Programme title: European Historical Population Samples Network
Programme acronym: EHPS-Net
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Keywords: History; Demography; Large Historical Databases; Life Course Data; Census data

Abstract of the proposal (max. 300 words):
The European Historical Population Samples Network (EHPS-Net) brings together scholars to create a common format for databases containing information on persons, families and households. This format or Intermediate Data Structure (IDS) forms an integrated and joint interface between many European databases.

During the project period, the main databases will convert their material to the IDS format. In the meantime, data extraction programs for different types of studies (e.g. on migration and fertility) are prepared in close collaboration between researchers and programmers. The intended system is open, scalable, and extendable. New types of analysis can be introduced by adding new extraction modules. Anyone can contribute an extraction module, which will be peer-reviewed and published in an e-journal. Programming will be organized in research projects delivering demonstrators.

Our activities include stimulating the creation of new databases and organizing training sessions in participating countries where historical population database are still scarce.

The network creates a portal that provides access to the European databases, as well as to important non-European ones which have joined the network. On the portal site an overview will be given of all databases, their contents and the degree to which their variables have been structured into the IDS. The portal will also centralize and systematize the data extraction software. The site will present and make downloadable the standardization rules, metadata and documentation. Thus, the existing expertise is made available to the research community.

We assemble scholars who by creating regional or national databases have advanced the field of (historical) demography in their respective countries. The network allows them to proceed beyond the boundaries of their individual datasets, by creating a common interface for the history of the life course. In this way, we can understand the historical dimensions of the challenges faced by contemporary European (and global) populations.

Previous or concurrent applications to the ESF for any of the ESF instruments: None
Section II:

Status of the relevant research field; scientific context, objectives and envisaged achievements of the proposed Programme:

Introduction
For almost half a century, population historians have created datasets on life courses from archival sources such as parish records, tax records, censuses and population registers. Their time span ranges from medieval times to the present day. These datasets are essential to understand how economic, social and cultural changes impacted on the lives of ordinary persons and how these persons, in turn, shaped their surroundings and their destinies by strategies of survival and improvement. Recent developments in ICT facilities and methodologies have increased the scale and the analytic power of these individual level datasets significantly. Thus, in several countries large regional or even national datasets have been made available for research (for an overview, see sections 3 and 4). New methods of record linkage and new statistical tools are being developed to improve the coverage of these datasets and to deal with the shortcomings of the sources by combining related pieces of information. European administrators have kept more detailed records than anywhere else in the world for centuries, but it is only now that the analytical power inherent in this uniquely rich source material is integrated in ways that bring out the comparative advantage for research on the history of the European population.

The logical next step in this development is to link all existing European datasets in a common format – the so-called Intermediate Data Structure (IDS) – in order to transcend the currently regional and national studies. By establishing the European Historical Population Samples Network (EHPS-Net) we aim to 1) create a discussion forum, 2) realize an integrated and joint interface between the many European datasets containing information on individual persons, families and households in the past and 3) stimulate the further development of databases especially in those parts of Europe were this kind of databases are scarce (East and South East Europe). New and existing databases brought together will allow us to study regional diversity and similarity in the life course experiences of all Europeans. Interest from non-European colleagues leads us to expect the format to become the standard for all historical life course datasets in the world. Researchers from many disciplines will be given access through a network of distributed databases. Thus, the aim of the IDS is not to replace the individual databases by some central database, but rather to provide a common format for accessing datasets which are structured in the same way.

In this proposal we:

1) Describe the logic and methods associated with the integration of a great number of European databases;
2) Demonstrate the unique analytical power associated with the complex dimensionality of these European data;
3) Elaborate the existing opportunities for and advantages of comparative analysis between several sites;
4) Outline a plan for integrating the European data for the purposes of cross-national and cross-regional comparison;
5) Develop an agenda for the investigation of some of the most important substantive questions in the fields of historical demography and family sociology, questions that resonate with a number of crucial contemporary issues (e.g. social mobility and immigrant incorporation);
6) Set forth a concrete plan for the development of the organizational infrastructure for the promotion and support of European demographic-historical studies.
Making datasets comparable

Making sets of micro-data comparable is the necessary first step towards a ‘European life course history’. Each database consists of widely varying variables, due to the diverging sources from which individual lives are reconstructed. These sources range from censuses, tax records and land registers, through church records and civil records (recording birth, death and marriage) to dynamically updated population registers. Furthermore, each database has its own problems of sampling, selection biases and ‘loss to observation’, that are documented extensively. The diversity in content means that not all research questions can be addressed to all databases. The tasks of the network are fourfold: 1) Mapping the diversity of data contained in European historical micro databases into a common interface based on an already established format (IDS)\(^1\), including metadata and documentation; 2) Bringing together programmers and researchers in projects to write data extraction programs for a number of research fields such as migration, fertility and social mobility; 3) Enhancing dissemination by educating scholars in the use of the IDS and data extraction programs; 4) Encouraging the development of new databases in parts of Europe where historical population databases are scarce.

Figure 1 Basic scheme of the data extraction structure.

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database in the same way. Standardized data extraction, metadata and documentation make for large gains in efficiency.

The EHPS-Net functions as a collaboratory in which the portal will be the centre of all activities (see figure 2). The portal will offer 1) a presentation of each database with a full documentation of sources, its IDS (documentation of data description) and the criteria for scientific use of the data, 2) facilities to archive and disseminate datasets from databases not equipped to handle dissemination on their own website and 3) facilities to download software tools uploaded by researchers and programmers. To encourage the sharing of programs and scripts an E-journal will be hosted on the website in which researchers and programmers may put their products in the form of articles (compare the R Journal for statistical computing in R, see http://journal.r-project.org/). This will stimulate software sharing and it promotes that programs and scripts are documented carefully. The projects involved in the network stand to gain through improved, standardized documentation, improved visibility and accessibility and through the possibility to compare directly with other datasets. Because of privacy regulations and/or specific regulations of databases, access to the data will be partly public and partly restricted (for example by way of remote access).

Figure 2  Central portal as a spider in the web

The data extraction software will provide a type of structured data mining whereby data from the IDS are moved into file formats designed for analysis. Since the requirements of each type of analysis vary, we expect to have many specialized extraction programs. This approach has important benefits. It is open, scalable, and extendable. Any database can transfer its data to the IDS which will be documented systematically in the metadata registry.
New forms of analysis can be introduced by adding new extraction modules. Anyone can contribute an extraction module, which will be peer-reviewed. Methodologies can be examined, discussed, and tested, and research results will be reproducible. This programming will be organized in pilot research projects delivering demonstrators. These pilots (including datasets for the analysis of migration, fertility and social mobility) will be essential for the fine tuning of the IDS. Moreover, they will explore the potential and expand the outreach of the IDS for Europe-wide and even global comparisons of demographic processes. An online platform for teams of distributed researchers is already available at www.iisg.collab.nl. The Virtual Knowledge Studio for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) offers additional funding to support these teams.

**Scientific impact**

Already, databases with micro data have stimulated the fields of family and community history in their respective countries. The IDS structure provides considerable added value by offering a common template for existing and new databases to:

1. Link a large number of data elements (e.g. church with tax records) relating to individuals, thus enhancing the richness of the data.
2. Reconstruct the family setting of individuals, allowing for the study of intergenerational processes such as the transmission of social status, health and cultural characteristics.
3. Supplement information on individuals with contextual data, creating opportunities for multilevel research.
4. Implement a longitudinal or life course perspective, in order to compare for instance socio-economic and demographic careers of migrants and non-migrants or urban-, semi-urban and rural dwellers.
5. Compare findings based on compatible datasets across Europe and across the globe.

Comparative historical demography can play an important role in understanding the challenges faced by contemporary European (and global) society. Currently, there is an intense discussion about the nature of the recent changes in family life. Everywhere, we witness a decline in marriage and remarriage rates, an increase in divorces, a rise in the age at first marriage, an increase in cohabitation, a severe fertility decline, higher levels of education and salaried employment of women. According to some scholars, these are 'new' developments, representing the demographical shadow of the genesis of a new society (risk society, post-modern society, reflexive modernity). According to others, these new trends should not be exaggerated because continuity is more important than the differences. Processes such as the privatization of family life, the formation and weakening of group identities, the development of new cultural identities, the reevaluation of women's role and their position in family and society, were already visible in the second half of the nineteenth century. To understand what is occurring in contemporary European society, we need not only good contemporary data (which can be fitted to our standard), but also detailed and regionally diversified data on historical life events such as marriage, family formation, mobility and mortality.

Increasingly, social scientists recognize the path dependency of current variation in economic and demographic patterns. Family life is still influenced, directly or indirectly, by factors such as traditional expectations towards marriage, ties to the extended family, care for and residence with or near parents. Likewise religious norms, family laws and inheritance practices continue to operate. Family systems, or regional norms patterning family behaviour, are essential in order to understand current demographic variation and trends. Our network and the interface between regional databases will prove a valuable tool for illuminating the role and conditions for endurance of regional family systems in an integrated Europe.

Another example of a research field that will benefit from the IDS is migration studies. We need to know more about the conditions for and the nature of (successful)
integration in receiving communities, preferably also for second and third generation immigrants. The IDS will allow us to compare the fate (in terms of marriage, family formation, health, careers) of immigrants in major cities across Europe, as well as the fate of their children. Did successful integration depend on the characteristics of the immigrants, their backgrounds, the timing of their migration, on the economic situation in the receiving city, the city’s or nation’s immigration policy? Furthermore, we still know very little about the moves people made during their lives and how these moves were related to other life course transitions. IDS will strengthen a new historical research agenda emerging from the analyses of individual migration trajectories including local moves.

Our network explicitly aims to facilitate collaboration between leading experts on large databases across all continents. Comparing life courses between cultures opens up a fascinating new field of research. A pioneering effort in this field was the Eurasia Project, sponsored by the ESF. In this project, longitudinal village reconstitutions from Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Japan and China were compared. The group studied mortality across family systems, revealing differences in internal redistribution of food, differential protection in times of economic stress, and differential power relations between generations and sexes. When more datasets are made comparable, it will become feasible to study variation in family life, in family ties and in individual behaviour by religion, by level of urbanization and economic specialization, by system of communal support et cetera. Understanding variation and different responses to similar economic conditions or processes (modernisation, globalisation) will provide important historical reflections on present-day challenges.

In sum, the network brings together scholars who by creating and exploiting regional or national databases have markedly advanced the field of family history and historical demography in their respective countries. The network allows them to proceed beyond the boundaries of their individual datasets, by creating a common interface for a truly European and even global history of the life course.

Facilities and expertise which will be accessible by the Programme:

Central in our network is the portal that provides access to the European databases. On this website an overview will be given of all databases, their contents and the degree to which their variables have been structured into the IDS. The portal will also centralize and systematize the data extraction software and regulate the development of new software. The site will also present and make downloadable the standardization rules, metadata and documentation. In this way the existing expertise is made available to the research community in a systematic way. Expert knowledge will be transmitted through courses designed to clarify the IDS and through accompanying software tools for interested researchers.

We expect the EHPS-Net to form a large collaboratory in which peer-groups share their meta-knowledge about the data and work on documentation, publications and other forms of research output. Sharing data and exchanging views and ideas about results amongst peers will greatly enhance the quality of the data and will facilitate leading edge collaborative studies. The network will also consider strategic enlargements of existing databases. On the European level this means that databases which are not yet involved will be approached to join this common enterprise. Likewise, researchers in countries lacking such datasets will be encouraged to digitize their relevant sources and they will be assisted where possible.
Expected benefit from European collaboration in this area:

Research in this field is already a global enterprise. A stronger European collaboration and position will result in a better integrated scientific community. Presently the main databases are primarily situated in the ‘North-Atlantic area’ (Britain, USA, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands). Our cooperation will strengthen the European part of this by including databases from Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Poland etc in this network. It will decisively improve the analytical skills of our colleagues and contribute to the emergence of a common culture of historical micro-data analysis. It will also create a network with enough critical mass to become a transnational cradle for PhD students and post-docs, in an area where are observed the most promising development in demographic and social sciences analysis, and where it is important to consolidate the European position.

European context:

In March 2006 the issue of how to make historical datasets more widely applicable was thoroughly discussed at a workshop organized by the Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN) in Amsterdam. The workshop was attended by over 20 representatives from relevant databases who agreed on the importance of simplifying access to longitudinal data. Follow up meetings were organized on May 1-2, 2008 at ICPSR, Ann Arbor and in Miami, October 22, 2008. This meetings resulted in the model for data sharing (IDS), which we employ. Over fifteen different databases participated in these conferences. New meetings have been scheduled for Long Beach, November, 12th of November and Ghent (April 2010). The meetings were funded by the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO Humanities), ICPSR and DDB Umea. The proposed network aims to continue and expand the activities of the group.

The databases involved in this network have contributed in various ways to research and discussions of two COST Actions, namely A34 (Gender and Well-being. Interactions between work, family and public policies) and (A35 Study of European Rural Societies). The project is closely related to the North Atlantic Population Project that provides access to historical censuses. Finally, the activities of the network are supported by the International Commission for Historical Demography.

Proposed activities, key targets and milestones:

The activities follow a scheme of biannual meetings where the progress of the diverse activities will be discussed. The meetings of the steering group will be held in connection with these meetings.

Key targets will be:
1. to build the EHPS-Net portal, to be maintained by the International Institute of Social History,
2. to include all main European longitudinal databases in the IDS,
3. to set up projects for developing data extraction software (migration, fertility etc.) and support teams of peer researchers that will create and test extraction programs,
4. to assist in the creation of new databases, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe,
5. to organize regional meetings where scholars will be educated in the use of the IDS and data extraction programs.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>List of milestones /deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website /portal</strong></td>
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<td>M54</td>
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<td>M60</td>
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*Several countries (e.g. Rumania and Lithuania) have indicated a strong interest in developing historical databases according to the standard to be created by the network. We expect that new databases will be developed in five countries.

**Duration** (48 or 60 months): 60 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget estimate (in €) by type of activities and per year of the Programme</th>
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<tr>
<td>**Budget **</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biannual meetings (average 25 participants)</td>
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<td>Meetings steering group (10 participants)</td>
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<td>Travel coordinator and database advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development portal **</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference costs</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Price level 2009, inflation rate 3% per year
** Portal will be maintained by IISG
List of names and full coordinates of the envisaged Steering Committee members listed by country in alphabetical order (One member per collaborating country; this can be a provisional list and names can be added to it later):

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Global dimension
The global dimension has already been indicated in section 2 and the proposal starts from the already existing cooperation. Some institutions even include European databases. The Minnesota Population Center (prof. Steve Ruggles) is main center of harmonizing historical and contemporary census databases. Institutions from outside Europe intend to find their own funding as soon as it is clear that there is a go for the EHPS-network, included databases are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Database</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td>(Founders and Survivors: Australian Lifecourses in Historical Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. dr. Janet McCalman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Melbourne, School of Population Health, Centre for Health &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Society, Parkville, Victoria, 3010, Australia, (+61 3 8344 9107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:janetsm@unimelb.edu.au">janetsm@unimelb.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td>(1891 Census of Canada sample; Europeans in the WWI Armies of Australia;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand and South Africa; 1871 Census of Canada</td>
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<tr>
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<td>sample; 1871 Census of Scotland sample)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. dr. Kris Inwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Guelph, Historical Data Research Unit, Economics and History,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stone Road East, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1, (519-824-4120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:kinwood@uoguelph.ca">kinwood@uoguelph.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taiwan</strong></td>
<td>(Taiwan Historical Demography Database)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. dr. Wen Shan Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academia Sinica, Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program for Historical Demography, 128 Academia Road, Section 2, Nankang,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taipei, Taiwan 11529, (Telephone: 886-2-2652-5117)</td>
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<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>(Genealogical Database for Families in the Northern United States (1620 to</td>
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<td>of America</td>
<td>1880))</td>
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<td>Prof. dr. Alice Bee Kasakoff, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of</td>
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<td>Anthropology and Research Associate in Geography</td>
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<td>University of South Carolina, Anthropology, Columbia, SC 29208, USA</td>
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<td>(803-777-6500; 803-777-5234)</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Kasakoff@sc.edu">Kasakoff@sc.edu</a></td>
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<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>(Historical Database of the Liège Region; German Village Genealogies;</td>
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<td>of America</td>
<td>U.S. Family Reconstitutions)</td>
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<td>Prof. dr. George Alter, Acting Director ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium</td>
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<td>for Political and Social Research), University of Michigan, Institute for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social Research, PO Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1248, USA, (+1-734-615-</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:altergc@umich.edu">altergc@umich.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>(Integrated Public Use Microdata Series)</td>
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<tr>
<td>of America</td>
<td>Prof. dr. Steven Ruggles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Minnesota, Minnesota Population Center, 50 Willey Hall,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>225 19th Ave, S., Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA, (+01 612 624 5818)</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:ruggles@umn.edu">ruggles@umn.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>(Utah Population Database)</td>
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<td>of America</td>
<td>Ken R. Smith, PhD</td>
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<td>University: University of Utah, Huntsman Cancer Institute, Pedigree and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Population Resource, 675 Apareen, Suite 200, Salt Lake City, UT 84112</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(801-581-7847)</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:ken.smith@fcs.utah.edu">ken.smith@fcs.utah.edu</a></td>
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Section IV: (not more than 3 A4 single pages in total)

CVs
(Full coordinates and short curriculum vitae of the applicant(s) including 'contact person'. The list of the five most recent relevant publications of each applicant):

Prof. dr. Anders Brändström
University of Umeå,
Centre for Population Studies
Demographic Data Base Umeå,
SE 901 87 Umeå, Sweden
tel. +46-90-786 57 17
e-mail: Anders.Brandstrom@ddb.umu.se

Anders Brändström is professor in Historical Demography at the faculty of Arts and Humanities, Umeå University. He is director of the Demographic Data Base Umeå and of the Centre for Population Studies (CPS). He received several grants amongst other for the Ageing and Living Conditions Programme (ALC). This programme is a central element in this research area of strong significance. It was appointed as one of Sweden’s most prominent research environments and received a Linnaeus Grant of 80 million kronor for 2006 from the Swedish Research Council. Participants in this programme are researchers from the faculties of social science, arts and medicine.

He is member of several commissions and boards, amongst others the Swedish Research Councils Committee for Research Infrastructures (VR - KFI), the Scientific committee of the Swedish National Data Service (SND), the permanent evaluation panel in the Social Sciences at the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (RJ – Bg2) and the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). TWG: Humanities and Social Sciences.

Main research interests are in the field of population studies, living conditions and infant mortality. Recent relevant publications:

For more information see
http://www.umu.se/english/research/researcher-profiles/anders-brandstrom
Kees Mandemakers is senior research fellow at the International Institute for Social History (IISG), heading the Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN) and professor of Large Historical Databases at the Faculty of History and Arts of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. In 2008 he received a grant from the NWO-programme Continuous Access to Cultural Heritage for the project LINKS (LINKing System for historical family reconstruction); in this record linkage project the genealogical indices of marriages, births and deaths will be linked into families, the whole consisting of about twenty million persons from over thirty million sources and appearing about hundred million times.

Since 2005 he is vice president of The International Commission for Historical Demography (affiliated to the International Committee of Historical Sciences). He leads an international working group making historical micro data comparable on database-level and developing open source tools to build datasets for analysis from all databases that contain micro data (project Internationalizing large historical databases).

Main research interest: Methodology of large historical databases, Family and Demography, Social stratification and mobility, Social history of education. Recent relevant publications:


For more information see http://www.iisg.nl/staff/kma.php
Koen Matthijs is a full professor at the Center for Sociological Research (School of Social Sciences, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven). He is also vice-dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. His research fields are historical demography, sociology of the historical family, comparative family studies, and aging and the life course.


Recent relevant publications:

For more information see