HERO? TRAITOR? VICTIM? AMBIGUITY OF DATA IN WAR BIOGRAPHIES

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https://digiwarhist.hypotheses.org
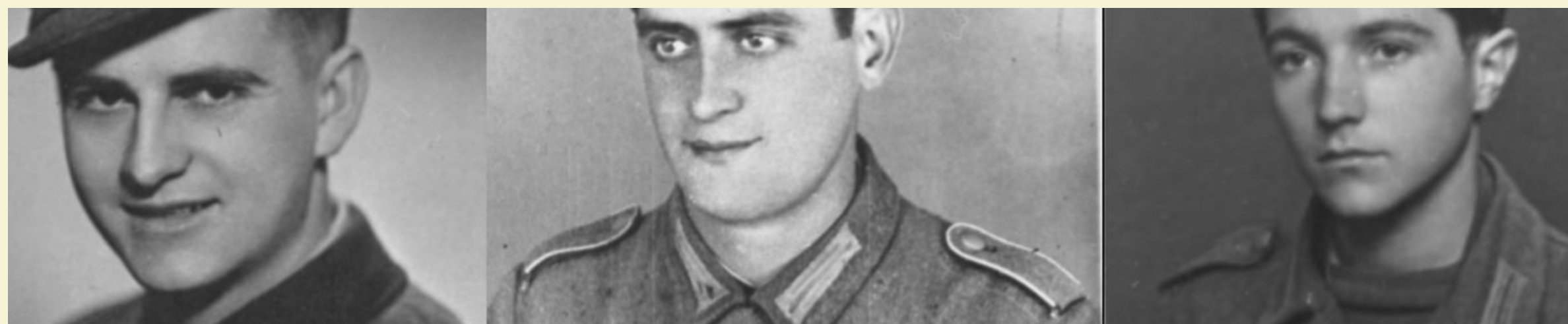
Biographical study of war biographies (and its different versions and scenarios) of Luxembourgish soldiers in WWII

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Conflicting Data about Luxembourgish soldiers in WWII - Question of WHEN the Luxembourgers joined the Wehrmacht is of importance. The date (before or after 30.08.1942) is a decisive factor for further biographical research and the war experiences of the men. Since there is contradictory and ambiguous information in the documents about the individuals, the analysis and use of this data is made difficult. We need to look at individual data statements

DATA

Biographical data - ego-documents (letters, diaries, memoirs), official documents (trials, testimonies, adminstrational records....)

TOOL

Using a relational database (nodegoat by lab1100) to build datasets based on their own data model and offers relational modes of analysis with spatial and chronological forms of contextualisation.

ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTED SOURCE MATERIAL

Document 1 - Nazi occupation. Presentation of the advantages of joining (awards, benefits from Nazi occupation). Example of a motivation letter as to why one should voluntarily join the Nazis.
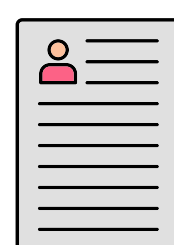
Document 2 - After the war. Investigation of "collaborators" such as volunteers in the Wehrmacht. Example: Testimonies and justifications in court cases for voluntary service and trivialisation of the circumstances. Downplaying of the individual role, correction or/and denial of the years of joining and collaboration.
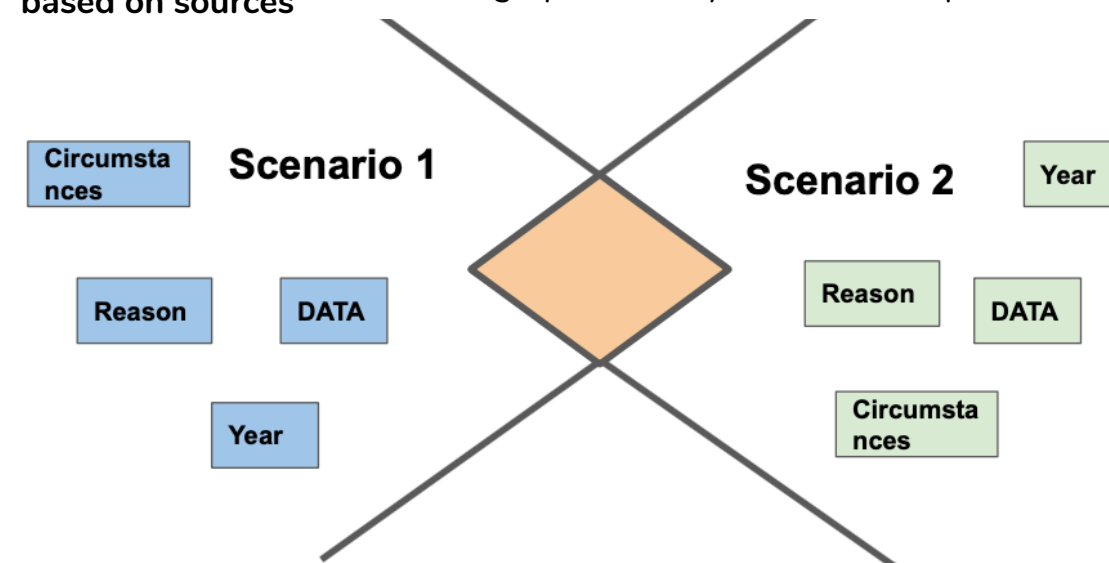
Ego-documents (letters, diaries, memoirs) - Justifications, individual statements, individual ways of thinking in the process of cooperation and personal war experiences.

DATA MODEL

If we analyse an event, e.g. the date of joining the Nazi troops, sources give us two different dates that can completely change the war biography. In a relational database, only one statement, here a date, is possible. Two different dates would confuse the data set. Therefore, we have to present two "versions" or scenarios. In both then the data from the documents (and the individual interpretation of the individual). The intersection why and how the individual justifies and substantiates their entry form the biographical analysis of their life path.

One Biography based on sources

Scenario 1 — Circumstances, Reason, DATA, Year

Scenario 2 — Year, Reason, DATA, Circumstances

RESEARCH STATUS PITFALLS

This poster was created based on the previous data model of the planned but already outdated approach. The originally designed data model was revised in the course of the project during the collection of the source material and its digitisation.
Please direct questions and recommendations to the author or the research team.

FURTHER STEPS

Evaluation of all data sets (official documents, ego-documents) and creation of the life path in the relational database. The focus in the further project will be on the war period only (due to time and personnel restrictions). The ambiguity of the data is taken into account, but the data entry is only done according to the contemporary war documents.

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WARLUX
Soldiers and their communities in WWII:
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