

LAUDATIO

Wilma Latuny

Tilburg, 29 September 2017

Doctor Latuny, Dear Wilma!

Congratulations with your doctoral degree! Both promotores are proud and wholeheartedly congratulate your family, friends and colleagues, with this milestone.

The promotion was wonderful, you did very well. It is the completion of a six-year exploration during which you transformed from a modest but persistent student to a modest and even more persistent student. Today, your promotores closely watched your facial expressions during this competitive setting. We are sure that your research has been beneficial in generating the proper expressions during your defence.

Together we have gone through many phases that are characteristic for any PhD trajectory. However, I have to admit: in your case the trajectory was full of unexpected turns. It all started six years ago when I received a message via my companion promotor Jaap van

den Herik. The message contained a proposal for a dissertation with the title: *Can a Community-Based Industry Cluster be the Core Driver in Building the Economic Convergence of an Archipelagic Region?* Although the title was not directly appealing to me, buried deeply in the dissertation proposal I discovered some connections with my research interests. I agreed to meet with "the PhD candidate from Indonesia." Our first meeting was on December 15, 2011 at 10.30AM. Looking back at our initial conversations, I have to admit that I was completely confused about the MSM procedure regarding the M.Phil and PhD trajectory. Although it turned out that you were fully aware of the details, you remained very friendly without making my ignorance explicit.

Your research started with various projects. The first project focussed on applying data mining methods to predict the sales of seaweed. A topic that is highly relevant for your home town and region. As of 2012 we quickly moved to the topic of facial expression analysis. This topic became central to your PhD research. The idea was to use the computer to analyse facial expressions from video sequences of contestants in a variety of contests and to investigate to what extent these expressions affect the outcome of the competitions. In your preliminary experiments,

you analysed the facial expressions of singers in international *Idol* competitions. Unfortunately, the amount of data available was insufficient to obtain interesting results. Subsequently, you spent considerable time and effort in collecting data that was suitable for analysis. Data collection and analyses were quite tedious and frustrating and at many times I had to cheer you up with my overoptimistic attitude. The typical pattern of our interactions went as follows: You entered my room in despair ("It does not work" and "It is not possible") and left my room with a glimpse of hope ("It may work!" and "It may be possible!"). As is true for most PhD students, you experienced quite some stress. Fortunately, your true strength is to never give up. From the beginning of our collaboration you were determined to make the PhD into a success. Because our group had moved from Maastricht to Tilburg, you decided to follow us and relocate to Tilburg. Your endurance and persistence are truly admirable qualities that resulted in the successful completion of your thesis, today.

In 2013, you faced a major drawback. After a trip to Indonesia, you became seriously ill. Your illness prevented you from working on your thesis. You needed about a year to recover and you had to follow a revalidation program in Maastricht. I remember that

during my visit at the revalidation centre, you were full of enthusiasm to battle your illness and to complete your thesis.

During the last phase of your PhD research, you paid regular visits to my companion promotor whom some of us respectfully refer to as "Jaap the maker." He excels in guiding PhD students to the successful completion of their PhDs. Together with him, you spent a tremendous effort in streamlining the thesis and ensuring that the contents were consistent. The final result is a beautifully designed thesis containing exploratory studies into the power of facial expressions.

To close, I would like to express our gratitude to the members of the assessment committee. In particular, we would like to thank our foreign guest Dr. Tsay for her presence, for her thought- and insightful feedback on the manuscript, and her constructive discussion today and earlier. Her "Sight over Sound" study was the main inspiration for the pianist study in the thesis. Dr. Feltkamp, we thank you for your presence and for your preparedness to review the thesis. Professor Van de Walle, thank you also for your comments and participation in the defence. We look forward to continuing our collaboration. We are grateful to our former colleague professor Bunt for his critical reading of the manuscript and his participation in the defence today. Finally, we would like

to thank professor Spronck for his thoughtful remarks and contribution to the defence.

Dr. Latuny, dear Wilma. Your promotores congratulate you again and are happy to see that your research further contributes to the understanding of facial expressions in competitive settings.

I thank the audience for their attention,

Eric Postma en Jaap van den Herik Promotores