ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation and the fieldwork it relied on has been both a physical and intellectual journey. On this journey I have been inspired by many people. A first big thank you goes to my supervisors, Meindert Fennema and Rinus Penninx. Meindert first aroused my interest in the social sciences, and without his support I would possibly never have pursued an academic career. A traineeship in 1998 on the analyses of migrant organisational networks in Liège, a project designed and led by Meindert and Jean Tillie, was decisive. After completing that project I knew that research was what I wanted to do. This study also put me on the ‘network’ trail, traces of which are still visible in this dissertation.

As my PhD supervisor, Meindert encouraged me to think ‘politically’ and to be creative: what is politics and how can one best study it on the ground and in action? I highly appreciated the openness to my more anthropological fieldwork methods that he showed as a political scientist. His understanding of political science as a hands-on exercise made him a fitting supervisor for this interdisciplinary project. Meindert’s phrase ‘a good researcher never takes no for an answer’ kept repeating like a mantra in my head when I suspected respondents were not telling me the truth or seemed unavailable for interviews. His emphasis on lucid writing hopefully contributed to the clarity of this dissertation.

My data collection and fieldwork benefited immensely from Rinus’ insistence on conducting systematic research. The anthropological side of my work carries his stamp more than anyone else’s. His simple advice to keep a detailed research diary helped me to reflect on my findings, research methods and interview techniques. When in the field ‘with your knees in the mud’ (to quote him), writing in the diary for hours at night was one way to shake off the mud and prepare myself ‘to get back in there’ the next day. His advice to flesh out a detailed structure in the very beginning greatly helped the writing process. In my other academic activities he encouraged me to think ahead and enter every meeting with a thorough plan. These are only some of the many straightforward lessons Rinus has taught me.

I thank both Meindert and Rinus for giving me thorough comments during the many meetings we had over the past years, while giving me the freedom to make the original two page project description my own. They coached me in shaping my own thoughts, ideas and arguments instead of simply telling me what to do; having met many other PhD students I came to realise how special this is. These are skills which I hope to develop in my future teaching and supervision of students.

John Jansen van Galen informally strengthened the supervising team during the preparations for my fieldwork in Suriname. Not only did his address book lead me to potential respondents in the Netherlands and Suriname, it also came with endlessly useful and funny anecdotes. His careful and motivating comments on my fortnightly fieldwork diaries, which I sent him from Paramaribo, were helpful in finding my way in
the maze of Surinamese politics. Back from the field he commented with the same critical enthusiasm on the progressive drafts of the chapters that cover the Surinamese case.

I thank the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam (UvA), under the direction of Rinus and carried on by Jan Rath, for funding this project. The institute provided an excellent infrastructure, not least through the efficiency of its managing director Hanneke Grotenbreg and its secretary Hannie Hoekstra – not to mention the pleasant and motivating working environment and many nice colleagues. My office ‘roommate’ Ilse van Liempt became a true friend, and no day passed without moments of intense laughter.

My research is built on the expertise and previous research conducted by the IMES. The institute’s national and international networks facilitated my work in many ways. In this respect I want to thank the Institute for Sociological and Economic Research (ISEO) of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, and especially Sandra Groeneveld, for making the address lists of Surinamese, Turkish and Kurdish respondents available. The many conferences organised by the B3 cluster ‘Migration and Citizenship’ of the International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) Network of Excellence were useful to present papers and receive feedback from experts in the field. An IMISCOE travel grant allowed me to present my work at the Centre on Migration Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford and to participate in its weekly ‘work in progress sessions’ in the spring of 2006.

My fieldwork in Suriname and Turkey was in part made possible by travel grants from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). Data collection in the Netherlands, Suriname and Turkey would not have been possible without the help and willingness of respondents too numerous to name. They were not only pleasant interviewees; many also shared their address books, personal archives and sometimes even their private diaries and photo albums with me.

In the Netherlands, students, assistants and trainees in the MA graduation project ‘Transnational Political Ties’, which I taught with Meindert at the UvA Political Science Department, contributed to data collection. I thank Anouk Adang, Eric Cilessen, Gülşen Devre, Edward Iemenschot, Wendy van den Klooster and Irma Siebrasse for conducting and reporting on the many fine interviews with individual respondents. Fellow PhD student Ece Öztan was always willing to translate documents from Turkish into English which I wanted to quote in my texts; Umut Azak helped me to improve my own Turkish language skills. Eelke Heemskerk advised me on network analysis software.

Feeling at home in Turkey and getting around would not have been as easy without the friendship and support of Didem Danış, Jaap Koedood and his partner Sonny, Dorine van Norren, Ibrahim Sirkeci and his wife Fusun, Yasin Torunoğlu,

---

1 Grant number Suriname R51-117, grant number Turkey R 52-1077.
Mehmet Ülger, Bertil Videt and Pınar Yelsali. In the early stages of my research, Didem, Pınar and Yasin made appointments for me and accompanied me as a translator. Yasin transcribed and translated the interviews I myself had conducted in Turkish. Yeliz Köse and her sisters Feliz and Deniz welcomed me in their home in Ankara as their fourth sister. I will never forget the many Sundays when we enjoyed Yeliz’ famous four-hour-long Turkish breakfasts and the trip we made to her family house in her memleket Sinop during þeker bayram.

In Paramaribo Hester Jonkhout, Roberto Tjon-A-Meeuw and their son Idris welcomed me in their home during my first visit and introduced me to the Surinamese way of life. The many joyful discussions I had with Ine Apapoe and Paul Tjon Sie Fat were highly valuable for my understanding of Surinamese politics. My visit with Ine to a Ndyuka village on the Cottica River, of which her grandfather is captain, was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Annelies Aside assisted me in transcribing some of the interviews. My student Anne Blanksma improved my understanding of the role of ethnicity in election campaigns. It was great fun to analyse what we had seen at the mass meetings over a beer on the terraces overlooking the Suriname River. I thank the Elshot family for my pleasant stay in their ondro oso, not to mention the delicious homemade stroop by ‘grandma’.

Intellectually I benefited from discussions in the PhD peer group ‘OLA’ hosted by the UvA’s Centre of Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) between 2005 and 2006. In a broader sense this is also true of my new colleagues at the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Leiden. I thank Peter Pels in particular for his understanding that the dissertation finished a bit later than expected, and for his encouragement to flesh out my future research plans.

In the final writing process my high school friends didn’t see a whole lot of me. Sometimes I saw them thinking and frowning ‘why is the thesis taking so long?’ I thank Maartje de Jong, Mirjam van Royen, Marinka Achterberg, Carlo Pellati, Nibia Fett, Edward Dordtland, Brechje Bos, Jantine van den Driest, Uri Bosveld and Fransje Melief for their understanding. I turned down their many tempting invitations for long evening dinners, drinking carefully selected wines, endless phone calls and much more because I needed to write. This will change, I promise. You are my family.

On the contrary, our friend Takeo David Hymans, his partner Valentina and their daughter Ayumi saw a lot of our family during the final stretches of my dissertation. Takeo edited my manuscript to his own high standards, turning even ‘monstrous’ sentences into smooth text which was still mine. Takeo is a word surgeon, but his operations are never painful. Valentina generously invited us for dinner, sometimes three nights in a row. ‘The only part in which I am not integrated into Dutch society is food’, she said once. This results in irresistible text messages like ‘pasta with homemade pesto’ or ‘quick Italian dinner tonight.’

I thank my mother Eveline Smit for encouraging me to do what I really like and for her support for whatever career path I would have chosen. My Schwiegereltern
Mechtild and Tölke Mügge provided enormous practical support during the final phases of my and Daniel’s dissertations. It was these monthly long weekends, when our son Kolja stayed with them in Germany, that I could finish most of the loose ends of the dissertation in one go. At the same time, I am grateful for the opportunity this has offered Kolja for developing his own transnational attachments. The support of Egbert Steenwinkel and Hendrickje Willemse has been invaluable over the past 30 years; the same is true for Toontje van der Hulst.

And than there is Daniel, my love, best friend and most critical colleague. Words cannot express his devotion and support for my project. Daniel never tired of my detailed reports on transnational migrant politics which dominated kitchen table discussions for the past years. He accompanied or visited me in the field many times, enjoying a Hindu fair in The Hague, a Kurdish festival in Germany, an Alevi festival in Central Anatolia, the lights of the mosques in Istanbul at night and the jungle of Suriname as much as I did. It has been wonderful to share this. With the same devotion he commented on all the chapters of my dissertation. With the same precision he did the layout of my dissertation. Having finished two PhD projects under the same roof, side by side, is only a fraction of what turned us into a well-oiled team, it was unconditional love.

Kolja’s birth enriched our lives in many ways. Never would I have thought that spotting airplanes together would become one of my favourite leisure activities and that there are so many ways to replicate them with Duplo. Intellectually, motherhood sharpened the focus of the writing process. The doubts and digressions of earlier days were swept under the carpet of the efficiency that parenting entails. It also challenged me to put the project into the perspective of the world in which he is growing up. In this respect I can only quote his father: ‘If by the time he will be able to read this thesis, it still contains what he considers valuable lessons, then it will have been time and energy well spent’ (Mügge 2008: ix). Kolja, this dissertation is for you.

Amsterdam,
August 2008