

PhD position in Nanotechnology, Toulouse, France

LAAS-CNRS, Paul Sabatier University

Growth of 1D and 2D Nanoscale Topological Insulators

Topological Insulators (TI) are a new class of materials that are electrical insulators on the inside and conduct electricity on the outer surface. They were discovered less than a decade ago after earlier theoretical work and awarded of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics. Among TI, bismuth antimonide ($\text{Bi}_{1-x}\text{Sb}_x$) was the first experimentally-observed 3D topological insulators¹. Because of these unique properties, 1D and 2D nanoscale bismuth antimonide alloys are promising candidates for quantum computing, thermoelectrics and spintronics².

Controlling the antimony composition, $\text{Bi}_{1-x}\text{Sb}_x$ is suggested to behave as: a semi-metal ($x < 0.07$), an indirect bandgap semiconductor ($0.07 < x < 0.09$), a direct bandgap semiconductor ($0.09 < x < 0.15$), an indirect bandgap semiconductor ($0.15 < x < 0.22$) and again semi-metal ($x > 0.22$)¹. Thus, a precise control of this parameter hold promises for future quantum devices. For instance, if $x = 0.03$, 3D Dirac cones should be observed in the structure and could be used to host Majorana zero mode when coupled with a superconducting contact¹. If $0.08 < x < 0.24$ the material behaves as a 3D-topological insulator, and for $x > 0.23$, the high electron mobility and strong spin-orbit interactions make it an interesting candidate for spintronics^{2,3}. Hence, excellent quality of 1D and 2D nanostructure with control of the Sb composition is necessary in order to understand and engineer the material.

This PhD position is the initial step on addressing these existing hurdles and on exploring nanoscale material properties. Epitaxial $\text{Bi}_{1-x}\text{Sb}_x$ nanowires and nanoflakes, with controlled Sb concentrations, will be integrated on silicon for the first time.

The research work will be conducted in the MPN group of the LAAS-CNRS under the supervision of Dr. Sébastien Plissard. The PhD candidate will benefit from the state of the art clean-room environment of the lab, and from the broad knowledge of the group in the fields of nanowire growth, high mobility materials, nano fabrication and material characterization.

Potential candidates should demonstrate knowledge or experience in nanotechnologies, thin film deposition, materials science, material characterization and nanofabrication.

References:

- [1] D. Hsieh, D. Qian, L. Wray, Y. Xia, Y.S. Hor, R.J. Cava, M.Z. Hasan, *Nature* **2008**, 452, 970–974.
- [2] S. Tang, M.S. Dresselhaus, *J. Mater. Chem. C* **2014**, 2 (24), 4710.
- [2] Z. Hasan, S.-Y. Xu, M. Neupane, *Topological Insulators: Fundamentals and Perspectives*, **2015**, 55–100.

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