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Living and working in the Netherlands, I have to admit, has never been on the very top of my bucket list. When I applied for PhD positions, I was looking for the big, wide world: Canada, the US, Australia, … – and I didn’t even know about the IVM and the VU at this time. However, apart from a depressingly lack of mountains in this country, starting a PhD in Amsterdam turned out to be a good choice not only professionally. While I joined IVM when the ‘good old times’ were already gone, it was still a great experience in a great environment. I had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people that it won’t be possible to name them all: Thanks for the warm welcome during the soccer world cup 2014, ski trips to Georgia and Slovenia, countless BBQs, game nights, dinners, and other social events! Julia, Marthe, and Samantha – thanks for introducing me into the procedures of IVM and the VU at the very beginning of my PhD. Jasper, thanks for mental and methodological support with my first paper. Christine, thank you for several after-work discussions about how to ‘survive’ in the IVM environment. Bep, Christine, Marija, Flavio, Justin, Katharina, Niels, Trond, Willems, Žiga: You were all great office mates and (some of you) even greater guardians of the EG cookie box! Not to forget: the fantastic IVM Futsal team! You guys ensured that I did at least some sports from time to time and although it’s definitely no fun biking to Landsmeer through snow and rain in the late evening, this was more than outweighed by the glorious victories in the second part of the team’s history (not worth mentioning that we relegated ourselves to the lowest possible league before…).

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Reinhard Prestele, May 2019