



**Scientific report of the EHPS-Net Summer School Summer school Nijmegen/KU Leuven
Historical Demography: Reconstructing Life Course Dynamics, 29 June – 10 July 2015,
Nijmegen, the Netherlands**

Summary

The Nijmegen-Leuven EHPS-Net summer school plays into the recent advances in historical demographic research which place great emphasis on longitudinal micro-level approaches of all important aspects of demographic behaviour. This means that historical demographic phenomena need to be studied within the context of life course analysis. This approach, however, involves the complex handling of large amounts of dynamic individual-level data; as a result complicated database management techniques have become a crucial component of the tool kit of historical demographers. These skills are however not regularly taught in standard university courses. This summer school has provided a thorough training in these database skills and has also offered an advanced theoretical and historiographical introduction into the major research themes of historical demography. Finally, the course has provided a thorough training in a limited number of complex analytical techniques associated with individual level data.

This course therefore consisted of three important features. First, the course offered a theoretical introduction into the life course approach and its central concepts; a number of senior researchers from the universities of Nijmegen and Leuven and the International Institute of Social History have given advanced theoretical lectures on a wide range of issues in which they discussed the most recent scientific developments in their fields.

The second and major component of the course consisted of a thorough training in the skills required to handle dynamic life course data from large historical databases, starting from the raw data contained in data entry files right up to the point at which the data are ready to be analysed by complex statistical tools such as event history analysis. Students were able to make use of Dutch and Belgian datasets for training purposes.

Third, the course offered a theoretical introduction as well as practical training into complex analytical statistical tools designed to analyse longitudinal life course data.

The course comprised 9 full teaching days. International recruitment was quite successful. In total 15 young student scholars (master and early PhD students) from a large number of countries participated in the course. Student evaluations were quite positive but also provided useful ideas on how to improve further on our format. The course was hosted by the Department of Social, Economic and Demographic History. Course leaders: prof.dr. Jan Kok and prof.dr. Angélique Janssens. Course coordinator: Tim Riswick MA.

Scientific content and discussions at the event

The course consisted of a combination of lectures, lab work and practical exercises, and to conclude students had to conduct a subgroup mini-research project based on the databases they had been practicing with. They presented their outcomes in a mini-symposium at the end of the course.

Lectures

Lectures were divided over different issues.

First, the summer school dealt with a number of substantial and central topics from the field of historical demography:

- Introduction of the life course approach
- Marriage strategies in the European past
- Fertility behaviour in the European past
- Pre- and extramarital sexuality in the European past
- Future developments in historical demography

These topics were chosen on the basis of their central place in the field of study but also because students might use these lectures as a starting point for their own research projects.

Second, the programme included two lectures on analytical approaches and tools which are essential for any study in the field of historical demography:

- Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for the study of demographic behaviour in the European past
- Using HISCO/HISCAM coding and classification systems for historical occupational titles

Third, in order for students to become acquainted with the databases they could use for their own research, we included two lectures on these:

- Introduction Antwerp COR* database
- Introduction HSN dataset

Fourth, the programme included several lectures on database and statistical software:

- Introduction ACCESS
- Introduction R-studio

Finally, a number of lectures were included on statistical analysis of life course data:

- logistic regression
- discrete time event history analysis
- cox models

Main part: lab work and exercises

Each day started with the introductory lectures on theoretical, conceptual and methodological issues (maximum of 1,5 hours). However, after the morning lecture students were working with hands-on exercises and assignments (until 18 hours). This makes clear that the body of the programme consisted of gaining a lot of practice in database management.

These exercises were carried out on the two databases offered by the course: the Historical Sample of the Netherlands and the Antwerp COR* database.

Students were guided by a series of senior teachers and student-assistants (local PhD's with a lot of experience in the field) so that each participant could easily work through the exercises.

The software used in the course included first of all ACCESS. This package allows for easy entry into database management. Initially, we had decided to use STATA as the central statistical software for the course; however, after careful consideration we decided to switch to R-studio on account of the fact that this package is freeware and is also used by the other courses in the EHPS training programme.

Final

Students carried out a subgroup mini-research project in the final days of the programme; the results of which were presented and commented on at a final conference. This proved to be a very stimulating event with extremely good results in some cases.

In preparation for the course students had been given a considerable list of literature before the start of the course: pdf's had been made available via internet. In addition, basic training modules for specific computer skills were provided beforehand through dropbox.

The course was part of the programme of summer schools of the European Historical Population Samples network (see: www.ehps-net.eu).

Schedule

Our realised program differs from the original program because one of our teachers (Evelien Walhout) fell ill on Friday 3 July. Therefore we moved some classes in order to reduce the amount of time students would 'lose'.

Sunday, 28 June 2015

Arrival

15:00-17:00 Getting your keys for the Guest House at the Gymnasium (Heyendaalseweg)

Monday, 29 June 2015

Arrival and Welcome

10:00-17:00 Getting your keys for the Guest House at the International Office (Comeniuslaan 4)

17:00 Campus Tour for participants in the Guest House (including visit supermarket and getting the Radboud bikes)

Location: starts in front of the Guest House (Platolaan)

19:00 Welcome reception (including snacks and drinks)

Location: Kitchen 9th floor, Department of History, Erasmusgebouw, Campus RU

Tuesday, 30 June 2015

Theoretical Introduction and first lab session ACCESS

09:00-10:30 Lecture 1: Introduction research agenda summer school & life course approach

Location: E1.05 By Jan Kok

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-13:00 Lecture 2 : Introduction ACCESS

Location: TP3 By Paul Puschmann

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:45 Methods and lab session: Workshop Antwerp COR*database &ACCESS

Location: TP3 By Paul Puschmann

15:45-16:15 Break

16:15-18:00 Students working on exercises and group project

Location: TP3

Wednesday, 1 July 2015

Marriage strategies and ACCESS training

09:00-10:30 Lecture 3 : Marriage strategies in the European past

Location: E1.05 By Saskia Hin

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-13:00 Lecture 4 : Introduction Antwerp COR*database&ACCESS

Location: TP3 By Paul Puschmann

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:45 Methods and lab session: Workshop Antwerp COR*database &ACCESS

Location: TP3 By Paul Puschmann

15:45-16:15 Break

16:15-18:00 Students working on exercises and group project
Location: TP3

Thursday, 2 July 2015

Introduction HSN dataset and ACCESS training

09:00-10:30 Lecture 5 : Introduction HSN dataset
Location: E1.05 By Evelien Walhout

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-13:00 Methods and lab session: HSN workshop & ACCESS
Location: TP3 By Evelien Walhout

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:00 Methods and lab session: Hands-on exercises
Location: TP3 By Evelien Walhout

15:00-15:45 Students working on exercises and group project
Location: TP3

15:45-16:15 Break

16:15-18:00 Students working on exercises and group project
Location: TP3

Friday, 3 July 2015

Fertility behaviour and ACCESS training

09:00-10:30 Lecture 6 : Fertility behaviour in the European past
Location: E1.05 By Hideko Matsuo

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-13:00 Students discuss their group project
Location: TP3

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 Lecture 11: Premarital sexuality in the European past
Location: TP3 By Jan Kok

15:30-15:45 Break

15:45-16:45 Students shortly present their ideas for their own group projects
Location: TP3

18:00-22:00 Social Activity: Bike tour, pancakes and drinks (including dinner at our expense)
Location: starts in front of the Guest House (Platolaan)

22:00+ Social Activity: Night Life in Nijmegen by our PhD colleague Robin (0031654607651)
Meeting place: in front of Rabobank Nijmegen (Keizer Karel roundabout)

Saturday, 4 July 2015

Free time

Sunday, 5 July 2015

15:30-17:00 Social Activity: Historical City Tour Nijmegen
Location: starts in front of Museum het Valkhof (Kelfkensbos 59, city centre)

17:00-18:30 Social Activity: Guided tour and beer tasting in brewery 'De Hemel' (optional to join for dinner at own expense)
Location: Franseplaats 1 (city centre Nijmegen).

Monday, 6 July 2015

Occupational coding systems and R Studio training

09:00-10:30 Lecture 7 : Using HISCO/HISCAM occupational coding systems
Location: E1.05 By Richard Zijdeman

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 Methods and lab session: workshop HISCO/HISCAM
Location: TP4 By Richard Zijdeman

12:00-13:00 Lecture 8 : introduction R Studio 1 – descriptive statistics and logistic regression
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer

- 13:00-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-15:00 Lecture 8 : introduction R Studio 1 – descriptive statistics and logistic regression
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer
- 15:00-16:00 Methods and lab session: exercises workshop R-studio
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer
- 16:00-16:30 Break
- 16:30-18:00 Methods and lab session: exercises workshop R-studio and group project
Location: TP1
- 15:00-17:00 Consultation for own research project (optional)
Location: E9.04a By Jan Kok

Tuesday, 7 July 2015

R Studio training and Geographical Analysis

- 9:00-10:30 Lecture 9: introduction R Studio 2 – discrete time event history analysis 1
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer
- 10:30-11:00 Break
- 11:00-13:00 Methods and lab session: workshop R Studio discrete time event history analysis 1
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-15:00 Lecture 9 : Introduction Geographical Analysis of Demographic Behaviour in the European past
Location: Forum By Onno Boonstra
- 15:00-15:45 Methods and lab session: workshop Geographical Analysis
Location: Forum By Thijs Hermsen
- 15:45-16:15 Break
- 16:15-18:00 Methods and lab session: workshop Geographical Analysis
Location: Forum By Thijs Hermsen

Wednesday, 8 July 2015

Premarital sexuality and conference preparation

- 9:30-10:30 Lecture: R Studio Discrete time event history analysis 2 and Cox regression
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer
- 10:30-11:00 Break
- 11:00-12:00 Methods and lab session: R Studio Discrete time event history analysis 2 and Cox regression
Location: TP4 By Ben Pelzer
- 12:00-13:00 Students working on own research project
Location: TP4 When you have questions go to room E9.04 or ask Ben Pelzer
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-16:00 Students working on own research project
Location: TP4 When you have questions go to room E9.04
- 16:00-16:30 Break
- 16:30-18:00 Students working on own research project
Location: TP1 When you have questions go to room E9.04
- 14:00-17:00 Consultation for own research project (optional)
Location: TP4 By Kees Mandemakers
Location: E9.03 By Angélique Janssens

Thursday, 9 July 2015

Future developments in historical demography and conference preparation

- 09:00-10:30 Lecture 12 : Future developments in historical demography
Location: E1.05 By Angélique Janssens
- 10:30-11:00 Break
- 11:00-18:00 Students working on own research project
Location: TP1a/b When you have questions you can go to room E9.04
- 14:00-17:00 Consultation for own research project (optional)
Location: E9.03 By Angélique Janssens

23:59 Deadline for handing in group projects (3-5 pages of text, tables/graphs can be added in an Appendix).

We propose to structure this group project as follows. However, if you would like to add more information (for example about your group process) in your paper you are free to do so:

- a (short) section about your research question / and explain why it is important
- a section about the data you use and why you choose this data
- if you constructed variables please explain this: which ones, how and why? You do not have to write down every step/code, but just give a general idea about how you constructed your variables.
- a section about the methods you use and why you choose these methods.
- a section on your results and conclusions.
- a section on what you would like to do next, if you had more time.

Please email your group project (paper (before 23:59, 09-07-15) and presentation (before 11:00, 10-07-15)) to t.riswick@let.ru.nl

Friday, 10 July 2015

Concluding student conference

- 10:00-10:45 Returning the bikes at the International Office
Location: Spinoza building (same place as were we picked them up)
- 11:00-13:00 Students present their group project to each other and to commentators and audience
Location: E1.05
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch break (including lunch at our expense)
- 14:00-15:00 Students present their subgroup research work to each other and to commentators and audience
Location: E1.05
- 15:00-16:00 Evaluation Summer School, Closure and Summer School Certificates Ceremony
Location: E1.05
- 16:00 - 19:00 Social Event: BBQ (including dinner at our expense)
Location: Sport Bar (Second floor, Gymnasion)

Assessments of the results and impact of the event on the future directions of the field

Evaluation by course leaders

The course leaders consider the course a success, because

- a) we offered a diverse course with both theoretical and (especially) practical components
- b) which resulted in lively discussions as well and intensive group work, leading to several high-quality final presentations and short papers and
- c) which was evaluated positively by the students.

However, we also believe there is ample room for improvement:

- a) in practical matters, such as ensuring that computers can handle operations on large databases
- b) in the technical components of the course, e.g. we are considering moving to R studio for data management as well
- c) in the analytical components of the course, e.g. deleting the introduction on GIS
- d) in the theoretical components of the course, e.g. adding approaches to mortality and/or migration

Student evaluation

Student evaluation was quite positive. On average students rated the entire course on a scale between 0-10 (10=highest) with an 8. The average of most sections and teachers is between 7-8.

Students expressed above all that their wish was to have even more focus on the practical exercises: participants considered the exercises the most useful part of the course. Moreover, it would be good

to make exercises for different levels so that people can choose their own level. Also there should be more time reserved in the programme for these individual exercises.

All theoretical parts of the course were deemed very useful. But students suggested to include mortality as a topic. All modules of the course were experienced by students as necessary and useful parts of the course. However, the component devoted to Geographical Information Systems was considered to fit least in the programme focused on data management and Event History Analysis (which were most important subjects in this summer school). Therefore it would be better the use this time for extended introduction in Microsoft Access or R Studio.

Participants recognized that it is difficult to accommodate the diverse levels and backgrounds of students, but recommend to do a pre-course survey (or exercise) to get informed about the level of each participant.

Improvements are recommended by students in the Microsoft Access part of the programme. They have provided some very useful ideas for this which can be taken up in next year's programme. Students also expressed that they would have wanted more guidance (and maybe a written explanation) of the group projects, and also about Event History Analysis (and the way data should be prepared), and more information about the structure of the databases.

Students rated the accommodation offered during the course as very good; and the organisation of the course as a whole as: 'fantastic', 'perfect', 'great and clear'. They considered the teachers to have been in general as friendly and helpful.

Impact of the event on the future directions of the field

The field of historical demography has strong potential in two senses. First, by charting and explaining long-term trends in phenomena such as population ageing, health improvement, relationship formation and dissolution, and migration it offers a unique contribution to the understanding of highly important societal developments. Second, mass digitization of sources (such as historical censuses) and advances in automated record linkages offer unprecedented opportunities to broaden the scope of research in this field, even (by making use of the European Historical Population Samples Network databases) to include international comparisons. However, recruiting young scholars to this field has proven difficult in the past for several reasons. First, the humanities curricula in many countries fail to incorporate quantitative research methods. Second, the large databases containing historical life courses are very complex and require extensive and hands-on explanation by experts. Finally, access to (free) statistical software has hampered the attraction to the field of scholars in eastern Europe. This course aims to redress these problems, by teaching statistical skills, learning to use complex databases, and by offering the opportunity to do comparative research (by comparing data from Netherlands and Belgium). The course is a vital step in the creation of a new international cohort of scholars able to take a long-term perspective on population issues.

Annexes

Full list of instructors

- Onno Boonstra**, RadboudUniversiteit, Comeniuslaan 4, 6525 HP Nijmegen, theNetherlands,
o.boonstra@let.ru.nl
- ThijsHermsen**, RadboudUniversiteit, Comeniuslaan 4, 6525 HP Nijmegen, theNetherlands,
t.hermsen@let.ru.nl
- Saskia Hin**, KU Leuven, Parkstraat 45 - bus 3601, 3000 Leuven, saskia.hin@soc.kuleuven.be
- Angélique Janssens**, RadboudUniversiteit, Comeniuslaan 4, 6525 HP Nijmegen, theNetherlands,
a.janssens@let.ru.nl
- Jan Kok**, RadboudUniversiteit, Comeniuslaan 4, 6525 HP Nijmegen, theNetherlands, j.kok@let.ru.nl
- Kees Mandemakers**, International Instituteof Social History, EHPS-Net, Cruquiusweg 31, 1019
AT Amsterdam, theNetherlands, kma@iisg.nl
- Hideko Matsuo**, KU Leuven, Parkstraat 45 - bus 3601, 3000 Leuven,
hideko.matsuo@soc.kuleuven.be
- Ben Pelzer**, RadboudUniversiteit, Comeniuslaan 4, 6525 HP Nijmegen, theNetherlands,
b.pelzer@maw.ru.nl
- Paul Puschmann**, KU Leuven, Parkstraat 45 - bus 3601, 3000 Leuven,
paul.puschmann@soc.kuleuven.be
- Evelien Walhout**, RadboudUniversiteit, Comeniuslaan 4, 6525 HP Nijmegen, theNetherlands,
e.walhout@let.ru.nl
- Richard Zijdeman**, International Instituteof Social History, EHPS-Net, Cruquiusweg 31, 1019 AT
Amsterdam, theNetherlands, richard.zijdeman@iisg.nl

Full list of students

First name	Surname	City	Country	University	Email
*Nicoletta	Signoret-ti	Rome	Italy	Sapienza Univer-sità di Roma	nicolet-colet-let-ta.signoretti@uniroma1.it
*Ewout	Depauw	Ghent	Belgium	Universiteit Gent	ewout.depauw@ugent.be
Alla Olegovna	Tyndik	SergievPo-sad	Russia		tyndik-ao@rane.ru
Francisco José	Marco Gracia	Alfamén	Spain	Universidad de Zaragoza	fran.marco.gracia@gmail.com
*ThorbjørnSønderg aard	Bornhøft	Copenha-gen	Denmark	University of Copenhagen	thorbjoernb@gmail.com
*Adriana	Santac-roce	Rome	Italy	Sapienza Univer-sità di Roma	adria-na.santacroce@uniroma1.it
Ryohei	Mogi	Shikishi	Japan	Meiji University	rmomniv@gmail.com
Arpine	Aghjoyan	Yerevan	Armenia		yoeala@gmail.com
MariskaJansinta	Meints	Groningen	The Neth-erlands	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen	mjmeints@gmail.com
Esther	Schipper	Barneveld	The Neth-erlands	Utrecht Universi-ty	eschipper91@gmail.com
Siyang	Kong	Changsha	China	University Utrecht	s.kong@students.uu.nl
Linda Adriana Wil-helmina	Coppens	Nijmegen	The Neth-erlands	Radboud Univer-sity	lincoppens@hotmail.com
*Ellen Mary	Potter	Cambridge	Great Britain	University of Cambridge	ellen.potter@cantab.net
*Giulia	Corti	Milan	Italy	Università di Milano "Il Bicoc-ca"	giuliacorti.mail@gmail.com

* Travel and accommodation supported by EHPS-Net.