Acknowledgements

Six years after I first embarked on my research for my PhD I now write what for my friends and family will be the part of this thesis that will probably be read the most: the acknowledgements.

Six years ago Willem Salet invited me to come to the AME Research Institute in the University of Amsterdam to write a dissertation. I would like to thank him here and now, and through him the AME, for the confidence that was put in me then. I have felt that constant trust like a warm blanket. Together with Jacques van de Ven (does anything ever happen in Amsterdam that he doesn't know about?) Willem gave me the space to find my own way, space through which I have happily meandered all this time. Discussing all those different versions became enjoyable rituals that I learnt to appreciate. Willem the intuitive challenger, Jacques, the solid source of inspiration. A great team: Willem and Jacques, my thanks for six beautiful years.

In 1999, under Julie Lawson’s inspiring leadership, the theme group “Instituties en Planning” was set up in AME. The theoretical basis of my thesis would certainly have taken another shape without the sometimes critical, sometimes irksome, but always good-humoured comments of my fellow PhD researchers and colleagues. I would like to thank Julie, Lianne van Duinen, David Evers, Luis Arribas, Stan Majoor, Leonie Janssen-Jansen, and Enrico Gualini for all those thought-provoking discussions on structures and individuals – even though we sometimes drove each other crazy.

Frankfurt is a fascinating city; I got to know it inside out in a most privileged manner. Professor Bodo Freund, armed with his camera, his infectious enthusiasm and (not to be underestimated) his generously proportioned car, led me in his own unique manner along Frankfurt’s office locations. It was a great experience, and I am delighted that Professor Freund became a member of my Promotion Committee. In addition, I would like to thank Dr Christian Langhagen-Rohrbach. He provided careful, detailed comments on all my chapters on Frankfurt.

Embarking on writing a thesis is one thing; finishing it is quite another. In the final phase I have been able to benefit from the flexibility afforded me by my new employer, the Ontwikkelingsbedrijf Gemeente Amsterdam [Amsterdam Municipal Development Corporation], for everything that had to done. My special thanks go
to the Beleid en Strategie [Policy and Strategy] department and to Keimpe Reitsma in particular.

The finishing of the book was a task that could not have been completed without the help of many people. I would like to thank UvA Kaartenmakers for the splendid figures which they produced at short notice. My thanks are also due to UvA Vertalers and Anne Hawkins of Spels for their proficient translation and editing. Julie Lawson deserves special thanks for all the hours she spent on the Amsterdam chapters. Wim Bosboom also deserves special mention for his cover design. The presentation is half the work, he once told me, and I was to call him when the thesis had been completed. I didn’t forget, but neither did he.

For all the academic efforts, I am already quite sure that when I have grown old and grey and look back on my years as a research student, it will be the friendships that will first come to mind. I think of all my different roommates through the years. First there was Enrico, who could type like a repeater gun, and for whom Tolkien held no secrets. Then there were Lianne and Jaap. I would like to thank both of them for our sparkling conversations, usually not about research. Jaap, thank you too for all those ‘laarzen’; they were good times on the Nieuwmarkt. Finally there were Cordula, who was so challengingly energetic, and Karin and Frans, who shared my last death spasms at the university. And I would also like to mention Stefan, pacing round the table in circles as he talked, Els, who just dropped in increasingly often, and Frank, the oil that made the wheels of the lunch club turn smoothly. You were most welcome pseudo-roommates.

Bas and Sander are my closest Amsterdam friends. I just want to thank them for their friendship. If they could bear to sit and watch so many bad Ajax matches, then at least they each deserve a mention in my foreword and a place at my side as my paranimf. What a pity that Sander will be somewhere on the Cote d’Azur when I defend my thesis. Some people have all the luck.

Finally I thank all those who are dearest to me: Marjon, Christa and Herman, Lex and Mirjam, Mum and Dad. My dearest Marjon, who felt that “that book” really ought to be finished soon, gave me just the extra puff of energy that I needed. That energy had to be found from deep down, because times are rough for all of us. So let’s stick together. I am happy that you are always there to give me that rock solid base that I can fall back on.

I dedicate this book to Mum and Dad. Thank you for everything.