Chapter 6
Chapter 6

General Discussion

This dissertation’s research aim has been twofold: 1) to increase understanding of what strategic information sharing is and 2) to provide technology-related solutions on how to stimulate the sharing of private important information; these twin functions of the same research aim mutually inform each other. Overall, the current research has been guided by the following research question: How do motivational and cognitive processes, separately and in interaction with technological features, affect strategic information sharing? To answer this question, several studies have been conducted. In this chapter, I firstly present a summary of the findings across the six studies. Secondly, I elaborate on the theoretical and practical implications of this research. Finally, I present the limitations and strengths of the research and methodological approach, also pointing toward future research directions.

Summary of the Main Findings

Chapter 2 presents two studies that aimed to examine the interactive effects of social motivation, time pressure and information display on strategic information sharing (SIS). The main findings replicated and extended prior research (Steinel, Utz, & Koning, 2010; Toma & Butera, 2009) indicating once again that SIS is affected by social motives such that individuals with a prosocial motivation shared more important and more private information than individuals with a proself motivation. We also found that actual and not perceived time pressure (i.e., need for cognitive closure) affected the sharing of (private) information. Interestingly, push-information displays increased the sharing of private information, especially for individuals with a prosocial motivation.

Chapter 3 presents one study that took a step further and investigated the effects of social power construals (as opportunity vs. as responsibility) and social buttons (‘Like’ vs. ‘Like-or-Trust’) on SIS. The main results indicated that construing power as responsibility (vs. as opportunity) as well as the sheer
presence of the ‘Trust’ button essentially increased the sharing of private information. The additional findings showed that the likelihood of sharing information was higher when information-judging buttons were clicked compared with when they were not clicked. Interestingly, information sharing was predicted by ‘Like’- rather than by ‘Trust’-clicking.

Chapter 4 presents one study that examined the moderating role of perceived ability on the relationship between social power construals and SIS also to make sure that the effects found in Chapter 3 are mainly due to social power construals since power and ability are two factors that have been studied confounded in previous research (Sturm & Antonakis, 2015) and are entangled in real work settings. The main results indicated that construing power as responsibility (vs. as opportunity) increased the sharing of private information, only under conditions of high perceived ability.

Chapter 5 presents two studies that aimed to test, in the field, among academics, what is robustly generalizable from the lab studies; this chapter mainly focused on the role of social value orientation (SVO), social power construals and perceived ability on the ‘what’ of sharing (i.e., grant proposals, tips, advice, feedback) but also on the sharing ‘with whom’ (i.e., familiar people vs. strangers). In line with the prior experiments, we found again that construing power as responsibility predicted the sharing of private important information, regardless of whether social power construals were only measured (i.e., in the field survey) or both measured and manipulated (i.e., in the field experiment); it also predicted the sharing with familiar people and the sharing with strangers. SVO did not predict sharing. Perceived ability moderated the relationship between power as responsibility and the sharing with familiar people: construing power as responsibility only increased the likelihood to share grant proposals with familiar people when perceived ability to write grant proposals was low.

**Theoretical Implications**

We start by presenting the contributions of studying the role of the individual motivations (i.e., social motives and social power construals) on SIS, emphasizing that the motivated information processing in groups (MIP-G)
Theoretical Implications for Strategic Information Sharing

This dissertation brings several significant theoretical contributions to the relatively recent but increasing line of research on SIS (Osatuyi, Hiltz, & Fjermestad, 2012; Steinel et al., 2010; Toma & Butera, 2009; Utz, Muscanell, & Goeritz, 2014; S. Utz & Steinel, 2008). Firstly, in two lab studies (Chapter 2), we show once again that information sharing is strategic behavior influenced by social motives since we conceptually replicate previous findings (Steinel et al., 2010) such that individuals with a prosocial motivation shared more important and more private information than individuals with a proself motivation; we also extend these findings by using more complex (i.e., with more and actual information) and thus also more realistic settings. The SVO effects in the field studies (Chapter 5) were less stable. This might have been due to the high proportion of prosocials in the self-selected samples; the restricted range of variance in SVO might have prohibited significant effects. However, these findings may be also due to the fact that information sharing situations are a special case of social dilemma situations and different from sharing coins/money, when SVO effects usually hold (e.g., Stouten, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2005). The main difference from these traditional mixed-motive situations (e.g., Stouten, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2005) is that information is not lost once it is shared. Also, withholding valuable information (and not coins/money) becomes meaningful in a reality in which the saying ‘knowledge is power’ is popular and salient. Although related (i.e., the significant correlation coefficients were not very high, ranging between -.19 and .24), we conclude that SVO and social power construals are different constructs and we have shown that power as responsibility is the better predictor of SIS than SVO if both SVO...
and social power construals are taken into consideration.

Secondly, we demonstrate the impact that social power construals (Sassenberg, Ellemers, & Scheepers, 2012) have on SIS, going thus beyond those studies that looked, so far, at social motivation (Steinel et al., 2010; Toma & Butera, 2009; Utz et al., 2014). In particular, the results have shown that construing power as responsibility positively affects the sharing of private information. The results indicate that power as responsibility is a robust predictor of SIS since consistent support was found regardless of whether social power construals were only manipulated (i.e., in Chapters 3 and 4), only measured (i.e., in the field survey, in Chapter 5) or both measured and manipulated (i.e., in the field experiment, in Chapter 5). To better understand the relationship between social power construals and SIS, perceived ability was also taken into account since power and ability are confounded factors (Chapter 4). Perceived ability has been found to moderate this relationship when it comes to private information (Chapter 4). However, when the sharing with familiar people comes into play, the moderation found in the study presented in Chapter 4 is not detected in the study presented in Chapter 5 anymore. This is possibly because non-task-oriented contexts (i.e., academics’ grant-related sharing behavior at large) shifted the attention from content to people (for more details see the next sub section).

Overall, the current research brought empirical evidence to validate particularly the role of social motivation and power, factors comprised by the MIP-G model (De Dreu, Nijstad, & Van Knippenberg, 2008), in the area of information sharing. Essentially, the findings enabled us to strengthen the idea of the mixed-motive interdependence in information sharing situations demonstrating that individuals with a prosocial (vs. proself) motivation and those construing power as responsibility (vs. as opportunity) are motivated to act towards social goals, serving the interests of others and thus share their important private information that ultimately is expected to enhance the quality of decision making and performance outcomes.

Thirdly, our understanding of the ‘what’ of SIS (Chapter 2 to Chapter 5) has been expanded (i.e., in Chapter 5) by looking not only at information sharedness (public vs. private) but also at sharing various other types of
information, representing explicit (e.g., written proposals) but also more tacit forms of knowledge (e.g., tips, advice, feedback). Profiling academics, as a specific professional category, and their information sharing behavior enables the findings to be even more rooted in the real world. Overall, the main findings showed that construing power as responsibility (vs. power as opportunity) stimulates the sharing of private information (e.g., tips, advice to apply for grants) for different categories of people including students and academics (Chapter 2 to Chapter 5). Academics construing power as responsibility share grant proposals with familiar people and with strangers (Chapter 5); in general, academics report to be significantly more likely to share more implicit knowledge such as pieces of advice than more explicit one captured in written grant proposals.

The experimental designs allow us to make sensible inferences about the causality between social motives, social power construals and SIS. We discovered, across different studies and manipulations, that construing power as responsibility is a reliable predictor of the sharing of private important information; it was also found to be a much better predictor than SVO (Chapter 5). Our findings prove to be robust in the light of the triangulated methodological approach, covering lab and field experiments, a field survey, different cover stories and categories of participants (i.e., university students, scientists and other people who are easy to reach forming the so-called convenience samples). However, bigger sample sizes need to be used and more studies need to be conducted to replicate our findings and to strengthen this recent line of research on SIS.

_Theoretical Implications for the Power Literature_

There are increasing debates (for an interesting discussion, see Sassenberg, Ellemers, Scheepers, & Scholl, 2014) on whether the construal of power as opportunity is indeed what motivates people to strive for power in the first place, being also more attractive than the construal of power as responsibility (Sassenberg et al., 2012). However, construing power as responsibility leads to a fairer distribution of resources than when it is conceptualized as influence, for instance (Wang, Sun, & Li, 2015). We advance the literature on power by
considering social power construals, i.e., a different facet of power that has not been investigated before, particularly in relation to SIS; previous research mostly looked at power differentials simply comparing a low and a high power position (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). While previous research (e.g., Galinsky, Magee, Rus, Rothman, & Todd, 2014) demonstrated that people do not share their information because they fear to lose power, current research demonstrated that construing power as responsibility stimulates sharing. This important finding applies preponderantly to situations when the power position is high (i.e., a high power position has been a constant across studies presented in Chapter 3 and 4) since situations with low power positions and control situations with no power positions have yet to be investigated.

The sharing of private information is also a matter of how social power construals in particular are being perceived. Specifically, we provide first evidence that social power construals and ability are dependent on each other in explaining the sharing of (private) information as indicated by the moderating effect of ability (Chapter 4). More specific, the effect of construing power as responsibility on the sharing of private information presented in Chapter 3 occurs only when people received high ability feedback, as presented in Chapter 4. This is possibly because people hold positive self-perceptions and are generally inclined to believe that the information they have and can make available to others is valuable and helpful (Kalman, Monge, Fulk, & Heino, 2002). Nevertheless, these findings emerge when there is no identifying information about the receivers of information (e.g., familiarity with the sharer) and the sharer relates to content only. Once this identifying information is available (Chapter 5), no interaction effect between social power construals and ability on the sharing of private important information is found anymore. Instead, an interaction effect on the sharing of grant proposals with familiar people is found (i.e., in the field survey in Chapter 5). Essentially, construing power as responsibility was positively related to the sharing with familiar people especially for individuals who perceived own ability to write grant proposals as low. We advance several reasons to explain these findings. First, the change of the pattern may indicate a shift from content to people. Sharing with this particular group of people makes responsibility salient while decreasing the
chance of receiving criticism. A general norm of sharing might have influenced the results also in the light of past or future collaborations with the familiar people, to do research or to apply for research grants together. Reciprocity might be other underlying mechanism explaining this pattern. The change of the pattern may be also due to the fact that academics associated the reference group ‘familiar people’ with different people than participants in the experiment reported in Chapter 4 who adopted their sharing behavior through association with ‘colleagues at work’. Furthermore, unlike in the study presented in Chapter 4, academics did not have to relate the particular sharing behavior to a particular task, i.e., one cannot say whether the sharing of grant proposals with familiar people would hinder or contribute to a particular outcome. Another reason might be that the moderating effect of ability is not as stable as expected and future research should seek for consistency and explanations in this regard. Another reason might also be measurement-related. In this respect, for instance, multiple and validated items can be used to avoid measurement error possibly caused by one-item measurements used in Chapter 5 that, unfortunately, cannot be empirically tested (Westfall & Yarkoni, 2016). Overall, by examining the moderating role of perceived ability, we advance this line of research showing that one should account for a person’s perceived ability to explain how different social power construals affect either the sharing of a particular type of information when no identifying information about the receivers is available or the sharing with particular categories of people (e.g., familiar people, strangers). This line of research takes a unique path than the large body of literature (for a review, see Sturm & Antonakis, 2015) that studied power and ability confounded.

When accounting for the stable individual dispositions to construe power (i.e., accounting for the measured constructs corresponding to the manipulated social power construals) either as responsibility or as opportunity (Sassenberg et al., 2012), we find that manipulated social power construals have an effect above and beyond the measured ones (i.e., in the field experiment, Chapter 5). Results yielded non-significant effects of the manipulated power construals when not accounting for the stable individual characteristics. This might be related to the low intensity of the treatment which showed an effect
once the stable individual characteristics were accounted for. The non-significant effects might be also due to certain learning effects – i.e., participants pondering on the consequences of their (not) sharing behavior on themselves/others – but field experiments imply imperfect control of these or other possible confounding factors. Nevertheless, the current studies are the first to empirically demonstrate that information sharing is dependent on how power is construed.

**Theoretical Implications for the Communication & Technology and the Trust Literature**

Our first technology-related findings showed that push-information displays increased the sharing of private information. Specifically, we detect a complex interplay between information display, information sharedness, and individuals’ social value orientation (Chapter 2) – i.e., push-information displays increased the sharing of private information, especially for individuals with a prosocial motivation. These findings expand our understanding on how specific technological features support information sharing contributing, ultimately, to successful knowledge sharing communities (Kraut et al., 2012). Investigating push designs in particular complements the studies that did not zoom in and devoted research attention mostly to technology seen from a broad perspective (e.g., knowledge management systems, social media platforms) (e.g., Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006; Vuori & Okkonen, 2012). The current research also uncovers the dynamic between specific technological features and individual motivations: push designs motivate especially prosocials to share their private information. Since social motives are integrated in the MIP-G model (De Dreu et al., 2008), this evidence also points to a need to expand this model by integrating technology and thus considering a more fine-grained approach when it comes to examining individual motivations in the area of online information sharing.

By examining trust as a theory-inspired technological feature, we found that the sheer presence of the ‘Trust’ button essentially increased the sharing of private information (Chapter 3). Our findings allow us to extend the line of research that translates theories in effectively implemented technological
features to affect behavior (e.g., Kraut et al., 2012; Ren et al., 2012; Ren & Kraut, 2014) but also to consolidate the findings that trust is an important enabler of information sharing (Wang & Noe, 2010); we also provide a technological solution on how to reduce the problem created by information sharing as strategic behavior (Steinel et al., 2010). Moreover, since trust is also integrated in the MIP-G model (De Dreu et al., 2008), our findings suggest possible refinements of the factors comprised by the MIP-G model into corresponding technological features. Overall, investigating how specific technological features (i.e., information display, buttons) impact SIS in the light of social motivation and time pressure (Chapter 2) and social power contruals (Chapter 3), respectively, we create an interdisciplinary bridge between social research on information sharing and the field of information systems and technology. Putting all these findings in real contexts, one should note that push-information displays make information visible in online collaborative platforms enabling the information flow necessary to lubricate stuck knowledge (Leonardi & Meyer, 2015). We found that information sharing at large was predicted by ‘Like’- rather than by ‘Trust’-clicking possibly because, unlike the ‘Trust’ button, the ‘Like’ button is popular and people, frequent users of the Web 2.0 technologies, have already internalized a ‘Like and then Share’ behavior. Moreover, although clicking information-judging buttons at large is an act of sharing in itself (i.e., is visible in the real time activity feed), in real online collaborative platforms (e.g., LinkedIn), current research suggests other design possibilities allowing to judge information, i.e., either ‘liking’ or ‘trusting’ it, before sharing it or regardless of the intention to share or not to share a particular piece of information (i.e., merely satisfying private information evaluation needs).

Theoretical Implications for the Need for Cognitive Closure Literature
We demonstrated that actual time pressure and not perceived time pressure impacts SIS (Chapter 2). In the field survey (Chapter 5), we found that the need for cognitive closure (NFCC) positively affected the sharing with familiar people, i.e., the higher the NFCC, the more grant proposals are shared with familiar people. It should be noted that both perceived time pressure and the NFCC
tackle a similar construct in the MIP-G model (De Dreu et al., 2008) as a context-like and as a trait-like characteristic, respectively. In this respect, we advance research on the role of time pressure in information sharing by disentangling the effects of actual and perceived time pressure, demonstrating that actual time pressure is detrimental because it mainly affects the sharing of private information (Chapter 2). In other words, we showed that SIS effects are not driven by the NFCC which we aimed to manipulate via perceived time pressure (i.e., as a context-like characteristic). Instead, actual time pressure had an impact. This may be because previous studies did not account for actual time pressure when manipulating perceived time pressure which manipulations always proved successful (Bechtoldt, De Dreu, Nijstad, & Choi, 2010; De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, & Baas, 2011; Pierro, Kruglanski, & Raven, 2012). The fact that the NFCC, as a trait-like characteristic, positively affected the sharing with familiar people may have interesting implications for the body of research showing that time pressure lowers decision quality in groups, in the lab as well as in actual teams (Bowman & Wittenbaum, 2012; Chong, Van Eerde, Rutte, & Chai, 2012; De Dreu, 2003). In other words, fostering familiarity in groups stimulates sharing even when there is high NFCC because familiar people are more predictable than strangers and predictability (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994) is what people look for when they have the desire to quickly reach decisions (De Dreu et al., 2008).

**Practical Implications**

*Practical Implications for Organizations*

Organizations should not ‘encourage’ the perception of power as opportunity because it’s being done at the expense of sharing unique and valuable information. In other words, despite the fact that power may seem less attractive to leaders when it is associated with responsibility (Sassenberg et al., 2012), organizations should consider emphasizing the responsibilities rather than the opportunities implied by a leading position, in order to stimulate the sharing of private information (Chapter 2 to Chapter 5). Also, ability appraisals made by others efficiently stimulate individuals in high power positions but only when construing power as responsibility to share especially their private
information (Chapter 4). The findings apply particularly to those professional environments that need to overcome the behavior of withholding information, environments in which the saying ‘knowledge is power’ is popular and require fewer specialists or people possessing broad expertise. When providing ability feedback, in general, managers but even same-level colleagues in organizations should be aware of the positive self-perceptions that people might have which might inform a high perceived ability while working on a particular task (Chapter 4). This recommendation is also in line with the findings presented in Chapter 5 with regard to the moderating role of perceived ability on the sharing with familiar people: because it is about the sharing with familiar people, people who perceive themselves to be capable and skilled share what they know with familiar people, regardless of how likely they are to construe power as responsibility. However, it is important for those less capable and skilled to be more likely to construe power as responsibility because this is what motivates sharing.

Practical Implications for Online Collaborative Platforms

The current findings showed that push-information displays (Chapter 2) and the sheer presence of the ‘Trust’ button (Chapter 3) increased the sharing of private information and this has important practical implications for the implementation decisions regarding the technological design of online collaborative platforms. Interestingly, push-information displays increased the sharing of private information, especially for individuals with a prosocial motivation (Chapter 2). Essentially, although online collaborative platforms have already adopted a push-design for displaying information, given the role played by psychological factors, they should also integrate ‘Trust’ buttons to stimulate users to share their valuable information (Chapter 3). For instance, platforms such as LinkedIn may consider integrating these buttons in the design of the premium accounts to distinguish them from freemium ones in terms of quality of information being easily and quickly accessed and signaled. Understanding the interplay between technological features and individuals motivations is essential for both designers of the online collaborative platforms but also
for the end users or employees who play an important role in sharing information; sharing is crucial within each (online) community and, ultimately, it offers a rewarding experience, a sense of belonging and purpose too.

This research also brought a scientific answer to the real-world need of considering the development of the design of the new technologies (Kraut et al., 2012; Ren & Kraut, 2014). Overall, the findings have important implications for online collaborative knowledge platform designers and managers who want to develop and maintain successful knowledge sharing behaviors.

Other Practical Implications
Intending to stimulate the sharing of the unique information, managers of online collaborative platforms and/or managers in organizations may wish to emphasize the cooperative aspects of tasks and reduce selfish motives for instance by rewarding team performance, inducing a cooperative norm (Steinel et al., 2010). Because time constraints seem to impact the sharing of (private) information for prosocials, online platform designers and/or managers in organizations should try to avoid time pressure or at least make deadlines less salient in accomplishing task responsibilities. Overall, the findings of this dissertation have significant implications for (online) interpersonal interactions, relationship building and trust, the quality of decision-making and organizational outcomes.

Limitations and Strengths
Although this dissertation brings significant contributions, we acknowledge and address the limitations of this research. Firstly, using a student sample may be seen as a limitation as it may affect the external validity of the findings, limiting thus the possibility to generalize them to other populations. However, we argue that the relationships investigated in this research explained underlying mechanisms and we therefore expect these relationships to hold over different age and professional categories. Importantly, the results related to construing power as responsibility have been very consistent across all studies. The
findings of the survey conducted among academics aims to bring the needed support in this case. Secondly, across the experimental studies, one limitation is that the private information was assigned to participants (Chapter 2 to Chapter 4) and this may not come in line with natural occurring situations when people gather information themselves. However, the field experiment tackles this limitation and participants refer to their own information (e.g., written proposals) when answering the questions. The results found are similar to the ones yielded in the lab experiments, i.e., construing power as responsibility stimulates the sharing of private important information, either assigned information or own tips/advice for writing grant proposals. Thirdly, we conducted field experiments (Chapter 3 and Chapter 5) in which one cannot control the influence of potential external factors (e.g., noise, dropouts) that might have caused interruptions while completing the study online. However, to also minimize the influence of confounds (Wicherts & Bakker, 2014), participants were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions and only completed cases were included in the analyses. Moreover, the participants completed the study in “perfectly voluntary” situations as they had the freedom to ‘leave’ the online experiment with the touch of a button (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 96). Fourthly, a more specific limitation across the experimental studies is related to participants not having the freedom to click a button at all as a ‘not sharing’ option for a particular piece of information; pressing a ‘Don’t Share’ button also means something different than not pressing a ‘Share’ button. It also limits generalizability to other online environments since nor Facebook neither Twitter, for instance, have a ‘Don’t Like’ button. However, the explicit presence of the ‘Don’t Share’ button is in line with previous research (e.g., Steinel et al., 2010) and it also justifies, in the online environment, real-world necessities for power holders who, in general, exert influence (Pierro et al., 2012), for instance, by withholding social resources (e.g., knowledge, decision-making opportunities) (Keltner et al., 2003). Finally, another limitation is related to the statistical power of the current studies, i.e., the probability of finding a significant effect given specific sample and effect sizes. Overall, we have small sample sizes in many cells and this results in low power for the between effects. This particularly applies to the studies presented in Chapter 2 for which we used
the rule of thumb striving to have a minimum of 15-20 participants in each experimental condition, data collection taking place in the year 2012. The studies following the year 2012 used bigger sample sizes also in line with the progressive insights on statistical power in the field (Bakker, van Dijk, & Wicherts, 2012). However, the central effects in all the studies are the ones involving within factors (e.g., SVO and public/private information, power as responsibility/opportunity and public/private information) and, in this respect, all studies have high power. For a clear overview of the statistical power of the studies presented in this dissertation, we used the software G*Power (GPOWER; Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996) to perform post-hoc power analyses with $\alpha = .05$ (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007); depending also on the study design, testing the power of the within/between effects, we assumed a correlation of .50 among the repeated measures (correcting also for nonsphericity, i.e., when variances of the repeated measures and all correlations between pairs of repeated measures are unequal) and a medium effect size of .25. The size of the treatment effects is one important determinant of the study’s power and it can be determined based on previous studies or on a realistic estimation of population effect sizes. For the current experimental studies, the assumptions were informed by the results reported in the article of Steinel et al. (2010). Thus, in Chapter 2, for Study 1 (N = 125), we found a power of .70 for the between effects, a power of 1.00 for the within effects and a power of 1.00 for the within-between effects. In Chapter 2, for Study 2 (N = 71), we found a power of .57 for the between effects, a power of 1.00 for the within effects and a power of .99 for the within-between effects. For the experimental study (N = 2304) presented in Chapter 3, we found a power of 1.00 for the main and the interaction effects. For the experimental study (N = 179) presented in Chapter 4, we found a power of .91 for the between effects, a power of 1.00 for the within effects and a power of 1.00 for the within-between effects. For the field experiment (N = 148) presented in Chapter 5, with between factors only, we found a power of .86 for both the main and interaction effects. For the field survey (N = 181) presented in Chapter 5, we found a power of .73 for the main and the interaction effects, this time assuming a small to a medium effect size of .06 as reported in the study of Utz et al. (2014). Future studies should bring
further evidence to support our findings and researchers should strive for bigger sample sizes.

Apart from the above limitations we also address some strengths of our research. Firstly, we mainly used an experimental approach whereas most related research is predominantly survey-based or qualitatively-oriented. A relatively recent meta-analysis indicated only 8% of studies based on experiments while 89% were based on surveys (Witherspoon, Bergner, Cockrell, & Stone, 2013). The latter methodological approaches make it difficult to detect causal relationships, especially when it comes to such a sensitive topic as withholding important private information. Nevertheless, in the current dissertation, we opted for triangulation: to gauge the robustness of our results we used both experimental studies and a survey to ensure that these different routes lead us to similar conclusions; different and truly international samples (e.g., students, academics) have also been used. Secondly, we used the information pooling paradigm (Steinel et al., 2010) that allowed us to investigate information sharing as strategic behavior, to objectively measure both the amount and the type of information shared (i.e., public vs. private); we objectively measured information sharing as well as clicking information-judging buttons and took, overall, a behavioral approach. Moreover, we also explored the ‘what’ of sharing focusing on different types of information (e.g., private information, written proposals) and also the sharing ‘with whom’. Looking at the sharing ‘with whom’ in particular adds value to previous research that did not investigate SIS in situations when characteristics of the receiver of information are also available. It is however true that the current research looked at the sharing ‘with whom’ by using a rather broad distinction between familiar people (i.e., ‘people I know personally’) and strangers (i.e., ‘who are recommended to me’) and future research should consider more nuanced distinctions based, for instance, on proximity, professional profile or environment.

**Directions for Future Research**

When referring to social power construals, future research could focus on using different manipulations. First, the extent to which responsible people hold
morality as part of his or her self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002) beyond what the power position/construal implies may influence the degree to which people emphasize their own versus others’ needs (DeCelles, DeRue, Margolis, & Ceranic, 2012) and subsequently influence how much and what they share. Therefore, future research should disentangle between the job-related responsibility (as it may be the case with the manipulation used by Sassenberg et al., 2012) and person-related responsibility. Future research should thus account for the fact that people who like taking responsibilities may perceive power equally attractive compared with people who construe power as opportunity. In addition, Sassenberg et al. (2012) claim that power is more attractive especially for individuals who have a promotion focus orientation. Future research should account for these aspects too.

Second, in our research, we manipulated social power construals by making specific reference to a leader position in an event-planning company in which the perception of power as responsibility might predominate. To be able to generalize our findings, future research should consider using scenarios about other professional environments since either one or the other perception of power might be predominant in a particular professional environment (Sassenberg et al., 2014); for instance, in non-profit organizations power might be perceived more as responsibility whereas in financial-banking institutions power might be perceived more as opportunity. How individual’s power construal instills a particular power perception in a professional environment would also be a very interesting line of research. Moreover, similar to the findings that individuals can be encouraged to cooperate by increasing the salience of their group membership (De Cremer & Van Vugt, 1999), making a certain construal of power more salient than the other would transform proselms’ motives in a more social, desirable way. Building on current but also on previous studies (e.g., Van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Blaker, & Heerdink, 2012), it might also be interesting to investigate whether the link from social power construals to information sharing is more contingent than fundamental.

Third, an interesting avenue for future research is to bring support either for the perspective that looks at both social power construals on a continuum or for the perspective that looks at the social power construals as if
they are two separate dimensions. Currently, Sassenberg et al. (2012) addresses this line of research by looking at the two social power construals on a continuum although they also make the claim that they both coexist: “it is not self-evident that those in power are equally concerned with these two different aspects of power, nor that they are equally aware of both aspects when taking up a position of power”. Thus, future research should also clarify whether the two social power construals are two rather successive (i.e., displayed on a continuum) or simultaneous, different constructs (i.e., treated separately), suggesting common measurement methods to establish commensurability.

When referring to ability, to consolidate the current findings, future research should further elucidate why people receiving low ability feedback share more public than private information when construing power as responsibility as well as when construing power as opportunity. Interestingly, since our findings are related to few types of information (e.g., public vs. private), future research could also investigate whether current effects extend to other types of information as well (e.g., accurate vs. inaccurate). Furthermore, given the inconsistent findings related to ability, it makes sense to argue that there is a shift from the ‘what’ of sharing to the sharing ‘with whom’ and future research should test for this explanation; it could also use different types of power (Liao, 2008) in relation with ability to contribute to a comprehensive picture with regard to determinants of SIS.

When referring to technological features, future research could shed more light on the underlying processes of SIS. First, in terms of information display, explicitly testing to what extent push-design affects the sense of information ownership (i.e., when people put more effort in acquiring information, they might be more reluctant to give it away). Additionally, exploring other underlying processes which tackle the differences between push- and pull-information displays (i.e., whether effort in accessing information is more associated with pull- than with push-information displays). Moreover, looking at possible downsides of push information such as information overload (i.e., people might also withhold information because they do not want to overwhelm other people with clutter).

Second, in terms of button use, future research could distinguish
between different forms of sharing (i.e., dependent and independent of clicking information-judging buttons). In this way, the practical implications of design implementations of the ‘Like’ button or even a new button such as the ‘Trust’ button would be better captured. Future research could also focus on different associations people have toward the ‘Like’ and the ‘Trust’ buttons. It might be the case that people who were primed with ‘Trust’ buttons presumably possessed strong, highly accessible attitudes (Bargh, Chaiken, Govender, & Pratto, 1992) towards trust. Future research however, should control for this and investigate therefore if this is indeed the case and also whether trust is more people- and/or content-related. Moreover, clicking the ‘Trust’ button might be related to specific personality variables (e.g., Big Five characteristics) and future research in the area of information sharing could tackle these aspects too. Finally and at a much broader level, future research should assess the implications for relationship building, trust and cooperation when people are aware of the strategic behavior interacting partners adopt when it comes to information and knowledge sharing.

When referring to the effect of time pressure on SIS, it seems not to be driven by NFCC. First, other NFCC manipulations (e.g., via process accountability, environmental noise) could be used to substantiate this finding. Second, future research could test the role of other potential mediators of the time pressure effect such as attentional focus or selectivity. Future research may also want to explore how various ways of information display and time pressure impact information sharing between leaders and followers or to investigate SIS for people who are either prosocial or proself motivated and, at the same time, have a powerful (vs. powerless) position.

Across the majority of studies, the sender had no knowledge about the receiver of information. In the survey, however, we captured the sharing ‘with whom’ (familiar people vs. strangers). These two categories of receivers of information are regarded from a broad perspective. Future research should focus on expanding the attention to other categories of familiar people, for instance, considering the degree of proximity with the sharer, interdependence relationship with them, shared ties etc. Future research should also investigate SIS when the sender knows, for instance, about the receiver’s personality
characteristics (e.g., trustworthy). The current dissertation bridges the relatively recent line of research that portraits information sharing as strategic behavior influenced by social motives (e.g., Steinel et al., 2010; Toma & Butera, 2009) with future research that may want to explore the impact of other individual motivations – i.e., above and beyond social motivation and social power construals – in combination with various other technological features – i.e., above and beyond information display and social buttons – on SIS.

**Final Conclusions**

The most important conclusion to be drawn in this dissertation is that information sharing is strategic behavior. I showed that social motives affect information sharing such that individuals with a prosocial motivation share more important and more private information than individuals with a proself motivation. However, results indicated that power as responsibility is more important than SVO when it comes to information sharing. Specifically, I showed that construing power as responsibility stimulates the sharing of private information and that perceived ability is an important underlying mechanism to explain sharing although more research is needed to clarify the effects as a result of focusing strictly on content or on people with whom to share. I also showed that technological features (i.e., push information displays and ‘Trust’ buttons) stimulate the sharing of private information and that they play a crucial role also because of their priming potential (e.g., the ‘Trust’ button). Finally, SIS is to be found inside the laboratory settings and in the field.

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