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Intentions to move, residential preferences and mobility behaviour: a longitudinal perspective

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Preface

During my PhD research, I turned out to be an excellent example of how behavioural inconsistencies may arise in one's individual mobility decision process, from the formation of an intention to move to the actual decision to move or not. In the first years of my research, the realisation of my intention to move was hampered by a variety of factors, such as my hesitation to put my scarce time toward finding a new home. However, in the course of time, the deterioration of the neighbourhood in which I was living, in combination with the long commuting time to my work, pushed me past the threshold level, and I began searching for a home. In a relatively short time, I moved from a social rental home to an owner-occupied home. Not long thereafter, an unfortunate, unanticipated life event triggered me to move unexpectedly, in accordance with the residential mobility theory, to a rental home.

While these events are based on a single case, $n = 1$, for this research, I had the opportunity to examine thousands of unique cases to investigate the individual mobility decision process in detail. Obviously, I did not do this all by myself. I had the luxury of having two excellent supervisors standing by my side: Claartje Mulder and Dorien Manting. Working on this dissertation sometimes felt like building an impossible skyscraper, not as an architect sitting neatly behind a drawing board but as a construction worker working at frighteningly high levels. The two of you prevented me from falling and guided me smoothly throughout this process. You have encouraged not only my critical thinking but also my curiosity and joy in doing research. I am grateful for your constructive guidance and support, both inside and outside the boundaries of this research.

This research would not have been possible without the tremendous help from Marjolijn Das of Statistics Netherlands. Marjolijn, every time I stumbled upon a data problem, you were the one who explored the unexplored to find a creative solution, always successfully. Thank you so much for everything. Furthermore, I want to express my gratitude to my dear colleagues of the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency who all have kept my spirits high during this intense period of dealing with data and words! I am particularly grateful to Femke Daalhuizen, Frank van Dam, Sanne Boschman, and Otto Raspe who have

been more closely involved with my research – each in their own way. I also want to thank my colleagues and officemates at the University of Amsterdam, particularly those who joined the “Leerzitje”, for their enthusiastic support and insightful comments on several drafts of my papers.

Finally, I want to thank those whom are dear to me: my parents Rob and Ria, my lovable sister Mariska, Roy and Ilora, Monique and Ramesh, Cindy and Ohad, Marta, Linda, Joyce, Nico and Ineke, Blanca and Miguel, Ana and Rulo, Erik-Jan, and Kenneth. I am thankful for your presence in my life; you all have made the work-life balance as healthy and joyous as possible. Carlos, my last words are for you. I am very grateful that our paths crossed during a summer course Mathematics at the University of Essex, an event that later gave an unanticipated joyous turn to my life and that made “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ”! Thank you so much for your encouragement, your great sense of humour, and for giving a sparkling glow to my life.

Carola de Groot
The Hague, August 2011