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Individual differences in preference for shared leadership

Summary of the doctoral dissertation
in the field of Management and Quality Studies

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Contents

Introduction

'Most of our assumptions about business, technology, and organization [. . .] have outlived their time'[1], and 'we can no longer rely on simple notions of top–down, command-and-control leadership, based on the idea that workers are merely interchangeable drones.'[2]

Therefore, as a consequence of times of high 'complexity' and 'uncertainty', more organizations are becoming 'flatter', but also more 'dynamic', 'flexible' and 'empowering' for their employees.

Practical evidence can be seen in workplaces and adopted management frameworks like e.g. Gore Associates, where the management team is elected by employees and each member has equal rights and responsibility for making decisions; or the Dutch Buurtzorg with 10.000 nurses in 800 self-managed teams, no manager and only 60 stuff in overhead (coaches and back office); or in a Deloittette survey, where 90% of executives across industries and around the globe are rating the 'agile management framework' as the most important human capital trend, with 'agile' meaning 'Individuals and interactions are valued over processes and tools', and one of the twelve principles is: 'The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams'.

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[1]Drucker (1998)

[2]Pearce (2007)

As a consequence shared leadership enjoys large and growing research attention throughout the last decades. That is, 'shared leadership (SL)', a way to distribute leadership among many team members compared to 'focused leadership (FL)', where only a few employees lead.

Those examples and research show that shared leadership can be an effective way to manage an organization. Thanks to the fact that employees can be more involved and have a greater influence on the decisions made, the company can achieve better results and increase its competitiveness. But does this apply to all employees?

Research in this domain is mainly concentrated on the team level, but so far there has been little contribution on an individual level. For it, the present dissertation circles around the question if every employee would prefer one or the other leadership structures in a team more or less.

Dissertation Structure

The empirical dissertation contains 4 chapters and an appendix.

Chapter 1, titled **'Literature review for hypotheses development'**, is organized into four sections.

Section 1, titled **'Leadership: from focused to shared'** discusses the domain of leadership as a research domain. A review of the literature contrasts the concept of leadership with the concept of management, but more importantly, brings the multiple research approaches into two main perspectives, a 'leader-centric' and a 'leadership-as-social network' perspective.

The section concludes that leadership is difficult to define and that shared leadership as a leadership network differs from focused leadership as a leader-centric approach on multiple dimensions and therefore justifies the idea that there is a major difference between focused and shared leadership.

Section 2, titled **'Shared leadership: a social network'**, discusses the shared leadership approach. A review of the literature shows that the concept of shared leadership is very difficult to define - numerous definitions and related terminologies could be identified. This section also discusses several commonalities between these different approaches, including common operationalizations, with only two major approaches. And this section presents some examples of positive outcomes of shared leadership, which however concern predominantly team-level outcomes.

The section concludes that shared leadership is still in flux, with much room for future research to refine the concept and its operationalizations but also advance research to an individual level.

Section 3, titled **'Cognitive consequences within social networks'**, discusses several cognitive consequences for employees within social networks. This section begins with a general discussion of why employees may act and react universally similarly due to a universally shared search for control, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, employees also act and react individually differently within social networks. Therefore, the section discusses in more detail two main research domains. The first part discusses social orientations as individual dispositions of employees to prefer different kinds of social networks, because some care, compete, and command more or less than others. The second part discusses the research stream on the prevailing and impactful forces of social hierarchies. Those forces are prestige and dominance to gain status and power.

Section 4, titled **'Theoretical model'**, reflects on previous sections of the review of the literature. The section highlights several important messages and confirms the research gap. Not focused or shared leadership is a panacea. Until now, research mainly concentrated on focused leadership, and within the domain of shared leadership research concentrated mainly on the team level, neglecting, e.g., outcomes on the individual level. To integrate the different streams and provide a base for the empirical work of the dissertation, the section first argues for two extreme forms to clearly distinguish focused and shared leadership, and second, it presents main aspects of why employees may prefer focused and shared leadership differently.

Chapter 2, titled **'The methods and objectives'**, presents the methodological paradigm 'WiW' used in the dissertation. It includes a description of the samples, procedures, and operationalization of the variables.

The main scope of the conducted studies was a quantitative research design, recruiting respondents on the MTurk online panel (study 1: N = 184, study 2: N = 178; over all > 90% employed; all US located), with no specific restrictions on the sampling procedure, except several attention checks.

All measures were standard measures except two newly crafted operationalizations for shared leadership. The **team preference** measure is a 'backward referent-shift' 10-item scale. Wood and Fields (2007) shifted the referent of a traditional leadership measure in the form of 'A leader' to 'Each member', and we added the 'A leader' back again providing both as choice options (focused vs. shared). The **team X target description** is an experimental manipulation for the team leadership structure assigning respondents randomly to react to one of the two (focused or shared).

Respondents were asked how they would feel (5 items), if they would be satisfied (1 item), and if they would like to work (1 item) in such a team. Those target descriptions were newly crafted and validated in multiple steps including face validity but also validating it in an additional test study. Although also videos were tested, the text versions were used as the final solution in study 2. See e.g. tables below.

Chapter 3, titled **'Results'**, contains the analysis of data from two studies.

Study 1 was a correlational study using a multiple hierarchical regression for the analysis. Team preference (focused vs. shared leadership structure) was regressed on four control orientations according to the Grzelak model[3] (H1: dominance, submission, collaboration, autonomy) including age and gender as control variables. Six personality scales[4] and two questions for political orientation[5] were included for exploration purposes. **Study 2** was an experimental study using for the analysis a one-way between-subjects ANOVA testing a main effect of the leadership structure manipulation (H2), and separate 2x2 between-subject ANOVAs testing the interaction of the manipulation with each of the dichotomized predictors: social motives according to the McClelland model[6], power (H3a), achievement (H3b), affiliation (H3c); and social rank with being supervisor or non-supervisor (H4). Age and gender were used as control variables.

Chapter 4, titled **'Summary'**, contains a discussion of the results of the studies conducted, limitations, directions for further research, and recommendations for HRM.

The **Appendix** contains supplementary materials that are not necessary to track the course of the argumentation but are necessary for those who would like to learn about the distributions of variables, details of the analyses carried out, or to replicate the analyses carried out on other data (detailed description of research procedures).

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[3]Grzelak (2001)
[4]de Vries (2013)
[5]Talhelm et al. (2015)
[6]scales included in SSA (after: Nowak and Mahari (2019)

Table 1: Team preferences - 'FL' by Wood and Fields (2007); 'SL' own adjustments.

Focused Leadership	Shared Leadership
A leader of the team establishes the goals for the organization.	Each member of the team participates in establishing the goals for the organization.
A leader of the team frames the vision for the organization.	Each team member helps to frame the vision for the organization.
A leader decides on the best course of action when a problem faces the team.	Each member shares in deciding on the best course of action when a problem faces the team.
Each member is evaluated by and is accountable to a leader of the team.	Each member is evaluated by and is accountable to all other members of the team.
A leader makes decisions that affect the organization.	Team members collaborate with one another in making decisions that affect the organization.
A leader decides how resources are allocated in regard to the team's priorities.	Each member has a say in deciding how resources are allocated in regard to the team's priorities.
A leader identifies, diagnoses, and resolves the problems that face the team.	Each member helps to identify, diagnose, and resolve the problems that face the team.(Reversed)
A leader insures the team fulfills its obligations.	Each member chip in (even if it is outside an area of personal responsibility) to insure the team fulfills its obligations.(Reversed)
The team has one person in charge who ensures that the work is well organized.	The team members collaborate to organize the workflow.(Reversed)
The team has one leader who takes on the responsibility for the team outcomes and guides the team members.	Each team member shares the responsibility for the team outcomes and helps in guiding others.(Reversed)

Note. 'Reversed' order for some items: team A = team SL(FL); team B = team FL(SL).

Table 2: Target descriptions - text-based experimental manipulation (own elaboration).

Focused leadership	Shared leadership
I work in a team with 8 other colleagues and our team leader.	I work in a team with 8 other colleagues. We have no team leader.
Normally, when our team gets a task to perform, our leader thinks how to complete it and distributes the workload and responsibilities between us.	Normally, when our team gets a task to perform, all of us meet and think how to complete it and how to share the workload and responsibilities between us.
Its a thought time right now. Due to the market crisis we had to double efforts.	Its a thought time right now. Due to the market crisis we had to double efforts.
My team leader prepared a plan on what and when to do, and set several deadlines throughout the year.	The whole team came together and prepared a plan on what and when to do, and set several deadlines throughout the year.
He set goals for each one of us, the completion of which he will evaluate later.	We decided on the goals for eahc of us, the completion of which we will evaluate later.
Everybody knows that individual salaries depend on reaching these goals.	Everybody knows that individual salaries depend on reaching these goals.
We will probably see the fruits of our efforts soon.	We will probably see the fruits of our efforts soon.

Summary of Findings

The tests of 9 hypotheses are summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Results of hypotheses' testing (own studies).

Hypotheses	Study	Results
H1: FL preferences depend on control orientations: FL preferences are stronger..		
H1a: .. the stronger the orientation for dominance.	S1	Confirmed
H1b: .. the stronger the orientation for submission.	S1	Not confirmed
H1c: .. the weaker the orientation for collaboration.	S1	Confirmed
H1d: FL preferences are not related to orientations for autonomy.	S1	Confirmed
H2: FL preferences are weaker than SL preferences (main effect)	S2	Confirmed
H3: FL preferences depend on social motives: FL preferences are stronger..		
H3a: .. the stronger the power motive.	S2	Partially confirmed
H3b: .. the stronger the achievement motive.	S2	Partially confirmed
H3c: FL preferences are not related to the affiliation motive.	S2	Confirmed
H4: Supervisors have stronger FL preferences than non-supervisors.	S2	Partially confirmed

Note. 'FL preference' = preferences for focused compared to shared leadership.

Study 1 was the first direct test of different social orientations that would predict different preferences for leadership structures because a major prerequisite for shared leadership to be an effective alternative to focused leadership would be the fact that employees would prefer it over focused leadership if they had the choice.

For it, Grzelak's control orientations were used as **predictors** of the preference for the leadership structure. Two additional measures were added as predictors for exploration, personality variables of which we did not expect a relationship to leadership preference, and political orientation, expecting conservative political orientation to predict higher preferences for focused leadership.

Consistent with the expectations, a **collaboration** preference predicted a higher preference for shared leadership (H1a). This is in line with Grzelak's argument that

collaboration preferences foster democracy by accepting the joint effort and coordination between all employees by encompassing everybody's interests[7]. Collaborating means giving up at least some part of the control and accepting the influence of peers. Employees with high preferences for collaboration therefore likely believe in the competence and good intentions of others, which is important for shared leadership.

Consistent with the expectations, a **dominance** preference also predicted a higher preference for focused leadership (H1c). As previous research showed, dominant employees value success and higher social rank[8], for which the opportunities seem higher in focused leadership. Such employees are motivated and can potentially envision themselves in leadership positions, which are clearly visible in teams with focused leadership, but not necessarily in teams with shared leadership.

Contrary to the expectations, a **submission** preference does not predict a higher preference for focused leadership (H1b). This may suggest that seeking the control of others can lead to different strategies. Some of these employees may find satisfaction in being controlled by a clear leader in a team with focused leadership, but others may find satisfaction in the control of many other members of a team with shared leadership.

In support of the expectations, the combined **autonomy** scale did not predict any preferences for any of the leadership structures (H1d). The three autonomy scales (proactive autonomy, respect for autonomy, and reactive autonomy) were combined into one autonomy measure due to high correlations. Employees who prefer autonomy prefer personal freedom and with it situations that provide that. Both, teams with shared but also focused leadership could assumably increase or decrease employees' personal freedom. The relationship between autonomy and leadership preference may be more complex.

Study 2 was an extension in that sense that respondents did not choose between alternatives but reacted to only one of two leadership structures because once an organization promotes one or the other leadership structure, it is essential to know if some employees are benefiting from that and others may not.

This study also extended the variety of **predictors** according to the theoretical model. A main effect of the leadership structure was expected. But the three social motives, power achievement and affiliation, and social rank, in terms of being a supervisor or not, were also used as predictors of the acceptance of the leadership structure.

Confirming expectations for a **main effect**, shared leadership appeared to be more accepted than focused leadership (H2). In fact, focused leadership was only observed

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[7]Grzelak (2001)

[8]Modrzejewska (2004)

to be perceived as negative, while shared leadership was only perceived as positive. This is in line with the literature that shared leadership increases many desired and decreases undesired team outcomes which depend on employees and their engagement, like team performance, team satisfaction, innovation, team conflict, etc. This is because if employees did not accept teams due to one or the other leadership structure, their engagement would be arguably low.

However, only partially supporting three of the hypotheses, shared leadership appeared to be more accepted than focused leadership only employees with a low **power** motive (H3a), a low **achievement** motive (H3b), and **non-supervisors** (H4). Employees with a high-power motive, a high-achievement motive, and supervisors accepted focused leadership more than shared leadership, but the effects were not significant. This is an interesting finding, as it presents several important points.

First, while those employees which are seeking power or achievement, but also supervisors are generally thought of as agentic, seeking to get ahead with their endeavors and control their environments. Following the literature on hierarchies, those are the employees who keep hierarchies and, with it, focused leadership alive. However, second, the literature on social orientations also suggests interactions between those dimensions. Those agentic employees may have different strategies depending as well on other dimensions, a prospect for future research. Third, especially those low profiles, low power, low achievement, and non-supervisors show a clear sign that focused leadership potentially decreases their engagement. Especially with non-suppervisors, which are usually the larger group in teams with focused leadership, this can be detrimental to outcomes of teams with focused leadership.

Research limitations, future research directions and implications for management practice

As it is stressed in the WiW paradigm in social science one needs to take care of the external and internal validity of conducted research[9]:

1) The availability of representative random samples of the population is very limited in social sciences. Not only is randomization costly, but people can only be drawn, but not forced to participate in research. Therefore, most studies are conducted with available samples consisting of people who have agreed to participate in the research. We increase the external validity by replicating studies on different available samples. This means that we should test the same hypotheses on different data sets and with different operationalizations.

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[9]Wieczorkowska-Wierzbińska (2021)

2) A survey is a form of cooperative conversation. The respondent should understand not only what is being asked, but why s/he is being asked. When collecting data, we need to ensure psychological realism, which determines the level of respondent's involvement. Where possible, we should take care of the internal validity of the research by using manipulations of independent variables in the survey, that is, to conduct experimental research by assigning volunteers randomly to different experimental conditions.
3) Where possible, in both questionnaires and interviews, we introduce target descriptions of the objects whose evaluation we want to know.
4) Standard measurement tools used in research should be checked for psychometric properties / adapted to the studied group of respondents.
5) Before the analysis, the data sets should be carefully cleaned from "fake" respondents who, e.g., carelessly clicked through the questionnaire.

With this in mind, the current research also faces several limitations but offers perspectives for future research and recommendations for human resource management (HRM).

**Limitations connected with measurements
of employees' personal characteristics**

All studies in this dissertation were based on self-reported measures. Not only did the respondents self-report their personal characteristics, but also their reactions to the target descriptions were only hypothetical.

There are multiple issues related to measuring the individual characteristics of employees, making their assessment difficult. Usually, respondents lack conscious awareness about their implicit personal needs and orientations, which allows them to respond only explicitly and highly subjective, which comes with risks like social desirability bias, or self-report bias, and makes measures often inconsistent, invalid, unreliable, or confounding with other factors, such as contextual and cultural differences.

There are also many problems related to the operationalization of shared leadership itself. As noted in the literature review, shared leadership is a multidimensional phenomenon at the team level. If researchers have difficulties describing and distinguishing it from focused leadership, how can respondents? Predominantly research was done in real team settings administering validated leadership measurement tools across team members and later aggregating the responses to assess the degree of shared leadership in real teams, with no need to describe shared leadership to the respondents. The present research tried to make shared leadership compared to focused leadership imaginable via target descriptions, which has two challenges. First, the target

descriptions must be imaginable, and realistic and evoke respondents' emotions, which makes the target descriptions but also the responses only hypothetical. Second, the target descriptions must clearly contrast focused from shared leadership in order to make any conclusions reliable.

However, the present research tried to account for this by asking not only for one but many connected questions and factoring them together, for both each of the personal characteristics and also respondents' reactions to the target descriptions. Additionally, the personal characteristic scales were all used and validated in former research, and the newly crafted operationalizations for the target descriptions were carefully crafted and tested in a multi-step validation. This included face validity by employees with business experience external to the research group but also validation through an experimental study described in the methodology chapter. Finally, I believe technological developments will allow getting better measurement tools in the future, in order to collect not only subjective but also objective responses[10].

Limitations connected with samples

Let's keep in mind that all the studies in the present dissertation recruited respondents with the MTurk online panel and included only selected personal characteristics of the respondents. This limits the scope of the sample including its characteristics.

Data collection via MTurk is a common practice in social science, but it holds various risks for the reliability of the drawn sample, risking e.g. false responses, lack of engagement, repeated respondents, etc. Reasons why it is useful to use such online panels and comments on the recent 'Mturk crisis' including strategies to overcome most of the caveats can be found elsewhere[11].

The data collection concentrated on US inhabitants as part of individualistic cultures, not everybody declared to be employed, and respondents have to be assumed to have very different social, economical, educational, or professional backgrounds. The literature review described before showed that cultural context may change certain dynamics concerning hierarchies and with it the preferences for focused or shared leadership. Additionally, the focus of the present dissertation is on employees in team contexts, and the fact that respondents were included with different employment statuses and diverse backgrounds may account for the generalizability of the findings but may be misleading as shared leadership is contextualized in different professional environments, like e.g. commercial vs. non-commercial organizations[12].

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[10]Nowak (2019)
[11]Kennedy et al. (2020)
[12]Sweeney et al. (2018)

Additionally, the present research limited the scope of predictor variables to social orientations, social motives, and social rank. As described in the theoretical model, employees may react differently to shared leadership due to obligations and opportunities they see connected with the challenges and threats that come with changing stability and predictability of the leadership structure. Other characteristics than the chosen may account for reactions on (in)stabilities and (un)certainties as well, like, e.g., seeking hierarchies due to a lack of control, seeking structure due to a methodological working style, or seeking change due to stereotypical disadvantages.

The findings are therefore not entirely generalizable to other parts of the globe with other cultural contexts, and may be confounded with other variables like gender, generation, educational level, professional context, social status, social or job security, etc., and have to be replicated on other settings, but also extended in scope.

Future Research Directions

The findings of the present research connected with its limitations suggest several avenues for future research. Not only is it important to replicate the findings, but also validate the newly crafted operationalizations and potentially extend the scope, e.g. of relevant personal characteristics and contexts.

In terms of **replication**, it could be thought of conducting the same studies but on larger samples, as the drawn samples were rather small in size. However, recruiting through channels other than MTurk could also be considered, such as MBA students, voluntary organizations, or other online platforms. Similarly, the same studies could be done in other countries with individualistic cultures, as this research drew data only from the US. There are also various available measures for the personal characteristics that were included. Changing those operationalizations of these social motives, social orientations, and social ranks would increase the external validity of the predicting concepts that were of interest.

A major challenge for the present dissertation was the concept of shared leadership itself. For it, new **operationalizations** were created, tested, and used. However, there are several points to be made that suggest future research attention. First of all, those operationalizations would benefit from further **validation**, testing those in different contexts with different research questions, even with already known dynamics. Second, as mentioned in the methodology chapter there are many different forms of shared leadership imaginable. Those proposed operationalizations could potentially be adjusted for those different shared leadership models and pitch those against each other. For example, the current research pitched the most extreme models, but there might be different outcomes on individuals preferences between a 'consensus' model

of shared leadership where everybody in the team has responsibility and voice versus a 'double-top' model or as Döörs et al. (2021) term it 'managerial shared leadership', where two or more managers share the head chair. A third endeavor concerning those new operationalizations would be adjusting them to different contexts, in order to make them authentic for different kinds of professional contexts.

Finally, future research would benefit from **extending** the present findings.

For example control orientations were measured as relatively stable dispositions, although they might be **situationally dependent**[13]. Giving up control may not be a good strategy for employees that face current job or economic instabilities, or who put some personal significance into the specific issues decided by the team. In such cases, contextual factors might influence the dynamic of preferring one or the other leadership structure, and future studies could investigate those. As previous research showed, feeling a lack of personal control might influence people's preferences for more hierarchical structures at work[14].

In both studies, attitudes and preferences towards the leadership structure were measured only on a **declarative, hypothetical** level, and lack of context may be too abstract. For example, self-management can increase counterproductive work behaviors if employees do not believe that the organization trusts them[15]. Future research could explore the **actual impact** of employees' personal characteristics on their satisfaction, emotions, and work performance within real teams with different leadership structures. This would give the findings a more objective character and counter the limitations in people's ability to introspect and predict one's emotional reactions.

Traditionally the consequences of the used social motives and orientation were studied separately but not necessarily in interaction with each other. There is research on taming the power motive with the affiliation motive and at least two kinds of motive patterns where identified by researhers, the 'leadership-motive-pattern' (LMP) and the 'compassioned-leadership-profile' (CLP). However, these are primarily researched on managers and the effects on the teams they manage. The studies on these motive interactions widely neglected the concern for non-managers, and studies on these interactions widely neglected the concern for outcomes on an individual level, and especially not between teams with different leadership structures. Future studies could integrate the research on those patterns, or motive interactions, with the present research questions. For example, the present research did not find power seekers to prefer focused leadership significantly more than shared leadership as was predicted.

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[13]Grzelak (2001)
[14]Friesen et al. (2014)
[15]Jensen and Raver (2012)

Was this perhaps due to a missing consideration for why these employees seek power and what level of affiliation they seek in addition? Perhaps only those with a high-power motive and a low-affiliation motive prefer focused leadership, which may be the reason the LMP was very successful in times of traditional leadership many decades ago, but the CLP is more successful in the present time of flatter organizations[16].

Implications for management practice

Organizations must fully leverage their **human capital** to remain competitive, effective, and innovative. Shared leadership is yet understudied; however, research already indicates that it is a strong candidate to address these challenges. 'As organizations have steadily progressed into the knowledge economy, we can no longer rely on simple notions of top–down, command-and-control leadership, based on the idea that workers are merely interchangeable drones.'[17]

Shared leadership in teams enacts employees' **collective psychological capital**, resulting e.g. in more participative and innovative organizational cultures[18]. As research showed, shared leadership improves innovation behavior[19], increases creativity on individual levels and team levels[20], lowers team conflicts (relational conflicts and task conflicts)[21], and strengthens team performance[22], which is mediated by team cohesion[23], team satisfaction[24], coordination activities, goal commitment, and increased knowledge sharing[25]. Other studies support the claim that shared leadership works better than focused leadership in change management teams[26], virtual teams[27], and new venture top management teams[28].

From an individual point of few, shared leadership has a large potential to increase **employee well-being**, as it predicts lower levels of conflict, greater consensus between employees, but also higher intragroup trust and cohesion[29], satisfaction in virtual teams, but also reduced role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and job stress for e.g., top management team members in Christian church organizations[30].

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[16]Steinmann et al. (2014)
[17]Pearce (2007)
[18]Nonaka et al. (2016)
[19]Hoch (2013); Wu and Cormican (2016)
[20]Gu et al. (2018); Lee et al. (2015)
[21]Hu and Judge (2017)
[22]Han et al. (2018); Mathieu et al. (2015); Robert and You (2018)
[23]Mathieu et al. (2015)
[24]Robert and You (2018)
[25]Han et al. (2018)
[26]Pearce and Sims (2002)
[27]Hoch and Kozlowski (2014)
[28]Ensley et al. (2006)
[29]Bergman et al. (2012)
[30]Wood and Fields (2007)

With this positive outlook above, shared leadership can be seen as a **strong alternative** to focused leadership to promote organizational performance, but also employee engagement. However, to **facilitate** shared leadership in teams, research has already identified various team and organizational factors, and the present research adds the notion of considering the personal characteristics of employees.

For example, an internal team environment consisting of shared purpose, social support, and voice was shown to enable the emergence of shared leadership in teams[31]. Under these conditions, team members would be more open to contributing to the leadership and accept the influence of other team members because there is a similar understanding of shared objectives, mutual support, and participation to contribute to the teams' purpose and decision-making process[32].

In teams of interacting employees that depend on the skills and task completion of others, research showed that shared leadership emerges via the enhancement of mutual solidarity[33], team integrity in form of transparent communication, high level of reliability, trust, but also fairness[34].

However, shared leadership comes in many forms and, although the present dissertation contrasted it with focused leadership, both could potentially coexist. Leaders external to the team have been shown to support and guide, and even enable teams with shared leadership[35]. But also reward strategies that stimulate employee participation, motivational support, and vertical empowerment can facilitate shared leadership[36]. Yet another important condition for shared leadership in a focused leadership setting is leader humility, the willingness to admit a lack of knowledge or expertise, acknowledge the knowledge or skills of others, and the openness to new ideas[37].

Whereas the above outlook of existing research highlights shared leadership to be a **positive alternative** to focused leadership, and how its emergence can be facilitated. The **present research adds** that not only do team or organizational factors play their role, but human research management must also consider individual differences of their employees, which seem to be affected by different leadership structures - if those are 'leader-centric' (focused) or 'collective' (shared). It could be shown that employees generally prefer and therefore potentially support shared leadership in teams, which seems even more so for employees currently not in supervision roles, but also employees, that generally seek to collaborate and try to avoid being in power.

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[31]e.g. Carson et al. (2007); Daspit et al. (2013)
[32]e.g. Carson et al. (2007); Daspit et al. (2013)
[33]Fausing et al. (2015)
[34]Hoch (2013)
[35]Carson et al. (2007)
[36]Grille and Kauffeld (2015); Fausing et al. (2015); Hoch (2013)
[37]Chiu et al. (2016)

Conclusion

The present dissertation contributes at a **theoretical** level by proposing a theoretical model based on an integrative review of the literature. Shared leadership extends the concept of leadership from a 'leader-centric' perspective to a 'leadership-as-social-network' perspective. Although shared leadership is mainly thought of as a team-level phenomenon, various psychological consequences for employees have to be expected due to individually different social orientations and the dynamics of hierarchies, power, and status.

However, the main outcome of the present dissertation is a **cognitive contribution** in showing that **employees differ in their preferences** for the type of leadership. Shared leadership was on average rated higher than focused leadership, but it turned out that differences in preferences depend on employees' personal characteristics, such as social motives, social orientations, and social rank.

Furthermore, two **methodological contributions** compound the construction and testing of **target descriptions** to examine preferences for teams with different leadership structures, focused vs. shared, but also the determination of the reliability of measuring the need for dominance, in other words, the **motive for power**, an inclination of employees that has important consequences within the workplace.

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