Governing by carrot and stick: A genealogy of the incentive
Dix, G.

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When the early excitement of writing has passed, you discover that clear and distinct ideas are created through a long and laborious process of writing and rewriting. A supervisor is indispensable in this process, and mine was especially thoughtful and demanding. Gerard de Vries extracted lines of argument that were hidden in my first drafts and eliminated flaws in my reasoning. I hope his recurrent plea to “have another go at it” has allowed a few clear and distinct ideas to shine through.

Writing a thesis can be boring and solitary work without the companionship of fellow academic travelers. My close friend and roommate, Pim, was a willing sounding board for all my new ideas and interpretations. His thoughtful comments and sceptical looks were invaluable. Martijn—never reluctant to give me tips on all aspects of academic (and nonacademic) life—provided irreplaceable moral and intellectual support, both over the phone and in person. I also thank Berend, Floortje, Jacques, Lucas, Martin, Michiel, Sara and Willemine for the many lunch talks and coffee conversations.

As I found out, there is still a lot of work to do after the chapters have been written and the content has converged into something relatively stable. First, I would like to thank Sheri Six for her amazing work as an editor. If the text is as readable as it has become, it is because of her skills in capturing the intention
of badly written English sentences and sections. The book design is the work of Ching Chen—thanks so much for the splendid result!

For children, the concept of a thesis has a meaning all its own. As I neared the completion of my thesis, my four-year-old daughter, Anna, similarly started to wrap up: she would finish her thesis while I was taking a shower and would even boast that she had five theses to finish (small scribbles in colored, felt-tip pens scattered on our couch). My six-year-old son, Boris, would turn the situation to his own advantage. When I asked him to clean the table for dinner while I proofread one of my chapters, he countered by saying: “But Daddy, you should let me play! Do you really want me to start bothering you while you write your thesis?”

My parents, too, were supportive in many different ways: emotionally, financially and as wonderful and committed grandparents.

Finally, I dedicate my thesis to my wife. I promised to do so when we first met, and after sixteen years, the time has come to keep that promise. More importantly though, I like the idea that, as the love of my life, Roosje is and remains a promise to me—and a very beautiful one at that.