ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Dissertations WASS 2013

O. (Omid) Noroozi
Fostering argumentation-based computer-supported collaborative learning in higher education
11 January 2013

A. (Arjumand) Nizami
Forest fights in Haripur, Northwest Pakistan
21 January 2013

M. (Margareth) Msonganzila
Gender, cooperative organisation and participatory intervention in rural Tanzania: a case study of different types of cooperatives and Moshi University College’s support to rural women
21 March 2013

D. (Derek) J.F. Eaton
Intellectual property rights, international trade and plant breeding
15 April 2013

A.T. (Augustin Tèko) Kouiti
Understanding learning in natural resource management: experiences with a contextualised responsive evaluation approach
18 April 2013

D.D.A. (Djalalou-Dine Ademoura) A. Arinloye
Governance, marketing and innovations in Beninese pineapple supply chains: a survey of smallholder farmers in South Benin
25 April 2013

M. (Marleen) Schouten
Resilience in rural social-ecological systems: A spatially explicit agent-based modelling approach
15 May 2013
DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN 2013

WASS

Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS) is one of the six graduate schools at Wageningen University. WASS brings together senior researchers, post-docs and PhD candidates in the social sciences and interdisciplinary fields of research. WASS hosts more than 430 PhD candidates and about 220 senior researchers, belonging to a variety of chair groups and research institutes.

The research programme of WASS addresses some of the major concerns of the globalized world we live in today, characterised by huge challenges, contrasts and inequalities. WASS’ mission is to bring international, comparative, disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches to bear on core challenges and concerns related to food quality and food safety; to environmental protection and sustainable resource use; to healthy lifestyles and sustainable livelihoods; and to equal access to development opportunities. In 2010, the request for reaccreditation at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) was successful, which means that WASS functions as a KNAW accredited graduate school at least until 2017.

WASS Developments

For WASS, scientific integrity and data management were important topics in 2013. An ad-hoc WASS Committee organised discussions with fellows and PhD candidates on research integrity and supervision. The Committee developed a set of recommendations to the WASS Board. The Committee outlined a framework for a data management policy of social sciences chair groups, after several consultation rounds within the School. On the basis of the work of the Committee, WASS Office published a guide for supervisors “Procedures, Principles and Good Practices for Supervising PhD Candidates”. This guide outlines the principles for supervision and presents tips and tricks, based on the experiences of WASS supervisors.

Within Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS), WASS co-organised a competences and skills course programme for PhD candidates, a training programme for postdocs, and a support programme for personal grants applicants.

In November 2013, Eveline Vaane left WASS Office on the occasion of her retirement. Eveline has played a major role in the development of WASS as a school. Her commitment and ability to put things in perspective will be missed.

WASS Seminar on the San Francisco Declaration

In October 2013 a large group of WASS researchers joined a discussion organised by the WASS Publication Policy Committee on “The Implications of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment”. This international Declaration, signed by many scientists and scientific organisations worldwide, recommends specific changes to the way scientific journal rankings are used in hiring scientists, funding research and publishing papers. The San Francisco Declaration challenges the strategic games played in the world of academia to increase productivity, get tenure and climb the rankings, which could easily lead to both a decline of scientific quality and an erosion of trust in science all together. The seminar participants discussed alternatives for the current assessment procedures in WASS and at Wageningen University.

WASS Visiting Research Grants

WASS offered 18 visiting grants to foreign senior researchers visiting WASS chair groups. Together with the chair groups, WASS regularly organises seminars, lectures and master classes with esteemed visiting scholars from all over the world. Some examples:

- Professor Michael Woods (Abershysthy University, UK) and Professor Sally Shortall (“Queen’s University Belfast) on (Re)Assembling Rural Places”?
- Professor Theodore Schatzki (University of Kentucky) and Professor Elizabeth Shove (Lancaster University) on “Practicing Practice Theory: Exploring the Relevance for Social Change”
- Professor Rodrigo Lozano (Utrecht University) on “Exploring the Interrelations between Individual CSR Competencies and Sustainable Business Practices”
- Professor James Robinson (Harvard University) on “State and Development in Colombia”
The number of WASS PhD candidates increased from 301 in 2006 to 439 in 2013. In 2013, the number of completed PhD theses was 45. This fits the steady trend of around 43 theses per year.

The research input from core staff members (fellows) increased as well, from 44.3 full time research years (fte) in 2006 to 54.5 in 2013. A slight decline is shown in the research input as from 2012 due to a changed system of administration of the input data.

The number of refereed articles still shows a steady increase. The number of refereed book chapters grew to 175. This increasing number of Q1 articles reflects WASS' policy to stimulate quality and international visibility of the research output.

Full publication lists can be found on the WASS website: www.wageningenur.nl/wass
Research funding

WASS researchers successfully obtained a variety of external research grants in 2013. Some examples:

- Several NWO programme funding for WASS fellows:
  - Deepa Joshi and Margreet Zwarteveen (Water Resources Management),
  - Dik Roth (Sociology of Development and Change),
  - Piety Runhaar and Renate Wesselink (Education and Competence Studies),
  - Annemarie Wagemakers and Kirsten Verkooijen (Health and Society).

- UK Research Council funding for Art Dewulf (Public Administration and Policy)

Newly appointed WASS Professors

- Marcel Verweij, Full Professor Philosophy
- Ruud Huirne, Special Chair Cooperative Entrepreneurship
- Peter Feindt, Full Professor Strategic Communication
- Hedwig te Molder, Personal Professor on Science and Technology
- Petra Hellegers, Professor Water Resources Management

Wageningen Young Academy

Wageningen Young Academy is an independent platform that brings together enthusiastic, ambitious and outstanding young scientists of Wageningen University across all its scientific disciplines. 4 WASS fellows are member of the Wageningen Young Academy: Ewout Frankema (RHI), Michel Handgraaf (ECH), Silvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (PAP) and Esther Turnhout (FNP).

Cum laude PhD

On 11 January, WASS PhD student Omid Noroozi (ECS) received a cum laude degree for his dissertation "Fostering Argumentation-Based Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning in Higher Education". This thesis explores Argumentation-Based Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (ABCSCL) as a promising environment in which to facilitate collaborative argumentation and learning. Using a multi-method approach, the thesis assesses what factors influence and constitute the results of ABCSCL. Special attention is paid to the role of ABCSCL in collaborative discussion and argumentation in a multidisciplinary group of learners, with divergent domains of expertise. The thesis also investigates how computer-supported collaboration scripts can be designed to facilitate knowledge sharing and transfer, argumentative knowledge construction, and domain-specific learning in a multidisciplinary setting. The results show that ABCSCL is an interactive process, whereby the components student, learning environment and learning process determine the component learning outcomes.

Wageningen Social Sciences Publication Award

The jury of the Wageningen Social Sciences Publication Award 2013 consisted of Rob King, professor of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota and member of the WASS International Advisory Board, Laan van Staaldhuizen, Director of the Social Sciences Group, and Arthur Mol, Director of WASS.


The Most Promising WASS Publication Award went ex aequo to two junior scientists: Omid Noroozi for the co-written publication "Argumentation-based computer supported collaborative learning (ABCSCL). A systematic review and synthesis of fifteen years of research", published in Educational Research Review; and Maarten Voors for the co-written publication “Violent Conflict and Behavior: A Field Experiment in Burundi", published in American Economic Review.

WASS main publications per theme

In 2013, WASS fellows, postdocs and PhD candidates published more than 100 papers in journals ranked in the top 10% of their domain in Web of Science. Some examples from the four WASS research themes:
**Theme 1: Disparities**  


B. (Bart) F.W. Wernaart  
Unravelling the role of innovation intermediaries in smallholder agricultural development: case studies from Kenya 19 November 2013

**Theme 2: Responsible Production and Consumption**  


**Theme 3: Natural Resources and the Environment**  


**Theme 4: Knowledge and Society**  


**WASS Thematic activities**

PhD candidates from different chair groups organised two large thematic activities in 2013:  
*“Voluntary Simplicity in Food Choices – A Seminar to Navigate through Theory and Practices of Responsible Food Consumption”* organised by Simona D’Amico, Robert-Jan Geerts and Esther Veen, with key note speaker Professor Philip Cafaro (Colorado State University) and local practitioners.

PhD workshop “Transnational Feminist Research: Global Connections and Rural Realities from a Critical Perspective”, organised by Lisa Bossenbroek, Carolina Dominguez and Xiangdan Meng, with key note speakers Dr Wendy Harcourt (ISS), Professor Priti Ramamurthy (University of Washington) and Seema Kulkarni.

This workshop was followed by a seminar *(Re)Engaging with Agrarian Transformation: the Rural, a Battlefield of New Social Hierarchies*, with Mostafa Errahj (Ecole Nationale d’Agriculture de Sahara) and Andrea Nightingale (Gothenburg), Ben White (ISS), Jan Douwe van der Ploeg (WU).
Doing systematic literature reviews

As a joint initiative of the graduate school, the research methodology group and the library, a course on doing systematic literature review was set up. The seminar style course leads PhD candidates through a pilot systematic literature review that is relevant to their own PhD project. Systematic reviews have long been used in medical disciplines to aggregate findings across multiple empirical studies. As their importance in the social sciences is rapidly growing the course aims at strengthening the quality of the literature reviews conducted by PhD candidates. The collaboration with the library guarantees the acquisition of necessary competencies relating to bibliographic databases, their analysis and the synthesis of the results. At the end of the course participants should have a draft literature review on which they can do further research.

WASS PhD grants and scholarships

In 2013 WASS conducted an open round to recruit new PhD researchers. A selection committee consisting of seven WASS senior scholars had the task to select four PhD candidates out of the 56 applications that WASS received. Finally the committee selected the following PhD candidates:

- Nowella Ayango (GEO, ENP): Tracing Conservation Finances as Global Flows
- Rosa de Vos (SDC): The Politics of Scale in Palm Oil Land Disputes in West-Kalimantan, Indonesia
- Tijdde Tempels (PHI): Food and Virtues: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Food Industry
- Sebastian Hoenen (MST): Factors Affecting the Time Lag before Academic Knowledge is Used by Industry

WASS Junior Grant

In 2013, 11 proposals in the annual competitive call for proposals for junior travel and visiting funds have been granted. WASS PhDs visited amongst other locations, CIFOR Indonesia, Michigan State University and University of Queensland in Australia.

“The WASS grant made it possible for me to work with Chris O'Donnel on the model in which measures to improve pig husbandry could be compared with Societal concerns, costs for the pig farmers and animal welfare. It was good to experience the working conditions in another country.” (Tamara Bergstra)
ACTIVITIES BY THE PhD COUNCIL

The PhD Council of WASS represents the interests of the WASS PhD candidates in the WASS Board (graduate school level), the Education and Research Committees of the WASS (department level), as well as in the plenary PhD-councils meetings of all Wageningen Graduate Schools (university level), informs PhD candidates on urgent matters via newsletters, e-mail and website, and organises formal and informal activities for PhD candidates.

In March, the PhD Council organised the annual Career Event, titled: ‘WASS Next?’. Two former WASS graduates shared their experiences of life after graduation with current PhD candidates. These graduates represented the areas of academia and consultancy (business). Furthermore, an interactive workshop was organised by a career coach on the self-assessment of competencies and transferable skills. Many PhD candidates enjoyed the afternoon and used the opportunity to broaden their network and rethink their career strategy. In May, the WASS PhD Council organised the annual WASS PhD Day. With up to 120 attendants, this day was a great success. Twenty-three papers were presented by PhD candidates in three parallel sessions. The reviewers commented on their work, offering them new and insightful ideas for their PhD research.

WASS Scientific Director Prof. dr. ir. Arthur Mol opened the PhD Day.

The keynote speech was delivered by Marlies Honingh and Marieke van Genugten from the Radboud University of Nijmegen. They gave an interesting speech, titled: ‘The public sector: In pursuit of passion’. Based on the edited book ‘Passie voor de publieke zaak’, the speakers provided the audience with an interesting insight on the extent to which young social scientists still show passion for the public good and how they can put this into practice. The day ended with drinks, providing the PhD candidates the opportunity to get in touch with the reviewers of their papers in an informal setting and share experiences with fellow PhD candidates.

Throughout the year, informal lunch meetings were organised to provide PhD candidates the opportunity to discuss suggestions, ideas, or problems they encounter during their PhD. These meetings were quite successful as PhD candidates can easily walk in and give their feedback or suggest new ideas for the WASS PhD Council.

The WASS PhD Council has created an information package for new PhD candidates, enabling them to start their research well prepared and informed. The latest version of this package, as well as news on upcoming activities, can be found on the WASS PhD Council website. For questions and suggestions, please contact the WASS PhD Council by e-mail: (phdcouncil.wass@wur.nl).

INAUGURAL AND FAREWELL ADDRESSES

Cor N. van der Weele
“Want to Know: Yes / No, Meat / Meat Cultivation”
Inaugural lecture upon taking up the post of Special Professor at Wageningen University on 17 January 2013.

Adrie J.M. Beulens
“Innovation and Future Internet: Virtualisation and Internet of Things are More than Vogue Words”
Farewell address as Professor of Applied Information Science at Wageningen University on 28 February 2013.

Anke Niehof
“The ‘Facticity’ of Households and its Significance”
Farewell address as Professor of Sociology of Consumption and Households at Wageningen University on 18 April 2013.

Ewout Frankema
“Africa and the Green Revolution”
Inaugural lecture upon taking up the post of Professor of Rural and Environmental History at Wageningen University on 23 May 2013.

Cees Leeuwis
“Coupled Performance and Change in the Making”
Inaugural lecture upon taking up the post of Professor of Knowledge, Technology and Innovation at Wageningen University on 6 June 2013.

Linden Vincent
“Making Irrigation and Water Systems Work”
Farewell address as Professor of Irrigation and Water Management at Wageningen University on 19 December 2013.

The full texts of inaugural and farewell addresses are available on the WASS website.
CONTACT

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Secretary and Confidential Advisor

WASS PhD Council

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Knowledge, Technology and Innovation
Member

T.J. (Tariku) Beyene
Business Economics
Member

S. (Sabina) Super
Health and Society
Chair WASS PhD council & member of WASS board

A. (Albert) Aalvanger
Strategic Communication
Member

W.C. (William) Cook
Forest and Nature Conservation Policy
Member Education Committee

WASS International Advisory Board

Monika Hartmann (chair), Professor for Agricultural and Food Market Research, University of Bonn, Germany

Terry Marsden, Professor in Environmental Policy and Planning; University of Wales, UK

Robert P. King, Professor, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, USA

Steve Yearley, Professor of the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge, Director of the ESRC Genomics Policy & Research Forum, University of Edinburgh, UK

Arun Agrawal, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan, USA.

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Chair Groups

Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy (AEP)
Business Economics (BEC)
Cultural Geography (GEO)
Development Economics (DEC)
Economics of Consumers and Households (ECH)
Education and Competence Studies (ECS)
Environmental Economics and Natural Resources (ENR)
Environmental Policy (ENP)
Forest and Nature Conservation Policy (FNP)
Health and Society (HSO)
Information Technology (INF)
Knowledge Technology and Innovation (KTI)

Research Institutes

LEI, Agricultural Economics Research Institute
Alterra, Research Institute for the Green World

Land Use Planning (LUP)
Law and Governance (LAW)
Management Studies (MST)
Marketing and Consumer Behaviour (MCB)
Operations Research and Logistics (ORL)
Philosophy (PHI)
Public Administration and Policy (PAP)
Rural and Environmental History (RHI)
Rural Sociology (RSO)
Sociology of Consumption and Households (SCH)
Sociology of Development and Change (SDC)
Strategic Communication (COM)
Water Resources Management (WtM)