CHAPTER 6

Sharing of Affect: General Discussion
So far, research on shared affect has found support for its existence in (work) groups, and moreover, revealed that sharedness of affect has substantial effects on work group functioning. Yet, previous research has been rather mute with regard to whether and to what extent interactive affective sharing processes explain the effects of shared affect, and has hardly examined affective sharing as a moderator variable, or looked at its effects on different types of performance tasks (e.g., analytical and creative tasks). The present dissertation was devoted to fill these specific voids and, thereby, to obtain more insights in affective sharing in social settings in general. Over the course of five experimental studies and three field studies we: (1) showed that the dynamic path to group affect renders stronger effects than the static path to group affect (Chapter 2, 3, 4, and 5), (2) revealed the moderating role of affective sharing in the mood-creativity link (Chapter 2 and 3) and conflict-performance link (Chapter 4), (3) identified future interaction expectation as a condition under which affective sharing is more likely to influence performance (Chapter 5), and (4) highlighted the role of specific task characteristics when considering the effects of positive and negative affective sharing on task performance (Chapter 2, 3, 4, and 5). In this chapter, we will first discuss the main findings of the empirical chapters and identify implications for research on group affect, task performance, and conflict. Subsequently, we will address several strengths and weaknesses and highlight directions for future research. We conclude this chapter with a discussion of the practical implications of these findings for organizational work groups, sport teams, and circles of family and/or friends and indicate how performance and intragroup dynamics may benefit from (not) sharing affective states.

Summary of the Main Findings

Affective sharing: Static versus dynamic processes. In Chapter 2 we predicted that interactive sharing of affect (the dynamic path to group affect) would account for stronger effects on group performance and dynamics than non-interactive sharing of affect (the static path to group affect), because interactive affective sharing mechanisms may function as social verification processes that validate affective experiences (cf., Hardin & Higgens, 1996) which, in turn, feed into the informativeness of feelings and thus in the impact that affect may have on processing strategies and behavior (e.g., Schwarz, 2001).

Results of our laboratory study with temporary work groups showed that groups performed better on a creative task than on an analytical task when they were in a positive mood, and better on an analytical task than on a creative task when they were in a negative mood, only when group members’ feelings were interactively (versus non-interactively) shared. Analysis of videotaped group member interactions during task performance showed similar results for work group dynamics. Work groups experienced a higher level of
belongingness and attained a higher level of information sharing when in a negative mood than when in a positive mood, only for work groups in which affect was interactively (versus non-interactively) shared. These results suggest that group affect influences task performance and group dynamics when affect is interactively shared and not when affect was non-interactively shared, and thereby support the idea that dynamical affective processes are fundamental for understanding the effects of group affect on behavior.

**Affective Sharing, certainty, and creativity.** Chapter 3 examined *when* and *why* positive affect influences creativity in social settings. Sharing of affect may be particularly relevant for people who are affectively uncertain (Schachter & Singer, 1962), because sharing of affect may accommodate the need for affective validation (cf., Festinger, 1954; Schachter, 1959). Because reciprocal validation may strengthen the affect-behavior link (Schwarz, 2001), we predicted that positive affect would positively influence creativity with increasing affective sharing, specifically for those who are low on certainty of affect. We further predicted that the interplay between positive affect, its sharing, and affective certainty may feed into creativity through the cooperative tendencies it may evoke.

A scenario study (Study 1a) and a laboratory study (Study 1b), indeed showed that participants had a higher performance on both the originality (Study 1a) and fluency (Study 1b) aspects of creativity when they experienced positive affect as compared to negative affect when they had shared (vs. not shared) their affect with others, but only when they were affectively uncertain. These results were replicated and extended in two organizational surveys (Study 2a and Study 2b) by demonstrating that positive affect was positively related to creative work involvement when affective sharing was high and certainty of affect was low at both the individual level of analysis (Study 2a), and the group level of analysis (Study 2b). Moreover, our two field studies showed that cooperative tendencies (partially) mediated the effects of positive affect on creative work involvement under these circumstances. These findings suggest that when creativity takes place in social settings, social processes, such as the sharing of affect among group members and the willingness to help fellow group members, may explain the effects mood has on both individual and group level creativity.

**Affective Sharing, conflict, and performance.** Chapter 4 focused on the sharing of positive and negative affect between group members as potential moderators in the conflict-performance relationship. We predicted that task conflict would lead to higher performance on a cognitive task when group members shared positive affect than when they shared negative affect, whereas relationship conflict would lead to higher performance on a
cognitive task when group members shared negative affect than when they shared positive affect. We tested these predictions, derived from an integration of theory on mood and information processing (Schwarz & Bless, 1991; Schwarz & Clore, 1988), and conflict management theory (e.g., DeChurch & Marks, 2001), in both a laboratory study and an organizational survey.

The results of our laboratory study (Study 1) confirmed these predictions and showed that task conflict increased cognitive performance when work groups shared (vs. not shared) positive (vs. negative) feelings. Moreover, we found the expected opposite pattern for relationship conflict, such that relationship conflict increased cognitive performance when work groups shared (vs. not shared) negative (vs. positive) affect. Similarly, the results of our cross-sectional survey of work groups (Study 2) showed that relationship conflict was positively related to perceived cognitive performance to the extent that group members shared negative affect. In addition to Study 1, this study further revealed that relationship conflict was negatively related to cognitive performance to the extent that group members shared positive affect. Hence, these results imply that sharing of affect may bring out potential beneficial effects and/or may mitigate harmful effects of intragroup conflict on performance.

**Affective sharing, future interaction expectation, and performance.** Chapter 5 examined the moderating role of future interaction expectation in the relationship between the sharing of negative affect and work groups’ task performance. Because expectations of future interaction may strengthen the effects of group defining characteristics on group member behavior (cf. Hancock & Sorrentino, 1980), we expected shared negative affect (as compared to non-shared negative affect) to influence work group outcomes more strongly when groups expect to meet again. More specifically, we predicted that work groups would have a higher performance on an analytical (decision making) task when negative affect is shared with fellow group members as compared to non-shared, and that these effects would be stronger for groups who have expectations of future interaction. Moreover, we predicted that work groups would have a lower performance on a creative (ideation fluency) task when negative affect is shared with fellow group members as compared to non-shared, and that these effects would be stronger for groups who expect to meet again.

Results from a laboratory experiment with three-person work groups indeed showed that shared (as compared to non-shared) negative affect facilitated work groups’ analytical task performance, whereas it inhibited performance on a creative fluency task, and that these effects were stronger for groups who had expectations of future interaction than for groups who did not have expectations of future interaction.
Theoretical Implications and Contributions

As stated in the introductory chapter the main goal of the present dissertation was to increase our understanding of the effects of positive and negative affective sharing on individual and group outcomes in social settings. All empirical chapters investigated the interactive effects of valence of affect and affective sharing (in combination with other factors) in an attempt to reach this goal. In addition, our findings have a number of distinct implications for research on the mood-creativity link and literatures on (relationship and task) conflict. In the below we will discuss the theoretical contributions of our findings on the role of affective sharing to the research fields of group affect, creativity and conflict.

Dual pathway to group affect. This dissertation testifies to the idea that there is merit in classifying the group affect literature into a static approach and a dynamic approach, depending on the extent to which a role for the interactive affective sharing processes has been reserved. In Chapter 2, we show that interactive affective sharing processes (dynamic path to group affect) yield stronger effects on work group functioning than non-interactive affective sharing processes (static path to group affect). Likewise, the results of Chapter 3, 4 and 5 consistently show that the effects of valence of affect on group members' task performance are stronger with increasing levels of interactive affective sharing. These findings provide first empirical evidence that the effects of group affect are contingent on whether and to what extent interactive affective sharing processes are involved. As such, our findings may contribute to the conceptual discussion on the nature of group affect. Our results highlight the importance of interactive affective sharing of affect, and moreover, imply that group affect is more than coincidental homogeneity of affective states of individuals. That is, group affect that comes about via the static path may miss the essential characteristics that explain the effect of group affect on a diverse set of group processes. Our results suggest that interactive sharing mechanisms are essential for building group affect in work groups. So far, group affect researchers have only theorized about the role of affective sharing mechanisms in the occurrence of group affect, but they did not yet empirically investigate its isolated and direct influence on group performance and dynamics. It may be the case that earlier studies on group affect found effects on group outcomes and explained those only in terms of homogeneity of affective states, while in fact they were due to interactive sharing mechanisms that were not explicitly acknowledged. All in all, our work provides a theoretical framework of group affect that allows for more differentiation and contributes to a more refined outlook on the role of affect and its potential effects on social and organizational behavior.
**The moderating role of affective sharing.** The findings of the present dissertation show that affective sharing may function as an amplifier moderator by strengthening the relationship between valence of affect and task performance. These findings are in line with previous research that has found evidence that the sharing of emotions and beliefs leads to a stronger association between these feelings and thoughts on the one hand, and behavior and attitudes on the other hand (Briñol & Petty, 2003; Peters & Kashima, 2007; Sechrist & Stangor, 2001). In addition, the findings of Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 add to prior research on (group) affect in demonstrating that the sharing of affective states also leads to a stronger association between valence of affect and task performance.

**The role of task type.** In this dissertation we considered task type in group affect research by zooming in on both analytical and creative task performance. Our findings in Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 indicate that shared positive affect enhances creative task performance, whereas shared negative affect increases analytical task performance. First, we extend earlier individual level research that has shown that positive mood fosters creative performance (e.g., Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005; Isen 1990, 2000), whereas negative mood fosters analytical performance (e.g., Fiedler, 2001; Sinclair & Mark, 1995), by suggesting that similar effects occur at the group level of analysis. Second, based on earlier studies on group affect, one might suspect that positive group affect, and not negative group affect, is positively related to higher performance. For instance, Totterdell (2000) found that professional cricket teams who shared positive affective states perceived their performance to be higher. Furthermore, Barsade (2002) found that positive emotional contagion was associated with higher perceptions of performance on a managerial exercise. However, previous work on group affect did not investigate the role of specific task characteristics. In doing so, we not only extend these prior findings by showing that negative group affect may have positive effects on task performance if the task is an analytical one, but also by revealing effects of shared affect on actual, instead of, perceived task performance.

**The role of group dynamics.** The present dissertation expands the scope of effects that group affect may have on work group functioning by incorporating the effects of affective sharing on feelings of belongingness and information sharing. Prior work has investigated effects of group affect on group processes, such as cooperation (George, 1990), conflict (Barsade, 2002), and coordination (Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005), yet, more socio-emotional and/or socio-cognitive processes between group members have received little empirical attention. Our results add to the literature by providing empirical evidence that only work groups who share (versus not share) affect experienced a higher level of
belongingness and attained a higher level of information sharing when in a negative mood than when in a positive mood. In addition, these findings extend prior research on social sharing of affect (e.g., Rimé, 1995) by showing that negative affective sharing not only has affiliative consequences at the interpersonal level (between sharer and listener; Zech, Rimé, & Nils, 2004), but also at the group level. The present findings suggest that feelings of belongingness and the sharing of information may be positively influenced by negative group affect. All in all, this leads us to concur with recent research that has pointed out that negative moods should not be viewed as being detrimental to (work) group functioning per se (George & Zhou, 2002, 2007).

**The role of future interaction expectation.** In this dissertation we have shown that future interaction expectation can be a potent facilitator of the effects of group affect on work group functioning. Our work corroborates earlier findings that show that group affect more strongly influences group outcomes when levels of group identification are high rather than low, suggesting group affect may be regarded a group defining characteristic to which group members are willing to conform to when the group is more important for their sense of self (Tanghe, Wisse, & Van der Flier, in press-a). Because group affect literature has hardly identified specific conditions under which the relationship between affective sharing and work group outcomes may particularly manifest itself, our findings extend existing research by showing that the sharing of negative affect may be deemed particularly influential when group members expect prolonged group longevity, arguably rendering group membership more important.

**Insight into the mood-creativity link.** Research on the role of affect on creativity concerns mostly individual settings and less social settings. This dissertation adds to prior work on the mood-creativity link by highlighting that affect may be shared among group members, and this affective sharing may play an important role in explaining mood effects on creativity. Our findings in Chapter 2 and 3 suggest that shared positive affect may facilitate creative task performance, which is in line with several studies on both the individual (e.g., Isen & Daubman, 1984) and group level of analysis (e.g., Grawitch, Munz, & Kramer, 2003). Moreover, the results of Chapter 3 show that the interactive effects of positive affect, affective sharing, and affective certainty influence creativity via cooperative tendencies. First, and in line with recent research by De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad (2008), these results imply that in order to understand the effects of mood on creativity we should look beyond valence of affect. Prior research on moderators of the mood-creativity link have mainly focused on task-related factors (Friedman, Förster, & Denzler, 2007; Vosburg, 1998a, 1998b; Zhou,
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2003), yet few empirical studies (for a review see Baas, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2008) focused on affect-related factors when trying to understand the effects of affective states on creativity. As an exception, De Dreu et al. (2008) investigated the role of activation level of affect and found that affective states may feed into creativity to the extent that they are activating (high arousal) instead of de-activating (low arousal) in nature. We show that other affect-related factors, such as the extent to which people are affectively certain and share their feelings with others may also affect the mood-creativity relationship. Second, we provide first evidence that cooperative tendencies may mediate the effects of positive mood on creativity in specific circumstances. The finding that cooperation with other group members may encourage creativity is in line with literature on brainstorming which shows that collaborating on idea development stimulates the generation of additional novel ideas (e.g., Dugosh, Paulus, Roland, & Yang, 2000; Paulus, 2000). Moreover, our results align well with recent theoretical analyses suggesting that sharing of positive group emotions enhances creativity by building on each others ideas, morale-building communication, and active affirmation, all of which may be related to cooperation (cf., Rhee, 2007).

The role of affect in conflict situations. The present dissertation creates a bridge between group affect research and conflict research, especially because their study has not been very well integrated (Nair, 2007). Our work contributes to conflict literature by showing that affective sharing can be a potent moderator in the relationship between task and relationship conflict on the one hand and cognitive task performance on the other hand. More importantly, the greatest contribution of our work on the role of affect in conflict situations lies in attempting to identify potential ways to alleviate conflicts’ harmful effects while harvesting its beneficial effects. Contrary to the popular opinion that conflict is ubiquitously bad, the results of Chapter 4 show that conflict may be potentially constructive under specific circumstances. Indeed, our results show that the sharing of positive affect exposes the potential beneficial effects of task conflict on cognitive performance, whereas the sharing of negative affect mitigates the detrimental effects that relationship conflict may have on cognitive performance. Yet, positive affective sharing was also found to enhance the detrimental effects of relationship conflict. These results may be explained in terms of conflict managements strategies, such that shared positive affect engenders openness to conflict, whereas shared negative affect leads to avoidance of conflict which has been found in earlier research (e.g., Desivilya & Yagil, 2005). Our results suggest that when group members share positive affect and are engaged in task conflict they may more openly discuss critical evaluations of the task, and opposing ideas and opinions with their fellow group members. As a consequence, group members’ cognitive processing and understanding of the
task increases, which benefits both individual and group task performance. However, being open about conflict may have detrimental effects when group members are engaged in a relationship conflict. Indeed, our results suggest that when group members share positive affect and are engaged in a relationship conflict they may more openly discuss interpersonal incompatibilities, interpersonal frictions, and irritations, which breaks down group members’ information processing and coordination. Hence, group members lose their focus and understanding of the task at hand, which decreases both individual and group task performance. Interestingly, our results show that when group members share negative affect the detrimental effects of relationship conflict are mitigated, which suggests that avoiding conflict on non-task related issues may leave group members with more cognitive space to focus on the task at hand. Admittedly, the present evidence is too modest to allow us to draw far-reaching conclusions about the effects of affective sharing in conflict situations, but we believe that it has potential in advancing our understanding of the role of affect in harvesting potential benefits of conflict and preventing conflict to hurt too much.

Limitations and Future Directions: Methods, Measures, Mechanisms, and More

Each empirical chapter of this dissertation focuses on a different research question. Yet, we will now take a broader perspective and focus on the common thread of the dissertation by discussing the limitations of our work across all chapters. Below the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of our research will be discussed, and avenues for future research resulting from these limitations will be highlighted. We will discuss the strengths and limitations in terms of (1) methods used, (2) measures used, (3) proposed mechanisms, and (4) some other relevant issues.

Methods. In this dissertation we have employed a wide variety of methodologies so that the strengths of the one method may compensate for the weaknesses of the other (Dipboye, 1990). Our computer-mediated laboratory studies might be criticized for their experimental set-ups that led participants to believe that they were interacting and exchanging affective information in a work group without actually seeing their group members. Although we used media in these studies that are less ‘rich’ as compared to the richness that can be obtained by face-to-face interaction (Daft & Lengel, 1984), several studies have shown that the communication of emotions often does not occur in face-to-face settings, but through media such as SMS or e-mail, and that the lack of physical contact may be compensated with emoticons or the use of affect-related words (Derks, Fischer, & Bos, 2008). Moreover, similar manipulations have successfully been used in previous psychological research (Peters & Kashima, 2007), and our manipulation checks also revealed
that affective sharing may well be manipulated without face-to-face affective interaction. Notwithstanding, to alleviate some of the concerns regarding the artificiality of the experimental set-ups we also employed a scenario study, which has the advantage of being able to establish causality in the predicted relationships, however has a higher level of mundane realism. More importantly, we conducted two experimental group studies using real interacting teams. These studies have the advantages of experimental control and a strong internal validity, while the ecological validity poses less of a problem. Also, experimental group studies create the advantage to be able to more closely investigate group dynamical processes.

We would like to point out that findings from laboratory studies that rely on student samples are usually similar to findings from surveys of organizational members (Dipboye, 1990; Wofford, 1999). Still, we considered that confidence in the conclusions would be bolstered by replication in the field, and therefore, we complemented our computer-mediated laboratory experiments with organizational field studies. Cross-sectional surveys allowed us to study individual employees, and work groups from a wide range of organizations, thereby increasing generalizability and enhancing external validity. Our surveys may be criticized for being cross-sectional surveys, thereby posing problems for causality, and raising the problem of common method variance. Although it is possible that relationships between variables may be inflated, common source/method bias cannot easily account for statistical interactions – indeed, because it may inflate main effects, it leads to an underestimation of the effect size of interactions, and lowers the power for the test of interactions (Evans, 1985; McClelland & Judd, 1993) – and thus forms no threat to the validity of our conclusions about the two-way and three-way interactions of the investigated variables. Confidence in our results is bolstered not only by replication across studies and methodologies, but also across samples of populations of students, employees, and organizational work groups.

**Measurement.** An important strength of this dissertation pertains to the variety and sort of measures used (objective performance scores, video-observations, and self-report data). Our main dependent variables, creative performance and analytical performance, were mostly objective performance measures, making the results of our studies less dependent on subjective perception measures. First, we used three different operationalizations of creativity in this dissertation, namely; (a) originality (Chapter 2 and 3), (b) fluency (Chapter 3 and 5), and (c) creative work involvement (Chapter 3). We obtained behavioral measures of creativity by assessing both originality, referring to the novelty or unusualness of ideas, and fluency, referring to the number of unique ideas, in drawing tasks and a brainstorm task in
our laboratory studies. A more subjective measure of creativity was obtained in our organizational surveys assessing employees’ creative work involvement, which has been defined as employees’ motivation to be engaged in creative processes at work (Kark & Carmeli, 2009). One could criticize this measurement of creativity due to the use of self-reported creativity. Yet, self-report measures of creativity may have some merit because not all creative activities are observed by others, and in fact, in some circumstances individuals’ self-perceived and self-reported creativity is the preferred measure of creativity (Zhou, Shin, & Cannella, 2008). Especially in the case of employees’ involvement in creativity, the focal persons themselves are best suited to assess the extent to which they are engaged in creativity. Others, such as supervisors or peers, may have less insight. Because creative behavior flows from individuals’ choices to spend time and effort to engage in creative processes, creative work involvement may be perceived as a major predictor of actual creative performance. Moreover, the results of the surveys were mirrored by the results of the laboratory study that assessed actual creative performance. Nonetheless, confidence in the conclusions would be bolstered by research replicating our results in field settings via ratings of supervisors who are familiar with the employees’ creative work behavior and via the use of more objective measures of creativity (e.g., patent disclosures), and we would welcome any such attempt (cf. Zhou, 2003).

Second, we used three different measures of analytical performance in this dissertation. Behavioral measures of analytical performance were obtained by calculating scores on a specific analytical reasoning task (Chapter 2), as well as assessing more general decision making qualities (Chapter 4 and 5). Although both tasks require systematic analyzing and processing of information to come to logical conclusions, which is common practice in organizational settings, one might criticize the tasks for being somewhat artificial in nature. Therefore, future research may use tasks that have a higher ecological validity (such as managerial exercises in which team members have unique information or are assigned different roles). We also used an organizational survey assessing group members’ self-perceptions of analytical performance at work (Chapter 4). Again, the self-reported nature of performance may be regarded as a weakness, and peers and supervisors ratings as well as more objective measures may be used in future field research.

Mechanisms. In the present dissertation the main focus was on the interactive effects of valence of affect and affective sharing (in combination with other factors) on work group functioning, whereas the underlying processes that may explain these interactive effects were underexposed. An important exception is the mediation that was reported in Chapter 2, where we found that the interactive effects of valence of affect, affective sharing,
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and affective certainty influenced creativity via cooperative tendencies. Although previous theoretical and empirical work strongly supported the rationales for the found effects in the other chapters, we cannot draw any final conclusions about the validity of our arguments, because in these chapters we did not empirically test whether our proposed underlying mechanisms played a leading role. In arriving at our propositions we mainly build on theoretical perspectives of social validation theory and reasoned that interactive affective sharing processes may affectively validate group members, which, in turn, may strengthen the valence of affect-behavior link. However, the mediating qualities of (social) validation need to be investigated in future research and more insight into the mechanisms explaining the effects of interactive affective sharing on work group functioning would be valuable. Future research may focus on this issue. Although we think that the proposed mechanisms may be promising and fruitful starting points for future research, alternative explanations for the found effects should also be taken into consideration. In sum, future research should focus more on mediators to be able to fully comprehend why interactive affective sharing affects group outcomes.

Besides falling short on mediating mechanisms, the present dissertation also remains mute regarding which of the three interactive sharing mechanisms may be helpful in explaining our findings. Our measures and manipulations were developed to capture three dynamic sharing mechanisms; affective contagion, affective comparison, and conscious social sharing of affect. Firstly, we developed an affective sharing scale, reflecting these three interactive sharing processes, which we used as a measure of affective sharing among employees in the organizational questionnaires, and as a manipulation check in our laboratory studies. Secondly, we developed an experimental set-up that offered participants the opportunity to engage in each of the three sharing mechanisms. However, we did not determine which of the three sharing mechanisms may be helpful in explaining our findings. Future research may look into the individual contributions of each sharing mechanism.

More... Further limitations of the present research include our focus on valence of affect, while we did not explicitly explore the role of the activation level of affect. Our manipulations of both positive and negative moods via the film clips may have elicited both low and high arousal moods, and we did not examine their isolated effects. Moreover, if one wants to fully comprehend the role of affective sharing in social settings only investigating affective tones with a general positive or negative nature may not be enough. The classification of affective experiences into the dimension of hedonic valence has the disadvantage that it summarizes discrete emotions (i.e., happiness, fear) under the broad category of positive or negative affect while detailed information on specific effects of these
emotions is lost. Future research may explore the consequences of interactively sharing discrete emotions with other group members. Although we believe that the present results provide useful insights into the effects of affective sharing on analytical and creative task performance, future investigations may benefit from extending the scope of the dependent variable.

**Practical implications: To Share or Not to Share, That’s the Question...**

Several social systems, such as commercial organizations, sport federations, universities, and hospitals, but also the local hockey club and probably your own circle of friends, rely on the functioning of groups and teams as a whole (e.g., Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000; West, Borrill, & Unsworth, 1998) for major sales, important sponsors, high-standing education, solid care, historical goals, and a record of heavy beer drinking. Because our understanding of groups in a wide variety of social settings is limited without taking affect into account (Lord, Klimoski, & Kanfer, 2002), there is merit in examining the role of sharing of affective states in these social groups. The findings of the present dissertation show that affective sharing has profound consequences for task performance and therefore may have important implications for applied settings.

First, in this dissertation we showed that shared affect in work groups has stronger effects on group members’ task performance than affect that is congruent between group members but not explicitly shared. From Chapter 2 it appears that although interactive (as compared to non-interactive) affective sharing between group members enhances the effect that valence of affect has on work group performance it does not necessarily enhance overall group performance. Therefore, companies, sports teams, task groups or other collectives should not take these results as an indiscriminant stimulant for promoting the engagement in dynamic sharing processes. Instead, they should first closely consider the kind of task that the group faces, before they engender open communication about affective events, or the display of affective states. Yet, in general, this dissertation shows that when groups face a creative task the sharing of positive mood is beneficial for performance, whereas for groups who face an analytical task the sharing of negative affect bolsters performance. Therefore, we pose that managers, directors, team leaders, and of course, group members themselves may be able to reap the benefits of dynamic sharing of affect within the group by promoting the use of interactive affective sharing mechanisms when the group experiences positive affect and has to come up with all sorts of creative ideas on a certain project, or when the group experiences negative feelings and has to work on an analytical reasoning task or make some important decisions. The promotion of interactive affective sharing among group members could be done via training programs, where group
members learn to openly communicate their feelings with others, be more attentive to each others’ emotional expressions, and to affectively compare one’s experienced affect to that of others.

Second, in Chapter 2, 4, and 5 we showed that the sharing of negative affect may have positive effects for work group functioning. Besides the positive effects for analytical task performance it may be especially important to interactively share negative feelings with other group members in order to share information with one’s group members and to feel attached to the group. Many practices in daily life, such as group therapy in clinical settings, initiation rites in student societies, and boot camp practices in military settings, appear to be aimed at building feelings of attachment through the dynamic sharing of negative feelings. However, in many social settings (implicit) emotion management strategies or emotion norms seem to prescribe the sharing of positive, rather than negative affect. Therefore, when for instance, organizations want to increase mutual information exchange and cohesion in their teams they could try to break down these normative rules, and create a more open and progressive group climate or atmosphere in which employees feel at ease to disclose negative events and experiences.

Third, in Chapter 4 we have shown that the sharing of positive and negative affect between group members may bring out the constructive potential (and/or may alleviate the harmful effects) of conflict. Because the sharing of affect influences the effects of conflict on task performance, people could use it as a device to manage conflicts in groups. Since incompatibilities, discussions, and even fights may occur in the best of families (or other social systems), it seems worthwhile to invest in training programs to provide group members with the skills necessary to engage in positive or negative affective sharing depending on the specific type of conflict they encounter, such that potential beneficial effects of task conflict come to the fore, whereas detrimental effects of relationship conflict are alleviated.

Last, based on our findings in Chapter 5, we may conclude that it is of importance to regard group members’ future interaction expectations. Our research suggests that shared affect may influence group outcomes especially when groups expect prolonged group longevity. Therefore, group managers and leaders may want to pay attention to group members’ expectations of stability and longevity and may want to adjust these expectations depending on the circumstances. In order to maximize group outcomes, managers may consider to enhance expectations of prolonged group longevity when groups share negative affect and perform analytical tasks; whereas they may consider to inhibit expectations of group longevity when groups share negative affect and perform creative tasks. We realize, of course, that it may be difficult to adjust expectations of group stability and longevity. Indeed,
project groups in organizations, academic staff at universities, and friends in your circle will often be expecting continued group member interactions, and in such cases, the effects of affective sharing may continue to influence group outcomes.

**Concluding Remarks**

At the starting point of this dissertation we mapped out our final destination: an increased understanding of the role of affective sharing in social settings. We then began an interesting journey, in which we aimed to unearth several fundamental aspects of the sharing of affect between group members. At the beginning of the journey we discovered we could walk on two different pathways to group affect, a static one (which was probably safer, yet more dull) and a dynamic one. Being quite adventurous we took the last one, and found that this pathway offered us many panoramas along the way that gave us new insights in the area of shared affect. We hope that this dissertation will spur on other researchers and inspires them to make a voyage in the world of affective sharing, because there is a lot yet to be discovered.