I have been looking forward to the day I would sit down and write these acknowledgments. It is a privilege that today is that day. I would like to thank the people who have been important for me during this amazing journey.

I would like to thank my promotor and copromotors: Prof. Joske Bunders, Dr. Marjolein Zweekhorst and Dr. Wim van Brakel. Joske, about 8 years ago we met for the first time a few minutes before boarding the airplane to Dhaka, Bangladesh. During this brief encounter you gave me a book entitled the ‘The speed of trust’ by Stephen Covey to read in the plane. You knew that my internship was about trust and trust building among women groups in Kulna and Jessore and thought it would be a good read. I still find this such a kind, and also inspiring gesture. Now, many years later, I can only conclude that you have inspired me in so many different ways. You gave me a lot of freedom to explore and write about interesting niches during my PhD research. The advice you gave on how to write more elegantly and your support during the final phase of my PhD was of great value to me. Thank you so much!

Marjolein, I like to express my sincere gratitude to you. Your kindness and understanding are exceptional. It is amazing how you can be so busy and at the same time can give me the impression that you have all the time in the world. When life gets a bit tougher you are approachable and you show understanding. We share an enthusiasm for participatory research and Prof. Robert Chambers is one of our gurus. As a lecturer you introduced me to participatory mapping and visualizations and you directed me to the Institute of Development Studies. Studying there shaped my thinking tremendously. I am very appreciative that you introduced me to this field of research. I like how we work together and hope this will continue in the future.

Wim, you are one of the driving forces behind leprosy-related stigma research in the world. You were key in the development of the SARI proposal, which has become this wonderful project I loved being part of. I am extremely grateful for that. After Joske enquired whether I wanted to join the SARI team you asked me whether I envisioned a career for myself in leprosy or disability research. I told you that I was not sure about this, but explained that the participatory and inclusive nature of the research appealed to me. After these four and a half years, I have come to appreciate leprosy, disability and stigma research, because of your contagious enthusiasm. It is a fascinating and very rewarding field of research. Throughout this study, you expressed your trust and confidence in me quite profoundly. For this I am thankful. It helped me to stay calm and flourish. We have said this before, but we work together so well and I hope that we will have many more fruitful collaborations in the future.

I thank the members of the reading committee for their time and involvement in evaluating my work: Prof. Mitchell Weiss, Prof. Matthias Angermeyer, Prof. Geert van Hove, Dr. Bassey Ebenso and Dr. Wim Brandsma.

Many thanks to the SARI team. Prof. Irwanto, you are such a kind and warm person. You
always showed an interest in my work, provided helpful suggestions and supported me along the way. It is an honour to work with you. Beatriz, I like to express my gratitude for everything I have learned from you, which is a lot. There were many special moments and I will cherish these. I like to thank ibu Ery for ibu Rita for their advice on my work during my visits to Indonesia. Mimi and Dadun, thanks for being two wonderful and engaging colleagues. I have so many fond memories of our times together in Amsterdam, Jakarta and Cirebon. We will meet again soon! Dear Yando, you have made my life in Indonesia so much easier. I enjoy working with you very much. Thanks! Ghea, after you left SARI you became a dear friend. I always look forward to travel to Jakarta because I know we will have time to catch up. Dear Oni, Hasan, Solihin, Siti, Rohman, Mujib, Harry, Ulum, Yanti, Christine and the late Hadi. This work could not have been done without you and I am immensely grateful to you. In particular for the respectful way in which you did your job. It was an honour to work with you and learn from you. Thank you so much!

I would also like to thank my colleagues at the Athena Institute, VU University Amsterdam. Jacqueline Broerse, thank you for reading and providing your comments on the introductory and concluding chapters of my thesis. Christine Dedding, knowing that you are there, just in case, has been helpful. Barbara Regeer, thanks for stepping into the SARI project and creating some peace during its more turbulent times. Thanks to Michèle, Jozien and Maaike from Athena’s secretariat and to my direct colleagues Sorana, Saskia, Eva, Yadira, Elsbeth, Nienke, Marlous, Anna, Wanda, Derek, Sam, Carolien, Rosanne, Marije, Emmy, Pim, Tjerk-Jan, Dirk, Lotje, Lia, Wieke, Inge, Michelle, Ona, Marjoleine, Sara, Mukesh, Maurits, Anne-Floor and all others. I am particularly grateful for the assistance and editorial suggestions of Sarah Cummings, Mike Powell and Deborah Eade. Also a word of appreciation to all my students and in particularly those that spend their time and enthusiasm on the SARI project: Anneke Taal, Hind Oulhadj, Timo Rebolledo, Miranda Hofker, Lisette Verkerk, Renske Voorn, Stefanie Kroeze and Ewita Djoechro.

The SARI project was supported by grants from Netherlands Leprosy Relief (NLR), the American Leprosy Missions (ALM), Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation (SMHF) and effect:hope (formally The Leprosy Mission Canada). I like to express my appreciation to each of these organisations. I like to thank the Ministry of Health of Indonesia, West-Java Provincial Health Office in Bandung, District Health Office in Cirebon for facilitating this study. Also the support of Disability Studies in Nederland, in particular, from Alice Schippers and Irene van Helden was very helpful. A special thanks to the inspiring staff from NLR Office Jakarta. Thanks for our interesting discussions and for challenging me and the SARI team to always do better: Dianne van Oosterhout, Vivian Velema-Andryka, Kerstin Beise, Firman Arief and Teky Budiawan. Also my gratitude to Jiske Erlings for her

assistance with finding literature and maintaining our SARI page on Infolep. I would like to express my appreciations to Sharon Stevelink, Silatham Sermrittirong, Fiona Budge and Erik Post for all the conversations we had about our shared interests and for your contributions to the arguments developed in this thesis.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people who did not contribute to this thesis specifically, but who have guided or inspired me during my professional education to learn, reflect and/or pursue a PhD: Alma van Hoften, Paul Beenen, Eddy van der Voort, Emmy van der Grinten, Pamela Wright, Palash Chandra Torforder, Hoat Ngoc Luu, Frea Haker, Kees Swaans, Rosalyn Eyben, Robert Chambers, Jethro Pettit and Sarah Cross.

Dear extended family and friends, thanks for your interest and advices. You made it good to be home again after another visit to Indonesia. I am incredibly grateful for this life and all of you in it! Marie en Jolien, more than 10 years ago we met each other in Mumias, Kenya. We became close friends. You encouraged me to pursue this PhD, showed an interest in my work and listened to my stories. Marie, you (and Ella) even visited me in Cirebon! I am grateful that you are my paranymphs.

A special thanks to my family-in-law: Gerry, Joop, Thomas and Femke. Thomas in particular for helping me see fun in deadlines again and for designing this beautiful book.

My time at IDS has been very influential for me and I carry the heart-warming memories shaped there with me. A special recognition to my lovely landlady Maeve and fellow classmates and dear friends: Maren, Sophie, Lauren, Ricardo, Alexandra, Paola, Jake and Cristina. Suzanne, thanks for being such a proud friend. Riekie for being both my aunt and good friend.

Loek, Nicole and Niek. My two wonderful brothers and future sister-in-law! Thanks for being there for me!! You are amazing! Loek, the pictures are beautiful. My parents, Nellie and Gerard, I am immensely grateful for how you raised me. You are a great example in my life. It amazing how you keep surprising me. Thank you for your unconditional kindness and love.

Ruben, your support was phenomenal and beyond anything I could have wished for. Love is in my opinion the best and most powerful human experience.

I say hey, I’ll be gone today,
but I’ll be back all around the way,
it seems like everywhere I go
the more I see the less I know
but I know one thing
that I love you.
Michael Franti & Spearhead featuring Cherine Anderson