Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis has been a long journey that is full of adventures and challenges. Despite the loads of frustrations during this journey, I have always been committed. Luckily, I did not play alone but gained tons of supports from folks to whom I would like to express my appreciation.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Prof. Agnes E. van den Berg for her guidance and supervision of my PhD project. She is one of world’s leading experts in the field of green space and health. Agnes, the thesis has benefited so much from your broad knowledge. Your flexibility and concern contribute to a good working relationship. You played an essential role in suggesting the way of how the results are presented and arguments are formulated, which have improved the quality of the thesis to a higher level. Many thanks to you for becoming my supervisor at a very crucial moment at two years ago, making it possible for me to complete the current thesis in time.

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to my co-supervisor Dr. Terry van Dijk for his unflagging supports over the last four and half years. Terry, you are always there with supports, patience, and genuine care. Our close cooperation had started before I came to Groningen. You helped me to draft the research proposal that was used to apply my PhD position in FRW and the scholarship from China Scholarship Council. For the first two and half years after I started my PhD, you were the core person I worked with. You enlightened me to formulate research questions and guided me to the right track of doing research. I have learnt so much from you, particularly in narrowing stories, presenting arguments, supervising students, and scheduling time. You know when to leave me to work independently and when to step in to deal with the problems. Without your insistence and supports, I could not have gotten what I have today. I will be grateful for your supports forever.

My deepest gratitude equally goes to Dr. Gerd Weitkamp who joined as my co-supervisor at the crucial last year of my PhD project. Before that, the shared interests on space and place had already brought us together to collaborate on a paper. Gerd, the experience to work with you was always full of joy and pleasure. Despite your busy schedule, you always give quick feedbacks and are easily accessible. Your creative thinking and good understanding of the whole thesis
Acknowledgements

have stimulated me to better shape the thesis structure and to sharpen the arguments.

I would like to express my special thanks to Dr. Jianjun Tang who participated in the research design and draft writing of Chapter 3. He is also one of my best friends in Groningen. He knew the answer to every single question relating to questionnaire design and statistical analysis. I wish to thank Prof. Gert de Roo for approving my PhD application and providing financial support from the PUMAH project. My sincere thanks also go to Prof. Tialda Haartsen, Prof. Clara H. Mulder, and Prof. Mirilia Bonnes for evaluating my PhD thesis.

I have greatly enjoyed working at FRW where nice colleagues have supported me in various ways. First, I am grateful to join the Reading Group that included Marije Hamersma (my paranymph), Jasper Heslinga, Gintare Morkute, and Fikri Zul Fahmi. Their inputs and personal supports during the countless group meetings are greatly appreciated. My thanks go to my kind and nice officemates, Tim, Koen (my paranymph), Taufiq, and Mohamed. The time spent together with you is very pleasant. Special thanks to my Chinese friends and colleagues, Jing, Shuhai, Bo, Honghao, Lei, Ruiqian, Huijie, Wangli, Tingting, Xiaolin, Rongdi, Jia, Chen, Xiangnan, Sheng and Xiaolong. I appreciate our broad discussions and the exchange of opinions in studying and working abroad. I owe a debt of thanks to many other friends and colleagues from the planning department and FRW who are too many to list. But, I believe they will understand how grateful I am for their kind supports and interesting talks as well as the activities we have joined together in the last four and half years. Thank you! I have played badminton for almost four years at Aclo, which is not just a kind of physical sport, but more of a way to release pressures. I express my gratitude to my badminton buddies, Hao, Yufan, Zheng, Dongdong and others. Sincere thanks go to all my friends in Groningen and other places in the Netherlands for their accompanies and supports. It is no surprise that I have developed strong place attachment to this lovely city as well as this country.

Last but not least, I express my deepest thanks to my family for their understanding and encouragement which are the sources of my energy and strength. I love you! Thanks to China Scholarship Council for funding my PhD research.

Yang Zhang

Tieling, May 2017