Acknowledgements

Completing a doctorate requires, among other things, interaction with many different people. This interaction have originated good and bad experiences which, nevertheless, have been enriching in one way or the other. This is the reason for which, at this point of my thesis, I would like to thank all the people who I have met and have enriched my experience of working and living in the Netherlands. With this I could finish but there is a number of people who I want to expressly mention. The first one is, of course, Dirk. And I use "of course" not only because you were my promotor but because you have definitely been a really good mentor and friend. Well, everything started during my master studies and later when you gave me the opportunity to join your group. I really appreciate your efforts to overcome, as you put it in an email, the "age hurdles" imposed by FOM. As a mentor I will always remember our discussions about preparing experiments and the long ones discussing results trying to explain them. Sometimes we got it wrong, some times we got it fine but always concentrating in the basic principles. I really enjoyed this way of doing physics. As a friend it will be impossible to forget your sailing lessons in the Hornsemeer or the skiing ones in the Salève or your efforts to convince me of staying in the Academia.

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Although it has been wonderful to have two great promotors, the more daily and terrenal matters are spent with the other members of the group. It is just matter of available time. I would like, then to thank all of them, in special Alexey, Hajo, Christian, and Fabrizio since for quite a long time we were the only oficial scientific members of the group. I and Alexey started at around the same time, Alexey with his postdoc and I with the PhD. I really think this was a strike of luck, Alexey, since in this way we were able to work a lot together and in that process I learned a lot from you. And we shared even more, we married with our respective wives at around the same time, lived under the same roof (as we say in Ecuador) for a couple of months, looked for a house, and so many other things. I am also thankful for your hospitality during my visits to Switzerland, which reminds me to thank also Elena. You both were really nice hosts. Finally, Alexey, I only hope that, as we agreed in Ameland, you visit Ecuador one of this
Hajo, you have also been a wonderful colleague and friend. One of the things I will never forget is your willingness to help. I think that it often was at expenses of your own time. No matter how busy you were, you were always helping someone. I wonder if that is one of the reasons for which you had to extent your contract... If so, sorry for that. Cristian, it was also great to work with you. Especially as you showed me almost everything I know of ellipsometry. As a friend I also enjoyed your company and talking to you, although you have to forgive me as, until now, I have not followed your advice of going to the U.S. and having a child. Fabrizio, you joined the group a bit latter. However, we have worked also with what has converted in our "precious" MnSi. It has been a nice experience to find the true Italian way.

Since Dirk moved to Genève, the group grew considerably. Despite of my few visits I got to know a bit the other members of the group. Thanks Ricardo, Violetta, and Erik for your amiability. Especially Erik for helping me with the preparation of the Samenvatting. The last person from Dirk’s group who I want to thank is Cor. The last but not the least as it is said. You know, in an experimental group, without technical help working becomes impossible. In fact, Cor, your help has been invaluable, especially with all those smart gadgets you have built during the years.

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This is the point to go to a different level. My parents and siblings who I have not seen for already four years. You know, this is my thesis and since my English is not that good, I would prefer to turn the Language knob to Spanish... Ya se lo que iban a decir, “¿A que hora este guaimbrito se cansa de escribir en inglés y pone algo en español?” Bueno, pues, este es el momento porque quiero enviarles un abrazo gigantesco desde aquí. Aunque no me han acompañado físicamente...
durante todo este tiempo, sé que lo han hecho de otras maneras. Los quiero a todos. Y bueno, papi y mami, este es el resultado de haberme ayudado con los estudios y haberme incentivado a seguir siempre adelante.

The final paragraph is reserved for someone extremely especial. Someone who has been with me these four years. Someone who also left Ecuador for the unknown. Not knowing the Language and not having been abroad before, it was a big step. And, then, being here, waiting at home until I finish the experiments. Being always extremely patient. Being always with me. Gracias corazón, gracias por estar conmigo.