

Research Self-Evaluation

2007-2012

February 2014

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Acronyms

tWIST	towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation
URSI	Urban and Regional Studies Institute
FRW	Faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen [Faculty of Spatial Sciences]
RAG	Research Advisory Group
ReMa	Research Master
RRC	Research Review Committee
RWS	RijksWaterStaat, part of the Netherlands Ministry for Infrastructure and Environment
Nethur	Netherlands Graduate School of Urban and Regional Research
UCW	Universitaire Commissie Wetenschap [University Committee for Science]
SEP	Standard Evaluation Protocol
PRC	Population Research Center
KNAW	Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
NWO	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
VENI/ VIDI/ VICI	Talent Scheme for excellent researchers, by NWO
MAGW	NWO-Social Sciences
WOTRO	NWO-Science for Global Development
NIDI	Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute
NNDC	Northern Network for Demographic Change
FB	Faculty Board
HANNN	Healthy Aging Network Northern Netherlands
GS(SS)	Graduate School (of Spatial Sciences)
RC	Research Cluster
RFF	Rosalind Franklin Fellows
ERC	European Research Council
HAPS	Healthy Aging: Population and Society
NICHE	Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education, under NUFFIC
GIS	Geographical Information System
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UMCG	University Medical Center Groningen
ISW	Instituut voor Integratie en Sociale Weerbaarheid [Institute for Integration and Social Resilience]
GMW	Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences
GSG	Globalization Studies Groningen
UCF	University Campus Fryslân
CBS	Netherlands Statistics
FEB	Faculty of Economics and Business
EDSD	European Doctoral School of Demographic Research
ERSA	European Regional Science Association
RSA	Regional Studies Association
NUFFIC	Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation
AESOP	Association of European Schools of Planning
ISI WoS	ISI Web of Science
NICIS	Netherlands Institute for City Innovation Studies
IF	Impact Factor
UoG	University of Groningen
EAPS	European Association of Population Studies
NvD	Dutch Demographic Society

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Preface

This Self-Evaluation Report describes the research being undertaken in the Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI) of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (Faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen, FRW) at the University of Groningen for the period 2007-2012.

The objectives of the self-evaluation are to:

- reflect on whether URSI's research development and output since 2007 has been up to expectations
- evaluate the effectiveness of FRW and URSI strategies and policies following the recommendations of the 2007 Research Review Committee (RRC) and the results of the Mid-Term Review 2007-2010
- identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (see B11)
- identify the strategies and policies that will be used in the coming years (see B12)

Above all, the self-evaluation process provides us with an excellent opportunity to critically reflect on ourselves, to see where we stand in 2012-2013 compared to 2007, and to determine where we will head in the coming years.

The period 2007-2012 is characterized by major changes in the Faculty, in which we grew from a small to a *small-to-middle-sized* faculty. At present, about 75 staff members, 950 students and approximately 95 PhD researchers are affiliated with the Faculty. This increase in size has entailed changes in the organizational structure. At present, we are in the middle of a process in which we are moving towards:

- creating a faculty-wide educational infrastructure, i.e. the Education Office
- developing a unified and integrated research programme called tWIST (towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation) within URSI, reflecting also the major recommendation of the Research Review Committee of 2007

Moving towards the faculty-wide programmes implies major challenges: for example, how to develop the joint research programme, how to define the role of the traditional departments in relation to tWIST, our new integrated research programme, and how to ensure that researchers will indeed work across departmental boundaries. We have taken up these challenges in the recent past with pleasure. The changes are extensively described in this self-evaluation.

In addition, we have been *profiling* our research programme to take into account developments in the outside world, for example by relating the programme to research developments at the national, European and international levels and by embedding it within the University of Groningen's main research priorities of Healthy Ageing, Sustainable Society and Energy. We are also meeting the challenge of attaining higher levels of research funding (second stream) and contract funding (third stream). These changes are also described in detail in this self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process started at the beginning of 2013 and consisted of:

- the national Graduate School (Nethur) at Utrecht University organizing a number of meetings (January, October, December 2013) of representatives from Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Groningen, where the overall objectives, protocol, procedures and possible candidates for the Research Review Committee were discussed. The final protocol was accepted in January 2014.

- establishing the URSI team to write the Self-Evaluation. The team consisted of:
 - o Dr. Lonneke Opsteegh (Research Policy Advisor, PhD coordinator and Faculty Funding Officer)
 - o Prof. Philip McCann (Endowed Chair FRW, leading role in development of tWIST)
 - o Ms. Alida Meerburg (Office Manager, URSI and Graduate School)
 - o Prof. Inge Hutter (Dean, Portfolio Research, Faculty Board FRW)
- additional contributions were made by:
 - o Prof. Frank Vanclay, who took the lead in developing Section B9 on the Societal Relevance of our research
 - o Ing. Imre Veen (Communication Officer FRW), who contributed to the layout of the report
- The texts on the research clusters in Section B3 were written by:
 - o Prof. Frank Vanclay Place, Identity and Wellbeing
 - o Prof. Clara Mulder Population and Wellbeing in Context
 - o Prof. Philip McCann Economy and Place
 - o Prof. Gert de Roo/
Prof. Johan Woltjer Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation

All of the contributors are members of the Research Advisory Group (RAG).

In addition, the process of evaluation was embedded within URSI, whose researchers had an important voice in the self-evaluation. This occurred through:

- URSI lunch seminars in the period April-June 2013, regarding the objectives of the self-evaluation, the societal relevance of our research projects and the evaluation of the different URSI meetings
- the half-yearly PhD Conference in April 2013, where the same issues were discussed with PhD researchers
- the URSI Away Day in June 2013, where URSI researchers provided input for the SWOT analysis

URSI PhD researchers Melanie Bakema, Jianjung Tang and Arjen Hijdra also share their passion for research in brief accounts of their projects included in this report.

A last draft of the report was discussed by:

- the members of the RAG in meetings on 28 October 2013 and 14 January 2014, and through reflections on the text, also by individual members:
 - former Vice-Dean Research Van Wissen
 - a large group of URSI researchers at the URSI Away Day, 31 October 2013
 - the Faculty Board on 19 November 2013
 - the University Committee for Science (Universitaire Commissie Wetenschap, UCW) of the University of Groningen (December 2013)

The report was finally approved by the Faculty Board on 11 February 2014.

Reading guide

In writing the Self-Evaluation Report, we followed the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2010-2015, as well as the elaborated evaluation protocol for the review of the Field of Human Geography and Planning Research in the Netherlands. The report has two parts:

Part A deals with the research *institute* URSI

Part B deals with the research *programme* tWIST

This implies that information on the structure of the University, Faculty and URSI, as well as on the composition of the research team and the funding of research, is provided only once, in Part A. In this respect, we have deviated from the evaluation protocol, with the second chapter in the protocol (Composition of the institute) found in Section A1.

The introduction summarizes the findings of the Research Review Committee (RRC) 2007 on the four distinct research programmes evaluated at that time. This is important because it provides much of the background and context to our subsequent decisions, and demonstrates that we have explicitly made choices not only on the basis of our own reflections but also on external high-level advice from the RRC. The introduction subsequently indicates how the RRC recommendations have been taken up, especially regarding the development from four smaller research sub-programmes towards one unified research programme under the banner of tWIST. Our current situation is the result of an eight or nine-year process of reflection, advice-taking, discussion, decision-making and implementation.

Section A1 describes the original organizational structure and major changes to the Faculty of Spatial Sciences over the period 2007-2013 as well as how the development of tWIST was facilitated *from the top down*. The section includes an overview of research input (in FTEs) within URSI.

Part B then describes the features of our research **programme**. B1 describes the mission and vision of tWIST, our new integrated research programme. B2 describes tWIST's positioning: its embedding in research developments within the University of Groningen, and its embedding in regional, national and international debates and networks. Here we also seek to benchmark our research programme with respect to the international research context. Section B3 describes how we, as URSI researchers, have been building tWIST together *from the bottom up*. This chapter can be regarded as an addition to the evaluation protocol.

B4 describes the quality and scientific relevance of our research
B5 describes our productivity, publications and scientific output
B6 describes our earning capacity
B7 describes our academic reputation
B8 describes the societal relevance of our research
B9 describes the viability of our research programme
B10 deals with the 'Next Generation'

In part PART C we reflect on developments in the period under review and describe our plans for the future:

C11 includes the SWOT analysis
C12 describes the strategies for the future

Each section ends with a list of Issues to Address, categorized in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and where external influences come in – for example, in Section B2 – opportunities as well. These issues constitute input for the SWOT analysis in Section B11 and inform subsequent strategies for the future in Section B12.

This report reflects the developments of tWIST, based on the evidence provided in the appendices on the website.

While the period under review is 2007-2012, activities that took place in 2013 are sometimes included in the discussion when indicative of further relevant developments.

11 februari 2014

1. Introduction: what happened since 2007?

Since the Research Review in 2007, the Faculty has gone through a process of rethinking, redefining and reorganizing several aspects of our research culture, research systems and research performance. This has been based on internal reflections and discussions, as well as acting on external advice and recommendations, and has been both a challenging and a rewarding and enjoyable experience, largely shaping all aspects of *what* we do and *how* we do it. In order to understand where we are today, it is essential to understand the journey we have gone through, the first steps of which were taken prior to 2007, but which began in earnest after 2007.

In 2007, the RRC evaluated four distinct research sub-programmes. In addition to this, the Board of FRW urged the Review Committee to reflect on a specific issue: Would it indeed be wise to continue the process that had been initiated, i.e. to move towards one integrated research programme for URSI? In this section, we first describe the evaluation of the four research sub-programmes and what has been done since then to enhance the quality of the sub-programmes *and* promote the move towards one unified research programme. We subsequently describe the actual move towards tWIST, our new unified and integrated research programme.

1.1 The Research Review 2007

In 2007, the RRC evaluated the performance of URSI's four research sub-programmes over the period 2000-2006. Of these sub-programmes, two were evaluated as very good to excellent, and two were evaluated as good to very good. Table I presents the results of the evaluation.

Table I: Results of the Research Assessment 2000-2006 (scores out of 5)

Programme/Scores	Quality	Quantity	Relevance	Viability
Explaining spatial economic change	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.3
Determinants of population dynamics	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.8
Planning for environmental quality	3.2	3.9	3.8	3.6
Making places	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.0

In total, 21 research programmes (Groningen, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Nijmegen and Delft) affiliated to the Netherlands Graduate School of Urban and Regional Research (Nethur) were reviewed. The two very good to excellent URSI sub-programmes were among the four best programmes in Nethur.

Below, we reflect briefly on the evaluation of the four research sub-programmes and what has been done since 2007.

The sub-programme **Explaining Spatial Economic Change** (total of 5.35 FTE in 2007: 1.5 tenured, 1.2 non-tenured, 2.65 PhD) was evaluated as very good to excellent. It was considered to be of excellent quality, at the forefront internationally, very productive and as having a

significant impact. The programme was also considered to be strong in knowledge valorization at the regional and national levels. After 2007, the group was further strengthened by the appointment of an Endowed Chair in Economic Geography (McCann), a new full professor of Real Estate with a strong focus on research (Van der Vlist, replacing part-time professor Nozeman) and the establishment of a tenure track position on entrepreneurship and regional development (Koster). Prof. Van Dijk also became part-time Director of the Wadden Academy (KNAW). The RRC commented that:

the research group itself seems to be very integrated, but the links with other groups in the institute could be improved

Section B, dealing with the development of tWIST, elaborates on this further integration.

The sub-programme **Determinants of Population Dynamics** (7.73 FTE in 2007: 0.88 tenured, 1.0 non-tenured, 5.85 PhD) in the Population Research Centre (PRC), was also evaluated as very good to excellent. It was considered to be at the international forefront in some areas and recognized as one of the best demographic groups in Europe. Comments by the RRC included:

it would appear likely to be one of the groups that could gain considerable benefit from greater flexibility across the overall research of the institute

and:

a strengthening of the focus on the 'spatial' could enhance linkages with other programmes

After 2007, the programme was further strengthened by the appointment of a new professor of Demography and Space (Mulder), partly replacing Van Wissen, who became Director of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI-KNAW), and who also plays an important role in the development of research on population decline within the Northern Network for Demographic Change (NNDC). The group was further strengthened by a Rosalind Franklin Fellow on Population and Child Health (Haisma).

Both research programmes have subsequently taken leading roles in the development of tWIST (as described in Section A1 and Section B3).

The sub-programme **Planning for Environmental Quality** (14.3 FTE in 2007: 1.45 tenured, 2.3 tenured, 10.6 PhD) was evaluated as good to very good. The comments by the RRC sometimes suggested higher scores, pointing towards excellence. The programme was considered to have a national reputation, to be at the forefront and internationally competitive, and it was applauded for the quantity of its output and high impact on policymaking. At the time of the 2007 assessment, the research programme was in a stage of transition. The former leader of the research programme (Voogd) passed away in 2007, and a new full professor was appointed in 2008 (De Roo). Over recent years, the new professor has given a boost to the development of the discipline of Spatial Planning, both in teaching and research. There has been a substantial change of staff, now being relatively young, dynamic and productive. The group has been working towards a coherent research programme, connecting the various interests of the individual researchers while also relating to the development of tWIST. The group has moved away from a focus on professional publications to international peer-reviewed publications, and has been strengthened by a tenure track/full professorship in Regional Planning and Development (Woltjer) and a Rosalind Franklin Fellowship on the Sustainability of Socio-Ecological Systems and their Multi-Scalar Governance (Parra Novoa). Research

collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (in particular, the Rijkswaterstaat, RWS) on sustainable infrastructure (through and with Arts) constitutes an important contribution to the group.

The sub-programme **Making Places** (2.3 FTE in 2007: 1.9 tenured, 0.4 non-tenured, no PhDs) was evaluated as good. It was considered to be primarily of national significance, with some publications being internationally competitive and some research seen as very promising, in particular around the themes of belonging and identity. The group was said to have an unrealized potential to contribute further to debates in cultural geography. A major concern of the group was that the RRC viewed the sub-programme in terms of the UK conceptualization of 'cultural geography', which was substantially different to the orientation that the group itself was trying to develop. Cultural geography in the Dutch context is heavily shaped by the longstanding Dutch artistic, heritage and community traditions, associated with a sense of place derived from – quite literally – making the landscape. At the time of the RRC, the research programme was severely constrained by personnel issues, such as the chronic illness of its then programme leader (Huigen). In discussing the future of the research programme, the Faculty – appreciating the sub-programme as the only one of its kind in the Netherlands, and viewing the positive remarks about the potential of the research programme – decided to strengthen the group by appointing a new professor of Cultural Geography, with a strong focus on research. The new full professor (Vanclay) joined the group in July 2010. The group was also strengthened by other appointments, such as the Mansholt Chair on Rural Development in 2005 (Strijker; who was originally in sub-programme 1), the promotion of two assistant professors to associate professors (Van Hoven, Groote) and the appointment of a tenure track position in Geography and Tourism (Buda) in 2013. The research of the group strongly relates to tWIST, for example in its leading role in the debate on population decline within the Northern Network for Demographic Change (NNDC) (Van Haartsen).

In summary, we have endeavoured to explicitly respond to all of the 2007 RRC recommendations in much of what we do. Since the RRC 2007, all four research groups have been strengthened and this has ensured a much better balance across the various lines of research expertise and interests, as well as providing greater opportunities for integration. Getting this balance right has also been essential in our decision to move towards one unified research programme.

1.2 Towards one integrated research programme

The Board of FRW thus urged the Review Committee in 2007 to reflect on a specific issue: Would it be wise to continue the process that had already been initiated (see the Self-Assessment Report 2006, pp. 3-4 and pp. 27-28), i.e. to develop one integrated research programme for URSI? And if so, did the RRC have additional ideas about how to develop this integrated research programme?

Some background information is needed here in this regard. When URSI was established and joined Nethur in 2003, the objective was already:

'to develop from a research institute where research is traditionally conducted within the boundaries of departments, into a research institute where researchers from different departments conduct research together within certain research themes (Self-Evaluation Report, 2007, p. 3)

In accordance, the Strategic Plan of the Faculty 2004-2010 indicated:

*In the present model, departments play a much more prominent role than research themes ... The faculty explicitly aims at **greater coherence in its research themes and seeks research synergy by encouraging cross-fertilization and cooperation between researchers from different departments with different research disciplinary backgrounds**, both within the faculty and within Nethur (FRW Strategic Plan 2004-2010, p. 13; and 11; cited in Self-Evaluation Report, 2007, p. 3)*

The initial aim of the Faculty Board with respect to the Self-Evaluation Report in 2007 was to evaluate the four sub-programmes as elements of one faculty-wide research programme. However, this was discouraged by the University of Groningen authorities, who preferred each sub-programme to be evaluated separately. The Self-Evaluation Report therefore provided a rudimentary outline of a joint research programme provisionally entitled 'Regional studies of population, economy and culture, planning and policy making' (Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 27-28). Examples of collaborations and cross-fertilization highlighted the importance of the joint themes of:

Firm demography, where expertise in the disciplines of economic geography and demography were combined (*especially personified by Van Wissen*)

Heritage planning and identities, bringing together expertise from the disciplines of planning and cultural geography (*especially personified by Ashworth*)

The initiation of joint projects, PhD supervision and proposal writing among URSI researchers were also described. Other possible joint themes were thought to be regional development, neighbourhood, governance and poverty. The start of the faculty-wide Graduate School in 2006 and the accreditation of the faculty-wide Research Master's programme in 2004 were also seen as important contributions to the further development of the faculty-wide research programme (Self-Evaluation Report, 2007, p. 3-4).

Thus, the objective of integrating our research activities has been in place for quite some time – since the establishment of URSI in 2003 – and the Self-Evaluation Report in 2007 reflects the initial stages of the integration occurring at that time. The Faculty Board's desire to receive advice from the RRC in 2007 regarding further development towards one integrative research programme was driven by the notions that:

- the amount of research time (in FTEs) in each of the sub-programmes was low, making some of the research sub-programmes vulnerable
- researchers from the sub-programmes did not seem to make enough use of each other's research expertise (content, theory, methodology) and overall flexibility was limited

The Research Review Committee advised as follows:

1. 'The composition of the research groups in URSI is primarily driven by the disciplinary backgrounds of the researchers and the education tasks in the undergraduate programme. This structure may not maximize the potential of the institute from a research point of view. The committee therefore supports the strategy of the management to strive for more flexibility in the research organization. **A single research programme with a few temporary themes** must be possible for this institute. The committee would advise the management of the institute to **stimulate greater cooperation between the research groups and to strengthen the innovative development of its "research nucleus"** policy by placing its appointee in a position apart from the research groups'. (p. 13, emphasis added)

2. **'Planning for declining areas could serve as a powerful and challenging integrative theme across the recent research groups'**. (p. 13, emphasis added)

Different sections in this report, especially Sections A1 and Sections B1-3, describe how we stimulated this greater cooperation and flexibility in our research, and how we developed tWIST, our new integrated research programme. The role played by the 'research nucleus' (Beaumont) was taken over by the Endowed Chair (McCann). And while we initially indeed focused on Population Decline as a possible umbrella theme – with quite a lot of research conducted on this theme by researchers from the different sub-programmes – the ultimate integrated programme has become broader, focusing on Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation (tWIST).

1.3 Establishing and developing the research programme tWIST

One of the first areas to which the Faculty thus devoted much attention and energy after the Research Review was to the establishment and development of a unified research programme. Our aim was to create more synergy between the research sub-programmes and develop a unified research vision and mission which encapsulated our major capabilities and motivations and with which all URSI members could identify and use to forge their research sub-agendas. At the same time, it was also our intention that the URSI research vision and mission should be highly distinctive, to ensure its appeal to both international and local audiences and to convey our specific priorities, capabilities and expertise. The move towards a unified research programme was always seen as a catalyst fostering a more integrated and strategic faculty-wide approach to addressing research issues.

The revisioning process has been two-sided: **top-down** from the institutional perspective of the Faculty and **bottom-up** from the perspective of the URSI researchers themselves. Of course, the two sides have actively engaged, finding the right balance between the leadership providing the framework and conditions, and putting facilitating mechanisms in place, and the researchers providing the shape, content, energy and momentum to the process.

The Faculty Board, Dean Pellenbarg and Vice Dean of Research, Van Wissen, established a committee known as the Taskforce for Population Decline, which included the head research professors in URSI. The assignment for the Taskforce was to discuss and establish a joint research programme within URSI. Meetings of the Taskforce for Population Decline (later called the Taskforce, and even later, the Research Advisory Group) took place deliberately in the evening over dinner and consisted of brainstorming, sharing ideas, trying to find consensus and ultimately sketching out tWIST. The Endowed Chair played an important role in uniting several research perspectives, coming from outside and having research expertise across the departments/research programmes. Section A1 and Section B1-2-3 will provide more examples of leadership by the Faculty in facilitating the development of tWIST and enhancing the overall quality of research.

At the same time, much of the rethinking and revisioning process took place from the 'bottom up', in particular via a series of *Heidagen* – or 'Away Days' – in which research faculty members participated. These URSI Away Days allowed URSI researchers to reflect on and share ideas about all aspects of their individual and collaborative research, and to explore possible lines of research cooperation with other faculty members. We e.g. established 'ideas factories', whereby younger members of URSI were asked to identify what they considered to be our major research ideas and priorities in conjunction with more senior staff, and this process also helped to foster greater trust and cooperation across the faculty at all levels. We also organized 'speed-dating' sessions between researchers, in which they exchanged information on their research expertise. Each of the Away Days took place in an informal and relaxed atmosphere, away from the university setting. Of course, ongoing joint research projects and PhD supervision also

contributed to development of tWIST. Section A1 and Section B3 will elaborate on more examples of how tWIST was built from the bottom up.

In 2009, this process led to the development of the URSI research programme, entitled 'Towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation'. The process of self-assessment and increasing self-awareness allowed us ultimately to identify the three threads which all of our research follows: *societal wellbeing*, *innovation* in all of its forms, and *spatial transformation*. All of the research within URSI finds itself following at least one of these threads, and typically two or more.

During the discussion at one of the Away Days, URSI researchers proposed that the former sub-programmes – neatly embedded in the four different departments – should be renamed research clusters, reflecting the idea that research should increasingly be conducted across departmental boundaries within tWIST rather than *within* departments. The proposal was received with enthusiasm. The research clusters were later named:

1. Place, Identity and Wellbeing
2. Population and Wellbeing in Context
3. Economy and Place
4. Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation

Each indicated their different foci within tWIST. While the research clusters still reflect the departments to a large extent, researchers from different research clusters are increasingly participating in research activities across clusters.

Figure 1 illustrates the transformation from the departmental research sub-programmes of 2007 to the three threads of Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation in tWIST and the new research clusters.

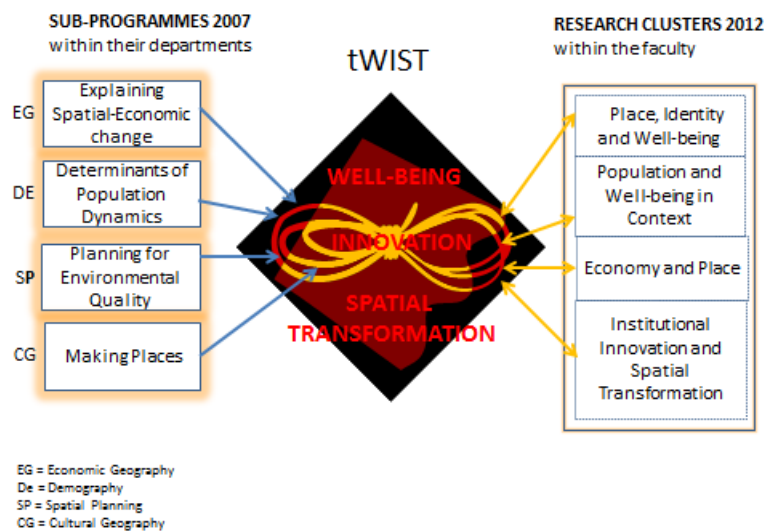


Figure 1: Illustration of the transformation from departmental research sub-programmes to tWIST and the research clusters

It has been important, in this process of moving towards one unified and integrated research programme, to acknowledge the fact that each former sub-programme also had to continue to develop within its own discipline. In fact, the former sub-programmes faced two challenges. Firstly, they needed to link into the development of the integrated research programme and secondly, it was also important to maintain the link with own disciplinary peers. The demography programme, for example, developed into the tWIST research cluster of *Population and Wellbeing in Context* (see B1.1.2), which reflects the current research focus in the discipline of Demography but also links up with tWIST. The embedding of the programme within tWIST

and collaborations with tWIST researchers has actually strengthened the disciplinary reputation of the research group. In a similar way, the economic geography sub-programme developed into the tWIST research cluster of *Economy and Place*, linking both to tWIST and to its disciplinary peers in economic geography and the regional sciences. The spatial planning sub-programme focused to a greater extent on the development of its disciplinary strength – necessarily, given the stage of development of the department – while in the meantime linking up to tWIST in the research cluster of *Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation*. The cultural geography sub-programme developed in a particularly interdisciplinary way within the tWIST research cluster of *Identity, Place and Wellbeing*.

As an outcome of this entire development process, the vision of tWIST was formulated as:

A society which is spatially transformed in ways that allow for high levels of wellbeing and innovation

Our mission is:

To undertake and disseminate world leading and highly distinctive research which helps to realize the vision

Our mission to realize this vision is obviously still unfinished business and the title of the research programme, *towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation (tWIST)*, captures the positive and normative aspects of our research and also reflects the fact that this is an ongoing process.

1.4 tWIST: where do we stand in 2013?

From a strategic perspective, we believe that the move towards a single research programme:

- has provided greater clarity in terms of our own research profile
- has helped us to achieve a better balance of skills and competences across the faculty with respect to the distribution of research FTEs
- helped us to identify areas of vulnerability which needed to be addressed, areas of strength to be capitalized upon and areas where new FTE allocations can help foster complementarities
- allowed us to become much more forward-looking in our approach and to forge a clearer vision of our current and future trajectory

In addition to research, tWIST is also taken as *the* theme when profiling the Faculty, and has driven changes in our teaching activities such as research-driven education in our Bachelor's programme, in courses within our Master's degree and research training in our Research Master's programme. Thus, we are building a coherent academic programme in both research and teaching.

Having established and developed tWIST, and reflecting on where we stand in December 2013 from both the management side and the perspective of URSI researchers, it can be stated that:

- tWIST is now established and accepted as the overarching research programme for the Faculty (based on URSI Away Days, 2012-2013)
- as such tWIST is the only research programme evaluated in this report
- tWIST is used as *the* Faculty profile in strategies and policies in the realms of research, teaching and internationalization (see below)
- tWIST guides the writing of new project proposals for PhDs and in research staff vacancies (see below)

- tWIST has facilitated the creation of more joint research projects and joint PhD supervision (see below)
- tWIST has facilitated URSI researchers in knowing 'where and when we can find each other' regarding their expertise (URSI Away Day 31 October 2013)
- tWIST is understood as an ongoing process, whereby researchers are continually seeking to position their work and their working relationships in the broader Faculty context, although at the same time URSI researchers (URSI Away Day, 31 October 2013) have indicated that what tWIST actually means in daily life is not yet always clear to them

Specific examples of this role of tWIST will be provided in subsequent sections. A detailed description of tWIST can be found in Section B1.

1.5 Issues to address

Strengths

- tWIST is our unifying Faculty research programme, leading:
 - o the Faculty's research activities, such as new projects, new proposals, PhDs, new vacancies
 - o the overall profiling of our Faculty to the external world
 - o our teaching programme
- tWIST is known at the strategic, policy and programme levels
- URSI researchers are aware of tWIST and indicate that:
 - o we are definitely a more unitary programme than was the case six years ago
 - o they know where to find each other with respect to research expertise (URSI Away Day 31 October 2013)

Weaknesses

- tWIST is *not yet completely* unified
- the meaning of tWIST in daily life is not always clear. As URSI researchers have indicated, 'the change in how we do things is still limited' and tWIST is not yet sufficiently visible in daily research activities
- tWIST could be profiled *more* externally (URSI Away Day, 31 October 2013)

PART A: THE URBAN AND REGIONAL
STUDIES INSTITUTE

1. Organizational Structure

In this section we describe the *institutional context* of our research, as embedded in the Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI) within the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen.

1.1 University of Groningen

In 2014, the University of Groningen, founded in 1614, celebrates its 400th anniversary. The University is one of six classical Dutch universities and the second oldest university in the Netherlands. It provides training for a full range of academic degrees in a wide variety of disciplines. The mission of the University of Groningen is to be one of the leading research universities in Europe. In August 2013, the University was listed in the top 100 universities worldwide: it was positioned 89th by the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings, 92nd on the ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities, or Shanghai List) and 97th on the QS World University Rankings.

The Executive Board of the University (College van Bestuur) is responsible for the general management of the University and consists of three members who are appointed by and accountable to a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is accountable to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands.

Until 2013, the University of Groningen comprised nine faculties, each governed by a Faculty Board (FB). A tenth faculty was added in 2013, the University College Groningen. Members of the FBs are appointed by and answerable to the Executive Board of the University.

In research, the University of Groningen concentrates on excellence in what are known as top research institutes (e.g. ZIAM, the Zernike Institute of Advanced Materials and NOVA, the Netherlands Research School for Astronomy) and excellence in research in three societal research themes: Healthy Ageing, Sustainable Society and Energy. In relation to these themes, researchers from different faculties cooperate with each other, as well as with partners from public organizations, government and business, at the regional, national and international levels. To illustrate the importance of these 'profiling' themes, in June 2013 the Northern Netherlands was awarded the status of an exemplary region for Active and Healthy Ageing by the EU. Major efforts in the field of Healthy Ageing have been brought together in the Healthy Ageing Network Northern Netherlands (HANNN), in which the University actively participates.

1.2 Faculty of Spatial Sciences (FRW)

1.2.1 *Composition of the Faculty*

The **Faculty Board (FB)** of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences is responsible for the organization of research, teaching and the general management of the Faculty. The FB consists of the Dean and Vice Dean, responsible for Research and Teaching respectively, and the Managing Director, responsible for Finances and HRM. The FB also includes one student member who is appointed for one year (in 2013-2014, Ms. Anne Abbing). The FB is supported by a secretary, Mrs Tineke Dijkman-Blaauw. In the period of review 2007-12, the Faculty Board consisted of:

Portfolio Teaching

May 2011-present

September 2008-May 2011

September 2002*-September 2008

Vice Dean Dr Peter Groote

Dean Prof. Piet Pellenbarg

Dean Prof. Gerard Linden

Portfolio Research

May 2011-present	Dean Prof. Inge Hutter
January 2011-April 2011	Vice-Dean Prof. Inge Hutter
April* 2009-November 2010	Vice-Dean Prof. Leo van Wissen
November 2008-February 2009	Vice-Dean Prof. Gert de Roo
September 2005-November 2008	Vice-Dean Prof. Inge Hutter

Portfolio Finances and HRM

September 2007-present	Managing Director, Ms Gerda Groen
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The change in the portfolio of the Dean over recent years to now include research, signals a shift away from the Dean's traditional teaching portfolio.

The member of the Faculty Board with the research portfolio is traditionally also the Director of URSI. In 2006, the Directorship of the Graduate School was added (see below).

The disciplinary focus of the Faculty (in Dutch: *discipline-overleg*) is that of Geography, Spatial Planning and Demography.

Within the Faculty, four **departments** were traditionally responsible for research and teaching in a specific discipline. The four departments thus reflect the traditional *disciplinary* organizational grouping of our teaching and research staff. The present Heads of Department are Prof. Clara Mulder (Demography), Prof. Jouke van Dijk (Economic Geography), Prof. Frank Vanclay (Cultural Geography) and Prof. Johan Woltjer (Spatial Planning).

In the period under review, the Faculty developed *from a small to a small-to-medium-sized faculty* as indicated by the increasing number of students (approximately 950 in 2013), PhD researchers (approximately 95 in 2013) and staff members. As a consequence, the Faculty is now in the middle of a process of moving towards:

- a faculty-wide educational infrastructure, i.e. the Education Office unified and
- an integrated faculty research programme within the URSI research institute, as also recommended by the RRC 2007

This means that at present (autumn 2013), both teaching and research increasingly take place *across* the four departments and thus *across* disciplines. The boundaries between the four departments have thus become more permeable and diffuse than in the past, with researchers interacting and cooperating across research sub-themes according to the research task being addressed. The departments increasingly function as a home for the staff members, who contribute their teaching and research to the Faculty's Education Office and URSI, respectively.

Additionally, the Faculty has become *more international*: 19% of the staff originate from countries other than the Netherlands. When Dutch staff with extensive international experience are included, the percentage is even higher. Of all PhD researchers, 57% originate from other countries. This implies a multicultural research environment and thus the need for intercultural competences and an international orientation within the Faculty. Workshops have already been organized on intercultural competences and more are envisaged in the near future. In addition, the Faculty has developed a *broader disciplinary background*, with researchers studying spatial issues from disciplinary backgrounds such as sociology, economics, anthropology and epidemiology. Last but not least, another important change is that the Faculty has been *rejuvenated*, with many young postdoc researchers and assistant professors having arrived (see B9.19.1).

In addition, while we have evolved into a small to-medium-sized faculty, at the same time, we feel our positioning within the research debates at the University has been enhanced (see for examples later), given the high degree of congruence between our research priorities and the major research priorities of the wider University.

1.2.2 Faculty Research: Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI)

Since 1999, research within the Faculty has been organized within the **Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI)**. URSI was established in 2003 when the Netherlands Graduate School of Urban and Regional Research (Nethur),¹ based in Utrecht, was founded. Senior URSI researchers are still assessed on the basis of what are known as the Nethur standards, which entail at least two peer-reviewed publications in international scientific journals per year, on average, over the course of five years. If this is achieved, researchers become Nethur/URSI fellows. In general, URSI researchers are allocated 40% research time, the Endowed Chair 50% research time, Rosalind Franklin Fellows and tenure track staff 70%, and postdoc researchers 90%.

The member of the Faculty Board responsible for research is traditionally also the Director of URSI. Research coordination and policy have traditionally been discussed by the **URSI Board**. Since 2009, when the Faculty Board established the Taskforce for Population Decline in order to begin to build a faculty-wide research programme (see Chapter A1, Introduction), the FB decided, for reasons of efficiency, that the Taskforce, later known as the Research Advisory Group (RAG), would also function as the URSI and GS Board. However, in practice, the RAG primarily functioned as a think-tank, discussing and advising on research in particular, without being involved in decision-making. Composed of full professors, the RAG thus was mostly understood to play a non-formal but important and influential role as a 'think-tank' and 'sounding board' role. The non-formal nature of the RAG made it easier to think 'outside the box' regarding difficult challenges, something which would have been more difficult otherwise. This non-formality is precisely what has allowed the RAG to play a key role in the development of tWIST and other research-related matters. Operating as a forum for the discussion of new ideas and possible initiatives, the RAG has been able to provide important input over the last four years that has assisted the Faculty Board in its decisions on all areas related to research.

At present, the RAG still functions largely according to its original purpose. Its members recently felt that the URSI Board (including the Graduate School Board, see below) should be re-vived with its role clearly defined and clearly distinguished from the role of the RAG (see further in Section B3). The URSI-GS Board is –accordingly- revived. The role and composition of the RAG will also be adjusted, with the inclusion of younger staff members in particular, to foster more of a 'bottom-up' approach to dealing with research-related challenges over the coming years (see further in Section B3). The transitions we have gone through and continue to go through also nicely illustrate the theories of change in organizations: after the initial period of brainstorming and pioneering, the further consolidation, formalization and professionalization of procedures, processes and quality care is required.

As described in the introduction above, in 2007 the four research programmes that were evaluated were closely related to each of the departments. Within the unified and integrated tWIST research programme, research is increasingly conducted across the boundaries of the departments, and the former research sub-programmes have been renamed research clusters (see Section 1.3). Increasingly, researchers now move across research cluster borders, working

¹ Nethur is a joint initiative of the University of Amsterdam (UvA), Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e), Radboud University Nijmegen (RU), the University of Groningen and Utrecht University (UU), which hosts the secretariat. Nethur is accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and offers an educational programme for PhD researchers and a collaborative research programme for PhD researchers and supervisors.

in collaboration or interdepartmental projects. The move of research staff trained within one department to another has facilitated this process (e.g. Klaassens and Meijering from RC 1 to RC 2, Noback and Venhorst from RC 2 to RC 3, Strijker from RC 3 to RC 1, Trelle from RC 1 to RC 4, Van Wissen from RC 3 to RC 2, Bijker from RC 1 to 3, Bakema from RC 3 to RC 4).

Moreover, it is an explicit and strategic research priority for us that such movements will be further enhanced in the coming years, thereby allowing new research links and networks to evolve naturally in an organic and bottom-up manner, with researchers making use of each other's research expertise and/or participating in other research clusters. The leadership is there to frame and facilitate this development, for example through the establishment of the Special Focus (*Profilerings*) Assistant Professorships (see below) and the Ubbo Emmius PhD vacancies, which will be the responsibility of a team of research professors within tWIST and the four research clusters.

1.2.3 *URSI Graduate School of Spatial Sciences*

Within URSI, the Graduate School of Spatial Sciences was established in 2006 on the basis of the University's policy of creating local Graduate Schools. Our Graduate School comprises the PhD programme in Spatial Sciences and the Research Master's in Regional Studies (established in 2004).

All PhD researchers in the Faculty are enrolled in the Graduate School and subject to its rules and regulations regarding aspects such as admission and supervision. For an overview of all PhD researchers in the Graduate School in December 2012, see Appendix 13.2. Through URSI, PhD researchers can attend courses organized by Nethur. During the two-year Research Master's programme (accredited until 2015), students are prepared for a career in academia or policy research.

During the period from September 2006 to February 2009, the URSI Director was also the Graduate School Director, but from September 2009 to January 2011, the functions of the Director of URSI and the Director of the Graduate School were separated. However, due to the size of our Faculty, the Faculty Board did not consider this separation of tasks to have been successful. The Faculty Board therefore appointed a new member with a research portfolio in January 2011, and decided at that time to return to a single director of URSI and the GS. The Graduate School Board –like the URSI Board- was taken along in the RAG in 2009, as described above.

In the period under review, URSI was in the process of professionalization.²

Since 2011, Meerburg has worked as the Office Manager for URSI and the Graduate School, while Van Dam (2008-2012) and Opsteegh (since 2013) have acted as Research Policy Advisors, PhD coordinators and Funding Officers. The procedures and processes for submitting project proposals, for registering research output and for advertising PhD vacancies have also been formalized. Since 2012, a Project Team – Bakker and Groen (finances and HRM) and Opsteegh and Hutter (research management, research tWIST) – has discussed all internal and the external project proposals and managed existing research projects in weekly meetings. The objective is to be able to respond quickly and adequately – based on research content, management, finance and HRM – to proposals submitted by URSI researchers.

² The concept of 'professionalization' refers to (further) consolidation and formalization of procedures and processes, and to the enhancement of quality care in the field of research. We also refer to the development of the competences of researcher/staff members, in, for example, management capacities, proactive attitudes and personal development. Throughout the report we provide several examples.

The Graduate School is also undergoing a process of professionalization. For example, procedures concerning entrance, the monitoring of progress and preparation of the PhD defence are increasingly taken care of by the Office Manager (Meerburg) and PhD coordinator (Opsteegh).

It is clear that further professionalization is needed in the near future and several steps have already been taken in this regard (e.g. Hora Finita, which monitors the progress and activities of PhD researchers; and Ubbo Emmius PhD vacancies which are now the responsibility of four research professors, one from each research cluster).

1.2.3.1 *The PhD Council*

In September 2010, in accordance with University policy, FRW established a PhD Council representing the interests of all PhD researchers in the Graduate School. The PhD Council focuses on information exchange – on a wide variety of PhD issues – between the Graduate School and PhD researchers. The PhD Council comprises four PhD researchers, preferably one from each of the research clusters and representing both contract and scholarship, local and international PhD candidates. It meets at least six times a year.

A delegation of the PhD Council participates in meetings with delegates of PhD Councils from other faculty Graduate Schools of the University of Groningen.

1.2.4 *Overview of the Research Organization*

Figure 2 below presents the research organization in schematic form. In addition to the *institutional embedding* of URSI, the figure includes the joint research programme tWIST and its four constituent research clusters (see also Introduction).

The large block represents URSI. The shape is reminiscent of the building in which we work, indicating pictorially that research in tWIST provides the 'profile' which encompasses all other activities in the Faculty (see e.g., on education, the Critical Reflections Educational Programme FRW, 2013).

As is depicted, the Graduate School of Spatial Sciences (GSSS) is part of URSI, and focuses on research training for PhD candidates and Research Master's students. Communication between PhD researchers and the GSSS takes place via the PhD Council.

Within URSI-GSSS, research activities take place within the unified and integrated research programme of tWIST which is currently made up of four research clusters. tWIST is presented as a cloud because it is not an organizational structure such as URSI-GSSS. tWIST is the unified and integrated research programme being developed by the URSI researchers themselves.

Currently, the Research Advisory Group (RAG) has functioned as described above: as a think-tank.

As mentioned above, Nethur is the national graduate research organization in which URSI participates. In the period under review, the role of Nethur decreased due to the increasing role of local graduate schools. The collaboration mainly becomes visible in Nethur courses for PhD researchers. URSI researchers are frequently involved in teaching these courses (for more information, see B10).

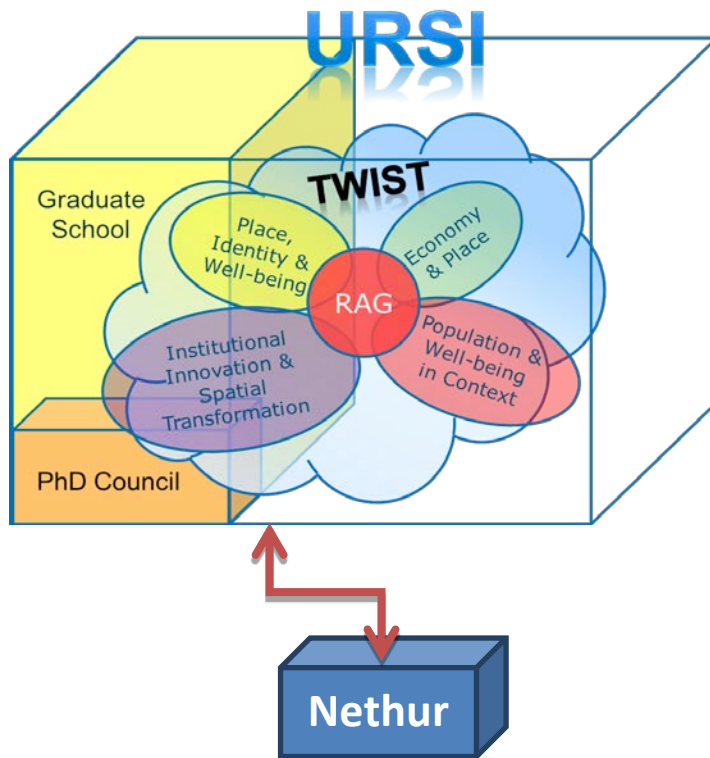


Figure 2: Organizational structure of URSI, the Graduate School and tWIST

1.2.5 Research FTEs

The research FTEs (i.e. only including the research time of staff members) included in URSI over the period of review are presented in Table II. We include all research staff with a PhD with more than 0.10 research FTEs.

Table II: Research staff, PhD researchers and support staff: total number of staff and research FTEs

	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013	
	#	FTE	#	FTE	#	FTE	#	FTE	#	FTE	#	FTE
Tenured staff ¹	24	5.97	27	6.5	29	7.76	29	8.82	31	9.16	29	8.48
Non-tenured staff ²	10	3.49	9	3.9	13	5.32	16	8.07	16	7.03	18	12.1
Total research staff	34	9.46	36	10.4	42	13.08	45	16.89	47	16.19	47	20.58
PhD candidates (employed)	11	7.4	12	9.4	11	10.2	12	7.8	15	7.9	19	13.4
PhD candidates (non employed)	14	12.5	15	11.3	14	10.6	19	15.2	26	18.1	33	26.0
Total PhDs	25	19.9	27	20.7	25	20.8	31	23.0	41	26.0	52	39.4
Support staff	2	0.7	3	1.1	3	1.1	3	1.33	3	1.6	3	2

¹ tenured = in permanent position, including special and honorary professors

² non-tenured = in temporary position

All names and positions of research staff are included in Appendix 13.1

As Table II shows, in the period under review, the staff research FTEs increased considerably, more than doubling from 9.46 FTEs in 2007 to 20.58 FTEs in 2012. The increase took place among both tenured (permanent positions: from 5.97 FTEs to 8.48 FTEs), and non-tenured

staff (temporary positions: from 3.49 FTEs to 12.1 FTEs). In 2012, more than 4 research FTE was added, indicating the fulfilment of new vacancies, by young research staff in particular (see later).

The research FTEs of PhD researchers (excluding external PhD researchers) increased enormously, from 19.9 FTEs in 2007 to 39.4 FTEs in 2012. The number of PhD researchers doubled from 25 to 52, especially increasing the number of non-employed PhD researchers (from 14 to 33). A large number of new PhD researchers joined in the years 2011/2012 and 2012, namely 10 and 11 respectively (with both direct, research and contract funding). In December 2012 (see Appendix 13.2), we had 95 PhD researchers in the Graduate School who are

- employed or used to be employed (33%), with a working contract at UoG
- non-employed (41%), with a fellowship
- or are external (26%, working and in the meantime finishing a PhD).

In this report, we deal with the internal employed and non-employed PhD researchers, as the progress of the external candidates is more difficult to monitor and predict. PhD researchers who are employed and funded through direct funding dedicate 85% of their time to research and 15% to teaching. Non-employed PhD researchers have fellowships and do not have a contract to work for the University. The increase in research PhD FTEs occurred among both employed PhD researchers (from 7.4 FTEs to 13.4 FTEs) and non-employed PhD researchers (from 12.5 FTEs to 26.0 FTEs).

Appendix 13.1 provides an overview of the research FTEs of all URSI researchers, as well as their main research expertise and interest. Looking at the increase in research FTEs in more detail, we can see:

- An increase at the **full professor** level, from 1.93 FTEs in 2007 to 3.16 in 2010, to 2.55 in 2012. The composition of this group also changed considerably.
- An increase at the **associate professor** level, from 1.04 FTEs in 2007 to 1.5 FTEs in 2012. Some members of this group have been promoted from assistant professors, while others are Special Professors or Adjunct Professors within the tenure track system (see below).
- An increase at the **assistant professor** level (non-tenured in the first instance) from 3.80 FTEs in 2007 to 7.69 FTEs in 2012. The figures reflect the growth of our Faculty in the period 2007-2012, with many young researchers coming in, both through internal and external funding.
- An increase in **other researchers** (from 2.53 FTEs to 8.56 FTEs), mainly consisting of non-tenured postdoc researchers who are appointed through external funding. There are two researchers who receive departmental funding.
- As indicated above, there has been a large increase in the research FTEs of **PhD researchers**, from 19.9 FTEs in 2007 to 39.4 FTEs in 2012. During the period of review, associate and assistant professors have become more involved in the daily supervision of PhD researchers. (see Appendix 13.2). Following the University rules, each PhD researcher now has a second *promotor* or daily supervisor. Involvement of the younger research staff in PhD guidance is seen to be stimulating for all involved as long as the supervision is indeed based on existing research expertise. The move towards PhD theses based on scientific articles rather than a monograph supports this development further: papers are written by the PhD researcher and co-authored by the supervisors. Currently, plans are being developed to counter the increasing imbalance between research staff FTEs and PhD research FTEs, for example, by organizing more courses on general academic skills (writing research proposals, English language, methodologies, etc.) for groups of PhD researchers within the Graduate School of Spatial Sciences.

- In general, PhD researchers have four years to complete their PhD research; however, funding is increasingly being provided for only three years, not only for PhD researchers who have completed a two-year Research Master's programme, but also increasingly for PhD candidates with external funding (e.g. Erasmus Mundus PhD fellowships). We consider three years to be too short to complete a PhD, and are increasingly confronted with the question of how to extend the duration of these specific PhD trajectories.
- An increase in **research support staff**, from 0.7 FTEs in 2007, to 2.0 FTEs at the end of 2012, reflects the increasing professionalization of research processes and procedures.

Regarding the *gender* of research staff in 2012:

- 2 out of 11 full professors were female (22%)
- 2 out of 9 associate professors were female (in 2013, 3 out of 9, 33%)
- 9 out of 15 assistant professors were female (60%)
- 4 out of 7 postdoc researchers were female (57%)
- 44 out of 95 PhD researchers were female (46%)

The research staff have been both internally and externally trained. Compared to the earlier period of review, we are increasingly hiring our staff from elsewhere. The inclusion of researchers from outside our own Faculty provides us with positive input, introducing various research cultures and attitudes. However, internally trained research staff are also needed to maintain continuity in the Faculty.

Table III: Personnel costs of URSI research 2007-2012

2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
Euro	FTE	Euro	FTE	Euro	FTE	Euro	FTE	Euro	FTE	Euro	FTE
Direct funding											
616.022	8,6	607.149	8,2	737.385	9,9	916.932	12	763.612	10,2	1.023.555	13,5
84%		73%		71%		69%		64%		71%	
Research and Contract funding											
120.494	0,9	220.365	2,2	300.608	3,2	416.217	4,9	429.731	6	423.391	7,1
16%		27%		29%		31%		36%		29%	
Total research funding											
736.516	9,5	827.514	10,4	1.037.993	13,1	1.333.149	16,9	1.193.343	16,2	1.446.946	20,6
Direct funding all scientific personnel											
Education & research incl contract PhDs											
2.456.925	34,3	2.650.725	35,8	3.254.922	43,7	3.759.423	49,2	3.907.898	52,2	4.079.057	53,8

The total amount of money spent on research personnel (in fte) did more than double over the years, from € 736,516 euro (9,5 FTE) in 2007 to € 1,446,946 (20,6 FTE) in 2012 (see Table III). We make a distinction between direct and research plus contract funded personnel costs. Both the amount of direct funding and research plus contract funding did increase. The percentage of direct funding in the total amount of funding did decrease from 84% in 2007 to 71% in 2012 (13.5 FTE); while research plus contract funding increased from 16% in 2007 to 34% in 2011, and 29% in 2012 (7.1 FTE). In this, research funding contributes more substantially from 2012 onwards, with 3.35 research fte. Please note that Table III reflects the funding of research fte of URSI senior staff. Quite some research and contract funding (as also indicated in Section B6 Earning Capacity) is spent on PhD research; in the period under review varying from 9.2 FTE in 2007, to 12.1 FTE in 2009, to 6.7 FTE in 2012.

In addition to this, there is money 'earned-in' by contract funding. These amounts show a large increase from €162,967 in 2007 to €660,105 in 2012. This so-called 'earned in' money is used for either personnel costs, research costs, or other costs.

The last line in Table III shows all costs for scientific personnel including research, teaching and management tasks in the period under review.

Regarding **direct funding** (first stream: University and FRW), the increase is due to:

- new positions created by the **University Board**, such as the Endowed Chair (McCann, in 2009) and the Rosalind Franklin Fellows (Haisma, Parra Novoa, and Buda in 2013). Endowed chairs are specially created by the University for internationally renowned professors – one in each faculty – focusing on innovation in research. RFF positions are given to excellent female researchers, who are given the opportunity to develop over a period of ten years from assistant professor to full professor, provided that they reach the criteria set for the positions. Both the Endowed Chair and RFFs are funded by the University for the first five years and are then made the responsibility of the respective faculty.
- new appointments by the **Faculty Board**, including professorships in Real Estate (Van der Vlist in 2008), Cultural Geography (Vanclay in 2010), and Demography and Space (Mulder, in 2008), the tenure track positions for excellent researchers (Woltjer, Koster), several Assistant Professorships (in the first instance always non-tenured), and the three Special Focus (*Profilerings*) Assistant Professorships (Trell, Busscher and Van Duijn). The tenure track system provides promising young researchers (such as the RFF) with the opportunity to develop from assistant professor to full professor. The non-tenured Special Focus Assistant Professorships were created in 2012 for researchers working across at least two departments in the Faculty, thus enhancing the development of tWIST. URSI researchers at the Away Day in October 2013 indicated that they considered these appointments were a clear sign of the relevance of tWIST. The three assistant professors will be working in the fields of:
 - o Infrastructure Planning: a cross-over between spatial planning and real estate within the collaboration with RWS (Busscher)
 - o Vulnerability and Sustainable Coastal Development: a cross-over between spatial planning and cultural geography, but also partly economic geography (Trell)
 - o Housing and Demography: a cross-over between real estate (within Economic Geography) and demography (Van Duijn)

Regarding **research funding** (NWO, KNAW, ERC), the increase is due to:

- increasing efforts made by URSI researchers to write funding proposals. Success had led to new positions, especially for postdocs and PhD researchers (for a detailed description, see Section B6: Earning Capacity).

Regarding **contract funding**, the increase is due to:

- increasing efforts made by URSI researchers to write proposals for **external contract funding**. Success has led to new positions, especially for postdocs and PhD researchers (for a detailed description, see Section B6).
- **external organizations** creating and funding chairs for Special Professorships (at associate professor level). Special Professors (*Bijzonder Hoogleraar* in Dutch) are professors appointed on behalf of a societal organization and reflect specific focus areas that the Faculty wishes to develop. Some of them have a research (and societal) task (e.g. Ashworth, Arts, Strijker, Van den Berg), while others focus mainly on educational (and societal) tasks (Nozeman, Van Dinteren e.g.). Strijker is Special Professor of Rural Development for the Mansholt Chair. Arts is Special Professor of Environmental and Infrastructure Planning within the collaboration between FRW and RWS. Van den Berg

was appointed Special Professor of Experiencing and Valuing Nature and Landscape in 2012 on behalf of the National Fund for Rural Areas (Stichting Nationaal Groenfonds).

Regarding PhD research, the increase is due to:

- the increase in profiling of our research expertise thus **attracting more external PhD researchers** to URSI. Employed PhD researchers are increasingly being funded externally (e.g. by RWS, HAPS, and the University Campus Fryslân, and internationally through NICHE projects). International PhD researchers are also increasingly applying to enter the Graduate School with their own fellowship. In addition, the University of Groningen has special PhD trajectories within the Ubbo Emmius fellowship programme.

1.3 Issues to address

Strengths

- we are a faculty undergoing change; growing from a small to a small-to-medium sized faculty with 20 FTE research staff. This makes us less vulnerable than before; it also makes us more capable of positioning ourselves – on the basis of tWIST – within the global academic community
- the increase in more international, young and externally trained staff has opened up our Faculty to the outside world and to new research attitudes; it also made us more dynamic
- the increase in non-tenured staff has made us more flexible and dynamic
- the hiring of the Endowed Chair and professors with international research reputations, of the Rosalind Franklin Fellows and the establishment of internal tenure track positions has enabled us to improve the quality of our research
- our new hiring policy ensures that the research of new staff members fits within tWIST, and we have also hired three Special Focus Assistant Professors who conduct research across departments, with both developments supporting us in the move towards one unified and integrated research programme
- following the increase in research FTEs we have been able to start professionalizing our research processes

Weaknesses

- the role of the Research Advisory Group as a think-tank (in its original form) has served its purpose with the establishment of tWIST. The URSI-GS Board should be re-established and its role clearly defined, distinguishing it from that of the future role and composition of the RAG
- the imbalance between research staff and the increasing number of PhD researchers creates challenges in terms of PhD supervision, for example relying on assistant professors as daily supervisors, the need to organize group courses for PhD researchers
- PhD researchers are increasingly receiving only three years of funding, while the time needed to complete a PhD is generally longer
- the increase in international staff in the Faculty implies the need to further develop the international research environment and intercultural competences of all staff
- while we have begun to professionalize our research processes, there is still a lot to be done, especially in the Graduate School (see B10)

Opportunities

- the development of more courses by the University of Groningen Graduate School on general research competences such as writing proposals, project management, English language and intercultural competences will facilitate the research of our PhD candidates within our own Graduate School

PART B: RESEARCH PROGRAMME TWIST

1. Objectives & Research Area: *Getting to know tWIST*

1.1 Research Mission and Programme: tWIST – towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation

Our vision is of a society which is spatially transformed in ways that allow for high levels of wellbeing and innovation

Our mission as a faculty is to undertake and disseminate world-leading and highly distinctive research which helps to realize this vision

Our mission to realize this vision obviously remains unfinished business and the title of the research programme tWIST – towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation – is therefore meant to capture the positive and normative aspects of our research and also reflect the fact that this is an ongoing process.

Our research mission and programme rests on the three threads of wellbeing, innovation and spatial transformation. The links between *Wellbeing* and *Innovation* capture the relationships between the level of human development and the processes of change and improvement which bring about this development. The research agenda of URSI is unique in that it examines and interprets these relationships in terms of processes of *Spatial Transformation* taking place in society. Societies and individuals strive to improve their *wellbeing*, their quality of life, happiness, and their ability to influence these outcomes, and this is driven by *innovation* – by continuous processes of change and improvement. One aspect of this process is increasing human mobility, which radically changes the geographical distribution of *wellbeing* and *innovation*. These changes both drive and are driven by geographical mechanisms, and the rural and urban consequences of these *spatial transformations* impact differentially on issues of ageing, health, governance, technology, planning, entrepreneurship, culture, investment and housing. As such, spatial transformation and mobility are not as promising for everyone or everything to the same extent, and greater mobility implies increasing differences between people in terms of their stake in society and their ability to influence and determine their own destinies. This raises many questions concerning the individual and collective sense of belonging and locational behaviour.

Our mission is to conduct *world-leading*, *distinctive* and *policy-relevant* research that aims to reveal these complex interrelationships.

The *world-leading* nature of different aspects of our research derives from our goal to continuously produce work which is communicable to the global academic community and publishable in world-leading research outlets. While our research encompasses issues which operate across the geographical scale – from a very local level to global dimensions – all of our research aims to be highly original, and capable of directly engaging with scholars, stakeholders and observers around the world.

The *distinctive* character of our research is that it explores the role which place, space, identity and culture play in the spatial and demographic transformation of society from a uniquely multi-methodological perspective. Our research spans and integrates a range of qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches to both theoretical and applied geographical research. Working in teams, the multi-methodological approaches we employ combine case study,

taxonomic, statistical, GIS and econometric models of research in a coherent, consistent and seamless manner.

The *policy relevant* features of our research derive from the issues we investigate, while the ways we investigate them also lend themselves naturally to policymaking. Our research is built on evidence and experience, while encountering issues of perception and identity. This provides for both a grounded and nuanced understanding of individual and social behaviour as a driver of, and a response to, spatial transformation. This allows for coherent policy analysis, design and evaluation.

Each of the research clusters within URSI contributes different insights and aspects to the overall research theme *towards Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation*. The broad field of geography, spatial planning and demography investigates the role which space, place, location and distance play in our communities and societies. We employ a range of qualitative, quantitative, micro and macro research methodologies to discern these issues and to help improve wellbeing, to encourage innovation and to increase our understanding of spatial transformation processes. The research work undertaken is also supported by the use of advanced geographical information systems (GIS). Appendix 13.1 indicates the research expertise of all staff in URSI in detail.

The four distinct research clusters thus reflect the different methodological and topical emphases we have developed over several years and each of the individual research clusters has a research sub-agenda which explicitly operates under the overall umbrella of tWIST. The four research sub-agendas of the four clusters are:

1. *Place, Identity and Wellbeing*
2. *Population and Wellbeing in Context*
3. *Economy and Place*
4. *Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation*

tWIST contributes to and complements the University of Groningen's *Healthy Ageing, Sustainable Society* and *Energy* research priorities. Society is ageing and also becoming more geographically mobile. The outcome of this is that growing social inequalities in terms of wellbeing, health and wealth are being mirrored by emerging spatial inequalities. These are major issues faced by contemporary society, for which URSI is uniquely placed to provide coherent policy analysis, design and impact assessment. Section B2 on the Research Environment, Section B6 on Earning Capacity, and Section B7 on Academic Reputation, specify our contribution to the University's research priorities of Healthy Ageing and Sustainable Society in particular.

1.1.1 Research cluster on Place, Identity and Wellbeing

Complementing URSI's research theme of tWIST and the University's focus areas of *Healthy Ageing, Sustainable Society* and *Energy*, the research cluster examines issues of *place, identity and wellbeing*. In particular, we explore the relationships between people and place, and the social experience of transformations in rural and regional communities. We seek to undertake theoretically informed, applied social research that contributes to policy and practice, as well as making a theoretical contribution. Our research is integrative, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, spanning social and cultural geography, landscape studies, rural studies, social impact assessment and tourism studies, as well as connecting with kindred disciplines such as rural and environmental sociology, environmental psychology, gender studies, social gerontology and other disciplines represented in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, including demography, economic geography and planning. We use qualitative and quantitative methodologies and have a particular interest in innovative methods, including visual

methodologies and location-based applications (social GIS). We study the lived experiences of local peoples around the world.

We approach the issues of place, identity and wellbeing from various angles, including community engagement; ageing and wellbeing; innovation and rural transformation; heritage; historical landscape change; perception and evaluation of nature and landscape; nature and health; death and burial; entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility; employment opportunities; housing and the living environments of various groups within society; social impact assessment; social aspects of new technology; governance of places; social aspects of agriculture and farming; social aspects of natural resource management; and visitor and host experiences of tourism.

Our research embraces the social relationships between people and places, emotional geographies, and the experience of spatial transformation. We believe that knowing one's 'place' is fundamental to the formation of human identity and wellbeing. Forms of cultural expression such as art, architecture, ritual and language, and an understanding and appreciation of nature and landscape all interact with the physical environment in the creation of our individual and communal life stories. As such, the ways in which we construct and transform spaces and places can be seen as manifestations of our imagination and self-awareness. In this way, we make sense of, define and celebrate our personal and collective identities, communities and localities.

1.1.2 Research cluster on Population and Wellbeing in Context

The research cluster on Population and Wellbeing in Context focuses its research (embedded in the Population Research Centre, since 1991) on population issues in a broad sense, and on the consequences of these issues for wellbeing, against the sociocultural and spatial background. We study traditional demographic topics such as fertility, mortality and migration, as well as population decline, health, ageing, nutrition, family relationships, household formation and dissolution, residential mobility and housing. Our research is internationally oriented and our projects are situated in various regions and countries in both the global North and the global South. Our theoretical approach emphasizes how individual life courses develop in the meso and macro contexts of households, families, health systems, regions and countries. We use a wide range of data derived from population registers and statistical offices, surveys, in-depth interviews and observations. We analyse this data using methods from analytical demography, multivariate statistical analysis and qualitative analysis. Part of our research moves beyond analysis and uses participatory methodologies, including the capabilities approach. These participatory methods offer us additional lines of research that follow a more community-based development agenda, as is currently advocated and emphasized by many international development organizations.

Our research is first and foremost related to the element of wellbeing in the tWIST research programme. All of our research projects are motivated to understand the consequences of the phenomena we study for wellbeing; in many studies we explicitly make the link to wellbeing or health outcomes by using them as the dependent variables in our analyses. The element of spatial transformation is apparent in our research on population decline and its consequences: on migration; on place-making in healthy ageing and community involvement; and on population issues at the macro level of regions and countries (e.g. on health and mortality patterns). Our research is also concerned with social innovation, for example, in work on coping with population decline and on the empowerment of older people.

1.1.3 *Research cluster on Economy and Place*

This research cluster focuses on the issues surrounding the performance, spatial transformation and interactions between economic agents, institutions and factors of production within an explicitly spatial context. The specific research topics currently being investigated include the role played by higher education institutions in promoting regional knowledge spill over; human capital and the migration behaviour of university graduates; the impacts of technological change on firm productivity; entrepreneurship and regions; social capital and its impacts on international migration behaviour; agglomeration and industrial clustering; gender, organizations and labour markets; the evaluation and effectiveness of labour market policy; the economic geography of globalization; the regional impact of creativity, trust, happiness and community engagement; landscape valuation and ecosystem services; real estate markets and local economic development; the procurement of public goods; social capital and local governance; social engagement and neighbourhood dynamics; and the evolution and change in European regional policy. Our analytical approach generally adopts a place-based way of thinking and emphasizes the role which the local context plays in shaping economic behaviour and outcomes.

Our research dovetails with each of the key elements of the tWIST research programme, while our portfolio of research projects reflects a wide-ranging approach to the identification and measurement of wellbeing and innovation in a society undergoing spatial transformation. Our work necessarily involves collaborations with colleagues from each of the other research clusters within tWIST, and these collaborations operate on many different levels. Recently, we have increased our emphasis on incorporating and assessing the impact of demographic change, and in particular of societal ageing, in various lines of enquiry. Examples of projects here include the impact of local population decline on local entrepreneurship, the links between population ageing and changing housing demand, the links between population decline, local labour market performance and the housing market, and the optimal design of public procurement. In addition, we are currently investigating the relationship between regional variations in wellbeing and other influences on regional resilience, including cultural factors and as economic indicators of innovation and productivity. Working with our colleagues from each of the tWIST research clusters, as well as with international collaborators, we are also increasingly focusing on regions facing decline or adverse shocks, such as vulnerable ecosystems (e.g. the UNESCO world heritage Wadden wetlands) or post-disaster situations.

1.1.4 *Research cluster on Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation*

The research cluster on Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation has a close relationship with the discipline of Spatial Planning. It contributes to the overall research agenda of tWIST by:

- *Clarifying* wellbeing through notions of sustainability, capability, quality of life, liveability, adaptiveness and resilience
- *Interpreting* spatial transformation in terms of urban change, complexity and capacities
- *Conceptualizing* these insights to create input for the theoretical debate and the empirical understanding of Dutch, European and Southeast Asian planning practice
- *Proposing* innovations in terms of institutional design and policy improvement

The cluster's research agenda reflects our drive to understand ongoing transformations of space and place as co-evolving institutional, physical and social environments. We aim to develop new opportunities to intervene in physical and social structures to enhance the quality of life. Such interventions are the result of complex interactions between various physical and social factors, as well as institutional actors and community stakeholders, and are designed to operate within democratic, political and policy processes so as to improve social wellbeing.

Sudden events, unpredictable outcomes and uncertain contexts draw traditional conceptions of planning into question. Achieving concerted action in such situations is very daunting but at the same time crucial. How planners can, do and should operate given these complexities is a central concern of all research undertaken within our group. All our research shares this common perspective on spatial planning when conceptualizing and framing the complex interplay of multiple institutional, organizational and social realities with their accompanying material realities, thereby enhancing an understanding of choice, policymaking and the planning of space and place. We acknowledge and emphasize that the full understanding, predictability or control of this interplay will be impossible. Planning therefore does not merely seek and build on certainties but also deals with uncertainties and processes of non-linear change.

Our joint and main project thus addresses the issue of how to undertake planning within environments that confront uncertainty, non-linearity and discontinuous change. Our aim is to understand ongoing spatial transformations and develop opportunities for governance intervention in complex physical and policy systems. Our goal is also to help establish capable and sustainable regions, cities and communities, contributing conceptual ideas and place-based institutional design. We explore promising linkages between planning theories and complexity sciences, design theory, institutional theories, capacity-building, contingency theory, and both structuralism and post-structuralism. On the basis of this common focus, our interests fan out into three partly overlapping themes which span three specific sources of uncertainty and three types of substance, namely: *Governing Urban Regions in Transition*; *Social and Community Engagements in Planning*; and *Integrated Development of Resources and Flows*. Research projects and activities within the research cluster may be positioned within one of the themes, but are generally located at the intersection of two or all three domains, as well as with domains within one or more of the other clusters within tWIST. Staff members, therefore, share common ground and various thematic coalitions. Our objects of study are also geographically varied. Qualitative methods for data collection and case study analysis prevail, with the intention to improve the conceptual debate.

1.2 Research clusters and tWIST

The explicit intention of these four individual research sub-agendas is to focus attention on the specific lines of research in which we have strength and scale within the overall tWIST programme, and also to better facilitate the linking of different methodological approaches across URSI and within the context of tWIST. Our overall research programme combines different methodological approaches and priorities, and each of these sub-agendas contribute directly to the building and strengthening of one or more of the threads explored by tWIST.

At present, the research clusters still primarily represent the former departments and research programmes, although more research staff have been exchanged between the clusters (see also Introduction) and more researchers from different clusters are now collaborating in joint projects or exploring temporary themes that are emerging between the clusters, such as regional development, healthy ageing, population decline, and urban and regional governance (for more details see B3). The aim is to increase the exchange of research expertise between researchers from the four clusters, making use of expertise in other domains and thus leading to even more collaboration and the development of new themes, and thus to a higher quality of research.

1.3 Issues to address

Strengths

- tWIST, with its three research strands and four constitutive research clusters, integrates research in the Faculty, with researchers increasingly working together and sharing research expertise
- tWIST facilitates the development of a common research-related language and discourse spanning topics and methodologies, and is a powerful binding force helping to foster greater self-awareness of capacity and critical mass
- we have an increasing faculty-wide sense of identity and mutual visibility in terms of research capabilities and agenda
- increasing levels of motivation, self-belief and initiative on the part of junior staff
- more panoramic, faculty-wide perspective regarding FTEs and appointments

Weaknesses

- tWIST is not yet sufficiently integrated: further integration and synergy can be achieved by sharing research expertise across research clusters
- it is a challenge to emphasize cross-disciplinary work and at the same time retain the advantages of participation in global disciplinary research fields that have their own peer groups, organizations (such as scholarly associations), activities (including conferences) and outlets (such as journals).

2. Research Environment & Embedding: *the local and the global tWIST*

In terms of positioning, we see tWIST as being set squarely within a context in which a broad reconsideration of grand societal challenges is taking place worldwide – as reflected in the publication of key documents, including the 2009 Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report and the Franco-German report on measuring societal progress – as well as being closely linked to the issues tackled in key reports dealing with local place-based and spatial challenges published by institutions such as the European Commission (2009), the OECD (2011, 2012) and the World Bank (2010). As a research faculty, we see our role as explicitly engaging with these wider societal debates, while at the same time also finding ways to relate these higher level discourses to more immediate challenges in the local and regional context. The local and regional embedding of our research is longstanding, as is demonstrated in previous self-evaluations. In other words, it is critical for us to get the balance between global and local engagement right in all aspects of our research, and finding ways to achieve this balance has been central to our research strategy.

To attain this balance, we have had to consider two important issues: positioning and relevance. We have had to consider the positioning of our research in the context of current global scientific debates and also the societal relevance of our research for the local regional context. Both the global and local dimensions are critical for us. On the one hand, we need continued exposure to, and engagement with, global and international debates in order to ensure awareness amongst our URSI members of the current research frontiers. On the other hand, we aim to consider the practical implications of these debates at the local, regional and international levels, in order to fulfil our valorization commitments to wider society as a regionally embedded but internationally renowned research university.

To achieve the desired global-local balance, we have also emphasized certain distinct and novel contemporary cross-cutting themes within the tWIST research programme. These bind together the four sub-agendas of the individual research clusters, which are also closely related to the specific demographic, quality of life and wellbeing challenges faced by the region of the northern Netherlands. These contemporary cross-cutting themes are not only related to regional development but also to the processes of ageing and demographic change, as well as the nature of urban and regional governance, and the interactions of each with regional development. While regional development research, including issues relating to our own region, has always been strongly emphasized in the Faculty, within tWIST this expertise has now been integrated with other strong lines of research in URSI (that is, with the broader themes of healthy ageing, population decline, wellbeing and liveability) while the focus on our own region has been extended to and integrated with existing expertise on the national, European and international levels. We believe that this is a novel and critical step forward for us. Our aim is to explicitly incorporate the topics of ageing and demographic change as well as the nature of urban and regional governance into all of our discussions of wellbeing, innovation and spatial transformation, and to do this in ways which build both critical mass in our research activities and also stronger links between the various research initiatives. Our intention is to ensure a tighter knit of our various research threads while also ensuring closer connections to the local context, while we have sought a stronger embedding of our research in the local context, at the same time we have also become more focused on the national, European and global levels. Section B3 provides examples of these contemporary research themes.

These cross-cutting themes also strongly relate to the University's three research priorities of Healthy Ageing, Sustainable Society and Energy, all of which reflect the key challenges faced by many parts of the northern Netherlands region and beyond.

Population ageing and complex, often adverse, demographic dynamics are a reality for many regions. Finding ways to foster improvements in health, education, entrepreneurship, innovation, good governance and community engagement in the context of these complex demographic shifts is an urgent priority. Several of our research projects (see Appendix 13.11 and www.rug.nl/ursi/projects*) in the northern Netherlands (including work with OECD) illustrate this, as does the L'Aquila-Abruzzo project in Italy (with OECD), our research for the North of England Futures Commission, our collaboration across the German border on coastal management, and our research on ageing and wellbeing in India. In declining and ageing regions, the challenges associated with promoting regional resilience are very different from regions facing population growth, and at URSI we have intentionally made these issues a priority, not only for local benefit. At the same time, building expertise regarding these issues also allows us to offer distinctive insights into the wider global debates.

2.1 Research collaborations

URSI has established a wide network of research collaborations both within the University of Groningen and at the national, European and global levels. Appendix 13.3 describes our international collaborations in more detail.

University level

URSI researchers are *strongly embedded* in the University's research networks, and play key roles in the development of the University's research themes of Healthy Ageing (Hutter) and Sustainable Society (McCann, de Roo, Woltjer, J. van Dijk, Van der Vlist). Within the latter theme, URSI researchers participate in the former Instituut voor Integratie en Sociale Weerbaarheid (ISW), which unites seven University of Groningen faculties. In 2013, the ISW became responsible for the University research theme of Sustainable Society.

In particular, there are interfaculty research collaborations with the Faculty of Medical Sciences, such as the Healthy Ageing: Population and Society (HAPS) programme, undertaken with the Department of Epidemiology (UMCG) and the Department of Sociology (GMW); and IROHLA, a FP7 programme on health literacy in older people in collaboration with the Department of Public Health (UMCG) and the Department of Communication within the Faculty of Arts. In 2013, a new OECD project entitled 'How's life in your place?', started in the northern Netherlands, in conjunction with the Faculty of Medical Sciences and the Faculty of Economics and Business. These interfaculty collaborations are expected to be enhanced and strengthened by future collaboration with NIDI-KNAW (see below). URSI also participates in the Groningen Globalization Centre (GGC), the former CDS.

It is expected that interfaculty PhD or other research projects will increase in the near future, given the development of the University's research priorities of Healthy Ageing, Sustainable Society and Energy. Interfaculty research projects imply interdisciplinary research, which is very stimulating but also more challenging, as concepts, theories and the ways of conducting research can differ considerably across disciplines.

Regional & national levels

There are strong research relationships in the fields of regional development, liveability, healthy ageing and population decline with other knowledge institutes in the northern Netherlands, including the Hanze Hogeschool of Applied Sciences in Groningen, Stenden University of Applied Sciences in Leeuwarden, the Wadden Academy, and the University Campus Fryslân

(UCF). Several joint PhD research projects have been defined in our collaboration with UCF. The research network in the northern Netherlands has been strengthened by an active societal network: many research activities are conducted in partnership with societal stakeholders (see B8 and Appendix 13.12). At the international level within the region, the cross-border research relationships with knowledge institutes in Germany (e.g. the Universities of Oldenburg and Bremen) focusing on coastal zone management are increasing (also stimulated by the University).

URSI is embedded in the national Graduate School (Nethur) in which Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam, Delft University and the Radboud University of Nijmegen all participate. URSI researchers also work with Wageningen University, especially on rural development, tourism, cultural landscapes and social impact assessment. In the period under review, the role of Nethur decreased due to the increasing role of local graduate schools. Collaboration is primarily visible in the Nethur courses for PhD students (see for more information, Section B10 Next Generation).

There are particularly strong linkages and joint research projects with research institutes in The Hague. These include research on demographic and societal change with the KNAW-NIDI (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute NIDI) and Statistics Netherlands (CBS); and on liveability and regional development, regional labour market policy, graduate migration and the knowledge valorization of institutes of higher education with the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) and Platform31. These research collaborations are strengthened by societal collaborations such as that with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, in particular on sustainable infrastructure with the RWS (see Section B8 and Appendix 13.12). In December 2013, the University decided to engage in a major – University-wide – research collaboration on demographic and societal change with NIDI-KNAW (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute) in The Hague, beginning January 2014. Four University of Groningen faculties will be involved: our own Faculty of Spatial Sciences, the Faculty of Medical Sciences (UMCG), the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (GMW) and the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB).

Europe

Within Europe, URSI participates in several European research networks, including the Migration Network, the European Doctoral School of Demographic Research (EDSD), and various research networks, symposia and doctoral school programmes organized by the European Regional Science Association (ERSA) and the Regional Studies Association (RSA).

There are many collaborations with other European research institutes, particularly in Germany, the UK and Sweden (for details, see Appendix 13.3). The research projects with German institutes on coastal zone management, mentioned above, provide a good example of regional-European research collaborations, also stimulated by the University.

World

At the global level, in 2013 URSI had especially strong relationships with research institutes in Indonesia, China and India. Currently, we are working on joint research projects (see Appendix 13.3 and 13.11), joint supervision of PhD researchers (see Appendix 13.2 and 13.10) and have international students undertaking our (Research) Master's programmes. We believe that the combination of research and teaching in these collaborations makes them even stronger, and capacity-building in research easier and more effective. A good example of this is the research collaboration on urban transformation, wellbeing and planning with partners in Indonesia (Woltjer). Indonesian students are currently participating in the MSc in Environmental and Infrastructure Planning, while PhD researchers (Hudalah, Mustajab, Mohadrja, Rahayu),

postdoc researchers (Hudalah) and Research Master's students are all participating in our research programme, which is not only generating high-quality academic output but also contributing to capacity-building and policy innovation. Funding comes from the Indonesian government, NUFFIC and the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

In summary, it is apparent that we are highly active in a large research network, although tWIST is not yet as visible as we would like. Our objective is to profile our specific expertise in tWIST to students across the world, to strengthen and deepen our existing collaborations at the local, national, European and international levels, and to develop new collaborations through the contacts of our URSI researchers. For more information see draft Internationalization Plan 2014-2020.

The embedding of tWIST is further illustrated by the presence of guest researchers and visitors to the Faculty, as is illustrated in Appendix 13.15 with a list of topics for our lunch seminars.

2.2 Benchmarking tWIST

In terms of international benchmarking, there are a range of different institutions from around the world with which we can compare ourselves, which assists us in maintaining a global perspective on research debates. While we have four different but interwoven research strands in the Faculty, when we compare ourselves to others it is typically the case that they have between one to three of these strands. Due to the heterogeneity of the institutions we observe, we do not have formal benchmarking indices against which we compare ourselves, but rather we observe their research initiatives and outputs to assist in the assessment of our own actions.

Besides the international research institutes that we collaborate with (see above), the type of institutions that we also compare ourselves to internationally include:

- Department of Geography and Environment, University of Southampton, UK
- Centre for Population Change (ESRC), University of Southampton, UK
- Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics, UK
- Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS), University of Newcastle, UK
- Regional Economics Applications Laboratory (REAL), Centre for Mobility and Spatial Planning, University of Ghent, Belgium
- University of Sheffield, Department of Geography, UK
- University of Waikato, Geographym Tourism and Environmental Planning Programme, New Zealand

2.3 Issues to address

Strengths

- extensive research expertise at both the local and regional levels and at the European and international levels
- positioning and linking of our research agenda to the wider University research agenda, playing a proactive role in the development of this agenda
- well embedded in the regional knowledge and research network
- good research relationships at the national level in The Hague
- extensive research collaborations in Asia (India, Indonesia, China)
- development of the regional and cross-border network of northern Netherlands-northern Germany

Weaknesses

- the integrated research programme (tWIST) is not yet sufficiently profiled in the outside world as well as within the scientific arena
- a challenge is to ensure that the younger generation of researchers continues to be exposed to the international research debates and developments, and gains international research experience

Opportunities

- the research foci of the University of Groningen, in particular Sustainable Society and the cross-over with Healthy Ageing
- increasing globalization, with its need for research training
- the new research collaboration between NIDI-KNAW and the University of Groningen, including the collaboration between four University of Groningen faculties

3. Working on & within tWIST

While Section A1 explains how tWIST was facilitated from the institutional point of view, this section focuses on how tWIST has been developed from within, or bottom up, through different URSI meetings: by the Research Advisory Group (RAG), at the URSI Away Days, the URSI lunch seminars, the URSI PhD Conference and through joint projects, joint research theme meetings, joint PhD supervision and joint coordination of the Research Master's programme. The objective of this approach was to make more use of research expertise across all disciplines and become more flexible in our research, as was recommended by the RRC 2007.

In the framework of this self-evaluation, URSI research events were evaluated (including possible future developments) by URSI researchers, including PhD candidates, during a lunch seminar (23 May 2013) and at a URSI Away Day (6 June 2013). Some of the major findings that are relevant to the external evaluation are described below.

3.1 Working on tWIST: the Research Advisory Group (RAG)

As outlined in the introduction, the Taskforce for Population Decline was established by the Faculty Board and consisted of the heads of the former research programmes, the Endowed Chair and the Vice-Dean of Research. The Taskforce was initially a think-tank, a group of people brainstorming about how to develop and deploy a joint research programme. Ideas that were developed in the taskforce – later called the Research Advisory Group (RAG) – were taken to URSI Away Days and shared with the other URSI researchers.

Since tWIST has been established and positioned as it is (see Introduction), URSI researchers have indicated at subsequent URSI Away Days that the RAG should turn its focus to research content matters and also include more young researchers, representing the different research clusters. The RAG would thus be considered the heart and brains of tWIST: connecting the subthemes and researchers within tWIST as an essential part of the further development of our research trajectory. These are issues which we intend to develop and act upon in the near future. In addition, as indicated in Section A1, the URSI-GS Board is re-established (see Section A1).

3.2 Working on and within tWIST: the URSI Away Days

URSI Away Days are organized to inform all URSI researchers about URSI matters, to discuss and evaluate policy changes or documents and to discuss the content of research projects and umbrella themes. In the period under review, URSI Away Days focused particularly on the joint development of tWIST, as reflected in the list of Away Days in Appendix 13.4.

Since the establishment of tWIST, URSI researchers have indicated that policy issues, which too often took precedence over the discussion of scientific content, should now be put aside to focus on research content again and discuss tWIST themes together. While the Away Days were originally organized away from the Faculty, in order to improve the level of attendance the meetings will now take place within the Faculty building.

3.3 Working with tWIST: URSI lunch seminars

URSI lunch seminars are organized for Thursdays by a team of PhD researchers and young research staff. The objective of the lunch seminars is to share information informally between staff members in the Faculty. While the meetings originally focused on research issues, since 2009 educational matters have also been included. Appendix 13.5 lists the topics discussed in

the URSI lunch seminars in the period under review. Lunch seminars may consist of presentations by URSI researchers, presentations by guest researchers, presentations by URSI management on specific URSI issues, such as the 2013 self-evaluation, and discussions of papers. While there was a temporary drop in the number of meetings in 2012, the lunch seminars are currently scheduled on a regular basis. Occasionally, the level of attendance is an issue, as a result of the other obligations faced by staff.

3.4 Working within tWIST: URSI PhD conferences

Since the early 2000s, URSI PhD conferences have been organized by PhD researchers twice a year. The URSI conference is a platform for PhD researchers to share their findings with other academic staff in the Faculty and practise their presentation skills. PhD candidates present their work-in-progress and receive feedback from their PhD peers, as well as comments from more senior researchers in the field.

The URSI conference meetings were evaluated positively: URSI researchers feel that they obtain an update on PhD research and share information about research in different research clusters. However, the level of attendance by senior staff can be an issue given their other obligations.

3.5 Working on tWIST in other research activities

In addition to these URSI meetings, tWIST is further developing through joint research projects, joint PhD supervision and the development of joint research themes.

In addition to the URSI meetings mentioned above, the research clusters also organize their own research meetings. Increasingly, small research networks that cross the borders of the research clusters are emerging, with researchers working on joint research themes. Examples include the Wellbeing and Ageing Network, the NNDC, working on population decline, and researchers working on mobility, coastal management and qualitative research.

In the framework of the present research collaboration with RWS, research has also been extended across the entire Faculty rather than being confined to the research cluster on Institutional Innovation and Spatial Transformation. Research on infrastructure – including research on the economics of infrastructure and the housing market (Economy and Place, and Population and Wellbeing in Context research clusters) – will soon be included.

The Ethical Committee is another example of the bottom-up development of tWIST. Until some years ago, the Faculty did not have an ethics committee, but on the initiative of Van Hoven, a committee was established to review, in particular qualitative primary data collection research projects in the field of wellbeing and health. The Ethical Committee consists of researchers from all four research clusters (currently: Van Hoven, Brouwer and Bailey and until 2012, Van der Meulen), and will be further developed to become more institutionalized within URSI-GS in the near future.

Within the Graduate School, the coordination of the Research Master's in Regional Sciences is in the hands of a team of researchers representing all four research clusters. As a consequence, Research Master's students are increasingly able to work in an interdisciplinary environment, combining research topics and methodologies studied within the different research clusters, and thus embodying tWIST.

Increasingly, although still in its infancy, PhD researchers are guided by supervisors from different research clusters (see Appendix 13.2 and 13.10). Traditionally, PhD researchers enter the Faculty with a single disciplinary focus. However, today, when applying for a PhD or for a

Ubbo Emmius fellowship for Research Master's students, candidates are required to write a research proposal that fits within tWIST. The selection procedure involves the heads of the research clusters and the Endowed Chair, thus ensuring the projects are embedded within tWIST. Supervision by researchers from at least two research clusters is also encouraged.

3.6 Issues to address

Strengths

- the RAG's function as a think-tank has been essential in the development and establishment of tWIST
- the Away Days, lunch seminars and PhD conferences are important platforms for research exchange within URSI and have been essential for the development of tWIST from the bottom up
- emergence of joint meetings, joint projects on contemporary research themes, joint PhD supervision across research clusters
- increasing integration of expertise of URSI researchers in new research themes in the fields of regional development, healthy ageing, population decline, liveability and wellbeing (i.e. in tWIST)

Weaknesses

- at present, the role of the RAG (in comparison to the URSI-GS Board, see Section A1) is not clear
- URSI Away Days have focused too much on policy matters over recent years at the expense of research content
- attendance levels at URSI meetings could be higher
- not yet sufficient integration in terms of joint research meetings, joint projects, research themes, joint supervision (sharing research expertise)
- ethical committee not yet institutionalized and mainstreamed within our research programme

4. Quality and scientific relevance of the research

The quality and scientific relevance of our research is illustrated by several indicators. We will focus on:

- the quality of our publications, the type and impact scores of the journals in which we publish
- the percentage of publications in top 10% and top 25% of disciplinary journals
- the four key publications of all senior and junior researchers
- the research areas in which we profile ourselves and/or are involved in innovation

4.1 Publications

As indicated in Table V (Section B5), and illustrated by our output listed in Appendix 13.6, the number of international peer-reviewed publications by URSI increased considerably in the period under review (see further B5).

4.2 Impact scores of journals

Some of the high-ranking journals in which our research has appeared, include: *Journal of Economic Geography* (IF: 2.6³); *European Journal of Epidemiology* (IF: 5.118); *Journal of Regional Science* (IF: 2.279); *Journal of Peasant Studies* (IF: 5.805); *Progress in Human Geography* (IF: 4.489); *Journal of Environmental Management* (IF: 3.057); *Applied Geography* (IF: 2.779); *Journal of Economic Geography* (IF: 2.6); *Journal of the American Planning Association* (IF: 2.319); *Demography* (IF: 2.305); *Population, Space and Place* (IF: 1.861); *Urban Studies* (1.493). An overview of all of the journals in which we published, including impact factors, is presented in Appendix 13.8.

4.3 Publications in top 10%, top 25%

Table IV presents the number of peer-reviewed articles per year in top journals (10% and 25%), including the percentage of all peer-reviewed articles published in a top journal. The ranking is based on ISI categories. Each journal has been ranked within its own discipline. A list of all top publications is presented in appendix 13.7. Please note that the ranking for all years is based on impact factors in 2012, and thus could lead to a misinterpretation of earlier years.⁴

Table IV: Number of publications in top journals

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL
Total number of scientific publications	25 (100%)	41 (100%)	50 (100%)	62 (100%)	64 (100%)	79 (100%)	321 (100%)
Publication in Top 10% journal	6 (24%)	2 (5%)	5 (10%)	9 (15%)	7 (11%)	6 (8%)	35 (11%)
Publication in Top 25% journal	9 (36%)	11 (27%)	11 (22%)	22 (35%)	20 (31%)	24 (30%)	97 (30%)

The percentages fluctuate in the period under review. The highest percentage of peer-reviewed articles were published in top journals in 2007, accounting for 36% our publications. Since 2010, the percentage of top publications remains fairly stable, just above 30%.

³ All impact factors are from 2012.

⁴ As consensus on this ranking was reached between the faculties of Groningen, Utrecht and Amsterdam, this limitation will not lead to difficulties in the comparison of faculties.

4.4 Key publications

The following four articles were considered to be the key tWIST publications by the four heads of the research clusters (see links for full text articles). The reason for the selection is included.

- **Bijker, R.A., Haartsen, T., Strijker, D.** 'Migration to less popular rural areas in the Netherlands: Exploring the motivations', *Journal of Rural Studies* 28 (2012) 490-498, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.07.003>
This paper is highly indicative of the issues addressed within the Place, Identity and Wellbeing research cluster. With PhD researcher Rixt Bijker as first author, the paper investigates the characteristics and motivations of migrants who have moved to less popular rural areas in the northern Netherlands. The paper is important in gaining a full understanding of rural decline. These areas can be attractive to people for a variety of reasons. A significant finding was that those who move to rural areas are not a homogenous group. In comparison to most papers on migration, this paper combined the motives for migration with the place attachment of those who moved. It is argued that areas considered 'less attractive' should not be regarded as such, because they do in fact attract newcomers. Potentially, the results and methodology will be applicable to all areas facing regional decline in an OECD context. At present, the first author is conducting research in the Economy and Place research cluster.
- **Mulder, C. H., & Malmberg, G.** 'Moving related to separation: Who moves and to what distance', *Environment and Planning A*, 43:11 (2011), 2589-2607. doi:10.1068/a43609. <http://www.envplan.com/epa/fulltext/a43/a43609.pdf>
This paper is a typical example of Mulder's research line 'Families, Households, Residence' within the Population and Wellbeing in Context research cluster. New theory was developed, and new hypotheses tested on whether ties to a residential location influence the decision to move on the occasion of separation or divorce, and how the impact of these ties differs by gender. The analyses were undertaken using Swedish register data, a promising, newly available type of data. The authors found that family members living close by had a surprisingly large impact on the likelihood of moving as well as on the distance moved.
- **Barca, F., McCann, P and Rodriguez-Pose, A.,** 'The Case for Regional Development Intervention: Place-Based versus Place-Neutral Approaches', *Journal of Regional Science*, 52.1 (2012)134-152. <http://repec.imdea.org/pdf/imdea-wp2011-15.pdf>
This paper has already become the fastest cited paper in the *Journal of Regional Science* in the last two years. The paper challenges the emerging consensus amongst many urban economists – in the wake of the 2009 World Development Report – that space-blind approaches to regional economic development are the most realistic. The paper uncovers the inconsistencies in these lines of argument and examines real cases relating to the developing world and the EU to demonstrate how limited these approaches are in reality. It then moves on to provide a justification of why place-based lines of thinking have an important place in public policy, based on a combination of economic geography and institutional issues.
- **Van Dijk, T.** 'Imagining future places: how designs co-constitute what is, and thus influence what will be', *Planning Theory* 10(2), (2011) 124-143. <http://plt.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/02/11/1473095210386656.full.pdf+html>
DOI: 10.1177/1473095210386656
The paper emerged from intensive discussions in the group about the true power of plans. Why does the world change when you draw up some idea? This paper touches on the core of both planning and cultural geography. It reviews literature on storytelling, persuasion and place construction, and points out that there are much more subtle and

mental processes going on in the deliberate changing of space than is often assumed in planning literature. The paper has a strong drive and a clear message. The editors of *Planning Theory* selected it as the most significant paper in their journal in 2011 and nominated it for the AESOP best paper prize. It is often cited in publications that are concerned with the persuasive power of concepts, ideas or plans.

4.5 Some of the other areas in which we profile ourselves/innovate (significant results)

Examining specific areas of our profile where we believe that the quality and originality of our work is appreciated in a variety of international and national arenas, the following topics/approaches/fields have been identified:

- *Regional Science* is a very strong part of the tWIST research programme as indicated by the research and academic activities of influential researchers such as McCann, Van Dijk, Van Wissen, Van der Vlist and Folmer
- *Population Geography*, as illustrated by the successful organization of the international conference in 2012-2013 (Mulder and team)
- *Emotional Geographies*, as illustrated by the successful organization of the international conference in 2012-2013 (Van Hoven and team)
- *Complexity Theory* has been adopted by Prof. de Roo and colleagues as a distinctive feature of their research approach to spatial planning, as illustrated in collaborations with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment
- *Research Collaboration* with RWS under the title 'Duurzame Wegen' (Arts and team)
- *Research on social aspects of sustainable governance* (Beaumont, Van Dijk, Parra Nova) as illustrated by EU-FP7 projects (FACIT, Pumah) and book volumes
- the adoption of the *Capability Approach* (Sen) and a focus on capacity-building applied by several URSI researchers (Woltjer, McCann, Haisma)
- the adoption of a *participatory approach in research* that i.e. including participants in research and aims at social change, in particular in the field of wellbeing, healthy ageing and liveability (Hutter, Meijering, Klaassens, Vanclay, several PhD researchers)
- *Social Impact Assessment* is another distinctive feature of our research, applied worldwide by Vanclay in numerous publications
- *Qualitative research* is a distinctive methodological feature of our research programme, as illustrated by several research projects that have adopted the approach and the Sage publication by Hutter, Hennink, Bailey (2010) which is in its second edition. Qualitative research also includes visual methods as developed by Van Hoven.

In addition, grants awarded (for example the NWO-VIDI grant to Haisma) are, of course, also considered to be indicators of the academic quality and scientific relevance of our research (see Section B7). Section B7 on Academic Reputation also summarizes other distinctive features that illustrate the quality of our research, while Section B5 presents our Output.

4.6 Issues to address

Strengths

- an increase in scientific publications (see further Section B5)
- profiling ourselves strongly in specific research areas, as indicated above

5. Output

5.1 Productivity

Table V presents the level of scientific and professional output by URSI. Between 2007 and 2012 we published 321 peer-reviewed journal articles in 165 different journals (see Appendix 13.6 and 13.8) across more than 40 different ISI categories. The number of international peer-reviewed articles increased from 25 in 2007 to 79 in 2012.

Our scientific publication output also consists of 113 book chapters in books published by 20 different academic publishers, and 25 monographs produced by 10 different academic publishers. The number of book chapters and monographs has been fluctuating over years, ranging from 9 book chapters in 2007 to 27 in 2008, and zero monographs in 2007 to 8 in 2012.

The number of PhD theses increased from 1 in 2007 to 11 in 2010. In 2013 there were 10 PhD thesis defences.

It may be concluded that there has been a steady increase in all scientific publications, from 35 in 2007 to 111 in 2012. This increase was accompanied by a decrease in the number of professional publications, from 100 in 2007 to 56 in 2012. In 2009 the focus shifted towards scientific publications: more scientific publications were published than professional publications.

The shift from professional publications to scientific publications reflects a major change in our publishing culture since 2000 (Self-Evaluation Report, 2006).

Please note that publications written by two or more URSI authors – of which we have quite a number, reflecting collaboration within tWIST (see Appendix 13.6) – were only counted once.

Table V: Total output

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	total
scientific articles, peer-reviewed	25	41	50	62	64	79	321
Scientific book chapters, peer-reviewed	9	27	26	11	23	17	113
Scientific monographs, peer-reviewed		6	4	4	7	8	25
PhD theses	1	4	8	11	8	7	39
total scientific publications	35	78	88	88	102	111	498
Professional publications	100	85	96	77	75	56	489
total publications	135	163	184	165	177	167	987

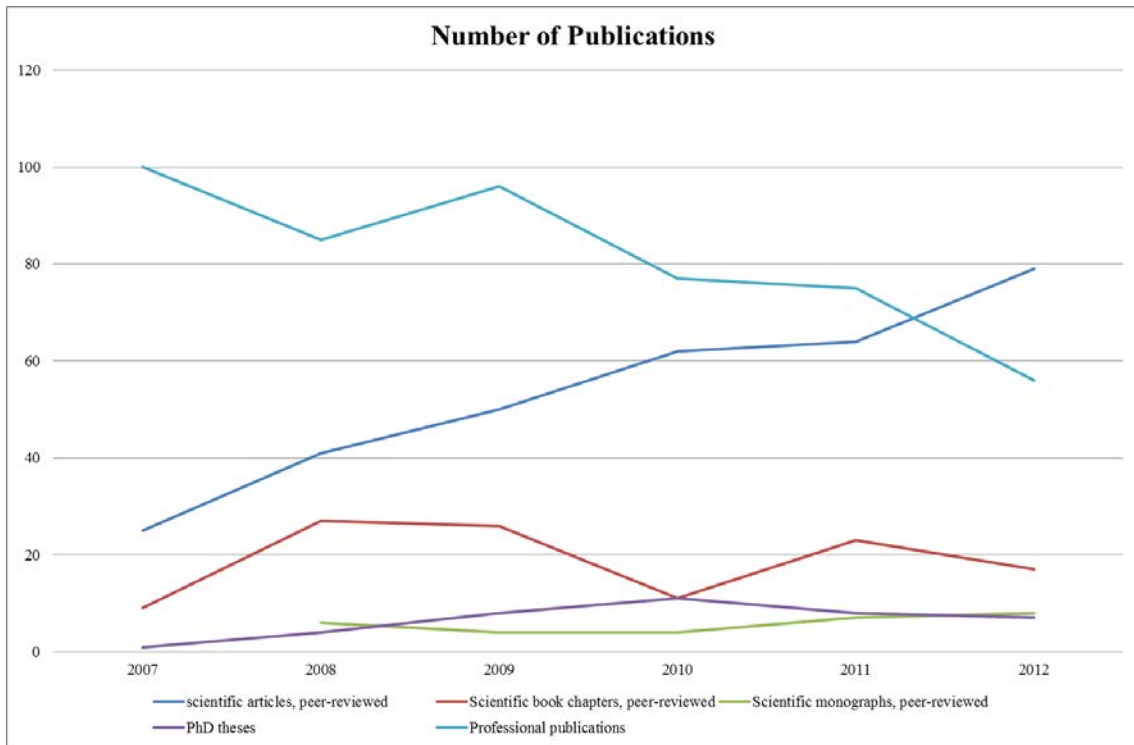


Figure 3: Number of publications

8.1.1 Output per input

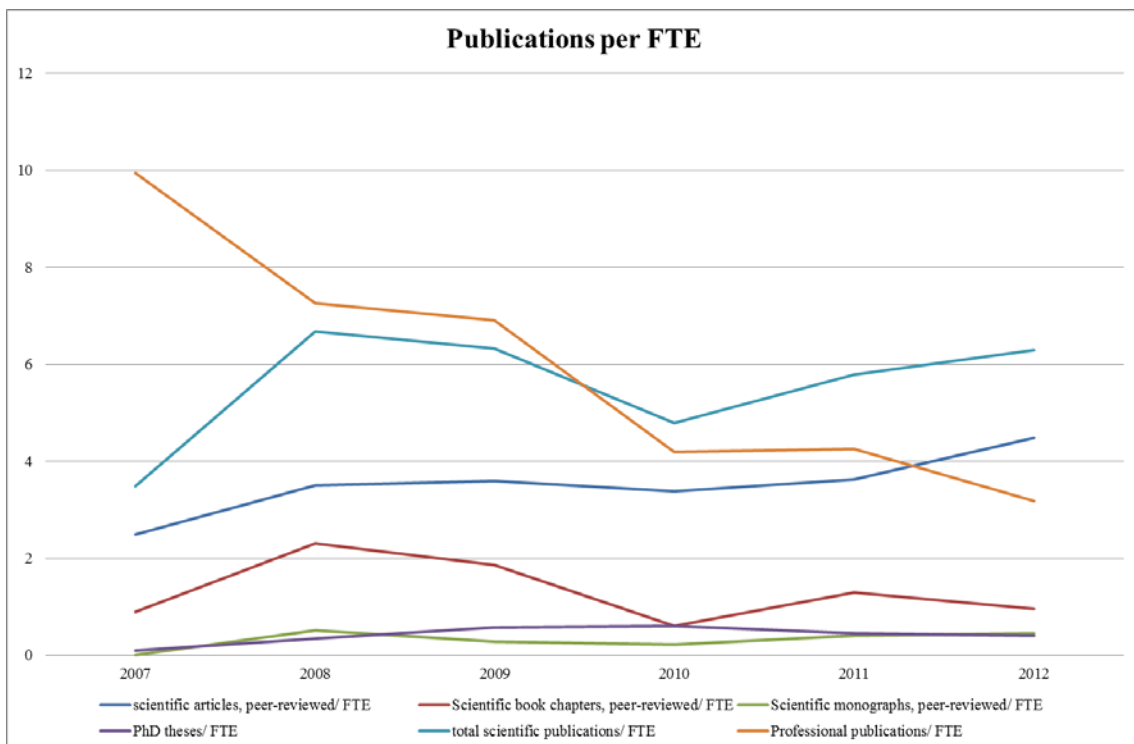


Figure 4: Publications per FTE from 2007 to 2012 (2012 based on the current rolling FTE numbers)

Figure 3 and Table VI were calculated using the current rolling FTE numbers which are listed in Table II. Figure 3 indicates that our scientific output per 1 FTE of research for all years is well above the Nethur norm of an average of two publications per 0.4 FTE research time. The

average number of scientific publications for each research FTE fluctuated from 3.48 FTEs in 2007 to 6.67 and 6.33 FTEs in 2008 and 2009, respectively, and 6.30 FTEs in 2012.

Table VI: Output per research FTE

URSI	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 ²	2012
Total RESEARCH FTE¹	10.05	11.7	13.9	18.36	17.63	17.63	20.55
Refereed Articles/FTE	2.49	3.50	3.60	3.38	3.63	4.48	3.84
Books/FTE	0.00	0.51	0.29	0.22	0.40	0.45	0.39
Book Chapters/FTE	0.90	2.31	1.87	0.60	1.30	0.96	0.83
PhD Theses/FTE	0.10	0.34	0.58	0.60	0.45	0.40	0.34
TOTAL scientific publications/FTE	3.48	6.67	6.33	4.79	5.79	6.30	5.40
<i>Professional Publications/FTE</i>	9.95	7.26	6.91	4.19	4.25	3.18	2.73

1 This is the total research FTE as presented in Table 1 in chapter 1.2.5

2 Publications per FTE, calculated with FTE of 2011

As mentioned above, the results presented in Figure 3 and Table VI were calculated using the current rolling FTE numbers, which are listed in Table II. However, there was a large increase in FTE between the 2011/12 and the 2012/13 academic years from 17.63 to 20.55. This large increase in research FTEs was the result of our strategic decision to appoint more junior staff with strong research potential. As they were all early career staff, and were appointed in the autumn of 2012, they were not able to contribute greatly to the overall 2012 publication or citation performance of the Faculty, because publishing involves time-lags. Therefore we calculated the 2012 research outputs per FTE using the FTE numbers from the previous year, which makes much more sense in this case.

In terms of the impact of our work in the wider international academic community, our overall journal citations were running at just under 700 ISI-WoS citations per annum and our Scopus citations were well over 1200 per annum. These figures represent more than a threefold increase in ISI citations per annum and a fourfold increase in Scopus citations per annum between 2007 and 2012. Given that our FTEs increased by a factor of 2 between 2007 and 2012 it is clear that our research impact more than outperforms our increase in FTEs. Again, if we remove the junior research staff who joined us in late 2012 and compare our citation scores to the 2011/2012 FTEs this implies that the FTEs increased by a factor of 1.75, with the impact of our increasing citation scores per FTE becoming even more evident.

5.1.1 Peer-reviewed articles

Table VII presents the ISI categories in which we published at least four articles. 65 Percent (210 articles out of 321) of our publications were published in these ISI categories. The remaining publications were either published in other ISI journals (30; 9%) or non-ISI journals (81; 25%). Please note that the journals mentioned here are sometimes included in more than one ISI category. For a list of journals in which publications occurred during the period of review, see Appendix 13.8.

Reflecting our Faculty's profile, research programme and our research sub-themes, the data indicate that we publish over a broad-ranging academic field, covering all of the aspects of spatial sciences in which the Faculty specializes. These include some 'outliers', for example, the ISI categories of Forestry, Clinical Neurology, and Anthropology.

Table VII: Publications in ISI categories

ISI-category	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	total
Geography	8	16	14	22	22	23	105
Economics	8	12	13	15	16	19	83
Environmental Studies	5	6	5	17	17	15	65
Planning & Development	4	4	11	7	3	9	38
Urban Studies	2	5	4	4	3	6	24
Demography	3	1	3	1	3	6	17
Public, Environmental & Occupational Health		2	1	3	6	2	14
Social Sciences, Biomedical		4			3	1	8
Transportation			3	2	1	2	8
Environmental Sciences	1		1	1		3	6
Management	1			1	2	2	6
Water Resources					1	4	5
Public Administration				1	2	1	4

5.1.2 Book chapters and monographs

In addition to peer-reviewed articles which accounted for the major part of our output, other scientific output was generated through book chapters and monographs. The Faculty produced 110 book chapters for 24 different academic publishers, as well as 27 monographs for 11 academic publishers. Appendix 13.9 lists the academic publishers of our books and the output per year.

5.1.3 Professional publications

In general, a decrease in the number of professional publications can be seen. This decrease reflects the changes in the position of research in the Faculty. Nevertheless, URSI will continue to publish professional publications – with the right balance between them and scientific publications – as such output is an indicator of the societal relevance of our research (see Section B8 and Appendix 13.9). Professional publications consist of reports, of articles for Rooilijn, Agora, Demos etc, and non-peer reviewed books.

5.2 PhD success rates

The number of PhD defences, 39 in total in the period under review, varied from 1 in 2007, to 11 in 2010, and 7 in 2012. In 2013, there were 10 PhD defences. There has been a slow increase in the number of PhD theses completed. Given the large inflow of new PhD researchers, the number is expected to increase in the near future. Appendix 13.10 provides more details about the PhD theses published in the period under review. It is quite interesting to observe that of all 39 PhD theses, about half were written by external PhD candidates, who were employed elsewhere but finalized their research under an URSI supervisor. In the overview, it can also be observed that the co-supervision of PhD researchers by URSI researchers from different research clusters increased from none between 2007-2010 to 1 in 2011 and 3 in 2012. With the development of tWIST, this number will increase in the future.

Table VIIIa indicates the success rates of PhD researchers with a contract from the University, and Table VIIIb the success rates of other PhD researchers such as those holding scholarships. External candidates – who do not have an official starting time – have not been included. We can observe the relatively low number of PhD researchers who discontinue; and also the highly successful group of PhD researchers starting in the year 2007 (employed: 71% graduated; non-

employed: 100% graduated within 4 and 5 years). The table also indicates the long duration of our PhD trajectories. Among the PhD researchers who graduated in the period under review, the average duration was 5 years and 3 months. The long duration can indeed be related to some outliers (PhD researchers needing more time to finalize their thesis, or being involved in additional research jobs), but in general we can conclude that the average duration of PhD trajectories is much higher than the expected 4 years. For shortening of the PhD duration, more intensive monitoring of PhD progress is needed, as well as professionalization of the PhD trajectory, e.g. by organizing PhD courses, enhancing entrance and progress criteria, etc. See also later in Section B10.

Table VIIIa: Employed PhD candidates

Starting year	Enrolment		Total	Success Rates				Total		
	Enrolment (M/F)			Graduated after ≤ 4 years	Graduated after ≤ 5 years	Graduated after ≤ 6 years	Graduated after ≤ 7 years	Total graduate	Not yet finished	Discontinued
2004	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
2005	-	2	2	-	-	1	1	2	-	-
2006	2	1	3	1	1	-	-	1	2	-
2007	3	4	7	1	1	2	1	5	1	1
2008	2	1	3	-	1	-	-	1	2	-
2009	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	-

Table VIIIb: Other PhD-candidates (not employed)

Starting year	Enrolment		Total	Success Rates				Total		
	Enrolment (M/F)			Graduated after ≤ 4 years	Graduated after ≤ 5 years	Graduated after ≤ 6 years	Graduated after ≤ 7 years	Total graduate	Not yet finished	Discontinued
2004	2	2	4	-	2	-	1	3	-	1
2005	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
2006	3	-	3	1	1	-	-	2	-	1
2007	2	3	5	2	3	-	-	5	-	-
2008	3	4	7	-	3	1	-	4	2	1
2009	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	-

5.3 Productivity strategy

5.3.1 Publication strategy: impact factors

The publication strategy of FRW/URSI has changed over the course of time, reflecting changes in the position of research in the Faculty. Traditionally, the main focus of the Faculty was on teaching and applied research, and the Faculty produced more professional articles and had less focus on scientific output. Over time, the Faculty has become more research-oriented and the focus has shifted to publications of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and monographs by academic publishers.

Another step taken in the period of review is that PhD theses now usually take the form of a series of articles rather than a monograph (the traditional form of a Dutch PhD thesis). Additionally, the teaching programme now focuses on research-based education in which tWIST plays a leading role. This integration of teaching and research activities can be further enhanced in the near future.

Given the figures above, it seems that we are ready for the next shift in research focus and publication approach. Each research cluster has their own strategy for publishing based on discussion and mentoring. These strategies are not based on formal policy documents but rather on our specialist knowledge of particular journals (highest impact scores, balancing of scientific

and professional outputs, speed of publication process, etc.) and tailored to the needs of and opportunities presented by our specific lines of enquiry. However, it does seem that now is an appropriate time to formulate a policy at URSI level which also recognizes the various types of output (PhD theses, international publications, professional publications).

As our mission is to deliver world-leading and highly distinctive research, we should be able to communicate our results on a high level, which can be enforced by a publishing strategy that aims to ensure that a higher proportion of our publications are in the top 10% **and** top 25% of journals within ISI categories (see Section 4.3).

5.3.2 *Open access publishing & repositories*

The Faculty does not yet have a formal policy with regard to open access publishing, particularly with regard to the financial aspects. URSI researchers are publishing in open access journals, with the heads of the research clusters broadly in favour of this. Some researchers have also been appointed to the editorial boards of open access journals. URSI researchers occasionally pay to be published in open access journals. Moreover, researchers who work in NWO programmes, for example, or in the collaboration with the University Campus Fryslân, in fact have access to special funding to publish in open access journals. The number of open access publications in the period under review is not reported here. However, we do believe that open access may be a very powerful tool for disseminating knowledge and is likely to become an increasing part of our research publication portfolio over the coming years.

The University has a general policy with regard to making research available to everyone. This is done through repositories, which are digital 'treasuries' containing the University's academic output. They form part of a national and international network (called DARE: Digital Academic Repositories). The design of the University's repositories has been updated in order to meet international standards and to make it easier for search engines such as Google Scholar, Yahoo! and Scirus to find the publications and assign a higher 'relevance ranking' to them. An overview of University repositories can be found on <http://ir.ub.rug.nl/>.

5.4 **Issues to address**

Strengths

- increase in number of scientific publications
- number of publications per research FTE is above the Nethur norm
- increase in scientific publications and decline in professional publications, illustrating the change in positioning of research in our Faculty
- professional publications are important as well, reflecting the societal relevance of our research (see Section B8)
- increase in number of PhD theses
- change in form of PhD dissertations from a monograph to a collection of scientific articles

Weaknesses

- the number of publications in ISI journals could be higher
- an overall URSI publication policy is lacking
- an overall policy regarding open access is lacking
- monitoring and differentiation of output is still lacking
- PhD success rates could be improved, mainly through professionalization of the Graduate School
- Long average duration of PhD trajectories

6. Earning Capacity

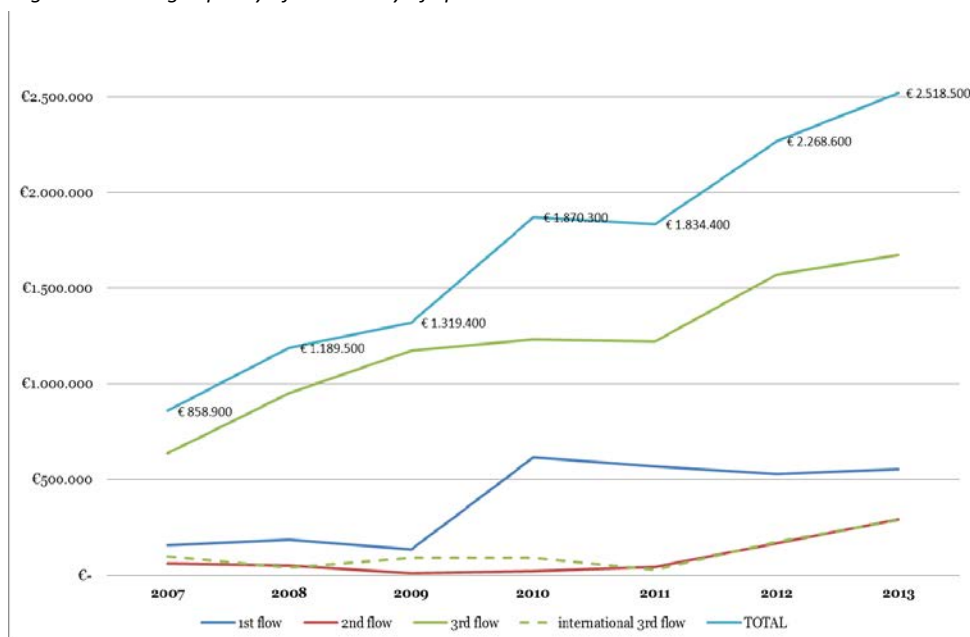
Figure 5 shows the earning capacity of URSI, classified into direct funding (first stream), research funding (second stream) and contract funding (third stream). A list of all projects (budgets over EUR 10,000) can be found in Appendix 13.11.

There was a strong increase in earning capacity in the period under review. Direct funding (first stream) increased through the creation of the Endowed Chair (McCann) in 2009 and the Rosalind Franklin Fellows (Haisma, Parra Novoa); through the funding of HAPS (Healthy Ageing: Population and Society), the joint research programme of the FRW, the GMW and the UMCG in the field of Healthy Ageing; and due to funding for the coordination of the Healthy Ageing research priority across the seven alfa-gamma faculties (Hutter).

In the period under review, research funding (second stream) also increased, but it remained at a much lower level than first and third-stream funding. Moreover, it consisted of several PhD (Noback, Sahu) and postdoc research projects (Hudalah, de Busser, Heinen, Bailey) funded by NWO and KNAW. In 2012, Haisma was awarded a VIDI grant. This constituted a major portion of the total research funding. Research funding reflects the scientific relevance of our research and should be enhanced in the future. URSI researchers do write VENI, VIDI, VICI and ERC proposals, with three VIDI proposals submitted in 2013 and four VENI proposals submitted in January 2014.

An almost continuous increase can be seen in contract funding (third stream). The dotted line represents the part of the third-stream budget that comes from international sources, such as EU projects. The collaboration with RWS contributes to a large extent. Other important funding sources are NICIS and Platform31, the University Campus Fryslân, and several ministries, provinces and municipalities. Contract funding reflects the societal relevance of our research.

Figure 5: Earning capacity of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences



The Faculty expects continued growth in earning capacity in the coming years, also given developments such as Horizon 2020. Since 2013, the Faculty has had a Funding Officer (Opsteegh) – in accordance with University policy – who keeps track of funding opportunities

and coordinates proposals. Her involvement is expected to enhance the submission of research proposals for external funding. At the University level, increasingly more staff are available to provide support (Department of Research & Valorization, Dean of Talent Development).

6.1 Issues to address

Strengths

- increase in research funding at PhD, postdoc and VIDI levels, reflecting the scientific relevance of our research
- increase in contract funding, reflecting the societal relevance of our research
- increase in European funding
- direct funding reflects the Faculty's central role in the development of the University research priority of Healthy Ageing

Weaknesses

- research funding still at a rather low level
- contract funding employs staff temporarily: to maintain the numbers in this group of non-tenured staff we need to ensure a continuous inflow of contract funding
- relatively young staff with inadequate experience in proposal writing
- a Funding Officer who has just started in the job

Opportunities

- Horizon 2020 with a focus on research issues related to tWIST
- embedding in European networks
- proposal support at University level

Threats

- overall, less funding available

7. Academic Reputation

In addition to the academic quality of our research, as indicated in B4, our academic reputation can also be deduced from the following indicators.⁵

7.1 Keynote lectures

Several senior staff members (including Vanclay, Van Dijk, Folmer, Mulder, Woltjer and McCann) have contributed several keynote speeches and lectures to international conferences.

7.2 Citation scores

As of 2012, overall journal citations for the Faculty were running at just under 700 ISI-WoS citations per annum and our Scopus citations were running at approximately 1200 per annum (see table IXa and b). These figures represent more than a threefold increase in ISI citations per annum and a fourfold increase in Scopus citations per annum between 2007 and 2012. We also know that our 2013 citation scores per FTE have increased at an even faster rate.

Between 2007 and 2012 we have more or less doubled our FTEs and more than maintained our ratio of papers published per FTE. A doubling of FTEs and of the total papers published per year, along with a doubling of citations per FTE, means that our overall annual international publication and citation performance has improved by a factor of 4 between 2007 and 2012.

Table IXa: Annual scopus citations per FTE

SCOPUS CITATION	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
FTE	9,46	10,4	13,08	16,89	16,19	20,58
# citations	363	266	537	723	1128	1231
scopus citations per fte	38,35	25,55	41,05	42,80	69,66	76,03 ¹
						59,81 ²

¹ Based on 2011 FTE allocation

² Based on 2012 FTE allocation

Table IXb: Annual ISI Web of Knowledge citations per FTE

ISI CITATIONS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
FTE	9,46	10,4	13,08	16,89	16,19	20,58
# citations	224	174	282	557	785	821
ISI citations per FTE	23,67	16,73	21,56	32,98	48,49	50,71 ¹
						39,89 ²

¹ Based on 2011 FTE allocation

² Based on 2012 FTE allocation

Within tWIST, constituted by *all* URSI researchers, highly cited researchers among the senior and mid-career staff are indicated in Table X (a) (ISI Web of Science index) and Table X (b) (Scopus index). The information is based on the citation scores reported in the ISI Web of Science and Scopus (January 2014).

⁵ Rather than presenting incomplete information in a table, we have decided to summarize the key findings.

Table X (a): **ISI-Web of Science** H-index and citation scores of a selection of researchers

Senior researchers	H-index	Lifetime total citations at end of 2012	Year of PhD defence
McCann	19	1227	1993
Mulder	14	596	1993
Vanclay	13	1045	1994
Mid-career researchers			
Janssen	8	164	2005
Beaumont	7	91	2000
Van Hoven	4	51	1999

Table X (b): **Scopus** H-index and citation scores of a selection of researchers

Senior researchers	H-index	Lifetime total citations at end of 2012	Year of PhD defence
McCann	21	1281	1993
Mulder	18	853	1993
Vanclay	17	1386	1994
Mid-career researchers			
Janssen	9	175 ⁶	2005
Beaumont	8	130	2000
Van Hoven	7	86	1999

Our conclusion is that we have both high-quality senior researchers and high-quality promising young researchers within tWIST.

7.3 Prizes and awards

Both senior and junior researchers have received prizes and awards. McCann received the 50th Anniversary Award for outstanding scholarship at the European Regional Sciences Association Congress, in Jonkoping, Sweden, in 2010. Folmer received the Fellow Award of the International Regional Science Association in 2010, and became Renowned Scholar at the Ministry of Education in 2010. Pellenburg became Doctor Honoris Causa at the University of Lodz in Poland in 2012. Emeritus Professors Willekens and Ashworth became Officers in the Order of Orange-Nassau (Dutch royal distinction) in 2011, for their effort and contribution to the academic world throughout their research careers. As both originate from other countries (Belgium and the UK), these distinctions can be considered a very special honour for their contribution to the academic world in the Netherlands.

Among the younger staff, PhD researcher Heike Delfmann received the 2nd Epainos Prize at the 52nd European Congress of the Regional Science Association International in 2012 for her paper 'Population change and new firm formation in urban and rural regions'. Also in 2012, PhD researcher Mihalis Kavaratzis won the outstanding paper award from the *Journal of Place Management and Development*. Eva Kibele received the Young Investigator Award from the German Society for Demography in 2012. In 2013, postdoc researcher Viktor Venhorst won the prestigious Gratama Science Award 'for innovative, socially relevant and influential research' with his thesis 'Smart move?: the spatial mobility of higher education graduates' and his policy-targeted publications. He also was runner up in the prestigious Tiebout Prize awarded by the Western Regional Science Association.

In 2013, PhD researcher Heike Delfmann also was runner up in the ERSa Summer School Best Paper Award, with her paper 'Starting a business in an ageing society: a UK-NL case study'.

⁶ There is an error in Scopus which mistakenly ascribed Janssen as being an author of one paper when this was not the case, and this mistake heavily distorts the Scopus citation scores. The numbers reported here are correct.

Over the past years, URSI researchers have been awarded honours for the 'Young Planner of the Netherlands and Flanders'. This award is based on papers submitted to a jury representing the Dutch Professional Organization for Urban Designers and Planners (BNSP) and the Flemish Organization for Space and Planning. In 2005 the award went to Christian Zuidema and in 2009 it went to Marc Beeftink. Stefan Hartman, Ward Rauws and Marc Beeftink were runners up in 2011, and Beeftink and Rauws were also runners up in 2010.

7.4 Research grants

Also research grants, as described in Section A1 and B6, add to our academic reputation.

7.5 Participation in boards of scientific organizations

URSI researchers play leading roles in scientific professional organizations. De Roo is President of AESOP (Association of European Schools of Planning), and Van Dijk, Van Wissen, Van der Vlist and McCann are board members of the Regional Science Association in various countries. Van Dijk became President of ERSA in 2013. Mulder is a member of the Council of the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) and of the Management Board of Housing Studies, while Hutter is Chairman of the Netherlands Demographic Society.

7.6 Editorships

URSI researchers also have various editorial roles. Examples are listed below:

- Chief Editors of international journals: *Papers in Regional Science* (J. Van Dijk), *Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences* (Folmer), *Briefs in Regional Science* (Folmer),
- Editors of international journals: *Papers in Regional Science* (McCann), *Spatial Economic Analysis* (McCann), *Review of Regional and Urban Development Studies* (McCann)
- Editors of international scientific books/series: SDU Spatial Sciences Planning Series (De Roo), Urban Planning and Environment and New Directions in Planning Theory, both at Ashgate (De Roo), New Horizons in Regional Sciences, Edward Elgar (McCann), Research Handbooks in Impact Assessment, Edward Elgar (Vanclay)
- Members of editorial boards: *Spatial Economic Analysis* (McCann), *Journal of Regional Science* (Folmer, McCann), *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* (Vanclay), *Housing Studies* (Mulder), *Regional Studies* (McCann), *International Regional Science Review* (McCann), *Growth and Change* (McCann), *Gender, Place and Culture, Antipode, and Emotion, Space and Society* (Van Hoven), *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* (Vanclay), *Local Environment – The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* (Parra Novoa), *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* (Beaumont)
- Younger researchers are also involved in editorships, including the *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* (Bailey), *ISRN Epidemiology and Tijdschrift Gerontologie en Geriatrie* (Janssen), *European Spatial Research & Policy* (Brouwer), as guest editors for *European Spatial Research and Policy* (Brouwer, Van Hoven and Meijering) and *Ocean and Coastal Management* (Van Haartsen), and as junior book review editors in *European Spatial Research and Policy* (Brouwer and Meijering).

7.7 Funding review committees

URSI researchers (Mulder, Van Wissen, T. van Dijk, Van Hoven, Hutter, Huigen, Woltjer) have been part of NWO (VENI, VIDI, VICI, MAGW, WOTRO) and other review committees. Our participation in these kinds of committees, however, remains too limited.

7.8 Co-appointments/important assignments of URSI researchers

On external request, senior staff have been co-appointed to other prestigious organizations:

- Between 2010-2013, Philip McCann was Special Adviser to the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn. This is the highest advisory role an academic can play in the European Union. McCann was Special Adviser at the time of the redesign and reorientation of EU Cohesion Policy, the regional and urban development programme of the European Union, the largest single development programme in the world. Very few academics have ever held such a position.
- In this role McCann also participated in the Mirror (Steering) Group for the EU Smart Specialization Platform (co-author of official RIS3 guidelines) and co-chaired the European Commission DGREGIO Expert Group on Outcome Indicators for Cohesion Policy (co-author of the published report).
- In addition, McCann participated in a number of international research and advisory panels, including the Northern Economic Futures Commission (UK), the North East of England LEP regional strategic assessment, the Scientific Advisory Board of the Urban Europe EU Joint Programming Initiative (JPI), and the Steering Group for the OECD Smart Specialization Assessment.
- Van Wissen became Director of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) in 2011, he remained also affiliated with FRW (0.2 FTE)
- Van Dijk became Director of the Wadden Academy in 2012 and he is affiliated with FRW (0.6 FTE)
- Arts is Special Professor at FRW (0.2 FTE) and also strategic advisor for Infrastructure and Environment at RWS in Delft. The joint research programme with RWS, 'Duurzame Wegen' (Sustainable Roads/Infrastructure), is described in Section B9.
- Janssen has a secondment as a researcher in the Department of Pharmacy, Pharmaco-epidemiology, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
- Vanclay was a member (in 2012) of the working group on outcome indicators for the World Health Organization (European Office). He was also a member of the expert panel to oversee the development of a guidance document to integrate human rights into Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessment being developed by IPIECA (the global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues) and the Danish Institute of Human Rights, and was also a member of the expert panel on outcome indicators for Cohesion Policy for the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy
- Hutter has been Healthy Ageing coordinator for the University for the alpha-gamma faculties since 2010
- Woltjer has been Coordinator of the International Planning Evaluation Group since 2004

7.9 International research training workshops and conferences

The provision of training workshops to researchers other than our own as well as other students also reflects our academic reputation. Several training workshops in Qualitative and Participatory Research Methodology have been provided in Europe, Asia and Africa (Hutter, Bailey). Social Impact Assessment training has also been provided worldwide (Vanclay). Folmer has given workshops on Structural Equation Modelling, Spatial Econometrics and Continuous Time Modelling.

Philip McCann organized the *IGU Conference Wellbeing, Innovation and Spatial Transformation* in July 2010.

7.10 Issues to address

Strengths

- senior staff are well embedded in the academic world and receive academic recognition through co-appointments at other reputable academic institutes and in requests to play roles as editors, participate in review committees for funding and give keynote lectures
- presence of academic potential among the younger staff, as indicated by prizes and awards and participation in editorships
- citation index high for top senior researchers, but we also have high-potential mid-career researchers, which is important for ensuring the future of the Faculty

Weaknesses

- potential among younger staff not yet sufficiently identified and differentiated
- participation in review committees for external funding too low

8. Societal Relevance

8.1 Statement of commitment to undertaking research of societal relevance

Our vision is of:

A society which is spatially transformed in ways that allow for high levels of wellbeing and innovation

Our mission is:

To undertake and disseminate world leading and highly distinctive research which helps to realize the vision of a society which is being spatially transformed in ways that allow for high levels of wellbeing and innovation

Within tWIST we are strongly committed to undertaking world-leading, distinctive, theoretical and applied research that addresses the policy and intervention needs and interests of contemporary society. We implement this commitment in a participatory and ethical way in all facets of our research, from conception and design, inception, the undertaking of research, the validation of research and its dissemination. We seek to influence policy and intervention, as well as the thinking and the framing of problems by policymakers, planners and project developers. We also seek to influence our disciplinary colleagues. We monitor our research effectiveness by considering its impact, by involving key stakeholders and by seeking feedback on our research outputs. We consider that societal relevance is a particularly strong point of URSI's research activities and mission. This is also partly indicated by the number and quality of our professional publications, as referred to in Section B5, and by:

- the contract funded research projects, as indicated in Section B6 and Appendix 13.11,
- our professional publications, as indicated in Section B5 and Appendix B13.6,
- our research collaborations with societal stakeholders as indicated in Section B2, for example, those by / for / with NICIS, Platform 31, University Campus Fryslân, ministries, municipalities, provinces and NGOs.
- memberships of societal advisory boards and relevant functions outside academia, as we have included them in Section B7.

In addition, in this Section and Appendix 13.12 we include several case studies illustrating the societal relevance of our research.

Our research addresses various social, economic and cultural issues facing society and contributes at multiple levels: the regional (i.e. local municipality, provincial and sub-national), the national (i.e. the Netherlands) and the international (European and worldwide). We contribute to public sector organizations, to our various academic disciplines and professional groups and to the private sector and society at large.

Appendix 13.12 provides indications of the types of activities in which our staff are engaged that have demonstrable societal relevance. Our contributions are so extensive that it is not possible to provide a complete list. Consistent with the protocol for this evaluation, and differentiating between three groups of stakeholders (Public Sector Organizations, Professional Organizations, and the Private Sector and wider community), the Appendix therefore provides some indicative examples from our many research activities between 2007 and 2012 which:

1. address our contribution to the *dissemination of knowledge*, i.e. how our research is a valuable source of information that is widely distributed amongst the stakeholders
2. demonstrate the *interest of societal stakeholders* and their appreciation of our research by pointing to examples of specific connections and influence
3. provide evidence of the *impact and use of our research* by stakeholders, providing examples of the specific effects our research has had

In this section, we highlight some significant examples of societal relevance, demonstrating our impact.

It is important to note that societal impact is unlikely to be attributable solely to a single research project. There are multiple factors that are responsible for change in individuals, organizations and society. Instances where a direct impact can be established in a short time frame may be insignificant in the greater scheme of things, and processes of change are often insidious. A gradual process of influencing organizations and in changing their perceptions might be much more significant in the long run in terms of social and environmental sustainability. Our research seeks to make sustained long-term contributions to society.

8.2 Examples of our societal relevance and impact

URSI has a long tradition in conducting research with societal partners in the region of the northern Netherlands. In the period under review, URSI (J. Van Dijk, Venhorst, Edzes, Broersma, Noback) carried out several research projects in conjunction with the three northern provinces, either individually or with the **Northern Provinces Alliance (SNN)**. A project on the spatial patterns of population decline and ageing in the **Province of Groningen** became the foundation of the province's regional liveability policies. One direct impact of the project was the creation of an awareness and the acknowledgment of migration behaviour as an important aspect in discerning the spatial patterns of population movement in the northern region, especially when addressing what is often described as the elevator model. Other research on the presence of economic clusters and 'Topsectors' was the basis of advice to the **Social Economic Council** of the northern Netherlands and provided important input into the provincial implementation of the EU regional policy framework regarding smart specialization.

URSI has strong and expanding links to the major municipalities of the Netherlands through a network called **Platform31** (also known as The Netherlands Institute for City Innovation Studies) (J.van Dijk and team). In cooperation with a consortium of municipalities, Platform31 has co-financed five research projects since 2008. These participatory projects, developed in conjunction with the municipalities, have been successful in informing urban and regional development policy, and focus on topics such as local labour markets, migration behaviour, entrepreneurship and education. The project '**Brain Drain or Brain Gain**' (Venhorst), for example, focused on the spatial mobility of university graduates. The dissemination of results through a PhD thesis and ISI-rated publications, meetings with municipal policymakers, a policy report, and media commentary, especially in policy-oriented media, has ultimately resulted in a reorientation of municipal policy from a simplistic conception of 'brain drain' to a more sophisticated, local approach to managing skill retention and acquisition. Due to the appreciation of the research by those involved, Platform31 requested the development of a new project, '**Successful in the City**', with additional cities joining a new and extended consortium of partners. Because of its track record, URSI was asked by Platform31 to spearhead what is referred to as 'bridge projects', which are specifically aimed at bridging the gap between the scientific state of the art and concrete policy questions. The typical architecture of these projects involves academic research leading to publications in ISI-rated journals and PhD dissertations, as well as the valorization of results in the form of frequently organized events and policy reports that influence the policy discourse in these municipalities. Our researchers are

frequently asked to present their work, or to lead or take part in workshops on the themes being investigated. Key findings and policy advice have also been incorporated into the annual Rotterdam Economic Forecasts.

One significant research project managed by URSI was '**On the Wings of L'Aquila: Building a resilient region in the case of a European region in a prolonged transition and hit by a shock. Lessons and models for policy-making**'. This was a project undertaken in partnership with the **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development** (OECD) for Comitato Abruzzo (www.comitatoabruzzo.it), a consortium of industry groups and trade unions in the Abruzzo region of Italy which was affected by an earthquake in April 2009. An international team of regional development experts led by McCann and Dr Monica Brezzi (OECD), and including Vanclay, conducted research into the issues the region was facing and what strategies might be appropriate to assist its recovery. The research was discussed with various groups in Abruzzo in a range of fora, allowing the ideas to gain local ownership. Primary suggestions of the team – that the region's capital should become a smart city; that the region should be developed into as a centre for eco and cultural tourism; that it should consider hosting an international architectural competition; and that L'Aquila bid for the European Capital of Culture – were taken up by the local community. The events that the team organized were all attended by the Italian Minister for Regional Development, Fabrizio Barca, with the final meeting addressed by the Italian Prime Minister, Mario Monti, and two other Ministers. The final report, *Policy Making after Disasters: Helping Regions become Resilient – The case of post-earthquake Abruzzo*, available in English and Italian, was published in early 2013 by the OECD.

A significant partnership for the Faculty and URSI is that with **Rijkswaterstaat** (RWS) (www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/en/), part of the Netherlands Ministry for Infrastructure and Environment. The partnership is a unique example of academic and agency cooperation. Unlike technical collaborations, this partnership is unique because what is valued by the agency is the different way of thinking provided by URSI. This partnership began in 2007, with RWS funding a part-time professorship in infrastructure planning (Arts) and supporting a postdoc (Tillema) and four PhD students. Because of the value of the partnership to RWS, in 2013 the collaboration was extended for a further seven years, also including researchers from other research clusters.

The contribution being sought by RWS is specifically intended to counteract its acknowledged technocratic orientation. What is felt to be needed is non-linear thinking and a realization by engineers that, by way of metaphor, the best road might not necessarily be a straight line. The focus of the collaboration is on creating an appreciation of the long-term effects of decisions, of the multi-stakeholder nature of decisions, an appreciation of a world in flux, and of the need for effective decision-making within this context.

In addition to his role as professor at the University of Groningen, Arts is also the strategic advisor for infrastructure and environment at RWS. URSI also conducts master classes and holds seminars and study conferences for RWS. Many of our students become employees of RWS and several RWS staff are undertaking external PhD research projects with URSI.

Apart from the fact that the partnership has been extended, further proof of the appreciation of the relationship is that in March 2012 the Minister for Infrastructure and Environment delivered an important ministry policy statement at the University. In addition, from 2013, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment intends to support a second professorship – in spatial development and adaptive planning.

Another partnership that demonstrates societal relevance is the **Kennisnetwerk Krimp Noord-Nederland** (KKNN/ Northern Network Demographic Change NNDC)

<http://kkn.vanmeernaarbeter.nl>, a knowledge network that addresses the consequences of population decline in the northern Netherlands (specifically the provinces of Groningen, Fryslân and Drenthe). The NNDC network includes national and provincial governments, municipalities, social organizations and businesses, as well as the Hanze University of Applied Sciences and the University of Groningen/FRW. The three provinces jointly finance a coordinating position based half-time at the Hanze University and half-time at URSI. Academic leadership is provided by Haartsen. The Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations has taken a specific interest and ministry officials regularly attend NNDC events. NNDC seeks to share and develop knowledge related to issues associated with population decline. It does so by fostering links with key stakeholders and knowledge dissemination activities, including monthly presentation meetings and social events (known as 'krimp-café's'). One impact of this network is that it has made population decline a major topic of research within URSI, and this has made URSI known as a source of relevant information and advice amongst the collaborating partners. In 2013, the NNDC started to define its research agenda, with two PhD vacancies created and externally funded by societal stakeholders (for example, University Campus Fryslân, provinces of the northern Netherlands).

Klaassens, Meijering and Hutter have conducted participatory research on the request of De Hoven, a care institution in northeast Groningen. The project was part of a care experiment known as '**Zorg Zonder Regels**' (Care Without Rules) of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports in The Hague, and involved a collaboration with the University Medical Center Groningen, funded by the health insurance company Menzis among others. De Hoven aimed at a major change in the care culture in their old age homes, moving from a supply-oriented towards a client-oriented care system. Qualitative research was conducted, in the form of an ethnographic study within the care institutions, using in-depth and key informant interviews, to identify the needs and wishes and perceived wellbeing of inhabitants. Subsequently, their voices – as identified in the research – were taken back to the care providers who adapted their care practices, one by one. The final results suggested that the wellbeing of the inhabitants had increased – as indicated by the wellbeing index created by Slaets at the UMCG. The carers' level of satisfaction with work was enhanced and the care indeed became more client-oriented (see Appendix 13.6, professional publication: Klaassens et al. 2012).

Another important partnership is with the **Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture** (now Ministry of Economic Affairs), which supports the Mansholt Chair in Rural Development held by Strijker, a specialist in European agricultural policy and rural development. A significant aspect of the research undertaken by Strijker and colleagues attempts to demonstrate that rural space involves much more than agriculture, and that even in remote villages, agricultural receipts make up only a small percentage of the local economy. The significance of this is that agriculture is less important than presumed and more dependent on the other sectors of the economy. Rather than position this relationship as a competition, the focus is on the complementarities between agricultural and non-agricultural production. An example of this is the effort to put the lack of broadband connections in rural areas in the Netherlands on the policy agenda, which has been explored with funding from an EU Interreg programme and regional authorities. Strijker frequently publishes in local newspapers and professional magazines; some of these publications have an immediate societal impact contributing to political agenda setting. Appreciation of the partnership's societal influence can be demonstrated by the fact that his position as Mansholt Chair was funded for a second five-year term by the Ministry.

Another interesting research-informed community engagement programme goes under the umbrella of **LILA**, which stands for 'Living in Leisure-rich Areas', undertaken by de Roo and colleagues. This programme has chosen lilac as its theme colour, drawing on the mixing of green (the traditional colour used to denote rural and natural landscape) and red (a traditional colour

for urban landscape). The idea developed in opposition to the common policy view that the northern Netherlands should compete with the Randstad. Given the structural differences, the northern Netherlands would be disadvantaged in any such competition. Thus, rather than compete, they take the view that it is better for the north to identify its assets and capitalize on them. A more appropriate model for development is not one of competition, but rather one of complementarity. Rather than relying on traditional economic concepts, thinking about broader social developments, including notions of an ageing society, a leisure society, endogenous regional development and cultural economy, led to the reconsideration of the assets of the north. Following on earlier work, these ideas have been further developed and form part of the basis of tWIST. The programme has led to considerable engagement between URSI and local municipalities.

Partly as a result of the LILA programme, URSI is also developing a strong relationship with Stenden University in Fryslân. With funding from University Campus Fryslân, and partial support from the Wadden Academy, URSI has now filled a total of five PhD positions that are shared with Stenden. Each PhD research project focuses on different aspects of liveability, leisure and the regional economic development of the northern Netherlands.

Another example of a societally relevant PhD project is that undertaken by Darak, who conducted PhD research on the **reproductive career of women with HIV in Maharashtra, India**. Being a researcher *and* being positioned in Prayas, a not-for-profit clinic in Pune, he conducted research among more than 600 HIV positive women. His findings suggest that some recommendations of the World Health Organization may be inappropriate, as there were adverse pregnancy outcomes with the use of the recommended triple-drug programme for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. He recommends a strengthening of the health system while implementing the triple-drug regimen. His findings have been disseminated in scientific publications and also in a booklet for HIV infected women, developed through activities in Prayas, and written in both Marathi and English.

Other relevant and interesting examples of our societally relevant research activities are provided in Appendix 13.12.

8.3 Into the future

While we believe that we are already doing well in terms of the societal relevance of our research, we will seek to improve capacity-building, upscaling and roll-out in the future. We will also seek to improve awareness of the importance of societal relevance in our research programme. We will enhance the training of our postgraduate students and staff by strengthening the teaching and knowledge of participatory approaches, research ethics, research evaluation and outcomes-based design. We also hope to bring this capacity-building to our research partners around the world. We are conscious that many of our projects are small and of local relevance. Into the future we will consider how the benefits of these projects can be rolled out on a larger scale to have a wider social impact. We will also consider how to upscale these projects to ensure that discoveries at the project or grassroots level are translated into policy.

8.4 Issues to address

Strengths

- our vision reflects the importance we attach to producing high-quality research with a strong societal relevance
- it is our explicit mission to conduct socially relevant research and *disseminate* our research findings

- we remain strong in embedding our research in the societal context
- we continue to work well with different societal stakeholders
- during the period under review, the traditional strong focus on applied research in the region has been enhanced by a strengthening of the academic quality of our research and its broadening to the national and international levels

Weaknesses

- socially relevant projects are small scale and local; there is need to upscale positive experiences and broaden them further to the national and international levels
- we face the challenge of 'capitalizing' on this experience in future capacity-building

9. Viability

9.1 Viability in research staff⁷

As indicated in Section A1, the Faculty has been rejuvenated during the past years, with many young Assistant Professors (tenured and non-tenured) and postdoc researchers (non-tenured) arriving. Figure 6 and 7 illustrate the age and gender distribution of staff.

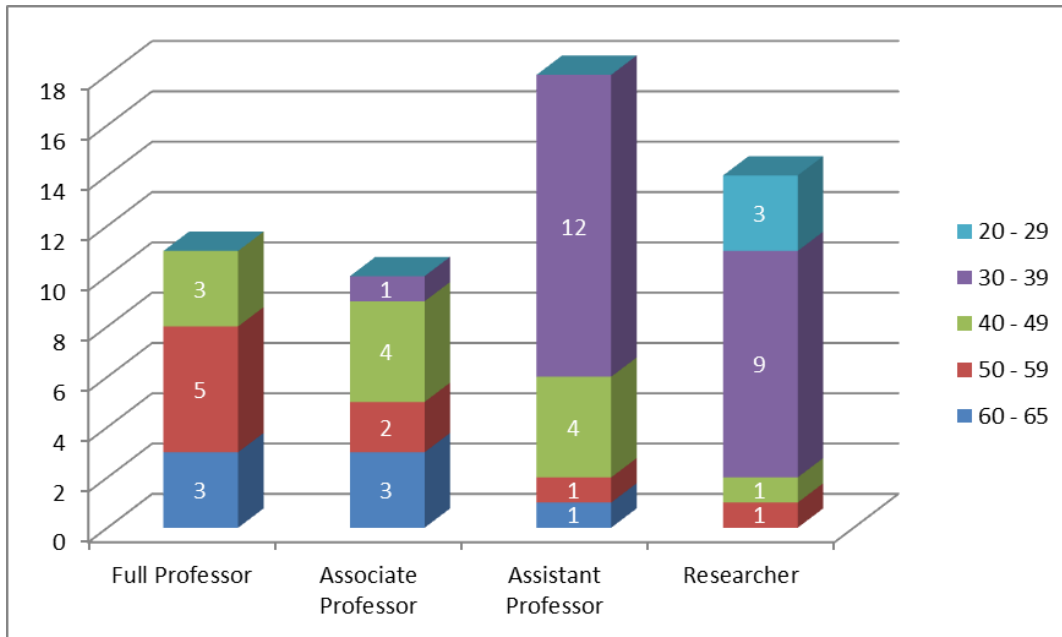


Figure 6: Age distribution of academic staff in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, June 2012

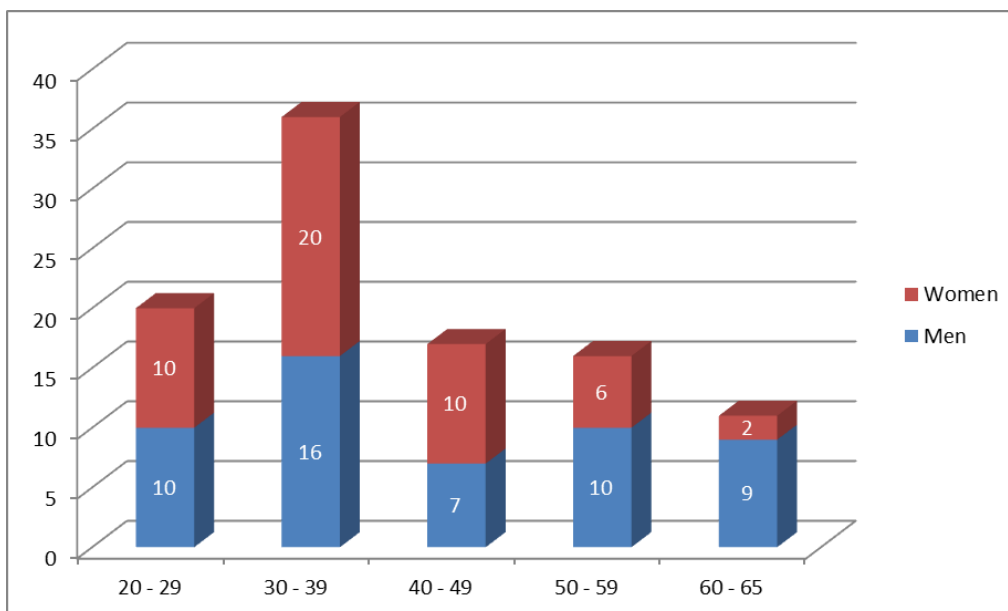


Figure 7: Gender distribution of academic staff in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, situation June 2012

The large group of young people means great enthusiasm in the Faculty, both in teaching and research activities. Among the younger researchers, the Rosalind Franklin Fellows (Haisma, Parra Navao, Buda) and Tenure Trackers (Woltjer until 2013, Koster) are expected to play an

⁷ Information on the Research Review 2007 and actions taken from there, is included in the Introduction

important role in the research profiling of URSI: they may be our new full professors in due time (NB: Woltjer became full professor in September 2013). Their assignments have been scheduled to take into account the composition of existing professorships in the Faculty. It should be noted that the Dutch policy on professorship is different from the UK system: they are obtained for a specific vacancy, therefore not everyone can become a professor in the Dutch academic world. In 2014, a new round of Rosalind Franklin Fellowships started. The Faculty, who is entitled to two of the RFFs, is currently reflecting on how to fill these vacancies. Other younger staff members are able to grow and develop along a regular career path, some of them already being in the process of development towards associate professorships. The aim is to build an age- and gender-balanced tenured research staff.

The large number of *non-tenured* young staff coming in (mostly with external funding) reflects dynamism and flexibility, and also provides us with an incentive to ensure future external funding and maintain the inflow of non-tenured staff at pace.

Having so many young researchers requires that attention be paid to supervision and guidance to build the Faculty for the future, where research processes will be more professionalized and research tasks further differentiated. Professionalization would mean, for example, that more attention is paid to the academic leadership skills of more advanced researchers, to project management skill of younger researchers, and to time management skills of young assistant professors (e.g. division research and teaching) and PhD researchers. An example of greater differentiation of research tasks is the trend towards senior professors acting as supervisors-at-a-distance, with the younger staff acting as daily supervisors of PhD candidates. The University's policy on recognizing talent (for example, for NWO or ERC grant applications) is also expected to play a role in the Faculty in the future.

In addition, during the period under review, researchers who have worked and were trained outside our Faculty and/or University have arrived. Our experience has been that some time is needed to become accustomed to the new work environment. The professionalization of procedures and processes – clear and transparent information on rules and regulations – would assist in this process. At the same time, it is important to maintain some institutional memory by having internally trained staff, so that present and future developments can be embedded in earlier experiences.

During the past years, research support in the Faculty has been professionalized. In the near future, this is expected to be intensified either at Faculty or at University level, for example, with regard to funding support (e.g. Horizon 2020, PhD monitoring, research output monitoring).

9.2 Viability in tWIST

Researchers are expected to be tWIST oriented. This does not mean that all tWIST research is conducted within joint projects, with single disciplinary projects also plausible. However, what remains important is that researchers are aware of existing research expertise in URSI, can find each other and make use of each other's expertise. Working within joint research projects, also including researchers from other faculties, requires networking capacities, for which training can be provided.

9.3 Issues to address

Strengths

- a rejuvenated Faculty
- enthusiasm, dynamism
- the professionalization of research processes has started
- identification of potential of future (associate) professors in place, especially through Tenure Tracks and Rosalind Franklin Fellowships.

Weaknesses

- the professionalization of research processes among researchers and research support staff can be enhanced
- we must ensure a continuous inflow of young non-tenured staff by further encouraging proposal writing for external funding
- there is currently not much differentiation between various research activities and tasks

10. Next Generation

As indicated in A1, the Graduate School – consisting of the PhD programme and the Research Master's in Regional Studies – is part of URSI and thus the unified and integrated research programme tWIST. As the Research Master's coordination is in the hands of four researchers representing all four tWIST research clusters (Van Hoven, Meijering, Zuidema, McCann), Research Master's students are increasingly writing their Individual Research Training assignments and Master's theses on tWIST topics (see Appendix 13.15) and are guided by researchers from different research clusters. In the PhD programme, PhD candidates are increasingly supervised by researchers from different research clusters (see Appendix 13.2 and 13.10) and candidates for the Ubbo Emmius PhD vacancies are asked to write a research proposal that explicitly addresses the focus of tWIST.

The Research Master's programme is accredited until 2015 and will be evaluated extensively in 2014.

A PhD manual that summarizes all of the current procedures, rules and regulations for PhD research has existed for some years. Prior to this, information was informally provided by the Office Manager or the Director of the Graduate School. The manual provides information with regard to courses, funding, writing a thesis, voluntary tasks and more. It also illustrates our intention to improve professionalization of the PhD process. At the time of writing this report, professionalization of the PhD programme was focused on the monitoring of progress, courses followed, etc.

10.1 PhD educational programme

A wide range of PhD courses is offered by Nethur. The courses cover theoretical perspectives and research methodologies in the spatial sciences, but also deal with general skills training in the fields of writing, oral presentation and project management. At present, the position of Nethur is not so clear. There is an increasing tendency for PhD researchers to take courses at the local faculty and university level, especially courses on general research skills such as project management, English-language publishing, presentation skills and time management. One advantage is that PhD researchers do not have to travel as far as Utrecht for these courses. However, the advantage of the theoretical and methodological courses offered by Nethur is – in addition to the content – that PhD researchers meet their fellow PhD colleagues from sister faculties. The future of these Nethur courses is to be discussed with the other universities involved. For an overview of all courses available see Appendix 13.13.

PhD candidates are encouraged to take courses – especially on methodology – where these are valuable and relevant to their research project. PhD candidates with four-year contracts or fellowships are expected to obtain 30 ECTS, while PhD candidates with three-year contracts/fellowships must obtain ECTS in proportion to the duration of their project. All international PhD students are offered a Dutch language course. Recently, the English writing courses have been professionalized and are now provided at Faculty level according to the level of English-language skills of candidates at the time of entry to the Graduate School.

PhD candidates are required to present their work-in-progress at least twice during their time in the Faculty. Presentations are given at either an URSI lunch seminar (see Section 3.3 and Appendix 13.5) or the URSI Research Conference. PhD candidates receive additional feedback during these gatherings and practise their presentation skills.

In addition, PhD candidates are expected to perform at least two voluntary tasks during their time in the Faculty. Examples of such tasks are:

- Participating in the PhD Council
- Organizing the URSI Research Conference
- Organizing URSI lunch seminars
- Participating in the Nethur Education Committee
- Mentoring Research Master's students

10.2 PhD supervision

All PhD candidates are supervised by at least one professor (the head supervisor) and one daily/second supervisor (the co-supervisor) (see Appendix 13.2). URSI had already initiated this, but from September 2013 it was made obligatory by the University. In some instances more supervisors may be involved. Over recent years, assistant professors and associate professors have become more involved as daily supervisors (see also Section A1). Increasingly, PhD candidates are guided by researchers from different research clusters, further contributing to the development of tWIST.

During the period under review, a mentor system – consisting of young assistant professors who discuss issues with PhD researchers and identify possible constraints – was in place, but is no longer active. Since February 2013, a PhD coordinator (Opsteegh) has been appointed, to whom PhD students can turn in case of difficulties. In addition, the PhD Council functions as an intermediary between the Graduate School and all PhD researchers, organizing PhD afternoons twice a year where PhD researchers can discuss relevant issues (see Section 10.3). With the publication of the PhD manual and all PhD candidates having a daily supervisor, we feel the mentor system has been sufficiently replaced.

Another point with respect to PhD supervision concerns the professionalization of the Graduate School which is currently in progress, for example regarding the monitoring of progress and entrance criteria as well as the evaluation (go/no-go) at the end of the first year of the PhD.

10.3 PhD afternoons

Twice a year the PhD Council (see A1.2.3) organizes a PhD Afternoon to inform PhD candidates about the Faculty and URSI plans and discuss other relevant matters, and to generate input for the PhD Council and to create a community of PhD candidates. The PhD Afternoon is organized by and for PhD students themselves. While Graduate School staff are invited to present the introductory speech, they do not stay for the meeting. Examples of topics that are discussed during the afternoon:

- Constraints in PhD trajectories
- Multicultural communications

PhD candidates are very positive about the PhD Afternoon, appreciating the time to discuss issues with other PhD candidates. PhD candidates are positive about the 'Open Space Method' used, where issues that are really important are brought up by participants themselves and discussed in an interactive way. One drawback is that the attendance of international PhD candidates is still relatively low and could be improved.

Like the PhD Council, the PhD Afternoons facilitate bottom-up development of the Graduate School.

10.4 Employment Opportunities for postgraduates

Many postgraduates have jobs in academia or research-related positions outside academia in the Netherlands, or Europe (Sweden, Turkey, Finland, UK, Austria), as well as other countries

around the world (Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Indonesia, India and the US). For an overview of current jobs of former PhD students see Appendix 13.14.

10.5 ReMa programme

The Research Master's in Regional Studies is accredited until 2015 and will be evaluated separately in 2014. Here, we provide some information on the Research Master's as part of the Graduate School of Spatial Sciences. The number of Research Master's students grew from five students in the academic year 2007/2008 to 12 in 2012/2013. Most graduates find jobs in academia, either in our own Faculty or other University of Groningen faculties (FWN, FEB), or at other universities in the Netherlands (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht) and beyond (UK: Bristol and LSE; Germany, China, Indonesia, Zambia) (see Appendix 13.16). The data demonstrates that we are indeed building a new research generation through our Research Master's programme.

10.6 Brief case studies of PhD researchers

We present here four case studies of PhD researchers sharing their enthusiasm for conducting their research, just to provide an insight into and a feeling about what PhD projects can be about.

Melanie Bakema: Ubbo Emmius PhD candidate, former Research Master's student, three-year contract. Guidance from Economy and Place Research Cluster (McCann) and Innovation and Spatial Transformation (Parra Novoa).

At the end of August 2012 I jumped on a plane to the other side of the world. The trip was not only going to be a nice journey, but the starting point of my interesting research. Having a research topic related to disasters brought me to Christchurch, New Zealand, a city that had recently been hit by several devastating earthquakes.

Disaster studies is a research field with many different but interrelated facets. What is so interesting about this topic, is that all normal practices, systems and structures in a society are overwhelmed and transformed by a disaster. In my opinion, because disasters directly affect life in a community, it is impossible to study this subject from the perspective of one isolated discipline. When a disaster occurs, it is often the result of institutional failure. Governance systems that determine how a society prepares and responds to a disaster are based on this institutional context. In addition, it is necessary to look at cultural and social systems. Consequently, the aim of my PhD is to determine good governance practices and thereby take a first step towards an international social protocol to enhance the resilience of pre- and post-disaster communities and attain higher levels of wellbeing in them.

In the coming years, my PhD will take me to Chiloé, an island south of Chile that has been hit by extensive pollution resulting from salmon farming practices. Finally, my research will take me back to the Wadden in the Netherlands, where I grew up. This final step will lead to the opening of a dialogue between the experiences from the three countries. Thereby, I very much hope to contribute to a better understanding of disaster governance and to the creation of better places in the world!

Jianjun Tang: Externally funded PhD candidate, four-year scholarship; guidance from the Economy and Place Research Cluster (Folmer)

China has to produce more food to feed its huge and still growing population. However, in the main food production area in Northern China water scarcity is a serious problem, with far-reaching environmental impacts, and threats to food security and socioeconomic development. Optimal use of the limited water resources is important. Since agriculture consumes approximately 70% of the total water resources in Northern China and exhibits a lack of efficiency, insight is needed into farmers' use of water in irrigation as a step towards conservation. The objective of my research is to investigate ways to improve efficiency in irrigation water usage and to design policy that can implement the necessary changes. My research synthesizes agricultural economics, environmental psychology and econometrics. With an economics background, my intuition told me to think like an economist. When it comes to ways of improving water use efficiency, a water-pricing scheme which creates economic incentives came to mind. Then I learnt that farmers' behaviour can also be viewed from different perspectives or disciplines. Perhaps psychological factors, such as farmers' awareness of water scarcity, might play a role. To find out, I undertook a survey in October 2011, collecting 500 questionnaires. The way farmers viewed the problem indeed was different from my own. This was an exciting discovery and made the research even more interesting, with the hypothesis eventually supported by the data, which brought about new and different methodologies to solve the problem.

Arjan Hijdra: external PhD candidate within RWS collaboration, started in 2010; guidance from Innovation and Spatial Transformation Research Cluster (Arts and Woltjer).

As a mid-career professional I was looking for an opportunity to deepen my knowledge of the environment. After 15 years of experience in infrastructure development I had a strong feeling that important questions were still unanswered. Finding the answers became a kind of personal mission. At this stage of my life I knew my priorities, work, family and study, needed to be maintained in a healthy balance. Nevertheless, I felt I had to go further than enrolling in a regular programme. After discussing this idea with management, colleagues and family, the idea of taking up this challenge in the form of an external PhD project was born. Living in the south of the Netherlands, the choice of Groningen wasn't an obvious one, although it had been recommended to me by several FRW alumni. Three years later, I am pretty much on schedule, and have never regretted my decision. I visit the Faculty every month and immerse myself in discussions with my superiors and, perhaps equally important, the other PhD candidates in the group. I always feel welcome and enjoy the open and helpful atmosphere. Sometimes people ask me if I'm really looking forward to finishing the project. I usually reply that I will welcome the PhD degree, but I will miss the journey which led to it.

10.7 Issues to address

Strengths

- the Research Master's programme, particularly the research topics for the Individual Research Training assignments and Master's theses, are increasingly embedded within tWIST
- every PhD researcher has a second (daily) supervisor, in accordance with University rules
- there is increasing professionalization of the processes in the Graduate School
- feedback from PhD candidates on the Graduate School is ensured through the PhD Council and the PhD afternoons

- PhD researchers mainly find jobs in academic institutions
- through the Research Master's we are building a new, interdisciplinary research generation

Weaknesses

- compared to the Research Master's the PhD programme is embedded within tWIST to a lesser extent
- further professionalization is required, especially in the PhD programme, i.e. monitoring of progress (from January 2014, the University-wide system, Hora Finita, will assist in this)

PART C: TOWARDS THE FUTURE

11. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic tool for helping to develop strategy by identifying areas for action and prioritisation. As has been explained in this document our intentional approach has always been to build both a ‘top-down’ and a ‘bottom-up’ approach to developing our research agenda, culture and systems. This initially involved largely a ‘top-down’ approach because of the necessity for making important changes at an early stage in order to initiate movements on a range of fronts. Over time, however, we have sought to increasingly shift to much more of a ‘bottom-up’ approach in order to enhance momentum and also to facilitate the wider engagement of more junior research staff. The SWOT analysis presented here derives heavily from the material already discussed in this document, and presents the key features representing each of the SWOT headings, as uncovered by the process of writing this self-reflection on our research activities, systems and performance. In some sense this is therefore constructed largely as a top-down exercise. At the same time, however, we also present the insights, experiences and perceptions of the more junior research staff under the various SWOT headings, and as elicited from the various Away Days. Their insights represent an extremely important barometer of how we are performing and where we are going and also must necessarily heavily shape how we intend to proceed over the coming years.

Based on all the points identified in this report, we have compiled the following SWOT analysis for URSI/tWIST (see table XI).

Table XI: SWOT analysis of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tWIST was developed from the top down and the bottom up, creating a Faculty-wide research platform - tWIST unites and integrates researchers and research clusters - tWIST ‘profiles’ the Faculty, in research, research-driven education, internationalization and HR - tWIST makes URSI less vulnerable - tWIST research addresses important societal issues - we work at the crossroads of the University’s research foci of Healthy Aging and Sustainable Society - large number of young staff creates a dynamic environment, with high talent potential - large number of non-tenured staff means dynamism and flexibility - more than 20% international research staff - initiation of professionalization in research support - senior staff: good academic reputation to be shared - increased focus on scientific publications, while not overloading professional publications - high societal relevance of research at local, national and international levels - publishing in broad ISI categories covering tWIST research - increase in research and contract funding especially ReMa and PhD graduates finding employment at other research institutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tWIST is not always sufficiently evident on the work floor - tWIST is very broad - externally tWIST profile is not sufficiently visible, thereby running the risk of missing out on participation in consortia - not yet sufficient innovative research across boundaries of research clusters, sharing and combining expertise and experience - roles of and difference between URSI-GS and the RAG is not clear - roles of research staff are not sufficiently differentiated - young staff are relatively inexperienced in research-related activities such as writing proposals and international research experience - large number of non-tenured staff may be a threat to continuity - imbalance between research staff and PhD researchers - research is not yet sufficiently professionalized (researchers and support) - not yet a sufficient number of joint projects, as shown in low number of co-authorships from different clusters (shared output) - there is no clear URSI publication policy - PhD completion too long

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University research foci on Healthy Ageing and Sustainable Society - talent policy of the University (Endowed Chairs, Rosalind Franklin Fellows) - University support for talent development (writing competitive funding proposals) - developments in Northern Region such as University Campus Fryslân (UCF), Healthy Ageing Network Northern Netherlands (HANNN) - external networks of URSI researchers to be used by fellow researchers - external organizations recognizing our expertise - potential PhD researchers with own fellowships, recognizing tWIST expertise - HORIZON 2020, clear links with tWIST 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possible budget cuts on national and European levels - budget cuts internationally for research student scholarships - increasing competition (for funding and in publishing) at a global level - in general, more funding emphasis on natural sciences than social sciences - budget cuts may lead to shorter-period research positions and more project-based appointments, and less long-term research continuity

Increasing global competitive pressures between research institutions, in terms of the availability of research funds and research staff, on the one hand represent potential threats to an institution such as ours. On the other hand, these developments also represent potential opportunities for us to improve our position in this competitive environment by making good decisions which galvanise our research environment and which help us to excel. Turning potential threats to potential opportunities as far as possible is essential.

For example, the ever-increasing pressure to publish represents an opportunity for us to increase our presence in the international arena. Indeed, the increasing number of research FTEs, the increasing number of publications, and the increasing number of citations per research FTE, all suggest that we are moving in the right direction in this respect and it is essential that we maintain and increase momentum in this regard. In addition, new opportunities, such as those associated with open-access publishing, provide new opportunities to reach a wider audience with our research.

Similarly, our tWIST emphasis on societal issues such as wellbeing, innovation and the evolving importance of place/context, closely links our work to some of the major societal ‘grand challenges’ widely discussed in various arenas, including in the international academy, in politics, and in the public domain. This better positioning of our work in the wider context beyond the research world will also help to increase the visibility and societal relevance of our work. Our recent research engagement with international, national, regional and local organizations also strongly points in this direction. Moreover, the high demand globally for obtaining PhD degrees in spatial sciences also attests to the importance of the issues we research.

Turning potential treats to potential opportunities also requires a certain degree of specialization and the importance of building on, and diversifying around, our core strengths. Because of both the funding cuts and also the need for greater societal valorization of research, making such advances will also require a certain degree of innovation and entrepreneurship in terms of ways of accessing resources. This may involve building strong links with other private organizations (including companies) as well as public organizations (i.e. government agencies).

We believe that the timing of these challenges involved in turning potential treats to opportunities is fortuitous for us. Having undergone such major changes, as we see below our priority now is to EMBED tWIST throughout all of our activities and to deepen, integrate and consolidate our new approach in all that we do. The role of the younger staff will be crucial here in the medium and long-run as well as in the short-run.

In addition to the SWOT analysis provided above, which is based on the evidence provided in all sections of the report, at an URSI Away Day in June 2013 URSI researchers discussed what they

perceived as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (without seeing our report). Several items that are mentioned in our general SWOT analysis above were brought up, but there were also some additional-from-bottom-up comments. These comments have been taken into account in the Strategy for the coming years, described in Section B12.

Among the strengths mentioned in this bottom-up brainstorming discussion, was the positive working atmosphere that most discussants experienced; URSI researchers also feel a sense of loyalty towards the Faculty, they believe they have expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research and the PhDs are considered to be very enthusiastic and inspiring. In addition to the strong collaborations between the departments, URSI researchers also emphasized the close relationship with stakeholders and a strong alumni network as strengths.

Weaknesses that were mentioned were the high work pressure, as the numbers of students and PhD researchers has grown rapidly. Greater differentiation and delineation of research and teaching tasks would be regarded as an improvement. URSI researchers felt that the Faculty might be too modest at times, thereby not assessing our activities at their true value. A possible connected weakness mentioned was that the Faculty is risk averse and that there seems to be a slight mismatch between ambition and ability. According to the discussants, the Faculty should aim higher. Researchers were uncertain about the benchmarking of our research. A final perceived weakness was that there was insufficient celebration of achievements.

Staff mentioned the following opportunities that the Faculty might make use of: we could make more and better use of social media to profile ourselves. Additionally, the University is celebrating its 400th anniversary in 2014, which gives the Faculty an opportunity to further position itself. In addition, some current demographic changes in society would be interesting topics for the Faculty to investigate, and we have the expertise to do so. A final opportunity mentioned by staff concerned the growing number of students. However, this was also considered a possible threat, as teaching tasks are sometimes experienced as hampering research. Another perceived threat was the current rat race in quantitative judgements, with people being increasingly evaluated in terms of numbers, for example, the number of published articles, rather than the quality of their work. A final perceived threat was the trend towards the three-year PhD contracts. Students who have successfully completed the Research Master's are expected to complete their PhD thesis in three years, possibly not giving them sufficient time to fully develop into independent researchers. PhD research fellows (non-employed) are also increasingly receiving fellowships for only three years.

Indeed, one of the most marked outcomes of these exercises is that the 'bottom-up' view, as reflected in the responses of the younger staff, is remarkably positive and optimistic, and rather less cautious than the more 'top-down' view. This provides a justification for wanting to increasingly involve younger research staff in more strategic advisory positions such as in the Research Advisory Group and to facilitate greater levels of engagement with them regarding ways to move forward. In particular, finding ways to mobilize their energies and ideas will be essential in order to help turn as many of the potential threats we have identified into real opportunities for progress. Already many of them have shown real research leadership and initiative and fostering and building on this is a central priority for the coming years.

Issues mentioned in this informal SWOT meeting were taken into account when formulating the Strategy outlined in Section B12 below.

12. Strategy

Based on all of the issues discussed in this report and the SWOT analyses in Section B11, below we outline the strategy for URSI for the coming six years, keeping in mind our mission:

To undertake and disseminate world-leading and highly distinctive research

which helps to realize the vision of

A society which is being spatially transformed in ways that allow for high levels of wellbeing and innovation

As has been explained in detail in this document, we have undergone major changes each year for the last few years as a response to a deliberate process of reflection and resulting in a strategic re-alignment of much of what we do and stand for. After these years of many developments and many changes, the key word for us for the coming years is that of 'embedding' – of the faculty research agenda tWIST in all aspects of our faculty life.

This embedding will involve the need for further integration, consolidations and deepening of our research vision and mission:

- of tWIST as a research programme, with innovative research, particularly on the borders of research disciplines and across the research clusters, while not neglecting our disciplinary peers
- in deepening the collaborations with research institutes, especially those
 - in The Hague, with RWS on sustainable infrastructure including the topic of spatial transformation, liveability and network implications; and with NIDI-KNAW on demographic and societal changes, on the research themes of migration and migrants, ageing and longevity, work and employment in particular
 - o at the European level, on well-being and regional development and in particular the cross-border link of northern Netherlands with Germany on coastal development
 - o at the global level, in particular the existing collaborations in Indonesia and China on spatial transformation and urban geography, and India on global health ageing, health and place
 - o and related, relevant collaborations elsewhere.
- by stimulating research-cum-education collaborations of URSI researchers with PhD researchers and Research Master; and involvement of Master and Bachelor students
- and enhancing the felt positive working atmosphere

Enhancing quality

- and continue to publish in ISI journals and develop a clear URSI publication policy in this respect

Make tWIST more visible

- in joint PhD supervision and joint publications
- in tWIST's contribution to the University research priorities, especially Sustainable Society and Healthy Ageing, and to a lesser extent Energy
- through our research collaborations (see above)
- externally, for example, through the website, social media, marketing

Upscale

- expertise and experience in research in collaboration with societal stakeholders; comparison of the region of northern Netherlands to regions in Europe and the world

Organize

- and revive the URSI-GS Board, and redefine its role while also redefining the role of the Research Advisory Group
- and continue applications for research and contract funding to ensure inflow of non-tenured research staff
- ensure continuous and sufficient inflow of students in the Research Master programme

Articulate and differentiate

- between roles and activities of the research staff: for example, senior researchers sharing their external network with junior researchers; junior researchers gaining international experience; division of tasks in PhD guidance, etc.
- to be made visible in a Research Monitor on the research activities of each researcher; thus providing an overview of the research strengths of URSI overall; and identifying where and how to possibly differentiate between researchers and make use of each other's expertise (e.g. expertise in socially relevant research, in writing research funding proposals, in research in specific countries, etc.). The Research Monitor will thus also indicate the time that people spend on research, and as such will function in a complementary way to the workload model for teaching.

Energize and motivate

- junior staff to take a proactive and confident approach to developing their research careers in an atmosphere where mentoring and support is highly valued and opportunities for taking initiatives and displaying leadership and are always available to younger staff

Engage

- with junior research staff at all levels to build on their ideas, experiences and perceptions in order to help establish and implement specific research-related priorities under the umbrella of tWIST

Professionalize

- by continuing to emphasize talent development and writing proposals for research funding (NWO/KNAW/ERC)
- research activities and processes, for research staff, PhD researchers and research support, e.g. proposal writing, PhD guidance, intercultural competences, research management, coaching/intervision
- the PhD programme in the Graduate School, especially the monitoring of entry, progress and supervision, as well as the educational programme, success rates and the quality of PhD research

Printed copies of this report are available through the URSI secretary, Alida Meerburg.

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