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Old firms in the Netherlands

Brouwer, Aleid Elizabeth

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

‘Today is a nice day for science!’

At the time I started my so-called ‘academic career’, as an AIO in September 2000, my friends thought I had gone mad...at that time the economy was booming with so much money to be earned, lease-cars to be picked out and free cell-phones being handed out. Notwithstanding all these ‘worldly temptations’, I decided I needed to learn more, much more! Luckily, I was offered this opportunity to do four years of research at the Department of Spatial Sciences in Groningen. By becoming an AIO, I got the chance to deepen my knowledge about economic geography and many other, both related and non-related, subjects.

Over these four years I have read plenty of prefaces and acknowledgements to dissertations and it seems to me that most PhD students feel like they have been slaving away and only finished after numerous personal sacrifices. In my case, I do not feel like this at all about the past four years. It has been an exiting period, with many opportunities to travel, talk with interesting people, make new friends, develop many new skills and, above all, I have learnt a lot - much more than I even anticipated. That does not mean that I was always smiling and cheerful in my job (only most of the time), because as any other person I would sometimes rather be doing something else, had annoying stuff to do, and even occasionally had boring, uninspiring days. But most of the time it was ‘*a nice day for science*’ and the job would not have been so pleasing without the interaction with several people to whom I am very grateful

First of all, I need to show my great appreciation to my promoters Piet Pellenburg and Pieter Terpstra, who both have been unfailing sources of inspiration and positive feedback. Thank you both very much for the encouragement and enthusiasm you shared with me over the years in this unusual project – even if occasionally other people thought of this project as a totally crazy and non-legitimate experiment!

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Overall, it has indeed been good days for science and I hope you can read between the scholarly lines of this thesis and sense the fun I have had....

Aleid
Groningen, 2005