Switching during commercial breaks
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Citation for published version (APA):

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I would like to acknowledge the many contributions made by various people over the last five years in the course of the SPOT research on switching behaviour and the preparation of this dissertation. I would first like to thank my parents for having taught me, among many things, the importance of finishing what you start. I frequently had to remind myself of this while writing this dissertation.

Ten years ago I had the good fortune to be able to work closely with Arie den Boon and Willem Saris, who were my thesis supervisors at that time. They shared with me their love of social science research and offered me my first opportunities to develop my research skills. They stimulated my academic interests and encouraged me to pursue a doctoral degree.

In 1995, STER and IP took the initiative in setting up the SPOT study of switching behaviour. Both television sales houses deserve praise for commissioning a public study of a then very controversial aspect of television advertising. The role played by Jan Ligthart, the director of SPOT, in this research cannot be underestimated. Thanks to his enthusiasm, persistence and critical involvement, this study of switching behaviour developed into a large scale, thorough and, ultimately, successful project. In this, he was assisted by a supervisory committee that included Jos van Mieghem and Peter Fransen, as well as Paul van Niekerk of The Media Partnership, representing advertising and media agencies, and Harry Steenkamp of the Postbank, representing advertisers. Arie den Boon and Jan van Cuilenburg served as independent members. I am sincerely grateful to all of them for their constructive contributions to this study.

The SPOT research was carried out by Intomart. Not many projects at a market research bureau lead to a doctoral dissertation. However this study of switching behaviour is not exceptional; much of the research carried out by Intomart meets the highest standards of academic research. That, in this instance, Intomart research has led to a doctoral dissertation is due in no small measure to Intomart’s director of media research, Leendert van Meerem. Not only did he allow me the freedom to design, co-ordinate and carry out the research in my own manner, he also provided the opportunity and the indispensable support which enabled me, alongside my normal duties at Intomart, to transform the results of the research on switching into this dissertation.

The switching research and the CKO, from which it was drawn, are the products of my colleagues at Intomart. Without them, this study would have remained just an interesting idea. I would like to thank them all for their dedication and responsibleness, their collegiality and co-operation. While not pretending to name
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everyone at Intomart who contributed to this study, I would like to acknowledge the particular contributions of a number of my colleagues. Joop Deden devised ways of carrying out the many, varied and sometimes extreme demands of the research. When standard methods were inadequate, new creative programming was developed by René Hubers and put into operation by Arnout de Vries and the media production department. Sander Flight assisted with the data management and with a significant portion of the analyses. Marlies van Bergen provided advice on SPSS and helped collecting supplementary data.

As an intern at Intomart, Patrick Alders carried out the literature review that provided the basis for the theoretical justification of the research. I am grateful to the following people for their help in collecting supplementary information and literature from Dutch as well as international sources: my colleague Héloïse van den Berg, Wim Bekkers and Marjan Hammersma (NOS KLO), Sikke Bakker and René van Veen (Weekbladpers), Marjolein Moorman, Edith Smit and Tijs Timmerman (University of Amsterdam), Paul Hendriksen, S. Siddarth, David Brennan (Flextech), Michael Darkow (GfK Fernsehforschung), Thomas Sudholt (IPA-Plus), Susan Read (Laser), Barry Cook (Nielsen Media Research), and Brian Roberts and Les Taylor (Taylor Nelson AGB). Furthermore, I would like to thank Bas van den Putte (University of Amsterdam), Andy Santegoeds (IP Nederland) and Willem Saris for their comments on various portions of this dissertation.

To Intomart I owe the luxury of a good translator. Mario Dávila provided more than a smooth and accurate translation. He was often able to draw a logical and polished narrative from my sometimes hastily written text. Intomart also generously financed the layout and printing of this thesis.

Special thanks go to my supervisors Jan van Cuilenburg (promotor) and Peter Neijens (co-promotor). They have provided constant support to me during the writing of this dissertation and were willing time after time to read it and offer constructive commentary.

Writing this dissertation was not an easy task. Very often it was only during vacations in the Netherlands and abroad that I was able to find the necessary tranquillity to work. In this regard, I want to thank my mother and father, Todd, Jack and Pehton for their hospitality. I am most especially grateful to my friend, Paul Chin. In a small apartment without a separate study, as well as during trips abroad, he tolerated the constant company of a laptop and my bad mood that seemed to go with it. Now I hope with him to re-discover life has more to offer.

Thanks to all of these people, the research on switching was ultimately a great experience for me. The completion of this dissertation is not an end point. At Intomart I have been able to work on a number of interesting and exciting research projects in addition to the switching study, and I hope to take part in many more in the future. I also hope that this dissertation is able to convey to the reader my enthusiasm for and enjoyment of media research.