

## Acknowledgements

This book, this research, this enterprise as a whole would not have been possible without my parents, who, during a hard period of their life have offered unfailing and selfless support for dreams that others in their position would have dismissed as frivolous. I would also like to thank Elisa and Franca, who also never failed to support me and made sure I never ran out of high-quality Italian coffee | *Questo libro, queste ricerche, questa impresa nel suo complesso non sarebbero state possibili senza i miei genitori, che in un periodo arduo delle loro vite hanno offerto il loro costante e disinteressato sostegno a sogni che altri, nella loro posizione, avrebbero ritenuto frivoli. Voglio anche ringraziare Elisa e Franca, che mi hanno sempre sostenuto e hanno fatto in modo di non farmi mai mancare niente, soprattutto il caffè italiano.*

I am infinitely grateful to everyone who saw something in me and gave me a chance – a most wonderful and rare gesture. *In primis*, my Ph.D supervisor Prof. Dr. Walter Grünzweig and my second reader and postdoctoral mentor Prof. Dr. Barbara Buchenau. But also Andy Jones, who gave me my first job in Germany: a small step towards adulthood in this country.

I am grateful to my colleagues at the Technische Universität Dortmund and, later, at the University of Duisburg-Essen for sharing their invaluable inputs – over and over and over again. Their thoughts are woven in the texture of my book. Those who took the time to read and patiently comment entire chapters deserve a special mention: Thank you Dietmar, Georg, and Mario. I owe much to the anonymous reviewers who helped me put my material in shape for publication, I have learned a lot from you. Thank you Barbara, Courtney, Dietmar, and Zohra, for having taken such good care of me, you are my academic family. I look forward to many years of inspiring conversations and shared projects.

