Revisiting followership through a social identity perspective: The role of collective follower emotion and action

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ABSTRACT

We review the concept of followership, with a specific focus on how followers actively influence leadership outcomes. We examine in particular research from four key areas: social identity perspectives on leadership, intergroup emotion theory, collective action, and reciprocal affect within leader–follower interactions. Our central proposition is that followers engage in actions, driven by both cognitive and affective-based processes, which affect leadership outcomes. Moreover, because leaders are part of the groups they lead and therefore embedded within the social context of a group, we propose that any action that affirms or threatens the salient group will trigger both cognitive and emotional responses from followers towards leaders. These include the extent to which a leader engages in actions that are perceived as (1) self-sacrificial, (2) procedurally fair, and (3) expressing emotions congruent with that of their group. We also propose that the extent to which followers translate their perceptions and emotions towards collective action towards their leaders will be moderated by individual-level group identification and group-level shared identity. To conclude, we highlight theoretical implications in light of these propositions and suggest areas for further research on followership.

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1. Introduction

In a review of the leadership literature, Chemers (2000) concluded that scholars had historically focused on leader traits and behaviors as key constituents of leadership outcomes, and therefore failed to give enough attention to the role played by followers. This omission was also highlighted in Gooty, Connelly, Griffith, and Gupta's (2010) recent review of the leadership literature. In effect, practical suggestions and recommendations derived from leader-centric studies tended not to consider appropriately the role that followers play in supporting or inhibiting desired leadership behaviors and outcomes. This conclusion was all the more intriguing, given that definitions of leadership have tended to define the concept as a social interaction process, in which one individual (i.e. the leader) attempts to influence the behaviors of others (i.e. the followers; Yukl, 2010). Moreover, the possibility that followers influence leadership outcomes was for a long time overlooked by leadership researchers (Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; Shamir, 2004). This deficiency was all the more surprising in view of the fact that, eight years prior to Chemers' review, scholars (e.g., Hollander, 1992; Lord & Hall, 1992) had already commented that conceptualizing leadership solely from the leader's perspective disregards the social nature of leadership.

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This over-emphasis on the leader as the central source of influence in the leadership process was also highlighted in Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich (1985) work on the Romance of Leadership (RoL). The RoL thesis consists of the assumptions, preconceptions and biases towards how observers view and attribute leadership, motivated by the need to simplify complexities in leadership processes in easily understood terms (Bligh, Kohles, & Pillai, 2011). Meindl and Ehrlich (1987) noted further that such over-simplified assumptions about leadership might explain why researchers have tended to over-attribute complex organizational outcomes to simplistic leadership influences, which has subsequently led leadership research being dominated by mostly leader-centric perspectives. Follower-centric perspectives thus emerged from the realization that the study of leadership has been over-simplified, especially if the cause of outcomes in complex organizations are attributed to leaders, when in fact, is the result of highly dynamic social interactions. While Meindl and Ehrlich (1987) made only passing mention of the term "followership" in their original work, follower-centric perspectives on leadership began to emerge as a means to provide a logical extension of these arguments (for a review of RoL, see Bligh et al., 2011). Meindl (1995) argues that followers' attributions towards their leaders may also play a central role in defining what an effective leader is, and that such perceptions should be given more attention in leadership research.

The shift towards more follower-centric research was partly driven by research focused on the mechanics of influence in the leadership interaction. Increased awareness of how leaders and followers *mutually* influence each other prompted researchers to consider ways in which followers themselves can influence the leadership process. Of particular interest is the growing attention paid towards emotions in leader–follower interactions. While established as an important influence in charismatic and transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Erez, Misangyi, Johnson, LePine, & Halverson, 2008; Walter & Bruch, 2007), existing research still only provides limited insight into how followers' emotions influence leadership outcomes given the persistent leader-centric perspectives on leadership.

Recently, in a review of leadership and affect, Gooty and colleagues (2010) highlighted that, despite the growing interest in follower-centered models of leadership, there remains a continuing need for more follower-centric research. In line with Hollander (1992) and Lord and Hall's (1992) comments, these authors point out that little attention has been paid to how followers perceptions, and their subsequent emotions and behaviors towards leaders shape leadership processes. In this review, we hope to contribute to redressing this imbalance.

To justify why follower-centric approaches are crucial to the advancement of leadership theory, we also 'problematize' current models of leadership by arguing that they have thus far failed to give sufficient weight to the importance of followers' roles in the leadership process. Indeed, much of what we understand about leadership effectiveness is framed under a leader-centric perspective, and neglect what it is that followers themselves do to influence leadership outcomes. Consistent with Alvesson and Sandberg (2011), rather than simply build on the assumption that leadership outcomes are solely determined by the leader, we challenge this view by suggesting that followers too, are active and influential parties that can also dictate leadership outcomes.

Moreover, researchers have begun to examine more specifically the role of followers' affect in influencing leadership outcomes (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2005; Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee, & Tse, 2009; Tee, Ashkanasy, & Paulsen, 2013; Weierter, 1997). Notably, the recent trend towards more follower-centric perspectives on leadership has built on the realization that it is not just follower cognition that can shape leadership outcomes, but also the affective processes that underlie leader–follower interactions. (e.g., see Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000).

Another limitation of much of the extant leadership research is its inability to capture accurately the multi-level nature of leadership processes and outcomes. In addition to being highly leader-centric, leadership researchers have tended to conceptualize leader–follower relationships as being mainly individual-level dyadic interactions. In reality, however, leaders lead *groups* of followers, not just individuals (Ashkanasy, 2003; Hogg et al., 2005; Thomas, Martin, & Riggio, 2013). This reality implies that models of leadership processes need to account for how leadership processes at multiple levels shape leadership outcomes (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995; Klein, Tosi, & Canella, 1999; Pearce, 2007).

Calls for multi-level studies of leadership have also been advocated by Yammarino and Dansereau (2008), who suggest that researchers should account for how leaders influence, and are in turn influenced by, meso-level contextual factors. The extension of leadership models from single-level analysis to multi-level models also holds theoretical appeal in advancing relational theories of leadership. Further, distinguishing the different levels on which leader–follower interactions take place is crucial, given the increasing number of multi-level leadership research, but also, that a large number of leader–member exchange research suffers from a misalignment of levels (Gooty, Serban, Thomas, Gavin, & Yammarino, 2012; Markham, 2010).

The theoretical and practical appeal of multi-level conceptualizations of leadership processes are not limited to relational leadership models alone, however. Conceptualizing leadership as a multi-level process also enhances the applicability of social identity models of leadership (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). The social identity model of leadership has received extensive research attention towards understanding the constituents of effective group leadership. Social identity models emphasize the importance of group-level identity in the leadership process, and are based on the idea that central to leadership effectiveness is the extent to which the leader represents and maintains salient group identity (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004). Indeed, these models of leadership appear to hold potential for future development of multi-level conceptualizations of leadership. In particular, such models emphasize a key role of leaders in upholding and preserving group-level identities that are important in building group norms and functions (van Knippenberg, 2011).

More importantly, social identity models also include consideration of how followers can collectively influence leadership outcomes. Because leaders are themselves members of the groups they lead, it is likely that the leaders are influenced by the collective behaviors, cognitions, and affective dynamics of their followers. Social identity theorists (e.g., see Collinson, 2006; van

Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003) assert that followers play an important part in determining the extent of leader endorsement and their influence on the groups they lead. Central to our thesis therefore is that followers can influence leadership outcomes that promote their salient group identities through affective processes.

Moreover, both cognitive and affective processes, which occur when followers self-categorize themselves as a member of a salient group, have implications for group identity and identification. As a result of this self-categorization, it seems reasonable to conclude that followers can proactively engage in collective actions towards leaders that either affirm or limit the influence of leaders on the group. We thus revisit initial propositions that leadership should be conceptualized via follower-centric perspectives (Hollander, 1992; Lord & Hall, 1992) and develop a follower-centric model of leadership revolving around follower affect and their influence on group identity. Our theorizing also follows up on Lord and Brown's (2001) suggestions that both leader and follower identity are central to a holistic understanding of leadership processes. With increasing evidence of the importance of processes in leadership interactions, along with the robustness of evidence pertaining to social identity processes in organizational leadership research, we propose that leadership researchers are now in a position to develop a follower-centric model grounded in these domains of research.

In the following sections, we review research based on social identity and social categorization theories (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2005, van Knippenberg et al., 2004) paying particular attention to the affective processes involved in the enactment of group identity. Consistently, we review research and relevant theories conducted on group-level emotions and collective action, and discuss the affective processes central to the enactment and expression of group-level emotions. We then provide an integrative discussion on how these areas of research collectively inform our central propositions, arguing that followers' shared identity can moderate the extent of leadership effectiveness through both expressions of emotions and collective action towards leaders. Following this, we discuss the individual-level and situational influences that encourage follower-centric emotional expressions and action towards their leaders. We conclude by providing suggestions for future research.

2. Social identity theory and leadership: emotions as identity

Social identity constitutes part of an individual's self-concept, derived from the knowledge of membership of a social group, together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981). Applications of social identity theory towards understanding leadership processes tend to revolve around how leaders enact a particular social identity based on the social context in which they are operating (van Knippenberg, 2011). An extension of social identity theory, referred to by Turner (1987) as self-categorization theory, suggests that the enactment of an actor's social identity is triggered by a process of individual depersonalization, whereby the individual changes their self-conceptualization and frames their identity not solely on individual idiosyncrasies, but more on group-relevant attributes.

Both theories provide two important considerations for the scholarly study of leadership, which make them an ideal foundation on which to base our current propositions. First, the theories consider leaders to be embedded within the context of the groups they lead, and that leadership effectiveness depends on how leaders uphold and preserve salient group identity. Second, in support of a more follower-centric approach to leadership, the social identity model also considers how groups of followers can collectively influence leadership outcomes. Within this framework, therefore, followers play an important part in determining the extent of a leader's endorsement and influence on the groups they lead (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

While we argue for followers' collective influence on leadership outcomes mainly from a collective sense, we also acknowledge that followers can, at the individual-level, shape leadership outcomes. We recognize that within-group differences in follower attributes can also influence how followers perceive leaders, are susceptible to leader influence, or engage in actions to promote or limit a leader's influence attempts. Some individual-level follower differences that have been researched before in this regard include followers' preferences for leaders based on their own values and personality (Erhhart & Klein, 2001), susceptibility to leader influence (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Thoroughgood, Padilla, Hunter, & Tate, 2012), self-perceptions (van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011) and regulatory focus (Pierro, Cicero, Bonaiuto, van Knippenberg, & Kruglanski, 2005; Pierro, Cicero, & Higgins, 2009; Stam, van Knippenberg, & Wisse, 2010). The focus of our present paper, however, is on meso-level group-relevant moderators (identification with the group and shared identity) that collectively influence how multiple followers shape leadership outcomes, as opposed to individual-level follower attributes.

To date, robust evidence exists to support the proposition that leadership effectiveness, under the social identity model, is dependent on the extent to which followers perceive leaders (1) to be representative of the group's identity, i.e. prototypical (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hains, Hogg, & Duck, 1997; Haslam et al., 1998; Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998; Hogg et al., 2006), and also (2) to be engaging in behaviors that are perceived as being beneficial to upholding the salient group identity, i.e. group-serving behavior (Duck & Fielding, 2003; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Haslam et al., 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005).

We acknowledge that the concept of prototypicality as defined in social identity theory differs from that defined by Foti, Fraser, and Lord (1982), who conceptualized prototypes as followers' implicit perceptions and assumptions of what defines an effective leader. Under implicit leadership theory, such prototypes relate instead to what followers perceive to be a prototypical effective leader, rather than how much s/he represents followers (Foti et al., 1982; Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994; Smith & Foti, 1998). As such, implicit leadership theories relate to followers' perceptions of leaders at the global level, which differs from van Knippenberg and associates' (van Knippenberg, 2011; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003) conceptualization of leader prototypicality in relation to local, group-level prototypes under the social identity theory of leadership. Thus, followers' collective perceptions of a leader's

effectiveness are not based on individual-level implicit understandings of effective leaders, but more on group-relevant attributes. In this paper, effective leadership is thus dependent on the extent to which leaders engender followers' self-concept — through identification with the leader themselves, along with the extent to which followers perceive the presence of a collective, shared identity (van Knippenberg, 2011; van Knippenberg et al., 2005). A corollary to these observations is that leaders who fail to fulfill the expectation of promoting and preserving the salient identity will be collectively disapproved by their followers.

In addition, applications of social identity processes towards the understanding of leadership processes in organizations appear to have mostly overlooked the role of emotions in the enactment and preservation of group membership and identities (Brown & Capozza, 2006). Group identities assist in coordinating and directing collective efforts towards a group-level goal, and one way in which group identities do so is via the creation of group-level emotions (van Knippenberg, 2011). Group-level emotion also forms an important part of an individual's social identity (Bettencourt & Hume, 1999; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, & Holzworth, 1993; Hogg, Hardie, & Reynolds, 1995; Páez, Basabe, Ubillos, & González-Castro, 2007; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007). How such shared emotions serve as a means by which followers reduce self-uncertainty and threats to their salient group identity, however, remains unclear. We develop this idea further in the next section, where we present our first proposition.

3. Followers' emotions and influences on group salient identity

Rimé (2007) points out that the sharing, experience and expressions of group emotions contribute to a sense of emotional communion. This then translates to feelings of unity, similarity, and enhanced feelings of belongingness to the group. These emotions are considered an important operative mechanism that also shapes identity formation (Jasper, 2011). In this respect, Reicher, Haslam, and Hopkins (2005: 126) posit leaders as "entrepreneurs of identity", who can shape group identity through emotions. Pescosolido (2002) likewise states that leaders may set the emotional tone of their groups, influencing how followers are expected to feel and behave within the group context. While the leader's own emotional expressions may serve as a particularly important reference point for followers to assess the leader's prototypicality and intentions to engage in group-serving behaviors (Haslam et al., 2001; Tee, Ashkanasy, & Paulsen, 2013), we propose that such expressions of emotions may also be a means by which followers promote or preserve their group's identity. These group-level emotions would serve as a mechanism by which followers promote or preserve the group identity.

Also, in as much as leaders are able to shape the collective emotion of the group, we propose that followers can also do the same as a means to promote or to preserve their group identity. Followers' shared sense of emotion towards leaders may be the key mechanism linking their perceptions towards their leaders and the extent to which they approve of their leaders. We suggest that leaders who uphold and promote the group identity will be perceived more favorably and arouse more positive emotion from followers. Disapproval, negative perceptions, and negative emotions would conversely be directed towards leaders who engage in actions that threaten the group's salient identity.

In this respect, Collinson (2006) and Chaleff (2003: 17) propose that followers may adopt an "oppositional identity" towards leaders perceived as not acting in the best interest of the organization. Evidence for our line of argument is also informed by research on intergroup emotions theory (Mackie, Smith, & Ray, 2008; Smith, 1993) and collective action, which show how social identities influence the ways in which group members are expected to feel towards external influences. We argue here that intergroup emotions theory is pertinent to elucidating our follower-centric, social identity model of leadership, in that followers' perceptions and emotional reactions towards leaders would be different if these leaders were viewed as members of an outgroup, rather than a representative ingroup member. Furthermore, it is not implausible to suggest that, within the context of organizational leadership today, followers may be led by multiple leaders (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2006). This possibility forms a more relevant case on how followers may perceive themselves as members of the ingroup, in contrast with multiple leaders, who may be perceived as part of the outgroup.

Mackie, Devos, and Smith (2000) showed that ingroup members communally felt anger towards individuals they perceived as being dissimilar to the group. These perceptions of dissimilarity, together with experiences of anger, motivated group members' intentions to take offensive actions against outgroup members. Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) suggest that such emotion-driven collective actions are motivated by group members' intention to promote and to preserve their group identities, and to create a positive distinction between their identities with the identities of rival groups.

Van Dijke and De Cremer (2010) assert further that such unfavorable perceptions may also lead to the experience and expression of negative emotions towards leaders who fail to uphold or preserve the salient group identity. Linking intergroup emotions theory and social identity theory gives rise to the consideration of leaders coming to be viewed as a member of an outgroup if they were to engage in actions that threaten the identity of the ingroup. Thus, when a leader engages in actions that threaten group identity, s/he should arouse negative emotional responses from followers, and will come to be disapproved by followers through collective actions motivated by these negative emotions. Likewise, it is logical to assume that leaders who are viewed as being a positive influence on group identity are likely to be perceived more favorably, arouse more positive emotion from followers and, subsequently, come to be endorsed by their followers. The experience of positive emotions towards such followers may then prompt followers to engage in collective acts that affirm the leader as a positive influence on group identity.

Our propositions are also in line with Dasborough and colleagues (2009) and Hareli and Rafaeli (2008)'s models of leader–follower reciprocal affect, where the authors theorize that followers' expression of negative emotions may stem from unfavorable perceptions of leader unwarranted favoritism and insincerity. They are also consistent with our initial argument that leaders, being members of the groups they lead, can themselves also be affected by their followers' affect (Tee, Ashkanasy, & Paulsen, 2013). We thus

extend on Dasborough and colleagues' (2009) multi-level theoretical model by also considering how followers can affirm leaders and preserve their group identities through the expression of positive emotion. In view of this, our first propositions are:

Proposition 1a. Leaders who are viewed as positive influences on salient group identity will be perceived as part of the ingroup. Such leaders will be viewed *favorably* by followers and will arouse positive emotions from followers and motivate them to approve of a leader's influence on the group.

Proposition 1b. Leaders who are viewed as threats to salient group identity will be perceived as part of an outgroup. Such leaders will be viewed *unfavorably* by followers and will arouse negative emotions from followers and motivate them to disapprove of a leader's influence on the group.

4. Threats to group identity

Our first proposition prompts a seemingly obvious follow-up question: What leader behaviors are likely to cause followers to form positive or negative evaluations of the leader, which may then lead to approval (or disapproval), and, consequently, relevant emotional reactions towards the leader? We answer this question by addressing three potential threats to group identity: (1) leader self-serving behavior, (2) procedural unfairness, and (3) inappropriate emotions. We address each of these three threats in turn.

4.1. Perceiving the leader as self-serving

As evidenced by research on ad hoc and permanent small groups, a leader's social attractiveness relies on how prototypical the leader is of the group (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hogg et al., 1993; Hogg et al., 1995). Followers' expressions of positive emotions towards prototypical leaders thus represent an affective response towards leaders who are perceived as conforming to and promoting the group's welfare and identity. Conversely, leaders who are perceived as being non-prototypical, or not leading in a manner that benefits their groups, are likely to arouse negative emotions in followers.

Recent advances in this line of research, however, suggest that leaders who embody the group prototype are endorsed because followers perceive these leaders as acting procedurally fairer than non-prototypical leaders (van Dijke & De Cremer, 2010). As such, we argue that simply being non-prototypical is unlikely to be sufficient to eliciting negative perceptions amongst followers to the point where they engage in collective action towards their leaders. While being prototypical (or in this case, non-prototypical) is important in garnering endorsement from followers, we suggest that other more explicit threats to the salient identity are more likely to provoke strong negative evaluations, disapproval and trigger negative emotional reactions from followers.

In the following therefore, we build on suggestions by Hains and colleagues (1997) and Haslam (2004), that consistency with a group prototype does not constitute leadership per se. Rather, such a role represents a more emblematic, passive, and impressionistic role that can also be moderated by skilled leaders (van Knippenberg, 2011). Consistent with this idea, our argument is that followers would be expected to engage in collective actions towards their leaders if leaders are seen to be engaging in actions that explicitly threaten the group identity. Evidence for this proposition is derived from research on leader self-sacrificial and group-serving behavior (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998).

Thus, to develop our next propositions, we first make the point that a leader's self-sacrificial behaviors actually constitute explicit indicators that s/he is willing to set aside her or his personal interests, thus drawing attention away from the leader's personal interests and emphasizing commitment to the group. In fact, research evidence (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Ryan & Veenstra, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005) appears to suggest that even non-prototypical leaders may be able to garner support from followers if they engage in actions that support the in-group's welfare. By doing so, they affirm their support for the salient group's identity. As a result, endorsement of a leader may depend less on who the leader *is*, and more on what the leader *does* for the group. In this case, even positive deviants (i.e. non-prototypical group members) who attribute their success to the group are likely to be perceived more favorably than deviants who attribute their success to personal attributes (Fielding, Hogg, & Annandale, 2006).

Likewise, Haslam and Platow (2001) found that followers' support for their leader is strongest when leaders chose to reward followers who oppose an outgroup and, by doing so, effectively indicate that they affirm and support their own group's welfare and identity. In two experimental studies, these authors found that leaders' expression of opposition towards an outgroup was an explicit indicator of their intention to promote their in-group's interests. Therefore, it would seem plausible to conclude that follower disapproval, combined with negative emotional reactions from followers towards leaders, may stem from leaders who actively engage in actions that explicitly threaten the salient group identity. Conversely, followers who perceive their leaders as engaging in actions that favor an outgroup, or are self-serving in nature, are likely to be perceived negatively and consequently trigger negative emotional reactions from members of the ingroup. Such deviant leader behavior may provoke strong emotional reactions from ingroup members because they explicitly violate the expectation that leaders should affirm the salient group identity.

Following on from these assertions, we suggest that it is also possible to align the implications of such leader behaviors with the Marques, Yzerbyt, and Leyens (1988) and Marques and Paez (1994) studies of the "black-sheep effect". In these studies, deviant ingroup members were judged more critically by members of their own group (compared to members of an outgroup) because they were seen to threaten the group's social image. We therefore argue that, when leaders engage in actions that threaten the salient group identity, they will be perceived as being deviant and non-prototypical (i.e., a "black sheep"), and arouse

negative emotional reactions from followers. It is worth mentioning that such perceptions may also be the means by which followers differentiate between authentic and pseudo-transformational leaders (Bass & Steidlmeir, 1999).

Moreover, perceptions of leader authenticity is also strongly influenced by concepts of both leader and follower identity, and the extent to which leaders engage in behaviors that affirm and support the needs of the collective (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). Similarly, Michie and Gooty (2005) argue for the importance of self-transcendent values in motivating leader self-sacrificial behaviors. Leading in a self-transcendent manner includes forgoing one's self-interest for a common good, and is a key indicator of whether leaders are viewed by followers as being self-sacrificial or otherwise. Based on this reasoning, we proffer:

Proposition 2a. Leaders who are viewed as self-sacrificial will be perceived as affirming the salient group identity. Such leaders will be viewed *favorably* by followers and will arouse positive emotions from followers and motivate them to approve of a leader's influence on the group.

Proposition 2b. Leaders who are viewed as self-serving will be perceived as threatening the salient group identity. Such leaders will be viewed *unfavorably* by followers and will arouse negative emotions from followers and motivate them to disapprove of a leader's influence on the group.

4.2. Perceiving the leader as procedurally unfair

Development of our next propositions begins with work by van Dijke and De Cremer (2010), who found that endorsement of prototypical leaders stems from followers' expectation that prototypical leaders will act more in line with specific procedural fairness rules compared with non-prototypical leaders. These results seem to tell us that leaders need to be seen to be procedurally fair when leading the group in order to be seen as being prototypical. Van Dijke and De Cremer (2010) argue in particular that the basis of social attraction towards prototypical leaders is a perception that prototypical leaders engage in actions deemed to be procedurally fair to the group, thereby enhancing perceptions of the leader's legitimacy and benevolence. This effect has been found to be consistent across experimental studies by Lipponen, Koivisto, and Olkkonen (2005), De Cremer, van Dijke, and Mayer (2010), and Seppälä, Lipponen, and Pirttilä-Backman (2012).

In opposition to this idea, however, Ullrich, Christ, and van Dick (2009) found that *positive* endorsement can be given to prototypical leaders who are perceived as acting unfairly towards the group under certain circumstances. In this instance, the evidence suggests that the benefits of being seen as prototypical are such that followers are more forgiving of prototypical leaders, for example when such leaders fail to meet group or organizational rules (Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008; Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009) or allocate resources unfairly (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). This outcome seems to be the case, however, *only for high-identifying group members*. As such, we argue that only high-identifying group members, relative to low-identifying group members, will be perceptive of how procedurally fair the leader is. Ullrich and colleagues' findings are thus consistent with an earlier study by Cornelis, Van Hiel and De Cremer (2006), who showed that leaders' unfair treatment can also result in lowered relationship quality levels with other team members. In a series of experimental studies, these authors found that support for the procedurally-fair, prototypical leader was highest amongst group members who had a high need for belongingness to the group.

Consistent with this theorizing, the Cornelis, Van Hiel, and De Cremer (2006) study also highlights the implications of leader unfair treatment on followers' emotions. Thus, Cornelis et al. (2006) found that, when leaders are seen to be acting unfairly, team members portray less positive emotion towards other team members who support the leader.

This pattern of results, however, like in Ullrich and colleagues (2009) study, was also moderated by follower-centered differences; in this case, a felt need to belong to the group (cf. high identification). In light of these findings, we argue that, when leaders act in an unfair manner, they violate expectations of acting in a procedurally fair manner, they will be viewed as being less prototypical, and their actions will be perceived as a threat to group identity by high identifying group members. Most importantly, the studies we cite above highlight that simply being prototypical is at times insufficient as the sole basis for leader endorsement. The foundation of leader prototypicality seems to lie in acting in a procedurally fair manner, upon which followers derive leader benevolence and social attraction. Importantly, the research also suggests that this effect is moderated by the strength of follower identification with their group. Thus:

Proposition 3a. Compared to low-identifying followers, high-identifying followers are more likely to experience/express positive emotions towards leaders exhibiting procedural fairness. This is because such leaders are viewed as prototypical, and affirming the salient group identity.

Proposition 3b. Compared to low-identifying followers, high-identifying are likely to experience/express negative emotions towards leaders exhibiting procedural unfairness. This is because such leaders are viewed as non-prototypical, and threatening to the salient group identity.

4.3. Perceiving the leader as expressing group-incongruent emotions

Given that group-level emotions form part of the salient group identity, followers might thus look to leaders as a point of reference on which to assess the appropriateness of their emotions within group contexts. In this regard, when leaders express

emotions congruent with that of their group, they are likely to be seen to be signaling their orientation towards the salient group identity (Haslam et al., 2001). We note further that this proposition is also consistent with the emotions-as-social-information (EASI) model (van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010), in that individuals judged others' intentions and expected behaviors on the basis of the expresser's emotions. Hence, another way in which followers infer the extent of a leader's group-serving intentions may also be via their leader's expressions of group-relevant emotions.

In fact, research (e.g., see Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002; Lewis, 2000) has shown that followers make assessments of the leader's sincerity and intention to act on behalf of the group based on the leader's emotional expressions. As such, emotional expressions appear to be more important than the objective content of a leader's communication in influencing followers' inferences of leader sincerity. Followers therefore assess leader behaviors (and intended behaviors) based on the extent to which the leader's emotion appears to be appropriate for the situation (see also Warner & Shields, 2009; Schaubroeck & Shao, 2012).

A recent field study of mid-level managers by Ilies, Curşeu, Dimotakis, and Spitzmuller (2013) further validates this point, showing that leader emotional expressiveness are a crucial influence on perceptions of leader authenticity and effectiveness. This particular field study of mid-level managers also showed that idealized influence was a key mediating influence between emotional expressiveness and follower perceptions of leader effectiveness.

The importance of leaders expressing emotions congruent with that of their group is most evident in research examining the impact of appropriate leader emotional expressions on followers' perceptions towards their leaders. Michie and Gooty (2005) and Connelly and Ruark (2010) stress that expressions of appropriate emotions as morally important, and are central in upholding perceptions of self-sacrificial behaviors during situations of uncertainty, in which the interests of the group become especially salient. Similarly, Bucy (2000: 195) argued that followers employ "emotional appropriateness heuristics" to judge a leader's traits, suggesting that the leader's emotional expressions must be compatible with the situation and context in which the leader is conveying the message.

In support of this idea, Bucy (2000) found in two experimental studies that followers rate political leaders as being more trustworthy if they are perceived to express emotions appropriate and congruent with the group's situation. Conversely, the lack of appropriate emotional expression by leaders results in followers making negative assessments of the leader. Bucy (2000) argues that, when a leader violates followers' expectations of normative, situationally-appropriate emotions that match group emotions, followers express lowered confidence towards the leader and view the leader less favorably than when the leader expressed situationally-appropriate emotions. Such expressions of situationally-appropriate emotions are especially important when groups are experiencing situational ambiguity, that is, situations in which groups experience a threat to the salient identity. In this instance, Stewart, Waller, and Schubert's (2009) experimental studies of presidential speechmaking styles (2009) found that the impact of leader emotional expressions is especially important during crisis situations. Individuals rely on leaders' emotional expressions as an overt indicator of the leader's credibility during the demanding situation. Specifically, results of the Stewart et al. study indicate that even brief, fleeting facial micro-expressions are important in influencing observers' perceptions of the leader's credibility.

Given that group-level emotions are part of the salient group identity, we argue that leaders expressing emotions congruent with that of the group's situation and status are likely to be viewed more positively and favorably than leaders who express emotions incongruent with that of the group's situation and status. Indeed, while the studies we cited above were not based within a social identity framework, they nonetheless provide some suggestion that, to be perceived by followers as willing to engage in group-serving behavior, leaders need to express emotions that are consistent with their group's situation and status.

In support of this idea, Tee, Ng, and Paulsen (in press) found that leaders were perceived as more effective and perceived as more willing to engage in self-sacrificial behaviors if they expressed emotions befitting the status of their group. Further, results from this study were that the expression of situationally-appropriate emotions was especially important for leaders who were perceived to be prototypical of the group. A prototypical leader who expressed group-incongruent emotions was rated more harshly and perceived more negatively than a non-prototypical leader who expressed group-congruent emotions.

Moreover, what emerges from the studies cited above is the notion that followers need to perceive the leader as willing to engage in actions that benefit the group. In the absence of such appropriate emotions, leaders may be considered acting deviant, and followers may impose harsher penalties towards prototypical leaders who were expected to uphold the salient group identity (i.e. the "black-sheep effect"; Marques et al., 1988; Marques & Paez, 1994). As Shields (2005) argues, expressions of appropriate emotions are explicit indicators of whose interests are promoted. Group-inconsistent emotions may be seen as a threat to the salient identity, and group-inconsistent emotions imply that the leader is indirectly conveying a lack of intention to promote or preserve the salient identity. Such perceptions by followers may lead subsequently to less favorable evaluations of the leader, and expressions of negative emotions towards such leaders. The importance of expressing appropriate emotions is also noted by Michie and Gooty (2005), who argue for the moral importance of the leader needing to express appropriate emotions, which are also suitably intense, in shaping followers' perceptions of their authenticity. Thus:

Proposition 4a. Followers will experience/express positive emotions towards leaders perceived as expressing emotions congruent with the group. This is because such leaders affirm norms of expected group-level emotions.

Proposition 4b. Followers will experience/express negative emotions towards leaders perceived as expressing emotions incongruent with the group. This is because such leaders violate norms of expected group-level emotions.

5. Translating emotion to action

In this section, we build on Propositions 1a to 4b to suggest that the followers' perceptions of leader behaviors we discussed above (self-serving, procedural unfairness, and expressing group-incongruent emotions) also trigger negative perceptions towards these leaders and, ultimately, negative emotional reactions and behaviors. These negative emotions and behaviors in turn undermine their support for and perceptions of effectiveness of these leaders. In particular, and as Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, and Zhang (2007) point out, the interaction between cognition and emotion are such that emotions do not *directly* inform behavior. Rather, emotions serve as a feedback mechanism that influences cognitive processes; which then inputs into decision and behaviors. Thus, to develop further the links between perception, emotion, and behavior of followers towards their leaders, we develop our next propositions with reference to two additional theoretical perspectives: (1) Marques and colleagues' (1988) "black sheep" hypothesis, and (2) Drury and Reicher's (2000) elaborated social identity model of collective action.

5.1. The black sheep hypothesis

The black sheep hypothesis (Marques et al., 1988) states that judgments about likeable and unlikeable group members should yield more extreme positive and negative evaluations than judgments about similarly likeable and unlikeable outgroup members. Thus, group members may respond to threats to the salient identity posed by leaders in one of two ways: (1) they may reappraise such deviant leader behaviors as being less deviant than they are or (2) recategorize these leaders as members of an outgroup (Pinto, Marques, & Levine, 2010). These motivations have, as Eidelman and Biernat (2003) and Ellemers et al. (2002) found, to be both an individual protection strategy to distance the individual from the unfavorable ingroup members (differential derogation) and a means to preserve the salient group identity.

In this respect, Hutchinson, Abrams, Gutierrez, and Viki (2008) state that, when the undesirable target (i.e., a deviant leader) is viewed in such a negative light, the leader can no longer be seen as a typical ingroup member and will be treated instead by followers as an outgroup member. Results from the Hutchinson et al. (2008) study were consistent with the authors' suggestion that this derogation of ingroup member deviance is another form of psychological exclusion geared towards enhancing the perception of ingroup members' positive stereotypical attributes.

5.2. The elaborated social identity model of collective action

The black sheep hypothesis, however, is in itself insufficient to explain how and why followers' negative perceptions and emotions inform their decision to *act* against ineffective leaders. In order to understand how followers' perceptions and emotions can and do translate to collective action against their leaders, we refer to Drury and Reicher's (2000) elaborated social identity model. Indeed, the strongest evidence for how such perceptions and emotions may translate to behaviors towards leaders is observable from research on crowd behavior (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005, 2009). In particular, Drury and Reicher (2009) posit that emotions are fundamentally linked with how individuals perceive themselves in groups, and that collective action is driven by members' perceptions of illegitimacy and unfairness of authorities (see also Tyler & Degoey, 1995). Such perceptions are in turn accompanied by emotional reactions such as grievance and outrage. This realization prompted Drury and Reicher (2005) to suggest that emotion and reason are "interwoven as causes of collective action, not separate pathways" (p. 720). In a study of two crowd events, Drury and Reicher found that it is the interplay of perceptions and emotion that empowers group members to affirm or to reject the power of dominant outgroups. Drury and Reicher's (2005) study of protest group participants is particularly relevant in highlighting also how such collective action against dominant outgroups is possible only when the protesters shared a common social identity.

Drury and Reicher's (2000, 2005) findings have also found support in Thomas, McGarty, and Mavor's (2009b) normative alignment model of identity and emotion in committing group members to sustained social and political action. These authors argue that shared beliefs and emotions create a climate of empowerment between group members to act in way that brings about desired change. We thus argue that shared perceptions and emotions directed towards leaders will empower the collective to act to affirm or to resist the influence of leaders. Thus, both the black sheep hypothesis (differential derogation by followers) and elaborated social identity model (perceptions and emotions motivating groups to act against outgroup influences on identity) inform our next proposition, in that these perceptions and emotions (as a function of group identity) motivate follower collective action towards their leaders, and that such collective action serves to promote, or preserve the salient group identity. Thus:

Proposition 5. Group identity unifies followers' perceptions and emotions towards leaders, leading followers to engage collectively in actions towards leaders aimed at promoting and/or preserving the salient group identity.

6. Moderators

In this next section, we address two factors that serve to moderate follower perceptions, expressions of emotions towards leaders, and intentions to engage in collective action. These are (1) follower identification and (2) shared identity.

6.1. Moderator 1: follower identification with group salient identity

The first moderating variable we address is follower identification with the group's salient identity. This idea is based on the social identity theory of leadership, where researchers (De Cremer, 2006; De Cremer, van Knippenberg, van Dijke, & Bos, 2006; Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hogg et al., 1998; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001) have studied the impact of follower identification with the salient group identity as a key moderating influencing a wide range of group and leadership outcomes. Findings from this research tell us that follower identification serves to moderate the dynamics between followers' perceptions and leadership outcomes. In particular, follower identification has been found to determine whether followers endorse prototypical leaders who were procedurally unfair; so much so that it may even allow high-identifying followers to overlook a prototypical leader's unfairness (Ullrich et al., 2009).

In support of our arguments regarding the role of emotions, Seger, Smith, and Mackie (2009) found that group-based emotions are triggered upon activation of social categorization (i.e., when the group identity is made salient). These authors found that this process was particularly evident for group members who identified strongly with the group, such that high-identifying group members were found to converge on shared, unified emotions that motivated group-relevant attitudes and behaviors. Such group-relevant attitudes may include the desire to confront threats to the group's identity.

Kessler and Hollbach (2005) also suggest that the link between group identification and group-based emotions is a bidirectional one, in that (1) identification with a group elevates the intensity of experiencing group-based emotions, and (2) the experience of group-based emotions heightens members' identification with the group. These authors argue that identification with the group is key to explaining how much individuals choose to associate with, or distance themselves from in-group emotions and action tendencies. In support of this, Kaiser, Hagiwara, Mahaly, and Wilkins (2009) highlight the effect of group identification as crucial in prompting attitudinal and behavioral responses amongst group members towards threats made towards the salient group identity.

In support of this idea, Kaiser et al. (2009) found in three experimental studies that highly identified group members are more sensitive towards acknowledging in group members who engage in confrontation in defense of the group identity. High identity members were also found to express more positive attitudes towards ingroup members (who actively confront threats to the salient identity) than ingroup members (who do not confront such threats).

Similar results were found by Hutchinson and colleagues (2008); that high identifiers are more extreme in their judgments of deviant ingroup members, and this motivates intentions to exclude these members from representing the ingroup. Such reactions are thus emotional responses towards ingroup members who react strongly toward external threats to the group identity. Taken together, these findings allow us to suggest that group members who identify strongly with the salient group identity, compared with group members who identify weakly with the salient group identity, are more likely to be sensitive towards leader influences on group identity. Thus:

Proposition 6. High-identification group members are more likely to be affected by group-level emotions, attitudes, and behaviors than low-identification members. As a result, high-identification members are also more likely to be sensitive towards potential threats posed by leader to the group's salient identity.

6.2. Moderator 2: group members' shared sense of identity

The mechanism linking how perceptions of ineffective leaders to the experience and expression of negative emotions towards these leaders may also be explained, in part, by the strength of group members' shared sense of identity. In line with the underlying purpose of social identities in affirming a positive distinction between the ingroup with the outgroup (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004), it may also be possible that it is the strength of this shared identity that allows followers to limit the influence of parties (in this case, leaders) who are perceived as unfavorable influences on the salient identity.

Haslam and Reicher's (2006) BBC prison experiment study provides the clearest evidence to date regarding this proposition. In this study, the authors found that low-power individuals (participants assigned to prisoner roles in the study) who shared a strong sense of identity were able to resist the influence of high-power individuals (participants assigned to guard roles), who shared a weak identity. In explaining these results, Haslam and Reicher (2006, 2007) suggest that, when group members share a collective, salient identity, they provide each other with more social support, and this allows them effectively to resist the effects of external, situational stressors and unwanted influences on their group. While their study did not explicitly measure the conveyance or expressions of emotions for either group of participants in the study, the stress measures they used suggest that the prisoners' strong sense of identity and aggression frustrated the guards' attempts of influence and control. In effect, while the study's main focus was not on the emotional aspects of how strong, shared identities resisted influences of external influences, it does nonetheless suggest that the resistance towards external influences may in fact be an emotional reaction towards influences on group identity.

These findings also suggest that the strength of a shared identity may even moderate the extent to which leadership is needed within groups. This is consistent with Drury and Reicher's (2005) findings that such collective actions are only possible when group members are empowered by a common social identity. Similarly, Thomas, McGarty, and Mavor (2009a) concluded that vague social identities are unlikely to be sufficiently motivating in empowering collective action. Thus, followers who share a strong sense of a common salient group identity are better able to convey support or disapproval of their leaders via their emotional displays and portrayals of resistant behaviors towards leaders.

We noted earlier that attention has only been paid to the influence of negative affect as one way in which followers limit a leader's influence on the group's identity. We therefore extend these findings by suggesting further that followers (who share a strong, unified social identity relative to those who share a weak identity) are also more likely to express positive emotions towards their leaders perceived as affirming of the group's identity. Thus:

Proposition 7. The strength of followers' shared group identity moderates the extent to which they express emotions and/or engage in collective action in response to leaders' attempts to shape group identity.

In summary, grounded in research on social identity theory, intergroup emotions, collective action, and reciprocal affect, we argue that both cognition and emotion interact in the enactment of followers' social identities. The salient identity enacted as a result of these individual-level mechanisms then motivates group-level, follower collective actions towards leaders. Followers are likely to perceive favorably, and to experience positive emotions towards leaders that are seen as group-serving, procedurally fair, and expressing emotions congruent with that of the group. Likewise, these individual-level negative perceptions, along with the experience of negative emotions are triggered by leaders who are seen as self-serving, procedurally unfair, and expressing emotions incongruent with that of the group. These effects are likely to be moderated also by the individual-level follower identification with their groups, and at the group-level, the strength of multiple followers' of the shared group identity. Collectively, we then propose that these group levels emotions towards leaders leads to group-level collective action towards leaders. A diagrammatical representation of our propositions, key components of our model and levels on which these components operate at are presented in Fig. 1.

7. Future research

While the evidence from related research provides initial support for our propositions, it is not until such propositions are empirically tested that we can come to understand fully the dynamics of how emotions influence followership process, group identity, and leadership outcomes. In the following section, we begin by suggesting the directions for future research that our propositions have for refining leader–member exchange theory and transformational leadership theory. Following this, we highlight three specific areas for further research that may aid in the refinement, development, and validation of the propositions we present in this review. These are (1) discrete emotions, (2) individual differences, and (3) situational and temporal factors. Finally, we propose ideas for methodological advancement in testing the propositions suggested in our paper.

7.1. Leader–member exchange and transformational leadership processes

We argue that our propositions suggest a need for refinement of more established theories of leadership, namely leader–member exchange and transformational leadership. We highlight the importance of both follower perceptions and emotions in impacting the quality of leader–follower relationships. We also emphasize as well the need to distinguish clearly between the levels of analysis in leader–member exchange research (which incorporates studies of group-level emotions), and how these may also impact leader–follower interactions at the individual level (Ashkanasy, Paulsen, & Tee, 2012). Moreover, the influence of collective followers' emotions has implications for advancing leader–member exchange research beyond that of individual and dyadic levels of analysis (Gooty et al., 2012). It is also plausible that such group-level affect impacts variables relevant to the quality of leader–follower relationships such as trust.
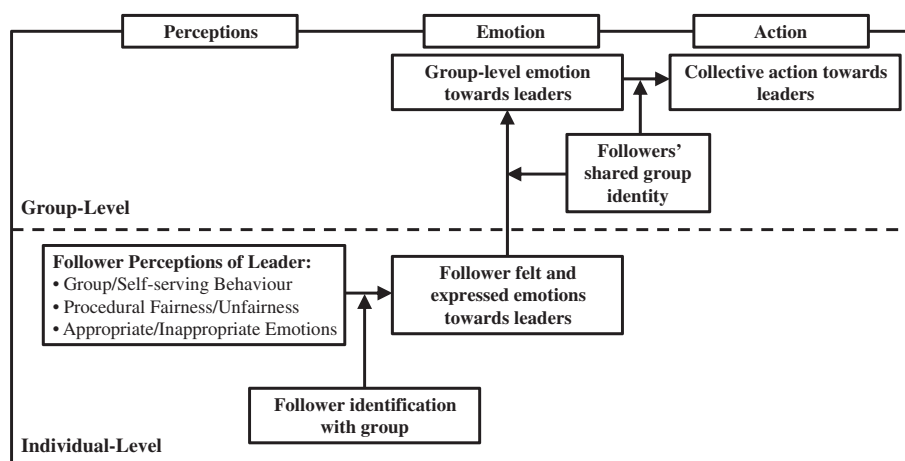

Fig. 1. Theoretical model.

Our propositions can thus also be extended to cover processes relevant to transformational leadership theory. In particular, we suggest that expressions of leader emotions are an important, but oft overlooked indicator of leader authenticity. Michie and Gooty (2005), for instance, highlight the importance of appropriate leader emotions in influencing follower perceptions of leader authenticity. Recent research (Eberly & Fong, 2013, Madera & Smith, 2009; Stewart et al., 2009) shows further that leader emotional expressions are important influencers of followers' perceptions towards leaders. Further research can assess the extent to which leader emotional expressions influence follower perceptions of leader authenticity and intentions to transcend self-interests for the benefit of their groups.

7.2. Discrete emotions

Future research also needs to take into consideration the role of discrete emotions expressed towards leaders in view of the propositions above (Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009). Understanding the role of discrete emotions would allow for a more nuanced consideration of the functions of specific emotions in how followers promote or preserve the salient identity. Theoretical developments within followership research and intergroup emotion theory can also benefit from understanding the role of emotions beyond that of the simplistic positive–negative emotion dichotomy (Becker, Tausch, & Wagner, 2011).

It is especially promising that recent research has acknowledged the differential effects of various emotions experienced, and how these effects shape the experience of emotion within ingroups and towards outgroups. Studies of intergroup emotions within laboratory contexts have tended to focus on anger as the primary emotion experienced by members of an ingroup in response to threats to identity (Pennekamp, Doosje, Zebel, & Henriquez, 2009) and in motivating support for positive risk-taking behavior (Tagar, Federico, & Halperin, 2011). This in turn apparently prompts intentions to take action against outgroup members (Butz & Plant, 2006; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Leonard, Moons, Mackie, & Smith, 2011). These findings are consistent with the conceptualization of anger as motivated by behavioral action tendencies, which prompt short-term, antagonistic responses and intentions to act against perceived injustice (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009; Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Further research would also do well to examine the effects of the moral emotions such as shame and guilt on follower responses towards leaders in groups. Shepard, Spears, and Manstead's (2013), for example, showed how anticipated feelings of shame and guilt based on affiliation with a particular group prompt followers to consider action against leaders. Followers' experience of such moral emotions should influence their resulting actions towards leaders.

The advancement of research on moral emotions also fits in well with the development of social identity theory, insofar as morality is seen an important part of an individual's social identity (Ellemers, Pagliaro, Barreto, & Leach, 2008; Ellemers et al., 2002). The implications of this are that followers may engage in other forms of collective action towards leaders that may not necessarily be solely driven by anger. Complex emotion blends such as compassion and gratitude may also moderate the extent to which followers are prompted to engage in collective action towards their leaders. While the focus of our review was mainly on leader behaviors that prompt negative follower emotions and actions against the leader, we conclude also that further research needs to examine how positive discrete emotions may motivate followers to act in support of their leader.

7.3. Individual differences

Thus far, we have considered primarily the role of follower identification with their groups as the main moderator of the likelihood of followers sharing collective emotions towards leaders (and therefore acting in unity towards a leader). More recent developments in social identity research have also considered other possible follower-centric individual differences which might potentially moderate the extent to which they endorse leaders. In particular, Pierro and colleagues (2009) suggest that followers with a promotion focus orientation are more likely to respond positively to leaders who are perceived as being prototypical of the group (compared with followers who are low in promotion-focused orientation). These authors found that a high promotion-focus orientation (relative to a low promotion-focus orientation) prompts followers to respond more positively towards leaders who advance in-group interests. These findings also build on Pierro's earlier work (Pierro et al., 2005) where they found that followers with a higher need for cognitive closure (i.e. stronger intention to reduce uncertainty) are more likely to support leaders who are representative of their groups.

Individual difference variables and behavioral patterns have been shown to predict the emergence of leaders in groups (e.g., Foti & Hauenstein, 2007). In line with a follower-centric perspective of leadership, it is likely that certain group-prototypical members may also emerge as leaders. Being prototypical of the group has been shown consistently in social identity research (e.g., see Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Haslam et al., 1998) to be an antecedent to leadership emergence amongst group-prototypical members. Other studies (Côté, Lopes, Salovey, & Miners, 2010) and empathy (Pescosolido, 2002; Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002) reveal that dimensions of emotional intelligence such as the ability to understand emotions predict leadership emergence.

Finally, further consideration of how leaders themselves perceive followers might be another important avenue for further research and theorizing. Indeed, as implied by implicit followership theory (IFT; Shondrick & Lord, 2010; Sy, 2010), leaders' perceptions of follower prototypicality may serve as a moderator of the process whereby leaders perceive and act towards followers deemed to be prototypical representatives of group ideals. This process may be especially interesting when leaders choose or recruit group members rather than inherit an intact group. It is even plausible to argue tentatively that the group-prototypical followers are more likely to be influential on the leaders than non-group-prototypical followers.

7.4. Situational and temporal factors

Beyond the group-level, researchers would also do well to examine the extent to which follower perceptions, emotions and their actions towards their leaders are also shaped by contextual and situational influences over time. One such future research avenue, for instance, may focus on how situational ambiguity influences the extent to which followers form perceptions, emotions and engage in actions directed towards leaders. It can be argued that the effectiveness with which followers engage in actions towards promoting or preserving their social identities may also depend on the extent of situational ambiguity.

Evidence for this proposition is based on the uncertainty-identity perspective (Hogg, 2007), in that conditions of uncertainty may moderate the likelihood of followers' support for leaders. Rast, Gaffney, Hogg, and Crisp (2012), for example, found that followers will support a non-prototypical leader under conditions of uncertainty when no other option is available. The implications of these findings are such that, under conditions of situational ambiguity, followers may openly affirm any leader under conditions of uncertainty, regardless of their prototypicality. An organizational crisis or change may disrupt the dynamics and patterns of followership and future research in this context may prove fruitful (van Knippenberg, 2011).

Further application of the uncertainty-identity perspective is also evident in Hogg, Meehan, and Farquharson's (2010) study of the operative mechanisms driving radical behavior in groups. In a study of what happens under conditions of uncertainty when follower self-relevant values are threatened, Hogg and colleagues (2010) found that individuals are more likely to identify with extreme groups with radical agendas for action than with moderate or gradualist agendas. Taken together, it may be likely that followers' affirmation of leaders could also be dependent on whether the followers themselves are situated in conditions that elevate their self-uncertainty.

These propositions also extend to shared leadership theory. In this respect, followers may also be seen to share in leadership responsibilities and to exert influence over leadership outcomes (Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006; Pearce & Sims, 2000, 2002). It may thus be plausible that the work environment might also moderate the likelihood the followers influence leadership outcomes. Based on our theorizing, environments that promote shared leadership arrangements (e.g., in flat, low-hierarchy organizational structures) might also inadvertently increase the likelihood that followers' collective emotions will influence leadership outcomes. Our arguments here are also in line with recent research which emphasizes the role of social identity processes in the creation of shared social identities and realities (Reicher et al., 2005; Subašić, Reynolds, Turner, Veenstra, & Haslam, 2011).

Based on calls from a number of commentators (e.g., Arrow, Poole, Henry, Wheelan, & Moreland, 2004; Burke, Stagl, Salas, Pierce, & Kendall, 2006; Hackman, 2012; Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001), temporal perspectives have recently emerged in the group dynamics literature and in the leadership and organization literature (e.g., Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011, Sonnentag, 2012). Arrow et al. (2004) argue in particular that interpersonal processes including affect management are relevant for effectiveness across the team life cycle. Hackman (2012) also argued for the importance of understanding of temporal factors in group dynamics and for the need to understand emergent phenomena in context. While our focus in this review is upon more immediate arousal of emotion and actions of followers, future studies would do well to focus on the role of temporal perspectives in the processes we propose. For example, researchers could investigate whether leader–follower affective processes stabilize over time, whether these processes are impacted by crisis events in a group or organizational change, or to what extent these processes are impacted by changes in group membership.

7.5. Ideas for methodological advancement

Owing to the multi-level nature of our model and propositions, it is imperative that future research also accurately distinguish between the levels of analysis (on which the key elements of the present model operate in) and align theory, hypotheses, measurement, and analysis of variables of interest (Gooty et al., 2012; Henderson, Liden, Glibowski, & Chaudhry, 2009). Clearly, there is a need to capture more accurately how these variables operate at their correct levels to understand how individual-level follower perceptions and emotions translate to group-level emotion and actions. Researchers should also consider the use of longitudinal designs in examining how leader–follower interactions evolve over time (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidyarthi, 2011). As per our model, the use of longitudinal designs may aid in identifying the tipping point where followers' emotions translate to actions towards their leaders.

Finally, we also advocate the use of mixed-method designs in testing the ideas presented here. For example, interviews or ethnographic methods such as participant observation could shed light further on whether leadership emerges from within a group over time as the group develops into a well-functioning collective. Real time longitudinal data could be collected using diaries, journals, videotapes, archival records, or experience sampling methods using smart phones. Integrating empiricist and constructivist paradigms in a mixed-method program of leadership research is relatively rare, but such designs hold great potential in providing a more comprehensive test of our propositions. Indeed, mixed-method designs may be essential in answering new and complex leadership questions including those relating to leadership emergence and aid to the holistic refinement of leadership theory as a whole (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012).

8. Theoretical implications

The arguments and propositions we have presented in this review build on both the social identity and followership models of leadership. First, we extend on the social identity model in understanding leadership dynamics by highlighting more prominently

how followers themselves can proactively shape leadership effectiveness. By incorporating research and theory from related domains such as intergroup emotion, collective action, and reciprocal emotions, we build links between the social identity framework to encapsulate more clearly the proactive follower-driven processes that shape followers' endorsement of their leaders and ultimately, leader effectiveness.

In particular, our model of followership behaviors here is derived from research evidence that collectively suggest that followers can play a more active role in shaping leadership outcomes. In contrast with the overwhelming focus on characteristics that lead to leaders to be endorsed (van Knippenberg, 2011) we consider the flip-side of this equation: What do followers do to promote or prevent leaders from having an influence on the salient group identity? We extend on intergroup emotion theory by suggesting that leaders themselves can be categorized by followers as a member of the outgroup, and that the possibility of group-level emotion being directed towards a single individual (i.e. the leader) is an area worthy of further research (Iyer & Leach, 2008). In this regard, we propose that emotions experienced towards the leaders are key affective mechanisms that change perceptions of leaders as either ingroup or outgroup members, and more importantly, as a means by which followers provide support, or disapproval of the leaders.

This consideration is an important mechanism linking followers' perceptions with emotions towards their leaders, and we therefore develop this notion in our present model of followership. Finally, and more broadly, we revisit followership in light of developments in social identity frameworks, which conceptualize leadership as a multi-level process, and one also affected by follower emotions. Our model here balances the overwhelming attention already given to leader-centric approaches to understanding leadership, and re-conceptualizes the leadership process according to its most fundamental definition: as a social interaction process in which both leaders and followers can mutually influence one another. Given the overlap between the theories and frameworks on which we base our present model, we suggest that the ultimate theoretical value of our propositions here is that it incrementally, but crucially, considers how followers influence leaders — through intergroup emotions, reciprocal emotions and as a group, and through their shared identities and collective actions.

9. Conclusions

In this conceptual review, we build links between followership and social identity theory by considering how emotions account for how followers shape group identity and leadership outcomes. We highlight the role of emotions and argue that group-level emotions constitute an integral element of the salient group identity. As a consequence, emotional processes occur within the context of groups, and such expressions of emotions have implications for group identity and leadership effectiveness. Central to our main thesis also is that leadership exists as a group-level process, that leaders are members of the groups they lead, and thus, are also subject to the social dynamics that occur within group processes. We propose that followers themselves can moderate the influence of leaders through unified group-level emotions and collective action towards leaders.

We also consider individual and group-level moderators of our proposed follower-centric expressions of emotions and collective actions towards leaders. A wide range of research from both studies of leadership based on the social identity model together with newer evidence from intergroup emotion theory supports our proposition that group identification influences the extent to which group members identify with, and are willing to be influenced by, group emotions.

We extend on this by also proposing that heightened identification with the group also motivates action tendencies in followers. We suggest in particular that high-identifying group members, relative to their low-identifying counterparts, are more likely to be responsive towards influences of group-level emotions, sensitive towards leader influences towards leader influences on group identity and more likely to engage in collective action as a result of emotions experienced towards leader attempts to influence group identity. We then propose that at the group-level, the strength of followers' shared identity may also moderate the extent to which they are willing to express emotions towards leaders who attempt to influence the group identity. A strong, unified sense of collective emotions, in particular, may be one way in which followers resist the influences of leader attempts on influencing the group identity. Taken together, these propositions inform possibilities for future research within the area of followership research, which we hope to revive and to contribute to its further development and refinement.

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