QANU Research review
Sociology

December 2008

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FOREWORD

This report follows the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP) that was developed by VSNU, KNAW and NWO. The purpose of this report is to present a reliable picture of the research activities submitted for this review and to give feedback on the internal quality assurance of the organisations concerned.

The review committee was supported by QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities). QANU aims to ensure compliance with the SEP in all aspects and to produce independent assessment reports with peer review committees of international experts in the academic fields involved.

QANU wishes to thank the chairperson and members of the review committee for their participation in this assessment and for the dedication with which they carried out this task. We also thank the staff of the units under review for their carefully prepared documentation and for their co-operation during the assessment.

Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities

Mr. Chris J. Peels
Director

Dr. Jan G.F. Veldhuis
Chairman of the Board

PREFACE

This report describes the quality assessment of most of the university research programmes in Sociology in the Netherlands.[1] The assessment covers the period 2000-2006 and was conducted according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP).

The quality assessment was carried out by a review committee consisting of one chair and four members with expertise in sociology and the relevant sociological methodology. These experts come from Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Their broad experience in research was most helpful when assessing the various programmes in sociology.

On the basis of the self-evaluation reports, preliminary assessments of each programme were produced independently by two members of the committee. During interviews held in Utrecht, questions and comments were presented by the committee to the directors of the research programme or their representatives. A selection of PhD students presented their projects. In some cases the PhD programme was the subject of a specific quality assessment. In addition, there was an interview with a delegation of each of the institutes, in most cases the dean and the research director.

From the very beginning, the committee worked as a team, including in the discussion about the phrasing of the conclusions and the assignment of the final ratings. The committee wants to stress that the ratings and the verbal commentary together reflect the full spectrum of the observations made.

As chair of the committee, I greatly appreciate the commitment, the high quality of the contributions, and the excellent cooperation of my four colleagues. The committee wants to thank all persons involved in the thorough preparation of the review, and especially the secretary for his support from the very beginning through the final completion of this report.

The committee regrets that the formal acceptance by the Executive Boards of the participating universities took four and a half months, apparently only for procedural reasons. It would be better if each university would set itself a clear deadline with a maximum of four weeks, so that one university cannot victimise the others.

Prof. J. Billiet
Chairman of the committee

[1] A research assessment of one sociology programme in the 2000-2005 period within the context of the Nijmegen Institute for Social and Cultural Research (NISCO) was separately organised and reported in 2006.

1. The review committee and the review procedures

Scope of the assessment
The review committee was asked to perform an assessment of the research in sociology at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG), Utrecht University (UU), University of Amsterdam (UvA), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU), Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) and Tilburg University (UvT). This assessment covers the research in the period 2000-2006. The RUG, UU and the UvA also offered their PhD programmes for assessment. The RUG and UU cooperate in the Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS) and offer a combined PhD programme.

In accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP), the committee's tasks were to assess the quality of the institutes and the research programmes on the basis of the information provided by the institutes and through interviews with the management and the research leaders, and to advise how this quality might be improved.

Composition of the committee
The composition of the committee was as follows:

- Prof. Jaak Billiet, Centre for Sociological Research, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, chairman of the committee
- Prof. Peter Abell, Managerial Economics and Strategy Group, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Prof. Sonja Drobnič, Institute of Sociology, University of Hamburg
- Prof. Robert Erikson, Swedish Institute for Social Research, Stockholm University
- Prof. Marc Hooghe, Centre for Politicology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

A short curriculum vitae of the committee members is included in Appendix A.

Roel Bennink of the QANU office (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities) was appointed secretary to the committee.

Independence
All members of the committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the institutes and research programmes in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between committee members and the programmes under review were reported and discussed in the committee meeting. The committee concluded that there were no unacceptable relations or dependencies and that there was no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

Data provided to the committee
The committee received detailed documentation consisting of the following parts:

1. Self-evaluation reports of the units under review, including all the information required by the SEP, with appendices
2. Copies of key publications per research programme.

Remarks about the data provided
The committee received detailed self-evaluation reports provided by the programme directors and the faculty, research institute or school. For each programme, a list of five key publications and copies of at least three of them were provided. The documentation included all of the information required by the SEP 2003-2009. The committee requested clarification and correction of the numerical data and the publication list in a couple of cases during the course of the evaluation. Where it was not initially provided, the committee asked for the figures for staff at the programme level. The committee also requested the completion of a SWOT analysis in one case where this was not provided in the self-evaluation report. All information was provided promptly.

Procedures followed by the committee
The committee proceeded according to the SEP. Prior to the committee meeting, each programme was assigned to two reviewers, who independently formulated a preliminary assessment. The final assessments were based on the documentation provided by the institutes, the key publications and the interviews with the management and with the leaders of the programmes. The interviews took place on September 28-October 2, 2008 (see the schedule in Appendix C) at a central location in Utrecht (Hotel Park Plaza). No site visits were held.

Preceding the interviews, the committee was briefed by QANU about research assessment according to the SEP. On the same day, the committee discussed the preliminary assessments. For each programme a number of comments and questions were decided upon. The committee also agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the assessment. After the interviews the committee discussed the scores and comments. The texts for the committee report were finalised through email exchanges. The final version was presented to the faculties for factual corrections and comments. The comments were discussed in the committee and led to changes in the report on a number of points. The final report was presented to the boards of the participating universities and was printed after their formal acceptance of the report.
Because of the time lag between the end of the review period (2006) and the preparation of the self-evaluation reports and the interviews at the end of September 2008, some programme directors informed the committee about the latest developments concerning the programme, the most recent publications (2007, 2008), and any further development of PhD programme which were extant at the end of the review period. In order to have comparable information about all programmes, the committee offered those programme directors who had not remitted recent information the opportunity to deliver any additional material they thought might prove useful. It was made clear, however, that the assessment and the scores still only covered the 2000-2006 period.

SEP scale differs from VSNU scale
The committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP). The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix B. It is worthwhile noting that the current meaning of the scores is somewhat changed compared with previous assessments (before 2003). The protocol is still a five-point scale, but category (4) has been changed from 'Good' to 'Very good'; category (3) is now 'Good' instead of 'Satisfactory'. This latter label is now moved to category (2). The previous label attached to category (2), 'Unsatisfactory', is now assigned to category (1). The highest category (5) 'Excellent' remains unchanged. One should keep these changes in mind when comparing the current assigned scores with those of previous assessments.

2. General remarks

State-of-the art in the field, current trends and developments
The sociology research programmes assessed in this report cover a variety of fascinating research questions about human behaviour, interaction, cultural patterns, and forms of organisation in different social and institutional settings. When one compares their development with the highest international standards in empirical and theoretical sociology, one must conclude that Dutch sociology is in a healthy state.

The discipline of sociology is becoming increasingly comparative, attempting to understand variations in interactions, representations, etc. in differing historical and geographical contexts. The context is also inherently multilevel. It can comprise primary social groups, organisations, local divisions (cities, communities, regions, societies, nations). This multilevel aspect is incorporated into the mission statements of nearly all of the reviewed programmes. Worldwide processes like individualisation, globalisation, and their consequences for societal integration, social cohesion, political legitimacy, mechanisms of solidarity and social networks all find a prominent place in the programmes. They deal both with theoretical questions of an academic origin and with practical questions raised by informed citizens and policy-makers.

Bridging the gap between theory and empirical research is a major challenge in current sociology. Several of the reviewed programmes are characterized by an exemplary balance between theoretical hypotheses and rigorous empirical research. Methodological choices are almost invariably sophisticated and always well considered, reflecting an optimal solution to the research questions. The committee gained the impression that Dutch sociology makes a notable contribution to bridging the gap between theory and empirical research. The committee was particularly impressed, in this respect, by the research projects of a number of the PhD students who presented their work.

Nowadays, thanks to large, cross-national, research data collection programmes in Europe, researchers are able to test propositions derived from theories that assume both longitudinal and cross-national (regional) comparisons. The programmes that were reviewed are fully engaged in these pan-European activities. A major challenge of this kind of research, where the higher level cases are countries, regions, or cities, concerns the large distance between concepts and indicators measured at different levels. In the programmes where this kind of research occupies a major position, methodological and theoretical reflections on the cross-level distance problem should be a major preoccupation, otherwise cross-level effects cannot be interpreted meaningfully.[2] Dutch sociology is certainly positioned to contribute to these debates.

Quantitative methodology, especially statistical analysis, has developed strongly in recent decades, and applications in the social sciences have multiplied considerably. Publication policies in many ISI journals stimulate this kind of analysis, as does the use of large, longitudinal and multi-country datasets. Qualitative methodology has also experienced development in recent years, and apart from ethnographic methods, new standardised approaches based on the rigorous methodology of analytic-deductive science have been proposed and applied.[3] A few programmes which are prominent in qualitative and historical sociology exist in Dutch sociology

[2] Goldthorpe, J.H. (1997). Current issues in comparative macrosociology: a debate on methodological issues. *Comparative Social Research*, vol. 16: 1-26.
[3] e.g. King, G., Keoane, R.O. & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry.* Princeton PB.

alongside those with a strong quantitative approach. Examples of convincing research in which several methods are optimally combined within integrated designs are still rare, but they do exist in Dutch sociology.

The focus on theoretically driven research does not prevent Dutch sociology programmes from tackling problems that are of significant social relevance. A general concern on the occasion of the 1995-1999 evaluation was whether the research teams that proved excellent from an academic point of view would be capable of providing insights relevant to an informed political discourse and social policy. The committee has observed that in the 2000-2006 period, much of the research carried out has had relevance for the challenges of contemporary social life. This is apparent in the key words of programme titles: inequalities, solidarity, contemporary modernity, conflict, aging, mobility, social networks, and internationalisation.

Coherence

One of the most striking developments in Dutch sociology, which is revealed by comparing past reviews with the current situation, is the reduction of sociology programmes from fifteen in the 1995-1999 assessment period to ten in the 2000-2006 period, of which nine were reviewed by this committee.[4] In 2001, of the very large number of sociology programmes, some were not viable because of the small number of tenured research staff. Another observation was the lack of coherence in some of the programmes. The drive within institutes towards structuring research into one or a limited number of coherent research programmes has led to stronger, viable programmes. Only one programme seemed problematic in this respect because of very particular reasons related to personnel job planning of staff in core positions. The review committee feels that the coherence within programmes has increased without a loss in their richness. There is still a multitude of research interests, but these are now grouped under so-called 'research lines' and coordinated by research directors who have definite responsibilities. The research lines seem less tight than the small programmes in the past, and the opportunities for cooperation seem to have increased.

Coordination

Sociological research teams further profit from good organisational structures, quality control devices and adequate research facilities. These features were already effective in the previous review period, but they have been strengthened further. Each of the institutes (or faculties) is characterised by a structure in which the responsibility for the research policy and the coordination of research activities have their appropriate place alongside the teaching activities. The structural embedding of research operates in several directions. Where the research in different disciplines is predominantly organised at the faculty level, the dean is assisted by two directors, one for teaching and one for research. Where the research activities transcend the university's borders, research policy and coordination are transferred to the director of a research school in which sociologists of several universities cooperate in common research projects. In both cases, the faculties remain responsible for quality control and for the provision of adequate research facilities. The review committee was impressed by the ways in which sociological research obtained its legitimate place in Dutch universities and by the undeniable positive appreciation of the research programmes in sociology by the deans of the faculties.

[4] The sociology programme of Radboud University Nijmegen was reviewed in 2006 as part of NISCO (Nijmegen Institute for Social Cultural Research) according to the SEP 2003-2009 rules. The review was organised by the university (and faculty). The assessment report was finalised in December 2006; the sociology programme received an excellent score for quality.

Kinds of publication output

An important decision concerns the kind of publications that are considered appropriate. In the self-evaluation report, a distinction is made between academic and professional publications. The academic publications are further divided into refereed and non-refereed categories. The committee decided to focus on the refereed academic publications. Calculating across all nine programmes, the proportion of refereed publications among all academic publications is 0.703 with a standard deviation of 0.178, but there are large differences. In two programmes the proportions of refereed publications are as low as 0.43 and 0.45. In another two programmes, these proportions are higher than 0.88. We must point out, however, that the definition of 'refereed' may differ somewhat from programme to programme. The committee has observed that in the categories of books and book chapters in edited volumes, the definition of 'refereed' is not applied very strictly in the tables of some self-evaluation reports. The category 'refereed journals' includes journals that differ substantially in terms of quality and influence in the academic community. This observation does not alter the conclusion that there is a substantial difference between the programmes in their share of refereed publications. This conclusion is based on the share of refereed journal articles among all journal articles. The definition of what is refereed is after all less controversial in the category of journal articles. In the programmes that are related to the national research school ICS, and in the sociology programme of the University of Tilburg, more than 95% of the journal articles are refereed. The share of refereed journal articles is also high in EUR and in the three VU programmes (over 0.80) but is the lowest in the ASSR programmes (about 0.72).

It is difficult to compare the figures about the share of refereed academic publications with the previous review period, since in the 1995-1999 review all programmes of socio-cultural sciences were reviewed, not just sociology. Moreover, in the 1996 review, the committee itself had classified the publications into refereed and non-refereed. Nevertheless, there is a reliable indication that the share of refereed publications has increased in the current review period. For all comparable research programmes in sociology in 1995-1999, the proportion of refereed publications among all academic publications was 0.67. The proportions per programme were in the range of 0.18 and 0.94 (standard deviation 0.208).[5] Although the share of refereed publications was already high, one can conclude that there was nevertheless an increase in the proportion of refereed publications in the current period. The programmes that already had high proportions remained relatively stable. This stable pattern or even the increase in refereed academic publications might be largely attributable to the research policy (and the remuneration system) of the research schools and the institutes.

The proportion of non-Dutch publications was more easily checked by the committee. We focus here on journal articles and book chapters since it is not appropriate to compare complete monographs with these two categories. Half of the academic publications in journals or as book chapters are in a 'foreign language', but the variation across programmes is still large. In two programmes the proportion is 0.40 and not higher than 0.21 in one programme, but it is above 0.60 in four other programmes. When we further narrow the kind of publications to journal articles, then one finds that proportionally more articles (0.67) are written in a foreign language. It is higher than 75% in five programmes.

[5] See Appendix 3 of the Research Assessment of Socio-Cultural Sciences 1995-1999, VSNU, 2001.

Productivity scores

The figures already mentioned inform us about the kind of publications but not about the productivity since one must relate the absolute publication numbers to the research staff input (fte). In the 2000-2006 period (seven years) and in all reviewed programmes taken together, the annual total number of senior research staff (tenured staff + non-tenured staff) assigned by the universities to the sociology programmes averaged 49.42 fte units.[6] This is an average of 5.49 per programme.[7] The programmes differ widely in size. The average annual input of total research staff (PhD students excluded) ranges from 1.64 in the smallest programme to 11.72 in the largest one. It is clear that the output figures must be related to this input. Although useful output is larger than productivity in terms of publications, we will focus here on the publication output since this indicator is the easiest one to compute, and useful for comparing programmes. There are several ways of computing publication output scores. The committee decided first of all to relate the annual output to the annual total number of research staff (excluding PhD students). Considering that the preparation of a publication takes some time, and that a sudden change in fte input can bias the output of that year, the committee also decided to relate output of year (t) to the total research staff of year (t-1).[8] This does not change the conclusions about the annual averages per programme, however. In the remaining part of this section, annual average figures for categories of publications are discussed for the whole review period. The sum of specific categories of publications over all reviewed years is simply divided by the total research staff (PhD students excluded) over these years.

Let us first consider the average annual amount of all academic publications per fte (i.e. all research staff minus PhD students). This stands at 10.29 and may be considered very high in an average year. One should, however, notice that one fte unit can equal two to three academic positions depending on the proportion of research time that has been assigned to a position. Taking this into account results in a more reasonable number of about 3 to 5 academic publications, of all possible kinds, per year. One should also keep in mind that there are many co-authored publications, with other members of the programme, with co-authors of other programmes at research institutes in the Netherlands, and with the PhD students. The same publication can thus be listed in more than one programme. When we consider only the refereed publications, then the annual average per fte is smaller (8.08). It is possible to compute productivity scores for these two categories (all academic and refereed) for the comparable sociology programmes in the previous period (1995-1999). The productivity score was then 9.86 for academic publications and 6.64 for refereed academic publications. The average number of publications per fte has, in other words, further increased in the current review period. When only refereed journal articles in a foreign language are considered, then the average productivity is 2.83, this is about one refereed journal article a year per staff member (PhD students excluded).

There are considerable differences between the programmes. Let us for example consider two categories: refereed academic publications and refereed journal articles in foreign languages. The average annual number of refereed publications exceeds 8.0 per fte in five programmes but is lower than 6.0 in three other programmes.[9] Concerning refereed journal articles in for-

[6] The non-tenured research staff included special full professors, post-docs, and junior researchers other than PhD students. PhD students are excluded.

[7] One fte unit is normally 0.40 of an academic's total employment time, but it is sometimes less and can also be more. In case of a half-time job, 0.40 corresponds to 0.20.

[8] These are so-called 'lagged' figures.

[9] Mean productivity score for refereed publications at the programme level is 7.74 with SD of 1.62.

eign languages, three programmes have productivity scores over 6.0, and two are lower than 4.0.[10] In sum, the productivity of the sociology programmes in the Netherlands is in general very high.

PhD programme

Three institutes presented their PhD programme in sociology for assessment: the universities of Amsterdam (ASSR research school), of Groningen and of Utrecht (both in ICS research school). Actually, the PhD training programmes for sociology in Utrecht and Groningen are identical. The committee interviewed a selection of PhD students from all reviewed programmes. The interviews covered the student's experiences with their training programmes and took place after a presentation by each of them of their PhD projects. The committee members were in general very impressed by the students' presentations. On the basis of this information and the evaluations of the programmes by the selected students, the committee gained the impression that most of the programme is good, and it is even very good to excellent in many programmes. This impression was based on the interviews with the students and was further confirmed by the information in the self-evaluation reports and by the discussions with the staff.

Let us first observe some factual information about PhD programme. The total number of defended PhD dissertations in sociology in the review period was 144. This is on average 20 per year over 9 programmes - 2.2 annual per programme. This number may appear low, but one should realise that some programmes were not running during the full seven-year period (2000-2006), but for only three of the six years. Where it proved possible to compare figures with all PhD theses at the institute level, it appears that sociology is in a rather good position compared with other disciplines. There are, however, differences between the programmes. One way of comparing the programmes is to compute the total number of theses by the total weighted number of tenured research staff (fte's) in the programmes for the reviewed period. This is a kind of average productivity rate for PhD output. These rates vary between 0.142 and 0.935. The latter means nearly one PhD per fte every year. The scores are higher than 0.5 in six programmes and lower than 0.35 in three other programmes.

So far, we have provided information about the PhD output. Another possibility is to compare programmes by the number of PhD students. In the self-evaluation reports, these numbers are not expressed in physical units but in fte units. The proportion of research time assigned to PhD students varies somewhat and depends upon whether they hold full-time or part-time positions. The modal research time is 0.70, but it is sometimes as low as 0.20. The average fte of PhD students per tenured staff over the whole period ranges from 0.98 (less than one PhD fte per fte research staff) to 2.204. However, in the latter programme the number of finished PhD theses is low because of the increase of PhD students in the second part of the review period. In six programmes the ratio of PhD fte units to staff fte units is higher than 1.5. The average ratio over all nine programmes is 1.637 (SD = 0.447).

Students take in general 4 to 5 years before finishing their theses. It is very difficult to provide a fair estimation of duration time since the data available are censored both left and right. In the observation period one can review finished PhD theses that started in the years before the observation period, and many theses by students who started recently which are not completed at the end of the period. The committee asked questions about PhD students who disappeared

[10] Mean productivity score for foreign refereed articles at the programme level is 3.13 with SD of 1.18.

during the observation period, but in most of the cases this was because the thesis was finished. The number of students who dropped out without producing a thesis seems acceptable. Neither the completion nor the drop out was mentioned as problematic in the SWOT analyses.[11]

A last observation concerning the PhD programme deals with the way it is organised. There are actually several ways in which the universities organise their PhD programme. In one case the programme is very successfully organised in a disciplinary national research school (ICS) in which two[12] of the reviewed programmes participate. This way of organising the PhD programme clearly benefits from the optimisation of resources (expertise, experience, mutual support). Other sociology programmes incorporate part of an interdisciplinary research school which is located in one institute (ASSR), but in which sociology (or other) programmes of different universities take part.[13] Here, too, students find additional support and profit from a broader offering of expertise and experience. A third kind of PhD programme incorporates part of an interdisciplinary training programme at the university level. Some are less strictly organised in standard programmes, but the students receive a budget with which they can 'buy' training courses at other institutions (other institutes and research schools). At the time of the assessment, several graduate programmes were recently established and still evolving. They were not fully operative in the review period, but they provided a good insight into the investments which institutes are prepared to put into a PhD programme. Concerning training, supervision, control, and support, the students interviewed were in general very satisfied with the facilities offered. Details per reviewed course will be offered later in this report.

General challenges

Some of the challenges mentioned in the SWOT analyses of the programmes are more or less common for several programmes. These are the ratio between the three types of sources of funding, the overload of staff members because of a sudden increase of PhD students, the low number of tenured staff (below critical mass), and in several programmes the replacement of prominent programme members.

[11] Completion time was mentioned in the previous research assessment, but this was only among the PhD students in anthropology because they needed more time for fieldwork.

[12] Utrecht and Groningen are the two ICS locations in this review. Nijmegen, as the third location of the ICS, fully participates in all activities of ICS research and the PhD programme. Other sociology programmes also take part in the training modules offered in ICS, and organise their training according to comparable principles.

[13] The EUR sociology programme participates in ASSR, not only for the PhD programme but also in the context of research projects.

ASSESSMENTS PER INSTITUTE AND PER PROGRAMME

3. Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam School for Social Science Research

Mission & Goals
The mission of the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research is:

- to combine the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and political science in a historical and comparative perspective to study contemporary social phenomena with a focus on Europe, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa;
- to investigate social developments transcending the boundaries of the local setting or national society.

The research programme seeks to address three distinct levels and their interrelations: the level of the transnational society, i.e. all social relationships that traverse and transcend boundaries between nation-states; the level of the national society; and the level of the local or subnational society.
Four postulates provide intellectual direction to the researchers and the research programme:

1. transnational relationships across large distances increasingly influence the actions of people in local and national contexts.
2. the impact of transnational relationships is differentiated locally and nationally.
3. the growing significance of transnational relationships (or 'globalisation') is not a necessary or inevitable development; it depends on historically contingent conditions, is subject to impasses and stagnations, and elicits counter-movements.
4. transnational society is characterized by unequal power-dependence relations, though there is not one centre which controls or dominates all spheres of social life.

The committee applauds the fact that this is an ambitious and wide-ranging mission statement that addresses several of the key questions facing contemporary social science. The committee also notes with satisfaction that the institute has a sufficient number of high-powered researchers to tackle these questions in a meaningful manner. However, the committee also has to draw attention to the possible downside of this broad orientation: uniting these different programmes into one coherent institute will remain an important challenge. Maintaining the coherence of this interdisciplinary agenda, therefore, should be seen as a major priority. The committee would also encourage the institute to develop its theoretical framework in a more explicit manner, as very broad concepts could sometimes obscure the precise research questions of the various programmes.

Leadership
The scientific director of the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (ASSR) is formally responsible for the institute's research programme and the allocation of its research budget. The director is appointed by the dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The director is responsible for PhD candidates. He or she advises the chairmen of the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology and Political Science on the research output of their staff members.
The manager of the institute supports the director by bearing special responsibility for financial matters, research infrastructure, external funding and management of externally funded projects. All three disciplines and the PhD students are represented on the executive board. This board has no legal status but acts as a collegial body supporting the management of the

institute and discusses important issues like funding, policy, PhD training programme and the progress of the PhD projects in monthly board meetings.

The committee notes with satisfaction that important changes have been implemented since the previous review. Indeed, the institute now clearly has a stronger leadership structure that should, in the future, be able to support an ambitious research programme. The leadership is highly motivated and clearly supports the establishment of a good research culture.
The committee has doubts about one element of the leadership structure, namely the fact that the executive board does not have a formal status. This could pose a threat to the accountability and transparency of the decision-making process.

Strategy & Policy
The approach in social science that inspires the research in the ASSR emphasizes comparative analysis of contemporary phenomena in their historical context. This approach dates from the foundation of the faculty in 1947. The ASSR has chosen to develop a transdisciplinary, problem-focused comparative approach which distinguishes its approach from area studies and discipline-based departments in the Netherlands and abroad. In 2004 the ASSR reorganised the research programme in five clusters following the recommendation of the ASSR International Advisory Board. In line with the recommendation, the ASSR decided to adapt its research programme to achieve better internal coherence within the research clusters. The clusters 'Mobility, Culture and Social Inequality' and 'Institutions, Inequalities and Internationalization' are assessed by this assessment committee.
The self-evaluation report states that no fundamental revisions of the ASSR research mission are foreseen. As of February 2009 the newly established Graduate School for Social Science will take responsibility for the PhD programme and the educational programme. This will provide opportunities for improving logistics and administration.

Regarding the development of the strategy and policy, the committee strongly supports the transdisciplinary and problem-focused research agenda of the Institute. As such, the committee believes that ASSR can be seen as an important asset for Dutch or, even more generally, for European sociology. The committee also notes that the ASSR responded adequately to the previous review by streamlining its research programmes. The committee notes that the ASSR has reacted well to the retirement of several eminent scholars by attracting highly qualified new staff. This is an important guarantee for the future of the programme. Although the committee strongly supports interdisciplinary research, it wishes simultaneously to urge that the institute remain open to the specific demands of sociology as a scientific discipline (with regard to training and methods).

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities
The department provided the following overview of the personnel resources, in full-time equivalents (fte) of research time.

Institutional level	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Tenured staff	27.88	28.78	27.82	29.30	30.50	29.67	29.06
Non-tenured staff	6.30	5.50	6.60	6.20	8.31	9.41	9.26
PhD students	51.00	48.00	48.00	45.00	50.00	53.00	56.00
Total research staff	85.18	82.28	82.42	80.50	88.81	92.08	94.32

Research programme level	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Programme *Mobility, Culture and Inequality*							
Tenured staff	3.02	3.02	2.82	3.02	3.42	3.42	3.74
Non-tenured staff	3.50	2.70	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.80	0.80
PhD students	8.00	5.00	3.00	4.80	5.80	6.60	7.60
Total research staff	14.52	10.72	7.82	8.82	9.22	10.82	12.14
Programme *Institutions, Inequalities and Internationalisation*							
Tenured staff	2.00	2.00	2.80	3.60	3.60	4.35	3.95
Non-tenured staff	0.80	0.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PhD students	1.00	1.00	4.00	5.00	9.00	12.80	9.80
Total research staff	3.80	3.80	6.80	8.60	12.60	17.15	13.75

The department provided the following information regarding the funding at the institutional level:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Direct funding	3042.1	4754.6	3510.0	4600.0	4781.5	4990.0	5117.0
	(95.0%)	(89.1%)	(78.0%)	(79.8%)	(82.9%)	(75.6%)	(55.0%)
Research funds	131.0	485.9	497.8	528.0	594.0	608.3	2143.0
	(4.1%)	(9.1%)	(11%)	(9.1%)	(10.3%)	(9.2%)	(23.0%)
Contracts	30.3	93.6	492.8	636.4	394.6	1006.0	2042.0
	(0.9%)	(1.75%)	(11%)	(11%)	(6.8%)	(15.2%)	(22.0%)
Total	3203.3	5334.1	4500.6	5764.4	5770.1	6604.3	9302.0

Figures are in thousands of €; % indicates the share of source in the total budget of that particular year

Academic Reputation

The self-evaluation report states that ASSR members have published their work in a wide variety of international journals. ASSR's reputation is significant due to its books, which in many cases are a preferred method to publish the empirically dense research undertaken by ASSR scholars. Although the ASSR scholars score high on the citation analysis of the 2003 accreditation, it is foreseen that due to the uneven distribution over the staff and the departure of several eminent senior scholars, the overall citation score will temporarily decline.

The committee expresses its satisfaction with the academic reputation of the ASSR, which covers a broad array of disciplines and specific research topics. The committee also notes that the ASSR is increasingly successful in acquiring research grants on a competitive basis, which, by itself, can be seen as an indicator of academic reputation. The committee expresses its support for the pluralistic research strategy of the ASSR, by paying attention, for example, to academic books or non-English articles (provided of course that these publications are also peer-reviewed). The committee notes with satisfaction that the percentage of peer-reviewed publications in the total published output has increased substantially in recent years. All this seems to indicate that the ASSR has indeed managed to counter the effects of the retirement of a number of eminent scholars.

Societal Relevance

The self-evaluation report states that the ASSR, in spite of its focus on innovative, academic research activities, has an impact on life outside the academy through a wide variety of struc-

tural activities that involve non-scientific partners. According to the self-evaluation report, the co-operative enterprises with non-academic partners may be seen as an external recognition of the societal relevance of the research of the involved ASSR scholars. ASSR scholars are members of advisory boards of a variety of national and international organizations. ASSR scholars also contribute to public debate, they frequently feature in newspapers, magazines and on radio/TV.

The committee acknowledges the strong societal relevance of the ASSR, and the role it plays in Dutch society and politics. As this is formally one of the evaluation criteria, the committee can only express its encouragement for this policy of reaching out to society and to its policy-making institutions. The committee, however, notes that socially relevant research should also adhere to the strictest norms with regard to the quality of research. As such, socially relevant research can be published in internationally recognized academic journals.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

According to the self-evaluation report, the ASSR maintained a high level of scientific output in spite of severe budgetary constraints in the years 2003-2006, and realized a significant increase in the number of PhD students and a significant increase in the amount of external funding. It maintained a solid position in international social science. Another strong point of ASSR is the coherence of the research programme and the social relevance of the themes the ASSR scholars work on. The important difference in output between individual staff members is seen as a weak point. The recent hiring of new assistant professors and the professorships that became available between 2002 and 2006 have provided a good opportunity for rejuvenation and brought new expertise and possibilities.

The self-evaluation report states that ASSR has managed to become a key player, both nationally and internationally. The institute's capacity for research on contemporary problems has been strengthened by recent appointments and rejuvenation of the staff. Simultaneously, the societal visibility of ASSR research and its relevance to societal debate and policy-making have improved further.

The committee expresses its appreciation for the activities of the ASSR, and the role it plays in Dutch sociology. We do believe, indeed, that the ASSR can be regarded as a key player in this regard. The interdisciplinary approach of the ASSR can be considered as making a unique contribution to Dutch social science. At the same time, however, the ASSR leadership should remain alert to the problems of maintaining 'coherence' that are inherent in this kind of broad-ranging research programme.

Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes of the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Mobility, Culture and Social Inequality	4	3	3	4
Institutions, Inequalities and Internationalisation	4	4	4	4

The detailed assessment per programme follows in the next section of this report.

Programme UvA 1:	**Mobility, Culture and Social Inequality**	
Programme director:	Prof. J.W. Duyvendak, Prof. W. van Schendel	
Research staff 2006:	3.74 tenured, 12.14 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	3
	Relevance:	3
	Viability:	4

Short description
The leading research question of this programme is: how do global developments manifest themselves locally? The programme comprises three key domains: long distance migration, new national and international divisions of labour, and cultural transformations. What are the effects of global developments:

- on inequality, social cohesion and social conflict?
- on lifestyle and the formation of cultures and identities?

In line with the ASSR's mission, this cluster carries out research from a comparative, historical and transnational perspective. The programme is divided into three subprogrammes, each of which addresses specific elements and/or context. Two of the subprogrammes are sociological, one in Rotterdam, one in Amsterdam. The Amsterdam subprogramme with the subtitle 'Urban Policy, Identity and Difference' is the subject of this assessment. Three research foci guide this subprogramme:

1. Contemporary forms of urban governance and their impact on a citizen's multiscalar loyalties and feelings of belonging.
2. Social consequences of the physical restructuring of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the effects of the influx of inhabitants from different parts of the world with low social and cultural capital.
3. Social movements based on politicized 'personal differences', such as ethnic, national, gender, sexual, class or age groups who demand social rights and new forms of citizenship and who combat experienced inequalities.

Quality
The programme leads to a high-quality scientific output that is conspicuously relevant from both a theoretical and empirical point of view. The publications of the researchers affiliated with this programme offer strong contributions to current scientific debates, and the committee is especially impressed by the theoretical pluralism, as manifested in the various publications. The committee wishes to emphasize that, despite the recent retirement of some leading researchers, this programme has been able to maintain international standards. However, simultaneously, the committee also encourages the members of this programme to be even more ambitious with regard to international publications.

Productivity
The productivity of the programme is good, with gradually a stronger emphasis upon peer-reviewed publications. Again, the committee realizes that this programme has had to manage a strong generational shift amongst its members, and further notes that this shift has a continuing effect on productivity, especially with regard to high-profile international journals. The committee notes there is still substantial room for improvement in this regard, but the

recent developments in 2007 and 2008 (not included in this assessment) are encouraging in this respect.

Relevance
The committee expresses its satisfaction with the way in which the members of this research programme tackle socially relevant questions in the Netherlands, and the manner in which the publications of this programme actually contribute to policy. At the same time, however, the committee notes that the programme could also play a more visible role in international scientific and theoretical debates on these matters. Again, recent developments are encouraging in this regard.

Viability
The programme has been remarkably successful in managing an important generational replacement. New young talent has been attracted while the amount of competitive funding (especially NWO) has increased strongly. We therefore have no doubts about the future viability of this programme. The committee would like to raise the question, however, of whether the programme can address such a wide range of topics in a successful manner. A strategy could be considered whereby attention is focussed upon a reduced number of strongly developed research topics.

Conclusion
This is an important research programme that addresses crucial social problems. Both empirically and theoretically, the programme incorporates diverse approaches, and the committee applauds this kind of scientific pluralism. While we do not entertain any doubts about the viability of the programme, the committee encourages its members to be more ambitious with regard to the international visibility of their research.

Programme UvA 2:	**3xI: Institutions, Inequalities and Internationalisation**	
Programme director:	Prof. J. Visser	
Research staff 2006:	3.95 tenured, 13.75 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	4
	Viability:	4

Short description

The mission of the 3xI research programme is to conduct sociological research in a historical and comparative perspective; to seek to combine different 'social science' disciplines; to focus on contemporary society; and to investigate social developments transcending the boundaries of the local setting or national society. The key conjecture inspiring the 3x I research agenda is that existing (national) institutions governing the allocation and distribution/redistribution of economic, educational and social resources in labour markets are being challenged by global and transnational as well as domestic developments such as financial globalisation, trade integration, relocation of labour, migration, skill-biased technological change, aging, change in family and organisational behaviour. The 3xI programme has been in operation since 2003. At the start of the evaluation period in 2000, there were only three tenured staff members and one PhD student working in this research area. The PhD programme has expanded to six positions in 2006.

Quality

The committee is impressed with the quality of the publications of this programme. The committee also notices that the framework developed by the programme has had a strong impact upon other researchers in this field. The committee also appreciates the way this programme reaches out to a more comparative understanding of labour relations in Europe.

Productivity

The productivity of this programme is very good, both with regard to policy documents and reports and with regard to publications in international peer-reviewed publications. This programme does not specialize in one specific kind of output but covers a broad field of possible outlets. Both the quantity and the quality of these publications are very good. Despite the fact that this research programme is committed to one very specific topic, the committee strongly appreciates the continuing effort to write on this topic in high-quality international outlets.

Relevance

The fact that this research programme concentrates on one specific ' niche' within the broad discipline of sociology renders it more difficult to provide an unambiguous recommendation as to its relevance. Within the specific field of labour and industrial relations, this programme is highly influential and relevant, and it is clearly one of the very important research groups in Europe. Nevertheless, the committee has interpreted this specific indicator as implying relevance for sociology as an academic discipline.

Viability

The prospects for the viability of this programme are very good. With regard to funding, the programme has been quite successful, not just at the national level but also at the European level. The programme has been able to attract high-powered researchers, and it is prepared in a well-structured manner for generational replacement. The committee assumes that this programme will further enhance its reputation as a leading European centre in this field.

Conclusion
This is a well-developed research programme, with a strong potential at the European level. The relevance of the programme is evident, both from a scientific as well as from a social perspective. It should be noted that the programme focuses on a specific subdiscipline within sociology. The committee has high hopes for the European visibility and viability of this programme. Scientific output and visibility are very good, and the members of the programme publish in very renowned and established international journals in the subdiscipline.

Assessment of the PhD programme

The ASSR offers a PhD programme which reflects its research mission, in the sense that it is oriented:

- to provide the top 10% of students with the programme and experience to develop and communicate original scholarly contributions in the fields of sociology, political science and anthropology;
- which are firmly grounded in sociological, anthropological and political science theory and methods as well as relevant substantive areas of knowledge;
- have a significant, rigorous empirical basis and
- analyze contemporary phenomena as embedded in wider developments across time and space.

The PhD programme is embedded in the research environment of the institute and in the research context of other institutes participating in the national research school. From 1993 onwards the ASSR has functioned as the home base of a national research school with the same name, in which several researchers from other universities (Leiden University, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam and in 2008 a group of social scientists from Utrecht University) participate. In 2008-2009 the PhD programme will be transferred to the newly established Graduate School for Social Sciences (GSSS) at the University of Amsterdam. The GSSS will run all master and research master programmes in anthropology, sociology, political science and social geography. It will also be the place where PhD candidates for ASSR will receive their training and education.
PhD candidates employed by the institute are expected to spend 10% of their time on teaching within one of the curricula of the department.

The ASSR training programme consists of:

- participation in three PhD courses;
- participation in a monthly dissertation club;
- participation in weekly ASSR staff seminars;
- presentation of their own work (3rd year) in either a staff seminar or a seminar within their own subprogramme;
- four major papers for evaluation (8th, 19th, 31st and 40th month).

All PhD candidates are required to take the *Theory in Action* and *Methodology Clinic* courses. As their third course, PhD candidates may choose from:

- two intensive short courses
- a language course
- several parts of the social science research master programme
- a course offered by another institute inside or outside the Netherlands.

In total the PhD training programme requires 1522 hours.

PhD candidates are supposed to submit four papers for evaluation during the PhD programme. Each evaluation is sent to at least three evaluators. These evaluations are discussed by the board, which then takes a decision on whether to continue the project and may propose specific measures.

In response to the comment given with the 2004 re-accreditation, the ASSR has implemented several measures to improve the supervision of PhD projects.
Courses are anonymously evaluated. Evaluation results may lead to adaptations.

The department provided the following overview of enrolment and success of PhD candidates:

Starting year	Enrolment	Total no. of PhD candidates	Graduated after 4 years	After 5 years	After 6 years	After 7 years	Not yet finished	Discontinued
2002	11	12	5 (45%)		1 (9%)		3/27%	2
2001	5	12	0 (0%)	4 (80%)	1 (20%)		0/0%	0
2000	12	21	1 (8%)	3 (35%)	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	3/25%	1
1999	6	12	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	1/8%	1
1998	8	10	3 (38%)	2/25%	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0/0%	1
Total	42	67	12 (29%)	9 (21%)	7 (17%)	2 (5%)	7 (17%)	5 (12%)

The committee welcomes the planned establishment, in 2008-2009, of the Graduate School for Social Sciences (GSSS) at the University of Amsterdam. The interdisciplinary GSSS will run all master and research master programmes in anthropology, sociology, political science and social geography. It will also be the location where PhD candidates in the ASSR will receive their training and education. According to the committee, the evolution to complete graduate schools, in which research master programmes and PhD programme are combined, may further improve the quality of the PhD programme at the ASSR as long as the link with the research projects is preserved.

Concerning the situation of the PhD programme in the reviewed period, the committee agrees that the ASSR PhD programme offers a supportive and internationally oriented environment for PhD students and staff, of which a substantial number of the former come from regions outside the Netherlands. This international orientation is in line with the mission statement and goals of the institute and the research programmes. It is also worth noting, however, that this international orientation does not prevent the programme (and the research) from contributing to academic reflection upon local societal problems nor from contributing to critical policy debates.

The committee appreciates the strengthening of the supply of courses (including compulsory ones) since 2004-2005. It was concerned about the quality of instruction in the more advanced methods in the preceding period. This concern arose from the tension inherent between the choice of methodological pluralism and the recent evolution in the direction of hypothetical deductive (statistical) methodology in some of the research clusters, a methodology which was not previously characteristic of the ASSR. The committee was also curious about the actual exposure of students to the mix of methods coming from different traditions. The option, introduced in 2004, to offer three compulsory courses with a clear focus on theory and methodology (Theory in Action, Methodology Clinic) in the first year of training, and the encouragement to follow additional short intensive courses in the second year, is strongly approved by the committee. The committee did express some concerns about course attendance. The other aspects of the programme, like monthly dissertation clubs, weekly ASSR staff seminars, presentations, and four progress reports, are in the committee's opinion effective contributions to the quality of the PhD programme in the ASSR, but only to the degree that the students

are really encouraged to fulfil their duties in these respects. An improved monitoring system seems, in the committee's opinion, vital.

The success rate of the PhD programme seemed somewhat problematic in the past since a substantial number of PhD candidates were not enrolled, and too many who were did not finish their PhD within 6 years. The measures undertaken since 2004 to reverse this situation are welcomed by the review committee. The committee understands that the recruitment of a broad range of international students requires extra measures in order to meet educational goals. Several measures concerning supervision introduced on the occasion of the 2004 re-accreditation are particularly supported by the committee. These are: the arrangements on the occasion of the first educational and supervision plan, the written quality of supervision assessment in the 31st month paper, the improved interaction and communication among supervisors, the pressure (financial) on senior staff, and enumerations for research efforts like offering additional research time.

A number of arrangements are also seen by the committee as supportive of the PhD programme. These are: 120h time for directors, free scholar time for the newly established position of a PhD coordinator (in 2006); 10% time of one PhD candidate for the organisation of the seminars, the hiring of a research management assistant; and the financial and logistic support for cluster activities and internal/external communication.

The committee enjoyed the presentations and discussions with the selected PhD students. It became clear during the sessions that the recent arrivals found the Methods Clinic very useful. The students appreciate the training environment of the ASSR and particularly found exposure to different approaches enriching.

A variety of projects was presented in which the global-local dimension of the institute's mission and the diverse methods employed were illustrated very well.
Contrary to other PhD programmes reviewed, the publication mode still seems to be mainly in the format of monographs. This is certainly most appropriate, given the kind of research that has been carried out, but a switch to dissertations in the form of collections of reviewed articles (international) might sometimes also be appropriate.

Conclusion
The ASSR provides a strong PhD programme in the difficult context of the large intellectual diversity of its students. The plans to include the PhD programme within a larger context of the GSSS will be beneficial for the quality of the programme. The PhD programme at the ASSR is compatible with an integration within a complete multidisciplinary research school given the culture of cooperation between disciplines. The committee appreciates the openness of ASSR to students of other institutes that cooperate within the ASSR in several research projects.

4. Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Mission & Goals

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) accommodates six disciplines: Social and Cultural Anthropology, Communication Science, Organization Sciences, Political Science, Public Administration, and Sociology. Since 2001, the faculty has gone through a process of change that involved both an expansion and a renewal of the academic staff. As a consequence, the faculty has been rejuvenated: almost every full professor and two-thirds of the faculty staff have been appointed in the past six years.

The faculty wants to be a breeding ground for committed academics who are prepared to put their ideas to the test, who contribute to the public debate, and who are committed to society at large. The faculty aims to be a centre for high-quality research. It would like to create a climate that stimulates and supports such research. In addition, the faculty wants to be able to provide talented students with the opportunity to develop into eminent scholars by means of an honours programme, a research master, and a PhD programme. The faculty wishes to be part of an international network of leading faculties of social sciences. The faculty wants to be a place of which staff and students can be proud and where they feel at home.

The faculty is going through a process of change which is still not complete. A milestone in this process is the reestablishment of a sociology department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. This, together with the departure of prominent faculty members, has induced an important change in the research programmes in sociology. On the one hand, a specific field of social research methodology (data collection) that had obtained a prominent position is no longer visible, but on the other hand the committee concludes that the actual research programmes at the Department of Sociology fit very well with the mission statement and goals of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The establishment of the Centre for Comparative Social Studies (CCSS) in 2004 is very promising for the future support of excellent and innovative research of several research programmes, and of two of the research programmes in sociology in particular. It will also play a role in further improvement of future PhD programme.

Leadership

The board of the faculty consists of the dean, the managing director, the research director and the teaching director. A student attends the meetings in an advisory capacity. The dean has full academic, managerial, and financial responsibilities for the faculty. The board of the faculty takes all decisions and is responsible for research, education, personnel and finance. The faculty maintains relationships with national and international research organizations, although contacts typically run through the individual departments. The faculty reports to the board of the university.

The faculty consists of seven departments: Public Administration and Organization Sciences (B&O), Communication Science (CW), Culture, Organization, and Management (COM), Social Research Methodology (M&T), Political Science (POL), Social and Cultural Anthropology (SCA), and Sociology (SOC). The M&T Department has no research programme of its own, but its members take part in the programmes offered by other departments. The management team of a department comprises of a head of department, a research manager and a teaching manager. The department head has full academic, managerial, and financial responsibilities for the department.

The Centre for Comparative Social Studies (CCSS) was established in 2004 to stimulate and reinforce promising and innovative research. The Centre supports high-quality research and high-quality researchers. It also accommodates the VU Graduate School in the Social Sciences, which encompasses the faculty's PhD programme and the two-year research master in the Social Sciences. Decisions are taken by the board of the Centre, consisting of the director of the Centre, the director of the PhD programme, and the director of the research master.

The committee was entirely satisfied with the organisational structure in which the dean and the managing director are supported by a research director and the teaching director. The position of research director guarantees a solid research policy at the faculty level. This structure is indispensable if one wants to coordinate and optimise the research activities in seven research-oriented departments. The wish of programme directors of several departments to share efforts is apparent through the establishment of the CCSS in which a graduate school, a research master, and PhD programme need to be coordinated.

Strategy & Policy

The policy of the faculty over the past few years has aimed at improving the quality of its researchers. All research programmes were reconsidered, the allocation of resources was made dependent on performance, and the CCSS was established as an instrument for stimulating excellent and innovative research. The redefinition and rearrangement of the research within the faculty resulted in seven new programmes. They are organized along disciplinary lines in a deliberate attempt to strengthen research in the various disciplines because it was assumed that interdisciplinary research grows on solid disciplinary roots. Between 2002 and 2004 six of these seven programmes were submitted for a mid-term evaluation. This evaluation led to further rearrangement. As the mid-term evaluation pointed to the heterogeneity of some programmes, it was decided to break them down into smaller but more homogeneous programmes. Two subprogrammes of the CCSS were discontinued due to negative evaluations.

The sociology programme encompassed three subprogrammes: 'Work, Life Course, and Social Change'; 'The Social Context of Aging (SoCA) '; and 'Social Conflict and Change (SCC)'. As the last programme had just started at the time, it was not included in the mid-term evaluation. Only the first two programmes were assessed. The evaluation resulted in negative ratings for the first programme and a positive evaluation of the second. On the basis of this evaluation the faculty board decided to terminate the 'Work, Life Course, and Social Change' programme. In the context of the reallocation of researchers of the M&T Department, the 'Comparative Stratification Research' programme (CSR) was added to the sociology programmes.

Regarding the development of strategy and policy, the committee remarked that the faculty board and the departments are characterized by a willingness to change their programmes in order to adapt to new situations. Despite the teaching demands challenge of high numbers of students and the virtual loss of eminent professors in one of the programmes, the faculty actively tried to preserve high-level research activities and to maintain the three subprogrammes in sociology.

The committee was very pleased by the presentations of the PhD students. They demonstrated that the faculty offers a valuable and flexible PhD programme although it is still in a period of change towards a graduate school and a two-year research master programme. The presentations of the PhD students provided indications of strong ties with the research programmes. PhD students seem to appreciate the organisation of their programme.

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities

The department provided the following overview of the personnel resources, in full-time equivalents (fte) of research time.

Institutional level	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Tenured staff	21.80	25.12	25.98	28.47	31.32	29.70
Non-tenured staff	3.01	5.03	6.18	7.15	6.71	6.34
PhD students	13.07	22.14	22.29	36.64	43.40	48.31
Total research staff	37.88	52.29	54.45	72.26	81.43	84.35
Research programme level	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Programme *Comparative Stratification Research*						
Tenured staff		0.31	0.89	1.19	1.66	1.92
Non-tenured staff		0.05	0.43	0.48	0.68	0.6
PhD students			0.68	1.44	1.51	2.24
Total research staff		0.36	2.00	3.11	3.85	4.76
Programme *Social Conflict and Change*						
Tenured staff	1.04	1.27	0.65	1.16	1.25	1.27
Non-tenured staff	0.93	0.60	0.08	0.54	0.80	1.45
PhD students	0.22	1.55	1.45	3.34	3.77	4.90
Total research staff	2.19	3.42	2.18	5.04	5.82	7.62
Programme *The Social Context of Aging*						
Tenured staff	1.62	1.67	1.52	1.72	2.23	1.72
Non-tenured staff	0.51	1.41	0.91	1.31	0.87	0.31
PhD students	2.23	4.22	3.46	3.31	2.70	5.14
Total research staff	4.36	7.30	5.89	6.34	5.8	7.17

The department provided the following overview of funding at the institutional level:

	2001	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Direct funding	1 639	2 412	3 309	4 096	4 544	4 442
	(70%)	(74%)	(81%)	(76%)	(73%)	(72%)
Research funds	419	498	308	687	852	895
	(18%)	(15%)	(7%)	(13%)	(14%)	(14%)
Contracts	287	368	493	605	803	841
	(12%)	(11%)	(12%)	(11%)	(13%)	(14%)
Total	2 346	3 278	4 110	5 387	6 199	6 178

Figures are in thousands of €; % indicates the share of source in total budget of that particular year.

According to the self-evaluation report, the meagre years concerning research funding came to an end in 2005. The committee found some evidence to support this statement. At the institutional level, the proportion of direct funding is still high, however, compared with money from research funds (and contract research). This is, in particular, the case for two of the programmes in sociology. The committee would like to see strategies adopted to improve the share of second-stream funding which should be given priority in those programmes for which contract research is less likely. Ways should be found to prevent high teaching loads from undermining the time devoted to preparing proposals for research funding in order to obtain additional support for non-tenured research staff. The committee appreciates the faculty's policy of funding PhD projects that received good evaluations but were not funded by the NWO. The committee positively values the recently increased number of PhD students in the rather

small sociology programmes. The committee, finally, appreciates the facilities offered by the faculty concerning IT, on-line surveys, and the media lab.

Academic Reputation
The self-evaluation report states that many members of the academic staff are in an early stage of their career: their academic reputation and impact still need to grow. On the other hand, the faculty has been able to attract internationally renowned scholars. According to the self-evaluation report, the international standing of the FSS as a whole has improved. Several members of the faculty are reputed members of the national and international academic community and have featured prominently in national academic debates.

The committee shares the view that in spite of the fact that many staff members are still in the early stages of their careers, the faculty contains a significant number of very prominent researchers. The establishment of the CCSS will be a significant factor in future in increasing the academic reputation of the participants. Various internationally recognized scholars are affiliated with the faculty.

Societal Relevance
The self-evaluation report states that the Faculty of Social Sciences actively takes part in Dutch society. Virtually every programme has its links to societal institutions and delivers important input in societal debates. Members of various programmes have actively taken part in the debates on migrants, the multicultural society, diversity and integration. The FSS at the VU is the centre nationally and internationally for the study of religion. On two issues — the issue of elections and that of aging — the FSS has a long-standing tradition of high-quality research that can make a difference to society.

The committee agreed that several programmes in the departments have high social relevance in a variety of fields such as, for example, safety and security, diversity, integration and governance. Needless to say, the ageing programme of the Sociology Department is extremely relevant given demographic trends.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses
According to the self-evaluation report, the greatest strength of the Faculty of Social Sciences is the presence of a critical mass of talented researchers, who know how to act at the interface of science and society and in the international academic community. According to the self-evaluation report, there is considerable variation between individual programmes, in terms of both output (publications, impact) and success. The faculty will continue the successful strategies of the past years to achieve its goals and will take additional steps to get beyond the current level:

- strengthen the graduate school; make entrance more selective in order to improve the quality of the students; spend more time and effort in supervising PhD students to make sure that they finish on time;
- create interdisciplinary institutes to increase national and international visibility;
- build support structures to acquire external funding, build strategic alliances with societal institutions;
- become involved in national and international academic networks and organizations that play a role in resource allocation

The committee considers the vulnerability of some small programmes in the faculty to be a weak point. The faculty is too dependent on direct funding which means that any downward fluctuations in student numbers can easily endanger the research quality. A reflection on strategies for enlarging second-stream research funding seems of high priority.

Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programmes of the Faculty of Social Sciences, VU Amsterdam:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Comparative Stratification Research	5	3	4	4
Social Conflict and Change	4	4	4	2
The Social Context of Aging	4	4	4	4

The detailed assessment per programme follows in the next section of this report.

Programme VU 1:	**Comparative Stratification Research**	
Programme director:	Prof. H. Ganzeboom	
Research staff 2006:	1.92 tenured, 4.76 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	5
	Productivity:	3
	Relevance:	4
	Viability:	4

Short description

The programme on Comparative Stratification Research (CSR) studies patterns of social inequality and social mobility in cross-national and historical perspectives. The programme focuses on individuals' positions in social hierarchies (education, occupation), which are related to but not identical with economic hierarchies, along with the role of mobility between and consolidation among such hierarchies. The conceptual background that addresses these issues has been formulated by Blau & Duncan's status attainment model, which relates family background (ascription) and personal talents and skills (achievement) to status attained in education and occupation by offspring during the life course.

The analyses address the dynamic relationship between family background and educational and occupational attainment in a large number of societies, including the long-term trends in these relationships within societies, in particular (but not exclusively) in the Netherlands. The projects included in this programme focus on the causes and consequences of three sources of inequality:

1. intergenerational reproduction of inequality in education and occupation
2. hierarchy and inequality within families
3. inequality as result of changes in socio-economic structures of the labour market.

Quality

The research related to the programme is internationally highly visible within the field of social stratification. In recent years high-quality articles within the field of demography have also been written within the programme.

Productivity

The output from the programme has been rather meagre over the whole reviewed period, although some very good articles have been published in recent years. The low output is attributable to several factors, the most important perhaps being the recent start of the programme (2004). In addition, the writing of a major book has delayed the publication of papers.

Relevance

Algorithms for occupational classifications or scales have been developed within the programme and are provided free of charge on a website. In this way the programme provides an essential service to the international research community. The algorithms are used by many researchers within the field of social stratification.

Viability

The recent publication record has been strong, and the committee expects this improvement to continue with the consequence that the contribution of the programme will increase.

Conclusion

The Comparative Stratification Research programme is vulnerable as it is largely dependent on the contribution of one person, and an assistant professor recently left the VU. The committee suggests that the programme leader should consider whether it would be possible to attach another experienced researcher to the programme. Even without any addition, it seems likely that research activity will increase over the next few years with the published output remaining at a very high standard.

Programme VU 2:	**Social Conflict and Change**	
Programme director:	Prof. R. Koopmans	
Research staff 2006:	1.27 tenured, 7.62 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	4
	Viability:	2

Short description

The Social Conflict and Change (SCC) programme investigates the relationship between social change and social conflicts in a comparative perspective (mainly cross-national but also historical and between-group). The focus is primarily on contemporary West European societies. The programme started in September 2003. The self-evaluation report states that during its still relatively short existence, the programme has gained strongly in coherence, and the researchers now form a close-knit group. Given the programme's roots in at least three previously independent strands of research, creating such interaction and coherence has been an important aim during the three years the programme has existed. The programme has undergone many changes in staff. The programme leader moved to another research institute in 2007.

On the most general level of analysis, the SCC programme aims to contribute theoretically and empirically to uncovering the basic mechanisms of social change. Social change consists of the spread of cultural innovations (e.g. values, identities, organisational forms, lifestyles, protest repertoires, cognitive frames) across populations. The approach used to study such diffusion is cultural-evolutionary and applies insights from neo-Darwinian evolutionary theories to questions of human cultural change. The programme aims to pay particular attention to the role of social movements and public contestation (what has recently been called 'contentious politics') as the causes and consequences of processes of social change.

Quality

Although the programme in its present form has been in existence for a relatively short period of time (since September 2003), it has succeeded in establishing a diverse but coherent research agenda which has resulted in a high-quality scientific output. Researchers affiliated with the programme have clearly contributed to the revitalization of social movements research in the Netherlands.

Productivity

The number of publications per fte is high and must be regarded as very good, also in relation to the fairly large number of researchers within the programme. The researchers in the programme are highly visible within their field of research.

Relevance

The focus of the research programme on issues of social movements, immigration, collective action, right-wing populism and European integration effectively crosses the borders between academic disciplines and has an impact upon the socio-political agenda and public debates. In this respect, the programme has successfully proven its scientific as well as socio-political relevance.

Viability

The committee considers viability a weak point in an otherwise very positive development of the programme. The number of research staff at the programme level was only 1.27 tenured

fte in 2006. Under such circumstances, every personal decision, such as a career move, may threaten the existence of the research group. Since the programme director has essentially left the VU and the only other full professor - who also serves as a dean - is only marginally affiliated with the programme, the chance of its survival is low.

Conclusion

The quality and secure standing of the research conducted within the SCC programme strongly indicate that any activities to retain the programme are well worth the effort. The committee acknowledges that there is an intention to continue the programme and notes that steps have been taken to recruit a new programme director. However, at the time of evaluation, these efforts have not been fruitful, and viability remains a critical issue.

Programme VU 3:	**The Social Context of Aging**	
Programme director:	Prof. C.P.M. Knipscheer (until 2004), Prof. T.G. van Tilburg (since 2004)	
Research staff 2006:	1.72 tenured, 7.17 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	4
	Viability:	4

Short description

By focusing on social networks, the research programme considers the social context of aging to be of central importance and elaborates upon the notion that social capital plays an important role in people's lives. The programme aims at identifying the determinants and outcomes of older adults' social networks. As generally acknowledged, determinants and outcomes can pertain to the individual level as well as the contextual. Although the focus of the research programme is on individual-level determinants and outcomes of social networks, the aim is to go beyond the individual level as well.

The overarching research question is specified along three lines of research. The first focuses on life-course trajectories in old age. In what way is late-life diversity in various areas shaped by the cumulative impact of events of the past life; harmonization of changes across different stages of life; interdependencies with the lives of social network members; and social context of life course trajectories?
The second line of research focuses on social-economic inequality in health and in the availability of care, in particular care provided within the context of informal sources such as the personal network. The research question is: to what extent does the accumulation of restricted or disadvantaged circumstances during one's entire life contribute to an increased risk of health problems in later life and to limited availability of care? The third line pertains to cohesion and to loneliness in particular. What are the resources within personal networks and to what extent do they contribute to a sense of social cohesion in older people?

Quality

The research conducted in the programme is of a solid character, whilst not at the very top of sociological research. The group could aim at publishing more in general journals of a high international visibility, while continuing to produce substantive articles within the field of social gerontology.

Productivity

The number of refereed publications per fte is high. This is particularly the case for book chapters and articles in a foreign language. The researchers in the programme are highly visible within their field of research.

Relevance

Output from the programme is of high social relevance. Researchers in the programme are responsible for a panel survey of persons above 55 years of age. The data thus collected are made accessible to researchers outside the programme, which is an important service to the scientific community.

Viability
Research in the programme seems to be on a steady path forward. However, the amount of research time (fte) for the tenured staff is rather low and could preferably be increased.

Conclusion
Research on the social context of aging is very good and solid, though not at the absolute international top level of sociological research. However, the research is highly visible internationally within the applied field of social gerontology and is of importance, not least due to its interdisciplinary character.

5. Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University

Mission & Goals
The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences maintains research programmes in cultural anthropology, educational sciences, interdisciplinary social science, pedagogy, psychology, and sociology. The present research assessment concerns exclusively the research programme Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality that comprises the Department of Sociology and the chair 'Interdisciplinary Social Science: Relations between Groups and Cultures' of the Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science. The mission of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences is to create a knowledge centre offering prominent, internationally respected scientific expertise with respect to important issues in the domains of the social and behavioural sciences. The tasks of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences comprise:

- academic education of students,
- the formation of a new generation of researchers,
- the formation of academics who combine scientific knowledge and attitudes with professional competencies,
- execution of innovative research,
- contributions to finding solutions for complex societal problems.

The committee concluded that the relationship between the faculty and its constituent departments was such as to foster the above objectives. The flow of resources to and cooperation between the Sociology Department and faculty are exemplary. The interviews revealed a high level of commitment and enthusiasm facilitating an atmosphere conducive to scholarship and research. The dean was fully apprised of the demands of sociological research. The committee was entirely satisfied that the appropriate level of flexibility is built into current arrangements, enabling the adaptation and if necessary the termination of research lines.

Leadership
All research programmes of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences are embedded in the research institute of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The research institute is managed by a board of research. The dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences chairs the board of research. One of the leaders of the programme Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality is a member of the board of research. Research programme leaders are responsible for the execution of the respective research programmes and the separate research projects that are included in those programmes. Research programme leaders are in charge of the daily supervision of the respective programmes. They are responsible to the board of research, which is in turn responsible to the management team of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The research programme Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality participates in the Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS), a research school in which the Universities of Groningen, Utrecht, and Nijmegen cooperate.

The committee was entirely satisfied that the synergies of leadership between the faculty and department (and thus research programme) worked to their mutual benefit. The leadership at both levels appeared to be of a high quality.

Strategy & Policy
In order to foster innovative and multidisciplinary research, Utrecht University has identified 15 research focus areas, that is, multidisciplinary clusters of high-quality research. The programme

Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality participates in two of these research focus areas, namely, 'Origins and Impacts of Institutions' and 'Coordinating Societal Change'. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences maintains the Utrecht School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (USSBS) that is responsible for the training of graduate students. This includes research master students as well as PhD students. Two research master programmes are related to Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality. One of these research master programmes, Sociology and Social Research (SaSR), is maintained by the Department of Sociology. The research strategy of the programme emphasizes a problem-driven approach, with a focus on the explanation of social phenomena. The self-evaluation report states that social science theory provides tentative solutions for explanatory problems. Empirical research is theory-guided, requiring the collection of appropriate data and using these data for testing theories. The common field of interest to which the research strategy is applied is solidarity and inequality problems.

Regarding the development of the strategy and policy, the committee remarks that the research programme of the Sociology Department contributed significantly to the objectives of the faculty. The cooperation in the context of ICS offers real added value to the development of the research in the department. The Sociology Department has, over the years, maintained an outstanding research programme linked to the training of PhD students. These students have constituted a resource for Dutch sociology.

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities

The department provided the following overview of the personnel resources, in full-time equivalents (fte) of research time. The 'institutional level' is the level of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences.

Institutional level	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Tenured staff	41.23	42.87	43.12	44.20	45.71	46.11	46.15
Non-tenured staff	16.91	13.60	12.61	14.29	18.56	22.75	23.67
PhD students	48.06	59.34	68.80	71.57	73.40	74.02	75.29
Total research staff	106.20	115.81	124.53	130.06	137.67	142.88	145.11

Research programme level	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Programme *Social Networks, Solidarity and Inequality*							
Tenured staff	5.87	5.69	4.19	3.98	4.10	4.47	4.44
Non-tenured staff	11.61	12.17	10.98	10.95	9.56	9.29	10.88
PhD students	17.47	17.86	15.17	14.92	13.67	13.76	15.32
Total research staff	24.29	24.88	22.74	21.52	20.50	20.43	22.42

The department provided the following overview of funding at the institutional level:

	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Direct funding	6 590	6 732	6 035	6 792	7 277	7 195	7 721
	(72%)	(75%)	(61%)	(62%)	(59%)	(53%)	(63%)
Research funds	1 089	678	1 457	1 895	2 905	3 079	2 823
	(12%)	(8%)	(15%)	(17%)	(24%)	(23%)	(23%)
Contracts	1 442	1 605	2 445	2 212	2 102	3 218	1 802
	(16%)	(18%)	(25%)	(20%)	(17%)	(24%)	(15%)
Total	9 121	9 015	9 937	10 899	12 284	13 492	12 346

Figures are in thousands of €; % indicates the share of source in total budget of that particular year

The committee believes these figures provide evidence of a strong faculty of which the Sociology Department is a significant part. The figures for research funding suggest an attractive balance between applied and theoretical research. The direct funding follows student numbers though the faculty maintains flexibility in such funding in order to stimulate innovative research agendas.

Academic Reputation
The self-evaluation report states that the programme received the highest evaluation scores in the previous research evaluation of sociology. Another indicator for the academic reputation of the programme is the recent report of the accreditation committee on the ICS application for KNAW re-accreditation: 'There is no doubt that the ICS is widely recognized both in Europe and in North America as a school with an outstanding research record.' Programme members hold elected memberships in learned societies and received prizes during the review period.

The committee is of the opinion that the programme under review contributes to the reputation of the faculty. Although it was not in a position to judge the overall academic quality of the faculty, there can be no doubt that the research mounted by the Sociology Department is of an international standard and has a significant impact upon the progress of scientific sociology through publication in the top journals. This influence is particularly strong in the area of social networks and in the domain of cultural diversity and ethnic relations. The citation record supports this conclusion.

Societal Relevance
The self-evaluation report states that the strategy to establish societal relevance can become transparent by considering:

- the results with respect to contract research
- the placement of PhDs in jobs outside universities
- media coverage for the programme.

During the review period, the programme secured major national grants for contract research from various Dutch ministries, from the Research and Documentation Centre of the Department of Justice (WODC) and from the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP). International contracts have been secured from the European Union, NORFACE, INTAS and the World Bank Institute.
The programme succeeded in placing PhD graduates in good positions outside universities. Such placements contribute according to the self-evaluation report to the dissemination of research results and to establishing and maintaining useful contacts with institutions outside the scientific community.
During the review period, research by programme members was covered regularly in the Dutch media.

The committee judged that the research programme has had an impact upon current affairs while being pitched at a commendable theoretical level. The committee felt that the scientific contribution is sufficient to place the research programme amongst the most prestigious in the Netherlands and abroad. This position has been maintained for longer than just the review period.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses
The self-evaluation report describes the strength of the research programme in its coherence, its proven track record and success over a long period of time in maintaining a high publications standard. The attractiveness of a research position at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences is threatened, however, by the high teaching load as well as by the low level of research funding for the social sciences in the Netherlands. The research group aims at more local interdisciplinary cooperation within Utrecht University and at maintaining a balanced staff in terms of tenure and non-tenure, at coping with outside job offers for staff members and at finding adequate replacements for staff members who leave the programme. The personnel policy is focused on identifying promising young postdocs and on offering adequate career perspectives to the staff members.

While recognising the problems facing the faculty and department in respect of relatively high teaching obligations and the tendency for talented academics to be attracted elsewhere, the committee notes nevertheless that a vibrant research environment has been maintained throughout the review period.

The committee feels that a strong flexible relationship has been established between the Sociology Department and the faculty which is likely to continue and will maintain the reputation of the research programme as amongst the intellectual leaders in international sociology.

Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programme of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality	5	5	5	5

The detailed assessment per programme follows in the next section of this report.

Programme UU:	**Social Networks, Solidarity and Inequality**	
Programme director:	Prof. W. Raub, Prof. A.J.M.W. Hagendoorn (until Sept 2006), Prof. M.J.A.M. Verkuyten (since Sept 2006)	
Research staff 2006:	7.1 tenured, 22.42 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	5
	Productivity:	5
	Relevance:	5
	Viability:	5

Short description
The programme distinguishes six research lines, defined as a set of interrelated projects on which a group of senior and junior members collaborates for a number of years.

- Cooperation in Social and Economic Relations. This research line addresses a core question of social theory, namely the problem of social order or social cohesion, by studying the mechanisms that facilitate trust, cooperation, and coordination.
- Social Networks and Social Capital. This line starts from the assumption that social networks can be instrumental to goal achievement and that a person's social network can therefore be conceived as that person's social capital.
- Migration and Stratification. This line examines a classical theme of sociology – social stratification – and a topic that is receiving considerable attention in contemporary times – migration.
- Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Relations. This line studies processes that facilitate and hamper the development of exclusive and inclusive social identification and the mechanisms involved in intergroup conflicts.
- Households and Employment. This line focuses on three topics: 1. the formation, organization, and dissolution of households; 2. the formation and organization of employment relationships; 3. the interplay between family life and employment.
- Policy Studies. This line aims to address two questions: 1. How to explain the behaviour of corporate actors and the collective outcomes of policy-making? 2. How to explain the effects of policies on societal problems?

Quality
The publication of papers in journals of both national and international repute is testimony to the international impact and scientific rigour of the research programme. The citations lead to the same conclusion.

Productivity
The count of publications per fte (in refereed journals, other journals, books, chapters in books, professional publications, etc.) indicates an outstanding productivity. The number of publications per fte in high-impact journals is particularly impressive.

Relevance
(a) Scientific/technical relevance
The cohesion of the research programme around the rigorous empirical testing of theory has placed the group amongst those at the forefront of sociology. The group has stayed abreast of appropriate technical/mathematical developments and also made significant contributions in this respect. Its link through the ICS has had a notable impact.
(b) Socio-economic impact

The group is less visible in this respect though maintains a healthy profile. It would be inappropriate to judge a group of this nature, with an ambition to test theories, in terms of its immediate practical impact.

Viability
(a) Success rate of projects
There is no evidence of failed projects though reorganisation has been a feature in the review period. This indicates an appropriate flexibility in the committee's opinion.
(b) Ability to select research projects
As far as the committee could judge all the subprojects have produced a strong output.
(c) Ability to initiate projects
The committee was satisfied that the intellectual vitality of the group and in particular the synergies between subprojects foster the possibility of new research lines opening up.
(d) Management of projects
The management is exemplary, communication between senior staff and PhD students is well established.
(e) Cost/benefit
The high productivity (above) ensures appropriate benefits. Overall, the committee felt that the future prospects of the group are good.

Conclusion
The committee awarded the highest scores to the research programme in full recognition that it has contributed to international sociology in developing the theory and methods of social networks, and continues to do so. The research programme has achieved a momentum which will in our view enable it to maintain its prominent position in the future.

Assessment of the PhD programme

The PhD programme is fully integrated in the research school Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS), a collaboration of the Universities of Groningen, Utrecht, and Nijmegen. The PhD programme is meanwhile also embedded in the local graduate school Utrecht School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (USSBS). The goal of the programme is to turn out highly qualified researchers and new university faculty who are able to conduct theoretically and methodologically advanced social science research.

The research school ICS selects each year 10-15 new PhD students educated in sociology, economics, the other social sciences, or mathematics. Typically, about 3-6 students are selected for the Utrecht programme, the others for the ICS locations in Groningen and Nijmegen. All members of a new cohort start the programme together at the beginning of the new academic year, on September 1. They follow all courses together, thus forming a 'year group'.

The structure of the training programme is as follows:

- During the entire four-year period, work on the dissertation is carried out under close supervision of ICS faculty and external experts.
- In the initial 18 months, students are offered various courses in theory construction, research methods, and the integration of theory and research methods, in combination with practical training.
- During all courses, the PhD students work in small groups on assignments, with a special emphasis on a critical application of theoretical knowledge to problems of empirical research.
- In the remaining 30 months, the PhD students regularly present their research in progress in seminars attended by ICS faculty and other university faculty. This phase likewise includes an external traineeship.

The basic programme consists of six components, namely, three structured programme courses (Theory Construction and Modelling, Advanced Methods and Techniques of Empirical Research, The Integration of Explanatory Models with Models of Analysis) during the first 18 months of PhD programme, a traineeship during the second or third year, dissertation research throughout the programme and, finally, regular presentations of the dissertation research at ICS Forum Days. The three courses serve the purpose of general training combined with planning the individual research project, while the other three components are related specifically to the subject of the dissertation. All of the coordinators and teachers of all courses are senior tenured ICS faculty on the full professor or associate professor level.

Admission of PhD candidates to the programme is a formal responsibility of the Board of Studies of USSBS. Following successful practice since 1986 and commitments incurred for the KNAW re-accreditation of the ICS in 2003, the selection of candidates has been delegated to the ICS Board.

For each new PhD student, there is a detailed training and supervision plan, in fact a contract, to be signed by the PhD student, the supervisors, and the programme leader. All PhD projects within the Utrecht programme are reviewed twice per year, in March and September, in a meeting for all tenured staff and postdocs of the programme.

Finally, the ICS Board reviews all ongoing PhD projects at the three ICS locations each year in a board meeting in November. These procedures ensure close monitoring and frequent feedback for both PhD students and supervisors as well as consistency and sufficient uniformity in supervision across projects.

The department provided the following overview of the enrolment and success of PhD candidates:

		Graduated within					
Start	**Students enrolled**	**Contract period**	**1 year after contract period**	**2 years after contract period**	**3 years after contract period**	**Not yet finished**	**Discontinued**
1996	4	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)			
1997	5	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)			
1998	2				1 (50%)		1 (50%)
1999	2	1 (50%)		1 (50%)			
2000	4	1 (25%)	2 (50%)			1 (25%)	
2001	3	1 (33%)	1 (33%)			1 (33%)	
2002	6	4 (67%)	1 (17%)			1 (17%)	
Total	26	11 (42 %)	6 (23%)	4 (15%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)

The committee fully understands why the PhD programme in ICS received an excellent qualification during previous research school assessments. It is an environment in which young researchers from research programmes at three universities cooperate within a common theoretically and methodologically well-defined research tradition (structural individualism). In the disciplinary research school ICS, the PhD programme is completely embedded in the research projects. In its goals, the PhD programme of ICS maintains high standards concerning academic attitudes, research skills, academic skills, and work orientation. The recent changes in the programme after 2005, related to the integration of part of the PhD programme with the research master, may be seen as an additional step in the improvement of the PhD programme. The staff members of the interuniversity ICS seem to be ready to fully support the master programmes at the different locations.

The programme is very well structured, with explicit rules for the number and order of the compulsory courses, with an advanced methodological training, obligations for students for presenting their work regularly, control over supervision, feedback, mentorship, and support for publishing. The students clearly know their rights and obligations. The selection of candidates is very strict. Each year about 3 to 6 students of each participating institute are selected by ICS. The success rate of PhD candidates is in general very good.

Typical of the Faculty of Social Sciences in Utrecht is that both the PhD programme and the training of graduate students is now embedded in the Utrecht School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (USSBS) which is responsible for the training of graduate students. The training of the PhD students is delegated to ICS, with which the USSBS closely cooperates. Also typical of Utrecht is the existence of two strong research master programmes at USSBS which are related to the research programme in sociology. These are Sociology and Social Research (SaSR) and Migration, Ethnic Relations and Multiculturalism (MERM). Both research master programmes are privileged sources for the selection of PhD candidates by ICS, although not the only ones since ICS selects a number of PhD students from other disciplines. The commit-

tee considers the integration of graduate training and PhD programme within USSBS, while maintaining a strong cooperation with ICS, as an important factor for the future success of the PhD programme and the formation of graduates who will find their way to research positions inside and outside the academic field.

The committee was impressed by the high quality of the research projects that were presented by the selected PhD students. They were all able to formulate theoretically driven research questions, to operationalise them, and to make adequate choices concerning the data and the methodology. The methodological qualification of these students, even the younger ones, was beyond reproach. The committee observed that clear choices are made concerning the publication policy. Early during PhD programme, the students prepare an article with the strong support of their supervisors, who are at that stage the first authors. Later during the programme, the initiative moves in the direction of the students, and they become the main authors. As a consequence, in the final year of their programme, the students already have several published (or accepted) reviewed articles in international journals to their names, with some of them in highly rated journals. These outcomes are remarkable even considering that the selection of PhD students might be made amongst the most successful. In line with this strategy, the final reporting of the PhD project has shifted from monographs (which were always of limited size in Dutch universities) to a collection of well chosen papers in international, reviewed journals. The minimum number of papers (four), first authorship, language, and state of the paper (published, accepted, or submitted) are strictly regulated. The committee believes that this strategy is one of the factors contributing to the excellent publication record of research programme members.

The PhD students interviewed did not complain about the rather strict course requirements; they admitted that some initial feelings of inconvenience later changed to tolerance once they experienced the usefulness of what they had learned. The committee asked questions concerning the possibilities of appeal in case of dysfunctioning supervisors. The students admitted that this rarely happened, and they referred to the relationship with their personal mentors, to monthly meetings among PhD students, and to an annual survey among the students aimed at detecting more general problems. The regular contact with students from different locations (Utrecht, Groningen, and Nijmegen) was strongly appreciated by the students.

Conclusion

Concerning the PhD programme, there is an actual tendency to focus on interdisciplinary research schools at the level of the faculties within the universities. This might appear to detract from the high standing of some of the disciplinary research schools at ICS. The committee discounts this view and wishes to warn policy-makers against hindering the very successful activities that have developed during the past few years amongst the disciplinary research schools at ICS. The committee hopes that even under any new regulation, the opportunities for mutual exchange and cooperation observed in ICS will be preserved.

6. Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, Department of Sociology

Mission & Goals

The Department of Sociology is one of the five departments of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences. In the self-evaluation report, the Department of Sociology is considered the institutional level relevant to the sociology research programme. All research activities of the department are organised within one research programme.
The mission of the Department of Sociology is to:

- fulfil a leading role in the advancement of theoretical micro-foundations and social network methodology;
- realize theory-guided empirical social research which meets current international state-of-the-art quality standards in the social sciences.
- recruit the most talented junior researchers and train them to become excellent, independent social scientists.

The department has only one research programme. All of its research activities operate within the research programme 'Social Networks, Solidarity and Inequality' of the Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS). In Groningen, solidarity problems are studied in relation to three specific contexts: 1. organizations, 2. communities, and 3. well-being.

The committee concluded that the research programme complies completely with the mission and goals of the Department of Sociology. The interviews revealed a high level of commitment and enthusiasm facilitating an atmosphere conducive to scholarship and research. The dean was fully apprised of the demands of sociological research. The committee was entirely satisfied with the appropriate level of autonomy offered to the department which enables it to meet its ambitious goals.

Leadership

The Department of Sociology is part of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences. At the highest level there is the faculty board. Daily responsibilities are delegated to the directors of research and education. The director of research is responsible to the dean of the faculty for the quality and performance of the research conducted at the department. The director of research is head of the department, and s/he is supported by a research secretary.
Coordination with the faculty is achieved by bi-weekly meetings of the two directors of the department and the members of the faculty board.
In September 2004, the Graduate School of Behavioural and Social Sciences was founded as a cooperation between the Sociology, Psychology and Pedagogy Departments of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (see figure A1). The Graduate School is formally responsible for the research master and PhD programme, but the latter is delegated to ICS (the Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology).

The committee was entirely satisfied that the synergies of leadership between the faculty and department (and thus research programme) worked to their mutual benefit. The leadership at both levels appeared to be of a high quality.

Strategy & Policy
The key objective of the department's research efforts is the realization of high-quality, theory-guided, empirical social research within the context of the broader research and training programme of the ICS, 'Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality'. One of the major instruments to achieve this objective is the training of and joint production between senior researchers and younger scholars (postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, and research master students). Joint production is realized through the writing of research proposals for external funding, co-authoring of articles, and joint data collection (experiments, surveys) and data analysis efforts. During most of the period under review, no explicit internal clustering of research teams existed, apart from loose topical discussion groups. Research collaborations formed on an ad hoc basis and were to a large degree realized along the lines of integrated research projects. This worked well, but the switch to PhD dissertations based on the collection of empirical research articles requires a more intensive and structured collaboration amongst those involved in specific research topics. Since 2006, the research activities in the department received more explicit structure through the formation of five permanent 'work groups':

1. Diversity and cohesion in organizational contexts,
2. Changing inequality and the life course,
3. Pro- and antisocial behaviour of adolescents,
4. Organizational governance and change
5. Statistical methods for social network analysis

These five work groups represent the current backbone of the contemporary collaborative structure of the Department of Sociology. Communication and collaboration are further improved by the task forces reporting on the progress in their field, by so-called 'transparency days' (once yearly) in which in-depth discussions about research or teaching are set up, and by the monthly internal research colloquia.

Regarding the development of the strategy and policy, the committee remarks that the cooperation in the context of ICS brings a real added value to the development of the research in the department. The Sociology Department has, over the years, maintained an outstanding and internationally recognized research programme linked to the training of PhD students. These students have constituted a resource for Dutch sociology. The committee appreciates the communication and collaboration within the department.

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities
The department provided the following overview of the personnel resources, in full-time equivalents (fte) of research time.

Institutional/ programme level	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Tenured staff	4.17	4.68	4.69	4.58	5.44	5.94	5.44
Non-tenured staff	4.81	6.10	6.61	5.67	2.97	3.07	3.82
PhD students	9.92	9.42	7.91	8.97	8.70	9.02	8.92
Total research staff	18.90	20.20	19.21	19.22	17.11	18.03	18.18

The department provided the following information about funding at the programme level:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Direct funding	1141.39	1291.40	1570.21	1319. 62	1026.62	900.81	1054.16
	(58%)	(67%)	(75%)	(67%)	(62%)	(58%)	(62%)
Research funds	728.71	489.35	430.72	553.44	587.90	594.99	566.67
	(37%)	(26%)	(21%)	(28%)	(35%)	(39%)	(33%)
Contracts	91.34	99.14	65.95	53.36	35.55	30.76	38.07
	(5%)	(5%)	(3%)	(3%)	(2%)	(2%)	(2%)
Other	14.14	35.45	19.14	29.23	12.13	16.68	41.68
	(1%)	(2%)	(1%)	(1%)	(1%)	(1%)	(2%)
Total	1975.58	1915.35	2086.02	1955.70	1662.19	1543.24	1700.59

Figures are in thousands of €; % indicates the share of source in total budget of that particular year

The department offers ancillary services that are supportive for the research programme, such as a unit for computer-aided telephone interviewing and facilities for on-line experiments. An ethical committee assesses whether or not experimental setups comply with the ethical standards of the profession. The department has also established a PhD mentor.
The committee believes these figures provide evidence of a strong faculty which invests in research of which the Sociology Department is a significant part.. The figures for research funding suggest an attractive balance between applied and theoretical research. Some 50% of the direct funding is based on the research output, which makes it somewhat independent of fluctuations in student numbers. The committee appreciates the ancillary services provided by the Department of Sociology. These also contribute to the high quality of the research and PhD programme.

Academic Reputation
The self-evaluation report states that the research programme scored excellently on academic quality and long-term viability in the previous research assessment. A supplementary assessment of ICS research as part of the re-accreditation of ICS by the KNAW concluded: 'The national and international contacts of the research school and the quantity and quality of its publications are outstanding.' The members of the research programme received several awards, prizes and grants in the reviewed period.
Because of the outstanding reputation of programme members in the reviewed period, the committee believes that the programme under review contributes to the reputation of the faculty. Although it was not in a position to judge the overall academic quality of the faculty since there was no information on that level, there can be no doubt that the research mounted by the Sociology Department is of an international standard. Members of the department have a significant impact upon the progress of scientific sociology through publication in the top journals. This influence is particularly strong in the area of social networks. The citation record supports this conclusion.

Societal Relevance
The self-evaluation report states that the department has a strong track record in collaboration with and dissemination of research results to stakeholders outside the scientific community. The department's research efforts are regularly mentioned in the national and regional media. Members of the department also regularly disseminate the results of their research to a broader non-scientific audience through a variety of professional publications and reports. Members of the Department of Sociology are also regularly invited as experts or act as consultants for

a variety of societal organizations. Some of the researchers are members of societal advisory committees and boards.

The committee judged that the research programme of the department, while pitched at a commendable theoretical level, has had an impact upon current affairs by the study of solidarity problems in organizations, communities, and the relation to well-being. The committee felt that the scientific contribution places the research programme amongst the most prestigious in the Netherlands and abroad. This position has been maintained for longer than just the review period.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses
The self-evaluation report describes the strong tradition of integrating mechanism-based theory formation with empirical social research and state-of-the art statistical methods as one of the strengths of the research programme. Further strengths are the intensive collaboration between its researchers, resulting in synergy and bundling of complementary expertise of theorists, methodologists and statisticians, and the very successful acquisition of NWO subsidies. The departure of five full professors in the period of evaluation was a weakness and possible threat, given the difficulty of recruiting new personnel. The department's strategy to cope with this situation is to exploit the possibilities created by the tenure track system implemented in the University of Groningen and to increase the managerial and leaderships responsibilities of the adjunct professors.

The committee recognizes the problems in recruiting high-quality personnel from abroad in a situation where eminent researchers leave the programme. It is convinced that the well-developed tenure track system of the faculty and the high reputation of the institute guarantee continuity of high-quality research in the future.

The committee feels that the measures undertaken to improve coherence and to safeguard the transition of leadership make it likely that the department will continue to maintain the reputation of its research programme as amongst the intellectual leaders in international sociology.

Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programme of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Groningen:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Social Networks, Solidarity and Inequality	5	4	5	4

The detailed assessment per programme follows in the next section of this report.

Programme RUG:	**Networks, Solidarity and Inequality**	
Programme director:	Prof. R.P.M. Wittek (since October 2006), Prof. T.A.B. Snijders (July 2002-September 2006), Prof. F.N. Stokman (until 2002)	
Research staff 2006:	5.44 tenured, 18.18 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	5
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	5
	Viability:	4

Short description

According to the self-evaluation report, a key characteristic of research at the Groningen department is the strong integration between theoretical micro-foundations, social network and measurement models, and their application to the study of solidarity problems related to formal organizations, communities, and individual well-being. A large part of the research is realized in the context of integrated research projects involving two or more PhD and postdoc positions:

- theoretical micro-foundations
- social networks and measurement models
- solidarity problems in organizations
- solidarity problems related to communities
- solidarity problems related to well-being

Quality

The committee is of the opinion that the research programme contributes to the international development of the study of social networks at both the theoretical and empirical levels. This conclusion is based upon the publication and citation record. In addition, the research group has attracted significant funding. If the group succeeds in maintaining its present research record, it will continue to secure its pre-eminent position.

Productivity

The research group is relatively small and maintains a good publication record per fte. The committee, however, concluded that the publication record in first-rate refereed journals leaves some ground for improvement.

Relevance

The committee believes that the group has made major scientific contributions to the study of social networks. It has also extended the rational choice foundation of social enquiry in significant directions. Although the socio-economic impact of the research has not been strongly evident, this is acceptable given its theoretical orientation.

Viability

While recognising the outstanding contribution of the research group, the committee expressed concerns about its future viability. The present record depends heavily upon near professors nearing retirement and part-time appointments. The group also appears to have encountered problems in securing replacement staff.

Conclusion

The committee wishes to encourage the research group in the full recognition of its contributions at the international level. It remains, however, troubled about the group's present insecure condition. The committee would hope that this matter can be addressed with dispatch so that the future viability of the group can be restored.

Assessment of the PhD programme

The PhD programme is fully integrated in the research school Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS), a collaboration of the Universities of Groningen, Utrecht, and Nijmegen. The PhD programme is meanwhile also embedded in the local Graduate School of Behavioural and Social Sciences at the University of Groningen. The goal of the programme is to turn out highly qualified researchers and new university faculty who are able to conduct advanced theoretical and methodological social science research.

The research school ICS selects 10-15 new PhD students each year who have been educated in sociology, economics, other social sciences, or mathematics. Typically, about 3-5 students are selected for the Groningen programme, the others for the ICS locations in Utrecht and Nijmegen. All members of a new cohort start the programme together at the beginning of the new academic year, on September 1. They follow all courses together, thus forming a 'year group'.

The structure of the training programme is as follows:

- During the entire four-year period, work on the dissertation is carried out under the close supervision of ICS faculty and external experts.
- In the initial 18 months, students are offered various courses in theory construction, research methods, and the integration of theory and research methods, in combination with practical training.
- During all courses, the PhD students work in small groups on assignments with a special emphasis on a critical application of theoretical knowledge to problems of empirical research.
- In the remaining 30 months, the PhD students regularly present their research in progress in seminars attended by ICS faculty and other university faculty. This phase likewise includes an external traineeship.

The basic programme consists of six components, namely, three structured programme courses (Theory Construction and Modelling, Advanced Methods and Techniques of Empirical Research, The Integration of Explanatory Models with Models of Analysis) during the first 18 months of PhD programme, a traineeship during the second or third year, dissertation research throughout the programme and, finally, regular presentations of the dissertation research at ICS Forum Days. The three courses fulfil the purpose of general training combined with planning the individual research project, while the other three components are related specifically to the subject of the dissertation. All the coordinators and teachers of all courses are senior tenured ICS faculty on the full professor or associate professor level.

Each ICS PhD student in Groningen has a team of supervisors, typically comprising two or three members. Complementary expertise between supervisors is an essential criterion for composing the team.

Admission of PhD candidates to the programme is a formal responsibility of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences. Following successful practice since 1986 and commitments incurred for the KNAW re-accreditation of the ICS in 2003, selection of candidates has been delegated to the ICS Board.

For each new PhD student, there is a detailed training and supervision plan, in fact a contract, to be signed by the PhD student, the supervisors, and the programme leader. All PhD projects within the Groningen programme are reviewed twice a year, in March and September, in a research staff meeting for all tenured staff and postdocs of the programme.

Finally, the ICS Board reviews all ongoing PhD projects at the three ICS locations each year in a board meeting in November. These procedures ensure close monitoring and frequent feedback for both PhD students and supervisors as well as consistency and sufficient uniformity in supervision across projects.

The department provided the following overview of PhD enrolment and success rate:

Starting year	Number of students enrolled	Graduated				Not yet finished	Dis-continued
		within contract period	within 1 year after contract period	within 2 years after contract period	within 3 years after contract period		
1996	5	2 (40%)	2 (40%)				1 (20%)
1997	4	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)		
1998	4		2 (50%)		1 (25%)		1 (25%)
1999	2		2 (100%)				
2000	5	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)		1 (20%)	
2001	2		2 (100%)				
2002	4	1 (25%)	3 (75%)				
Total	26	6 (23%)	13 (50%)	2 (7.6%)	2 (7.6%)	1 (3.8%)	2 (7.6%)

The committee fully understands why the PhD programme in ICS received an excellent qualification during previous research school assessments. It is an environment in which young researchers from research programmes at three universities cooperate within a common theoretically and methodologically well-defined research tradition (structural individualism). The PhD programme is completely embedded in the research projects in the disciplinary research school ICS. In its goals, the PhD programme of ICS maintains high standards concerning academic attitudes, research skills, academic skills, and work orientation. The recent changes in the programme after 2005 related to the integration of part of PhD programme in the research master may be seen as an additional step in the improvement of the PhD programme. The staff members of interuniversity ICS seem to be ready to support fully the master programmes at the different locations.

The programme is very well structured, with explicit rules for the number and order of the courses, with an advanced methodological training, obligations for students including presenting their work regularly, control over supervision, feedback, mentorship, support for publishing. The students clearly know their rights and obligations. The selection of candidates is very strict. Each year about 3 to 6 students of each participating institute are selected by ICS. The success rate of PhD candidates is in general very good.

The PhD programme is embedded in the local Graduate School of Behavioural and Social Sciences at the University of Groningen. The Graduate School also accommodates a research master programme 'Human Behaviour in Social Contexts' which is affiliated with the SaSR master programme in Utrecht. The committee believes that this rather recent evolution will further strengthen the already high quality of the programme. The preparation of a master

thesis is almost invariably in a format that can be published (and often is already) in an international professional journal. The research master programme provides a privileged source for the recruitment of PhD candidates by ICS, although not the only one since ICS selects a number of PhD students from other disciplines. Students who enter the ICS PhD programme after completion of a research master programme (in Groningen or Utrecht) obtain exemption from major parts of the PhD courses. Exemptions are also possible for students who enter the PhD programme with another master background (e.g. psychology).

The committee commends the flexible way in which PhD students are selected without restrictions concerning methodological and theoretical background. The integrated structure might, however, be seen as too restrictive for prospective PhD students from other disciplines or even from other sociology graduate programmes where the integration of methodology and theory is not as well developed. The committee invites ICS to reflect further upon the tension between flexibility and the preservation of high quality. The PhD students who were interviewed did not perceive the PhD programme as hindering their work towards their first publication nor the progress of their project. They did not complain about the rather strict requirements concerning courses but admitted to some initial feelings of inconvenience which changed in a later period during the course into feelings of acceptance, once they experienced the usefulness of what they had learned.

Further integration of PhD and research master students into the workgroups formed around the five research lines is recommended; the lines were introduced in 2006 and may be seen as local implementations of the broader ICS programme. According to the committee, this can further stimulate joint work and co-authored papers with senior faculty.

The committee was impressed by the high quality of the research projects presented by the selected PhD students. They were all able to formulate theoretically driven research questions, to operationalise them, and to make adequate choices concerning the data and the methodology. The methodological qualification of these students, even the younger ones, was evident. The committee observed that clear choices are made concerning publication policy. Already early during PhD programme, the students prepare an article with strong support of the supervisors who are at that stage first authors. Later during the programme, the initiative moves in the direction of the students, and they become the main authors. As a consequence, in the last year of their programme, these students already have several published (or accepted) reviewed articles in international journals to their names, with some of these in highly rated journals. These outcomes are remarkable even considering that the selection of PhD students is made among the most successful ones. In accordance with this strategy, reporting of the PhD projects has shifted from monographs (which were always of limited size in Dutch universities) to a collection of well-chosen papers in international, reviewed journals. The minimum number of papers, first authorship, language, and state of the paper (published or accepted) are strictly regulated. The committee believes that this strategy is one of the factors contributing to the excellent publication record of the research programme members.

The committee asked questions concerning the possibilities of appeal in case of dysfunctioning supervisors. As was the case in Utrecht, the students in Groningen admitted that this never or rarely happened; they referred to the relationship with their personal mentor, to monthly meetings amongst PhD students, and to an annual survey among the students aimed at detecting more general problems. The regular contact with students from different locations (Utrecht, Groningen, and Nijmegen) was strongly appreciated by the students.

Conclusion

Concerning the PhD programme, there is a tendency to focus on interdisciplinary research schools at the level of the faculties within universities. The quality and reputation of ICS PhD programme might suffer seriously if the university boards decide not to endorse re-accreditation of the interuniversity collaboration in the future. Such a decision might be at the cost of the high reputation of disciplinary research schools like ICS. The committee wants to alert policy-makers to the possibility of preventing the continuation of the very successful activities that have developed during the past few years by disciplinary research schools such as ICS. The committee hopes that even with new regulations, the opportunity for mutual exchange and cooperation observed at the ICS will be preserved.

7. Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Erasmus University Rotterdam

The Faculty of Social Sciences consists of three departments, Public Administration, Psychology, and Sociology. In addition to these three capacity groups, the faculty also includes the Erasmus Centre for Sustainable Development & Management, and the Dutch Research Institute for Transition. The self-evaluation report contains only three small sections about the mission statement, leadership, and the research policy. The interviews provided somewhat more information, but it became clear that the centre of gravity of research is at the level of the departments. Some of the committee comments apply to the faculty level while others deal with the Department of Sociology.

Mission & Goals

The research mission of the Faculty of Social Sciences is to promote and conduct socially relevant research of a high standard that is internationally recognized. In particular, the Faculty of Social Sciences stimulates international and interdisciplinary co-operation, linking theoretical, knowledge-driven questions to society-driven problems. There is a large variety of research subjects, covering urban problems, immigration and integration, cultural problems of meaning and identity, transformation of the welfare state, public governance, the role of public organizations in complex interactions between public and private sectors, European public policy, sustainable development, job selection, flow, addiction, anxiety disorders, memory and learning.

The committee concluded that the research programme of the Department of Sociology complies completely with the mission and goals of the faculty. The interview with the management of the faculty (dean and chair of the sociology capacity group) revealed that the faculty gives plenty of autonomy to the departments to fulfil their research programmes. The faculty offers opportunities that are positively appraised by the committee. Researchers occasionally participate in several other research schools, but the ASSR Research School located at the University of Amsterdam is a privileged research school in which a substantial number of researchers at the Department of Sociology of EUR are embedded. It also became clear during the interviews that in 2003 the faculty had supported the Department of Sociology's survival during a difficult period with low student numbers. The committee believes that the situation of sociology at EUR has improved considerably since that time, and compared with the previous assessment period.

Leadership

The faculty dean acts as the faculty's research director. S/he is responsible for the faculty's general administration and management. S/he manages the faculty and is charged with its administration, structure and organization with respect to both education and research. S/he is authorized to delegate managerial responsibilities to staff members according to agreed standards and acts as the faculty's research director.

Since December 2005, three-member committees have been managing each of the faculty's three capacity groups (Sociology, Public Administration and Psychology). The chair of each of these capacity groups is responsible for the administration and management of the resources (i.e. staff and finances) of the capacity group. The chairs of the capacity groups are also members of the executive board of the faculty. The programme director's principal responsibility is the organization of courses as described in the Teaching and Examination Regulations. The research director is charged with the organization and management of the research within his

or her academic field. His or her principal responsibilities are drafting a multi-year research programme every four years, implementing and supervising this programme, exercising quality control, and advising the dean on matters of internal and external quality management. Ultimate responsibility rests with the dean.

The committee wondered why there was no central position for research coordination over the three departments. The interviews revealed that this could be a future consideration. The actual managerial structure (since December 2005) was explained. The committee agreed that the three-member committees that are managing each of the faculty's three disciplinary capacity groups, with the chairs of the capacity groups being members of the faculty's executive board, guarantees a sound research policy at the faculty.

Strategy & Policy
The main aims of the research policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences are:

- promoting co-operation between the departments in the faculty (to stimulate the integration of knowledge and insights held by each of the departments);
- increasing the level of external research funding from NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research), BSIK (a scientifically refereed programme funded by the Dutch government), European Union, and a wide range of third-stream sources;
- developing international research co-operation and associated funding;
- promoting the scouting and training of young research talent (especially PhD students).

The Faculty of Social Sciences has an internal quality control system in place to ensure that these objectives are achieved and that all the research carried out at the Faculty of Social Sciences meets its quality standards.
The strategy and policy of the programme management are determined by the ambition to conduct research that is both scientifically and socially relevant, as well as by a readiness to interweave fundamental research and commissioned research.
A number of new appointments have been made since 2000 to strengthen expertise in the new programme's three key research areas. The programme has been successful in increasing the amount of external research funding. Given the priority of strengthening the research staff, major efforts have been invested in scouting and retaining young research talent during the assessment period. The programme aims at scouting these talents at the earliest possible stage, which is when they are still bachelor students, to be able to optimally prepare them for research positions after they have obtained their master.

Regarding the development of the strategy and policy, the committee remarks that not very much information about the faculty level was provided in the descriptive part of the self-evaluation report, but that much was clarified during the interviews. It became obvious that the faculty policy is to delegate important tasks to the level of the departments and, furthermore, that very concrete measures were taken at the faculty level: to stimulate research, to improve quality by a tenured track system, to reward publishing in international journals and to reinforce PhD supervision by attracting additional fte plus postdocs, supporting new research lines. The committee believes that these measures are proving adequate in view of improving the research at the Department of Sociology.

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities
The department provided the following overview of the personnel resources, in full-time equivalents (fte) of research time.

Research programme level	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Programme *Social Problems in Contemporary Modernity*							
Tenured staff	4.98	5.12	4.2	3.72	4.3	4.91	4.98
Non-tenured staff	1.45	3.63	2.17	1.1	1.22	1.41	2.5
PhD students	4.09	2.93	4.67	4.4	3.45	5.1	8.21
Total research staff	10.52	11.68	11.04	9.22	8.97	11.42	15.69

The department provided the following information on funding at the programme level:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Average
Direct funding	47	33	36	34	34	36	36	31
First stream research funds	20	14	18	13	12	11	11	14
Research funds	13	13	13	32	39	27	32	24
Contracts (including EU)	20	40	33	32	26	36	31	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Entries are percentages of total amount of funding.

The committee notes that the proportion of direct funding is rather low in the Department of Sociology, but it also observes that other first-stream research funding, based on research performance, has been growing gradually in recent years. The committee considers this a positive evolution and observes that a large proportion of funding is in the category of contract research. This does not constitute a problem for the academic quality of the research at the department since EU funding is classified under this category, and these resources in fact account for the lion's share of the programme's international refereed articles. Also, the support of social policy by means of applied (and commissioned) research is an explicit element in the mission statement and aims of both the faculty and the department. The committee observed a steady growth in PhD students in recent years. Although this might create some problems concerning supervision, the committee believes that the faculty and department are prepared to take the necessary measures to tackle these problems.

Academic Reputation
The self-evaluation report states that the Department of Sociology has drastically refocused its research by means of the new programme 'Social Problems in Contemporary Modernity', drawing on the influx of new expertise. The new research programme underwent its first (mid-term) research assessment in 2005, covering the period 2000-2004. The assessment committee concluded that the programme had already made significant progress. Programme members are editors or members of editorial boards of a range of national and international social science journals and referees for a substantially wider range of national and international journals. They have been members of juries for scientific prizes and awards, committees that supervise research projects and review committees. Several programme members have been a visiting professor.

The committee considers the academic reputation of the majority of the research staff exemplary. Many members of the department occupy positions of either editor or member of the

editorial board of a number of specialised international journals. They participate in international and national boards of academic and public policy associations. Some were visiting scholars in high-quality institutes. The number of citations in the SSCI, which is only one indicator of prominence, is unevenly distributed, however, perhaps as a consequence of the relatively young staff.

Societal Relevance
The self-evaluation report states that a large amount of commissioned research has been conducted since 2000, much of it for national and local governments. Senior programme members frequently appear in the media and contribute to leading newspapers.

The committee expresses its appreciation of the theoretically innovative research at the department. The researchers address highly challenging theoretical issues that are also relevant for social policy and for reflection on policy measures.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses
According to the self-evaluation report, the major strength of the programme is its successful interweaving of fundamental research and commissioned research, but further progress has to be made in terms of international research output. The prospects for the next few years are described as favourable, while first-stream resources are expected to increase. The programme needs to expand the research time of its most productive senior staff members, to enable them to further increase the international research output, and to invest in additional high-quality research staff. The staff will be strengthened with a number of high-quality young researchers who also play a role in teaching. Furthermore, the programme's annual research budget will be expanded to accommodate further externally acquired projects that require first-stream matching. An increased number of students in recent years and several retiring senior staff members in 2007 and 2008 enabled an expansion of the first-stream research budget of €150,000 annually, to increase the programme's opportunities to match externally acquired funding. In addition, at least five and potentially ten high-quality postdocs will be recruited in order to strengthen the research staff.

The committee believes that the management of the faculty and department is sufficiently aware of the threats and challenges facing them and is prepared to react adequately to them.

Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programme of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Erasmus University Rotterdam:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Social Problems in Contemporary Modernity: Globalization, Individualization, and Social Policy	4	3	4	4

The detailed assessment per programme follows in the next section of this report.

Programme EUR:	**Social Problems in Contemporary Modernity**
Programme director:	Prof. G.B.M. Engbersen (until autumn of 2004), Prof. D. Houtman (since 2004)
Research staff 2006:	4.98 tenured, 15.69 total fte
Assessments:	Quality: 4
	Productivity: 3
	Relevance: 4
	Viability: 4

Short description
The research programme Social Problems in Contemporary Modernity addresses the social problems that result from processes of globalization and individualization in contemporary western societies, especially the Netherlands. More specifically, the research programme studies:

1. how the twin processes of globalization and individualization spawn new social problems and transform existing ones in western countries (the Netherlands in particular);
2. how relevant social actors (including the state) articulate and address these problems;
3. what social consequences result from these attempts to deal with these social problems.

The programme has been successful in maintaining a strong record in policy advice and commissioned research on the one hand and using the latter to strengthen its fundamental research on the other. Priorities for the next five years include further strengthening of the research staff and further internationalization of the research efforts and research output.

Quality
The quality of this research programme is very good. The researchers deal with highly relevant and salient research topics, and they do so from a well-developed theoretical perspective. The committee expresses its appreciation for the fact that the programme addresses some of the fundamental and perennial questions within sociology. Simultaneously, the programme succeeds in paying attention to topics that are highly relevant for Dutch society and Dutch policy. The committee considers it an important challenge for this programme to maintain a healthy balance between policy research and 'fundamental' social science research.

Productivity
Productivity is good, but there is obviously still some room for improvement. Output in peer-reviewed journals (whether Dutch, English, or another language) could improve still further. The committee notes that the documents provided for 2007 (not officially included in this assessment) demonstrate that the programme's productivity increased significantly after the end of the assessment period.

Relevance
The committee expresses its appreciation for the theoretically innovative aspect of the programme. The researchers address highly challenging theoretical issues, and they clearly are not afraid to take risks in this regard. In the years ahead it will be important to keep up this innovative spirit, in order to keep abreast of the current developments in the international literature.

Viability
Given the research grants acquired on a competitive basis, and the rather young staff structure of the programme, the committee considers its future viability very good. The committee applauds the pluralism in methods and theories being applied and clearly recognises the importance of a highly committed group of scholars.

Conclusion
This is a very good research programme, combining theoretical innovation and a pluralist approach towards methods and research. It is clearly an ambitious programme, and it remains to be seen whether its scale actually allows it to realise these large ambitions. That apart, however, the committee does not entertain any doubts about the future prospects of this programme.

8. Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University

Mission & Goals
The Tilburg Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences focuses on issues of both an intra-individual and an extra-individual nature. Social, cultural, and behavioural phenomena are prominent. This means that both individual persons, social aggregates of persons, and social systems (groups, networks, organizations, and societies) are examined. The mission of the FSBS is to become not only an up-market player in academic education and research in the social and behavioural sciences in the Netherlands, but also a fully fledged competitor in the international academic arena in certain core areas. With respect to research, the faculty pursues the following goals:

- offering an environment that stimulates researchers.
- striving for the continual production of high-quality research in several substantive core areas of the social and behavioural sciences and in psychometrics and sociometrics.
- stimulating the dissemination of the results of this high-quality research by means of articles in high-impact, international, refereed journals and in book chapters with internationally renowned publishers, while also paying ample attention to the valorisation of the knowledge gained.
- stimulating the interest and providing a stimulating education of prospective high-potential young researchers.
- informing public discourse on topics that are within the domain of expertise of staff members and disseminating knowledge that can help to solve problems in society (valorisation).

The research of the faculty is coordinated in the Oldendorff Research Institute.

The committee values the concordance of the objectives set by the faculty and the implications for research practice. The overarching aim to create a stimulating environment has led to a high level of research at the programme level and an increasing visibility of Tilburg sociology not only on the national but also the international level.

Leadership
The executive board of the university has delegated all formal responsibilities at the faculty level to the faculty deans. The dean is the chair of the faculty board (management team) of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FSBS), which consists of the dean, the vice-deans for education and research and the managing director of the faculty. The managing directors of the research institute and the institute for education serve as advisors for the faculty board. The dean is ultimately responsible for all aspects of research, such as research policy and priorities, the quality and supervision of research and researchers, the provision of facilities, the recruitment of researchers, and the drawing-up of budgets. The vice-dean for research and the managing director of the Oldendorff Research Institute support the dean in these tasks.
The vice-dean for research and the managing director of the Oldendorff Research Institute are responsible for developing research policy, monitoring the implementation and progress of research policy, research evaluation, and advising the faculty board on all relevant faculty research matters. The staff of the research institute consists of a managing director, a full-time policy officer, one part-time secretary, a part-time database manager, and occasional student assistants. They support the researchers and PhD students of the faculty. The staff of the research institute support the work of approximately 100 researchers and 85 PhD students.

The committee was to some extent unsure about the role of the Oldendorff Research Institute in the organizational structure. There seems to be some tension between keeping the institute as a part of a supportive (internal) organizational structure and a desire to promote it as an internationally visible research institute. This tension is also reflected in uncertainties about the involvement of the institute in externally funded research.

Strategy & Policy
The most important decisions concerning research that were made in the evaluation period had to do with the poor level of organization of research within the faculty; only part of the faculty's research took place within the context of the faculty's thematic research institute WORC (Work and Organization Research Centre). The domain of WORC was broadened to encompass all of the faculty's research programmes. In 2004, the name of the research institute was changed to the Oldendorff Research Institute. With respect to the research programmes in the field of socio-cultural research, the following decisions were mentioned in the self-evaluation report:

- The Sociology group and the Organisation Studies group were subject to a far-reaching transformation. Most staff members were replaced by new, young scientists.
- Substantial changes also took place in the Human Resource Studies group. Especially the change in academic leadership proved to be rather important.
- The Leisure Studies research group was dismantled, due to a lack of quality.
- A new research group for the Organization and Management of Health Care was started up in 2000.

In order to keep up with developments at the university and national level, the faculty took several important measures concerning the relation between teaching and research, on the one hand, and the evaluation and monitoring of research output on the other. One of the strategic goals of FSBS is to employ some internationally well-known researchers in Tilburg.

Regarding the development of the strategy and policy, the committee gained the impression that the changes described above led to a radical research reorganization as well as changes in the organizational culture, both of which positively contributed to the research climate and measurable output.

Resources, Funding Policy & Facilities
The department provided the following overview of the personnel resources, in full-time equivalents (fte) of research time.

Institutional level		**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Tenured staff		19.33	23.34	24.75	24.96	26.53	26.99
Non-tenured staff		3.92	6.88	10.42	14.39	7.9	11.05
PhD students		22.3	23.15	26.74	31.3	33.46	39.02
Total research staff		45.55	53.37	61.91	70.65	67.89	77.06
Research programme level	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Programme *Social and Cultural Dynamics*							
Tenured staff	1.6	1.8	3	3.3	3.15	2.96	3.25
Non-tenured staff	0.35	0.55	1.59	1.73	1.59	1.06	1.24
PhD students	2.35	1.79	2.57	3.35	4.74	5.23	5.9
Total research staff	4.3	4.14	7.16	8.38	9.48	9.25	10.39

The department provided the following overview of funding at the institutional level:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Direct funding	2 956	3 234	3 413	3 542	3 634	4 194	4 851
Research funds	82	126	287	377	752	1151	1679
Contracts	1 332	1 152	1 501	1 753	1 669	1 902	2 250
Total	4 370	4 512	5 201	5 642	6 055	7 247	8 780

In thousands of €

Academic Reputation

The self-evaluation report states that in the well-known annual *Elsevier* survey, Tilburg was repeatedly chosen as the best sociology department in the country on the criterion of research output. This includes the most recent year (2007). The *Elsevier* survey is widely distributed, especially among potential students. It includes ratings and rankings of all programmes in higher education. The field-specific rankings of research output are based upon a survey among all associate and full professors in the particular field in the Netherlands. Members of the programme participate in boards of national and international journals and act as reviewers for a variety of journals. In the self-evaluation report a list of awards achieved is included.

The committee agrees that the research output is impressive and is particularly pleased with the high quality of the publications.

Societal Relevance

The self-evaluation report states that the programme has had an impact outside the immediate academic community, even though it is not primarily a policy-oriented group. The first source of evidence for this lies in the involvement in research and consultancy for government (and quasi-government) agencies.

Its impact can also be seen in the media attention that several SCD members have received. SCD members are regularly quoted in newspaper articles and often appear in interviews with the printed press as well.

Although the SCD programme contributes to national debates, the substantive focus on comparative issues and designs implies that the international (i.e. European) context is a more important setting than the national setting.

The committee sees the primary role for the programme as engaging in scientific and theoretical debates in sociology within the academic community. However, a dissemination of research findings and involvement in policy and socio-political debates should be encouraged and supported.

Balance of Strengths & Weaknesses

An advantage of the relatively small scale of the faculty is that communication lines are very short. The possibility of open and direct communication is considered an opportunity for close cooperation. The administrative tasks and bureaucratic burden of effective communication are reduced. The institute records the output of the researchers and applies strict evaluation rules. An optimistic financial perspective at the faculty level for the coming years is mentioned as a strength. A clear opportunity for the Faculty of Social and Behaviour Sciences is to emphasise medical psychology as a unique selling point, and to promote the presence of the European Values Study, which is located at the faculty.

According to the self-evaluation report, the most obvious weakness of the Oldendorff Research Institute is that it has not yet been able to gain an internationally respected reputation. This objective was not explicitly adopted at its inception, but it has been widely acknowledged that international visibility should be accomplished by the research programmes. The Institute has nevertheless mainly had an internal function within FSBS. The need for a good international reputation has become more salient with the introduction of the Graduate School which aims to recruit at a European-wide level. A serious threat for the researchers' workloadis the time lag between the fast growth of student numbers and the growth in the budget. The rather optimistic view at the faculty level concerning the sociology programme for coming years should be somewhat tempered, because of a reduction in student numbers. The sociology group will face a budget reduction as a consequence of a reduction in the number of students.

The committee appreciates that the management has a realistic view of the strengths, challenges, opportunities, weaknesses and threats. According to the committee, factors that will in all probability secure future developments are the quality of the motivated personnel, the general accepted way of measuring their output, and the reduction of bureaucratic burdens.

The committee was impressed by the presentations of the interviewed PhD students. They can take courses locally or in various research schools, in agreement with the supervisors, and are supported by the Institute. Also, the gearing of the master programmes to the matching research programmes is seen by the committee as a positive development and an important basis for recruiting talented students for the PhD programme.

Assessments per programme

The committee assessed the following programme of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Oldendorff Research Institute, Tilburg University

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Social and Cultural Dynamics	5	5	5	4

The detailed assessment per programme follows in the next section of this report.

Programme UvT :	**Social and Cultural Dynamics**	
Programme director:	Prof. M. Kalmijn	
Research staff 2006:	3.25 tenured, 10.39 total fte	
Assessments:	Quality:	5
	Productivity:	5
	Relevance:	5
	Viability:	4

Short description

The programme Social and Cultural Dynamics (SCD) studies aspects of social inequality and social cohesion in a comparative and dynamic perspective. Subthemes of social inequality are work, occupation, poverty, welfare and health. Subthemes within social cohesion are values, solidarity, religion, family, voluntary membership, and social networks. The comparative perspective focuses on the comparison of countries (mostly European), either from a macro perspective or a micro/macro (multilevel) perspective. The dynamic perspective consists of comparing countries or social groups across historical time on the one hand, and comparing individuals over their personal life course on the other. The programme is motivated by substantive forces in society on the one hand (i.e. processes of (post)modernization in western societies) and by methodological innovations on the other (i.e. the development of dynamic and multilevel data and statistical models). In terms of methodology, the programme is primarily quantitative, with a strong focus on comparative and longitudinal designs in survey research. The programme invests heavily in the collection of primary data for the sociological research community.

Quality

The committee is impressed with the rapid growth in the quality of this research programme. This research programme clearly provides high-quality research. Within its subdisciplines, the programme clearly can be regarded as one of the leading teams, internationally speaking. The committee especially wants to mention the effort invested in the European Values Survey (EVS), as the data set is being developed to the benefit of the wider sociological community. The committee expresses its appreciation for this effort.

Productivity

Productivity levels are excellent, both with regard to the quantity and the quality of the publications. The committee would encourage efforts to strengthen the coherence of the programme, since the relation between data collecting and analysis, thus far, seems rather modest.

Relevance

The publications of this research unit are highly relevant, particularly on scientific grounds, but partly also with regard to social problems in Dutch society. The citation scores are excellent, although maybe more could be done to promote the theoretical relevance of the research output. Production of the EVS data is highly relevant for the social science community.

Viability

This programme has clearly developed in recent years, and therefore the prospects for its future viability are very good. We have every reason to believe that the programme will continue to prosper and to strengthen its international reputation. It is a very ambitious programme, and it has every reason to retain its ambition. The scale, however, is still rather limited, which inevitably renders the programme potentially more vulnerable than those at large-scale, well-established institutions.

Conclusion

The committee is impressed by the clear improvement in the quality and international standing of this research programme. The committee has high hopes for its continuing international visibility, which could even be strengthened further by explicitly addressing some of the theoretical issues raised by the research. In general, it is clear that this has become an excellent research programme.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Curriculum vitae of the committee members

Peter Abell is professor of management at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he is part of the Managerial Economics and Strategy Group. Some of his publications:
- 'Putting Social Theory Right', *Theoretical Sociology* 18 (2000).
- The Future of Social Science: Towards a Sociological Theory of Social Theory [online article]. 2000. Available from http://www.fathom.com.
- with Reyniers, D. 'Generalised Reciprocity and Reputation in the Theory of Co-operation.' *Analyse and Kritik: Zeitschrift fur Sozialwissenschaften* 22, Symposium on 'The Evolution of Co-operation' (2000): 3-18.
- with Reyniers, D. 'On the Failure of Social Theory', *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 4 (2000): 739-750.

Jacques Billiet (chair of the committee) was full professor in social methodology until his retirement in 2007 at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, where he is currently special guest professor. He is a member of the central coordination team of the *European Social survey.* He chaired in the past several review committees in the Netherlands. His most recent publications are:
- Billiet, J. & Dewitte, H. (2008). 'Everyday Racism as Predictor of Political Racism in Flemish Belgium', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 64 (2): 253-268.
- Billiet, J. & Davidov, E. (2008). 'Testing the Stability of an Acquiescence Style Factor Behind two Interrelated Substantive Variables in a Panel Design', *Sociological Methods and Research* 36 (4): 542-562.
- Meuleman, B., Davidov, E. & Billiet, J. (2008). 'Changing attitudes toward immigration in Europe, 2002-2007: A dynamic group conflict theory approach', *Social Science Research* 208, 14 pp (advanced access Nov. 2008: www.elsevier.com/locate/ssresearch).
- Davidov, E., Meuleman, B., Billiet, J. & Schmidt, P. (2008). 'Values and Support for Immigration: A Cross-Country Comparison', *European Sociological review* 6, 16 pp (electronic advanced access published March 18, 2002).

Sonja Drobnič is professor of sociology at the Institute of Sociology, University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research interests include social stratification and inequalities, life course research, quality of life and work, social networks and social cohesion. She is recognized as an expert on the labor force participation of married women, bringing a sophisticated longitudinal methodology to the cross-national comparison of couples' work and family arrangements. With Hans-Peter Blossfeld, she published *Careers of Couples in Contemporary Societies: From Male Breadwinner to Dual-Earner Families* (Oxford University Press 2001). Her book on the division of household labour in cross-national comparison (with Judith Treas), *Dividing the Domestics,* will appear from Stanford University Press in 2009.

Robert Erikson is professor at the Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI) of Stockholm University. His research interests concern social stratification, education, family, and health, especially the study of individual change over the life course and how it can be understood with regard to individual and structural conditions. His publications have been foremost in the fields of social stratification and mobility, educational attainment, and individual well-being. Presently, he is engaged in an EU network, EQUALSOC (Economic Change, Quality of Life and Social Cohesion). Recent publications:

- (2007) 'Social selection in Stockholm schools: primary and secondary effects on the transition to upper secondary education' in Stefani Scherer, Reinhard Pollak, Gunnar Otte and Markus Gangl (Eds). *From Origin to Destination. Trends and Mechanisms in Social Stratification Research*. Frankfurt a. M. and New York: Campus.
- with Michelle Jackson, John H Goldthorpe and Meir Yaish (2007). 'Primary and Secondary Effects in Class Differentials in Educational Attainment: the Transition to A-Level Courses in England and Wales', *Acta Sociologica* 50:3, 211-29.
- with Jenny Torssander (2008). 'Social class and cause of death', *The European Journal of Public Heath* 18: 473-478.

Marc Hooghe is a Professor of Political Science at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and professeur invité à l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques/Université Lille-II. He has worked mainly on social capital, political participation and social cohesion. He is also editor of *Acta Politica, International Journal of Political Science* and president of the Belgian (Flemish) Political Science Association (*Politicologisch Instituut*).
Main research interests: political participation, social movements, social capital, gender and participation, political socialisation, social cohesion.
Recent publications (selection):
- with Tim Reeskens, Dietlind Stolle & Ann Trappers (2008). 'Ethnic Diversity and Generalized Trust in Europe. A Cross-National Comparative Study', *Comparative Political Studies,* 41, 2008, accepted.
- with Thomas Gschwend (2008). 'Should I Stay or Should I Go? An Experimental Study on Voter Responses to Pre-Electoral Coalitions in Flanders (Belgium)', *European Journal for Political Research* 47(5): 537-555

Appendix B: Explanation of the SEP scores

Excellent (5)	Work is at the forefront internationally and will most likely have an important and substantial impact in the field. Group is considered an international leader.
Very Good (4)	Work is internationally competitive and is expected to make a significant contribution; nationally speaking at the forefront in the field. Group is considered international player, national leader.
Good (3)	Work is competitive at the national level and will probably make a valuable contribution in the international field. Group is considered internationally visible and a national player.
Satisfactory (2)	Work that is solid but not exciting, will add to our understanding and is in principle worthy of support. It is considered of less priority than work in the above categories. Group is nationally visible.
Unsatisfactory (1)	Work that is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in its scientific and/or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc. Work not worthy of pursuing.

Quality is to be seen as a measure of excellence and excitement. It refers to the eminence of a group's research activities, its ability to perform at the highest level and its achievements in the international scientific community. It rests on the proficiency and rigour of research concepts and conduct; it shows in the success of the group at the forefront of scientific development.

Productivity refers to the total output of the group; that is, the variegated ways in which results of research and knowledge development are publicised. The output needs to be reviewed in relation to the input in terms of human resources.

Relevance is a criterion that covers both the scientific and the technical and socio-economic impact of the work. Here, in particular, research choices are assessed in relation to developments in the international scientific community or, in the case of technical and socio-economic impact, in relation to important developments or questions in society at large.

Vitality and feasibility. This dual criterion refers to the internal and external dynamics of the group in relation to the choices made and the success rate of projects. On the one hand, this criterion measures the flexibility of a group, which appears in its ability to close research lines that have no future and to initiate new venture projects. On the other hand, it measures the capacity of the management to run projects in a professional way. Assessment of policy decisions is at stake, as well as assessment of project management, including cost-benefit analysis.

Appendix C: Meeting and interview schedule

Sunday, 28 September 2008

15:00 hrs	Committee meeting: introduction to the Standard Evaluation Protocol; discussion of preliminary assessments; preparing questions for the interviews

Monday, 29 September 2008: University of Amsterdam (UvA)

09:00-10:00	Institute management UvA	Prof. dr. John Grin (scientific director), Prof. dr. Anita Hardon (sci dir, 2002-2006); Drs. J.M. Komen (Manager)
10:00-11:00	Programme director UvA 1	Prof. dr. Jelle Visser, Prof. dr. Herman van de Werfhorst
11:00-12:00	Programme director UvA 2	Prof. dr. Jan-Willem Duyvendak, Dr. Giselinde Kuipers
12:00-13:00	Lunch	Restaurant Park Plaza
13:00-14:00	PhD-students UvA	Barak Kalir, Bowen Paulle, Chip Huisman, Sanneke Kloppenburg
14:00-15:00	Management of PhD-training	Prof. dr. John Grin Prof. dr. Anita Hardon Drs. J.M. Komen
15:00-17:00	Committee meeting	

Tuesday, 30 September 2008: Vrije Universiteit (VU)

09:00-10:00	Institute management VU	Prof. dr. Bert Klandermans, dean Dr. Marjolein Broese van Groenou
10:00-11:00	Programme director VU 1	Prof. dr. Harry Ganzeboom
11:00-12:00	Programme director VU 2	Prof. dr. Ruud Koopmans
12:00-13:00	Programme director VU 3	Prof. dr. Theo van Tilburg
13:00-14:00	Lunch	Restaurant Park Plaza
14:00-15:00	PhD-students VU	VU1: Heike Schröder, Kadri Täht VU2: Jasper Muis, Evelyn Ersalini VU3: Ralf Kaptijn, Natasha Tolkacheva
15:00-17:00	Committee meeting	

Wednesday, 1 October 2008:

Utrecht University (UU)		
09:00-10:00	Institute management UU	Prof. dr. Willem Koops, Dean and Chair Board of Research; Prof. dr. Werner Raub, member Board of Research; Prof. dr. Theo Wubbels, Vice Dean
10:00-11:00	Programme director UU	Prof. dr. Werner Raub, programme leader; Prof. dr. Maykel Verkuyten, programme leader since September 1, 2006 Prof. dr. Louk Hagendoorn, programme leader until September 1, 2006

11:00-12:00	PhD students UU	Wiebke Schultz, Maike Gieling, Gerard Mollenhorst, Anne Roeters, Ozan Akzoy
12:00-13:00	Lunch	Restaurant Park Plaza

Groningen University (RUG)		
13:00-14:00	Institute management RUG	Prof. dr. Henk Kiers, dean Prof. dr. Rafaël Wittek
14:00-15:00	Programme director RUG	Prof. dr. Rafaël Wittek
15:00-16:00	PhD-students RUG	Alona Labun, Michaël Mäs, Jessica Pass, Jelle Sijtsema
Utrecht University (UU) and Groningen University (RUG)		
16:00-17:00	Management of PhD-training UU/RUG	Prof. dr. Werner Raub, programme leader UU Prof. dr. Theo Wubbels, Director Graduate School UU Prof. dr. Nico van Yperen, Director Graduate School RUG Prof. dr. Rafaël Wittek, programme leader RUG

Thursday, 2 October 2008:

Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)		
09:00-10:00	Institute management EUR	Prof. dr. Henk Schmidt, dean Prof. dr. Han Entzinger
10:00-11:00	Programme director EUR	prof. dr. Dick Houtman, prof. dr. Godfried Engbersen (2000-2006)
11:00-12:00	PhD students EUR	Fabian Dekker, Willem de Koster, Masja van Meeteren, Jeroen van der Waal
12:00-13:00	Lunch	Restaurant Park Plaza
Tilburg University (UvT)		
13:00-14:00	Institute management UvT	Prof. dr. Theo Verhallen, decaan Prof. dr. Fons van de Vijver (vice dean) Dr. Ton Heinen (policy director research)
14:00-15:00	Programme director UvT	Prof. dr. Matthijs Kalmijn (programme coordinator) Dr. Loek Halman (coordinator European Value Studies) Dr. Christiaan Monden (life course research)
15:00-16:00	PhD-students UvT	Maike van Damme, 4th year PhD (promotor Kalmijn/Uunk) Erik van Ingen, 4th year PhD (promotor Dekker/Kalmijn/Van Eijck) Suzanne Noordhuizen, 2nd year PhD (promotor De Graaf) Jornt Mandemakers, 2nd year PhD (promotor Monden/Kalmijn)
16:00-17:00	Committee meeting	further procedure, task division

Appendix D: Overview of scores

5= excellent; 4= very good; 3= good; 2= satisfactory; 1= unsatisfactory

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
UvA 1 Mobility, Culture and Social Inequality	4	3	3	4
UvA 2 3xI Institutions, Inequalities and Internationalisation	4	4	4	4
VU 1 Comparative Stratification Research	5	3	4	4
VU 2 Social Conflict and Change	4	4	4	2
VU 3 The Social Context of Aging	4	4	4	4
UU Social Networks, Solidarity and Inequality	5	5	5	5
RUG Social Networks, Solidarity and Inequality	5	4	5	4
EUR Social Problems in Contemporary Modernity: Globalization, Individualization and Social Policy	4	3	4	4
UvT Social and Cultural Dynamics	5	5	5	4

Appendix E: Reaction Utrecht University

Universiteit Utrecht

Heidelberglaan 1, De Uithof, Utrecht

Faculty of Social Sciences

Sender: FMT, PO box 80140, 3508 TC, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Faculty Board

University Board
Heidelberglaan 8
3584 CS Utrecht

Our reference
FMTUIT09/8
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+31 (0)30 253 43 00
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E-mail
j.k.m.morenc

Date
January 26, 2009
Subject
Report of the Peer Review Committee Research Assessment

The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University fully endorses the Report of the Peer Review Committee Research Assessment Sociology 2008. We notice with much satisfaction that the Utrecht sociology programme 'Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality' once again obtained the best possible result – four times score '5' – in a comparative assessment of Dutch research in sociology and that the Utrecht programme thus maintains nationally the position at the top of the discipline. This result is the same as in the previous 2001 comparative assessment, thus constituting a rather unique achievement. Since 2002, the Ercomer-group also participates in the programme, among other things a result of implementing recommendations of the 2001 Peer Review Committee. The 2008 results confirm that participation of the Ercomer-group in the programme makes sense. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences will continue to do everything feasible to maintain the quality as well as the present size and resources of the research programme 'Social Networks, Solidarity, and Inequality.' There are various indications already now that the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences will be successful in this endeavour.

The Research Assessment Sociology 2008, being a comparative assessment of Dutch research in that discipline, provides a welcome opportunity to draw attention to the following. Since 2003, the SEP-protocol is in use for research assessments. The protocol has to be evaluated in 2009. In the period since 2003 it has become evident that not strictly adhering to a system of comparative assessments of all research in a given discipline has not been a wise policy. Only a comparative assessment of all the research in a given discipline such as the present research assessment sociology can and does produce scores that offer optimal management information. The Peer Review Committees for such comparative assessments are moreover in a very good position to compare Dutch research to the international top in the respective discipline. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences thus strongly favours comparative assessments and wishes to return to a system of comparative research assessments for all disciplines.

Prof. Dr. W. Koops
Dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

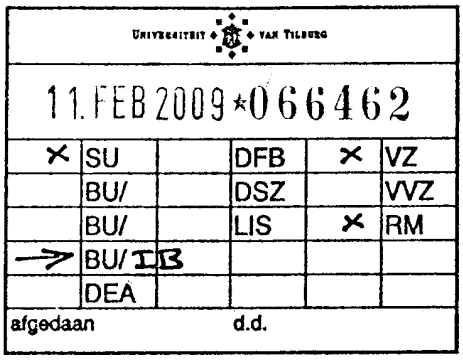
Appendix F: Reaction Tilburg University

UNIVERSITEIT VAN TILBURG

GEÏNSPIREERD VANUIT DE KATHOLIEKE TRADITIE

FACULTEIT SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

Aan het College van Bestuur
t.a.v. drs. W. de Koning, secretaris



Geacht College,

Datum
11 februari 2009

Onderwerp
Onderzoeksvisitatie Sociologie

Ons kenmerk
tv/ls/ug2009/026

Telefoon
013 466 24 54

Telefax
013 466 81 83

Recent heeft de commissie Billet een rapport uitgebracht over de onderzoeksvisitatie Sociologie. U hebt FSW uitgenodigd om een bestuurlijke reactie op dit rapport te geven. Aan dat verzoek voldoen wij gaarne.

De commissie heeft de Tilburgse sociologen op de dimensies Quality, Productivity en Relevance de score 5 gegeven; voor Viability kregen de sociologen het cijfer 4.
Uiteraard is de faculteit zeer verheugd over dit mooie resultaat. De enige verbetering die nog mogelijk blijkt ligt op het terrein van Viability. Wij hechten eraan te benadrukken dat FSW in de afgelopen jaren een forse inspanning heeft geleverd waar het gaat om onderzoeksinvesteringen in sociologie. Dat heeft ook tot goede resultaten geleid. De omvang van de sociologie groep is niet alleen afhankelijk van deze investeringen, maar ook van onderwijsparameters. Op dit terrein zien wij nog mogelijkheden om de positie van sociologie nader te versterken. Met het departement wordt overlegd over de vraag hoe de aantrekkelijkheid van de opleiding sociologie voor potentiële studenten kan worden verbeterd. Daarnaast wordt ook aan de werving extra aandacht besteed o.a. door het verzorgen van een les op middelbare scholen in de regio tijdens het vak maatschappijleer.

Voorts leidt het rapport van de commissie Billet ons tot de conclusie dat visitaties waarbij een groot aantal universiteiten betrokken zijn meer waarde hebben dan lokale visitaties. Wij zouden het op prijs stellen indien uw college in landelijk overleg dit standpunt ook uitdraagt.

Tot slot willen wij graag nog reageren op een opmerking van de commissie over de onduidelijkheid ten aanzien van het gewenste

Ons kenmerk
tv/ls/ug2009/026

profiel van het Oldendorff Research Institute. De commissie wijst erop dat de faculteit het instituut met name beschouwt als een interne service organisatie die naar buiten toe geen gezicht of bekendheid hoeft te hebben. FSW wil vooral dat de verschillende onderzoeksgroepen internationale bekendheid vergaren. Maar dat leidt volgens de commissie wel tot het probleem dat de aan het instituut gelieerde Graduate School ook geen heldere externe reputatie heeft en dat dat kan leiden tot een minder grote aantrekkingskracht op internationale Research Master studenten. De commissie legt hier terecht de vinger op de zere plek, maar het dilemma lijkt onoplosbaar te zijn. Ook andere sociale faculteiten in Nederland hebben te maken met dit probleem en de internationale belangstelling voor de Tilburgse Research Master is zeker niet minder dan die voor andere research master opleidingen op het terrein van de sociale wetenschappen.

Wij vertrouwen erop u met deze reactie van dienst te zijn geweest en verzoeken u om naar de QANU toe te laten weten dat uw college met het rapport instemt.

Hoogachtend,

Prof. dr. Th. Verhallen,
Decaan FSW