

Social identity and the dynamics of leadership: Leaders and followers as collaborative agents in the transformation of social reality.

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The Leadership Quarterly

Volume 16, Issue 4, August 2005, Pages 547-568

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.06.007>

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Abstract

Traditional models see leadership as a form of zero-sum game in which leader agency is achieved at the expense of follower agency and vice versa. Against this view, the present article argues that leadership is a vehicle for social identity-based collective agency in which leaders and followers are partners. Drawing upon evidence from a range of historical sources and from the BBC Prison Study, the present article explores the two sides of this partnership: the way in which a shared sense of identity makes leadership possible and the way in which leaders act as entrepreneurs of identity in order to make particular forms of identity and their own leadership viable. The analysis also focuses (a)

on the way in which leaders' identity projects are constrained by social reality, and (b) on the manner in which effective leadership contributes to the transformation of this reality through the initiation of structure that mobilizes and redirects a group's identity-based social power.



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Keywords

Leadership; Social identity; Power; Social change

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