



Assessment report

# **ANTHROPOLOGY 2013 – 2018**

November 2020

**RESEARCH REVIEW**

**ANTHROPOLOGY**

**2013-2018**

# ONDERZOEKERIJ

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## Preface

This research review was initially planned to be held in Amsterdam in April of this year, but instead took place online in September because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which continues to shape our world as I write these words. Meeting face-to-face would certainly have made a difference, both in relation to discussions with staff at the assessed departments and among the committee members themselves, who were not able to continue and contextualize discussions during breaks and meals. Despite these unfortunate circumstances, the committee agrees that the assessment process has worked out surprisingly well. We stand squarely behind the scores and recommendations presented in the report, which we hope will be helpful to the assessed departments as they work to improve their research strategies. We wish them every success in this endeavour. Last but not least, the committee would like to acknowledge the critical role of the committee secretary, dr. Annemarie Venemans of De Onderzoekerij, who skilfully guided us through the assessment.

Johan Lindquist, Chair of the Evaluation Committee



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Terms of reference for the assessment

The quality assessment of research in Anthropology is carried out in the context of the Standard Evaluation Protocol For Public Research Organisations by the Association of Universities in The Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

The Committee was asked to assess the scientific quality and the relevance and utility to society of the research conducted by five universities in the reference period 2013-2018, as well as its strategic targets and the extent to which it is equipped to achieve them. Accordingly, three main criteria are considered in the assessment: research quality, relevance to society, and viability. In addition, the assessment considers three further aspects: the PhD training programme, research integrity and diversity. This report describes findings, conclusions and recommendations of this external assessment of the research in Anthropology.

## 1.2 The Review Committee

The Board of the six participating universities appointed the following members of the Committee for the research review:

- Prof. dr. Johan Lindquist, Stockholm University
- Prof. dr. Steffen Jensen, Aalborg University Copenhagen
- Prof. (em.) dr. Trevor Marchand, University of London
- Prof. dr. Noel B. Salazar, KU Leuven
- Coco Kanters (PhD candidate), Universiteit Leiden, assessing RU, UvA and VU
- Willy Sier (postdoc), Universiteit van Amsterdam, assessing UL and UU

The Board of the participating universities appointed dr. Annemarie Venemans of De Onderzoekerij as the Committee secretary. All members of the Committee signed a declaration and disclosure form to ensure that the Committee members made their judgements without bias, personal preference or personal interest, and that the judgment was made without undue influence from the institutes or stakeholders.

## 1.3 Procedures followed by the Committee

Prior to the site visit, the Committee reviewed detailed documentation comprising the self-assessment report of the institutes including appendices, key publications and the previous assessment report.

The Committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP). The assessment was based on the documentation provided by the institutes and the interviews with their respective management, selections of senior and junior researchers, and PhD student representatives. The interviews took place between September 16 and September 23 (see Appendix A).

The Committee discussed its assessment during its final session of the site visit. The members of the Committee commented by email on the draft report. The draft version was then presented to the Institutes for factual corrections and comments. Subsequently, the text was finalised and presented to the Board of the universities.



## 2. General observations and recommendations

### 2.1 Background

‘The biggest win from a SEP-style process rather than a REF-style one is that you end up with a forward-looking report and not a backward-looking score’.<sup>1</sup>

The above quote is from a recent comparison of the Dutch and British systems for assessing quality of research in higher education. The committee agrees with the claim and conducted its work in this spirit. The SEP (Standard Evaluation Protocol) format offered the mandate to support Dutch anthropology departments, and Dutch anthropology more broadly, in their work to develop strategies to improve research quality, relevance and viability in the coming years. The committee consists of fellow anthropologists from Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. In the assessment process, which has been productive and often inspiring, the committee learned a great deal not only about Dutch anthropology and higher education but also about the commonalities and differences that shape national anthropologies across the European landscape.

In the reading of the documents and the conversations with staff that form the basis for the assessment, the committee was impressed by the general quality of all the departments and the commitment of their staff. All the departments took the previous SEP assessment seriously and made significant changes in response. The committee agrees that Dutch anthropology is doing very well and is on the right track. Furthermore, the committee’s work was characterised by a strong sentiment of being in a shared situation, in which the assessors and the assessed are working alongside one another in an attempt to strengthen anthropology in Europe, in diverse national contexts, and in different departments. Notwithstanding this sentiment and the quality of departments, the committee recognised as its primary task a critical engagement that aims to develop recommendations for change, where change appears necessary in addressing existing problems or as an opportunity to strengthen quality, relevance or viability.

The high standards of the assessed departments are most clearly reflected in the fact that one department, which is also by far the largest, scored a 1 (meaning excellent/world leading) and four departments a 2 (meaning very good) in all three categories: Research Quality, Societal Relevance, and Viability. With that clearly stated from the beginning, the committee hopes that the reader and indeed anyone concerned with this assessment will now turn their attention from the quantitative to the qualitative dimensions and focus on the different recommendations we have developed for Dutch anthropology in general and the individual departments in particular. In fact, the committee did not find the quantitative part of the assessment particularly helpful (beyond the fact that there is one department that stands out) and recommends that this type of scoring is discontinued in coming assessments. There are certainly significant differences among departments that scored a 2 on Viability, for instance, but the quantitative scores offered limited tools in expressing these differences.

The backdrop for the assessment is the transformations that have shaped higher education in Europe and beyond during the past decades. The committee will not rehearse the general discussions about

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<sup>1</sup> Gadd, Elizabeth (2020) “Dear REF, please may we have a SEP.” <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/dear-ref-please-may-we-have-a-sep/>, accessed September 25, 2020.



these processes and the different ways of describing them in conceptual or ideological terms, but rather note that they affect the economic, political and social viability of all the academic departments being assessed. Indeed, this very assessment is part of these processes, as highlighted by discussions concerning audit culture or society within and beyond higher education.<sup>2</sup>

The committee attempted to work reflexively with regard to these processes—not least because they affect the various departments where the committee members themselves are based—and considered strategies that ideally will strengthen the autonomy of the different departments in relation to both the threats they face and opportunities they have. Through close readings of documents and staff interviews, the committee identified recommendations at the interface between the changing landscape of higher education, the specific form of Dutch anthropology, and the realities of the different departments being assessed.

While the different departments will be discussed qualitatively and graded quantitatively in accordance with the SEP guidelines, this chapter offers general observations and recommendations for Dutch anthropology as a whole. As a general background, the committee notes that, together, the Netherlands' geopolitical position at the centre of Europe, its largely bilingual educational system, and the relatively small size of the country offer powerful comparative advantages in the European landscape of higher education. Some of these advantages have been realised by the departments being assessed, while others remain as opportunities. To offer a number of examples, Dutch anthropology was highly successful during the assessment period in tapping into the European grants system, notably through the relatively large number of successful European Research Council grant applications. This trend appears to be continuing. There is also a turn among several departments to English-speaking undergraduate programmes, which appear to be strengthening primary funding streams for universities. More generally, the relationship between these primary and secondary funding streams is at the heart of the viability of all departments being assessed. Finally, the size of the country offers largely unrealised opportunities for inter-departmental collaborations.

Other trends that were initially noted in the previous assessment for 2007-2012 include the continuing decline of a historical division of labour in which departments focused largely on specific geographical regions. This change has taken place alongside ascendant concerns with globalisation since the 1990s, which is characteristic of anthropology more generally, and the development of departmental research programmes. The previous assessment promoted conceptually focused research programmes – a recommendation most departments have largely heeded. In this process, however, some of the distinctiveness that characterised departments during the “area studies era” has arguably been compromised. Finally, the previous assessment noted that the declining importance of research schools was related to the rise of forceful deans who attempted to create ‘more coherence and synergy *within* the universities.’<sup>3</sup> The consequences of this, the committee notes, has become increasingly evident, not least with regard to how PhD programmes are increasingly shaped on the Faculty level in relation to other social science disciplines.

## 2.2 General recommendations

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<sup>2</sup> Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1999) “Audit Culture and Anthropology: Neo-Liberalism in British Higher Education,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 5(4): 557-575; Michael Power (1999) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*, Oxford University Press; Marilyn Strathern, ed. (2000) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*, Routledge.

<sup>3</sup> Research Review Cultural Anthropology 2007-2012, p. 11.



With the above points in mind, and building on the documents and interviews, the assessment committee attempted to outline a series of general recommendations that can be considered by all departments and by Dutch anthropology as a whole:

- The self-assessments should have been more self-critical. The committee noted that, for most departments, the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was a missed opportunity. The audit often calls for a particular mode of performance that is difficult to resist: namely, goals realised in relation to benchmarks. The SEP, however, offers a way of moving beyond a focus on achievements, and this should be kept in mind as the next assessment approaches. The cyclical self-assessment exercise should be reconceptualised as a tool for thinking deeply about opportunities in the short, medium and long term rather than heralding successes. It is an opportunity to reflect on existing weaknesses and vulnerabilities and the ways to own challenges and transform them into opportunities. Finally, the department can consider structural threats and how these might perhaps be collaboratively addressed with other departments within the university and fellow departments of anthropology across Netherlands (or the EU). In sum, the SEP should be approached as a mechanism to facilitate clearer research vision and relevance and the viability of not only the department but of the discipline of anthropology.
- Learn from each other and work together. All the departments in the assessment are dealing with similar problems and challenges, but in different ways. The committee recommends more collaboration between departments nationally. Work collaboratively across the Netherlands (and beyond) to shift the perspectives of university management and of national and EU funding bodies from emphases on quantitative metrics toward quality assessment of research, relevance and viability. Further examples follow below.
- Be more attentive to and engage with the potentially corrosive structure of grant proposals and work against the two-tier system of research and teaching. Dutch anthropology has been very successful and has gained substantially from the European grant landscape. But this has potentially negative effects on working conditions and community. The political economy of academia has been transformed. Junior staff feel compelled to acquire their own grants to secure their career trajectories. As one junior staff member put it, ‘Me getting a grant means me getting a job anywhere I want.’ The general distinction between the American “do-not-hire-your-own-PhD” and European “hire-your-own-PhD” systems has eroded. In its place, the committee noted the emergence of a grant-oriented hiring process.
- In light of this, departments have a duty to better manage the career and promotion expectations of their PhD students, junior and temporary staff, and to foster broader thinking about career trajectories for anthropologists that are rewarding and intellectually fulfilling, but not necessarily within the university. An invisible group in this assessment has been temporary teaching staff. Take care of this group. The viability of all departments arguably depends on this. The previous assessment was more optimistic with regard to this group. By contrast, the present committee noted a great deal of concern with regard to precarity in many discussions. The voices of temporary staff members were rarely present, and instead they were mainly spoken for. In the next assessment, there should be meetings between the committee and temporary staff at the different departments.
- Improve the PhD-training of PhD-students. PhD training is being transformed by the rise of grants such as the ERC. An increasing number of PhDs are project-financed. Projects are primary and, in an important sense, PhD students become instruments in relation to the projects. PhD programmes, primarily in smaller departments, are increasingly shaped on an ad hoc basis, with increasingly generic or general social science courses on the Faculty level. There is a risk that this process is weakening anthropological training. At the same time, all



departments need to consider more carefully the temporality of the PhD programme and take seriously the demand that students finish in four years. Programs need to be better managed and students supported more carefully from beginning to completion.

- In light of this, Dutch anthropology, and the smaller departments in particular, would have a great deal to gain from a national school of anthropology. The size of the Netherlands makes it ideal for these kinds of collaborations. Work collaboratively to create either shared training modules or forums for exchange, and work actively to build community among PhDs (and postdocs) across the Netherlands. This could function as a site for beneficially developing a future “Netherlands Anthropology.”
- In the race for interdisciplinary research, departments should carefully consider the impact on teaching and learning of core anthropology and on the viability of the discipline itself. In what ways might engagement in cross-disciplinary research serve to strengthen the position of anthropology within academia? Several departments noted the challenges of becoming relevant and playing a critical role in interdisciplinary projects within the social sciences and beyond.
- Departments should more fully recognise the importance of “slow research” and monographs for the conceptual development of anthropology, and thereby create more space for staff to write books and high-quality publications and outputs. These issues can be related directly to the “grants culture” and the management of career expectations of junior staff in particular. There is arguably real opportunity to create scholarly autonomy within this system and to engage forcefully with quality, however defined.
- All departments could develop stronger relevance strategies that reflect on societal relevance itself and develop strategic modes of engagement, ideally in connection to the departmental research programmes. Furthermore, communication to the public (e.g. websites, blogs, social media) could be improved across the board. The committee noted that new projects often lead to the creation of new websites and that a blog is seen as the answer to a problem. By contrast, the committee argues that it is not new communication *channels* that are primarily needed, but rather clearer communication *strategies*. Who is your audience? Who do you want to reach? What do you want them to take away with them in terms of learning and new understanding? Being able to answer these questions can allow for better communication and relevance strategies.
- All departments need to spend greater time thinking about and discussing diversity and why it is important. The committee’s discussions with staff concerning diversity were characterised by recognition that diversity should not be reduced to gender or ethnicity, but at the same time there were no concrete plans for taking action. Discussions about diversity should be aimed at creating guidelines for hiring, teaching and societal engagement.
- The research programmes of departments are quite similar in scope, with variable focus on issues of migration, mobility, globalisation and conflict. Only one programme continues to (meekly) underscore its regional strengths. It is recommended that departments better familiarise themselves with the scope of anthropological research themes across the Netherlands and more carefully consider what unique perspectives and contributions they make to these themes and how they might better distinguish themselves. At the same time, this could facilitate the broader collaborative questions: What might a future “Netherlands Anthropology” look like? And, what distinct contributions might it make to studies of and solutions to the most pressing issues of our time?
- Finally, it should be noted that this assessment took place at a particular historical moment, as the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically affected us all. It is worth considering carefully what effects Covid-19 will have not only on teaching and the sense of departmental community, but



also on the nature of ethnographic research itself over the long-term. Again, this is where a national collaboration may prove beneficial.



## 6. Department of Anthropology and Development Studies, Radboud University

### 6.1 Quantitative assessment

The committee assessed the quality, societal relevance and viability of the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its PhD programme, research integrity and diversity are assessed qualitatively. For the quantitative assessment a four-point scale was used, according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021. The explanation of the criteria underlying the scores can be found in appendix C. The qualitative assessment of the Institute can be found in the next sections.

Given the standards laid down in the SEP, the committee has awarded the following scores to the Institute:

Research quality:	2
Relevance to society:	2
Viability:	2

### 6.2 Organisation, strategy and targets

The Department of Anthropology and Development Studies is part of the larger Radboud Social Cultural Research (RSCR) with a total of 40 staff members at different levels of seniority and around 30 PhD students. RSCR comprises two research groups in Sociology and Anthropology and Development Studies, respectively, with the interdisciplinary group on Gender and Diversity straddling them both. This makes RSCR a highly interdisciplinary group with a unique and broad set of competences. This assessment only concerns the Anthropology and Development Studies group. While the interdisciplinarity is clearly a strength, the assessment committee questions how anthropological competence will be preserved and suggests that this be addressed by anthropologists in the department during the coming years. Furthermore, the assessment committee's general recommendations concerning PhD training in anthropology can strengthen the disciplinary focus without compromising the interdisciplinary core of the department. The general impression from the self-assessment and the interviews with all staff groups was one of generosity and assistance from senior to junior staff. Throughout the interviews, however, concerns about informalised structures around such issues as PhD-supervision and promotions emerged repeatedly. While informality might not be a problem in the light of the evident collegiality, the committee wishes to flag the necessity to continually review the formal mechanisms in place for assessing their appropriateness in dealing with various organisational issues. The committee returns to discussion of this below in relation to viability.

Research at the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies is organised within a research programme on *Diversity and Inequality*, with two research programme leaders. Two corresponding subthemes have been identified: Inequality and Relatedness in Multicultural Societies and Diversity, Markets and Natural Resources. The research strategy was a response to the previous assessment, which recommended that the Research Group (RG) focus on fewer regions and to work towards an integration of anthropology and development studies. While this strategic change was a response to external recommendations, the committee notes that the RG has been successful in integrating the two strands of research, as individual staff members are often present in both or move between them. The



interviews confirmed the initial impression of a healthy strategic development towards a combined strategy focusing on the intersections between inequality and diversity. One example of such future aspirations is the creation of a theme that draws from both strands of research, namely Mobilizing Change. While some staff suggested that it was a daily struggle, all levels of the department agreed that the strategic reorientation to crosscutting themes had been productive and helped to consolidate collaboration. Some initial resistance had also disappeared as new staff had been hired to strengthen the strategic orientation. Importantly, the re-orientation facilitated a productive rethinking of North-South divides along postcolonial lines (i.e. conceptualizing from the south). More generally, there is a growing turn to Europe in terms of geographical focus, as well as development focus.

In summary, the committee was impressed by the strategic reorientation that had been achieved during the assessment period and which appears to have deepened since. The initial division between anthropology and development studies seems to have been overcome and new crosscutting themes are emerging, not least through the input from different levels of staff. The department has successfully shifted research focus to include Dutch society through a broader postcolonial approach, which is in turn contributing to a deeper understanding of the national context. The committee notes that there is opportunity to further transcend the North-South divide by asserting the relevance of this research agenda to climate change, global health and global development.

### 6.3 Research quality

#### RESEARCH

All levels of staff expressed optimism regarding the research agenda and the transcending of old divisions. The sense that the strategic reorientation has been productive is also confirmed by the department's publications. The previous assessment recommended that the department focus on publishing in high-profile journals. The turn to journal articles is clear. Articles make up nearly 40% of the publications during the assessment period, followed by professional reports. During the same period, the number of book chapters decreased. Although there are some publications in high-ranking anthropology journals, most appear in the broad field of development and sustainability studies and a considerable number in geography and related interdisciplinary fields. Notably, more than 60% of listed publications are multi-authored, many with international scholars. This may also be indicative of different publishing traditions in anthropology and development studies, a division that may become less relevant as the crosscutting themes are further developed. In this way, and confirming the self-assessment, the academic output is sound and competent. There are good prospects for further developing the research quality at the cross-section between anthropology and development studies in ways that transcend divisions between the global North and South. The diversity theme's focus on relatedness, for instance, demonstrates this originality, as does the interesting application of ideas emanating from the global South to understanding phenomena in the global North, for instance those dealing with informality and brokerage. The inequality theme's focus on natural resources is also promising and illustrates the fertile analytical ground between anthropology, science studies and development studies.

#### REPUTATION

The department features a number of recognised scholars within anthropology, serving on editorial boards and in different associations. Department members have also been invited to speak at a significant number of conferences, possibly explaining why staff members have co-authored many publications with international collaborators. Reading through the self-assessment, the committee



notes that junior staff and PhD students have also received awards and appointments and are active in a number of different bodies. This is encouraging and illustrates the department's ability to attract talented staff, while recognising that the department has also lost important staff members to other universities. As management asserts, however, this may be an indication of strength of the department and its staff, as well as an opportunity to recruit new staff members who fit the shifts in research focus.

#### FUNDING

The department has acquired two ERC starting grants that also support PhD students and postdocs. Staff members have also been successful in securing funding from the Dutch Society for Arts and Sciences (KNAW) for several projects, and some have participated in projects on development cooperation and civil society funded by NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development programmes. Furthermore, a number of smaller grants have been acquired from civil society and governments for contract research. In recent years, the department has prioritised its participation in contract research in ways that strengthen the strategic direction of the department. This suggests a healthy development in funding streams, which is also supported by what appears to be increasing intake of students in a revamped study programme aligned with the new research strategy, thus promising stable direct funding development. While management wished for improved support for grant proposals, staff were generally satisfied with the support they received from the university. Some junior staff, however, mentioned that the support and the recognition from the university varied according to which grants staff applied for, with high-profile ERC grants privileged over smaller grants.

#### 6.4 Societal relevance

The department emphasises that societal relevance is as important as more traditional research output. In no small measure, this focus emanates from a form of development studies that often has an elaborate relation to the non-academic world of development. Interviews confirm that the entire RG is on board with regard to these often-impressive forms of engagement; from municipalities, to education diversity, environment and development. Importantly, the RG emphasises co-creation as a central principle and many projects are directly connected to NGOs and civil society organisations, with a shared focus on relationships between the state and local communities. In similar terms, development studies scholars regularly engage with government agencies, policy makers and evaluation specialists in the applied development field. In line with this, and in comparison with other departments, the RU department produces a large number of professional and policy reports, but fewer publications aimed at the general public.

The interviews confirmed the focus on societal relevance as an important part of the department's activities, which led to the valorising of staff engagement in outreach activities. However, the interviews also confirmed that the department might pursue opportunities for more strategic communications with a broader Dutch and international public. One dimension of this would be to create and communicate a stronger narrative about the research theme on Inequality and Diversity and to then tie individual projects to this overarching narrative. This might also include the development of a consolidated language of anthropology and development studies as a point of departure for a renewed relevance strategy. As it stands, the narrative within the department regarding the salience of the research focus on inequality and diversity became strong over the assessment period among all levels of staff. This internal understanding may be consolidated further to form the point of departure for external outreach to stakeholders in funding agencies, professional organisations, the general public, and the academic world within and outside the Netherlands. In this way, the committee recommends



that the department develop a communication and outreach strategy that will maximise benefits from this very strong conceptual and empirical narrative. Such a narrative may also strengthen the department's position more broadly within the university, where funds are available and the department has already been able to tap into and direct strategies. This would entail working systematically with stakeholder analyses of threats and opportunities for the diverse set of potential collaborators and recipients of the department's research output. It might also entail the further development of new kinds of output, for instance online, audio or visual products tailored to different outreach, and communication platforms beyond the already impressive professional report writing.

### 6.5 Viability

In terms of its future orientation and viability, the department stresses the need to increase diversity, focus more research on natural resources, and further integrate research themes. These are clearly important objectives in terms of viability. The department has good cause for optimism. Funding seems stable, research production is high and competent, and societal relevance is obvious. However, more consideration and reflection could be useful for mitigating the impact of transformations within the academic world on the department.

The department has lost two key researchers in the main two sub-themes (both to Leiden). Viability of the research programme depends on recruiting replacements. The aim is to hire one senior professor in development studies to strengthen the research programme and department. This is a critical issue. The committee recommends a cutting-edge scholar, who perhaps engages with the new directions within development studies, which problematises North-South divides, or who works both in the global North and South. During the interviews, management noted that problems with staff retention related to pull rather than push factors and, indeed, that the openings had enabled the hiring of staff committed to the new strategic orientation. Nonetheless, smaller departments are vulnerable and their continued development is dependent upon successful grant writing. What will be done to ensure this? Grant-writing workshops? As previously mentioned, there might be need to also prioritise smaller grants, not least because these are sometimes more accessible to younger staff.

Organisationally, senior and junior staff, as well as PhDs, appeared to be included in some of the decision-making processes. The interviews also revealed, however, that it may be necessary to address issues around formal and informal hierarchies, as well as discrepancies between the formal and the informal. Some staff noted, for example, that while there are formal requirements for promotion, these were seldom the only requirements in practice. Another issue that arose during interviews were inequalities on different staff levels between those who carry a heavy and sometimes debilitating teaching burden and those with grants who have less teaching; and, on the junior level, between those who could teach and those whose contracts precluded teaching, thereby excluding them from that important experience. There was also variation among staff regarding research time. While the recent assistant professor hires enjoyed 50% research time, there were cases of staff who had been in the department longer but had less research time. There was also a perception that management and the university valued some grants more than others, with ERCs at the top. Hence, while the collegiality and sense of community were obvious during the interviews, the existing issues of inequality and lack of transparency need to be addressed. The department has several structures in place to address issues around precarity, burn-out, teaching loads and PhD completion rates. Interviews suggested, however, that these structures might not be widely used or understood. Clearly, as also suggested by management, many of these issues relate to larger structural issues within Dutch and global academia. The committee nevertheless notes that there are mitigating actions that the department can take. This may be in the form of a departmental forum with representation from all groups, including temporary



teaching staff, in which frank and safe discussions can be conducted on issues such as expectations, aspirations, hierarchies, precarity, informality and diversity. It is up to management to create such safe spaces.

The communication and outreach strategy that the committee proposes above is also central for viability and relates to the general recommendation concerning distinctiveness. The department has an opportunity to position itself as a significant player in the anthropology of development studies, and perhaps in global development. This includes a stronger strategy for researching development within the Netherlands. Addressing the combination of different methodologies—there is a mixed methods potential—is critical in this process. The interviews conveyed awareness of these opportunities, and it was noted that the crosscutting theme of Mobilizing Change within the research programme could be further consolidated as a way to bring perspectives together. The recruiting of a new professor, as noted, should therefore be executed with great care. Finally, apart from the development of distinctive characteristics of the department, it may be worth exploring the possibilities of creating consortia. The department already engages in consortia-building within Radboud University, where it influences a range of thematic developments across the university. Clearly, this should be further explored beyond the university. Furthermore, there are apparent opportunities for developing cross-departmental collaborations between anthropology departments in the Netherlands. A possible first step here could be the development of a research school for anthropology, as suggested in the general recommendations of this report.

## 6.6 PhD programme

Twenty-six PhD students received their doctorate during the assessment period. Currently, there are nine PhDs on contract with 21 external PhDs. According to the self-assessment, the PhD programme is quite elaborate and expansive with a healthy mix of students from Europe and the global South. The PhD students enter the programme through a range of routes and have diverse backgrounds, and many of those from the global South gain access through project grants. This appears to make sustainable graduate training difficult. The role of CERES Research School for International Development is critical in this process, as well as extensive preparation and formal inclusion of external PhD students when they are present at the department.

The description of the PhD programme in the self-assessment report is relatively short. Interviews revealed that there is a formal, university-based system for tracking progress and delays, which is part of the efforts to address completion rates. The self-evaluation report notes that the delay experienced by many PhDs is connected to the nature of anthropological fieldwork as well as to a lack of training. The department states that training through CERES provides (part of) the support PhD students need for finishing their dissertations on time. Training and supervision plans are completed at the start of each PhD trajectory. During the interviews, PhD students reported that they were generally happy with these courses, although those offered by CERES do not cover in-depth anthropological methods, theory or ethics. In addition to existing coursework and PhD seminars, the PhDs noted that they would appreciate better preparation for fieldwork, as well as post-fieldwork discussions on ethics. During the interviews, management noted that the university has systems for addressing mental health issues related to burn out, stress and anxiety. It seems, however, that there is no formal guidance structure in place at the departmental level that focuses on PhD well-being.

PhD students are supervised by two members of staff, including a full professor. In interviews, PhD students were quite appreciative of the support they receive, especially from their supervisors. The supervisors, including junior staff, expressed pride and satisfaction in their dealings with PhD students. However, the committee noted a certain level of informality in the relationship between students and



supervisors. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, unless it is revelatory of other systems of inequality. The discrepancy between supervisory and management/university reactions appeared especially in relation to the Covid-19 crisis, which affected PhD-students (and other project staff) disproportionately. The bureaucratic structures imposed by grants sometimes conflict with interpersonal agreements.

Furthermore, many of the issues around unequal access to research time *and* teaching experience were also relevant among PhD students who were trying to prepare themselves for the academic market. In this light, PhDs and junior scholars suggested that measured teaching obligation could be built into contracts. Finally, although there is a career guidance team at the faculty level, discussions about career paths and preparation for the job market happened mostly informally. Given that there are rarely enough academic jobs for all PhD students, it is important that expectations are discussed and other career trajectories are part of an ongoing discussion with PhD students.

### 6.7 Research integrity

In the self-assessment, the question of research integrity—data management and ethics—is dealt with in quite a formalistic manner, possibly suggesting that there is limited discussion of these issues in the department. In interviews with all groups, this topic was discussed and it appears that there are indeed quite substantive discussions around ethics and research integrity. According to the management, the ERC's focus on ethics has routinised such discussions in the department as a whole. It may be necessary, however, to further formalise some of these discussions, and to embed them in seminars and supervision.

### 6.8 Diversity

The self-assessment report shows that the department is relatively diverse in terms of gender and age. Over the assessment period, 52% men and 48% women were tenured, whereas women were in majority in untenured positions (58 over 42%). Due to retirements, the department has been able to hire new and younger staff. The self-assessment report also explicitly highlights the lack of national and ethnic diversity. The main strategy for diversifying in these regards seems to be the hiring of PhD students and postdocs from different backgrounds. As noted, however, many of these scholars, and in particular PhD students from the global South, tend to return to their home countries after completing, and thus the question remains as to whether there are strategies for creating greater diversity among tenured staff. The interviews illustrated that there is awareness and discussions about diversity within the department, not least prompted by new staff who are engaging in relevant discussions about what constitutes diversity and why diversity is important.

### 6.9 Recommendations

Based on the discussions and the self-assessment, the committee proposes the following overarching recommendations:

- Develop a stronger narrative for external consumption and build this narrative into a strategy for outreach and communication;
- Further develop the global dimension of research in order to transcend the North-South divide;



- Build new strategic alliances while developing the distinctive characteristic of the department at the intersection between North and South and between anthropology and development studies;
- Recruit a cutting-edge development studies professor who can bridge the global North and South;
- Develop organisational structures that allow for ongoing reflections and greater transparency across all staff groups, including temporary staff, to mitigate problems of burn-out, precarity, promotion and diverse expectations;
- Develop grant-writing skills and support structures;
- Develop formalised systems of research tutoring for PhD students and monitor their effectiveness;
- Prepare PhD students for non-academic careers to offset the problem of a limited number of academic posts.



## Appendix A - Programme of the site visit

### Tuesday September 15

Time	Part
13.00 – 17.30	General preparation

### Wednesday September 16

Time	Part
<b>VU UNIVERSITY</b>	
13.00 – 13.30	Preparatory meeting
13.30 – 14.10	Management
14.10 – 14.20	evaluation
14.20 – 14.50	Junior staff
14.50 – 15.15	Evaluation and break
15.15 – 15.45	PhD students
15.45 – 15.50	Evaluation
15.50 – 16.30	Senior staff
16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 17.20	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
17.20 – 17.50	Management
17.50 – 19.00	Evaluation

### Thursday September 17

Time	Part
<b>LEIDEN UNIVERSITY</b>	
13.00 – 13.30	Preparatory meeting
13.30 – 14.10	Management
14.10 – 14.20	evaluation
14.20 – 14.50	Junior staff
14.50 – 15.15	Evaluation and break
15.15 – 15.45	PhD students
15.45 – 15.50	Evaluation
15.50 – 16.30	Senior staff
16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 17.20	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
17.20 – 17.50	Management
17.50 – 19.00	Evaluation



**Friday September 18**

Time	Part
<b>RADBOUD UNIVERSITY</b>	
13.00 – 13.30	Preparatory meeting
13.30 – 14.10	Management
14.10 – 14.20	evaluation
14.20 – 14.50	Junior staff
14.50 – 15.15	Evaluation and break
15.15 – 15.45	PhD students
15.45 – 15.50	Evaluation
15.50 – 16.30	Senior staff
16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 17.20	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
17.20 – 17.50	Management
17.50 – 19.00	Evaluation

**Monday September 21**

Time	Part
<b>UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM</b>	
13.00 – 13.30	Preparatory meeting
13.30 – 14.10	Management
14.10 – 14.20	evaluation
14.20 – 14.50	Junior staff
14.50 – 15.15	Evaluation and break
15.15 – 15.45	PhD students
15.45 – 15.50	Evaluation
15.50 – 16.30	Senior staff
16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 17.20	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
17.20 – 17.50	Management
17.50 – 19.00	Evaluation



**Wednesday September 23**

Time	Part
<b>UTRECHT UNIVERSITY</b>	
13.00 – 13.30	Preparatory meeting
13.30 – 14.10	Management
14.10 – 14.20	evaluation
14.20 – 14.50	Junior staff
14.50 – 15.15	Evaluation and break
15.15 – 15.45	PhD students
15.45 – 15.50	Evaluation
15.50 – 16.30	Senior staff
16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 17.20	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
17.20 – 17.50	Management
17.50 – 19.00	Evaluation

**Friday September 25**

Time	Part
13.00 – 16.00	Evaluation panel
16.00	Presentation chair



## Appendix B.4 – Quantitative data Nijmegen

Table 1 Research staff in fte Nijmegen

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Scientific staff	5.91	5.67	5.58	6.04	6.45	7.01
Postdocs	3.95	3.09	1.10	3.15	4.55	6.01
PhD students	3.93	2.80	1.87	5.52	10.61	10.47
<b>Total research staff</b>	<b>13.79</b>	<b>11.56</b>	<b>8.55</b>	<b>14.71</b>	<b>21.61</b>	<b>23.49</b>

Table 2 Funding – Nijmegen

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<i>Funding in FTE</i>						
Direct funding	8.93	7.81	6.24	8.50	10.43	8.85
Research grants	1.08	0.63	0.66	4.80	9.52	13.63
Contract research	3.78	3.12	1.65	1.41	1.66	1.01
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>13.79</b>	<b>11.56</b>	<b>8.55</b>	<b>14.71</b>	<b>21.61</b>	<b>23.49</b>
<i>Expenditure in k€</i>						
Personnel costs	862	697	536	885	1261	1484
Other costs	296	246	253	241	197	223
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1158</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>1126</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>1707</b>



## Appendix C – Meaning of the scores

Category	Meaning	Research quality	Relevance to society	Viability
1	World leading/ excellent	The research unit has been shown to be one of the few most influential research groups in the world in its particular field	The research unit makes an outstanding contribution to society	The research unit is excellently equipped for the future
2	Very good	The research unit conducts very good. internationally recognised research	The research unit makes a very good contribution to society	The research unit is very well equipped for the future
3	Good	The research unit conducts good research	The research unit makes a good contribution to society	The research unit makes responsible strategic decisions and is therefore well equipped for the future
4	Unsatisfactory	The research unit does not achieve satisfactory results in its field	The research unit does not make a satisfactory contribution to society	The research unit is not adequately equipped for the future



## Response to Research Review of Anthropology and Development Studies (2013-2018)

The board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the director of Radboud Social and Cultural Science and the programme leaders of the research programme of the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies at Radboud University would like to express their sincere gratitude to the review committee for their careful and constructive assessment of our research programme and the valuable recommendations to refine and further develop it in the years to come. The committee consisted of four top researchers in our field and one PhD candidate, together covering a wide range of expertise and experience in research and research management. In their report, the committee highlights the strengths of our research programme and identifies a number of opportunities for improvement.

We are pleased that the quality of our research programme as well as its relevance and viability have been assessed as 'very good', and that the committee judges our research to be internationally recognized, as making a significant contribution to society and to be very well equipped for the future. We are delighted that the committee was "impressed by the strategic reorientation" of our research programme that was introduced and achieved during the assessment period. Indeed, we made a serious effort to enhance the interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology and development studies by elaborating a crosscutting theme that focuses on the interaction between diversity and inequality. Our research under this overarching theme demands an interdisciplinary approach and is specifically developed to capitalize on the entire spectrum of expertise available. Furthermore, it enables the department to transcend the division between the Global North and the Global South, e.g. by focusing also on development issues such as inequality and poverty in Europe, by introducing a cross-cultural perspective in all development orientations, and by taking into account the global context of our research topics.

The committee is very positive about our interdisciplinary approach of the intersection between diversity and inequality. It notes two aspects that may be further developed. First, it recommends to develop a stronger narrative for dissemination of the programme's approach and insights, which it considers important especially for outreach to societal partners. The department endorses this recommendation wholeheartedly and is keen to follow it up. The new research vision that has been developed in recent years will be elaborated further in the coming years, especially in the context of new projects that we are hoping to set up in collaboration with societal partners. This will simultaneously result in a more concrete narrative that is likely to appeal to a wider audience. Second, the committee argues that there is further scope for transcending the North-South divide, which the department is naturally also keen to take to heart. We fully agree that in recent years a number of global problems have emerged, such as climate change, the increasing scarcity of natural resources, and food and health security, that without exception draw attention to the ongoing intensification of global connections and, as a consequence, require a global approach that exceeds disciplinary boundaries and regional divisions.

The recommendations of the review committee for the future direction of the research programme of our department are fully in line with already existing plans. Indeed, the

department is dedicated to further elaborate the distinctive features of the research programme on the interaction between diversity and inequality, both at the intersection between anthropology and development studies and at the nexus between the Global North and the Global South. We are planning to do so by building new strategic alliances, not only with societal partners in Europe and in developing countries, but we will also explore the possibilities of establishing international consortia to create new opportunities for cooperation with other universities. We plan to take the initiative in setting up international associations or networks to advance the study of diversity and inequality at home and abroad. In order to realize these plans and to expand our research programme, the recruitment of a new professor of development studies is essential. This professor is required to have a broad vision on the wider field of development studies in order to intensify interdisciplinary collaboration with anthropology in the department and to contribute to further transcending the divide between the Global North and the Global South.

The review committee also commented on the organizational structure of the research institute and the faculty. It advocates for greater transparency in decision making processes regarding promotion and expectations of temporary staff, partly also to alleviate precarious employment conditions. At the same time, it noted a discrepancy between formal and informal structures of hierarchy. We acknowledge that Dutch universities are ostensibly organized in an informal manner, while a formal hierarchy is underlying the structure of the organization. The recommendation to communicate more explicitly about the formal hierarchy is important in order to avoid misunderstandings or unrealizable expectations. Furthermore, it is essential to provide clear and unambiguous information about promotion possibilities for staff members. In this context, it is relevant to mention that over the past few years several staff members have already been offered a better balance between teaching and research as faculty regulations prescribe. In addition, we should like to add that the department deliberately employs very few temporary staff members with teaching assignments only, since obviously this will not advance the career opportunities of young scholars. For that reason, too, we appreciate the suggestion to extend the availability of university support in writing grant applications to early career scholars.

Finally, the review committee made a number of recommendations regarding the supervision of PhD students. We welcome the suggestion to explore the possibility of setting up a national research school of anthropology in the Netherlands, although this will not resolve the challenge to guide PhD candidates with very different backgrounds and whose funding, or the lack thereof, requires a different approach. Nevertheless, differences between PhD students with a contract should be minimized. We will improve the standardization of the supervision and monitoring of PhD students' progress. In addition, we shall make it mandatory for all PhD students with an employment contract to spend 10% of their time on teaching, except when funding agencies, such as the European Research Council, prohibit this.

The most challenging recommendation that was made by the review committee concerns the future prospects of PhD students to pursue an academic career. The assumption that the possibilities to stay in academia are limited is correct, so we do have to prepare many of them for a non-academic career. Since we select PhD students in view of their potential for an academic career, however, we will work to expand opportunities for future scholars in anthropology and development studies, while improving the support we provide for the development of careers outside academia (e.g. courses in transferable skills).