

**Research Review**  
**Erasmus School of History, Culture**  
**and Communication**  
**2005-2011**

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## Preface

Allow me to introduce to you the report of the Committee in charge of the research review of ESHCC, the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, that completes the assessment exercise.

Research assessments today build on a certain tradition in this regard, providing the School and the Committee with experiences and insights from the past. In referring to this, we do not wish to take anything away from the hard work that has been done in preparation of this exercise by the School and its various parts.

At the same time, research assessments have gradually become part of a wider audit culture in which academic institutions are confronted with many evaluations, assessments and reviews. This holds the potential danger of assessments becoming little more than a ritual of verification: the dutiful production of self-evaluations and ‘evidence’ by those that are being assessed, and the writing by the assessors of reports that are subsequently classified vertically.

Such fear proved unnecessary. The Committee was struck by and grateful for the constructive and productive atmosphere in which the review took place. During the site visit the Committee met with engaged colleagues and research centres that took part in an open dialogue and that did not shy away from looking at ways to improve.

As a result, the research review of the ESHCC turned into an interesting and instructive conversation between international peers concerned with the quality of the research in history, culture and communication. The Committee is convinced that this proved to be a fruitful learning process for both the School and the visiting peers, that took home many interesting new ideas.

Hilde Van den Bulck  
Chair of the visiting research assessment Committee 2013



# 1. The Review Committee and the procedures

## Scope of the assessment

The Review Committee ('Committee') was asked to perform an assessment of the research in the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC) at Erasmus University Rotterdam. The ESHCC comprises three research programmes (or 'Departments'): 'History', 'Arts and Culture Studies', and 'Media and Communication'. The assessment covers the research conducted in the period 2005-2011.

In accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 for Research Assessment in the Netherlands (SEP), the Committee's tasks were to assess the quality of the Institutes and the research programmes on the basis of the information provided by the Institutes and interviews with the management and the research leaders, and to advise on how they might be improved.

## Composition of the Committee

The composition of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Committee was as follows:

- Prof. H. (Hilde) Van den Bulck (chair), Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium;
- Prof. W. (Wendy) Griswold, Bergen Evans Professor of Humanities and Professor of Sociology at Northwestern University Chicago, USA;
- Prof. P. (Philippe) Coulangeon, Senior Researcher at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France;
- Prof. J.M.W.G. (Jan) Lucassen, Senior Researcher at International Institute of Social History and Professor at VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands;
- Prof. P.G.J.M (Peter) Raedts, Professor of Medieval History at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, the Netherlands;
- Prof. J. (Jostein) Gripsrud, Professor of Media Studies at University of Bergen, Norway;
- Prof. Y.R. (Yahya) Kamalipour, Professor of Mass and International Communication at Purdue University, USA.

Dr. F. (Floor) Meijer of QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities) was appointed secretary to the Committee. A short curriculum vitae of the Committee members can be found in Appendix C.

## Independence

All members of the Committee signed a statement of independence to guarantee that they would assess the quality of the Institutes and research programmes in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between Committee members and the programmes under review were reported and discussed in the Committee meeting.

## Data provided to the Committee

The Committee received detailed documentation consisting of the following parts:

1. Self-evaluation report of the units under review, including all the information required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP), with appendices;
2. Key publications per research programme, with a maximum of five articles and/or books;

3. Publication lists of staff members per research programme;
4. Examples of PhD progress reports and of tenure track agreements.

### **Procedures followed by the Committee**

The Committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2009-2015. Prior to the site visit, each programme was assigned to two reviewers, who independently formulated a preliminary assessment. Both reviewers were chosen on the basis of their expertise in the domain of the programme.

Preceding the interviews, the Committee was briefed by QANU about research assessment according to SEP, and the Committee discussed the preliminary assessments. The Committee also agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the assessment. Before starting with the interviews, the Committee discussed the self-evaluation report, key publications and preliminary findings for each research programme and for the Institute. The first and second reviewers opened the interviews, and then the other Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions. After each interview the Committee took five minutes to prepare their preliminary assessment. After concluding the interviews, the Committee discussed the scores and comments of the Institute and programmes.

At the end of the site visit, the Committee prepared the written assessments. The first and second assessor were together responsible for writing the draft assessment for each programme. The Committee chair prepared the assessment of the Institute. To conclude the visit, the chair gave an oral presentation of the Committee's findings to the assembled faculty and students of the ESHCC. The texts for the Committee report were finalised through email exchanges. With the approval of both assessors, the assessment was inserted into the report. After receiving all assessments, the secretary compiled the report and returned it to the Committee for final approval. The approved version of the report was presented to the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication for factual corrections and comments. The Committee discussed the replies. After formal acceptance by the Board of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the report was printed.

The site visit took place on 5 and 6 February 2013 (see the schedule in Appendix B) on site at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. It consisted of 30-minute interviews with the management of the three programmes ('Departments'), and 60-minute interviews with the programme leaders and PhD students/post docs.

The Committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 (SEP). The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix B.

## General Remarks

The Committee met with a flourishing School characterised by enthusiasm at all levels: PhD students and junior and senior staff. In the latter category, some people stood out, showing real leadership. Overall, personnel feels protected and respected by the School and its management.

The School is clearly geared towards research, and in tune with contemporary trends in terms of funding acquisition, PhDs and creating quality academic output. It manages to do so within a research framework that is a unique combination of Social Sciences and Humanities. This can be a real strength in terms of long time viability as it provides room for innovative and potentially internationally leading research, but at the same time can be a potential threat as it makes it harder for the School to fit the mainstream criteria adhered to in the international field of these disciplines.

With regards to the Media and Communication Department, the Committee was struck by the energy and enthusiasm of a group that is clearly in the middle of an exponential growth, working to be productive within contemporary quality standards. Its societal visibility is high, although maybe not as high as that of some of its sister groups. Its future looks bright but it will have to think carefully about the relationship between growth and consolidation.

The Media and Communication group is clearly in an organic relationship with the Arts and Culture group. The Arts and Culture Department shows similar levels of quality of research; although care should be taken to ensure that high productivity is matched by high quality. The Committee believes that there is room for more collaboration between the sociological and economic strands of the research.

The History Department seems to stand apart a little more and also shows less internal synergy, which seems to result in diverse levels of quality for the different centers and research units. Initiatives already taken to further internal (and external) collaboration should be elaborated on. This is compensated by a high societal visibility and relevance.

Overall, the Committee would like to suggest the School to hold on and invest in the enthusiasm and energy of its junior and senior staff. At the same time, we strongly suggest that the School develops a clear five year plan for the future that can help guarantee the viability of all sections of the School.



## 2. Assessment at Institute level: Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

### 1. The Institute

As of 2011, the Erasmus University's research is grouped into four domains: *Health, Wealth, Governance and Culture*. As part of the *Culture* domain, the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC) conducts research and offers research training in History, Arts and Culture, and Media and Communication.

The ESHCC's general mission is to generate research that is interdisciplinary in nature, comparative in scope, grounded in historical, social, cultural and economic science theory and methodology, and which is geared towards contributing to the further development of knowledge, methodology and theory.

A large part of the ESHCC's research currently takes place in three research centres, which to some extent transgress the Departmental and Faculty levels:

- Erasmus Centre for Early Modern Studies (ECEMS, in existence since 2005);
- Centre for Historical Culture (CHC, in existence since 2006);
- Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture (ERMeCC, in existence since 2008).

According to the self-evaluation report, these centres serve as platforms in which senior and junior researchers present and discuss their research. Furthermore, they promote the Department's research, establish collaborations and engage in fundraising.

Not all members of the ESHCC's research staff currently participate in the research centres. The SWOT analysis in the self-evaluation report mentions that opportunities for collaboration and cross-fertilisation within the School could be developed further. For example: the School's research in cultural economics and history is not yet fully integrated in research centres, but is in the process of becoming so (BusinessHistory@Erasmus).

With the creation of the Department of Media and Communication in 2007, there are now three Departments at the ESHCC:

- Department of History (participates in ECEMS, CHC and BusinessHistory@Erasmus);
- Department of Arts and Culture Studies (participates in ERMeCC);
- Department of Media and Communication (participates in ERMeCC).

### 2. Policy on scientific quality and academic reputation

In the self-evaluation report, it is pointed out that the hybrid nature of the School's research requires a broad spectrum of quality indicators to do justice to the diversity in research organisation, publication cultures and target groups.

To enhance quality, the school provides researchers, especially the next generation, with a tool for publication strategy. Furthermore, in 2013, the ESHCC will introduce a new system of quality measurement, based on a model developed for the Faculty of Social Sciences of the EUR.

### **Assessment/remarks**

The Committee praises the way in which the School harbours and encourages a unique combination of Social Sciences and Humanities. The School seems to manage this combination well, both in terms of topics, theoretical and methodological paradigms, funding applications and output strategies. This has helped the School to stand out as a research centre coming up with innovative cross-disciplinary topics that are often dealt with in an interdisciplinary fashion.

There is a real attempt to meet contemporary criteria of academic evaluation, including funding acquisition and publishing in peer reviewed quality outlets. To this end, the School has created an enabling environment by embracing a tenure track for new staff with clear research criteria and by providing structural initiatives such as support during preparation of research proposals, in house training facilities, a bench fee for PhD students, amongst others. People are encouraged to apply for high quality funding (NWO) and are rewarded when good projects are ranked but not funded, which works as a real encouragement. Both junior and senior researcher seem well socialised into the need to meet contemporary quality standards, and are encouraged and rewarded when doing so. The School seems to have managed to build quite a good academic reputation by encouraging people to be active in the international academic community and by providing structural support for initiatives that help secure this, including funding for conference attendance and for organising local conferences. As a result, both junior and senior members of the School are visible in international organisations (e.g. providing the NeFCA president) and in editorial boards, even as founding members or editors-in-chief of some key journals.

However, there is room for improvement. The numbers, particularly with regards to acquired funding and peer reviewed quality publications, as presented in the self-evaluation and further provided during the site visit, indicate that, as yet, the policy choices have not been completely successful. This suggests that the School needs to think more clearly about quality benchmarks and goals and about ways to achieve them. In this regard, the self-evaluation refers to the upcoming model developed for the Faculty of Social Sciences of the EUR in which allocated research time is evaluated against a number of quality parameters (incl. publications). While the Committee agrees that such a model can help develop medium term planning for individual trajectories and thus for the School at large, it would suggest to carefully study and if necessary 'translate' the Social Sciences criteria to realistically fit the Humanities particularities and thus the interdisciplinary nature of the School. In particular, the Committee is concerned about the future of book publications, which are still a key instrument of dissemination of good academic work in the Humanities but which can come under threat when subscribing entirely to Social Sciences publication criteria.

While the School invests (money) in the international visibility of the School's PhD and staff members (conferences attendance etc) and while there has been an internationalisation of staff, more can be done to strengthen the internationalisation of the School, by providing financial means and strategies to increase international exchange of PhDs, postdocs and staff (visiting scholars and own staff going on research stays elsewhere), which could further improve the visibility and international acclaim of the School.

### **3. Resources and resource policy**

During the assessment period, the time spent on research increased by more than 50%: from 24.2 fte in 2005 to 37.7 fte in 2011. Especially the number of tenured staff (professors, associate professors and assistant professors, 14.4 fte in 2011) has grown, as well as the number of PhD students (17.2 fte in 2011). By hiring more PhD students, the School believes to have responded to the recommendation made by the previous review Committee to

strengthen its research capacity. Total expenditure on staff rose from 1618K to 2427K.

Over the review period, funding has increased significantly. According to the self-evaluation report, this was largely due to extra university funding (in particular from the Tinbergen and Strategic Research Funds) and extra governmental funding (from the Sustainable Humanities programme).

Acquiring research grants, according to the SWOT analysis, has proven more problematic. Possibly this is due to the difficult fit of the Schools research within funding programmes: these cater either to the Humanities or to the Social Sciences, while the ESHCC research contains elements of both. Especially the success rate in competitions for individual grants is described as 'relatively low'. In response, the University Board has created incentives for researchers to submit proposals. It also supplies a support structure for potential applicants, consisting of guidance and workshops. Some recent successes are listed in the self-evaluation report. Amongst these are a 2009 HERA application, a 2010 Veni application and a 2011 joint faculty-university library application to FP7.

The overview of the funding obtained by ESHCC in the self-evaluation report clearly demonstrates that the ratio between direct funding, research grants and contract research has remained largely the same over the review period. Roughly two-thirds of the School's budget comes from direct funding by the Erasmus University (64,7% in 2005, 64,8% in 2011). Research grants obtained in national and international scientific competition (e.g. grants from NWO, KNAW and ERC) roughly account for the remaining one-third (34,1% in 2005, 32,0% in 2011). Contract research (e.g. research paid for by external organisations) amounts to around 1% of the School's annual budget.

### **Assessment/remarks**

The School demonstrates a smart use of its resources to guarantee that each staff member has sufficient time for research in a School where some Departments have heavy teaching loads. The introduction of the tenure track system for new staff members with clear criteria set out for research goals helps guarantee the socialisation of new staff into contemporary academic research benchmarks and criteria. The initiative, particularly in the Media and Communication Department, to deal with the heavy teaching load by providing PhD tracks of 5 year contracts with a 60/40 PhD/teaching ratio seems to work, and was applauded during the site visit by the PhD's involved.

While the School's self-evaluation indicates that for a number of reasons it is not easy to obtain high quality grants, it has shown initiative in helping staff focus on and improve grant applications. The Committee was impressed with the system whereby ranked but not financed projects are financially rewarded as this clearly works as an incentive to try again, as a way to help people improve their projects and thus obtain a grant. During the site visit, the Committee found much approval of this system amidst the staff. The recent appointment of a research policy advisor is a promise for the future as it can help in finding the right grant and writing good proposals.

However, there are ways in which the acquisition and use of resources could be improved. The self-evaluation – specifically in the section on the History Department – mentions that senior staff in permanent positions are considered a negative factor. During the site visit this was clarified in that senior staff are excluded from applying for veni or vidi grants, thus negatively affecting the chances of acquiring funding. It further became clear that the senior staff has a clear track record of successful NWO grant application. The Committee would like to suggest that the School thinks more carefully about how to turn this perceived

disadvantage into a plus by means of more diversified funding applications policies and strategies. Senior staff could be encouraged and helped to apply for and obtain bigger grants (vici, European funding) and to help junior staff to write and obtain veni and vidi. The reward system for those getting ranked but not financed by NWO could be extended to those ending highly ranked but not funded in HERA, ERC advanced grants, international EU funding, and others, thus encouraging senior staff to invest in this type of fund raising. It further appears that the School could think more carefully about a strategy to obtain more contract research which currently amounts to around 1% of the School's annual budget - indicating room for growth.

Despite the considerable growth in personnel and the increased pressure to obtain funding, administrative support dedicated to the School's research has remained at 0.70 FTE over the evaluation period. This raises questions as to the amount of support people can get in obtaining and, if successful, administrating projects (in the case of EU funding, often quite a bureaucratic exercise). Lack of support may discourage people from ambitious funding acquisition. While during the site visit we were informed that much support is provided by the central services of Erasmus University, the Committee would like to suggest that the School looks into ways to remove administrative burdens associated with grant applications and project administration in order to take away objections against applying.

#### **4. Productivity strategy**

The number of publications increased substantially over the evaluation period, especially in the last year, when the research output rose to 739 publications (compared to 334 in 2005 and 467 in 2010). The number of publications per fte grew from 13.8 in 2005 to 19.6 in 2011. According to the self-evaluation report, this increase can to a large extent be attributed to the addition of the Media and Communication Department (2007) and the ERMeCC research centre (2008).

The self-evaluation report states that, during the period under review, a total of 18 PhD students graduated, an average of 2.5 per year. The History Department produced 9 theses, the Arts and Culture Department 8, and the Media and Communication Department 3. Two PhD theses are related to Arts and Culture Studies as well as to Media and Communication.

#### **Assessment/remarks**

Staff at all levels are very aware of the need to be productive and productivity seems quite high. The School encourages this by making it a factor of staff evaluation, not just for tenure tracks and PhD but for all staff members. Similarly, it appears that many initiatives are taken to guarantee that people discuss and help improve each other's work by means of lunch seminars, ready for submission seminars and the like, which seem to encourage (self) evaluation of work in progress and can help raise a productive attitude. However, the School could benefit from thinking more about creating a productivity policy, that carefully balances amount and quality of work, and the specifics of its interdisciplinary nature.

With regards to publications, the numbers provided in the self-evaluation and during the site visit indicate that there is a need to think more carefully about and develop criteria for the relationship between quantity and quality of output. In relative terms, top publications have not increased despite an overall increase in output. The number of completed PhDs is low. In the case of Media and Communication this can be explained by its recent existence, but this does not apply to the older Departments. Similarly it appears that the time taken to complete a PhD is long. While there are some promising developments (e.g. the recent system of

annual progress reports), both issues require further monitoring and policy (see also section specific on PhD).

Productivity seems not divided equally amongst the different research centres and Departments. The self-evaluation admits that much of its growth has been realised by media and communication, which indicates that the School should think more carefully about productivity measures (balancing quantity and quality!) for the other Departments and centres. One issue in this regards seems to be the different levels of cooperation between researchers. While Media and Communication and Arts and Culture demonstrate a cooperative basic attitude, looking for synergies, this is much less the case in the History Department where various centres and independent researchers seem to find less reasons to cooperate. Encouraging intelligent synergies could provide a return on investment, also in terms of productivity in high quality areas.

## **5. Societal relevance**

The self-evaluation report points out that the ESHCC regards societal cooperation and societal services as part of its research mission. During the period under review, a variety of activities were carried out in this respect, most of them involving collaborations with cultural and educational Institutes at the local level, including an association between ECEMS and the Rotterdam Municipality Library ('Rotterdam Smart Port'). There are also connections with societal organisations at the national and international level. The SWOT analysis in the self-evaluation report lists this as a plus point of the Institute.

Furthermore, a considerable part of the staff is said to perceive participation in the public debate and or policy involvement as part of their work. Individual staff members perform advisory roles in Committees, boards and seminars and appear in the media to disseminate their findings to a broader audience. Several staff members write articles or books for the general public. Some are also involved in the programmes and platforms that Erasmus University has set up to reach a broad audience (e.g. 'Studium Generale', 'Erasmus Cultuur').

## **Assessment/remarks**

The Committee was quite impressed with the role the School and its researchers play in society. Across the board, the School takes the societal relevance of its work as an important aspect of academic research and in some instances, particularly in the History Department, there seems an almost symbiotic relationship and mutual respect and recognition between the School and its surroundings. In other Departments such as Media and Communication this connection was somewhat less outspoken but still clearly visible.

The main point of attention that the Committee would like to raise is the need for a clear policy that balances this need for and expertise in societal commitment with the academic quality requirements in terms of funding and output.

## **6. Strategy for the future**

To ensure its future quality of research and success at obtaining external funding, the ESHCC aims to attract, develop and retain talented academics by offering them favourable career opportunities. The self-evaluation report states that, to this effect, a tenure track system was implemented in 2008. So far four assistant professors and two associated professors have been appointed by tenure track.

The self-evaluation report also mentions an internationalisation strategy, designed to enhance international visibility. Here, international recruitment for tenure-track positions and a policy for stimulating international conference attendance and publishing are key instruments.

The ESHCC's strategy for the future furthermore involves the desire to venture into new interdisciplinary research fields such as Communication and Digital Humanities.

### **Assessment/remarks**

The School is flourishing as a research Institute. It has a unique interdisciplinary approach which it aims to elaborate on in the future and which results in innovative research that increasingly attracts national and international attention. Part of its growth results from the new and rapidly growing Media and Communication Department but the enthusiasm and engagement extends the other Departments and centres. There are various policies and strategies in place to improve productivity and quality.

However, in the coming years, the School will have to make a number of decisions. For one, it will need to look into the allocation of resources and staff amongst Departments to ensure viability of all different sections. It will need to think about the relationship between quantity and quality of output, about striking a balance between growth and consolidation, and about the extent to which additional synergies between groups and researchers can help increase the productivity and prestige of the School. To this end, the Committee would like to invite the School to draw up a clear five year plan, a road map that can help guide the School and its staff in its future managerial decisions and that can outline the parameters within which growth and synergies should take place.

### **7. PhD training**

The ESHCC currently has two types of PhD students: 'internal' candidates with full employment status and 'external', or self-funded, students. The first category has access to all university facilities. Conference attendance is usually paid for them and they are required to be a member of a national research School (either Posthumus, the Huizinga Institute, the Netherlands School of Communications Research, the Research School for Media Studies, the Research School for Political History or the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies), where they receive education in their respective fields. The second category of PhD students has access to university facilities and is invited to participate in relevant meetings within ESHCC, but needs to pay its own way in terms of conferences and participation in research Schools.

In the future, the Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities will become complementary to the national research Schools in providing local courses in transferable skills for research master's students and PhD candidates. At the moment, the Graduate School is still in the process of setting up.

According to the self-evaluation report, PhD students usually have at least one promoter (a full professor) and, often, one supervisor (and assistant or associate professor who is co-promoter). The term of a standard PhD project is always 1.5 + 2.5 years (or a part-time equivalent), with a formal evaluation after the first year. As of 2010, ESHCC also employs PhD students who combine research and teaching within a five-year trajectory (consisting of 0.6 fte for research and 0.4 fte for teaching).

The self-evaluation report states that for every PhD student an annual progress report is submitted to the Standing Committee for Research Performance ('Vaste Commissie Wetenschapsbeoefening'). This Committee provides a progress assessment, based on the prior advice of the supervisor and two other referees.

### **Assessment/remarks**

In recent years, the School has obviously worked hard to improve the number and position of PhD students and to guarantee high quality progress and completion of PhD. The annual progress report clearly works as an encouragement and a check of progress and quality. PhD students get ample opportunities to discuss their work with peers in seminars. The Committee was pleased to see that the School provides financial means (bench fee) for PhD students to engage and meet with international peers at international conferences and at other fora. PhD students are further encouraged to aim high when it comes to publishing their research. The National Research Schools seem to work well and during the site visit it became clear that students are satisfied with the guidance they get there. Overall, PhD students feel guided and supported by their supervisors and institution and are socialised into contemporary academic quality standards and criteria.

However, the Committee feels there is room for improvement, which is confirmed by the numbers that indicate that PhD students take a long time in completing their project. First of all, the Committee believes that the Graduate School has taken too long in being established. Set up in September 2012, it still does not really seem to be fully functioning and there are insufficient indications as to which specific contribution the School will make, complementary to the national PhD Schools and the individual supervision.

Second, PhD students, particularly those who combine teaching and research, struggle in the first year to find the balance between both tasks, usually at the expense of research. While some are finding their supervisors very helpful in learning to handle this, others needed to find out 'for themselves'. The Committee would like to suggest that more thought and care goes into setting up a more systematic instrument to help first year PhD's with this balancing exercise.

Third, while there is a lot of stress on training and helping PhD's, there is no real policy with regards to training supervisors. In the past period, supervisors have had to learn to deal with many more PhD students, a trend that will continue given the current climate and priorities. However, no additional time is reserved for supervision and no training opportunities to become an efficient yet good supervisor are in place. The Committee would like to suggest the School to think about such training and support system for supervisors.

### 3. Assessment at programme level

The Committee comes to the following overall programme scores for quality (Q), productivity (P), relevance (R), and vitality/feasibility (V) for the three programmes at Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Programme name</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>V</b>
ESHCC1	History	4	4	5	4
ESHCC2	Arts and Culture Studies	4	4	5	4
ESHCC3	Media and Communication	4	4	4	5



## Programme EUR1: History

Programme director: Dr. Gijsbert Oonk  
Research staff 2011: 18.51 fte

Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	5
	Viability:	4

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### *Brief description*

According to the self-evaluation report, the programme aims at advancing the understanding of developments in society by exploring and analysing long-term historical processes; the experiences, aspirations and struggles of the human past, how these were articulated, have been perceived, imagined and (re)mediated. Using theory and methods of Humanities, Social and Economic Sciences, the interdisciplinary research focuses on the interrelations between political, social, economic, and cultural history since the 16<sup>th</sup> century with an emphasis on the modern era. Pertinent to this group's research is the changing compatibility of political, economic and cultural contact zones, networks and entities.

The research is conducted within various research units:

- Early Modern Studies (organised within the Erasmus Centre for Early Modern Studies, ECEMS);
- Historical Culture (organised within the Centre for Historical Culture, CHC);
- Transnational History (organised mainly within the Rhine Economy Platform. Closely related is the BusinessHistory@Erasmus initiative);
- History of Society, Media and Culture (researchers have been involved in applied Digital Humanities research in the AXES project);
- Global History (apart from organising their own meetings, researchers participate in the activities of the centres mentioned earlier).

### *Quality*

The overall quality of the historians is uneven. There are a number of excellent research centers and groups, such as CHC, ECEMS and Transnational History, which have both a national and international impact. At the same time, we find in the evaluation period 2005-2011 that some members of the Department show scholarship that is below par as is visible from the quality of their publications. What is more, for some researchers not enough publications in the period under review are available to assess the quality. This may be due to rather high staff overturn figures 2005-2011. Recently the situation seems to improve, because new, promising ways of closer cooperation, both inside and outside the History Department, are being explored by many of the chair holders.

It should be noted that in the process of change the History Department is going through, it seems that the original ideals of the School in fostering interdisciplinary research for long successive periods are being transformed by an increasing emphasis on contemporary issues, such as transnational, global and post-colonial history, and historical culture.

### *Productivity*

Productivity, measured in number of publications (both books, book chapters and articles in refereed and other journals) over all is very good. Impressive are a number of books by chair

holders, some of whom have left the Department during and since the review period. The output is favourably influenced by some external professors.

The number of doctoral theses finished and supervised by the seven professors (per person 0, 1 or 2 in 7 years) seems to be low according to Dutch standards.

#### *Societal relevance*

The staff is very active in connecting to academia and national policy and to the wider public, in particular in the Rotterdam area, such as the Rhine Economy platform. The CHC has been pivotal and very visible in recent, sometimes fierce, discussions on the canon of Dutch history as it ought to be taught in primary and secondary schools.

#### *Viability, feasibility and vision for the future*

The Department has gone through major changes since it was established in 1978. In 1989, a separate Department of Arts and Culture came into being, and in 2007 a third one – Media and Communication. The connection between the historians and the two Departments is institutionally weak. This also seems to have impacted on the reconstruction of the History Department which so far has taken the form of strengthening a number of (but not all) chair groups. These tend to act in a more isolated way from the others – partially strengthened by considerable success in acquiring outside funding. This has resulted in a rise of PhD students which is promising for the future. The enthusiasm of the present PhD students clearly shows the vitality of the History Department. Nevertheless, the question is whether this conscious or unconscious change of policy will turn out to be successful in a future with increasing budget cuts and competition.

### **Conclusion**

The History Department and its research programme are in transition. The strong growth of the Department of Arts and Culture and of Media and Communications present the historians with new challenges. From the self-evaluation report it is obvious that the historians are well aware of these challenges and are fully prepared to meet them. So far this has taken the form of strengthening successful and productive chair groups, which has enabled them to form research centres (ECEMS, CHC, soon to be followed by REF). However, the Committee is concerned that this will not be sufficient to meet future developments, which will certainly include a less generous funding both by the university and by the government and other outside bodies. The Committee thinks that further consideration needs to be given to the question of coherence in the History Department, for two reasons. In isolation the research centres will probably not be strong enough to ensure their survival and receive the international recognition they so fully deserve. More coherence could also be of help in equalling out the unevenness in the quality of research that the commission sees as a problem in the History Department.

Some recommendations:

- The department must continue its efforts to find connections and common concerns between the different research centres, resulting in a more coherent common programme.
- This could be further strengthened by seeking more cooperation with the other departments in the ESHCC, but also, perhaps even more important, with other research programmes in the Humanities at the Erasmus University.

- The problem of the age of the staff and, therefore, a diminished chance of acquiring research funding from NWO, might partly be met by a stronger orientation towards European research grants.
- The department should check very carefully what consequences the new system of quality assessment, based on a model of the Faculty of Social Sciences, has for the historians, because publications in Dutch and monographs will always remain an important part of the scholarly output of historians.

## Programme EUR2: Arts and Culture Studies

Programme director: Prof. dr. Koen van Eijck

Research staff 2011: 9.03 fte

Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	5
	Viability:	4

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### *Brief description*

The self-evaluation report describes the general objective of the programme as ‘to understand the mutual relationships between the arts, cultural heritage and society at large’. This involves an in-depth analysis of the interactions between a changing society and developments in the ways art and heritage are produced, distributed and consumed. Of central concern are recent economic and social processes that have fundamentally changed the world of art and culture. The programme focuses in particular on globalisation, fading or shifting cultural boundaries, and emerging financial and organisational strategies in the arts and culture industries. As such, the Arts and Culture programme covers much of what is crucial in the art world except the works of art themselves.

The research projects can be grouped into three distinctive themes:

- Cultural Heritage and Globalisation;
- Cultural Entrepreneurship and Creative Industries;
- Production and Reception of Media and Culture.

### *Quality*

The research team displays a well balanced amount of interdisciplinary research in various fields of arts and culture studies. As it stands, the activity of programme members is closely linked to the Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture (ERMeCC). Programme members as well as PhD students come from various disciplines, both in Humanities and in the Social Sciences. Still, cultural sociology and cultural economics appear as the main structuring disciplines of the programme. The programme covers a wide range of topics related to the production, the diffusion and the reception of arts, media and cultural artifacts. In many of these areas of research, the Department occupies a leading position, both nationally and internationally. The attractiveness of the Department is well reflected in the high number of foreign PhD students involved in the programme. Among the Committee members, it has been noticed that the focus put on the social and economic context of arts and culture production and reception could preclude the very analysis of contents and meaning. During the visit though, several scholars and PhD students mentioned a revived interest in aesthetics and philosophy, which is reflected in the recent reinforcement of these disciplines in the master programmes in which the Department is involved.

### *Productivity*

The Arts and Culture Department members display significant numbers of academic publications, with a quite good amount of them in the leading journals of the research areas covered by the Department, especially in the field of cultural sociology. The Department has also been very effective in structuring innovative research streams, particularly in cultural economics. The Committee especially notes their activity in editorial work and in hosting and participating in conferences.

During the period covered by the evaluation, the Arts and Culture Department enrolled 15 Standard PhD-candidates. Four out of the five enrolled in 2004 and 2005 graduated in less than 5 to 7 years. None of the remaining ten have been enrolled before 2008. Since 2004, the Department has also enrolled three Contract PhD-candidates, among whom one has already graduated. As it stands, the number and completion time of PhD Students, along with the thematic coverage of their dissertations, ensure sustainability and renewal of the programme.

#### *Societal relevance*

The Department is very effective in outreach activities aimed at the general public and in social expertise in the field of Arts and Culture. In this particular Department, connections with wider society come about quite naturally. The research necessitates contacts in the various artistic fields, which create opportunities for students as well as researchers. Direct links with the Rotterdam context include the link with contemporary urban architecture; the natural connection between cultural economics and cultural heritage research on the one hand and the local economy on the other; and the cultural monitor project. The self-evaluation report mentions some specific activities along these lines, and these seem quite typical. The Arts and Culture programme pays attention to policy implications of its research, which is particularly important in the present era of declining subsidies for culture and the arts.

#### *Viability, feasibility and vision for the future*

Given the Department's record of productivity and success at raising funds, its viability, while it can never be taken for granted, does not appear to be in jeopardy. Cultural economics is very healthy; as a research field it is more accepted than in the past and growing in size and in its ability to attract talent and funding. One form of evidence here of is the Department's draw of international students. Arts and society, cultural tourism, cultural heritage studies, creative industries and urban development: these are growing areas. The Department's specific research themes take advantage of these trends, as their publications attest, and this bodes well for the future.

To the extent that there might be concerns about viability, they would be in the area of staff. We note the considerable overlap between Arts and Culture and the newer Media and Communication Department, with publications of those people showing up in both. The Arts and Culture Department needs to be sure that if those people move out of the Department, it will be able to reproduce its research excellence. This is in part a stage-of-career issue; the Department needs to maintain a strong group of younger tenured professors to move up to the level of international eminence.

#### **Conclusion**

The Arts and Culture Department has successfully maintained its vitality and international reputation following the split with Media and Communications. Productivity, quality, and morale are high, and this is especially notable given the decline in public financial support for arts and culture. To move forward, the Department should pay attention to the following issues:

- how to avoid too great a dependence on a few scholars whose energies are divided between two units, and;
- how better to integrate the cultural economics research with the other lines of research;

- both of these issues, and others as well, would benefit if the Department were to develop a strategic plan that identifies its goals for the next five years and the steps it will take to achieve them.

### **Programme EUR3: Media and Communication**

Programme director: Prof. dr. Susanne Janssen

Research staff 2011: 10.16 fte

Assessments:	Quality:	4
	Productivity:	4
	Relevance:	4
	Viability:	5

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#### *Brief description*

The self-evaluation report describes the programme's mission as 'to operate as an international, national and local centre of expertise for high-quality research into the myriad relationships between media, society, culture and business'. Its researchers seek to advance interdisciplinary, empirical work based upon scholarship in the Social Sciences and Humanities, in particular media and communication studies, cultural sociology and media economics. They are committed to the development of comparative and multi-method approaches for media, communication and culture research. In the research, they aim to understand and qualify transformations in media, communication and culture, as well as their transformational power in society.

The individual and collaborative research projects can be grouped into five interrelated themes:

- Transformations in the Media and Cultural Industries;
- New Production and Consumption Practices and their Impacts;
- Globalisation, Diversity and Identity in Media and Culture;
- Socio-Political Impacts of Media and Communication;
- Dynamics of the Symbolic Production of Culture.

#### *Quality*

The Committee is generally impressed by the high standard of the Department's research, which appears in leading journals and is widely cited. It is also impressed with what seems to be a steady growth in the scholarly quality of articles, books, and book chapters. In view of the relatively short history of the Department, as a separate unit, the national and international reputation it has gained in the span of about half a dozen years is highly commendable. Understandably, the Department is not yet at the level where one can claim it is, in general, "an internationally leading Department" in terms of academic and scholarly performance in the field of media and communication. While interdisciplinary and thematically broad in its orientation, quite a few of the faculties' selected key publications are in highly specialised or relatively marginal subfields. So, while the overall quality is of high standard and the Department has gained a notable reputation, there is room for further progress and improvement.

#### *Productivity*

Based on the informative material provided and our conversations with staff members, the Committee is quite impressed with the high level of productivity in terms of scholarly publications in the various areas of research output by the faculty and enthusiastic doctoral students. Furthermore, the number of publications and outputs (i.e. books, book chapters, refereed articles, and conference papers) has been steadily increasing since the establishment

of the Department of Media and Communication in 2007. Despite these notable achievements within a few years, the Committee feels that awarding the highest grade, which indicates the Department is internationally leading, may be premature. But, it is pleased to say that in terms of productivity and research output, the Department seems to be moving in a promising direction that will, in time, result in enhanced reputation within academia.

#### *Societal relevance*

The Department appears to be actively engaged in a variety of local, national, and international outreach and dissemination activities, including involvement with economic, cultural, and social work in collaboration with local and national organisations. The faculty and doctoral students also participated in commissioned research and executive advisory services, and relevant public debates. In view of the fact that the Department's competencies are very strong, the Committee found that a well-defined strategy for systematic efforts in this area is needed.

#### *Viability, feasibility and vision for the future*

The Committee's impression is that the Department seems to provide a dynamic and engaged intellectual milieu for its diverse staff and students. Furthermore, as long as the Department continues to methodically grow, expand, diversify, and internationalise, its future appears to be bright indeed. The current size of staff is sufficient, but could be strategically expanded in the future. The Department's leadership is highly qualified, experienced, and supportive. However, the Department appears to be quite dependent on its leader's extremely impressive administrative competence and scholarly productivity. Hence, it should reflect on the possibility that this particular person may decide to leave, at some point in time, and plan accordingly. Also, in view of the economic challenges and shortage of funding, the Department has to develop workable strategies for obtaining grants and external revenues.

### **Conclusion**

In general, the Committee is quite impressed with the Department, its staff and doctoral students. Undoubtedly, during its short history as a separate unit, it has accomplished a great deal and garnered reasonable visibility and status. However, as noted in the above explanations, its members should collectively and strategically plan for programme enhancement and improvements. The Committee suggests the Department to explore the following possibilities:

- expand contributions in the central thematic areas of international media and communication studies;
- consider adding new staff with adequate theoretical knowledge and analytical experience in areas such as aesthetics, rhetoric, hermeneutics, and semiotics;
- explore new, untapped areas of research in global communication, specifically in the areas of digital and social media;
- periodically host international communication conferences/seminars to engage faculty and students in presentations and networking with other scholars;
- consider the possibility of establishing a semi-annual academic publication (in digital and paper formats) for the purpose of enhancing research and collaboration;
- expand partnerships, student/faculty exchanges with international institutions of higher education; and
- periodically invite prominent international and media scholars to teach short seminars and/or deliver presentations.



# Appendices



## Appendix A: Explanation of the SEP criteria and scores

The four main criteria for assessment are: Quality, Productivity, Relevance, and Vitality & Feasibility. The assessment at the Institute level primarily focuses on strategy and organisation, whereas the assessment at the level of the research group or programme primarily focuses on the performance and activities of researchers and the results of their work (output and outcome).

Quality	<p>The level or degree of excellence of the research, compared to accepted (international) standards in that field.</p> <p>The scope of the term ‘research’ is not limited to the research results. Research management, research policy, research facilities, PhD training and the societal relevance of research are considered integral parts of the quality of work in an Institute and its programmes.</p>
Productivity	The relationship between input and output, judged in relation to the mission and resources of the Institute.
Relevance	<p>Social, economic and cultural relevance. Aspects to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Social quality</i>: efforts of the Institute or group to interact in a productive way with stakeholders in society</li> <li>▪ <i>Social impact</i>: how research affects specific stakeholders or procedures in society</li> <li>▪ <i>Valorisation</i>: activities aimed at making research results available and suitable for application in product, processes and services.</li> </ul> <p>Committee members can also remark on the relevance for the academic community, but the assessment should be on societal relevance.</p>
Vitality & Feasibility	The ability to react adequately to important changes in the environment. Also vision for the future.

The scores on a five-point scale are:

5 Excellent	<p>Research is world leading.</p> <p>Researchers are working at the forefront of their field internationally and their research has an important and substantial impact in the field.</p>
4 Very Good	<p>Research is considered nationally leading.</p> <p>Research is internationally competitive and makes a significant contribution to the field.</p>
3 Good	<p>Research is considered internationally visible.</p> <p>Work is competitive at the national level and makes a valuable contribution in the international field.</p>
2 Satisfactory	<p>Research is nationally visible.</p> <p>Work adds to our understanding and is solid, but not exciting.</p>
1 Unsatisfactory	<p>Work is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and/or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc.</p>



## Appendix B: Programme for the site-visit

<b>Day 0: 4 February 2013</b>		
18.00-19.00	Arrival of Committee members at Bilderberg Parkhotel, Westersingel 70, Rotterdam	
19.00-21.00	Dinner at Parkhotel	
<b>Day 1: 5 February 2013</b>		
<b>Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC)</b>		
Faculty Club, Room Kralingen (H17-07)		
8.30-10.30	Preliminary meeting Committee	
10.30-11.30	ESHCC Board and heads of Departments, including presentation by Board	Prof. dr. Dick Douwes Gytha Coleman, MBA, ir. Prof. dr. Susanne Janssen Prof. dr. Koen van Eijck Dr. Gijsbert Oonk Linda Jansen, MA
<i>12.00 Lunch break</i>		
<b>Media and Communication Department (Jostein Gripsrud, Yahya R. Kamalipour)</b>		
13.00-13.30	Management Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture (ERMeCC)	Prof. dr. Susanne Janssen Dr. Erik Hitters Dr. Stijn Reijnders
13.30-14.30	Tenured staff Media and Communication Department	Dr. Payal Arora Dr. Isabel Awad-Cherit Prof. dr. Susanne Janssen Prof. dr. Jeroen Jansz Dr. Marc Verboord
14.30-15.30	PhD candidates Media and Communication Department	Simone Driessen MA Johannes von Engelhardt MSc Arno van der Hoeven MA MSc Dr. Annemarie Kersten Lela Mosemghvdlishvili MSc
<i>Break</i>		
<b>Arts and Culture Department (Wendy Griswold, Philippe Coulangeon)</b>		
16.00-17.00	Tenured staff Arts and Culture Department	Prof. dr. Koen van Eijck Prof. dr. Arjo Klamer Dr. Christian Handke Dr. Pauwke Berkers Dr. Stijn Reijnders
17.00-18.00	Post-docs and PhD candidates Arts and Culture Department	Dr. Claartje Rasterhoff Erwin Dekker MSc Dorus Hoebink MA Niels van Poecke MA Diane Ragsdale MA Maloe Sniekers MA
18.00-19.00	Committee meeting	
<i>19.30 Dinner at La Stanza, Van Vollenhovenstraat 19</i>		

<b>Day 2: 6 February 2013</b>		
Faculty Club, Room Kralingen (H17-07)		
<b>History Department (Jan Lucassen, Peter Raedts)</b>		
9.30-10.00	Management Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies (ECEMS)	Prof. dr. Robert von Friedeburg Prof. dr. Wiep van Bunge
10.00-10.30	Management Center for Historical Culture (CHC)	Prof. dr. Maria Grever Dr. Maarten van Dijck
<i>Break</i>		
10.45-11.45	Tenured staff History Department	Dr. Bregje van Eekelen Prof. dr. Hein Klemann Prof. dr. Alex van Stipriaan Dr. Karin Willemse Dr. Ben Wubs
11.45-12.45	Post-docs and PhD candidates History Department	Dr. Stephan Klein Dr. Martijn Kleppe Zihni Ozdil MA Klara Paardenkooper MA Annemieke Romein MA Tina van der Vlies MA
<i>13.00 Lunch break</i>		
<i>Time for deliberation + writing session</i>		
16.30	Presentation first findings	

## Appendix C: Short Curriculum Vitae of the Committee members

**Hilde Van den Bulck** (chair), studied Communication Studies at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) where she obtained her PhD in 2000 with a monograph on the role of early public service television in the project of Modernity. She also obtained a master degree in Mass Communication (University of Leicester, UK, 1991). At the moment, she is Professor at the University of Antwerp where is the Dean of the faculty of Political and Social Sciences and Head of the research group Media, Policy and Culture. She teaches courses on media structures, processes and policies and on radio and television studies. She combines expertise in media policy and in media culture. With regards to policy, she focuses on the role and position of public service broadcasting in diachronic perspective. With regards to media culture, originally her attention focused on the relationship between media and collective identities. In recent years, this has shifted to the role of media in celebrity culture. She is involved in Flemish media policy as the vice chair of the Flemish policy advice committee Sectorraad Media. Van den Bulck further has a level of practical media experience. For several years, she wrote a monthly column as media watcher in newspaper De Standaard and she currently has a regular spot in the opinion pages of the information website *derelectie.be* of VRT. Van den Bulck is vice-president of NeFCA, the Netherlands-Flanders Communication Association, which she helped set up.

**Philippe Coulangeon** is associate research Professor in Sociology at the Centre National de La Recherche Scientifique. He is currently member of the The Observatoire sociologique du changement (OSC) at Sciences Po, a broad-based, comparative sociology research centre. His current research deals with cultural capital, inequalities in cultural participation and the symbolic dimensions of social stratification. Recent publications include an article on cultural practices in contemporary France in a context of changing cultural policies' doctrine ("Changing policies, challenging theories and persisting inequalities: Social disparities in cultural participation in France from 1981 to 2008", *Poetics*, 41, (2013) pp. 177–209).

**Wendy Griswold** is Professor of Sociology and Bergen Evans Professor in the Humanities at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA. She received a Masters Degree in English from Duke University and a Ph.D. in Sociology from Harvard University. Her research specialties are in cultural sociology and the sociology of literature. Her books include *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre 1576 - 1980*, *Literature and Social Practice*, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (now in its fourth edition), *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Nigerian Novel*, and *Regionalism and the Reading Class*. She is a Guggenheim Fellow and a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University.

**Jostein Gripsrud** is Professor of Media Studies at the University of Bergen, Norway. He has published extensively on theatre, popular literature, film history, television, journalism, popular music, media and cultural policy and relevant social and cultural theory for all of these media, genres and cultural forms. Gripsrud has lectured at numerous universities across Europe and the USA. He was Francqui International Professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Université Libre de Bruxelles and Gent University in 2011 and he has been Visiting Scholar/Professor at UCLA, the University of Southern California, Copenhagen University, the Université de Paris II, and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). He has led a string of national and international research projects on film and TV history, on rhetoric and knowledge, on "cultural disorder", on European media, and on *Democracy and the Digitisation of Audiovisual Culture (DIGICULT)* (2007-10). Among his publications are *Media*,

*Markets and Public Spheres* (2009), *Relocating Television: Television in the digital context* (2010) and *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader* (2010).

**Yahya R. Kamalipour** is Professor of mass and international communication, Head of the Department of Communication and Creative Arts, and Director of the Center for Global Studies, Purdue University Calumet, Indiana, USA. His areas of interest and research include globalisation, media impact, international communication, Middle East media, and new communication technologies. He has published 14 books, including *Global Communication* (2nd edition), which has been translated into Chinese and published by the Fudan University Press. In addition to serving on the advisory and editorial boards of a number of prominent communication journals and professional organisations, Kamalipour is the founder and managing editor of *Global Media Journal*, co-founder and co-editor of *Journal of Globalization for the Common Good*, and founder of the Global Communication Association. He has visited over 50 countries, and is routinely interviewed by major newspapers and broadcast media. As an international academic consultant, he has served on internal and external assessment and review committees and developed degree programmes in mass media and communication for universities in Oman, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. His articles and commentaries have appeared in professional and mainstream publications in the U.S. and abroad. Kamalipour earned his PhD in Communication at the University of Missouri-Columbia; MA in Mass Media from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and BA in Mass Communication from the Minnesota State University. He has been at Purdue University Calumet since 1986.

**Jan Lucassen** studied history at Leiden University and the University of Utrecht (PhD 1984). He taught history at a teacher training college in The Hague and at the Universities of Utrecht and Hull. In 1988 he joined the IISH, where until ultimo 2000 he acted as Research Director, and since he is senior research fellow. From 1990 onwards he has been Professor of 'international and comparative social history' at the VU University Amsterdam. His main research interests are comparative global labour history, including labour migrations, craftsmen's and journeymen's guilds, labour relations (in particular in the brick industry) and the monetisation of remunerations. His empirical research concerns Europe and India. Besides, he participates in a number of boards and committees, i.a. at the Geldmuseum (Utrecht), NWO, KNAW, and SNS-Reaalfonds. In 2004, Lucassen was elected as member of the KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences).

**Peter Raedts** studied history at the University of Utrecht. He obtained his D.Phil. in history at the University of Oxford in 1984 with a study on the 13th century Franciscan theologian Richard Rufus of Cornwall (published in 1987). Since 1994 he is Professor of medieval history at the Radboud University Nijmegen. His main research interest is representations of the Middle Ages in later ages. In a series of articles he examined how Dutch Catholics used the medieval past to establish their position in 19<sup>th</sup> century protestant Dutch society. A year ago he published a monograph on the whole process of the invention of the Middle Ages in Europe. He is a member of the Advisory Board of NWO and the chairman of the board of the Research School for Medieval Studies.