Preface and acknowledgements

This book is written thanks to my faculty offering me a part-time sabbatical, in order to study ‘something other’ than my mainstream research focus (I hold a chair in Transport Policy). I chose the link between transport and ethics. What were the reasons for this decision?

A first motivation is my deep interest in multi-disciplinary research. After a (Dutch equivalent of a) Masters in geography, I have been professionally inspired by other disciplines, the most important being civil engineering, economics, psychology, environmental and managerial sciences. New job positions were the most important trigger for studying ‘new’ disciplines, but also my belief that both scientific progress, as well as the practical use of science, benefits from a multi-disciplinary (and in some cases an interdisciplinary) approach. In addition, ethics (and more broadly, philosophy) had been – up to undertaking the work that resulted in this book – almost completely absent in my research focus.

A second motivation comes from my experiences with Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA). Although they are quite positive, I had the feeling that something was still missing. Part of my work relates to the *ex ante* evaluation of transport projects and policies. In most western countries mainstream economic reasoning is very dominant in *ex ante* evaluations of transport projects and policies, CBA being the most widely used framework for evaluation. I have supported the use of CBA in several roles, for instance in my work as a member of scientific committees, to check if CBAs for large infrastructure projects were made according to scientific insights and practical guidelines, but also by publishing on the strengths and weaknesses of CBA, and on options for further improvement. What has intrigued me for a long time is the strong resistance to, or even rejection of, CBA by some persons in (mainly but not exclusively) the practitioner community (such as some policy makers and members of interest groups). On the one hand, I cannot avoid the impression that for some it is purely the fact that they do not like the outcomes, and as a result reject the method of CBA out of self-interest. On the other hand, I think that some individuals do have good non-self-interest related reasons to debate the use of CBA for *ex ante* evaluations of transport projects and policies. However, they often were not able to make them explicit. Various discussions have given

me the impression that ethical questions such as fairness or equity¹ were behind some of the feelings of discomfort experienced by some of those individuals, and I could well understand these feelings.

The third reason is the motivation to do ‘something’ in some form of collaboration with people from another group in our faculty, preferably a well-respected group that I had not collaborated with previously. In this context, our faculty has a very strong group in the area of philosophy.

This brings me to acknowledging the persons that, in one way or another, have supported me in writing this book. The first is Professor Jeroen van den Hoven of our faculty philosophy group, who from the very inception of my ideas gave me strong support in bringing my plans into practice, by advising on literature, databases for literature, and other information, and also by discussing the subject. I also would like to thank our former dean Professor Hugo Priemus, who encouraged me years ago to take a sabbatical. In addition, the dean at the time of writing this book, Professor Theo Toonen, as well as the head of department, Professor Margot Weijnen, in several ways encouraged me to take this sabbatical. Next are my section members, who allowed me to do this work and made no issue of my limited availability. I am grateful to all of them, and in particular to Dr Vincent Marchau, Professor Lori Tavasszy, Dr Jan Anne Annema and Dr Caspar Chorus, who took over parts of my tasks during the year of my part-time sabbatical. I am also grateful to the almost 100 respondents who filled in my questionnaire about transport and ethics as described in Chapter 2, as well as to the persons I interviewed for Chapter 7. Next I want to thank the secretaries, and in particular Trudie Stoute,² who supported me most generously by performing any secretarial tasks in general, and also in relation to the part-time sabbatical leave. For their comments on (parts of) the draft version of this book, I want to thank Neelke Doorn, Jeroen van den Hoven, Karen Lucas, Ibo van de Poel, Piet Rietveld and Sabine Roeser. For correcting my English I want to thank Geoff Dudley. I want to thank all the persons who spontaneously sent me literature relevant for my sabbatical, including Jan Anne Annema, Rutger Beekman, Arjan van Binsbergen, Enne de Boer, Neelke Doorn, Karst Geurs, Marjan Hagenzieker, Gerard Hoekveld, Jeroen van den Hoven, Carl Koopmans, Patricia Mokhtarian, Ibo van de Poel, Piet Rietveld, Sabine Roeser, Behnam Taebi, Lori Tavasszy and Fred Wegman. I thank Marian Hagenzieker, Karen Lucas, Karst Geurs and Piet Rietveld for their contributions to joint papers based on parts of this book. I thank Peter Blok, Frank Bruinsma, Jeroen Klooster, Marianne Kuijpers, Henk Meurs, Rob Nieuwkamer, Sietze Rienstra and Erik Verroen for letting me interview them (Chapter 7). Finally, I thank Eric Molin for his data analysis (Chapter 7).