Socialized choices: Labour market behaviour of Dutch mothers
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One of the key findings of this research is that the support, trust and motivation of other people towards fulfilling one’s full potential at work are very important in one’s life. I would definitely not have been able to start or finish this research on my own. Throughout my life there have been many people who, directly or indirectly, have enabled me to complete this thesis.

Firstly, I am so lucky to be able to mention my parents. When I was seven years old, my mother started to study in order to obtain a university degree. At the same time she also took up paid work and by doing this she showed me how to combine motherhood, work and education in a satisfying (though admittedly often exhausting) way. I am grateful to her too because she appeared so persistent. She was able to convince my teachers at secondary school that if I started doing my homework, it would not be necessary to downgrade me to a lower educational level. Later, when I had almost completed high school, I had a conversation with my father, who was always in the mood for a chat about the education and future professions of his daughters. I recall that I had doubts about the correct continuation course – just like so many of the mothers I interviewed in this book. My father, who is imbued with enthusiasm about practically everything, and who is especially devoted to professional life, pondered my choice for some time, and then came back with the suggestion that sociology might be a good choice for me. Both of my parents set a vivid example of how to enjoy work, while transmitting the mental code that ‘work is valuable and should be fun’. I internalised this, and I know my dear sisters did too.

Secondly, I want to mention the supervisor of my master-thesis, Kees Schuyt. At my graduation he encouraged me to continue with scientific research, and he helped me to write a PhD-proposal. I didn’t succeed in receiving a grant then, but his trust and reinforcement were very important to me. I am doubly thankful to him, because 15 years later we met again at a conference, and when I explained about my enduring desire to start a doctorate study, he pointed me in the direction of Paul de Beer.

For many reasons I am especially indebted to Paul. Firstly because he agreed to be my supervisor, even though my initial ideas about the research were undeniably very vague. He helped me to structure my research plans, showed me relevant theories and how to work with statistics. I am equally thankful to my second supervisor Christien Brinkgreve and the way she guided and supported me. Both supervisors were always constructive and precise in their comments on my work. By working with them separately on the quantitative and qualitative
analyses, I learned a great deal about their respective ways of looking at research findings.

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stage of the research with putting together the conclusions in a few words for the back cover. I have valued her contribution hugely. And at the very last moment, there was my dear old friend Ilse Wage. We scanned the formatted manuscript together - thank you very much!

Likewise, my gratitude is deep when I think of all my precious friends with whom I love spending time and who have been at all times so joyful, interested and reassuring about my research.

Last but not least, I am very grateful and truly happy with Martijn, and our much-loved and sweetest children Meike, Bente, Tijn and Kaj. Martijn gave me the time to work on my research as much as I needed. He knows how important it is to have something in life that you can work on passionately, and how that thing can fuel everything else, and I love him for that.