Epistemic modelling and protocol dynamics

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Writing this dissertation is like approximating a fixed point whose existence is not guaranteed at the beginning. At the end of this long journey, the formulas and proofs in this book turn out to carry more meaning for me than their apparent mathematical denotations.\textsuperscript{1} Like a glass of wine may let a winegrower recall those sunny or rainy days in the year when the wine was made, the content of this book reminds me of those good or bad days of my Amsterdam life, and most importantly it reminds me how lucky I was for having so many people around who were willing to help and enlighten me. Without them, I would not be able to put my gusts of thought together into a whole picture as it is presented in this book.

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\textsuperscript{1}To really understand what I mean here, please turn to Chapter 1 of this dissertation.
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Despite the mathematical trappings, this dissertation may serve as a disguised
photo album for me, which depicts a large part of my (academic) life for the past 6
years. However, there is also a significant part of my life that involves the Chinese
community here in Amsterdam, which I have not mentioned yet. I probably need a
separate appendix to list my good Chinese friends who helped me in one way or the
other. For the sake of relevance and space, I can only mention a few of them who
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I sometimes find myself dry in words (but wet from sweating - an iconic heritage from my father) and this is one of those moments: I am risking not mentioning all the people that I should mention here. Nevertheless, I want to take this chance to express my sincere love to all my close Chinese friends here in the Netherlands, and without loss of generality I suppose you feel the same.

This almost concludes my acknowledgements and my Amsterdam life. Finally, I reserve my deepest gratitude to my parents for their unlimited love, support, and understanding. I shall be around soon!

Yanjing Wang
Amsterdam, July 2010.

\(^2\)Association of Chinese Students and Scholars in the Netherlands, Amsterdam Branch