Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking Prof. Peter Sloot not just for being a helpful supervisor when I needed but also for teaching me the importance of thinking big and having a clear vision to focus my energy. I am also grateful to him for doing so by giving me enough freedom to learn this lesson by my own mistakes. It was really a priceless gift. I would also like to thank Filippo Castiglione and Massimo Bernaschi for planting the seed of this manuscript and for believing in me during all these years.

I would like to thank all the colleagues and professors in the Computational Science group for the countless scientific discussions and for the good time we spent together: Joris, Lampros, Kees, Mikołaj, Omri, Daniel, Nol, Carolina, Paula, Lotte, Hannan, Carlos, Chinh, Narges Z., Narges J., Alfons, Jaap, Drona, Adam and Rob.

I would not have been able to survive in the Netherlands without the many friends who enriched my life over the past 5 years: Irene for our always pleasant movie nights, Umberto for being the example of a man we should all strive to be, Malgosia for showing me what being positive really means, Roberta, Kathrin and Andreas for their warm company always garnished with good food and great wine, Alessia, Paolo, Alessandra, Fabio, Daniela, Lara, Jana and all the other friends with whom I crossed path in this country. It is thanks to all of you that I feel this city as my own.

I am in debt with the three friends who were closer to me during these past 5 years: Rick, David and Gokhan. Your friendship made me a better person. You know I will always be there for you. A special thank and a hug to my friends Stratis and Katerina. You always remind me what is real love. I am also in debt of affection with Alexandra who helped me keep (part) of my sanity during these years.

Last and most important comes my family. I will always be in debt with my parents and my brother. Your support, encouragement and presence in my life have been the fuel of all my efforts.