

## Preface

This book presents the results of my PhD project, which I worked on while being a research associate at the University of Mannheim between 2008 and 2012. Living in Mannheim and going through the often lengthy and strenuous tasks associated with doing a PhD was not always easy. As a matter of fact and for a number of reasons, Mannheim was a rather restless and challenging chapter of my life so far.

But what is also true is that my time in Mannheim was tremendously valuable. Intellectually, it taught me to fully comprehend and appreciate the beauty and usefulness of scientific thinking – a true gift for life. It made me discover the fun of teaching and the satisfaction of developing new knowledge from scratch. And on a personal level, Mannheim meant the emergence of close friendships that I will never want to miss. There were countless warm, fun moments shared with wonderful people – and I am grateful for every single one of them.

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