AKNOWLEDGMENTS
‘Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.’
William Arthur Ward
Writing a PhD-thesis is a project of years in which many ups and downs are known. It is seldomly a project which is done solitarily and therefore there are many to thank for their support. Not to miss out on anyone or hurt anyone’s feelings: Thank you to all of you!! (The fact that you are reading this, most probably indicates you are one of those who contributes to the success of this thesis.)

Nevertheless, there are some people I would like to thank for being there when I need.

Prof. Dr. Danielle Posthuma. For sure this thesis would not have seen the light of life without you. Much has changed over the years, professionally and personally, but never was there a moment of weakness in your encouragement and support. You were always there, thinking about me and the project. I still wonder why, back then, you took the chance with a somewhat lost Brazilian soul, but in the end it did work out. Under your wings I had learned a lot about psychology, statistics, genetic variation in complex traits and even more about how to write a decent article. Your knowledge on matter was invaluable to me and key to the success of this thesis. Thank you for all your kindness, advices and support.

Prof. Dr. Peter Heutink. It’s equally said that also without you this thesis would not have been completed. Your knowledge and wisdom on the experimental part of my work have brought me guidance and was vital to this project. Thought I might not always have left our meetings as content as could be, they have always let to a way forward and always have enhanced the work. With you I learnt that a brilliant researcher has ideas and implements them but he/she is also critical towards his/her own work. I’ve learned a lot over the years and want to thank you for teaching me how to do research.

Prof. Dr. Matthijs Verhage. We mainly collaborated on my Fatty Acid Project in which your support was and it is essential. But always when I needed another mental/professional boost, you were always available. Thanks for believing in my (sometimes crazy) ideas and being such a kind and positive supporter of my work.

Dr. Sophie van der Sluis. Talk and discuss science with you was always a pleasure. It doesn’t matter if we talk about mouse projects, genetic variations or statistical significance, it was never boring, never frustrating. It was enlightening! Your criticism towards the projects was essential for the improvement of the projects and it was a oil to my brain machinery, and elixir. Thanks Sophie to be always around.

My dear paranymphs Esther Lips and Margherita Francescatto. Programming would be much more difficult without you. With your advices and friendship the management and analysis of the large genomic data was possible. We had also fun together. Thanks girls for all love, soup and gluten free cakes that you provided me.

The Medical Genomics Department. Patrizia Rizzu, Margherita Francescatto,
Deborah Blocq, Shushant Jain, Ingrid Bakker, Eva Verbeek, Sasja Heetveld, Saskia Woudstra, David Sondervan, Hans van Beek and Zoltán Bochdanovits. All of you have supported me with your knowledgeable feedback on my work, your patience when I was overreacting and your friendship when I was in need of some mental support. No doubt that without you my analysis would have been a lot more boring than it has been.

The NESCOG and CTGlab. Gea Beunders, Mandy Grannetia, and Tinca Polderman. Through all the sample inventory, projects, statistical analysis’s and paper discussion it was always a pleasure to work with each of you. Every time I got stuck in some corner there was always one of you who could turn me around and give me a better heading.

The White Matter Group. Emiel Polder, Gert Scheper, Ilja Boor, Laura Van Berge, Margreit Ridder and Nienke Postma. Since we shared the same area in the building, we’ve seen a lot of each other. Thanks for always being there for joyful moments, technical advice and mental support.

The Ex-Colleagues Dina Ruano and Maria Macedo who could truly understand my frustrations when blasting out in Portuguese. It was great to have you as colleagues as we share familiar backgrounds in language and culture. Thanks for being there.

Besides the professional friends and supports, writing a PhD-thesis requires much more support to come to a true end. No one can do without friends and family that take part of the heat out and support you when you need it the most.

Barbara Stam helped me out on many occasions. If it was about relaxing my mind and go to the sauna, helping with setting up the thesis, baby-sitting the kids or any other form of mental support, she was always available.

Daniel Kok was kind enough to help me with my sample pick-up and crossed borders for that matter. What could I’ve done without you if you would not have carried such heavy load?

My aunt Maria Helena, who since I was young knew what I would become. I would like to thank her for helping me with the Portuguese summary.

My parents, Helimar and Margarida; and stepparents, Robert and Solange; my sisters, Liz and Isadora, who always believed in me, no matter the score. To them, I will be forever the best of the game, the queen of the court. Their support inspired me ever since I was little, and subconsciously contributed a tremendous amount to the content of this thesis. Being so far from you never made things easier, so let’s also thank Skype and the Internet.

My parents in law, Norma and Gert, were always around when needed. Compensating for the fact that my family is living abroad, they are always just on the next block. Not understanding what I was doing for my thesis, they were always
available for helping out with the kids, doing the groceries or have a beer with a small chat.

My kids, Olivia and Lucas, made me what I am today: a proud mother of two wonderful kids. Although they consumed a lot of time during the process, they for sure contributed to the determination of completing this thesis. Hopefully they later will understand how important they have been and will be to me.

My husband, Joran, who without I would not have been here in the first place. I know it hasn’t been easy and the road has been long. But like behind every strong man there is a supporting woman, behind this woman, there is a supporting wonderful man and father. Thanks for being there for me, I love you.