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Dynamics of Academic Leadership in Research Groups

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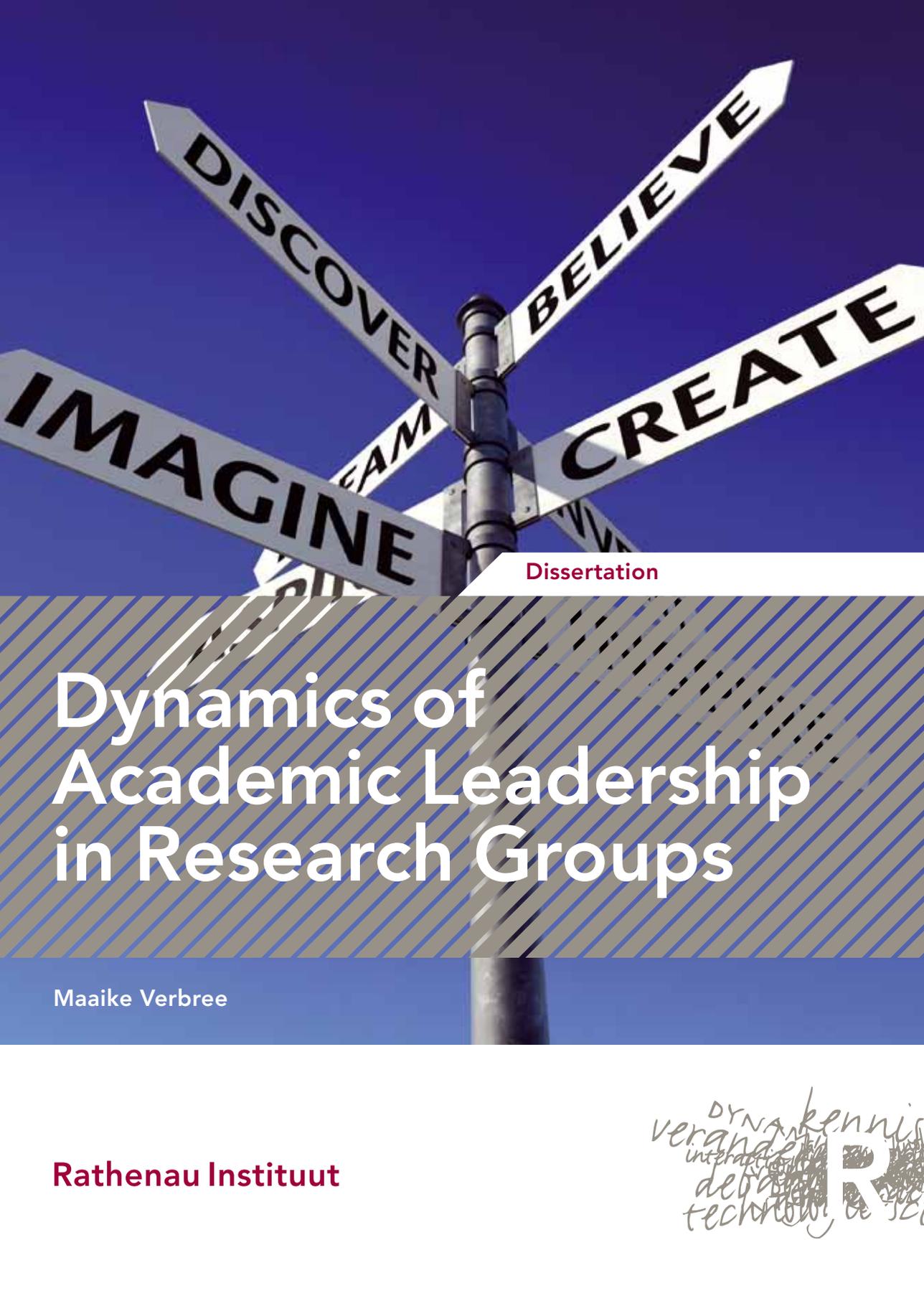
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Dissertation

Dynamics of Academic Leadership in Research Groups

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Rathenau Instituut

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The **Rathenau Institute** shows the influence of science and technology on our daily lives and reveals the dynamics of this process through independent research and debate.

Who was Rathenau?

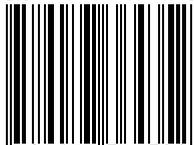
The Rathenau Institute is named after Professor G.W. Rathenau (1911-1989), who was successively professor of experimental physics at the University of Amsterdam, director of the Philips Physics Laboratory in Eindhoven, and a member of the Scientific Advisory Council on Government Policy. He achieved national fame as chairman of the commission formed in 1978 to investigate the societal implications of micro-electronics. One of the commission's recommendations was that there should be ongoing and systematic monitoring of the societal significance of all technological advances. Rathenau's activities led to the foundation of the Netherlands Organization for Technology Assessment (NOTA) in 1986. On 2 June 1994, this organization was renamed 'the Rathenau Institute'.

In order to conduct excellent research that contributes to solving complex scientific and societal issues, the availability of talented, creative, innovative, and enthusiastic researchers is crucial. However, researchers can excel only in an adequate environment. Increasingly, the work environment for researchers is their research group. And the challenge for academic group leaders is to create adequate conditions for meeting individual and collective goals, such as high research performance. Group leaders facilitate research meetings, supervise junior researchers and generate exciting new ideas. Their external activities are increasingly important, such as acquiring funding, maintaining collaboration networks and disseminating knowledge to society at large. The research question of this study is, *'how does academic leadership affect performance of research groups?'*

Two key factors are identified that positively influence the performance of research groups. The first is academic leadership: the way researchers are guided and stimulated by the vision and inspiration of the group leader. The other key factor is network management: the way academic leaders position their groups in scientific and societal environments and how they respond to environmental opportunities and constraints.

The study ends with a discussion on the implications for organising research and for science policy.

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