also include local inquiries against family members in Luxembourg, including testimonies, complementing the police files from Lëtzebuerg City Museum, now in the ANLux. These records occasionally mention the repressive measures taken against the families. They sometimes also feature confiscated private letters between soldiers and their relatives.

¹¹⁸ Rudolf Absolon, “Das Wehrmachtstrafrecht im 2. Weltkrieg: Sammlung der grundlegenden Gesetze, Verordnungen und Erlasse” (Kornelimünster: Bundesarchiv Abt. Zentralnachweisstelle, 1958); Wolfgang Schumann and Ludwig Nestler, eds., *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, vol. 4. *Belgien, Luxemburg, Niederlande* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1990).

¹¹⁹ A definition of both terms is provided in section 5 of this introductory chapter. In her work, Alexa Stiller provides background information on the journey and destruction of the central archives of the RKF at the end and after the war; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 25.

An enquiry was made to these archives to search for documents from the *Abwehrnebenstelle Luxemburg*, which would have been engaged in searching for deserters and resettling families. Apart from some documents located in the ANLux, no additional archives from this service could be identified. The Military Archives informed the doctoral researcher that these documents would not have been preserved.

Berlin – WAST (Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle) – Deutsche Dienststelle

Despite numerous challenges in accessing the files of the former *Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle* (WAST),¹²⁰ attributed to the impact of COVID-19 and the relocation of the archives in 2022, the military personnel records of Luxembourgish soldiers from Schiffange were examined within the broader framework of the Warlux project. These records contain details about the soldier's service, deployment and promotions, and, in certain instances, information about their fate, including injuries, illnesses and deaths. While not directly relevant to this specific research, they served as supplementary resources, offering additional insights into the soldiers if required.

3.4.2. Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution

The Arolsen Archives, recognised as a UNESCO World Document Heritage Site, holds the world's most comprehensive archive on the fates of victims and survivors of National Socialism, as well as evidence against the perpetrators.¹²¹ The archives are not bound by any national data protection laws but are subject to specific international provisions. They have one of the largest accessible online databases, featuring hundreds of thousands of digital scans of historical sources with machine-readable metadata.¹²²

Through these online archives, documents addressing different aspects of the research were consulted. The *Meldeblatt des Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitsdienst* for the years 1943-1944 was identified and analysed. The most pertinent information in these files concerned the wanted lists and details of searches and arrests of deserters and forcibly resettled individuals who had fled. In addition, an extensive folder on the persecution measures in Luxembourg during the war contained extracts of the war criminal trial against the members of the *Einsatzkommando Luxemburg* (EKL). This provided valuable information on the role of the EKL and the Gestapo in forced resettlements. Furthermore, searching for names of forcibly resettled individuals from the research sample led to post-war files from the tracing offices of the different occupied zones in Germany which document some individuals' whereabouts at the end of the war and, where applicable, their employment in Germany.

¹²⁰ This service was responsible for registering incoming soldiers, documenting their unit assignments and keeping their data up to date.

¹²¹ "Who we are", *Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution*, accessed on 13 September 2024 (<https://arolsen-archives.org/en/about-us/who-we-are/>); Christoph Rass and Ismee Tames, "Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration: A View from the Intersection of War and Migration Studies in the Digital Age," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 45, 174 (2020), 23.

¹²² "Risks and opportunities of an online archive", *Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution*, accessed on 13 September 2024 (<https://arolsen-archives.org/en/about-us/statements/online-archive/>); Rass and Tames, "Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration," *op.cit.*, 24.

3.4.3. Other international institutions

Other international institutions – mostly in Germany – were also consulted in the search for valuable documents. Although some unique material regarding the German occupation of Luxembourg was found, it was not always relevant for this specific research.

At Trier University, the digital database and copies of the “Gestapo Trier files” held at the *Service Historique de la Défense* in Vincennes were consulted in March 2022. This database contains more than 3,000 individual files of the Gestapo Trier, including many Luxembourgers. Unfortunately, no pertinent files were discovered. The documents held in this collection extend to early 1942, while the events investigated in the research start in the second half of 1942. There were also no documents found on earlier investigations against individuals or families from the research sample.

At the *Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz*, potentially relevant documents were identified through the online inventory and after contact with an archivist. Following a more thorough enquiry, their relevance for the research proved to be very limited. A handful of identified sources at the *Landesarchiv Thüringen* on forcibly resettled Luxembourgers could not be consulted owing to data protection reasons and time constraints.¹²³

In the *Archivdatenbank* of the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* in Munich, duplicates of files already consulted in the *Bundesarchiv* were identified. Nonetheless, it also housed a noteworthy transcript from a post-war interrogation of the former head of the DUT’s legal department in Luxembourg, Ludwig Metzger. This transcript provided new insights – albeit shaped by Metzger’s perspective and the information he chose to disclose – into the activities of the DUT in Luxembourg and shed light on the fate of the assets of resettled families. Because of the need for critical assessment, this file gains significance when compared to other source material on the DUT and the confiscation of assets of forcibly resettled Luxembourgers found in the ANLux and *Bundesarchiv*.

4. Methodology

4.1. *Methodological approach and frameworks*

The gathered source material was collected and analysed within a well-defined methodological framework. For the Warlux project, a methodological foundation was established during the initial reflections on the project and in connection with the funding request. In order to break with traditional historiography on “forced conscriptions” and to reveal a more nuanced understanding of war experiences in Luxembourg, the research was designed to enable us to write a history from below, with an actor-centred approach, focused on the individual

¹²³ Based on information received from the archivist, these documents contained seven completed questionnaires from forcibly resettled Luxembourgers. As these documents were subject to data protection, they could only be shared in an anonymised way. Unfortunately, owing to time constraints no physical visit to the archives could be made.

experiences and trajectories of the enrolled men and their families, from a locally and regionally defined sample.¹²⁴ The creation of a comprehensive database and the use of digital analysis tools were intended to help structure the collected biographical information and subsequently analyse the data.

Although this bottom-up approach also served as a guiding principle for this doctoral research, it proved insufficient to investigate the consequences of desertion and draft evasion and had to be adjusted. In order to understand the individual experiences of the families and individuals subjected to punitive measures, it was first essential to clarify the broader ideological frameworks, institutional structures and policy decisions within which these measures took place. A detailed analysis of this was lacking in the existing Luxembourgish historiography and was necessary as a solid basis for the research. The fact that data protection considerations made it difficult to access a large set of individual sources on the people affected further necessitated this broadening of approach.

The 2020 special issue of the journal *Historical Social Research*, entitled *Violence Induced Mobility*, was instrumental in this methodological reflection.¹²⁵ The volume explores the handling of mass displacements in the wake of the Second World War from a migration regimes perspective.¹²⁶ It proposes opening up the methodological approach of studies on the subject by drawing on models and insights from migration studies and war studies, as well as digital history methods.¹²⁷ In the introductory essay, historians Christoph Rass and Ismee Tames discuss the approaches and models used in forced migration studies and state that in the 75 years of research on displaced persons, two perspectives became well established.¹²⁸ First, early researchers predominantly applied a top-down perspective using documents and sources from the organisations and political institutions involved. Subsequently, an approach based on individual and collective experiences of the displaced persons, using autobiographies and biographical studies as well as collective and individual accounts, emerged and became more frequent. In the essay, the authors reflect on how institutional, process-generated documents on displaced persons can be approached with fresh ideas and perspectives as they contain both (auto-)biographical accounts of affected individuals and information on the functioning of institutions and organisations.¹²⁹

Based on the considerations and thoughts presented in the essay, this doctoral study combined the top-down and bottom-up approaches, as these were well-suited to the specific requirements of the research. Institutional sources from wartime authorities and organisations, such as the CdZ, the RKF and the military courts, but also from the post-war period, such as war damage and

¹²⁴ Juliane Tatarinov, Nina Janz, Denis Scuto, and Lars Wieneke, "WARLUX: Soldiers and Their Communities in WWII: The Impact and Legacy of War Experiences in Luxembourg." FNR CORE research project application form (unpublished). Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR), 2019, 2 and 18.

¹²⁵ Christoph Rass and Ismee Tames, eds., "Special issue: Violence Induced Mobility", *Historical Social Research*, 45, no. 4 (2020).

¹²⁶ Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff defined this as a concept which is used to capture the relation between mobility, regulation and discourse and therefore helps to understand the collective processes that bring about migration; Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff, "What Is in a Migration Regime? Genealogical Approach and Methodological Proposal," in *Was Ist Ein Migrationsregime? What Is a Migration Regime?*, edited by Andreas Pott, Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff, Migrationsgesellschaften (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2018), 19 and 46.

¹²⁷ Rass and Tames, "Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration", *op.cit.*, 11–12.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²⁹ Rass and Tames, "Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration", *op.cit.*, 23.

war criminal files, provided a top-down perspective. They offered valuable information on the German organisational structures at regional, national and central level, on the decision-making processes, and on the underlying mechanisms behind the investigated consequences and punitive measures. In addition, some of these institutional sources – such as the police investigations and war damages files – also offered a bottom-up perspective as they contain life-event data and autobiographical accounts from the researched families.¹³⁰ This dual use of the same source joins Tal Brutmann’s argument that “the shift in observation scales confirms [...] that the richness of an archive source depends on the analytical framework deployed to interrogate it.”¹³¹ Historian Olaf Berg noted in his article in the same volume of *Historical Social Research*, that these “process-generated” documents were produced at the intersection of the institutional environment and individual decisions and therefore hold expressions of both the configuration of institutional settings and personal experiences.¹³² Rass also considered this in his research on the war experiences of Wehrmacht soldiers and applied the term *Strukturbiographie* to differentiate between biographies reconstructed from institutional files and those extracted from ego-documents.¹³³ In this study, the gathered data from the institutional sources was to a certain extent further enriched with personal and collective accounts about the same affected families found in published ego-documents. The origin of the data was clearly differentiated in the analysis, as will be explained in more detail when discussing the research database.

When evaluating the collected documents, it was essential to bear in mind the specific context in which they were created, apply the necessary source criticism and combine or compare them with other document types. This also facilitated identification of the specific circumstances surrounding the sources and any distortion caused by ideological influences. As historian Mary Fulbrook rightly stated, one should always consider the distinction between the “inner self”, the “monitoring eye”, and outward behaviour patterns when dealing with accounts of wartime events.¹³⁴ To give a straightforward example taken from this study: a family’s statement to German police officers who were searching for their deserter relative will not be the same as their post-war testimony to the Luxembourgish police, taken in the context of the trials against those responsible for their forced resettlement. Furthermore, the accounts written in memoirs decades later will also vary. This variation can also be seen in the Nazi administration’s labelling of individuals as “anti-German” or “untrustworthy” and the post-war classification of the same individuals as displaying a “good patriotic attitude”.¹³⁵

For the actor-centred approach, the focus lay on the experiences of families from Schiffange. Inspired by Olaf Berg’s methodology in the article mentioned above, the original aim was to apply

¹³⁰ In the case of the wartime and post-war police investigations, it is important to note that the files are not exact transcriptions of the interrogations, but written down versions – which all follow a similar structure – created by the person who conducted the interview. They are thereby not entirely written in the interrogated person’s own words, in contrast to the war damages files.

¹³¹ “Le déplacement des échelles d’observation confirme [...] que la richesse d’une source d’archive dépend du cadre d’analyse déployé afin de l’interroger.” Quotation from Tal Brutmann et al., “Changer d’échelle pour renouveler l’histoire de la Shoah,” *Le Genre humain* 52, 1 (2012), 14.

¹³² Olaf Berg, “Capturing Displaced Persons’ Agency by Modelling Their Life Events: A Mixed Method Digital Humanities Approach,” *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 45, 4 (174) (2020), 264.

¹³³ Christoph Rass, “Gibt es den Gefreiten Jedermann? Perspektiven der Analyse personenbezogener Akten zum Personal militärischer Institutionen,” in *Von Feldherren und Gefreiten: Zur biographischen Dimension des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, edited by Christian Hartmann, *Zeitgeschichte im Gespräch* 2 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2008), 92.

¹³⁴ Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.

¹³⁵ These labels were for example used on the individual resettlement cards of the RKF and the war damages files.

a mixed-method research approach that combined a qualitative hermeneutic analysis with a more quantitative prosopographical analysis of this set of individual cases.¹³⁶ The prosopographical analysis would reveal patterns in the lives of the group of people, linked to for example, their profession, age, gender, origin, social status, memberships of organisations and destination of forced resettlement, which could then possibly explain certain types of experiences.¹³⁷ However, owing to the gaps and considerable diversity in the available source material and the difficulties in accessing sources containing personal data, not enough data could be collected in order to constitute a statistically representative sample to base this quantitative analysis on. As a result, the focus moved to a more qualitative hermeneutic examination of some of the individual cases.

It is important to emphasise that this part of the study therefore reflects the experiences of the investigated group of families and cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, it provides interesting insights into broader events and realities that extend beyond the scope of individual experiences.¹³⁸ As historian Blandine Landau stated during her thesis defence in March 2024, while referring to the book *Penser par cas*, by Jean-Claude Passeron and Jacques Revel: individual cases are exemplary on their own and not examples in themselves, but when considered together they can reveal trends and certain mechanisms.¹³⁹ By investigating individual cases on a micro-level, certain actions, impacts or patterns from the macro-level emerge. These either align with or contradict findings from the more global approach and thereby reveal new findings and new insights.

The combination of a top-down and actor-centred approach, coupled with the extensive and diverse range of sources employed for this purpose, enabled a more nuanced reflection on the impact of desertion and draft evasion on families and their war experiences. Berg's assertion that a source is a "representation" of a past event underscores the importance of combining a diverse range of sources to provide multiple representations of historical events.¹⁴⁰ As Rass and Tames stated: "Documenting an individual's fate by piecing together various snippets of evidence with the help of interlinked databases and archives improves research and remembrance."¹⁴¹ By incorporating and linking institutional and personal sources, from both the wartime and postwar periods and across various archives – each with their own context, issues and therefore applied source criticism –, this study was able to capture a wide range of representations and critically examine them with the aim of forming a credible and meaningful history from the knowledge generated.¹⁴²

Nevertheless, it is important to maintain an awareness of the fact that these results remain an interpretation and a representation of the source material that was available at the time of the investigation. As with any historical research, it is not the intention of this study to present *the*

¹³⁶ Berg, "Capturing Displaced Persons' Agency by Modelling Their Life Events", *op.cit.*, 266.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ John W. Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2017), 5.

¹³⁹ Further information on this can also be found in her PhD thesis: Landau, "A la recherche des juifs spoliés", *op.cit.*; Jean-Claude Passeron and Jacques Revel, "Penser par cas. Raisonner à partir de singularités," in *Penser par cas*, edited by Jean-Claude Passeron and Jacques Revel (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2005), 9-44.

¹⁴⁰ Berg, "Capturing Displaced Persons' Agency by Modelling Their Life Events", *op.cit.*, 279.

¹⁴¹ Rass and Tames, "Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration", *op.cit.*, 24.

¹⁴² Berg, "Capturing Displaced Persons' Agency by Modelling Their Life Events", *op.cit.*, 264.

truthful representation of any specific reality, as the past “reality” as a possible research object is irretrievably gone.¹⁴³ As Ismee Tames pointed out: “Those who expect ‘the story’ lose sight of the ambiguity of the data: the multiplicity, inconsistencies, variability, gaps, and silences in and of the sources.”¹⁴⁴ Following the theologian and philosopher Jens Zimmermann’s reflections on hermeneutics, which he defined as “as a basic human activity of interpretation concerned with understanding the meaning of communications or life situations”,¹⁴⁵ historians piece together all available clues from sources into the most convincing narrative based on their interpretation of these sources.¹⁴⁶ The subsequent reader of the historical account then also does this in turn. This construed meaningful whole represents the most probable interpretation of a past event, a hypothesis that encompasses the largest number of aspects provided by the text.¹⁴⁷ However, as Zimmermann further pointed out:

“There is always the possibility that a reader with greater experience, a keener eye, and a better imagination can provide a more persuasive reading that integrates more of the textual parts and clues into a convincing whole.”¹⁴⁸

Historical research thus reflects the interpretations and findings of the researcher, who is to a certain extent also influenced by the soci(et)al context in which the research takes place, as well as their own personal background.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, this does not signify that the research is a mirror of the historian’s own views.¹⁵⁰ As Berg rightfully stated, sources – and thereby the interpretation of these sources – are the only material on which we can build our study of the past.¹⁵¹ It is the transparent documentation and argumentation of the reflections and decisions made during the research process, as well as the truthful representation of the used material, with its contradictions, inconsistencies and gaps, that turns the whole into a scientific study.

4.2. Definition of the case study and the research sample

As part of this transparent documentation, it is essential to present the considerations, reasonings and decisions behind the selection of the research sample. As mentioned earlier, this doctoral research adopted and further built on the research sample of the broader Warlux project, consisting of RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers from Schiffange.

As an actor-centred investigation of all Luxembourgish recruits and soldiers was not feasible within the project timeframe – nor was it the aim of the project –, a specific research sample was

¹⁴³ Ibid., 278; Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History*, 3rd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁴⁴ “Wie ‘het verhaal’ verwacht, verliest de ambiguïteit van de data uit het oog: de meerduidigheid, inconsistenties, veranderlijkheid, gaten en stiltes in en van de bronnen.” Quotation from Tames, “Digitale Ontsluiting van het Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging, *op.cit.*, 305.

¹⁴⁵ Jens Zimmermann, *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 59 and 65.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ This aspect was for example addressed in detail by historian Fabio Spirinelli in his PhD thesis, in the chapter entitled “The Self-Reflecting Historian”; Spirinelli, “Staging the Nation in an Intermediate Space,” *op.cit.*, 22-24; Chantal Kesteloot, “The Role of the War in National Societies: The Examples of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.” In *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe*, edited by Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens, Studies in Contemporary European History 7 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 35.

¹⁵⁰ Zimmermann, *Hermeneutics*, *op.cit.*, 59.

¹⁵¹ Berg, “Capturing Displaced Persons’ Agency by Modelling Their Life Events”, *op.cit.*, 279.

defined early on and further refined during the process. Overall, the investigation at project level focused on the biographies and trajectories of:

- Young men¹⁵²
- Born between 1920-1927¹⁵³
- Of Luxembourg nationality
- Enrolled into the RAD and/or Wehrmacht (both voluntarily and forcibly)
- Residing in Schiffange at the moment of their enrolment

At the start of the project seven municipalities across different regions of Luxembourg, including the north, east, south and west, were initially earmarked as sample regions. This diverse selection would enable the comparison of wartime experiences within Luxembourg. The selection criteria for the municipalities consisted of geographical factors, the size of the towns – to ensure a balanced distribution across the different regions – and the availability of sources.¹⁵⁴ The researchers were able to create a broad overview of potentially available Second World War material in the country's municipal archives based on a survey they distributed among the municipal administrations. The initial selection consisted of the municipalities of Clervaux, Troisvierges and Weiswampach in the north¹⁵⁵, Echternach in the east, Esch-sur-Alzette and Schiffange in the south and Beckerich in the west. However, the large number of research subjects to investigate – estimated at over 2,000 recruits and soldiers – combined with constraints on available resources, including the project limitations and changes within the team, meant that the number of sample communities had to be reduced to one community in consultation with the project's Advisory Board.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² In the initial stages female conscripts of the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* and *Kriegshilfsdienst* were also included in the investigation. However, due to practical constraints, such as the difficult access to source material on these recruits, it was decided to limit the scope of the project to male recruits and soldiers.

¹⁵³ The birth years that were impacted by compulsory labour service and military service as determined by the regulations: Verordnung über die Reichsarbeitsdienstpflicht in Luxemburg vom 23. Mai 1941 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 6 June 1941, 232; Verordnung über die Arbeitsdienstpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1921 vom 14. Oktober 1941 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 18 October 1941, 414; Verordnung über die Arbeitsdienstpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1922 vom 15. Dezember 1941 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 22 December 1941, 536; Anordnung über die Arbeitsdienstpflicht für die Geburtsjahrgänge 1923 und 1924 vom 5. März 1942 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 17 March 1942, 70; Verordnung über die Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg vom 30. August 1942 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 31 August 1942, 253; Anordnung über Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1925 vom 25. März 1943 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 27 March 1943, 44; Anordnung über Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1926 vom 8. Dezember 1943 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 11 December 1943, 272; Anordnung über Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflicht des Geburtsjahrganges 1927 vom 14. Juli 1944 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 14 July 1944, 105.

¹⁵⁴ Juliane Tatarinov, Nina Janz, Denis Scuto, and Lars Wieneke, "WARLUX: Soldiers and Their Communities in WWII: The Impact and Legacy of War Experiences in Luxembourg." FNR CORE research project application form (unpublished). Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR), 2019, 18.

¹⁵⁵ Three municipalities were selected in the agricultural north of the country because of the lower population density in this region.

¹⁵⁶ The Warlux Advisory Board consisted of Prof. Dr. Christoph Brüll (Assistant Professor and Senior research scientist at C²DH/University of Luxembourg), Prof. Dr Ryszard Kaczmarek (Professor emeritus at the University of Silesia), Dr Peter Quadflieg (Head of the city archives of Wiesbaden), Prof. Dr Christoph A. Rass (Professor at the Universität Osnabrück), Dr Corinne Schroeder (Head of the Contemporary Section at the National Archives of Luxembourg), Prof. Dr Ismee Tames (Program Leader War & Society at NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies and Professor at Utrecht University) and Prof. Dr Nico Wouters (Head of CegeSoma and Associate Professor at the University of Ghent).



Figure 2: Administrative map of Luxembourg (1940-1945) indicating the original (yellow) and final (green) Warlux research sample, ANLux, P-323.

Schifflange was selected as the final sample based on practical and contextual considerations. First, the town had a total population of around 5,242 individuals in 1942, when mandatory military service was introduced.¹⁵⁷ With approximately 300 RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers, it was of reasonable size for the two researchers involved. Second, a substantial amount of source material on the conscripts from this town could already be identified in the municipal and national archives. Third, the town had an interesting and strategic location in the country because of its connection to the mining and steel industry, particularly the ARBED steel plant. Past migrations from within and outside the country to this industrial region also led to a town population with a diverse socio-economical background and thereby varied profiles among the investigated individuals.

The research at project level enabled the creation of a comprehensive registry and detailed data set on the enrolled young men from the town, including biographical information and details about their war trajectories and experiences. For the PhD project, the focus was placed on the families of these recruits and soldiers. This approach facilitated the identification of the families, enabled the establishment of a clearer link between the recruits' experiences and what happened at home and thereby also provided a better understanding of the families' experiences. The concept of "family" was defined as the individuals residing together in the same household at the time of enrolment. This entity is also commonly referred to by the German

¹⁵⁷ Overview of the memberships of the NSV in the local groups of the Kreis Esch/Alzig, 5 August 1942, ANLux, FD-235-08.

concept of *Herdstelle* (“hearthplace” or “hearth site”). These family members were mostly the parents or siblings of recruits and soldiers, but also their spouses, grandparents or parents-in-law. Over the course of the investigation, this definition had to be extended slightly to also include close relatives living outside the main household, if there were signs that they were also affected by the desertion or draft evasion. To ensure a feasible and manageable sample size, only families officially residing in Schiffange during the enrolment process were included in the study.¹⁵⁸

To gain a deeper insight into this research sample, it is first necessary to examine the sample of RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers. The Warlux research was able to identify 304 enrolled young men from the investigated town. For 109 of these individuals, traces of desertion or draft evasion were found in the source corpus. The selection of families could however not be made solely on the basis of this group. After the war, former Wehrmacht soldiers sometimes claimed to have deserted as an act of disobedience against the National Socialist regime in order not to be regarded as traitors.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, as Nina Janz rightly stated:

“The absence of data on desertions in the German military archives does not necessarily negate the event itself. Documents could have been destroyed, lost, or the army might have reported his desertion only towards the end of the war.”¹⁶⁰

Some soldiers also deserted during the chaotic final phase of the war and were not officially registered as deserters. Since this doctoral study examined the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on families during the war, only verified cases, where evidence of flight was found in official wartime documentation, were included in the analysis. In total, 67 of the 109 cases could be traced in the official wartime documentation, which included deserter registries, fugitive lists, police investigations or military court files. They consist of 54 deserters, 12 draft evaders and one uncertain case¹⁶¹ (see Annex 1).

For the total of 304 RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers, 263 family units were identified, 74 of which could be linked to the 67 deserters and draft evaders¹⁶² (see Annex 2). For 46 of the 74 families, signs of repressive measures following the desertion or draft evasion of the enrolled family member were found.¹⁶³ Of these families, 28 – including just over 80 individuals in total – were forcibly resettled or forcibly put to work (*Dienstverpflichtet*) in Germany (see Annex 3). A few members of these families were imprisoned and sent to a concentration camp for aiding the

¹⁵⁸ Although movements to other towns were observed within the families of other recruits and soldiers, no such cases were noted among the families of deserters and draft evaders. It is however important to note that not all information on the movements of these families during the war might have been identified or collected during the study.

¹⁵⁹ Klos, “Umkämpfte Erinnerungen”, *op.cit.*, 63 and 78; Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [5]; Peter M. Quadflieg, „Luxemburg - Zwangsrekrutiert ins Grossdeutsche Reich: Luxemburgs nationale Identität und ihre Prägung durch den Zweiten Weltkrieg“, in *Kriegserfahrung und nationale Identität in Europa nach 1945*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), 181.

¹⁶⁰ Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [5].

¹⁶¹ This case involves a Wehrmacht soldier who was suspected of desertion because he failed to return in time to his unit after his leave. He had requested additional leave because his sister was ill, but did not receive validation for this. The police investigation suggests that he returned to his unit three days after the end of this leave, but there is no further information confirming this.

¹⁶² Five of the 67 deserters were brothers or brothers-in-law who lived at the same address before enrolment and were part of the same family. As a result, the list of families in Annex 2 shows a total of 77 families instead of 74. Identical families are marked in bold.

¹⁶³ As elaborated in the article “Desertion leads to resettlement”, for some families the source material includes multiple reasons for the imposition of repressive measures, including being related to a deserter or draft evader; Vercruysse, ““Desertion leads to resettlement””, *op.cit.*, 264.

desertion or draft evasion.¹⁶⁴ A few were later transferred there due to their (suspected) involvement in resistance activities.

For the 18 other families, various types of impact could be noted. For instance, the members of one family were expelled from their house and had their assets confiscated, but they were not forcibly resettled because of their advanced age.¹⁶⁵ For all 17 other families, evidence was found that – just as for the resettled families – the local German administration and police forces had made a comprehensive inventory of their assets and placed a notice on their door prohibiting the sale of any property.¹⁶⁶ However, no additional information regarding any subsequent confiscation was found for them. Additionally, for one of these families, it was reported after the war that the transfer of the deserter's father – who was a civil servant – to another service in Germany was directly linked to the desertion.¹⁶⁷ Others claimed in their post-war witness statements that they were threatened with forced resettlement but that no further action was taken.¹⁶⁸ Two families also claimed that the ARBED steel plant prevented their resettlement, although no further proof of this was found.¹⁶⁹ For 28 of the 74 families no sign of any repressive measures was found in the consulted source material. This does not mean that they were unaffected. Owing to significant gaps in the source material and the difficult access to individual files, no definitive statements can be made regarding these families.

As previously indicated, a deliberate decision was taken not to conduct a detailed or prosopographical analysis of the entire sample group due to the large gaps in the data. The presented articles do include a deeper analysis concerning the families who experienced forced resettlement, as more data on this aspect was available.¹⁷⁰ It would be of significant scientific interest to include a more quantitative study on the entire group of families once more source material becomes available.

As part of the larger methodological framework, the assembled source corpus was used on three distinct levels: to identify the recruits, soldiers and families within the sample; to comprehend the broader frameworks, institutional structures and procedures related to the consequences of desertion and draft evasion; and to analyse the impact on the identified individuals from the sample on a micro-historical level. Digital analysis tools were used to structure and analyse the gathered data. The data on the families was entered into the wider project database in nodegoat, which also included information on the recruits and soldiers. This enabled direct links to be made between information about the families and information about deserters or draft evaders, resulting in the creation of a complex timeline and web of connections between the front lines and home.

¹⁶⁴ These are not included in the 80 individuals.

¹⁶⁵ Interrogation of P.P. at the Schiffflange police station, 3 September 1947, ANLux, CdG-003.

¹⁶⁶ Vercruysse, ““Desertion leads to resettlement”,” *op.cit.*, 269.

¹⁶⁷ The other members of this family unit stayed in their house and mentioned that no assets were confiscated; War damage file of K.F., ANLux, DG2DOS-00619 nr. 70140.

¹⁶⁸ For example: Interrogation of S. J-P. (brother) at the Schiffflange police station, 2 September 1947, ANLux, CdG-003; Interrogation of W.V. at the Schiffflange police station, 3 September 1947, ANLux, CdG-003; Interrogation of W. J-P. at the Schiffflange police station, 3 September 1947, ANLux, CdG-003.

¹⁶⁹ Interrogation of K.J. at the Schiffflange police station, 30 August 1947, ANLux, CdG-003; Interrogation of S. J-P. (father) at the Schiffflange police station, 3 September 1947, ANLux, CdG-003.

¹⁷⁰ It is important to note that some families were able to be analysed in more detail than others, depending on the material available on them.

4.3. *Digital instruments and methods*

4.3.1. Nodegoat

Nodegoat is a web-based research environment developed by the Dutch company Lab 1100, which was originally tailored for research within the humanities. It enables researchers to create custom-made data models and databases adapted to their specific research questions and data sets. It further assists them with their data management, network analysis and visualisations. This relational platform follows an object-oriented approach inspired by actor-network theory. This means that diverse aspects of the dataset (called “Objects”), such as people, events, artefacts or sources, are treated independently and as equal. They can be supplemented with additional geographical and temporal references, as well as in-text references. The hierarchy and connection between the objects depends on the composition of the network defined by the researcher in his or her specific data model. The platform can be used for both individual and collaborative research and allows great flexibility in the creation of data models, with no limitations on relational structures or depths. Through its use of iterative data modelling, which includes a continuous shift between the conceptual, logical and interface levels of data modelling, it allows researchers to continuously adapt and develop their data model throughout the data entry process. The platform enables researchers to process, filter, analyse and visualise complex datasets in different ways, helping them to identify common patterns and networks or pinpoint singular situations.¹⁷¹

The Warlux researchers used nodegoat as a main work instrument to store, structure and analyse the biographical data they collected on the research subjects. The private database – secured and restricted from public access – was built up around three separate but interconnected areas of focus: the first area gathered all the information on the recruits and soldiers from Schiffflange; the second area collected information on their families; and the third area contained information on the digital war letter collection, including transcriptions of letters. This latter area will not be discussed further here. The data was entered collectively by the two researchers and several student assistants throughout the entirety of the project, predominantly between August 2020 and March 2024. The majority of the sources used to build this database were not machine readable or available in digitised form, and had to be entered manually. The doctoral researcher of this study participated in the data entry on the recruits and soldiers. Nevertheless, her primary responsibility and focus were data entry regarding the families. In order to understand how this database was used in the doctoral research, an explanation of the larger data model, without delving too deeply into the technical details, is necessary.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [6]; “Using nodegoat”, *Nodegoat*, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://nodegoat.net/about#data-modelling>); “So, what is nodegoat in short?”, *Nodegoat*, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://nodegoat.net/faq>); Pim van Bree and Geert Kessel, “Iterative Data Modelling. From Teaching Practice to Research Method”, abstract retrieved from Digital Humanities Montreal database, 2017, accessed on 10 October 2024 (<https://dh2017.adho.org/abstracts/309/309.pdf>); Machteld Venken and Arnaud Sauer, “Arrival declaration forms. A new gateway for mapping migration to Luxembourg”, *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 4 (2022), accessible online (<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/human-dynamics/articles/10.3389/fhumd.2022.931758/full>).

¹⁷² Given the focus of this PhD thesis and the purpose of this chapter on methodology, the technical aspects of the database, as well as more detailed considerations regarding the focus areas on the recruits/soldiers and the letters are not extensively covered here. More information on these aspects can be found in: Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the database was constructed to closely examine the individual life paths of recruits, soldiers and families and the connections between them, in order to extend beyond the existing collective experiences of *the* “forced conscripts” as commonly represented in the traditional historiography. To capture the complexity of these individuals’ war experiences and trajectories and make room for the more pragmatic considerations and choices that shaped these experiences, a linear representation of their lives was insufficient.¹⁷³ The data model was designed to be flexible and adaptable so that it could accommodate the unstructured and unpredictable life realities of each researched individual.¹⁷⁴ As Nina Janz, responsible for the digital approach of the project and the coordination of the database, explained in her article *Mapping biographies in a relational database*, this was achieved by connecting the biographical profile of individuals – both soldiers and family members – to various “life events” or “chapters” of their wartime experience, such as military service, resistance activities or imprisonment.¹⁷⁵ These events were treated as equal but independent objects and were placed on the same level as the individuals themselves. Within every “life event” or “chapter”, specific information regarding time and space, as well as remarks from the researcher, could be linked for further contextualisation.¹⁷⁶ This approach allowed each individual’s unique war trajectory to be reconstructed in a very flexible and detailed way.¹⁷⁷ The data model was also adjusted to transparently reflect contradictions, ambiguities and gaps in the data.¹⁷⁸ For example, the sources could list multiple dates of birth or death for the same person, and names could be spelled differently or were Germanised during the war, complicating the exact identification of individuals. Also, statements made by conscripts or their families during the war could contradict with their statements after the war. The database included these variations, ensured their traceability, and captured their original context by cross-referencing the data with the original source of information.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ See also the term “situational opportunism”, employed as an interpretative framework by Andreas Fickers and Christoph Brüll, with which they try to demonstrate that individual actions and decision-making should be considered alongside social and political structural constraints within which the person acted; Andreas Fickers and Christoph Brüll, “Ein Experiment kollektiver Gewissensprüfung: situativer Opportunismus und kumulative Heroisierung.” *Grenzerfahrungen* 4 (2019), 8–39.

¹⁷⁴ Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [10].

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ “So, what is nodegoat in short?”, *Nodegoat*, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://nodegoat.net/faq>).

¹⁷⁷ Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [10].

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ The contradictory information or gaps in the data complicated the use of certain program functionalities, such as the creation of visualisations. The researcher therefore used the database solely for data storage; Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [5].

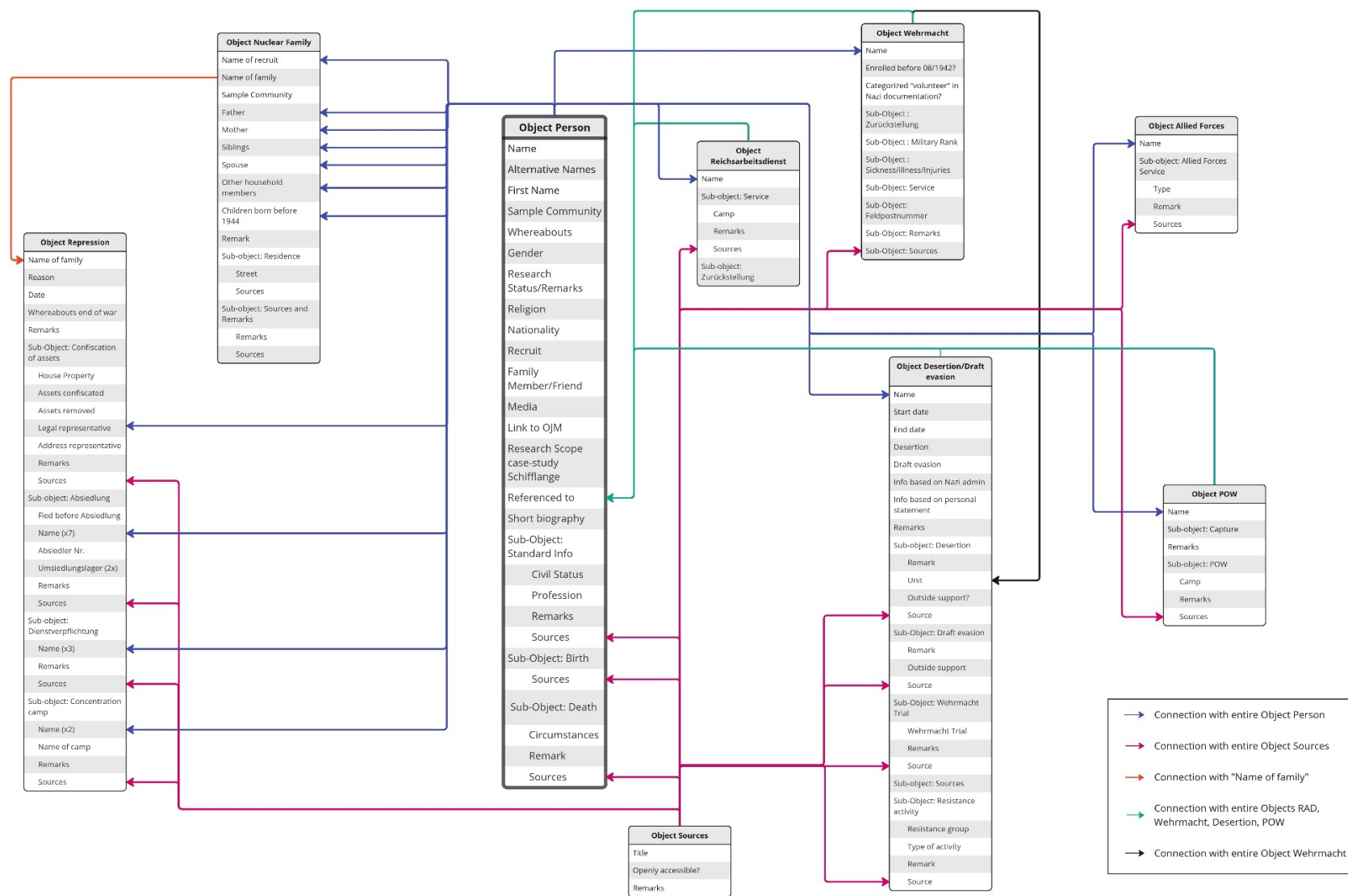


Figure 3: Overview of the Warlux data model.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ This overview is a slightly simplified version of the data model to convey the most relevant elements for the study in a structured way. For example, the information from "Object Wehrmacht" was reduced and the section on the letter collection is not depicted here. It is also important to note that every "sub-object" inherently includes information on the location and time.

¹⁸¹ Janz, “Mapping biographies in a Relational Database”, *op.cit.*, [7].

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Overview

Scheuer Rudi [edit](#)

Name Scheuer Rudi
 Start Date 22-02-1943
 End Date 10-09-1944
 Desertion Yes
 Info based on Nazi admin Yes
 Remark; Witness

Sub-Objects: Overview [Desertion] [Wehrmacht Trial/File] [Sources]

25 1 - 5 of 5

Date Start	Date End	Location	Remark	Family/Supporter	Unit	Source

Figure 4: Example of the individual profile of a labour service recruit and his connected object “Desertion”.¹⁸²

The recruits and soldiers were also linked to a separate object called “Nuclear family”, which formed the connection with the focus area of the 263 families. Every family unit consisted first of a connection to the individual profile of the recruit or soldier of the household.¹⁸³ The individual profiles of the different family members identified within the household were also created and associated. The father, mother, spouse and other household members were identified separately. Every person in the database – recruit, soldier or family member – thus existed separately through their individual profile, which contained information such as their date of birth and death, but was also associated with their family. In the “Remark” section, additional information, such as relationships with other family members or indications of the families’ behaviour before the war or enrolment, could be added. Finally, the place of residence of the family unit and the sources found about them were listed.

¹⁸² Some of this information had to be redacted in compliance with Luxembourg archival legislation and the agreements made with the National Archives during the inspection of the sources. The other information is also available on the project website.

¹⁸³ In some cases, multiple members of the same household were enrolled, and these were then connected to the same family.

Overview

Cross-Referenced

Scheuer

edit

Name of recruit

Scheuer Rudi

Name of family

Scheuer

Sample Community

Schifflange

Father

Scheuer Gaspard, Kaspar, Kasper

Mother

Scheuer-Oppermann Catherine

Other household members

Remark

Sub-Objects: Overview

[Residence]

[Sources and Remarks]

25

1 - 1 of 1

1

Date Start

Date End

Location

Remark (Street)

Sources

Figure 5: Example of the object “Nuclear family”.¹⁸⁴

For this specific investigation, a family unit could be further connected to two separate objects. The first was created to collect information on the support measures a family received from the Nazi administration. This however became irrelevant before any major data was entered due to the modification of the research focus. The second object was designed to collect all data pertaining to the consequences and repressive measures that could be associated with a family following the desertion or draft evasion of their relative. This included the multiple arguments mentioned in wartime and post-war documentation on why these families were targeted – including for instance their link to the deserter, a suspected negative political attitude or their unwillingness to join a Nazi organisation. In addition, it also included more detailed information on the confiscation of assets, forced resettlements, deportations to concentration camps and *Dienstverpflichtung*. As not all family members within a family unit were always concerned by the same events and the data was often ambiguous, the object was designed to allow flexible and customised data entry.

¹⁸⁴ Some of this information had to be redacted in compliance with Luxembourg archival legislation and the agreements made with the National Archives during the inspection of the sources. The researcher has decided to not redact the father’s name, as it is mentioned in a legally permitted way in one of the articles.

Overview

Scheuer [edit](#)

Family Name: Scheuer

Reason: [Redacted]

Whereabouts 1944/1945: returned

Remarks: [Redacted]

Sub-Objects: Overview [Confiscation of assets] [Absiedlung] [Dienstverpflichtung]

1-4 of 4

Date Start	Date End	Location	Absiedler Nr.	Umsiedlungslager 1	Remarks	Sources
[Redacted]						

Figure 6: Example of the object “Repression” containing information on the repressive measures taken against a family.¹⁸⁵

This overview of the data model provides a clean and structured depiction of the database design and especially its potential. Unfortunately, given the time spent in localising the largely dispersed source material, the difficulties in obtaining access to documents and the gaps in the material that was available, the database remained incomplete and its originally intended function had to be adapted. As mentioned in the first section of this methodological chapter, its role in providing a detailed analysis on the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the wider group of families was no longer possible. However, it did assist in the hermeneutic research on some individual cases for which more information was available. It is important to note that a large part of the source material used to construct the database was obtained through derogation requests in German and Luxembourg archives.¹⁸⁶ As a result, the data from the database may not be made public at this moment.¹⁸⁷ This also explains the redaction of the illustrations above and the pseudonymisation of the majority of the data in this thesis.

¹⁸⁵ Some of this information had to be redacted in compliance with the Luxembourg archival legislation and the agreements made with the National Archives during the inspection of the sources.

¹⁸⁶ Of the 737 individual sources used to build the entire database, 450 archival sources (or 61%) required a special request for access. 317 of these consist of the military personnel records of the former *Wehrmachtsauskunftstelle* and were solely used to gather information on the Wehrmacht service of the soldiers. The 133 others are from Luxembourg archives and were used to extract data on the labour service recruits, Wehrmacht soldiers and their family members.

¹⁸⁷ A condensed version of the database has been published on the project website (<https://warlux.uni.lu/>) in compliance with archival legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). A pseudonymised dataset, as an example of the data structure, has also been published on Zenodo: Nina Janz and Sarah Maya Vercruysse, “WARLUX Nodegoat Database, on Recruits of Schiffflange/Luxembourg, Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History/University of Luxembourg,” [Dataset]. Zenodo. 12 July 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8138202>.

4.3.2. Tropy

Before the data was entered in Nodegoat, the research photo management tool Tropy was used to structure and analyse the images and notes taken of all the collected archival material. Tropy was initially developed by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University (Virginia) in 2016 and was specifically designed for historians to annotate, structure and combine text, photographs, videos and audio recordings gathered during their research. It allows researchers to structure large photo collections and notes according to the specific needs of their research. They can then add annotations, tags, transcriptions and metadata to the documents and easily navigate the material through the search function. The imported files are copied and stored into a bundled project folder within a local folder, ensuring the protection of the data.¹⁸⁸

During this study, the tool was used as a primary step in the analysis of the consulted primary source material. In addition to nodegoat, which only assembled data on the individuals from the research sample, Tropy also facilitated the analysis of the institutional structures and broader frameworks. For documents which could be photographed or digitally scanned, the visual material was added to the platform. For those for which there was no permission to take scans, the notes gathered during the archival visits were entered so that all the data on the collected source material was gathered in one platform. The material was structured by topic such as “identification of family”, “general legislation” and “repression”. This last topic had sub-sections including “desertion and family investigation” and “forced resettlement and asset confiscation”. Subsequently, the material was subdivided by archive. Each archive folder again contained separate groups depending on the content of the material. For instance, the material from the *Bundesarchiv* on “forced resettlement and asset confiscation” was divided into “General: Forced resettlement and Sippenhaft”, “General: confiscations and bank accounts” and “Case study Schiffflange”. During the analysis of the material, descriptions of the content were added to each relevant page, keywords were incorporated and similar structures were applied to process-generated documents which included statements by families. Data on individuals from the research sample were first gathered here and then added to nodegoat. This approach helped to organise and easily locate information – for example on specific individuals, families, services or topics – which could then be used during the subsequent analysis and writing process.

¹⁸⁸ “Tropy Basics,” *Tropy*, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://docs.tropy.org/>); Anita Lucchesi and Sean Takats, “Manage your research photos with ease and consistency: The latest Tropy release is here,” *C²DH*, 11 April 2023, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/thinking/manage-your-research-photos-ease-and-consistency-latest-tropy-release-here>); Sytze Van Herck, “Historians as Computer Users” In *Digital History and Hermeneutics: Between Theory and Practice*, edited by Andreas Fickers and Juliane Tatarinov, *Studies in Digital History and Hermeneutics* 2 (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), 226.

4.3.3. Other digital instruments

Without going into as much detail as the two abovementioned digital tools, which played a central role in the source analysis for this doctoral research, it is also important to acknowledge other digital tools which were used during the process.

For the management of the secondary literature, the reference management software Zotero – also developed at the Roy Rosenzweig Center – was used with direct references to the PDF files. Initially, the Warlux researchers built a shared library for the project in this software. As the doctoral research progressed independently, a separate library was established and used. For annotating the most important literature, Evernote was employed, organising the literature and notes by topic. This structure, along with the tools' search functions, facilitated the retrieval of relevant information during the writing process. Following the crowdsourcing campaign and the collection of war letters, Transkribus, a platform for the digitisation and transcription of historical documents, was used for the transcription of the letters. Although this tool was used extensively for the Warlux project, it was used less for this doctoral research as the relevance of these sources remained limited.¹⁸⁹

A separate mention should also be made regarding the usage of AI within this study. Over the course of this research, the increasing availability of generative AI and large language models (LLMs) has caused a great deal of debate and confusion in academia. While it is acknowledged that these tools have value and potential in helping researchers during their study and writing, it is generally agreed that they should be handled with care and in a transparent manner.¹⁹⁰ During the composition of this thesis, the researcher used Deep L and Microsoft Copilot with Commercial Data Protection for translation purposes and to improve the style and readability of some parts of the texts, since English is not her mother tongue. Microsoft Copilot with Commercial Data Protection was made available by the University of Luxembourg to its staff in April 2024 in order to help them “summarise documents and websites, craft professional content, conduct research for papers and assignments, assist in writing code in several programming languages or create images for social media, articles, email”.¹⁹¹ The Commercial Data Protection ensures the protection of the data and prevents its dissemination outside the university, as well as its usage in training Microsoft AI models.

¹⁸⁹ Nina Janz, “A Workshop on War Letters (in the Digital Age)”, *C²DH*, 16 March 2022, , accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/thinking/workshop-war-letters-digital-age>); Nina Janz and Sarah Maya Vercruysse, “Transcribing, Curating and Researching War Letters in the Digital Age”, *C²DH*, 22 June 2022, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/thinking/transcribing-curating-and-researching-war-letters-digital-age>).

¹⁹⁰ “Artificial Intelligence Policy”, *Sage*, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/chatgpt-and-generative-ai>); Laura Bannier, “ChatGPT ne fait pas trembler l'Université du Luxembourg”, *Virgule*, 27 January 2023, accessed on 27 September 2024 (<https://www.virgule.lu/luxembourg/chatgpt-ne-fait-pas-trembler-l-universite-du-luxembourg/29760.html>); Marine Meunier, “Wie neue KI-Tools das Lernen verändern”, *L'essentiel*, 20 September 2024, accessed on 30 September 2024 (<https://www.essentiel.lu/de/story/luxembourg-wie-neue-ki-tools-das-lernen-veraendern-103188542>).

¹⁹¹ Jérémy Rémy, “Get Started with Microsoft Copilot”, *University of Luxembourg*, secured page on the universities' platform for logistics and infrastructure called “Service Now”, April 2024, accessed on 30 September 2024 (https://service.uni.lu/kb?sys_kb_id=5a6ca1e297bd86509ccbb811f053af9a&id=kb_article_view&sysparm_rank=1&sysparm_tsqueryId=00102ea33bda4650fe0d676aa5e45a74#_Toc164430777).

5. Clarification of the terminology

Throughout this thesis certain terminologies are used that carry specific connotations and require clarification. Furthermore, due to the large number and high frequency of original German terminologies and abbreviations in the investigation, and in response to feedback received during the peer review process of the articles, it was decided to translate certain terms to enhance the readability of the text.

Absiedlung versus Umsiedlung

In the sources and literature, the terms *Absiedlung* and *Umsiedlung* have been used interchangeably, creating confusion over their exact meaning. *Umsiedlung*, also called *Zwangsumsiedlung*, meaning forced resettlement, was defined by the National Socialist regime in the “Decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor for the Consolidation of German Nationhood” of 7 October 1939.¹⁹² It refers to a form of forced migration pursued by the RKF, with the objective of “repatriating” German minority groups from Southern, Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe back within the borders of the Greater German Reich.¹⁹³

As Alexa Stiller indicated, *Absiedlung* on the other hand, represented a distinct form of *Umsiedlung*, which served in the western occupied areas to punish and deter families of people who refused to belong to the German “people’s community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*), even though they were officially classified as such by the National Socialist administration.¹⁹⁴ While considered “undesirable” in their own regions, they were not unwelcome in the Reich for ideological, political and economic interests.¹⁹⁵ They were generally relocated to specific resettlement camps (*Umsiedlungslager*) within Germany’s original borders and put to work there. According to a letter from an anonymous SS official from August 1944, this term was applied to people “who at the time of the establishment of the civil administration, had their place of residence in Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Lower Styria or Upper Carniola.”¹⁹⁶

The confusion regarding the correct usage of both terms was already present during the wartime and caused frustration. A transcript from the confidential information of the Party Chancellery from September 1943 stated the following: “Recently, it has been repeatedly observed that the term “*Umsiedler*” has been used in a dishonorable manner, both in press articles and speeches. It has often been used as a threat of punishment against politically or ethnically unreliable fellow

¹⁹² The original title of this decree is *Erlaß des Führers und Reichskanzlers zur Festigung deutschen Volkstums*; Documentation from the *Reichsführer-SS Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* regarding the definition of “*Umsiedler*”, 19 October 1940, BArch, R 49/2929.

¹⁹³ Jochen Oltmer, “Einführung: Migrationsregime vor Ort und lokales Aushandeln von Migration,” in *Migrationsregime vor Ort und lokales Aushandeln von Migration*, edited by Jochen Oltmer, Migrationsgesellschaften. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2018), 15; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 1313; Documentation from the *Reichsführer-SS Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* regarding the definition of “*Umsiedler*”, 19 October 1940, BArch, R 49/2929.

¹⁹⁴ Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 613.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1313.

¹⁹⁶ “*Absiedler* sind Personen die ihre Niederlassung im Zeitpunkt der Errichtung der Zivilverwaltung im Elsass, Lothringen, Luxemburg, Untersteiermark oder Oberkrain hatten.” Quotation from a letter from the *SS-Obersturmbannführer* to the *Reichsarbeitsführer* in Berlin, August 1944, BArch, R 49/2971.

citizens. Where such measures become necessary, it is appropriate to speak of the “*Absiedlung*” of the persons concerned. The term “*Umsiedlung*” has, through the deep faith with which hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans followed the Führer's call, become a distinction and an uplifting declaration of loyalty to German ethnicity.”¹⁹⁷

In the thesis these terms have been defined in each article and have also been translated under the general term of “forced resettlement” to avoid confusion and for the general readability of the text.

Forced resettlement versus deportation

It is important to make the distinction between the terms “forced resettlement” and “deportation”. As stated earlier, forced resettlement refers to the forced migration of individuals considered part of the German “people's community” and who were for ideological, political and economic reasons still useful in the Reich. Deportation, on the other hand, designates the elimination of people who were considered alien to the Reich and posed a danger to that community.¹⁹⁸ The notion of “deportation” therefore refers to a different reality – with other objectives and outcomes – and carries a different load.

In the Grand Duchy, the “forced conscripts” and forcibly resettled were often referred to as *déportés militaires* and *déportés civiles*. This usage aimed to emphasise their status as martyrs and victims, aligning with the post-war master narrative. In the Grand-Ducal regulation of 14 March 1968 on the title of Resistance fighter, a broad definition was given of the term “deported” which further justified this usage. The regulation stated:

“The mention “deported” may be conferred on persons who, because of their resistance to the enemy, have been either deported from Luxembourg territory to be forced to work and forbidden to return home, or detained in a deportation camp outside Luxembourg territory, provided that the deportation has lasted at least 30 consecutive days”.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, in 1975, the “National Monument to Civilian and Military Deportation” was inaugurated in Hollerich near Luxembourg City, to commemorate “the 2,906 forced recruits who died and the 65 ‘deported patriots’”.²⁰⁰ The victims of the Shoah or concentration camps were

¹⁹⁷ “In letzter Zeit konnte wiederholt festgestellt werden, dass sowohl in Presseaufsätzen wie in Vorträgen der Begriff “Umsiedler” eine entehrende Verwendung gefunden hat. Häufig wurde er zur Strafandrohung gegen politisch oder volkstumsmäßig unzuverlässige Volksgenossen gebraucht. Dort, wo derartige Maßnahmen erforderlich werden, ist es zweckmäßig, von einer Absiedlung der Betreffenden zu sprechen. Der Begriff Umsiedlung ist durch die tiefe Gläubigkeit, mit der hunderttausende Volksdeutsche dem Rufe des Führers folgten, zu einer Auszeichnung und zu einem erhebenden Bekenntnis zum deutschen Volkstum geworden.” Quotation from a transcript from the confidential information of the Party Chancellery, 27 September 1943, ANLux, CdZ-A-4556-04.

¹⁹⁸ Alexa Stiller, “Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums” in *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Akteure, Netzwerke, Forschungsprogramme*, edited by Michael Fahlbusch, Ingo Haar and Alexander Pinwinkler (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 1940.

¹⁹⁹ “La mention “déporté” peut être conférée aux personnes qui, en raison de leur résistance à l'ennemi, ont été, soit déportées hors du territoire luxembourgeois pour y être contraintes au travail avec interdiction de retour au pays, soit retenues dans un camp de déportation hors du territoire luxembourgeois, à condition que la déportation ait duré au moins 30 jours consécutifs” Quotation from Règlement grand-ducal du 14 mars 1968 relatif au titre de Résistant, accessed on 20 October 2024 (<https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/rgd/1968/03/14/n1/jo>).

²⁰⁰ Mil Lorang, “Geschichte/Über Kreuze, Davidsterne und die Benutzung inkorrektter Begriffe – Gedanken über eine problematische Luxemburger Gedenkstätte,” *Tageblatt*, 6 May 2023 (<https://www.tageblatt.lu/headlines/ueber-kreuze-davidsterne-und-die-benutzung-inkorrektter-begriffe-gedanken-ueber-eine-problematische-luxemburger-gedenkstaette/>).

at first not even mentioned or represented.²⁰¹ Given the charged and politicised use of these terms in the country, the application of the appropriate terminology was emphasised throughout this study in order to bring nuance to these established narratives.

Dienstverpflichtung

Throughout the thesis the term “*Dienstverpflichtung*” is used to denote the punitive procedure that was directed at skilled workers with “anti-German attitudes”, such as family members of deserters, mostly coming from the industrial south of the country. As explained in the article *Desertion leads to resettlement*, in April 1944, Gauleiter Simon implemented a different treatment for this category of individuals, requiring them to work in his own administrative region, specifically in the Hunsrück, with the objective of enhancing war production there.²⁰² While the general group of forcibly resettled individuals were also forced to work in companies near their resettlement camps, these individuals were transferred outside the usual resettlement procedure. As a translation did not accurately convey the intended meaning, it was decided to keep the original term of the wartime sources.

Conscription, recruitment, enlistment, enrolment

These terminologies are often used interchangeably in the existing literature and cause confusion. Therefore, care was taken when dealing with them. Conscription refers to the mandatory enrolment of civilians in the armed forces or state service imposed by the state. It applies to individuals who are by law required to serve and excludes those who join voluntarily. Recruitment generally refers to the process of enlisting new people in state organisations or armed forces, as well as their initial training periods. Enlistment or enrolment, involves the formal integration of individuals into the organisation or armed force.²⁰³

“Forced conscription”

Throughout the manuscript, the terms “forced conscription”, “forced recruitment”, “enrôlés de force”, are consequently put between double quotation marks due to their inexplicit meanings and connotations. In Luxembourg, but also in Eastern-Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine, these concepts, as well as their equivalents “*Ons Jongen*”, “*Zwangssoldaten*” or “*Malgré-Nous*”, emerged after the war to designate the non-German individuals who were forcibly enrolled into the German army in violation of international law.²⁰⁴ These terms, however, became politically

²⁰¹ One year later, three David stars were added to this monument at the request of the Jewish community. Its name was also changed to “the Déportation Memorial”; Mil Lorang, “L’aveuglement mémoriel luxembourgeois revisité”, *Tageblatt*, 21 February 2023 (<https://www.tageblatt.lu/headlines/laveuglement-memoriel-luxembourgeois-revisite/>).

²⁰² Sarah Maya, ““Desertion leads to resettlement”,” *op.cit.*, 266.

²⁰³ “Conscription – military service”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed on 20 October 2024 (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/conscription>); “Conscription - Military enlistment, and extended uses”, *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed on 20 October 2024 (https://www.oed.com/dictionary/conscription_n?tab=meaning_and_use#8576190).

²⁰⁴ The conscription of non-German citizens violated Article 23 of the 1907 The Hague Convention which stipulated that it was “forbidden to compel the nationals of the hostile party to take part in the operations of war directed against their own country”; see “Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, October 18,

charged, reflecting the groups' post-war victim discourse and the efforts of their associations in seeking recognition, social rehabilitation and compensation after the war.²⁰⁵ It also subtly carries a moral implication, contrasting "forced conscripts" with for example those who "volunteered".²⁰⁶ Additionally, the terms led to a homogenisation of the varied experiences of these soldiers, creating what has been called "a collective memory of forced recruitment"²⁰⁷, excluding all questions about the conscripts' conduct during the war.²⁰⁸ As a result, their usage in historical research has been widely contested over the past decade. Historian Christoph Brüll stated in 2011 regarding the Belgian term "Zwangssoldaten": "[It] has prevented any nuanced approach to history."²⁰⁹ Today, historians choose to use quotation marks when referring to these terms to highlight their problematic nature.²¹⁰

Draft evasion - desertion

Desertion is defined as the unauthorised departure of a member of the armed forces – or the labour service – from their unit or service, during or after their training, during leave or when they run over to enemy troops, with the intention of permanently evading their obligation to serve. In contrast, draft evasion refers to the act of refusing and evading the draft registration and therefore the enlistment in the labour or military service.²¹¹

Esch/Alzig - Esch-sur-Alzette

Esch/Alzig and *Esch-sur-Alzette* both pertain to the area in the southern part of Luxembourg. Throughout the manuscript, the German term *Esch/Alzig*, denotes the broader administrative

1907", *International Humanitarian Law Databases*, accessed on 20 January 2023 (<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-conv-iv-1907>).

²⁰⁵ Frédéric Stroh, "Introduction. Une histoire commune, mais plurielle," in *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich : 1939-1945. Die Zwangsrekrutierung in den vom Dritten Reich annektierten Gebieten : 1939-1945*, edited by Frédéric Stroh and Peter M. Quadflieg (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017), 20; Peter M. Quadflieg, "Die „Zwangsrekrutierung“ im Westen: Eupen-Malmedy, Luxemburg, Elsass und Lothringen," in *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich : 1939-1945. Die Zwangsrekrutierung in den vom Dritten Reich annektierten Gebieten : 1939-1945*, edited by Frédéric Stroh and Peter M. Quadflieg (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017), 31.

²⁰⁶ Stroh, "Introduction. Une histoire commune, mais plurielle," *op.cit.*, 10.

²⁰⁷ Klos, "Umkämpfte Erinnerungen," *op.cit.*, 345.

²⁰⁸ Christoph Brüll, "Les soldats de la Wehrmacht d'Eupen-Malmedy: histoire, postérité et mémoire," in *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich : 1939-1945. Die Zwangsrekrutierung in den vom Dritten Reich annektierten Gebieten : 1939-1945*, edited by Frédéric Stroh and Peter M. Quadflieg (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017), 155.

²⁰⁹ "[Le terme "Zwangssoldaten"] s'intègre dans une conception de l'histoire qui est née à la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale au moment de l' "épuration civique", et qui [...] a empêché toute approche nuancée de l'histoire, voire déformé grossièrement le passé le plus récent" Quotation from Christoph Brüll, "Les « enrôlés de force » dans la Wehrmacht – Un symbole du passé mouvementé des belges germanophones au xxe siècle," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 241, 1 (2011), 64.

²¹⁰ Brüll, "Les soldats de la Wehrmacht d'Eupen-Malmedy: histoire, postérité et mémoire," *op.cit.*, 155; The problematic use of these terms has been widely discussed in Stroh and Quadflieg. *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich*, *op.cit.*, as well as in the workshop "Zwangssoldaten, Malgré-Nous, Zwangsrekrutiert? – Terms, Numbers and Statistics" of the Warlux team from 14 October 2021; Nina Janz, "Workshop report: Zwangssoldaten, Malgré-Nous, Zwangsrekrutiert? – Terms, Numbers and Statistics", *C²DH*, accessed on 11 October 2024 (https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/fr/thinking/workshop-report-zwangssoldaten-malgre-nous-zwangsrekrutiert-terms-numbers-and-statistics#footnoteref1_mw9uqps).

²¹¹ Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, *op.cit.*, 189; "Draft resistance and evasion", *Oxford Reference*, accessed on 20 October 2024 ([https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095729858#:text=Civil%20disobedience%20directed%20at%20government,military%20service%20\(draft%20evasion\)](https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095729858#:text=Civil%20disobedience%20directed%20at%20government,military%20service%20(draft%20evasion))); "Desertion", *Oxford Reference*, accessed on 20 October 2024 (<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095712702?rkey=6MpkEk&result=16>); "Fahnenflucht", Article 69 of the Militärstrafgesetzbuch (MStGB) from 10 October 1940 in: Reichsgesetzblatt, part I, 16 October 1940, 1353.

district (*Kreis*) that was established during the war. The French term *Esch-sur-Alzette* refers to the city itself. In the consulted documentation, both Esch/Alzig and Esch-sur-Alzette are used to describe these different entities, which causes confusion.

6. Structure of the thesis

This thesis follows the “Thesis by Publication” (TBP) model, also known as a PhD by publication, article-based thesis, cumulative thesis or compilation thesis.²¹² This format is an emerging alternative to the traditional monographic thesis. The following section provides a brief overview of the format and its varying conventions, the guidelines of the University of Luxembourg and its Doctoral School for Humanities and Social Sciences (DSHSS), as well as the reasons why this study evolved into this format. It also outlines the structure of the thesis.

6.1. The “thesis by publication” (TBP)

A “thesis by publication” is a doctoral thesis that consists of a collection of related articles or papers that have been written and published during a doctoral research project or are in the process of publication. The articles are accompanied by explanatory texts that consolidate the thesis into a coherent set of new insights and findings. These texts, also known as the *Kappa* – meaning mantle or cloak – in Scandinavian countries, are crucial elements as they explain the relationship between the various articles and how they fit into the larger doctoral research project. They outline the specific aims, methods, results, strengths and limitations of the doctoral project and its contribution to the broader academic field.²¹³

Björn Gustavii, an expert in scientific writing, identifies two types of TBP. The first is the “Scandinavian” or “two-part model”. This model consists of introductory sections divided into several chapters, followed by a summary and reprints of the articles as they appear in the publishing journal or volume. It does not prescribe a specific structure for including certain sections or their order. The second model is known as the “Sandwich model”. In this model, the articles are presented in the format of the final version of the manuscript as submitted to the journal and constitute separate chapters, between a general introduction and a discussion or conclusion. Although the thesis by publication has multiple names, it should not be confused with the “thesis by published work”, also known as the “retrospective thesis” in academic literature. This type of thesis is based on research outputs that were produced and published prior to the

²¹² In French this is often referred to as a “thèse sur articles”, “thèse sur publications” ou “thèse sur travaux”.

²¹³ Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield, “The PhD by Publication in the Humanities and Social Sciences: A Cross Country Analysis,” *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 47, 7 (2023), 864; Lorrie Christina Blair, *Writing a Graduate Thesis or Dissertation*, Teaching Writing (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016), 2; Lynn P. Nygaard and Kristin Solli, *Strategies for Writing a Thesis by Publication in the Social Sciences and Humanities* (London: Routledge, 2020), 5 and 7.

PhD. These were not originally intended to be evaluated in the context of a doctoral degree, unlike the articles within the thesis by publication.²¹⁴

The thesis by publication has become increasingly popular in the exact sciences, such as medicine and the STEM disciplines – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – since the 1990s.²¹⁵ It is still more commonly used in these fields today, but over the past two decades, and particularly in recent years, it has also gained in popularity in the social sciences and humanities in English-speaking and European universities, as evidenced by the rising number of publications on the topic.²¹⁶

The growing acceptance of this alternative outcome of doctoral research reflects broader international debates in academia regarding the assessment and measurement of scientific output, the career opportunities of doctoral graduates and innovations in doctoral education in general. The suitability of the monograph as the dominant mode of demonstrating one's ability to conduct doctoral research, acquire research skills and make an "original and substantial contribution"²¹⁷ to the academic field is thereby also challenged and questioned.²¹⁸ Even though more universities and departments allow new thesis formats, there also remains reluctance and criticism in more conservative circles.²¹⁹

One of the strongest arguments in favour of this model is that, in comparison to the monograph, it allows for a faster and wider dissemination of research findings and enhances prospects for academic employment by ensuring that graduates already possess publications. Moreover, institutions benefit from increased research outputs. It also provides researchers with feedback throughout the research journey, facilitating their progress and enabling the cultivation of important skills that will be useful in their later academic careers. This includes managing the peer review process, dealing with criticism, and writing for different audiences. Advocates also

²¹⁴ Björn Gustavii, *How to Prepare a Scientific Doctoral Dissertation Based on Research Articles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3–4; Nygaard and Solli, *Strategies for Writing a Thesis by Publication in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, *op.cit.*, 5; Margaret K. Merga, Shannon Mason and Julia E. Morris, "'What do I even call this?' Challenges and Possibilities of Undertaking a Thesis by Publication," *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 44, 9 (2020), 1245.

²¹⁵ For more about the history of this format please see Annamaria de Rosa, "Article, Book Format, or Both? Shared Criteria Adopted for the Double Doctoral Thesis at and Language in a European/International Joint Networked Ph.D. Program," in *Inted2016: 10th International Technology, Education and Development Conference*, edited by Luis Gomez Chova, Antoni Lopez Martinez, and Ignacio Candel Torres (Valencia: IATED, 2016), 1014–1026; John Rigby and Barbara Jones, "Bringing the Doctoral Thesis by Published Papers to the Social Sciences and the Humanities: A Quantitative Easing? A Small Study of Doctoral Thesis Submission Rules and Practice in Two Disciplines in the UK," *Scientometrics* 124, 2 (2020), 1390–1392.

²¹⁶ The research of John Rigby and Barbara Jones shows that multiple history departments at universities in the United Kingdom started to allow the TBP from 2001, even though it has remained a minority approach; Rigby and Jones, "Bringing the Doctoral Thesis by Published Papers to the Social Sciences and the Humanities," *op.cit.*, 1398; Nygaard and Solli, *Strategies for Writing a Thesis by Publication in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, *op.cit.*, 14 and 23; Paltridge and Starfield, "The PhD by Publication in the Humanities and Social Sciences," *op.cit.*, 863 and 871.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 865.

²¹⁸ Rigby and Jones, "Bringing the Doctoral Thesis by Published Papers to the Social Sciences and the Humanities," *op.cit.*, 1391–1392; Kristin Solli and Lynn P. Nygaard, "The Doctorate in Pieces: A Scoping Review of Research on the PhD Thesis by Publication," *Higher Education Research & Development* 42, 4 (2023), 985; de Rosa, "Article, Book Format, or Both?," *op.cit.*, 1014.

²¹⁹ Christophe Cousi, "La thèse par articles (ou par publications) est-elle une thèse 'au rabais' ?", *Methodo Recherche*, accessed on 19 April 2024 (<https://methodorecherche.com/these-par-articles-au-rabais/>); Penelope Niven and Carolyn Grant, "PhDs by Publications: An 'Easy Way Out'?", *Teaching in Higher Education* 17, 1 (2012), 106.

argue that this approach allows doctoral candidates to pursue their research journey in a more efficient and focused way by dividing it into separate parts.²²⁰

Nevertheless, the format has also faced criticism and presents several challenges. The challenges include ensuring that articles are reviewed and accepted before thesis submission and integrating these articles into a cohesive whole while addressing any overlap or repetition between the chapters. Additionally, researchers must take account of multiple evaluators – examiners, peer reviewers, journal editors, readers – and navigate their different expectations. One primary criticism is that given the limited size of the articles, the research may be presented with less detail than in a traditional thesis, particularly regarding methodology, data collection and analysis. Another criticism is that the articles do not allow sufficient space for the evolution of the research and the intellectual growth of the researcher, since they must be written at an early stage and during the investigation. The format also presents complications if researchers wish to publish their thesis, as the articles cannot be republished without every publisher's prior consent. Despite these considerations, the format is generally recognised to hold equal scientific value and achieve the expected level of "doctorateness".²²¹ Within the context of this manuscript, the author has also made every effort to incorporate these remarks as thoroughly as possible.²²²

Although the arguments for and challenges of the format appear to be presented in a broadly similar way in the existing literature, the application of the TBP varies across countries, universities and disciplines. There is no consensus on the precise criteria, such as the number of articles required, their publication status and location, or the role and content of the explanatory text. In general, a TBP consists of three to six publications, although the final number is usually determined by university guidelines and the examination committee. Because of the length of the publication process, many institutions accept unpublished work that is still under peer review. Some only accept papers that have been published in journals, while others also accept publications published in conference proceedings or by academic publishers in general.²²³

²²⁰ Paltridge and Starfield, "The PhD by Publication in the Humanities and Social Sciences," *op.cit.*, 864; Merga, Mason, and Morris, "'What Do I Even Call This?'," *op.cit.*, 1254–56.

²²¹ Lynn Nygaard and Kristin Solli define doctorateness as "something that develops over the course of the doctoral journey and results in the formation of a scholar who can work independently and function as a 'steward of the discipline' [...], with a high degree of competence as a researcher [...] and make a contribution to the scholarly community through an original, publishable body of work." Quotation from Nygaard and Solli, *Strategies for Writing a Thesis by Publication in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, *op.cit.*, 72–73.

²²² Merga, Mason and Morris, "'What Do I Even Call This?'," *op.cit.*, 1248; Nygaard and Solli, *Strategies for Writing a Thesis by Publication in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, *op.cit.*, 14 and 29; Pierre Romelaer and Michel Kalika, *Comment réussir sa thèse. Définir un sujet - Conduire une recherche - Soutenir sa thèse* (Paris: Dunod, 2016), 14-15.

²²³ Merga, Mason, and Morris, "'What Do I Even Call This?'," *op.cit.*, 1245–1246; Solli and Nygaard, "The Doctorate in Pieces," *op.cit.*, 985.

6.2. Guidelines and requirements of the University of Luxembourg

At the University of Luxembourg, the requirements for the cumulative thesis are defined by the researcher's respective doctoral school and Thesis Supervision Committee (commonly referred to by the French name *Comité d'encadrement de thèse* - CET).²²⁴ Only the requirements of the Doctoral School in Humanities and Social Sciences will be briefly examined here, as these are pertinent to this doctoral thesis.

The existing regulations, applicable since July 2021, outline the overall guidelines for thesis formats within the doctoral school, while also delineating distinct regulations and criteria for each of the four doctoral programmes in Education, Humanities, Psychology and Social Sciences.²²⁵ This research took place within the second programme. As is shown in the table below, it appears that the TBP, referred to as "cumulative thesis", has gained acceptance in Education, Psychology and Social Sciences. The criteria across these different programmes are largely consistent, with theses expected to adhere to the structure of the previously discussed Sandwich model. It is interesting to note that alternative forms of publication and output are also considered, indicating the continued search for new approaches in doctoral evaluation as mentioned above. However, in the humanities, the TBP is still considered an exception, with the Thesis Supervision Committee retaining the authority to establish all criteria.

The criteria for this thesis were established by the accompanying Thesis Supervision Committee and align with those of the other doctoral programmes. Unlike most doctoral students, who generally choose this format in the early stages of their research, the doctoral researcher only decided on this approach at the end of her third year because of the evolving circumstances in which the doctoral research took place. The numerous challenges encountered with regard to source accessibility and the unexpected evolutions within the Warlux project forced the doctoral researcher to adapt her research angle on multiple occasions. Together with the CET, it was decided that in the interest of the "economics of the thesis", these challenges would be transformed into an opportunity for positive questioning and innovation by turning the research into an article-based thesis. The initial collaborative aspect of the Warlux project and the researcher's prior commitments to contribute three articles to scientific journals and conference proceedings made this undertaking possible. Although the CET agreed to a minimum of three articles, a fourth article was written during the final year of the PhD.

²²⁴ "Doctoral Education – Thesis and defence", *University of Luxembourg*, accessed on 19 April 2024 (<https://www.uni.lu/research-en/doctoral-education/organise/thesis-and-defence>).

²²⁵ "Theses can be written in the format of a monograph or be based on separate but connected scientific articles (cumulative thesis). It is the responsibility of the CET, however, to ultimately decide on the format of the dissertation and on any specific demand regarding the articles assembled in a cumulative thesis (e.g., the eligibility of the chosen journals). The decisions of the CET should be in line with the following guidelines, but they can depart from them if a specific case calls for it. The criteria for the validity of a cumulative thesis formulated in the following guidelines for the individual Doctoral Programmes and/or disciplines are minimum requirements only. All CETs must guarantee that the quality of the work meets international standards in the respective field of research. Requirements for individual thesis may exceed what is foreseen in these guidelines and might be individually adapted by the CET." Quotation from "DSHSS Rules & Regulations of the Doctoral Programmes - Thesis Formats and Language Requisites", *University of Luxembourg* – secured Moodle platform, 1 July 2021, accessed on 28 August 2024 (https://moodle.uni.lu/pluginfile.php/2292714/mod_resource/content/1/Thesis%20formats%20and%20language%20requisites.pdf).

	Education	Humanities	Psychology	Social Sciences
General thesis format	Cumulative	Monograph	Cumulative	Monograph + cumulative
	Monograph: if the CET recommends it.	Exceptionally cumulative if the CET recommends it.	Monograph: if the CET recommends it.	
Structure	• Introductory part • At least three (3) scientific publications • Conclusion The introduction and conclusion should highlight the connection between the articles and demonstrate how, taken as a whole, the articles make a substantial contribution	The CET defines all criteria	• Introductory part • At least three (3) scientific publications • Conclusion The introduction and conclusion should highlight the connection between the articles and demonstrate how, taken as a whole, the articles make a substantial contribution	• Introductory part • At least three (3) scientific publications • Conclusion The introduction and conclusion should highlight the connection between the articles and demonstrate how, taken as a whole, the articles make a substantial contribution
Criteria for articles	In peer-reviewed journal, books or conference proceedings	/	In peer-reviewed journal, books or conference proceedings	In peer-reviewed journal, books or conference proceedings
	Be under review or be published	/	Be under review or be published	Be under review or be published
	Alternative forms of publications and output can be considered.	/	Alternative forms of publications and output can be considered, if deemed appropriate by the CET.	The CET expresses its preference for the most relevant forms of publications.
	PhD candidate = main contributor + first author of minimum two publications.	/	PhD candidate = first author of minimum two publications.	PhD candidate = main contributor + first author of minimum two publications.
	Multi-authorship is desired, single authorship is possible.	/	/	CET may encourage multi-authorship, but single authorship is desired for at least one publication.
	One paper can be used for two dissertations if both authors brought a substantial contribution.	/	One paper can be used for two dissertations if both authors brought a substantial contribution.	One paper can be used for two dissertations if both authors brought a substantial contribution.

*Figure 7: Thesis formats of the DSHSS at the University of Luxembourg.*²²⁶

²²⁶ "DSHSS Rules & Regulations of the Doctoral Programmes - Thesis Formats and Language Requisites", *University of Luxembourg - Moodle platform*, 01 July 2021, accessed on 28 August 2024 (https://moodle.uni.lu/pluginfile.php/2292714/mod_resource/content/1/Thesis%20formats%20and%20language%20requisites.pdf).

This transformation enabled a more significant contribution to the scientific community. It not only guaranteed the dissemination of the results of the doctoral research but also provided a space to critically analyse the conditions under which historical research projects on the Second World War in Luxembourg are conducted and, as historian Chantal Kesteloot noted, are “influenced by social implications and political demands”.²²⁷ It thereby also allowed the researcher to demonstrate her “internal process of increased understanding”²²⁸ of both the research subject and the research environment.

6.3. *Structure of the thesis*

In line with the institutional guidelines, the thesis is structured into three main sections: this introductory chapter, a central part including the four articles, and a conclusion. The preceding sections of this introduction provided a comprehensive analysis of the broader framework of the research and the processes of how this thesis came to be. First, the study’s specific research focus was presented and contextualised within the Warlux project. This was followed by a detailed review of the existing literature, the source corpus and the methods, as well as the terminologies used. In the following and final section of this chapter, the associated scientific contributions are listed.

The article section contains the main findings of the doctoral research and is divided into four articles that were written over the course of the study. In accordance with the language requirements of the publishing journal or volume, two of them were written in English and two in French. Every article is preceded by contextual information regarding the publication, including a submission statement about the current publication status and a contribution statement, which specifies which parts were written by the doctoral researcher. In case of a co-authored article, this helps to clarify the specific input of each researcher. In general, the TBP format also allows for the inclusion of a section on any findings that have emerged since publication and contradict statements made in the article. No such contradictions have been observed in this thesis, so this section has not been included.

The articles are presented in the format of the latest available version of the text. At the time the thesis was submitted, two articles had already been published, one had been peer reviewed and accepted for publication and one was still in peer review. For the two published articles, the PDF version of the published article was incorporated. For the others, the submitted manuscript is used. The articles are organised in chronological order, which offers an insight into the evolution of the research process and the increasing level of detail that has been achieved. The first three articles cover different aspects of the consequences of draft evasion and desertion on families.

²²⁷ Kesteloot, “The Role of the War in National Societies,” *op.cit.*, 35.

²²⁸ Diana Leonard and Rosa Becker, “Enhancing the Doctoral Experience at the Local Level,” in *Changing Practices of Doctoral Education*, edited by David Boud and Alison Lee (London: Routledge, 2009), 71.

When viewed together, these articles show some overlap. This was inevitable for the comprehension of each article on its own.

1. **Research article in scientific journal (first authorship). Status: Published.**

Vercruysse, Sarah Maya and Blandine Landau. “Que faire des “indésirables”? Etude comparative de la dépossession des familles juives et des familles déplacées de force du Luxembourg (1940-1944)”, *Revue d’Histoire de la Shoah* 219 (March 2024), 149-170.

The first article centres around a comparison of the persecution and dispossession of Jews and forcibly resettled Luxembourgish families. It investigates how German occupation authorities used the confiscation of property from these groups to foster a sense of allegiance to the German “people’s community” within the territory.

2. **Research article in conference proceedings (first authorship). Status: Accepted for publication, publication planned for early 2025.**

Vercruysse, Sarah Maya and Nina Janz. “The “long arm” of the military justice of the Wehrmacht – A case study on Luxembourgish desertions”, due to be published in *Military Justice in Modern History: The Adjudication of War and Violence in a Globalizing World*, edited by Maddox, Kelly, Tino Schölz and Urs Matthias Zachmann. Berlin: De Gruyter, [2025].

The second article analyses the far-reaching influence of the military justice system, unveiling the direct correlation between soldiers who deserted, the efforts of the military justice system to locate them, and the repercussions for their families. It emphasises the complex web of connections and the participation of diverse institutions in this endeavour, demonstrating the widespread reach of the military justice system from the frontlines to the homeland.

3. **Research article in conference proceedings (single authorship). Status: Published.**

Vercruysse, Sarah Maya. ““Desertion leads to resettlement” – The consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of Luxembourgish soldiers (1942-1945)”, in *The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)*, edited by Nina Janz and Denis Scuto. 241-278. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024.

The third article considers the impact of desertion and draft evasion on Luxembourgish families at home and examines the punitive measures imposed on them. It focuses on the decision-making process and mechanisms behind these measures, highlighting the key actors, methods of enforcement and strategic use of such measures for political purposes.

4. **Research article in scientific journal (first authorship). Status: In peer review**

Vercruysse, Sarah Maya and Blandine Landau. *Entre volonté et réalité – La recherche sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg et l'accès aux sources* (submitted to the French journal *Genèses*).

The fourth article takes a different angle. It delves into the challenges that researchers of Second World War history in Luxembourg have been facing for several decades. Although not immediately related to the overarching research topic, it sheds light on the circumstances under which this research was conducted and the factors that have significantly shaped the research process. These are essential to understanding the results of this thesis.

The concluding chapter will present the historical and methodological findings of the doctoral research. It will thereby also present its wider contribution to the field and suggest potential avenues for future research and project opportunities.

7. **Associated publications and scientific contributions**

In addition to the four presented articles, multiple other publications and presentations were produced during this study. Although they are not all included in the thesis, they are valuable to mention in order to provide a comprehensive representation of the results of this doctoral research.

Publications

1. **Online article** - Vercruysse Sarah Maya. "Families of Luxembourgish Wehrmacht recruits during the Nazi occupation and the impact of local authorities and National Socialist organisations on their everyday lives", *Denken Ohne Geländer*, 5 October 2022, accessed on 10 October 2024. <https://haitblog.hypotheses.org/3525>.
2. **Online article** - Janz, Nina et al. "Die Zwangsrekrutierung und deren gesellschaftliche Folgen während der NS-Besatzungszeit in Luxemburg: Eine Analyse zur Ortschaft Schiffingen", *Portal Militärgeschichte*, accessed on 11 September 2024. https://www.portal-militaergeschichte.de/janz_zwangsrekrutierung.
3. **Scientific proofreader** – Courtoy, Jérôme and Hoffmann Elisabeth eds., *Im Griff des Nationalsozialismus*, Schiffingen, 2023.

4. **Conference report** - Vercruysse, Sarah Maya. "The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945)", *H-Soz-Kult*, accessed on 11 September 2024. <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/fdkn-135744>.
5. **Forum Z report** - Schmolze, Susanne, Nina Janz and Sarah Maya Vercruysse. "Local History up Close," *C²DH*, accessed on 11 September 2024. <https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/forum-z/local-history-close>.
6. **Publication of Warlux database on Zenodo**: Janz, Nina and Sarah Maya Vercruysse, "WARLUX Nodegoat Database, on Recruits of Schiffange/Luxembourg, Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History/University of Luxembourg," [Dataset]. Zenodo. 12 July 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8138202>.

Participation at conferences, workshops and other valorisation activities

1. Nodegoat SPARK **Workshops** and Nodegoat Day, University of Bern (April 8, May 5, May 12, May 26 and June 4, 2021)
 - Presentation of the Warlux team: Using data analysis on recruited Luxembourgers in WWII
2. **Study days** - Déposséder –dépossédé - Journées d'étude consacrées aux mécanismes de dépossession et à leur représentation en Europe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, Centre national de littérature /C²DH, Luxembourg (5 - 6 July 2021).
 - Presentation: Umsiedlung and dispossessions of families of Luxembourgish recruits during the Nazi occupation (1942-1945)
3. **Doctoral Forum** - Demokratie- und Diktaturforschung im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert: Individuum und Organisation in autoritären und demokratischen Gesellschaftsordnungen, Hannah-Arendt-Institut für Totalitarismusforschung, TU Dresden (16-17 May 2022)
 - Presentation: Families of Luxembourgish soldiers during the Nazi occupation and the impact of local authorities and NS-organizations on their everyday life
4. **Conference** - Military Justice in the Modern Era, 1850-1945, FU Berlin (28-30 July 2022)
 - Presentation with Nina Janz: The Long Arm of Military Justice in the Wehrmacht – The Arrest and Resettlement of Families of Deserters Sentenced by a Wehrmacht Military Court

5. **Conference** - The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945), C²DH (26-28 October 2022)
 - Presentation: *Sippenhaft* and *Umsiedlung* - Consequences of desertion on families of Luxembourgish recruits (1942-1945)
6. **Workshop** - Umsiedlung und die Ordnungen des Raumes: Bevölkerungsverschiebungen in landeshistorischer und vergleichender Perspektive, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt – Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte (1-2 November 2022)
 - Presentation: The *Umsiedlung* of families of Luxembourgish recruits during the Nazi occupation (1942–1945)
7. **Forum Z** - Lokalgeschichte ganz nah: Persönliche Kriegserlebnisse in Schiffflange, C²DH (22 February 2023)
 - Presentation with other team members: Presentation of the Warlux research project, database and website for the Schiffflange case study
8. **WWII LUX online exposition** – Contribution of written text, data, and video recording on the topic of “forced conscription” and forced resettlement (2024).
 - “Gare de Hollerich, Luxembourg, Luxembourg - Les enrôlés de force, les transplantés de force”, ww2, 2024, accessed on 19 December 2024. https://ww2.lu/notice/N1-C_03-PAD-place-gare-de-hollerich-luxembourg-luxembourg.
 - Vercruysse, Sarah Maya. “Absiedlung au Luxembourg”, ww2, 2024, accessed on 19 December 2024. <https://ww2.lu/note/note-40-les-transplantations-de-force>.
9. **C²DH podcast** by Hanna Siemaszko: “C²DH Innovating & Sharing History - WARLUX - Soldiers and their communities in WWII”, *Buzzsprout*, 13 March 2024, accessed on 19 December 2024. (<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2092026/episodes/14675892-warlux-soldiers-and-their-communities-in-wwii>).
10. **Conference** - Historical Arguments and the Digital, C²DH (25 June 2024)
 - Chair: Panel 1 - Conflict Narratives & War Voices
11. **EUROPAST Mid-Project Conference**: Public History and Community-Based Research, C²DH (5-6 July 2024).
 - Presentation: Challenging Luxembourg's Second World War narratives through public engagement and community-based research

Co-organisation of conferences, workshops and other valorisation activities:

1. Warlux **Crowdsourcing campaign** (February – July 2021)
2. **Workshop** - Zwangssoldaten, Malgré-Nous, Zwangsrekrutiert? – Terms, Numbers and Statistics, C²DH (14 October 2021)
3. **Workshop** - “War Letters & Transkribus”, Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies (NIOD)/C²DH (12 January 2021)
4. **Workshop** - “War Letters & Transkribus”, Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies (NIOD)/C²DH (31 May 2022)
5. **Conference** - The impact of war experiences in Europe – The conscription of non-German men and women into the Wehrmacht and Reichsarbeitsdienst (1938-1945), C²DH (26-28 October 2022)
6. **Forum Z / Public outreach** - Lokalgeschichte ganz nah: Persönliche Kriegserlebnisse in Schiffflange, C²DH (22 February 2023)

CHAPTER 1: QUE FAIRE DES “INDÉSIRABLES”? ETUDE COMPARATIVE DE LA DÉPOSSESSION DES FAMILLES JUIVES ET DES FAMILLES DÉPLACÉES DE FORCE DU LUXEMBOURG (1940-1944)

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Contribution statement: This article was written following a presentation on “*Umsiedlung* and dispossessions of families of Luxembourgish recruits during the Nazi occupation (1942-1945)” at the study days “*Déposséder – dépossédé - Journées d’étude consacrées aux mécanismes de dépossession et à leur représentation en Europe pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*”. This event was organised in Luxembourg by the *Centre national de littérature* and the C²DH in July 2021. Blandine Landau was co-organiser of this event.

The article was originally written by Sarah Maya Vercruysse based on her own research and on information provided by Blandine Landau from her doctoral research on the spoliation of Jewish property during the Second World War in Luxembourg.²²⁹ As the involvement of Blandine Landau became more important during the writing process, she became second author and made important modifications to the parts on the dispossessions of Jewish property and the general structure of the article. The implementation of the modifications following the peer review, including the rewriting of the conclusion, was done by Sarah Maya Vercruysse. She also wrote the abstract.

The text was originally written in English, but subsequently translated by Claire Darmon on behalf of the journal.

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²²⁹ This aforementioned doctoral thesis was defended in March 2024; Landau, “A la recherche des juifs spoliés”, *op.cit.*.

QUE FAIRE DES « INDÉSIRABLES » ?

ÉTUDE COMPARATIVE DE LA DÉPOSSESSION DES FAMILLES CONSIDÉRÉES COMME JUIVES ET DES FAMILLES DÉPLACÉES DE FORCE AU LUXEMBOURG (1940-1944)

Sarah Maya Vercruysse¹ et Blandine Landau²

Traduit de l'anglais par Claire Darmon

Au cœur de la stratégie gouvernementale du régime nazi reposait l'exploitation intensive de groupes considérés comme « indésirables » ou « ennemis du Reich » (*Reichsfeinden*), tant en Allemagne même que dans les territoires occupés. Dans le cadre du pillage généralisé et de la guerre raciale, ces groupes de population furent dépouillés de leurs biens et de leurs droits, avant d'être expulsés. Comme l'explique Götz Aly dans son livre *Hitlers Volksstaat*, « spoliations, déportations et meurtres de masse devinrent [...] la source principale des finances publiques allemandes³ ». Pendant l'occupation et l'annexion *de facto* du Luxembourg, les autorités nazies et leurs alliés accumulèrent d'immenses richesses en confisquant les biens de ces groupes, notamment les Juifs et les familles luxembourgeoises déplacées de force, désignées comme *Abgesiedelten*⁴.

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- 2 Conservatrice du patrimoine, Blandine Landau termine actuellement une thèse sur la dépossession des personnes considérées comme juives au Luxembourg pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale (Université du Luxembourg – EHESS Paris). Elle est aussi curatrice du Mémorial Digital de la Shoah au Luxembourg.
- 3 « Enteignungen, Deportationen und Massenmorde wurden, [...] zur wichtigen Quelle der deutschen Staatsfinanzen. » Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus*, Francfort-sur-le-Main, S. Fischer Verlag, 2005, p. 53 ; en français, *Comment Hitler a acheté les Allemands : le Troisième Reich, une dictature au service du peuple*, traduit par Marie Gravey, Paris, Flammarion, 2005, p. 45-46.
- 4 En dépit des définitions fournies par l'Office central des questions ethniques (*Hauptamt für Volksstumsfragen*) et le Commissaire du Reich pour le renforcement de la nation allemande (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKF) chargé des déplacements forcés, les termes *Umsiedlung* et *Absiedlung* furent utilisés indifféremment aussi bien dans les sources primaires que dans les sources secondaires portant sur ce sujet au Luxembourg. Comme l'a expliqué Alexa Stiller, le terme *Zwangsumsiedlung* ou déplacement forcé désigne le transport de personnes déplacées dans certains lieux contrôlés par les autorités nazies, avec ou sans liberté de mouvement, et il était souvent associé à l'internement et au travail forcé. Par ailleurs, le terme *Absiedlung* était défini comme un type distinct de déplacement forcé où des familles et des groupes de population étaient réinstallés de force dans l'« ancien Reich », principalement pour des raisons politiques, avec souvent des considérations économiques sous-jacentes. Les familles du Luxembourg affectées par cette politique pourraient ainsi être désignées plus exactement par le terme *Absiedler*, bien que, dans les textes, elles soient communément qualifiées de *Umsiedler* ; Alexa Stiller, *Völkische Politik: Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939-1945*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2022, p. 1313 ; Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-A-4556-04 : notes d'une information confidentielle du bureau du parti, septembre 1943.

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Le présent article examine comment cette politique constitua un élément central de la stratégie de l'administration nazie, contribuant à l'essor de la « communauté du peuple » allemand (*Volksgemeinschaft*⁵). Cette promotion, de même que la vaste politique de germanisation au Luxembourg, prit diverses formes, notamment la persécution des Juifs, les déplacements forcés et les déposessions. Cette contribution s'attachera principalement à la dépossession et établira des comparaisons entre les modalités de son application entre les deux groupes.

La comparaison des groupes revêt une dimension particulière au Luxembourg où persistent des tensions concernant le statut et la reconnaissance des différentes victimes de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. C'est ce qu'illustrent les discussions passionnées et les controverses qui ont surgi après l'installation des *Stolpersteine* dans le pays en septembre 2021. Ces pavés commémoratifs (« pierres de mémoire ») à la mémoire des Juifs qui furent victimes de persécutions et des Luxembourgeois enrôlés de force dans la Wehrmacht, suscitèrent de vives critiques de la part de certains représentants de différents groupes de victimes⁶. Malgré les différences considérables entre les politiques, les mécanismes et les objectifs ultimes liés à l'exclusion et à la dépossession de la population juive et de ceux qui furent déplacés de force, il est instructif de comparer les modalités et l'argumentation des traitements infligés aux deux groupes.

Dans la recherche historique luxembourgeoise sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale, on constate une remarquable absence de travaux universitaires sur la dépossession en général, et plus précisément, sur la persécution et la dépossession des Juifs. En 2009 une commission chargée d'examiner la spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg publia ses conclusions⁷. Également limités, les travaux sur

5 Le concept de *Volksgemeinschaft*, ou « communauté du peuple », était central dans l'idéologie nationale-socialiste. Il visait à unifier la communauté nationale germano-aryenne, en excluant tous ceux qui ne faisaient pas partie de ce groupe racial. Il mettait l'accent sur l'unité de la collectivité et était utilisé pour maintenir la loyauté parmi ceux qui étaient considérés comme Allemands. Robert Michael, *Nazi-Deutsch/Nazi-German: An English Lexicon of the Language of the Third Reich*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 2002, p. 30 et 423.

6 Volker Bingenheimer, « Erinnerungsaktion in Junglinster: Stolpersteine lösen Debatte über NS-Opfergruppen aus », *Luxemburger Wort*, 17 octobre 2021 ; Sonja Kmec, « Erinnerungspolitik und -praxis in Luxemburg am Beispiel einer gegenwärtigen Kontroverse », *Zeitgeschichte Online*, accessible à l'adresse suivante : <https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/geschichtskultur/erinnerungspolitik-und-praxis-luxemburg-am-beispiel-einer-gegenwaertigen> (consulté le 19 décembre 2023).

7 Rapport final de la Commission spéciale pour l'étude des spoliations des biens juifs au Luxembourg pendant les années de guerre 1940-1945, officiellement remis au gouvernement luxembourgeois le 19 juin 2009 et publié en ligne sous le titre *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/communiqués/2009/07-juillet/06-biens-juifs.html (consulté le 19 décembre 2023). Bien que le terme « spoliation » ait été choisi par cette commission spéciale pour définir l'objet de ses travaux, il ne convient pas de l'employer pour désigner les mesures prises pour aryaniser les biens juifs. Il s'agit d'un terme juridique porteur d'une signification spécifique, forgé dans l'après-guerre pour désigner certaines de ces mesures qui, lorsqu'elles furent prises, n'étaient pas considérées comme une « spoliation ». Quant à ces mesures elles-mêmes – et non la façon dont elles furent interprétées après 1944 –, il est donc plus exact de recourir au terme plus large de « dépossession ». Sur ce sujet, voir Johannes von Lintig, « Le concept

la dépossession des Luxembourgeois déplacés de force reposent principalement sur des témoignages de première main ou sur de brefs paragraphes dans le cadre d'études plus complètes traitant de la politique d'occupation nazie au Luxembourg⁸. L'historienne Alexa Stiller a cependant apporté dernièrement une contribution majeure à ce domaine en observant les pratiques d'exclusion et d'inclusion dans les régions annexées par les nazis, bien que ses travaux ne s'ancrent pas particulièrement dans le contexte luxembourgeois⁹.

En 2019, le Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) de l'Université de Luxembourg et la Fondation luxembourgeoise pour la mémoire de la Shoah ont conclu un accord afin de financer un programme de recherches de doctorat de quatre ans portant sur « la spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale ». Blandine Landau a été recrutée en janvier 2020 pour effectuer ce travail. En août de la même année, Sarah Maya Vercruysse rejoignait le projet WARLUX du C²DH, intitulé « Les soldats et leurs communautés pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale : l'impact et l'héritage des expériences de guerre au Luxembourg ». Elle étudie les mesures répressives imposées aux familles de déserteurs et de réfractaires à la conscription, entre autres leur déplacement forcé et la confiscation de leurs biens. Ces travaux de long terme étant en cours, cet article ne vise pas à fournir un tableau exhaustif et détaillé du sujet, mais plutôt un aperçu des premières conclusions des chercheurs.

Contexte historique

Entre le 10 mai et le 21 juin 1940, après l'invasion allemande, le Luxembourg fut placé sous l'administration militaire de la *Feldkommandantur* 515 qui était subordonnée à l'administration militaire de la Belgique et du nord de la France. Durant cette période, l'objectif principal était de rétablir l'ordre après l'invasion et de relancer les activités économiques conformément aux principes du régime nazi. Cette période marqua le début de l'exploitation économique du Luxembourg. L'administration militaire imposa l'enregistrement

légal de spoliation dans la législation de l'après-guerre et dans la pratique de réparation actuelle en France », *Tsafon*, 2022, p. 84, disponible à l'adresse suivante : <https://journals.openedition.org/tsafon/5224#article-5224> (consulté le 19 décembre 2023).

8 Gilles Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942-1945: von der numerischen und namentlichen Erfassung bis zur Beschreibung des Lagerlebens anhand von Zeitzeugenberichten*, Saarbrücken, AV Akademikerverlag, 2013 ; Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe: die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940-1945*, Luxembourg, Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1985.

9 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op. cit.

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de toutes les entreprises et la confiscation des biens nécessaires à l'effort de guerre. Elle nomma en outre des représentants allemands au sein des grandes entreprises et réquisitionna toutes les automobiles, bicyclettes et chevaux du pays. Les résidences et les propriétés abandonnées furent confisquées, occupées et évacuées par la Wehrmacht, le Commandement pour la protection des devises étrangères (un organisme chargé de superviser et de contrôler les transactions en devises étrangères) ou encore le *Volksdeutsche Bewegung* (VdB), organisation nazie luxembourgeoise créée le 17 mai 1940. Si ces saisies n'étaient pas dirigées contre un groupe particulier, elles affectèrent considérablement les Juifs qui furent informés que, contrairement aux autres groupes, ils n'auraient droit à aucune indemnité¹⁰. De plus, un décret du 20 mai 1940 adopté par les autorités luxembourgeoises demeurées en place (la Commission administrative), encourageait la population à « protéger » le contenu des commerces dont les propriétaires s'étaient enfuis, leur conseillant de s'emparer de ces marchandises avant qu'elles ne tombent entre des mains allemandes¹¹. Certains suivirent cette recommandation avec zèle et enthousiasme, et appliquèrent le même principe aux habitations dont les occupants avaient dû fuir ou avaient été évacués.

Le 21 juillet 1940 commença une nouvelle phase de l'occupation du Luxembourg avec la création d'une administration civile (*Zivilverwaltung*) sous la direction de Gustav Simon (1900-1945). Il occupait à la fois les fonctions de *Chef der Zivilverwaltung* (CdZ) et de gauleiter¹² de la division administrative de Coblenze-Trèves. À l'instar des chefs des administrations civiles d'Alsace et de Lorraine, Robert Wagner (1895-1946) et Joseph Bürckel (1895-1944), Simon rendait compte directement à Adolf Hitler et assumait de hautes responsabilités¹³. L'une de ses principales missions consistait à protéger et promouvoir la *Volksgemeinschaft* dans la région frontalière. D'après l'idéologie nazie, les Luxembourgeois étaient considérés comme des Allemands de souche (*Volksdeutsche*), des individus de sang allemand et d'origine allemande qui devaient renouer avec leurs racines et être réintégrés dans le

10 Paul Cerf, *L'étoile juive au Luxembourg*, Luxembourg, RTL Éditions, 1986, p. 40 ; *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, op. cit., p. 21, 22 et 34.

11 « Verordnung über Beschlagnahme in den besetzten Gebieten der Niederlande, Belgiens, Luxemburgs und Frankreichs » in *Verordnungsblatt für das besetzte Gebiet des Großherzogtums Luxemburg*, herausgegeben von der Heeresgruppe, Nr. 3, 28.5.1940, p. 9-11.

12 Les gauleiters étaient les principaux responsables qui supervisaient les circonscriptions administratives régionales du parti nazi. Ils détenaient l'autorité suprême au sein du territoire auquel ils étaient affectés, jouant un rôle déterminant dans la structure administrative régionale du parti. Ils occupaient un rang supérieur dans la hiérarchie du parti, en comparaison avec les chefs de district (*Kreisleiter*) et les responsables de groupes locaux (*Ortsgruppenleiter*).

13 Marc Schoentgen, « Arbeiten unter Hitler. NS-Sozialpolitik und Herrschaftspraxis im besetzten Luxemburg 1940-1944 », thèse de doctorat, Université de Luxembourg, 2017, p. 38.

Reich. Comme l'avait exprimé Hitler dans *Mein Kampf*, « le même sang appartient à un même empire¹⁴ ». Cette politique raciale impliquait l'exclusion de ceux qui étaient considérés comme nuisibles¹⁵. Le 9 août 1940, le CdZ interdit le retour au Luxembourg des personnes qui avaient fui le pays pendant l'invasion et étaient considérées comme préjudiciables à la *Volksgemeinschaft*, en particulier les ressortissants français et les Juifs¹⁶.

Au cours du mois d'août 1940, et notamment suite à l'adoption de plusieurs décrets le 5 septembre 1940, les individus définis comme « Juifs » en vertu de la loi nazie devinrent les cibles premières des persécutions infligées par l'administration allemande. Une fois la définition établie, le processus d'identification des individus et des biens « juifs » commença, menant à l'« aryanisation » du pays¹⁷. Les Juifs vivant au Luxembourg qui ne s'étaient pas encore enfuis furent contraints au départ. Jusqu'au 15 octobre 1941, quelques dizaines réussirent à gagner la France et la Belgique, tandis que des centaines d'autres furent déportés vers l'ouest. Ces transports s'effectuèrent par train ou par autobus jusqu'à la frontière de la zone non occupée en France ou, pour ceux qui purent se procurer des visas, par train jusqu'à la frontière espagnole¹⁸. Le 16 octobre 1941, les Juifs demeurés au Luxembourg commencèrent à être déportés vers les parties orientales du Reich, le premier convoi quittant le Luxembourg pour Litzmannstadt¹⁹. Ce processus se poursuivit jusqu'au septième convoi le 17 août 1943. Les déportés furent dans le même temps dépossédés de tous leurs biens. Fin 1943, l'« aryanisation » du Luxembourg fut considérée comme achevée²⁰.

14 « Gleiches Blut gehört in ein gemeinsames Reich », extrait de Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Munich, Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger GmbH, 1927, p. 1 ; en français, *Mein Kampf*, édition en ligne, traduction intégrale par J. Gaudefroy-Demombynes et A. Calmettes, p. 32, accessible à l'adresse suivante : https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj-x5Ht0faCAXXgRaQEHWwCFwQFnoECAoQA-Q&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbeq.ebooksgratuits.com%2FPropagande%2FHitler-combat-1.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1ZmkfQtakGmJCJeOeY08A_&opi=89978449 (consulté le 20 décembre 2023).

15 Mathias Wallerang, *Luxemburg unter nationalsozialistischer Besatzung: Luxemburger berichten*, Mayence, Gesellschaft für Volkskunde in Rheinland-Pfalz, 1997, p. 86.

16 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, AE 3929, 0003-0004 : Interdiction du retour des Juifs et des Français.

17 Concernant le mot « aryanisation », c'est la définition donnée par Jean-Marc Dreyfus qui sera utilisée : « Le mot d'« aryanisation » est directement nazi, il signifie « rendre aryen », c'est-à-dire « non juif » et décrit l'expulsion des Juifs d'un domaine donné, le plus souvent d'une position économique. » Jean-Marc Dreyfus, « L'« aryanisation » économique et la spoliation pendant la Shoah. Une vision européenne », *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, n° 186, 2007, p. 15-41.

18 Georges Büchler, *Évacuation, déportation : le premier transport vers l'Est, 16.10.1941*, Esch-sur-Alzette, Op der Lay, 2016. De telles déportations furent l'une des premières solutions nazies apportées à la « question juive », avant que ne soit envisagée une « Solution finale » au cours de l'été 1941 (Florent Brayard, « La "Solution finale" comme "complot" », in Florent Brayard (éd.), *Auschwitz, enquête sur un complot nazi*, Paris, Seuil, 2012, p. 365-398).

19 Nom germanisé de Łódź, ville située auparavant en Pologne qui faisait alors partie du *Reichsgau Wartheland*, la région de Pologne annexée au Reich.

20 Dès le 2 juillet 1943, dans une lettre adressée au *Chef der Zivilverwaltung*, Joseph Ackermann, chef du département chargé de l'« aryanisation », écrivait : « Considérant que les tâches principales du département ont été réalisées et que les opérations sont dans ce qu'on appelle la phase de liquidation », il espérait mobiliser ses forces pour d'autres missions, ajoutant : « J'espère vivement que le travail des principaux services pourra

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Au début, l'administration civile allemande était persuadée que la population luxembourgeoise allemande de souche accepterait volontiers sa « réintégration » dans le Reich allemand. Rapidement, il devint cependant évident que cette assimilation ne serait pas aisément tolérée. Un net changement se produisit dans l'opinion publique après l'introduction, le 30 août 1942, du service militaire obligatoire visant les jeunes gens luxembourgeois nés entre 1920 et 1924, puis étendu à ceux qui étaient nés jusqu'en 1927²¹. Cette décision déclencha une vague de protestations et de grèves dans le pays, ce qui conduisit le CdZ à adopter une politique plus répressive. Le 9 septembre 1942, la presse annonça que, dans l'intérêt de la défense de la frontière du Reich et de sa population allemande de souche, les individus d'origine allemande perçus comme peu fiables et hostiles au Reich ne seraient plus autorisés à résider dans la région frontalière, et qu'ils seraient transférés et établis ailleurs²². Les communiqués de presse étaient une forme de propagande : il était spécifié que cette mesure n'était pas punitive, mais plutôt une action nécessaire sur le plan politique pour « garantir » l'intégrité territoriale de la région frontalière du Reich et offrir une occasion de « rééduquer » la population. En tant que *Volksdeutsche*, ces familles n'étaient pas considérées comme des ennemis directs de l'État. On les pensait plutôt capables d'entreprendre un processus de « germanisation » (*eindeutschungsfähig*). En juillet 1943, le ministère de l'Intérieur du Reich accorda même « la nationalité allemande révocable » (*auf Widerruf*)²³ à des personnes originaires d'Alsace, de Lorraine et du Luxembourg réinstallées après le 23 août 1942, sous réserve qu'elles soient considérées comme racialement adéquates et « germanisables » par le Bureau central SS de la race et du peuplement » (*Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt SS, RuSHA*)²⁴. Cette différenciation permet leur assimilation au sein de l'« Ancien Reich » allemand (*Altreich*), en les distinguant des autres groupes déplacés²⁵.

être traité d'ici le 30 octobre 1943. » De fait, comme le soulignait le rapport final de la commission spéciale, en décembre 1943, tout ce qui se trouvait encore sur les comptes bancaires du département (I'Abteilung IV A) avait été transféré au *Regierungsoberkasse du Chef der Zivilverwaltung* ; Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-A-1840 : lettre de Joseph Ackermann au CdZ, 02.07.1943.

21 « Verordnung über die Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg vom 30. August 1942 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 31.08.1942, p. 253.

22 « Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg », *Luxemburger Wort*, 9 septembre 1942, p. 3.

23 Cette révocabilité signifie que les individus recevaient la nationalité allemande avec des droits réduits pendant une période probatoire de dix ans. Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op. cit., p. 541.

24 Bundesarchiv (BArch), R49/2768 : Lettre adressée par le RKF sur l'octroi d'une nationalité révocable aux habitants d'Alsace, de Lorraine et du Luxembourg réinstallés dans le territoire du Reich, 20.07.1943 ; Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas*, Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2003, p. 326 ; Alexa Stiller, « "Ethnic Germans" », in Shelley Baranowski, Armin Nolzen et Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (éd.), *A Companion to Nazi Germany*, Hoboken (NJ), Wiley-Blackwell, 2018, p. 533-549, ici p. 541-542.

25 Ceux qui résistèrent à cette rééducation devaient être envoyés dans des camps de concentration ; « Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg », art. cité ; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, op. cit., p. 324 ;

La responsabilité du processus de repeuplement fut confiée aux bureaux du Commissaire du Reich pour le renforcement de la nation allemande (Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums, RKF) sous la supervision du *SS-Obergruppenführer* Theodor Berkelmann (1894-1943) agissant au nom de l'administration civile²⁶. Pour comprendre cette décision, il est fondamental d'observer le contexte général appelé le « Nouvel Ordre européen ». Le RKF, sous l'autorité de Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945), s'y considérait comme responsable des Allemands de souche en Europe et, dès la fin des années 1930, procéda à des expulsions et à des transferts de population sur une grande échelle dans les territoires occupés. Ces mesures avaient pour objectif de repeupler et de « germaniser » les régions occupées en transférant les groupes de population allemande « désirables » dans ces territoires. Le RKF délégua les tâches d'installation des nouveaux colons allemands de souche dans des camps temporaires et de gestion de leurs biens respectivement au Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VoMi), un service SS relevant du RKF, et à la Deutsche Umsiedlungs- und Treuhandgesellschaft (DUT), une société à responsabilité limitée liée au RKF²⁷.

De 1942 à 1944, plus de quatre mille Luxembourgeois furent transférés dans des camps de réinstallation (*Umsiedlungslager*) gérés par le VoMi en Basse-Silésie, dans les Sudètes et la région du Hunsrück²⁸. Les colons allemands de souche (*Ansiedler*) originaires de régions comme le Sud-Tyrol, la Bosnie et la Bucovine furent acheminés au Luxembourg pour les remplacer²⁹. Il importe de souligner que ces camps de réinstallation étaient fort différents des camps de concentration. Ceux qui avaient été déplacés de force furent affectés au travail dans l'industrie de guerre allemande, aux côtés de citoyens allemands. Ils étaient

Lothar Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973, p. 263.

- 26 Le RKF ne disposait pas d'une autorité directe pour transmettre des directives aux chefs des administrations civiles en Alsace, en Lorraine et au Luxembourg, puisqu'ils opéraient sous l'autorité directe de Hitler. Comme l'a montré Alexa Stiller, pour étendre son influence à ces régions de l'ouest, le RKF dut collaborer avec les CdZ et dépendait de leur attribution de rôles au personnel de la RKF au sein des systèmes administratifs. Dans ce contexte, Gustav Simon fut nommé délégué du commissaire du Reich pour le renforcement de la nation allemande au Luxembourg le 20 décembre 1940. Le bureau régional du RKF ne fut cependant créé au Luxembourg qu'en septembre 1942. De même, en septembre 1940, Berkelmann, qui occupait également le poste de chef SS et dirigeant de la police du Rhin (*Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer*), s'est vu confier la responsabilité de toutes les questions liées aux déplacements en Lorraine par Josef Bürckel en tant que son adjoint.
- 27 Selon l'étude d'Alexa Stiller, environ douze millions de personnes dans les territoires annexés de l'Est, de l'Ouest et du Sud-Est furent affectées par la mise en œuvre de cette politique ethnique, dont près d'un million d'Allemands de souche venus d'Europe de l'Est et du Sud-Est ; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op. cit., p. 11 et 146 ; Stiller, « "Ethnic Germans" », art. cité., p. 537 et 539 ; Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische "Volkstumsarbeit" und Umsiedlungspolitik 1933-1945. Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Siedlerauslese*, Berlin, Frank & Timme, 2013, p. 15, 62 et 66.
- 28 Marc Gloden, « Zur "Wiedereindeutschung" ins Reich: die Umsiedlungen von 1942-1945 », in Musée national de la Résistance et des Droits humains (éd.), *Le Luxembourg et le Troisième Reich, un état des lieux. Luxembourg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, Luxembourg, Op der Lay, 2021, p. 620-633, ici p. 625.
- 29 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, op. cit., p. 109-110.

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autorisés à correspondre avec leurs familles dans leurs foyers, voire à quitter les camps pour une période limitée³⁰. Les conditions de vie dans ces camps se caractérisaient cependant par un manque d'hygiène, des soins médicaux insuffisants, une pénurie alimentaire et, par conséquent, une grande précarité³¹. Au sein du vaste système de persécution nazi, institué à différentes époques et poursuivant des objectifs distincts pour les Juifs et pour ceux qui avaient été réinstallés de force, on peut identifier et comparer trois phases dans la confiscation des biens : identification, dépossession et liquidation. Ces phases, inspirées par les travaux de l'historien Raul Hilberg³², soulignent également les mécanismes répressifs mis en place par l'administration nazie. Cette structure analytique permet de mieux comprendre la nature systématique de ces processus et montre comment ils se déroulèrent dans les deux contextes.

Identification

En vertu de la politique de germanisation, l'administration nazie avait pour objectif la création de régions frontalières « peuplées exclusivement par des individus d'origine allemande, de caractère allemand et de nature allemande, qui proclameraient consciemment et avec joie leur allégeance au Reich et à la communauté allemande³³ ». Au début, en vue d'atteindre cet objectif, le CdZ ciblait principalement les « adversaires » de l'extérieur, à savoir les Juifs et certaines personnes qui avaient fui le Luxembourg le 10 mai, comme les membres du gouvernement, la grande-duchesse et sa famille, ainsi que leurs biens. La résistance d'une partie de la population luxembourgeoise à la perspective de rejoindre la communauté allemande s'intensifia cependant au cours de l'été 1942. Cette évolution conduisit l'administration à promouvoir une expulsion plus méthodique de ces individus de l'intérieur perçus comme « hostiles » et « intolérables ». Malgré des similitudes quant au principe d'encourager la *Volksgemeinschaft* tout en excluant ses adversaires, ces mesures répressives prises à différentes époques furent surveillées par différentes instances administratives et suivirent des trajectoires distinctes.

30 Dans certaines conditions, ils pouvaient même quitter les camps et devenir *Lagerfrei*, si leur employeur ou eux-mêmes en formulaient la requête auprès du RKF.

31 Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942-1945*, op. cit., p. 175.

32 Voir Raul Hilberg, *The destruction of the European Jews*, New York, Holmes & Meier, 1985; en français, *La destruction des Juifs d'Europe*, traduit par Marie-France de Paloméra et André Charpentier, Paris, Fayard, 1988.

33 « [...] daß seine Grenzräume ausschließlich von Menschen deutscher Abstammung, deutscher Art und deutschen Wesens besiedelt werden, die sich bewußt und freudig zum Reich und zur deutschen Lebensgemeinschaft bekennen », citation extraite « Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg », art. cité.

Les Juifs et leurs biens

Alors que les « Juifs » furent frappés par les premières mesures de dépossession adoptées immédiatement après l'invasion, eux et leurs biens ne furent considérés officiellement comme « juifs » qu'à partir du 5 septembre 1940³⁴. À cette date, le CdZ adopta en effet trois décrets qui, pour l'essentiel, reprenaient la législation antijuive allemande au Luxembourg³⁵.

Le premier, intitulé *Verordnung über Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Judenrechts vom 5. September 1940*, découlait directement des lois de Nuremberg de 1935 et du décret allemand de 1938 sur l'élimination des Juifs de la vie économique³⁶. Il établissait entre autres les critères de classification des individus et des entreprises « juives » et précisait les conséquences de cette classification dans les divers secteurs économiques. Il interdisait en outre aux Juifs d'acquérir, de mettre en gage ou de vendre des objets précieux qu'ils soient en or, en platine, en argent, en pierres précieuses ou en perles, ainsi que des œuvres d'art dont la valeur excédait 1 000 RM. Ce décret les contraignait à déposer toutes leurs actions, titres et dettes dans une banque, et les dépouillait *de facto* de la plupart de leurs droits de propriété.

Le deuxième décret, *Verordnung über das jüdische Vermögen in Luxemburg vom 5. September 1940*, visait à identifier les biens des individus considérés comme Juifs³⁷. S'inspirant des déclarations sur la fortune transmises aux Juifs en Allemagne le 3 décembre 1938, il ordonnait que tous déclarent leurs biens d'ici la fin de l'année. Cette obligation était assortie de nombreuses interdictions et restrictions, notamment une

34 La première mesure fut adoptée le 9 août 1940 lorsque le gauleiter adressa une directive à la Commission administrative qui, à l'époque était encore responsable de la mise en œuvre de la nouvelle législation. Cette directive interdisait explicitement aux individus jugés susceptibles de causer du tort au projet de la *Volksgemeinschaft* de revenir au Luxembourg. La deuxième mesure comportait l'établissement de listes identifiant les individus classés comme Juifs résidant encore au Luxembourg. Ces listes furent dressées entre août et novembre 1940, comme le précisa Vincent Artuso dans son « Rapport sur le rôle de la Commission administrative durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale », officiellement présenté au Premier ministre le 10 février 2015, p. 171. Disponible en ligne : https://me.gouvernement.lu/de/actualites/gouvernement%2Bfr%2Bactualites%2Btoutes_actualites%2Barticles%2B2015%2B02-fevrier%2B10-bettel-artuso.html (consulté le 20 décembre 2023). Il est important de noter que les procédures évoquées ici ne concernent que la dimension légale de la dépossession, qui passe également par le pillage (visant aussi bien les riches collectionneurs que les logements les plus modestes).

35 « Verordnung über Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Judenrechts vom 5. September 1940 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 24.09.1940, p. 10-11 ; « Verordnung über das jüdische Vermögen in Luxemburg vom 5. September 1940 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 24.09.1940, p. 11-12 ; « Zur Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das öffentliche Leben in dem mir als Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg unterstehenden Gebiet », 5.09.1940 – mentionné par Vincent Artuso dans son rapport « La "Question juive" au Luxembourg (1933-1941), l'État luxembourgeois face aux persécutions antisémites nazies », p. 173, pour lequel il se fonde sur Archives nationales du Luxembourg, AE 3999 (17), documents 193-195 ; Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-1-1441 : Anordnungen, Verordnungen und Rundschreiben, 1934-1944.

36 « Verordnung über Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Judenrechts vom 5. September 1940 » in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 24.09.1940, p. 10-11.

37 « Verordnung über den Einsatz des jüdischen Vermögens vom 3. Dezember 1938 » in *Reichsgesetzblatt*, première partie, 5.12.1938, p. 1709.

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liste de sanctions en cas d'infraction. Pour rendre compte des biens des familles qui avaient déjà quitté le pays, les bureaux municipaux d'état-civil et la Gestapo se mirent à inventorier tous les biens « abandonnés » à partir de février 1941.

Le troisième document était une circulaire destinée à éliminer « l'influence juive de la vie publique ». Adressée à la Commission administrative le 9 septembre, puis diffusée dans toutes les administrations luxembourgeoises, la « Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das öffentliche Leben in dem mir als Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg unterstehenden Gebiet » excluait les Juifs de la fonction publique et de certaines professions libérales. Une procédure similaire d'identification et d'exclusion des élèves juifs fut appliquée dans les écoles du 6 septembre au 29 octobre 1940³⁸.

Si certaines administrations se heurtèrent à des difficultés pour identifier les Juifs ou étaient réticentes à entreprendre une telle tâche, les critères pour déterminer le caractère juif d'une personne, d'une association, d'un compte ou d'une entreprise étaient, eux, bien établis. La situation n'était pas aussi simple pour les *Abgesiedelte*.

Les *Abgesiedelte*

Le processus de sélection des Luxembourgeois soumis à déplacements forcés et la privation des biens qui s'en suivait étaient nettement différents de ceux des Juifs. Les critères nets faisaient défaut, et les personnes concernées ne constituaient pas un groupe pré-identifiable. Des commissions *ad hoc* furent constituées dans chaque district (*Kreis*) afin d'identifier les personnes vouées au transfert et de mener des enquêtes sur elles. Ces commissions étaient dirigées par le chef de district (*Kreisleiter*) et comprenaient des représentants du conseil de district (*Landrat*), de la Gestapo, du médecin de district (*Kreisamtsarzt*) et dans certains cas, le responsable des agriculteurs du district (*Kreisbauernführer*) ou des maîtres artisans du district (*Kreishandwerksmeister*). À partir de 1943, elles inclurent également le chef régional (*Landesleiter*) du VdB, Damian Kratzenberg (1878-1946), et un représentant spécial du CdZ chargé des questions du personnel³⁹.

38 Le 6 septembre 1940 fut distribuée aux enseignants la circulaire n° 3344 qui leur donnait l'ordre d'établir des listes des « enfants juifs » ayant fréquenté des crèches et des écoles primaires de leur quartier à la fin de l'année scolaire 1939-1940. Ces listes devaient être remises aux commissaires de district et au maire de Luxembourg. Par la suite, la circulaire n° 3362 étendit cette procédure pour inclure les écoles du second degré. Puis, le 29 octobre 1940, le CdZ publia une directive ordonnant aux municipalités et aux directeurs d'école d'exclure les enfants juifs ; « Zur Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das öffentliche Leben in dem mir als Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg unterstehenden Gebiet », 5.09.1940 (mentionné par Artuso dans son rapport « La « Question juive » au Luxembourg (1933-1941), l'État luxembourgeois face aux persécutions antisémites nazies », doc. cité, p. 173, Archives nationales du Luxembourg, AE 3999 (17), documents 193-195).

39 Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942-1945*, op. cit., p. 68.

Au début, cette mesure visait principalement les membres de la famille des participants aux manifestations et grèves d'août et septembre 1942, de hauts fonctionnaires et des membres de l'élite luxembourgeoise. Mais vers le milieu de l'année 1943, avec l'augmentation du nombre de déserteurs, les membres de leurs familles furent également pris pour cibles⁴⁰. Sans faire partie des commissions elles-mêmes, les responsables de groupes locaux (*Ortsgruppenleiter*) jouèrent un rôle majeur dans le processus de sélection. Ils préparèrent sur demande des évaluations politiques de certaines familles, évaluations qui pouvaient influencer les décisions de la commission. Selon le *Kreisleiter* du Luxembourg, Adolf Schreder (1899-1969), ces évaluations politiques étaient déterminantes pour la commission qu'il présidait⁴¹. L'historien Benoît Majerus a, lui aussi, fait remarquer que les différents *Kreisleiter* exerçaient une influence déterminante sur la présélection des familles dont les cas devaient être soumis aux commissions⁴². Dans certains cas, la Gestapo et les représentants du CdZ ordonnaient directement le transfert des familles sans attendre l'avis de la commission.

Ce processus de sélection laissait la place aux décisions arbitraires, aux abus et aux motivations personnelles, comme la rancœur et l'appât du gain, d'autant plus que cette politique et les dépossessiones qui lui étaient associées n'étaient pas appliquées avec cohérence. En octobre 1943, le gauleiter donna l'ordre aux chefs de district d'intensifier la confiscation des biens dans les familles de déserteurs, mais souligna que cette politique ne devait pas être généralisée⁴³. Comme l'indiquèrent l'historien Gilles Kartheiser et le témoin contemporain Evy Friedrich, les premières personnes transférées possédaient des fortunes considérables, ce qui laisse penser que certaines familles déplacées de force pouvaient avoir été sélectionnées en fonction des Allemands pour leurs biens, lesquels pouvaient être légalement confisqués dans le cadre de ce processus⁴⁴.

40 L'administration nazie considérait que le comportement des déserteurs et des réfractaires à la conscription reflétait leur mauvaise éducation et que la désertion ou le refus de conscription ne pouvaient se produire sans la complicité des familles. Les proches des déserteurs allemands de souche ou des réfractaires à la conscription dans les régions occupées et annexées comme l'Alsace, la Lorraine, la Basse-Styrie et la Haute-Carniole furent victimes de mesures similaires ; « Jeder Deserteur siedelt seine Angehörigen oder seine Sippe um », *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 164, 16.07.1943, p. 4 ; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op. cit., p. 597, 603 et 675-676.

41 Benoît Majerus, « Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction... : les degrés de l'implication dans la collaboration avec l'Allemagne nationale-socialiste à travers l'exemple des *Ortsgruppenleiter* luxembourgeois », mémoire de maîtrise, Université libre de Bruxelles, 1999, p. 104.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

43 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-G-0687 : lettre adressée par l'*Oberbereichsleiter* du NSDAP Koenig au *Kreisleiter* de Diekirch, Johann Jakobs, 20.10.1943. Il faut souligner que certaines familles virent leurs biens confisqués sans être soumises à un déplacement forcé. Ces cas particuliers n'entrent cependant pas dans le champ de cette analyse.

44 Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942-1945*, op. cit., p. 69 ; Evy Friedrich, *Als Luxemburg entvölkert werden sollte: Geschichten und Geschichte der Umsiedlung (1942-1945)*, Luxembourg, Kripler-Muller, 1987, p. 15.

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Dépossession

Une fois identifiés, les individus jugés « indésirables » étaient isolés de la société et leurs biens confisqués.

Les Juifs et leurs biens

En application du deuxième décret du 5 septembre, l'administration allemande au Luxembourg créa la *Devisenstelle*, service spécialisé dans la gestion des biens juifs. Depuis 1938, les *Devisenstellen* fonctionnaient sous l'égide du ministère des Finances du Reich et s'étaient montrées particulièrement actives dans le suivi des processus d'expropriation ou pour faciliter l'émigration des Juifs. Dispersées dans le Reich et abondamment pourvues de fonctionnaires, elles avaient pour responsabilité première de limiter ou de confisquer les droits des Juifs à posséder des biens, de superviser et d'imposer des taxes sur les biens de ceux qui cherchaient à émigrer, et de restreindre leurs possibilités de transférer des fonds.

La *Devisenstelle Luxemburg*, dirigée d'abord par Oswald Morenz, puis par le docteur Dirke, s'organisa en deux structures distinctes. La première gérant les comptes bancaires sur lesquels étaient déposés les fonds acquis par les expropriations ; la seconde se concentrait sur la gestion des biens fonciers (sous la direction du Luxembourgeois Franz Reuter-Reding, qui entretenait des relations avec des notaires) et des entreprises (sous la direction du banquier allemand Gustav Fleishmann). Dans le cas des comptes bancaires, la *Devisenstelle* ordonna aux Juifs détenteurs de comptes de prendre contact avec leurs banques afin de geler ces comptes, le 19 septembre 1940. Le 1^{er} octobre, elle interdit aux Juifs de détenir des espèces et de réaliser des transactions financières à quelques exceptions près, comme le paiement des impôts ou la cotisation au Consistoire israélite du Luxembourg⁴⁵.

De novembre 1940 à novembre 1941, toutes les associations identifiées comme juives virent leurs comptes gelés et furent dissoutes, à l'exception du Consistoire israélite qui demeura actif jusqu'en avril 1942. En sa qualité de *Stillhaltekommissar für das Organisationswesen*, Frans Schmidt, ancien *Oberbereichsleiter* du NSDAP, supervisa ce processus placé directement

45 Suite à la publication de la *Bekanntmachung zur Sicherung jüdischen Vermögens* du 1^{er} octobre et la stricte limitation de l'accès aux activités professionnelles, de nombreuses personnes durent vendre les biens meubles qu'elles possédaient encore, situation qui se reflète dans les déclarations de fortune remplies en décembre 1940. Sur ce sujet, voir l'article de Blandine Landau et Benoît Majerus dans ce volume, « Identification des biens et dépossession : les *Verzeichnisse über das Vermögen von Juden* », p. 81-105.

sous l'autorité du CdZ, conformément à l'arrêté du 28 août 1940. Auparavant responsable de la mise au pas des diverses organisations dans le système nazi en Autriche, il fut nommé à un poste similaire au Luxembourg⁴⁶.

Ces opérations se déroulèrent parallèlement à l'expulsion des Juifs du Luxembourg qui relevait de la responsabilité de la Gestapo. Gustav Simon, rivalisant de zèle avec Robert Wagner et Joseph Bürckel, visait à se distinguer par la rapidité et l'efficacité de sa gestion de la « question juive ». Fin 1940, mécontent des résultats obtenus par la *Devisenstelle* en matière de dépossession, et par la Gestapo pour les expulsions, il restructura son administration et choisit une personne de confiance pour traiter les deux sujets : l'inspecteur de district (*Gauinspekteur*) Joseph Ackermann (1905-1997). Nommé en décembre directeur du nouveau département dédié à la « gestion des biens juifs et autres biens » (*Verwaltung des jüdischen und sonstigen Vermögens – Abteilung IV A*), Ackermann organisa ce département tout particulièrement en vue de l'« aryanisation » du Luxembourg, assisté par un économiste, un expert en droit et une équipe de plus de soixante-dix fonctionnaires, dont soixante originaires du Luxembourg⁴⁷.

Le 2 décembre 1940, Ackermann informa le grand rabbin du Luxembourg, Robert Serebrenik, que tous les Juifs devaient avoir quitté le Luxembourg d'ici la fin de l'année⁴⁸. Le 24 avril 1941, Serebrenik et le président du Consistoire, Louis Sternberg, furent convoqués à l'Office central de la Sûreté du Reich (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, RSHA) à Berlin par Adolf Eichmann en personne. Eichmann leur lança un ultimatum : le Luxembourg devait être débarrassé des Juifs, d'une façon ou d'une autre. À la mi-octobre, des centaines d'entre eux avaient fui ou avaient été déportés vers l'Ouest, ce qui signifie qu'ils avaient été « déposés » en France sur la ligne de démarcation ou, s'ils possédaient les visas adéquats, à la frontière espagnole. Ce que les déportés pouvaient emporter avec eux était strictement contrôlé,

46 Schmidt avait été chargé de fonctions similaires en Lorraine le 22 août 1940 et ses responsabilités furent étendues à l'Alsace à partir du 2 septembre 1940. Ce cas unique illustre les similitudes dans l'administration des divers territoires annexés ; Wolf Gruner et Jörg Osterloh, « La persécution nationale-socialiste des Juifs dans les territoires annexés, 1935-1945 », *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, n° 209, 2018, p. 401-430 ; « Verordnung über die Einsetzung des Stillhaltekommissars für das Organisationswesen in Luxemburg vom 28. August 1940 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 24.09.1940, p. 8.

47 La création du département fut annoncée dans le *Luxemburger Zeitung* du 12 décembre 1940. Au cours de l'année 1941, sa dénomination fut changée en Administration des biens juifs et des biens des émigrants (*Verwaltung des jüdischen- und Emigrantenvermögens*) et ses attributions furent dûment étendues pour inclure les biens des « émigrants » qui avaient fui le pays le 10 mai, comme les membres du gouvernement et la grande-duchesse et sa famille. Le fonctionnement du département fut expliqué par Ackermann en personne dans son témoignage lors de son procès d'après-guerre, voir Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdG 19, liasse 2D, 0385.

48 Les détails concernant cette réunion sont connus grâce aux notes prises par Serebrenik, reprises par Vincent Artuso, « Rapport sur le rôle de la Commission administrative durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale », *op. cit.*, note 473.

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conformément aux principes de la *Reichsvereinigung* qui s'appliquaient à l'ensemble de la population du Reich. La législation au Luxembourg était destinée à priver les Juifs de leurs droits à la propriété. Un décret du 7 février 1941 plaçait les biens de ceux qui avaient quitté le pays depuis le 10 mai 1940 sous l'autorité du *gauleiter*. Un autre décret, du 18 avril 1941, confisquait les biens de ceux qui demeuraient encore au Luxembourg⁴⁹.

Après le début de l'opération Barbarossa, le 22 juin 1941, les mesures et décrets excluant les Juifs de la société se succédèrent⁵⁰. Le 15 octobre 1941, le dernier convoi à destination de l'ouest quitta le Luxembourg et, à partir du 23 octobre 1941, l'émigration (déjà étroitement contrôlée) ne fut plus possible pour les Juifs. Cette date marqua le début de la phase finale de leur élimination, sur le plan physique aussi bien qu'économique.

Les Abgesiedelte

L'un des aspects fondamentaux du déplacement forcé, c'est qu'il aboutissait à l'élimination économique des familles du fait de la confiscation de leurs biens. L'administration civile allemande au Luxembourg joua un rôle déterminant dans ce processus, mais délégua toutes les tâches et responsabilités liées à la propriété au RKF. Alexa Stiller observa une collaboration similaire entre le CdZ et le RKF pour les déplacements forcés et les confiscations de biens en Alsace. En Lorraine, cependant, Bürckel prit le contrôle des biens des familles de déserteurs déplacées, en tant que « biens ennemis », au profit de sa propre administration⁵¹.

Le RKF avait désigné la Deutsche Umsiedlungs- und Treuhandgesellschaft (DUT) depuis 1939 pour gérer les biens pour tous les déplacements d'Allemands de

49 Böhler, *Évacuation – Déportation*, op. cit., p. 23-51 ; « Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Emigranten- und Judenvermögen vom 7. Februar 1941 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 11.02.1941, p. 90 ; « Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Emigranten- und Judenvermögen vom 7. Februar 1941 vom 18. April 1941 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 25.04.1941, p. 208.

50 Le décret du 29 juillet 1941 exigeait des Juifs qu'ils portent un brassard jaune distinctif en public et leur interdisait de participer à diverses activités publiques, politiques, sportives et culturelles. Il limitait en outre leur capacité à faire leurs achats dans les épiceries à certaines heures, seulement de 9 h à 11 h du matin. Un couvre-feu était également imposé, les obligeant à demeurer chez eux de 19 h à 7 h du matin. À partir de septembre 1941, les hommes juifs adultes furent soumis au travail forcé, notamment dans les carrières de Nennig, sur le chantier de la *Reichsautobahn* près de Wittlich ou dans l'entreprise luxembourgeoise Paul Wurth. Le 17 octobre 1941, une nouvelle exigence fut introduite, obligeant les Juifs à porter une étoile jaune pour les distinguer davantage. En novembre, d'autres restrictions comprenaient l'interdiction de quitter leur lieu de résidence sans en informer la police ou d'engager des conversations avec des Aryens. Parallèlement, les Juifs furent progressivement déplacés de leurs foyers et transférés dans divers points de rassemblement, comme le décrit l'article de Renée Wagener, avant d'être internés au monastère de Cinqfontaines (« Les "maisons de retraite juives" au Luxembourg pendant l'occupation nationale-socialiste », p. 107-125) ; Cerf, *L'étoile jaune*, op. cit., p. 226 ; Claude Marx, « Mesures antijuives au Luxembourg », in Musée national de la Résistance et des Droits humains (éd.), *Le Luxembourg et le Troisième Reich : un état des lieux. Luxemburg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, Esch-sur-Alzette, Op der Lay, 2021, p. 388-403.

51 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op. cit., p. 602, 610 et 613 ; « Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg vom 13. September 1942 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 17.09.1942, p. 277.

souche au sein du Reich⁵². Établie à Berlin, elle constitua un vaste réseau de succursales dans toute l'Europe occupée par les Allemands. La branche luxembourgeoise, subordonnée à celle de Strasbourg, avait un bureau central à Luxembourg et des représentants locaux dans les différents districts du pays afin de permettre une communication directe avec les autorités locales. Dès le début de ce processus, Gustav Simon précisa bien que les déplacements impliquaient principalement la collecte, l'estimation et l'utilisation des biens des personnes⁵³. L'ampleur des dépossessions devient particulièrement évidente lorsqu'on examine les structures juridiques mises en place entre septembre 1942 et juillet 1943.

La « Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg vom 13. September 1942 » et la « Verordnung über die Sicherstellung von Vermögenswerten bei der Absiedlung in Luxemburg vom 9. Januar 1943 » préparèrent le terrain pour procéder aux confiscations. Elles stipulaient que le RKF et les instances nommées par lui étaient responsables des tâches liées aux biens immobiliers pour les déplacements de force et étaient habilitées sans restriction à confisquer et à utiliser ces biens. Elles soulignaient que tous les biens saisis devaient être enregistrés et remis au RKF. Tout manquement à ces obligations pouvait valoir de lourdes sanctions aux contrevenants, comme le précisait l'article 8 de la première ordonnance. Les deux décrets spécifiaient qu'il était impossible de recourir aux processus judiciaires ordinaires, ce qui laissait à l'occupant une entière liberté d'action. La « Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg vom 21. April 1944 » gérât les paiements et indemnités aux créanciers en utilisant les biens confisqués. Dans le règlement du 10 juillet 1943, la Zivilverwaltung fut habilitée à imposer la confiscation des biens et à prendre « d'autres mesures appropriées » aux proches des déserteurs ou à ceux qui s'étaient soustraits à l'enrôlement dans la Wehrmacht et le Reichsarbeitsdienst (RAD). Cette mesure avait un effet rétroactif à partir du 30 août 1942, jour de l'introduction du service militaire. On remarquera qu'aucune législation ne contenait de clauses concernant le déplacement des familles ; il n'était question que des modalités d'application de la déposition. La formulation vague de certains alinéas laissait également le champ libre à l'interprétation par le législateur. Par exemple, le décret du 10 juillet 1943 ne précisait pas qui était considéré comme un proche (*Angehörige, Sippe*), pas plus qu'il ne spécifiait la signification d'autres mesures appropriées⁵⁴.

52 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op. cit., p. 184-186, 613.

53 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, op. cit., p. 213.

54 « Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg vom 13. September 1942 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der*

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Pour identifier les biens susceptibles d'être saisis, les familles reçurent l'ordre de fournir un inventaire détaillé de tous leurs biens au jour de leur déplacement⁵⁵. La DUT enregistrerait alors ces biens et assurerait le contrôle administratif en tant que mandataire du RKF. Le 19 septembre 1942, la presse publia que les espèces, les comptes bancaires, les comptes postaux et les comptes d'épargne demeuraient à la disposition des individus déplacés tant qu'ils n'étaient pas nécessaires pour rembourser des dettes ou finaliser des opérations industrielles et commerciales en cours⁵⁶. La DUT proposa même de « protéger » ces comptes et ces fonds pendant les déplacements forcés en les maintenant en tutelle⁵⁷. Or une note interne du 19 janvier 1943 émanant de la General-Bank Luxemburg spécifiait que la DUT déclarait généralement tous les comptes en banque concernés, les comptes-titres et autres dépôts détenus ou administrés par des banques en tant que biens confisqués et donc bloqués⁵⁸. À leur départ, les *Absiedler* étaient aussi informés qu'en donnant procuration à un représentant de leur choix, ils pourraient recouvrer leurs meubles dès qu'ils auraient trouvé un nouveau domicile dans le Reich « dans la mesure où [la DUT] libérait les objets des biens confisqués⁵⁹ ». Les sources examinées montrent que les individus désignés, souvent des membres de la famille, purent effectivement restituer des objets personnels comme vêtements, photographies et souvenirs de famille à leurs propriétaires ou, dans certains cas, prendre possession de certains biens meubles comme des baignoires, des poêles de chauffage et des fours⁶⁰.

Tout au long de la guerre, le CdZ, le RKF et la DUT conservèrent une attitude ambiguë quant à la nature véritable des confiscations et éventuelles indemnités. Ils offraient en public une image suggérant que les personnes pourraient être indemnisées tout en recourant à la menace de confiscation sans indemnité

Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 17.09.1942, p. 277 ; « Verordnung über die Sicherstellung von Vermögenswerten bei der Absiedlung in Luxemburg », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 29.01.1943, p. 9 ; « Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 21.04.1944, p. 67 ; « Verordnung über Maßnahmen gegen Wehrpflichtentziehung », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 15.07.1943, p. 152.

55 Certaines familles furent informées de leur transfert avant que la Gestapo ne frappe à leur porte et purent s'enfuir.

56 « Die DUT und die Umsiedlung für Luxemburg », *Luxemburger Wort*, 18.09.1942, p. 3.

57 *Ibid.*

58 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-B-0351, Lettre adressée par la General-Bank Luxemburg à la DUT concernant la dissolution des comptes des personnes déplacées de force. 19.01.1943.

59 « Zwecks Freigabe von Vermögenswerten aus unserem beschlagnahmten Vermögen », extrait de Marie-Madeleine Schiltges, *Die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg 1942-1945*, Ettelbruck, Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1988, p. 19 ; « Die Zuverlässigkeit der Grenzbevölkerung des Gaues muß gewährleistet sein », *Escher Tageblatt*, 5 décembre 1943, p. 3. Si aucun représentant n'était nommé, la gestion des biens était immédiatement confiée aux représentants du *Landrat*.

60 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-G-00685, Reçu concernant la récupération des biens de l'*Absiedler* numéro 1100 par le représentant désigné ; Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-B-0352, Déclaration de Frau E. N. concernant la récupération des biens de sa fille déplacée de force, le 25 avril 1944.

comme moyen de dissuasion en cas d'inventaires incomplets ou de résistance⁶¹. Cette ambiguïté est perceptible également dans la loi du 13 septembre 1942 dont l'article 3.2 établit expressément qu'aucune revendication pour dommages causés ne pouvait être formulée. L'article 3, cependant, permettait au RKF d'accorder des indemnités aux parties lésées⁶². L'examen des opérations générales de la DUT montre à l'évidence que cet organisme saisissait des biens « abandonnés » des familles déplacées de force, le jour même de leur transfert. Ces objets étaient évalués et la valeur estimée était enregistrée comme une « dette » due aux propriétaires d'origine, remboursable lors de leur réinstallation permanente dans le Reich allemand, processus appelé *Vermögensausgleich*⁶³. Selon Ludwig Metzger, ancien chef du département juridique de la DUT au Luxembourg, un processus similaire était appliqué dans ce pays. Il affirma que la valeur des objets qui appartenaient aux *Abgesiedelten* luxembourgeois et qui seraient vendus fut systématiquement inscrite afin de déterminer de futures indemnités⁶⁴. Il demeure cependant peu probable que de telles indemnités aient véritablement été prévues.

Évaluation et liquidation

Les Juifs et les biens leur appartenant

La liquidation des biens juifs et le processus d'« aryanisation » furent finalisés entre février 1941 et la fin de l'année 1943. Cette phase finale débuta par l'établissement des structures juridiques nécessaires au moyen de trois « règlements d'application » (*Durchführungsverordnungen*) publiés le 7 février 1941, le 18 avril 1941 et le 4 avril 1942⁶⁵.

61 « Die DUT und die Umsiedlung für Luxemburg », doc. cité.

62 « Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg vom 13. September 1942 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 17.09.1942, p. 277.

63 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, FIN-10341 : Lettre adressée par le ministère des Finances du Luxembourg au président de la Ligue luxembourgeoise des prisonniers et déportés du Luxembourg (LPPD), 30 mai 1945 ; Robert Lewis Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy, 1939-1945 – A History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germanism*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 98.

64 IfZ München, ZS 1222, Interrogatoire de Ludwig Metzger après la guerre.

65 « Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Emigranten- und Judenvermögen vom 7. Februar 1941 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 11.02.1941, p. 90 ; « Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Emigranten- und Judenvermögen vom 7. Februar 1941 vom 18. April 1941 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 25.04.1941, p. 208 ; « Zweite Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Juden- und Emigrantenvermögen vom 7. Februar 1941 vom 6. Juli 1941 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 22.07.1941, p. 298 ; « Dritte Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Emigranten- und Judenvermögen vom 4. April 1942 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 14.04.1942, p. 134. À la même époque, des décrets furent publiés entre novembre 1941 et juin 1942 imposant la confiscation des postes de radio, bicyclettes, appareils photos, jumelles, machines à écrire, vêtements et autres textiles, lampes électriques, argenterie, gramophones, appareils électriques, aspirateurs, fers à repasser, etc.

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Le premier exigeait que tous les biens appartenant à des personnes signalées comme absentes soient répertoriés. Ces biens étaient alors placés sous l'autorité du CdZ qui avait toute latitude pour déterminer leur utilisation, avec effet rétroactif au 10 mai 1940. Le deuxième modifiait et étendait le premier, couvrant les biens des personnes encore présentes au Luxembourg ainsi que l'héritage de ceux qui étaient récemment décédés⁶⁶. Enfin, le troisième règlement donnait pouvoir au CdZ de transférer les biens juifs à des tiers et de procéder à tout changement juridique nécessaire. Les Juifs perdirent ainsi toute forme de propriété légale, ce qui mena effectivement à son terme le processus d'« aryansisation » fin 1943⁶⁷. Comme le souligne le rapport final (2009) de la Commission, « celui qui tira véritablement profit des aryansisations et liquidations fut sans conteste le CdZ. Sans aucune restriction, il pouvait prendre possession de la propriété juive et la transmettre à titre de donation ou à un prix dérisoire. Par ce biais, il pouvait s'assurer la loyauté et le soutien des nouveaux propriétaires⁶⁸ ».

Évincés de ce qui restait de leurs foyers, les Juifs qui se trouvaient encore au Luxembourg en 1941 furent rassemblés dans des « maisons juives ». Du mois d'août 1941 à juin 1943, ils furent notamment transférés dans ce qu'on appelait « la maison de retraite » (*Altersheim*) installée dans le monastère de Cinqfontaines (*Fünfbrunnen*⁶⁹). Semblable à un ghetto, cet endroit se caractérisait par d'effroyables conditions de vie qui causèrent la mort de nombre de ses résidents. Il servit d'ultime étape avant la déportation vers l'est, d'où revinrent moins de cinquante personnes. À l'exception de ceux qui étaient mariés à des Aryens, de quelques *Mischlinge* et d'un nombre encore plus restreint de Juifs qui parvinrent à se cacher, du point de vue de l'administration allemande, fin 1943, la « question juive » pouvait être considérée comme « réglée⁷⁰ »⁷¹.

66 « Zweite Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über Maßnahmen betreffend das Juden- und Emigrantenvermögen vom 7. Februar 1941 vom 6. Juli 1941 », in *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 22.07.1941, p. 298.

67 Cela ne signifie pas que tous les biens avaient été vendus à cette date. Dans le cas des biens immobiliers, par exemple, certaines maisons furent louées, et d'autres furent données à l'administration allemande. Voir *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, op. cit., p. 28-29.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

69 Selon les estimations actuelles, avant le 10 mai 1940, environ 5 000 personnes, ultérieurement catégorisées comme juives, résidaient au Luxembourg. On estime que près de 3 900 d'entre elles se trouvaient peut-être encore dans le pays à cette époque. Plus de 3 000 partirent entre le 10 mai 1940 et le 15 octobre 1941, environ 1 600 survécurent à la guerre et seulement 70 étaient présentes sur le territoire luxembourgeois en septembre 1944. Pour plus de précisions sur le nombre de Juifs au Luxembourg avant et pendant la guerre, voir Marc Gloden, « La Shoah au Luxembourg », 2010, publié en ligne sur le site de la Fondation luxembourgeoise pour la mémoire de la Shoah, accessible à l'adresse suivante <https://fondluxshoah.lu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/La-Shoah-au-Luxembourg-2.pdf> ; En ce qui concerne les estimations du nombre de Juifs se trouvant encore au Luxembourg fin 1940, voir l'article de Blandine Landau et Benoît Majerus dans ce volume, « Identification des biens et dépossession : les *Verzeichnisse über das Vermögen von Juden* », p. 81-105.

70 Terme péjoratif utilisé par les nazis pour stigmatiser les personnes d'origine aryenne mêlée ou non aryenne.

71 Marc Schoentgen, « Das "Jüdische Altersheim" in Fünfbrunnen », in Wolfgang Benz et Barbara Distel (éd.), *Terror im Westen. Nationalsozialistische Lager in den Niederlanden, Belgien und Luxemburg 1940-1945*, Berlin,

Selon les conclusions de la Commission en 2009, les archives allemandes révèlent que « des biens juifs (et d'émigrés) d'une valeur d'au moins 30 millions de RM furent confisqués et servirent à financer la guerre et la politique de germanisation au Luxembourg⁷² ». Dans un décret daté du 31 janvier 1941, le gauleiter Simon n'avait pas caché ses intentions, expliquant que le produit du processus d'« aryanisation » devait rester sur un compte bloqué de la Bank der Deutschen Arbeit jusqu'à l'achèvement du processus, avant d'être affecté à l'Aufbaufonds Moselland⁷³. Le ministère des Finances du Reich lui donna finalement gain de cause et ces fonds purent ainsi être dédiés à la germanisation du territoire⁷⁴.

Les Abgesiedelte

Comme pour la dépossession des Juifs de leurs biens, le processus concernant les familles déplacées de force impliquait l'évaluation et la liquidation de leurs biens. Afin de protéger les intérêts de l'économie de guerre et assurer le fonctionnement continu des entreprises confisquées, des administrateurs provisoires ou de nouveaux propriétaires furent nommés pour les sociétés jugées d'intérêt public⁷⁵. Dans les fermes confisquées, des *Ansiedler*, Allemands de souche du Sud-Tyrol, de Bosnie et de Bucovine, furent chargés de cultiver les terres agricoles tout en contribuant à la germanisation de la région⁷⁶. En réalité, l'organisation de ce processus présenta d'importantes failles.

En décembre 1943, Carlheinz Lehnkering, délégué régional (*Gebietsbevollmächtigte*) de la DUT dans le bureau de district de Diekirch, fit part de ses inquiétudes. Il critiquait la longueur du délai avant l'attribution des fermes, ainsi

Metropol, 2004, p. 49-71 ; Mil Lorang, *Luxemburg im Schatten der Shoah*, Soleuvre, Editions Phi, 2019, p. 150.

72 *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, op. cit., p. 110.

73 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdG 12, liasse 2A, 0371 : copie du décret du 31 janvier 1941, mentionné dans *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, op. cit., p. 28.

74 Les chiffres précis et le processus de négociation sont décrits dans *La spoliation des biens juifs au Luxembourg 1940-1945*, op. cit., p. 29-30. Au cours des derniers mois de 1943, les fonds résultant de l'« aryanisation » furent méticuleusement inscrits dans la comptabilité de l'Abteilung IV A à la Bank der Deutschen Arbeit avant d'être transférés ultérieurement sur le compte n° 155 de la Regierungsoberkasse du CdZ à la Reichsbank du Luxembourg. Cette documentation donne un aperçu du montant global en jeu, bien qu'il ne représente peut-être qu'une partie de la somme totale, comme le suggère un témoignage recueilli le 9 septembre 1944 auprès de l'un des protagonistes luxembourgeois impliqués, Franz-Joseph Reuter-Redding : « Plus de 1 500 à 2 000 personnes achetèrent des maisons, des champs, du bétail, du mobilier, des draps et de nombreuses œuvres d'art juif. J'estime que le montant de ces achats devait s'élever à quelque 500 millions de francs, voire davantage. » (Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CT-03-01-01873). Reuter-Redding commença à travailler pour les Allemands immédiatement après l'invasion et assumait la responsabilité de la gestion des biens fonciers et immobiliers appartenant aux Juifs fin septembre 1940 dans la *Devisenstelle*. En décembre 1940, il poursuivit ce rôle au sein de l'Abteilung IV A. On remarquera qu'il fut le seul Luxembourgeois à occuper un poste aussi élevé dans l'administration allemande. Par la suite, en janvier 1941, Erich Pies, qui avait auparavant occupé les fonctions de *Gauhauptstellenleiter* à Coblence, lui succéda.

75 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, op. cit., p. 109 ; Friedrich, *Als Luxemburg entvölkert werden sollte*, op. cit., p. 11.

76 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, op. cit., p. 109.

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que l'état des maisons confisquées après le transfert des familles⁷⁷. Nombre de ces maisons étaient illégalement vidées par les habitants, ce qui suscita les critiques suivantes formulées en juillet 1944 : « Les *Ansiedler* vivent en partie dans des conditions dégradantes, ils sont contraints de jeter de la paille sur le sol nu pour pouvoir dormir, alors que les maisons voisines sont peut-être pleines de lits⁷⁸. » L'historien Paul Dostert souligna que seule une centaine des 270 fermes évacuées avaient été réattribuées en mai 1944, ce qui laissait au moins 180 colons bosniens dans l'attente d'un nouveau logement⁷⁹. Maisons, mobilier et autres biens meubles furent également loués, donnés ou vendus à des membres du parti, des organisations nazies et des particuliers⁸⁰. La maison et le jardin de Pierre Decker de Beckerich, *Absiedler* numéro 225, furent par exemple loués en mai 1943 à l'administration financière du Reich (Reichsfinanzverwaltung) afin de loger le commissaire de district des douanes (*Bezirkszollkommissar*⁸¹).

L'utilisation des ressources financières résultant de la liquidation de ces biens demeure un sujet peu exploré. Comme dans les procédures de dépossession des Juifs, la Bank der Deutschen Arbeit joua un rôle déterminant dans la gestion des fonds recueillis au cours de ce processus, entretenant deux comptes spéciaux de la DUT⁸². Des recherches complémentaires s'imposeraient pour révéler comment ces ressources financières furent allouées par la suite ou utilisées. Il n'en demeure pas moins que des transferts des comptes en banque de la DUT du Luxembourg vers l'Allemagne quelques jours avant la libération, le 10 septembre 1944, ainsi que d'autres rapports au cours des mois suivants, indiquent que les fonds demeurèrent sous le contrôle de celle-ci pour le compte du RKF⁸³.

77 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-G-0687, Lettre adressée par Carlheinz Lehnkering au *Kreisleiter* de Diekirch, 2 décembre 1943.

78 « Die Ansiedler wohnen daher zum Teil in unwürdigen Verhältnissen, sie sind genötigt Stroh auf den nackten Fußboden zu schütten, um eine Schlafstätte zu schaffen, während vielleicht in den Nachbarhäusern alles voll Betten gestopft ist », extrait de Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-G-00689, Mémoire sur la confiscation des biens des personnes déplacées de force avant et après leur déplacement, 18 juillet 1944.

79 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, op. cit., p. 109-110.

80 Majerus, « Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction... », op. cit., p. 77 ; Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-G-00689, Lettre adressée par la Deutsches Frauenwerk Kreisstelle Diekirch au Landratsamt, 10 janvier 1944.

81 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, CdZ-G-00679, Attestation concernant la location de l'*Absiedler* Peter Decker de Beckerich, 17 mai 1943.

82 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, FIN-18143, Relevés de compte de 1943 des comptes numéros 7509 et 7523 appartenant à la DUT à la Bank der Deutschen Arbeit ; Archives nationales du Luxembourg, FIN-18266, Relevés de compte de 1942 des comptes numéros 7509 et 7523 appartenant à la DUT à la Bank der Deutschen Arbeit.

83 Archives nationales du Luxembourg, SEQDOS-0064 n° 1644, Relevé de compte de juillet à septembre 1944 du compte numéro 44785 appartenant à la DUT à la General-Bank Luxembourg ; BArch, R 1702/1018, Notes d'une réunion entre le bureau central de la DUT et des membres de l'ancienne succursale du Luxembourg, 1 décembre 1944.

Les politiques d'exclusion et de dépossession menées par le régime nazi pendant l'occupation du Luxembourg eurent de graves répercussions aussi bien pour la population juive que pour les familles luxembourgeoises déplacées de force. Alors que les politiques menées pour les deux groupes présentaient certaines similitudes administratives, elles furent fondamentalement distinctes.

Si l'on excepte la question du pillage, d'un point de vue administratif, les mesures suivirent une même voie logique et procédurale. Elles commencèrent par l'identification des individus et de leurs avoirs, enchaînèrent par la confiscation, l'estimation, puis la liquidation des biens. Des structures juridiques furent progressivement établies pour fournir une base légale à ces mesures. L'élimination économique et la suppression physique de ces groupes étaient en droite ligne avec l'objectif de promouvoir la *Volksgemeinschaft* dans la région. Selon l'administration nazie, le déplacement forcé de ceux qu'elle considérait comme des éléments « indésirables » contribuait au dessein de « purification » du territoire et de défense de la région frontalière. Le remplacement de ces groupes par des personnes jugées plus « fiables » était destiné à encourager la germanisation de la région, tout en minimisant tout impact préjudiciable à l'économie.

Il y avait cependant des différences fondamentales dans l'approche de la dépossession, les objectifs ultimes et les répercussions. Il faut souligner que les ressources financières induites par ces liquidations servaient des objectifs distincts. Dans le cas des avoirs juifs, les biens furent confisqués et liquidés au profit du CdZ du Luxembourg, dans l'intention de financer la politique de germanisation et l'économie de guerre allemande. De leur côté, les avoirs des familles déplacées de force furent confisqués au profit du RKF, par l'intermédiaire de la DUT. De nouvelles études pourraient examiner l'utilisation ultérieure de ces ressources financières.

Une autre distinction importante a trait à la nature des déplacements de population et des confiscations. L'expulsion des Juifs avait vocation à être permanente et à aboutir à un transfert définitif de propriété ou à une liquidation de leurs biens, rendant souvent impossible en pratique la restitution aux demandeurs revenus après la guerre. Inversement, les *Abgesiedelte*, bien que considérés comme « indésirables » au Luxembourg (et il leur fut interdit de retourner chez eux) présentaient un certain intérêt pour le régime nazi dans d'autres territoires. Les autorités leur octroyèrent donc une nationalité allemande révoquée. En nommant un représentant, ils parvinrent à recouvrer certains objets et effets personnels. En théorie, la

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DUT inscrivit aussi leurs biens afin de faciliter l'attribution d'indemnités une fois qu'ils seraient installés définitivement dans le Reich allemand. Il reste cependant à déterminer si des indemnités financières leur furent véritablement versées.

Cet article constitue une première étape vers une étude comparative plus détaillée de la persécution et de la dépossession de ces deux groupes de victimes. Des analyses complémentaires seraient déterminantes pour comprendre la complexité de ces mesures répressives et la façon dont elles furent mises en œuvre dans le contexte plus large de la politique d'occupation nazie. De tels travaux pourraient révéler des informations précieuses sur la collaboration entre les organismes responsables au Luxembourg et le Reich allemand.

CHAPTER 2: THE “LONG ARM” OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE OF THE WEHRMACHT – A CASE STUDY ON LUXEMBOURGISH DESERTIONS

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The “long arm” of the military justice of the Wehrmacht – A case study on Luxembourgish desertions

Sarah Maya Vercruysse / Nina Janz

1 Introduction¹

During the Second World War the military courts of the Wehrmacht were characterised by their strict and uncompromising procedures. Soldiers in the German military were naturally subject to the jurisdiction of the Wehrmacht courts. These soldiers included *Reichsdeutsche* (with German citizenship before 1939) uniform wearers and those recruited from other occupied countries and regions, such as Luxembourg and Alsace. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was *de facto* annexed and incorporated into German territory. The laws and ordinances of the Reich applied to the local population. As (compulsorily) conscripted naturalised Germans, they were also subject to military jurisdiction. The offense that predominantly led Luxembourgers to appear before Wehrmacht courts was desertion. The punishment of individuals did not end with the sentence handed down in court, however, because their communities and families in the occupied homeland also came onto the authorities' agenda, resulting in investigation proceedings or punitive measures. As a result of soldiers' desertion from the Wehrmacht, thousands of family members of Luxembourgish deserters and draft evaders were forcibly resettled in East German territories such as Boberstein (*Bobrów*) in what is today Poland, and had their assets confiscated.

This contribution examines the efforts of the courts and military justice administration to capture and arrest individuals in accordance with the laws and ordinances of the Reich. It delves deeper into the investigations conducted by the military court and examines seizures made in the deserters' homelands, as well as threats and arrests involving their families.

Cooperation between military courts and local police forces was used by the occupying authorities to terrorise the inhabitants of occupied territories and to pressure men in the Wehrmacht not to defect. The chapter specifically examines the consequences faced by individual soldiers and their families in the occupied territory of Luxembourg, drawing on the analysis of 54 desertion cases from the industrial town of Schiffingen, located in southern Luxembourg.² Using court records and trial transcripts, as well as files from the police and civilian authorities - relating both to the desertions and to the interrogation and forced resettlement of the corresponding families -, it seeks to establish a connection between the treatment of deserters and the repercussions for their relatives, highlighting the broader impact

¹ This contribution is part of the WARLUX research project at the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) at the University of Luxembourg. The project aims to study the individual profiles and experiences of Luxembourgers who served in the German Labour Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*, RAD) and the Wehrmacht during World War II. The focus of the research is not only on the conscripted individuals themselves but also on the experiences of their families and communities. This aspect will be explored in more depth in the doctoral research of Sarah Maya Vercruysse.

² The analysis of desertion cases from Schiffingen is part of a broader investigation conducted within the WARLUX project, which included a case study on the wartime experiences of young conscripts and volunteers from this town.

of the military apparatus on individuals during World War II. Additionally, a limited number of personal accounts from individuals from this research sample, such as memoirs, are employed to offer a glimpse into the perspectives of families. Through the analysis of this source material, this chapter traces the far-reaching influence – or “long arm” – of the military justice system, which extended not only to a soldiers’ original unit, but also to their home regions. Wehrmacht court records provide not only individual and personal information about the defendants’ motives and the court’s findings but also details about the families and backgrounds.

The role of investigating and punishing deserters was shared between various branches of the Wehrmacht and the civil administration, such as police forces, which were responsible for the prosecution and sentencing of deserters and their families. The term “long arm” is used to convey the idea that the German military did not just act through military tribunals; it also involved other institutions and local communities to track down deserters.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the occupation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the conscription of its men into military service. It then examines judgments in cases of desertion among Luxembourgers in the Wehrmacht. The chapter also explores disagreements between the military and the civil administration on the treatment of deserters, as demonstrated by their correspondence. The final section presents the consequences for the deserters’ families at home. Throughout the chapter an individual case is followed, illustrating the interactions between the military and civilian authorities as well as the consequences on family members.

The consequences of the military justice system on families is a relatively under-researched topic. While studies about the jurisdiction of military courts over soldiers, civilians and personnel have been published recently,³ the impact on families and the application of the principle of “family liability” (*Sippenhaftung*) have been given little attention. This article shows how desertion created a chain of events. Desertion – in German, *Fahnenflucht* (literally “fleeing from the flag”) – was interpreted differently by the Wehrmacht and the occupation administration, and was seen as an affront to National Socialist ideology and the system. Therefore, measures were taken to interrogate and forcibly resettle families. Although similar measures were introduced by the military and civil occupation institutions for desertions and draft evasion, this article mainly focuses on desertion.⁴

2 Luxembourgers as soldiers and deserters in the Wehrmacht

Along with Belgium and the Netherlands, Luxembourg was invaded on 10 May 1940 by Wehrmacht troops. The Grand Duchess fled the country and a civilian occupation

³ To mention just a few: Walter Manoschek, ed., *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz: Urteilspraxis, Strafvollzug, Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich* (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2003); Stefan Kurt Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge? Deserteure der Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2021); Norbert Haase, “Gefahr für die Manneszucht”. *Verweigerung und Widerstand im Spiegel der Spruchstätigkeit von Marinegerichten in Wilhelmshaven (1939–1945)* (Hanover, 1996); Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmachtjustiz, 1933–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005); Claudia Bade, Lars Skowronski and Michael Viebig, eds, *NS-Militärjustiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Disziplinierungs- und Repressionsinstrument in Europäischer Dimension*, 1. Aufl., Berichte Und Studien (Dresden, Germany), no. 68 (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2015).

⁴ On draft evasion among Luxembourgers, see Aimé Knepper, *Vie ou Mort des réfractaires* (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1992).

administration (*Zivilverwaltung*, abbreviated as *CdZ*), led by the *Gauleiter*⁵ of Koblenz-Trier, Gustav Simon (1900–1945), was established. The civil administration applied German laws and special extraordinary laws and regulations to the territory of what had been Luxembourg. The goal of the National Socialist regime was to annex and incorporate the former Grand Duchy, which had a population of around 293,000,⁶ into the German Reich as part of *Gau Moselland*. With the new conscription law of 30 August 1942, *Gauleiter* Simon announced that young Luxembourgish men born between 1920 and 1924 – later extended to 1927 – would be recruited to the Wehrmacht. This decision came after the announcement of mandatory labour service for men and women on 23 May 1941.⁷

In alignment with National Socialist ideology, which considered Luxembourgers to be of “Germanic” ethnicity, the young men were drafted into the German army. A total of over 10,000 individuals received the order to join the National Socialist forces between 1942 and 1944. However, a substantial number of conscripts, approximately one third, evaded the draft or deserted, mostly by not returning to their regiments after their leave period.

In August 1942, upon the announcement of the military draft, no specific guidelines were provided regarding the integration and treatment of Luxembourgers within the Wehrmacht. However, by December of the same year, a ban had been imposed by the Chief of Army Armaments and the Commander of the Reserve Army, General Army Office (*Chef der Heeresrüstung und Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres*), *Generaloberst* Friedrich Fromm (1888–1945) on the deployment of soldiers from Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg in Western Europe.⁸ Exceptions were made for war volunteers whose political reliability was beyond doubt. It is not clear whether the imposition of this ban in 1942 was a result of the war situation in the East, which required more men, or due to the increasing rates of draft evasion and desertion of the affected men. The newly recruited men were distributed among the Wehrmacht troops rather than forming their own units and divisions. In 1943, a directive was issued by the German Military High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, OKW) stating that the proportion of soldiers from Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg in the reserve army should not exceed 8% but could temporarily reach 15% in exceptional cases. In active combat units, the proportion should not exceed 5%. The goal of this order was to mix these ethnic German (*Volksdeutsche*) soldiers with others in order to prevent the formation of distinct groups, and to encourage their integration and Germanisation within the military.⁹

The conscription of non-German citizens was a clear violation of international law. Article 23 of the “Regulations Annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention” of 1907 stipulated that it was

⁵ *Gauleiters* were the leaders of regional administrative districts within the Nazi Party. They held supreme authority over their respective territories (*Gaue*) and played a crucial role in the party's regional governance. *Gauleiters* held a higher rank than a district leader (*Kreisleiter*) and a local group leader (*Ortsgruppenleiter*) within the party hierarchy.

⁶ Haase, Norbert. “Von ‘Ons Jongen’, ‘Malgré-Nous’ und anderen. Das Schicksal der ausländischen Zwangsrekrutierten im Zweiten Weltkrieg”, in *Die anderen Soldaten: Wehrkraftzersetzung, Gehorsamsverweigerung und Fahnenflucht im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, edited by Norbert Haase and Gerhard Paul (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), 168; “Livres d’or des camps: KZ an Émsi dlong”, *Rappel: organe de la Ligue luxembourgeoise des prisonniers et déportés politiques* 5–6 (1990): 497.

⁷ Verordnung über die Reichsarbeitsdienstpflicht in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 23 May 1941, 232; Verordnung über die Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 31 August 1942, 253.

⁸ Order by the Chief of Army Armaments and Commander of the Reserve Army (Chef H Rüst and BdE/AHA/IvVIII Nr. 5619/42 g.K.), 1 December 1942 and confirmed by OKW Nr 1956/43 geh.WFSt/Org(II), Treatment and use of conscripts from the German-administered western territories (Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourg), 19 May 1943 (Copy), Bundesarchiv (BArch) RH 10/12.

⁹ Chief of Army Armaments and Commander of the Replacement Army, Chief of Training in the Replacement Army, Guidelines for the treatment of conscripts from Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourg and Lower Styria, 12 February 1943, BArch RH 14/123.

“forbidden to compel the nationals of the hostile party to take part in the operations of war directed against their own country”.¹⁰ German lawyers and the National Socialist administration were aware of this, especially since the German conscription law from 1935 specified that only German citizens could be conscripted into the Wehrmacht.¹¹ Before the Luxembourgers were conscripted, some legal issues regarding their nationality had to be clarified. The “Ordinance on citizenship in Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg” of 23 August 1943 promised the ethnic German conscripts of the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS from these regions unrestricted German citizenship. However, naturalisation was only declared after they had joined the army.¹² Conscription in these regions was therefore not a result of the granting of citizenship; rather, citizenship was used as a solution to legitimise compulsory military service.¹³

As ethnic Germans, Luxembourgers were considered to be regular soldiers in the Wehrmacht. They were distributed among the units on an equal footing with *Reichsdeutsche*.¹⁴ They had the same duties, but they also had the same “rights” to supplies and medical treatment, awards and promotions. From 30 August 1942 until late summer 1944, when Luxembourg was liberated by US troops, they were sent to German military training camps after their service in the RAD, and then directly to the front.

The occupation of Luxembourg was met with mistrust and rejection by the population, but also with collaboration in all parts of the administration and voluntary enrolment by some Luxembourgers. The announcement of the introduction of compulsory military service was followed by strike actions throughout the country, particularly in the Arbed steel industry in the south. The strikes were harshly repressed by the National Socialist authorities and resulted in summary executions and death sentences for participants. Despite this repression, resistance to military service persisted, albeit on a local scale, through support for draft evasion, provision for deserters and assistance to help draft evaders and deserters safely cross the border into France and Belgium.

2.1 Desertions among Luxembourgers

After the first wave of enlistments from August to October 1942, the training period and the first leave permits, the military noticed an increasing number of desertions, especially from mid-1943 onwards.¹⁵ This emerges from a report by the Court of Infantry Division No. 172 in Koblenz, near Luxembourg. This divisional court, was specifically competent to deal with

¹⁰ “Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, October 18, 1907”, International Humanitarian Law Databases, accessed 17 January 2023. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-conv-iv-1907/regulations-art-23#:~:text=A%20belligerent%20is%20likewise%20forbidden,the%20commencement%20of%20the%20war.>

¹¹ With the “Law on the establishment of the Wehrmacht” (*Gesetz über den Aufbau der Wehrmacht*) of 16 March 1935 (Reichsgesetzblatt (RGBl.) I.1935, 375), followed by the “Military code” (*Wehrgesetz*) of 21 May 1935 (RGBl. I 1935, 609–614), military service was reintroduced in Germany and the Reichswehr was renamed the “Wehrmacht”. The duration of military service was initially set at one year and extended to two years in August 1936.

¹² Verordnung über die Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 31 August 1942, 253; Verordnung über die Staatsangehörigkeit im Elsaß, in Lothringen und in Luxemburg in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 23 August 1942, 254.

¹³ Frédéric Stroh and Peter M. Quadflieg, eds, *L’incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich: 1939–1945* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2016), 33.

¹⁴ Order by the OKW Nr 1956/43 geh. Wfst/Org(II), Treatment and use of conscripts from the German-administered western territories (Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourgers), 19 May 1943 (Copy), BArch RH 10/12.

¹⁵ By August 1943, over 41% of all conscripted men had joined the Wehrmacht. In the second wave of conscription, between September 1943 and August 1944, 38% of conscripts joined the Wehrmacht (Quadflieg, 2008, 144).

insubordinate forcibly conscripted from Luxembourg, Lorraine and Alsace. From the summer of 1944 onwards, Luxembourg and Mosellan cases were transferred to the military court of Division No. 462 in Trier, and later to the military court of Division No. 464 in Leipzig.¹⁶ By December 1943, 1,010 Luxembourg desertion cases had been announced and 891 soldiers were fugitives.¹⁷ In May 1944, 145 new cases were added and in total over 1,426 conscripts were on the run.¹⁸ 16 were sentenced to death.¹⁹ According to Stefan Kurt Treiber's survey on Luxembourg, most cases of desertion were soldiers who did not return from home leave.²⁰ To tackle the problem of desertion, the Commander of the Reserve Army announced a ban on leave for all ethnic Germans from German occupied territories, i.e. occupied Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg, Lower Styria and Carniola, in December 1943.²¹

In the German Military Penal Code, there are two types of desertion: desertion (*Fahnenflucht*) and unauthorised absence (*unerlaubte Entfernung*). Desertion was defined as the act of "intentionally evading the obligation to serve in the Wehrmacht or seeking to end the service relationship by leaving or staying away from one's unit or office."²² Unauthorised absence, on the other hand, referred to anyone who "intentionally or recklessly absented themselves from their unit or office for more than three days or in the field for more than one day".²³ The punishment for these offences ranged from imprisonment to the death penalty.²⁴

Many Luxembourgers were sentenced *in absentia* for "unauthorised absence" as they did not return from leave. In general statistics of punishments and desertions, Luxembourgers are however not mentioned explicitly, which makes it difficult to determine accurate figures. However, Luxembourgers gained attention within the Wehrmacht due to their high rate of desertion and draft evasion. Recent studies show that Luxembourgers proportionally deserted more frequently than *Reichsdeutsche* soldiers: an estimated 2,300 Luxembourgers deserted and 1,200 evaded the draft, accounting for approximately 34.5% of recruited Luxembourgers.²⁵ These post-war estimates must however be viewed with a critical eye as fugitives were often counted as both draft evaders and deserters. In addition, there were both unreported desertions and claimed desertions. The prevailing post-war narrative in the country favoured the hero or

¹⁶Frédéric Stroh, "Refus et résistance face à l'incorporation de force' à l'Ouest et leur répression: Eupen-Malmedy, Luxembourg, Alsace, Moselle", in *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich – Die Zwangsrekrutierung in den vom Dritten Reich annektierten Gebieten*, by Peter M. Quadflieg and Frédéric Stroh (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2016), 55-56; Frédéric Stroh, *Les malgré-nous de Torgau : des insoumis alsaciens et mosellans face à la justice militaire nazie* (Strasbourg: L'Incongruiste, 2006), 95.

¹⁷ Report by Court of Division No. 172, Koblenz-Ehrenbreitstein, Court Cases "Luxemburger" November 1943–June 1944, BArch RW 60/91.

¹⁸ Report by Court of Division No. 172, Koblenz-Ehrenbreitstein, Court Cases "Luxemburger" November 1943–June 1944, BArch RW 60/91.

¹⁹ Report by Court of Division No. 172, Koblenz-Ehrenbreitstein, Court Cases "Luxemburger" November 1943–June 1944, BArch RW 60/91.

²⁰ According to the same author, deserting from home may have been seen as a more viable option than deserting at the front line or defecting to the enemy. Additionally, non-German soldiers may have had a higher chance of successful desertion, as they could rely on the anti-German attitude of the local population and gain their support. Without the help of others, survival as a deserter would have been nearly impossible, as they had to be kept hidden, provided with food and safely escorted over the border; Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge*, 204.

²¹ Chief of the Alsace civil administration, Robert Wagner, to the chief of the High Command of the Wehrmacht (OKW), Wilhelm Keitel, about the leave ban for ethnic Germans from the CdZ-regions, 21 January 1944, BArch NS 19/2179.

²² "Wer sich einer unerlaubten Entfernung (§§. 64, 65, 68) in der Absicht, sich seiner gesetzlichen oder von ihm übernommenen Verpflichtung zum Dienste dauernd zu entziehen, schuldig macht, ist wegen Fahnenflucht (Desertion) zu bestrafen", "Fahnenflucht" §§ 69 and 70 Militärstrafgesetzbuch (MStGB), from 10 October 1940, announced on 16 October 1940 (RGBl. I 1940, 1347).

²³ "Wer von seiner Truppe oder von seiner Dienststellung sich eigenmächtig entfernt oder vorsätzlich fern bleibt, oder wer den ihm erteilten Urlaub eigenmächtig überschreitet, wird wegen unerlaubter Entfernung mit Freiheitsstrafe bis zu sechs Monaten bestraft", "Unerlaubte Entfernung" § 64 MStGB, from 10 October 1940, announced on 16 October 1940 (RGBl. I 1940, 1347).

²⁴ Files in the Bundesarchiv's Military Archive in Freiburg (Record Group "Pers 15") indicate that more trials dealt with unauthorised absence (17,829) than desertion (14,225). This record group is being continually inventoried.

²⁵ André Hohengarten, "Die Zwangsrekrutierung Der Luxemburger in die Deutsche Wehrmacht", *Histoire & Mémoire. Les Cahiers Du CDREF* 1 (2010): 23; Haase, "Von 'Ons Jongen' und 'Malgré-nous' und anderen. Das Schicksal der ausländischen Zwangsrekrutierten im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 171; Peter M. Quadflieg, "Zwangssoldaten" Und "Ons Jongen". *Eupen-Malmedy und Luxemburg als Rekrutierungsgebiet der Deutschen Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2008), 115.

resistance fighter, which meant that it was better to say that one had deserted as a recruited German soldier than to admit that one had tacitly followed National Socialist orders. Furthermore, the exact number of Luxembourgers who were prosecuted by the German military justice system during World War II is uncertain, as no reliable data currently exists.

2.2 Reactions by the military and civil administration

The rising numbers of deserters naturally attracted the attention of officials. As a rule, reported offences, thefts or desertions were dealt with by the competent military court of the division and, in the case of the reserve army, by the military districts. If a Luxembourger was suspected of having left his unit “without justification”, his case ended up at the earlier mentioned nearby divisional courts in Koblenz and Trier, as most Luxembourgers deserted at home during their leave from the front.

Cases of desertion were also reported to higher military authorities: in November 1943, the Army Law Department (*Amtsgruppe Heeresrechtswesen*) compiled a list of proceedings against Luxembourgers (as well as residents of Alsace and Lorraine) for “desertion” and “subversion of military strength” (Figure 2.2).²⁶

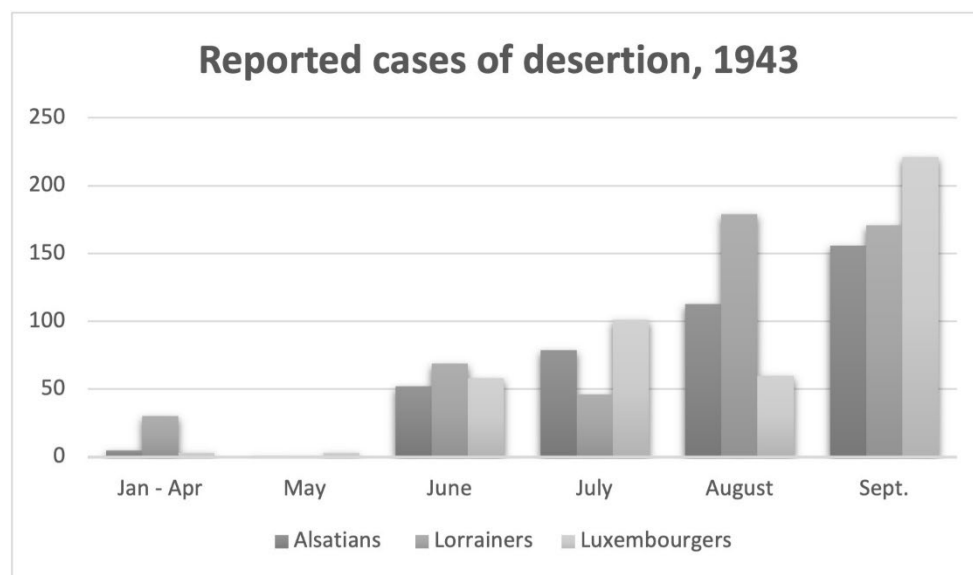


Figure 2.2: Reported cases in 1943 of deserters from Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg (BArch, NS 19/2179)

The civil administration naturally also noticed the rise of deserters. The *Gauleiter* of Luxembourg, Gustav Simon, wrote on 8 February 1943 to the *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945) and voiced his support for harsh punishment: in his eyes Luxembourgish deserters should in principle be sentenced to death.²⁷ On the same day, *Gauleiter* Simon reiterated his demands in another letter to *Generaloberst* Fromm.²⁸ Simon documented the increase in cases of desertion within six months of the implementation of the conscription law.

²⁶ Copy of the report on criminal proceedings against soldiers from Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg, 3 November 1943, BArch NS 19/2179.

²⁷ *Gauleiter* Simon to the *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler on the treatment of Luxembourgish deserters, 8 February 1944, BArch NS 19/2179.

²⁸ *Gauleiter* Simon to *Generaloberst* Fromm on the treatment of Luxembourgish deserters, 8 February 1944, BArch NS 19/2179.

For the month of September 1943 alone, 221 cases were reported. He acknowledged that the resistance movement in Luxembourg was powerful and that Luxembourg soldiers were able to escape to the West using false passports. He attributed this to the perceived leniency of the courts in sentencing deserters. Some were sentenced to death, which he supported, but otherwise he felt that sentences were too lenient. He also pointed out that 800 Luxembourgers had already been killed at the front and that it was not fair that some were evading conscription or leaving their position. He argued that the population was becoming “enlightened” and politically informed and that the same was expected of Luxembourg conscripts as of any German soldier from the “old Reich”. He proposed the establishment of a specialised court which would try only cases from Luxembourg and sentence all deserters to death by default. Simon concluded by stating “that no deserter from the CdZ area of Luxembourg may survive this war”.²⁹

The Court of Division 172, Special Department in Koblenz wrote its statement to the Army Justice Department (*Heeresjustizwesen*) on 17 February 1943: “The court is reluctant to give special treatment to Luxembourgers” and totally rejected the “special penal provisions”.³⁰ The court determined that the problem lay in the home regions of the civil administration, because only in rare cases of desertion did Luxembourgers act on their own initiative. It argued that the only way to get to the root of the issue was to “fight” the anti-German organisations in Luxembourg. Luxembourg conscripts were, after all, only “victims” of the political masterminds who had to be stopped if desertion was to be controlled. In the other regions, such as Lorraine, desertions were also high and accounted for about 20% of total cases in the courts. The court insisted on a uniform line according to the law and not, as Simon suggested, on special treatment for Luxembourgers. The Court of Division 172 also received back-up from *Generaloberst* Fromm: soldiers from the incorporated areas were to be treated in the same way as soldiers from the “old Reich”.³¹ The sentencing of suspects from annexed and occupied territories remained mainly the same as for *Reichsdeutsche* defendants, but it also showed the ruthless and ideological side of the National Socialist terror regime. In reality the military court files also contained cases in which the accused were punished more severely or more leniently because of their origin. This was expressed in the case of the Luxembourgish sailor E.W., who had absconded in the Netherlands in 1943 with the help of the resistance movement. In March 1944, a naval court imposed a life sentence for desertion: “The decisive factor for the court was the fact that the accused came from Luxembourg. As a Luxembourger, he completely lacks the military discipline and education that is instilled in every German young man from his earliest childhood and that gives German soldiers a completely different conception of duty and ethnicity. It is well known how little a population such as that of Luxembourg is familiar with such concepts. What one can absolutely expect from a German man based on his entire education, one cannot demand from a Luxembourger.”³²

²⁹ “[...] dass kein Fahnenflüchtiger aus dem CdZ-Bereich Luxemburg diesen Krieg überleben darf.” quoted after *Gauleiter* Simon to *Generaloberst* Fromm on the treatment of Luxembourgish deserters, 8 February 1944, BArch NS 19/2179.

³⁰ Court of Division 172, special department in Koblenz to the Chief of the Army Justice Department, 17 February 1943, BArch RW 60/4241.

³¹ The Chief of Army Armaments and Commander of the Reserve Army about criminal proceedings against deserters from Luxembourg, 29 May 1944, BArch NS 19/2179.

³² “Entscheidend war für das Gericht die Tatsache, dass der Angeklagte aus Luxemburg stammt. Als solcher Luxemburger geht ihm die militärische Disziplin und Erziehung völlig ab, die jedem deutschen jungen Manne von frühester Kindheit eingeimpft wird und die dem deutschen Soldaten eine ganz andere Auffassung von Pflicht und Volkszugehörigkeit gibt. Es ist ja bekannt, wie wenig ein Volk, wie das

The military planned to keep applying the usual measures, blaming the political situation in the occupied territories for the rise in desertion rates. The military and civilian authorities continued to try to catch and punish fugitives and close their cases, but the prosecution and arrest of those helping deserters (*Hintermänner*) were also essential to prevent further desertions. At the beginning of 1944, Court 172 in Koblenz urged that Luxembourgish deserters who had been arrested in Belgium, the Netherlands and France should be transferred quickly and without delay to give the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*) the opportunity to catch those aiding with desertion in Luxembourg.³³ Efforts to curb desertions at the front and in occupied territories were multifaceted. There was the politically motivated effort by *Gauleiter* Simon to impose the death penalty for every deserter from Luxembourg, but there was also the effort to prosecute Luxembourg soldiers according to the Military Penal Code, with the same level of severity as for other soldiers. However, the success rate in prosecuting and punishing deserters was relatively low, as evidenced by the numbers and cases brought to trial. As the authorities were not able to apprehend all the deserters, they shifted their focus to another group: soldiers' relatives.

As an illustration, the investigation of the desertion of Luxembourgish conscript R.G. by the military court and the local authorities is followed in this chapter and juxtaposed with the consequences for his family. R.G. was born on 3 September 1922 and lived in Schiffingen, an industrial town in the south of Luxembourg. He was drafted during the first wave in October 1942 and arrived after his training at his unit in Ukraine (*Ausbildungsbataillon* II, 153rd *Feldausbildungs-Division*) in May 1943. His court file contains short evaluations stating that he was an applicant for reserve officer service and was considered to have “a good soldierly attitude”. R.G. was granted leave from the front on 14 October 1943 and travelled from Ukraine home to Luxembourg, where he did not return to his unit on 8 November 1943.³⁴

3 Consequences of desertion in Luxembourg

3.1 Local investigations in home communities³⁵

When a unit detected the unauthorised absence of a Wehrmacht soldier, it informed the relevant authorities, such as the respective military court, the counterintelligence office (*Abwehrstelle*), the Reich Criminal Police Department (*Reichskriminalpolizeiamt*) and the local civilian and police authorities in Luxembourg, which set in motion a whole series of search measures.³⁶ The

luxemburgischen solche Begriffe kennt. Was man bei einem deutschen Manne unbedingt voraussetzen kann auf Grund seiner ganzen Ausbildung, kann man bei einem Luxemburger nicht verlangen.” Quoted from military court file, E.W., BArch Pers 15/186842. For a more in-depth analysis, it is necessary to broaden the study and consider more cases to determine if Luxembourgers were sentenced differently or more harshly than their German comrades. The Bundesarchiv's Military Archive contains over 300 additional cases of Luxembourgers in the Pers 15 record group that need to be taken into account. Moreover, the inventory of this record group is ongoing, so more cases of *Volksdeutsche* soldiers from Alsace, Lorraine, and Silesia are expected to be discovered.

³³ Court of Division 172, Koblenz-Ehrenbreitstein department to the Chief Judge of DAB 7, Wiesbaden, 11 March 1944, BArch RW 60/75.

³⁴ Military court file, R.G., BArch Pers 15/128567.

³⁵ This chapter is mainly based on an analysis of the military court files on deserters from the industrial town of Schiffingen and hundreds of war documents containing local police investigations against deserters and draft evaders in the Esch/Alzette region; Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette, 3 folders (at the moment this article went to printing, these documents were transferred to the National Archives of Luxembourg under reference numbers CdZ-G-15291; CdZ-G-15292; CdZ-G-15290; CdZ-G-15293; CdZ-G-15291; CdZ-G-15292; CdZ-G-15290; CdZ-G-15282).

³⁶ In some cases the State Protection Police (*Schutzpolizei*) and the Luxembourg military district command (*Wehrbezirkskommando Luxemburg*) knew about the desertion of a soldier on leave before the unit and started the desertion investigation.

counterintelligence office also forwarded to the regional Wehrmacht offices any suspicious reports about soldiers from Luxembourg who had not returned from leave and probably deserted.³⁷ Since many Luxembourgers deserted in their homeland, the local State Protection Police (*Schutzpolizei*) of the fugitive's home community started a local investigation by performing house searches and interrogating close family members with whom a soldier might be staying or be in contact.³⁸ Any correspondence with or pictures of soldiers found in the houses were confiscated. Equipment and uniforms were recovered, inventoried and secured. Investigations into desertion could begin a couple of days to several months after the presumed desertion, depending on the case. In the case of R.G. the investigation and military justice procedure by the Court of the 153rd *Feldausbildungs-Division* only started in February 1944, three months after his desertion, as his unit did not anticipate his desertion and initially thought he had been assigned to another unit on his return.³⁹

Post-war testimonies show that the families did not always cooperate as productively as the official documents led to believe. In an effort to mislead investigators and avoid repressive measures, relatives made false statements and provided false evidence, such as letters written by the deserter and posted in Germany by a comrade or a Luxembourgish resistance movement, which gave the impression that the deserter had disappeared across the Rhine. Parents and wives who were all too aware of the desertion also wrote letters to the units asking for news of their son or husband to demonstrate their concern. Personal accounts also indicate that items that may have been incriminating were removed from houses before they were searched.⁴⁰

During the investigations the local authorities, including the State Protection Police, the local mayor and district chief (*Landrat*), the Security Police (*Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*), the unit of the deserter and the competent military court worked closely together on the case. The Security Police kept a central register of all desertions and draft evasions in the country and issued search alerts (on a wanted list called *Fahndung*), based both on the reports of the Wehrmacht units and on the searches carried out by the local police forces (*gendarmerie*) and State Protection Police.⁴¹ These lists were also sent to the different home districts or municipalities. The previously mentioned conscript from Schiffingen, for example, appears on the list of the Security Police on 23 February 1944.⁴² Next to fugitive prisoners of war, *Ostarbeiter* (foreign workers deported from occupied Central and Eastern Europe to provide labour) from the Arbed factories and civilians who committed civilian crimes, however, deserters and draft evaders only played a minor role in these lists. Most of the people caught were smugglers or petty criminals. The military justice also kept detailed records

³⁷ Transcript from the counterintelligence office in military district XX to the counterintelligence office in district XII Wiesbaden, about fugitives from Lorraine and Luxembourg, 19 February 1944, Archives Nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux) CdZ-A-4620.

³⁸ Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette; Maria Fritsche, *Entziehungen: Österreichische Deserteure und Selbstverstümmelter in der Deutschen Wehrmacht* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 72.

³⁹ Military court file, R.G., BArch Pers 15/128567.

⁴⁰ Marc Trossen, "Verluere Joëren": 85 Luxemburger Zeitzeugen des Zweiten Weltkriegs berichten, vol.1, *Zwangsrekrutierte, Refraktäre, Deserteure, Resistenzler, aber auch Kollaborateure, Kriegsfreiwillige...* (Redange/Attert: Les Amis de l'Histoire - Luxembourg, 2015), 222 and 552; Aimé Knepper, *Les réfractaires dans les bunkers* (Luxembourg: Editions Saint-Paul, 2004), 44 and 61.

⁴¹ Reporting sheet of the Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitspolizei, 9 July 1943, BArch R 70/2 Luxembourg.

⁴² Daily wanted list of the task force of the Einsatzkommandos der Sicherheitspolizei und des Sicherheitsdienst, 23 February 1944, ANLux CdZ-C-1285.

and maintained separate lists of wanted individuals for Luxembourgers who had deserted (*Fahndungsliste*).⁴³

Despite the regular border controls and random checks, suspects and listed fugitives were still able to evade capture in the sparsely populated and forested border areas. This was despite the request of *Gauleiter* Simon to *SS-Sturmbannführer* Fritz Hartmann (1906–1974) on 18 August 1942 that Luxembourg's borders with Belgium and France be reinforced in view of possible escape attempts, as well as the increase in the number of police officers deployed by the customs office after the introduction of military service.⁴⁴ The Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, SD) and police forces also carried out large-scale manhunts against these fugitives both within Luxembourg and in the neighbouring countries.⁴⁵ In spring 1944, an SD task force arrested 70 Luxembourgish draft evaders in the French Massif Central, 11 of whom were shot in the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp. The others were sentenced to death by Wehrmacht courts in Trier and Metz for “desertion” and “subversion”.⁴⁶

The competent military courts were also involved in local investigations and requested regular updates on the status of cases. They would ask the local police authorities for additional information about the fugitive's community, his parents and his employer to obtain more information on his possible whereabouts. If the fugitive was not “apprehended” after a certain period of time, the case would be handed over to the Tracing Office of the Court of the Wehrmacht Command in Berlin and as from April/May 1944 to the Central Military Court (*Zentralgericht des Heeres*, ZGH).⁴⁷ The military court files reveal how statements from parents, confiscated letters and pictures, and documentation from the military were used in the investigation and assessment of a fugitive.⁴⁸ Given the large number of deserters from the Western *CdZ* areas, Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg, the military justice administration also seems to have created a template to put into the investigation files with a reference code/number composed of F (*Fahnenflucht*) and E (*Elsässer* [conscripts from Alsace]), Lo (*Lothringer* [conscripts from Lorraine]) or Lux (*Luxemburger*), containing several standardised questions (*Figure 3.1*).⁴⁹ What is remarkable here is not only the information regarding the deserter himself but also the reference to measures taken against close family members. Unauthorised absence, for example, resulted in the suspension of family support (*Familienunterhalt*) for the

⁴³ Wanted list of Luxembourgers (*Fahndungsliste* “Luxemburger”), 8 December 1944, BArch RW 60/3967.

⁴⁴ Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe: die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940-1945* (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1985), 178; Head of the main customs office (*Hauptzollamt*) to the district customs office G (*Bezirkszollamt*), 12 October 1942, ANLux CdZ-C-1217.

⁴⁵ Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, 178.

⁴⁶ Michael Eberlein and Norbert Haase. eds. *Luxemburger Zwangsrekrutierte im Wehrmachtgefängnis Torgau-Fort Zinna 1943-1945* (Dresden: Sächsisches Druck- und Verlagshaus GmbH, 1996), 12.

⁴⁷ This court was established by decree in April 1944 and assumed responsibilities from the Court of the Wehrmacht Command, including political criminal cases, corruption cases of particular significance, and fugitive investigations. This shift was intended to relieve the Court of the Wehrmacht Command in light of the increasing number of wanted fugitives and political offenses. According to Thomas Walter, fugitive investigations accounted for the largest portion of the ZGH's activities; Fritz Wüllner, *Die NS-Militärjustiz und das Elend der Geschichtsschreibung: ein grundlegender Forschungsbericht* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1991), 454 and 502; Thomas Walter, “„Schnelle Justiz - gute Justiz“? Die NS-Militärjustiz als Instrument des Terrors”, in *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz. Urteilspraxis – Strafvollzug – Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich*, edited by Walter Manoschek (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2003), 43.

⁴⁸ Examples here are the investigations of R.A. from Schiffingen and the military court file of R.G.; Letter from the Central Military Court to the local police of Schiffingen in Luxembourg, 8 June 1944, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette; Military court file, R.G., BArch Pers 15/128567.

⁴⁹ Military court file, J.W., BArch Pers 15/128200; Military court file, J.D., BArch Pers 15/152095; Military court file, J.D., BArch Pers 15/152759

conscript and his family.⁵⁰ Furthermore, in the case of ethnic German conscripts, relatives were threatened with forced resettlement due to an intertwined interplay between the various National Socialist civil authorities, the Wehrmacht and the military courts.

F/E	F/Lo	F/Lux
1.) <u>Feststehend, dass im Ausland:</u>		
2.) <u>Anzunehmen, dass im Ausland:</u>		
a. <u>allein:</u>		
b. <u>mit Familie:</u>		
3.) <u>Familie umgesiedelt:</u>		
4.) <u>Früher franz. Soldat:</u> <u>nein, ja, wo?</u>		
5.) <u>Verwandtschaftliche Beziehungen</u> <u>zu Frankreich ?</u>		
6.) <u>Muttersprache:</u> <u>deutsch, französisch</u>		
7.) <u>Familienunterhalt gesperrt:</u>		
8.) <u>Flucht vom Ersatztruppenteil, von Feldtruppe,</u> <u>vom Urlaub nicht zurückgekehrt.</u>		

Figure 3.1: Reproduction of the template for deserters from Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg (example available in military court file, J.D., Barch Pers 15/152095)

3.2 The shared liability of relatives

In an effort to exert pressure on fugitives and to discourage conscripts from deserting and fleeing, the civil administration in Luxembourg began targeting its punitive measures directly towards their relatives in 1943. The “Regulation on measures against draft evasion” of 10 July 1943 (published on 15 July 1943) stipulated that “the head of the civil administration can impose property confiscation or other appropriate measures on relatives of deserters or people who evade military service or compulsory labour service, as well as on relatives of other disturbers of the peace”.⁵¹ The legislation was to be implemented retrospectively as from 30 August 1942, the day on which military service was introduced. Research nevertheless indicates that repressive measures against the families of deserters were already being carried out prior to the implementation of the regulation, which essentially served to give the measures a legal basis and increase the scale of the action. Interestingly, the regulation did not clarify who was considered as a relative, nor did it specify what it meant by “other appropriate measures”, which kept the door open for interpretation. This is in stark contrast to the law of 1 October 1943 in Alsace, which clearly defined which relatives of deserters and draft evaders would be considered for forced resettlement.⁵² On 16 July 1943 the “Luxembourgish” press specified that

⁵⁰ Verordnung zur Durchführung und Ergänzung des Einsatz-Familienunterhaltsgesetzes (RGBl.I.1940, p.913); Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge*, 280; Fritsche, *Entziehungen: Österreichische Deserteure und Selbstverstümmler in der Deutschen Wehrmacht*, 72.

⁵¹ “Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung kann gegen Angehörige von Fahnenflüchtigen oder solchen Personen, die sich der Wehrpflicht oder Arbeitsdienstpflicht entziehen, sowie gegen Angehörige sonstiger Friedensstörer Vermögensbeschlagnahme und Vermögensentziehung oder andere geeignete Maßnahmen verhängen”, quotation from Verordnung über Maßnahmen gegen Wehrpflichtentziehung in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 15 July 1943, 152.

⁵² Lothar Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973), 228; Stroth, “Refus et résistance face à l’incorporation de force à l’Ouest et leur répression”, 55.

desertions would lead to the forced resettlement (*Umsiedlung/Absiedlung*⁵³) and dispossession of relatives and justified the measure to the public by stating that “[It] must be assumed in principle that no conscript of labour and military service can become a deserter without the financial assistance provided to him by his deserter relatives. Consequently, harsh action against the relatives of deserters [...] is justified in every way.”⁵⁴

The involvement of family members in desertion was thus laid down by the German administration. Individuals who could be proven to have participated in or been aware of the criminal act were convicted as accessories (*Beihilfe*) by the German special civilian court (*Sondergericht*) and sent to prison or concentration camps.⁵⁵ In the case of forced resettlements, the source material indicates that households were punished under the pretext of providing help to deserters or failing to report them. The sources lack any proof of the families’ actual involvement and contain no indications of judicial enquiries, let alone convictions.⁵⁶ The assessment forms of R.G.’s family, for example, stated: “It can be assumed that the desertion was known to the parents beforehand. They can therefore no longer stay in the border region of Luxembourg.”⁵⁷ R.G.’s parents were also found to be uncooperative during the local investigation by the State Protection Police, as “[they] do not want to be able to state where their son R. is at present”.⁵⁸ The report of a meeting of the central commission responsible for the organisation of the resettlements in Luxembourg from December 1943 also refers to this ungrounded responsibility of family members, stating that “it must be considered as self-evident that the parents and family will be held jointly responsible for the son’s behaviour”.⁵⁹

3.3 *Absiedlung*

Understanding the forced resettlement of relatives of Luxembourgish deserters and the role of the military justice system involves viewing the measure outside a purely military context and as part of wider National Socialist policies concerning the population (*Volkstumspolitik*) and the occupied territories.

⁵³ The terms *Umsiedlung* and *Absiedlung* are used interchangeably in the primary sources and secondary literature on the topic. According to the National Socialist *Hauptamt für Volkstumsfragen*, the term *Umsiedlung* could not be used to designate the punitive measure against politically or ethnically *untrustworthy* people. It rather referred to “the deep faith of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans that follow the Führer’s path” and was used as “an honour and uplifting commitment” to the German *Volkstum*. Luxembourgish relocated families were therefore officially *Absiedler*, even though they were most often (mistakenly) referred to as *Umsiedler*; Transcript from the confidential information of the party chancellery, ANLux CdZ-A-4556-04.

⁵⁴ “[Es] muss grundsätzlich angenommen werden, dass kein Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflichtiger ohne die finanzielle Hilfe, die ihm seine Angehörigen der Fahnenflüchtigen zuteilwerden lassen, fahnenflüchtig werden kann. Infolgedessen ist ein scharfes Vorgehen gegen die Angehörigen der Fahnenflüchtigen [...] in jeder Weise gerechtfertigt”, cited from “Jeder Deserteur siedelt seine Angehörigen oder seine Sippe um”, *Escher Tageblatt* 164 (16 July 1943), 4.

⁵⁵ Verordnung über Maßnahmen gegen Wehrpflichtentziehung in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 15 July 1943, 152; Lena Haase, “Verfolgung – Verhaftung – Verschleppung. Die Deportation von Luxemburgerinnen nach Flußbach und Ravensbrück”, in *Le Luxembourg et le Troisième Reich: un état des lieux – Luxemburg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée national de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 661.

⁵⁶ Further research on the backgrounds of the families – their underlying involvement in desertion, criminal activities, resistance or other activities – is ongoing and will be published in the author’s thesis.

⁵⁷ “Es ist anzunehmen, dass die Fahnenflucht den Eltern vorher bekannt war. Die Eltern können daher nicht länger im Grenzland Luxemburg bleiben.” Quoted from the assessment form of Emil G. by the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood, BArch R 49/92.

⁵⁸ “Die Eltern des R.G., [...] wollen nicht angeben können, wo sich ihr Sohn R. z.Zt. befindet.” Quoted from the military court file, R.G., 2 March 1944, BArch Pers 15/128567.

⁵⁹ “Es müsse hierbei als selbstverständlich betrachtet werden, daß die Eltern und die Sippe für das Verhalten des Sohnes mitverantwortlich gemacht werden”, quoted from “Desertion führt zur Absiedlung”, *Escher Tageblatt* 291 (11–12 December 1943), 4.

With the aim of (ethnically) reorganising Europe according to the National Socialist ideology and racial principles – known as the New Order (*Neuordnung*) –, the National Socialist regime carried out large-scale expulsions and population shifts in the occupied territories from the end of the 1930s onwards. In order to repopulate and Germanise these regions, as well as to “repatriate” Germans “of good racial stock” within German territory, the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKF), under the control of Heinrich Himmler, orchestrated the removal of “harmful influences” and the settlement of *Volksdeutscher* in these areas. The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi) and the *Deutsche Umsiedlungs- und Treuhandgesellschaft* (DUT) were assigned respectively to house the new settlers in temporary resettlement camps and to collect, manage and exploit their assets.⁶⁰

Between 1942 and 1944 more than 4,000 Luxembourgers were forcibly relocated by the RKF to resettlement camps (*Umsiedlungslager*) in Silesia, Sudetenland and the Hunsrück.⁶¹ The civil administration started to apply this procedure in September 1942 to family members of “unreliable elements”, such as participants in the strikes, senior civil servants and members of the Luxembourgish elite. The measure was presented as a politically necessary step to safeguard the integrity of the border region of the Reich and its ethnic German population.⁶² The relocated families were not regarded as direct enemies of the state, and because of their Germanic descent they were considered capable of being “re-Germanised” and assimilated with the “reliable and healthy population” within German territory.⁶³ According to the civil administration, forced resettlement was to be seen not as a punishment but as an “opportunity for re-education”. This also applied to the families of deserters, who from mid-1943 onwards made up a considerable part of the forcibly resettled population.⁶⁴ Although these families were linked to *traitors*, their Germanic descent still allowed them to be deployed in other areas of the empire where they could be useful. In exchange, ethnic German resettlers (*Ansiedler*) from South Tyrol, Bosnia and Bukovina were brought to Luxembourg to cultivate the liberated agricultural lands, to continue the operation of the companies and to positively influence the Germanisation process in the area.⁶⁵ Similar measures were applied against relatives of ethnic German deserters and draft evaders from occupied and annexed regions as the Alsace, Lorraine, Lower Styria and Upper Carniola.⁶⁶ Towards the final months of the war, relatives of all Wehrmacht soldiers whose reliability was questionable - due to for example desertion, defecting to the enemy or suspicion of treason during captivity - could be held liable “with property, liberty or life”.⁶⁷ The

⁶⁰ Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische “Volkstumsarbeit” und Umsiedlungspolitik 1933–1945 – Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Siedlerauslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2013), 15; Detlef Brandes, *Lexikon der Vertreibungen: Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 683.

⁶¹ Marc Gloden, “Zur ‘Wiedereindeutschung’ ins Reich: die Umsiedlungen von 1942–1945 – Une rééducation au cœur du Reich: les transplantations de 1942 à 1945”, in *Le Luxembourg et le Troisième Reich: un état des lieux – Luxemburg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 625.

⁶² “Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg”, *Luxemburger Wort* 252 (9 September 1942), 3.

⁶³ “Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg”; Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), 324; Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß*, 263.

⁶⁴ According to the existing literature, this last group formed the majority of the total number of relocated individuals. Even though it is clear that they formed a large part of the total number, this statement cannot yet be confirmed.

⁶⁵ Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, 109–110.

⁶⁶ For more information see: Stiller, Alexa. *Völkische Politik: Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939–1945*. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022).

⁶⁷ Order by the OKW WFS/Qu. 2/NSF/W Nr. 09395/44 dated 19 November 1944, quoted in Rudolf Absolon, “Das Wehrmachtstraftrecht im 2. Weltkrieg: Sammlung der grundlegenden Gesetze, Verordnungen und Erlasse” (Kornelimünster: Bundesarchiv Abt. Zentralnachweisstelle, 1958), 97–98.

forced resettlements were however aimed specifically at families of ethnic German descent and not at *Reichsdeutscher*.

While families of deserters were easily identified through military records and local investigations, by no means all relatives were targeted by this measure and the associated dispossessions. The criteria used to select some families and not others remain vague, just like the legislation on who was to be considered a “relative”. Within every district (*Kreis*) a specific commission was responsible for singling out and investigating the people that were to be transferred. These commissions were chaired by the district leader (*Kreisleiter*) and assisted by the district chief, a representative of the *Gestapo*, the district medical officer (*Kreisamtsarzt*) and in some cases also the district farmer leader (*Kreisbauernführer*) or the district master craftsmen (*Kreishandwerksmeister*). From 1943 onwards, it also included the *Landesleiter* of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung*, a Luxembourgish National Socialist organisation, and a special representative for personnel matters from the central administration. Local group leaders (*Ortsgruppenleiter*) also appear to have played an important role in this selection procedure, as they prepared the political assessments of the targeted families.⁶⁸

The research shows no active involvement of military tribunals in the procedure. The military courts seem to have been rather passive observers; they would ask the local authorities whether a family had been forcibly resettled in the interest of their own investigation into the deserter.⁶⁹ The forced resettlements were also independent from the military court trial or conviction of the deserter as they often occurred before the conclusion of the trial or the proclamation of the sentence. After the investigation into the parents of R.G. in February and March 1944, his mother was sent to Nohfelden resettlement camp on 20 June 1944, while his father was forcibly put to work (*dienstverpflichtet*) in Wissen earlier that month. His sister, born in 1926, was listed as fugitive. On 27 June 1944, the Central Military Court asked for an additional investigation into the parents and the confiscation of a letter from the fugitive, to which the State Protection Police responded that the family had been resettled.⁷⁰ This shows that the court was unaware of the status of the case. The last entry in the court file dates from 12 August 1944 but does not contain a verdict or any information about the fate of the conscript. It is noteworthy – yet not uncommon – that the forced resettlement took place four months after the start of the investigation and seven months after the desertion, which demonstrates the length of the procedures and the difficult communication between the various actors involved, in this case with a unit stationed in Ukraine. According to post-war witness reports, R.G. left Luxembourg on 8 November 1943 and fled to France, to Les Ancizes (Clermont-Ferrand), where many Luxembourgers were already hidden thanks to the Luxembourgish and French resistance movements. He was presumably brought to the Clermont-Ferrand region via the Luxembourgish resistance organisation *Ungeheuer* and given a place to sleep and eat in the

⁶⁸ Benoît Majerus, “Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction...: les degrés de l’implication dans la collaboration avec l’Allemagne nationale-socialiste à travers l’exemple des Ortsgruppenleiter luxembourgeois” (Master diss., Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1999), 104.

⁶⁹ Military court file, J.W., BArch Pers 15/128200; Military court file, J.D., BArch Pers 15/152095; Military court file, J.D., BArch Pers 15/152759; Military court file, R.G., BArch Pers 15/128567.

⁷⁰ Military court file, R.G., BArch Pers 15/128567

mines. He moved back home to Schiffingen after the war and continued working as an electrician. His family, including his sister, was repatriated to Luxembourg on 13 April 1945.⁷¹

The observed passivity of the military tribunal with regard to the punishment of relatives of Luxembourgish soldiers contrasts with the findings of historian Robert Loeffel, who cites the court of the 28th *Jäger* Division which ordered the forced resettlement and deportation of the relatives of three deserters from Alsace in October 1944.⁷² This discrepancy may be attributed to the escalation of prosecutions and the increasing implementation of repressive measures against relatives of opponents (*Sippenhaftung*⁷³) in the wake of the assassination attempt on Hitler on 20 July 1944, just a few weeks prior to the liberation of Luxembourg on 10 September 1944.⁷⁴

Throughout the war, the National Socialist regime, including the Wehrmacht and the military courts, used *Sippenhaftung* – an arbitrary punishment whereby relatives of a recognised traitor were held liable for the actions of their family member purely on account of their kinship – to enforce obedience and ensure discipline. It was first applied in the occupied regions against the ethnic German conscripts and population, and after 20 July 1944 also domestically in Germany.⁷⁵ Penalties ranged from imprisonment to deportation, loss of citizenship and property confiscation. The principle was used unsystematically and arbitrarily, which created a climate of fear among soldiers and the local population. Clear guidelines for its application were however lacking until the OKW initiated its codification on 19 November 1944 with a decree on measures against defectors.⁷⁶

The *Absiedlung* of the families of Luxembourgish deserters closely resembles the aforementioned principle. However, since the term implies that those punished were innocent, it makes it difficult to determine genuine cases. As historians Maria Fritsche and Johannes Salzig clearly point out in their research, what looks like a case of family liability at first glance may, after closer investigation, indicate the involvement or anti-German classification of the relatives concerned.⁷⁷ A comparison of the wartime German documentation with regard to the forcibly resettled Luxembourgish families, for example, also highlights this complexity and reveals a variety of reasons behind the forced resettlement of certain deserter families. In addition to the desertion, these included the families' non-membership to any National Socialist organisation, their political passivity or association with "opponents".⁷⁸ Certain families were

⁷¹ Trossen, "Verluere Joëren", 304; Knepper, *Vie ou Mort des réfractaires*, 154.

⁷² Johannes Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes: ideologische Grundlagen, Umsetzung, Wirkung*, Schriftenreihe der Forschungsgemeinschaft 20. Juli 1944 e.V 20 (Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2015), 72.

⁷³ For more information, see Matthias Weidemann, *Geschichte der Sippenhaftung: Das Entstehenmüssen von Verwandten* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002).

⁷⁴ The military court files consulted for this research included cases where families were relocated before 20 July 1944; Norbert Haase, "Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges", in *Terror nach Innen. Verbrechen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, edited by Cord Arendes, Edgar Wolfrum and Jörg Ziedler, Dachauer Symposien zur Zeitgeschichte (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2006), 80 and 93.

⁷⁵ Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, 479; Robert Loeffel, *Family Punishment in Nazi Germany: Sippenhaft, Terror and Myth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 53.

⁷⁶ Order by the OKW WFSt/Qu. 2/NSF/W Nr. 09395/44 dated 19 November 1944, quoted by Absolon (1958), 97–98; Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, 458 and 472; Loeffel, *Family Punishment in Nazi Germany*, 55 and 59.

⁷⁷ Maria Fritsche, "...haftet die Sippe mit Vermögen, Freiheit oder Leben...". Die Anwendung der Sippenhaft bei Familien verfolgter Wehrmachtsoldaten", in *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz. Urteilspraxis – Strafvollzug – Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich*, edited by Walter Manoschek (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2003), 484; Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, 139 and 141.

⁷⁸ Assessment forms of families created by the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood, BAArch, R 49/92; *Affaire politique* Alphonse Pfeffer, ANLux CT-03-01-01755.

also of Italian descent, which doesn't exclude racial motives. In post-war accounts, the affected families themselves also suggest ties to resistance activities, but these could not always be confirmed. The term *Sippenhaftung* can therefore not be applied unequivocally to the Luxembourgish case, as it offers an overly simplistic categorisation and fails to capture the complexity of the actual circumstances.

4 Conclusion

The Wehrmacht justice system was known for its uncompromising nature, as evidenced by the harshness of the punishments it inflicted from the beginning. The military judiciary demonstrated its unwavering allegiance to the National Socialist regime. As Norbert Haase wrote, "over the course of World War II, the Wehrmacht justice system developed increasingly into a political justice system".⁷⁹ National Socialism did not tolerate any deviation and the Wehrmacht military justice system did not abide any form of transgression that implied military weakness. Draft evaders and deserters were considered to be traitors to the German people and were punished with extreme severity.

Even though desertion rates among non-German soldiers in the Wehrmacht were significantly higher than among German soldiers, towards the end of the war the desertion rate of all Wehrmacht soldiers, regardless of origin, increased significantly, as did the implementation of the death penalty.⁸⁰ It is estimated that of the approximately 18 million Wehrmacht soldiers, around 300,000 cases of desertion were reported.⁸¹ This is relatively high in comparison with desertion rates and punishment in the First World War or in other modern armies.⁸² While the exact number of Luxembourgish soldiers who were tried and executed is not known, it is clear that they were included in the total number of deserters in the Wehrmacht. It remains however important to note that desertion was not a widespread or general phenomenon among soldiers either, as evidenced by the figures presented. This indicates that the majority of soldiers remained *loyal* and did not desert their duties.

The treatment of Luxembourgers by military courts serves as just one example of the treatment of naturalised soldiers of German origin. However, the court records analysed indicate that Luxembourgers, like other German-origin conscripts, were not subjected to significantly different treatment by the military courts. As this research illustrates, the military courts were inclined to adopt a uniform approach in their sentencing, as demonstrated by the refusal of the Court of Division 172 to distinguish between soldiers from the former Grand Duchy and others. This went against the wishes of *Gauleiter* Simon to impose harsher sentences, including the death penalty, on every suspect.⁸³ Nonetheless, it cannot be excluded that in some instances, the military courts may have imposed different sentences based on the soldiers' origin, such as Luxembourg or Austria. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Luxembourgers were

⁷⁹ Haase, "Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges", 98.

⁸⁰ Franz W. Seidler, "Die Fahnenflucht in der deutschen Wehrmacht während des Zweiten Weltkrieges", *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 22 (1977): 28, accessed 27 January 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1524/mgzs.1977.22.2.23>; Haase, "Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges", 84–85.

⁸¹ Wüllner, *Die NS-Militärjustiz und das Elend der Geschichtsschreibung*, 168 and 234.

⁸² Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge*, 250.

⁸³ It is important to note that not all instances of desertion or unauthorised absence were met with execution. In some cases, individuals were given prison sentences or had their death penalty commuted to long-term imprisonment. The death penalty was also sometimes converted to a 15-year prison sentence; see the case of Alfred P., BArch R 3018/4413.

subjected to a higher execution rate. Furthermore, this does not imply that the Wehrmacht and civilian authorities were lenient, as in the majority of cases those arrested were sentenced to death.

The Wehrmacht reacted to the rising number of desertions but did not impose the severe measures demanded by the *Gauleiter*. Despite the differing opinions between the military justice system and the civilian administration, not only were Luxembourgish deserters actively pursued and prosecuted, the military courts also extended their reach into the local communities by collaborating with local authorities to track down and target them back home. The courts ordered additional investigations into deserters' backgrounds, showing a particular interest in their families and home environments. However, in the cases studied, this interest appeared to be primarily aimed at locating the deserters rather than punishing their relatives. While the military courts were informed about the forced resettlement of deserters' families, no records suggest they were directly involved in carrying out these actions. Instead, the military justice system focused its influence on its own legal mandate – investigating and prosecuting deserters – while leaving the broader persecution of families, which aligned more with political objectives, to the civilian authorities.

As suggested by Robert Loeffel, this implication could however have changed after the assassination attempt on Hitler on 20 July 1944 and the formalisation of the implementation of *Sippenhaftung* by the military in November 1944.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, no court records of Luxembourgish deserters dating from this period whose relatives were forcibly resettled could be consulted in the context of this study as Luxembourg was liberated early September 1944. In general, it can be concluded that the Wehrmacht and the military courts – much like the National Socialist authorities in general – were not out to apply this principle on a large scale. Instead they used it as a threat and a means of pressure to enforce loyalty from the soldiers and relied on the deterrent effect of the examples set. The effectiveness of this approach is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the fear of this punishment persisted in Luxembourg even after the war and was used as justification for soldiers who did not desert.

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⁸⁴ Order by the OKW WFSt/Qu. 2/NSF/W Nr. 09395/44 dated 19 November 1944, quoted by Absolon (1958), 97–98; Loeffel, *Family Punishment in Nazi Germany*, 72.

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CHAPTER 3: “DESERTION LEADS TO RESETTLEMENT” – THE CONSEQUENCES OF DESERTION AND DRAFT EVASION ON THE FAMILIES OF LUXEMBOURGISH SOLDIERS (1942-1945)

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“Desertion Leads to Resettlement” – The Consequences of Desertion and Draft Evasion on the Families of Luxembourgish Soldiers (1942–1945)

1 Introduction

“When a man excels, he is rewarded and so is his family. And if a man is unfaithful in the Reich, he is punished and so is his family. This is in an ancient Germanic law. The clan is liable for each and every one of its own.”¹ With these words the *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler (1900–1945) encapsulated the principle of familial responsibility (*Sippenhaftung*) in National Socialist politics in July 1944, following the assassination attempt on Hitler. The Nazi regime used *Sippenhaftung* as a means of pressuring and punishing the extended families of resisters for any act of opposition to the Third Reich.² This involved confiscating their property and depriving them of their liberty. Even though the identification of actual cases of *Sippenhaftung* is challenging, the principle helps to understand the punitive measures inflicted on the relatives of Luxembourgish deserters and draft evaders from the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (RAD) and Wehrmacht during the occupation of the country. As a deterrent measure to enforce compliance and secure the political objectives of the Nazi regime in the region, thousands of family members endured forced resettlement (*Absiedlung*)³ to German regions such as Lower Silesia, Sudetenland and the Hunsrück, as well as having their assets confiscated.

1 “Wenn ein Mann sich auszeichnet, wird er belohnt und zugleich seine Familie. Und wenn ein Mann in diesem Reich untreu ist, wird er bestraft und seine Familie. Das ist in ein altes germanisches Recht. Die Sippe haftet für jeden einzelnen der ihren.” Quotation from a speech by the *Reichsführer-SS* in Grafenwöhr, 25 July 1944, BArch, R 19/4015.

2 Johannes Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes: ideologische Grundlagen, Umsetzung, Wirkung*, Schriftenreihe der Forschungsgemeinschaft 20. Juli 1944 e.V 20 (Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2015), 47–48; Robert Michael and Karin Doerr, *Nazi-Deutsch/Nazi-German: An English Lexicon of the Language of the Third Reich* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 374.

3 The terms “*Umsiedlung*” and “*Absiedlung*” have been used interchangeably in the sources and literature related to the subject in Luxembourg. “*Zwangsumsiedlung*”, or forced resettlement, primarily refers to the forced “repatriation” of German minority groups from South, East, Central,

Note: “Desertion führt zur Absiedlung,” *Escher Tageblatt* 291 (11/12 December 1943), 4.

This chapter examines the impact of desertion and draft evasion on Luxembourgish families at home and explores the punitive measures imposed on them by the National Socialist administration. It analyses the decision-making process and mechanisms behind these measures, highlighting the key actors, the methods of enforcement, and their strategic use for political purposes. By contextualising the measures within Nazi Germany's wider policies towards its occupied territories, the chapter seeks to contribute to the comprehension of the regional variations in the Nazi regime's treatment of deserter families and ethnic German population groups.⁴

The Second World War, and more precisely the history of the “forced conscription”⁵ of young men into the German armed forces, holds a central place in Luxembourg's collective memory and historiography. In the post-war period, draft evaders and deserters were given an important role in the country's master narrative as “those who opposed the occupying forces”. This perspective was also prevalent in public discourse and scholarly publications. However, the impact of deserters' choices on their family members has been largely overlooked. Current understanding of the experiences of these families is primarily based on personal experiences of witnesses, or short chapters in more general studies on the Second World War, or the forced resettlements in general.⁶ Internationally, the experiences of the families and communities of ethnic German deserters and draft evaders

and Southeast Europe, directing them back within the borders of the Greater German Reich, mostly in the newly annexed eastern territories. On the other hand, “*Absiedlung*” represents a distinct form of forced resettlement, where individuals and families from occupied regions were forcibly moved within Germany's original borders, mainly for political reasons, with economic motives. In Luxembourg, the most accurate term to indicate the resettlement of these families is therefore “*Absiedlung*”; Alexa Stiller, *Völkische Politik: Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939–1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022), p. 1313; Transcript from the confidential information of the Party Chancellery, September 1943, Archives Nationales du Luxembourg (ANLux), CdZ-A-4556-04.

⁴ Given the limited scope of the study, this chapter does not provide a detailed cross-national comparison of how various ethnic German deserter families were treated within the German Reich. This is however an interesting topic for future research.

⁵ Considerable debate arises concerning the diverse range of meanings this term encompasses and the numerous implications it carries. For more information see Frédéric Stroh and Peter M. Quadflieg, eds., *L'incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich: 1939–1945* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2016).

⁶ With the exception of Gilles Kartheiser's quantitative study on the forced resettlements of Luxembourg families. This study does not focus on the families of deserters but nevertheless provides an important basis for this research; Gilles Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942–1945: von der numerischen und namentlichen Erfassung bis zur Beschreibung des Lagerlebens anhand von Zeitzeugenberichten* (Saarbrücken, AV Akademikerverlag, 2013).

in the German services, as well as the treatment of ethnic Germans by the Nazi regime in general, have been the subject of numerous publications, which were crucial to this research.⁷

The study uses administrative and judicial documents from both civil and military authorities during and after the war. These include interrogation files from the local police, military court files, witness statements from post-war trials, and a limited number of personal records. While ego-documents such as memoirs and letters provide insights into life during resettlement, they offer only brief mentions of the underlying processes, and are thus less relevant here. This chapter presents findings from a broader doctoral research project focusing on the social environments of Luxembourgish soldiers and recruits during World War II, based on a case study of resettled families from Schiffflange, an industrial town in southern Luxembourg.⁸ By examining private and official documentation related to this specific group, the chapter seeks to critically examine policy guidelines, procedures and objectives by comparing them to the experiences of these resettled families.⁹

7 See among others Leopold Steurer, Martha Verdorfer, and Walter Pichler, *Verfolgt, verfehmt, vergessen: Lebensgeschichtliche Erinnerungen an den Widerstand gegen Nationalsozialismus und Krieg, Südtirol 1943–1945* (Bozen: Edition Sturzflüge, 1993); Maria Fritsche, “‘. . . haftet die Sippe mit Vermögen, Freiheit oder Leben . . .’. Die Anwendung der Sippenhaft bei Familien verfolgter Wehrmachtsoldaten”, in *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz. Urteilspraxis – Strafvollzug – Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich*, edited by Walter Manoschek (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2003); Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, eds. *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS: Entziehungsformen, Solidarität, Verfolgung* (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023); Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*; Alexa Stiller, *Völkische Politik*; Lothar Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973).

8 This doctoral research is part of the project “WARLUX – Soldiers and their communities in WWII: The impact and legacy of war experiences in Luxembourg” (2020–2024) at the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) at the University of Luxembourg; see also Sarah Maya Vercruysse, “Families of Luxembourgish Wehrmacht recruits during the Nazi occupation and the impact of local authorities and National Socialist organisations on their everyday lives”, last updated 05 October 2022. <https://haitblog.hypotheses.org/category/sonderreihen/doktorandenforum-demokratie-und-diktaturforschung-im-20-und-21-jahrhundert-individuum-und-organisation-in-autoritaeren-und-demokratischen-gesellschaftsordnungen>

9 In accordance with archival regulations and GDPR, the author has opted to pseudonymize the names of contemporaries, unless they were already openly published, or the individual held a public position.

2 Luxembourgers: In German Territory, in the Wehrmacht, and as Deserters

On 10 May 1940, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, which had a population of around 290,000 people,¹⁰ was invaded by Germany and placed under a military administration. In early August 1940, a civil administration (*Zivilverwaltung*, CdZ) was established under the direction of Gustav Simon (1900–1945), who held the positions of Head of the Civil Administration and *Gauleiter*¹¹ of the Koblenz-Trier administrative division. Just like the *Gauleiters* of Alsace and Lorraine, Simon reported directly to Hitler and held a position of significant authority.¹² One of his main concerns was to Germanise and Nazify the country, as well as to protect and promote the German “people’s community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*) living there. As in other occupied regions, German laws were applied, public life was brought under German control, and connections to French culture were removed, as can be seen, for example, in changes to family and street names. The Luxembourgish population was considered to be ethnic German (*Volksdeutsch*) – German descendants by blood – who had to be reintegrated into the German Reich as part of the new administrative district *Gau Moselland*.

While the civil administration originally thought this reintegration would be welcomed by the population, rising protest made it clear that this would not simply be accepted. Following the establishment of compulsory labour service for young men and women between the ages of 17 and 24 on 23 May 1941, the central administration introduced compulsory military service for young men born between 1920 and 1924 – later extended to 1927 – on 30 August 1942.¹³ The “Ordinance on citizen-

10 Gérard Trausch, *La croissance démographique du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg du début du XIXe siècle à nos jours: les mouvements naturels de la population*, 2. ed. (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Victor S.A. Esch-sur-Alzette, 1973), 46.

11 *Gauleiters* served as the leaders of regional administrative districts known as *Gaue*, established by the Nazi Party. They held supreme authority within their designated territories, playing a pivotal role in the party’s regional governance structure. Their position in the party hierarchy ranked higher than district leaders (*Kreisleiter*) and local group leaders (*Ortsgruppenleiter*); Michael, *Nazi-Deutsch/Nazi-German*, 176.

12 Marc Schoentgen, “Arbeiten unter Hitler. NS-Sozialpolitik und Herrschaftspraxis im besetzten Luxemburg 1940–1944” (PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg, 2017), 38.

13 Verordnung über die Reichsarbeitsdienstpflicht in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 23 May 1941, 232; Verordnung über die Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 31 August 1942, 253.

ship in Alsace, Lorraine, and Luxembourg”, dated 23 August 1943, granted German citizenship to ethnic German conscripts of the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS from these areas.¹⁴ The announcement of military service was followed by a wave of strikes throughout the country. Despite the opposition, in total more than 10,000 young men were conscripted into the Wehrmacht over the course of the war. It is estimated that around 3,500 of them deserted or hid before the draft could reach them. Approximately 3,000 died at the front or never returned home.¹⁵

From mid-1943 onwards, the German military noticed a steady rise in desertion rates following the initial wave of enlistment that took place between August and October 1942, the training period and the first leave permits.¹⁶ Historian Stefan Kurt Treiber’s survey on Luxembourg revealed that the majority of desertion cases involved soldiers who failed to return after being granted home leave.¹⁷ *Gauleiter* Simon attributed this increase to the powerful resistance movement in the country, which helped conscripts obtain false passports and escape across the border, as well as to the “lenient” sentencing of deserters by some military courts.¹⁸ He asked Hermann Passe (1894–1977), who was responsible for matters regarding the Wehrmacht at the Party Chancellery, to enforce the harshest measures against the deserters from Luxembourg and to rule out pardons for deserters sentenced to death.¹⁹ In accordance with the well-known statement by the Führer, he wrote in February 1944 that “[. . .] no deserter from the CdZ area of

14 Nonetheless, naturalisation was only conferred after their enlistment in the military; more information on this subject can be found in the article of Denis Scuto in this volume, *Citizenship, Naturalisation and Military Service during the Second World War: The case of occupied Luxembourg*; Verordnung über die Staatsangehörigkeit im Elsaß, in Lothringen und in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 23 August 1942, 254.

15 Ministère de l’Intérieur, *Livre d’or des victimes luxembourgeoises de la guerre de 1940 à 1945* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l’Intérieur, 1972), 18; Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe: die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940–1945* (Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1985), 181; Peter M. Quadflieg, “Zwangssoldaten” und “Ons Jongen”. *Eupen-Malmedy und Luxemburg als Rekrutierungsgebiet der Deutschen Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Aachener Studien zur Wirtschafts- Und Sozialgeschichte 5 (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2008), 115.

16 For more information on the desertion of the Luxembourgish forced conscripts and how the civil and military administration dealt with this, please consult Sarah Maya Vercruysse and Nina Janz, *The “long arm” of the military justice of the Wehrmacht – A case study on Luxembourgish desertions*, which will be published by De Gruyter in 2024–2025.

17 Stefan Kurt Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge? Deserteure der Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2021), 204.

18 *Gauleiter* Simon to *Generaloberst* Friedrich Fromm on the treatment of Luxembourgish deserters, 8 February 1944, BArch, NS 19/2179.

19 Letter from *Gauleiter* Simon to Hermann Passe, 16 July 1943, BArch, NS 19/1163.

Luxembourg may survive this war”.²⁰ Draft evaders and deserters were both seen as traitors, and were subjected to severe punishments, including death or lengthy prison terms. The number of Luxembourgers prosecuted by the German military justice system during World War II is not known because of a lack of reliable data. Nevertheless, it is estimated that approximately 2,300 Luxembourgers deserted, while 1,200 evaded the draft, accounting for roughly 34.5% of the total number of Luxembourgers recruited.²¹

3 General Consequences of Desertion on Families and Communities

The act of desertion by any soldier from the Wehrmacht had immediate consequences, not only for the person in question but also for their family members at home. If a unit noticed that a soldier was missing and suspected that he was absent without leave²² or had deserted, it had to immediately inform a whole series of authorities, who would launch search operations. This included the respective military court, the local commandant’s office, the Reich Criminal Police Department (*Reichskriminalpolizei*amt), and the local civilian and police authorities “in all possible places of residence”.²³ According to military protocol, if a soldier failed to return from leave, a fugitive report, containing the details of his closest relatives, had to be submitted within 14 days of the expected arrival time.²⁴ An

20 “[. . .] dass kein Fahnenflüchtiger aus dem CdZ-Bereich Luxemburg diesen Krieg überleben darf.” Quotation from BArch, NS 19/2179.

21 André Hohengarten, “Die Zwangsrekrutierung der Luxemburger in die deutsche Wehrmacht”, *Histoire & Mémoire. Les Cahiers du CDREF* 1 (2010), 23; Norbert Haase, “Von ‘Ons Jongen’, ‘Malgre-Nous’ und anderen. Das Schicksal der ausländischen Zwangsrekrutierten im Zweiten Weltkrieg”, in *Die anderen Soldaten. Wehrkraftzersetzung, Gehorsamsverweigerung und Fahnenflucht im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, edited by Norbert Haase and Gerhard Paul (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), 171; Quadflieg, “Zwangssoldaten” und “Ons Jongen”, 115.

22 *Unerlaubte Entfernung*: anyone who left or was absent from his unit or post without authorisation and was intentionally or negligently absent for more than three days – or for more than one day in the field – was to be punished by imprisonment or detention for up to ten years (§ 64 Militärstrafgesetzbuch).

23 In certain instances, the State Protection Police and the Luxembourg military district command (*Wehrbezirkskommando* Luxembourg) were aware of the desertion of a soldier on leave before the unit and initiated the desertion investigation; Leaflet for processing cases of absence without leave/desertion, 27 January 1944, BArch, RH 26/1023:3.

24 Leaflet for processing cases of absence without leave/desertion, 27 January 1944, BArch, RH 26/1023:3.

analysis of local police investigations and military court files regarding Luxembourgish deserters reveals that the timeframe for launching investigations varied, ranging from a few days to several months after the suspected desertion.²⁵ This delay was considered unproductive and detrimental to the military's efforts to implement effective countermeasures.²⁶

Upon receipt of the report, the local police in the fugitive's home community launched a local investigation by conducting house searches, confiscating the deserters' personal belongings, and interrogating close family members who may have hosted or been in contact with him.²⁷ Post-war testimonies reveal that families often had considerable knowledge about the deserters, but did not always cooperate as effectively as the official documents would have us believe. Relatives made false statements and fabricated evidence in an attempt to mislead investigators.²⁸ For example, some wrote letters to the deserters' units, expressing their concern and seeking news of their missing sons or husbands, while being very well aware of the situation. A few even openly refused to collaborate with these investigations. The father of X.B. declared, for instance, "However, I must state that in the future, if I were to become aware of the whereabouts of my son X., I would not reveal them."²⁹ The mother of J.B. stated, "I cannot provide any information about his field post number because I didn't memorise it and I burned all

25 Local police investigations against deserters and draft evaders in the Esch/Alzig region, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette (at the moment this article went to printing, these documents were transferred to the National Archives of Luxembourg under reference numbers CdZ-G-15291; CdZ-G-15292; CdZ-G-15290; CdZ-G-15293; CdZ-G-15291; CdZ-G-15292; CdZ-G-15290; CdZ-G-15282); Military court file, J.W., BArch, Pers 15/128200; Military court file, J.D., BArch, Pers 15/152095; Military court file, J.D., BArch, Pers 15/152759; Military court file, R.G., BArch, Pers 15/128567.

26 Leaflet for processing cases of absence without leave/desertion, 27 January 1944, BArch, RH 26/1023:3.

27 Local police investigations against deserters and draft evaders in the Esch/Alzig region, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette; Maria Fritsche, *Entziehungen: Österreichische Deserteure und Selbstverstümmelter in der Deutschen Wehrmacht* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 72.

28 Marc Trossen, "Verlure Joëren": *85 Luxemburger Zeitzeugen des Zweiten Weltkriegs berichten*, vol 1., *Zwangsrekrutierte, Refraktäre, Deserteure, Resistenzler, aber auch Kollaborateure, Kriegsfreiwillige . . .* (Redange/Attert: Les Amis de l'Histoire – Luxembourg, 2015), 552; Aimé Knepper, *Les réfractaires dans les bunkers* (Luxembourg: Éditions Saint-Paul, 2004), 44 and 61.

29 "Auf Vorhalt muss ich jedoch sagen, dass ich in Zukunft den Aufenthalts meines Sohnes X. nicht verraten würde, wenn mir dieses bekannt werden sollte." Quotation from the interrogation file of J.B., 24 February 1944, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette, folder II.

of his mail.[. . .] Additionally, I don't possess a photograph of my son J. that I could attach to this interrogation."³⁰

On 6 May 1943, the father of Rudi Scheuer, a labour service recruit who had deserted on 22 February 1943, provided the following statement to the local police officer of Schiffflange, "My son Rudi did not send me any messages after his disappearance from the RAD camp in Zobten. I have also not heard anything about his whereabouts from other people. I have searched for him among all relatives and acquaintances, but I have not been able to find anything."³¹ However, according to the memoirs of Ady Schoux (one of Rudi's comrades) as documented in the publication *Verluere Joeren*, Rudi and the other deserters travelled to Düsseldorf, where they spent several days at Rudi's uncle's residence before returning and going into hiding in the area around their home town for the remainder of the war. The father's statement includes contact details for a relative in Düsseldorf, and in a post-war questionnaire, Rudi himself asserts that his father was hiding him at the time of the interrogation. Although the accuracy of this last claim could not be confirmed, a comparison of the source material strongly suggests that it is unlikely that Rudi's father had no additional information about his son's whereabouts in May 1943, especially considering that Rudi was in hiding with relatives and had been residing in the same town as his parents since March that year.³²

The investigations involved close collaboration between the local police, the local administration, the Security Police (*Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*), the deserter's unit, and the competent military court, as evidenced by their extensive correspondence. Military court records, for instance, provide insights

30 "Angaben über seine Feldpostnummer kann ich nicht machen, weil ich mir diese nicht gemerkt und alle seine Post verbrannt habe. Ich habe sie verbrannt, weil ich keinen Wert darauf legte, sie längere Zeit aufzubewahren. Auch habe ich kein Lichtbild meines Sohnes J. im Besitz, welches ich dieser Vernehmung beifügen konnte." Quotation from the interrogation file of T.K., 24 February 1944, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette, folder II.

31 "Mein Sohn Rudi liess mir nach seinem Verschwinden aus dem RAD-Lager in Zobten keinerlei Nachricht zukommen. Auch durch andere Leute habe ich bisher noch nichts über seinen Aufenthaltsort erfahren. Ich habe bei sämtlichen Verwandten und Bekannten nach ihm geforscht, habe jedoch nichts entdecken können." Quotation from the interrogation file of "Kaspar" Scheuer, 6 May 1943, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette, folder III.

32 Interrogation file of "Kaspar" Scheuer, 6 May 1943, Lëtzebuerg City Museum, collection Kreisleitung N.S.D.A.P. Esch-sur-Alzette, folder III; Marc Trossen, "*Verluere Joeren*": *Luxemburger Zeitzeugen des Zweiten Weltkriegs berichten*, vol. 3, *Peenemünde und die Verdienste der Luxemburger Resistenz*, (Redange/Attert: Les Amis de l'Histoire – Luxembourg, 2018), 701; see information sheet of Rudi Scheuer for the "Ons Jongen" Ligue des réfractaires et déportés militaires Luxembourgais, 29 August 1946, Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains.

into how courts sought updates on cases and conducted further investigations within the deserters' communities. They also reveal the use of parents' statements, confiscated letters and pictures as part of the assessment process for deserters, as well as during the trial.³³

In addition to the search measures, desertion could also have consequences on the financial and material situation of a family. The National Socialist regime offered material and financial support for the dependents of labour service recruits and conscripted soldiers to provide for their basic needs while the conscripts were away serving in the military or the labour service. Under the “Deployment Family Support Act” of 26 June 1940, provision was made to allocate financial assistance to the families of military and labour service personnel in order to cover essential living expenses, including housing, food, clothing and medical care.³⁴ As naturalised Germans, Luxembourgish conscripts were also entitled to this support. Yet it remains to be investigated whether this support had a significant financial impact. However, if a conscript was absent without leave, deserted, or was arrested, he lost his eligibility for military service and his entitlement to this financial aid, leaving his family without the financial assistance.³⁵ In the case of family support file nr. 2891, which pertains to a family from the Schiffflange research sample, it was observed that the monthly payment of 47 RM, which the family had been receiving since 15 February 1943, was stopped in August 1944 following the soldier's desertion and arrest at the end of June 1944.³⁶ Additionally, the Nazi Party's Welfare Organisation (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, NSV) had the authority to deny deserters' families access to any social welfare services, as indicated in a Nazi Party

³³ For more information on this topic, see the article by Sarah Maya Vercruysse and Nina Janz, *The “long arm” of the military justice of the Wehrmacht – A case study on Luxembourgish desertions*, which will be published by De Gruyter in 2024–2025; Military court file, R.G., BArch, Pers 15/128567 Military court file, J.D., BArch, Pers 15/152095.

³⁴ Einsatz-Familienunterhaltsgesetzes vom 26. Juni 1940 in: Reichsgesetzblatt, part I, 28 June 1940, 911–912.

³⁵ It is notable that the law provided for family support to be continued if a soldier went missing in action, was imprisoned, or voluntarily returned to his unit; Verordnung zur Durchführung und Ergänzung des Einsatz-Familienunterhaltsgesetzes vom 26. Juni 1940 in: Reichsgesetzblatt, part I, 28 June 1940, 912–918; Treiber, *Helden oder Feiglinge*, 280; Fritsche, *Entziehungen: Österreichische Deserteure und Selbstverstümmelter in der Deutschen Wehrmacht*, 72.

³⁶ In accordance with Luxembourg archival legislation and the agreements made with the National Archives during the inspection of this file, this information had to be anonymised and cited as follows: ANLux, CdZ-G-12843.

circular from the district leader (*Kreisleiter*) of the Luxembourgish district Esch/Alzig, Wilhelm Diehl (1889–1965), and highlighted by historian Robert Loeffel.³⁷

Beyond these investigations and the overall repercussions potentially experienced by relatives of all types of deserters, the families of ethnic German conscripts faced the additional threat of forced resettlement, which involved displacement and the confiscation of their belongings. To understand the full scope and context of these repressive measures, they must be viewed within the broader political, economic and ethnological frameworks in which various levels of the National Socialist civil and military authorities operated, interacted and pursued distinct interests.

4 From Resettlement to the Confiscation of Assets

4.1 Resettling Ethnic Germans: a Historical and Contextual Overview

With the aim of reorganising Europe based on National Socialist ideology and racial principles, commonly referred to as the New European Order,³⁸ the National Socialist regime carried out large-scale expulsions and population transfers in occupied territories from the late 1930s onwards. Within the framework of the *Volkstumspolitik*, the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKF), operating under the authority of Heinrich Himmler, orchestrated the removal of individuals deemed “harmful” to the German people and the German community, including Jews and Poles. The focus was primarily on the incorporated eastern territories and annexed western Poland. Simultaneously, the regime resettled (*Umsiedlung*) ethnic German minorities from regions such as the Baltic, Russia or South Tyrol into these territories, aiming to repopulate and Germanise these areas. As Alexa Stiller noted, the RKF’s ethnic politics (*Völkische Politik*) exhibited a symbiotic relationship, interconnecting the reinforcement of Germanification efforts in the occupied and annexed territories with the expulsion and mass murder of undesired groups. She estimates

³⁷ Robert Loeffel, “Sippenhaft in the Third Reich: Analysing the ‘spectre’ of family liability punishment against opposition in Nazi Germany 1933–1945”, (PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2004), 70.

³⁸ Michael, *Nazi-Deutsch/Nazi-German*, 153.

that some 12 million individuals from the eastern, western and south-eastern annexed territories were affected by this.³⁹

For the practical implementation of the forced resettlements of ethnic Germans, the Reich Commissioner enlisted the support of numerous entities such as the different Reich ministries, the Wehrmacht, as well as existing SS offices or entities affiliated to the SS.⁴⁰ These included, among others, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi), which was responsible for housing the new settlers in temporary resettlement camps, and the *Deutsche Umsiedlungs- und Treuhandgesellschaft* (DUT), a private company which was responsible for the collection, administration and exploitation of their property. The RKF also delegated tasks within a widespread network of offices and encouraged middle and lower authorities to take on executive tasks in order to increase its influence in various areas while maintaining control.⁴¹

While the ethnic politics initially centred on the eastern territories, it later also extended westwards to the civil administrations in Lorraine, Alsace and Luxembourg, where it took on a distinct form.⁴² Following initial discussions between Himmler and Robert Wagner (1895–1946), the head of the civil administration of Alsace, Hitler decided in early August 1942 on the policy of resettlement for per-

39 Alexa Stiller, "Völkisch Capitalism: Himmler's Bankers and the Continuity of Capitalist Thinking and Practice in Germany," in *Reshaping Capitalism in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, edited by Moritz Föllmer and Pamela E. Swett, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 286–287; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 11; Markus Leniger, *Nationalsozialistische "Volkstumsarbeit" und Umsiedlungspolitik 1933–1945 – Von der Minderheitenbetreuung zur Siedlerauslese* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2013), 11 and 15; Detlef Brandes, *Lexikon der Vertreibungen: Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 682.

40 A detailed examination of the general functioning of the RKF and its policy of forced resettlement can be found in Alexa Stiller's study *Völkische Politik*.

41 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 257; Michael Fahlbusch, Ingo Haar, and Alexander Pinwinkler, eds., *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Akteure, Netzwerke, Forschungsprogramme* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 1941–1942.

42 The RKF initially had no jurisdiction in the western occupied areas. It was gradually able to increase its influence there by working together with the civil administrations and having them assign roles to RKF personnel within their administrative systems. In Luxembourg, *Gauleiter* Simon was designated as "Commissioner for the tasks of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood" (*Beauftragten für die Aufgaben des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*) on 20 December 1940. Subsequently, the Higher SS and Police Leader "Rhein" was assigned as the *Gauleiter's* representative and also served as the deputy representative of the RKF. This allowed the RKF to consolidate its power in the region. It was not until September 1942, with the start of the forced resettlements, that a regional office of the RKF was established in Luxembourg. For more information see Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 146; Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, 206 and 212.

sons who were considered unreliable in those three territories, but who did not require permanent elimination as they were deemed acceptable based on their race. Nevertheless, they were still considered to be a nuisance and not politically reliable enough to be placed in the newly annexed eastern territories. The territory east of the Rhine, within the original borders of the Reich, was seen as an ideal place to settle these “troubled” residents, as they would not negatively affect the Germanisation policy in the East and would be easily assimilated with the local German population. Despite Gustav Simon’s initial reservations about implementing this measure in his area of jurisdiction, he eventually revised his stance shortly thereafter.⁴³

In response to the considerable resistance encountered after the introduction of military service at the end of August 1942, the civil administration in Luxembourg hardened its policy and decided to resettle Luxembourgers who were believed to be uncontrollable. On 9 September 1942, the press publicly announced that, in order to safeguard the integrity of the western border region of the Reich and its ethnic German community, “unreliable elements” were to be removed and resettled.⁴⁴ The resettlement process was to be carried out by the offices of the RKF on behalf of the civil administration, under the direction of the Higher SS and Police Leader, *SS-Obergruppenführer* Theodor Berkelmann (1894–1943). The procedure was presented as a politically necessary and expedient measure, which should not be seen as a punishment but rather as an opportunity for “re-education”.⁴⁵ With a view to their gradual integration into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the Reich Ministry of the Interior issued a circular on 9 July 1943, granting “German citizenship upon revocation”⁴⁶ to individuals from Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg who had been resettled after 23 August 1942, provided that they were assessed for racial suitability

43 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, 211; Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), 324; Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler’s Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933–1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 181.

44 “Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg”, *Luxemburger Wort* 252 (9 September 1942), 3.

45 “Umsiedlungsaktion für Luxemburg”; classified report on the first meeting of the CdZ regarding the start of the “Umsiedlung”, 11 September 1942, ANLux, CdG-003; Letter from *Gauleiter* Simon to the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, 6 July 1943, BArch, NS 19/1163.

46 This meant that they received German citizenship with reduced rights for a ten-year probationary period. This remained a discriminatory form of citizenship which did not give many rights. For more information see the article of Denis Scuto in this volume: National Socialist Ethnicity and Citizenship Policy under growing military pressure in occupied Luxembourg (1940–1944).

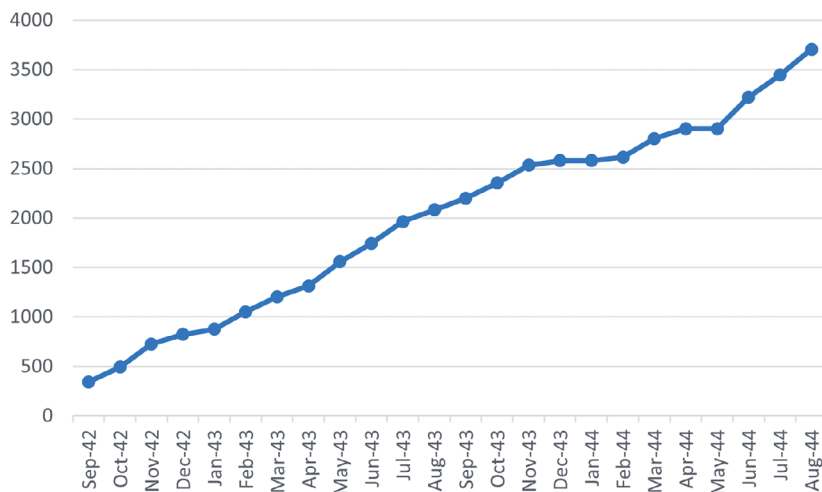


Fig. 1 (1): Total amount of Luxembourgish individuals resettled from Luxembourg.
(Statistical tables of the CdZ Luxembourg, BArch R 49/622)⁴⁷

and “Germanisability” by the SS Race and Settlement Main Office.⁴⁸ During the prior discussions, the Reich Chancellery recognised the national and security policy reasons behind this but commented internally to Himmler that “it is in itself paradoxical that people who are resettled here because of political unreliability are granted German citizenship, while this is otherwise precisely a reason for not granting it to them. However, since the granting is considered necessary from ethno-political and police-related perspectives, there seems to be no reason to object from our standpoint.”⁴⁹ Between the end of September 1942 and August 1944,

⁴⁷ During the analysis of these statistics, counting errors regarding the last transports were noted for at least 100 families and five individuals. The author has chosen to present all figures as they appear in the statistics, without any corrections.

⁴⁸ This citizenship was officially granted as of 1 August 1943; According to a letter from the RKF main office (*Stabshauptamt*), *Absiedler* who were racially unsuitable, but of German origin or racially unsuitable and not of German origin were to be treated as foreign workers; Letter of the RKF *Stabshauptamt* to the head of the civil administration, acting as the representative of the RKF, 24 September 1943, BArch 49/2070; Letter of the Reich Ministry of the Interior to the Representative for the four-year plan, 4 January 1945, BArch, R 59/61; Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut*, 326.

⁴⁹ “Es ist an sich paradox, dass hier Leuten, die wegen politischer Unzuverlässigkeit umgesiedelt werden, die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit verliehen wird, während diese sonst gerade ein Grund für ihre Nichtverleihung ist. Da jedoch aus volkstumpspolitischen und polizeilichen Gesichtspunkten heraus die Verleihung für notwendig erachtet wird, dürfte kein Grund bestehen, von hier aus zu widersprechen.” Quotation from a memorandum of the Reich Chancellery, 12 April 1943, BArch, R 43/II/137, 92.



Fig. 1 (2): Map depicting the German Empire in May 1944, with additional points showing resettlement camps containing Luxembourgers.
(Bennet Schulte/Wikipedia)⁵⁰

approximately 4,000 Luxembourgers from all over the country were forcibly resettled to resettlement camps in Lower-Silesia, Sudetenland and the Hunsrück and put to work there (Fig. 1(1)-1(2)).⁵¹ The resettlements to this last region, situated west of the Rhine, started only in the Spring-Summer of 1944 driven by economic

50 “Greater German Reich NS Administration 1944”, Wikimedia Commons, Accessed 27 July 2023
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_German_Reich_NS_Administration_1944.png.

51 The available source material presents varying figures. According to the official statistics from the civil administration, 3,705 individuals were permanently resettled, from a total of 1,310 families. Gilles Kartheiser's research, which combines lists from the war and post-war period, reports a total of 4,165 individuals; Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942–1945*, 78; Statistical tables of the CdZ Luxembourg, BArch, R 49/622; Marc Gloden, "Zur 'Wiedereindeutschung' ins Reich: die Umsiedlungen von 1942–1945 – Une rééducation au cœur du Reich: les transplantations de 1942 à 1945", in *Le Luxembourg et le Troisième Reich: un état des lieux – Luxembourg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 625.

and political imperatives of the *Gauleiter*, which will be discussed later. Official figures from the civil administration indicate that 30.85% of the total resettled individuals came from the central district of Luxembourg, 30.4% from the northern district of Diekirch, 28.26% from the southern district of Esch/Alzig, and 10% from the less populated eastern district of Grevenmacher.⁵²

The forced resettlements served the consolidation and Germanisation policies of the *Gauleiter* in the border region, with the aim to fully integrate the territory into the Reich once the Germanisation process was completed. "Uncontrollable" individuals were removed and replaced by ethnic German resettlers (*Ansiedler*) from Bosnia, South Tyrol and Bukovina, who would infuse "new German blood" into the area, cultivate the newly available agricultural lands, continue to run companies that had been vacated, and ultimately enhance the Germanisation of the region.⁵³ According to the official numbers provided by the civil administration, by July 1944 approximately 432 individuals from South Tyrol, 659 from Bosnia and Croatia, 134⁵⁴ from Bukovina, and 62 from Transylvania had been settled in Luxembourg, as well as a small number of individuals from the Baltic, Russia and the current Kočevje region of Slovenia (formerly *Gottschee*) (Fig. 1(3)).⁵⁵ Additionally, the civil administration used the measure to create a climate of fear with the aim of maintaining order and compliance within the population. Only a limited number of individuals were chosen to serve as examples, as the measure was not meant to be implemented extensively, following orders from Hitler and Himmler.⁵⁶ This decision was made, among other factors, to prevent resistance from the population and to avoid any disruption to war production.

At first, those targeted were mainly family members of strike participants, but this quickly expanded to include other individuals deemed to be "agitators and disturbers of the peace". This group encompassed senior civil servants, members of the Luxembourgish elite, and business owners who were perceived to have marginalised the leading members of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung*, a Luxembourgish National Socialist organisation, in their dealings. Interestingly, a significant exception was made for parents of soldiers. According to the report of a meeting held

52 Statistical tables of the CdZ Luxembourg, BArch, R 49/622.

53 Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, 109–110; Lumanns, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 180.

54 This number represents the situation from April 1944. However, RKF statistics indicate that 241 ethnic Germans from Bukovina had moved to Luxembourg by June 1944. Wolfgang Schumann and Ludwig Nestler, eds., *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, vol. 4. *Belgien, Luxemburg, Niederlande* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1990), 222.

55 Statistical tables of the CdZ Luxembourg, BArch, R 49/622.

56 Letter from Heinrich Himmler to *Gauleiter* Simon, 3 May 1943, BArch, R 49/2768; Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe*, 211; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 613.

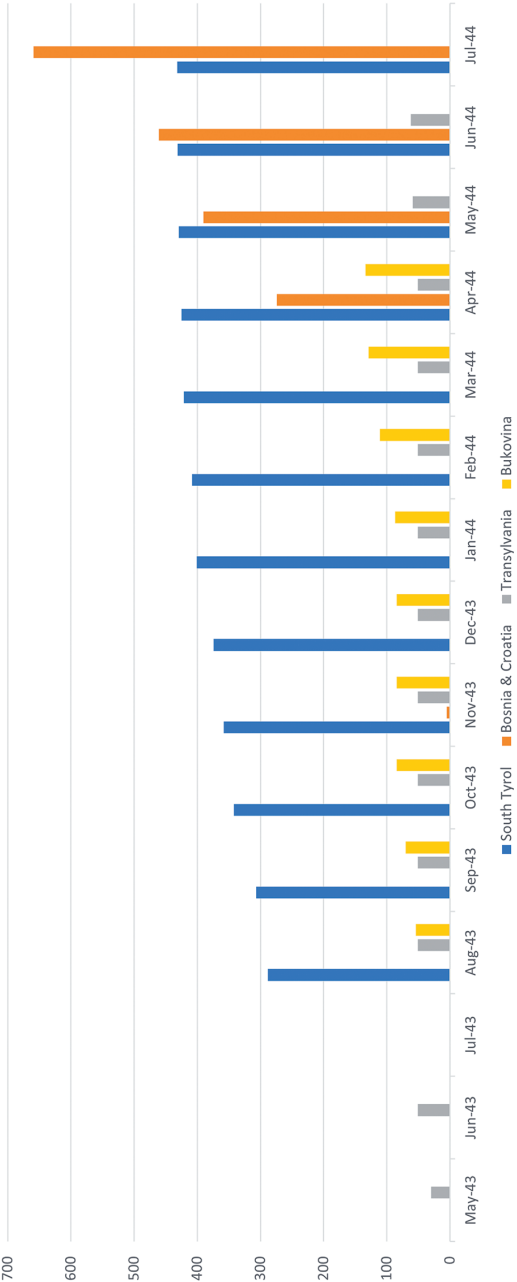


Fig. 1 (3): Total amount of ethnic German individuals settled inside Luxembourg. (Statistical tables of the CdZ Luxembourg, BArch R 49/622).

on 10 December 1942, Berkelmann and *Gauleiter* Simon decided that “parents of volunteers currently serving in the Wehrmacht or Waffen-SS should not be subjected to resettlement”.⁵⁷ An additional report from that meeting – written a few days later in the district of Esch/Alzig – went even further, emphasising that “soldiers’ parents are to be treated as gently as possible. Even if they exhibit anti-German sentiments, they are to be resettled only as a last resort. First of all, attempts should be made again and again to make the point of view clear to them and to offer them the opportunity to change their political views. They should always be given a probationary period.”⁵⁸ This study cannot confirm the accuracy and direct application of these criteria, as no such cases were found in the researched town of Schiffange. However, these directives can be seen as potential indicators of the unique role and position of the military service in the public sphere in Luxembourg.⁵⁹

4.2 The Resettlement of Families of Deserters: Implementation and Regional Dynamics

As the number of deserters continued to rise, the civil administration faced mounting pressure, leading to changes to the directives regarding the treatment of soldiers’ families, particularly those of deserters.⁶⁰ Following a meeting with *Gauleiter* Simon, Bruno Jung (1886–1966), the district administrator (*Landrat*) of Esch/Alzig, clarified in May 1943: “The resettlement of soldiers’ parents must be avoided under all circumstances. On the other hand, the families of deserters must

57 “Dass Eltern von z. Zt. bei der Wehrmacht oder Waffen-SS dienenden Freiwilligen nicht zur Absiedlung kommen sollen.” Quotation from the report of the meeting held on 9 December 1942 about resettlements in Luxembourg, 10 December 1942, ANLux, CdG-003.

58 “Soldateneltern sind möglichst schonend zu behandeln. Selbst bei deutschfeindlicher Gesinnung sind sie erst in letzter Linie umzusiedeln. Zunächst soll immer wieder versucht werden, ihnen den Standpunkt klarzumachen und ihnen die Möglichkeit zu bieten, sich politisch umzustellen. Man soll ihnen immer noch eine Bewährungszeit lassen.” Quotation from the report of a meeting with the *Gauleiter* on 9 December 1942 regarding resettlements and the related confiscation of assets, 16 December 1942, ANLux, CdG-003.

59 This is also exemplified by the statement by the German Military High Command that conscripted individuals who had been resettled were also to be called up for active military service without any restrictions and could not be deferred for reasons of resettlement; Letter from the OKW on the military service of *Umsiedler*, 17 April 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

60 While a significant portion of the procedure was identical for both political resettlements and resettlements due to desertion, this chapter will specifically concentrate on the resettlements resulting from desertion.

be resettled under all circumstances.”⁶¹ This directive aimed to exert pressure on fugitives and discourage conscripts from deserting and fleeing by directly targeting their relatives with punitive measures. Consequently, by the end of the war, this group constituted a significant portion of the total resettled population.⁶² The research also indicates that parents of volunteers who deserted during their service were not exempt from these repercussions. The parents and five siblings of N.K., who was a volunteer in the Wehrmacht for six months, were resettled to Lower-Silesia in July 1943 after his desertion in May 1943.⁶³

The imposition of responsibility on the families of deserters was not exclusive to Luxembourg. In fact, between 1942 and 1945, relatives of ethnic German deserters and draft evaders from occupied and annexed regions such as Alsace, Lorraine, Upper Carniola, Lower Styria and South Tyrol faced similar consequences, including forced resettlement, imprisonment and confiscation of property. However, German military law did not provide for such actions. There were no clear guidelines for the application of familial responsibility until the German Military High Command initiated its codification on 19 November 1944 with a decree on measures against defectors, extending the threat to all soldiers within the Wehrmacht, not only to ethnic Germans.⁶⁴ Although this comparison requires further study, it's worth noting that the regulations and measures varied considerably from region to region. Nevertheless, they did share some common features, such as exerting pressure on and controlling the local population, and preventing further desertions.⁶⁵

61 “Die Umsiedlung von Soldateneltern muss unter allen Umständen unterbleiben. Dagegen sind Familien von Deserteuren unter allen Umständen umzusiedeln.” Quotation from the report of a meeting held in Luxembourg on 6 May 1943, chaired by the *Gauleiter*, regarding resettlements, 10 June 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

62 Unfortunately, owing to the absence of detailed statistics differentiating between so-called political and Wehrmacht resettlements, no exact percentage can be provided.

63 War compensation file of family K., ANLux, DG2DOS-02481 nr.24642; *Affaire Politique* against N.K., ANLux, CT-03-01-01123.

64 According to Johannes Salzig, although all Wehrmacht soldiers were threatened with family liability at the end of the war, this remained the exception rather than the rule; Order by the OKW WFSt/Qu. 2/NSF/W no. 09395/44 dated 19 November 1944, quoted in Rudolf Absolon, “Das Wehrmachtstrafrecht im 2. Weltkrieg: Sammlung der grundlegenden Gesetze, Verordnungen und Erlasse” (Kornelimünster: Bundesarchiv Abt. Zentralnachweisstelle, 1958), 97–98; Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, 458 and 475.

65 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 597, 603, 675–76; Brigitte Entner, “Slowenische Soldaten: Organisierte Flucht innerhalb der Reichsgrenzen?” in *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS: Entziehungsformen, Solidarität, Verfolgung*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, Krieg in der Geschichte 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023), 51–64; Martha Verdorfer, “Desertion in der mehrsprachigen Grenzregion Südtirol” in *Deserteure der Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS: Entziehungsformen, Solidarität, Verfolgung*, edited by Kerstin von Lingen and Peter Pirker, Krieg in der

With the “Regulation on measures against draft evasion” of 10 July 1943, the civil administration in Luxembourg stated that it could “impose property confiscation or other appropriate measures on relatives of deserters or people who evade military service or compulsory labour service, as well as on relatives of other disturbers of the peace”.⁶⁶ The legislation was to be implemented retrospectively from the introduction of the military service in August 1942, and legalised a practice that had already started several months earlier. In comparison to a similar law in Alsace, which defined which relatives would be considered for forced resettlement, the regulation in Luxembourg did not mention this, nor did it clarify who was considered as a relative, which left the door open for interpretation.⁶⁷

The participation of family members in the desertion was evident to the German authorities. In a newspaper article dated 16 July 1943, the regime justified the new legislation by stating that “One must assume that they [deserters] are typically victims of a narrow, false, and anti-people atmosphere within their families and thus live in an environment that consciously induces and promotes this cowardly and unmanly attitude. [. . .] Consequently, harsh action against the relatives of deserters and those who fail to comply with the conscription into the Wehrmacht and the labour service is justified in every way.”⁶⁸ Interestingly, in comparison with

Geschichte 122 (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023), 65–80; Martha Verdorfer, “Nein zum Krieg: Widerstand und Verweigerung in Südtirol 1939–1945 – Überlegungen zu einem Oral-History-Projekt”, *Storia e regione*, 1 (1992), 120–128.

66 “Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung kann gegen Angehörige von Fahnenflüchtigen oder solchen Personen, die sich der Wehrpflicht oder Arbeitsdienstpflicht entziehen, sowie gegen Angehörige sonstiger Friedensstörer Vermögensbeschlagnahme und Vermögensseinzziehung oder andere geeignete Maßnahmen verhängen.” Quotation from Verordnung über Maßnahmen gegen Wehrpflichtentziehung in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 15 July 1943, 152; Interestingly this law was issued one day after the circular of the Ministry of Interior about granting German citizenship upon revocation to resettled individuals.

67 Internal communications and post-war declarations, however, specify that the concept of family was defined as all the individuals living together in a household, commonly referred to as the “hearthplace” or “hearth site” (*Herdstelle*); Classified report on the first meeting of the CdZ regarding the start of the *Umsiedlung*, 11 September 1942, ANLux, CdG-003; Testimony of the district leader of Luxembourg, Adolf Schreder, on the resettlements, ANLux, CdG-003; Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß*, 228; Frédéric Stroh, “Refus et résistance face à l’‘incorporation de force’ à l’Ouest et leur répression: Eupen-Malmedy, Luxembourg, Alsace, Moselle”, in *L’incorporation de force dans les territoires annexés par le IIIe Reich – Die Zwangsrekrutierung in den vom Dritten Reich annektierten Gebieten*, edited by Peter M. Quadflieg and Frédéric Stroh (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2016), 55.

68 “Man muss deshalb annehmen, dass sie in der Regel das Opfer einer engeren, falschen und volksfeindlichen Atmosphäre bei ihren Angehörigen sind und so in einer Umgebung leben, die bewusst diese feige und unmännliche Haltung hervorruft und fördert. [. . .] Infolgedessen ist ein scharfes Vorgehen gegen die Angehörigen der Fahnenflüchtigen und jener, die den Einberufenen

the article from 9 September 1942, the press here acknowledges the punitive nature of the measure.⁶⁹ Consistent with the measures implemented across Nazi Germany, individuals who could be proven to have participated in or been aware of the criminal act were convicted as accomplices (*Beihilfe*) by the German special civilian court (*Sondergericht*) and sent to prison or concentration camps.⁷⁰ This was the case for the family of H.G., a young man who attempted to evade the draft in February 1944. Two days after his arrest, two of his sisters were arrested, deported to concentration camps and later convicted as accomplices. On the day of the sisters' sentencing, the mother was also arrested and deported. Shortly after, another sibling was sent to a resettlement camp in Boberstein (Bobrów).⁷¹

In the case of the resettlements, the families were punished under the pretext of providing help, as the sources lack any proof of their involvement and contain no indications of judicial inquiries, which again points to the principle of *Sippenhaftung*. The testimonies of the Luxembourg district leaders during their post-war trial also suggest that the *Gauleiter* rejected any connection between resettlements and legal or quasi-judicial proceedings.⁷² The assessment forms of resettled families, prepared by the Luxembourg resettlement commissions and the RKF, remain equally vague, as exemplified by the form concerning H.K's family: "It can

zur Wehrmacht und zum Arbeitsdienst keine Folge leisten in jeder Weise gerechtfertigt." Quotation from "Jeder Deserteur siedelt seine Angehörigen oder seine Sippe um", *Escher Tageblatt* 164 (16 July 1943), 4.

69 „Diese Maßnahmen sind aber nicht ausschließlich strafender Natur, sie sind im Gegenteil besonders dazu bestimmt, die Angehörigen und die Arbeitsdienst- und Wehrpflichtigen vor einem Schritt zu bewahren, der sie ins Unglück und in Schande führen würde [. . .].“ Quotation from "Jeder Deserteur siedelt seine Angehörigen oder seine Sippe um", *Escher Tageblatt* 164 (16 July 1943), 4.

70 See Artikel 49 on the participation in crimes in: A. Grosch, *Strafgesetzbuch für das Deutsche Reich vom 15. Mai 1871: Mit einem Anhang von wichtigen Bestimmungen des Gerichtsverfassungsgesetzes und der Strafprozessordnung. Zum Gebrauch für Polizei-, Sicherheits- und Kriminalbeamte*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1907 – reprint 2020), 16; Verordnung über das Sonderstrafrecht im Kriege und bei besonderem Einsatz (Kriegssonderstrafrechtsverordnung) vom 17. August 1939 in: Reichsgesetzblatt, part I, 26 August 1939, 1455–1457; Verordnung über Maßnahmen gegen Wehrpflichtentziehung in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 15 July 1943, 152; Lena Haase, "Verfolgung – Verhaftung – Verschleppung. Die Deportation von Luxemburgerinnen nach Flußbach und Ravensbrück", in *Le Luxembourg et le troisième Reich: un état des lieux – Luxembourg und das Dritte Reich: eine Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Musée national de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (Luxembourg: Op der Lay, 2021), 661.

71 War compensation file of H.G., ANLux, DG2DOS-613 dossier 70099.

72 Report of the first appearance of Wilhelm Diehl at the district court, 10 December 1948, ANLux, CdG-003; Post-war interrogation of Adolf Schreder, 9 November 1948, ANLux, CdG-003.

be assumed that the parents approved of their son's defection. Therefore, the family is unsuitable for the border region of Luxembourg."⁷³

The findings of the research indicate that far from all of the deserters' families were subjected to this repressive measure. In Schiffange, around 32% of the desertions and draft evasions known to the authorities at the time led to the resettlement of close relatives (Fig. 2(1)).⁷⁴ Despite the impression given through official communication channels and the legal framework that this measure was systematically applied, its actual implementation was less extensive, with many underlying criteria influencing the selection process. In May 1943 – two months before the publication of the law – the civil administration had already issued internal guidelines stating that only the most politically unfavourable families of deserters could be selected for resettlement.⁷⁵ On 27 November 1943, the *Gauleiter* wrote a confidential circular to the district leaders, stating "if it is certain that the parents neither instigated nor supported the desertion and, on the contrary, are politically reliable, resettlement should be avoided".⁷⁶ In December he went even further by stating that "political passivity alone would not suffice as a reason for resettlement".⁷⁷ Families who had another son serving in the military, or who was expected to be drafted into the labour service or the military in the foreseeable future, were also to be exempted.⁷⁸

73 "Es ist anzunehmen, dass die Eltern die Flucht ihres Sohnes gutgeheißen haben. Die Familie ist somit für das Grenzland Luxemburg untragbar." Quotation from the assessment form of H.K. BArch, R 49/93.

74 The research, conducted as part of the WARLUX project, identified approximately 300 male labour service and military recruits residing in the municipality during the war, born between 1920 and 1927. Analysis of wartime sources – such as deserter registries – revealed that around 22% of them, totalling 67 individuals, were pursued by the police and military justice system for draft evasion, absence without leave, or desertion. In total 38 families from Schiffange were resettled between September 1942 and August 1944. Within this group, 28 families could be linked to 21 individual deserters or draft evaders, representing approximately 31.8% of their total number.

75 Generally, individuals over 65 years old were also excluded from resettlement; Confidential letter from Dr. Münzel to all district leaders with regard to Luxembourgish deserters, 13 May 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

76 "Sofern aber feststeht, dass die Eltern die Desertion weder veranlasst noch unterstützt haben, sondern im Gegenteil politisch zuverlässig sind, muss die Umsiedlung unterbleiben." Quotation from an extract of a circular from *Gauleiter* Simon to the district leaders in Luxembourg, 27 November 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

77 "Eine politische Passivität allein genüge nicht als Absiedlungsgrund." Quotation from notes of a meeting held with *Gauleiter* Simon on 10 December 1943 with regard to resettlements in Luxembourg, 16 December 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

78 In the file of the family of deserter E.B. from the deserters' register (*Fahnenflüchtigen-Kartei*) it was noted: "Protected, the brother K.B. is still with the Wehrmacht" see the deserters' registry at the Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains (MNRDH) in Esch-sur-Alzette; Extract of

These guidelines imply a progressive narrowing of instructions from the civil administration, with a certain degree of vagueness to allow for interpretation. Luxembourg historian, Vincent Artuso, noted that the original will of the civil administration to hit desertion with harsh measures was quickly reduced, owing to the complexity of the situation and to avoid opposing the sentiments of pro-German Luxembourgers.⁷⁹ However, it is important to note that in practice, different logics conflicted, revealing a discrepancy between the official doctrine and the practical realities on the ground. The decision-making power rested at the regional administrative level, resulting in variations and deviations from the prescribed guidelines. These variations were influenced by local dynamics (especially in light of the evolving war effort), individual circumstances, and personal judgements.

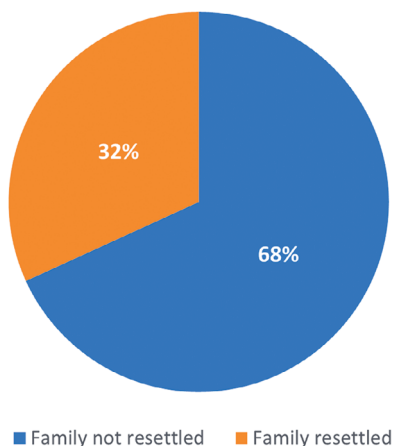


Fig. 2 (1): Proportion of desertions and draft evasions leading to family resettlement in Schiffange between September 1942 and September 1944.

In each district, a specific commission had the task of identifying and investigating individuals for resettlement. Led by the district leader, the commission consisted of officials such as the *Landrat*, a representative from the Gestapo,⁸⁰ the district medical officer, and in some cases the district farmer leader or the district master crafts-

a circular from *Gauleiter* Simon to the district leaders in Luxembourg, 27 November 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

⁷⁹ Vincent Artuso, *La collaboration au Luxembourg durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, 1940–1945: accommodation, adaptation, assimilation*, Études luxembourgeoises / Luxemburg-Studien 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2013), 250.

⁸⁰ The Gestapo informed the commissions of any records and data they held on the individuals. If a person targeted for resettlement fled to avoid resettlement, the Gestapo would launch a search operation; Chapter XVI on “Umsiedlung” during the postwar trial against the members of

men.⁸¹ From 1943 onwards, the leader of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung*, along with a special representative for personnel matters from the civil administration, were also involved.⁸² The district leadership gathered lists and information on deserters and draft evaders from sources including the local police offices, the Security Police, and the *Wehrbezirksskommando*.⁸³ They instructed local group leaders (*Ortsgruppenleiter*) of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung* to communicate the political stance of the families in question and to investigate the military or labour service of other relatives, as well as these relatives' specific political connections.⁸⁴ For this, the local group leaders made use of the extensive information they had already gathered on the inhabitants through their surveillance networks and through denunciations from neighbours and other locals. Based on this information, they also proposed certain individuals and families for resettlement to the district leaders. The district leaders, in turn, decided which cases to present to the commission based on these assessments. Once a final decision was made, the commission notified the representative of the RKF in Luxembourg, Leonard Motz, about the selected cases. Motz then compiled the transport lists, coordinated transportation, and informed other RKF entities, including the VoMi, responsible for the camps, and DUT, responsible for the confiscation of assets.⁸⁵

This regional selection process was characterised by ambiguity, potential for abuse, and personal motives. District leaders held significant influence, not only in determining which cases would be presented to the commission but also during the voting process. An illustrative example is seen in Diehl's claim of personally intervening to prevent the resettlement of a deserter's family based on the father's physical disability (he only had one leg).⁸⁶ Additionally, local group leaders, despite

the *Einsatzkommando der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* in Luxembourg and Gestapo, ITS Arolsen (online archive), 9029900, 213–216.

⁸¹ These commissions existed only in the territory of Luxembourg and were allegedly set up by the *Gauleiter* as a precautionary measure to prevent arbitrary resettlements.

⁸² Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942–1945*, 68.

⁸³ Post-war testimony of district leader Wilhelm Diehl, ANLux, CdG-003; Letter from the *Wehrbezirksskommando* Luxembourg regarding non-compliance with the conscription order for 24 February 1944, 24 February 1944, ANLux, CdZ-G-15182.

⁸⁴ See the files assembled as part of the political trial against the local group leader of Schifflange Peter Anheuser, ANLux, CT-03-01-05421; Post-war testimony of district leader Wilhelm Diehl, ANLux, CdG-003; Post-war testimony of J.K., former clerk at the *Kreisleitung* of Luxembourg, ANLux, CdG-003; Report of post-war interrogation of Leonard Motz, 24 June 1948, ANLux, CdG-003; Benoît Majerus, "Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction . . . : les degrés de l'implication dans la collaboration avec l'Allemagne nationale-socialiste à travers l'exemple des Ortsgruppenleiter luxembourgeois" (Master diss., Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1999), 104.

⁸⁵ Report of post-war interrogation of Leonard Motz, 24 June 1948, ANLux, CdG-003.

⁸⁶ Post-war interrogation of Wilhelm Diehl, 30 June 1948, ANLux, CdG-003.

not being members of the commissions themselves, possessed first-hand knowledge of the families involved and exerted significant influence in the decision-making process through their evaluations.⁸⁷ The commissions failed to offer clear explanations for their resettlement decisions, and kept no record of their meetings. As a result, affected families often remained unaware of the precise reasons for their displacement, even post-war.⁸⁸ In a post-war statement, Motz acknowledged this and provided examples demonstrating how resettlement orders were sometimes based on trivial matters and personal conflicts.⁸⁹ Regional disparities, linked to the local economic situation, also played a role in the selection process. For instance, despite numerous desertions in the northern agricultural district of Diekirch, the district leader refused the forced resettlement of 150 farmers from this region in mid-December 1943 because of a shortage of *Ansiedler* to replace them on their farms.⁹⁰ Directors from the mining industry could also object to specific resettlements if certain workers were deemed indispensable for their jobs.⁹¹ Due to the numerous influences and differences at play, it is almost impossible to determine why certain families were chosen for forced resettlement while others were not. The family M. from Schiffflange is illustrative of this: between November 1943 and May 1944, three members of the same household, two sons and a son-in-law, deserted while on leave.⁹² Contrary to what might be expected, the study did not uncover any evidence of reprisals against this family, nor was it able to identify any reason for their exemption from such measures.

87 Post-war testimony of J.K., former clerk at the *Kreisleitung* of Luxembourg, ANLux, CdG-003; Majerus, "Faiblesse, opportunisme, conviction . . .", 104.

88 Wartime documents included multiple reasons for the resettlements such as non-membership in Nazi organizations, connections with opponents and political passivity. Post-war testimonies from descendants of affected families suggest that active resistance activities were the main contributing factor.

89 Report of the post-war interrogation of Leonard Motz, 24 June 1948, ANLux, CdG-003.

90 The study by Gilles Kartheiser also shows large regional differences in the country and reveals that at the end of the war, percentage-wise more people were resettled from the northern regions of the country; Kartheiser, *Die Umsiedlung Luxemburger Familien 1942–1945*, 85; Notes of a meeting held with *Gauleiter* Simon on 10 December 1943 with regard to resettlements in Luxembourg, 16 December 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

91 Whether this was taken into account is a separate matter; Letter from the Vereinigte Hüttenwerke Burbach-Eich-Düdelingen to the civil administration with regard to the forced resettlement of J.D., BArch, R49/3661; Directives from the Moselland District Personnel Office Leader (*Gaupersonalamtsleiter*) regarding the compulsory employment of Luxembourgish skilled workers within the *Gau Moselland*, 22 February 1944, ANLux, CdG-003.

92 See files on E.M., J.M. and F.M in the deserters' registry (*Fahnenflüchtigen-Kartei*) at the Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains in Esch-sur-Alzette.

Familienkartei

Umsiedler Nr. Lux. 833 833 20

Name: Scheuer Vorname: Casper
Geb. Datum: 27.11.01 Ort: Differdingen Kreis: Esch
Staatsangeh.: Volksdeutscher Luxbg. Herkunftsl.: Luxemburg
relig. Bekennt.: kath. Familienstand: led. verh. verw. gesch.
Beruf erlernt: Hüttenarbeiter jetzt: Hüttenarbeiter, Werk Angestellter selbst: Schifffl. Beamter
Letzter Wohnort: Schiffflingen Strasse und Nr.: E. Mayrischstr. 132
Ehefrau: Oppermann Lina Geb. 9.7.06 Ort: Differdingen Kreis: Esch
(Mädchenname)

Kinder:

Kopfzahl der Familie:	unter 15 Jahren:		über 15 Jahren:		V. D. B. seit: Nr.:
	männl.	weibl.	männl.	weibl.	
<u>1 2 3</u>			<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Nein</u>

Besitztum: in Miete

Arbeitgeber: Werk Schiffflingen Hüttenarbeiter
Ort: Schiffflingen
Abgesiedelt am: 3.12.1943
nach: Mittelsteine



Namentliche Aufstellung der Kinder unter 15 Jahren:

Name: _____ Vorname: _____ Geb. _____ Ort: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Vorgang: Der Sohn Rudi Scheuer geb. am 20.4.24 in Differdingen hat sich am 22.2.43 unerlaubt vom RAD. entfernt und ist flüchtig. Die Familienangehörigen sind abzusiedeln.

Der Kreisleiter K. Spring Landrat Spring Vertreter d. Stapo der SA Spring Der Kreisbauernführer bzw. Kreishandwerksmeister

Fig. 2 (2): Resettlement card of the Scheuer family signed by the members of the resettlement commission.(BArch R 49/3751).

The research findings strongly support the notion that the civil authorities in Luxembourg held primary responsibility for implementing punitive measures. The RKF acted at the request of the civil administration and had little to no control

over the criteria for expulsions, as is also corroborated by Stiller's findings.⁹³ Once the process had been initiated, however, the RKF and the entities it appointed took charge of managing the individuals; this involved transportation, settlement, employment and asset acquisition. Furthermore, no evidence was discovered to suggest active involvement of the military or military tribunals in the procedure, as indicated in the author's prior study.⁹⁴ This research showed that the military courts were somewhat passive observers of the resettlements, only interested in them in the context of their own investigation of the deserter. The resettlements also often took place before the conclusion of the trial or the pronouncement of the sentence, showing that they were not linked to the conviction of a deserter.

In early 1944, *Gauleiter* Simon ordered that skilled workers who could no longer stay in Luxembourg because of their "anti-German attitude", such as the families of deserters, were to be transferred to the Hunsrück – a region in the eastern part of his administrative division – and forced to work rather than be resettled. This measure was intended to strengthen war production in the region and address the immediate labour shortage in the local industry.⁹⁵ In collaboration with the *Gauarbeitsamt Moselland* and the main industry players – particularly the Arbed steel plant – a procedure was established in mid-1944 for transferring a large workforce outside the usual resettlement process, without the involvement of the RKF.⁹⁶ This primarily affected the male members of families, particularly the heads of households, while other family members were resettled to nearby camps such as the camp in Nohfelden. This does not only highlight the economic motivations behind the punitive measures, but also underscores the dominant role of the *Gauleiter* and the civil administration in the policy of penalizing families of deserters, demonstrating their capacity to adapt existing procedures to suit their own political and economic agendas.

⁹³ Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 613.

⁹⁴ See the article by Sarah Maya Vercruysse and Nina Janz, *The "long arm" of the military justice of the Wehrmacht – A case study on Luxembourgish desertions*, which will be published by De Gruyter in 2024–2025.

⁹⁵ This also concerned individuals and families who had already been resettled to Lower Silesia. Despite the difficulties and risk of repercussions for industry in Lower Silesia, the VoMi agreed with this transfer and supported the *Gauleiter's* action; Letter from Gustav Simon to *SS-Obergruppenführer* Lorenz of the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, 21 February 1944, ANLux, CdG-003; Letter from the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* to the *Reichsführer-SS*, June 1944, BArch, R 59/59.

⁹⁶ Directives from the Moselland District Personnel Office Leader (*Gaupersonalamtsleiter*) regarding the compulsory employment of Luxembourgish skilled workers within the *Gau Moselland*, 22 February 1944, ANLux, CdG-003.

4.3 Confiscation of Assets

A crucial and underexamined aspect of this policy was the imposition of economic measures on the families through the confiscation of their belongings by the DUT. This company was designated by the RKF for the collection, management and exploitation of the assets of resettled individuals within the Reich from 1939 onwards.⁹⁷ Based on the available source material, it is not possible to discern a distinction in the confiscation of belongings between families of deserters and other forcibly resettled individuals in the case of Luxembourg.⁹⁸ This topic is characterised by significant ambiguity, and the available sources often present contradictory information depending on the individuals or services providing the data and the context in which it was shared.⁹⁹

The civil administration of Luxembourg issued a total of five regulations concerning forced resettlement and the associated confiscation of assets. The “Regulation on resettlement in Luxembourg” dated 13 September 1942 and the “Regulation on the seizure of assets in the event of resettlement in Luxembourg” dated 9 January 1943 laid the foundations for these confiscations. According to these regulations, the RKF and the bodies it appointed were responsible for handling property-related tasks following the resettlements and had full authority to take control of and manage these assets. The latter regulation was specifically designed to prevent asset withdrawal by individuals anticipating resettlement.¹⁰⁰ The “Regulation on the pre-emptive rights of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood in the sale of commercial and agricultural enterprises or properties” of 9 January 1943 focused on the pre-emptive rights of the head of the civil adminis-

97 The DUT had a central office in Luxembourg but appointed local representatives in the different districts to communicate directly with local authorities. In March 1944 the company started transferring tasks to the regional district administrations (*Landrat*) and municipal mayors (*Amtsbürgermeister*) because of the evolving war situation; 1943 semi-annual report of the DUT, 10 August 1943, BArch, R 49/460; Transcript of the proposal to transfer tasks from the DUT to managing bodies of the civil administration, ANLux, CdG-003.

98 It is also important to highlight that some deserter families had their property confiscated without being subjected to forced resettlement. This was for example the case for those who were older than 65 years of age. The decision was taken by the settlement commissions during their meetings.

99 In addition, important source material on the subject, such as the post-war compensation files, is very difficult to access due to the sensitive nature of these files and the strict archival legislation in Luxembourg, which restricts access and involves lengthy procedures to obtain special permission for access. Further research is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of these disposessions. It is hoped that this research will be possible in the near future.

100 1943 semi-annual report of the DUT, 10 August 1943, BArch, R49/460.

tration, acting as the representative of the RKF, in these specific property transactions. However, the RKF had the power to delegate the tasks related to exercising this right to another body. The “Regulation for the implementation of the regulation on resettlement in Luxembourg” dated 21 April 1944, which followed the aforementioned regulation of 10 July 1943, provided practical details for the implementation of property-related measures during resettlement, including the filing of claims, the suspension of payment obligations, and legal proceedings. Interestingly, there was no specific legislation regarding the resettlement of the families themselves; instead, these instructions were communicated through internal orders. The legal framework focused primarily on implementing measures for the confiscation of property, underlying the importance of this aspect in the eyes of the civil administration.¹⁰¹

On the day of their transportation, families were allowed to take as much as was “easily transportable”, with a maximum of 50 kilograms per person.¹⁰² In order to determine the property of the families, the heads of the households were required to provide the DUT with a detailed inventory of their belongings, categorised into private assets, business operations, urban real estate and property ownership, agricultural operations, and claims and debts.¹⁰³ The company would record this information, seal the house, and take over the administration of the goods through a trust on behalf of the RKF. The items would then be appraised to determine their estimated value. Bank accounts, securities accounts or other deposits held or admin-

101 Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 17 September 1942, 277; Verordnung über die Sicherstellung von Vermögenswerten bei der Absiedlung in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 29 January 1943, 9; Verordnung über das Vorkaufsrecht des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums bei Veräußerungen von gewerblichen und landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben oder Grundstücken, 29 January 1943, 10; Verordnung über Maßnahmen gegen Wehrpflichtentziehung in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 15 July 1943, 152; Durchführungsverordnung zur Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg in: *Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg*, 21 April 1944, 67.

102 Classified report on the first meeting of the CdZ regarding the start of the *Umsiedlung*, 11 September 1942, ANLux, CdG-003.

103 In March 1944, in the district of Esch/Alzig, district leader Diehl instructed the local mayor (*Amtsbürgermeister*), Dr. Josef Kohns, to place 144 notices on the doors of deserters' families prohibiting the sale of any property. Furthermore, a comprehensive inventory of the furniture was made to ensure that no items were removed from the houses. Many of these families were later resettled; Guidelines for the resettlement commands, September 1942, ANLux, CdG-003; Letter from district leader Diehl to *Amtsbürgermeister* Kohns, 3 March 1944, ANLux, CdG-003.

istered by banks were commonly declared seized and blocked by the DUT, as indicated in an internal memo of the *General-Bank Luxemburg* in January 1943.¹⁰⁴

The administration of both movable and immovable property, including companies, houses and furniture, was closely controlled by the DUT, the RKF and Gustav Simon as "Commissioner for the tasks of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood". To ensure the continuity of confiscated enterprises of public interest, temporary administrators were appointed and made accountable.¹⁰⁵ *Ansiedler* were assigned to take over vacated enterprises and farms, and were given priority in acquiring residences, furniture or household items from those who had been displaced.¹⁰⁶ A circular dated July 1943 also stated that certain proceeds from the remaining Jewish assets were to be used for the benefit of the South Tyrolean settlers.¹⁰⁷ On the instructions of Gustav Simon, confiscated houses and buildings were also made available to civil servants or party leaders or for official party purposes, even though they were not allowed to officially acquire property of any kind without his personal approval.¹⁰⁸ Specific items, such as works of art and objects of cultural value, were to be sold to Luxembourg museums or to "politically reliable individuals in the *Gau Moselland*".¹⁰⁹ Houses not required by the administration or new settlers were handed over to the local housing office to be put on the housing market.¹¹⁰ Items that were not

104 The funds on these accounts could also be used to cover the former owners' debts, or for continuing industrial or commercial operations; Record note from the *General-Bank Luxemburg* following a visit to the DUT, ANLux, CdZ-B-0351; "Die DUT und die Umsiedlung für Luxemburg", *Luxemburger Wort* 261 (18 September 1942), 3.

105 Information sheet from the DUT Luxembourg regarding the *Absiedlung* in Luxembourg, September 1943, ANLux, CdG-003; Transcript of the proposal to transfer tasks from the DUT to managing bodies of the civil administration, ANLux, CdG-003.

106 Notes of a meeting held with *Gauleiter* Simon on 10 December 1943 with regard to resettlements in Luxembourg, 16 December 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

107 Circular of the CdZ of Luxembourg, Nr.4, July 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

108 By instruction of 12 July 1943, the *Gauleiter* forbade houses of *Abgesiedelten* from being used for official purposes as they were to remain available to cover the housing shortage; Article 2 of General Order (*Allgemeine Anordnung*) no. 13/42, 24 October 1942, ANLux CdZ-A-1423; Article 7 of General Order (*Allgemeine Anordnung*) no. 14/42, 9 November 1942, ANLux CdZ-A-1423; Article 3 of General Order (*Allgemeine Anordnung*) no. 5/1943, 9 August 1943, ANLux CdZ-A-1430.

109 Report of the meeting on 9 December 1942 with regard to resettlements in Luxembourg, 10 December 1942, ANLux, CdG-003; Marie-Madeleine Schiltges, *Die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg 1942–1945* (Ettelbruck: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1988), 20; Fabio Spirinelli, "Staging the Nation in an Intermediate Space: Cultural Policy in Luxembourg and the State Museums (1918–1974)" (PhD thesis, University of Luxembourg, 2020), 393–394.

110 Giving war wounded and bombing victims priority; letter from the *Landrat* of Esch/Alzig to district leader Adolf Schreder, 16 July 1943, ANLux, CdG-003; Notes of a meeting held with *Gaulei-*

needed, as well as certain personal objects, were returned to representatives of the resettled families – often appointed relatives acting under a power of attorney – to cover the most urgent needs.¹¹¹ In the case of the resettled family of deserter Rudi Scheuer, his grandmother, acting as the representative, managed to transport most of the furniture to her house in Niederkorn.¹¹²

Throughout the war, the National Socialist administration maintained an ambiguous stance regarding the true nature of the confiscations and the potential compensation of Luxembourgish resettled families. When looking at the general *modus operandi* of the DUT in the eastern parts of the Reich, a procedure of property compensation, also called “*Vermögensausgleich*”, was applied in the form of a restitution in kind. For each resettled family, the DUT kept a separate account of the value of the property they had to leave behind. Once a family had permanently settled in the German Reich, they would be compensated with goods confiscated from undesired local populations such as Jews or Poles. The aim was that the resettled families should live in conditions similar to those they would have lived in had they not been resettled, without the administration having to use cash resources from the Reich budget.¹¹³

In Luxembourg, the German authorities gave the impression that resettled families would also receive compensation. It used the threat of uncompensated confiscation to discourage incomplete inventories or acts of resistance.¹¹⁴ The legislation left room for interpretation stating that claims for damages could be considered if the RKF decided to do so on an individual basis.¹¹⁵ District leader Diehl also testified in June 1948 that “according to Simon’s explicit instructions, the resettled individuals were not supposed to incur any financial harm. The value of

ter Simon on 10 December 1943 with regard to resettlements in Luxembourg, 16 December 1943, ANLux, CdG-003.

111 If no representative was assigned by the resettled family, the administration of the property would immediately be assigned to the *Landrat*; Confirmation of receipt by J.W., ANLux, CdZ-G-00685; Declaration by Frau N., 25 April 1944, ANLux, CdZ-B-0352; Post-war interrogation of Ludwig Metzger, IfZ München, ZS 1222.

112 War damage file of S.-O. G., ANLux, DG2DOS-02534 file 47590.

113 Stiller, “Völkisch Capitalism”, 292–93; Robert Lewis Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy, 1939–1945 – a History of the Reich Commission for the Strengthening of Germanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 98.

114 “Die DUT und die Umsiedlung für Luxemburg”; Empty form for the declaration of assets, ANLux, CdG-003.

115 Verordnung über die Umsiedlung in Luxemburg vom 13. September 1942 in: Verordnungsblatt Chef der Zivilverwaltung Luxemburg, 17 September 1942, 277.

the confiscated items was to be credited to the resettled individuals."¹¹⁶ Ludwig Metzger, the former head of the legal and organisational department of the DUT in Luxembourg, also stated after the war that the value of the sold items of forcibly resettled Luxembourgish families was recorded in order to determine how this value would be returned to them after the war.¹¹⁷ The accuracy of these statements is questionable, as no clear records of these accounting books were ever found.¹¹⁸ The legal advisor to the post-war Sequestration Office also testified that the DUT files, which the affected families could consult after the war, did not contain detailed and truthful inventories of the confiscated assets. He concluded that there was no provision for compensation by the German administration.¹¹⁹ Internal wartime documentation of the DUT also shows that no compensation was foreseen by the end of the war. A report regarding the closure of the DUT offices in the West, dated two days after the liberation of Luxembourg on 9 September 1944, states that "a furniture compensation claim of the *Absiedler* does not exist".¹²⁰ Furthermore, a note from the company in December 1944 states that "the establishment of a proper asset registry, as originally planned, is unnecessary, as the asset equalization is not to be carried out for the time being".¹²¹

Between 1942 and 1944, the DUT amassed substantial funds in Luxembourg through the liquidation and rental of properties of forcibly resettled families. Of the multiple accounts used to transfer funds from and to the DUT Luxembourg, three could be examined in the accounting books of the civil administration in Luxembourg, revealing large transfers of money during this period. Two of these accounts were held by the *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit*, with a total revenue of 102,912 RM at the end 1942 and 1,306,697 RM a year later, coinciding with the in-

116 "Gemäß den ausdrücklichen Anordnungen Simons persönlich sollten die Abgesiedelten keinen finanziellen Schaden haben. Der Wert der beschlagnahmten Sachen sollte den Umgesiedelten gutgeschrieben werden." Quotation from the post-war interrogation of Wilhelm Diehl, 30 June 1948, ANLux, CdG-003.

117 Post-war interrogation of Ludwig Metzger, IfZ München, ZS 1222.

118 Despite numerous inquiries, the existence of these files could not be confirmed by the archivists of the Luxembourg National Archives. No trace of these files could be found in the files of the Sequestration Office, or in the war damage files.

119 Post-war declaration of lawyer E.N., 21 July 1948, ANLux, CdG-003.

120 Note regarding the closure of the DUT offices in the West, 11 September 1944, BArch, R 1702/1018.

121 "Die Aufstellung einer ordnungsgemäßen Vermögenskartei, wie sie ursprünglich vorgesehen war, erübrigt sich, da ohnehin der Vermögensausgleich bis auf weiteres nicht durchgeführt werden soll." Notes of a meeting between the DUT and members of the former branch office of Luxembourg, 1 December 1944, BArch, R 1702/1018.

creasing pace of resettlements.¹²² According to Stiller, the DUT's total balance was approximately 245 million RM at the end of 1942 and 420 million RM at the end of 1943.¹²³ Another bank account, numbered 447785 at the *General-Bank Luxemburg*, contained 200,000 RM in early August 1944, but was almost entirely emptied a few days before the arrival of the Allied forces.¹²⁴ The funds were transferred to a bank account in Mühlhausen in Thuringia, to which the Luxembourg and Strasbourg offices of the DUT had been transferred.¹²⁵ The subsequent destination and use of these financial resources, as well as the role of the other bank accounts, require further investigation for clarification (Fig.3).

122 Unfortunately, the account statements for the year 1944 could not be located; Account statements from 1943 for account numbers 7509 and 7523 belonging to the DUT at the *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit*, ANLux, FIN-18143; Account statements from 1942 for account numbers 7509 and 7523 belonging to the DUT at the *Bank der Deutschen Arbeit*, ANLux, FIN-18266.

123 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 197.

124 Account statements from July-September 1944 for account number 44785 belonging to the DUT at the *General-Bank Luxemburg*, ANLux, SEQDOS-0064 no. 1644.

125 At the end of the Summer of 1943, the central accounting office of the DUT had moved from Berlin to Mühlhausen; Correspondence between the DUT central accounting office and the DUT branch in Luxembourg, August-September 1943, BArch, R 1702/155.

Account nr.	Account name	Initial communication date
216	<i>Postcheckkonto</i>	5.11.1942
30114 / Lux: 7509	<i>Bank der Deutschen Arbeit, Luxemburg, Laufendes Kontos (7509)</i>	5.11.1942
30115 / Lux: 7523	<i>Bank der Deutschen Arbeit, Luxemburg, Sonderkonto (7523) / für Mietzahlungen</i>	5.11.1942
5029	<i>Verrechnungskonto Strassburg bei der Verbindungsstelle Luxemburg</i>	5.11.1942
675	<i>Grundstückverwaltungskonto. Absiedlung Luxemburg (Strassburg)</i>	17.11.1942
88010	<i>Erlöskonto Luxemburg</i>	20.11.1942
88011	<i>Nahrungs- und Genussmittel, Luxemburg</i>	20.11.1942
88012	<i>Garten- und landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse, Luxemburg</i>	20.11.1942
88013	<i>Viehverkauf, Luxemburg</i>	20.11.1942
88014	<i>Möbel, Hausrat und Sonstiges, Luxemburg</i>	20.11.1942
5033	<i>Verrechnungskonto Berlin bei der Geschäftsstelle Luxemburg</i>	17.12.1942
5125	<i>Verrechnungskonto Luxemburg bei der Zentrale Berlin</i>	17.12.1942
6448	<i>Transportspesen, Lagermiete, Verpackungsmaterial und sonstige Kosten w/ Absiedlung Luxemburg</i>	17.12.1942
6637	<i>Schätzungs- und Bewertungskosten Luxemburg w/ Ferdinand Schumann</i>	17.12.1942
219	<i>Postscheckkonto Luxemburg / Sonderkonto Grundstücksverwaltung</i>	21.01.1943
6449	<i>Umzugskosten wegen Absiedler Luxemburg // Übernommene Kosten für Dritte</i>	2.03.1943
6638	<i>Schätzungs-Bewertungskosten Luxemburg w/ Architekt Gabel</i>	2.03.1943
6639	<i>Schätzungs-Bewertungskosten Luxemburg w/ Johann Schwartz</i>	2.03.1943
6640	<i>Schätzungs-Bewertungskosten Luxemburg w/ Karl Ruppert</i>	2.03.1943
6450	<i>Umzugskosten für Absiedler aus Luxemburg</i>	12.03.1943
6710	<i>Sammelkonto für Verwertung landwirtschaftlicher Objekte Luxemburg</i>	11.05.1943
6456	<i>Versicherungsspesen und andere Kosten wegen kommissarisch verwalteter Betriebe Luxemburg</i>	11.05.1943
10119	<i>Postscheck-Konto Luxemburg</i>	N/A
822	<i>Postscheck-Konto für Mietzahlungen Luxemburg</i>	N/A
4478	<i>Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhand-Gesellschaft G.m.b.H. Nebenstelle Luxemburg (General-Bank Luxemburg)</i>	N/A

Fig. 3: Table of DUT bank accounts linked to the forced resettlements in Luxembourg. (BARch, R 1702/155; ANLux, SEQDOS-0064, n°1644).¹²⁶

¹²⁶ These bank accounts were communicated by the DUT's central accounting office in Berlin to the branch in Luxembourg between 1942–1943. Account 6449 was previously reported as being designated for “*Transportwesen, Lagermiete, Verpackungsmaterial und sonstige kosten w/Absiedlung Elsass*”. It remains uncertain whether this account truly pertains to Luxembourg or if this was an error. Apart from the three investigated accounts, the others could not be subjected to further examination in this study.

5 Conclusion

The consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of Luxembourgish soldiers during the occupation of the country had profound and enduring consequences. As highlighted by Norbert Haase, over the course of the war, the measures taken by the Nazi civil authorities, the Wehrmacht, the Gestapo, and the police intertwined to discipline the population.¹²⁷ In Luxembourg – as in other occupied regions such as Alsace, Lorraine, South Tyrol, Lower Styria and Upper Carniola – the forced resettlement and asset confiscation of certain families emerged as potent tools wielded by the occupying forces to assert dominance, instil fear, and undermine resistance from the ethnic German population.¹²⁸ They were also used as threats and means of pressure to secure loyalty from soldiers, relying on the deterrent effect of exemplified cases.¹²⁹ With their families serving as hostages of the state, deserters were compelled to (re)consider their actions, thereby showing the complex interplay between actions occurring in the military sphere and their repercussions within society.¹³⁰ The extent to which this deterrent strategy actually influenced soldiers remains unverifiable.

The sanctions imposed on the families of deserters were mainly the responsibility of civilian authorities, ranging from those in Berlin to the local administrations in Luxembourg. However, these authorities had varying motivations and exerted different levels of influence on the process. The civil administration in Luxembourg played a central role and exercised considerable authority over the implementation of the measures. It acted as an overseer and instigator, issuing directives, while the RKF carried out the resettlements and confiscations on its behalf.¹³¹ Both the civil administration and the RKF benefited from this, but pursued distinct objectives and interests. The politically unreliable individuals were removed from Luxembourg and replaced by more reliable ethnic Germans, who were intended to influence the local communities and strengthen the border area. At the same time, the resettled Luxembourgers, due to their favourable ethnicity, were “reused” in other regions of the Reich as a valuable labour force. These actions supported the *Gauleiter*’s efforts

127 Norbert Haase, “Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges”, in *Terror nach Innen. Verbrechen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, edited by Cord Arendes, Edgar Wolf- rum and Jörg Ziedler, Dachauer Symposien zur Zeitgeschichte 6 (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2006), 82.

128 Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, 479.

129 Salzig, *Die Sippenhaft als Repressionsmassnahme des nationalsozialistischen Regimes*, 492.

130 Haase, “Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges”, 93.

131 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 613.

towards “pacification” and Germanisation, as well as the RKF’s racial and settlement policies in line with the New Order framework, and its aim to increase its influence in the Western regions.¹³² Although both bodies worked together, it can be concluded that the measures were not driven by a centrally directed German settlement policy, but were more closely linked to *Gauleiter* Simon’s regional policy of Germanisation and Nazification of the country. The alignment with Stiller’s observations in Lorraine further supports this understanding.¹³³ Furthermore, the study shows that considerable power was held at the regional and local levels, including district and local group leaders, as well as representatives of the industry, who determined which families were to be resettled and in what numbers. In practice, different, at times conflicting logics were at play, leading to a discrepancy between the official directives and the realities on the ground.

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¹³² Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 605; Haase, “Justizterror in der Wehrmacht am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges”, 93.

¹³³ Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 612.

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CHAPTER 4: ENTRE VOLONTÉ ET RÉALITÉ - LA RECHERCHE SUR LA SECONDE GUERRE MONDIALE AU LUXEMBOURG ET L'ACCÈS AUX SOURCES

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Contribution statement: This article grew out of the multiple discussions between the two authors concerning the numerous challenges and obstacles they encountered in accessing Luxembourgish sources for their respective doctoral research projects. Both authors played an important role in the initial conceptual reflections. Sarah Maya Vercruysse took the lead and conducted the research. She reviewed and analysed the (inter)national literature and source material. Based on her findings, she wrote a first draft of the article. She also undertook the final editing. Blandine Landau translated the article from English to French, implemented structural improvements and enriched the text with additional findings. She also wrote the abstract and conclusion.

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Entre volonté et réalité

La recherche sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg et l'accès aux sources

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Résumé

Partant du cas de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et des difficultés constatées dans l'accès à ces archives depuis plusieurs décennies au Luxembourg, l'article cherche à en comprendre les causes alors que le contexte semble très favorable au développement de la recherche sur ce sujet. L'examen d'études et de publications récentes ainsi que la mise en perspective avec le contexte international révèlent la relation complexe de la société luxembourgeoise avec cette période, et la nécessité d'une réflexion plus large sur le rôle des acteurs de la recherche.

Mots-clés : Deuxième Guerre mondiale, recherche historique, narratif national, accès aux archives, Histoire et Mémoire

Introduction

Le 30 août 2023 Benoît Majerus, Professeur d'Histoire Européenne au *Center for Contemporary and Digital History* (C²DH) de l'Université du Luxembourg publiait un article intitulé « Qu'est-ce que les Archives Nationales ont-elles à cacher? » (Majerus 2023). Il y dénonçait la nouvelle procédure mise en œuvre pour la consultation des dossiers dont la date de communicabilité n'était pas encore venue à échéance et pour lesquelles une demande de dérogation avait été accordée au chercheur. Depuis le début de l'année, sans que cela ait été fait suite à une annonce de la part de l'institution publique ou à une modification de la législation concernant l'accès aux archives, les Archives Nationales du Luxembourg avaient en effet commencé à « anonymiser » les documents avant leur communication en « caviardant » des portions significatives, les rendant inutilisables. Cette procédure s'accompagnait d'une surveillance étroite lors de la consultation. Benoît Majerus fit part de sa préoccupation alors qu'en vingt-cinq ans de travail sur des sujets sensibles d'Histoire contemporaine dans divers pays, il n'avait jamais subi de telles atteintes à l'autonomie de la recherche¹.

Cet exemple est le dernier d'une longue série et témoigne de la situation complexe dans laquelle se trouvent les personnes qui souhaitent travailler sur des questions d'Histoire contemporaine au Luxembourg depuis plusieurs décennies. Cette situation est d'autant plus étonnante que l'on observe simultanément une augmentation des financements public accordés aux questions d'Histoire contemporaine, liées notamment à la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Que penser de cette dichotomie entre le soutien affiché à la recherche historique

et les difficultés expérimentées par les acteurs de celle-ci, en particulier lorsque leurs travaux visent à interroger le narratif national (Majerus 2023)?

Prenant pour objet d'étude la recherche sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale, cet article vise à aborder la question de la relation entre la société luxembourgeoise contemporaine et son passé récent, et ainsi interroger la place de la recherche historique sur cette période au Grand-Duché. Ce type de questionnement est actuellement très présent dans les débats européens, la place relative des experts et des acteurs publics dans les processus de mémorialisation ainsi que la différence entre Histoire et Mémoire ayant notamment fait l'objet d'études récentes (Bevernage et Raphael 2023; Echternkamp et Martens 2010; Gensburger 2023; Rouso 2012).

L'article vise à susciter une réflexion permettant de dépasser le clivage observé entre aspirations et réalité pratique. Il se fondera sur une évaluation large des problématiques mises en lumière aussi bien dans les travaux récents menés sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg que dans les publications émanant du gouvernement, les débats parlementaires, les articles de journaux et d'autres médias depuis les années 1970, plus particulièrement au cours des deux dernières décennies. Les éléments émergents, bien que dans une certaine mesure propres à la situation du Grand-Duché, seront mis en perspective dans un contexte plus global où les problématiques liées à l'accès aux sources et la recherche sur les questions sensibles trouveront un écho éclairant.

Etudier la Seconde Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg : un défi ?

Un narratif national bien ancré et peu nuancé

Jusque dans les années 1970, les manuels scolaires du Grand-Duché ne présentaient la Seconde Guerre mondiale que sous l'angle de la nation résistante face à l'invasion étrangère, sans mention des persécutions à l'encontre des minorités – notamment les Juifs – ni de la collaboration (Péporté et al. 2010 : 77-78). Ceci était lié à la mise en place dans l'immédiate après-guerre au Luxembourg, comme dans de nombreux pays d'Europe, d'un récit insistant sur l'opposition unifiée de la société à l'Allemagne nazie, un récit visant à présenter le Luxembourg comme « une nation de martyrs et de victimes », rassemblée derrière la figure tutélaire de la Grande-Duchesse Charlotte (Lagrou 1999 : 2; Majerus 2012 : 24). Ce narratif servit de fondement à la reconstruction de l'identité et de la souveraineté du pays durant l'après-guerre (Kesteloot 2010 : 8; Scuto 2006 : 501). L'attention était focalisée sur les figures héroïsées dont les expériences étaient seules considérées comme « légitimes », tandis que les autres aspects – tels que la collaboration, les persécutions raciales ou ce que Benoît Majerus nomme « les nombreuses zones grises qui existèrent durant l'Occupation » – étaient au mieux omis, au pire dissimulées (Majerus 2012 : 36-37). Cela s'observe de façon nette dans la politique mémorielle menée alors – via les monuments et les commémorations –, les dédicaces à certaines catégories de victimes illustrant également l'émergence d'une concurrence mémorielle propre au Luxembourg (Majerus 2012 : 28)². Car si en France la période 1970-1990 voit l'affirmation de l'idée du « devoir de mémoire », principalement liée à la Shoah, au Luxembourg elle fut surtout marquée par la lutte des associations d'« enrôlés de force » pour la reconnaissance de leur expérience de la guerre et son inscription dans le narratif national. Le paysage mémoriel issu de ces débats imprègne encore aujourd'hui une grande partie de la vie publique, comme en témoigne cette question parlementaire posée le 15 décembre 2022:

« Au fil du temps, de moins en moins de témoins de la Seconde Guerre mondiale peuvent raconter leur expérience, dire quelle fut la situation de la population luxembourgeoise, ce que furent le recrutement forcé, la Résistance³. »

Les sujets autres que la Résistance et l'« enrôlement de force » intéressent peu et les études de ces derniers se basent essentiellement sur les récits des témoins de l'époque. Gilbert Trausch, ancien directeur de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Luxembourg et historien renommé, explique ainsi cette frilosité en 1975 : « Les historiens luxembourgeois ont toujours éprouvé de fortes réticences à étudier les problèmes du passé récent » (Trausch 1975 : 7). Certains s'y risquent pourtant.

Au début des années 1980, déplorant qu'« encore et encore, l'expérience personnelle occupe le devant de la scène et empêche la distance critique et l'analyse scientifique » (Dostert 1985 : 9), Paul Dostert rédige sa thèse de doctorat qui est la première étude à aborder aussi bien la résistance que la collaboration et à recourir aux archives allemandes. Il dresse de la période un tableau beaucoup plus complexe et nuancé que précédemment, ce qui suscite des réactions fort vives (Koch-Kent 1985 : 6; Wehenkel 1988 : 4-5; Molitor 1988 : 4; Thomas 2015). Il ne permet cependant pas d'ouvrir de grand débat sur la période, l'impact de cet ouvrage massif ayant plutôt « pour conséquence d'inhiber la recherche sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale » (Artuso 2013 : 29) pendant plusieurs décennies. Parallèlement, hors des milieux académiques, des voix dissidentes tentent de s'élever dont celle de Paul Cerf, « précurseur d'une recherche moins docile sur le problème juif au Luxembourg durant la période nazie » (Marx 2015). Mais ses publications, constituant un pavé jeté « dans la mare tranquille d'une bonne conscience collectivement adoptée », ne sont perçues que comme « la manifestation paranoïaque d'un journaliste dénué de toute culture historique, en mal de célébrité » (Marx 2015). Ceux dont les travaux remettent en question le narratif national opèrent ainsi dans ce que Denis Scuto qualifie encore en 2006 de « champ de mines » (Scuto 2006 : 508). Le « rapport Artuso » sur la responsabilité des autorités luxembourgeoises dans les persécutions anti-juives en 2015 (Bumb 2015; Barthel 2015; « Die Debatte um den Artuso-Bericht » 2015), les révélations sur l'implication du 101^e bataillon de réserve de la police allemande - auquel appartenaient des luxembourgeois - dans l'assassinat de Juifs en Pologne en 2019 (Artuso 2020), ou plus récemment les travaux d'Elisabeth Wingerter sur l'épuration dans la Justice dans l'immédiate après-guerre (Wingerter 2021) suscitent ainsi de vives réactions.

En dépit de ces difficultés, ces publications témoignent de l'évolution depuis la fin des années 2000 du nombre et du profil des personnes qui mettent en question ce narratif national en se basant sur les sources et non sur les récits des figures tutélaires. Or plusieurs d'entre elles, y compris les membres de commissions missionnées par le gouvernement, se font l'écho de procédures de demandes de consultation longues et complexes, pénalisant leurs recherches (Artuso 2015 : 17-21). Qu'en est-il ?

Quid de l'accès aux sources ?

Avant l'entrée en vigueur de la loi sur l'archivage de 2018, la situation était globalement la même au Grand-Duché depuis les années 1970⁴. Les ministères, les autorités judiciaires, les responsables des archives ou les associations agissaient comme des « gardiens », restreignant ou facilitant l'accès aux sources, ce qui avait une influence non négligeable sur la production

académique. Dans sa thèse de doctorat, l'historien Emile Krier explique ainsi s'être vu refusé l'accès à certains dossiers des Affaires Etrangères sur la base « d'une justification extrêmement fragile » (Krier 1978 : 20). Cette influence combinée à celle des réseaux personnels impactait grandement la faisabilité de certains projets de recherche (Thomas 2017; Artuso 2013 : 28; Artuso 2017 : 343). Dans sa thèse de doctorat, Eva Maria Klos critiqua ainsi vertement les pratiques de contrôle d'accès à l'information opérées par les associations des « enrôlés de force » au Luxembourg (Klos 2017 : 43-44).

Les manques et la dispersion des documents posent également problème. Bien que cette question ne soit pas propre au Luxembourg, le Grand-Duché présente ici encore certaines spécificités, dues à l'absence jusqu'en 2018 d'une législation visant à la standardisation et la centralisation de la gestion des fonds (Artuso 2015 : 18; Scuto 2018). Jusqu'à cette date il n'était en effet pas légalement requis des administrations du Grand-Duché qu'elles versassent leurs archives aux Archives Nationales. Les conséquences de ce choix furent mises en avant par Vincent Artuso dans son rapport en 2015, et plus encore par la conservatrice des collections contemporaines aux Archives Nationales au cours de la discussion parlementaire qui suivit la publication dudit rapport (Artuso 2015 : 18)⁵. Elle confirma que les dossiers d'épuration étaient encore en main privée, détenus par les avocats et procureurs qui avaient suivi ces affaires, menant à des pertes significatives soulignées par Elisabeth Wingerter dans sa thèse (Thomas 2021; Wingerter 2021 : 20-21). Sans pouvoir remédier à la perte des dossiers disparus, la loi de 2018 permit au moins d'établir un cadre visant à la professionnalisation et la transparence de la gestion des archives produites par les institutions publiques du pays. Mais elle s'accompagna d'une complexification de certaines procédures de consultation, du fait notamment d'une interprétation très stricte de cette législation, ainsi que du Règlement Général sur la Protection des Données (RGPD) (Caregari 2018)⁶. Les difficultés apparurent dès la mise en application de la loi, comme l'expliqua Denis Scuto :

« La nouvelle période de protection légale de 75 ans pour les documents publics contenant des informations personnelles entraîne que, pour les dossiers de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, qui étaient jusqu'à présent directement disponibles, une procédure bureaucratique est désormais nécessaire, au cours de laquelle les archives doivent demander l'autorisation des producteurs, par exemple les ministères. Le résultat est que non seulement les chercheurs, mais aussi les archivistes et les fonctionnaires des ministères perdent leur temps avec beaucoup de paperasse. [...] Il ne peut pas être que, en tant que chercheur, j'ai plus facilement accès à des documents historiques à Berlin, à Paris et à Washington qu'au Luxembourg » (Scuto 2018).

Les conséquences de ces nouvelles procédures, particulièrement chronophages, furent lourdement ressenties par les chercheurs du nouvellement créé « Centre pour l'Histoire Contemporaine et Digitale » (*Centre for Contemporary and Digital History*) de l'Université du Luxembourg (Bucher 2023a; Venken 2024 : 15). Comment en effet mener des projets portant sur la période contemporaine alors que, comme le déplorait récemment le directeur du centre de recherche Andreas Fickers, « Les délais de protection fixés par la loi luxembourgeoise sont de loin les plus longs comparés au reste de l'Europe »⁷?

Les universitaires ne furent pas les seuls touchés. En 2019 François Heisbourg, *Senior adviser* pour l'Europe de l'*International Institute for Strategic Studies* (IISS) et auteur de l'ouvrage *Cet*

étrange Nazi qui sauva mon père, critiquait ainsi sévèrement les difficultés d'accès aux sources au Luxembourg:

« Silence impressionnant aussi des archives luxembourgeoises, qui m'a d'autant plus étonné, du moins au premier abord, que les fonds français concernant l'Alsace et la Lorraine ne connaissent pas le même degré de fermeture. [...] Le Luxembourg officiel continue apparemment de vivre sa version du « passé qui ne passe pas », pour reprendre la formule qu'appliquait Henry Rousso à la France de Vichy il y a déjà quelques dizaines d'années. Ces silences appellent explication, tant par souci de vérité historique que pour comprendre ce qu'ils nous disent sur l'état actuel de nos sociétés façonnées par les guerres du XX^e siècle en Europe » (Heisbourg 2019 : 16-17).

L'accès aux sources contemporaines au Luxembourg fait toujours l'objet de débats intenses, dans les milieux de la recherche autant que dans les cercles politiques ou auprès du grand public. Le journaliste Luc Caregari ainsi que plusieurs parlementaires, aussi bien du côté de la majorité que de l'opposition, se sont récemment fait l'écho de ces critiques grandissantes (Caregari 2020a; Caregari 2020b), de même que le député Ben Fayot qui rappelle que⁸ :

« [P]our construire la mémoire du pays en y engageant des gens intelligents et responsables, il faut [que l'État] cesse de se méfier d'eux par une politique néfaste de l'archivage public. Dans un État moderne, c'est la confiance et la transparence qui devraient mener à un large accès intelligemment réglé aux archives publiques » (Fayot 2024).

S'il est normal qu'un certain décalage sépare les demandes des chercheurs et les obligations réglementaires des archivistes, la centralité qu'occupe l'accès aux archives dans la pratique de ces deux professions ainsi que leur souci commun de l'intérêt public et leurs déontologies professionnelles devraient permettre leur rapprochement⁹. Ce débat est essentiel car comme le soulignait Fabio Spirinelli en 2017 :

« Même si les sources interdites, inaccessibles ou manquantes et les mythes persistants peuvent ralentir la recherche, les historiens doivent continuer à étudier le passé. (...) Ce n'est que par l'analyse critique qu'au moins certaines parties de la Seconde Guerre mondiale restées dans l'ombre pourront être éclairées » (Spirinelli 2017).

L'impact du degré d'ouverture des fonds d'archives n'est plus à démontrer, aussi bien pour la recherche que pour le grand public (Janz 2022; Ministère de la Culture 2023; von Ossel 2021; Soucheyre 2021)¹⁰. Il convient alors de comprendre les raisons de ces blocages afin, peut-être, d'y apporter une solution.

Hypothèses concernant les raisons des blocages

Une « exception nationale » ou une « singularité nationale » ?

La situation luxembourgeoise n'est pas un phénomène isolé. Elle entre en résonance avec les évolutions transnationales et les discussions qui au cours des dernières décennies ont trouvé écho aussi bien dans les études des politiques de mémoire que dans l'analyse des narratifs

nationaux ou les questions relatives à l'accessibilité des archives (Berger 2013; Bevernage et Wouters 2018; Gensburger et Lefranc 2020).

En Belgique, historiens et archivistes se sont mobilisés en 2006 afin qu'une différence soit clairement établie entre recherche historique et politique de mémoire, appelant au soutien politique d'une recherche historique indépendante et à une réforme législative afin de rendre les archives accessibles (Aerts 2021; « Geschiedenis is meer dan herinneren » 2006; « Pléthore de mémoire » 2006; Wouters 2019).

En France, des débats intenses ont porté sur la difficulté d'accès aux archives sensibles de l'État, soulignant l'importance de ces questions dans une démocratie (Combe 2001; Combe 2013; Duclert 2008). Ces débats, ouverts en 1994 par la publication du livre de Sonia Combe au titre provocateur *Archives interdites : les peurs françaises face à l'histoire contemporaine* (Combe 1994), furent notamment marqués par les interventions de François Hartog et de Jacques Derrida, ce dernier rappelant que « Nul pouvoir politique sans contrôle de l'archive, sinon de la mémoire » (Derrida 1995 : 15 ; Hartog 2000 : 47). La décision en 2015 de permettre que soient « librement consultées (...) des archives publiques relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale » marqua en cela une évolution significative, même si la question reste encore aujourd'hui problématique (Robert 2020; Orsini 2020; « Nous dénonçons une restriction » 2020)¹¹. Comment se positionne le Luxembourg face à ces évolutions ?

Les nations aiment souvent à se percevoir en tant qu'« exception nationale » pour reprendre l'expression d'Henry Rousso, à se penser comme des entités aux trajectoires uniques et distinctes. Or Rousso explique qu'il serait plus clair de faire la distinction entre la « singularité », l'« exemplarité » et l'« exceptionnalité » d'une nation (Rousso 2016 : 234 et 238). Si l'on se penche sur la « singularité nationale » du rapport du Luxembourg à la période de la Seconde Guerre mondiale – un concept qui recouvre à la fois son unicité et ses similitudes avec d'autres pays – celle-ci présente des liens forts avec un contexte plus large, transnational. Qu'il s'agisse de la création d'instituts dédiés à l'histoire contemporaine, de l'établissement d'une commission d'enquête missionnée par l'État concernant l'implication des autorités dans la persécution des personnes considérées comme juives, ou de la reconnaissance par les représentants de l'État de la responsabilité de ce dernier dans la persécution (INA-Institut national de l'audiovisuel 1995; CegeSoma 2007), le Luxembourg semble suivre un parcours similaire à celui de ses voisins¹².

Mais une analyse détaillée montre que le Luxembourg possède également des caractéristiques propres, liées aux modalités de construction de l'identité du pays, aux coutumes locales, à des circonstances particulières. Ainsi l'inscription du Luxembourg dans les grandes tendances transnationales s'opère souvent avec un certain retard, comme le souligne en 2000 Ben Fayot dans l'exposé des motifs de la proposition de loi portant création d'une commission d'étude sur les spoliations des Juifs du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg durant l'occupation nazie, citant les exemples de commissions de ce type créées en France et en Belgique¹³.

Quel est concrètement l'impact de cette « singularité nationale » sur les modalités d'accès aux sources ?

Changements et résistances

En 2003 il fut décidé de créer « une université internationale et multilingue centrée sur la recherche » au Luxembourg, destinée à « faire revenir le potentiel intellectuel dans le pays et d'offrir un enseignement à tous ceux qui ne peuvent pas aller étudier à l'étranger » (Université du Luxembourg s.d.). Si l'histoire contemporaine ne faisait pas partie de ses premiers axes de développement, la nécessité d'y étudier la Seconde Guerre mondiale fut soulignée dès le début par Renée Wagener, historienne et députée qui déposa à la Chambre plusieurs motions à ce sujet, insistant notamment sur le fait « qu'il est du devoir de l'État luxembourgeois de se donner les instruments pour une recherche aussi complète et large que possible sur la 2^e Guerre mondiale, qui ne se limite pas au fait de la Résistance »¹⁴. C'est finalement sous l'influence d'événements extérieurs que sa demande fut entendue.

En 2012, réagissant aux excuses présentées par la Belgique à la communauté juive pour la responsabilité du pays dans la Shoah (« Martyr juif » 2012), plusieurs personnalités publiques Luxembourgeoises exprimèrent la nécessité de « questionner le récit de la dernière guerre tel qu'il est propagé depuis des décennies par la mémoire et l'histoire officielles » (Artuso 2012). En mars 2013, le gouvernement chargea donc l'Université d'étudier l'éventuelle implication des autorités luxembourgeoise dans les persécutions antijuives, peu de temps avant que des élections législatives anticipées n'amènent au pouvoir une nouvelle majorité. Celle-ci souhaitait mettre en œuvre une politique de réformes y compris dans l'accès à l'information, et insistait sur le fait que l'Université devait « s'impliquer dans la réflexion sur les mutations de la société luxembourgeoise » (Service information et presse du gouvernement 2013 : 117). Dans le cas spécifique de l'Histoire contemporaine le nouveau gouvernement, conscient qu'« il importe de différencier dans le cadre institutionnel luxembourgeois entre, d'un côté, la recherche historique et, de l'autre, le devoir de mémoire », annonça la création d'un « Institut d'Histoire du temps présent » ayant « pour mission une recherche scientifique, critique et objective sur notre histoire contemporaine, objet bien différent d'un centre/comité du souvenir sur la résistance et les victimes du nazisme » (Service information et presse du gouvernement 2013 : 142). L'Institut d'Histoire du temps présent – intégré à l'Université la même année sous le nom susmentionné de *Center for Contemporary and Digital History* - et le Comité pour la Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale furent ainsi créés en 2016¹⁵. A partir de 2017, le *Center for Contemporary and Digital History* a ainsi pour objectif de « créer une plateforme permettant à la fois une discussion critique et la recherche académique sur les questions liées à l'histoire contemporaine du Luxembourg dans une perspective transnationale » alors que des représentants des différents groupes de victimes sont réunis dans l'entité distincte que constitue le Comité pour la Mémoire¹⁶.

Ces démarches témoignaient de changements profonds dans la société luxembourgeoise, au même titre que l'inscription dans la loi de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État en 2018¹⁷. La Seconde Guerre mondiale fait alors l'objet d'un intérêt renouvelé, soutenu par le Fonds National pour la Recherche qui en 2019 définit « l'histoire contemporaine, les études mémorielles et l'histoire publique » comme l'une des priorités pour la recherche au Grand-Duché (Fonds National pour la Recherche 2019)¹⁸. Vincent Artuso évoque ainsi ces changements :

« L'intérêt accru pour la collaboration n'est pas dû au fait que notre époque serait plus morale, nos historiens plus courageux ou nos hommes politiques plus conscients de

leurs responsabilités historiques, mais parce que depuis une vingtaine d'années nous sommes en train de changer – pour reprendre un concept foucaldien – d'épistémè. C'est-à-dire que notre manière de nous représenter le monde et d'ordonner les connaissances que nous produisons à son sujet n'est plus la même » (Artuso 2017 : 346).

Si l'on constate effectivement un changement d'épistémè, il est cependant fondamental de le mettre en rapport avec le concept plus large du « régime d'historicité » développé par François Hartog (2003) – définissant le rapport qu'une société entretient avec son passé, à la façon dont elle traite ce passé et l'utilise (Hartog 2003 : XVII et 9; Rouso 2012 : 17-18) - car les évolutions ne se font pas au même rythme dans tous les milieux et les tensions entre les différentes approches s'observent ainsi nettement lors des débats portant sur la proposition de loi sur l'archivage, en 2015.

Soumise dans un contexte apparemment très favorable, la proposition de loi sur l'archivage avait notamment pour but de raccourcir les délais de communicabilité, insistant sur le fait qu'« une réduction du délai de communication par rapport aux délais en vigueur dans les pays voisins constitue sans doute un avantage comparatif pour le Luxembourg comme lieu de recherche historique »¹⁹. Mais à l'issue des débats parlementaires ces grandes ambitions avaient disparu, sans que les utilisateurs et notamment les chercheurs – représentants de la nouvelle épistémè - n'aient été consultés (Scuto 2018).

Outre les questions liées au texte proprement dit, nous avons vu que les modalités de consultation des documents posent également problème. Or celles-ci sont liées à l'appréciation de l'entité versante et du Directeur des Archives Nationales, il ne s'agit donc pas ici d'« Observer la loi » mais d'« Interpréter la loi », une différence dont les implications ne sont pas anodines.²⁰

Le décalage entre l'idée exprimée par le législateur et l'application de la loi est une notion ancienne, étudiée notamment par Michael Lipsky qui recourt pour l'expliquer au concept de « bureaucratie de proximité » (*street-level bureaucracy*) (Lipsky 1980). Les travaux du sociologue américain sur le pouvoir discrétionnaire des agents administratifs s'avèrent fort éclairant pour expliquer les modalités de mise en œuvre de la loi sur l'archivage, quel sens donner à leurs choix ? S'agit-il d'une affirmation de leur pouvoir discrétionnaire ou de la volonté – consciente ou non – de protéger une certaine idée de l'histoire nationale (Evans et Harris 2004; Spire 2008) ?

Dans un petit pays comme le Luxembourg, où tout le monde se connaît, il est compréhensible que la remise en question d'un récit considéré comme une vérité historique, ou plus précisément le ternissement de la réputation de personnes proches, soient fort mal perçus (Trausch 1975 : 7 ; Dostert 198 : 9)²¹. Cet argument était déjà présent lors des débats de 2015 et bien que dans le cas de la Seconde Guerre mondiale les personnes concernées soient dans leur très grande majorité décédées, il est fort possible qu'il pèse dans la prise de décision de certains agents chargés de définir ce qui constitue une « atteinte excessive à la vie privée »²².

Il est à ce titre particulièrement éclairant de constater que sur la page des Archives Nationales du Luxembourg présentant leurs missions fondamentales, celles-ci sont définies ainsi :

« Les Archives nationales de Luxembourg jouent un rôle clé dans la conservation et la communication d'archives publiques et privées ainsi que dans la gestion de l'information au sein de l'État. Ce travail est essentiel pour le maintien de la mémoire du pays, pour une société plus transparente et plus démocratique et pour le bon fonctionnement des organisations publiques » (Archives Nationales du Luxembourg s.d.).

Peut-être serait-il intéressant d'envisager qu'outre « le maintien de la mémoire du pays » ce service doive aussi permettre l'étude critique de son histoire, tout aussi utile pour la construction d'« une société plus transparente et plus démocratique » (Archives Nationales du Luxembourg s.d.)?

Les tensions entre Mémoire – une appréciation plus personnelle et émotionnelle du passé – et Histoire – qui implique une appréciation objective, critique et analytique, des événements – sont un sujet d'étude fréquent aujourd'hui (Joutard 2015 : 16; Gensburger et Lefranc 2023). Le poids de la Mémoire, et notamment du narratif du « Luxembourg résistant » jusque dans les années 2010, pourrait expliquer les difficultés auxquelles ont à faire face ceux et celles qui tentent par leurs recherches de le mettre en question. Il importe donc d'insister sur l'indépendance de la recherche historique et de la soutenir, car comme l'écrivent Berber Bevernage et Lutz Raphael, « [p]aradoxalement, un intérêt sociétal accru pour le passé semble coïncider avec une situation dans laquelle l'expertise historique académique conventionnelle subit d'intenses pressions » (Bevernage et Raphael 2023 : 7).

CONCLUSION

La situation du Luxembourg a énormément évolué au cours de la dernière décennie, y compris dans l'historiographie de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Le passage d'un narratif national(iste) unificateur à une histoire aux multiples facettes s'illustre notamment dans la création récente de la « 50-faces box » :

« Outil didactique qui présente 50 biographies de guerre (...), permet d'aborder différentes thématiques liées à l'expérience la 2e Guerre mondiale, dans une perspective luxembourgeoise (...) [et] ouvre également le débat sur les différentes « Mémoires » » (Zentrum fir politesch Bildung s.d.).

Mais cette évolution est loin de s'opérer dans un contexte apaisé et les tensions sont toujours vives, aussi bien entre les différentes « Mémoires » qu'entre les tenants du narratif national et ceux souhaitant y apporter un regard critique²³.

Ceci explique sans doute qu'en dépit de progrès importants, les historiens du pays continuent à écrire que l'impact de leurs travaux reste limité et que l'étude de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et de ses conséquences reste une tâche ardue au Luxembourg (Péporté et al. 2010 : 124; Majerus 2012 : 32; Scuto 2020; Artuso 2020; Brüll 2021). L'accès aux sources contemporaines en particulier y reste un sujet complexe, au point que cette problématique semble parfois focaliser l'attention au détriment des questions de fond (Fayot 2024; Archives Nationales du Luxembourg et al. 2024). Or c'est justement pour pouvoir avancer sur le fond qu'il serait nécessaire d'envisager certaines évolutions, notamment dans les modalités d'accès aux archives.

Le 6 février 2024 le ministère de la Culture a lancé une grande « Consultation publique relative à la loi modifiée du 17 août 2018 relative à l'archivage (...) ayant pour objet d'élucider la question de la nécessité d'une adaptation de la loi précitée » (« Consultation publique relative à la loi » 2024)²⁴. Les résultats n'ont pas encore été publiés, mais cette initiative témoigne d'une prise de conscience de cette problématique.

La résistance au questionnement du narratif national s'observe dans de nombreux pays d'Europe de l'Ouest parallèlement à la montée de tendances xénophobes et nationalistes, notamment en France où Éric Zemmour s'érige en « redresseur de torts d'une histoire nationale « déconstruite » par des universitaires « idéologues » » (Jahan 2022 : 154). Ce contexte met en lumière l'importance du travail des historiens et la nécessité de permettre l'accès direct du public aux sources afin d'en favoriser l'étude critique. L'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe a justement approuvé une résolution en ce sens le 7 mars 2024, alors que l'on observe dans plusieurs pays un raidissement des positions et une tendance à limiter à nouveau l'accès aux documents²⁵.

Il semble clair que le rapport d'un pays à son passé, notamment la façon dont la relation entre Histoire et Mémoire y est envisagée, influe sur les modalités d'accès aux Archives. Le présent article abordait principalement le cas du Luxembourg ; il serait intéressant d'élargir l'étude à d'autres cas afin d'établir s'il s'agit effectivement d'une tendance plus globale, et quelles réponses y apporter.

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Notes

¹ Finalement, du fait de la pression (politique) croissante, cette nouvelle procédure fut abandonnée en novembre de la même année. Sur ce sujet, voir Bucher (2023a), Bucher (2023b) et la question parlementaire n°7 déposée par le député Parti Pirate Sven Clément, 31.10.2023, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/question/26104>, consultée le 3.10.2024.

² Sur la notion de « concurrence mémorielle », voir l'article du Réseau Canopée (s.d).

³ Question parlementaire n°7381 déposée par la députée LSAP Francine Closener, 15.12.2022, accessible sur <https://men.public.lu/content/dam/men/fr/actualites/articles/questions-parlementaires/2023/01/qp-7381.pdf>, consultée le 27.09.2024.

⁴ Loi du 17 août 2018 sur l'archivage [...], accessible sur <https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2018/08/17/a706/jo>, consultée le 1.10.2024.

⁵ Procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission des Institutions et de la Révision constitutionnelle et Conférence des Présidents, 26.03.2015, accessible sur <https://wdocs-pub.chd.lu/docs/exped/143/477/144726.pdf>, consultée le 1.10.2024.

⁶ Règlement (UE) 2016/679 du parlement Européen et du conseil du 27 avril 2016 relatif à la protection des personnes physiques à l'égard du traitement des données à caractère personnel et à la libre circulation de ces données, et abrogeant la directive 95/46/CE (règlement général sur la protection des données), accessible sur : <https://gdpr-info.eu/>, consultée le 9.10.2024.

⁷ Rapport de la journée d'échanges « Les délais d'accès aux archives au Luxembourg et dans nos pays voisins » du 9.02.2023 au Centre Culturel de Rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster, Luxembourg, 5.

⁸ Question parlementaire n° 0486 déposée par le député LSAP Franz Fayot, 12.03.2019, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/question/17153>, consultée le 3.10.2024; Question parlementaire n° 2046 déposée par la députée CSV Diane Aehm, 10.04.2020, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/question/18901>, consultée le 3.10.2024; Question parlementaire n° 3807 déposée par le député DP André Bauler, 9.03.2021, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/question/20938>, consultée le 3.10.2024; Question parlementaire n° 7 déposée par le député Parti Pirate Sven Clément, 31.10.2023, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/question/26104>, consultée le 3.10.2024.

⁹ Il est d'autant plus surprenant alors que des chercheurs du C²DH, qui ont discuté la question de l'accès aux archives lors de conférences internationales, ont reçu une lettre de réclamation de la part de la directrice des Archives Nationales du Luxembourg.

¹⁰ La question a même été au centre du Forum des archivistes du 3-5 avril 2019, dont les actes ont été publiés dans *La Gazette des archives*, n°255, 2019-3.

¹¹ Arrêté du 24 décembre 2015 portant ouverture d'archives relatives à la Seconde Guerre mondiale, accessible <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000031691149> consultée le 1.10.2024.

¹² Parmi les exemples de centres d'études dédiés à l'histoire contemporaine : le Centre d'Etude Guerre et Société (CegeSoma) en Belgique, l'Institut pour la Guerre, l'Holocauste et l'étude des génocides (NIOD) aux Pays-Bas, l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps présent en France, l'Institut pour l'Histoire Contemporaine (*Institut für Zeitgeschichte*) en Allemagne.

¹³ Ben Fayot, Proposition de loi portant création d'une commission d'étude sur les spoliations des Juifs du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg durant l'occupation nazie, 20.12.2000, accessible sur <https://wdocs-pub.chd.lu/docs/exped/002/001/006410.pdf>, consultée le 1.10.2024.

¹⁴ Motion parlementaire n°1502 déposée par Renée Wagener, 28.01.2003, accessible sur https://www.chd.lu/fr/motion_resolution/1502, consultée le 2.10.2024 ; Motion parlementaire n°421 déposée par Renée Wagener, 16.12.2003, accessible sur https://www.chd.lu/fr/motion_resolution/421, consultée le 2.10.2024.

¹⁵ Loi du 21 juin 2016 portant création d'un Comité pour la mémoire de la Deuxième guerre mondiale [...], accessible sur <https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2016/06/21/n1/jo>, consultée le 1.10.2024.; Projet de loi n°6960 portant création d'un Comité pour la mémoire de la Deuxième guerre mondiale [...], 2016, 2, accessible sur <https://wdocs-pub.chd.lu/docs/exped/105/637/160346.pdf>, consultée le 1.10.2024.; Projet de loi n°6863 abrogeant la loi du 7 août 2002 portant création du Centre Virtuel de la connaissance sur l'Europe, 2016, 2, accessible sur <https://wdocs-pub.chd.lu/docs/exped/182/407/148016.pdf>, consultée le 1.10.2024.

¹⁶ Déclaration d'Andreas Fickers, directeur du C²DH, dans le premier rapport annuel du centre, accessible sur <https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/report/2017/introduction/research/>, consultée le 30.09.2024.

¹⁷ Loi du 13 février 2018 portant sur la gestion des édifices religieux et autres biens relevant du culte catholique, ainsi que sur l'interdiction du financement des cultes par les communes, accessible sur <https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2018/02/13/a142/jo>, consultée le 10.10.2024.

¹⁸ Procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission des Institutions et de la Révision constitutionnelle et Conférence des Présidents, 26.03.2015, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/meeting/6143>, consultée le 30.09.2024; Résolution parlementaire n°2555 portant sur la « Reconnaissance de la souffrance infligée à la communauté juive [...] », 9.06.2015, accessible sur https://www.chd.lu/fr/motion_resolution/2555, consultée le 30.09.2024.

¹⁹ Projet de loi n°6913 sur l'archivage, 30.11.2015, 23, accessible sur <https://wdocs-pub.chd.lu/docs/exped/131/572/153701.pdf>, consultée le 2.10.2024.

²⁰ Le choix d'autoriser la consultation « avant l'expiration des délais de communication » dépend notamment de sa décision, comme précisé au paragraphe 4 de l'article 17 de la loi sur l'archivage. Citation venant de Benoît Majerus sur X le 30.08.2024 : « Dans @Letzland, @ArchivesNatLux, @CNL_Lux et MNAHA répondent aux critiques de Ben Fayot (et de Blandine Landau) quant à l'accès aux archives luxembourgeoises avec un titre qui cache les vrais enjeux: au lieu d' « Observer la loi » ils auraient dû mettre « Interpréter la loi » ».

²¹ Cet aspect était particulièrement évident lors de la campagne de collecte de documents personnels d'enrôlés de force organisée dans le cadre du projet WARLUX du C²DH en 2021, certaines familles exprimant une certaine gêne quant à l'impact potentiel de ces recherches sur leurs proches ou ceux des personnes citées dans les lettres.

²² Projet de loi n°6913 sur l'archivage, 30.11.2015, 25, accessible sur <https://wdocs-pub.chd.lu/docs/exped/131/572/153701.pdf>, consultée le 2.10.2024; Procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission des Institutions et de la Révision constitutionnelle et Conférence des Présidents, 27.04.2015, 2, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/meeting/6197>, consultée le 2.10.2024; Question parlementaire n°7 déposée par le député Parti Pirate Sven Clément, 31.10.2023, accessible sur <https://www.chd.lu/fr/question/26104>, consultée le 3.10.2024.

²³ En témoigne la controverse entourant la pose des *Stolpersteine* en septembre 2021, voir Bingenheimer (2021) et Kmec (2022).

²⁴ Loi du 17 août 2018 relative à l'archivage – consultation publique. Prise de position du C²DH (Université du Luxembourg), 15.04.2024.

²⁵ Résolution n°2535 portant sur « Le droit à la liberté d'information: garantir l'accès aux documents historiques » adopté par la Commission permanente agissant au nom de l'Assemblée, 7.03.2024, accessible sur <https://pace.coe.int/fr/files/33389/html>, consultée le 5.10.2024 ; Concernant la limitation de l'accès aux sources, voir la revue de presse de l'Association des Archivistes français autour du débat sur l'accès aux archives classifiées, accessible sur <https://www.archivistes.org/Suivre-les-actualites-du-debat-sur-l-acces-aux-archives-classifiees-secret>, consultée le 6.10.2024.

CONCLUSION

This PhD thesis, shaped by the specific and unusual circumstances in which it took place, allows conclusions to be drawn in terms of both historical knowledge and methodological approaches. It thereby establishes a foundation for future research and contributes to broader debates and reflections regarding the practices, challenges and constraints of historical research.

1. Concluding remarks on the historical dimension

The study shows that the consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of RAD recruits and Wehrmacht soldiers in Luxembourg cannot be fully grasped when limited to the general context of forced resettlements as a measure implemented by the civil administration to combat resistance, a perspective that has long dominated Luxembourg historiography. A more comprehensive examination of the various civil and military contexts in which the measures were taken proved essential for understanding the overall situation. Although the existing national and international literature touched on some of these aspects – such as the influence of ethnic and racial policies, the enforcement of family liability on the close relatives of Wehrmacht deserters and the operations of the military justice system – this information has remained fragmented. Analyses often lacked depth and were characterised by repetitive narratives drawn from previous publications. By extending the analytical lens, drawing together the scattered insights and consolidating the whole into a unified framework, this research provides a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the topic, uncovering the multilayered dynamics that shaped the experiences of the families.

A first aspect revealed by the investigation is that the repercussions can be divided into two categories. The first category consists of general measures and punitive actions that potentially affected all types of deserter families, regardless of their (ethnic) background. These included house searches and police interrogations, as well as financial and material consequences such as the loss of family support or social welfare services. Additionally, family members arrested and later convicted for their involvement in a soldier's or draft evader's flight faced deportation to concentration camps. The second category consists of punitive measures aimed at deserter families of ethnic German descent, including forced resettlement, *Dienstverpflichtung* and the confiscation of assets. These latter four measures – deportation to concentration camps, forced resettlement, *Dienstverpflichtung* and confiscation of assets – were closely tied to the Germanisation policy of the Gauleiter and the broader *Volkstumspolitik* of the National Socialist regime. As an "intermediate territory"²³⁰ – neither simply occupied nor fully annexed by Germany – and an important border region that needed to be secured and consolidated, Luxembourg was

²³⁰ The concept of "intermediate space" was introduced by Fabio Spirinelli in his doctoral thesis "Staging the Nation in an Intermediate Space: Cultural Policy in Luxembourg and the State Museums (1918-1974)". Drawing on historian Philip Ther's German concept of *Zwischenraum*, he uses it to frame Luxembourg as a border region, located at the periphery of other nation-states, where various cultural, linguistic, and ethnic influences converged and interacted; Spirinelli, "Staging the Nation in an Intermediate Space," *op.cit.*, 73-74.

to be reintegrated in the Reich and its population aligned with the regime's ideals. Individuals deemed unsuitable for integration into the *Volksgemeinschaft* and who were to be rendered harmless – even when of German origin – were sent to concentration camps. Meanwhile, those whose presence was politically unacceptable in the region but who did not require permanent removal were forcibly resettled within the Reich for assimilation.²³¹ To facilitate the assimilation process, they could be granted German citizenship, albeit under a discriminatory form, as their loyalty was not yet assured.²³² In addition to these political-ideological interests, forced resettlements, *Dienstverpflichtung* and asset confiscations also served economic and pragmatic interests.²³³ The relocation of this valuable workforce to the Reich allowed them to be used for labour, while the liquidation of their assets further supported the implementation of the aforementioned policies, as shown in the first article of the thesis.

The measures were based on complex networks of interactions involving numerous actors and power structures. In her study, Stiller notes that in the existing literature, the National Socialist system of rule is often assumed to be characterised by competing centres of power, operating around the central figure of Hitler.²³⁴ Depending on the literature, these centres included the NSDAP, the ministerial bureaucracy, the military, the SS and industry.²³⁵ Stiller, however, refutes this supposition with regard to the RKF and argues that it was not in competition but rather operated in cooperation with the various power structures of the regime.²³⁶ This study also demonstrates that the different powers and layers of authority – including the RKF, SS agencies, ministries, the CdZ, the Wehrmacht, military courts, police forces, industry, regional administrations, NS organisations and more – broadly worked together to punish the families of deserters and draft evaders, thereby advancing the central goals of the National Socialist regime regarding its racial/ethnic and territorial expansionist policies, while also pursuing their own specific interests. For instance, the RKF, which initially lacked formal jurisdiction in the Western CdZ regions, was able to expand its influence and implement its policies through close collaboration with the Gauleiter and the civil administration.²³⁷ Gauleiter Simon, who determined the extent of this influence and nevertheless remained largely independent, used the RKF's frameworks to manage these political "undesirables" and advance his Germanisation efforts. He further used the fear created by punitive measures to enforce compliance, keep the population in line and deter desertion and draft evasion plans. These interests were also pursued by the Wehrmacht and the military courts, which in addition worked together with the various bodies in their search for and trials of deserters. Furthermore, industry players were involved in the strategic employment of these individuals and were also able to exert a certain influence over the selection process. The study clearly shows that although measures imposed on these families

²³¹ Reference is made here to a letter sent by Himmler to Gauleiter Richard Wagner on 18 June 1942; Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß*, op.cit., 263.

²³² This aspect has been discussed in more detail in Denis Scuto, "National Socialist Ethnicity and Citizenship Policy under growing military pressure in occupied Luxembourg (1940-1944)", op.cit..

²³³ Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, op.cit., 687.

²³⁴ Ibid., 53-54.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid., 13.

²³⁷ Ibid., 146 and 1302.

took place at the intersection of the military and civil spheres, the civil authorities – and in particular the civil administration and Gauleiter Simon – played the primary and most influential role.

In addition to this collaborative system, the implementation of the repressive and punitive measures was also characterised by what Stiller called the “principle of delegation”. This involved a division of responsibilities and a decentralisation of the decision-making process based on Konrad Meyer’s model of “central leadership, regional control and local implementation”.²³⁸ This allowed for decisions to be adapted to local conditions and circumstances, while still being aligned with central directives. It also facilitated the continuous communication between the various levels of authority and administration. Nevertheless, this broad participation of different levels of power also included significant autonomy for lower administrative levels, partly explaining the variations and deviations from prescribed guidelines discussed in the third article.²³⁹

Even though institutional actors held a central position in the investigation, families also played a pivotal role. In addition to the methodological insights that the focus on families’ individual experiences and situations provided – which will be discussed below –, this approach also offered fresh perspectives on their reactions, scope of action and individual impacts, resulting in certain established national and international narratives being challenged.

After the war, the memories of forcibly resettled families from Luxembourg – and therefore also the experiences of relatives of deserters and draft evaders – were integrated into the dominant national narrative of patriotism, anti-fascism and resistance, which played a central role in the reconstruction of the nation and national identity.²⁴⁰ In a version of events propagated by victim associations, these families were portrayed as a homogeneous group that unanimously resisted the Nazi occupier. As Elisabeth Hoffmann’s research shows, already from 1944 onwards their interests were represented by the LPPD, which came to be considered as the umbrella organisation for the resistance.²⁴¹ Early attempts by the association of “forced conscripts” to also represent these individuals were met with strong resistance, leading the topic to become a point of contention in the *concurrence mémorielle* (the “competition for memory”) between the two associations.²⁴² The LPPD remained the primary representative voice over time, which may help explain why the topic was less explored within the military context of “forced conscription”. This homogenised resistance narrative can also be closely tied to questions of loyalty, equally important for the post-war reconstruction of national honour. Families’ loyalty to their loved ones in supporting the desertion plans and shielding them from capture, as well as to their

²³⁸ Reference made by Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 257 to Konrad Meyer, “Planung und Ostaufbau”, *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* 5, 9 (1941), 394.

²³⁹ Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 169 and 1309-1310.

²⁴⁰ Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965*. Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 292 and 301.

²⁴¹ Hoffmann, “La mémoire de la 'Résistance' au prisme d'une histoire comparée des associations d'anciens résistants du Luxembourg, de l'Alsace, de la Moselle et de la Belgique de l'Est (1944-2017)”, *op.cit.*, 71, 86 and 120.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 92-94.

country for the previously mentioned reasons of opposition and sacrifice, was emphasised. Similarly, the decision of soldiers who did not desert was also woven into this narrative and framed as a pure expression of loyalty, aimed at protecting their relatives and compatriots from the severe reprisals that would inevitably follow.

On the other hand, families were also portrayed as victims of *Sippenhaftung*, subjected to arbitrary persecution simply because they were related to deserters or draft evaders. This portrayal implied the complete innocence of these families, which in practice is contradictory to and incompatible with the resistance narrative. Both perspectives were nevertheless used simultaneously in certain studies.

The multiplicity and diversity of experiences revealed by the investigation both challenge simplistic representations and underscore the need to move beyond the binary categorisations and consider more complex realities. The application of repressive measures was inconsistent, with no clear criteria explaining why certain families were affected while others were not. Keeping in mind that this is not an established and generalisable percentage, 38% of the families in the research sample showed no sign of any direct impact. Their stories and perspectives have, however, never been considered. Furthermore, despite the official guidelines of the CdZ stipulating that evidence of participation in or instigation of draft evasion or desertion was required for families to be targeted by punitive measures, the actual selection process exhibited significant arbitrariness. Among the researched families who were subjected to repression, some showed various potential underlying reasons, including signs of active or passive resistance. For others, however, no indications beyond their family connections could be identified. As highlighted in the study, it remains difficult today to draw clear conclusions on the position of every family, given the lack of documentation and the inherent bias of the available sources. Wartime sources were for instance influenced by families' attempts to mislead police agents or by German efforts to emphasise familial complicity in desertion. Official post-war sources were often created in contexts aimed at securing war reparations or prosecuting collaborators. Memoirs, on the other hand were influenced by the need to align with the national resistance narrative. Nevertheless, the combination of different types of sources did provide interesting insights for this investigation. Greater complexity and diversity were also found regarding dispossessions. While certain families lost significant portions of their assets, others managed to recover belongings via their legal representatives or because items were never removed from their houses. In some cases, families were only threatened with asset confiscation, with inventories of their assets being made but nothing taken.

Despite these new findings, it is not the intention of this study to make any generalised or definitive statements regarding the families. In Bruttman's words, "the aim is to look for keys for comparison in order to situate the particular within the general, without thinking that the general is the sum of the particular cases."²⁴³ Additional research, based on a larger sample and

²⁴³ "Il s'agit ici de chercher des clés de comparaison afin de situer le particulier dans le général, sans penser pour autant que le général est la somme des cas particuliers." Quotation from Bruttman et al., "Changer d'échelle pour renouveler l'histoire de la Shoah," *op.cit.*, 13.

more extensive quantitative analyses, could however be valuable to refine and expand upon the results.

Another observation that emerges from this investigation regards both the similarity and uniqueness of the situation in Luxembourg compared to other occupied and annexed territories such as South Tyrol, Austria, Upper Carniola, Lower Styria, Alsace and Lorraine. While clear similarities in the treatment of relatives of deserters and draft evaders exist between the regions, including the type of measures taken, their arbitrary application, the central influence of local power centres and the aim of ensuring compliance and discouraging desertion, they are also characterised by significant temporal and regional variations.²⁴⁴ These are linked in part to the Nazi regime's classifications of territories and populations – particularly in terms of ethnicity and race – as well as to specific regional dynamics and the policies of respective leaders. For instance, the measures taken by the civil administrations of Luxembourg, Lorraine and Alsace were very similar and closely interlinked. Nevertheless, the different regional policies of the three Gauleiters led to significant differences in the implementation of the measures, giving each region its own peculiarity. Gustav Simon was, for instance, the only Gauleiter to set up resettlement commissions for the selection of families, supposedly to reduce the risk of arbitrariness. Additionally, he allowed the RKF greater influence in his jurisdiction, in contrast to Gauleiter Bürkel of Lorraine, who sought greater autonomy.²⁴⁵ This was particularly evident in the control of families' property and the distribution of the financial resources derived from their liquidation, as discussed in the third article. Although this thesis provides some comparative insights, a comprehensive international analysis was not within the scope of the investigation. This would nevertheless be valuable in order to further examine the variations and consistencies in the treatment of families of deserters and draft evaders across occupied territories.

In addition to the previously mentioned research needs and opportunities, this study has uncovered other avenues for further investigation. Valuable sources that can serve as a foundation for these enquiries have already been identified and were mentioned throughout the manuscript.

The dispossession of families and the utilisation of the financial resources derived from the liquidation of their assets remains insufficiently explored and is characterised by considerable ambiguity. How were the funds that were collected in the various bank accounts allocated and used? How do the dispossessions compare to those of other persecuted groups? The first article of this thesis initiated this comparison with regard to people considered as Jewish. It also

²⁴⁴ Entner, "Slowenische Soldaten: Organisierte Flucht innerhalb der Reichsgrenzen?", *op.cit.*, 53; Steuer, Verdorfer and Pichler, *Verfolgt, verfehmt, vergessen*, *op.cit.*, 29-30, Martha Verdorfer, "Nein zum Krieg: Widerstand und Verweigerung in Südtirol 1939-1945 - Überlegungen zu einem Oral-History-Projekt", *Storia e Regione*, 1 (1992), 127; Fritsche, ""...haftet die Sippe mit Vermögen, Freiheit oder Leben...", *op.cit.*; Kettenacker, *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik im Elsaß*, *op.cit.*, 227-228, Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 597-613, 675-676.

²⁴⁵ Stiller argues that he was able to maintain such autonomy because of his strong position within the power structures of the Nazi regime, which was built on his personal connections and his previous work on the incorporation of the Saar and Austria into the German Reich; Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, *op.cit.*, 145.

highlighted the need for further analysis to fully understand the complexity of the measures, as well as the similarities and differences in their practical application.

The study also revealed a significant gap in research regarding ethnic German *Ansiedler*, who were brought to Luxembourg to settle. Further investigation is required to determine the identity of these individuals and the circumstances under which they were relocated to Luxembourg. It is also important to examine the impact of their arrival on local communities and on Luxembourg society and economy more generally. Also, what became of them after the liberation of the country and the end of the war?

As stated in the introduction, substantial research gaps also persist concerning the social and economic impacts of “forced conscriptions” more generally. For this, a more thorough analysis of the wartime correspondence between the conscripts and their families, using the Warlux digital war letter collection, could offer interesting insights. Furthermore, this study also highlighted the potential of examining the various forms of assistance provided to families, such as *Familienunterhalt* and the assistance provided by the NSV. Research in this area, combined with the findings of this study, could also facilitate an analysis of the differences in the treatment of families, an objective initially envisioned for this investigation.

2. Concluding remarks on the methodological dimension

On a methodological level, this research has demonstrated the value and potential of combining diverse methodological approaches and various types of sources to challenge and extend historical insights. However, the application of these methods also presented challenges and limitations that are equally important to include in this final reflection.

The historical events were studied via both a top-down and a bottom-up approach, drawing on a spectrum of sources which encompassed institutional, personal, post-war and wartime perspectives. Recognising that each source offers a particular representation of the past, multiple accounts of that past could thus be collected and analysed. Although this whole still required interpretation, it provided a richer and more complex comprehension of the events.²⁴⁶ The use of the *Strukturbiographie* concept was insightful in this regard, as it highlighted the differences between biographies reconstructed from institutional records and those based on first-person accounts.²⁴⁷ By emphasising the distinct perspectives and unique information each document type provides, it demonstrated how the accounts could complement one another and create a more comprehensive representation.

The increased focus on *Alltagsgeschichte*, based on a micro-historical and actor-centred approach to the families of deserters and draft evaders from Schiffange, proved particularly

²⁴⁶ Berg, “Capturing Displaced Persons’ Agency by Modelling Their Life Events”, *op.cit.*, 270.

²⁴⁷ Rass, “Gibt es den Gefreiten Jedermann?”, *op.cit.*, 92.

instrumental. While the macro-historical and (trans)national analyses that have dominated Second World War historiography have provided essential knowledge on the broader context and overall understanding of the war, they have often resulted in more generalised conclusions, obscuring the specificity and complexity of local-level dynamics and modalities.²⁴⁸ By concentrating on individual experiences “at ground level”,²⁴⁹ this study considered historical events in their specific social contexts.²⁵⁰ This revealed mechanisms, dynamics and impacts that had previously been overlooked and in some cases contradicted findings from broader perspectives. It also made it possible to distinguish between singularities and general patterns and to take these singularities into account.

The integration of digital history and public history methods further enhanced this framework. Digital analysis tools – particularly the database – facilitated the structuring and analysis of the large amount of information gathered, making patterns, relationships and incoherences more visible. It is true that the process of extracting data from analogue sources and integrating it into digital tools entailed restructuring and reinterpretation. This resulted in the generation of new data, but also involved the risk of losing information and contextual details. Berg also observed this duality and stated: “Digital representation tends to fragment information, but also has the ability to recombine these fragments of information into new perspectives on the sources and their interrelation.”²⁵¹ Based on the approach suggested by Claire Zalc and Claire Lemerrier, special care was therefore taken during data entry to preserve as much as possible of the original context of the sources – for instance by including contradictions and referencing each source – while still aligning with the specific research objectives and questions.²⁵²

Public history methods facilitated access to sources and information that were unavailable through the conventional institutional channels and enabled a closer and more direct look at the personal and individual stories of contemporaries. Although this approach proved very valuable for the research at project level, it was less conclusive for the doctoral study as the collected sources did not include data on the specific research topic or the people from the research sample. Nevertheless, the overall results of this approach still proved significant, as they led to the preservation of important historical documents and the creation of a substantial digital war letter collection which can now serve as a resource for future research.

Both digital and public history approaches – for instance the website, crowdsourcing campaign, Forum Z and podcast – also extended the reach of the research project beyond purely academic circles, facilitating the exchange of knowledge with the wider public. In doing so, the research

²⁴⁸ This also raises the question of whether it is possible to write a European history of occupation that transcends national boundaries, as recently undertaken by Tatiana Tönsmeier in her new book; Tatjana Tönsmeier, *Unter deutscher Besatzung: Europa 1939-1945* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2024); Clemens Klünemann, “Europa im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Das Nazi-Gift der Entmenslichung,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 10 November 2024 (<https://sz.de/lux.NjmmXVEN8ZfwFW2w5mTTny>); Bruttman et al., “Changer d’échelle pour renouveler l’histoire de la Shoah,” *op.cit.*, 15.

²⁴⁹ To borrow Jacques Revel’s concept “au ras du sol”; Jacques Revel, *Jeux d’échelles: la micro-analyse à l’expérience*, Hautes Études (Paris: Gallimard-Le Seuil, 1996).

²⁵⁰ Bruttman et al., “Changer d’échelle pour renouveler l’histoire de la Shoah,” *op.cit.*, 12.

²⁵¹ Berg, “Capturing Displaced Persons’ Agency by Modelling Their Life Events,” *op.cit.*, 284.

²⁵² Claire Lemerrier and Claire Zalc, *Quantitative Methods in the Humanities: An Introduction* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 62.

contributes to the C²DH's mission of providing the population with a more nuanced and complex understanding of the Second World War and encouraging a critical reflection on Luxembourg's wartime past. These objectives were also underscored by Andreas Fickers and Christoph Brüll at the launch of the World War II online exhibition (<https://ww2.lu/>) on 5 December 2024.²⁵³

Despite its strengths and results, this methodological approach also revealed challenges and limitations that significantly impacted the study and resulted in numerous shifts in the research angle. These constraints are primarily linked to the need to access a substantial number of sources containing personal information, as well as the time-intensive nature of this process. The sources were scattered across various locations and countries and varied greatly in the volume and type of information they provided for each family and individual, compromising a quantitative analysis. More critically, stringent data protection and archival regulations, especially in Luxembourg, severely restricted access to the source material. This raised the question of the extent to which it is possible to conduct critical historical research from an individual and personal perspective in Luxembourg today.

The challenges surrounding source accessibility have been raised by multiple researchers from the University of Luxembourg and the C²DH over the past few years. This has reignited the debate about the societal importance of ensuring more democratic and transparent access to contemporary sources – without this necessarily meaning that the fundamental principles of data protection are compromised – and of enabling critical historical research.²⁵⁴ This topic has also become increasingly relevant today in light of the current socio-political tensions and democratic challenges in Western Europe. At this moment, discussions are ongoing at the Ministry of Culture – and soon in parliament – to reconsider the delays and procedures imposed by the Archival Law of 2018. It remains to be seen whether the apparent political will, as reiterated by Ben Fayot in his opinion piece of August 2024,²⁵⁵ can this time lead to tangible change.

²⁵³ "World War II Luxembourg", ww2, 2024, accessed on 19 December 2024 (<https://ww2.lu/>); Isabel Spigarelli, "Luxemburg im 2. Weltkrieg: Was sich hinter der neuen Plattform „ww2.lu“ verbirgt", *Tageblatt*, 6 December 2024 (<https://www.tageblatt.lu/headlines/luxemburg-im-2-weltkrieg-was-sich-hinter-der-neuen-plattform-ww2-lu-verbirgt/>).

²⁵⁴ This argument is often put forward too readily. In his recent newspaper article on the demand of the national archives to anonymise personal data of Nazi war criminals, Benoît Majerus also refers to this; Benoît Majerus, "Incompréhensible", *Les Archives nationales demandent aux chercheurs d'anonymiser le dossier d'un des chefs de la Gestapo*, *d'Lëtzebuerger Land*, 6 December 2024.

²⁵⁵ As cited in the last article of this thesis, he argued that "in a modern state, it is trust and transparency that should lead to broad, intelligently regulated access to public archives." Quotation from Ben Fayot. "Étudier la Shoah au Luxembourg : Un travail de bénédictin?", *d'Lëtzebuerger Land*, 2 August 2024 (<https://www.land.lu/page/article/917/341917/FRE/index.html>).

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Pseudonymised list of deserters and draft evaders from Schiffflange

Nr.	Nodegoat ID	Desertion	Draft evasion
1	ngXj3O671WNm0YNFpW8g1nDufXA	Yes	
2	ngYk3P772XEnjZOKqYHh8oEXgXr	Yes	
3	ngFr4W479Eru7GVXxEYorvLAnFS	Yes	
4	ngUg5L974TgjeVKMmTND1kAPcTH	Yes	
5	ngVh6M075Uhk1WLVnWEe1lBQdVo		Yes
6	ngGs4X570GWvqHWGyG7p7wMvoFJ		Yes
7	ngPb5G479Ole7QFDhO6y7fVexQS	Yes	
8	ngQc5H570Pmf0RGkiQpzbGwXyQj	Yes	
9	nglu7Z378lYx7JYya15r7yObqIV	Yes	
10	ngXj6O277Wjm2YNJpWwg7nDWfXq		Yes
11	ngHt4Y671HXwqlXVzHQqrxNCpGa	Yes	
12	ngDp6U873DzspETbvDMm1tJYIDw	Yes	
13	ngFr7W075FburGVXxGYo3vLSnFI	Yes	
14	ngHt7Y277Hdw3lXDzGQq5xNKpHq	Yes	
15	ngJv7A479JZy7KZNblCs7zPgrJs	Yes	
16	ngZl9Q075ZFo5APDrZSi0pFY		
17	ngXj8O873Wjm3YNTpYGG8nDK		Yes
18	ngBn9W277ARq2CRBtCUkkrHS		Yes
19	ngCo9T378Dlr3DSOuCblosIF		Yes
20	ngQc0n378RWfzRGMiPpzagWP	Yes	
21	ngVh0M873ULk8WLJnUEe1lBQdUI	Yes	
22	ngZl1s277ZFojAPtrYlijpFo		Yes
23	ngBn1u479CRq7CRNtAak4rHA	Yes	
24	ngDp1a671CTs8ETZvEMmotJa	Yes	
25	ngGs1d974GWvqHWOyGfp0wMB	Yes	
26	ngOa5F378Nkd6PEmgO5xyeURwNh	Yes	
27	ngUg5L974TgjeVKMmUNdekAncTH	Yes	
28	ngAm6R570AwpkBQqsBTjkqGHiAj	Yes	
29	ngCo6T772CyrmDSQuBLl8slrkDF	Yes	
30	ngTf3K277Sji4UJlSCcfjZibUW	Yes	
31	ngEq6V974EatpFUcwE1nquKpMFH	Yes	
32	ngFr7W075FburGVbxFYorvLQnEI	Yes	
33	nglu7Z378lYx7JYMaHRr5yObqIV	Yes	
34	nglu4Z772lYx7JYAaIRr0yOPqlr	Yes	
35	ngUg0r772VAj0VKGMvDD8kAj		Yes

36	ngDp1a671CTs8ETtvDcm1tJC	Yes	
37	ngKw7B570KAz8LAGcLTt8aQhsJX	Yes	
38	ngVh6M075Uhk2WLVnUOe4lBldUo	Yes	
39	ngPb2G873OlezQFfhQllyfVGxQC	Yes	
40	ngQc2H974Pmf9RGgiPJzzgWPyQz	Yes	
41	ngDp4U277Cps5ETxvCcm4tJYICw	Yes	
42	ngEq4V378Dqt5FUuwE5nquKLmEn	Yes	
43	ngFr4W479Eru7GVTxFeo4vLAnES	Yes	
44	nglu4Z772lYxuJYEaHRrryOZqlr		Yes
45	ngJv4A873JZyvKZRbJistzPUrKW	Yes	
46	ngNz5E277Mjc5ODZF4NwydTYvMQ		Yes
47	ngLx5C075LBa2MBbdK2uubRYtLu	Yes	
48	ngQc5H570Pmf0RGkiRJz7gWLyQD	Yes	
49	ngTf5K873SfifUJXISM2jZWbTc	Yes	
50	ngVh6M075Uhk1WLVnV2eflBCdWI	Yes	
51	ngZl6Q479ZFo7APDrAli4pFYhZM	Yes	
52	ngCo6T772CyrmDSQuBLl0sInkBl	Yes	
53	ngKw7B570KAz8LAacJ7t6aQBskX	Yes	
54	ngLx7C671LRavMBjdK8u9bRStKO	Yes	
55	ngTf0K671SJidUJTlUCC0jZqbTG	Yes	
56	ngWi8N772Vil9XMqoWvf2mCV	Yes	
57	ngXj8O873Wjm3YNrpX0g0nDA	Yes	
58	ngBn9W277ARq2CRNtAak7rHq		Yes
59	ngCo9T378Dir3DSYuBblmslv		Yes
60	ngDp9U479Cps6ETDvCMm9tLm	Yes	
61	ngFr9Q671FburGVbXFOpuvLQ	Yes	
62	ngGs9J772HWv1HW0yHZprwOp	Yes	
63	ngHt9G873INwslXxzHQq9xPq	Yes	
64	nglu9T974JYxrJYcalhr9yQr	Yes	
65	ngNz0k075NjczODFfMmwwdTA	Yes	
66	ngQc0n378RGf4RGgiQpzbgWH	Yes	
67	ngUg0r772VAj0VKGmVNd8kAj	Yes	

Annex 2: Pseudonymised list of families of deserters and draft evaders from Schiffflange²⁵⁶

Nr.	Nodegoat ID Deserter/Draft evader	Deserter/Draft evader	Nodegoat ID Family	Relation to deserter/ draft evader	Sign of repression	Link to asset confisca tion	Link to resettle ment	Link to <i>Dienstverpf lichtung</i>	Link to KZ
1	ngXj3O671WNm0Y NFpW8g1nDufXA	Deserter	ngPE2F77xNkVyNU mgPXxaeUFwNR	Spouse	No				
2	ngYk3P772XEnjZOK qYHh8oEXgXr	Deserter	ngGV4W47oErM6E LRxE6oovLEnFy	Parents	No				
3	ngFr4W479Er u7GVXxEYorvL AnFS	Deserter	ngQF5G47yObWy OVBhQYy7fVmxQS	Parents	No				
4	ngUg5L974TgjeVK MmTnd1kAPcTH	Deserter	ngZO8P97hYkFkXE sqX1h2oEF	Parents + other househol d member	No				
5	ngVh6M075Uhk1 WLVnWEe1IBQdVo	Draft evader	ngRG0n37zRWXaP WYiPpz7gWH	Parents	Yes	Yes			
6	ngGs4X570GWvqH WGyG7p7wMvoFJ	Draft evader	ngHW7X17pGcN3F MOyHPp2wMRoFz	Parents	Yes	Yes	Yes		
7	ngGs4X570GWvqH WGyG7p7wMvoFJ	Draft evader	ngLA4B97tKAR1JQ OcLDt0aQXsJt	Sister, brother- in-law + children	Yes	Yes	Yes		
8	ngPb5G4790le7QF DhO6y7fVexQS	Deserter	ngHW7X17pGcN4F MUyFPp1wMBoGz	Mother	No				

²⁵⁶ Identical deserters/draft evaders or families are marked in bold.

9	ngQc5H570Pmf0R GkiQpzbgWXYqJ	Deserter	ngHW7X17pGcN4F MUyFPp1wMBoGz	Mother	No				
10	nglu7Z378IYx7JYya l5r7yObqIV	Deserter	ngVK8L57dTABdTA UmUtdekAL	Parents	No				
11	ngXj6O277Wjm2Y NJpWwg7nDWfXq	Draft evader	ngDS9T37IDSJ5Blw uCbl8sIP	Parents	Yes	Yes			
12	ngHt4Y671HXwqIX VzHQqrxNCpGa	Deserter	ngCR6S67kBxllAHJt AKk0rHujCO	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
13	ngHt4Y671HXwqIX VzHQqrxNCpGa	Deserter	ngRG5H57zPcXzP WUiQZz8gWTyRD	Parents- in-law + other househol d members	Yes	Yes	Yes		
14	ngHt4Y671HXwqIX VzHQqrxNCpGa	Deserter	ngAP1s27iZPG4YF NrAli4pFQ	Spouse + Children	Yes	Yes	Yes		
15	ngDp6U873DzspET bvDMm1tJYIDw	Deserter	ngGV4W47oFVMp ELBxFYo5vLcnEy	Parents	No				
16	ngFr7W075FburGV XxGYo3vLSnFI	Deserter	ngSH8I27aRXY3QX hjQqa4hXlZQE	Father	No				
17	ngJv7A479JZy7KZN bICs7zPgrJs	Deserter	ngHW7X17pGcN3F MeyGfswMJoGz	Parents	Yes	Yes			
18	ngHt7Y277Hdw3IX DzGQq5xNKpHq	Deserter	ngIX4Y67qGtO1GN TzHQq1xNGpGU	Parents	No				
19	ngZI9Q075ZFo5AP DrZSiOpFY	Deserter	ngIX9G87qGXO1G NDzGAq1xPq	Parents + sibling	No				
20	ngXj8O873Wjm3Y NTpYGg8nDK	Draft evader	ngAP6Q47iZFG8YF RrZyi8pFwhYM	Parents	No				
21	ngBn9W277ARq2C RBtCUkkrHS	Draft evader	ngUJ5K87cSfA8SZX IT0c1jZKbTW	Parents	Yes	Yes		Yes	
22	ngCo9T378Dlr3DS OuCblosIF	Draft evader	ngXM6N17fViD1VC qoWvfgmCNeWf	Brother, sister-in- law + children	Yes	Yes	Yes		

23	ngCo9T378Dlr3DS OuCblosIF	Draft evader	ngSH5I67aQnY1QX VjRKabhXQzQa	Exact relation unclear	Yes		Yes		
24	ngCo9T378Dlr3DS OuCblosIF	Draft evader	ngNC5D17vMCT2L SAeMVv6cSXuNZ	Parents	Yes	Yes	Yes		
25	ngCo9T378Dlr3DS OuCblosIF	Draft evader	ngSH3I07aQnY0QX VjSAa2hXQzQa	Exact relation unclear	Yes		Yes		
26	ngVh0M873ULk8W LJnUEe1IBQdUI	Deserter	ngWL6M07eUhC2 UBNnUEeflBkdUI	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
27	ngZl1s277ZFojAPtr YlijpFo	Draft evader	nglX4Y67qGtO1GN xzGAq8xNGpIU	Mother + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
28	ngBn1u479CRq7CR NtAak4rHA	Deserter	ngPE2F77xNkV7NU OgPHx7eUlWOR	Parents	No				
29	ngDp1a671CTs8ET ZvEMmotJa	Deserter	ngFU6V97nEaLqDK uwE1nouKpmFH	Spouse + Children	Yes	Yes			
30	ngGs1d974GWvqH WOyGfp0wMB	Deserter	ngGV7W07oFbMq ELRxFOoovLQnFI	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
31	ngOa5F378Nkd6PE mgO5xyeURwNh	Deserter	ngAP1s27iZFGiYFZr ASilpFY	Parents + sibling + uncle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
32	ngUg5L974TgjeVK MmUNdekAncTH	Deserter	ngLA7B57tKAR7JQi cJ7t5aQVsKd	Parents	Yes	Yes			
33	ngAm6R570AwpkB QqsBTjkqGHiAj	Deserter	ngHW7X17pGcNsF MGyF3prwMNoFT	Parents	No				
34	ngCo6T772CyrmdS QuBLl8slrkDF	Deserter	ngQF0m27yQVWz OVLhQIy7fVi	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
35	ngTf3K277SJi4UJlS CcfjZibUW	Deserter	ngCR1u47kCRlKAH FtB6k5rHI	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes		
36	ngEq6V974EatpFU cwE1nquKpmFH	Deserter	ngKZ4A87sJZQvIPX bKSsuzPQrlc	Parents + sibling	No				
37	ngFr7W075FburGV BxFYorvLQnEI	Deserter	ngPE5F37xNkV6NU KgNXxaeUdwNB	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

38	nglu7Z378IYx7JYM aHRr5yObqIV	Deserter	ngAP6Q47iZFG7YF xrZyilpFChYs	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes			
39	ngWi8N772Vi9XM qoWvf2mCV	Deserter	ngIX2e07qGdO0G NbZhgq3xNa	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
40	nglu4Z772IYx7JYAa IRr0yOPqlr	Deserter	ngIX9G87qGNOtG NZzH0q3xPq	Parents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
41	ngUg0r772VAj0VK GmVDd8kAj	Draft evader	ngIX9G87qGNO1G NPzGgqtxPq	Parents	No				
42	ngDp1a671CTs8ETt vDcm1tJC	Deserter	ngQF0m27yPFW6 OVjhOYyyfVK	Parents + sibling(?)	No				
43	ngKw7B570KAz8LA GcLTt8aQhsJX	Deserter	ngAP9Q07iZvG5YF VrAli3pFw	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes			
44	ngVh6M075Uhk2 WLVnUOe4lBldUo	Deserter	ngJY7Z37rlYP7HOg aJRrsyOVqIV	parents- in-law + Spouse	No				
45	ngPb2G873OlezQF fhQlyyfVGxQC	Deserter	ngJY7Z37rlYP7HOg aJRrsyOVqIV	Parents + sibling	No				
46	ngQc2H974Pmf9R GgiPJzzgWPyQz	Deserter	ngJY7Z37rlYP7HOg aJRrsyOVqIV	Parents + sibling	No				
47	ngDp4U277Cps5ET xvCcm4tJYICw	Deserter	ngNC5D17vMCT2L SAeMVvycSDuLf	Sister + brother- in-law + children	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
48	ngDp4U277Cps5ET xvCcm4tJYICw	Deserter	ngDS4T17lBIJoBIYu CVI5sITkBF	Parents	Yes	Yes			
49	ngDp4U277Cps5ET xvCcm4tJYICw	Deserter	ngIX7Y27qHdO3GN fzG4q7xNKpGq	Brother + sister-in- law + children	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
50	ngFr4W479Eru7GV TxFeo4vLANES	Deserter	ngMB7C67uLRSvK RLdLEuwbRitMO	Parents + grand- mother	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
51	ngEq4V378Dqt5FU uwE5nquKLmEn	Deserter	ngKZ7A47sJZQ7IPd bJis5zPcrKM	Parents + sibling	No				

52	nglu4Z772IYxuJYEa HRrryOZqlr	Draft evader	ngCR6S67kBxIIAHB tCKk8rHMjCO	Parents + sibling(?)	No				
53	ngJv4A873JZyvKZR bJistzPURKW	Deserter	ngMB7C67uLRSvK RLdKEuxbRitKO	Parents	No				
54	ngNz5E277Mjc5OD ZfN4wydTYvMQ	Draft evader	ngJY7Z37rIYP8HOg alhr6yOVqIV	Parents	Yes	Yes			
55	ngLx5C075LBa2MB bdK2uubRYtLu	Deserter	ngXM3N57fVMD9 VCuoWPfhmCJeVp	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes		
56	ngQc5H570Pmf0R GkiRjz7gWLyQD	Deserter	ngKZ2A27sIPQ5IPX bICs5zPlrJc	Parents + sibling	No				
57	ngTf5K873SfifUJXIS Mc2jZWbTc	Deserter	ngCR4S07kAHIOAH BtAKkkrHOjBO	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
58	ngVh6M075Uhk1 WLVnV2eflBCdWI	Deserter	ngRG5H57zPcXzP WUiQJz6gWDyRD	Parents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
59	ngZl6Q479ZFo7AP DrAli4pFYhZM	Deserter	ngVK0L77dTKBdTA YmTnd1kAPcVX	Parents	Yes	Yes			
60	ngCo6T772CyrmdS QuBLl0sInkBI	Deserter	ngQF0m27yPFW7 OVjhO4ybfVC	Parents	No				
61	ngKw7B570KAz8LA acJ7t6aQBskX	Deserter	ngAP3Q87iYFGjYF NrY0i0pFUhAC	Parents	No				
62	ngLx7C671LRavMB jdK8u9bRStKO	Deserter	ngJY2Z17rHOP5HO QalRr4yOfqHr	Brother	Yes	Yes			
63	ngLx7C671LRavMB jdK8u9bRStKO	Deserter	ngQF0m27yPFW6 OVDhOoy3fVS	Father + brother	Yes	Yes			
64	ngTf0K671SjIdUJTI UCc0jZqbTG	Deserter	ngDS4T17IBIJoBIYu CVI4sIBkDF	Brother and sister-in- law	No				
65	ngXj8O873Wjm3Y NrpX0g0nDA	Deserter	ngOD0k07wNjU4M TBfMGwwdTA	Parents	Yes	Yes			Yes
66	ngCo9T378Dir3DSY uBblmslv	Draft evader	ngCR6S67kBxIIAHJt AaknrHIjAu	Parents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
67	ngBn9W277ARq2C RNtAak7rHq	Draft evader	ngRG8H17zQWXbP WQiQ3zagWXyQT	Parents + spouse	Yes	Yes			

68	ngBn9W277ARq2C RnTAak7rHq	Draft evader	ngNC7D77vMCT1L SceMFvvcSfuMZ	Sibling(?)	No				
69	ngDp9U479Cps6ET DvCMm9tLm	Deserter	ngBQ6R57jAGH8Z GlsBJj5qGDIBD	Parents	Yes	Yes			
70	ngFr9Q671FburGV BxFOpuvLQ	Deserter	ngET1a67mCzK6CJ RvDWm8tJU	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes			
71	ngGs9J772HWv1H WOyHZprwOp	Deserter	ngYN6O27gWjEjW DFpYGghnDufXq	Parents	No				
72	ngHt9G873INwsIXx zHQq9xPq	Deserter	ngZO6P37hYEF8XE MqYRhhoEngYB	Parents + sibling	No				
73	nglu9T974JYxrJYca lhr9yQr	Deserter	ngHW7X17pGcNsF MwyFfp5wMdoGT	Relation unclear	Yes	Yes			Yes
74	nglu9T974JYxrJYca lhr9yQr	Deserter	ngFU1b77nDULoD KlwFNnquKx	Parents + spouse + child	Yes	Yes	Yes		
75	ngNz0k075NjczOD FfMmwwdTA	Deserter	ngHW7X17pGcN3F MayG3pqwMXoGT	Parents + sibling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
76	ngQc0n378RGf4RG giQpzbgWH	Deserter	ngJY2Z17rHOP4HO caJBr1yOfqlr	Parents + spouse	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
77	ngUg0r772VAj0VK GmVNd8kAj	Deserter	ngNC2D57vLST9LS ceMVv8cSZuLP	Parents + sibling	No				

Annex 3: Pseudonymised list of forcibly resettled families of Schiffflange²⁵⁷

Nodegoat ID Recruit	Nodegoat ID Family	Relation to deserter/draft evader ²⁵⁸	Absiedler nr.	Date of convoy	First destination
ngGs4X570GWvqHWGyG7p7wMvoFJ	ngHW7X17pGcN3FMOyHPp2wMRoFz	Parents	821	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngGs4X570GWvqHWGyG7p7wMvoFJ	ngLA4B97tKAR1JQOcLDt0aQXsJt	Sister, brother-in-law + children	830	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngHt4Y671HXwqIXVzHQqrxNCpGa	ngCR6S67kBxIIAHJtAKkOrHujCO	Parents + sibling	1267	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngHt4Y671HXwqIXVzHQqrxNCpGa	ngRG5H57zPcXzPWUiQZz8gWTyRD	Parents-in-law + other household members	1263	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngHt4Y671HXwqIXVzHQqrxNCpGa	ngAP1s27iZPG4YFNrAli4pFQ	Spouse + Children	1266	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngCo9T378Dir3DSOuCblosIF	ngXM6N17fViD1VCqoWvfgmCNeWf	Brother, sister-in-law + children	825	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngCo9T378Dir3DSOuCblosIF	ngSH5I67aQnY1QXVjRKabhXQzQa	Exact relation unclear	824	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngCo9T378Dir3DSOuCblosIF	ngNC5D17vMCT2LSAeMVv6cSXuNZ	Parents	823	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngCo9T378Dir3DSOuCblosIF	ngSH3I07aQnY0QXVjSAa2hXQzQa	Exact relation unclear	822	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngVh0M873ULk8WLJnUEe1lBQdUI	ngWL6M07eUhC2UBNnUEeflBkdUI	Parents + sibling	1265	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngZl1s277ZFoJAPtrYlijpFo	ngIX4Y67qGtO1GNxzGAq8xNGpIU	Mother + sibling	1159	08/08/1944	Boberstein
ngGs1d974GWvqHWoYgfp0wMB	ngGV7W07oFbMqELRxFOooVlQnFI	Parents + sibling	1270	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngOa5F378Nkd6PEmgO5xyeURwNh	ngAP1s27iZFGiYFZrASilpFY	Parents + sibling + uncle	1271	20/06/1944	Nohfelden

²⁵⁷ Identical deserters/draft evaders or families are marked in bold.

²⁵⁸ This column indicates the relation of the individuals that were part of this family unit to the deserter or draft evader. It does not automatically refer to the individuals who were forcibly resettled within this family. Some members were for example too old to be resettled or were sent to concentration camps.

ngCo6T772CyrMDSQuBLI8sIr kDF	ngQF0m27yQVWzOVLhQJy7f Vi	Parents + sibling	1292	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngTf3K277SJi4UJlSCcfjZibU W	ngCR1u47kCRlIAHfB6k5rHI	Parents + sibling	571	02/07/1943	Schlauphof
ngFr7W075FburGVBxFYorvL QnEI	ngPE5F37xNkV6NUKgNXxae UdwNB	Parents + sibling	1272	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngWi8N772Vil9XMqoWvf2 mCV	ngIX2e07qGdO0GNbzHgq3x Na	Parents + sibling	1274	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
nglu4Z772IYx7JYAaIRr0yOPq Ir	ngIX9G87qGNOtGNZzH0q3x Pq	Parents	1273	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngDp4U277Cps5ETxvCcm4t JYICw	ngIX7Y27qHdO3GNfzG4q7xN KpGq	Brother + sister-in-law + children	1284	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngDp4U277Cps5ETxvCcm4t JYICw	ngNC5D17vMCT2LSAeMVvyc SDuLf	Sister + brother-in-law + children	1287	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngFr4W479Eru7GVTxFeo4vL AnES	ngMB7C67uLRSvKRLdLEuwb RitMO	Parents + grand-mother	1285	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngLx5C075LBa2MBbdK2uub RYtLu	ngXM3N57fVMD9VCuoWPfh mCJeVp	Parents + sibling	832	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngTf5K873SfifUJXISMc2jZW bTc	ngCR4S07kAHl0AHBtAKkkrH OjBO	Parents + sibling	833	03/12/1943	Boberstein
ngVh6M075Uhk1WLVnV2efl BCdWI	ngRG5H57zPcXzPWUiQJz6g WDyRD	Parents	1288	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngCo9T378Dlr3DSYuBblmslv	ngCR6S67kBxllAHJtAaknrHljA u	Parents	1293	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
nglu9T974JYxrJYcalhr9yQr	ngFU1b77nDULoDKlwFNnqu Kx	Parents + spouse + child	1001	08/08/1944	Fugitive
ngNz0k075NjczODFfMmww dTA	ngHW7X17pGcN3FMayG3pq wMXoGT	Parents + sibling	1294	20/06/1944	Nohfelden
ngQc0n378RGf4RGgiQpzbG WH	ngJY2Z17rHOP4HOcaJBr1yOf qlr	Parents + spouse	930	08/03/1943	Fugitive

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