



IU BLOOMINGTON

# EMERGING AREAS OF RESEARCH

## Abstract Template -- Due June 30, 2017

Title of initiative to be proposed:

The Center for the Social History of Central Eurasia (CSHCE)

Name of lead PI, with title, department/school:

Edward J. Lazzerini  
Director, Sinor Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, School for Global & International Studies

Key team member names and departments/schools (up to 10 names):

Kate Graber, Dept. of Anthropology; Dov-Ber Kerler, Jewish Studies; Tatiana Saburova, Dept. of History; Jeffrey Holdeman, Slavics; Weihua An, Sociology (Network Analysis); Damir Cavar, Linguistics (Natural Language Processing); Arthur Alderson, Sociology (Comparative & Historical); Funda Ergun, Informatics (Algorithms for Big Data); Tassie Gniady, Informatics (Digital Mapping); Beth Plale, Informatics (Data Mining & Science)

Description of area to be proposed. What constitutes this area of research or creative activity as emerging?  
(Word limit=500)

The Sinor Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies seeks EAR funding to create and manage a Center for the Social History of Central Eurasia. By bringing together the resources of IU and select partners elsewhere in the US and abroad, the Center will serve as a unique hub coordinating long-term collaborative research projects that apply innovative methodologies and tools to rewrite the social history of the region between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries.

The first endeavor that the CSHCE will support is a big-data project—"The Central Eurasian Muslim Population Project (CEMPP)"—under the direction of Edward J. Lazzerini and currently funded by an IU FRSP External Resubmission grant and an NEH Digital Start-Up grant. In AY 2017-2018, we plan to seek additional funding from NEH through its Digital Humanities Advancement program as well as support from the National Archives of the Republics of Tatarstan and of Bashkortostan, both in the Russian Federation. If our proposal to the EAR program is successful, we will leverage its support to seek a future multi-million dollar grant from NSF.

To appreciate the purposes of the CSHCE, the place to begin is with CEMPP, which serves as the first phase in the creation of a massive database of longitudinal vital statistics and social information gathered from the so-called metrical books (parish registers) compiled, in the first instance, for Muslim subjects of the Russian Empire between 1828 and 1918. More generally, the metrical books represent an empire-wide effort to gather similar information on all imperial subjects down to the personal level based upon confession—e.g., Muslims, Buddhists, Rabbinical & Karaite Jews, Georgian Orthodox, Old Believers and other Sectarians, and Animists, etc. Within the context of the CSHCE, we will create a unique set of non-aggregated data on persons, families, and household covering, for the first time, the bulk of the Russian Empire's population when it was in the throes of dramatic change, unexpected domestic and international stress, and a rising tide of disorder and revolution that brought it to a downfall in 1917. By gathering tens of millions of discrete records on historical populations in the central portion of the vast Eurasian continent, we will be able to fill a huge gap with data never before examined and without which historical demographers and social historians working on the western or eastern ends of Eurasia are prevented from engaging in large-scale comparative study.

By means of this and other projects, the Center will produce broadly usable datasets that will be stored, preserved, and served globally. It will generate publishable products from local, regional, and state data, as well as others rich in comparative results. The historical demography and social history of the Eurasian continent as a whole will be revealed as never before. Likewise, the Central Eurasian zone, that witnessed perennial migrations of peoples as well as the near constant interplay between nomadic and surrounding imperial centers will, for once, receive significant attention in dramatic ways.

Please submit to [earprogram@indiana.edu](mailto:earprogram@indiana.edu)