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**SESSION 1: RECONSTRUCTING THE PAST**

**DUTCH HISTORICAL STATISTICS: 19th CENTURY POPULATION CENSUSES**

Report submitted by the Statistics Netherlands\*

Summary

1. For some time, the interest in historical statistics has grown strongly. In reaction, Statistics Netherlands has compiled and revised a number of long, consistent time-series, concerning, for instance, population and labour force data. These data are based on census results. Even a superficial examination of the results of the nineteenth century censuses shows how difficult it is to compare them. This paper touches upon some of the problems of these censuses against the background of the development of the Dutch statistics.

2. In the development of the present Dutch system of statistics, three periods can be distinguished: before 1795; 1795-1899 and from 1899 - present. During the 19th century, censuses were taken regularly. These censuses have a number of deficiencies; the paper discusses the corrections which were made on the population and occupational censuses.

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1/ Prepared by C.A. Oomens and G.P. den Bakker.

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3. Two general conclusions from the Dutch nineteenth century censuses are drawn:

- The government decided on the purpose of the censuses. They were focused on information which was needed for government

activities. Social issues seldom played a role in the censuses;

- There was insufficient attention to the comparability of the censuses.

Looking at the successive censuses it appeared that "learning from doing" hardly apply to the 19th century censuses.

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