Acknowledgments

I have accumulated many debts of gratitude on the journey of researching and writing this PhD.

Hans Werdmölder and Piet van Reenen encouraged me to take on human rights as a sociological reality. They allowed me to pursue my own theoretical and empirical quest and endured my stubbornness. They stuck with me unwaveringly and supported me in a fatherly manner in the difficult period when my access to the police was withdrawn. I would also like to thank my assessment committee, consisting of Cees Flinterman, Peter Geschiere, Thomas Blom Hansen, Maurice Punch and Ton Robben.

The Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) was an important and interesting academic home for researching the first part of this thesis, in more ways than one. It provided me with a wonderful group of colleagues who introduced me to some skills necessary to survive a PhD. Rolanda Oostland was a great office-mate and companion from the very first week. It was from her, in endless discussions, that I learned viscerally what it meant to believe in the power of the law. Quirine Eijkman stayed in touch with me and kept me up to date long after I had left the SIM. And Marcella Kiel and Maeyken Hoeneveld have always been most helpful in their administrative support.

My entry into South Africa and first access to the South African Police Service would have been much more difficult and challenging, if not impossible, were it not for Duxita Mistry, Anthony Minnaar and Jabu Dhlamini from the Technikon SA. They shared with me their networks, their experience of dealing with the SAPS, and their excitement about their daily findings.

Carin van den Heever gave me a home in Johannesburg even before I arrived. From reminding me to bring enough moisturiser because of Joburg's dry weather, to guiding me into the cultural underbelly of the inner city, she was a generous host, and became a great friend. In the following months and years Carin, her sister Liesel, Larry and Buford, and a shady *stoep* in Melville, were the safe haven to which I could always

return and find relaxation after the often taxing hours with the police. As housemates and friends, they provided much care, drama and fun. Thanks a million to all of you.

Ivor Chipkin introduced me to the WISER staff and vouched for my work and credibility at a crucial time. Little did I know then that WISER was to become my new intellectual home. It proved to be a most rewarding opportunity, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues at WISER, particularly Deborah Posel, Sarah Nuttall, Jon Hyslop, Achille Mbembe, Irma du Plessis, Tom Odhiambo, Robert Muponde and Graeme Reid. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn from and contribute to the WISER project, and time to concentrate on finishing the PhD, and most of all, for being such inspiring and congenial colleagues and friends. I would also like to thank Najibha and Adila Deshmukh for their wonderful care and dedication, and for keeping me up to date on the cricket and Bollywood front.

It is scary to launch oneself publicly with one's first piece of written work, and be exposed for the first time to academic scrutiny. Steffen Jensen and Lars Buur probably had very little idea of what it meant to me when they invited me to present at a workshop and contribute to a special issue on everyday policing. Our connection lasted well beyond this initial moment, and they are among my most inspiring and fruitful academic friends. Steffen's comments on the introduction to this thesis have been extremely helpful.

It is not always easy to maintain friendships when life takes us to different corners of the planet. Therefore I am even more indebted to the unwavering friendship of 'the girls' – Mona, Celine, Elli and Julia – for living with me through the ups and downs of this PhD and all its spin-offs, in email and in real time, always as best friends – durch Dick und Dünn.

The Anthropology Club of the Amsterdam School of Social Science Research (ASSR) welcomed me back despite my defection to the foreign territory of Law. Its members, especially Rachel Spronk, Martijn Oosterbaan, Vazira Zamindar, Francio Guadaloupe, Marleen de Witte, Eileen Moyer, Zé d'Abreu and Lotte Hoek have become important interlocutors over the years and their fellowship has been significant, far beyond the Anthropology Club meetings, as we keep meeting in new professional roles. I would also like to thank Birgit Meyer and Mattijs van de Port for their support.

Peter Geschiere was most gracious when he accepted my apologies and offered to read and comment on my work. His dedication to his students is without equal and to have been a beneficiary of it has been a wonderful privilege. I am deeply indebted to him for talking "the book" (which is still to come) into being and helping me to pull through.

I am also indebted to the people who agreed to read parts of the thesis and comment on it, especially Jean Comaroff and Eric Worby. It was a great privilege when John Comaroff agreed to read the entire thesis and offer his incredible insight and meticulous comments.

I am particular indebted to Anouk de Koning. She has been a friend and so much more than a friend. She convinced me that becoming an academic was a good life choice, she has been an intense and encouraging reader of my work, she has made some of the most important suggestions, and she has always so freely invited me into her networks at the ASSR. Her hospitality allows me to return to Amsterdam as if I were still living there.

A dear friend and an academic brother in crime has also been Gerhard Anders. Who would have thought that we would end up sharing such similar interest when we met years ago as foreign exchange students on a boat in Amsterdam? He moved from law to anthropology and I moved from anthropology to law and there has been so much I could learn from him.

Robert Berold and Mindy Stanford edited the thesis with great sensibility and a passion for language. Martijn de Koning has done a fabulous job on the layout.

Two groups of people remain to be mentioned. The first are the police officers who allowed me to be by their sides, who took risks in taking me along on their night raids, who endured my questions and nosiness, and sometimes opened up their lives to me. They might not like what I have written about them, and they might be surprised to see what went into the thesis and what didn't, but I sincerely hope that they can see that I tried to do justice to their predicaments instead of simply blaming or pathologising them.

The other group is my family, especially my father, my mother and Ulrich. I am indebted to them for their boundless love, for always believing in me, and for supporting every step of this journey even if it took me further and further away from them geographically. I am also indebted to my little sister Luisa who always reminds me

through her way of doing things that there is more to life than books. And I am indebted to Grossmutter who left me with a task to complete – I hope that I have done her proud.

Finally there is Riason, who helped me to keep a cool head when I was losing mine, who showed me how to enjoy what the moment had to offer rather than always scanning the horizon for some possible disaster. Thanks for sharing your taste for life with me.