



## Social Identity Formation and Leadership Emergence in the Pauline Mission

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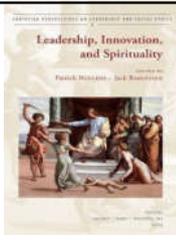
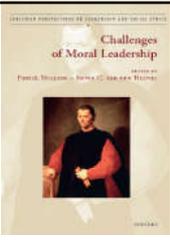
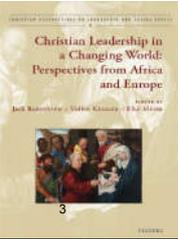
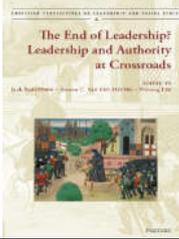
Introducing ...



Evangelische Theologische Faculteit  
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Overview

- o A social identity theory of leadership
- o Social identity leadership in early Christianity
- o Contemporary religious leadership as social identity leadership

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1. A Social Identity Theory of Leadership: Origins



- o Henri Tajfel (1919-1982)
  - Social Identity Theory (SIT)
- o John Turner (1947-2011)
  - Social Categorization Theory (SCT)



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What is a social identity?



- o Social Identity =
  - A sense of 'us', of belonging to a group
  - Self-concept that makes me think of myself as a group member
  - An individual psychological process that connects a person with a group

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## Group prototypes and leadership

- Prototypicality
- Social Attraction
- Leadership Attribution
- Trust

Context 1  
Personal identity  
(me, Beth)

Amy Beth

Context 2  
Social identity  
(us, women)

Amy Beth

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## Social Identity Leadership

- 'be one of us' identity *prototypicality*
- 'do it for us' identity *advancement*
- 'celebrate (with) us' identity *impresarioship*
- 'transforming into us' identity *performance*
- 'craft a sense of us' identity *entrepreneurship*

- Steffens, Haslam, Reicher, Platow, et al, "Leadership as Social Identity Management: Introducing the Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI) to Assess and Validate a Four-Dimensional Model"
- Hogg, van Knippenberg, Rast, "The Social Identity Theory of Leadership: Theoretical Origins, Research Findings, and Conceptual Developments."

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## 2. Social identity leadership in early Christianity

- Paul as Entrepreneur of Identity in Corinth
  - Paul's conversion: ± 31-33 AD
    - 1 or 2 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ
  - Paul stayed in Corinth 18 months: ± 50-52 AD
    - He founded the first Christian community there
  - Paul wrote letters to this community: ± 54-56 AD
    - We look at the letter that the Bible knows as "1 Corinthians"

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## Paul as Entrepreneur of Identity in Corinth

- Leading rival subgroups
- Promoting the emergence of new leaders

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## Leading rival subgroups

- Evidence for the rise of subgroups
  - 1 Corinthians 1:12-13
  - What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

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## Leading rival subgroups

- Evidence for the rise of subgroups
  - 1 Corinthians 1:11; 3:3
  - For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people **that there is quarreling** among you, my brothers.
  - For while there is **jealousy** and **strife** among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

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● ● ● | **Leading rival subgroups**

- How can we explain this?
  - Patronage and traveling teachers



● ● ● | **Leading rival subgroups**

- Social identification through rivalry
- How does Paul lead?
  - Watch how he crafts an alternative version of socio-religious identity



● ● ● | **Not eloquence but the crucified Christ**

- And I ... did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with **lofty speech or wisdom**. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him **crucified**. And I was with you in **weakness** and in **fear** and much **trembling**, and my speech and my message were **not in plausible words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
  - 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

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● ● ● | **Not 'great leaders' but servants of God**

- What then is Apollos? What is Paul? **Servants** through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each .... Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but **only God who gives the growth**. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.
  - 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

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● ● ● | **God judges and rewards, not man**

- For **no one** can lay a **foundation** other than that which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ**. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw**—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will **disclose** it, because it will be revealed by **fire**, and the fire will **test** what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a **reward**.
  - 1 Corinthians 3:11-14

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● ● ● | **Leading rival subgroups (summary)**

- How does Paul shape their understanding of Christian social identity?
  - Not eloquence but the crucified Christ
    - Priority of social identity in Christ
  - Not 'great leaders' but servants of God
    - God is the ultimate Divine Prototype
  - God judges and rewards, not man
    - Authority and allegiance belong to God
- Thus: Paul crafts a different sense of "us" as entrepreneur of socio-religious identity

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### Other Dimensions of Identity Leadership in 1 Corinthians

- Paul as founder and father of the community
  - 'be one of us' (identity prototypicality)
- Paul's self-sacrifice for the community
  - 'do it for us' (identity advancement)
- Paul's ordering of community meetings
  - 'celebrate (with) us' (identity impresarioship)
- Paul's instructions for handling specific matters
  - 'transforming into us' (identity performance)

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### Paul as Entrepreneur of Identity in Corinth

- ~~Leading rival subgroups~~
- Promoting the emergence of new leaders
  - Watch how Paul moves some budding leadership forward within the faith community



EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

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### Promoting the emergence of new leaders

- Paul's leadership in Corinth was limited to a subgroup
- These subgroups did not yet have any overarching leadership for the network
- How could Paul anchor his vision of socio-religious identity as he was mostly an absent subgroup leader?
- He needed to empower local leadership!

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### Promoting the emergence of new leaders

- How would Paul be able to support leaders in line with his vision of socio-religious identity?
- By portraying himself and others as prototypical for the group, as sacrificing for the group, and as trustworthy to lead the group

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### Paul's prototypical leadership

- 4:15 – For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became **your father** in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
  - 1 Corinthians 4:15

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### Promoting Timothy as his trusted proxy

- 4:17 - That is why I sent you Timothy, **my beloved and faithful child** in the Lord, to **remind** you of **my ways** in Christ, as **I teach** them everywhere in every church.
- 16:10-11 – When Timothy comes, see that you **put him at ease** among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, **as I am**. **So let no one despise him**. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to **me**.
  - 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10-11

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● ● ● **Promoting Stephanas as local leader**

- 1:16 – (I did **baptize** also the household of Stephanas)
- 16:15-18 – Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were **the first converts (=co-workers)** in Achaia, and that they have **devoted** themselves to the **service** of the saints— be **subject** to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because **they have made up for your absence**, for they **refreshed** my spirit as well as yours. Give **recognition** to such people.
  - 1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15-18

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● ● ● **Paul's own intended visit**

- 4:19 - But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and **I will find out** not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.
- 11:34 – About the other things **I will give directions** when I come.
- 16:5-7 - I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, **so that you may help me** on my journey, wherever I go.
  - 1 Corinthians 4:19; 11:34; 16:5-6

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● ● ● **Promoting the emergence of new leaders (summary)**

- How does Paul empower new local leaders?
  - By presenting himself as prototypical
  - By presenting a close affiliate (Timothy) as prototypical, suitable as interim leader
  - By presenting a local leader (Stephanas) as prototypical, raising his status to city-wide leadership
  - By visiting in person to consolidate group and leadership arrangements

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● ● ● **Paul as Entrepreneur of Identity in Corinth**

- Leading rival subgroups
- Promoting the emergence of new leaders




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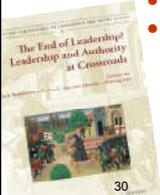
● ● ● **Almost done ...**

- Introduction
- A social identity theory of leadership
- Social identity leadership in early Christianity
  - Paul as entrepreneur of identity in Corinth
- Contemporary religious leadership as social identity leadership

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● ● ● **3. Contemporary religious leadership as social identity leadership**

- Western context for religious leadership
  - Decline of religious institutions
  - Expanding social networks
  - Public demands for transparency and authenticity
  - Increasing interest in spirituality
  - Growing religious presence in civic society




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## Contemporary religious leadership as social identity leadership

- Religious identities are no longer shaped by revered institutions nor by stable social and relational patterns.
- Rather, they are constructed and reconstructed in interaction with changing social networks, civic influences and religious ideas in an open market.
- Religious leadership will increasingly focus on socio-religious identity and civic engagement to maintain the vitality and relevance of faith communities today.
- Early Christian sources demonstrate some features of identity leadership and civic engagement.

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## Contact information

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