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# FEB Research



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### New appointments

Per September 1, 2008 Prof. Harry Garretsen has joined the FEB as professor in the field of International Economics & Business. Also per September 1, 2008 Prof. Rob Alessie has started in Groningen as professor in micro-econometrics. Per January 1, 2009 Prof. Sjoerd Beugelsdijk will come to Groningen. He has been appointed as professor of International Business & Management Prof. Koen Pauwels (Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth) has been appointed as professor at FEB. He holds the honorary chair in Research in Marketing Dynamics.

### 2nd Conference on Mathematics and Sports

From June 17-19, 2009, SOM and IMA (The Institute of Mathematics and its Applications) will organise the 2nd Conference on Mathematics and Sports in Groningen.

Sports is interpreted liberally and includes: Games and pastimes; gambling and on-line gaming; lotteries; and general fitness and health-related activities.

Possible topics are: Econometrics in sport;

competitive strategy; match outcome models; decision support systems; analysis of sporting technologies; analysis of rules and adjudication; performance measures and models; optimization of sports performance; mathematics education and sport, optimal tournament design and scheduling; computationally intensive methods. For information please see [online.ima.org.uk/](http://online.ima.org.uk/)

### SOM's PhD Conference will be held on

March 3, 2009. During this major event SOM's PhD students will present their latest work and SOM (associate) fellows will act as discussant.

### Millions for innovative gas research

On 23 September 2008, SNN (the Northern Netherlands Assembly) issued a positive advice on a significant contribution to the Gas Research and Sustainability Program (GrASp). The amount involved is EUR 10 million from the European EFRO fund. In addition, the Province of Groningen has guaranteed EUR 2 million and the central government is being asked to contribute a further EUR 10 million.

GrASp is a national consortium headed by

the Energy Delta Research Centre of the University of Groningen. The Faculty of Economics & Business hosts this research institute. It combines all the knowledge and expertise in the Netherlands in the field of gas, thus enabling joint efforts in the field of sustainable energy in the future. GrASp aims to become an international centre of excellence in the field of gas and sustainability.

## Editorial

**“To contribute to the advancement of knowledge in economics, business and technology by conducting high-quality research” is part of the mission of the Faculty of Economics of Business (FEB) at the University of Groningen. Conducting high-quality research is one thing, informing the world what is happening in Groningen is another.**

The aim of the new magazine *FEB Research* is to inform colleagues, business contacts and partners at the local, national and international level, by highlighting special events and by providing a glimpse behind the scene.

FEB Research will be published twice a year and will contain information about new staff members, graduate programmes, research institutes, centres of expertise, publications and policy issues. In other words, everything we feel to be of sufficient interest to bring to your attention. In this first issue, for example, we have interviews with prof. Prasada Rao, who spent two months in Groningen, new professor Rob Alessie and SOM alumnus Gerwin van der Laan.

We are greatly indebted to all the people who have contributed to the realisation of FEB Research: prof. Henk Sol, the first dean of FEB; Joke Kouyaté, former head of the communications department; Daniel Koning of Studio Tineke Wieringa; Reyer Boxem (the photographer); all colleagues who have given their comments in various stages of developing this magazine and of course the colleagues who have contributed to this first issue.

Rest assured, in future issues we will not bother you with boring details regarding the magazine's contents on this page. Instead you will find a column here.

Annemiek Koning  
Rina Koning







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# Research Policy FEB

**Elmer Sterken and Jakob de Haan have changed the research policy of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) over the last two years. In this interview De Haan explains this policy and gives his view on the future of the faculty's research, while Sterken gives his reaction.**

**Elmer Sterken is dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business. Jakob de Haan has been director of SOM for more than ten years, and he will step down in 2009.**

### Ambitions

De Haan: "Our mission with respect to research is to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of economics and business by conducting high-quality research. This research can be more fundamental or applied. Within SOM, we currently have five research institutes and they should receive high scores in research assessments, especially with respect to productivity and quality of the research."

"An important task is to increase the number of publications in very good and top journals. That is why we have changed the criteria for becoming a SOM fellow. We only reward publications in journals that are approved of, and publications in high-quality journals get a much higher reward. The new rules provide better incentives to publish in top journals. Under the new rules, SOM fellows will receive 40% research time. Directors of research institutes have some freedom and resources to increase this percentage." "Although I think that there will always be discussion about the status of some journals, everyone seems to be well aware of the importance of publishing in journals that really matter. In my view, the current system for the allocation of research time contains the right incentives. This

is important because we have to further increase the number of top publications. Also in my own research I aim much more than in the past on high-quality journals. For instance, recently a paper jointly written with four co-authors including Alan Blinder was accepted for publication in the Journal of Economic Literature. And I am not the only one. In 2008, many SOM researchers got acceptances from journals in the 5-point category."

Sterken: "I am happy with the increases in performance, the development of certain areas where we were not performing before, and yes I am very happy with the increased visibility of our performance. We still could increase relative performance within the Dutch academic community. We need to work on further instruments to improve quality and especially visibility of

research output, for instance by producing publications in ISI-ranked journals. But we also need to be visible within corporate and policy communities more than before. Our Centres of Expertise can help in this respect, but I also think that we should be more aware of publicity in (inter)national media."

### SOM as graduate school

De Haan: "I strongly believe in a clear link between research and graduate studies. That is why our research master programme has five profiles that coincide with the research programmes of the SOM research institutes. And that is also why the directors of the research programmes play a key role in selecting students and assessing their research proposals and progress."

### SOM criteria

- To hold a PhD Degree
- To do research that fits into SOM
- To have sufficient SOM credit points

The rules for SOM credit points are:

- International journals in three categories: 5 – 3 – 1 point
- PhD thesis: 1 point
- Monographs only if published by highly reputed publisher (1 point)
- Monographs published by top publisher (according to list) (3 points)
- Chapters in books and edited volumes published by highly reputed publisher (0,5 point)
- Thesis supervision: 1 point
- Editorship of an international journal (as editor-in-chief): 1 point

Over a four year period, a fellow has to obtain 5 points (at least four points have

to be obtained from international journal publications). An associate fellow has to obtain three points (at least two points from international journal publications). If someone has less time available for research due to a part-time appointment, the criteria are adjusted accordingly. In case of more than one author or supervisor, the following formula applies:  $2/(n+1)$ , where n is the number of authors/supervisors. The SOM journal list is available at [www.rug.nl/feb/som](http://www.rug.nl/feb/som)



## Jakob de Haan

Full professor of Political Economy  
Director of SOM  
PhD University of Groningen, 1989

### Recent publications

R. Inklaar, R.M. Jong-A-Pin and J. de Haan (2008), Trade and Business Cycle Synchronization in OECD Countries A Re-examination, *European Economic Review*, 52(4), 646-666.

Blinder, A.S., M. Ehrmann, M. Fratzscher, J. de Haan and D. Jansen, Central bank Communication and Monetary Policy: A Survey of theory and Evidence, NBER Working Paper 13932, *Journal of Economic Literature*, forthcoming.

J. de Haan, S. Oosterloo and D. Schoemaker, *European Financial Markets and Institutions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

“I am very proud of the launch of our Research Master programme. It is unique as it is a joined programme for economics and business. I strongly believe in this concept. We can learn from one another. Just to give you an example. Some of my students have followed a course by marketing professor Tammo Bijmolt and discovered that particular methodologies that are frequently used in the field of marketing can also be applied in my own research. For instance, in a paper with my PhD student Jeroen Klomp on political budget cycles we apply methods that Jeroen learned about in the course Multivariate Data Analysis by Tammo Bijmolt.”

“The students who graduated in the Research Master programme all got good jobs, not only as a PhD student but also as researchers in private firms. The programme owes much of its success to Bart Los, the Research Master coordinator.”

“Our PhD programme has expanded rapidly from 60 in 2000 to some 130 students in 2008. Our PhD coordinator, Martin Land, does a very good job in supporting all these students. PhD students get a tailor-made educational programme. We also stimulate that they present their research at international conferences. An important issue is monitoring of progress. In view of the large number of students, we have decided to change our monitoring system. Learning from best practices from other graduate schools of the University of Groningen, we have decided that within each research institute small committees will evaluate the work and progress of PhD students. As the members of these committees work in the same field, they are better able to assess the work done by the students.”

“An increasing number of students are externally funded. Also the number of foreign students has increased very fast. Of our 130 PhD students almost 50% is foreign, while almost 40% is female. We have 25 different nationalities among the foreign students. Also in the Research Master, the share of foreign students is almost 50%. That is a nice balance.”

Sterken: “I think that we need to have more PhD students and PhD defenses. The Faculty Board has therefore adopted a strategy to increase the number of PhD positions financed by the FEB from 44 to 60. In the near future the FEB will receive more money for each successful PhD defense.”



## Future

De Haan: “In my view, internationalization of research should be high on our list of priorities. Some of our research groups are too inward looking. Also on the basis of my own experience, I think internationalization will help us to further improve upon the quality of our research. So internationalization should not be an aim for its own sake. Currently, we have a double degree PhD programme with the Graduate University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. I want to increase the number of double degree programmes. Right now we are working on a joint programme within the Research Master with two other universities, one in Brazil and one in the US. I hope that next year the programme will be launched. We will provide more scholarships for Research Master students. This year we lost some very good students to other universities because we could not offer sufficient scholarships.”

Sterken: “We have three main areas where we would like to see progress. The first, and by far the most important, is the quest for a continuous improvement of the quality of all activities of our faculty and faculty staff. Since about 90% of our inputs consist of people, it is to a large extent human resource management. The second item is internationalization, as Jakob de Haan explains. The OECD forecasts a tripling of the number of international students in the next decade. The current financial crisis might slow down this process. But still, I expect that many more foreign students would like to come to Groningen and more of our students would like to go abroad. We have to adjust our faculty in such a way that we can handle this development. And third, we need an International Business School. This school will serve as a gateway to the international academic and corporate communities.”



## Elmer Sterken

Full professor of Monetary Economics  
Dean Faculty of Economics and Business  
PhD University of Groningen, 1990

### Key publications

R. Lensink and E. Sterken (2002), The option to wait to invest and credit rationing: A note on the Stiglitz-Weiss model, *Journal of Money, Credit, and Banking*, 34, 221-225.

Hong Bo and E. Sterken (2002), Volatility of the interest rate, debt, and firm investment: Dutch evidence, *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 8, 179-193.

R. Lensink and E. Sterken (2001), Asymmetric information, option to wait to invest and the optimal level of investment, *Journal of Public Economics*, 79, 365-374.

**Gerwin van der Laan (1981) is the first student to finish both the Research Master and PhD programme of the graduate school SOM. In this interview he looks back at his time in Groningen.**

*You have already left Groningen. What are you doing at the moment?*

I took up complementary positions at the University of Antwerp and the University of Utrecht. In Antwerp, I am a post-doc. I have been asked to work out a grant proposal, which is basically a continuation of my PhD research in Groningen. I spend the rest of my work week in Utrecht, where I am an assistant professor. In the past three months, I taught a BSc course in institutional economics, which took up most of my energy. The student evaluations which I just received, however, show that the students value my investments. It is great fun to combine research and teaching, thus the combination of the two positions suits me perfectly.

*What has been your motivation to do the research master and PhD programme at SOM?*

The research master is tailor-made for students who want to pursue a career in academia, and thus fitted me well. I have always been interested more in the subjects than was required to just pass a course. The possibility to participate in courses offered by PhD networks, and the flexibility that was inherent in the programme also played a role in the decision to join. The programme offered content courses similar to regular master programmes, but was much more targeted to the individual student. I would be

supervised by an experienced researcher and be able to participate in research myself. I expected – and that turned out to be true – that the individual supervision and the atmosphere inside the small group of students would be such that my nascent interest in research would only grow further.

*How do you look back at this period?*

The research master (RM) and PhD have been a period of great flexibility. Back then (and I hope still so today) there was a lot of freedom in selecting courses in the RM. Also in the PhD, this flexibility remained. For example, a few months before I finished the draft PhD thesis, I replied to the question of ‘what binds the chapters in your thesis together?’ with ‘the cover, and the cover only’. In fact, the core of the PhD thesis became apparent only nine months before I finished the first draft. This reflects that I could research whatever I wanted, as long as it fitted in some broad outline which I set out at the start. I think the key of a research master is that it allows students to develop as they, and their supervisors, deem appropriate. The student and his/her supervisor know best what mix of methods, theories, and skills are relevant for the field of research. Further, frequent meetings with my fellow RM students stimulated my development.

With respect to supervisors, I have been a lucky guy. I have participated in a substantial number of research projects already as a student. Apparently, my supervisors (Hans van Ees and Arjen van Witteloostuijn) were also satisfied, as they both accepted my request to also supervise my PhD research. In fact, another advantage of the RM is that you already get to know your future colleagues and that

the transition from student to employee is thus much smoother. Early on, you get involved in the department in which you will later work.

*You will defend your thesis in January. What is it about?*

I have a collection of papers that aim to go beyond formal structures of company management. Many studies exist – with inconsistent results – that examine the effect of contracts among corporate governance variables and firm performance. I intended to contribute by showing that setting the structures right, does not imply that the outcomes follow immediately, because individual behavior interferes with expectations. The public defense is scheduled for January 22nd, and I hereby invite everybody to attend.

*Is there anything else you would like to share with us?*

Yes, definitely. Next to my academic life, big personal changes occurred as well. We moved to Nieuwegein, and even for a true Groninger – I lived in the province all my life – I have rooted well. Further, in New York, on our post-conference holiday, I proposed to my girlfriend, and she gladly said ‘yes’. Just shortly thereafter, we discovered that our happy life together would soon be expanded, as Marjolein is pregnant. Somewhere by the end of April, I hope to become the proud father of our first daughter or son. In half a year, my life will be different from what it looked like half a year ago, but I am enjoying it to the max.

# Looking Back:



A portrait of a young man with short, wavy brown hair, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a black and white horizontally striped jacket with a white collar and cuffs. The jacket has the text 'Vintage Aviation' in a script font across the chest, with 'PM' and '33' in large, bold, grey letters below it. He has his arms crossed. The background features a white-framed window with multiple panes, some of which are arched at the top. The wall to the right has decorative, light-colored wallpaper. A red horizontal bar is positioned above the text 'Gerwin van der Laan'.

Gerwin van der Laan

**Although foreign visitors often find their way to Groningen, it is much less common to have a visitor of the stature of Prasada Rao and even rarer to have him with us for two whole months and teaching an intensive academic workshop on productivity and efficiency. Therefore, I have taken this opportunity to introduce to a wider audience the man, his research and his ties to Groningen.**

Prasada's normal base of operations is the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia where he has been a professor at the School of Economics for the past five years. Of Indian origin, he has spent a major part of his career in Australia building the Centre for Efficiency and Productivity Analysis (CEPA) with other prominent researchers in this field: "The Centre grew out of an unusual constellation of econometricians (Battese, Coelli, Griffiths, O'Donnell) at the University of New England who were all, one way or the other, interested in productivity measurement and related

issues." Only recently, many of these researchers moved to Brisbane. But while Australia is an attractive location, sabbaticals are very important to stay current with developments in other parts of the world. And Groningen is a 10+ hour flight away from most other places. Furthermore, the Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC), founded by Angus Maddison, is a close intellectual cousin to Prasada's CEPA. It is not for nothing that Angus celebrated his 80th birthday with workshops in both Groningen and Brisbane in 2006. Both this university's GGDC and CEPA measure and analyze prices and productivity across countries and it is in this area that Prasada has earned his academic stripes.

#### **Purchasing Power Parity**

Prices play a key role in economics: if we want to know how well an economy is doing compared to last year, it is crucial to adjust the money value of domestic production for changes in prices. Only then do we know whether the economy is producing more (i.e. whether it has shown positive growth) or whether price inflation

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# Prasada Rao: it's all about prices (and purchasing power parities)











is driving the increased value of production. Most of us are aware of certain prominent prices, such as gasoline or food prices, but the key is to measure all prices, from food to health services, from electronics to housing rents. Prices are not only crucial in measuring economic growth, but similarly important in comparing countries to each other. Measuring global poverty (how many people are living on a dollar a day?), for example, relies on accurate measures of prices. But rather than comparing prices over time, in this case prices should be compared across countries to determine

the purchasing power parity (PPP): if I can buy 10 apples with one euro in the Netherlands, how many dollars would I need to spend in Australia to get 10 apples there? And what is the PPP for steaks, beer or cell phones? Prasada: "I was drawn into PPP work after Khamis visited the Indian Statistical Institute when I was a graduate student. That led to my first piece of research where I established necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of unique positive solutions for the Geary-Khamis system of equations – I never looked back from that!"

And indeed, in this field Prasada has made considerable contributions by working on difficult questions such as how the different PPPs should be combined to get an overall relative price level for an economy; how to evaluate the reliability of country-wide PPPs; what these PPPs imply for poverty and the income distribution; and how PPPs can be used to compare productivity across countries, applying this to agriculture for most of the countries in the world. Prasada has long been a good friend of Groningen: "I immensely enjoy my visits to Groningen mainly because of the



collegial atmosphere at GGDC and working in a stimulating atmosphere with bright, young and hardworking researchers not to mention the exciting lunch times – all these more than compensate for the typical Dutch weather Groningen has to offer!”

### Groningen Growth and Development Center

Founded by Angus Maddison, the GGDC has been doing research into comparative living standards and productivity performance for about a quarter century. After Angus, Bart van Ark, now

Chief Economist at The Conference Board, a US-based business research organization, ran the Centre for many years. His research and that of other GGDC researchers are well-known in productivity circles all around the world. This reputation is not just amongst fellow academics like Prasada but also in policy and (thanks to The Conference Board) in business circles.

Indeed, the GGDC, now run by Marcel Timmer, has notched up quite a few successes recently, with papers in prestigious journals such as the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Economic Policy*, and (forthcoming) *The Economic Journal*. These publications are partly based on the results of a large project for the European Commission called EU KLEMS. Recently completed, this project involved about 15 research institutes throughout Europe and resulted in a well-used database with internationally comparable data on economic structure and growth and productivity performance. Prasada: “Applied researchers need reliable data on the phenomena they want to research, but the investment needed to construct such data is often too large to justify for a single research project so shortcuts are made. Therefore, the GGDC tradition of constructing internationally comparable databases of the highest standards is to be commended as a great public service. It is good that you are now not only getting credit for doing all this work but also for the new insights and analysis that be gained from these data sources.” As Groningen is the leading partner in a new large EU project on constructing international input-output tables (WIOD), the pay-offs from the emphasis at GGDC of careful data work seem guaranteed for many years to come.

### Productivity and efficiency measurement

Back in 2000 Prasada was also in Groningen for a longer period of time and also gave a workshop on productivity and efficiency measurement. This year’s workshop aims at researchers both in Groningen and from other institutes that are looking for a hands-on introduction into a wide range of methods for measurement productivity and efficiency. A well-known book by Prasada and colleagues (see Selected Publications) forms the basis of this workshop. That time, colleagues Marcel Timmer and Bart Los were inspired enough by this workshop to write a paper using these methods that was published in the *Journal*

of Development Economics, a top journal on SOM’s journal list. Prasada has also written joint papers with a number of (former) Groningen people: Angus Maddison, Dirk Pilat and Marcel; appearing in journals like the *Review of Economics and Statistics* and the *Review of Income and Wealth*. This time around, he has also been a very stimulating presence, at lunch-time, in informal discussion, when visiting seminars by others and in his own seminar. With the second productivity and efficiency workshop taking place, we can only hope that the current crop of PhD students and other attendants will be stimulated enough to try their hand at some of the methods pioneered by Prasada.

Robert Inklaar

### Selected publications

Coelli, T., D.S. Prasada Rao, Christopher J. O’Donnell and G.E. Battese (2005), *An introduction to efficiency and productivity analysis*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Second Edition (Revised), pp.350

Chotikapanich, D., W.E. Griffiths and D.S. Prasada Rao (2007), Estimating and combining national income distributions using limited data, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, 25, 97-109.

Lee, B., D.S. Prasada Rao and W.F. Shepherd (2007), Comparisons of real output and productivity of Chinese and Indian manufacturing, 1980-2002, *Journal of Development Economics*, 84(1), 378-416.





As of 1 September 2008, Prof. Rob Alessie (1958) has been appointed as professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business. He holds the new chair in microeconometrics. Microeconometrics is the discipline that carries out empirical research into microeconomic questions. Having lived in the western part of the Netherlands for all his life, the choice for Groningen was remarkable.

#### Groningen

"Last year I was asked by Elmer Sterken (dean of the faculty) to come to Groningen. I wasn't sure at first. However, I knew several of the researchers in Groningen, I liked the research environment and the Faculty of Economics and Business offers Econometrics programmes so I decided to make the move."

In Utrecht he was involved in teaching econometric classes to economists. And while he enjoyed teaching that group of students, Alessie looks forward to teaching both students of Economics and Econometrics.

#### Career

Prior to his move to Groningen, Alessie

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# Rob Alessie

A practical micro-econometrician in Groningen



worked as an associate professor at the Free University in Amsterdam and as professor at Utrecht University. He obtained his doctorate in 1994 with empirical studies into consumer behaviour. In addition, Alessie worked at various academic centres, such as CentER Tilburg, University College London, CREST-INSEE in Paris, ICER in Turin and the European University Institute in Florence.

#### Netspar

In Groningen Alessie's research, along with colleague from the Free University and Tilburg University, will focus on consumption and saving behaviour of retirees. The research will take place within Netspar, an international network dealing with the problems of ageing populations and pensions. The goal of his research is to analyze the behavior and well-being of the Dutch elderly workers and retirees in relation to their pensions and social security provisions and other environmental factors.

#### Early retirement

Dutch employees retire rather early. Due to this phenomenon and due to population aging the current Dutch pension and health care systems will become

unsustainable in the near future if no further policy measures will be taken. One way to prevent this from happening is to adjust financial incentives for early and late retirement in order to stimulate people to stay in the labor force longer. It is therefore important to answer the following research question: How do financial incentives (such as social security and pension levels) affect retirement behavior?

#### Spending behaviour

Another aspect of his research will be how retirees are spending their money. At a certain age, people have to decide how much money they want to save and how much they are going to spend. As their life expectancy is shorter, there is less need to save much money. Alessie explains: "As you don't know how long you will live, you need to have some savings for unexpected expenses and in case you will reach a very old age. Most retirees don't find it very important to leave an inheritance for their children and can therefore spend more money on their own interests."

Other important factors that influence the spending behaviour of retirees are the increased additional pension (mostly because both partners worked and receive

a pension) and the fact that more retirees are home-owners. Research has shown that in 2000 more 65+ year old retirees still had a mortgage outstanding with the bank than in 1990. Apparently, among retirees there is an increasing tendency to spend the home equity instead of saving it for their children.

#### Societal relevance

Banks and financial organisations can use the results from this research for their product development. "It might be interesting for them to offer products that will enable retirees to spend more money. A good example is the interest-only mortgage."

#### Future

Alessie looks forward to his life in Groningen. "Apart from Netspar research, I will continue doing research in micro-econometrics. I really enjoy writing articles with co-authors and will definitely publish articles with some of my colleagues here in Groningen. And I will supervise PhD-students as I did before. The occasional managerial position might come along, but most and for all I am a practical researcher".

#### Key publications

Kalwij, A.S. and R. Alessie (2007), Earnings mobility of British men: 1975-2000, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 22(6), 1033-1062

Alessie, R., S. Hochguertel and G. Weber, (2005), Consumer credit: evidence from Italian micro data, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 3, 144-178

Kapteyn, A., R. Alessie and A. Lusardi (2005), Explaining the wealth holdings of different cohorts: productivity growth and social security, *The European Economic Review*, 49, 1361-1391





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# Multidisciplinary Health Care Research

**One of the centres of expertise at the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) is RHO: Research on Health-care Organisation & Innovation. RHO was established in 2004 by Professor Jacob Wijngaard. Also Manda Broekhuis and Marjolein van Offenbeek have played an important role within the centre. Within the Faculty of Economics and Business around 16 researchers participate in RHO. The Centre works closely with the University Medical Centre of Groningen (UMCG) and conducts research for and with different health care organisations and health insurance companies.**

Kees Ahaus is the Centre's director. He has been a part-time professor Quality Management at the FEB since 2004 and he is director of TNO Management Consultants. Becoming director of RHO was a logical step: Ahaus' connections with UMCG intensified since April 2008, his chair focused on health care management and fitted the RHO research well, and he has a business background. Ahaus enjoys his new position. "It's a new challenge, the faculty wants to further develop its contract research and the RHO community is committed to contribute to that goal."

### Mission

RHO engages in research concerning the management and organisation of health care delivery processes. The main objective is to investigate how the performance of health care processes and organisations can be improved. The whole health care chain from the general practitioner to the specialist at the hospital to post-clinical or ambulatory care is therefore subject of the centre's research. To improve performance many topics can be researched: How to organise the delivery processes and system, how to organise effective (multidisciplinary) teamwork while retaining professional autonomy, how to divide and coordinate tasks, how to use shared resources effectively, how to adapt to technological and ICT developments, how to cope with societal requests like transparency? Nowadays, the health care sector needs to be flexible and use

innovations to deliver high standard health care. RHO aims to support health care organisations in dealing with these developments.

### Multidisciplinary

To tackle the questions, knowledge, models and methods are required from a variety of disciplines: HRM, operations management (planning and logistics), knowledge management, quality management, management control and finance, organisation studies, change management, and ICT. The centre aims to bring this knowledge together. "A multidisciplinary approach is necessary in health care organisations like hospitals. Different specialists have to collaborate in curing the patient. The teamwork quality is directly linked to the patient's well being. Our multidisciplinary research should be supportive to practitioners who are looking for and working on integrative solutions to complex problems. Hence, it is logical that RHO offers and combines different expertises."

### Ambitions

RHO works closely with the UMCG (University Medical Centre of Groningen). An example of this cooperation is that

qualified UMCG employees will work on a research project, supervised by RHO researchers, which ultimately should lead to a PhD thesis. "It combines the best of two worlds," Ahaus explains. "The PhD candidate brings the in-depth knowledge of the field and we have the theoretical background."

"A result of this cooperation is that the researchers can publish findings in scientific journals. RHO aims for more publications in international peer reviewed journals." Regionally, RHO is a well-known partner for contract research, resulting in PhD projects and master theses. Ahaus is looking ahead. "We want to be an important partner when it comes to health care research, at the national and international level. A good example is the new research project, a benchmarking study for De Ziekenhuisketen ('Hospital Chain'), with seven Dutch hospitals".

### Societal relevance

With an ageing population, health care becomes increasingly complex and its volume will grow. For hospitals it is becoming more difficult to get new staff and keep the existing staff. "Whoever has the best people, will provide the best care and will improve the market position.

## Key researchers

### Dr. Marjolein Achterkamp

Strategy and stakeholder management

### Prof. Kees Ahaus

Performance management, continuous improvement and guidelines

### Prof. Albert Boonstra, Prof. Bert de Brock

ICT  
Dr. Manda Broekhuis  
Performance management, continuous improvement and guidelines; cooperation in multidisciplinary teams

### Dr. Ben Crom

Management control

### Prof. René Jorna

Knowledge management, planning and scheduling

### Dr. Mark Mobach

Architectural and organizational designs, virtual reality

### Prof. Eric Molleman

HR, cooperation in multidisciplinary teams, team effectiveness

### Dr. Marjolein van Offenbeek

Task redistribution, new healthcare workers

### Dr. Taco van der Vaart, Prof. Jacob Wijngaard

Patient logistics

### Prof. Jan de Vries

Integrated Care

### Prof. Hans Wortmann

Telecare/telecure

### Dr. Durk Jouke van der Zee

Simulation

*In the picture, from left to right: Kees Ahaus, Manda Broekhuis (back row), Marjolein van Offenbeek and Jacob Wijngaard (front row).*





Harry Luik

Harry Luik, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kennemer Gasthuis in Haarlem:

“The hospitals in this chain called De Ziekenhuisketen have a rich tradition in performing benchmarking studies, for example on Operating Rooms, Emergency Services and the Purchasing Process. We have been looking for a semi-permanent partner for performing the next benchmarking study. We have been inspired by MINOZ, a cooperation between 13 Flemish hospitals, that has a similar kind of relationship with the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School in Belgium. We see similarities in their approach and that of RHO. We now have a contract with RHO for a two-year study.

What appeals to us in RHO’s approach is their empathy for our questions and the fact that the researchers are very well able to combine useful ideas for our daily routines with academic depth.”

Having motivated staff around is definitely going to be a USP” says Ahaus. “Within the Hospital Chain project we will look into this.”

Moreover, we analyse in which ways task redistribution between healthcare occupations may help to fit the right set of competencies to the patient streams, and to develop robust, attractive jobs alongside efficient, sustainable personnel planning. Another research issue is transparency. Patients like to know what they can expect (e.g., which hospital excels at certain specialisations) and will choose their health care provider based on the information that is available. Comparing health care providers is not easy. “The ministry in The Hague asks health care providers to supply data regarding the quality of care, but it is hard to get everyone to agree on the definitions of the data and to get reliable and comparable quantitative data”.

### Zorg Innovatie Forum (‘Health Care Innovation Forum’)

RHO also participates in the Health Care Innovation Forum, an initiative of eleven health care providers and health insurers. The forum’s goal is to provide synergy in the vast amount of innovations the care sector faces. The forum has an important role in making information about care developments and care innovations accessible. “The University of Groningen participates in this forum. For us it’s an important place to meet other stakeholders and share information”.

### Future

Ahaus expects that in the future even more RHO research will be published in scientific journals. “It is always our intention to conduct relevant research for practitioners and organisations, as well as to contribute to the scientific community. After all, we are a research-oriented organisation.” He looks forward to having more faculty staff involved in RHO research. “Especially HRM themes will become more important in the near future. Fortunately, as a faculty we have high quality expertise in that field with researchers like Eric Molleman and Gerben van der Vegt. “

**Within the scope of this interview only a few examples of research issues were mentioned. Below, three projects are described in more detail. For further information you also may visit the RHO website (in Dutch) [www.rug.nl/feb/rho](http://www.rug.nl/feb/rho).**

## Koala telecare and -cure project

Health care providers and insurance companies increasingly seek new technological and organizational means of improving healthcare services’ delivery efficiency. Telemedicine, telecare and telehealth monitoring seem to be promising information communication technologies in order to realize these objectives. RHO researchers investigate the implementation, adoption, substitution, organizational implications and (cost-)effectiveness of a large telecare and telecure project, called Koala. Koala is a foundation set up by Menzis, Thuiszorg Groningen and KPN Telecom to introduce telemonitoring and teleconsulting services for care and cure markets. In this project, clients and patients can make video calls from their own home with a medical service center on a 24/7 basis, or with their own provider at agreed times. Second, patients can send in their monitoring data (e.g. blood pressure, weight) to this center. For providers from homecare, family practices and hospitals this innovation implies that they outsource a part of their healthcare services to this nurse-managed service center.

The research examines the practical problems of workability and integration in the health system that such complex technological innovations pose. Whether and how patients and clients are actually using such a system seems to be highly dependent on the way it has been introduced to them by their providers, and how well this new “delivery channel” and/or additional service has been thought out and integrated in the whole healthcare system. The quality of the implementation affects largely the cost-effectiveness realized in this project. In general, the majority of patients evaluate the use of the system quite positive. Developing a range of focused care and cure services for smaller targeted groups may better enable substitution and generate more adoption. The public research report is downloadable from the Koala website (see [www.koalaweb.nl](http://www.koalaweb.nl)).

## Co-operation among medical specialists: “pain or gain?”

In her PhD thesis, Renée Stoffels describes three studies on multidisciplinary teamwork among medical specialists. In her first study she examines the relationships between the complexity of the health-care needs of the patient and (1) the verbal cooperative behavior of physicians during team meetings and (2) how the meeting specialists evaluate the discussion. Three dimensions of the complexity of the health care demanded are related to the behavior of medical specialists during meetings of multidisciplinary medical teams. Three medical teams from a Dutch university hospital, each while discussing 40 patients, have been observed. The results show that in case the patient's demand covers more than one medical domain, medical specialists primarily exchange information and evaluate these discussions positively.

The other two dimensions (the extent to which the patient's problems interfere and the degree to which the problems are ambiguous) have to be considered in concert: interference is positively related to negative affective behavior but only if ambiguity is low. Further, ambiguity is positively related to weighing and evaluating the information that had been exchanged and to mutual support, and negatively to the evaluation of the discussion, but only if coordinative complexity is low.

The second study focuses on the impact of multidisciplinary teamwork on core features of professionals, i.e., professional autonomy and accountability. In a large survey among Dutch medical specialists Stoffels reports, that medical teamwork reduces perceived clinical autonomy



and increases perceived accountability. Personality traits and the kind of medical speciality moderate these relationships. For example, due to teamwork surgical specialists particularly seem to feel more ‘pain’, whereas supporting specialists on average experienced more ‘gain’.

The third study focuses on the experiences of patients with multidisciplinary medical teams. An instrument to measure these experiences has been developed and validated. The first findings amongst patients of 5 medical teams show that “consensus within the team” and “showing expertise” are evaluated most positively. Together with “patient empowerment” these aspects are also considered to be most important.

Renée Stoffels has conducted her research as a researcher at the Wenckebach Institute of the University Medical Centre Groningen. She defended her thesis on November 20, 2008.

## Benchmarking Study for De Ziekenhuisketen (‘The Hospital Chain’)

Eight Dutch hospitals participate in a large benchmarking study executed by RHO. The main theme of this study is the way that hospitals can grow to be attractive employers for nurses. The hospitals collaborating in De Ziekenhuisketen (‘Hospital chain’) are Medisch Centrum Alkmaar, Kennemer Gasthuis, Ziekenhuisgroep Twente, Meander Medisch Centrum, Reinier de Graaf Groep, Jeroen Bosch Ziekenhuis, Máxima Medisch Centrum, and Maasland Ziekenhuis.

Hospitals are challenged to recruit and retain nurses in a time when the demand

for nurses increases while the amount of applicants decreases. Hospital executives are therefore interested in those aspects that make nurses stay in their hospitals and make them proud to fulfill their jobs.

In a two-year study, aspects like nursing leadership, nurse autonomy, quality of interdisciplinary relationships, patient satisfaction with nursing care, and nursing productivity (direct nursing care) will be measured. Data from the benchmarking study provide a foundation for developing improvement plans in cooperation with the hospitals. The benchmarking study is further expected to result in a research report for the hospitals and in international journal publications.

### Key publications

Mobach, M.P. (2009), Counter design influences the privacy of patients, *Social Science & Medicine*, forthcoming

Minkman, M.M.N., C.T.B. Ahaus, I.N. Fabbriotti, U.W. Nabit & R. Huijsman, A quality management model for integrated care: Results from a Delphi and concept mapping study, *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, forthcoming

Gort, M., M. Broekhuis, R. Otter & N. Klazinga (2007), Improvement in practice of early breast cancer: actionable surgeon and hospital factors, *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*, 102(2), 219-226

Broekhuis, M. & C. Veldkamp (2007), The usefulness and feasibility of a reflexivity method to improve clinical handover, *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 13, 109-115

Offenbeek van, M.A.G., D.J. Kiewiet & M.J. Oosterhuis (2006), The compatibility of future doctors' career intentions with changing health care demands, *Medical Education*, 40(6), 530-538



## Publications

Please find below an overview of publications in SOM's top and very good journals, books, PhD theses and reports in SOM's Research Report Series in the period January – November 2008.

### Journal Publications

Andrews, R.L., Currim, I.S., **Leeflang, P.S.H.** & Lom, J. (2008). Estimating the SCAN\*PRO model store sales: HB, FM or just OLS? *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 25(1), 22-23.

**Ark, H.H. van**, O'Mahony, M. & **Timmer, M.P.** (2008). The productivity gap between Europe and the U.S.: Trends and causes. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(1), 25-44.

**Bekker, P.A.** & Lawford, S. (2008). Symmetry-based inference in an instrumental variable setting. *Journal of Econometrics*, 142, 28-49.

**Bezemer, D.J.** & Headey, D. (2008). Agriculture, development and urban bias. *World Development*, 36(8), 1317-1492.

**Bokhorst, J., Nomden, G. & Slomp, J.** (2008). Performance evaluation of family-based dispatching in small manufacturing cells. *International Journal of Production Research*, 46(22), 6305-6321.

Bolton, R., Lemon, K.N. & **Verhoef, P.C.** (2008). Expanding business-to-business customer relationships: modeling the customer's upgrade decision. *Journal of Marketing*, 72(1), 46-64.

**Boonstra, A. & Vries, J. de** (2008). Managing stakeholders around inter-organizational systems: A diagnostic approach. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 17, 190-201.

**Boonstra, A.**, Bell, S. & Boddy, D. (2008). Stakeholder management in IOS projects: Analysis of an attempt to implement an electronic patient file. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 17, 100-111.

**Brakman, S.**, Bosker, M., **Garretsen, H.** & Schramm, M. (2008). A century of shocks: The evolution of the German city size distribution 1925-1999. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 38(4), 330-347.

**Broersma, L.** & Dijk, J. van (2008). The effect of congestion and agglomeration on multifactor productivity growth in Dutch regions. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 8(2), 181-209.

Bruyn, A. de, Liechty, J., **Huizingh, K.R.E.** & Lilien, G.L. (2008). Offering online recommendations with minimum customer input through conjoint-based aids. *Marketing Science*, 27, 443-460.

Busco, C., Giovannoni, E. & **Scapens, R.W.** (2008). Managing the tensions in integrating global organisations: The role of performance management systems. *Management Accounting Research*, 19(2), 103-125.

Cole, M.S., **Walter, F.** & Bruch, H. (2008). The affective mechanisms linking dysfunctional behavior to performance in work teams: a moderated mediation study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 945-958.

**Donk, D.P. van** (2008). Challenges in relating supply chain management and information and communication technology: An introduction. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 28(4), 308-312.

**Doorn, J. van & Verhoef, P.C.** (2008). Negative incidents and the impact of satisfaction on customer share. *Journal of Marketing*, 72(4), 123-142.

## Henk von Eije:

"Dividend policy is a major issue in corporate finance. Bill Megginson and I examine the dividend policies of companies in the European Union (EU) and we compare them to recent findings for the United States. We include typical European characteristics like the fact that companies do not have to report on a quarterly basis and that relatively many companies are privatized. As far as I know, we are the first to analyze both the likelihood to pay cash dividends as well as the amounts paid. Moreover, we study both cash dividends and share repurchases. Our most striking finding is that share repurchases have surged in the EU, rising by more than 800% to almost 59 billion euro in 2005 (prices of 2000). We also find a major decline in the propensity to pay cash dividends. Some 84% of the companies paid cash dividends in the period 1989-1993, while in 2005 it was reduced to

53%. Despite the decline in the propensity to pay, cash dividends increased from 35 billion to 113 billion euro. The largest companies (the top 10%) increased their share in cash dividends from 79% to 92%. Furthermore, our regression analyses show that similar influences affect payout in the EU as in the United States, like company size (+), company earnings (+), market to book value (-) and company age (+, though not for the likelihood to repurchase). We also find that total payout has become increasingly sensitive to earnings and that the response to earnings is faster.

Finally, we show that average financial reporting frequency has increased and is associated with higher payout, and that the privatized companies account for almost one-quarter of total EU cash dividend payments."



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- Zoethout, K., Jager, W. & Molleman, E.** (2008). Task dynamics in self-organising task groups: expertise, motivational and performance differences of specialists and generalists. *Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems*, 16(1), 75-94.

## Books

- Brakman, S. & Garretsen, H.** (Eds) (2008). *Foreign Direct Investment and the Multinational Enterprise*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

## PhD theses

### Kees Bouwman

*Essays on financial econometrics. Modeling the term structure of interest rates.*

Prom./coprom.: Prof. P.A. Bekker.  
Defended on: March 6, 2008

### Anke Brockmöller

*Knowledge sharing in expert-apprentice relations: Design of a protocol.*

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### Simon de Jong

*Asymmetry in task dependence among team members.*

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FEB Research  
Faculty of Economics & Business  
Research School SOM  
University of Groningen  
P.O. Box 800  
9700 AV Groningen  
The Netherlands  
e-mail: [febresearch@rug.nl](mailto:febresearch@rug.nl)

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