Collision-induced absorption of radiation by interacting molecules

Katharine L. C. Hunt Department of Chemistry, Michigan State University Institute for Advanced Studies, Department of Physics and Materials Science, University of Luxembourg

Physics Seminar, November 24, 2023







Interactions between molecules during a collision induce transient dipoles. The interactions break the symmetry of non-dipolar species. The induced dipoles change as the molecules rotate and vibrate, leading to collisioninduced absorption in the infrared and far infrared.



https://www1.eere.energy.gov/hydrogenandfuelcells/tech_validation/pdfs/fcm01r0.pdf

Collision-induced absorption has been extensively studied experimentally at and below room temperature, in samples of hydrogen, nitrogen, methane, and other molecules.

Information on collision-induced dipoles is needed for astrophysical applications.

- Anomalous radiative profile of very old, very cool white dwarf stars.
- Formation of the first stars in the universe?
- Temperature profiles of the outer planets and exoplanets.

Hubble Image

James Webb Space Telescope Image

Near-infrared,

NASA

2022

Visible light, NASA/ESA 2014

The Pillars of Creation, a star-forming region in the Eagle Nebula

NASA/ESA Hubble view of the star-forming region in S106, in Cygnus

How did the first stars form? Star formation is believed to occur in cool, dense regions of molecular hydrogen. As a primordial gas cloud contracts under gravity, it heats up. A cooling mechanism is needed to permit the gas cloud to continue to contract.

K. V. Getman, E. D. Feigelson, and M. A. Kuhn, *Astrophys. J.* **787**, 109 (2014). NASA, CXC/PSU/JPL-Caltech NGC 2024 in the Flame Nebula

When H₂, H, HD, and He are in their ground electronic states, vibrational or rotational transitions are necessary to cool the gas further, to permit star formation. The predicted size of the Population III stars depends on the efficiency of cooling. Size estimates range from M_{\odot} to 1000 M_{\odot} .

Further Astrophysical uses of information on H, He, and H₂ interactions Dynamical modeling, radiation profiles, cooling rates

Abell 2744 GLASS JWST/NIRCam







Glass z12 in the outer regions of the giant galactic cluster Abell 2744, about 350 million years after the Big Bang.

Protostars

•

At one point in time during star formation, T = 1000 K and the density is 10^{13} H₂ molecules/ cm³.

Class 0 Protostar, Dark Cloud L1527 James Webb Space Telescope, NASA

Gas giants and gas giant exoplanets

47 Ursae Majoris b

51 Eridani b





51 Pegasi b A Capella Science: Whole New Worlds

55 Cancri f



Jupiter captured by Hubble in the visible spectrum (left) and by the JWST in the infrared (right). Hubble, NASA, ESA, Jupiter ERS team, image processing by Judy Schmidt





55 Cancri d

NASA

Collision-induced absorption by H₂ gas near room temperature



Figure 2. Collision-induced absorption by pairs of H_2 molecules in the rotational band of H_2 in hydrogen gas at room temperature. Calculation: solid trace. Measurements: dots³⁷ and circles.³⁸



Figure 4. Collision-induced absorption by pairs of H_2 molecules in the first overtone band of H_2 at room temperature in hydrogen gas. Calculation: solid trace. Measurements: open squares,² dots,⁴⁰ circles.⁴⁴





Figure 3. Collision-induced absorption by pairs of H_2 molecules in the fundamental band of H_2 in hydrogen gas at room temperature. Calculation: solid (smooth) trace. Measurements: dots,^{39,40} circles,⁴¹ squares,⁴² red trace (slightly noisy).⁴³

Figure 5. Collision-induced absorption by pairs of H_2 molecules in the second overtone band of H_2 at room temperature in hydrogen gas. Calculation (solid line). Measurement: circles.⁴⁹

Comparison of experimental and calculated spectra

Figure 2: Rotational band
Figure 3: Fundamental vibrational band
Figure 4: First vibrational overtone
Figure 5: Second vibrational overtone

From: Martin Abel, Lothar Frommhold, Xiaoping Li, and Katharine L. C. Hunt, *J. Phys. Chem. A* **115**, 6805 (2011).

Collision-induced absorption by H₂ gas at lower temperatures



Measurements:

1	77	Κ

• 292 K

Solid lines: Isotropic interactions, distinguishable H nuclei

× × ×

Anisotropic potential, indistinguishable H nuclei

T. Karman, A. van der Avoird, and G. C. Groenenboom, J. Chem. Phys. 142, 084305 (2015).

A case with no experiments! Collision-induced dipole of $H_2 \rightarrow H$

Comparison with previous calculations: RWP: R. W. Patch, *J. Chem. Phys.* **59**, 6468 (1973). GFM: M. Gustafsson, L. Frommhold, and W. Meyer, *J. Chem. Phys.* **118**, 1667 (2003).

Work	Method	Basis	# of θ	# of r	# of R
					1111111111
RWP	Full CI	Three 1s	6	1, 1.401446 a.u.	4, from 1 to 4 a.u.
GFM	MCSCF + CEPA with SCEP	75 functions	4 (0º to 90º in 30º intervals)	5 (1.111 to 1.787 a.u.)	11, from 3 to 11 a.u.
Our work	UCCSD(T)/RHF	165 functions	19 (0º to 90º in 5º intervals)	9 (0.942 a.u. to 2.801 a.u.)	16, from 3 to 10 a.u.

H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, J. Chem. Phys. 150, 204307 (2019).

Finite field methods with 6 fields, base strength f, Strengths {f, – f, 2^{1/2} f, – 2^{1/2} f, 3^{1/2} f, – 3^{1/2} f} Total of 43, 000 *ab initio* calculations aug-cc-pV5Z, aug-cc-pV6Z & d-aug-cc-pV5Z basis sets



H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, *J. Chem. Phys.* **150**, 204307 (2019). Figure by Lee *et al.*, in: Adam Liebendorfer; *Scilight* **2019**, 220002 (2019).



Dipole moments in the y and z directions, as a function of the angle θ between the H₂ bond axis and the intermolecular vector. Results from 0° to 90° from ab *initio* calculations, remainder obtained by symmetry arguments H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, *J. Chem. Phys.* **150**, 204307 (2019).



Spherical Tensor Analysis of the Dipole

 $\mu^{M}(\mathbf{r}, \mathbf{R}, \theta) = 4\pi/3^{1/2} \sum_{\lambda, L, m} D_{\lambda L}(\mathbf{r}, \mathbf{R}) \langle \lambda L m M - m \mid 1 M \rangle Y_{\lambda}^{m}(\theta, \phi) Y_{L}^{M-m}(0, 0)$

Correspondence with Cartesian tensor elements $\mu^{0}(r, R, \theta) = \mu_{z}(r, R, \theta)$ $\mu^{1}(r, R, \theta) = -(1/2)^{1/2} [\mu_{x}(r, R, \theta) + i \mu_{y}(r, R, \theta)]$ $\mu^{-1}(r, R, \theta) = (1/2)^{1/2} [\mu_{x}(r, R, \theta) - i \mu_{y}(r, R, \theta)]$

Advantages: This illuminates the physical mechanisms that contribute to the dipole. This form is also very useful in spectroscopic line shape calculations.

Physical mechanisms of dipole induction for $H_2 \cdot \cdot \cdot H$

The leading long-range contribution comes from the quadrupole-induced dipole This contribution varies as R^{-4} in the separation of H_2 and H It shows up in the spherical tensor expansion coefficient D_{23}

Hexadecapolar induction is also apparent in the *ab initio* results This contribution varies as R^{-6} in the separation of H_2 and H_2 It shows up in the spherical tensor expansion coefficient D_{45}

Dispersion and back-induction are also apparent in the *ab initio* results These contributions vary as R⁻⁷ in the separation of H₂ and H They are evident in D₀₁. They are present in other coefficients, but harder to detect there

D₂₁ and D₄₃ have no long-range classical counterparts, but they contribute significantly at shorter range

Results for Spherical Tensor Components $\mu^{M}(r, R, \theta) = 4\pi/3^{1/2} \Sigma D_{\lambda L}(r, R) \langle \lambda L m M - m | 1 M \rangle Y_{\lambda}^{m}(\theta, \phi) Y_{L}^{M-m}(0, 0)$ λ, L, m



Results for the leading expansion coefficients. The largest coefficients are D_{01} and D_{23} . As the separation R decreases, D_{21} , D_{43} , and D_{45} grow in relative magnitude. H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, *J. Chem. Phys.* **150**, 204307 (2019). Dependence of Spherical Tensor Components on Bond Length $\mu^{M}(r, R, \theta) = 4\pi/3^{1/2} \sum D_{\lambda L}(r, R) \langle \lambda L m M - m | 1 M \rangle Y_{\lambda}^{m}(\theta, \phi) Y_{L}^{M-m}(0, 0)$

λ, L, m



The largest coefficients are D_{01} and D_{23} . As the bond length increases, D_{21} , D_{43} , and D_{45} grow in relative magnitude

H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, J. Chem. Phys. 150, 204307 (2019).

Comparison with Known Long-Range Forms $\mu^{M}(r, R, \theta) = 4\pi/3^{1/2} \sum D_{\lambda L}(r, R) \langle \lambda L m M - m | 1 M \rangle Y_{\lambda}^{m}(\theta, \phi) Y_{L}^{M-m}(0, 0)$ λ, L, m

Largest coefficients: D_{01} and D_{23} . As r increases, D_{21} , D_{43} , and D_{45} grow.



H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, *J. Chem. Phys.* **150**, 204307 (2019).

Dispersion dipoles of unlike pairs A and B

- $\mu^{AB}_{disp} = -\partial \Delta E^{AB}_{disp} /\partial F |_{F \to 0}$
- Spontaneous, quantum mechanical fluctuations in the charge density of molecule A set up a nonuniform local field at B.

 $F^{A}(\omega) = T^{(2)}(R) \cdot \mu^{A}_{fl}(\omega) + (1/3) T^{(3)}(R) : \theta^{A}_{fl}(\omega) + \dots$ $F'^{A}(\omega) = -T^{(3)}(R) \cdot \mu^{A}_{fl}(\omega) + \dots$

 The local field induces charge moments in B, as determined by the fielddependent susceptibilities of B and the nonuniformity of the local field.

Reaction field theory for ΔE_{vdW} :

B. Linder, Adv. Chem. Phys. 12, 225 (1967).

D. Langbein, *Theory of van der Waals Attraction* (Springer, New York, 1974) Chapter 3. Theory of the dispersion dipole:

K. L. C. Hunt and J. E. Bohr, *J. Chem. Phys.* 83, 5198 (1985).

- The Induced dipole is $\mu^{B}_{ind}(\omega) = \alpha^{B}(F, \omega) \cdot F^{A}(\omega) + (1/3) A^{B}(F, \omega) \cdot F'^{A}(\omega) + (1/\omega) G'^{B}(F, \omega) \cdot B^{A}(\omega) + \dots$
- The induced polarization in B gives rise to a nonuniform local field at A, the reaction field:

 $F^{B}(\overline{\omega}) = T^{(2)}(R) \cdot \mu^{B}_{ind}(\omega) - (1/3) T^{(3)}(R) : \theta^{B}_{ind}(\omega) + \dots$ $F^{\prime B}(\omega) = T^{(3)}(R) \cdot \mu^{B}_{ind}(\omega) + \dots$

- The resulting change in the energy of molecule A is the average of the instantaneous energy shift over fluctuating charge distribution of A. $\Delta E^{A} = -(1/2) \langle \mu^{A}{}_{fl}(t) \cdot F^{B}(t) \rangle - (1/6) \langle \theta^{A}{}_{fl}(t) : F'^{B}(t) \rangle + \dots$
- The field and field gradients from B result from the spontaneously fluctuating multipoles of A. Their correlations are given by the fluctuation-dissipation theorem, applied to A in the field F.

From the fluctuation-dissipation theorem of H. B. Callen and T. Welton, *Phys. Rev.* 83, 34 (1951), modified for static-field effects,

(1/2) $\langle \mu_{\alpha}(\omega) \mu_{\beta}(\omega') + \mu_{\beta}(\omega') \mu_{\alpha}(\omega) \rangle_{\mathsf{F}}$

= $(\hbar/2\pi) \alpha ''_{\alpha\beta}(\omega; F) \delta(\omega + \omega') \operatorname{coth}(\hbar\omega/2kT)$

(1/2) $\langle \mu_{\alpha}(\omega) \theta_{\beta\gamma}(\omega') + \theta_{\beta\gamma}(\mathbf{r}', \omega') \mu_{\alpha}(\omega) \rangle_{\mathsf{F}}$

= $(\hbar/2\pi) A''_{\alpha,\beta\gamma}(r, r', \omega; F) \delta(\omega + \omega') \operatorname{coth}(\hbar\omega/2kT)$

- The effects of a spontaneous fluctuation in the charge density of B are added.
- The net energy change is given in terms of an integral over all real frequencies.
- The real parts of the susceptibilities are even in the frequency, and the imaginary parts are odd. This permits us to write the energy change as the integral over an analytic function of ω.

• The susceptibilities are analytic in the upper half plane, to ensure causality. Therefore, the only poles in the upper half plane come from the function $coth(\hbar\omega/2kT)$. They are located along the imaginary axis at $\omega_n = 2\pi i nkT/\hbar$.

- Typically, the poles along the imaginary axis are sufficiently close together that the sum over the poles can be converted to an integral over imaginary frequencies.
- Then expand the susceptibilities in the field **F**, to obtain the answer Result for the dispersion dipole of atoms or centrosymmetric molecules:

 $\mu_{\phi}^{AB} = (\hbar/3\pi) \int_{0}^{\infty} d\omega T^{(2)}{}_{\alpha\beta}(R) \alpha^{B}{}_{\beta\gamma}(i\omega) T^{(3)}{}_{\gamma\delta\epsilon}(R) B^{A}{}_{\alpha\phi,\delta\epsilon}(0, i\omega)$ $- T^{(2)}{}_{\alpha\beta}(R) B^{B}{}_{\beta\phi,\gamma\delta}(0, i\omega) T^{(3)}{}_{\gamma\delta\epsilon}(R) \alpha^{A}{}_{\epsilon\alpha}(i\omega)$

 $\begin{aligned} &\alpha_{\alpha\beta}(i\omega) \\ &B_{\alpha\beta,\gamma\delta}(0,\,i\omega) \\ &T^{(2)}_{\alpha\beta}(R) = \nabla_{\alpha} \nabla_{\beta} (1/R) \\ &T^{(3)}_{\alpha\beta\gamma}(R) = \nabla_{\alpha} \nabla_{\beta} \nabla_{\gamma} (1/R) \end{aligned}$

Specializing to the dipole for two atoms at long range

 $\mu_z^{AB} = (9\hbar R^{-7}/\pi) \int_0 \left[\alpha^A(i\omega) B^B(0,i\omega) - \alpha^B(i\omega) B^A(0,i\omega) \right] d\omega$

 $B^{X}(0,i\omega)$ denotes the dipole-dipole-quadrupole hyperpolarizability of atom X $\alpha^{X}(i\omega)$ denotes the polarizability of atom X

If μ_z^{AB} is positive, the polarity of the dispersion dipole is A⁺B⁻

Each atom is hyperpolarized by the fluctuating charge distribution of the neighboring atom, and the applied field The applied field alters spontaneous quantum fluctuations of the atomic charge densities

L. Galatry and T. Gharbi, *Chem. Phys. Lett.* **75**, 427 (1980). K. L. C. Hunt and J. E. Bohr, *J. Chem. Phys.* **83**, 5198 (1985).

 ∞

The Dispersion Dipole in *ab initio* Quantum Calculations for $H_2 \cdot \cdot \cdot H$

 $\mu^{M}(\mathbf{r}, \mathbf{R}, \theta) = 4\pi/3^{1/2} \sum_{\lambda, L, m} D_{\lambda L}(\mathbf{r}, \mathbf{R}) \langle \lambda L m M - m \mid 1 M \rangle Y_{\lambda}^{m}(\theta, \phi) Y_{L}^{M-m}(0, 0)$ λ, L, m $D_{01} \text{ converges to the known long-range form!}$

Dispersion plus back induction, aug-ccpV5Z basis with correction for basis-set extension errors (BSSE)

Long-range analytical form: Bohr & Hunt (1987) Values of the susceptibilities: Bishop & Pipin (1992) *Ab initio* results: H.-K. Lee, X. Li, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt, *J. Chem. Phys.* **150**, 204307 (2019). White Dwarf Stars in Globular Cluster NGC 6397 Hubble Space Telescope ACS/WFC

> NASA, ESA, and H. Richter, University of British Columbia STSc1-PRC07-42

HST/ACS

D. Verschatse Antilhue Observatory

Astrophysical evidence for collision-induced absorption

Observations of the cool white dwarf WD0346+246, with the Jacobus Kapteyn Optical Telescope, the UK Infrared Telescope, and the NIRC instrument (at the W. M. Keck I Observatory in Hawaii)

Estimated age: 12 billion years

Opacity due to collision induced absorption by H_2 - H_2 and H_2 -He increases by about 2 orders of magnitude in the range 1-2 μ m.

Ratios of H_2 to He can be determined by detailed study of the IR spectrum.

S. T. Hodgkin, B. R. Oppenheimer, N. C. Hambly, R. F. Jameson, S. J. Smartt and I. A. Steele, *Nature* **403**, 57 (2000).

$H_2 \cdot \cdot \cdot H_2$: Comparison of our results with AUTOSURF results

X. Li, A. Mandal, H.-K. Lee, E. Quintás-Sanchez, Evangelos Miliordos, R. Dawes, and K. L. C. Hunt, to be published.

Dawes Group, Missouri University of Science and Technology H₂-H₂: Comparison of our most recent work with previous calculations New work: aug-cc-pV5Z basis, 320 (248) basis functions; spot-checked with aug-cc-PV6Z work MFB/MBF/FZB: 62 basis functions

New work: Total of 27 (17) relative orientations, most with non-zero μ_X and μ_Z MFB/MBF: 18 relative orientations, 9 non-redundant dipole components FZB: 13 relative orientations

New and old work: Bond lengths r = 0.942, 1.111, 1.280, 1.449, 1.618, 1.787, 2.125, 2.463, 2.801 a.u., combined for 45 (36) pairs of bond lengths, MFB/MBF: 4 pairs of bond lengths FZB: 10 pairs of bond lengths

Nathan Jansen

New work: 24 (15) separations between the molecular centers of mass, from 3.4 a.u. to 10.0 a.u. MBF: 9 separations

Method: Production runs with CCSD(T), but checked against CCSD(T)-F12 and full CI This work: 6 field strengths to determine the collision-induced dipoles

MFB: W. Meyer, L. Frommhold, and G. Birnbaum, *Phys. Rev. A* 39, 2434-2448 (1989).
MBF: W. Meyer, A. Borysow, and L. Frommhold, *Phys. Rev. A* 40, 6931-6949 (1989).
FZB: Y. Fu, C. G. Zheng, and A. Borysow, *J. Quant. Spectrosc. Rad. Transfer*, 67, 303-321 (2000).
This work: Nathan Jansen, Hua-Kuang Lee, X. Li, A. Mandal, E. Miliordos, and K. L. C. Hunt

Spherical Tensor Analysis for the $H_2 \cdot \cdot \cdot H_2$ dipole

Tensor components of the dipole are expressed in terms of the spherical harmonics of the orientation angles for the bond axes and the intermolecular vector

 $\Delta \mu^{M}(\mathbf{r}_{A}, \mathbf{r}_{B}, \mathbf{R}) = (4\pi)^{3/2} \ 3^{-1/2} \ \Sigma \ D_{\lambda_{A}\lambda_{B}\Lambda L}(\mathbf{r}_{A}, \mathbf{r}_{B}, \mathbf{R})$ $\times Y_{\lambda_{A}m_{A}}(\Omega^{A}) \ Y_{\lambda_{B}m_{B}}(\Omega^{B}) \ Y_{L \ M-m}(\Omega^{R})$ $\times \langle \lambda_{A} \lambda_{B} \ m_{A} \ m_{B} \ | \ \Lambda \ m \rangle \langle \Lambda \ L \ m \ M-m \ | \ 1 \ M \rangle$

Summation runs over λ_A , λ_B , Λ , L, m_A and m_B

Spectroscopic implications

 $\Delta \mu^{M}(\mathbf{r}_{A}, \mathbf{r}_{B}, \mathbf{R}) = (4\pi)^{3/2} 3^{-1/2} \sum D_{\lambda_{A}\lambda_{B}\Lambda L}(\mathbf{r}_{A}, \mathbf{r}_{B}, \mathbf{R}) Y_{\lambda_{A}m_{A}}(\Omega^{A}) Y_{\lambda_{B}m_{B}}(\Omega^{B}) Y_{L M-m}(\Omega^{R})$ $\times \langle \lambda_{A} \lambda_{B} m_{A} m_{B} | \Lambda m \rangle \langle \Lambda L m M-m | 1 M \rangle$

If the potential is isotropic, then

Coefficients $D_{\lambda_A 0 \Lambda L}$ produce transitions with $\Delta J^A = \pm \lambda_A$ and $\Delta J^B = 0$ Coefficients $D_{0\lambda_B \Lambda L}$ produce transitions with $\Delta J^A = 0$ and $\Delta J^B = \pm \lambda_B$ Coefficients $D_{\lambda_A \lambda_B \Lambda L}$ with $\lambda_A \neq 0$ and $\lambda_B \neq 0$ produce *simultaneous* transitions with $\Delta J^A = \pm \lambda_A$ and $\Delta J^B = \pm \lambda_B$

Higher ΔJ values produce absorption in the farther wings of the spectrum

Anisotropies of the potential combine with the angular momentum indices on the dipole coefficients to produce transitions with additional ΔJ values

Collision-induced absorption by $N_2 \cdots N_2$ at 78 K

T. Karman, E. Miliordos, K. L. C. Hunt, G. Groenenboom, and A. van der Avoird, *J. Chem. Phys.* **142**, 084306 (2015).

Comparison of results for D₂₀₂₃ from various fits

Comparison of results for D_{2023} with long-range forms

Comparison of results for D₂₂₃₃ from various fits

Comparison of results for D₂₂₂₃ with long-range forms

Comparison of results for D₄₀₄₅ from various fits

Comparison of results for D₄₀₄₅ with long-range form

Comparison of results for D₄₂₄₅ from various fits

Comparison of results for D₄₂₄₅ with long-range form

Hydrogen molecule potential and vibrational energy levels Vibrational levels from J. D. Poll and G. Karl, *Can. J. Phys.* **44**, 1467 (1966).

Exploration of contributions to the force from all orbitals and analysis of exchange effects: In progress Desirability of adopting a Slater basis? Difference between the charge density in the 1s state of the H atom and the representation with [9/6] Gaussian s functions

Collision-induced three-body polarizability of helium Jakub Lang, Michał Przybytek, Michał Lesiuk, and Bogumił Jeziorski <u>https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0137879</u>

- Coupled-cluster and full CI calculations of the three-body polarizability of helium, used to determine the third dielectric virial coefficient
- Comparison with experimental data and with Path Integral Monte Carlo calculations by Giovanni Garberoglio, Allan H. Harvey, and Bogumił Jeziorski
- Important result for quantum metrology, eliminates the main accuracy limitation in the optical pressure standard

"tanquam ex ungue lionem," Johann Bernoulli about Isaac Newton

Dr. Anirban Mandal

Dr. Hua-Kuang Lee

Garrett Mai, Ashley Siegmund, Scott Gilbert, Corbin Fleming-Dittenber, Zyk Hlavacek, Drew Scheffer, Jessica Messing, Aidan Gauthier, Matt Loucks, [David Wang, and Julia Egbert]

Dr. Sasha North

Dr. Janelle Bradley

Dr. Xiaoping Li

Nathan Jansen

John Buhl

Sara Jovanovski

Nathan Jansen will present a poster on the entropies of Schrödinger's cat states on quantum computers.

Acknowledgments: National Science Foundation Grant CHE-1900399 National Science Foundation Grant CHE-2154028

Thanks for the invitation to give this seminar!

Thanks for Letters of Collaboration from:

Prof. Ben Levine Stony Brook Prof. Richard Zare Stanford

Prof. Elad Harel MSU Prof. Warren Beck MSU Prof. Marcos Dantus MSU I am very grateful to the Institute for Advanced Studies of the University of Luxembourg for a DISTINGUISHED grant, which has made my visit possible, and to Professor Jens Kreisel, Rector of the University of Luxembourg, Professor Catherine Léglu, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Professor Claus Vögele, Dr. Sylvie Fromentin, Paula Souza, and Manuel Quaino, F. M. and Logistics Officer.

Very special thanks are due to Professor Alexandre Tkatchenko, Head of the Department of Physics and Materials Science, Professor Aurélia Chenu, Professor Susanne Siebentritt, Dr. Dmitry Fedorov, Dr. Ashmita Bose, Dr. Ariadni Boziki, Dr. Dahvyd Wing, Dr. Matteo Gori, Dr. Dhruv Sharma, Dr. Jorge Alfonso Charry Martinez, Dr. Gregory Cordeiro Fonseca, Dr. Szabolcs Góger, Dr. Igor Poltavskyi, Dr. Josh Berryman, Kyunghoon Han, Matyas Nachtigall, Mirela Puleva, and all additional graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the Tkatchenko research group. I am also very grateful to Dr. Elodie Duriez and Yolande Edjogo!