



Mikal Skuterud

**Professor, Labour economics; Microeconometrics,
University of Waterloo**

I initially became interested in labour markets, especially in questions about what people are paid for the jobs they do, while working as a high school student in a large warehouse in Mississauga, Ontario employing large numbers of recent immigrants to Canada. My interests led me to McMaster University's undergraduate program in Labour Studies, which provided me with a broad interdisciplinary perspective on labour market issues, with an emphasis on the role that trade unions play in these markets. As part of this program, I was introduced to a sequence of courses in economic theory, as well as field courses in Labour Economics and the Economics of Trade Unions. My recollection is that the formality and rigour of the economic models, which allowed me to exploit my skills in mathematics, appealed to me, which led to a Master's degree in Economics at the University of British Columbia, where I completed two additional courses in Labour Economics.

Applying to PhD programs in Economics, I was drawn back to McMaster University by the offer of a generous four-year Doctoral Fellowship, a Faculty with exceptional strength in the area of Labour Economics, and an impatient girlfriend (and soon to be wife). During my PhD studies, completed under the supervision of Peter Kuhn, now of the University of California at Santa Barbara, I began my research on working hours -- looking specifically at the impact of Sunday shopping deregulation on working hours and employment levels in the retail industry -- and on job search -- examining the impact of using the internet to find a job on workers' unemployment durations.

Following graduation, I worked for three years in a small research division at Statistics Canada called the Family and Labour Studies Division. This job provided me with an ideal setting for focusing full-time on my research, while accessing confidential Statistics Canada data. It was during this time that my interests in immigration policy and the challenges that many new immigrants face in trying to integrate into Canada's labour markets developed, a topic that continues to occupy much of my research efforts. Following the birth of our two sons, the preference of my wife and I was to be closer to our families in Mississauga, which brought us back to Southern Ontario and my current position here in the Economics Department at the University of Waterloo.