Acknowledgements

Usually in this section one can find a sentence similar to: ‘It would not be possible to complete this thesis without the great help of my supervisor’ and people think: ‘Oh, a candidate is very polite’. In fact, in my case it has little to do with politeness and it simply describes the situation as it is. What started as an email message to Michel about possibly defining a specific research problem and maybe solving it and finally took shape of this booklet, was rather far away from a typical PhD programme. Michel frequently said: ‘We have to be creative’, so we were and we managed to overcome all the organizational obstacles.

I can definitely name Michel a perfect supervisor: his broad knowledge allowed us to discuss topics ranging from the implementation of queueing mechanisms in the modern Ethernet switches to the usage of the dense sets to prove the decay rates of certain probabilities. My PhD training at UvA lasted only about 20 months but I developed a lot during this time thanks to frequent meetings and discussions we had. I was always amazed at how Michel (apart from doing many other things) was able to supervise 5-7 PhD students at the same time, offering each of us enough attention, guidance and true mentoring but also a large degree of freedom and flexibility.

I have also gathered some valuable experience while being involved for several years in the research projects NOBEL and EURONGI/FGI at the Department of Telecommunications, University of Science and Technology (AGH-UST) in Poland. I want to thank Andrzej Jajszczyk for making my involvement possible: he has always been very enthusiastic about the idea of interdisciplinary research, early recognizing the increasing importance of the cross-domain activities while being aware of the organizational difficulties in conducting them. With Krzysztof Wajda we had lots of fun discussing questions of applicability of mathematical models to communication networks. In the framework of EURONGI project I also worked intensively with David Rincón, Udo Krieger, and Natalia M. Markovich having productive time in Barcelona and Bamberg.

Other people back in AGH-UST who shared my vision of interdisciplinary research are Vsievolod Vladimirov (Faculty of Applied Mathematics), who offered me a great deal of help in organizing my scientific career as well as Ryszard Tadeusiewicz and Stanislaw Bialas who at the late stage of my graduate studies encouraged me to stay in the academic community and obtain a PhD degree.

Completing my thesis was also much facilitated by the SURFnet grant and special thanks go here to Richa Malhotra (SURFnet) for her valuable comments and suggestions on linking mathematics and ICT.
A group of friendly people around you when you arrive to the completely new place just on your own is really an important thing to have: Ricardo, Jevgenijs, Loek, Enno, Abdel, Nabi, Kamil, Alexandr, Naser, Adam as well as Evelien & Hanneke. Equally important is to know that back in Poland I have someone I can count on and when I visit my country, we just talk like resuming a conversation interrupted a day, not some months, ago. You know, guys, who you are: Andrzej, Jakub, Michal, Marcin and again Michal.

Finally, I want to thank to my family: the place where I am now is not just a result of the things happening in last several months - it started much much earlier. Without all the love, encouragement and support I got from you I could not dream of reaching 10% of my achievements. My wife Jadwiga deserves a special acknowledgement as I can imagine it is not easy to be the partner of a scientist ;-). Thanks for giving me energy to move on in the (more or less) right direction.