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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.

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Jesse Levin

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