ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
At the end of my PhD thesis I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who supported me throughout the years of my thesis and thereby contributed largely to the success of this work.

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Kathrin Thedieck. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work on these interesting and challenging projects. Thank you for your continuous scientific support throughout the years, and for setting high scientific standards in all your projects. Especially, I want to thank you for your trust in my abilities to quickly acquire the theoretical knowledge of cell signaling pathways, as well as the technical expertise in performing biochemical experiments, when I started as a greenhorn in your lab. Without having any previous western blot or cell culture experience, you had to trust my confidence and motivation in complying with other requirements than the ones usually expected. I also want to thank you for your support and trust that allowed me to pursue my thesis from places other than your own destination, especially for letting me move to Heidelberg. After all these years of working together, thank you for shaping me as a scientist.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my co-supervisor Dr. Christiane Opitz. You welcomed me with open arms and allowed me to finish my PhD in your laboratory in Heidelberg. Thank you for all your scientific support at the end of my thesis, for broadening my scientific knowledge and for taking me seriously as a scientist.

Furthermore, I would like to express my thankfulness to Prof. Dr. Ralf Baumeister for allowing me to perform my work in his department and for all his support during my time in Freiburg.

In addition, I would like to thank all former and present colleagues of the Thedieck, Opitz and Baumeister laboratories for your interest in my PhD thesis, many discussions, as well as a constant scientific as well as non-scientific exchange and support. Thank you for providing a very pleasant and stimulating working atmosphere.

I would also like to thank all members of the surrounding departments in Groningen and Heidelberg (especially all members located on the 4th floor in the ERIBA building, as well as the 4th floor in the DKFZ main building) for their help with
Acknowledgements

getting started in a new laboratory, for sharing reagents and equipment and all their support in general.

Special thanks to all collaboration partners in the course of the different projects for sharing scientific knowledge, giving advice on new techniques and for the development of new ideas. Special thanks to Antje Thien for the great guidance within the complex framework of TGF-beta signaling and the confidence in our teamwork.

Furthermore, I want to thank SGBM for funding me during my PhD thesis, enabling me to attend several interesting and rewarding conferences and workshops, as well as for sharpening my scientific competences.

In particular I would like to thank the girls in Freiburg, with whom working was a lot of fun back then: Birgit Holzwarth, Stefanie Ruf, Jennifer Schwarz, Annika Sonntag, Antje Thien and Regine Tölle. Thank you for so much: getting me started in the lab, for sharing laughter, as well as for exchanging ideas and sorrows. It meant a lot to me to have you at my side. Jenny, I absolutely agree, you are my favorite person for late overtime hours.

Special thanks also to Isabell Adam, Bianca Berdel, Luis Felipe Somarribas Patterson and Gretchen Wolf for giving me a smooth start in Heidelberg, for showing me around inside DKFZ and outside the lab, and for supporting me with all kinds of aspects as colleagues and friends.

I would like to especially thank my colleagues Ineke Kuper and Frieda Reuter. Your support in the lab contributed tremendously to the success of my PhD thesis. A real big thank you not only for your hands-on support, for a real good communication and interaction during our joint work, but also for sharing a sense of good scientific practice and being very open about all kinds of scientific as well as non-scientific topics. Dear Ineke, many thanks for carrying on with the project in Groningen, for keeping me not only updated, but also motivated, when I moved already to Heidelberg. Many thanks in addition also to Birgit Holzwarth for your great technical and personal support and teaching me all kinds of different techniques. Learning from you has always been a great pleasure.

Finally, I want to thank with all my heart my mom, my friends, and my boyfriend for their incredible patience, their universal support, their true understanding,
and passionate encouragement. I would not have made it without you and it means a lot to me to have you in my life!