

University of Groningen

To Complete a Puzzle, You Need to Put the Right Pieces in the Right Place

Kok, Holmer Jan

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2018

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Kok, H. J. (2018). *To Complete a Puzzle, You Need to Put the Right Pieces in the Right Place: Exploring Knowledge Recombination and the Creation of New Inventions*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen, SOM research school.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Chapter 9. Acknowledgments

There are several people who have played a huge role in helping me to complete this PhD dissertation. I want to use the last pages of my dissertation to thank these fantastic people!

First of all, I would like to thank my PhD supervisors: Dries Faems and Pedro de Faria. Thank you so much for all the efforts you put into my development and dissertation! I could truly not have wished for better PhD supervisors!

Dries, since the start of the Research Master program, you have been a patient, kind and supportive mentor! You were always ready to make things ‘possible’ for me. From the beginning of our collaboration already, you involved me in the academic world, by means of supporting me to go abroad, having me review for conferences and academic journals, and introducing me to many interesting people in the academic community. Besides this, you have played a huge role in my intellectual development. Your tireless efforts to improve the papers that we were working on together have taught me so much about how to conduct cutting-edge research. Numerous times during our collaboration, I was reminded of something Hans once told me: “Normal researchers think one or two steps ahead, Dries always thinks 27 steps ahead”. Time and time again, you’ve shown that you truly have this gift of foresight, considerably raising the quality of our joint research output. I look forward to continue working with you on some great research papers in the future!

Pedro, over the past five years, you have become a true friend and mentor. Throughout the entire PhD, you were always ready to help me when something went wrong with my research, teaching activities, or personal life, providing me with solid encouragements and advice to move on. You are also one of the most cheerful and funniest guys that I know (not like a clown, but more like a comedian mind you!), making working with you a pleasure! Co-writing papers with you, I have learned a great deal about how to conduct rigorous research. You’re very pragmatic and precise in research, and have a great sense for how complex topics should be approached. You also always knew how to motivate me to work harder, telling me for example that “If you do not bring cake on Friday, I will not approve your thesis”. In all seriousness, I can say, without a shred of doubt, that you have contributed immensely to my well-being during the PhD, and helped to raise the

Chapter 9

quality of this dissertation far above what I could have hoped for. Thanks for everything!

I am also very thankful for the excellent feedback provided by the assessment committee: Thank you Professor George, Professor Los, and Professor van de Vrande!

I also enjoyed amazing support from my family during the PhD. Thanks pap and mam for being such great parents! Pap, you've been one of my main inspirations to start this PhD. Ever since I was small, you've taught me to always remain curious and try to understand how the world works. You also taught me how to be a pioneer and not get stuck in the old ways; and, of course, how to deal with the inevitable setbacks associated with this approach. I will always look up to you as one of my greatest role models. Thank you for teaching me so much, advising me countless times, and unconditionally supporting my endeavors in life! Mam, I am so proud and happy to have you as my mother. You are truly one of the strongest and most persevering people I've ever met. During the PhD, you have been an inexhaustible source of love, positivity, and 'gezelligheid'. On many occasions, when things got tough, you gave me comfort and encouraged me to push further, helping me to reach my goals. Thank you for always being there for me! Suzanne, I know that, in your eyes, I will always be your little brother. Ever since we were kids, you've been a fantastic older sister who cared very deeply about my well-being. During the PhD, this was no different, as you were always ready to support me without a second thought. This is not something I take for granted, and I hope you know that! Sander, as my older brother, your contributions to my PhD dissertation have been of a different nature. Ever since I was small, you've helped shape my opinions in many different ways, helping me to become much more critical of the world around me. This was a huge asset during the PhD, and I thank you for it!

I also want to thank Jan-Willem and Roekie for providing me with a warm and cozy place to stay during my 'teaching' months in Groningen. I always looked forward to Wednesdays again, because I knew I would receive a warm welcome from you in Groningen! During the last few months of the PhD especially, you've given me advice when I most needed it, something which I am very grateful for.

Tjeerd, your help was greatly appreciated during the PhD! Your 'hands-on' business and entrepreneurial insights have also been of great inspiration!

Acknowledgments

My fellow PhD candidates at FEB have also contributed hugely to this PhD dissertation. I want to take this opportunity to thank some of them. Amber, you have been a fantastic office mate and friend during the PhD, providing me with many interesting discussions, encouragements and laughs. You have a very cheerful personality, which is why I always enjoyed your presence in the office! You've also substantially broadened my research horizons, sharing with me your own view of how to conduct valuable research (i.e. valorization!). You've really had a big impact on this dissertation, hence why I chose you as my paranymp! Georgiana, as your colleague, but more importantly as your friend, we have shared many laughs, cheerful discussions, and delicious dinners. Our many fruitful discussions helped me to refine many of my theoretical arguments. In the beginning of the PhD, you also helped me feel very welcome in the department, something which I am still thankful for! Aneta, our visits to international conferences were an absolute highlight of the PhD (especially thanks to Pedro's tight restaurant planning). Next to conference visits, we also taught courses together, something I really enjoyed! Throughout the entire PhD, I was always able to find in you a helpful and dedicated colleague, as well as a supportive friend who would always listen to my complaints and heartedly congratulate me on my successes. I really value the friendship we have developed over the past few years, and I am certain that we will sustain it for many years to come! Nora, as my office neighbor, I would often seek your keen research advice, which was always well-taken! Of course, most of the time, I would actually visit your office to complain (I mean, "say utmost positive things") about my students or talk about other trivial things. Thanks for enduring this and being such a pleasant colleague and friend! Brenda, during my first year, you've taught me a lot of very useful things about doing research, which I carried with me during the remainder of the PhD. Thanks for this! Hendryk and Martine, my fellow "one-year trackers", thanks for the many enjoyable coffees and chats! They were always a highlight during the PhD. Sten, though we have only shared the same office shortly, I have greatly enjoyed your presence in our PhD group! Edin, thank you for the many interesting discussions about our research!

I also want to thank my dear friends Wessel, Pieter, Melanie and Wieteke. Wes, I want to thank you for your friendship. We became friends during the second

Chapter 9

week that I moved to the Netherlands, now 16 years ago. During this time, and also during the PhD, we shared some epic fun (“Falcon Punch, hoe kan dat nou!?”), and I knew that I could always find in you a great friend! Pieter, Melanie, and Wieteke, I will always hold dear the memories of us starting our studies together in Groningen, painfully sitting through mathematics seminars on Friday morning, preparing dozens of PowerPoint slides, and playing cards during statistics lectures (*ahem*). Of course, our best times were shared outside the university, dancing our feet off and drinking beers at ‘Het Feest’, ‘De Drie Gezusters’, ‘Kokomo’, and, well, anywhere in between. The four of us always manage to have a good time and, despite our busy schedules, we were still able to meet pretty often during my PhD. Pieter, I chose you as my paranymph because you’re one of my trustworthiest and most loyal friends (and you’re really smart, which never hurts!). And, of course, I would have failed many exams without you and Melanie during my Bachelor so, in a way, this whole dissertation would not have existed without your help. For the many great times that we have shared, I thank you three very much.

I would also like to thank some of my other (ex-)FEB colleagues. Florian, you were always ready to help me with my research, regardless of how difficult my questions were. I am very thankful for this! Isabel, I greatly enjoyed having you as a colleague! Department lunches and research seminars were always much more interesting and fun when you were there. John, thank you for all the help and advice you gave me during my PhD about my research but also about finding a job in academia! Jordi, teaching strategic management was made that much easier by having you as a colleague. Your comments on my research were also very welcome and useful! Killian, we recently started working on a project together, which I am sure will be a great success! Wilfred, thanks to you I was able to pursue a Research Master in I&O and obtain a PhD position in the IM&S department. For this, I am very thankful! A big thank you also goes to the IM&S secretaries – most notably Jeannette, Mirjam, Amanda – who have always been of great support during the PhD! Also, the support of SOM and, above all, Ellen, Rina, Astrid, Arthur, Justin, was very valuable to me. Whenever I needed something, you were there to help me!

During the PhD, I spent an enjoyable semester as a visiting researcher in Lausanne at EPFL. Chris, thank you for sponsoring my stay, and making me feel most welcome in your research group. I learned a lot from you, especially in terms

of how to manage a university, but also how to develop interesting research projects. Cyrielle, thank you for your kind help with preparing various things during my stay! Gianluigi (Gigi), Heidi, and Xiaohua (Maple), I had the luck of sharing an office with you during my stay. I learned a lot from you, and I laughed a lot with you! Also, a big thank you to my other EPFL colleagues: Joana, Giovanni, Giada, Emilio, Gaetan. And finally, thank you Catherine and Patrick for your hospitality during my stay!

I also want to thank my helpful colleagues from ECOOM in Leuven who helped me to collect various data for my papers!

Finally, I want to conclude with a story about you, Yating. On the 29th of August 2013, I made a decision which perhaps had the biggest impact of them all on my PhD: I proposed to drive you home after the Research Master's introductory event. Ever since that day, you've been my closest companion in life, and have exerted a huge influence on my PhD. During the PhD, you always listened patiently to the many silly stories I told you. Sometimes, you even laughed at my jokes (thanks). You also accepted me for who I am, and helped me to like me. Importantly, you taught me not to settle for less, and always pursue higher targets, something which has been instrumental to the success of this PhD. I know I wasn't always the easiest person to handle, but somehow you managed admirably, remaining patient and supportive at all times, even when I was working day and night on my research. Throughout the past few years, we've shared so many amazing and interesting experiences, living the student life in Groningen, going on interesting trips, enjoying (too) many delicious foods, raising silly 猫咪 (Youxi), and many more. Thanks to you, I will always look back to this period in my life as one of the happiest. Now that this great chapter of my life ends, and a new one is about to start, I cannot help but think that the best things in life are still ahead of me, as long as I have you by my side. Thank you for everything you've done for me, I love you honey!

Tack så mycket! If you're looking for me, I'll be having some nice fika in Stockholm! Feel free to visit!

Holmer Kok

Vlaardingen, 1st of February 2018