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I learnt about the cold analytical side of research, but also about the soft skills and social understanding required to be a full fledged researcher. *Lars* reminded me that the most important was not to work at a highly-ranked university or get hundreds of citations, but to feel that I am at the right place with the right people. *Jan*, always open to working with me though we still have not written a single paper together, helped me more than he knows. In times of doubt, his appreciation of my work and ideas lifted me up. *Laurent* allowed me to appreciate serendipity as part of research and provocative statements as starters for novel ideas. I admit that the latter still frightens me. In the later years of my PhD, *Roman* impressed upon me that the responsibility of a researcher also lies in making sure that everyone in their research environment feels at ease. I had been advocating for it for several years already, but his earnestness in applying it led me to consider how I was interacting with students and supervisees myself. *Tom* taught me to stop worrying about everything and enjoy the moment.

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Curriculum Vitae

Marie Anastacio was born in France on the 10th of September 1989. She grew up near Bourges, where she went to classes préparatoires in maths and physics. She moved to Belfort (France) to acquire a Computer science engineering degree from the Université Technologique de Belfort-Montbéliard in 2012. She concluded her engineering studies as an exchange student in Trois-Rivières (Canada), which extended into an internship followed by a master degree in Applied Mathematics and Computer Science at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières obtained in 2015. Marie came back to Europe in 2015 with a fiancé and a child to be born. In 2017, she started her PhD studies under the supervision of Professor Holger H. Hoos in the Leiden Institute of Computer Science at Leiden University (the Netherlands), the most tangible result of which you can read in the present thesis. Since the goal is the journey, Marie got involved in the community by starting monthly seminars to share research among PhD candidates, sitting on the diversity committee of the research institute and co-founding the CAIRNE Rising Researcher Network – a European network of early career researchers in artificial intelligence. She also got involved in outreach towards students at various stages of their studies, from talking about research in a primary school, to giving a first taste of research to high-school students in the Hague. During her PhD studies, she took courses in time management, scientific writing, effective communication and scientific conduct, among others.

Marie now works as a researcher at RWTH Aachen university in Germany, where she explores further her research interests in optimisation and their application to problems she cares about, such as trustworthiness of AI and sustainability.