

Which institution are you working at? How long have you been working there for?

I have always been a job hopper and changed employer every two or three years until I found a place to dwell at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of EUR in 2009. I worked at Groningen University, Zurich University, in Rotterdam at and Erasmus School of Economics and combined and alternated that with jobs in private banking (ABN, UBS) and in policy (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Competition Authority and the Dutch Central Bank). I get easily bored.

What is your main research focus?

Currently I work on the next pandemic. I have just published a monograph *Pandemic Economics* (you may want to read the first chapter [here](#) for free). I finished the book July 2020, and there is significant follow-up research. You may want to read my contribution at [Voxeu](#) or read this [working paper](#).

The basic messages of *Pandemic Economics* ([video here](#)) are, first, that the next pandemic is a certainty; only its timing is uncertain. This was well known and well understood before COVID-19 but also ignored in the major policy centers. Second, a design weakness pre COVID-19 was that economic analysis was policy-free and certainly did not consider that lockdowns and firm closures would be used world-wide on a massive scale for a disease with a relatively low mortality. Third, the economic and health fallout of the massive use of Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions has probably exacerbated the pandemic's impact. We cannot afford to do this again. My conclusion is that we need to prepare for the next pandemic and in *Pandemic Economics* I discuss how the organization of society and global governance need to be redesigned and why major investments in restructuring of the economy are necessary to avoid that pandemics become ruin problems. The book was therapeutic. Rather than being annoyed or angry about stupidity, I could think 'Oh, this fits nicely in Chapter 3'.

Why did you do a PhD?

You want to excel in something, and a physical marathon was not feasible for me so it became a mental marathon. The topic was very much inspired by Jan Tinbergen, The Dutch Nobel prize laureate and famous development economist who had argues that economists should consider topics of war and peace. My PhD thesis offers some pieces of the puzzle as it is about trade and diplomacy and deals with economic sanctions. My PhD journey continued and I was very happy to be the editor of two research handbooks that enabled me to take stock of the development in the field and to be in touch with the new and promising generation as well as the giants on which I built my PhD thesis.

I also had this crazy nightmare that for some reason an examination was disqualified for my secondary schooling and that I had to be at school and redo lessons and exams and the same for my BA and MA. Then I read that the PhD is a stand alone does not rely on any earlier work. The nightmare sometimes return, but I have trained myself t think in the dream: you have a PhD (I sleep well)

Do you have any advice for PhD students?

Follow your intuition. Don't be afraid to try out things that you thought were not your cup of tea. In my twenties I was abhorred about working in banking, at a ministry or a university. Economics was my third choice.

Do you have a recommendation for a paper/TED Talk/ Podcast that you enjoy?

I am also a professional lithographer and I invite you to take a look at my exhibition with artistic perspectives on the pandemic. I organized it the day before the lockdown. I had to rush to get everything ready: the guest book, the price list, the works – an exhibition that nobody can visit was just in time ready for the public that could no longer come. Perfect! I hope that ***you*** enjoy the video [Broken Links](#).

