

Downloaded from UvA-DARE, the institutional repository of the University of Amsterdam (UvA)
<http://dare.uva.nl/document/62615>

File ID 62615
Filename Acknowledgements

SOURCE (OR PART OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCE):

Type Dissertation
Title Essays in the economics of education
Author J.D. Levin
Faculty Faculty of Economics and Business
Year 2002
ISBN 9051706480

FULL BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS:

<http://dare.uva.nl/record/104849>

Copyright

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), other than for strictly personal, individual use.

Acknowledgements

Completing a dissertation can be thought of as an academic rite of passage. The road that leads one to finishing up such a piece of work sometimes presents itself as a smooth flowing thoroughfare, at other times a congested freeway in the middle of a traffic jam, and occasionally a treacherous pothole-filled path only wandered by the most adventurous of intellect. To make matters more uncertain, often the new Ph.D. starts this journey with the mental equivalent of a baby carriage that in time gets traded in for a stroller. After a while the individual learns to ride a tricycle, bicycle (with and without training wheels), and eventually can apply for a driver's license. Now as I am at the last stage of this crude analogy, ready to drive the open road of economic research, I look back in retrospect pondering over times that were both trying and rewarding. The following book is the culmination of several years of research performed at the Tinbergen Institute and University of Amsterdam that represents not only the work of the author, but also the energies of countless others who have assisted me on my journey by providing their time, support and understanding. It is to these individuals that I now direct my deepest thanks.

First and foremost, I wish to thank my promoters Joop Hartog and Hessel Oosterbeek, under whose tutelage I conducted this research. I could not have hoped for a more supportive pair of mentors. Over the years they have provided their knowledge, guidance and unwavering confidence and patience, without which this book would not have been completed.

Next, I would like to give thanks to the individuals with whom I wrote two of the publications that came out of this book. Working with these people undoubtedly increased my writing and research skills in addition to nourishing my curiosity in labor economics and the economics of education. Erik Plug co-authored a 1999 article upon which the work in Chapter 4 is based titled "Instrumenting Education and the Returns to Schooling in the Netherlands", *Labour Economics* (6), pp. 521-534. I worked together with Simone Dobbelsteen and Hessel Oosterbeek to produce the recently published (2002) article, "The Causal Effect of Class Size on Scholastic Achievement: Distinguishing the Pure Class Size Effect From the Effect of Changes in Class Composition", *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* (64), pp. 17-38, which laid the foundation for Chapter 1. The results of this collaboration fueled my interest in the effects of class size and peers on achievement, which led to the composition and eventual publication of Chapter 2 in 2001, "For Whom the Reductions Count: A Quantile Regression Analysis of Class Size and Peer Effects on Scholastic Achievement", *Empirical Economics* (26), pp. 221-246.

Henriette Maassen van den Brink and Wim Groot deserve special thanks. It was they who originally interviewed me in San Francisco years ago and gave their recommendation that resulted in my being invited to the Netherlands to pursue a Ph.D. Later, I was taken in by the wonderful research institute they established (SCHOLAR), which provided me with the facilities and a nurturing environment in which to conduct my research. In addition to those mentioned above, I would also like to express my great appreciation and respect for all my other colleagues at SCHOLAR with whom I have worked with so closely over the years: Mieke van Hooijdonk, Bas Jacobs, Bas van der Klaauw, Chris van Klaveren, Edwin Leuven, Mikael Lindahl, Sandra Maximiano, Nicole Jonker, Patrick van Balkom, Erik Plug, Simona Raita, Randolph Sloof, Niels Smits, Ib Waterreus, and Dinand Webbink. The hours of

discussion and sense of camaraderie at SCHOLAR are things I will never forget and surely miss.

The first portion of my doctoral voyage was made while resident in the Tinbergen Institute. Thanks to Elfie Bonke, Marian Duppen-Cohen and Miep Oomes for taking care of all of the fresh Ph.D.'s (especially those of us that were tumultuously careening down treacherous pothole-filled academic paths in our baby carriage mental states). Also, thanks to my fellow expatriate Ph.D. students José Antonio Cabral Vieira, Francesca Medda and Athula Ranasinghe. Being from abroad we shared a common culture shock coming from our respective homelands to the Netherlands. Meeting, working and bonding with you eased this shock greatly. While the other colleagues I met and worked beside at the Tinbergen Institute were numerous, I will do my best to give them all my thanks here (please forgive all omissions): Jaap Abbring, Doreen Arnoldus, Govert Bijwaard and his wife Klarita Sadiraj, Dennis Botman, Mathijs Bouman, Nina Budina and her husband Rumin Budin, Silva Dezelan, Luis Díaz Seranno, Paul Frijters, Louise Grogan, Edwin van Gameraen, Pieter Gaultier, Egbert Jongen, Bas van der Klaauw, Udo Kock, Pierre Koning, Luc Moers, Pieter van Oijen, Jeroen Roodhart, Tauni Sanchez, Xander Tieman and Susan van Velzen. It has been a pleasure working beside and knowing you all.

An extra warm thanks goes out to several colleagues that were instrumental in my research via lengthy econometric discussions: Jaap Abbring, Maurice Bun, Cees Diks, Bas van der Klaauw, Edwin Leuven, Mikael Lindahl and Erik Plug. I honestly don't know what I would have done without your help. You all have the unique gift of making the incomprehensible clear and simple, and I thank you for sharing this with me.

My would also like to express my gratitude to Willem Houtkoop and the Max Goote Foundation, who arranged my first year's funding that allowed me to begin my studies and write Chapter 5. In addition, thanks to Jaap Roeleveld and the SCO Kohnstamm Institute who made available the PRIMA Survey data used in the first three chapters of this dissertation and to Kees Gordijn at the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics for providing additional data used in Chapter 3. Finally, it goes without saying that I am grateful to those members of my committee for their participation in the final stage of my doctorate, which involved much time and effort on their part to carefully review of my work.

Working abroad has put me a great distance from my loving family and friends back home who have displayed the utmost patience and understanding throughout the duration of my studies. I thank you for your continued support and encouragement.

Martin, you have been like a brother to me since we first met years ago and have endlessly lent your support without want. More than once you were a pillar of stability when everything seemed like it was all going terribly wrong. Thanks for being there when I needed you.

Writing a dissertation tends to put an incredible damper on one's social life and stretches thin the amount of time that can be devoted to relationships. My deepest thanks and affection go out to Nienke whose unconditional love, support and understanding helped me complete this academic journey.

Jesse Levin

Amsterdam, September 4, 2002