A word of thanks

When I reflect over my PhD time, I enter a mood of gratefulness and happiness. These years are filled with valuable lessons that shaped me and my future path strongly. Apart from developing a passion for my work, I learned a very important thing: science (especially a PhD) is a together-thing on your own (in Dutch: een samencing in je eentje). My thesis is not very different, it is result of the interplay between my environment and me. In which the level of description and analysis remains, of course, on the Nanda-level ;) - just like my CROSS agents. I want to take the opportunity here to highlight some element of my social environment that played an important role in this thesis.

Let me start with the fixed elements of my scientific social environment: my supervisors. René, Wander and Tony, you all have been enthusiastic about this project from day 1. It is a delight to have this enthusiasm as a base. René you're my prof or like the Germans say, my ‘DoktorVater’. You taught me a lot about myself through our interactions and these insights are really important to me. Your ability to reason on a high abstraction level is crucial in exploring complex new domains - thank you for showing me the tools to deal with complex problems.

Wander, you are scientist with strong social skills, a value I highly appreciate. It did not only show me that science can be social, but also helped me find my place and feel home as a scientist. As a scientist you are a skilled time-manager, this continues to amaze me. The fact that I always 'disturb' and therefore, I am always welcome to barge into your office - love it! In terms of content, your alertness on the concrete part of my computational model and experimentation were indispensable. I enjoyed our fruitful discussions about simulation models and experiments and look forward to having many more.

Tony, without you, there wouldn't be a thesis on crowd behaviour and simulation. You created this opportunity for me to have two research surroundings (Academia and a Applied Research Institute). This was a stimulating and joyful experience that taught me a lot about work, people, communication and science. Your support throughout these years was at any moment very valuable to me. Your straight and almost brute remarks are not only incredibly funny, but were exactly what I sometimes needed to hear to relativize the matter (sometimes the use of the ‘tang’ is nice ;), but you were definitely right it was a style-thing).

My research took place at 2 institutions RUG (University of Groningen) and TNO (Dutch Research Institute in Applied Science). Having two workplaces can be difficult at times, however it was mainly was a great opportunity to learn about the Uni-way and the applied science (& practice)-way. I thank both RUG & TNO for this unique
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One of the benefits of having two workplaces is having a lot of nice colleagues. In both the department of Strategy and Innovation (RUG) and Human in Command (HIC|TNO) I found my place. A special feeling goes out to my HIC-colleagues (TNO) where I spent most of my time and enjoyed being part of the group, thank you all very much.

To my very close colleagues - Kristian, Marloes, Martin and Niels (RUG) - Roos, Wim, Bart, Saar, Nienke, Inge and Remco (TNO), I want to thank you for listening, your advice, the sharing of the wonderful and the difficult moments of daily (PhD) life, and most importantly, having a good laugh together. For me it is a pleasure and honour to be surrounded by such bright minds with warm hearts. We all have our unique stories and the few words I can say here cannot fully reflect what this means to me - thank you all for this unique time together.

For me, some people made it easier to be at two places. This involves making me feel at home, but also practically helping me with getting things done. I like to thank the secretaries (RUG) - Sonja, Hennie, Jeanette and Truusje for always helping me out, but also for creating a warm atmosphere. Research school SOM (RUG), thank you for supporting my non-standard initiatives, you really enrich the development of PhD students. With a special thanks to Ellen, your warm smile and willingness to explain and help is so nice and valuable. Martin, you were an excellent PhD coordinator in the sense that you made possible the above stated support, however my appreciation moves beyond that. Thank you for your support during more difficult phases, they mean a lot to me.

People that were involved in (some aspect) of my work were not restricted to these two physical locations. Their role was indispensable and they deserve a proper place here.

SimSoc@work, my simulation friends! It is so nice to be part of an emergent phenomenon :). Thank you for all the valuable discussions in our online and face-to-face meetings. In every phase of the development of my simulation, you played an important role in decision making, but also as social support. For me this is exactly the way we should work in science, I feel it as very special to be part of this group. Iris and Cara, I want to thank you both in particular. Not only did we develop a warm friendship, you both supported the work on this thesis for the last three years in many ways. Thank you for your time, attention and sharp feedback, but also for your warm motivating words.

Otto, Sara, Elaine and Martina: my crowd research/police academy friends! You helped me forming a view on crowds not only by simply going to a real one, but also by discussing theory on crowds and giving me valuable feedback that helped me to place myself in this research area. It is great to share a topic and passion for research to generate knowledge that can be used in real life.

Martin, you helped me coding my agents in the very beginning. We made them walk! Thank you for doing this together with me, it is great having a friend aka robot-psychologist involved and reliving the fun of programming together! Concerning da brunnenberg - it’s timeless, just works for us, real collision-avoiding should never be coded explicitly :).

Jacco, your help really made the difference in the development of my simulation. Thank you for helping me set up the building plan of my simulation. Not only did you
teach me the basics in software development, it was also a delight to talk to you on code level, to discuss program quality, bugs, or other computational issues.

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Otto, you have become a dear friend of mine, with whom I love to work together. You taught me so much during the end phase of writing my diss, I just don’t know where to start to thank you. I just want to say I enjoyed this time that was a road full of hills, travelling this route together with you made the difference. Your ability to discuss, understand my work into great detail, ask the most relevant (and often painful) questions. I am more than impressed. You showed me how to communicate in writing, I find it sooo valuable to have words for all the ideas that live in my head. I remain in gratitude and look forward to continue creating roads in impassable areas.

Not only was I surrounded by intelligent people with a variety of expertise, I also consider myself very lucky for having you - my dear friends and family. I thank you all for your support and foremost your patience during the last couple of years. It is really special to be surrounded by people that support me whatever goal I choose to pursue. Thank you for moments of relaxation, doing sports, talking and laughing.

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