

## **DEDICATION**

**For Maria**

**Your patience, tolerance and understanding are immeasurable.  
Mere words could never convey the depth of my gratitude and love.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To paraphrase the Grateful Dead, what a long and strange trip it has been! My quest for a Ph.D. in Sociology began over thirteen years ago when I entered the doctoral program at Virginia Tech in 1987. Research and writing on this dissertation began in 1990, and continued at various levels of intensity throughout the decade. While I alone bear sole responsibility for the length (and any accompanying strangeness) of this intellectual journey, there are many, many people who aided and supported me throughout the years.

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