

University of Groningen

Not Like Everybody Else

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Published in:
Historical Life Course Studies

DOI:
[10.51964/hlcs9556](https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs9556)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2021

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Kok, J., Bras, H., & Zijdemans, R. L. (2021). Not Like Everybody Else: Essays in Honor of Kees Mandemakers. *Historical Life Course Studies*, 10(Special Issue 3), 1-4. [hlcs9566].
<https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs9556>

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Not Like Everybody Else. Essays in Honor of Kees Mandemakers

By Jan Kok, Hilde Bras and Richard L. Zijdeman

To cite this article: Kok, J., Bras, H. & Zijdeman, R. L. (2021). Not Like Everybody Else. Essays in Honor of Kees Mandemakers. *Historical Life Course Studies*, 10, 01-04. <https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs9556>

HISTORICAL LIFE COURSE STUDIES

Not Like Everybody Else.
Essays in Honor of Kees Mandemakers

VOLUME 10, SPECIAL ISSUE 3
2021

GUEST EDITORS
Hilde Bras
Jan Kok
Richard L. Zijdeman



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HISTORICAL LIFE COURSE STUDIES

Historical Life Course Studies is the electronic journal of the *European Historical Population Samples Network* (EHPS-Net). The journal is the primary publishing outlet for research involved in the conversion of existing European and non-European large historical demographic databases into a common format, the Intermediate Data Structure, and for studies based on these databases. The journal publishes both methodological and substantive research articles.

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This section includes methodological articles that describe all forms of data handling involving large historical databases, including extensive descriptions of new or existing databases, syntax, algorithms and extraction programs. Authors are encouraged to share their syntaxes, applications and other forms of software presented in their article, if pertinent, on the openjournals website.

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HISTORICAL LIFE COURSE STUDIES
VOLUME 10, SPECIAL ISSUE 3 (2021), 01-04, published 31-03-2021

Not Like Everybody Else

Essays in Honor of Kees Mandemakers

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ABSTRACT

This collection of essays pays tribute to Kees Mandemaker's great contribution to the data infrastructure of social science history, in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Several essays discuss (the future of) historical databases. Yet other provide examples of research on topics covering important life course transitions. All demonstrate the scale, scope and variation of research based on well-constructed databases.

Keywords: Historical databases, Social science history, Record linkage, Retirement, Life course

e-ISSN: 2352-6343

DOI article: <https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs9556>

The article can be downloaded from [here](#).

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*If you all want me to settle down
Slow up and stop all my running 'round*

A lifelong devotee of The Kinks, Kees Mandemakers is undoubtedly familiar with their song 'I'm not like everybody else' (1967). The rebellious spirit of the song must have resonated with Kees' own early revolt against the strictures of religion, as he fondly recounts his discussions with the church minister trying to teach him catechism. Although he can be quite headstrong, Kees is not the type to protest for the sake of protest, in fact, he turned out to be a 'rebel with a cause'. He devoted his career to the cause of supporting social history in its broadest sense with state-of-the-art databases. This required rebelliousness but most of all perseverance. For the past thirty-odd years, Kees soldiered on in the face of a growing disdain for quantitative history. He weathered periods with, at best, lukewarm institutional support for his enterprises and limited financial sponsoring. In other periods, he resisted exaggerated faith in innovative techniques in database construction.

The focus of Kees' professional attention was the reconstruction of Dutch life courses and families in order to create an infrastructure for social science history. First and foremost, this entailed building the Historical Sample of the Netherlands, which is flanked by dozens of side-projects. Since 1989, Kees devoted all his time and energy to create, disseminate, enrich and expand the HSN, which by 2020 had resulted in no less than 412 scientific publications and 802 lectures and presentations (Annual Report 2019).

HSN is not completed. Actually, it is not even intended to be completed and then stored away in some data archive. The more than 80,000 individual life courses in HSN will be enriched with further data on networks, income, education, as well as with the life courses of offspring, which will allow for audacious explorations in social science history. But even more ambitious than HSN is the LINKS project that Kees embarked on some fifteen years ago. This project implies the complete reconstitution of all Dutch families in the 19th and early 20th century by linking all public civil records. For several provinces, the task is already completed.

From the start, Kees has put his Dutch databases squarely in an international network of similar initiatives. These initiatives inspired him and, conversely, his experiences found their way in the form of advice and papers on 'best practices' to database builders abroad. A crucial step in strengthening international collaboration was the Intermediate Data Structure, an identical output format for all historical databases. To construct and promote this format, Kees and others founded the European Historical Population Samples Network as well as the open access journal *Historical Life Course Studies*.

We cannot do full justice here to Kees' advice and support for many projects in several countries, his own research activities, his professorship at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and so on. But our appreciation for his work, support and friendship is profound. We hope to express our appreciation in this collection of short essays, that all have a direct bearing on Kees' professional mission.

Obviously, the creation of research infrastructures plays a large role in this special issue. New quality standards and future prospects of historical databases in general are discussed in the essays by [Lionel Kesztenbaum](#), [Kris Inwood and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart](#), [Lex Heerma van Voss](#) and [Jan Kok](#). [Peter Doorn](#) argues that, despite the attention for Big Data, we should not forget the richness of small datasets. Several essays argue for the extension of HSN, e.g. through linking with criminal records ([Sanne Muurling and Evelien Walhout](#)), by adding causes of death ([Tim Riswick](#)) or by linking with the military records of the Dutch East Indies ([Ulbe Bosma](#)). The latter also describes the efforts to create a Netherlands Indies counterpart of HSN. An 'HSN' of Suriname is already under construction and [Cornelis van Galen](#), [Björn Quanjer](#), [Matthias Rosenbaum-Feldbrügge](#) and [Matthijs Kraijo](#) report on the first explorations of this database. [Gerrit Bloothoof](#)t demonstrates nominal record linkage techniques using the surname 'Mandemakers'. New ways of database creation are explored by [Gunnar Thorvaldsen](#) who shows the prospects of automated source transcription. [Angélique Janssens](#) shows the advances in the creation of an international coding system for historical causes of death. Finally, the progress and prospects of the Intermediate Data Structure are the topic of three contributions, respectively by [George Alter](#), [Luciana Quaranta](#), and [Sam Jenkinson](#), [Hideko Matsuo](#) and [Koen Matthijs](#).

The other essays have a more empirical character. We can introduce them here by the stages of the life course they deal with. [Theo Engelen](#) analyzes the seasonality of conception in the Netherlands and Taiwan. [Luminița Dumănescu and Ioan Bolovan](#) describe the changing position of midwives in 19th-century Transylvania. [Hilde Sommerseth](#) reports on how stillbirths were defined in Norway. [Peter Ekamper and Frans van Poppel](#) compare mothers who had multiple births with mothers who had singletons only. Fertility is also the subject of the essay by [Hilde Bras](#). She analyzes reconstituted families in Zeeland using LINKS and argues

that even a 'high fertility' region had couples very different demographic profiles. [Niels van den Berg](#), [Ingrid van Dijk](#) and [Rick Mourits](#) demonstrate that fertility of daughters of older mothers is reduced.

Work and education are important domains of the life course, and have always had Kees Mandemakers warmest interest. [Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk](#) discusses schooling in the Netherlands and Java between 1800 and 1940, reflecting Kees' own interest in education. [Björn Quanjier](#) and [Kristina Thompson](#) take an unusual approach as they explore the shifting relation between education and obesity with conscript records. [Corinne Boter](#) uses the marriage certificates of LINKS and shows how regional differences in industrialization rather than social norms affect women's labour force participation.

Migration trajectories are explored in the essay by [Myron Gutmann](#) who puts the famous Dust Bowl migration to California in perspective by tracing the provenance of migrants 1935–1940. [Matthias Rosenbaum-Feldbrügge](#) and [Paul Puschmann](#) warn users of LINKS not to mistake place of marriage with the place of residence as this would overestimate male migration.

Other studies are concerned with health. [Rick Mourits](#), [Ruben Schalk](#), [Albert Meroño-Peñuela](#), [Joe Raad](#), [Auke Rijpma](#), [Bram van den Hout](#) and [Richard Zijdean](#) chose a timely subject and trace 'hotbeds' of the Spanish flu. [Lotta Vikström](#), [Sören Edvinsson](#) and [Erling Häggström Lundevaller](#) look at disability and causes of death in 19th-century Sweden. Finally, [Sander Wennemers](#) and [Hilde Bras](#) use HSN to study life expectancy in the province of Overijssel.

Three essays may have some bearing on Kees Mandemaker's own history and life course. Stemming from an Orthodox Protestant family more or less on the frontier between 'Rome and Reformation', he will enjoy [Hans Knippenberg's](#) essay on the rise of Pillarization ('Verzuiling'). [Ineke Maas](#), [Marco van Leeuwen](#) and [Antonie Knigge](#) look at the recruitment of university professors in the past and note the closed character of this occupation. For Kees, we can safely say that he reached this position on his own merits. Finally, [Anders Brändström](#) and [Glenn Sandström](#) study recent developments in retirement.

Kees Mandemakers may have stopped 'running 'round' and appears to have 'settled down' comfortably in Utrecht city. But we hope that, intellectually, he will never settle down but will keep on giving advice, writing history, and exploring new venues. Like every individual, Kees' life course is part and parcel of general societal processes, which translate to the micro-level in class-, gender-, age- and cohort-specific ways. But we are more than the sum of the variables determining our life course trajectories. With regard to Kees: his steadfast devotion, energy, relentless enthusiasm, and singular capacities make him, at least to us, truly unique, or in other words: Not Like Everybody Else.

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