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Niklas K. Steffens, S. Alexander Haslam, Rudolf Kerschreiter, Sebastian C. Schuh, Rolf van Dick\*

## Leaders enhance group members' work engagement and reduce their burnout by crafting social identity\*\*

Previous research has examined burnout and work engagement as a function of demands and resources at work. Yet we know little about the ways in which these are determined by people's social experience as a member of their workgroup as shaped, in particular, by leaders' management of shared identity. To address these issues, we propose a model in which leaders' identity entrepreneurship (the degree to which the leader promotes understanding of shared group identity) impacts on group performance through burnout and work engagement. We tested our model in a field study with 641 participants from the US working population who responded to their workgroup leader and indicated their health. Results indicated that when leaders acted as identity entrepreneurs, group members not only reported higher group performance but also experienced less burnout and were more engaged at work. Moreover, the relationship between identity entrepreneurship and group performance was mediated by an increase in work engagement and a reduction in burnout both of which in turn facilitated group performance. These findings suggest that what it means for healthprotective leaders to be 'transformational' is being capable of facilitating the development of a special sense of 'us' that they and group members share.

Key words: leadership, health, burnout, social identity, identity entrepreneurship (JEL: I31, L21, M12)

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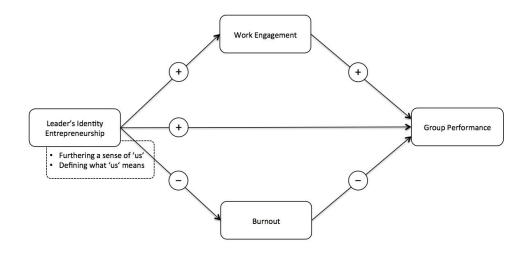
### Leaders enhance group members' work engagement and reduce their burnout by crafting social identity

Stress and strain are increasingly common features of the modern workplace. Indeed, in some sense, they are emblematic of working life in the 21st century. Speaking to this point, key findings of the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey revealed that across the 27 EU member countries every fifth person at work has poor mental health (Eurofound, 2012). Such findings are remarkable because they point to significant costs not only for individuals (in terms of suffering) and society (in terms of economic expenditure on health) but also for organizations in which working conditions that compromise well-being lead to reduced motivation and ultimately lower productivity. Addressing the policy implications of such findings, the European pact for mental health and well-being thus strongly recommends that stakeholders seek to "improve work organization, organization cultures, and leadership practices to promote mental well-being at work" (p. 115; Eurofound, 2012). In practice, however, burnout and diminished well-being are mostly considered problems of the individual and it is the individual who is seen as responsible for prevention and recovery (e.g., by being encouraged to attend stress-management courses; see Haslam, 2004).

What can leaders do, however, to create "win-win arrangements" that enhance employees' well-being at work? Should leaders encourage every individual to increase his or her effort to look after him or herself (e.g., through personalized health programs and activities)? Or can they also alleviate each individual's strain by working with, and promoting, individuals' sense of *togetherness* (or 'we-ness')? These are the questions that the present paper addresses.

In fact, a large body of recent theoretical and empirical research serves to underscore the role that leaders' management of groups (e.g., Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2006; van Knippenberg, 2011; Yammarino, Salas, Serban, Shirreffs, & Shuffler, 2012) and, in particular, identity entrepreneurship (i.e., leaders' crafting of a shared sense of 'we' and 'us'; Augoustinos & De Garis, 2012; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, 2003) plays in effective leadership. In line with these points, the greater part of previous research has looked at the role of managing identity in providing a basis for leader influence and group effectiveness more generally (e.g., Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). However, little if no research has investigated the capacity for identity entrepreneurship to contribute to group members' health and well-being in the workplace. Addressing this gap, in the present research we test a model (represented schematically in Figure 1) that proposes that the degree to which leaders help to bring a workgroup together by creating a shared sense of social identity is associated with enhanced work engagement and reduced burnout in the workplace, both of which facilitate group performance. In this way the present paper contributes to an emerging body of research that points to the role of leadership in shaping employees' health and well-being at work (for reviews see Kuoppala, Lamminpää, Liira, & Vainio, 2008; Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010). However, it also extends upon prior work and thereby opens up a variety of novel research avenues – by suggesting that leaders' ability to create and shape social identity is a means of fostering group members' health and well-being in the workplace.

Figure 1: A Leadership and Identity-Furthering Entrepreneurship (LIFE) model of the impact of leader identity entrepreneurship on group performance through group members' work engagement and burnout



#### Leaders' management of a group

In recent years, research and theories have increasingly pointed to the role of groups and the management of groups in successful leadership (e.g., for a recent overview of leadership research, see Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014; see also Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007; Day et al., 2006; Haslam et al., 2011; Hogg, van Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012; Yammarino et al., 2012). Indeed, research across different theoretical traditions suggests that a critical ingredient in leaders' success is their engagement with the group that promotes shared understanding among its members. Along these lines, in their research on 'team leadership', Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks (2002) suggest that for leaders to manage highly effective teams, they need to engage in activities that are oriented towards the team such that, among other things, they engage in behaviours that are conducive to sense making and sense giving as well as shared mental models (those that specify a mission, required actions, role requirements; after Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994; for reviews on team leadership, see also Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Morgeson, DeRue, & Karam, 2010). In addition, it has been shown that leaders empower their teams and their members by getting team members together in ways that then allow them to build relationships with, and support, each other (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). Together, this research suggests that enhancing group members' perceptions that they and their leaders are 'singing from the same song sheet' is central to a leaders' ability to enhance group performance.

Substantiating these claims, another theoretical tradition that has placed particular emphasis on issues of group management is the social identity approach to leadership (for comprehensive recent reviews, see Haslam et al., 2011; Hogg et al., 2012; van

Knippenberg, 2011). This approach builds on the idea that we are able to think of ourselves and others not only as individuals in terms of personal identity (i.e., 'me' and 'you') but also as members of a group in terms of social identity (i.e., 'we' and 'us'; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994; for a recent review see Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010). Moreover, it has been argued that this self-categorization in terms of shared social identity (e.g., as 'us psychologists') forms the basis for processes of social influence (Turner, 1991).

Applying these insights to the area of leadership and followership, it has been suggested that a leader's effectiveness is contingent on the extent to which he or she is seen to be *prototypical* of a particular group (i.e., to embody attributes, beliefs, and values that make a particular group 'special' and distinct from other groups; after Hogg, 2001; Turner & Haslam, 2001). Abundant evidence has supported these ideas. For instance, a leader's perceived prototypicality has been shown to increase followers' (a) endorsement of leaders (Ullrich, Christ, & van Dick, 2009), (b) trust in the leader (Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008), (c) perceptions of leader fairness (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001), (d) perceptions of leader charisma (Platow, van Knippenberg, Haslam, van Knippenberg, & Spears, 2006; Steffens, Haslam, & Reicher, 2013), and (e) creativity and productivity (Hirst, van Dick, & van Knippenberg, 2009; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005)<sup>1</sup>.

Further empirical evidence supports these claims by showing that leaders' effectiveness also depends on the degree to which their attributes are seen to be characteristic not only of *typical* leaders (e.g., what leaders are vs. are not normally like) but also of *ideal* leaders (e.g., what leaders are vs. are not ideally like; van Quaquebeke, Kerschreiter, Buxton, & van Dick, 2010; van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2010). In sum, then, this research underlines the broader point that leader effectiveness is determined in part by leaders being seen as representative of, and as being aligned with, the stereotypical attributes of a particular group.

More recently, though, it has been argued that effective leaders not only need to be seen to be representative of a group, but also need to create this group in the first place as well as then advance its interests and embed it in the material world (Haslam et al., 2011). Here research suggests that for leaders to be able to manage a group, they need to engage in identity entrepreneurship by crafting a sense of 'us' and by furthering understanding of what it means to be 'one of us' (Reicher et al., 2005; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, 2003; Steffens & Haslam, 2013; Steffens, Haslam, Kessler, & Ryan, 2013). In this way, this research suggests that leaders' ability to exert influence over other people derives in part from actions aimed at (a) defining the boundaries of

Here, it is noteworthy then that the term leader prototypicality (or prototypes) has also been used within leader categorization theory (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984). Yet, as a point of difference, while leader prototypes as discussed above refer to those attributes that are characteristic of a particular group in question (e.g., a particular community, department, or organization), in terms of leader categorization theory leader prototypes (or stereotypes) refer to those attributes that are seen to be leader-like (i.e., characteristic of the group of leaders in general that are more or less variable across cultures, see also Brodbeck et al., 2000; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

group membership (e.g., by making people feel who falls inside and outside ingroup boundaries) as well as (b) shaping what it means to be a member of the group (e.g., developing an understanding of the norms, values, and ideals that define the ingroup; Reicher et al., 2005). These aspects then have bearing upon the scope as well as direction of influence (i.e., by determining *who* will be influenced and to *what ends*).

Leaders' crafting of shared identity thus has direct implications for group members because people's capacity to categorize themselves in terms of a group membership is a critical determinant of their motivation (and hence performance; Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000; van Knippenberg, 2000; see also Wendt, Euwema, & van Emmerik, 2009). Following on from this, because people's self-categorization in terms of group membership relates to the performance of individual group members and the group as a whole (Ellemers, de Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; see also Zaccaro et al., 2002), we expect that leaders' cultivating of shared identity also feeds into group members' perceptions that they as a group are successful and performing well. This can be formalized in terms of the following hypothesis:

H1. Leader identity entrepreneurship will be positively related to group members' perceptions of the performance of their workgroup.

# Impact of leader identity entrepreneurship on work engagement and burnout

Yet, beyond this relatively straightforward link to group performance, is it possible that leaders' creation and furthering of shared identity also has an impact on people's well-being at work? Evidence that this might be the case comes from research indicating that in addition to having impact on classical leadership outcomes such as performance, leaders are also capable of shaping group members' health and well-being (Kuoppala et al., 2008; Skakon et al., 2010). Along these lines, research has demonstrated, for instance, that indicators of individuals' well-being at work are related to individuals' belief that their leaders display transformational leadership (e.g., Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007; Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008), supportive leadership (such as providing feedback and support; e.g., van Dierendonck, Haynes, Borrill, & Stride, 2004), or authentic leadership (e.g., Giallonardo, Wong, & Iwasiw, 2010). This research substantiates suggestions that leaders have an impact on followers' health. Beyond this, though, whether (or not) leaders' management of group membership has any role to play in group members' well-being remains largely unchartered.

This is somewhat surprising given that a growing body of research suggests that social factors – and, in particular, group memberships – are fundamental to people's health and well-being (e.g., Cruwys et al., 2013, in press; Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012). More specifically, empirical evidence shows that people tend to experience better health and well-being to the degree that they identify with a group (or groups) such that they categorize themselves in terms of a shared group membership (as 'us') rather than as individuals (as 'I'; e.g., Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005; Sani, Herrera, Wakefield, Boroch, & Gulyas, 2012; Wegge, Schuh, & van Dick, 2012; for recent re-

views see Schuh, van Dick, Wegge, & Haslam, 2013; van Dick & Haslam, 2012). Along these lines, Haslam and Reicher (2006) have shown experimentally that the extent to which people perceive themselves in terms of a group membership is related to reduced experience of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), while field research by Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, Wecking, and Moltzen (2006) has demonstrated that call centre workers' increased identification with their organization is negatively associated with burnout. Extending this line of analysis, we propose that by creating a sense of 'us' among group members as well as providing guidance by clarifying what this 'we' stands for, leaders' increased identity entrepreneurship should also help protect group members' well-being as indicated by their reduced experience of burnout.

While classical research on health and well-being at work had focussed primarily on indicators of the absence of ill-health, more recent research has begun to complement prior work by examining indicators of the presence of well-being (inspired by an emphasis on positive psychology and subjective well-being; Diener, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In this regard, with the aim of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of well-being in the workplace, and as an antipode to stress and burnout, Bakker, Schaufeli, and colleagues (e.g., Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002) have sought to investigate people's engagement at work (for comprehensive reviews, see Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). This work engagement is typically conceptualized as capturing the extent to which people feel vigour at work, are dedicated to what they do, and are also absorbed in their work. In line with original propositions that well-being at work comprises distinct positive and negative aspects, meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that engagement and burnout are clearly distinct concepts (Halbesleben, 2010).

More broadly, we propose that there are promising ways that allow us to integrate research on the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2011) and the social identity approach to health and well-being (Haslam et al., 2009; Jetten et al., 2012). In particular the social identity approach is consistent with the job demands-resources model in stressing (a) that people can experience demands and resources at work and (b) that such experiences are related to subsequent wellbeing. However, the social identity approach would specify that while social identities in and of themselves guide and motivate particular forms of behaviour and tend to have beneficial health implications, self-categorization in terms of a particular identity is a necessary precursor to people's perception and experience of particular demands and resources in the workplace (Haslam & Reicher, 2006; van Dick & Haslam; 2012). By way of example - and as demonstrated by Haslam and colleagues (2005) - while tasks that involve serving needy customers behind the counter are not perceived as particularly stressful by either bomb disposal workers or bar staff, working with supposedly dangerous explosive materials is perceived as stressful by bar staff but not by bomb disposal workers. In sum, beyond the idea that is tested in the present research - namely, that direct health benefits can result from leaders' creation of a shared social identity – we would also expect issues related to self-categorization and social identification to have broader implications for people's perception of health-related demands and resources at work.

Speaking to the influence of leaders, then, we suggest that individuals are more likely to be engaged at work when they have a better understanding of the meaning and purpose of the group they belong to and of what it stands for in relation to other groups. Accordingly, leaders who foster such a sense of shared identity and clarify its content are likely to enhance people's work engagement. Some tentative evidence for this assertion can be found in studies that have shown that people's psychological adjustment is positive related to their personal self-concept clarity (e.g., Campbell, Assanand, & Paula, 2003) and that people's well-being in terms of positive affect and self-esteem are positively related to their self-concept clarity with regard to their cultural identity (Usborne & Taylor, 2010). By the same token, we propose that people's reduced experience of burnout and greater engagement should also be positively related to the understanding of self that is derived from their collective workgroup as fostered by leaders' identity entrepreneurship. More formally, these arguments lead us to the following two hypotheses:

H2a and H2b. Leader identity entrepreneurship will be (a) positively related to group members' work engagement and (b) negatively related to their burnout.

# Impact of identity entrepreneurship on performance through enhanced well-being

The foregoing discussion might lead one to suspect that leader identity entrepreneurship has independent impact on employees' performance and health. However, previous research suggests that although issues of performance and health are often discussed in separate fora, they are actually inter-related and mutually dependent on each other. Indeed, although under some conditions performance may lead to greater well-being, growing evidence indicates that the link from well-being to performance may be stronger (for a discussion and meta-analysis on the relationship between burnout and performance, see Taris, 2006). Along these lines, Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) provide meta-analytic evidence which indicates that subjective well-being *precedes* personal success and performance at work (see also Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Speaking more closely to the issues of the present research, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2011) found that employees' daily variations in their exhaustion was negatively related to their in-role performance, while Christian and colleagues' (2011) meta-analysis indicated that work engagement mediates the effects that a variety of contextual work factors have on people's in-role as well as extra-role performance. In line with these findings, we suggest that leaders' identity entrepreneurship is likely to have an impact on group performance partly by means of reducing group members' strain as well as enhancing their engagement. More specifically, leaders who act as identity entrepreneurs (Haslam et al., 2011; Reicher et al., 2005) should have a protective impact on group members' strain which in turn should mitigate the negative impact that strain has on performance. At the same time, leader identity entrepreneurship should

have a boosting impact on group members' engagement, which in turn should reinforce the positive impact of work engagement on performance. This can be formalized in terms of a third hypothesis:

H3a and H3b. The positive impact of leader identity entrepreneurship on members' perceptions of the performance of their workgroup will be mediated by their (a) increased work engagement and (b) reduced experience of burnout

#### Method

#### Participants and design

Six-hundred-and-ninety-nine participants from the general public in the United States were willing to take part in the present online survey for exchange of a small reimbursement after being recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (for comprehensive reviews of this tool, see Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2013). Participation required respondents to have work experience and the survey was advertised as 'Evaluation of workgroups and leaders'. The failure of 54 participants to respond to two control questions as requested ("This is a control question – please select 3") and missing data in four cases led to a total sample size of 641.

Participants' demographic characteristics indicated that around half the participants were female (315; 1 missing) and that their age ranged from 18 to 71 years (M = 32.51; SD = 11.02). Participants worked in a variety of different industries (e.g., retail, research, public sector) while the vast majority were white-collar workers. They had an average of 13 years work experience (SD = 10.05) gained in five different organizations (SD = 5.32). Their current workgroup had on average of 12 members (SD = 20.71) and they had been working with their current workgroup leader for an average of three years (SD = 2.94).

#### Procedure and measures

Participants were asked to reflect on their current workgroup and workgroup leader before responding on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely) to items assessing leader's identity entrepreneurship<sup>2</sup> (four items,  $\alpha = .95$ , from the Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI) by Steffens, Haslam, Reicher, Platow, Fransen et al., 2014: "This leader makes people feel as if they are part of the same group", "This leader creates a sense of cohesion within the group", "This leader develops an understanding of what it means to be a member of this group", "This leader shapes members' perceptions of this group's values and ideals") and on scales ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always/every day) to items assessing nork engagement (nine items,  $\alpha = .93$ , from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) by Schaufeli et al., 2006, assessing vigour: "At my work, I feel bursting with energy", "At my job, I feel strong and vigorous", "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work"; dedication: "I am enthusiastic about my job", "My job inspires me", "I am proud of the work that I do"; absorption:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Participants' responses to the four items assessing leader identity entrepreneurship are also reported in Steffens et al. (2014) as part of the scale development of the construct.

"I feel happy when I am working intensely", "I am immersed in my work", "I get carried away when I am working"). Moreover, they also responded on 7-point Likert scales to items assessing burnout" (six items,  $\alpha = .78$ , from Haslam & Reicher, 2006, assessing exhaustion: "I feel I am working too hard", "I feel exhausted"; lack of personal accomplishment: "I feel I am failing to achieve my goals"; "I feel frustrated"; callousness: "I don't really care what happens to people any more"; "I feel I am becoming callous towards other people") and perceived performance of their workgroup (four items,  $\alpha = .96$ : "This group as a whole displays high performance", "This group brings good results", "This group as a whole is successful", "This group is very productive"). After this, participants provided demographic details and were fully debriefed.

#### Results

#### Preliminary analyses

Addressing common method variance and establishing construct validity

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations are presented in Table 1. Results show that the independent variable was significantly correlated with the mediator variables and the dependent variable, with correlations ranging in absolute size between .37 and .61 (these were largely unrelated to workgroup members' key demographic variables displayed in the table, with the exception that members' work engagement was weakly but positively related to their age and as results of main analyses are virtually identical when controlling for demographic variables, we refrain from adding these as control variables). To address potential confounding effects due to commonmethod variance between independent, mediating, and dependent variables, we investigated whether more than 50% the variance could be explained by a single factor (conducting Harman's single factor test; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). An unrotated factor solution indicated that eigenvalues of the first eight factors (9.49, 3.18, 2.09, 1.43, 1.15, .89, .77, .52) explained 41.28%, 13.82%, 9.09%, 6.24%, 4.98%, 3.89%, 3.37%, and 2.25% of the variance, respectively. This therefore suggests that the maximum variance accounted for by a single factor is less than half of the total variance.

We then conducted a confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to examine the factor structure of the present constructs. Consistent with traditional conceptualizations of work engagement and burnout, the subcomponents vigour, dedication, and absorption were specified as second-order factors of work engagement, while the subcomponents exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishment, and callousness as second-order factors of burnout. However, to differentiate more clearly between positive and negative indicators of well-being at work, previous research has also suggested an alternative conceptualization of these constructs such that the two burnout dimensions

Participants also responded to three additional reversed (negatively framed) items to assess burnout. Because empirical investigation demonstrated that inclusion of these items increased measurement error by reducing the fit of the constructs to the data to a poor level (CFA results with all constructs including these additional three items:  $\chi^2(287) = 6.216$ , CFI = .890, RMSEA = .090, 90% CIs = .086, .094, SRMR = .112), we refrained from including these items in subsequent analyses.

exhaustion and callousness are combined into a factor reflecting 'core burnout' while the dimension personal accomplishment and the three dimensions of work engagement are combined into a factor reflecting 'extended engagement' (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002). To investigate the fit of these alternative conceptualizations, we also specified a model with the respective four second-order factors for extended work engagement and the two second-order factors for core burnout.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Leader Identity     Entrepreneurship <sup>a</sup>	4.73	1.69	-							
2. Group Member Work Engagement <sup>b</sup>	3.47	1.20	.37**	-						
3. Group Member Burnouta	3.08	1.24	40**	37**	-					
4. Perceived Group Performance <sup>a</sup>	5.35	1.40	.61**	.49**	39**	-				
5. Group Size <sup>o</sup>	7.00	5.00	.04	.04	03	.05	-			
6. Group Member Work Experience	12.88	10.05	04	.11**	04	.03	.09*	-		
7. Group Member Genderd	1.49	.50	02	.01	02	03	01	.05	-	
8. Group Member Age	32.51	11.02	03	.10*	03	.03	.09*	.90**	.05	-

Note. p < .05, p < .01; p <

In sum, to examine the discriminant validity of our constructs, we examined the fit of a four-factor model (Model A) that distinguished between identity entrepreneurship, work engagement, burnout, and perceived performance (in terms of chi-square  $\chi^2$ , comparative fit (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residuals (SRMR); Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). We then compared this model's fit to the data to that of alternative models with fewer factors, that is, the three-factor Model B that combined the two proposed mediators work engagement and burnout in a common factor, the three-factor Model C that combined identity entrepreneurship and perceived performance in a common factor, the one-factor Model D that combined all constructs in a single factor, as well as the four-factor Model E with the alternative conceptualizations extended work engagement and core burnout (any alternative models omitting second-order factors burnout and work engagement showed poorer fit and are not considered here). CFA results are presented in Table 2. As can be seen in the table, overall, Model A had a moderate and acceptable fit to the data. Speaking to potential alternative conceptualizations, Model B, Model C, and Model D all showed overall poor fit to the data, while Model E showed an overall marginal fit to the data. This suggests that treating the variables as four distinct constructs – in line with our theoretical expectations – is the strategy best supported by the data. Because Model E showed poorer fit than Model A, we refrain from analysing extended work engagement and core burnout.

examined constructs

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) results concerning factor structure of

	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D	Model E	
	Four-factor model distin- guishing all variables	Three-factor model combining leader identity entrepreneurship and performance	Three-factor model combining work engage- ment and burnout	One-factor model combining all variables in sin- gle common factor	Four-factor model with ex- tended work engagement and core burnout	
Chi-square	980.14	2706.64	2994.65	3860.61	1240.623	
Degrees of freedom	218	221	223	224	218	
Chi-square/df	4.496	12.247	13.429	17.235	5.691	
CFI	.940	.803	.780	.711	.919	
RMSEA	.074	.133	.139	.159	.086	
RMSEA 90% Cls	[.069, .079]	[.128, .137]	[.135, .144]	[.155, .164]	[.081, .090]	
Std. RMR	.056	.084	.104	.131	.078	

Note. Model A, B, C, and D are based on traditional conceptualizations of work engagement (encompassing the three second-order factors vigour, dedication, and absorption) and (encompassing the three second-order factors exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishment, and callousness); Model E is based on alternative conceptualizations of 'extended work engagement' (encompassing the four second-order factors vigour, dedication, absorption, and personal accomplishment) and 'core burnout' (encompassing the two second-order factors exhaustion and callousness).

#### Primary analyses

Impact of leader identity entrepreneurship on well-being and performance (H1 and H2)

To test whether leaders' identity entrepreneurship was related to well-being measures as well as group members' perceptions of the performance of their workgroup, we ran a series of linear regressions (for the sake of continuity with subsequent analyses, we ran linear regressions although results are identical to the results of bivariate correlations). Supporting H1, analyses revealed that the extent to which leaders engaged in identity entrepreneurship was positively related to members' perceived performance of their workgroup,  $\beta = .61$ , t(640) = 19.44, p < .001. Moreover, supporting H2, analyses indicated that the degree to which leaders engaged in identity entrepreneurship was (a) positively related to group members' work engagement,  $\beta = .37$ , t(640) = 9.93, p < .001, and (b) negatively related to their experienced burnout,  $\beta = -.40$ , t(640) = -10.92, p < .001.

Multiple mediation by work engagement and burnout (H3)

To examine whether the impact of leaders' identity entrepreneurship on group members' perceived performance of their workgroup was mediated by members' well-being, we ran parallel multiple mediation bias-corrected bootstrapping resampling method with 5000 resamples (by means of PROCESS; Preacher & Hayes, 2008; updated by Hayes, 2013). In contrast to Baron and Kenny's (1986) proposed procedure, this bias-corrected bootstrapping analysis has several advantages. These include the capacity to estimate the specific indirect effect of a mediator more accurately and to test simultaneously each mechanism while controlling for the shared association be-

tween multiple mediators. Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model statistics are summarized in Table 3, while the model's path coefficients are presented graphically in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Statistical mediation model displaying coefficients of indirect paths of leader identity entrepreneurship on group performance through group members' work engagement and burnout

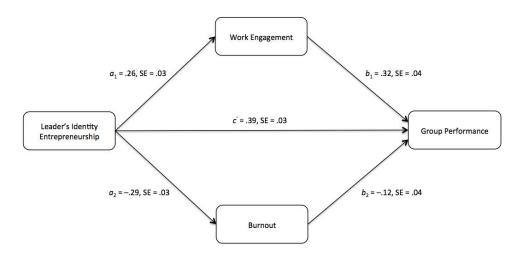


Table 3: Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model summary information for the influence of the presumed leader identity entrepreneurship multiple mediator model depicted in Figure 1 with traditional conceptualizations of work engagement and burnout

	Consequent											
		M₁ (Work Engagement) M₂ (Burnout)				y Per						
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	р		Coeff.	SE	р		Coeff.	SE	р
X (Leader Id. Entrepreneurship)	a <sub>1</sub>	.26	.03	< .001	a <sub>2</sub>	29	.03	< .001	c'	.39	.03	< .001
M <sub>1</sub> (Work Engagement)			_	_		_		_	$b_1$	.32	.04	< .001
M <sub>2</sub> (Burnout)		_	_	_		_		_	$b_2$	12	.04	.001
Constant	<i>i</i> <sub>M1</sub>	2.24	.13	< .001	<i>i</i> <sub>M1</sub>	4.46	.13	< .001	İy	2.76	.24	< .001
		H	R <sup>2</sup> = .14			H	R <sup>2</sup> = .16	i		ŀ	R <sup>2</sup> = .46	
		F(1,641) = 98.52, p < .001 $F(1,641) = 119.25, p < .001$				1	<i>F</i> (1,641) = 181.05, <i>p</i> < .001					

As can be seen in Table 3, analysis revealed that the indirect path of identity entrepreneurship on perceived group performance through work engagement was indeed significant,  $\gamma = .08$ , SE = .01, 95% CIs = .06, .12, supporting H3a. The indirect effect through work engagement arose from two positive constituent effects. These suggest

that to the extent that leaders engaged in greater identity entrepreneurship, team members' perceptions of group performance were increased as a result of fostering members' work engagement (because  $a_1$  is positive) which, in turn, had a reinforcing impact on perceived performance (because  $b_1$  is positive). Moreover, in support of H3b, leaders' identity entrepreneurship indirectly affected team members' perceived performance of their group through members' experienced burnout,  $\gamma = .03$ , SE = .01, 95% CIs = .01, .06. This second indirect effect through burnout consisted of two negative constituent effects. Here, leaders' identity entrepreneurship was positively related to group performance as a result of diminishing group members' burnout (because  $a_2$  is negative) which in turn limited the negative impact that burnout had on perceived performance (because  $b_2$  is negative). Multiple mediation analysis thus suggests that identity entrepreneurship was related to performance via a positive path involving work engagement as well as negative path involving (lack of) burnout. Multiple mediation analysis with age as a control variable (as age was correlated with work engagement in the present sample), yielded virtually identical results.<sup>4</sup>

Calculation of the ratio of the overall indirect effect (through both work engagement and burnout),  $\gamma = .12$ , SE = .02, 95% CIs = .09, .16, to the total effect,  $\gamma = .51$ , SE = .03, 95% CIs = .46, .56, indicated that the proposed mediators explained about 23% of the total effect of identity entrepreneurship on group performance (Hayes, 2013). We also calculated whether (or not) the strength of the specific indirect effects differed in their strength from each other (using bias-corrected bootstrapping that specifies a contrast between the mediators; Hayes, 2013). Analysis indicated that the indirect effect of the contrast between work engagement and burnout was statistically different from zero,  $\gamma = .05$ , SE = .02, 95% CIs = .01, .09. Thus the indirect effect of identity entrepreneurship that involved the reinforcing path through group members' work engagement was more pronounced than the negative path involving burnout.

#### Discussion

The present research was designed to examine the impact of leader identity entrepreneurship not only on perceived group performance but also on group members' health and well-being at work. Supporting our theoretical model (see Figure 1), the present findings indicate that group members report greater group performance when they perceive their leaders as bringing the group together and creating a shared sense of identity (H1). Moreover, leader identity entrepreneurship was also found to be positively related to group members' work engagement and to be negatively related to their burnout (H2). Finally, there was evidence that the relationship between leader identity entrepreneurship and group performance was mediated by group members' increased health and well-being (H3). Specifically, in support of our model, leader identity entrepreneurship enhanced group members' work engagement which in turn strengthened the positive effect that work engagement had on group performance.

Multiple mediation analysis with age as covariate indicated that the indirect effect of identity entrepreneurship on perceived performance through work engagement was statistically different from zero,  $\gamma = .08$ ; SE = .01, 95% CIs = .06, .11, as was the indirect effect through burnout,  $\gamma = .03$ ; SE = .01, 95% CIs = .01, .06, ruling out spurious relationships due to age in the main analyses.

At the same time, leader identity entrepreneurship reduced group members' experience of burnout, thereby alleviating the harmful impact that burnout exerted on performance. Findings indicated, though, that despite the fact that the relationship between leader identity entrepreneurship on performance ran in parallel fashion and independently through increased work engagement and reduced burnout, the indirect path through positive indications of health (work engagement) was stronger than that through the absence of ill-health (burnout).

#### Theoretical and practical implications

Taken together, these findings contribute to our understanding of leaders' capacity to promote employees' health - and of the means by which they do this - in at least three important ways. First, by demonstrating an association between leaders' identity entrepreneurship and group members' burnout and work engagement, the present examination breaks new conceptual ground by being the study first to assess group members' perceptions of leader identity entrepreneurship explicitly in quantitative terms (something that had typically been assessed previously only using qualitative analysis; Augoustinos & De Garis, 2012; Haslam & Reicher, 2007; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996, 2001, 2003; Reicher et al., 2005). On top of this, it also breaks new theoretical ground by demonstrating the utility of the social identity approach to leadership – and in particular leaders' crafting of social identity - in the area of health and wellbeing (Haslam et al., 2011; Jetten et al., 2012). More specifically, findings suggest that leaders play an important role in nurturing group members' psychological well-being by crafting a sense of 'us' that involves both (a) making people feel that they are part of the group and (b) clarifying what the group as a whole stands for (in terms of its norms, values, goals, and vision).

Second, the present findings also have implications for examinations of burnout and work engagement (Bakker et al., 2008; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002; 2006) in suggesting that although these may be experienced as something very personal and manifest at the level of the individual, burnout and work engagement are also shaped by individuals' experiences as group members reflecting the degree to which their sense of 'we-ness' is created and is being developed by their leader. Thus in pointing to the importance of social factors in people's health and well-being, the findings complement research which suggests that employees' health and well-being are related to personal characteristics of the individual such as hardiness and attributional style (Eschleman, Bowling, & Alarcon, 2010; Proudfoot, Corr, Guest, & Dunn, 2009). Moreover, and potentially more importantly, these findings also offer novel opportunities for practical leadership interventions to improve employee health (for reviews see Day et al., 2006; Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009; Taylor, Russ-Eft, & Taylor, 2009). These would also differ from more conventional well-being and stress reduction programs (e.g., those involving relaxation classes, massage therapy, gym classes), whose focus is on the individual rather than the broader social context that affect individuals' sense of self (Helliwell, 2011; Sani et al., 2012). More particularly, the present findings make the case for leadership interventions that help to create work environments which allow employees to embrace and live out group memberships at various levels of abstraction (e.g., the workgroup, department, organisation as a whole) and which, rather than focussing on leaders or on followers alone, are conducted with leaders and followers *together* (Kellerman, 2012; Küpers & Weibler, 2008).

More specifically, in terms of implications for practice, organizations that aim to promote employees' health and performance may thus support leaders at various levels of the organizational hierarchy in their efforts to create a sense of shared identity for members of the particular group that they are leading. Indeed, particularly for those organizations in which a diversity of subgroup identities prevail, our findings suggest that well-being will be enhanced if organizations encourage leaders to engage with and promote those diverse identities rather than to ignore or subvert them (e.g., along lines suggested by Haslam, Eggins, & Reynolds, 2003). This is not to say that organizations should refrain from creating and advancing a strong sense of superordinate organizational identity (partly because we know that organizational identification tends to have a positive impact on health; van Dick & Haslam, 2012). Rather they may be more effective in enhancing employees' well-being if they provide structures that help to sustain organizational identities defined at multiple levels of abstraction.

More generally, though, leaders of workgroups, teams, or departments who want to foster well-being at work might be well advised to think carefully about processes of *social identity management*. In particular, they might benefit from strategies that engage with what Haslam et al. (2011) describe as the "Three Rs" of identity leadership: (1) by *reflecting* on the nature of social identities in their organization (e.g., by Ascertaining Identity Resources; AIRing; Eggins, O'Brien, Reynolds, Haslam, & Crocker, 2008; Peters, Haslam, Ryan, & Steffens, 2014), (2) by *representing* those identities (e.g., by establishing meaningful group boundaries and developing shared understanding through the process of sub-group caucusing; Haslam et al., 2003), and (3) by initiating activities and structures that help to *realize* those identities (e.g., through collective goal-setting; Haslam, Wegge, & Postmes, 2009).

Finally, the present findings align with previous research which indicates that leaders play a central role in shaping group members' health and well-being in the workplace (Kuoppala et al., 2008; Skakon et al., 2010). However, they also extend this previous work by suggesting that leaders can exert an impact on group members' health and well-being not so much through their personal qualities or (exceptional, transformational) behaviours in the abstract as through behaviours that promote the strengthening of group members' sense of a collective identity that they share with those leaders (Haslam et al., 2011; Reicher et al., 2005). Looked at through the lens of research that sees transformational leadership as one of the key solutions to employee health and well-being (Arnold et al., 2007; Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jonas, 2013; Nielsen et al., 2008; for a review see Skakon et al., 2010), another way of making sense of the present findings is to suggest that what it means for leaders who practice health-protective leadership to be 'transformational' is for them to facilitate sustainable forms of group membership among those they lead. Indeed, in line with van Knippenberg and Sitkin's (2013) assertions that rather than examining leadership processes by operationalizing transformational leadership in terms of the outcomes we want to explain, we might gain insights into, and understanding of, the process of leadership better if we strive to explain this very feature rather than seeing it as the feature that does the explaining. Critically, then, the present research suggests that the source of this transformational impact derives from leaders' capacity to manage social identity effectively and in ways that in turn allow for the creation of fulfilling and meaningful social bonds. In short, good leaders not only craft a special sense of 'us', but by doing so they also help make groups good for us.

#### Limitations and future research

Despite its various strengths, the present research has a number of shortcomings that future research should address. Most particularly, the present design relied on selfreport data that may have increased common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although these issues cannot be ruled out with certainty (bearing in mind that mono-method and self-report data are not necessarily subject to greater biases than other methods such as multi-method data or experimental designs; Spector, 2006), we addressed these in preliminary analyses that suggest that the present variables should be treated as clearly distinct variables. Although it is possible that (at least to some degree) reporting elevated group performance also enhances respondents' well-being and makes them more likely to see their leaders as identity entrepreneurs, previous research provides stronger evidence for the present analyses in so far as there is abundant evidence that leaders' identity entrepreneurship shapes follower responses (e.g., Haslam et al., 2011) and that well-being feeds into performance (e.g., Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile for future research to provide further evidence for the role of leader identity entrepreneurship in health and well-being by means of a variety of different methodologies including (a) experimental (intervention) research (Avolio et al., 2009), (b) longitudinal design (see also Gleibs et al., 2011; Haslam & Reicher, 2006) and (c) examinations of physiological functioning (Häusser, Kattenstroth, van Dick, & Mojzisch, 2012; Wegge et al., 2012).

Moreover, future research also needs to disentangle potential differential effects of leaders' identity entrepreneurship on different forms of performance. Along these lines, examining the degree to which the present relationships also extend to objective group performance as well as to individuals' in-role as well as various forms of extrarole performance would be valuable. Here, it is also worth pointing out that in the present research leader identity entrepreneurship and group performance related to the group as a whole, which we examined at the level of the individual. In this sense, it is individuals' sense of group issues as represented in the mind of the individual (rather than actual sharedness in terms of individuals' sense of sharedness) that mattered (see also Turner, 1982). This is not to say that issues related to actual sharedness are not important or theoretically meaningless. In fact, we believe that issues related to actual sharedness are important and interesting (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2008) and in future research should investigate systematically when and why actual sharedness between individuals' representation of leaders' creation of shared identity may explain incremental variance.

We also need to identify potential boundary conditions to our analysis. For instance, in line with previous research that has shown that the precise content of an identity shapes people's health behaviours (e.g., Tarrant, Haggar, & Farrow, 2012), it is possible that beyond the health protective effects of leader identity entrepreneurship, such leaders may also have harmful effects on group members' health to the extent

that they promote group norms and ideals that are unhealthy (e.g., unhealthy lifestyle or coping mechanisms) or contribute to employees' workaholism that in turn has negative effects on their health (Avanzi, van Dick, Fraccaroli, & Sarchielli, 2012). These are important issues with potential ethical implications that need further attention. In sum, in terms of its capacity to satiate our appetite for greater understanding of these issues, the present research is best seen as breakfast rather than dinner.

#### Conclusion

The present paper expands upon previous work by investigating the impact of leader identity entrepreneurship not only on group members' reported group performance but also on their work engagement and burnout. In doing this, the research is the first to demonstrate the usefulness of a social identity approach to leadership for an understanding of team members' well-being. Specifically, our findings suggest that leaders are able to foster engagement and to prevent strain among group members by creating a shared special sense of 'us' as well as helping to clarify what it means to be 'one of us'. Indeed, it appears that a leader who fails to craft a shared sense of 'us' will not only be ineffective in directing group members' energies, but is also likely to sap these energies altogether.

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