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### Rain falls on all of us (but some manage to get more wet than others) : political context and electoral participation

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# preface

The making of this dissertation has been quite a journey. It took twice as long as planned, it took me to places I had never planned to live in, and it got me into contact with a lot of people that I'm glad I met (and a few others). Now that it's done, I can sincerely say that it's been well worth it.

A few people deserve special mentioning. Quite a few will go unmentioned here - as they probably know themselves, that is *not* because I do not appreciate what they've done for me. Daniel Dorling and Henrik Oscarsson helped me acquire data vital for the British and Swedish analyses. Pat Lyons was always available for advice on the intricacies of the English (and Gaelic) language, and came up with the three c's of electoral participation and closeness. I would like to thank them very much.

Nan Dirk de Graaf played a vital role in starting out this project, and in the beginning stages of what has eventually become this book. Although the project has turned out considerably different from its original plan, I want to thank him sincerely for the help he has given me. Wout Ultee was right there when I needed him - and had time to have a drink afterwards, which helped a lot when times got rough and the pressure mounted. And of course I want to thank Cees van der Eijk, the supervisor who not only got me into this, but also got me through it. His manic-didactic approach to political science, life and the universe as a whole has always been stimulating, if at times exhausting, and reminded me why I want to do this. In addition, he's also an extremely nice person, with interesting views on the connection between contextual influences on electoral participation and ice-skating.

Then there are those who helped me in a non-professional way. Rob and Sabine became very good friends in the time I spent in Nijmegen. Toril taught me everything there is to know about staying as an ex-pat in Dublin and Trondheim. Céline and Anne gave me some invaluable insights into the female French mind, and Heinz and Marion never taught me much German - but that's all forgiven now. I'd like to thank Rob Johns for his insights into underrated and overrated bands, amongst other things.

The friends I have neglected in the manic last year(s) of finishing this dissertation will hopefully forgive me, eventually. And I know Dionne will forgive me if I promise her I will never write a dissertation again. Which I gladly do.

