A Tale of Two Churches: Distinctive Social and Economic Dynamics at Thessalonica and Corinth

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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue that the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations were similar yet strikingly different, while extrapolating their differences through socio-economic and social-scientific lenses: though founded and taught by Paul, they attracted different kinds of people and developed distinctive social relationships within church and with non-believers in strong or weak social identity. In other words, four criteria - socio-economic status, intergroup and intragroup relationships, and social identity - were inextricably entangled with each other, creating idiosyncratic socio-economic dynamics at Thessalonica and Corinth.

In the first chapter, I develop a social-scientific criticism through which the historical and logical connections between biblical snapshots of the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations can be clarified. Through this approach, I link seemingly unconnected biblical descriptions of the two: how socio-economic status influenced social relationships, how intergroup relationship was intertwined with intragroup relationship, and what role social identity played in building the dynamic of social relationships.

In the second and third chapters, I examine the Thessalonians' distinctive socio-economic status and social relationships. While the Thessalonian congregation attracted poor free(d) occasional workers, its members suffered from conflicts with outsiders and their consequential economic predicaments, but enjoyed solidarity and economic reciprocity. I argue that their low socio-economic status affected their broken relationships with outsiders and in turn their spiritual and economic mutualism within the church, forming their strong social identity.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, I explore the Corinthians' socio-economic dynamics. Their church embraced the poor, the well-born, and upwardly mobile people. Certain wealthy believers contributed to social harmony with their wider society, but caused internal tensions. I claim that certain Corinthians' high economic status played a critical role in building the social relationships, while their social harmony with outsiders weakened internal cohesion and social identity.

In the sixth chapter, I conclude that Paul's teachings of grace, ethics, and community were manifested and modified in different communities in different ways due to their different socio-economic contexts.

Declaration

This thesis is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to Durham University or any other institution for a degree.

Statement of Copyright

Contents

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of primary and secondary sources largely follow the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), with the following additions:

Sociology and Social Psychology

BJSP	*British Journal of Social Psychology*
ERSP	*European Review of Social Psychology*
JESP	*Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*
JPSP	*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
PSPB	*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*
PSPR	*Personality and Social Psychology Review*
ASQ	*Administrative Science Quarterly*

Inscriptions, Papyri, and Other Ancient Sources

BGU	*Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden.* 15 vols. Berlin, 1895-1983.
Corinth VIII.2	*Corinth VIII,2. The Latin Inscriptions 1896-1926*. Edited by Allen B. West. Princeton, 1931.
Corinth VIII.3	*Corinth VIII,3. The Inscriptions 1926-1950*. Edited by John H. Kent. Princeton, 1966.
IGR	*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*. Edited by R. L. Cagnat. Paris, 1901-1927.
IK	*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*
*IManisaMu*s	*Greek and Latin Inscriptions in the Manisa Museum*
ILS	*Inscriptiones latinae selectee.* 3 vols. Edited by Hermann Dessau. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1916.
OMS	*Opera minora selecta.* 7 vols. Amsterdam, 1969-1974, 1989-1990.
P.Abinn.	*The Abinnaeus Archive. Papers of a Roman Officer in the Reign of Constantius II*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962.

P.Bour.	*Les Papyrus Bouriant.* Edited by Paul Collart and Urban Bouriant. Paris, 1926.
P.Lips.	*Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig*
P.Lond.	*Greek Papyri in the British Museum.* 7 vols. London, 1893-1974.
P.Mich.	*Michigan Papyri.* Ann Arbor, 1931-1996.
P.Oxy.	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London, 1898-.
P.Oxy.Hels.	*Fifty Oxyrhynchus Papyri*
P.Sakaon.	*The Archive of Aurelius Sakaon: Papers of an Egyptian Farmer in the last Century of Theadelphia*. Edited by G.M. Parássoglou. Bonn, 1978.
P.Tebt.	*The Tebtunis Papyri*

Chapter one

Introduction and Methodology

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Main Issues

The thesis title, "A Tale of Two Churches: Distinctive Social and Economic Dynamics in Thessalonica and Corinth," borrows from the title of Charles Dickens' renowned novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*.[1] Dickens begins the book with interesting illustrations of two quite similar but different cities, London and Paris, and continues implicitly to contrast their differences as the backdrops of its main story. I will also compare and contrast the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations - two similar yet strikingly different ones - with regard to their members' social status, relationships, and identity.

Although Paul founded these two churches in metropolises in the Mediterranean area in a similar period and delivered constant messages to them, the two communities attracted different kinds of people and developed distinctive features and atmospheres. In Thessalonica, Paul converted many casual labourers who showed solidarity within their church but experienced affliction from conflict with non-believers. On the other hand, the Corinthian congregation was more diverse and included those experiencing economic mobility, the well-born, and the poor. Its members generally found social harmony with their larger society but did not enjoy strong ingroup cohesion.

In this thesis, I will try to underline the conspicuous differences between the two Pauline congregations concerning their socio-economic compositions, social relationships, and further social identities, while extrapolating certain circles of causality between them through socio-economic and social-scientific criticism. In other words, this research has three chief aims: (1) highlighting the dissimilarities between the Thessalonians and the Corinthians by contrasting their socio-economic statuses, intergroup and intragroup relationships, and social identities; (2) tracing certain patterns of historical causation between the four criteria; and (3) developing a socio-economic and social psychological approach to the Pauline letters which can help to achieve the two former goals.

[1] I am grateful to John M. G. Barclay who suggested this title.

Though the attempt of contrasting the Pauline communities and letters itself is not novel, this study is distinctive from previous research in many senses. Though a majority of commentators have admitted or naturally assumed that there were many divergences amongst the Pauline churches, many tend to concentrate on similarities more than dissimilarities. Only a few scholars, such as John M. G. Barclay and Craig S. de Vos, turned their attention more to the manifest divergences between the Pauline Communities or in the same community in different periods. Barclay, in his seminal study of the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations, deals with the eschatological implications of different social relationships with non-believers.[2] He argues that, while the Thessalonians' imminent eschatology was reinforced by harassment from outsiders, the Corinthians' non-eschatological perspective was influenced by their social harmony with non-believers and vice versa. He concludes that "all Paul's churches were of the same stamp" is a wrong supposition.[3] Following Barclay's emphasis on the distinctiveness of each of the Pauline congregations, de Vos attempts to contrast the three communities in Thessalonica, Corinth, and Philippi with regard to their conflicts with non-believers.[4] He focuses on explicating causes for different severities of conflicts with outgroups in those regions by developing the "Culture of Conflict" theory, which deals with which regions had high or low conflict cultures. He insists that cultural and regional factors determined how frequently the believers were exposed to conflicts with non-believers. But his explanations have limitations in several senses. Firstly, he focuses predominantly on conflict with outsiders. But there were some other notable differences between the Pauline churches, such as different intragroup relationships and socio-economic compositions, that should be given further attention. Secondly, while his emphasis on local factors is reasonable, his explications of them are to a certain degree oversimplified and need further elaboration. For instance, he simply considers the religious and political mentality of ancient Thessalonians as Greek, which he defines as having little tolerance towards minor groups; Thessalonica, however, was hugely Romanised and loyal to Rome, as he would

2 John M. G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," *JSNT* 47 (1992), 49-74; idem, "Conflict in Thessalonica," *CBQ* 55 (1993), 512-530.

3 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 73. His similar expression is famous: "Grace is everywhere", but it is "not everywhere the same" (*Paul and the Gift* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015], 6).

4 Craig S. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

admit, and adopted many foreign gods by accepting many foreigners.[5] Whether ancient Greeks were intolerant towards vocal minorities is also debatable. Most importantly, internal and other factors in the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches, such as their socio-economic compositions and internal relationships, are undervalued in de Vos' study. It seems that their members' conflicts with outsiders were influenced far more by the internal factors than by local or cultural factors, as I will argue in the following chapters. Therefore, even though the contributions of these studies should not be underestimated, there are still untouched and unilluminated areas of research regarding the social relationships and memberships of the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations and their differences.

First, the previous scholarly treatments of divergences in the Pauline churches have shed little light on certain areas of study, in particular the early Christians' socio-economic status. There is a long history of debates on the early believers' status.[6] While some scholars have argued that the Pauline Christians were mostly poor, others claim that their socio-economic levels varied from the elite to the impoverished. The former position is generally called the Old Consensus (e.g. Gustav A. Deissmann and Justin J. Meggitt), while the latter one the New Consensus (e.g. Gerd Theissen and Wayne A. Meeks). Although many scholars over the last century have developed the discussion in methodology, terminology, and socio-economic exegeses of particular biblical passages like 1 Thess 4:9-12 and 1 Cor 1:26, they have not reached a general consensus on early believers' socio-economic levels. One of the major problems in this debate is that the majority of the Pauline scholars deem the issue as a dichotomous question: choosing either the New or Old Consensus for all the Pauline congregations. Another problem is that the Corinthian congregation has been viewed as the archetypal church which reflects the socio-economic composition of all the Pauline or the later congregations.[7] However, there is another possibility that the early Christian congregations were, in fact, distinctive from each other in their socio-economic

5 Pantelis M. Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations in Roman Thessalonikē: In Search of Identity and Support in a Cosmopolitan Society," in *From Roman to early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura S. Nasrallah, Ch. Bakirtzēs, and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 13-47; Néstor O. Míguez, *The Practice of Hope: Ideology and Intention in First Thessalonians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 49.

6 For a detailed history of the dissonance between the Old and New Consensuses, see §2.1 and §4.1.

7 Cf. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 70; Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale, 1960), 60.

compositions. For example, the Thessalonian community may correspond with the Old Consensus, while the Corinthian one with the New Consensus. I will try to explore this possibility by examining the different social makeups of the two Pauline communities respectively in Chapters 2 and 4 and by directly contrasting them in Chapter 6.

Second, the traditional descriptions of early believers' social status and relationships and their socio-economic implications and ramifications need to be more fleshed out and challenged.[8] In this regard, numerous unanswered and contentious questions can be raised. When it comes to the Thessalonians, we can list many questions as follows. Was their conflict with outsiders chiefly religious and political, as many scholars assume? Were there any other social and economic causes for it? Can we associate Paul's depictions of their vulnerability to harassment from non-believers with their low socio-economic position? What did the conflict imply in their everyday and church lives, especially their social and economic activities, as manual workers? Did the conflict influence their cohesion, economic mutualism, or social identity as some commentators presume? If so, how did it affect them? How did the Thessalonians build their unusual cohesion and reciprocity so quickly, given their recent founding? Was their solidarity simply religious and ethical, or was it also practical and financial? What were the social and economic implications of Paul's teaching of brotherly love against the Thessalonians' social experiences, especially conflict with non-believers? There are similar questions about the Corinthians. How did certain Corinthians come to enjoy social harmony with outsiders in spite of Paul's teachings that conflicts between believers and non-believers were natural and common? Who were accountable for the harmony? Why did they desire to build it? What were the social and economic benefits of the good relationships with outgroup members, and what were their costs? How did the social adaptability influence their ingroup tension and social identity? Was the discord within the church religious, ideological, political, social or economic? Where were the main battlefields of the tension amongst the Corinthians or between certain Corinthians and Paul? All these questions will be answered by accentuating distinctive socio-economic facets, implications, origins, and results of certain intergroup and intragroup relationships and memberships in Thessalonica and Corinth lying behind Paul's theological discourses. I will try to answer these questions one by one throughout this thesis, in particular in Chapters 3 and 5, while contrasting the distinctive socio-economic atmospheres of the two churches in Chapter 6.

[8] §3.1 and §5.1 provide a detailed history of previous research on the social relationships in Thessalonica and Corinth and its limitations.

Third, in comparing the Thessalonian and Corinthian communities, I will propose two different circles of historical causality between socio-economic status, intergroup and intragroup relationships, and identity. The causal connections between the four criteria are implied in many notable studies. Some commentators have presupposed that the membership of a certain community may have influenced social relationships within it[9] and with non-believers.[10] Besides, the possibility has also been suggested that the intergroup and ingroup relationships reinforced each other[11] and were entangled with its members' eschatology or ethics.[12] Many of these suggestions, however, remain scholarly hunches and have not been studied exhaustively. I will attempt to clarify how socio-economic status played an indispensable role in creating different atmospheres in which members enjoyed good social relationships or suffered from bad ones within church and with non-believers, and how the intergroup and intragroup relationships were interwoven with each other and with social identities in Thessalonica (Chapters 2-3) and Corinth (Chapters 4-5) respectively. This will be achieved by two major tasks: integrating nuanced reconstructions of social histories in Thessalonica and Corinth and comparing the historical snapshots both with ancient sources and with modern social psychological theories. In particular, I will employ Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) which deal with social relationships and behaviours in systematic and heuristic ways. This of course calls for negotiation and refinement of socio-economic and social-scientific methodology.

I will articulate my own social-scientific criticism, after exploring why biblical scholars are attracted to social psychological theories and how they have used them. Employing modern theories, such as SIT/SCT, to interpret the Pauline letters has been contentious, since it embodies the latent dangers of anachronism, reductionism, determinism, and theory-driven study. Though many scholars - Philip F. Esler, Mikael Tellbe, J. Brian

9 Theissen, *Social Setting;* idem, "Social Structure of Pauline Communities: Some Critical Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty and Survival," *JSNT* 84 (2001), 83-84; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 287-291; Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 155-178; cf. de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 296-297; John H. Elliott, "The Jesus Movement Was Not Egalitarian but Family-Oriented," *BibInt* 11 (2003), 173-210.

10 John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

11 Alan C. Mitchell, "Rich and Poor in the Courts of Corinth: Litigiousness and Status in 1 Corinthians 6.1-11," *NTS* 39.4 (1993), 562-586; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), 85.

12 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 49-74.

Tucker, and David G. Horrell - have used and developed their own social psychological approach to the Pauline letters, it is still not an agreed-upon method. Following Esler's suggestion that a comparative aspect of social-scientific methodology needs to be underlined,[13] I will defend and develop this method which draws into dialogue a social history and a modern theory in three specific steps: reconstruction, distant comparison, and semi-verification (§1.2).

1.1.2. The Composition and Argument of This Thesis

Chapter 1 will introduce the major issues and argument of this thesis and justify my socio-economic and social psychological approach to 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. I will underline the comparative nature of the methodology and the necessity of vivid historical reconstructions of the Thessalonian and Corinthian communities for the method. This chapter includes summarising Social Identity Theory (SIT), Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), and their relevant research on minority-majority relations.

Chapter 2 will profile the Thessalonian believers' socio-economic levels and situations in light of the Roman economy. I will argue that they were mostly free(d) occasional workers who were vulnerable to economic fluctuation and uncertainty, as well as to social ridicule and abuse. This portrait will be contrasted with Chapter 4 which deals with the Corinthians' socio-economic status. In the chapter, I will claim that the Corinthian congregation consisted of three major strata: semi-elites, upwardly mobile people, and the poor. Thus, Chapters 2 and 4 are intended to reveal the different socio-economic compositions of the two Pauline communities. If this contrasting work is successful, it means that it is not necessary to choose between the Old Consensus and the New Consensus as the representation for all the Pauline churches: the Thessalonian community fits more with the Old Consensus while the Corinthian one with the New Consensus.

In light of Chapters 2 and 4, Chapters 3 and 5 will explore the nature of the early believers' different social relationships at Thessalonica and Corinth. In Chapter 3, I will maintain that the Thessalonians suffered from conflicts with outsiders but enjoyed solidarity and economic mutualism because of their low social and economic status; in the end, they formed a strong social identity in Christ. This will be contrasted with Chapter 5 which examines the Corinthians' social relationships and weak social identity. The chapter will

[13] Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 6-12.

reveal that the Corinthians enjoyed social harmony with non-believers at the cost of internal discord since certain wealthy members endeavoured to gain or monopolise honour and economic benefits through their own social networks. The result of this was their weak social identity in the Corinthian community. These two chapters, along with Chapters 2 and 4, will articulate how the four criteria - socio-economic status, intergroup and intragroup relationships, and social identity - were intertwined with one another by comparing my historical reconstructions of the Thessalonian and Corinthian communities with social psychological theories (SIT/SCT). Thus, Chapters 2-3 describe the socio-economic dynamics in Thessalonica, while Chapters 4-5 illustrate those in Corinth.

Chapter 6 will summarise the conclusions of the previous chapters. This includes contrasting the different socio-economic compositions, intra- and inter-group relationships, and identities of the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations, while determining the historical and logical causations between the four criteria.

Throughout the thesis, I will mainly argue that Paul's messages of God's grace, ethics, and community were proclaimed to two distinct communities consisting of different members in Thessalonica and Corinth, and thereby were manifested in different social relationships, behaviours, and identities in the two churches. On the one hand, a possible social history of the Thessalonians will be demonstrated as follows. (1) They were mostly social and economic minorities as poor free(d) casual labourers. (2) Their socio-economic vulnerability and the breach of their previous intimate relationships caused conflicts between the converts and non-converts in small groups. In the eyes of the non-believers, the Thessalonian converts were betrayers and peace or group breakers. (3) The tension, in turn, worsened their social and economic insecurity and threatened their survival, but enabled them to build and fortify their cohesion and economic mutualism as a response to the conflict and as a survival strategy. Meanwhile, the ingroup solidarity reinforced the intergroup conflict. (4) As a result, they formed a strong social identity in Christ, developing high ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination. On the other hand, a plausible historical scenario of the Corinthian congregation will be proposed vis-à-vis the Thessalonian one as follows. (1) It included some relatively wealthy members, such as semi-elites and upwardly mobile people. (2) Certain well-to-do believers created the ethos in which the Corinthian community generally enjoyed good relationships with their larger society. They treasured their own social connections through which they desired to be honoured and to gain social and material benefits. They imitated the common elite social network system in which only a few

members monopolised honour and tried to justify honour hierarchy. (3) Their obsession with social connections for social and economic benefits was incompatible (and therefore clashed) with Paul's teaching of fellowship with/in Christ to which some other, likely poorer, believers strongly adhered. This is because fellowship with/in Christ did not allow a few wealthy believers to monopolise honour; it rather encouraged all members to share honour, as well as suffering, joy, and material goods with one another. (4) Certain believers' relationships, which copied aristocratic social networks, weakened their Christian identity. Their weak social identity reinforced a less discriminating attitude towards non-believers and less favourable behaviours towards ingroup members.

1.2. Methodology: Socio-Economic and Social Psychological Approaches

1.2.1. Methodological Issues

Reconstructing a "social history (Sozialgeschichte)"[14] of early Christians in Thessalonica and Corinth is one of the most significant parts of this thesis. The goal can be achieved by observing, describing, and sometimes correlating their social behaviours, relationships, experiences, and events. The task is contingent firstly on the Pauline letters, secondly ancient writings and archaeological evidence, and thirdly, occasionally, social theories, models, or concepts. Depending on the former two sources as historical evidence for social history is common in biblical scholarship.[15] Since I will follow general principles in using the two

[14] Rainer Kessler defines social history as "an investigation of a society's social structure within history", a concept broader than "history of events" and narrower than "social structure" (*The Social History of Ancient Israel: An Introduction* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008], 3).

[15] The priority of the two types of source, however, needs to be ordered. Some Old Testament scholars tend to prioritise archaeological and historical evidence over Israel's Scriptures (cf. Kessler, *Social History*, 19-23), while scholars in New Testament studies show the opposite tendency. This is because the Old Testament is not generally well dated and is written after or long after the actual events, but the (especially undisputed) Pauline letters can be historically well located. Therefore, many Pauline scholars tend to view Paul's letters as the primary source, archaeological or historical evidence as the secondary one, and social theories as the tertiary one. Cf. A. D. Clarke and J. B. Tucker, "Social History and Social Theory in the Study of Social Identity," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. B. Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 50 note 27.

In my view, Acts needs to be placed between the primary source (the Pauline letters) and the secondary source (archaeological and historical evidence) in historical research on the Pauline communities. When Acts is used for historical reconstruction in this thesis (esp. §§2.3, 4.3.2), I will follow three basic rules. First, if Luke's descriptions of the Pauline communities are not inconsonant with Paul's letters, I will view them as being like the primary source. Second, if the depictions in Acts conflict with those in the Pauline letters, the latter will be preferred as more historically reliable. Third, Luke and Paul had their own biases against the Pauline congregations. Because of the third

sorts of sources and this is not controversial, it is not necessary to articulate them here. By using the biblical, historical and archaeological sources, I will try to explore the socio-economic levels and relationships of the Thessalonians and the Corinthians, while locating them in the Roman economy and society. This task will dominate many parts of this thesis, being fundamental for further social-scientific discussions.

I also employ social psychological theories to construct the social and economic history of the Pauline churches. This, however, is controversial among biblical scholars. It means that its usefulness for or its applicability to the Pauline letters should be negotiated before using it; my position on this methodology needs to be elaborated. The following sections, therefore, are intended to diagnose the potential problems of this criticism, find a remedy for them (§1.2.2), and develop a social psychological approach (§1.2.3). After this, I will summarise two social psychological theories, Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), and their relevant study of minority-majority relations which will be compared with 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians (§1.2.4). Before starting these tasks in detail, I will briefly introduce the origination of SIT/SCT in social psychology, the basic reasons why biblical scholars are attracted to the theories, and the chief problems of their approach.

A study of intergroup behaviour, conflict, and harmony in social psychology was developed by Muzafer Sherif in the 1960s. His series of summer camp studies were attempts to explain a cause for and a process of intergroup conflict on the basis of competition for scarce resources,[16] such as honour, economics, and power.[17] He argued that group conflict resulting from competition to obtain scarce rewards accelerates intragroup solidarity and an antagonistic bias towards outgroup members, while interdependent goals and cooperation between groups alleviate intergroup hostility and chauvinism. His position has been supported by other strong experimental and anthropological evidence and expanded by Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RCT or RGCT).[18] The RCT, according to Donald T.

rule, Acts may sometimes be deemed more historically reliable than Paul's letters in certain cases. These three rules, however, are neither absolute nor strict.

16 M. Sherif, *In Common Predicament: Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

17 Cf. Ronald J. Fisher, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution* (New York: Springer, 1990), 33-34.

18 Henry Tajfel and John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relation*, ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Monterey: Brooks/Cole, 1986), 7-24; Donald T. Campbell, "Ethnocentric and Other Altruistic Motives," in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, Vol. 13, ed. D. Levine (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 287.

Campbell, "assumes that group conflicts are rational in the sense that groups do have incompatible goals and are in competition for scarce resources".[19]

In the 1980s, Henri Tajfel, John Turner, and their colleagues, based on Sherif's and other predecessors' research,[20] turned more attention to the meaning of group belonging itself and the process and development of identification with groups in the context of intergroup relations.[21] They proposed Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), which have both been edited, complemented, and extended.[22] These two theories are still influential, providing theoretical foundations for recent experiments and field research on new and recurring issues, such as minority-majority relations.[23] In this sense, those dealing with intergroup and intragroup relationships in politics, diplomacy, cultures, and everyday lives have mostly drawn resources from the SIT/SCT.

These studies of intergroup relations and social identity have recently attracted some biblical scholars. They consider them as a methodological tool to explore the dynamic relations between communities and of their members, as well as early Christians' social identity in the New Testament.[24] For instance, writing a series of commentaries on Galatians

For the anthropological evidence, see R. A. Levine and Donald T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitude and Group Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1972).

19 Campbell, "Altruistic Motives," 287.

20 Cf. G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self & Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); L. Festinger, "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes," *Human Relations* 7 (1954), 117-140.

21 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 8.

22 For the SIT, see Henry Tajfel and John C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in Austin and Worchel, *Intergroup Relations*, 33-47; eidem, "Social Identity," 7-24. For the SCT, see John C. Turner, "A Self-Categorization Theory," in *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*, ed. John C. Turner et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 42-67.

23 R. Brown and D. Capozza, eds., *Social Identity Processes* (London: Sage, 2000), vii-viii.

24 For the recent applications of this methodology to the New Testament, see Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); idem, *Galatians* (New York: Routledge, 1998); idem, *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994); idem, *Community and Gospel*; Philip F. Esler and Ronald Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006); J. B. Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010); A. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the 'Other': Social Identity, Ethnicity and Intergroup Reconciliation in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 147-224; M. Tellbe, *Christ-Believers in Ephesus: A Textual Analysis of Early Christian Identity Formation in a Local Perspective* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 137-182; J. B. Tucker and Coleman A. Baker, eds., *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014); cf. Coleman A. Baker, "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *BTB* 42.3 (2012), 134-135.

(1998), Romans (2003), and the Gospel of John (2006), Esler has explored the applicability of social psychology to the New Testament.[25] He states "the material in the letter [Romans] pointing to tension and even conflict within the Christ-movement in the capital calls for a theory of identity that is embedded in the processes of intergroup differentiation and hostility".[26]

In a similar vein, the Thessalonians' conflict with non-believers (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14-16; 3:3-7) and ingroup solidarity (1:3; 3:12; 4:9-12), and the Corinthians' harmony with non-believers (1 Cor 5:10; 6:1-11; 8:10; 10:27; 14:24-25) and ingroup conflict (1:10-17; 6:1-11; 11:17-22) call for a sociological or social psychological analysis. For example, though seemingly unconnected in the rhetorical setting, the two issues - the Thessalonians' conflict with outsiders and solidarity within church - can be placed together in the sequence of events; the conflict with non-believers would have strengthened the ingroup cohesion.[27] This hypothesis can be undergirded by social psychological insight: "intergroup competition [conflict] enhances intragroup morale, cohesiveness, and cooperation".[28] Likewise, there is room for a social psychological explanation of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians (Chapters 3, 5).

It is worthwhile noting, however, that social psychology is not a magic wand by which the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers' social experience, cognitive processes, and belief system in the context of conflict can be unveiled. Some New Testament scholars are still sceptical of the methodology, mainly because of the possible traps of anachronism, determinism, reductionism, and theory-driven study (§1.2.2).[29] I am aware of the possible inappropriateness of applying modern theories to ancient texts in some senses and share some of the critiques and concerns. Thus, I will examine and develop this methodological tool in

25 See note 24.

26 Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 19.

27 Cf. de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 168-169; Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 55.

28 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 8.

29 Edwin A. Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," *JRH* 11 (1980), 201-217; J. C. Miller, "The Sociological Implications of 'Collective Identity' and Its Implications for Understanding Second Peter," in *Reading Second Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Second Peter*, ed. D. F. Watson and R. L. Webb (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 149 note 8; John M. G. Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 6-7 note 10; cf. C. S. Rodd, "On Applying a Sociological Theory to Biblical Studies," *JSOT* 19 (1981), 95-106. For responses to Judge's criticism, see Bengt Holmberg, "The Methods of Historical Reconstruction in the Scholarly 'Recovery' of Corinthian Christianity," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for Pauline Church*, ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (London: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 254-271; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 12-16.

greater depth, while responding to some possible critiques in the following sections (§§1.2.2.2, 1.2.3). What I should reiterate here is that the reason I concentrate more on negotiating social-scientific methodology and its methodological issues than the socio-economic approach is that the former is far more contentious than the latter.

1.2.2. Social Psychology in Pauline Scholarship

1.2.2.1. The Attractions of Social Theories and Their Usages

Social psychology, in particular Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (SIT), has been gradually utilised by some Pauline scholars from the late-1990s as a supportive tool for several reasons. First, it appears that this phenomenon is not unrelated to new questions about early Christians' social identity that have been raised in New Testament scholarship, as well as scholars' continuing concern with the believers' dynamic relationships within the Pauline communities and with their larger society. Given that the concept of "identity" in social relationships has recently been coined by sociologists, it is difficult to deny a connection between a quest for early Christian identity and sociology.[30]

Second, as John H. Elliott points out, some recent exegetes are not content with conventional approaches because they find them less helpful in exploring the socio-economic dimensions of biblical texts.[31] They are therefore motivated to hunt for a more systematic approach to such social phenomena including social interactions, identities, and their causalities. Without social psychological analyses, many aspects of socio-economic dynamics of the Pauline communities may remain unclear and categorised as hunches and scholastic imagination.[32] In other words, group dynamics implicitly presented in Paul's letters can be unravelled and clarified by employing social psychology which analyses the inter- and intra-group relations in a heuristic and systematic way.[33]

Third, social psychology can offer an alternative angle, rather than sources. It enables scholars to look into and interpret ancient data in a way different from traditional views, and thereby to produce new insights into them.[34] For example, seemingly unrelated snapshots of

30 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 47.

31 John H. Elliott, "Social-Scientific Criticism of the Bible: Emergence, Features, and Contributions," in *Reading a Tendentious Bible*, ed. Marvin L. Chaney, Uriah Y. Kim, and Annette Schellenberg (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), 36.

32 Cf. Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 45.

33 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 45-46, 48.

34 M. Duverger, *Introduction to the Social Sciences* (George Allen & Unwin, 1964), 267; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 10.

the Pauline communities can be plausibly connected by social psychology in a certain historical sequence or causality. In this regard, social theories are not gap-fillers for evidence, but tools used to infer logical causalities between historical pictures. This is the main benefit of this methodology which I will pursue in this thesis.

There are several notable scholars, such as Esler, Tellbe, Horrell, and Tucker, whose approach to the Pauline letters is social psychological. Their works reveal some essential methodological issues, and their own strength and weakness. In the first place, Esler can be considered as a pioneer of employing SIT (Social Identity Theory) and SCT (Self-Categorization Theory) to interpret the Pauline letters. His academic career commenced in the 1980s with his defence of socio-scientific methodology against critics, while applying diverse sociological and anthropological knowledge to the New Testament.[35] Esler turned his attention to social psychology, in particular SIT/SCT, in the late-1990s. His commentaries on Galatians and Romans are the manifestations of his concern with both social psychology and the Pauline letters.[36]

Esler, in his study on Romans, explores Paul's strategy of creating and reinforcing a common ingroup identity in Christ to handle conflicts between the Judean and Greek believers in Rome.[37] The commentary is divided into three major parts: introducing SIT/SCT, reconstructing the Roman believers' intergroup relationships historically, and reading Paul's letter to the Romans in light of the former two parts. First, Esler carefully summarises SIT/SCT, especially the common ingroup identity model devised to reduce intergroup conflict, and F. Barth's research on ethnicity.[38] The second part is an attempt to explore the historical settings of the Roman believers. Esler especially bases the possible social tension between the Judean and Gentile recipients in Rome on archaeological, historical and biblical evidence. He supposes that the Roman house church(es) were divided in tension as the Gentile believers had developed a distinctive identity; the identity became divergent in the period when the Jews were banned from Rome which ended after 49 CE. In the third part, Esler interprets the whole letter through a socio-scientific lens. He argues that "Paul seeks to reconcile Judeans and Greeks by reminding them of the new common ingroup

35 CF. Esler, *Community and Gospel*; idem, *Social Worlds*.

36 His commentary on Galatians is the first published application of SIT/SCT in New Testament scholarship.

37 Esler, *Conflict and Identity*.

38 Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 40-76; cf. F. Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969).

identity that they share",[39] while to a degree allowing them to maintain their subordinate or previous ethnic identities.[40] As such, he reads Romans from a different angle by using SIT/SCT, thus suggesting an alternative interpretation.

Although Esler's approach to and insights into Romans are valuable, they are not free from problems. One criticism is with his historical reconstruction of the tension between believers in Rome, a reconstruction which is foundational to his argument.[41] The biblical evidence for the ethnic and social conflict in or between the Roman house churches seems neither sufficient nor specific enough to convince some readers. Esler bases the probable origin of the conflict and its features heavily on the general ethos in the Mediterranean world. But it is not clear whether the possible conflict is dominant in the whole letter to the Roman believers, whether its nature resembled common ethnic and social conflicts in antiquity, and whether it came originally from different identities and an ethnocentrism developed by the banning of Judeans from Rome. The archaeological and anthropological evidence he provides cannot guarantee the origin and nature of the actual tension between the Gentile and Judean believers, even though his reconstruction is overall probable and successful in many parts. This indicates that, in order to use socio-scientific methodology, early Christians' social experiences should be reconstructed as clearly as possible with primary sources. Without the concrete reconstruction, the socio-scientific approach to social history may give the impression that the study is too theory-driven and not text-based.[42] In addition, a theoretical critique to Esler's study is that his approach is susceptible to anachronism in that he uses the modern theory for navigating ancient history; in particular, he seems to believe as if Paul adopts social psychological models as "an entrepreneur of identity".[43] I will discuss this anachronism issue in detail in the next section (§1.2.2.2).

Other Pauline scholars, including Tellbe, Horrell, and Tucker, are also worth mentioning in that they employ SIT/SCT in different ways. Tellbe, in *Christ-Believers in Ephesus*, explores the Christian congregations in Ephesus by using several kinds of social scientific perspective, including SIT/SCT. In particular, in dealing with the issue of deviance

39 Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 133.

40 Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 218-219, 364-365.

41 Cf. C. J. Hodge, "Review on Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter," *CBQ* 67.1 (2005), 142; J. A. Loubser, "Review on Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter," *Neot* 39.2 (2005), 443.

42 Cf. David G. Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," *JSNT* 78 (2000), 83-105.

43 Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 109.

at Ephesus, he employs social conflict and identity theories and the sociology of deviance to claim that conflict and deviance between believers played an important role in forming their own different identities.[44] As far as the chapter on deviance is concerned, Tellbe largely follows previous studies and uses sociological theories to back up his ideas. The impression is that he tries to translate the theological language and ideas of the previous studies into sociological and social psychological concepts.[45]

Tellbe's methodological problems are as follows. Firstly, his presupposition that "theories about the construction of social identity transcend time and history, at least at a general level"[46] is somewhat naïve. He does not further explain why and how social theories transcend time and space and what he means by "a general level". Secondly, Tellbe employs social conflict theory, the sociology of deviance, and social identity theory from sociology and social psychology without any further justification for how the three different theories can be harmoniously and simultaneously applied to one historical text or passage. He seems to underestimate the possibility that the three theories - one of which in fact comes from a different discipline - might be to a degree dissonant. Thirdly, while his study of deviance is mostly confined to 1-2 Timothy, Tellbe argues that deviance and conflict were common in the Ephesian churches.[47] Though he briefly deals with Revelation 2, the Johannine Letters, and Ignatius' Letter to the Ephesians in terms of "deviance",[48] it remains in question how common the deviance in the Ephesian communities was. Since his main argument is that the "story of Jesus" was the remedy for the deviance and conflict in the Ephesian congregations, one must first more firmly reconstruct the prevalence of deviance in Ephesus.

Horrell and Tucker can be considered as different from Bruce J. Malina and possibly Esler, members of the Context Group,[49] in their positions with regard to demarcating social scientific methodology.[50] Malina confines the method exclusively to a model-based

44 Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 179.

45 Due to this impression, David G. Horrell notes in criticism that "although this book covers a range of significant aspects of early Christian identity, much of what is said in the chapters on ethnicity and deviance offers rather little beyond the existing scholarship, which is often summarized at length" ("Review on Christ-Believers in Ephesus," *CBQ* 73 [2011], 405).

46 Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 138.

47 Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 139, 180.

48 Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 180-181.

49 Bruce J. Malina, Esler, Elliott, and other members have regularly met since 1990, publishing social scientific studies of the New Testament. Cf. John H. Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 29-30.

50 David G. Horrell, "Whither Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation? Reflections on Contested Methodologies and the Future," in *After the First Urban Christians*, ed. T.

approach. It means that it must be accepted and verifiable by social scientists;[51] for the social-scientific methodology, one should set out a certain agreed-upon model or theory in the first place. From this point of view, Theissen's and Meeks' works can hardly be categorised within this social-scientific method.[52] On the other hand, Horrell expresses concern over the Context Group's rejection of other types of social scientific approaches. Horrell's position is less rigid than the Context Group, since he does not suppose that one should necessarily set forth certain models or theories in advance.[53] Furthermore, what concerns him is that a model-based method may lead spontaneously to a model-driven study; if one depends heavily on a certain model, historically specific evidence and actors would be subordinated to the model.[54]

In *Solidarity and Difference*, Horrell employs several sociological and psychological models, theories, or insights, while trying to avoid subordinating the Pauline texts to a single model. He tries to pursue a (so-called) text-based social scientific methodology. In particular, SIT/SCT are used along with other social theories in chapters 3 and 5 to explore Paul's ethics. In those chapters, Horrell tends to (1) extract issues from and interpret the Pauline letters first; (2) strengthen the interpretation by using several modern theories suitable for the texts and the themes; and (3) answer questions raised from a contemporary context.[55] It appears that his exegesis of the Pauline letters is not fettered by one sociological or social psychological model.[56] His use of models is flexible depending on texts and issues. Horrell's less strict methodology, however, runs the possible risk of rashly adopting various modern theories and models for biblical exegeses without negotiations. It can be argued that, as

D. Still and David G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark International, 2009), 6-20; idem, "Response to Philip Esler," 83-105; Philip F. Esler, "Review of D. G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence*," *JTS* 49 (1998), 253-260; idem, "Models in New Testament Interpretation: A Reply to David Horrell," *JSNT* 22.78 (2000), 107-113; cf. Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 4-14; Bruce J. Malina, "Social-Scientific Methods in Historical Jesus Research," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 3-26.

51 Malina, "Social-Scientific Methods," 3, 15.

52 Cf. Horrell, "Social-Scientific Approaches," 16.

53 Horrell, "Social-Scientific Approaches," 15.

54 Horrell, "Social-Scientific Approaches," 12-17; Horrell, "Response to Philip Esler," 83-105.

55 Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 100-104, 152-155; Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 12.

56 Holmberg points out that Horrell "emphasises the participation of the human actor in both the maintenance and transformation of social structures", rather than just regarding the actor as "predictable and regular, presentable in generalized and typical patters that occur cross-culturally, and that might, albeit tentatively, enable the formulation of (social) laws, or at least generalisations, concerning human behaviours" ("Historical Reconstruction," 269).

Horrell will also agree, scholars should be careful in using sociological models, particularly those which are out-dated, flawed, and rejected by social science communities,[57] and interpreters need to provide justification for using modern theories in any way.

Tucker, as he mentions in *You Belong to Christ*, generally follows Horrell's method described above to interpret 1 Corinthians 1-4.[58] In this book, Tucker mainly argues that "Paul was concerned with the continuation of gentile identity 'in Christ'";[59] he reprioritised and re-evaluated the existing social identities on the basis of an "in Christ" identity which is salient over all other identities.[60] In chapter 2, Tucker provides methodological justification for using social identity theories and other models from sociology and social psychology. He highlights that "elements of various social-scientific theories will be integrated in order to provide a plausible reading of the text".[61] He does not depend on just one theory exclusively. In this regard, Tucker does not unquestioningly accept and use SIT/SCT by acknowledging its limitations and weaknesses. He complements them by further employing diverse identity theories, e.g. Richard Jenkins' study of individual and collective identity, Stephanie Lawler's narrative identity, M. Billing's research on ancient rhetoric and identity, and postcolonial theorists' understanding of identity.[62] He is right to argue that there is no single perfect theory to explain identity. What is questionable, however, is whether Tucker's attempt to eclectically integrate SIT/SCT and eight different sorts of identity theories into one theoretical framework is successful.[63] A variety of identity theories can supplement each other, but also be dissonant in some parts. He rightly underlines the former point but negates the latter one. It seems that Tucker's "eclectic integration"[64] of identity theories, even at first glance, is too complicated and impossible even in modern sociology and social psychology, since sociologists disagree with one another with regard to identity in many senses. If the eclectic approach on identity was possible, there would likely have been a scholarly consensus. In this regard, the attempt to apply the eclectic integration of various identity theories to ancient texts seems premature and very ambitious.

57 But at the same time, Horrell maintains that it should be admitted that there is no single perfect and flawless theory ("Social-Scientific Approaches," 13).

58 Nevertheless, Tucker disagrees with the way Horrell underplays the differences between social theorists and social historians (*Belong to Christ*, 12).

59 Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 268.

60 Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 268.

61 Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 3, 13.

62 Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 38-59.

63 Cf. Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 60 note 118.

64 Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 60.

So far, I have reviewed a wide range of applications of social identity theories to the New Testament. The prevailing usage, however, does not guarantee its usefulness, applicability, and appropriateness. Besides, although many scholars' uses of SIT/SCT for the Pauline letters have their own strengths, there are also limitations and vulnerability. It is necessary, then, to negotiate the possible criticisms at the theoretical and practical levels (§1.2.2.2), before developing my methodology (§1.2.3) and applying it to 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians (Chapters 3, 5).

1.2.2.2. Possible Critiques and Response

The social psychological approach to Paul's letters is relatively fresh to biblical scholars so that, as Andrew D. Clarke and Tucker state, "it unsurprisingly lacks a clear and agreed-upon method".[65] This inevitably results in controversy among scholars.[66] Such debates, along with my preliminary review above (§1.2.2.1), can reveal the typical weaknesses and strengths of this methodology. In this section, I will negotiate three key critiques and possible responses to them, before explaining my position with specific principles and procedures (§1.2.3).

The first criticism of the social psychological approach derives from the essential dissonance between historians and social theorists: the criticism is of reductionism and determinism.[67] As Edwin A. Judge rightly states, "history walks a tightrope between the unique and the typical".[68] Historians tend to underline the unique aspect of a certain history and its actors;[69] there are different and independent individuals living in changing societies in specific time and space. On the other hand, social theorists seek to find generalisations of human behaviours and relationships.[70] Even while tracing the changes and developments of human society, they explain them through a model or theory. A few social theorists (e.g. Émile Durkheim and Karl Lamprecht) have thought of sociology as though it can discover universal laws which are transferable in time and space, much like in the natural sciences.[71]

65 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 47; cf. Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 36.

66 Cf. §1.2.2.1, esp. notes 50, 29.

67 For a general discussion of the relation between history and social theory, see P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), 1-21; cf. Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 41-58.

68 Judge, "Question of Method," 216.

69 Burke, *Social Theory*, 2.

70 Burke, *Social Theory*, 2.

71 Cf. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 12; Burke, *Social Theory*, 14.

In this regard, some historians, as Peter Burke summarises, view "sociologists as people who state the obvious in a barbarous and abstract jargon, lack any sense of place and time, squeeze individuals without mercy into rigid categories and, to cap it all, describe these activities as 'scientific'".[72] As a biblical scholar, Judge expresses a similar concern about the determinism of some theorists in which individuality is often denied.[73] A majority of the Pauline exegetes share the criticism that the unique facets of historical individuals and their communities should not be ignored. But a few studies are in fact still so theory-driven that the Pauline congregations and their members are described as stereotyped figures.[74] Applying social psychology to Paul's letters runs the risk of determinism or reductionism.

In order to avoid that potential risk, it is necessary to take three steps. Firstly, any reconstruction on the basis of historical evidence about Pauline communities should be concerned with vivid, specific and precise portrayals of the characteristics of persons and groups. Secondly, practitioners need to discern whether the features of subjects can be explained by social models or theories, while acknowledging that models and theories can only rationalise certain aspects of the historical actors or societies. Thirdly, a back-and-forth movement between the reconstructed history and social theory can solidify the unique or typical characteristics of the individuals and groups. In this regard, social psychology can both highlight the historical or religious uniqueness of a Pauline church and clarify its typical features. It can be said, as I will elaborate below, that my approach is more like a comparison or analogy which finds both similarities and differences between the Pauline churches and modern groups. This is far from the one-sided application which colours historical actors wholly with a broad social psychological brush.

Second, and more importantly, a social psychological approach to ancient texts is exposed to the danger of theory-driven study and anachronism.[75] Two relevant questions can be raised: (1) how can an experiment-oriented social psychology be applied to real life situations?[76] and (2) how can modern theories shed light on ancient texts and contexts? First

72 Burke, *Social Theory*, 3.

73 Judge, "Question of Method," 216.

74 Horrell suspects that Esler's study is model-driven ("Response to Philip Esler," 83-105). Esler responds to Horrell, saying the critique comes from Horrell's misunderstanding of his studies ("Reply to David Horrell," 108-109, 112).

75 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 43; Judge, "Question of Method," 210.

76 This question has also been raised by some social psychologists. Cf. R. Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 114; M. Maass, L. Castelli, and L. Arcuri, "Measuring Prejudice: Implicit versus Explicit Techniques," in Brown and Capozza, *Identity Processes*, 96-116.

of all, SIT/SCT tend to draw upon context-less laboratory experiments, but scholars' main motivation for developing and using the SIT/SCT is to understand actual group conflicts and/or to practically abate conflicts in real life situations.[77] Tajfel was motivated to start his study of conflict by his experience of World War II in which he lost his family and friends.[78] More interestingly, many recent social psychologists have tried to explore and reduce real intergroup or interethnic conflicts occurring all around the world. Therefore, their work is concerned with real life situations and historical events,[79] such as the religious and political conflict in Ireland.[80] In this way, SIT/SCT are not only experiment-based but also practical. What should be accepted, nonetheless, is that real life situations tangled up with multifaceted variables are too complex to be illuminated by any one social theory.

Turning to the next question, the temporal and spatial gap between the first century Mediterranean people and the subjects studied by modern theories cannot be easily neglected. For instance, the most notable difference between them is collectivism vis-à-vis individualism; the Romans are a far more group-oriented people than our contemporaries, in particular in the western world.[81] In this regard, SIT/SCT can be useful and at the same time less useful for apprehending ancient people. While SIT/SCT are studies of group dynamics compatible with the ancients' collectivism, they are research on individuals and their cognitive processes in groups. More specifically, the consequences of "depersonalisation" (see §1.2.4.1) in groups in SIT/SCT can be reasonably compared to the ancient figures' group behaviours. But it is tricky to see into ancient individuals' mindset by using SIT/SCT, which study modern society built to a larger degree on individualism. Thus, the sociological aspect

77 Brown and Capozza, *Identity Processes*, vii-viii, 117-183.

78 Cf. John C. Turner, "Henry Tajfel: An Introduction," in *Social Groups and Identity: Developing the Legacy of Henry Tajfel*, ed. W. P. Robinson (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996), 1-24.

79 Cf. S. McKeown et al., eds., *Understanding Peace and Conflict through Social Identity Theory: Contemporary Global Perspectives* (Switzerland: Springer, 2016).

79 Brown and Capozza, *Identity Processes*, vii-viii.

80 Cf. N. Ferguson and S. McKeown, "Social Identity Theory and Intergroup Conflict in Northern Ireland," in McKeown et al., *Understanding Peace*, 215-227; A. Livingston and S. A. Haslam, "The Importance of Social Identity Content in a Setting of Chronic Social Conflict: Understanding Intergroup Relations in Northern Ireland," *BJSP* 47 (2008), 1-21.

81 Bruce J. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 225-232; cf. Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (London: SCM, 1981), 58-80. They provide a comparative table showing the differences between modern Western cultures and ancient Mediterranean ones. Though their contrasts are too simple and tend to make generalisations about both cultures, some differences are clear.

of SIT/SCT focusing on group dynamic and behaviours needs to be more tailored to the study of the ancients, while individual psychological approaches to subjects should carefully be negotiated and partly bracketed.

Judge further criticises social-scientific criticism as being too dependent on modern cultural patterns. He labels it a "sociological fallacy".[82] This term means that some scholars believe that "social theories can be safely transposed across the centuries without verification".[83] He goes on to criticise it, saying "until the painstaking field work is better done, the importation of social models that have been defined in terms of other cultures is methodologically no improvement on the 'idealistic fallacy'".[84] Judge's critique is tenable, if one's approach is just a one-sided application in which social theories are alternative sources for historical reconstruction, i.e. filling in the gaps in primary sources, substituting for evidence, or predicting the ancient people's future behaviours which are not recorded historically. In order to employ social theories in those ways, we should create (so-called) "ancient social psychology" after verifying it from the painstaking field work. However, if one's approach is more like comparison than one-sided application, the field work would not, though profoundly helpful, be mandatory.[85]

A social psychological approach in this thesis is an attempt to compare historical subjects to SIT/SCT, rather than pushing and squeezing ancient individuals and groups into the theories.[86] This comparison, in particular "distant comparison",[87] is, according to

[82] The origin of the phrase "sociological fallacy" comes from Bengt Holmberg's "the fallacy of idealism" which was used to criticise the tendency in New Testament scholarship to confine a historical phenomenon to theological structures without a dialectical conversation between ideas and social structures (*Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* [Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1978], 205). Interestingly, Judge coins the "sociological fallacy" to refute Holmberg's works with regard to socio-scientific criticism ("Question of Method," 210). For Holmberg's reply to this critique, see Holmberg, "Historical Reconstruction," 254-271.

[83] Judge, "Question of Method," 210.

[84] Judge, "Question of Method," 210.

[85] Cf. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 14-15.

[86] As to this emphasis on "comparison", I am indebted to Esler (*Community and Gospel*, 6-12). For biblical scholars' recent exploration of comparative methodology, see John M. G. Barclay and B. G. White, *The New Testament in Comparison: Validity, Method, and Purpose in Comparing Traditions* (London: T&T Clark, 2020).

[87] Many social scientists acknowledge that comparison is one of the fundamental methods to discover sociological laws. Duverger classifies the comparison into two categories: "close comparisons" and "distant comparisons" (*Social Sciences*, 261-267). The close comparison presupposes similarities between two subjects, aiming at finding and explaining differences between them. According to Duverger, "close comparison is essentially a substitute for the experimental method" (*Social Sciences*, 266). On the other hand, the distant comparison premises differences

Maurice Duverger, by its nature to premise the temporal and spatial differences between ancient data and modern theories or models. At the same time, it seeks to find their similarities and the degree and significance of the similarities, according to which its usefulness or uselessness can be confirmed.[88] He points out, however, that distant comparison cannot verify theories and models as evidence unlike "close comparison", but reveals a general idea and culture shared between two subjects.[89] It should be mentioned, additionally, that bringing other comparable ancient sources to the comparison is very productive in confirming and clarifying the similarities and differences between the two major sets of data. In this process of comparison, social psychological interpreters can gain a different angle through which one can gain an alternative insight into data,[90] while to a degree circumventing anachronism.

An element of anachronism in the social-scientific approach, furthermore, should not be unduly exaggerated as though ancient and modern human beings are wholly different species. Ancient and modern people share common features and conditions as human beings which enable us to mitigate the distance of time and space.[91] More interestingly, a majority of scholars have already used modern concepts, models, or theories both consciously and unconsciously.[92] Many modern terminologies, such as society, identity, class, status, and family, are used for exegesis. But these are not equivalent to the concepts ancient people had. For instance, the terms "family", "marriage", and "society" were unfamiliar to ancient Jews in the Old Testament.[93] Since identity is recently coined by modern sociologists, a quest for early Christian identity itself can be "a semantic anachronism".[94] The study of early Christianity as a religious sect, which depends on a modern theory, has also been spotlighted

between two subjects, such as temporal gap, aiming at finding analogies and looking for a general idea, culture, and system. Nonetheless, Duverger claims that this distinction between close and distant comparison is not rigid. Esler borrows this concept for his social-scientific criticism (*Community and Gospel*, 10).

88 Cf. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 10-11.

89 Duverger, *Social Sciences*, 261-267.

90 Duverger, *Social Sciences*, 267; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 10; cf. John Barclay, "'O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us, To see oursels as others see us': Method and Purpose in Comparison the New Testament," in John Barclay and B. G. White, *New Testament in Comparison*, 9-22, esp. 9-10.

91 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 46; Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 40; Jenkins, *Social Identity*, 3.

92 Kessler, *Social history*, 35-36; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 15; Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 47; Elliott, "Social-Scientific Criticism," 40.

93 Kessler, *Social History*, 35.

94 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 47.

in New Testament scholarship.[95] This is not to say that employing modern terms, models, and theories always runs the same level of risk and can be allowed without negotiation; using theories for biblical interpretation should be more sophisticated than applying terms and models.[96] Nonetheless, what needs to be admitted is, as Esler points out, "the inevitability of a sociological perspective" in contemporary biblical studies.[97] Dale B. Martin, moreover, claims that when one studies ancient cultures and societies, it is unavoidable to translate their languages into modern ones which cannot perfectly fit with the ancient ones; a historian, accordingly, cannot circumvent anachronism.[98] He goes on to argue that there is nevertheless distinction between "good and bad anachronisms"; a bad anachronism misleads contemporary readers to misapprehend ancient cultures and societies as if they were modern ones.[99] Therefore, although bad anachronisms should be avoided, anachronism is to a degree inevitable in studies of ancient history and texts.

Third, the paucity of primary and secondary sources for early Christians' social history is one of the deepest roots of many problems in social-scientific criticism.[100] As the majority of scholars agree, the foundation of a social psychological approach to the Pauline letters is a nuanced historical reconstruction of the Pauline communities, if possible, on the basis of a so-called "thick description".[101] Without such a foundation, social-scientific studies of ancient communities are vulnerable to the critique that they are theory-driven or sociological reductionism. Besides, the degree of concreteness and vividness of reconstruction determines how useful comparisons between social theories and ancient data are. In this regard, it is unfortunate and at the same time significant for social psychological interpreters to need to concede that a thick description of the Pauline communities is only partly possible due to the scarcity of primary sources and the impossibility of empirical research, like interviews, field work, and experiments. This historical insufficiency

95 Cf. Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 77-117.

96 Theory is generally considered as a more superordinate and conceptualized framework than model in social science, though there is no general consensus in definitions of and even distinction between theory and model. Cf. R. Sutton and B. Staw, "What Theory is not," *ASQ* 40 (1995), 371-384; J. Heinen, "A Primer on Psychological Theory," *The Journal of Psychology* 119 (1985), 413-421.

97 Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 15-16; cf. Kessler, *Social History*, 36.

98 Dale B. Martin, "The Possibility of Comparison, the Necessity of Anachronism and the Dangers of Purity," in Barclay and White, *New Testament in Comparison*, 72.

99 Martin, "Necessity of Anachronism," 72.

100 Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 45; Holmberg, "Historical Reconstruction," 268.

101 Holmberg, "Historical Reconstruction," 269.

sometimes makes social-scientific interpreters wrestle with the temptation, for instance, to exaggerate and flesh out artificial conflicts between or within ancient communities. If the conflicts or peace are not clearly attested from primary sources, social psychological approaches to the ancient intra- and inter-group relations are not necessarily useful and can rather mislead. This is one of the major limitations of the social psychological approach.

1.2.3. Social Psychology for the Thessalonian and Corinthian Communities

So far, I have dealt with the history of social psychological approaches to Paul's letters and critiques of the methodology. Through continual modification and refinement, this methodology has become more developed and sophisticated.[102] With this development and my review of this approach in the previous sections, I will try to elaborate the specific procedure and principles which will be applied to this thesis: (1) reconstruction, (2) comparison, and (3) semi-verification.

First, what should be underlined repeatedly in this study is that the foundation of a social psychological approach is a firm, vivid, historical reconstruction of the Thessalonian and Corinthian communities which is comparable with SIT/SCT.[103] In this sense, SIT/SCT are more useful for and applicable to 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians than other New Testament documents which are more ambiguous about early believers' social behaviours and relationships. These two letters show more explicitly the socio-economic status, social relationships with non-believers, and intragroup relations of Christians in Thessalonica and Corinth.[104] Furthermore, their social experiences and behaviours can be reconstructed from the two Pauline letters as primary sources, as well as other historical and archaeological records relevant to the early Christians' everyday lives in these regions. From this reconstruction we can obtain the relatively numerous, specific and clear snapshots of the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers. Without these vivid snapshots, social-scientific criticism cannot even commence. Only these firmly reconstructed social and economic

[102] Elliott, "Social-Scientific Criticism," 49-51.

[103] Holmberg, "Historical Reconstruction," 269; Clarke and Tucker, "Social History," 50-52; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 12; cf. Kessler, *Social History*, 21, 36; Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), XIII.

[104] For example, Romans only thinly shows the Roman believers' socio-economic status and relationships with outsiders or each other. Similarly, other New Testament texts include vague evidence about the relationships of early believers. Because of this, it is likely that the documents are not that suitable for this social psychological approach. Cf. Tucker, *Belong to Christ*, 5.

aspects of early believers can be compared to SIT/SCT. Because of this, Chapters 2-5 will focus more efforts on historically reconstructing the social statuses and behaviours of the Thessalonians and the Corinthians than on their comparison with SIT/SCT. It should be emphasised, nonetheless, that the reconstructed snapshots are not the whole picture of the Thessalonian and Corinthian Christians; they will include partial and smudgy parts which are historically unconnected with one another. This is why the next step is needed.

The second step is a distant comparison between the reconstruction of early Christians in Thessalonica and Corinth and SIT/SCT. As I mentioned above (§1.2.2.2), through the distant comparison, I will seek to uncover the similarities between the historical snapshots of the believers and SIT/SCT, while presupposing their differences. On the basis of this analysis, I will attempt mainly to (re-)arrange, not to fill in, the snapshots in a possible historical sequence. This includes explaining the historical and logical causalities between them. For example, I will reconstruct three snapshots of the Thessalonians: their low socio-economic status, broken relationships with outsiders, and solidarity within the church. These three snapshots will be compared to SIT/SCT in order to connect and (re-)arrange them in a historical sequence. It will seek further clarity, e.g. whether low economic status (cause) influenced their broken social relationships or solidarity (results). Then, I will explicate the logical correlations among the three snapshots by using social psychological language. It can be said that the work is similar to codicology, i.e. arranging segments of biblical manuscripts through help from philology and palaeography. These are also similar in that ordering the pieces well does not guarantee a complete picture of the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers or manuscripts because it is highly likely that, from the beginning, we do not have all the pieces. The lacunae between pieces will not be artificially filled in with social psychological knowledge or hunches. They will be left as they are, except for a few evident cases and some possible comments regarding early Christians' social identity.

In this comparison, the possible dangers of social psychological reductionism and anachronism will be avoided. I will not artificially reduce all the features and uniqueness of the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers as ancient independent figures in the Mediterranean world into generalised social psychological explanations. If possible, rather, I will highlight their peculiarities through comparison while underlining the features common to other ancient and modern subjects.

Third, this comparative study needs to be supported or to a degree verified by other ancient data which will be brought in to the comparison to circumvent bad anachronisms and

to solidify the hypothesis established by the previous steps. It is obvious that the more ancient data are put on the table, the more clearly and confidently can the hypothesis be underpinned. As far as space permits, I will pursue this task as meticulously as possible.

1.2.4. Social Relationships and Identity in Social Psychology

1.2.4.1. Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory

Turning to social psychology, Tajfel and Turner deepened the discussion of intergroup relations, social identity, and self-categorisation by supplementing and refuting Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RCT). While the RCT regards scarce resources as the main cause for conflict,[105] Tajfel and Turner understand intergroup conflict as initially deriving from people's identification of themselves as members of certain groups.[106] Such a group-based identity entails intergroup discrimination favouring ingroup members and opposing outgroup members which can trigger and intensify competition or conflict.[107] This process of evolving from identification to intergroup conflict is articulated by Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), which are mutually supportive.[108]

By eliminating external variables, Tajfel attempted to observe the essential functions of group membership which changed members' intergroup behaviours and attitudes. For this, he devised an experimental method called the minimal group paradigm (MGP). The MGP had the goal of creating an artificial situation in which the intended groups are purely cognitive. The groups were designed without previous interaction between subjects, competition for rewards, or the possibility of individual members' realistic or economic benefits from membership.[109] From the MGP, Tajfel argued that belonging to a group per se leads the members to have ingroup favouritism, to maximise differences from outgroups, and thus to generate conflict with the outgroups. The effects of group membership operate in the social and cognitive processes of identification, categorisation, and comparison,[110] while this pattern is intensified or loosened by several factors. This is the basic idea of SIT.

105 Campbell, "Altruistic Motives," 287.

106 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 9; cf. Sonia Roccas and Andrey Elster, "Group Identities," in *The Oxford Handbook of Intergroup Conflict*, ed. Linda R. Tropp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 106.

107 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 13.

108 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 42-43.

109 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 9, 14. The context-less experiment aims at excluding a variety of variables so that an original cause for conflict can be left.

110 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 14.

According to the SIT, belonging to a group creates a member's social identity, which "will be understood as that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership".[111] In other words, group members share the same values, norms, and beliefs on the basis of symbolic attachment to social groups (cognitive dimension), and assessing the positive or negative connotations of the groups (evaluative dimension).[112] In this process, individuals are provided with social identities which can determine their attitudes and behaviours towards insiders and outsiders (emotional dimension).[113]

As for social identity, Tajfel presents three fundamental principles as follows: (1) individuals as group members endeavour to enhance positive social identity; (2) positive social identity comes from favourable comparison with and differentiation from out-groups; (3) the individuals will try to change their groups (positively) or leave them if social identity is not satisfactory.[114] Self enhancement or positive social identity is the major motivation for individuals' identification with groups, which can be achieved through social comparison.[115] Ingroup members evaluate their social identities positively or negatively by comparing them with outgroups which are chosen by several criteria, such as "similarity, proximity, and situational salience".[116] This evaluation is comparative: we are better or worse than, or distinctive from the outgroups. Since individuals are motivated to achieve a positive social identity, they tend to exaggerate positively valued distinctiveness from outgroups. This entails expressing ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination and maximising similarities within and differences between groups.[117] This procedure can provide group members with positive social identity, while potentially causing intergroup conflict.[118]

111 Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 2, 55.

112 Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978), 28; cf. Roccas and Elster, "Group Identities," 106-107.

113 Tajfel, *Social Groups*, 28; Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 15.

114 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 16; Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 256.

115 Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 254. This idea is mainly based on Festinger's theory of social comparison, but his theory remained at an individual level. See Festinger, "Social Comparison," 117-140.

116 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 17.

117 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 16; Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 257-259.

118 Nonetheless, the comparison with outgroups sometimes results in relative deprivation and negative social identity, in particular more frequently in minority groups (Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 19-23; cf. Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 259-267).

Turner and his colleagues, on the basis of SIT, paved the way to formulate SCT.[119] The SCT covers more general group behaviours including specific intragroup processes beyond intergroup conflict and relations.[120] More specifically, it tries to explain "how individuals are able to act as a group at all", underlining two pivotal concepts: "self-categorisation" and "depersonalisation".[121] First, self-categorisation is "cognitive groupings of oneself and some class of stimuli as the same in contrast to some other class of stimuli".[122] In other words, this is a cognitive process or comparison to perceive similarities and differences between individuals, groups, or species. The lowest level of abstraction of self-categorisation is personal self-categorisation; one differentiates oneself from other individuals on the basis of interpersonal comparison.[123] The next level is ingroup-outgroup (or so-called social) categorisation; one perceives similarities with ingroup members and dissimilarities from outgroup members on the basis of intergroup comparison.[124] There are numerous levels of abstraction of self-categorisation, and a certain level of self-categorisation becomes salient at any given situation. Esler provides a good example of this: for Australian immigrants to the UK, their Australian identity, though normally not salient, can become salient at attending a rugby match between England and Australia.[125] In addition, there is an interconnection between one level of self-categorisation and other levels, i.e. "a functional antagonism"; when one differentiates oneself from other individuals at the level of personal self-categorisation, it reduces intragroup similarities and further intergroup differences at the level of social categorisation and vice versa.[126]

Second, depersonalisation occurs when social categorisations are contextually more salient than personal self-categorisation as a result of increased similarities between ingroup members.[127] Depersonalisation is "the process of 'self-stereotyping' whereby people come to perceive themselves more as the interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as

119 Turner does not deny the resemblance between SIT and SCT. He sometimes calls the SCT the social identity theory of the group, while calling the former that of intergroup behaviour ("Self-Categorization Theory," 42-43).

120 John C. Turner et al., *Rediscovering the Social Group: Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

121 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 42.

122 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 42.

123 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 45.

124 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 45.

125 Philip F. Esler, "An Outline of Social Identity Theory," in Tucker and Baker, *Social Identity*, 25.

126 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 49-50.

127 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 50.

unique personalities defined by their individual differences from others".[128] This, however, does not mean "deindividuation" or "dehumanisation" which refers to "a loss of individual identity" or "a loss or submergence of the self in the group".[129]

Turner explains depersonalisation as "the basic process underlying group phenomena (social stereotyping, group cohesiveness, ethnocentrism, co-operation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective action, shared norms and social influence processes, etc.)".[130] Factors which lead to "the formation and salience of shared ingroup memberships" produce and increase group cohesion that is "a function of mutually perceived similarity (identity) between self and others in terms of the defining characteristic of the ingroup self category".[131] They further fortify intragroup cooperation and mutualism for shared needs, goals, and motives, and intergroup competition.[132] On the other hand, "factors which tend to personalize or individuate intragroup relations will decrease mutual co-operation".[133] These factors will be described in more depth below (and in §1.2.4.2).

Based on SIT/SCT, Michael A. Hogg suggests that belonging to groups can not only enhance positive social identity[134] but also reduce (subjective) uncertainty.[135] In other words, "uncertainty motivates self-categorization and psychological group formation: it drives people to join groups".[136] Hogg firstly states that "[self-conceptual] uncertainty arises when we discover that we disagree in our beliefs, attitudes, feelings and bahaviors with similar others" and its reduction is a dominant and common human motive.[137] More specifically, uncertainty is produced by threats to social identity, such as "geographical

128 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 50.

129 Tuner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 51; M. A. Hogg and D. J. Terry, "Social Identity Theory and Organizational Processes," in *Social Identity Processes in Organizational Contexts* (Philadelphia: Psychology, 2001), 5.

130 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 50, 56-66.

131 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 59.

132 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 65; cf. J. F. Dovidio et al., "Divergent Intergroup Perspectives," in Tropp, *Intergroup Conflict*, 159-160.

133 Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 66.

134 Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 16; Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 256.

135 Michael A. Hogg, "Subjective Uncertainty Reduction through Self-categorization: A Motivational Theory of Social Identity Processes," *ERSP* 11.1 (2000), 223-255; Michael A. Hogg and B-A. Mullin, "Joining Groups to Reduce Uncertainty: Subjective Uncertainty Reduction and Group Identification," in *Social Identity and Social Cognition*, ed. D. Abrams and M. A. Hogg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 249-279; cf. Roccas and Elster, "Group Identities," in Tropp, *Intergroup Conflict*, 116; Dovidio et al., "Divergent Intergroup," 159.

136 Hogg, "Uncertainty Reduction," 224.

137 Hogg, "Uncertainty Reduction," 231-232.

relocation [immigration], rapidly changing status differentials, loss of membership," etc.[138] Many social psychologists have shown that such an uncertainty can be alleviated by belonging to groups in which members agree with each other. Geert Hofstede showed that the relation between propensity to avoid uncertainty and willingness to belong to groups is in direction proportion.[139] Hogg further argues that, while self-categorisation and depersonalisation are the process to construct ingroup and outgroup prototypes which makes a self-concept clearer and simpler, the prototypical similarities in groups accentuate ingroup members' agreements which lead to uncertainty reduction.[140] According to Hogg, "the process of depersonalization associated with self-categorization transforms the 'uncertain self' into a 'certain self' governed by an ingroup prototype that is consensually validated by fellow ingroup members".[141] On the other hand, if one finds prototypical differences within groups, it can instead intensify uncertainty.[142]

Following SIT/SCT, many social psychologists have posited that the severity and frequency of conflict between groups is determined by many variables or factors: high or low identification, homogeneity or heterogeneity, multiple or single identity, and high or low group status.[143] First, the more strongly the ingroup members identify themselves with the group, the more severe the conflict with outgroups can become.[144] When individuals are closely identified with the group, the distinctions between the self and the group are blurred.[145] Therefore, not only are any ingroup members' sufferings shared emotionally with other group members as if the sufferings are their own experiences,[146] but group members are also more likely to be willing to react or even take revenge against those who caused

138 Hogg and Mullin, "Reduce Uncertainty," 266.

139 G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequence: International Differences in Work-related Values* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980).

140 Hogg, "Uncertainty Reduction," 233.

141 Hogg and Mullin, "Reduce Uncertainty," 269.

142 Hogg, "Uncertainty Reduction," 233.

143 The former three will be discussed in this section, while the last one in the next section (§1.2.4.2).

144 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identities," 107.

145 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identities," 107; cf. S. Coats et al., "Overlapping Mental Representations of Self and In-group: Reaction Time Evidence and Its Relationship with Explicit Measures of Group Identification," *JESP* 26 (2000), 304-315; L. R. Tropp and S. C. Wright, "Ingroup Identification as the Inclusion of Ingroup in the Self," *PSPB* 27 (2001), 585-600.

146 B. Lickel et al., "Vicarious Retribution: The Role of Collective Blame in Intergroup Aggression," *PSPR* 10 (2006), 372-390.

harm to the group and its members.[147] Furthermore, depersonalisation - the complete overlap between "I" and "Ingroup" or "You" and "Outgroup" - can make ingroup members feel less guilty over their aggressive behaviours towards outgroups. This can result in escalating intergroup conflicts.[148]

Second, homogeneity or heterogeneity within groups is closely related to intra- and inter-group processes and behaviours. More homogeneous groups are expected to have "less conflict, more predictability and less member anxiety" in smoother ingroup processes.[149] This can spontaneously create members highly identified with the groups. This ingroup homogeneity also has a significant influence on discriminative behaviours towards outgroups.[150] The more homogeneous the group is in their belief or some other senses, the more accentuated their favouring the ingroup and expressing hostility to outgroups.[151] On the other hand, diversity in groups is a potential factor in generating ingroup conflict, as group members feel distinct from other ingroup members.[152] Such a dissimilarity in groups, however, attenuates antagonistic bias against outgroups.[153]

Third, how individuals perceive multiple identities is another important variable of intergroup relationships. Individuals can have a series of identifications with a variety of groups, while one of them is salient depending on time and place.[154] Against this background information, several models of social identity have been suggested.

The common ingroup identity model is a way of reducing intra or inter-group conflict through a recategorisation from a subordinate to a superordinate category.[155] One group can categorise their religious identity as Catholic, while another as Protestant. These

147 D. Bar-Tal, "Collective Memory of Physical Violence: Its Contribution to the Culture of Violence," in *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, ed. E. Cairns and M. D. Roe (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 77-93.

148 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identities," 106-107; cf. Turner, "Self-Categorization Theory," 50. For studies of religious groups with regard to this issue, see E. Cairns et al., "The Role of In-group Identification, Religious Group Membership and Intergroup Conflict in Moderating In-group and Out-group Affect," *BJSP* 45 (2006), 701-716; Livingston and Haslam, "Northern Ireland," 1-21.

149 J. Allmendinger and R. J. Hackman, "The More, the Better? A Four-nation Study of the Inclusion of Women in Symphony Orchestras," *Social Forces* 74 (1995), 424.

150 V. L. Allen and D. A. Wilder, "Categorization, Belief Similarity, and Intergroup Discrimination," *JPSP* 32.6 (1975), 975.

151 A good example of this is the belief similarity theory. See Allen and Wilder, "Belief Similarity," 975-976.

152 M. Hewstone et al., "Majority-Minority Relations in Organizations: Challenges and Opportunities," in Hogg and Terry, *Organizational Contexts*, 68-75.

153 Allen and Wilder, "Belief Similarity," 975.

154 Hewstone et al., "Majority-Minority," 77.

155 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identities," 109.

two categories are subordinate to "Christian" which is the superordinate category. Gaertner and Dovidio's studies indicate that, when the two groups accept their common group identity as Christian, they generally show less belligerent attitudes to the outgroup. As a result, the common identity can reduce intergroup bias by blurring group boundaries.[156] Nevertheless, if conflict is already severe or the positive distinctiveness of a subordinate category is strongly meaningful for ingroup members, they may react negatively to the attempt to create a common identity.[157]

The crossed categorization model suggests that crosscutting categorisations of two or more groups and singling out the contact point reduce intergroup bias.[158] For example, one group can be categorised as poor, casual workers, and Jews, while another as rich, social elite, and Jews. In this case, the crosscutting category is "Jews". If this is perceived by the two groups, intergroup bias will be reduced.[159]

As such, variable intergroup relationships influence individuals' identification with groups, and vice versa. The causality between social relationships and identification is bidirectional.[160] While a strong social identity effects conflict, conflict tends to strengthen the process of individuals' identification with a group. According to Daniel Bar-Tal, conflict enables ingroup members to intensify their social identity, solidarity, and cooperation, which are correlated to achieving their desire for a positive social identity and security provided by groups.[161] Also, in times of intergroup conflict, multiple identities are likely to be weakened, while social identity is perceived by others as simple and plain.[162] Sonia Roccas and Andrey Elster point out that "intergroup conflict is likely to lead to a simplified social identity, which in turn might lead to less tolerance and to intensification of conflict".[163] On the other hand, the lack of conflict can cause a loss of group-based identity and distinction from outgroups.

156 S. L. Gaertner and J. F. Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Ingroup Identity Model* (Philadelphia: Psychology, 2000); cf. Roccas and Elster, "Group Identity," 109-110; Hewstone et al., "Majority-Minority," 78.

157 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identity," 110.

158 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identity," 110; Hewstone et al., "Majority-Minority," 79-80.

159 Crisp et al., "Multiple Categorization," 76-89.

160 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identity," 115.

161 D. Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations of Intractable Conflicts," *American Behavioral Scientist* 50.11 (2007), 1443.

162 Roccas and Elster, "Group Identity," 116.

163 A vicious circle of conflict and identification results occasionally in intractable or malignant conflict. See Roccas and Elster, "Group Identity," 116; Vallacher et al., "Why Do Conflicts Become Intractable? The Dynamical Perspective on Malignant Social Relations," in Tropp, *Intergroup Conflict*, 14-15; P. T. Coleman, "Characteristics of Protracted, Intractable Conflict: Towards the Development of a Meta-framework," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 9 (2003), 31.

The groups without intergroup conflict and distinction, in particular small and minor groups, are occasionally forced to merge into larger groups or society.[164]

1.2.4.2. Minority-Majority Relations

Tajfel also draws attention to the social psychology of minorities with regard to identification,[165] but his study on this issue is limited to a general discussion. Tajfel's main question is this: if members of social, economic or numerical minority groups are unsatisfied with their social identity, what will be their reactions to their circumstances and inequality?[166] Many recent social psychologists have conducted further research on how social and economic factors have different influences on identification, specifically on inter- or intra-group behaviours.[167] In this section, I will concentrate more on recent studies of minority-majority relations.

Before examining minority-majority relations, it is significant to define minority and majority. Accepting Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris' study of minorities,[168] Tajfel defines minority groups as "'self-conscious units' of people who have in common certain similarities and certain social disadvantages".[169] The social disadvantages result from a compound of various criteria: group size, power, economic or social status, prestige, etc.[170] These criteria are intertangled with each other to demarcate and characterise minority groups. For instance, though resting on number in defining minorities is straightforward and common, numerical minorities can sometimes be considered as social or economic majorities.[171] In some countries, such as in South Africa, Whites, though a numerical minority with certain disadvantages, are generally viewed as majorities in terms of economic

164 Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 3, 15.

165 Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 309-343; Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 19-23.

166 Its answer is associated with "social mobility", "social creativity", and "social competition". For the three notions, see Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 316-343; Tajfel and Turner, "Social Identity," 19-23.

167 B. Simon et al., "The Social Psychology of Minority-Majority Relations," in *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes*, ed. R. Brown and S. Gaertner (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 303-323; N. Ellemers and M. Barreto, "The Impact of Relative Group Status: Affective, Perceptual and Behavioral Consequences," in Brown and Gaertner, *Intergroup Processes*, 324-343; D. M. Mackie and C. L. Wright, "Social Influence in an Intergroup Context," in Brown and Gaertner, *Intergroup Processes*, 281-300; Hewstone et al., "Majority-Minority".

168 C. Wagley and M. Harris, *Minorities in the New World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

169 Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 309-310.

170 Simon et al., "Minority-Majority Relations," 303.

171 Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 309-310; Simon et al., "Minority-Majority Relations," 303.

and social status.[172] In this regard, various criteria should be counted all together in dealing with minorities and majorities in real life situations. I will consider all the factors as critical and compounded but concentrate more on studies of numerical and socio-economic minorities and majorities for this thesis.

As for numerical minority and majority groups, social psychologists have reached consensus in many aspects.[173] First, members of numerical minority groups tend to cognitively identify themselves with the ingroups more intensely than majorities do.[174] Numerical minority members more easily perceive similarity and homogeneity in groups,[175] particularly if depersonalisation occurs in a given context in which social categorisation is meaningful and positive for them.[176] On the other hand, numerical majority members often view their groups as consisting of unique individuals.[177] If individualisation is fostered in the majority groups, the majority members' collective identity can be strengthened.[178]

Second, numerical minorities tend to show stronger intergroup discrimination and distinctiveness than majorities.[179] This propensity may be because of their insecure status resulting from numerical disadvantage[180] and their willingness to perceive similarities in groups and differences from outgroups.[181] It is highly likely that, for minority members, insecurity and threat can be lessened by their strengthened collective identity which results in intergroup bias. If security is guaranteed, it would have less need of such a process.[182] For instance, when minority groups are treated as equal to majority groups, they tend to feel less insecure and threatened and thereby lessen their discriminative attitude towards outgroups.

172 Simon et al., "Minority-Majority Relations," 303.

173 Studies of numerical minorities and majorities are more common and less controversial than studies of socio-economic ones.

174 B. Simon, *Identity in Modern Society: A Social Psychological Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 101-104; Simon et al., "Minority-Majority Relations," 303-305.

175 B. Simon and D. L. Hamilton, "Self-stereotyping and Social Context: The Effects of Relative In-group Size and In-group Status," *JPSP* 66.4 (1994), 704; B. Mullen, "Group Composition, Salience, and Cognitive Representations: The Phenomenology of Being in a Group," *JESP* 27 (1991), 305.

176 B. Simon et al., "When Self-Categorization Makes Sense: The Role of Meaningful Social Categorization in Minority and Majority Members' Self-Perception," *JPSP* 73.2 (1997), 315.

177 Mullen, "Group Composition," 305.

178 Simon, *Identity*, 116.

179 Simon, *Identity*, 126; Mullen, "Group Composition," 309.

180 M. Sherif points out that "there is safety in numbers" (*The Psychology of Social Norms* [New York: Harper Torchbook, 1966], 111).

181 Simon, *Identity*, 126.

182 Hogg, "Uncertainty Reduction," 233.

Numerical majority members show the opposite tendency.[183] They tend to discriminate against outgroups less. But, for the majority members, equality with minority members itself is a sort of threat to their superiority, leading to their discrimination against smaller outgroups in order to maintain their superiority.[184]

Research on status asymmetry generally shows results similar to studies of numerical majorities and minorities regarding intergroup relationships.[185] In social psychology, status is reflected by various factors, among which social and economic factors are the most influential in defining low or high status groups.[186] For example, student groups categorised by parents' low incomes into stigmatised groups tend to show clearer results than other sorts of minority group, such as higher anxiety, higher identification with groups, and higher membership effects on lessening anxiety in groups.[187]

When it comes to intergroup relationships, socio-economic and numerical minority members tend to reveal the most intensified intergroup bias and discrimination.[188] This is related to the fact that they are most vulnerable to threat from outgroups and feel more insecure and less powerful than any other types of group.[189] It appears that this vulnerability leads members to seek a positive and secure social identity and exhibit ingroup favouritism through biased intergroup comparison, as long as they remain in the groups. This is for compensating for or alleviating their present insecurity. On the other hand, socio-economic and numerical majority groups show the opposite tendency.

183 B. A. Bettencourt et al., "Numerical Representation of Groups in Cooperative Settings: Social Orientation Effects on Ingroup Bias," *JESP* 33 (1997), 653.

184 Bettencourt et al., "Numerical Representation," 653; Dovidio et al., "Divergent Intergroup," 167.

185 This is not to say that status asymmetry always co-varies with numerical asymmetry or that two types of research on majority and minority differences with regard to group status and size produce the same results. Group status is another independent variable which influences experimental results in ways similar to yet different from the effects of ingroup size. For the precise results of experiments, four different groups need to be analysed and compared with each other: (1) socio-economic and numerical majorities; (2) numerical majority of low status; (3) numerical minority of high status; and (4) socio-economic numerical minority. Nonetheless, as to intergroup relationships, status and size are factors that produce similar results. Cf. Simon, *Identity*, 104-108, 125-130.

186 The issue of social status was originally raised in sociology, but studies of inequality and group status have moved into social psychology. Cf. Ellemers and Barreto, "Group Status," 324-325.

187 D. E. S. Frable et al., "Concealable Stigmas and Positive Self-Perceptions Feeling Better Around Similar Others," *JPSP* 74 (1998), 909-922.

188 Simon, *Identity*, 129.

189 Simon, *Identity*, 130.

Overall, many recent social psychological experiments and field work have confirmed minority-majority differences with regard to intergroup relationships; the results are generally compatible with SIT/SCT.

1.2.4.3. Social Identity Theory and Its Limitations

A majority of social psychologists agree that the twin theories of SIT/SCT offer one of the most persuasive perspectives on identification and intergroup relationships.[190] This is, however, not to say that those theories per se are fully sufficient in explaining identity and conflict. Some researchers argue that the correlation between identification and intergroup bias is often weak, in particular under minimal conditions, or that identification needs to be considered as an independent, though key, variable.[191] Turner himself acknowledges that SIT/SCT need to be supplemented by other identity and conflict theories for an integrative perspective.[192] In this regard, I do not pretend that SIT/SCT are the only theories that can help to explicate social relationships in the Pauline churches. But I expect that the twin theories can be of great help in uncovering certain facets of the Pauline believers and their social identity.

190 Simon, *Identity*, 125-126.

191 Cf. A. Mummendey and S. Otten, "Aversive Discrimination," in Brown and Gaertner, *Intergroup Processes*, 114-115. As for Turner's answers to several critiques, see John C. Turner and K. J. Reynolds, "The Social Identity Perspective in Intergroup Relations: Theories, Themes, and Controversies," in Brown and Gaertner, *Intergroup Processes*, 133-152.

192 Turner and Reynolds, "Intergroup Relations," 146-148.

Chapter Two

Paul's Letter to Free(d) Casual Workers: Profiling the Thessalonians in Light of the Roman Economy

2.1. A History of Debate between the Old and New Consensuses

The elaboration of socio-economic stratification in the Pauline churches has been one of the most controversial issues for the last four decades, in particular since the publication of Theissen's series of article.[1] This debate can be summarized, in a rather simplified manner,[2] as a history of disagreement between the (so-called) Old and New Consensuses. While the Old Consensus argued that early Christians were located in the lower classes, the New Consensus portrays the Christian congregations as a cross-section of society.

Deissmann, who published several books related to this issue in the 1920s,[3] has been frequently cited as a pioneer or a representative of the old view,[4] though his position is somewhat over-simplified.[5] He tends to associate the early Christian movement, in particular its relevant documents, with the low sector of the Roman society,[6] although not ruling out the possibility that some members of the Pauline church were of the middle and higher strata

1 Theissen, *Social Setting*; idem, "Social Structure," 65-84; idem, "Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty and Survival," *JSNT* 25 (2003), 371-391; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*; idem, "Response to Martin and Theissen," *JSNT* 24 (2001), 85-94; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*; idem, "Socio-Economic Profiling of the First Urban Christians," in Still and Horrell, *First Urban Christians*, 36-59; Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the so-called New Testament Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004), 323-361; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 51-74; Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977); cf. Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, "The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire," *JRS* 99 (2009), 61-91; Timothy A. Brookins, "Economic Profiling of Early Christian Communities," in *Paul and Economics*, ed. Thomas R. Blanton IV and Raymond Pickett (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 57-88; John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019), 162-185.

2 Cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 324-326.

3 G. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910); idem, *Das Urchristentum und die unteren Schichten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908); idem, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

4 Cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 51-52; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 29-35; Longenecker, "Socio-Economic Profiling," 38; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 100.

5 Friesen, "Poverty," 324-326.

6 Deissmann, *Ancient East*, 404; idem, *Unteren Schichten*.

(cf. Acts 17:4).[7] What is clear is that Deissmann provided a basis for "something approaching a consensus"[8] up to the 1970s to relate the early Christian communities to the poor and working classes.[9] This old view was recently radicalised by Meggitt who argues "the Pauline Christians *en masse* shared fully the bleak material existence which was the lot of more than 99% of the inhabitants of the Empire, and also … of Paul himself".[10] He goes on to claim that early Christians who were labelled as poor would have adopted reciprocity as a survival strategy in a harsh economic environment.[11] In other words, they shared a similar economic predicament and anxiety, endeavouring to overcome them through mutual support within and between the Pauline congregations.

In 1975, Abraham J. Malherbe heralded that "a new consensus may be emerging": "the social status of early Christians may be higher than Deissmann had supposed".[12] Malherbe, Meeks, Judge, and Theissen have redirected scholars' attention to the possibility that some influential church leaders who were of a higher social level supported other members and providing meeting places.[13] Theissen characterised this reality in early Christian congregations, especially the Corinthian church, as "social stratification" and "love patriarchalism" which are contrasted with Meggitt's notions of "homogeneity" and "reciprocity".[14]

The dissonance between these two positions should be acknowledged but not overdrawn or oversimplified to avoid misunderstandings for two reasons.[15] Firstly, as Meeks points out, social status is a multifaceted term.[16] The term includes a multidimensional phenomenon, such as "power (defined as the capacity for achieving goals in social systems), occupational prestige, income or wealth, education and knowledge, religious and ritual purity, family and ethnic-group position, and local-community status".[17] Each of these multiple dimensions of status does not carry the same weight when people use it; rather, the

7 Deissmann, *Paul*, 241-243; cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 325.

8 J. G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 96.

9 Holmberg, *Sociology*, 28-35.

10 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 99.

11 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 155-178.

12 Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 31.

13 Theissen, *Social Setting*; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*; Judge, *Social Pattern*.

14 Theissen, "Social Structure," 83-84; idem, *Social Setting*, 164.

15 Longenecker, "Socio-Economic Profiling," 39.

16 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 54.

17 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 54.

weight of each depends on the users' preference.[18] For the reason, the term "social status" used in many scholars' books should be carefully examined and differentiated based on their emphasis on a certain criterion so that unnecessary confusions may be avoided.

Secondly, the definitions of critical terminologies used for profiling ancient believers are by their nature vague in many senses. Dividing low, middle, and high statuses has been most frequently employed to articulate a social profile of early Christians. But their meanings are not clear-cut but vary on the basis of scholars' intentions. Using terms like the poor, the wealthy, and the social elite is similarly equivocal. For instance, some scholars describe the poor as those of low and moderate statuses, but others only as the lower classes.[19] Even the same terms have been used with different meanings. In this regard, Steven J. Friesen's attempt to make a poverty scale in antiquity with seven categories (PS1-7) is meaningful,[20] even though it is not precise and does not reflect legal and social statuses.[21] His Poverty Scale (PS) ranges from "below subsistence level (PS7, low 28%)" to "imperial elites (PS1, high 0.04%)".[22] Friesen emphasises that more than 80% of the urban population in the Roman world were poor, living around subsistence levels (PS5, 6, 7). Bruce W. Longenecker moderates this scale, arguing that 15% of the population in a city are embedded in "moderate surplus resources level (PS4)", double the number Friesen estimated (7%).[23] Many other scholars have also suggested their own poverty scales by fine-tuning each percentage of the seven categories.[24] These poverty scales can be useful in profiling the believers

18 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 54.

19 For example, Meggitt insists that 99% of the population in the Greco-Roman world were poor (*Poverty and Survival*, 99).

20 Friesen, "Poverty," 323-361; Scheidel and Friesen, "Distribution of Income," 61-91; cf. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 36-59.

21 Friesen's poverty scale has two major limitations. First, its precision has been doubted. John M. G. Barclay points out that "the main difficulty, as Friesen acknowledges, is that outside the top 3% we are plucking percentages out of the air, with the aid of (very generalized) conclusions drawn from (only slightly better known) 'pre-industrial' societies" ("Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen," *JSNT* 26 [2004], 365). See also Peter Oakes, "Constructing Poverty Scales for Graeco-Roman Society: A Response to Steven Friesen's 'Poverty in Pauline Studies'," *JSNT* 26 (2004), 367-371; idem, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 61.

Second, it does not reflect one's legal and social status and status inconsistency; economic status did not often co-vary with other statuses. For instance, certain slaves were far richer than freeborn people (See also Chapter 4 note 267).

22 Friesen, "Poverty," 347.

23 Longenecker prefers the term ES (Economic Scale) to the PS (*Remember the Poor*, 53).

24 Cf. Brookins, "Economic Profiling," 57-87; Guy D. R. Sanders, "Landlords and Tenants: Sharecroppers and Subsistence Farming in Corinthian Historical Context," in *Corinth in Contrast:*

economically and in avoiding unnecessary misunderstandings. I will try to circumvent those confusions in this chapter, while focusing on the social, economic and legal dimensions of status and using the poverty scales to clarify my position.

This brief sketch of the history of the debate over the social profile of early believers informs us of two key issues. First, studies of the composition of an early Christian church have been related to examining its community ethics in many cases. For example, Meggitt insists that a majority of early believers were so poor that they would have supported each other mutually in a community.[25] On the contrary, Theissen argues that there were a few influential members who supported and led other members in the Corinthian community.[26] He goes on to claim that internal conflicts attested in 1 Corinthians would have derived from this social factor, i.e. the economic differences among believers.[27] Agreeing with the idea that socio-economic status is entangled with social relationships, I will push this idea further to explicate how it worked in the Pauline congregations in this and the following chapters (Chapters 2-6).

Second, discerning whether one underlines the social-economic homogeneity of early Christians labelled as poor and underprivileged or their stratification in a community is one of the most important criteria in differentiating between the Old and New Consensuses. Even though conceding that some of early Christians were possibly of high status, Deissmann emphasises their general homogeneity as poor and deems it more important in understanding early Christianity. On the other hand, Theissen views a few influential leaders as more critical in characterising the Pauline church, even if they were neither imperial elites nor regional elites.

2.2. The Purposes of Profiling the Thessalonians

In that history of debate (§2.1), many scholars have contributed to the discussion in collecting data from biblical, historical and archaeological evidence, sharpening methodologies to locate the early Christians in the Roman economy, as well as clarifying some vague terms.[28]

Studies in Inequality, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Schowalter (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 121-124.

Peter Oakes also suggests a different sort of economic scale based on one's space occupation (*Reading Romans*, 61).

25 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 163-164.

26 Theissen, "Social Structure," 83-84.

27 Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 371.

28 Cf. Holmberg, *Sociology*, 73-76.

Comparatively little attention, however, has been given to the Thessalonian community in the debate. Néstor Míguez's study of 1 Thessalonians, *The Practice of Hope*, is one of the few exceptions.[29] In this regard, three possible problems can be raised. First, it appears that some valuable evidence in 1 Thessalonians has been neglected or underplayed as I will describe below. Second, the possibility has been barely explored that the Thessalonians' socio-economic status was distinct from that of other Pauline Christians. Many scholars both in the Old and New Consensuses often presume that the Corinthian community is the archetypal church that reveals the entire early Christians' socio-economic origin. They seem to believe as though all other Pauline churches were similar to it.[30] Barclay, however, argues that the dissimilarities between the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches in their relationships with outsiders and belief system should be given more attention.[31] Another difference may also lie in their membership. The difference needs to be examined so that the uniqueness of the Thessalonian community, especially compared to the Corinthian congregation, is not undervalued. Third, a lack of the specific and distinct socio-economic information about the Thessalonians may lead to false interpretations of some passages in 1 Thessalonians. This is because reconstruction of their social context and exegesis of the letter mutually reinforce each other in a virtuous or vicious circle.[32]

In this chapter, I will argue that the Thessalonian church was a fairly homogeneous community of Gentile freed/free casual workers who lived around subsistence level (mostly PS6 and partly PS5 or PS7). In order to do so, first, I will interpret literary evidence in the Pauline letters (1 Thess 1:3; 2:1-12; 4:9-12; 2 Cor 8:2) to provide a glimpse of the Thessalonian congregation (§2.3). Second, after reconstructing manual and casual labourers' social and economic conditions, everyday lives, social networks, and legal status (§2.4), I will articulate the implications of the Pauline evidence in relation to the Greco-Roman economy (§2.5). Third, I will categorise the specific economic status of the Thessalonians, and briefly mention their socio-economic circumstances (§2.5). The conclusions of this chapter will provide the spadework for Chapter 3 and will be contrasted with the Corinthians' socio-economic level (Chapter 4) in Chapter 6.

29 Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 51-71.

30 Cf. Theissen, *Social Settings*, 69-70; Judge, *Social Pattern*, 60.

31 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 49-74; cf. G. Schöllgen, "Was wissen wir über die Sozialstruktur der paulinischen Gemeinden?" *NTS* 34 (1988), 72-74; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*.

32 Cf. Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

2.3. Evidence from the Pauline Letters

A snapshot of the Thessalonian Christians can be roughly drawn based on the Pauline evidence: a majority of them were Gentiles (1 Thess 1:9; cf. 5:3), craftsmen who were encouraged by Paul to work with their hands (2:9; 4:11; cf. 1:3; contra 1 Cor 4:12), and those probably came from the urban "poor"[33] (2 Cor 8:2; 1 Thess 4:11-12).

First, the Thessalonian church consisted of many Gentiles with at most a handful of Jews or proselytes.[34] Paul describes the Thessalonians as people who turned (ἐπεστρέψατε) from idols to serve the living God (1 Thess 1:9). The term ἐπιστρέφω, rare in the Pauline letters (Gal 4:9; 2 Cor 3:16; cf. Acts 14:15), connotes choosing one of two incompatible options and abandoning the other in terms of attitude, thought, belief, and behaviour, occasionally in conversion.[35] In LXX Tobit 14:6, the verb ἐπιστρέψουσιν is paralleled with κατορύξουσι τὰ εἴδωλα αὐτῶν (will bury or abandon their idols). For Gentile converts, turning often entailed abandoning idols (1 Thess 1:9; Tob 14:6) and other "vain things" (ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν, Acts 14:15). It appears that, by using this unusual expression, Paul has in mind the Gentiles who abandoned their traditional gods to join the

[33] The poor were not straightforwardly defined as a distinct social group. They were described only by many indeterminate terms, such as *proletarius*, *plebs*, *pauper*, πένης, and πτωχός. This is why many scholars maintain that "poor" was a relative and vague term in antiquity. In this thesis, "the poor" basically refers to those living around subsistence levels (PS5, 6, 7) categorised by modern scholars (§2.1). And I generally follow Peter Garnsey and G. Woolf's definition of the poor: they were "those living at or near subsistence level, whose prime concern is to obtain the minimum of food, shelter, and clothing necessary to sustain life, whose lives are dominated by the struggle for physical survival" ("Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill [London: Routledge, 1990], 153). See also Larry L. Welborn, "The Polis and the Poor: Reconstructing Social Relations from Different Genres of Evidence," in *The First Urban Churches 1: Methodological Foundations*, ed. J. R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 194-199; Robin Osborne, "Introduction: Roman Poverty in Context," in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11-15.

[34] For the Gentile origin of the Thessalonians, see Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 118; Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 85; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 147; Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 56; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Black, 1972), 176; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 64-65; Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 64.

The account of Acts 17:1-10, in which the impression is that the Thessalonians were mostly Jews and some prominent Greek women and men, is secondary and, to a degree, contradictory to 1 Thessalonians. Many commentators point out that this description reflects Luke's theological agenda and personal interest. See also note 15.

[35] BDAG, 382; LSJ, 661; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 119.

Thessalonian congregation. Another important clue is that 1 Thessalonians does not provide any hints of the presence of Jews in the community. As Robert Jewett points out, "Paul neither addresses Jewish Christians at any point nor makes frequent reference to the Hebrew scriptures".[36] This is even more notable compared to his letters to other communities in which there were some or many Jews. The recipients hear the voice of the Old Testament frequently in Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians. Paul quotes the Hebrew Bible over 100 times in his letters, most frequently in Romans and least frequently in Philippians. 1 Thessalonians, however, contains no citations of it. The letter rather contains some echoes of Roman propaganda, such as "peace" and "safety", to which Gentiles were accustomed (1 Thess 5:3).[37] These two facts indicate that many Thessalonians were neither Jews nor even God-fearers, but Gentiles who had previously revered pagan gods.

Second, most believers in Thessalonica would have been craftsmen who were encouraged by Paul to work with their hands (4:11; cf. 1:3; 2:9).[38] It seems that Paul used a missionary strategy in which he proclaimed the gospel to fellow and neighbouring artisans on a market street, converting some of them (2:9).[39] It is not surprising that Paul utilized his shop/workshop for protreptic speech, since this method was not anomalous among contemporary philosophers;[40] he stayed in his workshop all day (2:9), and would use any means of evangelism (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23; Phil 1:18). After Ronald F. Hock first suggested a similar idea, many commentators have carefully examined the Apostle's possible missionary strategy in or around shops/workshops in Thessalonica,[41] not in public places.[42] But many of them do not clearly demonstrate who the main targets of Paul's evangelism were. It can be assumed that the converts were his colleagues and neighbours on a certain market street, and

36 Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 118; cf. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 56.

37 Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2014), 331-359; Joel R. White, "'Peace' and 'Security' (1 Thess 5.3): Roman Ideology and Greek Aspiration," *NTS* 60 (2014), 499-510.

38 Cf. Origen, *Cels.* 3.44, 3.48, 3.55, 1.62.

39 Ronald F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 26-49; cf. Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 18-19; idem, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 149; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 104; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 151; Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 64.

40 Hock, *Tentmaking*, 41.

41 Hock suggests that Paul's missionary strategy would have been analogous to Cynic philosophers who had intellectual discourse around workshops (*Tentmaking*, 41). Cf. Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 64-66.

42 S. K. Stowers, "Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul's Preaching Activity," *NovT* 26.1 (1984), 59-82.

probably members of a (professional) association. Paul worked and preached simultaneously in light of 1 Thess 2:9b: "while working (ἐργαζόμενοι) night and day …, we proclaimed (ἐκηρύξαμεν) the gospel of God". The present participle of ἐργάζομαι here can denote the coinciding action with the main verb, ἐκηρύξαμεν.[43] Besides, "night and day (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας)" is used to refer to manual work under considerable pressure due to deadlines or the quantity of orders (cf. *P.Tebt*. I.48, III.1.706, III.1.782; *P.Lips*. II.132).[44] These suggest that Paul spent all day working and concurrently preaching at a workplace. If so, it is highly likely that his mission mainly targeted his fellow artisans, neighbours, and perhaps members of an association on market streets,[45] leading some of them to the Christian faith.

This idea can be undergirded by the fact that Paul urges the Thessalonians to continue working with their hands in 1 Thess 4:11. If they were not manual labourers, this instruction would be unnecessary, inappropriate or even uncomplimentary. This is true, given the tendency in antiquity that Gentile social elites and those not physically working disdained manual labourers (cf. Cicero, *Off.* 1.150-1; Seneca, *Ep*. 88.21; Plutarch, *Per*. 1.4; §§2.4.5, 2.5);[46] some clubs did not allow members to work with their hands.[47] For example, Cicero viewed the *mercennarii* (hired workers) as most dishonourable, since they hired out their labour like slaves as though they were owned by others (*Off.* 1.150-1). Plutarch is also in the same camp, saying that dyers and perfumers were of low status and vulgar (*Per*. 1.4). For the social elites, instruction on manual labour could be offensive and even insulting. Against this social ethos, Paul encourages the Thessalonians to work with their hands like him, contrary to what he does to those in Corinth (1 Thess 4:11; 2:9a; 1:3; contra 1 Cor 4:12 [see §4.3]). This

43 Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 149; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 104.

44 A. Bammer, "An Approach to the Papyrological Understanding of Paul's Laboring 'Night and Day' (1 Thess. 2.9)," in *Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Papyrology*, ed. T. Gagos (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Library Press, 2010), 47-52; cf. Hock, *Tentmaking*, 31-32.

45 Richard S. Ascough further insists that "'a preexisting workers' association turned en masse to worshiping Jesus", though there is no good evidence to determine whether the collective decision in an association occurred ("Of Memories and Meals: Greco-Roman Associations and the Early Jesus-Group at Thessalonike," in Nasrallah, Bakirtzēs, and Friesen, *Early Christian Thessalonikē*, 53; idem, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: Encountering the Christ Group at Thessalonike* [Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2014], 15).

46 See Susan M. Treggiari, "Urban Labour in Rome: Mercennarii and Tabernarii," in *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 48-64; Sandra R. Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 66-67; Peter Garnsey, "Non-Slave Labour in the Roman Word," in *Non-Slave Labour*, 35.

47 J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 38.

literary evidence displays that manual workers were the main members of the Thessalonian congregation.

Third, the Thessalonians may have been relatively poor. This is contingent on two clues in Paul's letters: 2 Cor 8:2 and 1 Thess 4:11-12.[48] Paul describes the Macedonian churches, including the Thessalonian community, as giving in circumstances of "extreme poverty" (ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία) in 2 Cor 8:2. Meeks insists that such an expression is Paul's rhetoric and may be discounted as hyperbole with a goal to collect offerings for Jerusalem.[49] But the expression "extreme poverty" does not seem to be mere rhetoric and hyperbole. As Theissen points out, the issue at stake in this statement is not only Paul's collection from the Corinthians for Jerusalem but also his integrity and apostleship.[50] Paul expected that the Corinthians would meet representatives of the Macedonian churches (2 Cor 9:4). It meant that they could immediately see whether or not Paul's description of the Macedonians' poverty was true. In other words, "Paul's rhetoric would be subject to verification or contradiction".[51] It is not likely, therefore, that Paul risked misrepresenting their economic condition. Míguez also argues that the "extreme poverty" of the Macedonian congregations reflects reality. He analyses the rhetorical structure of 2 Cor 8:1-8 whose purpose is to contrast the poverty of the Macedonian churches (8:1-4) with the spiritual and possibly material wealth of the Corinthian church (8:6-8).[52] He concludes: "the Christians of Macedonia are poor, very poor; certainly poorer than the Corinthians".[53]

The supposition that the Thessalonians were poor is also a valid deduction from 1 Thess 4:11-12. Paul's instruction on working (4:11) indicates that labour with one's hands, which was often related to poverty in antiquity (cf. Aristophanes, *Plut.* 552-554), was an essential part of the Thessalonians' lives. In 1 Cor 4:11-12, Paul also juxtaposes manual and hard labour with being hungry, thirsty, and homeless. This description implies that craftsmen usually experienced such poverty. In addition, 1 Thess 2:8 and 4:11-12 give the impression that Paul was worried the Thessalonians would not be able to shoulder the economic burden of supporting more than themselves. By his own manual labour, Paul not only avoided

48 For Luke's comment on some rich women in the Thessalonian church (Acts 17:1-10), see note 34.

49 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 66; cf. Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 519 note 23.

50 Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 376; Friesen, "Poverty," 351.

51 Friesen, "Poverty," 351.

52 Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 58-64.

53 Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 64; cf. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 118-123.

placing any economic burden on them (2:8), but also encouraged them to work for their economic self-sufficiency (4:11-12).[54] As Peter Oakes suggests, Christians' experience of conflict with outsiders (Phil 1:29; cf. 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14-16; 3:3-4; 4:12) also implies their economic predicament because social relationships were interwoven into economic relations (see §3.2.3).[55] The broken relationships with outsiders would have resulted in the breakdown of economic relations with owners, employers, patrons, and customers. It thus could damage their financial activities. Accordingly, it is safe to assume that the Thessalonians were poorer than the Corinthians or at least experienced an economic crisis.

These three features of the Thessalonians have often been accepted by New Testament scholars, but a further detailed description of their socio-economic status has not been fleshed out. In this regard, it is fortunate that since the early 1990s, classical scholars have expended much effort on reconstructing craftsmen's everyday lives and their legal, social and economic status on the basis of archaeological and documentary evidence.[56] Such a proliferation of the study of crafts and trade has been characterised by interdisciplinary efforts by historians, archaeologists, economists, and sociologists.[57] These efforts have resulted in numerous valuable publications.[58] This is not to say that a complete picture of

[54] de Vos claims that Paul's expectation of the Thessalonians' self-sufficiency (1 Thess 4:12) indicates that they were neither slaves nor freedmen but "free people from the artisan class", since most slaves or freedmen would have depended on patrons or owners (*Community Conflicts*, 150-151). However, as I will explain in the following chapters, the goal of self-sufficiency was not confined to freeborn people.

[55] Oakes, *Reading Romans*, 89-99; cf. Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 62-63.

[56] Cf. A. I. Wilson and M. Flohr, eds., *Urban Craftsmen and Traders in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-5.

[57] Wilson and Flohr, *Urban Craftsmen*, 2.

[58] Wilson and Flohr, *Urban Craftsmen*; M. Flohr, *The World of the Fullo: Work, Economy, and Society in Roman Italy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); idem, "Working and Living under One Roof: Workshops in Pompeian Atrium Houses," in *Privata Luxuria. Towards an Archaeology of Intimacy: Pompeii and Beyond*, ed. A. Anguissola (Munich, 2013), 51-72; Walter Scheidel, ed., *Cambridge Companion to The Roman Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 88-120; Paul Erdkamp, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 315-385; A. MacMahon and J. Price, eds., *Roman Working Lives and Urban Living* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2005); Claire Holleran, *Shopping in Ancient Rome: The Retail Trade in the Late Republic and the Principate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Cameron Hawkins, *Roman Artisans and the Urban Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Dominic Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-century A.D. Egypt: The Heroninos Archive and the Appianus Estate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

For slave and freedmen labour, see Joshel, *Legal Status*; Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57-80; H. Mouritsen, *The Freedmen in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 206-247.

manual labourers in antiquity can be captured. It indicates that we can re-evaluate and reorganise the multifaceted snapshots of Roman labourers based on legitimate evidence. I suggest that the above sketch of craftsman believers in Thessalonica can be filled in with more specific detail on the basis of this recent scholarship on artisans, farmers, and builders. In other words, if the general features of the Thessalonians are related to recent research on Roman workers, these could have several implications that reveal their more precise socio-economic status and circumstances. Therefore, I will summarise the most relevant findings of scholarship on this topic in the next section (§2.4), before returning to the Christians in Thessalonica to describe their social and economic conditions in more detail (§2.5).

2.4. Manual and Casual Labourers in the Greco-Roman World

2.4.1. Structural Features of Thessalonica and Other Urban Cities

Around the first century CE, ancient Rome as a capital city had probably over 1 million inhabitants and at least two hundred kinds of trades which are attested in epigraphic records.[59] The other urban cities, such as Pompeii, also had approximately 90 different sorts of occupations.[60] These estimations of population and job diversity can indicate how dynamic the Roman economy was and how highly Rome was urbanised, even compared to metropolitan cities of the fifteenth century CE, like Paris or Florence.[61] It is highly likely that massive amounts of products were manufactured, purchased, and traded in the entire Roman empire on bustling market streets. Numerous artisans, (sub)urban farmers,[62] and builders would have been involved in catering to the changing demand and needs of social elites and all other consumers.

For construction workers, see J. C. Anderson Jr., *Roman Architecture and Society* (Baltimore, 1997); Janet DeLaine, *The baths of Caracalla: A Study in the Design, Construction, and Economics of Large-scale Building Projects in Imperial Rome* (JRA, 1997).

For professional associations, see § 2.4.4.

59 Wim Broekaert and Arjan Zuiderhoek, "Industries and Services," in Erdkamp, *Ancient Rome*, 318.

60 Since this number is counted only on the basis of epigraphic evidence, the real job diversity may be far great (cf. Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 318).

61 Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 318.

62 Urban agriculture was normal in the Roman economy. Since the perishable commodities should be transported into an urban city and centre quickly and cheaply, the (sub)urban areas were cultivated for horticulture and dairy farming (Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 319-320).

This overpopulation and job specialisation, on the other hand, implies that the issues of un(der)employment and low wages would have surfaced.[63] Some recent classical scholars have argued that overpopulation resulting from migration in ancient cities caused an increase in unemployment among labourers and a wage decrease.[64] Besides this, it is possible that job specialisation and diversity was the result of manual labourers' survival strategies to create informal trades and street markets.[65] It is likely, as Kai Ruffing argues, that several new jobs would have been created by poor workers who did not get regular daily work; they wanted to avoid competition with skilled workers and sought an economic niche by producing low quality goods.[66]

In the following sections (§§2.4.2-5), I will explore this dark side of the success of the Roman economy around the first and second centuries CE, while concentrating on the issue of un(der)employment and casual or daily labourers' social networks, legal status, economic conditions, and everyday life.

Before exploring the Roman economy, it is worthwhile to note two points. First, I will not pretend to be able to draw a complete picture of ancient Thessalonica and its economy. Although the following description of the Roman economy should ideally be specified temporally and geographically at Thessalonica around the first century CE in order to apply it to the Christian workers in Thessalonica, this is nearly impossible due to the paucity of archaeological evidence and historical records. The life of manual workers in Thessalonica has not been well examined by archaeologists and classical scholars compared to that in Rome or Pompeii and in cities and towns in Egypt.[67]

It is reasonable to assume, however, that ancient Thessalonica was not wholly different from other major metropoleis in its structural economic aspects. Firstly, it was the largest city in the province of Macedonia and served as its capital. The population of

63 As for the negative influence of overpopulation and migration on the Roman economy, see Claire Holleran, "Migration and the Urban Economy of Rome," in *Demography and the Graeco-Roman World: New Insights and Approaches*, ed. Claire Holleran and April Pudsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 165-178.

For the implication of job specialisation, see Kai Ruffing, "Driving Forces for Specialization," in Wilson and Flohr, *Urban Craftsmen*, 115-131; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 317-335.

64 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 165.

65 Ruffing, "For Specialization," 127; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 319; Holleran, "Urban Economy," 174-175.

66 Ruffing, "For Specialization," 127; Holleran, "Urban Economy," 174-175.

67 Charles Edson, "Cults of Thessalonica (Macedonica III)," *HTR* 41 (1948), 153; Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 52 note 7.

Thessalonica can be estimated at around 50,000 (cf. Cicero, *Att*. 3.14).[68] Although this number is far lower than the 1 million inhabitants in Rome, it can be said that Thessalonica as a local city had a high population density. Thessalonica, in addition, attracted immigrants from Italian cities, southern Greece, and Asia Minor along with their cultures and gods.[69] Secondly, Thessalonica was a centre of trade and traffic, facilitated by the *Via Egnatia* and the harbour on the nearby Aegean Sea.[70] This implies that its market street was bustling. Craftsmen in the marketplace actively organised and engaged in voluntary associations (e.g. purple dyers, *IG* X/2.1.291; donkey drivers, Nigdelis no. 39; garland makers, Nigdelis no. 40; gladiators, Nigdelis no. 44; ship-owners, *SEG* 42.625).[71] Thirdly, ancient Thessalonica was deeply influenced by Rome. Not only did a Roman style permeate the rectangular city plan of Thessalonica,[72] but the leading elites in it were also willing to express their total loyalty to Rome. It was no surprise that the city became a free city (*civitas libera*) in 42 BCE. All these indicate that Thessalonica was compatible with, influenced by, and similar to many other urban cities in the Roman empire, not to mention Rome, with regard to population, market, workers, and culture in relation to its economy. Thus, I will use evidence drawn from several major towns in the first and second centuries CE to portray the economy and manual labourers in Thessalonica, while acknowledging and being cautious about special factors which may distinguish the various municipalities.

Second, it is necessary to define permanent labour and casual labour. According to Dominic Rathbone, a basic distinction can be made "between people employed all year round, whom I [Rathbone] term permanent labour, and those employed on an *ad hoc* basis to cope with the seasonal demands for extra labour or to provide particular services, whom I [Rathbone] term occasional labour".[73] It is also important that the permanent workers

68 de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 129; cf. J. L. Hill, "Establishing the Church in Thessalonica," (unpublished PhD thesis, Duke University, 1990), 46-48.

69 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 20-21.

70 A. E. Vacalopoulos, *A History of Thessalonica* (Repr., Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1972), 3; M. Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," *JHS* 93 (1972), 169.

71 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 19.

72 Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 159.

73 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 88.

received salaries (ὀψώνιον), but the occasional ones wages (μισθός).[74] In this paper, I will use the two terms, permanent and occasional (or casual) labours, in the same way.[75]

2.4.2. Economic Fluctuations, Survival Strategies, and Underemployment

There is a general consensus that employers, employees, and even landowners in the Greco-Roman World were all, though to different degrees, exposed to various risks in running businesses or working in farms, shops/workshops, and building sites.[76] The household economies of subsistence or near-subsistence level manual labourers were particularly vulnerable. It seems that substantial economic insecurity derived mainly from the seasonality and uncertainty of the Roman economy.[77]

The economic seasonality and uncertainty were closely interwoven into manual workers' everyday economic activities and employment.[78] First, agrarian productivity and the price of grain were most straightforwardly influenced by the changes of season and climate.[79] At peak times in the agricultural year, most landowners, tenant farmers, and even seasonal workers enjoyed relatively abundant food supply and profits from land. Particularly during the harvest season, a supplement of seasonal labour was highly necessary (cf. Cato, *Agr*. 144-145),[80] and the price of cereal crops became low.[81] The following seasons from winter to early summer saw the opposite phenomenon in which food prices sometimes soared by up to 100% due to a shortage in food supply. Many casual workers, in particular day

74 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 92; cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 32.

75 Rathbone points out that the distinction between the permanent and occasional labours is not rigid, saying "the position of some workers crossed the boundaries between different categories, while employees within the same category could be treated differently" (*Economic Rationalism*, 88).

76 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 23-65; Holleran, "Urban Economy," 165-180; Dennis Kehoe, "Contract Labor," in Scheidel, *Roman Economy*, 114-130; Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 43-86; Wilson and Flohr, *Urban Craftsmen*, 7-8; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 319.

77 For the illustrations of the economic fluctuations in the Greco-Roman world, I am indebted to Hawkins' studies of it (*Roman Artisans*, 23-65; idem, "Manufacturing," in Scheidel, *Roman Economy*, 175-194; cf. Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 43-86).

78 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 32; cf. P. A. Brunt, "Free Labour and Public Works at Rome," *JRS 70* (1980), 81-100; Paul Erdkamp, "Mobility and Migration in Italy in the Second Century BC," in *People, Land and Politics. Demographic Developments and the Transformation of Roman Italy, 300 BC-AD 14*, ed. L. de Ligt and S. Northwood (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 417-449.

79 Paul Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire: A Social, Political and Economic Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 147-155; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 33.

80 Kehoe, "Contract Labor," 115, 121; Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 44; Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 320.

81 Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 149; Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 24-25; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 33.

labourers, may have remained unemployed and looked for another job.[82] When it comes to the price of crops, Cicero observed, while accusing C. Verres who was the former governor of Sicily, that "a *modius* of wheat was 5 *denarii* before the new harvest came in, [but] he [Verres] asked only 3 *denarii* a modus.… in the same period corn was valued at 3 *denarii* after the harvest when the corn was cheapest … [and] the whole value of wheat should be estimated by the seasons and the current market prices" (*Verr*. 2.3.214-215; cf. Julian, *Misopogon* 369b).[83] Likewise, the price of corn fluctuated by the seasons, being the lowest at the harvest. It seems that the volatile nature of food prices and the fluctuations of employment were the structural features of the Roman agriculture, which could jeopardise all citizens, nor least craftsmen.[84]

In order to minimize the risks from seasonality and disasters, landowners and tenants depended on their own survival strategies. Landowners preferred receiving a fixed rent in cash on a short-term basis from tenants regardless of the success or failure of the harvest[85] and hiring a permanent workforce of a minimum size to economise on the fixed labour costs. Tenant farmers and smallholders tended to take low-risk production strategies. They divided farming lands into three or more pieces even at opposite sides of mountains,[86] planted mixed crops as insurance against partial crop failure,[87] and had small gardens cultivated with cabbages, onions, and fruit trees for self-sufficiency (cf. Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 19.51-52).[88] They also preferred exploiting underemployment to offering full-time employment in order to curtail vulnerability to the seasonal swing.[89] Casual or wage workers, however, would have remained most susceptible to the seasonal fluctuations in agriculture, occasionally facing low wages or a lack of employment, as well as the high price of cereal crops in times of food shortage in (sub)urban cities (cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.86).[90]

82 Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 149; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 139.

83 Cf. Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 149-150.

84 Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 24; Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 149.

85 Kehoe, "Contract Labor," 116, 118. This means that tenant farmers often bore the burden of extreme disasters, such as army invasion, flood, not to mention droughts that were common in the Mediterranean agriculture (P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000], 175-230, 298-341).

86 Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 48.

87 Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 49-55.

88 Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 321.

89 Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 319-320.

90 Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 45.

Second, building trades practised outdoors were by their nature affected by seasons and weather.[91] Building construction was stopped or at least decelerated for a few months not only by cold and wet weather in Mediterranean winters, but by the nature of Roman mortar and concrete which did not solidify into one compact mass well under frost or the excessive heat of the sun.[92] For example, Frontinus wrote *De Aquaeductu* at the turn of the first century BCE, recommending that "the suitable time for masonry work is from April 1 to November 1" except "during the hottest part of the summer" (2.123).[93]

Along with this seasonal fluctuation, building projects were so irregular and unpredictable that a flexible workforce was absolutely necessary.[94] Contractors who recruited skilled and unskilled workers could not easily predict when new building projects began and how many workers would be needed.[95] Given this episodic aspect of construction, it was almost impossible for contractors and master builders to keep a large pool of permanent workers. Instead, as some classical scholars have suggested, "the bulk of unskilled labour on major building projects was in fact provided by the mass of poor free inhabitants of Rome (occasionally supplemented by convicts), who were hired as temporary wage-labourers on building sites" (cf. *Dig*. 45.1.137.3).[96] While the size of construction businesses in urban cities was large enough to hire roughly 15%-24% of all adult males as Janet DeLaine guesses,[97] their number fluctuated year-on-year or month-on-month. This means that many of the workforce may have remained vulnerable to unemployment in the times of hiatus during winter or between building projects. A good example of this phenomenon is the Baths of Caracalla, one of the largest constructions in ancient Rome. DeLaine conservatively estimates that it offered on average 9,000 job opportunities during the main construction period from 212 to 215 CE, while the numbers peaked at 13,100 in 213 CE and bottomed at 6,000 in 214-215 CE.[98] The discrepancy between peak and low seasons in one construction site, 7,100, should not be underplayed, provided that the whole male adult population working with their hands in Rome was roughly 100,000-300,000. In addition, the workers

91 D. J. Mattingly and J. Salmon, eds., *Economies Beyond Agriculture in the Classical World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 7.

92 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 34-35.

93 Cf. Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 34-35.

94 Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 326, 328.

95 Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 328.

96 Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 328; cf. Kehoe, "Contract Labor," 123; Brunt, "Free Labour," 81-100; Anderson, *Roman Architecture*; DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 201.

97 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 201; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 326.

98 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 192-193.

involved in this large project were continuously replaced on the basis of different kinds of required tasks, weather, and seasons over 6 years.[99] It is likely, therefore, that many unskilled masons and labourers were employed on a relatively short-term basis under the influence of seasonal and episodic fluctuations, while often being forced to stop working.[100]

Lastly, market streets also had peak and low seasons, resulting in some craftsmen being hired on a short-term basis. For example, as Cameron Hawkins points out, "social seasonality" like festivals occasioned swings of consumer demand.[101] At the heart of Roman holidays were religious festivals, during which certain traditional cloths, foods, and handcrafts were briskly purchased on market streets. The religious festivals triggered certain kinds of consumption, leading artisans in specific trades to engage in catering to the demand of consumers.[102] This is exemplified by gift exchange during the Saturnalia and the Sigillaria in Late December (Libanius, *Orations* 9.8).[103] The gifts varied from small amounts of food to gold plates (Martial, *Epigr.*14).[104] It is highly likely that these festivals were the seasonal peaks for certain craftsmen to manufacture both tailor-made and ready-made commodities. This means that master artisans would have employed surplus labourers on short-term contracts at peak times, while seasonal workers were driven to find other temporary jobs after festivals.[105]

As for the fluctuations of the Roman economy, one of the biggest challenges for economic players was to minimize its negative impact. They sought to stabilise their business and incomes rather than maximising their profit.[106] The most significant issue at stake was employment, in particular underemployment. As argued above, there was the tendency in many businesses not to hire permanent craftsmen, but to exploit casual workers at peak times.

2.4.3. Casual Labourers and Their Wage and Subsistence

99 See the table 23 in DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 192.
100 Cf. Brunt, "Free labour," 81-100.
101 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 28-29, 35-37.
102 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 35-36.
103 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 36.
104 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 36-37.
105 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 168.
106 James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasants: Rebellion and Subsistence in South East Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), 4; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 139; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 328.

It is highly likely that underemployment was one of the conspicuous structural phenomena of the Roman economy as described above.[107] In this regard, questions can be raised about the casual workforce concerning how ubiquitous the seasonal or daily labourers were and what level of economic insecurity they endured. I will try to extrapolate the prevalence of occasional workers further, and their rough number, wage, and economic vulnerability through literary evidence.

In the first place, some impressions regarding casual craftsmen can be gleaned from Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* and Matt 20:1-16. The interpretation of dreams in *Oneirocritica* provides a glimpse of the concerns of craftsmen, in particular unemployment, in the second century CE.[108] Artemidorus foretells the unemployment of craftsmen (*Onir.* 1.13):

> If someone dreams that he is born from any women, it reveals the following: for a poor man, it is good, because someone will nourish him as if he were a baby, unless he is a craftsman. In that case, the dream foretells unemployment (σχολήν). For babies do not work (ἀργά) and have their hands wrapped up.[109]

Besides, according to Artemidorus, labourers' dreams of being young adults or dressing in white clothing portended unemployment for one or more years (*Onir.* 1.54, 23). These dream interpretations reflect the craftsmen's common anxiety about un(der)employment.[110]

Matthew 20:1-16 draws a rough sketch of the ancient labour market in which short-term labour agreements were made. In this parable of Jesus, an employer drew on the marketplace for temporary labour on which casual labourers congregated (cf. Apuleius, *Metam.* 2.21, 9.5-6). The contract with potential workers was made orally on a short-term basis. Many classical scholars argue that this parable echoes the ancient labour market.[111]

[107] Though casual labour was common, as a topic of study it has attracted little attention from classical and biblical scholars. For the exceptions, see Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 148-174; Holleran, "Urban Economy," 155-180; Kehoe, "Contract Labor," 114-130.

[108] J. -J. Aubert, "The Fourth Factors: Managing Non-agricultural Production in the Roman World," in Mattingly and Salmon, *Economies Beyond Agriculture*, 106-107; Daniel E. Harris-McCoy, *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 28; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 23-25; Artemidorus, *Onir.* 1.42, 1.67, 2.3, 2.11, 2.14, 2.20, 2.22, 2.36.

[109] I modify Harris-McCoy's translation (*Artemidorus' Oneirocritica*).

[110] Arthur J. Pomeroy, "Status and Status-Concern in the Greco-Roman Dream-Books," *Ancient Society* 22 (1991), 65-66.

[111] Treggiari, "Urban Labour," 51; Holleran, "Urban Economy," 169-170; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 141.

Second, it is plausible that the phenomenon of exploiting occasional workers in many businesses was accelerated by manumission, migration, and overpopulation in cities. As explained above (§2.4.2), employers in the Roman empire tended to minimise the number of permanent workers, while exploiting a number of wage labourers on a short-term contract in almost all businesses. In other words, it is likely that many casual or daily craftsmen, builders, and farmers were created by the demand of a flexible workforce which could reduce employers' fixed costs on human resources. In addition, Hawkins argues that *operae libertorum* can be a manifestation of the flexible system.[112] Some slaves were manumitted at the cost of their earnings from their labour for a number of contracted years, while slave-owners not only gained the benefit from freedmen's labour but kept their regular labourers to minimal numbers to reduce the relevant fixed costs on housing and feeding them.[113] As a result, casual craftsmen would be again necessary as a supplement to the workforce in this pattern of manumission and employment.

Overpopulation was possibly one of the factors that forced many workers not only to become casual ones or create informal trades but also to get less paid. But Walter Scheidel has argued that several factors, for example high prices, would have driven wages up in Rome, and that the high wages attracted rural workers to migrate to urban cities.[114] Even if this is so, it is doubtful, as Claire Holleran points out, that this assumption reflects Roman casual workers' real incomes given the nature of the labour market.[115] In other words, even if normal skilled labourers on a long term contract gained high wages, the real wages of the seasonal workforce, who competed for jobs, would have been lower. More importantly, Holleran goes on to claim that "migration had a detrimental impact upon the employment market as the increased competition for work probably depressed wages in the city";[116] the overpopulation created a number of new casual workers. It can also be assumed that some of the casual workforce, in particular those left out of the job race, created informal and street trade, such as hawking, prostitution, and begging.[117] Thus, it appears that overpopulation in

112 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 130-191.

113 Robert C. Knapp, *Invisible Romans: Prostitutes, Outlaws, Slaves, Gladiators and Others* (London: Profile Books, 2011), 151.

114 Walter Scheidel, "A Model of Real Income Growth in Roman Italy," *Historia 56*. (2005), 336.

115 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 169 note 78.

116 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 179.

117 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 174-175.

metropoleis played, to some degree, a critical role in spawning many casual workers and lowering their wages.[118]

Third, the tendency to hire casual workforce is more specifically found in the large estate business, managing village-based local managerial units.[119] Analysing the estate business is helpful in that it can offer some roughly quantified numbers with regard to the percentage of casual or daily workers as opposed to permanent employees and their wages: about 60 percent were casual workers, and their wages were 2 drachmae. In this regard, Rathbone provides a valuable study of the Appianus estate and related documents in Roman Egypt in the third century CE. He shows, on the basis of nine written records in the "Heroninos archive", that the percentage of casual workers on the estate is on average 61 percent, varying from 35 to 79 percent.[120] From September to December the rate is relatively low at 35-50, while from February to June the rate is high at 59-79.[121] According to these data, owners of estates tended to hire up to half of their workforce from among casual labourers, while the rate fluctuated between peak and slack seasons. Though this is not a certain proxy datum that reveals the employment rates of occasional labourers in all other trades and in cities, this suggests that casual labourers, to a considerable degree, buttressed the Roman economy

Rathbone's analysis of the estate business, furthermore, sheds light on casual workers' approximate wages and living costs.[122] As long as one was an unskilled casual labourer, the expected daily wage from large estates in Roman Egypt was about 2 drachmae.[123] It could be doubled, if one carried out heavy jobs or if labour was extremely scarce.[124] When one had the fortunate opportunity to work for two-thirds of a year or five days per week, the total income would be more or less 480 dr. Rathbone estimates that casual workers' minimum cost of living, if living alone, was 420 dr. or more, including meals (170 dr.), house rent (100 dr.), taxation (100 dr.), and sundry goods (50 dr.).[125] If his calculation is tenable, unskilled workers would have needed to work for more than 210 days a year just to scrape a living, even without any dependents. If they had families, it can be assumed that

118 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 179.
119 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 174.
120 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 153.
121 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 153.
122 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 155-166.
123 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 155-166.
124 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 159.
125 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 165; cf. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 86.

children and women would also work to contribute to the household finances.[126] Skilled casual labourers were better off than unskilled ones in this sense. 4 dr. was the expected daily wage for them: carpenters, river-workers, builders, mudbrick-makers, smiths, etc.[127] Jerry Toner similarly concludes that general labourers in Rome needed 7,500 denarii, which is equivalent to working for 300 days, only to buy staple food for a family of four.[128] Though these estimations cannot be exactly the same as those in other urban contexts, it is plausible that casual workers' incomes and lives in major cities were not wholly different from that attested in Roman Egypt and Rome.

The evidence regarding casual workers in Roman society, therefore, can be encapsulated as follows: (1) a considerable number of workers were forced to work on a short-term basis; they waited to be hired on a certain part of market streets; (2) they had anxiety about unemployment as their employment was competitive; some of them created informal trades to avoid the competition; (3) the employment was influenced by seasonal and episodic fluctuations and overpopulation; (4) unskilled casual labourers probably earned around 2 dr. a day in Roman Egypt which enabled them just to scrape a living. It is highly likely that these structural features of the Roman economy in and around the first and second century CE were pervasive in many major cities including Thessalonica, though there would have been minor local differences.

2.4.4. Social Networks of Labourers

The social networks of professionals have increasingly attracted ancient historians since the 1990s. A lively discussion about them, as a formal institution, has developed since Moses I. Finley's claim:

126 For the labour of women and children, see Susan M. Treggiari, "Lower Class Women in the Roman Economy," *Florilegium* 1 (1979), 65-86; Richard P. Saller, "The Roman Family as Productive Unit," *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 116-128; Keith R. Bradley, *Discovering the Roman Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 108-109, 117-119; Sabine R. Huebner, *The Family in Roman Egypt: A Comparative Approach to Solidarity and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 58-91; Josiah Osgood, "Making Romans in the Family," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 74; Jerry Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 17.

127 Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*, 166-174.

128 Toner, *Popular Culture*, 19-20.

> The *collegia* played an important part in the social and religious life of the lower classes, both free and slave; they sometimes performed benevolent functions, as in financing burials; they never became regulatory agencies in their respective trades, and that, of course, was the raison *d'être* of the genuine guilds, medieval and modern.[129]

Finley's emphasis on the social functions of voluntary associations for freemen and slaves and his contrast between ancient *collegia* and medieval guilds have been repeated, extended, and modified.[130] Some classical scholars, however, have turned their attention more to the economic dimension and other informal forms of social networks.[131] In this section, I will explore the possibility that such a social network would, to a certain degree, help workers to enjoy social and economic security against uncertainty and unemployment or underemployment.

At the heart of craftsmen's social and working lives were diverse social networks: spatial, economic, and institutional networks. The spatial network means the tightly gathered shops/workshops on market streets, which spontaneously created craftsmen's social relationships. The economic network involved artisans' connections with land/shop owners, employers or employees, patrons, and customers. The institutional network means professional and religious associations which were called σύνοδος and κοινόν in Egypt, συνεργασία, ὁμότεχνον, and σύστημα in Asia Minor, and *collegia, collegium, corpus,*

[129] M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 138.

[130] Cf. Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 76; John S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and *Thiasoi*: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World,* ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 16-30.

[131] For the other (esp. economic) functions of professional associations, see Onno M. van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1997); P. F. Venticinque, *"Family Affairs: Guild Regulations and Family Relationships in Roman Egypt*," *GRBS 50* (2010), 273-294; idem, "*Common Causes: Guilds, Craftsmen and Merchants in the Economy and Society of Roman and Late Roman Egypt*," (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2009); Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). Kloppenborg has to a degree accepted some possible economic benefits in associations (*Christ's Associations*, 33).

For the other forms of social network of professionals, see Penelope Goodman, "Working Together: Clusters of Artisans in the Roman City," in Wilson and Flohr, *Urban Craftsmen*, 301-333; Flohr, "Working and Living," 51-72.

synergasia, and *homotechnon* in the Western Roman world. These three kinds of social networks were not mutually exclusive.

First, craftsmen's spatial clusters on market streets have been well examined in several ancient cities (esp. Pompeii) by archaeologists who have raised the questions of why craftsmen clustered and what they benefited from it. Major urban cities generally had a marketplace with a commercial agora; ancient Thessalonica would not be an exception.[132] More importantly, many similar sorts of shop/workshop have been excavated in certain blocks or *insulae* of the marketplace. At the western centre of Pompeii, eighteen workshops are similarly composed of "long masonry tables, small vats, and lead-lined pans with furnaces underneath".[133] Seven of them are squeezed into one block. Many scholars agree that the shops/workshops would have operated in the same or similar trade:[134] "*officinae lanifricariae*" which are deemed as wool workshops[135] or as serving hot food.[136] These kinds of spatial cluster in Pompeii are attested also in many other urban cities.[137] In ancient Thessalonica, *tabernae*, which were the most popular shop type in the Greco-Roman world,[138] congregated in certain rectangular blocks whose sizes were approximately 100 m x 50 m.[139] One block could be occupied by two rows of four regular houses.[140] Edward Adams points out that "the *tabernae* were often integrated into larger buildings, both public complexes, such as *thermae*, and domestic buildings".[141] This indicates that, even if some artisans worked alone in a small *taberna*, the spatial connection or contiguity would naturally have allowed them to build social and economic relationships with neighbouring workers.[142]

132 Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 163, 169.

133 Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 311.

134 For the further debate over these shops, see M. Flohr, "The Textile Economy of Pompeii," *JRA* 26 (2013), 53-78.

135 Walter O. Moeller, *The Wool Trade of Ancient Pompeii* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 12-13; idem, "The 'Lanifricarius' and the 'Officinae Lanifricariae' at Pompeii," *Technology and Culture* 7.4 (1966), 493-496.

136 Willem Jongman, *The Economy and Society of Pompeii* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1988), 166-169.

137 Cf. Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 301-333.

138 A. MacMahon, *The Taberna Structures of Roman Britain* (Oxford: John & Erica Hedges, 2003), 9.

139 Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 160.

140 Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 160.

141 Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 140; cf. Pirson, "Shops and Industries," in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. J. J. Dobbins and P. W. Foss (London: Routledge, 2007), 469.

142 A large *taberna* (over 1000 m^2) in Pompeii was spacious enough to accommodate up to a hundred workers (Adams, *Meeting Places*, 142; Alison Burford, "Crafts and Craftsmen," in

Given that many labourers spent a lot of time working, eating, resting, conversing, worshipping, and even sleeping in the *taberna*,[143] it is not difficult to imagine that they had a strong bond with each other in the shops/workshops. The relationships sometimes developed spontaneously into voluntary associations. The association of purple-dyers in Thessalonica is a good example of this: "the guild of purple-dyers of the eighteenth street (honored) Menippos, son of Amios, also called Severus the Thyateiran. In memory" (*IG* X/2.1 291).[144] On the eighteenth street, purple-dyers gathered together and formed a voluntary association. As for the reason for this spatial cluster in Pompeii and other cities, Walter O. Moeller guesses that it facilitated access or reception of raw materials from the adjacent provision-market.[145] Penelope Goodman further argues that artisans "could hardly have avoided knowing one another, and this would have put them in a good position to cooperate and achieve agglomeration economies if they had chosen to do so".[146] She goes on to claim that outsourcing from larger firms to small ones might have been one of the forms of cooperation in the Jewellery Quarter in Pompeii.[147] The geographical contiguity and craftsmen's social bond may also have facilitated lending and borrowing raw materials, tools, and space.[148]

Second, craftsmen's connections with land/building owners, employers or employees, and customers were essential for their economic activities.[149] Land/building owners, to a large degree, regulated the artisans' economic lives. They had practical power to determine which kind of trades occupied their land and *insulae*, and skimmed off benefit from their buildings.[150] Some of them might have rented their *tabernae* to a particular group or individuals on favourable terms to enhance their reputation as patrons, while driving out a

Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome, ed. M. Grant and R. Kitzinger [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988], 376).

143 Cf. Adams, *Meeting Places*, 143-145; Hock, *Tentmaking*, 38.

144 John S. Kloppenborg, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary. Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 365; idem, *Christ's Associations*, 37-38; cf. Christoph vom Brocke, *Thessaloniki-Stadt des Kassander und Gemeinde des Paulus: eine frühe christliche Gemeinde in ihrer heidnischen Umwelt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 65.

145 Moeller, *Wool Trade*, 68-71; cf. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 72; Burford, "Craftsmen," 378.

146 Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 314.

147 Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 314.

148 Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 89-90.

149 Cf. Oakes, *Philippians*, 89-90.

150 Pirson, "Shops," 469-470; Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 325; cf. A. Wallace-Hadrill, "Public Honour and Private Shame: The Urban Texture of Pompeii," in *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, ed. T. J. Cornell and K. Lomas (London: Routledge, 1995), 51-55.

certain trade or person from their properties.[151] Goodman argues that such land/building owners' management would have been motivated by their social relationships, economic profits, and aesthetic preferences.[152] Chief artisans employed workers on both long- and short-term bases in their social networks.[153] Most importantly, artisans' pursuit of profit was contingent on relationships with consumers, particularly patrons who made private orders. Alison Burford points out that "for lack of a buyer of ready-made goods in the shop or market, a private customer placing special orders, or an official board commissioning works on the community's behalf, the craftsman found himself unemployed and unpaid".[154] It is likely that such diverse economic connections could easily facilitate or exacerbate craftsmen's economic activities.

Third, voluntary associations were at the centre of artisans' social and probably economic lives. There is no doubt that the associations were ubiquitous even in small towns.[155] The voluntary associations can be characterised by several criteria: a common ethnicity, deity, or profession, or a spatial contiguity.[156] Craftsmen were in the loop of not only professional associations but also religious and neighbourhood associations, though the distinction between them is blurred.[157] For instance, in Thessalonica, a perfume-seller, G. Hostius Eros, was recorded as a member of a religious association whose deity was Poseidon (Nigdelis no. 36).[158]

A controversial issue with regard to voluntary associations has to do with the question of why craftsmen formed and participated in these groups and what specific benefits they gained.[159] There are three general aspects of associations which attracted artisans: fulfilling funerary needs, religious rituals, and social functions. Firstly, providing funerary

151 Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 326-327.
152 Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 327.
153 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 28-29, 35-37.
154 Burford, "Craftsmen," 124.
155 Kloppenborg, "Collegia and *Thiasoi*," 17.
156 Nicholas R. E. Fisher, "Roman Associations, Dinner Parties, and Clubs," in Grant and Kitzinger, *Ancient Mediterranean*, 1209; Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 25-40.
157 Kloppenborg, *Attica*, 2; cf. Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 20; Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 23.
158 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 20.
159 All voluntary associations in the Roman world did not have the same purposes. This is why many classical scholars have examined the associations on the basis of their geographical and historical context since the 1990s. Nonetheless, the specific examination of associations needs to start with a study of general features of the associations. Cf. Ilias Arnaoutoglou, "Hierapolis and its Professional Associations: A Comparative Analysis," in Wilson and Flohr, *Urban Craftsmen*, 278.

assistance was one of the most common features of associations.[160] The groups assisted their members in funerary practices both economically and socially. They lent or provided money, honoured the burials as guests, and substituted for the role of a relative.[161] In Thessalonica, inscriptions witness that one association commemorated the death of Athenion while setting up a funerary monument in 90-91 BC (*SEG* 42.625; cf. *IG* X/2.1.506); another one lent money to its members for decent burials (Nigdelis no. 42).[162] Secondly, worshipping cultic gods was practised in most of the associations. Dionysos, the Egyptian gods, traditional Greek gods, and demigods were most frequently revered in the Thessalonian associations.[163] Thirdly, "banquets of bread" (καρπήαν) or "midnight bread" (μεσανύκτιον ἄρτον) were attractive to craftsmen (*IG* X/2.1.259; cf. *IG* X/2.1.58; *IG* X/2.1.68). It was common that, before or after cultic activities, the members shared meals to strengthen social relationships. Many scholars point out that meeting regularly in voluntary associations provided social identity or a sense of belonging for their members.[164]

The economic dimension of voluntary associations deserves attention. Due to the lacunae in archaeological and written evidence, it cannot be easily presumed that the craftsmen's most compelling motivation to organise associations had to do with running or protecting businesses, earning more profits, and alleviating their economic vulnerability.[165] But some evidence, along with some reasonable guesswork, enables us to glance at the economic functions of associations.

Firstly, it appears that some professional associations played a role in protecting their members' common trade from outgroup artisans or potential risk factors (cf. *P.Mich*. 5.245; *IK* 24.1.712; *IGR* 4.352; Acts 19:23-28).[166] A good example is the salt-dealers of Egyptian Tebtunis in an association which provided a regular banquet to drink together on the twenty-

160 Cf. J. Liu, "Professional Associations," in Erdkamp, *Ancient Rome*, 364.

161 Liu, "Professional Associations," 366.

162 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 29.

163 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 14-18.

164 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 33-35.

165 Due to the paucity of evidence, some scholars tend to underplay the possibility that craftsmen's economic advantage in professional associations was significant (cf. Finley, *Ancient Economy*, 137-138; Kloppenborg, "Collegia and *Thiasoi*," 19; note 131).

166 van Nijf, *Professional Associations*; Venticinque, "*Common Causes*"; Goodman, "Clusters of Artisans," 201-333; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 317-335.

Venticinque further argues that the benefits of membership in professional associations included "reduced transaction costs, increased contract enforceability, and lessening of risks and uncertainties involved in endeavors" ("Family Affairs," 276).

fifth of each month. They also negotiated economic cooperation and collective price-setting in their trade (*P.Mich.* 5.245):[167]

> "Orseus alone has obtained by lot the sole right to sell gypsum in the aforesaid village of Tebtunis and in the adjacent villages, … And if anyone shall sell at a lower price than these, let him be fined eight drachmas in silver … If anyone shall bring in gypsum and shall intend to sell it outsider, it must be left on the premises of Orseus …"[168]

The members divided up trading areas to certain individuals and penalised those who violated the minimum prices that had been set, while the selling and buying of salt and gypsum to outside traders was regulated by the association. As Onno M. van Nijf points out, given that the price-fixing by certain groups or persons was forbidden in a late Roman law, it does not seem that the price-setting of salt-dealers in the association was exceptional (cf. *IK* 24.1.712).[169] Acts 19:23-28, furthermore, can be understood as another example of the craftsmen's economic cooperation.[170] When Paul tried to convert a number of people by proclaiming that gods made with hands were not real gods, silversmiths who made silver shrines of Artemis rioted against him in Ephesus. The riot was the craftsmen's attempt to protect their business by which they made their living (19:25). Although it is not clear that the silversmiths were involved in a voluntary association, it can be assumed that artisans in the same trade would have collectively cooperated to shield their profits from potential risks.

Secondly, professional associations, in particular construction *collegia*, may have provided their members with access to occasional jobs. Although epigraphic evidence for this is elusive, DeLaine suggests that social relationships in associations would have helped contractors (*redemptores*) to recruit diverse and numerous labourers who were necessary for major construction projects.[171] In other words, when skilled or unskilled workers were affiliated with certain associations, they would have more opportunities for employment and enjoy more economic security. Construction work in Roman society was operated by

167 van Nijf, *Professional Associations*, 14-15; Venticinque, "*Common Causes*," 49-52.
168 Arthur E. R. Boak's translation.
169 van Nijf, *Professional Associations*, 14.
170 van Nijf, *Professional Associations*, 15; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 74.
171 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 204; cf. Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 328; Liu, "Professional Associations," 358.

hierarchical contracts, from landowners to *curatores* and contractors (*redemptores*), and from them to skilled and unskilled labourers.[172] In this contract process, there was room for the involvement of voluntary associations, or at least informal groups. There was the *collegium fabrorum tignuariorum*, which consisted of about 1,300 master builders who were the heads of small firms of 8-10 (*CIL* 6.1060).[173] The *collegium* could possibly have mobilised approximately 10,000-12,000 labourers (1,300 × 8~10) on the basis of its members and their social connections.[174] Some building associations in Rome were specialised into "the *marmorarii* (marble workers, [*CIL* 6.9550]), the *fabri ferrarii* (blacksmiths), the *mensores aedificiorum* (building surveyors) and the *pavimentarii* (pavement layers)".[175] In addition, it was common that a small gang of 8-10 labourers (*decuria*) was put to work together on a construction site, while the members could build a sense of camaraderie.[176] On the basis of this evidence, it is difficult to imagine that such "a ready-made structure" in associations and informal groups, which could be valuable for and easily exploited by contractors, was only for their members' sociability.[177] The already organised social connections and specialisation of associations would not have been unrelated to employing and being employed on construction sites.[178] It is plausible that contractors enjoyed access to workforce in professional associations, and labourers to employment.

What is worthwhile to note is that voluntary associations were not welcomed by all people. Many Roman emperors and senates expressed caution and suspicion towards voluntary associations because of their possible political overtones. After the political riots of the organisations of the *vici* in 67-64 BCE, the senate supressed all *collegia*.[179] Caesar (and Augustus) officially prohibited "all clubs except those of ancient constitution" (Suetonius, *Jul.* 42.3, *Aug.* 32).[180] Some foreign cults, including the organisations of the Jews, were especially suspected as illegal clubs by Tiberius and Gaius.[181] Informal associations were also questioned by some social elites. Cicero describes the associations as groups of "the slave-dregs" (*Pis.* 9), the destitute, and prisoners (cf. *Dom.* 45; *Sest.* 34; *Flac.* 18). In

172 Anderson, *Roman Architecture*, 95-118; Delaine, *Building Projects*, 201-205.
173 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 199-200; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 327.
174 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 205.
175 Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 327; Liu, "Professional Associations," 360.
176 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 204.
177 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 204.
178 DeLaine, *Building Projects*, 204-205; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek, "Industries," 328.
179 Fisher, "Roman Associations," 1210.
180 Fisher, "Roman Associations," 1210; Liu, "Professional Associations," 354.
181 Fisher, "Roman Associations," 1221.

addition, the informal clubs were occasionally linked to drunkenness under pretext of sacrifice (Philo, *Flacc.* 4), as well as to civil disruption and unrest (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 52. 36).[182] Nicholas Fisher suggests that this background may be one of the causes for the Roman persecution of the early Christian communities.[183] Likewise, associations were, to some degree, notorious as subversive gangs from the point of view of governing groups.

In summary, craftsmen's social networks of all forms were intertwined with their economic activities and financial security or vulnerability. On the one hand, if the labourers had a strong friendship with neighbours in spatial, economic, and institutional networks, they could take advantage of the camaraderie for their economic insurance, such as employment. On the other hand, if their social relationships were broken or malfunctioning, they would be more exposed to economic risks. It is highly likely that the social networks of professionals, especially casual or unskilled workers, played an important role in mutual economic insurance and survival.

2.4.5. Legal Status and Work

The legal status of craftsmen is one of the critical criteria which had a great influence on their economic activities. The legal status of the individual - slave, freedman, or freeman (Gaius, *Inst.* 1.9-11) - determined the nature, goal, meaning, and scope of their labour. Attitudes towards working often depended on legal status.[184] In what follows, I will explore the different legal statuses of craftsmen. This, however, is not an attempt to describe all the general features of legal status. I will focus on the correlation between working and legal status.

Most slave workers had three common features in Greco-Roman society: their activities were embedded into almost all working areas; they were exclusively dependent on slave-owners; and many of them were trained as workers with specific skills. Firstly, although the total number and percentage of slaves cannot be calculated exactly, many classical scholars claim that slave labour was ubiquitous at around 5-10 percent of the total population.[185] Scheidel estimates on the basis of the census returns of Roman Egypt that

182 Cf. Venticinque, "*Common Causes*," 6-7.
183 Fisher, "Roman Associations," 1222.
184 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 49-61; Garnsey, "Non-slave Labour," 35.
185 Cf. Walter Scheidel, "Slavery," in *Roman Economy*, 90-96.

"close to 15 percent of urban residents and more than 8 percent of villagers, mostly in Middle Egypt, were slaves, but only 7 percent of the residents of a town in Upper Egypt" in the first three centuries CE.[186] This number is consistent with the picture of slave workers in many work places attested by legal sources, literary accounts, and inscriptions: "estate managers, field hands, shepherds, hunters, domestic servants, craftsmen, construction workers, retailers, miners, clerks, teachers, doctors, midwives, wet nurses, textile workers, potters and entertainers".[187] Since slave labourers were hired out or purchased, it was not difficult to find them in shops/workshops.[188] Secondly, slave workers were perceived as their owners' property,[189] which could be sold, lent, and mortgaged.[190] Slaves' children were also the possessions of their mothers' owners.[191] Even when slaves were hired out, the incomes belonged to their owners (Gaius, *Inst.* 1.52). The legal system did not deny the owners' right to abuse their slaves,[192] though slave labour as a valuable asset was well managed.[193] Likewise, slave labourers relied exclusively on their owners and had no freedom to work or not. Thirdly, many slaves were trained to have some professional skills.[194] It was common to expect that slaves continued working throughout their lives, even from a young age.[195] Child slaves were forced to work in farms to harvest crops and to tend animals and in shops/workshops to assist in simple tasks. As a result, they could be trained as farmers, artisans, and builders.[196]

Freedmen were positioned in the middle ground between slaves and freeborn citizens.[197] Freedmen could enjoy partial freedom to sell property, have a proper marriage, have their own children, and sue others.[198] Since freedmen had some professional skills honed in their slave years, it was not always challenging for them to make a living.[199] A few

186 Scheidel, "Slavery," 91.
187 Scheidel, "Slavery," 90; Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 59.
188 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 64.
189 Bradley says that "owning slaves always served to express *potestas* in a society highly sensitive to gradations of status, esteem, and authority" (*Slavery and Society*, 30).
190 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 28.
191 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 29.
192 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 30.
193 Scheidel, "Slavery," 97.
194 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 64. Some slaves were proud of their professional skills (*CIL* 6.9437).
195 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 68.
196 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 68.
197 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 35.
198 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32.
199 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 168.

of them were successful in running their own business (cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* 1.101-106; Martial, *Epigr.* 2.29; Horace, *Epod.* 4). "The stigma of a servile past", however, remained in their everyday lives and in their bodies.[200] The stigma was one of the most fundamental aspects of freedmen. It differentiated them from their own children. Freedmen were occasionally subjected to ridicule and light beatings in public places (*Dig*. 47.10.7.2).[201] Most importantly, freedmen's relationships with their former masters continued in various forms. All freedmen were to some degree forced to continue to show compliance (*obsequium*) towards their former owners.[202] When freedmen did not do the service, they were viewed as ungrateful in Roman law (*Dig*. 37.14.19). Besides, freedmen who were still bound to *operae libertorum* had to work and pay a fixed amount of their income to their former masters for a certain number of years.[203] On the other hand, some other freedmen had no living former masters or patrons. This means that, while some manumitted slaves remained dependent on former owners in *operae libertorum* or *obsequium*, other freedmen were relatively independent so that they could work totally for themselves.

Freeborn citizens varied in terms of economic status, though all shared some general features. Freeborn people as legitimate members of the social order enjoyed freedom to manage their possessions, legal privilege, and respect from slaves and freedmen.[204] However, these rights did not always guarantee their wealth. Holleran points out that, while some freeborn citizens were wealthy enough just to manage land and property inherited from their fathers, "the social and institutional infrastructure of Rome (thus) left many of the freeborn inhabitants of the city living in poverty".[205] This is because unskilled freeborn people may have been in trouble to compete with the well trained and skilled slaves and freedmen to get a job in many areas. It is unfortunate that there remains little epigraphic evidence on freeborn workers compared to that on freedmen workers. It may indicate that many freeborn citizens shared a negative attitude towards manual work with social elites so that it was shameful for them to reveal their manual labour and to leave behind records about their occupations.[206]

200 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32.
201 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32, 34.
202 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 33.
203 Cf. Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 131-191; Scheidel, "Slavery," 97.
204 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 27-28. For the legal privilege and protection, see Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).
205 Holleran, "Urban Economy," 169.
206 For the freedmen's epigraphic records, see Mouritsen, *The Freedmen*, 288-299.

2.5. Free(d) Casual Workers with Social Networks in the Thessalonian Church

So far, I have described the Roman economy, focusing on economic fluctuations (§2.4.2), casual workers (§2.4.3), and their social networks (§2.4.4) and legal status (§2.4.5). Now, I will situate biblical descriptions of the Thessalonians (§2.3) in light of the Roman economy to suggest that many of them were poor casual workers of low social and legal status with social networks.

First, the fact that the Thessalonians were Gentiles and had a positive attitude towards working indicates that they were neither social elites nor wealthy freeborn citizens, but freed or poor freeborn manual workers. It is clear that Gentile social elites and many freeborn citizens shared a negative view on manual work and toil (§§2.3, 2.4.5).[207] Cicero's comment on craftsmen in his *De Officiis* is most frequently quoted: most craftsmen are vulgar and in virtually servile occupations (1.150-151; cf. Seneca, *Ep*. 88.21; Plutarch, *Per*. 1.4). Aristophanes also relates labour (ἔργον) directly to poverty (*Plut.* 552-554). Many classical scholars acknowledge that most social elites disdained manual craftsmen who toiled in shops/workshops. They also argue that this elite bias was shared by many freeborn people, though those of lower status, including slaves and most freedmen, did not share it but boasted of their professional skills.[208] In this regard, for the social elite and many wealthier freeborn people, an encouragement towards manual labour, like 1 Thess 4:11, would be unnecessary, inappropriate, or even uncomplimentary.

On the other hand, as far as 1 Thessalonians is concerned, Paul boasts of his manual labour and reminds his recipients of his toil, while encouraging them to work with their hands. He does not present any hint of social shame regarding working in 1 Thessalonians (in contrast to 1 Cor 4:11-13). It is highly likely that Paul and the Thessalonians shared a similar and positive attitude to toil (κόπος, 1 Thess 1:3; 2:9; cf. 2 Thess3:8) and labour (ἐργάζομαι, 1 Thess 2:9, 4:11). The term κόπος literally means a burdensome activity or service, in accordance with which someone expects to receive pay or reward (1 Cor 3:8; John 4:38; Rev

[207] On the other hand, the Jews' attitude towards working is controversial. It appears relatively positive, or at least not that antagonistic. Cf. T. Still, "Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *JBL* 123 (2006), 781-795.

[208] Garnsey argues that "craftsmen could be proud of their skills and convinced of the worth of their enterprise, but for Cicero the crafts were virtually servile occupations" ("Non-slave Labour," 35).

14:13; Sir 14:15).[209] More specifically, κόπος, along with μόχθος, is equated with ἐργάζομαι in 1 Thess 2:9 (cf. 2 Thess 3:8). What is interesting here is that Paul associates all the words, κόπος, μόχθος, and ἐργάζομαι, directly with love: ἀγάπη (love, 1 Thess 1:3), ἀγαπητός (beloved, 2:8), and φιλαδελφία (brotherly love, 4:11). In 1 Thess 1:3 as part of Paul's *exordium* thanksgiving, which creates a positive emotion in his recipients,[210] κόπος is mentioned as the main feature of ἀγάπη in the genitive form: τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης.[211] Paul continues to explain the love that he practised towards the Thessalonians as a model of love in the *narratio* (2:1-12).[212] Here, κόπος, μόχθος, and ἐργάζομαι are again presented as the manifestations of love in 2:9. More importantly, in 4:9-12, the Apostle instructs on φιλαδελφία in the *exhortatio* (4:9-12). He encourages the believers to work with their hands (4:11) as though working is a practice of love. In this literary context, while love is one of the main issues in 1 Thessalonians (1:3; 2:1-12; 3:12; 4:9-12), it is frequently related to working with one's hands (1:3; 2:8; 4:11). Furthermore, these three passages are deeply interlocked in Paul's rhetorical setting: the *exordium* introduces the main themes among which is the labour of love,[213] the *narratio* following the *exordium* shows a model of love,[214] and the *exhortatio* contains the continuing instruction on love and labour.[215] In other words, Paul shared a positive attitude towards manual work as a mode of love with the Christian workers in Thessalonica. This literary evidence suggests that freed and poorer freeborn manual labourers who did not have the bias of the Gentile elite against manual labour were the main members of the Thessalonian community. Accordingly, Paul's exhortation on working was neither unnecessary, inappropriate, nor insulting.

Second, the Thessalonian congregation would have consisted largely of casual labourers, either freed or poor freeborn manual workers. Paul's instruction on manual labour in 1 Thess 4:11-12 provides the first evidence for this argument, if the verses are situated in the context of the Roman economy. Many scholars have raised the question of why the

209 BDAG, 558.

210 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 75.

211 Cf. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 109.

212 Cf. Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 90-91.

213 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 72-76.

214 Wanamaker points out that the *narratio* commonly follows the exordium, having two functions: it establishes a positive mood and relationship between a writer and the recipients as their real story, and it plays a role of implicit *parenesis* connected with the following *exhortation* (*The Thessalonians*, 90-91).

215 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 146-147.

Thessalonians stopped working or were forced not to work.[216] However, leaving this question aside, I will turn the attention to the fact that Paul instructs the believers to "work with your own hands" (4:11). This implies that they were labourers who could stop or start working voluntarily. If the believers had no choice whether they worked or not, Paul's exhortation on working would be entirely pointless. Furthermore, provided that Paul definitely relates working to making money in 2:9 and 4:11-12, his instruction on working is not just an ethical or theological issue with regard to eschatological idleness or enthusiasm but an economic matter. Paul tried not to burden the believers in Thessalonica economically, and this was one of the main goals of his work which was a way of making money in shops/workshops (2:9). His exhortation on manual work (4:11) is also connected to not depending on others materially (4:12b). This means that avoiding burdening others and not depending on others (from outgroups, §3.4) can be achieved by earning money through labour. The impression we have of the Thessalonians, therefore, is this: they could stop or restart their work voluntarily, and the goal of their work was closely associated with their household, church, or individual economy.

In light of this, it is highly likely that the Thessalonian Christians were not dependent workers, such as permanent labourers or labourers on a long-term contract. Some possibilities regarding the believers' social profile can be eliminated on the basis of the ancient evidence. Firstly, all slaves were permanent workers dependent on their owners, even when they were hired out as casual workers by their owners (§2.4.5).[217] Their sustenance, work, and life relied exclusively on their owners. Secondly, freedmen who were bound to *operae libertorum*

[216] A few scholars, Malherbe, von Dobschütz, and Hock, have tried to interpret Paul's instruction on work as a catechetical exhortation without a specific historical backdrop (Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 252; Hock, *Tentmaking*, 43; Ernst von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*. 7th ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909], 178).

On the contrary, others have associated it with historical events, such as eschatological laziness (Rigaux, Best, Bruce, and Jewett) and enthusiasm (Marxsen, Barclay, de Vos, and Furnish), Gnosticism (Schmithals), or the abuse of the generosity of wealthy members (Wanamaker, Russell, and Winter). See Beda Rigaux, *Saint Paul* (Paris: Gabalda, 1956), 519-521; Best, *Thessalonians*, 175; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonian*s (Waco: Word, 1982), 91; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 172-175; Willi Marxsen, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979), 25-26, 62; Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 522-525; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 160-170; V. P. Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 98; Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 158-160; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 162-164; R. Russell, "The Idle in 2 Thess 3.6-12: An Eschatological or a Social Problem?" *NTS* 34 (1998), 105-109; Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 41-60.

[217] Joshel, *Legal Status*, 28-30; Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 30.

were indebted to their previous owners for their freedom (§2.4.5). Since being required to pay some of their incomes to the owners for several years,[218] they had virtually no choice whether to work or not. Thirdly, there were some freedmen and freeborn people who worked on a long-term contract or were bound to contracts in order to rent workplaces. During the contract years, they had no freedom not to work. Fourthly, tenant farmers paid a fixed rent to land-owners monthly in many cases so that it would be almost impossible for them not to work (§2.4.2).[219] Fifthly, members in a family business who relied on each other for their survival and rented a workshop had no choice not to work, unless they collectively decided not to work or were rich enough to pay a rental without working. These were all dependent or permanent labourers, who had to work until the due date of a written contract without their will. The fact that Paul had to instruct the Thessalonians to work with their hands suggests that they would not have been these kinds of labourers.

Neither would the Thessalonian Christians be relatively wealthy independent labourers, such as contractors, master builders, and chief artisans. They would have needed to be financially independent to hire skilled and unskilled workers; or they were wealthy enough to manage projects until the completion of buildings or productions, because they received the payment for ordered projects only after their patrons' final approval, in particular in the construction business (§2.4.2).[220] This does not fit well with the description of the Thessalonian believers' low economic status in 2 Cor 8:2 and Paul's encouragement of their self-sufficiency in 1 Thess 4:11-12 (§2.3).

The remaining possibility, therefore, is that many of the Thessalonians were casual workers and possibly small-scale artisans on streets like Paul. The Apostle was an itinerant occasional worker at least in Thessalonica. He stayed in the city for a short time, at most eight months.[221] Given his short stay and abrupt departure (Acts 17:10), his contract might have been a short-term oral agreement. Although Paul worked night and day, he may have just scraped his living while not burdening other Christians (1 Thess 2:9). Such a description of Paul implies that he was a voluntary occasional labourer rather than a permanent or an independent one who rented a shop or workshop in Thessalonica.

218 Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 61-129; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 151-152; Mouritsen, *The Freedmen*, 120-205; cf. Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32-34.

219 Kehoe, "Contract Labor," 116.

220 Kehoe, "Contract Labor," 124.

221 Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 2.

Like Paul, many of the Thessalonians would have been occasional workers for three further reasons. Firstly, it seems that Paul and the believers had similar positions and experiences in shops/workshops. The believers remembered and understood Paul's hard work in shops/workshops positively (2:9) and shared a similar view on manual working with Paul (1:3; 2:9; 4:11). Paul recounts his positive experiences in Thessalonica shared with the believers in 1 Thess 2:5-12, among which is working night and day. This is in stark contrast to 1 Cor 4:12 in which Paul catalogues his sufferings, including working, as unfavourable from the perspective of certain Corinthian believers. Besides, given that Paul worked and preached the gospel simultaneously and converted some of his co-workers and neighbours (2:9; cf. §2.3), it is highly likely that the converts shared not only a positive attitude towards work but a similar experience and position in the workplace as casual workers. Secondly, it appears that the Thessalonian Christians were among the flexible workforce. As they had suddenly stopped working or were forced to stop working for whatever reason, Paul encouraged them to re-start or continue working with their hands (4:11). This flexibility in Roman society indicates that they were casual workers and probably small-scale street artisans who could stop, restart, and continue to work relatively freely. Thirdly, Paul's description of the believers' poverty fits well with the common characteristic of occasional labourers, especially unskilled ones (§§2.4.2-3). The unskilled casual labourers could barely scrape a living if they worked for more than 200 days a year and had no dependents. It is almost certain that they were most exposed to seasonal fluctuations and economic insecurity. Similarly, the Thessalonians were relatively poor, compared to the Corinthians (§2.3). As Paul exhorts in 4:11-12, they had to work for their self-sufficiency while not depending on others.[222] This gives an impression of the believers' economic insecurity or vulnerability. Considering all these, it can be argued that many of the Thessalonians were casual workers.

I suggest, therefore, that the Thessalonian church was a fairly homogenous community of poor freed/free occasional craftsmen. They would have been mostly Gentile freed or perhaps poor freeborn labourers who did not share negative views on manual work among the elite. It is highly likely that they were not dependent and permanent workers, but casual labourers who had to work to survive. In Friesen's poverty scale, the Thessalonians

[222] Reidar Aasgaard, "Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul: Its Role and Character," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, ed. H. Moxnes (London: Routledge, 1997), 166-182; Ryan S. Schellenberg, "Subsistence, Swapping, and Pau's Rhetoric of Generosity," *JBL* 137.1 (2018), 229-231.

can be located mostly "at subsistence level (PS6)", and partly "below subsistence level (PS7)" and around "stable near subsistence level (PS5)".[223] Friesen describes those "at subsistence level" (PS6, about 40% of the urban population) as a group of "small farm families, laborers (skilled and unskilled), artisans (esp. those employed by others), wage earners, most merchants and traders, small shop/tavern owners".[224] This level fits best with the craftsman believers in Thessalonica. The overall impression is that many believers in Thessalonica were freed and poor freeborn casual labourers or street workers in low social strata.

If this delineation of the Thessalonians is correct, several implications about their everyday lives can be suggested. The Thessalonians as casual workers were exposed to economic insecurity and uncertainty (§§2.4.2-3). Unemployment may have been one of the most serious anxieties in their everyday lives (cf. Artemidorus, *Onir.* 1.13, 54, 23). Getting a job daily or monthly was essential for them to keep their heads above water. If one had dependents, unemployment was equivalent to a threat to the survival of the household or community. This indicates that many of the Thessalonians were vulnerable to the seasonal fluctuations and uncertainty of the Roman economy which influenced their employment and wage. Winter would have been harsher for them as the price of cereal crops soared and employment contracts were made infrequently in farms and construction sites.[225] Furthermore, many of the Thessalonians who were poor freedmen would have been easily subjected to social ridicule and mild beatings from their former owners, social elites, and freeborn citizens in public, since the Roman law, to some degree, neglected these matters (cf. *Dig*. 47.10.7.2; §2.4.5).[226] If I should describe the Thessalonian Christians in sociological terms, they would have been numerical, social, economic, and powerless minorities.

In this tough economic and social environment, the Thessalonian Christians' social networks were fundamental in cushioning them against economic fluctuations and predicaments: family, communal gatherings, economic connections, and possibly voluntary associations (§2.4.4). Given the fact that local governments' intervention and assistance was not common[227] and there was no permanent or targeted system of public economic

223 Cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 341.
224 Friesen, "Poverty," 341.
225 Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 149; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 139.
226 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32, 34.
227 Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 43.

welfare,[228] the social networks would have played a crucial role in mitigating casual workers' economic vulnerability. It is highly likely that social relationships in antiquity were inextricably interwoven into craftsmen' economic activities, which included finding jobs, cooperating in shops/workshops or on market streets, and protecting their business from various potential risks (cf. Acts 19:23-30). The craftsman believers in Thessalonica would not have been exempt. It is plausible to say that the Thessalonian congregation was one form of these social networks which offered some insurance against economic vulnerability to its members and attracted poor manual labourers (cf. 1 Thess 1:3; 3:6; 3:12; 4:9-12).[229] I will explore this possibility more and use the information of the social and economic conditions of the Thessalonians to explicate their social relationships, such as conflicts with non-believers and solidarity within their church in Chapter 3.

[228] Holleran, "Urban Economy," 166.

[229] Oakes, *Philippians*, 77-102; Reidar Aasgaard, *'My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!': Christian Siblingship in Paul* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 164-165; Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 229-231; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 161-162; White, "Roman Ideology," 510.

Chapter Three

Dynamic Socio-Economic Phenomena in Thessalonica: Status, Relationships, and Identity

The fabric of society, including the economy, is essentially an interweaving of relationships. Economic factors influence social relationships, while the relationships transform economic reality. This interconnection between the economy and social bonds can be straightforwardly attested in almost all societies, though how it operates varies to different degrees.[1] A good example of this is social relations in the Roman Empire, such as patronage (§5.2). As Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller point out, one's socio-economic status determined his or her position in relationships as either a benefactor, a patron, a superior friend, an equal friend, a lesser friend, or a humble client (cf. Pliny, *Ep*. 2.6.2, 7.3.2; Seneca, *Ep*. 94.14).[2] Such varied social connections were occasionally re-categorised or affected by giving and receiving favours, services, and gifts. A change in socio-economic status also meant weakening or strengthening social ties. Thus, it can be said that different socio-economic statuses and situations resulted in different manifestations of social relations in the Greco-Roman world.

The Thessalonians' intergroup and intragroup relationships were not exempt. It is highly likely that their social contacts within church and with outgroup members were intertwined with their socio-economic status and conditions. In this chapter, therefore, I will suggest that the Thessalonians' low socio-economic status and high economic vulnerability were related to the tenor of their conflicts with outsiders and community ethic and solidarity, while asking how the socio-economic factors operated. In light of this historical reconstruction, I will further attempt to interpret 1 Thess 4:9-12 as Paul's response to the conflicts with non-believers in a socio-economic sense, and at the same time as his ideal of spiritual and economic reciprocity in the poor Thessalonian congregation.

1 There is a general consensus among economists, anthropologists, and historians that the connection between social relationship and economy in pre-modern societies was much stronger than that in commercial societies. See Allan Silver, "Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Social Theory and Modern Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 95.6 (1990), 1484-1485.

2 Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 149; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 88.

In order to do so, a brief history of research on intergroup and intragroup relationships in Thessalonica and its limitations will be considered first (§3.1). Complementing the previous studies, I will examine religious, social, and most significantly economic overtones of conflict with non-believers, and its impact on internal solidarity and social identity through social psychological analysis (§3.2). Thereafter, the Thessalonians' economic and social mutualism will be explored based on an integrative explication of their socio-economic status (Chapter 2), Paul's familial language, the internal structure and cohesion of their community, and social psychological and anthropological models (§3.3). Finally, I will summarise the studies of the Thessalonians' intergroup and intragroup relationships in a nuanced interpretation of 1 Thess 4:9-12 (§3.4).

3.1. A History of Previous Research

There is a scholarly consensus that the Thessalonian Christians experienced harassment from non-believers (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:1-7), but enjoyed fellowship in their church (1:3; 3:6, 12; 4:9-12; 5:11). There are two major streams of research on the social relationships. First, the issue of the believers' conflicts with fellow compatriots (τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν, 2:14) or outsiders (τοὺς ἔξω, 4:12) received only little attention until a few ground-breaking studies were published in the 1990s.[3] Barclay's two articles on conflicts in Thessalonica inspired the research of scholars like Todd Still, de Vos, Victor P. Furnish, and Horrell.[4] They have each proposed plausible scenarios about the intergroup conflicts, expounding their causes and results and Paul's response to them. In these studies, the religious, apocalyptic, social, and political overtones of the conflicts are explored with the following assumptions: the Thessalonians' conflicts with non-believers were associated with their rejection of traditional gods, aggressive evangelism,[5] seeming or apparent opposition to the imperial authorities,[6] or

3 Cf. Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 50; V. P. Furnish, "Inside Looking Out: Some Pauline Views of the Unbelieving Public," in *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honor of Calvin J. Roetzel*, ed. J. C. Anderson, S. Philp, and S. Claudia (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 106.

4 Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 512-530; idem, "Social Contrast," 49-74; T. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); de Vos, *Community Conflicts*; Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 271-299; M. Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 2001), 118-130; cf. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 93-94; Oakes, *Philippians*, 77-102.

5 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 53.

6 For the political overtone of conflict, see James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities in Thessalonica and Rome* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 47-70; Míguez, *Practice of Hope*; Tellbe, *Synagogue and State*; Karl P. Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica and the

acceptance of Paul's teaching of apocalyptic dualism. I will neither repeat nor neglect these ideas here. Instead, I will suggest an alternative and nuanced socio-economic cause and effect of conflicts with non-believers (§3.2) on the basis of a precise socio-economic profiling of the Thessalonians (Chapter 2),[7] while clarifying this by employing social psychological theories (§3.2.5).

Second, the subject of solidarity and economic reciprocity within the Thessalonian community has also only recently drawn scholars' interest. This attention was stimulated by Meeks' socio-historical approach to the Pauline communities: "those groups enjoyed an unusual degree of intimacy, high levels of interaction among members, and a very strong sense of internal cohesion and of distinction both from outsiders and from 'the world'".[8] His introductory comparison between early Christian congregations and ancient groups, such as associations and family, paved the way for future research.[9]

The recent studies of the intragroup relationship in the Thessalonian church fall into three categories: church as a family, egalitarianism as a church structure, and mutualism as a community ethic. Firstly, Paul's usage of familial language, such as φιλαδελφία (1 Thess 4:9), πατήρ (2:11), and τέκνον (2:7, 11), has stimulated scholarly interest. In this regard, the ancient family (οἶκος, *familia*, or *domus*) has been frequently compared to a system of relationships in early Christian communities in recent decades.[10] Robert Banks' monograph

Thessalonian Correspondence," *NTS* 31 (1985), 336-356; C. Rulmu, "Between Ambition and Quietism: The Socio-Political Background of 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12," *Bib* 91 (2010), 393-417; A. Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers': Toward a Postcolonial Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), 47-66; contra, Peter Oakes, "Re-Mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians," *JSNT* 27 (2005), 301-322.

7 Barclay suggests that, though an economic approach is inseparable to social interaction study, the Thessalonians' socio-economic status is just in the realm of speculation ("Social Contrasts," 68). Nonetheless, over the last two decades, we have come to have a better grasp about early believers' economic background (Chapters 2, 4). For example, Oakes suggests that economic factors including early Christians' socio-economic status were intertwined with conflict with non-believers (*Philippians*, 77-102).

8 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 74.

9 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 74-110; cf. Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting* (1979; repr., Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 52-61.

10 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 74-110; Norman R. Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Klaus Schäfer, *Gemeinde als "Bruderschaft": Ein Beitrag zum Kirchenverständnis des Paulus* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 1989); Banks, *Idea of Community*, 52-61; Karl O. Sandnes, *A New Family: Conversion and Ecclesiology in the Early Church with Cross-Cultural Comparisons* (Peter Lang, 1994); Abraham J. Malherbe, "God's New Family in Thessalonica," in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, ed. L. M. White and O. L. Yarbrough (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1995), 116-125; John M. G. Barclay, "The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and

reveals scholars' strikingly minimal preoccupation with familial language in Paul's letters in 1979. He suggested that connecting ancient families to early Christian congregations can clarify "the essence of his [Paul's] thinking about community".[11] Banks' suggestion was followed by a proliferation of the research on church as a family. As for the Thessalonian congregation, it is worthwhile to mention Trevor J. Burke's book, *Family Matters*.[12] Complaining that 1 Thessalonians had been treated just as additional evidence for familial relations in the Pauline communities, he underlined that the letter contains the most frequent and varied familial language which called for an integrated and independent approach to it.[13] It is also notable that the burgeoning interest in this topic within Pauline scholarship has coincided with classical scholars' attempts to revisit and explore ancient families based on newly found evidence and methodologies.[14] This means that new sources, findings, and insights about the ancient families are waiting to be employed by biblical scholars. I will utilize the studies of family both from Pauline and classical scholarship for this thesis.

Secondly, defining a structure of relationships within the Thessalonian church has become another area of enquiry. The issue of whether the congregation was egalitarian or hierarchical has been controversial.[15] As far as it is relevant to the discussion of community ethics, this subject will be briefly mentioned.

The last and more significant matter is the broad spectrum of models with regard to community ethics and reality in the Thessalonian congregation: "love-patriarchalism"

Early Christianity," in Moxnes, *Christian Families*, 66-80; S. S. Bartchy, "Undermining Ancient Patriarchy: The Apostle Paul's Vision of a Society of Siblings," *BTB* 29 (1999), 68-78; Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); Aasgaard, *Beloved Brothers*; Trevor J. Burke, *Family Matters: A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians* (London: T&T Clark International, 2003).

Some other scholars have tried to compare voluntary associations with the Thessalonian church. See Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*; Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*; idem, "Meals"; idem, *Encountering the Christ.*

11 Banks, *Idea of Community*, 53.

12 Cf. Malherbe, "New Family," 116-125; Trevor J. Burke, "Paul's New Family in Thessalonica," *NovT* 54 (2012), 269-287.

13 Burke, *Family Matters*, 2-5; idem, "Paul's New Family," 269-273.

14 Beryl Rawson states that the studies of ancient families have become an interdisciplinary task in history, law, art, archaeology, and theology in recent decades (*A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011], 1).

15 Burke, "Paul's New Family," 269-287; Malherbe, "New Family," 116-125; cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 75; eadem, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 180-183; Elliott, "Family-Oriented," 173-210; Thomas Schmeller, *Hierarchie und Egalität: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995).

(Theissen), "philanthropic almsgiving" (Longenecker), or "mutualism" (Meggitt; cf. §2.1).[16] In this regard, many scholars have grappled with several difficulties. The Thessalonians' reality, unlike Paul's ideals, cannot be simply defined by one out of three models, but by a combination of them.[17] Life is far more complex and equivocal than ideals or theories. It is thus better to claim that their relationships were either "more" or "less" close to reciprocity, philanthropy, or love-patriarchalism. Besides, as Theissen rightly points out, Paul's ideal and the overall community ethos and reality are, though deeply intertwined, to be differentiated and thereby to be respectively explicated.[18] Paul's ideal would have been manifested in different communities in diverse ways. It is tenable that the Thessalonians' mutual love was different from that of the Corinthians, even though Paul taught them the similar ideal ethics. The ideal can result in different realities and ethos due to diverse socio-economic contexts (Chapters 3, 5). As a result, while articulating his ideal, it is necessary to focus on its different manifestations in dissimilar socio-economic backgrounds. One more hindrance is insufficient biblical evidence. A few verses (1 Thess 1:3; 3:6, 12; 4:9-12, 18; 5:11, 13; cf. 2 Thess 3:6-12) are not adequate to unravel the Thessalonians' actual and precise community ethic and its intricacy. This is why, before examining early Christians' intragroup ethics, many scholars try to clarify socio-economic status, familial language, and community structure.[19] In particular, a detailed socio-economic profile of early Christians has been viewed as one of the most critical elements which can help to trace a congregation's intragroup relations and ethic. As Theissen maintains, this is not to say that the link between members' socio-economic status and community ethic is a one-to-one correspondence.[20] Although the composition of a community unmistakably affects the group's internal ethic and relationship, the influence cannot be generalised. For instance, the fact that a majority of early Christians were poor per se does not guarantee "economic mutualism" in their communities, just as socio-economic stratification did not always lead to "love-patriarchalism". Only after considering diverse issues in an integrative way (e.g. group structure, membership, economic status, familial

16 Theissen, *Social Setting;* idem, "Social Structure," 83-84; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 287-291; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 155-178.

17 Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 218-220.

18 Theissen, "Social Structure," 83.

19 Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 215-234; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*; Theissen, *Social Setting*; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*.

20 Theissen, "Social Structure," 83-84; cf. Elliott, "Family-Oriented," 173-210.

language, socio-economic context, etc.), can one argue with confidence which model is more applicable to paint a silhouette of the Thessalonians' intragroup relations and ethic.

I will, therefore, reflect on many factors - socio-economic profile (Chapter 2), intergroup conflict (§3.2), brotherly love within the church (§3.3.1), Paul's familial language (§3.3.3), and social psychological and anthropological models (§§3.3.2, 4) - in order to draw a conclusion regarding the Thessalonians' uncommon solidarity and possible economic mutualism (§3.4). This integrative study will seek to avoid jumping carelessly into biased modern constructs, such as communism or a philanthropic movement for equality.

3.2. Intergroup Conflict, Economy, and Social Identity[21]

3.2.1. The General Landscape of Conflict in Thessalonica

The Thessalonians along with Paul encountered harassment from non-believers and its consequent social dislocation. Paul repeats expressions relevant to social conflict and sufferings from it: affliction (θλῖψις, 1 Thess 1:6; 3:3, 7), to suffer (πάσχω, 2:2, 14), a struggle against opposition (ἀγών 2:2), to persecute (ἐκδιώκω, 2:15), to afflict (θλίβω, 3:4), and trouble (ἀνάγκη, 3:7). These terms in 1 Thessalonians indicate three features of the landscape of the conflict: social harassment, severe conflict, and affliction related to conversion.

First, it is plausible that the Thessalonians' affliction (θλῖψις) was derived from social harassment. Malherbe insists that the expression "in much affliction" (ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ, 1:6) denotes the converts' mental distress resulting from the journey from their past to a new belief.[22] He rightly points out that the affliction is associated with receiving the word (1:6). It is also likely, as he argues, that a conversion experience in religious and philosophical sects embraces personal "confusion, bewilderment, dejection, and even despair".[23] As far as 1 Thess 1:6 is concerned, it makes sense that the θλῖψις can refer to such an internal suffering. Nevertheless, in the whole letter, Paul seems to have the Thessalonians' social affliction and

[21] Some ideas in this section (esp. §§3.2.4.2, 3.2.3, 3.3.1) regarding manual workers' relationships with diverse people on market streets and their economic implications have been developed from my unpublished MA dissertation, "Responding to Conflict between Insiders and Outsiders: A Social and Economic Approach to 1 Thess 4:9-12" (Durham University, 2016).

[22] Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 46-48; idem, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 127-129.

[23] Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 45.

dislocation in mind more than their personal distress.[24] Firstly, in most cases, the authors of the New Testament, including Paul, use the noun θλῖψις to signify affliction from external troubles.[25] Secondly, there is no reason to insist that the conflict with outgroup members presented in 2:14-16 is unrelated to θλῖψις in 1:6 and 3:3. It is plausible to read the different forms of θλῖψις in light of 2:14-16. The impression is that the demonstrative ταύταις in "by these afflictions" (ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις, 3:3) designates the Thessalonians' sufferings from the social conflict presented in 2:14-16. Thirdly, the affliction in 3:3 implies serious social pressure that may have shaken their faith. Paul was worried lest the believers lose their faith, and therefore sent Timothy to them. If their affliction was due only to mental distress resulting from conversion, Paul would neither reiterate this issue nor send his fellow worker to soothe their sufferings in the similar way that he treated the neophytes in his other communities. Fourthly, the Apostle's instruction on behaving becomingly towards outsiders and living quietly (4:12) implies that the Thessalonians were struggling in social relationships with non-believers. Overall, it is highly likely that the Thessalonians' affliction came from social conflict and ostracism.

Second, Paul's repeated reference to social conflict suggests that the Thessalonians suffered from more aggressive conflict than other Pauline Christians, particularly the Corinthians. The most frequently reiterated terms in the first half of 1 Thessalonians are associated with their sufferings: θλῖψις, πάσχω, ἀγών, ἐκδιώκω, θλίβω, and ἀνάγκη (these appear nine times). Two of these, θλῖψις in 1:6 and ἀγών in 2:2, are coloured with "much" (πολλῇ and πολλῷ) to highlight the severity of conflict. Though this may be discounted as Paul's rhetorical hyperbole and repetition, comparing 1 Thessalonians to other Pauline letters seems to reveal that his rhetoric here reflects a serious reality. The Apostle neither repeats nor underlines Christians' social affliction in other Pauline letters, unlike in 1 Thessalonians. Rather, 1 Corinthians contains clues to the Corinthians' social harmony with non-believers (1 Cor 8:10; 10:27; 14:24-25; §5.3).[26] In Phil 1:29, the Philippians' suffering is justified and exalted as things "given graciously (ἐχαρίσθη)" and "for Christ (τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ)", with no further elaboration. This comparison verifies that the social conflict between believers and

[24] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 514; idem, "Social Contrasts," 53; Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 208-217; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 155; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 81-82; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 100-101.

[25] BDAG, 457. The exceptions are 2 Cor 2:4 and Phil 1:17.

[26] Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 57-60.

non-believers in Thessalonica would have been not only tangible but also concrete (1 Thess 2:14-16), persistent (3:1-5), and considerable (1:6), far more than that in other regions.

Third, conversion is associated with the social conflict (1:6). Paul clearly states that converts in Thessalonica accepted his message of God in severe social affliction (1:6). The affliction seemed to continue to have a pernicious influence on their new faith and life even after their conversion (3:1-5). It is reasonable to guess that the ostracism derived directly from their conversion (1:6) - which Paul describes as turning from idols to serve a living and true God (1:9) - and its negative impacts continued (3:1-5). This is why many commentators agree that the converts' offensive or inevitable abandonment of traditional gods is one of the main causes for the social conflict.

Many scholars accept this threefold landscape of conflict in Thessalonica, while suggesting some more specific reconstructions based on this general consensus. For example, Karl P. Donfried insists that the conflict is grave enough to cause physical abuse and thereby someone's death (4:13-18).[27] Barclay bases the causes for the Thessalonians' social conflict both on their refusal to revere traditional gods and on their apocalyptic dualism. He further claims that aggressive evangelism, including ridiculing idols and foretelling their destruction, was a trigger of the social dislocation.[28] Some other scholars have associated the social conflict with political issues, such as revolting against the Roman government and the emperor.[29] These varied studies of conflict in Thessalonica are not mutually exclusive, as conflicts in antiquity could embody religious, political, social and economic features simultaneously.

Rather than restating or refuting the previous studies here, I will suggest four relatively fresh ideas based on the three basic features of conflict described above. (1) The clash was severe but erupted like brushfire in small groups on a few market streets rather than arising in the whole city (§3.2.2). (2) Several small groups regarded the Thessalonians as betrayers, peace-disturbers, or group-breakers (§3.2.3). (3) The conflict made the believers' social and economic insecurity worse. Their low socio-economic status meant that they were vulnerable to harassment from others and to economic fluctuation (§3.2.4.1). This social and economic susceptibility deteriorated due to conflict with non-believers. It entailed the damaging of their economic activities and profits (§3.2.4.2). (4) On the other hand, the

27 Donfried, "Cults of Thessalonica," 336-356.
28 Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 513-520; idem, "Social Contrasts," 50-56.
29 See note 6.

conflict strengthened their social identity as Christians and the ingroup cohesion among them (§3.2.5). In other words, this study is an attempt to further underline the social and economic overtones of conflict in Thessalonica more than religious and political ones.

3.2.2. Sporadic and Neighbourhood Conflict

The Thessalonians experienced intense hostility from non-believers. It can be further specified that the conflict was witnessed in small social groups - voluntary associations, working groups, neighbours, and households - on certain market streets rather than in the whole city.[30]

There are four points of evidence for this brushfire conflict. First, the Thessalonian congregation was a numerical and socio-economic minority group (Chapter 2). It appears that its size and social influence was too minor to draw the whole city's attention, in particular from government officials, politicians, and social elites.[31] Most of the population, with the exception of the Thessalonian believers' friends, fellow workers, employers, neighbours, and households, may have been indifferent to the fledgling community revering an exotic god, even though its members refused traditional gods.[32] This is more probable on the basis of the fact that many immigrants brought their cultic gods to Thessalonica.[33] Many residents would have initially viewed the Thessalonian church as being one of them and acted nonchalantly. Second, the Christian community was still fledgling in around 49 CE. Paul sent 1 Thessalonians to them approximately 8 months later after his first arrival in Thessalonica.[34] It is likely that this period was too short to have drawn the attention of all residents. Many locals would not have heard scandalous tales of the Thessalonian converts.

30 Cf. Jakob Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto: Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire c. 50-250 AD* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2007); K. E. Hammer and M. Murray, "Acquaintances, Supporters, and Competitors: Evidence of Inter-Connectedness and Rivalry among the Religious Groups in Sardis," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna*, ed. Richard S. Ascough (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 175-194; J. N. Lightstone, "Urbanization in the Roman East and the Inter-Religious Struggle for Success," in Ascough, *Religious Rivalries*, 211-241.

31 Cf. Robert Jewett, "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church: The Implications of a Form-Critical Analysis of 2 Thessalonians 3:10," *BR* 38 (1993), 23-42; Philip F. Esler, "Keeping It in the Family," in *Families and Family Relations*, ed. J. W. Van Henten and A. Brenner (Leiden: Deo, 2000), 165.

32 Similarly, the Bacchic cult was not aggressively repressed by the senate until it became widespread (cf. Livy, 39.8).

33 Cf. Míguez, *Practice of Hope*, 49; Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 14-20; Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 24-28.

34 Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 2.

Third, the Thessalonians were manual workers whose monotonous lives were spent mostly in shops/workshops, social clubs, and houses (§2.4.4). Some Roman craftsmen spent all day working, eating, chatting, learning, resting, worshipping gods, and even sleeping in one place, their shop/workshop.[35] That Paul worked night and day in Thessalonica (2:9) may not be an exaggeration. Moreover, a majority of manual workers were tightly surrounded by other fellow workers and shops on market streets. Because of this, Keir E. Hammer and Michele Murray's study of an ancient multi-complex in Sardis suggests that, if workers experienced conflict, this would have taken place on certain market streets.[36] More specifically, one of the most frequently quoted gnomai says "potter is angry with potter, carpenter with carpenter" (Hesiod, *Op*. 25).[37] Given these facts, while many populations were unconcerned with the Christian manual and casual labourers and their religious lives, their acquaintances, friends, and households would have easily perceived and immediately reacted to their conversion.

Fourth and most importantly, Paul depicts the Thessalonians' affliction as coming from people close to them (τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν,1 Thess 2:14). The συμφυλέτης, a hapax legomenon in the New Testament, connotes either the Gentile Thessalonians as an ethnicity or the inhabitants of Thessalonica in a geographical sense.[38] I lean towards the former meaning, since Paul seems to contrast τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν with τῶν Ἰουδαίων (2:14). What is more significant here is that, as Meeks points out, the phrase implies strong social bonds, like kinship.[39] The noun συμφυλέτης is a compound word of συμ (the same) and φυλή (a tribe or a subgroup of the human race). The φυλή means a group united by ties of blood or local habitation.[40] Paul underlines and further specifies the meaning by prefixing συμ and adding ἰδίων possibly to indicate smaller groups than tribes. Thus, as Meeks claims,

35 Adams, *Meeting Places*, 140-145; Oakes, *Reading Romans*, 3, 15-33; Pirson, "Shops," 469; Hock, *Tentmaking*, 38; S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (London: Methuen, 1977),119-122.

36 Hammer and Murray, "Inter-connectedness and Rivalry," 175-194; Lightstone, "Inter-Religious Struggle," 212; contra J. S. Crawford, "Multiculturalism at Sardis: Jews and Christians Live, Work and Worship Side by Side," *BAR* 22.5 (1996), 38-47.

37 Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98.

38 Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 218-224; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 167-168; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 168.

39 Wayne A. Meeks, "Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 689; LSJ, 1688.

40 BDAG, 1069; LSJ, 1961.

the expression τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν (2:14) can refer to a close friendship and kinship previously shared between the Thessalonians and their opponents.[41] If so, it is reasonable to guess that the conflict in Thessalonica happened between households, friends, or fellow workers who formerly shared strong ties (see §3.2.3).

In sum, the Thessalonians underwent social harassment and dislocation conceivably from their family members, acquaintances in social groups, or fellow and neighbouring craftsmen on certain market streets. It may not be from unspecified masses or government officials. This implies two important things. Firstly, some scholars' emphasis on political overtones of the social conflicts in Thessalonica (§3.1) seems to be overstated.[42] As least when Paul sent his letter to the Thessalonians, it is unlikely that the small and fledgling community constituted of manual and casual labourers attracted politicians' and social elites' concern even if they intended to do so. While many citizens would have been indifferent to this minor group, the conflicts appeared to occur mainly between people on market streets. At this stage, not only was the Thessalonian congregation hardly a serious threat to the Roman empire, but also it is unlikely that outsiders deemed it so. The possibility, however, cannot be ruled out that the Thessalonian community came to be viewed as an illegal voluntary association and a political group long after Paul sent the letter; or some of the Thessalonians' previous acquaintances accused them of not participating in public religion and worshipping the Roman emperor at a personal or small group level. Secondly, as I will articulate below, the Thessalonians' conversion would have damaged their previous small groups economically and socially, and thereby triggered their former acquaintances' irritation and ostracism (§3.2.3). It further means that this neighbourhood conflict had a destructive impact directly on the believers' everyday lives, especially their economic conditions (§3.2.4).

3.2.3. Breaking Previous Relationships and Peace in Small Groups

Many possible causes for ostracism by non-believers have been suggested (§3.2.1). Not neglecting these ideas, I will suggest that, after conversion, the Thessalonians broke their former friendships, peace, and friendly cooperation in small groups. If it is tenable that the believers devastated their former relationships in workplaces, social groups, and households due to their conversions, it is highly likely that this triggered conflict with non-believers in

41 Meeks, "Social Functions," 689.
42 Cf. Oakes, "Re-Mapping the Universe," 301-322.

the small groups.[43] Before arguing this, two preliminary points will be made: (1) manual labourers built good relationships and cooperation in small formal or informal groups; (2) many of the Thessalonian converts had joined such groups and had already known each other even before conversion.

First, there are good reasons to believe that a majority of craftsmen, including the Thessalonians, built camaraderie in shops/workshops, minor or informal social clubs, or voluntary associations, not to mention in households (see §2.4.4). This complex social web was not only a stimulus for artisans' reciprocal support, but also one of the latent causes for conflict.[44]

Second, in light of this, it is highly likely that many of the Thessalonian converts already knew each other in their work and social groups before conversion for three reasons: Paul's mission in a workplace (1 Thess 2:9), the Thessalonians' welcoming Paul (1:9), and their uncommon brotherly love (4:9-10a). Firstly, it appears that Paul converted the Thessalonians mostly in a few workshops and social groups. As described above (§2.3), Paul spent night and day in a certain *taberna*, *insula*, or *therma* working and preaching concurrently (2:9). This would have resulted in Christian manual workers whose shops/workshops were probably not far from Paul's life circle. In other words, it can be assumed that many of them were already acquaintances in shops/workshops or associations on particular market streets where Paul moved about.

Secondly, the Thessalonians had welcomed Paul, probably before they were converted. Paul states "what kind of acceptance (εἴσοδος) we received and how you turned to God from idols …" (1:9). The noun εἴσοδος literally means entrance or visit (cf. 2:1), but here it can also denote welcome or acceptance in a passive sense.[45] So then, can this welcome be considered as a collective welcome by work groups or associations before Paul converted them? It might be, since καί, which connects 1:9a with 1:9b, can refer to a sequence or concurrency of events: we received welcome from you (1:9a) and (then or at the same time) you turned to God from idols (1:9b). If so, it can be surmised that the members of

[43] According to Garnsey and Saller, "to leave friends out of a will, or worse, to criticize them in a will, was an insult that drew public attention" (*Roman Empire*, 155).

[44] Cam Grey, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25-57.

[45] BDAG, 294-295; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 118.

social or work groups accepted Paul and his party and allowed them to work and eat together, though this possibility is not conclusive.[46]

Thirdly, Paul's description of unusual solidarity in the Thessalonian congregation needs to be explored (1:3; 3:6; 3:12; 4:9-10a), since it was just a fledgling community. As I will articulate in the following section (§3.3.1), it is clear that the Thessalonians enjoyed internal harmony. Charles A. Wanamaker insists that they "formerly were not even acquaintances" and "had no basis for a mutual relation prior to their conversion to Christ", but "God has led them or taught them to do so [love each other]".[47] It is hard to imagine, however, that, within only about 8 months after Paul founded the community, its members accepted the gospel, adjusted themselves to a new way of life and belief, and then built strong relationships among themselves. As Malherbe and many sociologists point out, religious conversion involves internal confusion and a transition period towards a new religious life.[48] Besides, the Thessalonian converts turned from idols (1:9). These Gentile believers would have gone through a longer transition period than Jews or God fearers did. Thus, it is more likely that the Gentile converts' former relationships in small groups were transformed and consolidated by Christian *agape*, while non-converts in the groups were left behind (see §§3.3.1-2).

Considering the above two points, it can be assumed that the non-converts who remained in those small groups deemed the Thessalonians as betrayers, peace and rule breakers, and group disturbers in many senses. As many scholars agree, conversion to Jesus often meant switching from one traditional religious world view into a completely new one. Such a conversion could also reshape the converts' political, social, and economic terrains. This indicates that conversion led not only to the abandonment of former religions but also to the disassociation of oneself from previous political, social, and economic networks (cf. Acts 14:15). Such a multifaceted conversion could be a latent cause for conflict on market streets. In other words, non-converts and their small groups in Thessalonica would have been insulted and damaged religiously, emotionally, socially, and economically by the Christian

46 Cf. Ascough, "Meals," 51; idem, *Encountering the Christ*.

47 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 160.

48 Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 34-60; Charles A. Wanamaker, "Like a Father Treats His Own Children: Paul and the Conversion of the Thessalonians," *JTSA* 92 (1995), 46-55; Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1967), 176-182.

workers' conversion and disassociation from their former fellowship (τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν, 1 Thess 2:14; cf. 1 Peter 4:1-3). If so, the non-converts likely reacted to it aggressively.

The social conflict in Thessalonica is unmistakably a religious issue. The Thessalonians' conversion is depicted as "turning" from idols (ἐπεστρέψατε, 1 Thess 1:9; §2.3). The term connotes abandoning what they had previously revered (1 Thess 1:9; Tob 14:6). Besides, the neophytes absorbed Paul's teaching of apocalyptic dualism, eagerly awaiting the day of the Lord (4:13-5:11, esp. 5:2). This eschatology divides people into two groups, children either of light or of night (5:5-8) and subjects either of God's wrath or of God's salvation (2:16). As many commentators agree, such a religious exclusivism, like their aggressive rejection of traditional gods and advocation of apocalyptic dualism, is itself sufficient to offend non-convert friends and to cause religious debate and conflict in small groups.[49]

Furthermore, conversion entails a social overtone. John Scheid and Clifford Ando rightly state that "to disengage from religious obligations therefore signified a repudiation of social belonging, and such a decision is never easy" in the Greco-Roman milieu.[50] In small groups, deviation from shared gods and common religious outlooks per se could confuse the groups and their members' social identity and cohesion. Even for Paul, one of the most serious concerns was to prevent the Pauline believers from turning to a different gospel (cf. Gal 1:6-10). It is highly likely that, in this matter, he had in mind not only its theological weight but also its tangible dangers, like dismantling the Pauline communities. It is plausible that this also happened in small groups in which the Thessalonians were formerly involved and enjoyed camaraderie.

Labourers in voluntary associations, workgroups, and families revered certain traditional gods together and shared many other things, like social identity, group rules, and lifestyle, while trying to secure them. Although many voluntary associations did not maintain monotheism or exclusivism in a general sense, the groups revolved around the gravity of

[49] I will not further articulate this religious issue here, since some scholars have sufficiently examined it. See Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 512-530; Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*,155-160.

[50] John Scheid and Clifford Ando, *The Gods, the State, and the Individual Reflections on Civic Religion in Rome* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 213; cf. Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), 95, 98. Barclay also claims that "to disassociate oneself from the worship of family and community deities would entail a serious disruption in one's relationships with family, friends, fellow club members, business associates and civic authorities" (*Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988], 58).

certain gods or goddesses whom group members shared and revered. For example, one association in Thessalonica shared a particular view of the afterlife in venerating Dionysos' mother.[51] Some associations, possibly consisting of members in similar maritime commerce, worshipped respectively Poseidon (Nigdelis, no. 36), Auloneites (Nigdelis no. 27), and Aeneias (Nigdelis no. 30). Professionals in the same trade tended to worship gods relevant to their occupation because, if not, they might be collectively punished by the gods with disasters like storm, drought, deluge, and famine (cf. *MAMA* IV 281).[52] They also hoped for safety on the ocean and prosperity in business.[53] In addition, many voluntary associations tried to protect ingroup integrity and peace by enacting by-laws (*P.Mich.* 5.243; *Dig*. 47.22.4; *IG* II$_2$ 1369.40-42; *IG* II$_2$ 1368.72-80).[54] When the internal rules were violated in certain groups, penalties were meted out to rule-breakers.[55] Some voluntary associations required members to pay a monthly fee to sustain their groups, to strengthen a sense of belonging, and to provide for social welfare, such as funerals (*CIL* XIV 2112).[56] A few associations were extended from households or consisted of several families (*P.Mich.* 5.244; *BGU* VII 1615).[57] All these indicate that many associations in Thessalonica had their own unique social and religious identity with particular rules depending on their benefactors, gods, membership, and trades.[58] It also implies that, while enjoying ingroup cohesion, group members had a particular commitment to their small groups, gods, and belief systems, along with public religion (*sacra publica*).

Furthermore, some archaeological and historical evidence unmasks conflict and rivalries between small groups, especially voluntary associations, in everyday life (cf. §3.3.4).[59] Even though the overall ethos on market streets was of coexistence and

51 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 15; vom Brocke, *Thessaloniki-Stadt*, 127.

52 Cf. Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 515; Fox, *Pagans*, 425-426. Tertullian defended the Christians who were denounced as causing flooding, hunger, and plagues (*Apol.* 40.1-2).

53 Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations," 18.

54 Venticinque, "Family Affairs," 273-294.

55 Venticinque, "Family Affairs," 286.

56 J. S. Perry, "Organized Societies: Collegia," in Peachin, *Social Relations*, 506-507.

57 Venticinque, "Family Affairs," 279.

58 Scheid and Ando, *The Gods*, 214.

59 For the intergroup or religious competition and rivalries, see Richard S. Ascough, ed., *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005); L. E. Vaage, *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press), 2006; Grey, *Constructing Communities*; Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians* (London: T&T Clark, 2009); Adam M. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011); Roger S. Bagnall, "Official

cooperation between small work and social groups, competition and conflict were not rare. Some classical scholars, including Jörg Rüpke and John A. North, adopt the metaphor of "a market place of religions" to draw a picture of religious competition for adherents in the Roman world.[60] According to North, "there was no fixed belief that a state or an individual ought to tolerate different forms of religion; that is the idea of far later periods of history".[61] North goes on to argue that the ancients only tolerated outgroups innocuous to them, but basically demarcated them from disparate, notorious, and detrimental groups.[62] Archaeological evidence further suggests that small groups raced to gain benefactors, financial support, honours, and adherents. Philip A. Harland argues, by examining evidence from Sardis and Smyrna from around the first and second centuries, that groups boasted of their patron deities and membership:[63] "we are the best of all Bacchic associations" (*IG* II.2 1368)"; "this god alone [is] a full partner in their sacrifices" (*Or*. 45.27-28); "I observed zeal and faith towards the *thiasos*" (*IManisaMu*s 354; cf. *P.Lond.* VII 2193).[64] One more attractive piece of archaeological evidence for competition comes from an ancient multi-complex in Sardis. The complex was surrounded by shops owned by people who believed in

and Private Violence in Roman Egypt," *BASP* 26 (1989), 201-216; Hammer and Murray, "Inter-Connectedness and Rivalry," 175-194. These scholars argue that there were several social phenomena and historical records which can be explained only by positing rivalries, competitions, and conflicts. But it is necessary to admit that attesting conflict and competition between religious groups in archaeological evidence is by its nature difficult. For example, ancient people desired to leave inscriptions to honour their friends, families, and benefactors rather than denouncing them and recording conflicts.

60 See J. Rüpke, "Antike Großstadtreligion," in *Zwischen Krise und Alltag: Antike Religionen im Mittelmeerraum*, ed. C. Batsch, U. Egelhaaf-Gaiser, and R. Stepper (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), 13-30; John A. North, *Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 191-208; cf. R. Beck, "The Religious Market of the Roman Empire: Rodney Stark and Christianity's Pagan Competition," in Vaage, *Religious Rivalries*, 233-252.

However, it is still controversial whether this metaphor is applicable to the Roman religions. Some scholars, like A. Bendlin, employ the market metaphor not to refer to competition but to depict "a standard polytheistic context" ("Looking Beyond the Civic Compromise: Religious Pluralism in Late Republican Rome," in *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome and Italy*, ed. E. Bispham and C. Smith [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000], 134).

61 North, *Roman Religion*, 63, 6; idem, "The Development of Religious Pluralism," in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John A. North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 178-179.

62 North, *Roman Religion*, 63.

63 Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 145-160; idem, "Spheres of Contention, Claims of Pre-eminence Rivalries among Associations in Sardis and Smyrna," in Ascough, *Religious Rivalries*, 53-63.

64 These examples are quoted by Harland (see note 63). We should be aware that rhetorical exaggerations in inscriptions were common and thereby the expressions should not be taken literally.

a variety of religions, including pagan cults, Christianity, and Judaism. The shop owners and workers occasionally displayed aggressively religious symbols and defaced other religious icons. Hammer and Murray point out that this could indicate a competitive ethos on market streets.[65]

Families are not different from social and work groups in that they served particular gods and valued internal harmony.[66] Particular gods were consecrated by each household. Many inherited a familial tradition to serve certain gods from their ancestors. Domestic worship was led by the father or his son and was assisted by the mother in private shrines (*Lararia*). This means that religious authority and rites were in the charge of the head of a household. Moreover, for serious philosophers, familial harmony was one of the fundamental ideals of families, which could be achieved by worshipping together the same gods (Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 19/140D; Musonius Rufus, 15).[67] All family members, even new members from marriage, had obligations not to deviate from a similar way of life and the same cultic gods and rites in their houses (Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 2:25.1-7; Cicero, *Off.* 1.55).[68] This was called *pietas*.[69] In this regard, for a family member to deny the domestic gods was equivalent to challenging familial integrity and tradition, as well as the authority of the patriarch. This is supported by some historical clues. In domestic contexts, some women were depicted as impious and thereby causative for familial tension (Apuleius, *Metam.* 9; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 2).[70] A Christian woman was subjected to criticism, as her conversion led to tension in the family and a divorce (Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 2; cf. 1 Cor 7:10-16; 1 Peter 3:1-6).

If these descriptions of group identity, intragroup solidarity and loyalty, and competition between or within small groups are tenable, even a few members' disassociation from their small groups could have been enough to make the other members feel betrayed and insulted.[71] It is highly likely that the Thessalonians aggressively abandoned their former faith, group loyalty, social identity, and friendships for a totally new belief system and way of

65 Hammer and Murray, "Inter-connectedness and Rivalry," 175-194, esp. 182.

66 Cf. Scheid and Ando, *The Gods*, 210-215; Sandnes, *New Family*, 21-31.

67 Sandnes, *New Family*, 29-30.

68 Sandnes, *New Family*, 30; Osgood, "The Family," 72.

69 Cf. Richard P. Saller, "Pietas, Obligation and Authority in the Roman Family," in *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. K. Christ, P. Kneissl, and V. Losemann (Darmastadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 393-410.

70 Sandnes, *New Family*, 26-27.

71 Cf. Venticinque, "Family Affairs," 285-288; Scheid and Ando, *The Gods*, 213; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 58.

life in a new group. They did so in spite of another option to have multiple memberships and religious identities (cf. *Dig.* 47.22.1.2).[72] Sticking to a new way of faith, life, and ethics (cf. 1 Thess 4:1-8; 4:13-5:11), the converts would have attempted or been forced to distance themselves from their former groups, friends, acquaintances, and family members. This might occur even while they were working or living with non-converts. If this description is tenable, conflict between converts and non-converts in small groups would be unsurprising. Moreover, given the competitive ethos between groups, groups which disreputably lost a few members and thereby were shaken would have been socially dishonoured. They might have further lost their benefactors and been mocked by others. This is more plausible, since the Thessalonian converts created an exclusive community and committed to membership only in the new group. If employers, landowners, and social elites as group members or benefactors were directly or indirectly involved in the event, they would have felt more dishonoured because of the converts' notorious conversion story and antisocial behaviour against the by-laws, integrity, and solidarity of small groups. For their group honour and cohesion, it is highly likely that the remaining members defended themselves, attributed the cause for the disreputable events to the converts, and ridiculed or harassed them, while denouncing them as traitors, peace breakers, and group disturbers. 1 Thess 2:14-16, especially expressions like ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων (driving us out), θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων (not pleasing to God), ἐναντίων (opposed), and κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς (preventing us), would have reminded the Thessalonians of the religious and social conflicts in small groups described above. Therefore, although the converts and non-converts had once been friends and family members in small groups (cf. 2:14), they became competitors and opponents in serious conflicts.

3.2.4. Socio-Economic Aspects of Conflict

The Thessalonians' conversion meant that they were demarcated as sub-groups or seceders from their former small groups religiously and socially as described above. Since the Thessalonians were manual and casual workers, this demarcation also indicates that their economic grids were rapidly reshaped.[73] In this section, I will explore this socio-economic aspect of conversion and conflict, noting that conflict was not equal for all in Roman

[72] For the multiple memberships, see Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 156-160; Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 87-88; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 85.

[73] Oakes, *Philippians*, 89-96.

society.[74] Marginalised labourers were more vulnerable to social harassment, and its economic impact on their lives was far more pernicious than on those of higher statuses. It is likely that the incidence and severity of conflict was affected by socio-economic factors. In this regard, I will argue that the Thessalonians, as socio-economic minorities, experienced severe ostracism from non-believers with painful effect on their everyday and economic activities.

3.2.4.1. Socio-Economic Vulnerability and Insecurity of Poor Freed Labourers

I have argued that the poor, free(d), and casual labourers in the Thessalonian congregation lived in socially and economically insecure positions (§§2.4.2-3). It can be more specified. First, ancient literature suggests that the destitute were subject to social reproach and physical abuse in public, while encountering economic predicaments. Many social elites, philosophers, and freeborn people were contemptuous of the poor, stereotyping them as lazy, servile, reprehensible, and nefarious (cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Ven*. 103-152).[75] The two archetypal images of the needy - that they were not virtuous (Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.4; Seneca, *Vit. beat.* 22.1) and only eager for "bread and circus" (Juvenal, *Sat*. 10.77-80) - are repeated in many Greek and Roman elite sources.[76] These elites' perceptions of the paupers, though rhetorical or political in nature, were hypostatised in how they were treated in real life. For instance, the poor were deemed as potential criminals and false witnesses in legal courts (*Dig.* 22.5.3; Babrius, *Fables* 118; cf. Luke 12:58-59) and were ridiculed as "doggies" (cf. Martial, *Epigr*. 4.53; Juvenal, *Sat*. 3.153-154).[77] The bias against the needy, that poverty comes from immorality, was probably shared even amongst some plebs, like in the graffito in Pompeii: "I hate poor people. If anyone wants something for nothing, he is a fool. He should pay for it." (*CIL* 4.9839b; cf. James 2:1-4).[78] Alongside the social shame and physical

[74] Cf. Toner, *Popular Culture*, 12-13.

[75] Cf. Osborne, "Roman Poverty," 12-13; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 138-141; Neville Morley, "The Poor in the City of Rome," in Atkins and Osborne, *Poverty*, 25-26. There were, of course, some exceptions. The Cynics, some Epicureans, a few social leaders, and ancient poets rather romanticised poverty as virtuous, criticising the wealthy and their corruption (Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 10.1-4; Martial, *Epigr*. 4.53; Osborne, "Roman Poverty," 14).

[76] Osborne, "Roman Poverty," 12-13; Morley, "The Poor," 25-26; C. R. Whittaker, "The Poor in the City of Rome," in *Land, City and Trade in the Roman Empire* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 2-7.

[77] Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 105; Morley, "The Poor," 34.

[78] Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 12; Morley, "The Poor," 35; Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 91-92. The formula "poverty is equivalent to indolence" was prevalent in Greco-Roman society.

threats, the poor faced substantial economic insecurity like the fluctuations of staple food prices and un(der)employment. Their daily concern was just to keep their heads above water.[79] But they had very little social cushion for financial risks.[80] Worse, some plebs were ensnared in a fierce competition for survival, essentially a zero-sum game;[81] even beggars competed in ways of utilizing different methods of begging and occupying an important location like town gates (cf. Luke 16:20; Acts 3:2; Martial, *Epigr.* 10.5.5; John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 34.4-5).[82] As a result, for the poor, starvation and social abuse were routine.[83]

Second, Roman freedmen remained socially and legally stigmatised (§2.4.5).[84] All of them shared "the stigma of a servile past".[85] Not only was this stigma engraved in body and mind, but this also jeopardised the freedmen. Freedmen commonly endured light beatings, mockery, ridicule, and legal inequality (cf. *Dig*. 47.10.7.2).[86] Their low social status meant limited legal protection. They were more likely to be convicted than high-status defendants and were sentenced to stricter and heavier penalties on the same charges (*Cod. theod.* 9.18.1).[87] Moreover, freedmen's former masters enjoyed a legal right to exploit their compliance (*obsequium* or *officium*), while some freedmen's economic activities and profits were restricted by this right. They were also socially and sometimes physically abused by disgruntled former masters (*Dig*. 37.14.19; *P.Oxy*. 4.706; *CIL* 6.11027).[88]

Third, manual, especially casual, labourers were constantly confronted with issues like occupational accidents and unemployment. The low status craftsmen were more often exposed to dangers like injuries, infections, and fighting in workplaces because of the arduous and hazardous nature of their labour and their unsafe and unhygienic workplaces. Some workers, in particular those working in construction sites, needed to deal with noxious, weighty, or pointed materials.[89] Additionally, casual labourers' incomes, working hours, tasks, and employment were mostly controlled by landowners, shop-runners, or chief

79 Toner, *Popular Culture*, 16.

80 Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 43; Holleran, "Urban Economy," 166; Finley, *Ancient Economy*, 40; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 89; cf. Osborne, "Roman Poverty," 4-15.

81 Knapp points out that ancient fables are full of conflict and competition for survival (*Invisible Romans*, 94-98; Toner, *Popular Culture*, 2).

82 Cf. Toner, *Popular Culture*, 16.

83 Morley, "The Poor," 33-35; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 93-95.

84 Artemidorus wrote that some freedmen themselves still acted like slaves (*Onir.* 2.31).

85 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32.

86 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 32, 34; Garnsey, *Legal Privilege*, 277; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 154.

87 For the legal discrimination in Roman courts, see Garnsey, *Legal Privilege*, esp. 100.

88 Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 146-147, 152-154; Joshel, *Legal Status*, 33.

89 MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 70-71.

craftsmen. This meant that their social relationships with the employers directly determined their social and economic security.

All these - paupers, freedmen, and occasional craftsmen - were embroiled in constant social and economic insecurities. Given this, it can be easily guessed that, since many of the Thessalonian believers were poor free(d) casual workers, they were in vulnerable and fragile positions, e.g. enduring disdain and tolerating economic predicaments. While the Thessalonians' conversion was the main trigger of conflict (§§3.2.1-3), their low social and economic status would have served to aggravate the conflict and its detrimental impact on their lives.

3.2.4.2. Economic Consequences of Conflict

Social relationships were inextricably intertwined with economic reality in antiquity. Patronage and cooperation were consequent upon socio-economic relations created by mutual needs like honour, protection, and money.[90] On the other hand, competition and conflict played a negative role in dismantling patronage, friendship, and familial bonds, as well as in destroying previously established economic symbiosis and favouritism.

In light of this, it can be argued that the Thessalonians' conversion and its consequential conflict with non-believers in small groups led to the reshaping of their social and economic relationships with landowners, chief and fellow craftsmen, patrons, and customers in a negative way. The Christian labourers in Thessalonica, as described above, had already been exposed to difficulties like conflicts, social or physical abuse, and economic insecurity (§3.2.4.1). Considering the socio-economic ethos, even a small change to their social web would have resulted in irrecoverable damages.[91] Consequently, the Thessalonians' conflict with non-believers would have strained and spoiled their economic activities and profits, not to mention their social lives, while the risks, instability, and insecurities facing them increased.

Peter Oakes suggests that "to suffer for Christ" (τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν, Phil 1:29) embodies economic and social disruption as the consequence of conversion. He argues that "the most serious long-term component of suffering would be economic".[92] He goes on to

90 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 173.

91 Cf. Toner, *Popular Culture*, 13, 15; Halvor Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 28-34.

92 Oakes, *Philippians*, 96.

underline the economic sufferings in the first-generation Christians' "mixed relationships" with non-converts in families, workplaces, and social clubs. The mixed relationships, as a latent cause for conflicts, led to their suffering including death, physical abuse, and economic harassment.[93] Oakes points out that this scenario can be validated by early Christian texts to show that believers suffered from economic predicaments after conversion.[94] If his suggestion is tenable, his description of the Philippians' economic suffering is even more suitable for the Thessalonians than for any other Pauline Christians. Paul portrays the Thessalonians' conflict with outsiders as graver than that of other Pauline Christians (§3.2.1).[95] Besides, since many of the Thessalonians were occasional labourers, they were more susceptible to financial difficulties from the conflict. Considering these facts, it is plausible that conflicts with non-believers had caused detrimental economic consequences for the converts in Thessalonica, possibly more than in any other cities.

The evidence of Paul's letters suggests that conversion and conflict led to the Thessalonians' financial affliction (1 Thess 4:11-12). If it is tenable that the expression κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία in 2 Cor 8:2 reflects the Thessalonians' actual economic status (§2.3), then the question of whether their status was originally low regardless of conflict or if it was worsened as a result of the conflict should be answered. Paul's instruction on working, public life, and self-sufficiency (4:11-12) can help shed light on this issue (see, in detail, §3.4). He summarises his concerns over the Thessalonians, in particular their relationship with outsiders (4:12a), public and working lives (4:11), and financial suffering (4:12b), into one sentence. The sentence along with 1 Thess 4:9-10 is designed as a rhetorical pericope to integrate different sub-themes under one main theme. Though what main theme Paul has in mind and how the sub-themes are connected in the main theme is still controversial, it is clear that the diverse sub-themes are to a reasonable degree interlocked in Paul's rhetorical purpose. The impression is that Paul intends to make a connection in his instructions on the tension between believers and non-believers (4:12a), working with one's hands (4:11c), living quietly (4:11a, b), and an economic survival mechanism (4:12b). More specifically, the rhetorical pericope appears to reveal the Thessalonians' worsening conflict with outsiders (4:12a) and its consequent economic side-effects on the Christians (4:12b). Because of this, Paul was worried about the deterioration of social and economic conflicts (3:1-5) and needed

93 Oakes, *Philippians*, 93-96.
94 Oakes, *Philippians*, 96-99.
95 Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 513.

to instruct on their public and economic lives (4:11). In other words, a possible historical sequence might be: (1) conversion and its consequent conflict (1:6, 9; 2:14-16; §§3.2.1-3) made the Thessalonian Christians' social and financial difficulties worse (4:12; cf. §3.2.4); (2) the conflict and its consequential socio-economic complications led Paul to worry about their struggles (2:9; 4:12) and, more importantly, about their faith and love being shaken by the predicaments (3:1-10); (3) as a result, he encouraged them to live peaceably and to work with their hands in order to behave becomingly towards outsiders and to be financially independent against such predicaments (4:11-12). Though evidence for this suggestion is implicit, fragmentary, and scattered, this suggestion can be underpinned by historical, economic and sociological research. The research can help to clarify, historically rearrange, and logically integrate these faint biblical snapshots into a cohesive picture (see §3.4).

The first-generation Christians, as Oakes points out, were unavoidably in "mixed-relationships".[96] In the first century Greco-Roman world, there were many mixed-relations in small groups: a Christian and non-Christian couple, parent-child, and owner-slave relationships in households (1 Cor 7:12-16; Eph 6:5-9; Philemon 11; 16), mixed-members in voluntary associations and workgroups (Acts 18:3), Christian and non-Christian sellers-customers, landowner-tenant or patron-client relationships in shops and society (1 Thess 4:12a; Acts 24:24-26).[97] It is almost certain that the Thessalonians also had mixed-relationships in households, associations, and shops/workshops.

First, the possibility cannot be ruled out that some of the Thessalonians were members of voluntary associations in which they may have enjoyed economic privilege. If so, their conversion would definitely have dismantled existing camaraderie in associations (§3.2.3). The Thessalonians' exclusivity and apocalyptic dualism (2:16; 3:12; 4:4-5; 4:11-12; 5:5-6) would have complicated the relationships in the group even more.[98] It might have further uprooted the believers from the voluntary associations. The broken or estranged relations in the voluntary associations would have unavoidably affected the Thessalonians' economic activities. The associations served to facilitate economic cooperation among members (§2.4.4). In this regard, losing membership in such associations was equivalent to being deprived of some economic privileges. If it is plausible to maintain that the Thessalonians were viewed as peace breakers in voluntary associations after their conversion

96 Oakes, *Philippians*, 93-96.
97 Oakes, *Philippians*, 93.
98 Meeks, "Social Functions," 691; Fox, *Pagans*, 425.

(§3.2.3), it is highly likely that they lost economic protection, support, and job opportunities that they had enjoyed in the clubs.

Second, the Thessalonians belonged to households which were often considered as one basic social and economic unit.[99] If one family member converted to another religion, it was regarded as a challenge to the patriarchs, familial traditions, integrity, and *pietas* (§3.2.3). As long as the converts were the heads of household (*paterfamilias*), it was not that problematic. It seems that the other family members were also converted by following their patriarch, being under *patria potestas* (cf. Acts 16:31-34). However, if converts were wives, sons, daughters, and slaves, familial conflict was inescapable (Apuleius, *Metam.* 9; Justin Martyr, *2 Apol*. 2; 1 Cor 7:10-16; 1 Peter 3:1-6).[100] Breaking familial harmony is associated with economic issues, in particular for needy families. A household was an economic unit (*oeconomia*, "household management") in which each of its members played a critical role in familial self-sufficiency (see §3.3.3). Women and even young boys and girls contributed to the familial financial budget. The poorer a family, the more significant each member's economic contribution and dependence. Because of the mutual economic dependence, any familial conflict could endanger the finances of the entire household. If the Thessalonians were converted without their family members, it can be assumed that familial conflict and its resulting financial difficulties were inevitable.

Third, it appears that the Thessalonians' economic sufferings came mainly from dismantled relationships with land/shop owners, customers, patrons, fellow or neighbouring workers, and employers.[101] If the Christian labourers experienced ostracism on market streets, the ostracism must first have come from their fellow, chief, or neighbouring workers (cf. Hesiod, *Op*. 25). Cooperation and comradeship among labourers were common. They were engaged in others' tasks, borrowed tools and space, ordered and received raw materials together, ferried heavy stuffs, and exchanged products.[102] Some types of cooperation were more indispensable in workplaces, e.g. doing collaboration to complete goods in workshops, gathering together for public work as a civic duty, and making small working groups (*decuria*) in construction sites.[103] Without fellow workers' help and teamwork, some

99 Osgood, "The Family," 69.
100 Sandnes, *New Family*, 26-27.
101 Oakes, *Philippians*, 89-99.
102 Oakes, *Philippians*, 89-90; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 72; Burford, "Craftsmen," 378.
103 Alison Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 124, 101-107, 142-145; idem, "Craftsmen," 378.

labourers could have even lost their jobs. Such an economic symbiosis was naturally influenced by workers' intimacy and social status: the less close they were, the less willing they would be in helping each other; the lower their socio-economic status, the more necessary their symbiosis. In other words, for the poor craftsmen, losing friends in workplaces was equivalent to working inefficiently, decreasing productivity and profits, or even losing a job. As Saller points out, working in the Greco-Roman world was not "an impersonal relationship with a faceless corporation".[104] Against this backdrop, the Thessalonians' conflict with fellow and neighbouring workers meant that they could lose cooperation and their position in shops/workshops could become precarious. They would not have expected any help from non-converts, but would rather suffer from verbal or even physical abuse.

Conflict with land/shop owners or employers would have been more serious for the poor workers. The owners and employers enjoyed many privileges: naming market streets, deciding on the type and scope of businesses in a certain block, (re-)allocating shops on markets, paying salaries (ὀψώνιον) or wages (μισθός) sometimes according to their whims, and skimming off profits from shops/workshops at about 40 percent of production.[105] This privilege, conversely, meant vulnerability for tenants and employees. Their earnings and economic activities were contingent on landlords' and employers' decisions and whims. In this regard, good relationships with landlords and employers were integral for menial labourers' survival. If the Thessalonians experienced harassment from landlords and employers, this would have been a threat to their hand-to-mouth existence. They may have been expelled not only from their workplaces but also from market streets entirely. It is also likely that their rents, salaries, and wages were adversely affected because of their peace breaking and notoriety.

Another possible issue comes from the Christian labourers' relationships with customers and patrons. In antiquity, customers "knew exactly where to go to buy dyes, honey-salve, books, clothes, or jewellery", who the shop owners and labourers were, and what happened on market streets.[106] They did not want to buy goods from craftsmen

104 Richard Saller, "Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. D. L. Balch and C. Osiek (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 189.

105 Pirson, "Shops," 469-470; Burford, *Roman Society*, 137; Peter Temin, *The Roman Market Economy* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 154.

106 MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 69-70.

notorious for being trouble makers or peace breakers. Patrons, in particular, bought made-to-order products, drawn to the fame or honour of particular artisans. Without customers, craftsmen found themselves in a vulnerable position.[107] The Thessalonians' financial budget would have been affected by the broken relationships with customers and patrons.

As described above, a small change in relationships, turning from cooperation into conflict, could collapse Roman labourers' everyday lives, especially their economic activities. The Thessalonians' severe conflict in small groups cannot be an exemption. Their conflict with non-believers possibly damaged their financial budgets or cost them their jobs.[108] The economic consequences of the conflict would have been more damaging due to their low socio-economic level.

In light of this historical background, it is highly likely that the Thessalonians' affliction (θλῖψις, 1 Thess 1:6; 3:3, 7) included economic sufferings occasioned by conversion (1:9) and social conflicts (2:14-16; 3:4). If this was so serious, it is not difficult to imagine that Paul had in mind their conflict and economic predicament (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5) and intended to alleviate it by instructing on working, public, and economic lives (4:9-12). In this regard, there is room for an interpretation of the rhetorical pericope on φιλαδελφία (4:9-12) as Paul's response to the Thessalonians' conflict and its consequential financial problems; the response was, in turn, targeted at stabilising solidarity in church. I will explore this possibility in the following sections (§§3.3-4) in more depth.

3.2.5. Conflict, Social Identity, and Solidarity

The underlying causes for intergroup conflict and its impacts can be more expounded through an analysis of the interconnection between social identity, status, conflict, and solidarity. The four elements are deemed as entangled in social psychology (§1.2.4). For example, intergroup conflict is caused by identification with a group, while the conflict has both dark and bright sides. It can damage group members' social and economic lives (§§3.2.3-4), while strengthening their social identity and solidarity. When a group is jeopardised by outgroups, its members tend to congregate together and to identify themselves more with the group to overcome the external threat and insecurity.[109]

[107] Burford, *Roman Society*, 124.

[108] This may be the reason the Thessalonians were forced to stop working and encouraged to work by Paul (1 Thess 4:9-11).

[109] Meeks rightly points out "internal cohesion and the creation of boundaries against outsiders are complementary factors and can best be considered together" (*Urban Christians*, 85).

It is plausible that this also happened in the Thessalonian community. Paul was worried lest the Thessalonians be shaken by persecution (3:3-4) and so sent Timothy to find out about their faith (3:5). Timothy instead brought Paul the good news of their "faith and love" (τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην, 3:6) which can be translated into social psychological terms: social identity and group cohesion. The Apostle confirmed that the Thessalonians not only lived according to his teaching (4:1), but also practised brotherly love towards their church members and all Christians throughout Macedonia (4:9-10). He only encouraged them to do so more and more (4:1c; 4:11a; 3:12). Paul's concern about social conflict with non-believers turned into relief (νῦν ζῶμεν, 3:8) and thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία, 3:9) because of their firm faith and solidarity (3:6; 4:1, 9-10), although the conflict and its consequential economic predicament itself remained problematic (4:11-12). These verses, of course, do not straightforwardly indicate the connection between conflict (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:3-5) and unity or strong social identity (1:3; 4:1, 9-12) in Paul's rhetoric. But this can be supported by other biblical passages and historical and social psychological research which show that intergroup conflict crystallises intragroup relations and social identity.

Paul's letters reveal his awareness that suffering from persecution can be unfavourable (1 Thess 3:3) but also beneficial for believers in strengthening Christian faith or identity (2 Cor 4:7-11; Rom 5:3-11; Phil 1:29; cf. 1 Thess 3:4). His catalogue of sufferings in 2 Cor 4:7-11 includes being afflicted (θλιβόμενοι, 4:8a) and being persecuted (διωκόμενοι, 4:9), which are both echoed in his description of the Thessalonians' sufferings (1 Thess 3:4; 2:15). While identifying the sufferings with "carrying about the dying of Jesus in our body" (2 Cor 4:10a), Paul adds the conjunction ἵνα to reveal the purpose of these sufferings: "in order that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body" (4:10b). As many commentators agree, the Apostle considers the affliction from persecution as the manifestation of the death and life of Jesus and therefore as the fundamental and natural characteristic of authentic ministry and Christian faith.[110] In other words, for Paul, sufferings divulge and strengthen Christian identity. A similar sentiment is reiterated in 1 Thess 3:3, Phil 1:29, and Rom 5:3-11. Paul describes sufferings as the believers' destiny (εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα, 1 Thess 3:3) and privilege (χαρίζομαι, Phil 1:29); in the end, it produces hope (κατεργάζεται … ἐλπίδα, Rom

[110] G. H. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2015), 259-260; V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 283; R. F. Collins, *Second Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2013), 101.

5:3-11). Besides, for sufferers, such a positive description of sufferings per se can play a role in strengthening their Christian identity as Paul probably intends.

In other early Christian literature, discord with non-believers is also viewed as one of the most pivotal criteria of Christian identity and functions to imprint this identity on church members. *The Epistle to Diognetus*, written in the second century as an apology,[111] is one of the best examples. The author catalogues characteristics about early Christians: they are strangers (πάροικοι, 5:5), persecuted (διώκονται, 5:11, 17), misunderstood (ἀγνοοῦνται, 5:12), condemned (κατακρίνονται, 5:12), dishonoured (ἀτιμοῦνται, 5:14), slandered (βλασφημοῦνται, 5:14), reviled (λοιδοροῦνται, 5:15), insulted (ὑβρίζονται, 5:15), punished as evil (κολάζονται, 5:16), and attacked (πολεμοῦνται, 5:17). Conflict with non-believers is described as unavoidable and essential for the believers (6:10). More interestingly, the author recognises that such persecution and suffering solidify Christians' religious identity and unity: "the world hates Christians [6:5]. … As treated badly with regard to food and drink, the soul becomes deeper. As Christians are penalised [κολάζονται, cf. 5:16] every day, they flourish more and more [6:9]".[112]

Paul and early Christian authors tend to associate persecution from outgroups with Christian social identity and unity, though this is not to say that they exactly knew how believers' sufferings created solidarity in the church. Paul seemed to perceive the Thessalonians' group cohesion as an unexpected result of persecution (1 Thess 3:5, 8). It is likely that this was deemed as a result of his or God's teaching of love (4:9-10) or as a result of his strategy to overcome persecution (cf. 4:11-12). Even if he did not perceive that solidarity was occasioned directly by conflicts with non-believers, it does not mean that this did not happen historically.

The connections between status, conflict, identity, and solidarity in Thessalonica can be more fully explicated and validated by social psychological theories. Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory (SIT/SCT) show that group belongingness per se effectuates ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination which are viewed as latent causes for conflict, while actual competition and conflict reinforce the sense of belonging amongst members. While the sense of belonging creates social identity in a group and causes conflict with outgroups, the conflict in turn strengthens the social identity created. Diverse

111 C. N. Jefford, ed., *The Epistle to Diognetus (with the Fragment of Quadratus): Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 52, 28-29.

112 I modify Jefford's translation (*Epistle to Diognetus*, 147).

intergroup conflicts which threaten security and identity tend to lead ingroup members to more intensely identify themselves with their groups and to more willingly share their group's values, norms, and beliefs, unless the conflict is too intractable. This tendency also accelerates ingroup favouritism, cooperation, mutualism, and thus ingroup cohesion against insecurity. On the other hand, in a competitive ethos, group members tend to maximise differences from outgroups and to discriminate against them. This process of crystallising social identity can be a vicious or virtuous circle; conflict facilitates ingroup favouritism and solidarity in social categorisation, while the strengthened social identity in turn worsens the broken relationship with outgroups.

The Thessalonians' social history is consistent with the SIT/SCT in many senses. First, when they were converted and deeply involved in a Christian congregation, these started to create their strong social identity. This indicates that their identification with the congregation entailed antagonistic bias against outgroup members that could be a latent cause for intergroup bias and conflicts. The Thessalonians probably shared Paul's apocalyptic dualism dividing people into children of light and those of darkness (1 Thess 5:5-8). It seems that their apocalyptic dualism and strong social identity reinforced one another to cause intergroup differences and conflicts.

Second, their suffering from social conflict would have, in turn, helped them to identify themselves more strongly with their community in two ways. Firstly, as Paul mentions in his letters, suffering in persecution is one of the important characteristics and virtues that Christians should share in a group (2 Cor 4:7-11; Rom 5:3-11; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 3:3b). Sharing virtues or group norms not only increases similarities between members but also solidifies their social identity. Secondly, SIT/SCT explain that intergroup conflicts per se tend to lead group members to more strongly identify with their groups, while making their social identity simple and plain. It is highly likely that these two processes happened in the Thessalonian church simultaneously: the members came to possess a stronger social identity both by sharing group belief and norms like persecution (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5; 4:1) and apocalyptic dualism (5:5, 7) and by experiencing intergroup conflicts together.

The Thessalonians' strengthened collective identity (3:3b; 4:1) seems to be connected with their group cohesion (1:3; 3:6; 4:9-10), if SIT/SCT is applicable to them. Their unusual love (4:9-10; 1:3) was definitely formed by several factors. One of the factors would be their strong social identity strengthened by intergroup conflicts as explained above. SIT/SCT explain that the more strongly the group members identify themselves with the

group, the more stimulated the group cohesion and reciprocity. This is not to say that conflict is the only reason why the Thessalonians enjoyed solidarity. Their mutual love in a fledgling community was more than usual and perhaps more than social psychological (1:3; 3:12-13; 4:9-10; see §3.3).

The above historical connections between conflict (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5), social identity (4:1; 5:5, 7), and solidarity (1:3; 3:6; 4:9-10) are more plausible, since many of the Thessalonians were poor casual labourers. SIT/SCT maintain that a homogeneous group in belief and socio-economic status facilitates the process of social categorisation and depersonalisation that "I" and "Ingroup" overlap. While this strengthens social identity, it stimulates collective behaviours including aggressive attitudes towards outgroups. Besides, numerical and socio-economic minority group members tend to more easily perceive similarities in groups and cognitively identify themselves with their groups. They show the more evident tendency of intergroup bias and discrimination than to numerical or powerful majorities. While these factors increase the potential for intergroup conflicts, the conflict with outgroups often results in a stronger identification with a group and ingroup solidarity. In other words, the logical causality between conflict, identity, and group unity arises more evidently and naturally in both minority and homogeneous groups. If this is true, the Thessalonians' homogeneity in low socio-economic status would have positively influenced their unusual group cohesion and strong social identity, while causing serious intergroup conflicts.

If the above description of the Thessalonians through the lens of SIT/SCT is tenable, a social history with regard to conflict in Thessalonica can be summarised as follows. (1) The Thessalonians experienced conflict with non-believers due to their conversion, low socio-economic level, and strong social identity (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5). (2) While their religious, social and economic networks were reshaped after conversion, the conflict jeopardised their socio-economic activities. (3) On the other hand, the social conflict led the Thessalonians to more strongly identify themselves with their church (3:3b; 4:1; 5:5, 7) and made them build a stronger cohesion in the group (1:3; 3:6; 4:9-10). (4) It is also highly likely that their strengthened social identity and solidarity, in turn, reinforced outgroup discrimination (5:5-9) and ingroup favouritism (4:10). This would have caused more severe conflicts with outsiders and worsened its consequential economic predicaments. (5) As a result, Paul needed to ease the conflicts by encouraging them to live quietly, to mind their business and to work with their hands for peace and economic independency (4:11-12). While the conflict became more

and more serious in a vicious circle, the group cohesion intensified in a virtuous circle. It is probable that Paul intended to sever the vicious one (4:10b-12) and to encourage the virtuous one (4:9-10a) as I will continue to argue below.

3.3. Solidarity and Economic Mutualism

So far, I have articulated how socio-economic factors, such as status, influenced the Thessalonian Christians' social relationship with non-believers and its economic consequences, and how the intergroup conflict was intertwined with their social identity and unusual love within church. In doing so, I have suggested that Paul responded to the conflict by encouraging them to behave becomingly towards outsiders and to be self-sufficient as a remedy to social and economic sufferings as seen in 1 Thess 4:11-12.

The issue of the Thessalonians' mutual love (4:9-12; 1:3; 2:8; 3:6, 12; 5:8, 13) - one of the most important and frequently mentioned themes in 1 Thessalonians - will be examined in more depth in the following sections. I will focus on four points: some basic features of the love presented in Paul's rhetoric (§3.3.1); how the believers achieved it in a short time (§3.3.2); Paul's ideal of φιλαδελφία through its comparison with some ancient documents and anthropological studies (§§3.3.3-4); and how the Thessalonians actually practised this ideal love in church (§3.3.4). The familial and reciprocal socio-economic relationships implied in Paul's letter will be highlighted. While pursuing these tasks, I will keep trying to unravel how socio-economic factors, such as low socio-economic status and intergroup tensions, were entangled with the mutual affection. These will all help to define the nature of their solidarity and reciprocity in theological, social, and economic senses and thereby provide a further historical backdrop for 1 Thess 4:9-12 (§3.4).

3.3.1. Unusual Mutual Love

The Thessalonians' mutual love is unusually strong in character, which requires an explanation as their church was so young. 1 Thessalonians provides clues to how Paul thought of their love. I will explore terms related to love, in particular φιλαδελφία, in Paul's rhetoric to argue that he complimented the Thessalonians' love.

Love is one of the principal themes of 1 Thessalonians, accentuated and reiterated throughout (1:3; 2:12; 3:6; 4:9-12; 5:8, 13, 26). First, Paul remembers and introduces the Thessalonians' love embracing specific actions in the *exordium* (1:3). He expresses his thanksgiving to God for the Thessalonians, recalling their labour of love (μνημονεύοντες …

τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης) along with faith and hope (1:3). Many commentators point out that one of the functions of the *exordium* is to introduce the principal themes that will be discussed in the rest of the letter.[113] This function is intensified by an *inclusio* between the triads of faith, love, and hope in 1:3 and 5:8.[114] Love is actually most frequently mentioned in the letter alongside faith and hope. Paul's mention of love in the *exordium* is rhetorically intended, but this also indicates that he recognised and approved the Thessalonians' labour of love. The noun κόπος added to the ἀγάπη as a genitive form means that their love included concrete actions, especially laborious affairs (1:3).[115] The κόπος along with μόχθος paired with ἀγαπητοί re-presented in 2:8-9 refer to Paul's hard work and mission in a shop/workshop. It is no coincidence that his instruction on working with one's hands (4:11) is again embedded in a rhetorical unit of φιλαδελφία (4:9-12). This means that Paul remembered the Thessalonians' specific actions (κόπος; μόχθος) including manual work (ἐργάζομαι) as the manifestations of their love (ἀγάπη; φιλαδελφία; cf. §2.5).[116]

Second, 1 Thess 3:1-10 in the *narratio* reports that Paul heard from Timothy about the Thessalonians' mutual love so that he was relieved. Timothy as an eyewitness brought Paul a good report of their love in times of conflict with non-believers (3:6) about which the Apostle was deeply worried (3:1-5). Recognising the Thessalonians' steadfast love in church, he was comforted (παρεκλήθημεν) and thereby effusively said "we now live" (νῦν ζῶμεν, 3:7-8). The νῦν ζῶμεν metaphorically expresses his relief which derives from the fact that the Thessalonians had endured social afflictions in faith and love and had achieved Christian love in the difficulties (3:6). The impression is that not only their endurance of sufferings but also their mutual love which flowered in times of conflict were enough to reassure Paul.

Third, the theme of love is again echoed in the *transitus* (3:11-13) which implies that the Thessalonians had been enjoying mutual affection. The *transitus* functions to summarise the *narratio* (esp. 2:8; 3:6) and introduces the following parts, here the *exhortatio* (esp. 4:9-12).[117] Paul prays for their love for each other to abound more and more (3:12). This "wish prayer" in the *transitus* does not directly present their tangible love, but the combination of

113 Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 68-78; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 73; Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 52.

114 Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 298.

115 BDAG, 558-559.

116 Cf. Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 134.

117 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 140.

πλεονάσαι and περισσεύσαι, which are almost synonymous, underlines that they already had a certain degree of mutual affection which Paul wished to overflow.[118]

Fourth and most importantly, Paul delineates the Thessalonians' love (φιλαδελφία) in the *exhortatio* (4:9-12) to show their unusual familial love in church. The Apostle compliments their love in several ways. Firstly, he chooses φιλαδελφία to paint the nature of the Thessalonians' relationship. The term φιλαδελφία was mostly used exclusively to denote mutual love in blood relations until Paul and other early Christian authors transformed it into a figurative affection in Christian communities (Rom 12:10; Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22; 2 Pet 1:7; 1 Cle 48:1).[119] It means that, if the Thessalonians practised brotherly love in their everyday lives, it was analogous to the ancients' ideal familial relationship, highly praised by many philosophers.[120] Secondly, Paul employs paralipsis to confirm that they pursued mutual love in real life (4:9a). The paralipsis, οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν (you do not have any need [for us] to write to you [about love]), is a rhetorical move that ancient authors used to pretend to segue into a new theme when in fact they intended to approve or praise the audiences' certain knowledge and virtues.[121] This rhetorical device in 4:9 suggests that Paul appreciated and complimented the Thessalonians' knowledge and practice of φιλαδελφία (cf. 1:3; 3:6). Thirdly, Paul adds two γάρ clauses to the paralipsis to reveal two reasons why he did not need to write further about their love: "you yourselves are taught-by-God (θεοδίδακτοι) to love one another" (4:9b) and "you do this towards all the brothers in the whole of Macedonia" (4:10a). As for the θεοδίδακτοι, many scholars have suggested its special derivations and overtones,[122] as it is a unique Pauline coinage considered as the first

[118] Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 177.

[119] BDAG, 1055; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 243; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 285; John S. Kloppenborg, "ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ, ΘΕΟΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΣ, and the Dioscuri: Rhetorical Engagement in 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12," *NTS* 39 (1993), 272-273.

[120] Kloppenborg, "ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ," 273; cf. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 285.

[121] Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 286; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 159.

[122] Helmut Koester argues that θεοδίδακτοι indicates the ethos of the Thessalonian believers' independence of Paul ("The Text of 1 Thessalonians," in *The Living Text*, ed. Dennis E. G., and Robert Jewett [Lanham: University Press of America], 39). Kloppenborg points out that Paul used the term to encourage them to imitate the example of the Dioscuri, the twin cultic gods, which may have been well known in Thessalonica ("ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ," 289). However, these two arguments are incompatible with the overall literary context of 1 Thessalonians: the believers in Thessalonica received Paul's teaching as the word of God and depended on it (2:13; cf. 1:7; 4:1-2) and they turned to the true God from idols, such as cultic gods, rather than imitating them (1:9). On the other hand, Malherbe insists that Paul coined the word to show the believers' dependence on God, criticising the Epicurean ideal of being "self-taught" ("Exhortation in First Thessalonians," *NovT* 25 [1983) 253-254). Most commentators, however, are in favour of the contention that the coinage has an allusion to Isa 54:12 (LXX) and Jer 31:33-34 (LXX) and implies the eschatological blessing in which the

appearance in Greek literature.[123] Many commentators generally agree that "taught-by-God" implies experiences of eschatological blessing. It is highly likely that Paul coined this unique term to highlight the Thessalonians' love as God's blessing in an eschatological sense. Furthermore, the Apostle further validates their love by giving an example, though it is not detailed. They practised Christian love not only to one another in their church but also to all believers in Macedonia (4:10a). It is difficult to articulate how they demonstrated their love. Some scholars guess that their love was related to their financial support for or personal involvement in evangelism in Macedonia or was expressed towards Christian travellers from Macedonia to Thessalonica.[124] What is clear is that their love was hypostatised in churches in some sense.

Paul's repeated delineations and compliments of the Thessalonians' mutual love in 1 Thessalonians (1:3; 3:6, 12; 4:9-10a) do not seem just rhetorical hyperbole or flourish.[125] It is clear that Paul intentionally employs many rhetorical devices to effusively praise their love possibly in order to comfort them. This is not to say that Paul's praise of their love should be devalued. It is more likely that his elaboration of it reflects reality in Thessalonica. Given that the Thessalonian church was a fledging community, it was a surprise even for Paul to witness their unusual love so much so that he uses unique terms, such as "taught-by-God" (4:9). All these indicate that the Thessalonians had been building an extraordinary solidarity in a short time, possibly in around 8 months.

When it comes to this unusual love in Thessalonica, some questions can be raised. How did the Thessalonians accomplish this group cohesion? What kind of ideal love did Paul encourage the Thessalonians to reach? And what specific way of loving had they achieved so that they were complimented by Paul? The Apostle scatters several hints in 1 Thessalonians, such as his familial language and the Thessalonians' achievement of his ideal love in manual labour. In order to better paint what this love was, the various clues must be collected and assembled together. This task can be underpinned by historical, anthropological, and social-scientific research on the survival strategies of the poor in times of dearth, which are

believers have no need to be taught by human mediators. For further debate, see S. E. Witmer, "Θεοδίδακτοι in 1 Thessalonians 4:9: A Pauline Neologism," *NTS* 52 (2006), 240-243; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 286-288.

123 Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 244.

124 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 161; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 290; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 245; Best, *Thessalonians*, 173-174.

125 Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 244.

comparable with those of the Thessalonians. To the extent that literature and historical clues allow, I will articulate the mutual affection: how this was accomplished (§3.3.2), Paul's ideal (§3.3.3), and the Thessalonians' ethos (§§3.3.3-4).

3.3.2. Social Factors, Identity, and Solidarity

Several socio-economic factors would have influenced the Thessalonians' unusual love: previously formed relationships, intergroup conflicts, homogeneity, minority, and identity. Wanamaker points out that God's teachings led them to achieve this mutual love in a special way, underscoring "taught-by-God" (4:9b).[126] The impression, however, is that he neglects other factors influencing this distinctive love.[127] The Thessalonians' mutual love in fact can be explained not only by the theological reasoning but also by social and sociological ones.

First, it is highly likely that a majority of the Thessalonian labourers had been in complex and intimate social relationships in small groups in which some were converted to Christ (2:14; §§3.2.2-3, 2.4.4). If this is plausible, the previously formed comradeship would have been consolidated smoothly and overlaid with Christian love. Second, conflicts with non-converts (§3.2.3) appeared to play an important role in building a solid community (§3.2.5). Moreover, that they endured harassment from outgroups (3:6-7) suggests that their group cohesion was robust enough to stand up to it. Third, homogeneity is another socio-economic factor that helped the Thessalonians to accomplish this unusual love (§3.2.5). The Thessalonians shared a similar conflict experience (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5), a belief system including apocalyptic dualism and imminence (4:1-8; 4:13-5:11), and a low socio-economic status (4:11c; Chapter 2). Social psychologists would say that this naturally facilitates a sense of mutual belonging and security in a group. Fourth, it is possible that the Thessalonians' low socio-economic status per se made them intensely identify themselves with their group and built solidarity, given that numerical, social, and economic minorities are more willing to belong to a group, to more strongly share similarity with other ingroup members, and to more intensely identify with the group against insecurity (§3.2.5). As a result, they were able to build unusual love, solidarity, and social identity in church.

It is evident that the Thessalonians' characteristic mutual love was the result of a complex combination of several social, psychological, geographical, and religious factors. In the next sections (§§3.3.3-4), another possible factor will be disclosed: Paul had persistently

126 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 160-161.
127 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 160.

tried to build a family-like community in an emotional and economic reciprocity by using various familial terminology.

3.3.3. Paul's Ideal: Building a Familial Community as an Economic Unit

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian labourers is replete with kinship language, giving the impression that he treated them as family members in a single household. Some biblical scholars have recently explored the heavy concentration of familial terminology in 1 Thessalonians that considers the community as "family" created by God (§3.1). This preliminary research has paved the way for further studies of an egalitarian or asymmetrical structure,[128] community ethics,[129] and Paul's intention to describe the church as family.[130]

The economic aspect of "God's new family"[131] in Thessalonica, however, has not been fully examined. As many Pauline and classical scholars agree, the ancient family functioned not only as the most basic social and emotional unit (Cicero, *Off.* 1.54) but also as "the primary site of production, reproduction, consumption and the intergenerational transmission of property and knowledge undergirding production".[132] In this regard, that Paul intended to build the Thessalonian congregation as a family may indicate that the community was designed as an economic unit in a way in which members shared production, consumption, and economic knowledge. I will suggest that such an economic and emotional mutualism was encouraged by Paul's ideal of church, and the Thessalonians to some extent achieved it.

Throughout 1 Thessalonians, Paul repeats varied familial terms more frequently vis-à-vis his other letters:[133] God as Father (πατήρ, 1:1, 3; 3:11, 13); Paul as a father (πατήρ, 2:11); a nursing-mother (τροφός, 2:7), an infant (νήπιος [or ἤπιος], 2:7),[134] and an orphan

128 Burke, "Paul's New Family," 269-287; Malherbe, "New Family," 121.

129 Aasgaard, *Beloved Brothers*, 153-166.

130 Malherbe, "New Family," 125; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 170-175.

131 Malherbe, "New Family," 116-125.

132 Saller, "Productive Unit," 116; Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 151; S. Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 25; Huebner, *The Family*, 205-206; Osgood, "The Family," 69, 74-77; Toner, *Popular Culture*, 15-18; Aasgaard, *Beloved Brothers*, 46.

133 Furthermore, the Pauline letters contain "brothers" far more than the earliest Christian literature (Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 87).

134 There is a major text critical conundrum in 1 Thess 2:7 as to whether νήπιοι (infant) or ἤπιοι (gentle) is a better reading. Either reading can be viewed as a scribal error: haplography explains ἤπιοι as a variant, while dittography νήπιοι. Some commentators choose ἤπιοι, since it is more natural in the literary context and less awkward in Paul's usage of the two terms (Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 145-146; Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 100; Koester, "The Text," 224-226; J.

(ἀπορφανίζω, 2:17); and believers as children (τέκνον, 2:7, 11; υἱός, 5:5) and brothers (ἀδελφός, 1:4; 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:2; 3:7; 4:1, 6, 10 [x2], 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27). Besides, some implicit kinship metaphors are also employed: being beloved by God and Paul (ἠγαπημένοι, 1:4; ἀγαπητοί, 2:8), brotherly and sisterly love (φιλαδελφία, 4:9), and ritual holy kiss (φιλήματι ἁγίῳ, 5:26).

Paul's usage of kinship terminology suggests that he intends to build a familial relationship among the Thessalonians. Firstly, Malherbe points out that Paul's portrayal of God with some particular qualifiers - Father (1:1, 3; 3:11, 13), living and true (ζῶν καὶ ἀληθινός, 1:9), election (ἐκλογή, 1:4), and to love (ἀγαπάω, 1:4) - reflects Jewish and Greco-Roman ideas of God who loves and calls the Gentiles, and is the creator of the cosmos and relationships.[135] He goes on to argue that "Paul thought of the God of creation as calling Gentiles into a new relationship with himself in which he would be their father and they his beloved children".[136]

Secondly, this parent-child relation between God and the Thessalonians is the basis of familial ties and is extended to those among the Christians including Paul. The Apostle uses the vocative plural "brothers" fourteen times for the Thessalonians and uses other forms of it five times to refer to the believer(s) - more than once every five verses. This most frequent occurrence of the term, compared to other Pauline letters, along with φιλαδελφία (4:9) and the holy kiss as its expression (5:26), creates and strengthens the ethos in which the bond, harmony, and *pietas* of the brotherhood are expected in the group (Cicero, *Off.* 1.53-58).[137] In particular, the love of brothers and sisters is a verification of parental love (Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 15.480F); and Paul's depiction of the Thessalonians as beloved by God or by Paul as their father (1:3-4; cf. 2:8) obligates them to prove it in mutual love (3:12; 4:9-10).

Thirdly, while the Thessalonians were treated gently as children (τέκνα, 2:7, 11; υἱοί, 5:5) by Paul, he depicts himself as a father and nursing-mother (πατήρ, 2:11; τροφός, 2:7).

Delobel, "One Letter Too Many in Paul's First Letter? A Study of (ν)ήπιοι 1 Thess 2:7," *Louvain Studies* 20 [1995], 128-129). Others argue that the internal evidence is not sufficient enough to override the stronger manuscript attestation of νήπιοι (P65 ℵ* B C* D* F G I Ψ* 0150 5 38 61 69 102 103 104*; see B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [Stuttgart: United Bible Societies], 629-630; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians,* 144-146, 180-187; Burke, *Family Matters,* 154-157). I lean towards the second option, but do not rule out the possibility of the former one.

135 Malherbe, "New Family," 117-120.

136 Malherbe, "New Family," 118.

137 Burke, *Family Matters,* 163-175.

Paul describes his role not only as the nursing-mother who cares for them, shares with them himself alongside the gospel, and loves them like his own children (2:7-8; cf. Tacitus, *Agr*. 4.2-4; *CIL* 6.26192), but also as a father who is holy, righteous, and blameless and who appeals, encourages, and implores (2:10-12).[138] As Burke points out, this image of Paul both as a caring mother and as a teaching father is consonant with normal social expectations of parents in antiquity.[139]

Fourthly, what is more interesting here is that Paul inverts his parental imagery by employing νήπιοι (2:7) and ἀπορφανισθέντες (2:17) in his self-description. He uses these two terms to underline his gentle but fervent affection towards the Thessalonians instead of claiming his apostolic authority over them (2:7). It is paradoxical that Paul should simultaneously define himself as father, mother, orphan, and possibly infant, though metaphorically (2:7-17). This flexible self-description is more noteworthy, provided that ancient family members had their own fixed roles and authority depending on gender, age, and position (Gaius, *Inst.* 1.48-55, esp. 55; *Dig.* 50.16.195-6; Dionysius, *Ant. rom*. 2.26.4).[140] Thus, Paul's multifaceted self-portrait gives the impression, as Malherbe observes, that the structure of the Thessalonian congregation as family is not strictly hierarchical in classifying members.[141] More importantly, as Paul did not appeal to a rigidly fixed image of his gender, age, and leadership, in particular of his *patria potestas* (2:7a), it is highly likely that the Thessalonians were not requested to play a single stereotypical role either as a father or as a mother and either as an adult or as a child in the new family. Rather, they could have been father, mother, child, or brother depending on each occasion like Paul, not depending on gender, age, and status (2:7, 12, 17). In this sense, Paul differentiates the flexibility and dynamic of his new family from the rigidness of the usual ancient family.

Paul's ideal of church, therefore, is God's new family in which its members enjoy a strong mutual affection (4:9; 5:26) who play flexible roles as father, mother, child, or brother in imploring, caring, and being beloved in a less hierarchical structure (2:7, 11, 17). It seems

138 Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 81.

139 Burke, *Family Matters*, 160; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 146, 150-151; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 154.

140 Cf. Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 154-164.

141 Malherbe, "New Family," 121-122; Aasgaard, "Brotherhood," 177,179. Even though concluding that "some degree of structure was in existence from their [Christian communities'] earliest inception" ("Paul's New Family," 287), Burke admits that Paul modified his patriarchal role in 1 Thess 2:7 and 2:17 (*Family Matters*, 157, 162).

that, though he borrows the idea of φιλαδελφία from the ancient family to portray Christians' ideal and deep love, Paul modifies its hierarchical structure into more elastic roles in 1 Thessalonians.

One more issue at stake is whether or not Paul designs the new family as an economic unit like the Roman family. A few scholars guess that Paul's instruction on working in φιλαδελφία (4:11c) evokes the family members' obligation to work together.[142] Reidar Aasgaard further presumes that Paul's ideal of depending on no-one or nothing (4:12b) is unlike the individualistic self-sufficiency of the Stoic-Cynic tradition. He goes on to say that the Apostle "here focuses on the idea of mutual self-maintenance as part of the Christian φιλαδελφία" like the ancient ideal of family.[143] These possibilities were just suggestions in the studies, but are worthy of a fuller examination with evidence concerning the ancient family and its economic functions comparable with the Thessalonian congregation.

Ancient Romans had emotional, moral, and economic ideals of family. The emotional ideal is a familial harmony, as documented in much literature: "their marriage code is strict, and indeed nothing else in their characters is more praiseworthy" (Tacitus, *Germ*. 18; cf. Pliny, *Ep*. 7.5; Dionysius, *Ant. rom*. 2:25.1-7; Cicero, *Off*. 1.55; §3.2.3).[144] The moral ideal can be categorised into two points: *pietas* within family and its honour in the larger society (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 5.4.7; Pliny the Elder, *Nat*. 7.121).

What is more important here is that ancient family was not only a fundamental part of the Roman economy and society (Cicero, *Off*. 1.54) but also an indispensable economic unit for its members' survival. Each family member was expected to make a contribution to familial self-sufficiency in mutual dependence. Fathers carried the biggest economic burden in providing everyday meals, sheltering other members, training or sending children as apprentices, and helping the children to establish their independent careers.[145] Women also worked as their husbands' partners or independent workers to enhance the family well-being, especially in poor families,[146] even though the general expectation for women in elite society

142 Burke, *Family Matters*, 217-220; Aasgaard, *Beloved Brother*, 163.
143 Aasgaard, *Beloved Brother*, 164-165; Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 229-231.
144 Cf. Aasgaard, *Beloved Brothers*, 53-57.
145 Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 234-236; Huebner, *The Family*, 204.
146 Treggiari, "Lower Class Women," 65-86; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 242-267; Saller, "Productive Unit," 116-128; Bradley, *Roman Family*, 109.

was to stay at home (*domiseda*) and to care for their children (cf. *CIL* 6.11602).[147] Sons and possibly daughters (*CIL* 6.9213) were not exempt from working to assist familial self-sufficiency and to show filial duty in the short and long term.[148] Children worked from the age of 12 or even younger as assistants or apprentices to make money and to be trained in order to help their parents (Lucian, *Dial. meretr*. 1; *Dig*. 7.7.6.1).[149] They were further obligated to care for the aged (γηροβοσκία) by working (Xenophon, *Mem*. 2:2.3-11).[150] Children usually received half or less of adults' wages.[151] As a result, it was not rare for all family members to work together in one place or to work in a similar profession to help each other (*ILS* 7687; *CIL* 6.9151-9152, 6.9493).[152] One evidence of this is Mecia Dynata's family (*CIL* 6.9493).[153] Her family was in the wool trade: her mother was a wool-comber (*tonstrix*) and her brother was a wool-worker (*lanarius*). Classical scholars assume that she was also engaged in the wool trade and her family members managed their own respective businesses but in a strong reciprocal relation.[154] There are also some ancient fables and instructions on brotherhood to stick together (Babrius, *Fab.* 47), cooperate (Plutarch, *Frat. amor*. 478D-E), and work together (Hierocles [Stobaeus], *Anthology* 4.84.20; cf. Musonius Rufus, *Frag*. 15.100.5-6) to overcome social and economic difficulties.[155] Even though some family members lived in different houses, they cooperated in sharing land, animals, and tools.[156] It is clear that, for the poor or craftsman family, mutual dependency was more vital for survival than for the upper class family.[157] One of the ideals in the common ancient family, thus, was a mutual economic cooperation both in production and consumption.

147 L. L. Lovén, "Roman Family Reliefs and the Commemoration of Work: Text, Images and Ideals," in *Families in the Imperial and Late Antique Roman World*, ed. M. Harlow and L. L. Lovén [London: Continuum, 2012], 151-152; cf. Osgood, "The Family," 74.

148 Huebner, *The Family*, 58-91; Bradley, *Roman Family*, 109, 117-119.

149 Bradley, *Roman Family*, 108; Huebner, *The Family*, 77; Osgood, "The Family," 74; Toner, *Popular Culture*, 17.

150 T. G. Parkin, *Old Age in the Roman World: A Cultural and Social History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 203-235.

151 Osgood, "The Family," 74.

152 Osgood, "The Family," 74-75.

153 The date of this inscription (*CIL* 6.9493) is not exactly tracked, but its style is attributed to the Roman era.

154 Holleran, "Women and Retail in Roman Italy," in *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West*, ed. E. Hemelrijk and G. Woolf (Raiden: Brill, 2013), 307; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*, 192-193.

155 Burke, *Family Matters*, 219.

156 Paul Erdkamp, "Agriculture, Underemployment, and the Cost of Rural Labour in the Roman World," *ClQ* 49.2 (1999), 559-560.

157 Cf. Bradley, *Roman Family*, 103, 118.

In antiquity, the emotional, moral, and economic privileges and obligations enjoyed by all members were inextricably entangled with each other.[158] A deep emotional bond naturally led family members to shoulder moral and economic obligations together, while economic mutualism and *pietas* fortified familial cohesion. On the other hand, a broken familial bond, in many cases, was derived from economic conflicts or undutiful and disordered behaviours (cf. P.Sakaon. 37, 40; P.Abinn. 56).[159] It is not a coincidence that some descriptions of ideal fathers, mothers, and children often catalogue their economic contributions alongside familial affection and *pietas*. Some women were honoured in inscriptions for their frugality (*frugi* or *parsimonia, CIL* 6.26192; cf. Tacitus, *Agr*. 4.2-4) and contribution to family business (*CIL* 6.11602, 8.152) along with their chastity, modesty, and devotion. Urbanilla, a woman who lived in North Africa in the second century CE, was praised by her husband as "*comes negotiorum socia parsimonio fulta*" (my frugal and supportive business associate, *CIL* 8.152). Thus, it is plausible that compliments of kinship implied that each family member fulfilled his/her own moral and economic duties.

Against this background, it can be suggested that economic mutualism, an ideal of the ancient family, was also pursued by the Thessalonian community (4:9-12). I have argued that Paul designed the church as a family, the Thessalonians accepted his familial ideals, and he complimented their familial love (§3.3.1). It is highly likely that Paul's ideal of a familial community embodies economic reciprocity, while his praise of the Thessalonians' familial love refers to their actual achievement of it as one economic unit.

This impression can be further undergirded by one Pauline passage, 1 Thess 4:9-12. Two phrases (4:11c; 4:12b) in the text reveal Paul's specific design of the familial church in an economic sense and the Thessalonians' realisation of it. Paul's instructions on working with hands (4:11c) and depending on no-one or nothing (4:12b) reflect his thoughts about God's new family in which each member contributed to familial self-sufficiency both in production (4:11c) and in consumption (4:12b). First, Paul's instruction on working in φιλαδελφία alludes to one of the familial duties. Working to produce something for family was an economic obligation carried by all family members, especially in poor families. If one encouraged family members to work with their hands in brotherly love, it is highly likely that each member perceived this as a request to contribute to a familial production which would be consumed by all members. If this is correct, it is also plausible that, when instructing the

158 Cf. Grey, *Constructing Communities*, 36.
159 Grey, *Constructing Communities*, 37-38.

Thessalonians to work (4:11c) in φιλαδελφία (4:9), Paul was urging them to shoulder the familial obligation to work and to produce something together for all members and their survival. They could probably understand what the Apostle intended. This explains why Paul's exhortation to work is in a rhetorical pericope of brotherly love and in the overall rhetorical setting which is coloured with kinship metaphors.[160]

Second, having need of no-one or nothing (μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε, 4:12b), as a goal of working and as a way of manifesting φιλαδελφία, evokes the ancients' ideal of reciprocal well-being in family, in which its members had to work together and to mutually rely on ingroup members. The adjective μηδενός can denote "nothing" as masculine or "no-one" as neuter.[161] Choosing "no-one" is more natural in the rhetorical flow,[162] though both translations are grammatically possible. I will not exclude one of the two options. What is more significant here is that μηδενός implies three possible options for its meaning: (1) literally no-one (not depending on anyone at all); (2) no-one in the church (not depending on fellow believers); or (3) no-one from outgroups (not depending on outsiders but only on insiders). The third option is most plausible for four reasons. Firstly, reading "depending on no-one or nothing" literally as an individualistic self-sufficiency is not coherent with Paul's design of the church as a new family aiming at mutual well-being implied in φιλαδελφία (4:12b). This suggestion has long been favoured by many scholars who regard the Thessalonians as lazy or enthusiastic in their imminent eschatology or Gnosticism (cf. §3.1). But it does not make sense that, while wishing their love to overflow to each other (3:12; 4:10) and underscoring familial love (4:9), Paul suddenly changes his mind to urge them to be independent of each other. Love is logically consonant with cooperation rather than independence in a group. Besides, Paul's exhortation on self-sufficiency is not, or is at best loosely, connected with eschatological laziness or enthusiasm in his rhetoric. Secondly, the second option, not depending on anyone in church, conflicts with Paul's compliment of the Thessalonians' love in 1 Thess 1:3, 1:7, 3:6, 3:12, and 4:9-10. Some commentators ascribe economic troubles to the immoderate economic reliance of the poor on wealthy members so that independence was necessitated in church.[163] This suggestion, however, is not consonant with Paul's praise of the Thessalonians' mutual love (4:9-10; 1:3; 3:12). His effusive praise

160 Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 229-230.

161 Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 300; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 252; BDAG, 647.

162 Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 300.

163 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 162-164; Russell, "The Idle," 105-109; Winter, *Seek the Welfare*, 41-60.

of their familial love implies that their love was not so inferior that many of them were parasitic on and overburdened other members.[164] I am further sceptical of the view that there were some well-to-do believers at Thessalonica on whom many other members could rely economically (Chapter 2). It is less likely, thus, that wealthy Christians' economic generosity was abused by many other poor members. If so, it is not reasonable to insist that Paul encouraged individualistic self-sufficiency in the world or in church.[165] Thirdly, Paul mentions τοὺς ἔξω (4:12a) just before μηδενός. This gives the impression that "no-one" alludes to outsiders in the flow of the sentence. This is more plausible based on Paul's heavy concentration on intergroup conflict in the sentence (4:10b-12; §3.2). It is hard to show the rhetorical connection between intergroup conflict and individualistic self-maintenance, but it is easier to establish the link between the broken relationship with non-believers and communal self-sufficiency as a way of handling the conflict and its detrimental impacts. Fourthly, given that the Thessalonians suffered from economic conflicts with outsiders and from poverty (§3.2.4), it is plausible that it was dangerous for them to depend on the outgroup members or not depend on any ingroup members, while it was indispensable to lean on insiders mutually to cushion their economic predicaments. Even if they did not experience economic sufferings from social conflicts, it was natural for the poor in a community to rely on ingroup members for survival (§§3.2.4-5). Most importantly, Paul's encouragement and compliment of loving each other (1:3; 3:6, 12; 4:9-10) coloured by kinship terminology is consonant with "not depending on outsiders but insiders". In light of this literary and historical backdrop, it is better to read μηδενός as "no-one or nothing from outgroups". This means that familial self-sufficiency as one of the ways of expressing brotherly love and of overcoming economic predicaments was invigorated in the Thessalonian community. Further, it can be argued that not depending on outsiders was a strategy to lessen intergroup conflict from which the Thessalonians suffered as it would minimise economic contacts with non-believers (§3.2.4). Since this translation is an important point, I will come back to this issue to fully examine 1 Thess 4:9-12 (§3.4).

Considering all the points listed above, Paul's vision for the Thessalonian church as God's family is analogous to, but in certain ways different from, the ancient family. Paul's

164 In addition, there is no literary evidence in 1 Thessalonians referring to the economic (over-)dependency of the poor on the wealthy, unless 2 Thessalonians, Acts, and 1 Clement should be seriously considered in this issue and have a deep historical connection with 1 Thess 4:9-12. But it is hard to prove the connection and their historical accuracy in this matter.

165 For more critiques of these suggestions, see §3.4 (esp. note 215).

ideal in this family is that each member shoulders familial obligations and enjoys economic and emotional privileges together. This family seeks to achieve deeper emotional bonds in a less hierarchical structure than common in the ancient family. As Paul played a multi-faceted role as father, mother, child, and brother depending on the occasion (2:7, 12, 17), the Thessalonians were instructed to build mutual love by playing flexible roles which did not depend on rigid structures of power, gender, and age. In this ethos, Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to deepen economic mutualism as familial duty and privilege both in production (4:11c) and in consumption (4:12b). This is coherent with their economic sufferings derived both from their low socio-economic status and from their social conflicts with non-believers. Paul responded to the intergroup conflict and its consequential economic predicaments by encouraging the Thessalonians to build mutual well-being (§§3.2.4, 3.4).

3.3.4. The Poor, Insecurity, and Survival Strategies: An Anthropological and Historical Approach to Reciprocity in Thessalonica

Paul's ideal of familial self-sufficiency was not just utopian but would have been translated into reality or at least an ethos in the Thessalonian church. The Thessalonians' unusual familial love recognised and praised by Paul (§3.3.1) implies their (enduring) economic "reciprocity"[166], since these two, familial love and reciprocity, were not separated in antiquity (§3.3.3); a solid family was erected on cornerstones of both emotional and economic mutualisms. This ethos of familial reciprocity in Thessalonica can be underpinned by historical and anthropological research on poor communities and their survival strategies.[167]

166 In anthropology, reciprocity has been defined in many ways. Some scholars complain that using the term is useless, since it can mean anything (cf. G. MacCormack, "Reciprocity," *Man* 11 [1976], 101). This is why anthropologists try to define it first, when they use it.

I will use reciprocity to refer to (long-term) horizontal mutual support, in particular in poor groups for survival. But this relation does not exclude the poor's connection with well-to-do members. In particular, I believe that Paul's ideal reciprocity includes the mutual help between the poor and wealthier members, while it is painted by his ethical and eschatological agendas alongside its practical utility for survival. In this sense, the reciprocity in the Pauline communities was to a degree different from common gift-exchange in elite culture.

167 For historical research on reciprocity, see Garnsey, *Food Supply*; T. Gallant, *Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991); Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*; Grey, *Constructing Communities*; Huebner, *The Family*; Hawkins, *Roman Artisans*; Morgan, *Popular Morality*; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*; Toner, *Popular Culture*; C. Gill et al., eds., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); S. von Reden, *Exchange in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1995).

For anthropological studies of this, see M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine • Atherton, 1972); Larissa A. Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality: Life in a Mexican Shantytown* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Carol B. Stack, *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black*

Before stating the ancient survival strategies and reciprocity of the poor, however, it should be admitted that evidence is not sufficient to paint a perfect picture of it.[168] Besides, many historical descriptions of paupers were coloured by social elites' slant on them.[169] In archaeological remains, the poor's everyday struggle is also only opaquely unveiled.

Nevertheless, some classical scholars, in particular Teresa Morgan, have recently pioneered a third way of navigating the real world of the commoners.[170] This is through the lens of rich and diverse fables, gnomic sayings (*sententiae*), proverbs, and exemplary stories (*exempla*). These were handed down orally, (re-)written, circulated, and used by plebs including slaves in around the first century CE, and sometimes quoted by elite writers and even by Paul.[171] These moral stories and sayings can to some extent reveal consistent snapshots of how commoners lived.[172] For example, Publilius Syrus, who came to Rome as a slave in the first century BCE, collected, recorded, and created many popular maxims containing non-elites' risk management. Fables and proverbs came also mainly from those of low socio-economic status.[173] This is not to say that these stories and maxims enable us to reconstruct the vivid reality of the ancient poor. But they provide a glimpse of the ethos, culture, and morality in which the plebs lived and sought to survive. Furthermore, this study of the ancient needy through didactic sayings and stories can be sharpened by anthropological research on the destitute not as corroborative evidence but as a comparative sample.

Community (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); Peter Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964); Serge-Christophe Kolm, *Reciprocity: An Economics of Social Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); H. van Wees, "The Law of Gratitude: Reciprocity in Anthropological Theory," in Gill et al., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, 13-50; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 11-65; Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 215-234.

168 Meggitt mentions that the research on the poor's survival strategy had been rarely conducted, probably because of the paucity of evidence (*Poverty and Survival*, 164-165).

169 Knapp points out that there are two sorts of elites' source with regard to poverty: some parts were intentionally written, while others incidentally. The latter often contains historical contexts non-biased towards ordinary people (*Invisible Romans*, 8).

170 Morgan, *Popular Morality*; Toner, *Popular Culture*; Yannis Z. Tzifopoulos, "Proverbs in Menander's 'Dyskolos': The Rhetoric of Popular Wisdom," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), 169-177; Christos A. Zafiropoulos, *Ethics in Aesop's Fables: The 'Augustana Collection'* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Knapp often quotes the bible as a source to make the invisible Romans' life visible (*Invisible Romans*).

171 Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 101; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1254. For instance, Paul quoted Menander's maxim (*Thais*, fragment 218) or its popular version in 1 Cor 15:33 (φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρηστὰ ὁμιλίαι κακαί).

172 Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 2-8; cf. J. Obelkevich, "Proverbs and Social History," in *The Social History of Language*, ed. P. Burke and R. Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 43-72. In some ancient sources, the poor are not just referents but subjects.

173 Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 6.

Ryan S. Schellenberg summarises anthropological studies of the poor's risk management as follows: "reciprocal exchange is a common practice whereby the poor manage economic uncertainty" rather than "a uniquely Christian mode of economic practice".[174] Many anthropologists agree that some forms of reciprocity can be a powerful mechanism for marginalised people to cushion economic crisis.[175] Some further argue that poverty is a favourable condition stimulating economic reciprocity: "the poorer you are, the more likely you are to pay back".[176] After comparing this with Paul's terminology of generosity and early Christian communities, Schellenberg concludes that they were "share communities" like some of the contemporary and modern poor communities.[177] But I am sceptical of his assumption that many poor groups in the Greco-Roman world achieved solid economic mutualism. It seems that, though reciprocity was not the unique practice of Christian congregations, neither was it common.

While underscoring the marginalized people's mutualism as risk-management, Schellenberg underplays the fact, as many economists and anthropologists point out, that solid reciprocity flourishes only under certain conditions and thereby is not easily achieved in reality, in particular in the Greco-Roman world. There are three basic conditions for it: trust, time-verification, and contextual necessity. The most important criterion is trust: reciprocity is mostly built on a scaffolding of both rational and emotional trust,[178] reinforcing trust and reducing ingroup tensions.[179] This is why, in many societies, economic mutualism percolates in progression from family units to neighbourhood networks, to larger and formal groups, and to society.[180] Larissa A. Lomnitz points out that "the size, stability, and intensity of exchange in a reciprocity network depend on the social closeness between member families. All-kin

174 Schellenberg, "Rhetoric of Generosity," 233; contra Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 169-175.

175 Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality*; Stack, *All Our Kin*.

176 Stack, *All Our Kin*, 43; cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 85.

177 Schellenberg borrows the phrase "share communities" from Borg and Crossan ("Rhetoric of Generosity," 233). See Marcus J. Borg and John D. Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009), 188-190.

178 Blau, *Exchange and Power*, 94; Kolm, *Reciprocity*, 14-15; Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality*, 209; J. L. Aguilar, "Trust and Exchange: Expressive and Instrumental Dimensions of Reciprocity in a Peasant Community," *Ethos* 12.1 (1984), 3-29.

179 Sahlins, *Stone Age*, 186; van Wees, "Reciprocity," 25-26, 29; Lorna Marshall, "Sharing, Talking and Giving: Relief of Social Tensions among !Kung Bushmen," *Africa* 31 (1961), 231-249; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 13, 18. Sahlins maintains that "connection between material flow and social relationships is reciprocity… If friends make gifts, gifts make friends" (*Stone Age*, 186).

180 Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality*, 209; Kolm, *Reciprocity*, 1.

networks tend to be more stable, more self-sufficient, and larger in size than networks of nonkin neighbors".[181] The second criterion is time-verification. Reciprocity cannot be established in a day in communities but only after a long-term verification through repetitive tests of giving and receiving with some minor failure and success. Peter Blau encapsulates this process as follows: "since there is no way to assure an appropriate return … exchange relations evolve in a slow process, starting with minor transaction in which little trust is required because little risk is involved. … The gradual expansion of mutual service is accompanied by a parallel growth of mutual trust".[182] This also means that some serious failures in getting initial favours back can break down trust, reciprocity, and trust-networks. On the contrary, generosity can play a role in catalysing reciprocity.[183] When each party receives gifts worthier than they expect and regards it as generous, like in times of dearth, the genericity prevents the breaking of reciprocal relationships. The third criterion is the contextual necessity of mutualism shared amongst all ingroup members. One of the pivotal stimuli for reciprocity is the lack of resources and skills for group members to sustain their hand-to-mouth existence.[184] This is why poverty is a favourable condition for it. Furthermore, a specific situation is when all members' survival is threatened by "large fluctuations or uncertainty in the sources of supply of food and other items"[185] like in natural disasters, in the dark side of radical urbanisation, and in serious intergroup conflicts. When ingroup members suffer from economic predicaments together, they are willing to exercise economic reciprocity for survival. Economic mutualism, therefore, usually flowers in the soil of trust, time, and contextual necessity. In other words, poverty itself (contextual necessity) can trigger reciprocity but does not guarantee it, much less sustain and strengthen it without trust and time-verification. Against this anthropological background, it seems that the Greco-Roman world was less favourable for a deep-rooted mutualism because of the first and second criteria as I will explain below.

As poverty was prevalent in the Greco-Roman world, there were many survival strategies for the poor to manage financial risks.[186] On the one hand, risk management

181 Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality*, 209; cf. Gallant, *Risk and Survival*, 144.

182 Blau, *Exchange and Power*, 94.

183 van Wees, "Reciprocity," 26.

184 van Wees, "Reciprocity," 27.

185 John R. Lombardi, "Reciprocity and Survival," *Anthropological Quarterly* 48.4 (1975), 246; cf. Lomnitz, *Networks and Marginality*, 2-4.

186 Toner singles out that "popular culture was how people [non-elites] survived" (*Popular Culture*, 2).

should not be unduly romanticised as though all commoners cooperated with one another. Their way of handling subsistence risks was in fact far more temporary, cunning, tragic, and drastic in many cases than one expects. First, selling human and material resources was a temporary life maintenance skill.[187] Lucian left a sketch of it through a fictive tale (*Dial. meretr*. 6.1-2; cf. *BGU* 4.1024):

> When he [Crobyle's husband] died, first I [Crobyle] sold his tongs and anvil and hammer for two minas, which kept us going for seven months. Since then I've scarcely provided us with enough food, either by weaving or by spinning thread for the weft or the warp. … [Crobyle's daughter] consorting with young men, and drinking and sleeping with them for money.[188]

This story is an example of a possible vicious circle in which the poor gradually lost resilience and became vulnerable in short-term survival strategies.[189]

Second, there were mischievous options for the poor to scrape by: fraud, theft, robbery, and gambling (cf. Lucian, *Tox*. 57; Dorotheus, *Carmen Astrologicum* 5.35; Artemidorus, *Onir*. 2.36; Apuleius, *Metam*. 9.9-10; Matthew 6:20).[190] It is not a coincidence that ancient fables and maxims are replete with warnings of deception (Diogenianus, *Proverbs* 2.77a; Aesop [Perry ed.], *Fab*. 143, 155, 166, 298; *CIL* 4.3948), false friendship (P.Lond. 253; Aesop [Perry ed.], *Fab*. 345; cf. Isocrates, *Ad Nic*. 27, *Demon*. 24), strife, and naivety (P.Oxy. 3007), rather than with praises of actual trust, friendship, and cooperation.[191] While the poor were bombarded with enemies, mistrust, competition, conflict, uncertainty, and injustice, some of them became malicious themselves trying to survive in such a jungle. The ethos is well presented in two maxims: "ita amicum habeas, posse ut facile fieri hunc inimicum putes" (Treat a friend without forgetting that he may easily become a foe, Publilius

187 See Gallant, *Risk and Survival*, 129-133; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 208-211; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 165-166.

188 C. D. N. Costa's translation (*Lucian: Selected Dialogues* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 256).

189 Cf. Gallant, *Risk and Survival*, 140-142.

190 Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 36-41.

191 Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 54, 82-83, 119; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 94-98; Toner, *Popular Culture*, 28-30.

Syrus, *Sententiae* 284)[192] and "virtue … goes with wealth" but not with poverty.[193] Gambling, as a common hobby of the plebs, which often resulted in theft, robbery, and assault (*Dig.* 11.5) was an abridged version of the mistrust-based survival strategy: cheating others, disbelieving opponents, assessing risk, and looking for luck (Columella, *Rust.* 1.8.2).[194] Surrounded by enemies in the atmosphere of distrust, the poor had to become either prudent and shrewd or crooked and lawless to survive.

The poor's life skills, on the other hand, should not be described as too pessimistic as though no one cooperated with each other at all. There were several sorts of trust-based risk management: asymmetrical or horizontal interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, and group-benefactor dependency. Patronage, personal alms, religious festivals, and governmental aids were safe and legal ways for paupers to obtain life maintenance resources in vertical relationships. But only a small number of them, as Meggitt argues, could enjoy steady benefits from their benefactors.[195]

What I want to focus on here is the reciprocal support between those of low socio-economic status about which some questions may be raised. How prevalent was solid financial mutualism among the poor for survival? On what conditions could it be achieved? Was the Thessalonian believers' socio-economic backdrop favourable for it? First, it is hard to determine whether or not solid reciprocity was common because of the paucity of evidence. It is clear that many philosophers and social elites shared the ideology of mutual obligation between friends or patrons and clients (Aristotle, *Eth. nic*. 1155b34, 1162b9-11, 1162b18, 1163a1-10; §5.2). This is not to say, however, that the ideal mutualism was widespread and manifested in all sectors of Greco-Roman society, in particular in those of low status. Historical sources rarely display the examples of the poor's actual enduring reciprocity (Dio Chrysostom, *Ven*. 68; Alciphron, *Ep*. 2.3; Hesiod, *Op.* 349-354), and it thereby may imply that the ideal was too idealistic or demanding to be actualised in poor communities.[196] Only a small portion of ancient fables and maxims show a glimpse of possible reciprocal relationships among paupers. A strict reciprocity was encouraged in

192 Loeb translation.

193 Morgan points out that this gnome implies "it is hard to be virtuous when one is poor" (*Popular Morality*, 91-92).

194 Toner, *Popular Culture*, 30-31; idem, *Leisure and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), 89-101; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 332.

195 For the asymmetrical reciprocity, see Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 166-169; Gallant, *Risk and Survival,* 170-196; cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift,* 34, 43.

196 Cf. Toner, *Popular Culture*, 28.

several maxims including gnomic sayings and proverbs (P.Bour. 1, Gnomai 11, 17, 22; Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 2, 59, 64, 93, 202, 631, 491, 541; Zenobius, *Proverbs* 1.36, 1.81, 1.94, 2.11, 4.63).[197] Two of them are "he who can't give help shouldn't ask for it" (Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae*, 59) and "having taken, give back so that you may take whenever you want" (P.Bour. 1, Gnome 11).[198] Some other sayings and fables seem to explain the more specific contexts and reasons for mutual support (Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 664, 685, 696; Babrius, *Fab.* 44, 47; Zenobius, *Proverbs* 3.43):[199] "everyone is safe where one is defended" (Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 696). These records imply that the plebs shared and probably realised the aristocratic view on friendship and reciprocity, but only to a degree.

Second, even though there were many forms of horizontal economic reciprocity in the relationships of the poor (cf. §2.4.4), it was hard to be either ubiquitous or long-lasting because of several obstacles. As described above, anthropological research reveals that reciprocity flourished only on the basis of trust, time-verification, and contextual necessity. This underpins that the Roman World was not fertile for enduring mutualism. Some ancient fables and maxims deal with these three conditions. Many writers warned that the poor should not naively try to build friendships and reciprocity because mistrust was endemic on market streets: "all craftsmen are liars, but cobblers are the worst of all" (Aesop [Perry], *Fab*. 103, cf. 475).[200] Dorotheus of Sidon describes that thieves invade their acquaintance's or friend's houses (*Carmen Astrologicum* 5.35.76-78, 136-137).[201] An ancient comedy lampooned slaves' mutualism: "furta omnes facimus, fraudem tamen nemo patitur, quoniam totum hoc mutuum est " (we all make thefts, but no one suffers since it is all mutual[ly done], *Querolus* 74).[202] Though many paupers looked for trustworthy relationships and boasted of their honesty (*CIL* 9.4796, 8.7156),[203] only some of the poor in reality had mutual trust in a long term (P.Lond. 253). For the social milieu of distrust, competition, and conflict, it was hard, unwise, and naive simply to trust neighbours and even friends and family (Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 284; Aesop [Perry], *Fab*. 143, 345; Ps.-Phocylides 152). Suspicion, though not encouraged, was a necessary quality for survival (cf. Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 7, 688;

197 Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 100; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 26.
198 These gnomai are quoted in Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 100.
199 Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 100-101.
200 Laura Gibbs' translation (2002).
201 Toner, *Popular Culture*, 30.
202 Toner, *Popular Culture*, 28.
203 Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 13.

Isocrates, *Demon*. 24). It is likely that solid reciprocity thus only to a limited degree emerged in such a distrust culture: the safest way is "ἅμα δίδου καὶ λάμβανε" (Diogenianus, *Proverbs* 2.77a; cf. Zenobius, *Proverbs* 2.41).

A long-lasting reciprocity further demanded time-verification after contextual necessity alongside emotional and rational trust, even amongst relatives. It is clear that some urgent situations, such as natural disasters, crop failures, and accidents, stimulated paupers to request favours and to promise to return the help. One of Alciphron's fictional letters describes a farmer who failed to harvest because of a hailstorm and requested another farmer to lend him money (*Ep.* 2.3):

> So, lend me twenty bushels so that myself and my wife and children will be saved. When there comes a good harvest, we will pay you back with 'the same measure or better' if I have an abundant crop. Please, do not desert good neighbours in times of dearth.

If another farmer responded to the letter, this could be a starting point for building reciprocal relations; "last year we borrowed some wheat just for seed, but we repaid them as soon as harvest time was come (Dio Chrysostom, *Ven*. 69)".[204] Such a situational necessity could trigger economic cooperation between two poor persons or in communities. Though temporary reciprocity was often triggered by poverty and natural disaster, the problem was whether or not it could become continuous and stable (Hesiod, *Op*. 320-365, esp. 349-354). The process was simple: if one gives or receives a favour in a group, one would be expected to re-give and re-take from any other group member in a virtuous circle, which in turn would create a reciprocal spirit (Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 491). If one does not offer or repay a favour, one should not expect more gifts in a vicious circle (Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 59, 93, 202, 631). In this regard, time verified friendship and the reciprocity in it: "Make no one a friend before you investigate how he has treated his friends before. … Be slow to take on a friendship, but once you have, try to maintain it" (Isocrates, *Demon*. 24).[205]

In light of the anthropological and historical research on the poor's survival strategies, the Roman world was not favourable for the poor to establish solid and stable

[204] J. W. Cohoon's Translation (2017). Cf. Garnsey, *Food Supply*, 55-58; Erdkamp, *Grain Market*, 97-98.

[205] David C. Mirhady and Yun Lee Too's translation (2000).

reciprocity, even though their low economic position desperately necessitated the economic mutualism. It was like "prisoner's dilemma"; even though all knew that reciprocity was the best option for survival and they looked for it, the poor ironically could not easily establish it due to distrust with the question, "what if I alone burn my fingers?". It is likely that economic cooperation among the poor was common (§2.4.4). But it was unstable and short-term based, since trustworthy groups and persons could not easily be found in the ethos of distrust. It can be argued that, for the plebs, transient reciprocity could often be established but occasionally jettisoned for their survival (Aesop [Perry], *Fab*. 26[206]). This is not to say that all the plebs did not enjoy a solid reciprocity, but only some of them actually could.

Was the Thessalonian community privileged to enjoy an economically reciprocal relationship? The answer can be positive for three reasons. It is evident that the Thessalonians met most conditions to activate and stabilise reciprocity: trust, time-verification, and contextual necessity. First of all, their relationship was built on trust and love which is the most significant element of reciprocity (1 Thess 4:2-10, §§3.3.1-2). The trust was painted by familial love (ἀγάπη, 1:3; φιλαδελφία, 4:9), not just idealistic but practical (ποιεῖτε αὐτό, 4:10). Second, their trust was time-verified in social conflicts and economic sufferings (3:6; §3.2) and the trust network was possibly being extended to other Christian groups (4:10; cf. 2 Cor 8:1-7). Not only did they endure social and economic predicaments together (1 Thess 3:1-10), but also their mutual love, and possibly economic reciprocity, was strengthened (3:6; 4:9-10). Third, the Thessalonians' economic sufferings derived from their low socio-economic status and conflict with non-believers (§3.2.4) would have triggered mutual exchanges for survival, like other poor communities have done throughout history. It appears that (1) the contextual necessity, especially conflicts with non-believers, stimulated them to begin giving and taking materials or to share meals; (2) the Thessalonians' uncommon love accelerated their reciprocity; and (3) it was reinforced as time passed.

In this process, furthermore, the economic mutualism was characterised by Paul's ideal of God's new family and his eschatology (4:13-5:11, esp. 5:8, 11). The Thessalonian believers accepted Paul's vision of the new family in which members were obliged to share sufferings and materials in φιλαδελφία (3:3; 4:9-10; §3.3.3). It is likely that they also enthusiastically adopted his apocalyptic vision in which they should encourage (παρακαλεῖτε,

206 This fable storifies a fisherman: he was fishing in river, while muddying the water. One of the residents in this area complained to him about stirring up the river as they could not drink clean water. He answered. "but if I don't stir up the river, I will have no choice but to die of starvation".

5:11) and build (οἰκοδομεῖτε, 5:11) each other up in love (5:8) before the day of the Lord (cf. 5:13-14; 4:18). They actually practised these things (ποιεῖτε αὐτό, 4:10; καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε, 5:11). If it is correct both that Paul had in mind familial love in church as an emotional and economic reciprocity and that "the breastplate of love" (5:8) reflects this, then he possibly deemed reciprocity as a defensive armour during a war or conflict in his apocalyptic vision (5:8, 11; cf. 4.18). It is clear that the triad of virtues, faith, love, and hope in 5:8 reminds the recipients of the labour of love in the similar triadic formula in 1:3 in an *inclusio*. This indicates that the meaning of love in 5:8 seems not independent from that of the previous love-related terms (1:3; 2:8; 3:6, 12; 4:9) which are practical actions in sharing materials and suffering together. In particular, in 5:8, Paul likens the love to a breastplate, a "protective covering for the chest in combat",[207] in his instruction on eschatological dualism (5:1-11). This metaphor stems from Isa 59:17, but Paul applies it not to God but to humans and modifies its meaning. In Paul's letters (Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:3-5; Eph 6:11-17; Phil 2:25; cf. 2 Tim 2:3-4), this armour metaphor is closer to his contemporary philosophers' usage in depicting human ethical duty.[208] Moreover, Paul paints the picture of a breastplate as a defensive armour[209] which allows believers to stand up against opponents during apocalyptic conflicts (1 Thess 5:8; Eph 6:11-17; cf. Rom 13:12). This implies that, for Paul, the breastplate of love, which is possibly reciprocity, is an eschatological defensive armour meant to protect them from social conflicts (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5; 4:12) or clashes between light and darkness (2:16; 5:5; cf. Eph 6:10-20; Isa 59:17) until the *parousia* (1 Thess 4:13-5:11; cf. Rom 13:11-14; Eph 11-12). Paul seemed to believe that the Thessalonians could be protected by love, especially economic reciprocity, from social and eschatological conflicts.

All these lead to the conclusion that the poor Christian labourers in Thessalonica had achieved economic reciprocity which Paul wanted to confirm and stabilise through his ecclesiological and apocalyptic visions in his letter. The reciprocity was not only a practical risk management for survival, but also an ethical duty for familial members and a theological agenda in Paul's ecclesiology and eschatology, meant to protect the Thessalonian community.

207 BDAG, 463.

208 Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 297-298.

209 Malherbe rightly points out that "unlike Eph 6, [all] the armor here is defensive" (*Letters to the Thessalonians*, 297).

3.4. Love for the Sake of Security and Peace for the Sake of Love: Redrawing φιλαδελφία in 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

So far, I have collected historical, anthropological, social psychological, and textual evidence to reconstruct a social history of the Thessalonian believers' intergroup and intragroup relationships. The research has helped to build a contextual setting for an alternative exegesis of 1 Thessalonians, especially 4:9-12. In light of this, I have kept suggesting not only that Paul responded to the believers' social and economic sufferings from intergroup conflicts (§3.2.4) but also that he intended to encourage them to fortify solidarity and reciprocity (§3.3.4).

In this section, I will integrate all the evidence, historical snapshots, and suggestions into one scenario, arguing that Paul designed 1 Thess 4:9-12 as a consistent rhetorical pericope, along with other verses, in order to respond to the conflicts between believers and non-believers and to strengthen solidarity and reciprocity in the church in two supportive ways: (1) building up solidarity and economic mutualism (4:9-10a) to overcome conflict with outsiders and its economic effects on security (4:10b-12); and (2) alleviating the conflict and its pernicious impact (4:10b-12) to stabilise the solidarity and reciprocity (4:9-10a). Paul appeared to have in mind the creation of a virtuous circle between intragroup (4:9-10a) and intergroup (4:10b-12) relations. Integrating all the evidence that I have collected, I will now delve into Paul's intention and the Thessalonians' historical context as submerged in 1 Thess 4:9-12 and other verses, while redrawing a more nuanced understanding of φιλαδελφία.

The structure of 1 Thess 4:9-12 is straightforward, consisting of just two short sentences:

> (9a) Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν, (9b) αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοί ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους · (10a) καὶ γὰρ ποιεῖτε αὐτὸ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τοὺς ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ. (10b) παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, περισσεύειν μᾶλλον, (11a) καὶ φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν (11b) καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια (11c) καὶ ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν ὑμῶν, (11d) καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν, (12a) ἵνα περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω (12b) καὶ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε.

Paul introduces the main theme, φιλαδελφία, by using περὶ δέ. He first says that he does not need to write this to the Thessalonians (4:9a), explaining the two reasons for this by adding

two γάρ phrases: because they are taught-by-God (θεοδίδακτοι, 4:9b) and because they are already practising love (ποιεῖτε, 4:10a). He moves to the next sentence with the main verb, παρακαλοῦμεν (4:10b), followed by four infinitive verbs: to do more and more (περισσεύειν μᾶλλον, 4:10b), to aspire to live quietly (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, 4:11a), to mind your own affairs (πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, 4:11b), and to work with your hands (ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν ὑμῶν, 4:11c). He adds to this that he already instructed about these things (4:11d). These four exhortations have two goals: in order that (ἵνα) you may behave becomingly (περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως)[210] toward outsiders (4:12a) and you may depend on "no-one or nothing from outgroups"[211] (4:12b). When it comes to the structure, there is no serious disagreement amongst scholars.

Many Pauline scholars have grappled with the consistency of the rhetorical unit (4:9-12),[212] because Paul squeezes various issues - love, manual labour, a quiet life, decent behaviour towards outsiders, and economic self-sufficiency - into the two short sentences. Correlation between the issues is seemingly opaque. This is why a few scholars - Malherbe, Ernst von Dobschütz, and Hock - have tried to interpret it as a catechetical exhortation.[213] On the other hand, others have associated the rhetorical unit with historical events, such as eschatological laziness or enthusiasm, Gnosticism, or the abuse of the generosity of wealthy members.[214] These suggestions are all possible, but none sufficiently integrates the various issues presented in 4:9-12 as a single unit in a reliable rhetorical and historical setting.[215] The

[210] The phrase περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως denotes practising "the social virtues of seemliness, propriety and orderliness" (Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 251).

[211] For this translation, see §3.3.3.

[212] T. Still, "Interpretive Ambiguities and Scholarly Proclivities in Pauline Studies: A Treatment of Three Texts from 1 Thessalonians 4 as a Test Case," *CBR* 5.2 (2007), 207-219.

[213] Hock insists that "the precept on work was part of Paul's missionary instructions … [and] is to be understood as simply a reminder" (*Tentmaking*, 43). Cf. von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 178; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 252.

[214] See §2.5 and §3.1 (esp. Chapter 3 note 216).

[215] The traditional interpretations of 1 Thess 4:9-12 are not satisfactory for four reasons. First, Paul's eschatological teachings (4:13-5:11) are not strongly connected with the text in his rhetoric (Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 253). Rather, he seems to separate the two rhetorical units. In this emphasis on eschatology, other important political and social aspects of Paul's language in 4:9-12 have been undervalued (cf. Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 521). Second, it is doubtful that τοὺς ἀτάκτους in 5:14 is the significant expression to help to exegete Paul's instruction on manual working in 4:9-12. It does not literally mean the idle but the disorderly (BDAG, 148), and the rhetorical connection between two passages is too weak. The tendency to link the two issues, in fact, reflects 2 Thess 3:10. Third, many scholars tend to depreciate the Thessalonians' unusual love as though they were lazy or exploited other wealthy members. This does not fit with Paul's praise of their mutual love. Furthermore, there is reason to be sceptical of the assumption that there were some wealthy believers in Thessalonica (Chapter 2). Fourth, the various traditional explications neither demonstrate

unity of this pericope under the main theme of φιλαδελφία can be understood by an alternative reading: Paul's attempt to create a virtuous circle between intragroup and intergroup relationships.

First, in the first half of 4:9-12, Paul focuses on the Thessalonians' intragroup cohesion (§3.3.1). The sentence begins with περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας. The περὶ δέ is a rhetorical formula which shifts from the previous issue to a new one that dominates the new rhetorical unit (4:9-12).[216] The brotherly love is the new issue around which all of Paul's sub-instructions revolve. In 4:9-10a, Paul intends to commend the Thessalonians' love by employing special terms and devices, such as φιλαδελφία, *paralipsis*, and θεοδίδακτοι (4:9), and to reinforce their practice of it (4:10a) which embraces an emotional and economic reciprocity (§3.3). What is tricky to explain is the transition from this sentence (4:9-10a) to the next one (4:9-10b-12), because, at first glance, the second part seems only to target intergroup relationships and financial issues (§3.2).[217] Paul, however, provides the hint that the first and second sentences are rhetorically and thematically connected. Proceeding to the second half of the text, he begins with παρακαλοῦμεν as a main verb and adds a fourfold set of instructions to it (4:10b-11). Importantly, the first infinitive of the set is περισσεύειν μᾶλλον (to do [love] more and more). In other words, while Paul fully concentrates on the Thessalonians' intergroup relationships, particularly the conflict with outsiders, in 4:10b-12 as I have suggested (§3.2.4.2) and will argue below in further depth, his first instruction is to love each other more and more (4:10b). This indicates that Paul consciously connects the theme of solidarity with his exhortations on intergroup relationships as though group cohesion is entangled with intergroup conflict and its pernicious economic consequences. For Paul, it appears that loving each other is not only the prime goal in 4:9-10a, but also one of

the consistency of 1 Thess 4:9-12 as a rhetorical unit nor account for all the points presented in it. See also §3.3.1.

216 Most scholars agree that 4:9-12 is a single rhetorical pericope (e.g. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians,* 242; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians,* 283).

217 For that reason, a few scholars have tried to cut the rhetorical unit (4:9-12) into two, 4:9-10a and 4:10b-12, underlining δέ (4:10b) which can imply a distinction from the previous verses. See Dieter Lührmann, "The Beginnings of the Church at Thessalonica" in *Greeks, Romans and Christians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 524; James E. Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 157-163.

However, the δέ can also function as a further explanation of what has been dealt with before. See F. Blass et al., *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 447; cf. Burke, *Family Matters*, 204; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 242.

the major means to deal with intergroup relationships in 4:10b-12. This is more evident if the meaning of 4:10b-12 is clarified.

Second, turning to the second half of the text (4:10b-12), it is highly likely that Paul discusses the Thessalonians' social conflicts and economic sufferings. Paul responds here straightforwardly to the conflict between believers and non-believers in 1 Thess 1:6, 2:14-16, and 3:1-5. He expresses his apprehension about the Thessalonians' social and economic sufferings in persecution by painting the first half of the letter with conflict-related language (1:6; 2:2, 14-16; 3:3-4, 7; §3.2). The description of their sufferings resulting from conflict with non-believers can provide one of the most critical historical settings to understand 1 Thessalonians.[218] Besides, 2:14-16 and 3:1-5 are in the *narratio* which is viewed as connected with the following *exhortatio* (4:1-5:22) in any sense, like "a framework for the exhortation" or as "a transition to the topics to be discussed".[219] If 1:6 should be regarded as a part of the *exordium*,[220] this verse more notably functions to introduce the main themes of the letter. In any case, the Thessalonians' social conflict and sufferings are highly likely related to the following exhortations (4:1-5:22). In particular, it is plausible that 1 Thess 4:9-12 is the response to the intergroup conflict and its consequential economic predicaments, since all his instructions in this text target the Thessalonians' public lives (4:11a-b, 12a) and economic activities (4:11c, 12b). 4:10b-12 is one sentence consisting of intergroup-oriented terms: living quietly (4:11a), minding your own business (4:11b), working with your hands (4:11c), behaving becomingly towards outsiders (4:12a), and being self-sufficient from non-believers (4:12b). These can also be categorised into two aspects of life: socio-political (4:11a-b, 12a) and economic (4:11c, 12b). If these exhortations should be understood together in one specific context, it must be related to the Thessalonians' specific social and economic lives, in particular their struggles. As described in previous sections, the Thessalonian Christians suffered from social conflict (§3.2.3) and its resulting economic predicaments (§3.2.4). This historical reconstruction gives the impression that Paul responds to the social conflict in 4:11a-b and 4:12a and to its economic consequences in 4:11c and 4:12b.

218 Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 93-94; Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 512-530; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 155-170; Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*.

219 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 90; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 60.

220 Wanamaker, *The Thessalonians*, 72-73.

While many commentators agree that the main purpose of this exhortation (4:10b-12) is φιλαδελφία,[221] it also has two sub-purposes: "in order that you may behave becomingly towards outsiders" (4:12a) and "be dependent on no-one or nothing from outgroups" (4:12b). The first goal of Paul's instruction is directed to social relations with outsiders (τοὺς ἔξω). It indicates that the relationship between the Thessalonians and non-believers was strained and needed to be moderated. In other words, Paul's exhortation on "behaving decently towards outsiders" (4:12a) in the *exhortatio* is a remedy of the conflict with non-believers (2:14; 3:1-5; 1:6) presented in the *narratio*. To achieve the goal of peaceful relationships with outsiders (4:12a), the Apostle suggests two strategies: "we exhort (παρακαλοῦμεν)… to aspire to live quietly (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν) and to mind your own affairs (πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια)" (4:11a-b). In antiquity, these phrases were often used to speak of avoidance of social and political conflicts.[222] The verb ἡσυχάζω is occasionally considered as a way of avoiding or alleviating troubles in "the market, theatres, courts of justice, councils, assemblies (ἐκκλησίας), and all meetings and associations (θίασον)" (Philo, *Abr.* 20).[223] Philo contrasts busybodies with those living in stillness, emphasising that to live quietly makes peace (*Abr.* 20, 27, 209). In a few cases, ἡσυχάζω is juxtaposed with the old maxim, "minding one's own business", like in 4:11 (Plato, *Resp.* 6.496D; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 60.27). A tragic figure, Vinicius, lived quietly and minded his own business to avoid conflict and to save his life (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 60.27). Moreover, the expression "minding your own affairs" per se was a common maxim embracing a way of handling conflicts which was encouraged and used not only by social elites and philosophers (Plato, *Resp.* 4.441DE) but also by commoners.[224]

Considering these facts, it is highly likely that Paul urged the Thessalonian believers to live quietly and mind their own affairs (4:11a-b) in order that they might behave decently towards outsiders (4:12a) and ultimately alleviate the conflicts with non-believers presented in the *narratio* (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5). Though the Thessalonians could not live without any contact with non-believers as φιλοτιμεῖσθαι implies (4:11a; cf. 1 Cor 5:10),[225] Paul gave

221 Cf. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 242.

222 Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 96; idem, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 246-252.

223 Philo, *Abr.* 27, 209; Chion, *Epistle* 16.5; Plato, *Resp.* 4.441DE.

224 Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 249; Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 96, 98.

225 The verb φιλοτιμεῖσθαι means "to aspire", referring, in some cases, to the pursuit of public affairs or philanthropic public service (Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 292-293; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 246-247; BDAG, 1059; LSJ, 1941; cf. Rom 12:18). The word functions as an oxymoron, being used with ἡσυχάζειν ("withdrawal from active participation in political and social affairs", Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, 247). This seems to suggest that the believers should inescapably be involved in social activities but should not be engrossed in them (1 Cor 5:10).

them some advice to mitigate the latent cause for social conflicts - not becoming too engaged in public lives by living quietly and minding their own business.

The second goal, communal self-sufficiency (1 Thess 4:12b) along with Paul's exhortation to work with one's hands (4:11c), is by its nature related to the Thessalonians' financial difficulties. As many commentators point out, the believers in Thessalonica were in economic troubles, though its cause is not clearly demonstrated in their studies. Many scholars attribute the economic problem to the Thessalonians' belief system and life attitude, i.e. imminent eschatology or Gnosticism, and its results like laziness or enthusiasm leading to quitting work. Given the rhetorical and historical backdrop described above, it is more plausible to argue that Paul was addressing in 4:11c and 4:12b economic troubles resulting from intergroup conflict and low socio-economic status.

If it is tenable that Paul aims at relieving conflict in 4:11a-b and 4:12a, it is highly likely that the rest of the passage (4:11c, 12b) is also, to some extent, rhetorically connected with the conflict and its economic consequences. Paul already knew that the Thessalonians were in extreme poverty (Chapter 2) and, possibly based on his experience (1 Cor 4:10-12), that conflict with non-believers caused economic predicaments such as job losses, reduced incomes, and hunger (§3.2.4). He was worried about their tight financial budget (1 Thess 2:9). In light of this rhetorical and historical aspect, it makes sense that Paul encouraged them to work with their hands (4:11c) for familial self-sufficiency (4:12b) in order to alleviate the detrimental economic effects of the intergroup conflict on the believers.

As I have argued (§§3.3.3-4), Paul designed the Thessalonian community as a family in which an economic reciprocity needed to be accomplished by working together (4:11c) and sharing materials (4:12b). In antiquity, reciprocity in production and consumption was pivotal for poor families to survive in times of severity (§3.3.4). In this regard, Paul's ideal of familial reciprocity (4:11c, 12b) and the Thessalonians' practice of it (4:9-10a) would have played a fundamental role in cushioning the economic sufferings facing them (§3.2.4.2). This is possibly one of the reasons that some labourers were attracted to this new community.

In the second half of 4:9-12, though Paul responds to conflict (4:11a-b, 12a) and its economic impact on the Thessalonians (4:11c, 12b), the prime goal of this passage (4:10b-12) goes back to building a strong internal solidarity and reciprocity (4:9-10a). The word φιλαδελφία dominates the whole text (4:9-12) in Paul's rhetoric. In other words, all of the instructions in 4:9-12 are targeted at fostering φιλαδελφία entailing group cohesion and economic reciprocity. The Apostle was worried lest intergroup conflicts shake the

Thessalonians' faith and possibly their intragroup cohesion (3:1-5). However, this did not happen (3:6). Paul, nonetheless, appeared to take precautions against the latent threat of intergroup conflict which could devastate the Thessalonians' solidarity. As a result, he exhorted them to mitigate the conflict and its impact for the sake of solidarity (4:10b-12). For Paul, while social conflicts were still stumbling blocks to an emotional and economic reciprocity, circumventing them meant a safe course to strengthen the solidarity.

In sum, Paul intends to create a virtuous circle between intragroup and intergroup relationships in two mutually supportive sentences in 4:9-12. While the first sentence aims at establishing solidarity to overcome intergroup conflict (4:9-10a), the second seeks to circumvent the conflict and its pernicious economic impacts in order to stabilise the cohesion and reciprocity (4:10b-12). It can be encapsulated into two phrases, love for the sake of security against intergroup conflicts (4:9-10a) and peace for the sake of love (4:10b-12). In this virtuous circle, Paul believes that familial love and reciprocity would become stable and solid.

3.5. Status, Relationships, and Identity

I have illustrated the Thessalonians' socio-economic status (Chapter 2), conflicts with non-believers (§3.2), and solidarity in church (§3.3), while revealing that these depictions are well consonant with the social psychological concept of the "strong social identity of minorities" (§§3.2.5, 3.3.2, 1.2.4). This concept developed by SIT/SCT sheds light on the historical interconnection between the three aspects of the Thessalonians, i.e. how socio-economic factors influenced their social relationships and how intergroup conflict and ingroup cohesion were mutually reinforced.

That the Thessalonian Christians had a strong social identity implies many things. First, it is highly likely that their strong social identity was influenced by the socio-economic composition of their church. Many of the Thessalonians were poor free(d) casual workers in a small congregation (Chapter 2). In other words, they were in an economic, social, and numerical minority group. SIT/SCT explain that such a minority tends to identify themselves strongly with a group, leading to depersonalisation. If the group is homogeneous in socio-economic status or in other senses, this tendency is strengthened. According to the theories, this procedure reflects their desire for security. The Thessalonians as minorities possibly underwent this process of identification and depersonalisation. If so, it resulted in their discriminative attitude towards outgroups and favourable actions towards ingroup members.

Second, though the Thessalonians' conflict with outgroups was triggered by their abandonment of the traditional gods, their strong identification with the church underlay and reinforced the conflict. A strong social identity in SIT/SCT means increased propensity to maximise differences from outgroups and to discriminate against them. This tendency is a potential cause for intergroup conflict (§3.2.5). It appears that the tendency was manifested in the Thessalonians community. As the Thessalonians joined and strongly dedicated themselves to a new small group, it is likely that they reshaped or disassociated themselves with their previous relationships in small groups, such as associations, families, working networks, and neighbourhood (§3.2.2). This would have caused their social alienation (§3.2.3) and its consequent economic sufferings (§3.2.4). Third, the Thessalonians enjoyed unusual mutual love and possibly economic reciprocity in church approved by Paul (1:3; 3:12; 4:9-10). This cohesion was a historical corollary of Paul's repetitive teaching of φιλαδελφία in which emotional and economic mutualism was encouraged (4:9-12; §3.3.3). But socio-economic factors cannot be neglected (§3.3.2). It is plausible that, as SIT/SCT indicate, intergroup conflict reinforced the Christian minorities' strong social identity in Thessalonica, making them protect each other from insecurity by cooperating and forming cohesion. This progression would have been facilitated both by their low socio-economic level and by homogeneity in their status.

In sum, the four snapshots of the Thessalonians - low socio-economic status, intergroup conflict, ingroup solidarity, and strong social identity - were intertwined with each other as follows: (1) their similarity in low socio-economic status led to their strong Christian identity which facilitated their ingroup harmony and intergroup tension; (2) they actually experienced unusual ingroup cohesion and serious intergroup conflict, while the intra- and inter-group relationships reinforced each other and further strengthened their social identity; and (3) such a strong social identity, in turn, influenced their conflict with non-believers and reciprocity within church in a vicious or virtuous circle.

Chapter Four

Paul's Letter to a Diverse Community in Corinth: Profiling the Corinthians in Light of Roman Culture

There is a long history of debate over the early Christians' socio-economic status (see §2.1). At the centre of this discussion is the Corinthian community which is often viewed as the archetypal church for understanding the early Christians' status.[1] Though I am not in favour of the idea that all early Christian communities were similar to the Corinthian one,[2] it should be admitted that 1 Corinthians contains relatively abundant and significant clues to the early Christians' socio-economic origins vis-à-vis the other Pauline letters.[3] Therefore, while neither neglecting the significant evidence in the letter nor generalising about the Pauline churches, I will underscore the Corinthians' distinctiveness, especially compared to the relatively homogeneous community of poor free(d) casual craftsmen in Thessalonica depicted in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I will argue that the Corinthian believers can be classified into three distinguishable socio-economic "strata"[4]: the semi-elite by birth, those experiencing economic upward mobility but remaining in low social status, and the poor who scraped a living. In other words, they constituted a heterogeneous community. In order to argue so, first, I will articulate a brief history of Roman Corinth and its culture, trade, industry, and

1 Theissen, *Social Settings*, 69-70; Judge, *Social Pattern*, 60.

2 Cf. Philip A. Harland, "Connections with Elites in the World of the Early Christians," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*, ed. Anthony J. Blasi, P. Turcotte, and Jean Duhaime (Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 2002), 391; Schöllgen, "Die Sozialstruktur," 72-74; Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 94; Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 49-74; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*.

3 Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 94-95.

4 In this chapter, I use "three strata" rather than "three groups" to avoid some misunderstandings. Using the term "group" gives the impression that the Corinthian congregation had political groups or parties of people depending on their social and economic status, a group which had specific goals (cf. 1 Cor 1:12). But "stratum" is a more neutral term just to classify the believers socially and economically. It may be that some people in each stratum had bonds and made political groups. In order to argue this, we need more evidence to connect people in the three strata with certain groups. Thus, the first step is to classify the Corinthians into three strata (Chapter 4), and then to ask further whether they built some groups or parties based on these socio-economic strata (Chapter 5).

Furthermore, when I articulate the "three" strata, my purposes are both to overcome a binary model, rich or poor, which has been traditionally argued for, and to clarify that the Corinthian church is a more diverse community in legal, social, and economic senses than many scholars have assumed.

residents in around the first century CE, while focusing especially on socio-economic mobility (§4.2). Second, in light of the history and culture of Roman Corinth, I will examine 1 Cor 1:26-31, 4:6-13, 1:5, and 11:17-22 which contain some clues to the composition of the Corinthian congregation (§4.3.1). Third, the examination will be underpinned by a prosopography of six notable Corinthian figures and by specific historical events reflected in Paul's instructions in 1 Cor 5-11, such as law suits (6:1-11), divorce (7:1-16), meat consumption (8:1-13; 10:23-33), and invitation to a private house for a meal (10:27; §4.3.2).

4.1. A History of Previous Studies

As for the early Christians' socio-economic standing, 1 Corinthians has drawn significant attention from many biblical scholars. They have furiously debated over it for the last four decades.[5] Three key issues are: (1) the exegesis of 1 Cor 1:26 and 11:17-22; (2) the prosopography of seventeen Corinthian figures, in particular of Crispus, Gaius, and Erastus; and (3) the identification of possible meeting places for worship and the Lord's Supper.

First, 1 Cor 1:26 and 11:17-22, which are at the heart of this debate,[6] have been read extensively through theological, sociological, economic, cultural, philological and intertextual lenses.[7] Most commentators agree that Paul's prime intention in 1:26 is not to

[5] Theissen, *Social Setting*; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*; Meeks, *Urban Christians*; Horrell, *Social Ethos*; Schöllgen, "Die Sozialstruktur," 71-82; D. Sänger, "Die δυνατοί in 1 Kor 1:26," *ZNW* 76 (1985), 285-291; J. Bohatec, "Inhalt und Reihenfolge der 'Schlagworte der Erlösungsreligion,' 1 Kor. 1.26-31," *TZ* 4 (1948), 252-271.

[6] W. Wuellner mentions that "no other single verse of the entire New Testament was more influential in shaping popular opinion and exegetical judgement alike on the social origins of early Christianity than 1 Corinthians 1:26" ("The Sociological Implications of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 Reconsidered," in *Studia Evangelica VI*, ed. E. A. Livingstone [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973], 666).

However, though its importance for the study of profiling the Corinthians should be acknowledged, I am skeptical of the idea that the verse reflects a general description of all early Christians' socio-economic status. Cf. Timothy A. Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom, Stoic Philosophy, and the Ancient Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47-48.

[7] For 1 Cor 1:26, see K. Schreiner, "Zur biblischen Legitimation des Adels: Auslegungsgeschichte zu 1. Kor. 1,26-29," *ZKG* 85 (1975), 317-357; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 102-107; Wuellner, "Sociological Implications," 666-672; Deissmann, *Ancient East*, 8; Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 189; Sänger, "1 Kor 1:26," 285-291; L. E. Keck, "God the Other Who Acts Otherwise: An Exegetical Essay on 1 Cor 1:26-31," *WW* 16 (1996), 437-443; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 70-73; Gail R. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality," *JBL* 109 (1990), 259-267; Bohatec, "1 Kor. 1.26-31," 252-271; Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Structure of 1 Corinthians* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 197-236.

For 11:17-22, see Theissen, *Social Setting*, 145-174; Neil Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification and the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34)," in Blanton IV and Pickett, *Paul and Economics*, 245-278;

reveal the Corinthians' social or economic status but to build his theological argument about election and boasting in a wider literary context.[8] This means that the socio-economic aspect of this verse is more incidental than intentional, and thereby its weight as evidence in disclosing the Corinthians' socio-economic origin should not be overstated.[9] Nonetheless, regardless of Paul's conscious and theological intention, the three words in the verse - σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς - embody the social and possibly the economic profile of the Corinthians.[10] The issue is what exactly these three adjectives denote and how ambiguous or explicit their meanings are. One more important issue at stake is how to construe the οὐ πολλοί in the same verse.[11] Some scholars (usually the Old Consensus) underline "most are not", while others (the New Consensus) "some are". This can raise a statistical question as to what percentage of the Corinthians the οὐ πολλοί indicates: 2, 5, 10, or 20 per cent?[12] This cannot be deduced only by reading 1 Cor 1:26, but in tandem with other evidence. As the exact definitions of σοφοί, δυνατοί, εὐγενεῖς, and οὐ πολλοί are somewhat opaque, their meanings have been fleshed out with other passages, most importantly with 4:6-13 and 11:17-22.

While it is generally agreed that 1 Cor 1:26 plays a critical role in unravelling the Corinthians' "social" level, many scholars have suggested that their "economic"

Luise Schottroff, "Holiness and Justice: Exegetical Comments on 1 Corinthians 11.17-34," *JSNT* 23.79 (2001), 51-60; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 118-122; Demetrius C. Passakos, "Eucharist in First Corinthians: A Sociological Study," *RB* 104 (1997), 192-210; C. L. Porter, "An Interpretation of Paul's Lord's Supper Texts: 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 and 11:17-34," *Enc* 50 (1989), 29-45; Andrew McGowan, "The Myth of the 'Lord's Supper': Paul Eucharistic Meal Terminology and Its Ancient Reception," *CBQ* 77.3 (2015), 503-521; cf. David G. Horrell, "Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre," *NTS* 50 (2004), 349-369; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1983), 153-161.

8 Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 82; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 71; idem, "Social Conflicts," 375; O'Day, "1 Corinthians 1:26-31," 264; Wuellner, "Sociological Implications," 671.

9 Cf. Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 105.

10 Dale B. Martin accurately points out that "we cannot be content to outline Paul's language purely in theological terms; we must also examine how that theological language relates to social structures, conflicts between groups of people, and struggles for power" (*Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990], 146; *The Corinthian Body* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995], 61). See also Theissen, *Social Setting*, 71-72; A. D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 41-45.

11 Meggitt rightly notes that "ironically the text has been intrinsic to both the 'Old' and 'New' consensuses, providing a keystone for their respective reconstructions of Christian origins" (*Poverty and Survival*, 102).

12 Cf. Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 116.

characteristics can be further illuminated by Paul's exhortation on a proper supper of the Lord (11:17-22). Although it is certain that there were factions in the celebration of this meal, the specific backdrop and cause for the conflict remains contentious. A few scholars insist that this issue of conflict had nothing to do with socio-economic stratification and was basically theological or episodic.[13] Many commentators, however, have favoured Theissen's socio-cultural approach to the Lord's Supper which discloses that the poor were treated differently or discriminated against by the rich in line with some general ancient dining customs.[14] Recent readings focus on a nuanced reconstruction of τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (the have-nots), "a particular [dining] habit",[15] and the believers' meeting places.[16] Based on this social, cultural and archaeological reconstruction "if class conflict is clearly attested in 1 Cor. 11:17-34", as Meggitt also admits, "then we have firm evidence that at least some members of the Pauline communities came from the higher levels of first-century society".[17] If not, of course, this cannot be easily corroborated.

Second, prosopographical evidence of seventeen Corinthian individuals has been taken as significant to undergird Paul's general description of the Corinthian community (1 Cor 1:26; 11:17-34).[18] Scholars in the New Consensus often agree that seven to nine out of seventeen individuals - Aquila, Priscilla, Stephanas, Erastus, Sosthenes (probably not a

13 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 118-122; Antoinette C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 106-107; J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910; repr., 1977), 283; Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 250-256; cf. Horrell, "Domestic Space," 349-369.

14 John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor*. 27.1; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 145-174; idem, "Social Conflicts," 377-381; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*, 153-161; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 67-70; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 534; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 111; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 241-252; H. -J. Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1982), 285-332; P. Lampe, "Das korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenistisch Mahlpraxis und paulinischer Theologia Crucis (1 Kor 11,17-34)," *ZNW* 82 (1991), 183-213; S. W. Henderson, "'If anyone Hungers …': An Integrated Reading of 1 Cor 11.17-34," *NTS* 48 (2002), 195-208; R. A. Campbell, "Does Paul Acquiesce in Divisions at the Lord's Supper?" *NTS* 33 (1991), 61-70; Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 245-278.

15 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 151.

16 For the probable meeting places, see note 26.

17 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 118.

18 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 73-99; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 128-153; Edwin A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community: Part II," *JRH* 1.3 (1961), 128-130; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 55-63; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 197-202; Longenecker, "Socio-Economic Profiling," 45-48; Friesen, "Poverty," 352-357; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 96-101; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 46-67; John K. Goodrich, "Erastus, *Quaestor* of Corinth: The Administrative Rank of ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (Rom 16.23) in an Achaean Colony," *NTS* 56.1 (2010), 90-115.

Corinthian), Crispus, Phoebe, Gaius, and Titius Justus - can be classified into the upper or middle societal echelons (possibly PS3, 4, and 5).[19] On the other hand, some others, such as Meggitt and Friesen, are sceptical of this categorisation, since the information on those figures in the Pauline letters and Acts is neither sufficient nor specific enough to indicate their socio-economic status.[20] They also think that other scholars' evaluations of the evidence are too optimistic.[21]

Third, one additional issue at stake is where the Corinthians gathered for worship and the Lord's Supper: wealthy members' private villas or smaller domestic places? Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's argument is well-known; wealthy believers' villas were the possible meeting places, and the division of the homes into smaller spaces such as *triclinium* and *atrium* was one of several factors leading to intragroup factions regarding the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34).[22] He argues that "the first-class believers were invited into the *triclinium* while the rest stayed outside" in the *atrium*.[23] This idea has been reinforced by Theissen's cultural approach to the text and the New Consensus,[24] though Horrell's recent suggestion adds further complexity to the issue.[25] Horrell argues that we should also consider the probability that non-elites' humbler semi-residential buildings, possibly within *insulae*, had second or third floors which might have accommodated all the Corinthian believers or

19 As for the examples, see Theissen, "Social Structure," 75-83; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 89-91; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 55-63.

20 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 128-153.

21 Friesen, "Poverty," 357.

22 Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*, 153-161; idem, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 182-193; Lampe, "Korinthische Herrenmahl," 183-213.

23 Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*, 159.

24 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 145-174.

25 Horrell, "Domestic Space," 349-369. Though Horrell is inclined to the idea of "a considerable degree of social diversity" in the Corinthian church (*Social Ethos*, 101; "Domestic Space," 358), he has to a degree accepted some points of Meggitt's critique on this view ("Domestic Space," 357-359; cf. Adams, *Meeting Places*, 6). He contends "it is at the very least uncertain whether any of the Corinthian Christians would likely have owned a large, sumptuous villa" ("Domestic Space," 359).

smaller groups of them (cf. Acts 20:7-12).[26] This idea has often aligned itself with the Old Consensus.[27]

Concerning the three issues stated above, four important points can be made. Firstly, the three key issues are mutually dependent. How one interprets 1 Cor 1:26 and 11:17-34 is influenced by the interpretation of prosopographical evidence and vice versa. The issue of where the Corinthians gathered is interwoven with certain Corinthian individuals' economic status and the disunity at the Lord's Supper.[28] In other words, this scattered evidence should not be treated separately but rather integrated to paint a full picture of the Corinthians' socio-economic origin. In this matter, a broader synthesis of all the available evidence is far more important than a sum of the individual pieces of evidence.

The second point, similarly, is that the process of synthesising the evidence is like connecting many dots. It needs to be acknowledged that each point of evidence in 1 Corinthians is not clear enough to provide a vivid vignette of many socio-economic aspects of the Corinthian community. Much of it is rather minimal and vague. Connecting the various points of the data in the letter, however, can form a clearer line which reveals a sharper portrait of the Corinthians. The more evidence one connects, the more vivid the picture gets. Thirdly, several new points of evidence remain relatively untouched: attitudes towards working, marriage, divorce, education, meat, etc. For example, though people's view on working with their hands is one of the most significant demarcations between social elites and commoners in antiquity,[29] this has not fully been treated (cf. 1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 4:11).

Fourthly, the multidimensional meaning of "status" embodies broadly its social, legal, and economic aspects (cf. §2.1).[30] These three facets of status have often been muddled up and treated as if the three are proportional with each other. However, there was

26 Horrell, "Domestic Space," 369. Adams further suggests other possible meeting places in Corinth, like a rented dining space, a barn, and a large garden (*Meeting Places*, 30).

For the general discussion of early Christians' meeting places, see Adams, *Meeting Places*; R. W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004); D. L. Balch, *Roman Domestic Art and Early House Churches* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); L. M. White, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture. Vol. 1, Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1990); Jewett, "Tenement Churches," 23-43; idem, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 64-69; Oakes, *Reading Romans*.

27 Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 264-265.

28 Cf. Horrell, "Domestic Space," 349-369.

29 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 62-91.

30 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 54.

of the status inconsistency. Legally high status was not a certificate of economic affluence, while wealthy people did not always enjoy high social status. For example, some freedmen (low legal status) achieved economic success (high economic status) but were not recognised as socially influential (low social status).[31] Even some slaves were wealthier than freeborn people.[32] This means that, when ancient people are profiled, their statuses should be evaluated in at least the social, economic and legal dimensions.

In this chapter, therefore, I will profile the Corinthians socially, legally, and economically through a synthesis of the clues which can be connected together, some of which have not been elaborated before or need to be reconsidered.

4.2. Roman Corinth and Culture

4.2.1. The Corinthian Dream: A Land of Opportunity

Throughout history, dramatic social changes after wars, political revolutions, or radical agricultural and industrial developments have created niches for upward economic and then social mobility.[33] The Roman Corinth in which Paul landed saw such an upheaval in its complete demolition after the Achaean war in 146 BCE and particularly in its restoration from 44 BCE onward. This war, though tragic, meant that Corinth could be a land of opportunity for economic and political success for some colonists and immigrants during the reconstruction. As for this history of Corinth, certain questions can be raised and need to be answered: how grave was the war, how was the city newly rebuilt, to what degree was socio-economic "mobility"[34] seen in this city, and most importantly, how did this mobility actually take place?

Greek Corinth had enjoyed economic, social, cultural, and political privileges through its geographical advantages in the Mediterranean world until the Achaean war (cf.

31 Joshel, *Legal Status*, 78-85.

32 Imperial slaves or freedmen are good examples of this. See Harland, "Connections with Elites," 396; Joshel, *Legal Status*, 78-85; 83; T. M. Finn, "Social Mobility, Imperial Civil Service and the Spread of Early Christianity," *StPatr* 17 (1982), 32.

33 Cf. W. Runciman, "Accelerating Social Mobility: The Case of Anglo-Saxon England," *P&P* 104 (1984), 3-30.

34 When I use "mobility" in this thesis, it indicates two things which I will deal with separately: "social" and "economic" mobility. And it does not refer only to extreme changes (from slaves or freedmen to senators, equites, or decuriones) but includes less extreme cases in small groups. For instance, one's change from PS6 to PS4 or PS5 can be deemed "economic mobility".

Cicero, *Leg. man*. 5).[35] The city was "the master of two harbours" (δυεῖν λιμένων ὢν κύριος, Strabo, *Geogr*. 8.6.20) connected by the *diolkos*, a four-mile paved roadway. This traffic system of intersecting sea and land roads stretched to many prominent cities.[36] Strabo witnessed that the strategic location for trade led to "wealthy Corinth" (ὁ δὲ Κόρινθος ἀφνειός, *Geogr*. 8.6.20).[37] Brisk commercial trade took place along with cultural, religious, and intellectual exchange.[38] As its economic and political influence extended, it was no surprise that Corinth became a leader of the Achaean League in the mid-second century BCE and therefore found itself in the midst of delicate diplomatic and economic matters.

Corinth underwent drastic changes which began with the Achaean war in 146 BCE.[39] The war was a historical corollary of the long-running tension between Corinth and Sparta,[40] as well as Rome's expansion, intervention in the tension, and desire to disband the Achaean League.[41] The Achaean League leaders declared war on Sparta, Rome's ally, while rejecting the Romans' interference.[42] But their army was annihilated by the Roman legions on the Isthmus (Pausanias, *Descr*. 2.1.2; Strabo, *Geogr*. 8.4.8, 8.6.23). After the defeat, Corinth was sacked, burned, and deserted while its inhabitants were killed, sold into slavery or fled (Cicero, *Tusc*. 3.53-54; Strabo, *Geogr*. 8.6.23, 10.5.4; Pausanias, *Descr*. 2.1.2, 7.16.8). Ancient writers report that Corinth was laid waste and its walls and buildings were all destroyed (Pausanias, *Descr*. 2.1.2; Diodorus, *Library of History* 32.27.1, 32.4.5), and remained abandoned for a long time (Strabo, *Geogr*. 8.6.23); "not even a trace is left" (*Anthologia Graeca* [Antipater of Sidon] 9.151; cf. *Anthologia Graeca* [Polystratus] 7.297;

35 For the description of Greek Corinth's development and prosperity, see James R. Harrison, Introduction: Excavating the Urban Life of Roman Corinth," in *The First Urban Churches: Roman Corinth*, ed. James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 1-7; J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 BC* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Michael D. Dixon, *Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Corinth, 338-196 B.C* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

36 Donald W. Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8-14; James R. Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome I: 228 B.C. - 267 A.D.," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen* Welt II.7.1. ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 441.

37 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 50-52; Susan E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 158-161.

38 Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 445-446.

39 Cf. Robin Waterfield, *Taken at the Flood: The Roman Conquest of Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 229-232.

40 In the second century BCE, Sparta joined and left the Achaean League four times and its caprice was one of the triggers for the war.

41 Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 458-462; Waterfield, *Roman Conquest*, 222-223.

42 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 14-15.

Cicero, *Agr.* 2.32). Though it was not the total demolition historically, it is safe to assume that the Roman soldiers ravaged and ransacked Corinth.[43]

A new era of Corinth commenced with Julius Caesar's plan to re-found it as *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis* in 44 BCE (Diodorus, *Library of History* 32.27.1; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 43.50.3-5). Caesar's blueprint was to overlay the old Greek city with Roman town-planning, laws, culture, and administrative systems to establish a Roman bridgehead and economic vantage point for eastern campaigns.[44]

The preliminary and most significant step for Caesar's re-foundation of Corinth was to send Romans or Romanised Greeks[45] as colonists including freedmen, the urban poor, and a sprinkling of his veterans.[46] Strabo noted that the colonists were mostly freedmen (*Geogr*. 8.6.23), while Appian learned by inquiry (πυνθάνομαι) that they were the urban needy (τῶν ἀπόρων) in Rome (*Hist. rom*. 8.1.136; cf. *Anthologia Graeca* [Crinagoras] 9.284).[47] Such a historical record is to a degree underpinned by archaeological evidence.[48] After examining the duoviral coinage and epigraphy of Roman Corinth, Antony J. S. Spawforth argues that many of the original colonists were poor freedmen, though some of the freedmen were wealthy and politically influential.[49] He further surmises that "colonial Corinth's reputation for being 'freedman-friendly' continued to attract freedmen in the years after the foundation".[50] John R. Lanci also suggests, based on the fact that the colonists looted the Greek graves for necrocorinthian wares (Strabo, *Geogr*. 8.6.23), that "they were strapped for

43 Not only have archaeological remains, such as stamps, bowls, and coins, inscriptions and intact buildings, from the interim period (146-44 BCE) been excavated, but also Cicero, visiting around 79-77 BCE, saw some native Corinthians who were slaves (*Tusc*. 3.53). See Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 494; Guy D. R. Sanders, "Urban Corinth: An Introduction," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, ed. Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard Theological Studies, 2005), 22; Sarah A. James, "The Last of the Corinthians? Society and Settlement from 146 to 44 BCE," in Friesen, James, and Schowalter, *Corinth in Contrast*, 25-27; Mary E. H. Walbank, "The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth," *JRA* 10 (1997), 95-97.

44 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 16-17; Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 95-130.

45 Benjamin W. Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel N. Schowalter, and James C. Walters (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 22.

46 Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 107; Millis, "Colonists," 13-35; A. J. S. Spawforth, "Roman Corinth: The Formation of a Colonial Elite," in *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects*, ed. A. D. Rizakis (Athens, 1996), 167-182.

47 The verb πυνθάνομαι implies the credibility of Appian's report.

48 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 167-182; cf. Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 97-98, 107; Millis, "Colonists," 21-23.

49 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 169.

50 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 170; cf. Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 497.

cash".[51] Along with many poor freedmen, it is probable that a small number of veterans were also sent to Corinth (Strabo, *Geogr*. 17.3.15; Plutarch, *Caes*. 57.8).[52] As a result, it is highly likely that the population in Roman Corinth in the early first century CE consisted of the descendants of colonists including many poor freedmen and a few veterans, new immigrants looking for economic opportunities,[53] and marginalised Greek natives classified as *incolae* (resident aliens).[54]

Though it took some time, Corinth regained its past commercial reputation in around the late first century BCE.[55] One thing which was not changed after the war in Corinth was its strategic location for commerce and trade, though the trade route had barely been used for almost one century since 146 BCE.[56] Taking its geographical advantage, Corinth gradually recovered as a commercial centre. As Donald W. Engels points out, manufacturing, market exchange, and trade were substantially revitalised under Augustus, making Corinth a wealthy service city again (cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Cor*. 36).[57] One of the manifest results of this restoration was that the Isthmian Games - one of the biggest festivals in the Mediterranean world - was held again under the supervision of Corinth in 6 or 2 BCE for the first time since the Achaean war (*Corinth* VIII.3 no. 151-153).[58] When Paul landed in Corinth, the city was still reaching its zenith as an economic and political hub in Achaea while its commercial opportunities were attracting new immigrants.[59]

51 John R. Lanci, *A New Temple for Corinth: Rhetorical and Archaeological Approaches to Pauline Imagery* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 27; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2003), 2.

52 Millis, "Colonists," 17-21; Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 107; Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 170-171.

53 Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 497.

54 Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 107; James, "Society and Settlement," 37; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 70. The resident aliens (*incolae*) were socially and politically marginalised in Corinth since they as non-citizens and non-Romans could neither vote nor hold magistracies.

55 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 19; Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 107-130.

56 Millis, "Colonists," 33-34; M. Lawall, "Amphoras and Hellenistic Economies: Addressing the (Over)Emphasis on Stamped Amphora Handles," in *Making, Moving and Managing: The New World of Ancient Economies, 323-31 BC*, ed. Z. H. Archibald, J. K. Davies, and V. Gabrielsen (Oxford: Oxbow, 2005), 214.

57 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 19, 121-142.

58 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 19; Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 503; cf. Elizabeth R. Gebhard, "The Isthmian Games and the Sanctuary of Poseidon in the Early Empire," in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period*, ed. T. Gregory (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology), 78-94; M. Kajava, "When Did the Isthmian Games Return to the Isthmus? (Rereading *Corinth* 8.3.153)," *CP* 97 (2002), 168-178.

59 Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 503; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 33-39.

Poor colonists and immigrants, not to mention wealthy businessmen (cf. Cicero, *Fam*. 13.21, 22, 25), harvested the benefits of revitalised trade and markets. Some of them and their descendants climbed up the economic and social ladders by exploiting social fluidity after the war. Several biblical scholars have assumed that Roman Corinth provided socio-economic mobility for its inhabitants, though the evidence presented by them is circumstantial.[60] They suggest that the rapid economic growth and social change of Corinth from 44 BCE onward created an ethos for individuals to succeed in business and in turn, though far more difficult, to hold civic office. This assumption can be undergirded by classical scholars' studies of social mobility in the Greco-Roman world.[61] There is a general agreement that some freedmen and their descendants entered the ruling classes on the basis of their economic success. After meeting more complex conditions like social connections with the elite, they replaced old families who held office in many cities, especially in Ostia and Pompeii.[62] Even among the pantomime artists, L. Aurelius Pylades became a patron of a mime association, a priest, and a joint-mayor in turn (*ILS* 5186; cf. *CIL* 8.11824).[63] Henrik Mouritsen further argues that the social mobility was "an integral part of the structure of Roman Pompeii".[64] Nonetheless, many Roman sources tell us that, although some freedmen collected riches (cf. Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 51.3.3; Juvenal, *Sat*. 1.40; *CIL* 10.6488),[65] many of them failed to gain social recognition and rather were subjected to satire (Lucian, *Tim.* 22-23).[66] The common satire was that they as nouveaux riches were uneducated and

60 Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 23-24; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 2, 74-75; Timothy L. Carter, "'Big Men' in Corinth," *JSNT* 66 (1997), 63; Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 20-22; cf. Benjamin W. Millis, "The Local Magistrates and Elite of Roman Corinth," in Friesen, James, and Schowalter, *Corinth in Contrast*, 38-53; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 191-192; Winter, *After Paul*, 4-7.

61 For the classical scholars' research on social mobility, see H. Mouritsen, "Mobility and Social Change in Italian Towns during the Principate," in *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the Consumer City*, ed. H. M. Parkins (London: Routledge, 1997), 57-82; idem, *The Freedmen*, esp. 206-278; N. Purcell, "The Apparitores: A Study of Social Mobility," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 51 (1983), 125-173; R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), esp. 196-208; P. Lopéz Barja de Quiroga, "Freedmen Social Mobility in Roman Italy," *Historia* 44.3 (1995), 326-348; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 98-104.

Although many classical scholars agree that social mobility has been attested in Roman literature and archeological evidence, why and how it happened is controversial (Mouritsen, "Social Change," 57-80).

62 Mouritsen, "Social Change," 57.

63 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 101.

64 Mouritsen, "Social Change," 78; cf. Lopéz Barja de Quiroga, "Social Mobility," 326.

65 For the rich freedmen, see Mouritsen, *The Freedmen*, 228-247.

66 Lopéz Barja de Quiroga, "Social Mobility," 326.

insolent. Petronius in his novel created a freedman character, Trimalchio, who is wealthy but vulgar and arrogant (*Satyricon* 26-78; cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* 1.101-106). A freed teacher, Palaemon, actually earned 400,000 sesterces annually because of his good memory and fluent speech, but he remained arrogant (Suetonius, *Gramm*. 23). In other words, the "Trimalchio-type freedmen"[67] were often seen in many urban cities including Corinth, though their social success was less frequently achieved because of their disrespectable social origin and manners. In this regard, their children were in a better position for social mobility.

It is plausible that Corinth witnessed upward socio-economic mobility more than other cities in the first centuries BCE and CE. Five more points of evidence for this can be listed. First, colonists in Corinth could easily and freely access infrastructure and capital. It is highly likely that not only was land allocated to the first colonists (cf. Appian, *Hist. rom*. 8.1.136),[68] but they also renovated and used old Greek buildings without strict restrictions.[69] Furthermore, some of the colonists dug open the Greek sepulchres, found necrocorinthian ware, established a market for it, and sold it at a great price (Strabo, *Geogr*. 8.6.23). All these, the allotment of land, use of existing structures, and acquisition of initial capital, were indispensable stepping-stones for poor freedmen to create and fuel their own business and to accumulate wealth.

Second, it can be assumed that many of the colonists as freedmen had a trade or skill (§2.4.5).[70] There is a general agreement that one of the goals of Caesar's re-foundation of Corinth was to establish an economic hub in the eastern regions.[71] This may explain why he sent freedmen to Corinth who had professional skills. If this is true, their commercial and trade know-how would have facilitated their settlement and financial self-sufficiency or success. Considering this, the overall economic growth of the city was no surprise.[72] It is not a coincidence that some new industries, such as lamp-making and pottery, were created and

67 Many classical scholars have dubbed the rich but uneducated freedmen "Trimalchio-type".

68 Engels roughly estimates that it was "perhaps 10 to 12 iugera (2.53-3.0 hectares; 6.25-7.5 acres) per colonist" (*Roman Corinth*, 67). Cf. Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 99; L. J. F. Keppie, *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy: 47-14 B.C* (London: British School at Rome, 1983), 87-88.

69 Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 509-521; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 19; Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 111-116.

70 Walbank, "Roman Corinth," 107; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 90.

71 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 175.

72 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 66-67.

developed in around the first century BCE.[73] Engels attributes the rapid economic development of Corinth largely to the colonists' "talent and creativity".[74]

Third, Corinth held many festivals, among which is the Isthmian Games in the second and fourth years of an *Olypiad*. A myriad of travellers came to the city as spectators and contestants for the Isthmian Games during spring (Plutarch, *Quaest. conv*. 8.4.1-5; Dio Chrysostom, *Cor*. 37),[75] while inhabitants supplied food, tents, accommodation, and transport for the visitors.[76] The wealthiest citizens, like On. Comelius Pulcher, were specially elected as benefactors or agonothetes and supported the festival at their own massive expense.[77] Such a festival in which a considerable sum of money was in circulation would have been a great opportunity for commoners' financial gain (economic mobility), while wealthy people could gain honour and social recognition (social mobility).

Fourth, Roman Corinth was more tolerant of those in low social and legal classes than other cities. A good example of this is that Caesar permitted freedmen to be *duoviri* in Corinth though Augustus revoked this unusual policy.[78] This means that some freedmen and their descendants had enjoyed exceptional prospects to hold office as long as they were rich and honourable.[79] It is easy to imagine that, even if only a few of those of servile origin became magistrates, many others could more easily climb the social ladder in lower positions or in smaller groups.

Fifth, archaeological evidence strengthens such a picture of socio-economic mobility. After the Achaean war, the old Greek elites needed to be replaced by new faces. Many historical figures who are deemed as freedmen actually dominated the upper echelons and became local magistrates.[80] Spawforth argues that Gnaeus Babbius Philinus achieved economic success and expanded his social influence as a high official under Augustus (*Corinth* VIII.2 no. 132) in spite of his humble beginnings. His progeny, the Babbii, also became notable benefactors and held civic office (*SIG*^{3} 825C-D).[81] Antonius' family is

73 For the development of Corinth's manufactures, see Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 33-39.

74 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 66.

75 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 51-52.

76 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 57-58.

77 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18.

78 Susan M. Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen During the Late Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 63; Mouritsen, *The Freedmen*, 74-75.

79 Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 18.

80 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 169-170.

81 Engels further comments that "the social mobility of Babbius [and Antonius] was probably repeated many times in the new city" (*Roman Corinth*, 69). See also Spawforth, "Roman Corinth,"

another example of social mobility taking place over multiple generations.[82] In light of this, Spawforth claims that freedmen broke into the upper economic and social classes in Corinth.[83]

Considering these, it can be argued that, compared to other urban cities, Corinthian society had a greater degree of social and economic fluidity from 44 BCE onward. In the mid-first century CE, Corinth still provided significant economic opportunities for immigrants.[84] When Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, Corinth may have been an attractive option for a considerable number of them who were craftsmen like Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3; Rom 16:3-5), possibly because it had established a favourable environment to start business and accumulate wealth.[85]

The process of colonists' and immigrants' steady or radical advancement in socio-economic positions over generations can be summarised as follows: (1) Caesar's re-foundation of Corinth after the Achaean war led the city to a dramatic change which created social fluidity and economic opportunities; (2) some colonists and immigrants who were freedmen succeeded in commerce and trade and amassed riches by taking advantage of free land and infrastructure; (3) a few of them expanded their social and political power as benefactors on the basis of their wealth, and their descendants broke into the upper social ranks; (4) many freedmen, of course, failed to succeed in business and probably a majority of them were far from social success. Social mobility was far more difficult than economic mobility.[86]

4.2.2. Status Inconsistency and Competitive Culture

Roman Corinth was a land of opportunity for those of low socio-economic status. It is highly likely that this ethos created several social phenomena, such as status inconsistency and a competitive culture. Although opportunities for economic success were open even to those of servile origins, only some of them realised their dreams through commercial competition.

169; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 48; Larry L. Welborn, "Inequality in Roman Corinth: Evidence from Diverse Sources Evaluated by a New-Ricardian Model," in Harrison and Welborn, *Roman Corinth*, 59-60; Millis, "Local Magistrates," 39-41.

82 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 170.

83 Spawforth, "Roman Corinth," 169-170.

84 Corinthians were still renovating some old Greek buildings and constructing many new buildings in the first and second century CE. See Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 509-520.

85 Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome," 503.

86 Cf. Millis, "Local Magistrates," 38-53; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 270.

Furthermore, only a small number of the successful businessmen were recognised as socially and politically influential through competition for honour. In other words, many Corinthians experienced status inconsistency and were ensnared in competition for economic and social success.

When it comes to status inconsistency, it can be easily assumed that some Corinthians of servile origins succeeded in business but failed to gain social power. While their original status was far lower than their achieved status, their present social and political status was lower than their economic status (Suetonius, *Gramm*. 23; Petronius, *Satyricon* 26-78; cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* 1.101-106).[87] Such a person would have experienced status inconsistency between past and present, social and economic, or attributed and achieved positions. They possibly made every effort to gain social recognition and to expunge the shadow of a servile past.[88] In this atmosphere, it is likely that status-hungry people were common in Corinth.

Second, it seems that a competitive culture was accelerated by an imbalance between scarce resources or honours and many competitors for them. There is a general agreement that competition for honour was ubiquitous in the Greco-Roman world (§5.2).[89] Martial depicts this sarcastically (*Epigr.* 10.70):

> Torquatus has a mansion four miles from the city:
> Otacilius bought a tiny farm at the same place.
> Torquatus built heated baths shining with many-coloured marble:
> Otacilius organized a kettle. …
> When Torquatus was consul, Otacilius was street-warden.[90]

It is likely that Corinth as a land of opportunity made the competition more intense and brutal, as it drove Corinthians to perennially seek economic success and social honour, power, and influence. In other words, the fact that the gate for economic and social success was open to many means that competition became fiercer. The fierce competition resulted in some people using immoral means of gaining materials and honour (cf. Dio Chrysostom,

87 Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 73.
88 Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 23; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 123-125, 188.
89 MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 61-62, 125; Malina, *New Testament World*.
90 Lendon's translation (*Empire of Honour*, 100).

Virt. 9; Apuleius, *Metam,* 9.33-34, 10.18-35).[91] It seems that commercially successful freedmen especially endeavoured not only to hold office but also to become leaders and benefactors in voluntary associations and small groups by any means. They were obsessive about attaining honour through education for themselves or their children.[92] Acquiring wisdom through education was especially crucial for them, because it could make them overcome their lowly birth.[93] In order to elevate themselves above others, they displayed and boasted of their distinctiveness in many aspects, such as wealth, wisdom,[94] marriage, religion, name, and social influence.[95] It is plausible to say, accordingly, that Alciphron's description of Corinth as exemplifying "the sordidness of the rich and the misery of the poor" (*Ep.* 3.60.1) was indicative of this competitive ethos.

4.3. Diversity in Socio-Economic Status in the Corinthian Community

Many scholars have suggested that the Corinthian community was a mirror of Roman Corinth whose residents varied more greatly in socio-economic status than other cities.[96] Although the composition of the population in Corinth is not necessarily reflected in that of the Corinthian congregation, the social and economic context can help to explain particular features of the church presented in Paul's letters. In this section, I will revisit Paul's descriptions of them in light of the history, culture, and population of Corinth to suggest that we need at least three distinct "strata" to classify the Corinthian believers: (1) "semi-elites" born to relatively respectable families (probably PS3 and 4); (2) those who succeeded in business but failed to be recognised as socially and politically influential (PS3, 4, and 5);[97] and (3) those of low socio-economic and legal levels (around PS6). These strata can be called respectively "the semi-elite",[98] "(economically) upwardly mobile people or nouveaux

[91] H. J. Mason, "Lucius at Corinth," *Phoenix* 25.2 (1971), 160-165; Welborn, "Inequality," 51; Winter, *After Paul*, 62.

[92] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 125-126; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 24; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 4; Savage, *Power through Weakness*, 35.

[93] Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 114.

[94] Pogoloff demonstrates the interconnection between education, wisdom, money, and status (*Logos and Sophia*).

[95] Savage, *Power through Weakness*, 22-24.

[96] Theissen, *Social Setting*, 69-119, esp. 70; Welborn, "Inequality," 47-84; Judge, *Social Pattern*, 60; contra Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 99.

[97] The economic status of some of the upwardly mobile people (PS 3, 4 and 5) is comparable with semi-elites, but their social status and origin is clearly lower than that of the semi-elite.

[98] Only a small percentage of the Roman population, such as senators, equites, and decuriones, can be strictly called the (imperial or regional) elite. But broadly some more people, who were wealthy and influential in local areas and groups and shared elite cultures, would have been viewed as

riches",[99] and "the poor".[100] Its biblical terms are respectively (1) "not many of you" in 1 Cor 1:26, (2) "you" in 4:6-13, and (3) "many of you" in 1:26 (cf. "we" in 4:6-13). It will also be demonstrated that, while the division between the semi-elite and the poor was notable at the moment of their conversion presented in 1:26 ("the first phase"), the upwardly mobile people became obtrusive after Paul left Corinth ("the second phase", 4:6-13). The time scale and three strata will be articulated in the following sections.

4.3.1. Not Many of You "were"[101] of High Status: A Socio-Economic Reading of 1 Corinthians (1:26-31; 4:6-13; 1:5; 11:17-22)

Paul's portrayals of the Corinthian believers in 1 Cor 1:26-31, 4:6-13, 11:17-22, and 1:5 provide a consistent impression that there were two or more distinguishable socio-economic strata among them.[102] In particular, it appears that, when Paul sent the letter, the believers embedded in one of the strata had been experiencing some changes in status and were seeking social recognition like many upwardly mobile freedmen in Corinth (cf. §4.2). Even though the passages contain many contentious and pivotal theological issues, I will focus on their socio-economic implications in this section. This is not to say that the theological issues will remain untouched. They will be explored in Chapter 5 in depth based on some socio-economic factors which will be illuminated below.

4.3.1.1. The First Phase: The Well-Born and the Not-Well-Born

As noted above, 1 Cor 1:26 has been viewed as fundamental in understanding the Corinthian believers' socio-economic level. The text reveals, as even Meggitt admitted, that at least "a small number were more fortunate than the others",[103] though the exact meanings of οὐ

"semi-elites" in the eyes of the plebs. In this thesis, I will use "the semi-elite" in this way. In Friesen's poverty scale, the semi-elite would be embedded around PS3 and PS4.

99 Compared to the "upwardly mobile people", the "nouveaux riches" has a more negative connotation suggesting boasting, ambition, or bad manners.

100 For a definition of the poor, see Chapter 2 note 33 (§2.3).

101 There is no Greek verb indicating the tense of 1 Cor 1:26. However, many scholars agree that its elliptical tense is past, since Paul was reminding the Corinthians of their calling (βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν). Besides, after this, Paul uses the aorist tense of the verb, ἐξελέξατο, three times to underline the past time of God's calling (1:27-28). See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 162.

102 Many scholars assume that 1 Cor 1:26 refers to two socio-economic strata, but I further argue, in this section, that it indicates three distinguishable strata.

103 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 106.

πολλοί, σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς are still being debated (§4.1): how fortunate and how many were they?

Paul repeats οὐ πολλοί three times to define σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς respectively. The repetition of οὐ πολλοί differentiates many of the Corinthians from a few in terms of wisdom, power, and birth.[104] Besides, Paul eschews generalising the Corinthians as uneducated, powerless, and humble by using "not many" rather than "not any",[105] even though this can weaken his theological agenda that God chose foolish, insignificant and despised people regardless of their present value (1:27-28).[106] This indicates that at least a few of the Corinthians were recognised as wise, influential and well-born not only by other believers but also by non-believers (κατὰ σάρκα) at the moment of their conversion (τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, 1:26).[107]

The three words, σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς, in 1:26 provide a glimpse of the social composition of the Corinthian community. Many commentators concur that the words basically reveal that some Corinthians were educated (σοφοί),[108] socially and politically influential (δυνατοί), and well-born in noble families (εὐγενεῖς). It means that they were semi-elites or at least privileged people.[109] This also implies that they were wealthy (cf. Jer 9:22-23; 1 Sam 2:10 LXX; Acts 25:5; Rev 6:15).[110] These ideas are underpinned by many texts in ancient literature. In particular, the adjective εὐγενής frequently modifies socially distinct classes (Luke 19:12; Acts 17:11; Philo, *Contempl.* 9.69, *Ios.* 106, *Virt.* 187-226;

104 Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 375.

105 Origen refutes Celsus' generalization made about the early believers that no one is educated and wise, saying not all are poor and uneducated by quoting 1 Cor 1:26 (Origen, *Cels.* 3.44, 3.48).

106 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 79.

107 A few scholars, such as Wuellner and O'Day, perceive "not many" as "a fair percentage" by interpreting this verse as interrogative with expectation of an affirmative answer (Wuellner, "Sociological Implications," 672; O'Day, "1 Corinthians 1:26-31," 263-264). However, this attempt is not persuasive. As Raymond F. Collins claims, an interrogative ὅτι, especially at the head of the first clause, is not used in the Pauline letters (*First Corinthians* [Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999], 110; cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 162-163; Schreiner, "1. Kor. 1,26-29," 317-357). Besides, if many of the Corinthians were wise, powerful, and noble, this would be in contrast with God's election of the foolish, weak, and despised (1:27-28).

108 Pogoloff successfully links λόγος and σοφός to high social ranks (*Logos and Sophia*, 113-127). Cf. Ramsay MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 15; Plutarch, *Mor.* 146F-149B; Cicero, *Fin.* 3.22.75.

109 Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 189, 200; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. F. Clarke (Richmond: John Knox, 1959), 162-163; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 70-73; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 197-212.

110 Sänger sharpens an understanding of the δυνατοί which can denote economic affluence ("1 Kor 1:26," 285-291; cf. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 113-127).

Josephus, *A.J.* 10, 186; Aeschylus, *Pers.* 704). For instance, Aristotle describes well-born people as those inheriting outstanding virtue and wealth from their ancestors (*Pol.* 5.7).[111] Bruce W. Winter further points out that these three terms were used together by the Sophists to emphasise wise-men's socio-economic distinctiveness, especially their parents' power (δυνατός) and noble birth (εὐγενής, cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 58E; Dio Chrysostom, *2 Serv. lib.* 29-30).[112] Accordingly, the combination of these three terms clearly connotes certain Corinthians' social, political and economic distinctiveness from the others in their church.

The issue, nevertheless, is how revealing these words are meant to be, especially considering their usage in relevant inscriptions. Meggitt tried to relativise the socio-economic meanings of the words, in particular εὐγενής, by showing epigraphic examples in which the term was used to describe probably a dancer, an athlete, and a doctor, or even for slaves' names.[113] He went on to maintain that this triad of words is far "more elusive than has traditionally been assumed".[114] Although Meggitt was right to claim that the usage of these terms was to a degree flexible,[115] a careful examination of their usage in inscriptions and Paul's rhetorical use of them suggest that they are more socially descriptive than he suggested.

First, the usage of εὐγενής in inscriptions needs to be more carefully examined. Although Meggitt presents several points of evidence from inscriptions for the flexible meaning of εὐγενής (*SEG* 35.1327, 33.869, 28.983; *OMS* 2.1129-1130), these do not strongly support his position. One example he cites is Aemilianus who led a ritual of a Dionysiac group in the second century CE (*SEG* 35.1327). He was revered, being professional at martial arts, sports, and ritual dancing or satire writing. He is recently deemed as a person of the gymnasial class rather than a professional dancer (cf. Lucian, *Salt.* 79).[116] Another problem is that εὐγενῶν is not used for him but for his foster-father, Geminos, whose career is not known to us except for the fact he taught Aemilianus many skills and raised him as a leader of a group.[117] In this case, the εὐγενῶν is not a good example of its broad connotation. The

111 Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 249.

112 Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 189.

113 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 104.

114 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 105.

115 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 104.

116 C. P. Jones, "Lucian and the Bacchants of Pontus," *EMC* 9 (1990), 53-63.

117 Meggitt probably mismatches the εὐγενῶν to Aemilianus (*Poverty and Survival*, 104 note 143).

second example presented by Meggitt is Euboulos, a young athlete (*SEG* 33.869). He is described by the words, εὐγενές, προγό[νω]ν, and φιλότειμον. The juxtaposition of these three words, as many classical scholars acknowledge, definitely denotes his noble birth in a high-ranking family.[118] Besides, athletes in aristocratic families were not rare (cf. Cicero, *Flac*. 31).[119] Good examples are Flavillianus who was the cousin of a person of a senatorial rank (*IGR* 3.500), M. Aurelius Hermagoras' father (*IGR* 3.1344; cf. *IG* 14.1102), and M. Aelius Aurelius Menandros.[120] The third evidence is Melito, a kithara-player, described with εὐγενείᾳ (*OMS* 2.1129-1130).[121] The εὐγενείᾳ connotes Melito's social status, being paralleled with παράδοξον (being extraordinary), σεμνότητι (dignity), θαυμασθέντα (admired), and [τ]ειμηθεντα (honoured). In particular, the inscription records that Melito was very much (μάλιστα) admired and honoured by an emperor. This means that he was depicted at least as one of a few very exceptional musicians admired by many, even including an emperor. Then, the εὐγενείᾳ in this inscription was used to praise his distinct social origin and honour among musicians. The last inscription, which is heavily damaged, is Athenocle (*SEG* 28.983), who was clever (πάνσοφον), well-born (εὐγενε[]), and pious (εὐσεβῆ) and had smooth-hands (ἠπιόχε[ιρα]). Because of the ἠπιόχε[ιρα] and his name, some scholars, including Meggitt, presume that he was a physician (cf. *SEG* 37.840).[122] This assumption is probable, but not definite. What is clear is that the εὐγενε[] is paralleled with cleverness, piousness, and a good talent. Accordingly, the overall impression is that, even if it should be admitted that εὐγενής was applied to non-elites in a few cases, the term even in those cases was frequently juxtaposed with wisdom, power, and honour and was used to describe exceptionally talented persons revered by others. Accordingly, a majority of ancient Romans perceived εὐγενής as an adjective to depict and praise those from distinctive social origins, possibly group leaders or notable persons in a group, even when it was used in inscriptions.[123]

118 H. W. Pleket, "On the Sociology of Ancient Sport," in *Sport in the Greek and Roman Worlds II: Greek Athletic Identities and Roman Sports and Spectacle*, ed. T. F. Scanlon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 74.

119 Jason König, *Athletics and Literature in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 307; Pleket, "Ancient Sport," 74-75; Patrick Gouw, *Griekse atleten in de Romeinse keizertijd (31 v. Chr. - 400 n. Chr.)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 5-6.

120 For more examples, see Pleket, "Ancient Sport," 75-76; Gouw, *Griekse atleten*, 5-6.

121 Charlotte Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods* (London: The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1993), 196-198; cf. Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 104 note 143.

122 Évelyne Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec: Sources épigraphiques sur la naissance d'un corps medical* (Genève: Libraire Droz, 2003), 417-418.

123 Pleket, "Ancient Sport," 74 note 193.

Second, in his argumentative rhetoric in 1:26-31, Paul appears to employ εὐγενεῖς, along with σοφοί and δυνατοί, to specifically describe some Corinthian individuals. It is likely that his use of the adjective εὐγενεῖς is closer to its dictionary definition, "noble birth", than its exaggerated or flexible meaning. In this regard, the usage of εὐγενής in some inscriptions should be differentiated to a degree from Paul's use of it in 1:26.[124] The rhetorical genre of the former is mostly "praise" (the epideictic rhetoric) to commemorate someone frequently by using ornament and hyperbolic metaphors.[125] Even though Paul also uses rhetorical exaggerations in 1 Corinthians, the letter, in particular 1:26-31, is basically argumentative with the intention to persuade the recipients to take a certain action (possibly the deliberative rhetoric).[126] In this case, hyperbole would spoil his whole thesis in the pericope. Instead, Paul seeks to explain the Corinthians' situation with precision in 1:26. This is why he uses "not many" before εὐγενεῖς rather than "not any" to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding and quarrel, while risking a weakening of his basic idea that God chose "τὰ μὴ ὄντα" (that are not) to nullify "τὰ ὄντα" (that are, 1:28).[127] The fact that some Corinthians were included in the "τὰ ὄντα" is a statement unfavourable to Paul's argument, but he mentions it for accuracy. If so, it is hard to explain the meaning of εὐγενεῖς in this context as an "arrogation".[128] Furthermore, Paul contrasts wise, influential, and well-born people with low (ἀγενής) and despised people (1:26-28). The contrasts are echoed in 4:10-13. As Theissen claims, the contrast between εὐγενής and μή(δέν) in a sociological sense is also found in other ancient writings (Sophocles, *Aj.* 1093-1097; cf. Philo, *Virt.* 173-174).[129] Given Paul's attempt to avoid imprecision in expressions and his contrasts between "well-born" and

124 For a similar reason, Theissen is right to say that "even slaves were called 'Eugenes' in those times, but this does not elucidate our text" ("Social Conflicts," 375).

125 George A. Kennedy defines one feature of the epideictic style as follows: it "tends to amplification and is fond of ornament and tolerant of description and digression. … epidictic orators are notoriously casual about their use of history" (*New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* [London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984], 75). Cf. C. Carey, "Epideictic Oratory," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. I. Worthington (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 245-246.

126 Although it is hard to confine the rhetorical genre of 1 Corinthians as a whole to *genus causarum*, many parts of the letter are close to deliberative rhetoric (cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 55). Betz and Margaret M. Mitchell, further, regard the whole letter as deliberative rhetoric ("Corinthians, First Epistle to the," in *ABD* 1 [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 1139-1148; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993], 6).

127 Cf. Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 376.

128 Contra Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 104.

129 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 71.

"low, despised, and nothing", it is highly likely that the εὐγενεῖς in 1 Cor 1:26 connotes a social origin higher than that of commoners.

The clear snapshot of the Corinthian community which has been described so far (and will be detailed more below) is that it consisted of two socio-economic strata at the initial stage of the congregation: a smaller group who were born to relatively noble families and held social power and influence even in the eyes of outgroup members, and a larger group which was neither wise, influential nor well-born, equivalent to nothing (τὰ μὴ ὄντα, 1:26-28). It seems that this snapshot has to do with the period when the Corinthians were first converted by Paul (βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, 1:26). I will call this period "the first phase" of the church for convenience (cf. 3:6-7), since the Corinthian congregation experienced some noticeable changes after this.[130]

4.3.1.2. The Second Phase: Economically Mobile People

First Corinthians 1:26-31 and 4:6-13 seem to indicate "the second phase" after Paul's departure from Corinth in which another socio-economic stratum became conspicuous: upwardly mobile people. Paul's social description of the Corinthians in 1:26 targets their social origins and the moment of their conversion,[131] not their current circumstances.[132] That Paul reminds (βλέπετε) them of their social location at conversion rather than in their present status seems to imply that some of them might have experienced some changes, especially in their status in the church, after conversion (cf. 1:5; 4:7-10).[133] Paul appears to hint in 1:26-31 that, although they were chosen by God regardless of their foolishness and humble origin, some of them now became or were pretending to be wise and strong. If so, it may be surmised that this second phase, after conversion and Paul's departure from Corinth, included upwardly mobile people who were neither well-born nor poor but endeavoured to gain social recognition in church based on their changing economic status and spiritual gifts (cf. 1:5; 4:7; 4:10).

130 This idea of the two phases of the Corinthian community is implied in 1 Cor 3:6-7: Paul planted (the first phase) and Apollos watered (the second phase). Winter also argues that the Corinthian community faced some changes and challenges "after Paul left Corinth" (*After Paul*).

131 It is clear that the κλῆσις here denotes "called to faith" rather than vocational calling (cf. 1:1, 2; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 179).

132 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 80.

133 Cf. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 116.

There are six more clues to Paul's address to the upwardly mobile people who became important in the second phase. First, even though he mentions that many of the Corinthians were not wise (σοφοί) before their conversion (1:26), Paul states earlier that they became enriched (ἐπλουτίσθητε) in speech (λόγῳ) and knowledge (γνώσει) of every kind in Christ (1:5) and later, though sarcastically, reiterates that some of them became rich (ἐπλουτήσατε, 4:8) and clever (φρόνιμοι, 4:10). The two similar verbs, ἐπλουτίσθητε (1:5) and ἐπλουτήσατε (4:8), whose tense is an ingressive aorist, unmistakably indicate a positive change of status. The verb, ἔλαβες (4:7), also implies such a change for some Corinthians. This would be contradictory, unless some Corinthians experienced changes after conversion especially with regard to wisdom. Besides, it is unlikely that σοφός (1:26), λόγος (1:5), γνῶσις (1:5), and φρόνιμος (4:10) are used to denote completely different things in 1 Cor 1-4. The two of them, λόγος and γνῶσις, in 1:5 embody a more positive and thereby comprehensive sense in Paul's greeting and thanksgiving (1:1-9) compared to σοφός (1:26) and φρόνιμος (4:10). But, given that Paul uses his thanksgiving to announce the main themes of the letter, in particular wisdom here,[134] wisdom in 1:5 does not seem unrelated to other wisdom-related terms in 1 Cor 1-4. Paul's repetitive use of the words relevant to wisdom after 1:5 cannot be a coincidence. Writing the verse, he likely has in mind the following discussion of wisdom in the whole letter. It is plausible that Paul thanks God for and acknowledges the Corinthians' enriched wisdom and speech (1:5) but takes precautions against its misuse or mixture with secular wisdom (1:18-4:13) as in 1 Cor 8, 12, and 14.[135] More importantly, the Apostle seems to describe that those who became wise were many (4:10; 1:5). These depictions of many wise men would be contradictory with 1:26 in which only a few were wise, unless some changes between before and after conversion were considered. In light of this outlook of 1 Cor 1-4, it can be suggested that most Corinthian believers possibly agreed with Paul's statement that they were not wise before their conversion (1:26), but some of them became enriched in wisdom and knowledge (1:5; 4:10; cf. 12:8).

134 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 130.

135 H. D. Betz, "The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology According to the Apostle Paul," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère*, ed. A. Vanhoye (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 26-27, 32-34; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 91; Corin Mihaila, *The Paul-Apollos Relationship and Paul's Stance toward Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (London: T&T Clark International, 2009), 14-15.

Second, what is more interesting is that the problematic wise believers (4:6-13; cf. 1:27-31) were probably different from the not-well-born and differentiated from the well-born (1:26). This is because the "you" in 4:6-13 seems to refer to a group different from "not many of you" in 1:26.[136] Both the "you" and the "not many of you" were wise (σοφοί, 1:26; φρόνιμοι, 4:10)[137] and possibly rich (δυνατοί, 1:26; 4:8-13; see below). But it is not difficult to differentiate between the two objects in Paul's descriptions in some senses. The "you" in 4:6-13 acquired (ἔλαβες) many things including wisdom (4:7-8; 4:10; cf. 1:5) as God's gifts (cf. 12:8) or through education. Though they became wise, boasted of it and sought the social recognition, their wisdom was not recognised by all (4:7; 3:18). On the other hand, the high social status and wisdom of the "not many of you" in 1:26 was given at birth and accepted both by ingroup and outgroup members (κατὰ σάρκα). In other words, Paul deems one group's high social status and wisdom as acquired, variable, and contentious (4:7; 1:27-31; 3:18) but some others' high status ("well-born") and wisdom unquestionable (1:26), even though he principally believes both groups' wisdom and influence are meaningless and nullified before God (1:27-29; 4:7). If so, there would have been one more discernible socio-economic stratum in the second phase which embedded those "becoming" wise and possibly rich though they were not well-born unlike the "not many of you" in 1:26.

136 Many scholars, including Theissen, argue that "you" (1 Cor 4:6-13) and "not many of you" (1:26) are the same group (*Social Setting*, 72). But the subtle differences between them can be found in 1:26 and 4:6-13 as I will describe in this and following pages.

On the other hand, Meggitt argues that the "you" (4:6-13) is the entire congregation and 4:8 which determines a reading of 4:10 cannot describe Paul's opponents' actual social situation (*Poverty and Survival*, 106-107). Although it should be admitted that Paul's instruction on boasting in a larger rhetorical setting (4:6-13) appears to aim at all the Corinthians, it is also clear that his teaching is more specifically targeted at a certain group, especially at those actually boasting (cf. 1:26-31; 4:18; 8:7). Martin calls this a "dual audience" (*Corinthian Body*, 67). Though seemingly describing all the Corinthians as wise (φρόνιμοι) in 4:10, Paul specifies that not everyone has knowledge (γνῶσις) in 8:7. As Martin rightly points out, following 4:6-13, 4:18 refers directly to some of the Corinthians who became arrogant (*Corinthian Body*, 67). Besides, Paul's hardships (4:9-13) would have shared with many poor Corinthians (1:26). It gives the impression that he speaks to those in contrast with him and his party, not to those sharing his sufferings. Meggitt further neglects the likelihood that those socio-economic predicaments (4:9-13) shed light on reading 4:6-8.

137 Though Paul uses two similar yet different terms, σοφός and φρόνιμος, in 1 Cor 1:26 and 4:10, it is not certain that there is a meaningful difference between the two intended by him. It can be just said that, as far as the Pauline letters are concerned, the word φρόνιμος implies negative or dangerous aspects of wisdom in most cases (1 Cor 11:19; Rom 11:25, 12:16), while the word σοφός is more multidimensional (1 Cor 1:4-2:16; Rom 16:27).

Another interesting feature of "you" in 1 Cor 4:6-13 is their wealth. Although the text is full of figurative and eschatological terms,[138] Paul tries to make a socio-economic contrast between "you" and "we":[139] the "you" already became satiated, kings, rich, wise and strong, while the "we" including Paul were still hungry, public spectacles, foolish, thirsty and working with hands. All these adjectives and verbs that describe the "we" unmistakably indicate Paul's current economic predicaments. This also implies that, if it is true that he intends to contrast himself directly with certain Corinthians, they became full (κεκορεσμένοι, 4:8; cf. Acts 27:38), rich (ἐπλουτήσατε, 4:8), kings (ἐβασιλεύσατε, 4:8) and wise (φρόνιμοι, 4:10) not only in a theological or eschatological sense but also in a socio-economic sense in light of the whole rhetorical context of 4:6-13.[140] Besides, the triad of richness (4:8), kingship (4:8), and wisdom (4:10) was used to depict someone's socio-economic superiority in antiquity. For instance, Cicero links "wise man" (*sapientis*) to economic wealth and social distinctiveness several times (Cicero, *Fin*. 3.17.56-57, 3.7.26-3.8.30, 3.22.75).[141] Plutarch similarly describes the Stoics' teaching that the "wise man" (τὸν σοφόν) is a king (βασίλειος) and a rich man (πλούσιος) in not just metaphysical but also social and economic senses (Plutarch, *Tranq. an*. 472A, *Frat. amor*. 485A).[142] Martin further suggests that the different forms of βασιλεύω (4:8) can denote that some Corinthians claimed a patronage position over others, since kingship-related terms were "the client's word for a rich patron" (Horace, *Ep*. 1.7.37 [*rexque*], 1.17.43 [rege]).[143] In light of this, though the two similar words, ἐπλουτίσθητε (1:5) and ἐπλουτήσατε (4:8), connote certain Corinthians' spiritual richness,

138 Anthony C. Thiselton interprets the verse (4:8) including ἤδη as evidence for an overrealised eschatology at Corinth ("Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24 [1978], 510-526).

139 It is not necessary, or rather dangerous, to artificially divide all the words in 1 Cor 4:6-13 into figurative, eschatological, and socio-economic terms. It would be better to acknowledge that Paul uses the multidimensional terms with theological and sociological implications. See Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 122; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 1,1-6,11)* (Zürich: Benziger, 1991), 343; cf. note 10.

140 Although it is clear that Paul adopts the terms, κεκορεσμένοι, ἐπλουτήσατε, and ἐβασιλεύσατε figuratively, these figurative meanings are all based on their basic economic or social definitions. Besides, if the contrast is purely theological, his economic hardships listed in 1 Cor 4:11-12 seem to some degree inappropriate. Cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 72-73; John M. G. Barclay, "Crucifixion as Wisdom: Exploring the Ideology of a Disreputable Social Movement," in *The Wisdom and Foolishness of God: First Corinthians 1-2 in Theological Exploration*, ed. C. Chalamet and H.-C Askani (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 16-18.

141 Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 115-116.

142 Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 117-118.

143 Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 210 note 13; idem, *Corinthian Body*, 66; G. Highet, "Libertino Patre Natus," *AJP* 94 (1973), 279; cf. Juvenal, *Sat*. 5.14, 130, 137, 161, 7.45, 10.161.

these also have an economic nuance.[144] In particular, the second verb ἐπλουτήσατε (4:8) may denote that some Corinthians became literally wealthy (cf. Philo, *Virt*. 173-174). Paul uses the term again in 2 Cor 8:9 to encourage economic aid to one another. Its economic meaning, to become wealthy, is also found in Luke 1:53, 1 Tim 6:9, and Rev 18:3, 15, 19, seven out of twelve uses in the New Testament. Its adjectival form πλούσιος is used in Jer 9:22 (LXX) to refer to the wealthy, which is frequently compared with 1 Cor 1:26. Considering this, the word ἐπλουτήσατε (4:8) may reflect both the changing economic status and rich spiritual gifts of certain Corinthian believers. As such, Paul's contrasts between "you" and "we" in 4:6-13 indicate certain Corinthians' relatively high economic level.

More specifically, Paul's mention of his manual labour as one of his hardships in 1 Cor 4:12 appears to denote that his opponents ("you") did not need to work and probably disdained manual labour. While boasting of and encouraging manual labour in 1 Thessalonians (2:9; 4:11; 1:3), Paul catalogues it as one of his seemingly unfavourable experiences in the eyes of his audience in 1 Corinthians. On the one hand, 1 Thessalonians juxtaposes working with one's hands (ἐργάζομαι, 1 Thess 2:9; 4:11) and toil (κόπος, 1:3; 2:9) with love (ἀγάπη, 1:3; ἀγαπητοί, 2:8-9; φιλαδελφία, 4:9-12) as though labour is a manifestation of love (see §2.5). On the other hand, 1 Cor 4:8-13 includes working (ἐργαζόμενοι) and toiling (κοπιῶμεν, 4:12) as hardships (cf. 9:4, 6) alongside terms like spectacle (θέατρον, 4:9), stupid (μωροί, 4:10), weak (ἀσθενεῖς, 4:10), dishonoured (ἄτιμοι, 4:10), rubbish (περικαθάρματα, 4:13), dregs (περίψημα, 4:13), etc. It is highly likely that this striking contrast between the two letters indicates the recipients' different socio-economic conditions. The Thessalonians in lower socio-economic statuses understood and empathised with Paul's arduous and manual work (1 Thess 1:3; 2:9; 4:9-12), while certain wealthy Corinthians, especially those who boasted, neither worked nor shared Paul's positive view on labour (1 Cor 4:12; 9:6). This contrast reflects ancient people's different ideas of manual labour according to their status. A majority of slaves and freedmen viewed their professions positively as an important part of their identity, not avoiding manual work. But many social elites and freeborn people depreciated, or at least were reluctant to boast of, manual labour

[144] The definition of πλουτέω is basically economic, to become rich (Artemidorus, *Onir*. 4.59; Philo, *Virt*. 166; Josephus, *A.J*. 4.14; Origen, *Cels*. 8, 38, 17), though it is more frequently used as a metaphor (LSJ, 1423; BDAG, 831).

(§2.5).[145] In other words, one's attitude towards manual labour, or whether or not one worked with hands, was a powerful demarcation between ordinary and elite cultures or high and low socio-economic statuses. In this sense, unlike many Thessalonians and Paul, certain Corinthians would have been wealthy enough not to work with their hands and shared or imitated elite culture (4:12). Considering their humble origins (1:26), they were likely to attempt to differentiate themselves from the popular culture, which was linked to a positive attitude towards working, prevalent hunger, and economic sufferings. It seems that they desired to demonstrate their high social status and wealth in the Corinthian community. It is probable that Paul and his party were shamed by certain Corinthians for working with their hands. Accordingly, as many terms in 4:6-13 have socio-economic implications, it suggests that the Corinthians in question were in a socio-economic stratum distinguishable both from those of noble birth and from the poor. They can be called "nouveaux riches" or "upwardly mobile people", characterised by humble origins, wealth, and a desire for imitating elite culture.

Third, Paul's instruction on boasting in 1 Cor 1:26-31 and 4:6-13 would have aimed mainly at some of the upwardly mobile people, neither semi-elites nor the poor. The issue at stake is who actually boasted (1 Cor 1-4). Unless those boasting in 1:26-31 and 4:6-7 should be differentiated,[146] Paul states that they were seen as different and special, not by all but by themselves (4:7; 3:18; 8:7), not before conversion but after conversion (1:26). They boasted as they achieved or received something like wisdom (4:6, 8, 10; 1:5). In this sense, they were neither semi-elites whose noble birth was recognised by most people (1:26) nor the poor. They are rather those becoming wise, satiated, and kings possibly based on their economic success (4:8-9). They themselves thought that they were wise, strong, and honoured (4:10-13). It seems that they wanted to display their newfound wisdom and power to elevate themselves over others (4:6). This overlaps with 1:26-31; certain Corinthians were originally among the not-well-born but boasted of something based on their recently changed status regarding wisdom (cf. 1:5; 4:10; 8:1-13). While many Corinthians became wise, some of

[145] Joshel, *Legal Status*; Treggiari, "Urban Labour," 48-64; Garnsey, "Non-Slave Labour," 35; John H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[146] Scholars usually concur that those two passages are interlocked in Paul's rhetoric. See Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 201; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 141; cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 72-73.

them who were wealthy exploited it as a means to seek social recognition (1:27-31; 4:6-13).[147]

Fourth, based on the clues enumerated above, it may be that Paul's attempt to avoid using economic terms in 1:26-31 and εὐγενής in 4:6-13 is his conscious (or unconscious) intention to differentiate between semi-elites and nouveaux riches. When portraying a few semi-elites in 1:26, the Apostle does not use economic terms but instead seems to avoid using them. It can be easily assumed that, as explained above, the semi-elite were rich, but Paul gives this impression based only on hints. Compared to Jer 9:22-23, he chooses εὐγενής instead of עָשִׁיר (rich) or πλούσιος (LXX), while adopting the other two words חָכָם and הַגִּבּוֹר (or σοφός and ἰσχυρός in LXX) among the triad (cf. 1 Sam 2:10 LXX).[148] The verbal types of the πλούσιος, πλουτίζω and πλουτέω, are rather used to refer to upwardly mobile people in 1 Cor 1:5 and 4:8. Furthermore, describing those boasting in 4:6-13 and 1:29-31, he does not use terms like εὐγενής referring to one's noble birth and good family background. These may indicate Paul's delicate intention to distinguish the semi-elite from another wealthy group. In this regard, Gordon D. Fee correctly points out that "it may be that this word [εὐγενής] was chosen in place of 'wealthy' because it is more sociologically determinative: some of them may have been wealthy, but few would have been well-born".[149] If Fee's observation is right, there would have been two strata within the wealthy: both "the wealthy but not-well-born" and "the wealthy and well-born".

Fifth, the socio-economic contrast between the wealthy and Paul presented in 1 Cor 1-4 is delicately reiterated in 11:17-34.[150] While Theissen's socio-economic reading of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34) as contention between rich and poor members has been widely accepted in Pauline scholarship, some have cast reasonable doubts on the economic factions (cf. §4.1). After examining the hermeneutical issues in 11:17-34 raised by both sides, I will demonstrate that the meeting place(s) for shared meals became spaces of competition for honour among semi-elites and nouveaux riches, leaving the poor members neglected and ashamed. While this will be explicated in the next chapter (§5.4.2), I will concentrate here on

147 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 132; cf. Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 91; Mihaila, *Paul-Apollos*, 14-15.

148 For the intertextuality between 1 Cor 1:26-31 and Jer 9:22-23, see O'Day, "1 Corinthians 1:26-31," 259-267; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 80; H. H. Williams, *The Wisdom of the Wise: The Presence and Function of Scripture within 1 Cor. 1:18-3:23* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 103-132.

149 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 80.

150 John Chrysostom reads 1 Cor 11:17-34 in light of 1 Cor 1:12 (*Hom. 1 Cor*. 27.1).

the fact that some core words and themes in 11:17-22 echo 1:1-4:21 (esp. 1:26-31; 4:6-13).[151] This can provide basic evidence for socio-economic divisions at the Lord's Supper. The first term σχίσμα is used only three times in 1 Corinthians and in the Pauline letters (1:10; 11:28; 12:25; cf. John 7:43). The plural form of it, σχίσματα, which implies that two or possibly more groups were involved in the tension,[152] appears only twice in the New Testament, 1 Cor 1:10 and 11:18. In this sense, the σχίσματα in 11:18 unmistakably reminds the recipients of 1:10.[153] The connection reveals that two seemingly separate issues in 1 Cor 1-4 and 11:17-37 are, though not identical, not wholly unrelated thematically, possibly regarding boasting.[154] This is further undergirded by two facts that the word σχίσματα is placed at the front of each rhetorical unit which revolves around the term (1:10; 11:18),[155] and that αἵρεσις along with σχίσμα (11:18-19) can suggest two or four parties mentioned in 1:12, 3:4, and 4:6. The second repeated term is found in 4:11 and 11:21. One of Paul's hardships, hunger (πεινῶμεν, 4:12), recurs as πεινᾷ in 11:21 and 11:34. Another hardship, thirst (διψῶμεν), is contrasted with μεθύει in 11:21. Besides 4:11, 11:21, and 11:34, all of these terms are used just once apiece elsewhere in the Pauline letters (πεινᾷ, Rom 12:20; διψᾷ, Rom 12:20; μεθύουσιν, 1 Thess 5:7). If it is tenable that Paul's wording in 1 Cor 11:21 is influenced by 4:12, it is highly likely that the hunger of some Corinthians mentioned in 11:21 is not episodic but endemic. It means that their hunger resulted from poverty and was reflective of their low economic status (cf. 9:4). A more significant expression in 11:17-22 is τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας which possibly evokes τὰ μὴ ὄντα in 1:28.[156] The τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας literally means "those not having". Meggitt insists that the phrase was often followed by objects, like "a house"[157] or "the bread and the wine of the supper of the Lord", not necessarily denoting the

151 Cf. Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 271.

152 It is reasonable to raise Theissen's question regarding σχίσματα: "how many groups are involved in the contention surrounding the Lord's Supper?" (*Social Setting*, 147-148). Most scholars have presumed that the contention in 1 Cor 11:17-22 is between two groups, not three or more, but it is not necessary to limit the number to two.

153 Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 70.

154 H. Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I/II* (*HNT* 9; 5th ed. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), 55-56; A. Lindemann, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (*HNT* 9/1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 250; cf. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor*. 27.1.

Some commentators are very cautious about or skeptical of linking 1 Cor 11:18 to 1:10 in a thematic sense, though 11:18 is clearly reminiscent of 1:10. As for the example, see Barrett, *The Corinthians*, 260-261.

155 Henderson, "Anyone Hungers," 197-198.

156 Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 271.

157 Cf. Barrett, *The Corinthians*, 263.

poor.[158] However, he does not notice a similarity between τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (11:22) and τὰ μὴ ὄντα (1:28) in the same letter. Like some words reiterated in 1 Cor 1-4 and 11:17-34 listed above, τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (11:22) may echo τὰ μὴ ὄντα (1:28) which apparently refers to one's low socio-economic level in its rhetorical context (1:26-31).[159] Furthermore, Theissen points out that οἵ τι ἔχοντας and οἱ οὐκ ἔχοντας were often used to describe the wealthy and the poor (Herodotus, *Hist*. 6.22; Sophocles, *Aj*. 157; Euripides, *Suppl*. 238-244).[160] If so, it is possible to translate the τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας as "the have-nots" or "the poor". Overall, wealthy members, possibly including the nouveaux riches, contrasted with the poor like Paul (4:6-13; 1:26-31), reappear on the scene of the Corinthians' problematic supper (11:17-22).

Sixth, a history of Corinth strengthens the possibility of the presence of nouveaux riches in the Corinthian church (§4.2). They and their descendants sought to be socially recognised through education, benefaction and donation based on their wealth. Given that these nouveaux riches were relatively common in Corinth, it is not surprising that some of them were part of the Corinthian congregation.

When it comes to the upwardly mobile members, two additional questions can be raised: where did these people come from? and what was the source of their wisdom? As for the first question, two possible scenarios can be suggested: they were original members possibly converted by Paul (cf. 1 Cor 1:26) or new members after Paul left Corinth (cf. 14:23). These two possibilities are mere conjectures due to the lack of information. Turning to the second question regarding the source of their wisdom, there are two possible answers: spiritual gift or secular and philosophical education. On the one hand, 1:5 and 12:8 indicate that the Corinthians became enriched in knowledge in Christ. This spiritual gift described in 1:5 is entangled with problematical wisdom discussed in 1:18-4:13. If so, it can be assumed that they were criticised by Paul since they misused the gift in boasting. This is compatible with his caution against abusing the spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12 and 14. On the other hand, Paul's language regarding wisdom in 1:18-4:13 and elsewhere reflects that certain Corinthians were influenced by secular education, especially the Sophists (§5.4.1).[161]

[158] Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 120; cf. Bruce W. Winter, "The Lord's Supper at Corinth: An Alternative Reconstruction," *RTR* 27.73 (1978), 81; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 435.

[159] Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 271.

[160] Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 378.

[161] Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 158-59; F. G. Downing, *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches: Cynics and Christian Origins II* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); G. Tomlin, "Christians and Epicureans in 1 Corinthians," *JSNT* 68 (1997), 51-72; Robert S. Dutch, *Paul and the*

Besides, Paul describes certain Corinthians' wisdom as secular, in contrast with God's wisdom in 1:18-2:16. One more probable scenario can be supposed: some Corinthians received wisdom as a spiritual gift, but it was mixed with their secular knowledge and they boasted of it. One of these possibilities, however, cannot be the clear-cut answer due to insufficient evidence.

Considering all these clues, it is highly likely that Paul intended to differentiate upwardly mobile people or nouveaux riches from the semi-elite and the poor in the Corinthian congregation. Firstly, 1 Cor 1:26 reveals the sharp contrast between a few well-born and many not-well-born members at the moment of their conversion ("the first phase" of the church). Their most discernible difference is whether or not they were well-born. On the other hands, 1:26-28 and 4:8-13 indicate that many of the not-well-born were socially and economically marginalised. They were unwise (μωρός), weak (ἀσθενής), of ignoble birth (ἀγενής), and so disdained (ἐξουθενημένα, 1:27-28). They were called "nothing" (τὰ μὴ ὄντα, 1:28). Some of these features were shared with Paul and his party (4:8-13). Paul is self-described as unwise (μωροί), weak (ἀσθενεῖς), dishonoured (ἄτιμοι), and hungry (πεινῶμεν, 4:10-11), similar to the poor. The poor reappear in Paul's exhortation on the Lord's Supper as the hungry (πεινᾷ), the have-nots (τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας), and the ashamed (καταισχύνετε, 11:21-22). More interestingly, 1:26-31, 4:6-13, and 1:5 refer to another stratum which includes upwardly mobile people in "the second phase" of the Corinthian congregation. Though they were neither well-born, wise, nor powerful before their conversion, they endeavoured to be socially recognised after conversion. They were wealthy and became wise, and boasted of it to elevate themselves over others in spite of their low social origins. It is likely that the nouveaux riches were ambitious and competitive for honour, seeking upward social mobility. As a result, after Paul left Corinth, they would have become prominent in the community.

4.3.2. Implicit Evidence in 1 Corinthians 5-11 and Prosopography

Several passages containing information about Corinthian figures in 1 Cor 5-11 and other Pauline letters give some impression that there were more wealthy members in the Corinthian congregation than the "not many" presented in 1:26.[162] If this impression is correct, it can be

Educated Elite in 1 Corinthians: Education and Community Conflict in Graeco-Roman Context (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia.*

[162] Fee, *The Corinthians*, 80.

argued that the total number of well-to-do Christians minus that of the well-born must be that of the not-well-born wealthy members, that is, upwardly mobile people. Though the distinction between the two is not clearly attested in many parts of 1 Cor 5-11, the implicit evidence supports the picture of the overall number of the wealthy being higher than the few ("not many") who were both well-born and wealthy.

A) Litigation (1 Corinthians 6:1-11)

In this passage (6:1-11), Paul reports that two or more Corinthians had sued one another for ordinary and trivial matters in the secular court. The issues at stake range from relationships between the outside world and the church[163] to Christians' moral failures (§5.3.1). But I will focus here on the identities of the plaintiff(s) or the defendant(s), especially their socio-economic statuses.

Many scholars have recently argued that a few wealthy Corinthians were involved in the problematic law suit(s).[164] But Meggitt claimed the possibility that the legal cases were between "social equals from the lower echelons of Corinthian society".[165] He went on to catalogue the examples of (pre-)legal disputes amongst the non-elite, such as P.Oxy.Hels. 23, P.Mich. 5.230, *Dig.* 9.2.52.1, 9.3.1, and P.Oxy. 8.1121. However, he neglected some important points of Paul's instruction on litigation and did not provide a nuanced exegesis of this passage. Refuting his suggestion, I will argue that a few wealthy members were implicated in the text (6:1-11).

First, Paul viewed the original affair(s), which caused the litigation, as trivial (ἐλάχιστος, 1 Cor 6:2) and quotidian (βιωτικός, 6:3, 4). As Winter well observes, the ἐλάχιστος indicates that the disputes amongst the Corinthians would have been covered by civil law rather than criminal law.[166] While emphasising that the civil litigation per se is

163 Wayne A. Meeks, "'Since Then You Would Need to Go Out of the World': Group Boundaries in Pauline Christianity," in *Critical History and Biblical Faith: New Testament Perspectives*, ed. T. J. Ryan (Villanova: College Theology Society Press, 1979), 4-29; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 228-248; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 563-569.

164 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 97; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 562-586; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 123-130; Bruce W. Winter, "Civil Litigation in Secular Corinth and the Church: The Forensic Background to 1 Corinthians 6:1-8," *NTS* 37 (1991), 559-572; idem, *After Paul*, 58-75; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 76-79; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 162-169; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 59-71.

165 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 123; cf. Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Vol. II): *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 122.

166 Winter, "Civil Litigation," 561.

profoundly problematic in the church as a sort of moral failure (ἥττημα, 6:7), Paul relativises the magnitude of the original objects of litigation by using the adjective ἐλάχιστος, with the elative sense of the superlative form (least, smallest or very trivial; cf. 4:3; 15:9).[167] This implies that the causes for legal suits, in fact, were not weighty enough to take them to secular courts in Paul's eyes. Theissen further postulates by singling out βιωτικός that matters of property or income were the causes (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.26.1-7).[168] Although it is impossible to confirm if the conflicts had to do with property or income, the βιωτικός juxtaposed with ἐλάχιστος in 6:2-4 suggests that the sources for conflict were everyday matters rather than serious crimes.[169] The twice mentioned βιωτικός can denote not only worldly things but also mundane matters.[170] The former meaning is underpinned by its contrast with angels in an eschatological sense, the latter by its parallel with ἐλάχιστος. Likewise, Paul underlines the triviality of the objects, which caused the lawsuits, at the outset of his exhortation.[171] Although Paul's uses of the two words may be rhetorical to make a settlement regarding the legal issue(s) by underestimating its seriousness, this is not to say that he utterly changed the nature of the sources for legal conflict(s). If he did so, it would risk making the conflict(s) worse and create side-effects.

Second, this raises a question of who usually took such trivial cases to court in antiquity: did the non-elite take advantage of the Roman legal system for such nugatory and everyday matters? The answer would be negative. Although Meggitt lists some examples of (pre-)legal actions between those of low status, most of the cases were severe enough even for the non-elite to consider lawsuits in spite of the costs of litigation. For instance, P.Mich. 5.230 records that Papontos, a farmer in Talei, accused Patynion of home invasion, theft, insult, and his child's near-death injury in a case taken to a strategos.[172] If his accusation against Patynion is valid, this case would be classified as a grave crime. P.Oxy. 8.1121 contains Aurelia Techosis' petition which informs that some property inherited from her

167 Cf. Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 564; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 234; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 427-428, 430.

168 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 97.

169 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 430.

170 LSJ, 316.

171 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 427-428.

172 Meggitt quotes the papyrus (P.Mich. 5.230), but just mentions "builders [probably not builder(s) but farmer(s)] over wooden beams" (*Poverty and Survival*, 124). In fact, Papontos' accusation of the opponent was far more serious, especially regarding his child's serious injury.

mother was seized by two neighbours.[173] According to her statement, when she nursed her mother who was seriously ill and subsequently died, the two neighbours took advantage of her preoccupation with caring for the sick mother and occupied the property, probably land. This does not seem trivial. Meggitt also quotes two historical or hypothetical cases from Justinian's *Digest* (9.2.52.1, 9.3.1). These cases are more than petty. One of the cases supposes that, if a shopkeeper blinds or damages the eyes of a thief who hits the shopkeeper first with a spiky whip, the reaction would be legal self-defence (*Dig.* 9.2.52.1).[174] The second hypothetical case is seemingly less serious: if something is thrown out from a building and causes damage to someone, the assailant should pay double as compensation (*Dig.* 9.3.1). But death and grave injuries, not trivial results, are given as the two examples of the damages.[175] Although Meggitt rightly points out that litigation was not monopolised by the elite, his many examples seem irrelevant to 1 Cor 6:1-11 since the Apostle defines the objects of the lawsuits as trivial.

Returning to the original question, who would want to take small cases to court? The answer would be those having a surplus of money and time. As many scholars have expounded, litigation was not free of charge. In particular, the poor had to risk many things to proceed with litigation, such as paying the costs of advocates and juristic advice,[176] being absent from working places, wasting time, travelling cost, and enduring possible fines or other sentences resulting from losing suits.[177] It is needless to say that the sum of money had to be deposited before litigation for security.[178] Thus, Andrew M. Riggsby claims that "a working person might well not have been able to risk the loss even if she [or he] had a strong

[173] Meggitt summarises the petition as between "occupants of a house over the furniture" (*Poverty and Survival*, 124), but the women's actual petition is concerned with the loss of her mother's property, probably land, as bequest (P.Oxy. 8.1121).

[174] Meggitt underestimates its seriousness, saying "a shopkeeper fearing litigation from a thief whose eye he had damaged" (Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 124).

[175] Meggitt summarises this case into "disputes between neighbours over waste disposal in blocks of flats" (*Poverty and Survival*, 124). But the *Digest* (9.3.1) in fact deals with serious damages.

[176] The cost varied from astronomical figures to bottles of cheap wine. However, in order to win legal cases, it could be an endless competition to hire a better lawyer, while a maximum fee for it was restricted but often ignored. See J. A. Crook, *Legal Advocacy in the Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 131; Andrew M. Riggsby, *Roman Law and the Legal World of the Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 79-79; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 124 note 247.

[177] Riggsby, *Roman Law*, 78-80; Crook, *Legal Advocacy*, 130-131; J. M. Kelly, *Roman Litigation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 69-84.

[178] Riggsby, *Roman Law*, 80.

case".[179] The opportunity cost was simply too high for the poor to afford litigation in trivial cases. In other words, people who were able to take minor cases to court would mostly have had surplus resources. If so, Paul's use of ἐλάχιστος and βιωτικός seems to refer to the better-off as litigants.

The above argument can be reinforced by a scholarly consensus that legal inequality was prevalent. Garnsey's seminal work on legal privilege in the Greco-Roman world has led many scholars to concur that money, social power and connections, and the supposed moral characters of plaintiffs or defendants influenced judges' verdicts in both direct and indirect ways (cf. Cicero, *Caecin*. 73).[180] The ways varied. Those of high socio-economic status could afford hiring better barristers, getting qualified legal advice including writing and sending petitions, and sometimes bribing judges and juries (Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 20.1.7; Cicero, *Att*. 1.16; Ovid, *Metam.* 13.90; Apuleius, *Metam*. 10.33; Petronius, *Satyricon* 12-15).[181] Their social power and contacts were considered as one of the critical criteria in judges' adjudications.[182] It was natural for people to send letters of commendation to judges on behalf of their friends with a view to obtaining favourable judicial rulings. The tactic often worked. Social status was linked to moral virtue, dignity, and credibility which were highly valued in legal proceedings.[183] The wealthy and well-born were considered trustworthy in their testimonies and actions in court. The more controversial the cases were and the less the evidence there was, the more vital the personal characters and statuses were in final judgements (cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att*. 14.2.1-25). These systematic advantages for the wealthy and well-born, on the other hand, meant that those of lower status had to overcome great legal disadvantages to sue and more so to win even in smaller cases.[184] Then, the question of what kinds of people would usually sue in trivial cases can now be answered with

179 Riggsby, *Roman Law*, 80.

180 Garnsey, *Legal Privilege*; Riggsby, *Roman Law*, 77-85; Kelly, *Roman Litigation*, 31-68; Winter, "Civil Litigation," 561-566; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 575-581; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 62-68.

181 Riggsby, *Roman Law*, 78-80, 82-85; Kelly, *Roman Litigation*, 33-42; Leanne Bablitz, "Roman Society in the Courtroom," in Peachin, *Social Relations*, 317-334.

182 Kelly, *Roman Litigation*, 42-68; cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 30-31.

183 Riggsby, *Roman Law*, 80-82.

184 Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 64-66.

more confidence: the litigants would have been wealthy and powerful enough to proceed with these cases and win them.[185]

Third, it is likely that the σοφός mentioned in 1 Cor 6:5 is not wholly unrelated to "the wise" presented elsewhere in the letter in a negative way (3:18; 4:10; 8:1).[186] The σοφός creates an ironic sarcasm in the text.[187] Although some Corinthians boasted of their wisdom (1:27-29; 4:6-13; 8:1-13), there was in fact no one capable or wise enough to judge petty matters (6:5; cf. 6:2). This irony is similar to Paul's cynicism repeated in 1 Cor 1-4 that the wise who boast of wisdom are not actually wise (cf. 8:1-13). If it is plausible that his sarcastic question in 6:5 targeted those boasting of wisdom, it seems that the litigants were nouveaux riches (§4.3.1). A possible scenario is that the upwardly mobile members claimed that they were wise, but Paul denounced them for not being wise enough to handle even minor issues and rather choosing to sue one another.

If it is correct that one or more rich persons were involved in this litigation, two possibilities remain:[188] the lawsuits were between those of similarly high status[189] or between those in different social or economic positions.[190] Although choosing one of the two options is almost mere speculation, I lean towards the former option because of the phrase κρίματα ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν in 1 Cor 6:7. Though most commentators have not spotlighted the ἑαυτῶν, it can suggest a type of lawsuit which is not unilateral but bilateral. The ἑαυτῶν as a plural form denotes a "marker of reciprocal relation" (cf. Mark 10:26; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13; 1 Thess 5:13; 1 Pet 4:8).[191] This may indicate that, regardless of who started the litigation, both parties sued mutually. If so, as Winter has argued, it is likely that most of the lawsuits were between those of high economic or social status, probably functioning as a power game.[192]

185 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 97; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 562-586; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 123-130; Winter, "Civil Litigation," 559-572; idem, *After Paul*, 58-75; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 68.

186 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 97; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 128; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 572-575.

187 Schrage, *1 Kor 1,1-6,11*, 413; Winter, "Civil Litigation," 568-569; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 572-573; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 237.

188 It was almost impossible that people of low status initiated litigation against the elite (Kelly, *Roman litigation*, 65; Winter, "Civil Litigation," 561).

189 Winter, "Civil Litigation," 559-572.

190 Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 562-586.

191 BDAG, 269; LSJ, 466.

192 Winter, "Civil Litigation," 559-572.

This is supported by J. M. Kelly's study of Roman litigation which "might take place where the parties were evenly matched".[193]

It can be concluded that the legal case(s) in question were initiated by wealthy and powerful litigants who abused their legal advantages. In Paul's view, trivial affairs could have been settled in the church (6:2-4), but instead became one of the major issues for the Corinthian congregation because wealthy members took them to a secular court (6:7). It is of course necessary to more fully explicate why dealing with the litigation became so significant for Paul and the community. This will be explored in the next chapter (§5.3.1).

B) Invitation, Meat, and Divorce (1 Corinthians 10:23-30; 7:1-40)

There are more events referring to the wealthy in the Corinthian congregation: invitations to meals (1 Cor 10:27), the consumption of meat (10:23-30; 8:1-13), and divorce (7:1-16). As for the non-believers' invitation to a private meal and consumption of meat, Theissen has claimed that these reveal some wealthy Corinthians' eating habits.[194] If it is correct to assume that the believers were invited to private houses,[195] the invitation per se can be an indication of their socio-economic position. Many ordinary people lived in *insulae* or *pergulae* in *tabernae* which usually had no kitchen, stove, or private place to invite others for a meal.[196] This explains why many of the ancient plebs ate out in public places or bought take-away food.[197] Inviting guests and sharing food, especially meat, in a private house was a privilege which showed the surplus wealth of both hosts and guests; many actually boasted of it.[198] Furthermore, Paul mentions μάκελλον (a meat and fish market, *macellum*[199]) in 10:25 before discussing the non-believers' invitation. This one word gives a critical snapshot of the Corinthians' status. Some believers targeted by Paul would have been used to buying

193 Kelly, *Roman Litigation*, 65.

194 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 125-129; idem, "Social Conflict," 381-389.

The consumption of food was deeply embedded in religion, feast, and status. See John M. Wilkins and Shaun Hill, *Food in the Ancient World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 42-43; Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 113.

195 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 483; Theissen, "Social Conflict," 386.

196 Theissen, "Social Conflict," 386; Wilkins and Hill, *Food*, 64; Simon P. Ellis, *Roman Housing* (London: Duckworth, 2000), 27-28.

197 Wilkins and Hill, *Food*, 52.

198 Wilkins and Hill state that "richer people were more likely to invite guests more often, poorer people much less frequently and possibly only on special occasions such as marriages and family gatherings" (*Food*, 72; cf. Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 113-127).

199 BDAG, 611; D. W. J. Gill, "The Meat-Market at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:25)," *TynBul* 43 (1992), 389-393; Julian Richard, "Macellum / μάκελλον: 'Roman' food markets in Asia Minor and the Levant," *JRA* 27 (2014), 257. Μάκελλον is a Greek translation of *macellum.*

expensive meat and other high quality food at the *macellum,* which can be viewed as a relatively luxurious market (cf. 8:1-13).[200] While consuming meat was not common for all, it happened usually on special religious feasts or at the wealthy' private meals.[201] That some Corinthians visited the *macellum* to buy meat frequently and privately (10:25) suggests Paul has in mind some Corinthians' regular eating habits rather than the plebs' participation in infrequent religious festivals (cf. 10:27).[202] Meggitt challenges Theissen's idea of elites' exclusive consumption of meat, saying that the non-elite also ate meat sold in *popinae* and *ganeae*.[203] Theissen responds by arguing that Meggitt overlooks the important point that some Corinthians went shopping at *macellum*, not *popinae* and *ganeae*.[204] It has been assumed that the *macellum,* which is attested by an inscription in Corinth (*Corinth* VIII.2 no. 124-125), was accessible exclusively to the wealthy because of the high price of fine quality food.[205] Besides, this kind of shop was funded by local benefactors (cf. *IGR* IV.1676).[206] If the above observations are tenable, invitation to a private meal, meat, and *macellum* together suggest certain Corinthians' high economic status and their privileged eating habits (10:23-30; 8:1-13).

Second, Paul's exhortation to women concerning divorce indicates that at least a few women were rich enough to consider divorce (7:10-16). Paul essentially instructs couples not to divorce and stay in their present status (7:10). But he allows for separation if unbelieving spouses want it, as they are not enslaved to each other (7:15). Unless the women targeted by Paul were wealthy and could be financially independent from their husbands after divorce, and unless there were women who had seriously considered divorce, this instruction would be pointless. In 1 Cor 7, it seems that Paul responded to actual, not hypothetical, matters regarding marriage, married life, divorce, and celibacy about which the Corinthians raised questions with him (7:1). What is interesting here is that, when delivering his opinions in 1

200 Richard, "Macellum," 255; Gill, "Meat-Market," 289-293.

201 Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 123-124; Wilkins and Hill, *Food*, 56-57.

202 Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 386 note 39; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 483.

203 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 108-112; Philip L. Tite, "Roman Diet and Meat Consumption: Reassessing Elite Access to Meat in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10," *JSNT* 42.2 (2019), 185-222.

204 Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 384; cf. Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 126.

205 The connection between the *macellum* and local temples has been suggested by scholars. This means that Paul would have had in mind the sacred food sold in the *macellum* in 1 Cor 10:25. See Henry J. Cadbury, "The *Macellum* of Corinth," *JBL* 53 (1934), 134-141; M. Isenberg, "The Sale of Sacrificial Meat," *CP* 70.4 (1975), 271-273; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*, 33.

206 Richard, "Macellum," 259; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 783; Gill, "Meat Market," 289-293; Theissen, "Social Conflicts," 384; Cadbury, "*Macellum* of Corinth," 134-141.

Cor 7, Paul mostly addresses men and their cases first and then women afterwards (7:2-7, 8-9, 12-13; 27-28, 33-34, 36-38), except for two cases (7:10-11, 16). The two exceptions concern divorce: wives should not separate from their husbands (7:10); and they might save their husbands if they do not separate (7:16). Similarly, Paul gives instructions only to women that they are bound to their husbands (7:39). Given that divorce in Greco-Roman society was usually initiated and managed by men[207] and especially common only among the aristocracy (Seneca, *Ben*. 3.16.2-3),[208] it would make more sense that such instructions were directed first towards wealthy men rather than women. Paul, however, reverses the expected order. This is in contrast with the other verses in 1 Cor 7 and Roman culture. It appears that Paul has in mind something special, possibly a few women's desire for divorce. If not, it is hard to explain the reversed order only in the matter of divorce. If it is plausible that some Corinthian women wanted to divorce their husbands (7:10-11), especially unbelieving partners (7:15-16), it is likely that they were wealthy enough to consider the divorce. For ancient women, marriage was the most crucial economic vehicle for survival. In other words, divorce, widowhood, and singlehood meant that most women without property became extremely vulnerable in many senses and easily slid into poverty or prostitution (Lucian *Dial. meretr*. 6.1-2).[209] Given that women were at a great disadvantage in the workplace, it is no surprise that, without property or wealthy familial background, divorced women and widows had no security against financial crisis.[210] This is why widows and divorced women were often categorised as a vulnerable group along with beggars and orphans.[211] Women's decision to divorce or remarry, thus, largely depended on their economic condition rather than their will.[212] It can be argued, therefore, that 1 Cor 7:10-16 gives the impression that there were a few wealthy women in the Corinthian community who did or could seriously consider divorce.

207 Susan M. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 436, 440-444; Jérôme Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 109-110.

208 Carcopino, *Daily Life*, 111-112; Toner, *Popular Culture*, 51; Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 28; Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 473.

209 Saller, "Productive Unit," 127; April Pudsey, "Death and the Family: Widows and Divorcées in Roman Egypt," in Harlow and Lovén, *Families*, 157.

210 Saller, "Productive Unit," 116-128. When women initiated divorce, they often lost their whole dowry (Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 442).

211 Early Christian communities viewed widows as a vulnerable group which needed economic care (1 Tim 5:3-16; Luke 21:1-4; Acts 6:1).

212 Cf. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 444; Carcopino, *Daily Life*, 112.

C) Crispus, Gaius, Erastus, Stephanas, Phoebe, and Chloe

There are seventeen individual names of the Corinthians preserved in the Pauline letters and Acts.[213] Six to nine of them have been usually deemed as among the wealthy by scholars in the New Consensus (§4.1). As far as the evidence allows, I will try to further classify the six individuals into two socio-economic strata, semi-elites or upwardly mobile people. The fundamental criteria to differentiate them are three: legal (freeborn, freed, and slaves), social (well-born or not and honoured or dishonoured), and economic (PS1-7). If one is freeborn, wealthy, and well-born (1 Cor 1:26), they can be among the semi-elite. If one is freed or freeborn, wealthy, and not-well-born (4:6-13), they can be among upwardly mobile people. The rest of the Corinthians would have been poor (PS5-7). This is not to say that the individuals can be vividly profiled based on abundant evidence and strictly categorised into one of the three strata. It should be admitted, as some scholars point out, that the biblical evidence is too limited to lead to a conclusive classification.[214] Therefore, this is an attempt to roughly but legitimately hypothesise the Corinthian individuals' status in legal, social, and economic senses.

Crispus (1 Cor 1:14; Acts 18:8) and Gaius (1 Cor 1:14; Rom 16:23) are two prime candidates for the semi-elite compared to other Corinthians. First, Crispus was a previous ruler of a synagogue (ἀρχισυνάγωγος, Acts 18:8).[215] Rajak and Noy point out that "archisynagogal status could not have been acquired without resources".[216] Those holding the title as benefactors or patrons are found "as donors of whole synagogue buildings [Lifshitz no. 1, 16, 79; Luke 7:5], restorers of buildings [Lifshitz no. 33], or donors of parts of buildings: mosaic floors [Lifshitz no. 38, 39, 66], a chancel screen [*CIJ* 756], columns [Lifshitz no. 83; cf. no. 37, 74]".[217] Likewise, in inscriptions, nine or eleven out of forty holding the title ἀρχισυνάγωγος were recorded as benefactors. This number and rate is pretty high compared to other Jewish

213 This study of Corinthian individuals uses Acts as supplementary historical evidence. For my rules in using Acts in this thesis, see Chapter 1 note 15.

214 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 128-153; Friesen, "Poverty," 357.

215 It is almost certain that Crispus in 1 Cor 1:14 was a ruler of a synagogue (Acts 18:8). Luke's description of Crispus would be historically reliable, since his name and position are specific (cf. Chapter 1 note 15).

216 Rajak and Noy, "*Archisynagogoi*: Office, Title, and Social Status in the Greco-Jewish Synagogue," *JRS* 83 (1993), 88.

217 Rajak and Noy, "*Archisynagogoi*," 87; cf. B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et Fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris, 1967); Theissen, *Social Setting*, 74; idem, "Social Structure," 81; contra Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 141-143.

titles.[218] The rulers of synagogue were honoured and recognized even by the outside world.[219] Non-Jews, though rarely, could hold the title as patrons (possibly Lifshitz no. 33).[220] Besides, Crispus' household is presented in Acts 18:8. Though its size and members are not known to us, the household itself which probably included slaves and freedmen may be indicative of his wealth (cf. Luke 19:9; Acts 10:2).[221] Accordingly, it may be that Crispus was wealthy and well-born (semi-elite).[222]

Second, if it is plausible that Gaius was a "host" of Paul and the whole church (Rom 16:23),[223] it means that he hosted literally "the whole church" (ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας, Rom 16:23; cf. 1 Cor 14:23), not a small group of the church.[224] Although some commentators tend to interpret Rom 16:23 as just showing Gaius' hospitality to travellers from all over the empire,[225] James D. G. Dunn argues that the verse refers to the whole-church gathering in his house.[226] If so, his house was spacious enough to accommodate all the believers as the Corinthian congregation was relatively large (cf. Acts 18:10).[227] According to Oakes'

218 Rajak and Noy, "*Archisynagogoi*," 88; Theissen, "Social Structure," 81.

219 Rajak and Noy, "*Archisynagogoi*," 88.

220 Rajak and Noy, "*Archisynagogoi*," 88-89; cf. Theissen, "Social Structure," 82.

221 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 83-87. Luke tends to use οἶκος for wealthy family, like Zacchaeus (Luke 19:9) and Cornelius (Acts 10:2).

222 Theissen suggests "they [*archisynagogoi*] belonged to the periphery of the local elite" ("Social Structure," 82).

223 Richard Last recently challenged the traditional interpretation of the ξένος as a host, since it was not used for referring to a host regarding any associations and the presumption that Gaius in Rom 16:23 is identical with Gaius in 1 Cor 1:14 cannot be guaranteed (*The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015], 62-71; cf. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 85-86). He concludes that the ξένος should be translated as a guest. However, the traditional translation of it better explains Paul's mention of him in Romans if Gaius in Rom 16:23 and 1 Cor 1:14 is the same person (Larry L. Welborn, *An End to Enmity: Paul and the 'Wrongdoer' of Second Corinthians* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011], 288-379). It does not make sense that Gaius was baptised by Paul and later became his guest and a guest of the whole Corinthian church. This may be why Origen chose this option. In fact, since there is no strong evidence to determine whether or not the Gaii are the same individual, it is hard to exclude one of the two possibilities. I admit that, if one should choose one of the two options, it needs some presumptions. I choose Origen's translation with the presumption that Rom 16:23 and 1 Cor 1:14 refer to the same Gaius.

224 Horrell suggests that Gaius' hosting was an occasional gathering of small household groups ("Domestic Space," 359 note 52). But the word ὅλος needs to be explained (cf. 14:23). See Theissen, "Social Structure," 83; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Dallas: Word, 1988), 910-911; cf. Last, *Corinthian Ekklēsia*, 56-61.

225 The notable recent supporter of this view is Adams (*Meeting Places*, 27-29).

226 Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 910-911.

227 Welborn, *End to Enmity*, 288-289; Murphy-O'Connor estimates the church members as more than fifty (*First Corinthians*, 183; cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 89).

economic scale, house size can be an indicator of wealth.[228] Gaius' house would have been far larger than 200m2 to hold approximately 30 to 60 people.[229] This indicates that he falls into at least the top 20 percent of Roman population in Oakes' economic scale, and thereby around or above PS5-4.[230] Murphy-O'Connor further assumes that Gaius' house was a large villa (approximately 400-700 m2) with *triclinium* and *atrium* (respectively 30-100 m2) which could be owned only by the wealthy.[231] But there is no strong evidence to determine if the type of his house was such a villa.[232] Paul's mention of ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας (Rom 16:23), nonetheless, provides information on Gaius' relatively large house and wealth, possibly around PS5-4.[233] As for Gaius' social and legal status, there are only small hints. Considering that the Latin praenomen, Gaius, was common especially at Roman Corinth and followed Gaius Julius Caesar,[234] his name might indicate he was a descendant of freedmen sent by the emperor to the colony. Fee supposes "he belonged to that class of Roman freedmen who had come to Corinth and had 'made it big' in the commercial enterprises of the city".[235] This presumption is possible but not certain. It is safest to assume that Gaius was either among upwardly mobile people or among the semi-elite.

Erastus' socio-economic status is most controversial. The key question is how to interpret the phrase ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (Rom 16:23) in light of the Greco-Roman administrative system and his relation with one epigraphic source recording an aristocratic (ep)Erastus who paved some roads in Corinth (*Corinth* VIII.3 no. 232).[236] Three quite different possibilities for his social position have been suggested: Erastus might be either

228 Oakes, *Reading Romans*, 56; Jongman, *Economy and society*, 239-264.

229 Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *First Corinthians*, 183.

230 Oakes presumes that those having 100-399m2 house would be equivalent to PS5, and 400-799m2 to PS4 (*Reading Romans*, 61, 66). Cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 356.

231 Murphy-O'Connor, *First Corinthians*, 183-184.

232 Horrell points out that "such hospitality hardly requires that he owned a villa like the one at Anaploga, nor that he belonged to the upper stratum of Corinthian society" ("Domestic Space," 359).

233 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 89; Welborn, "inequality," 70-71; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 910-911; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 57; Murphy-O'Connor, *First Corinthians*, 183-184; cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 356.

234 Cf. Welborn, "Inequality," 70; E. J. Goodspeed, "Gaius Titius Justus," *JBL* 69 (1950), 382.

235 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 62.

236 The usage of οἰκονόμος, its Latin equivalence, and the connection between *Corinth* VIII.3 no. 232 and Rom 16:23 (cf. Acts 19:21-22; 2 Tim 4:20) are the key issues in profiling Erastus' status. However, I will not delve deeper into all the complicated issues here. For the disagreements among scholars, see Goodrich, "*Quaestor* of Corinth," 90-115; Steven J. Friesen, "The Wrong Erastus: Ideology, Archaeology, and Exegesis," in Friesen, Schowalter, and Walters, *Corinth in Context*, 231-256.

The inscription (*Corinth* VIII.3 no. 232) records "*ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT*".

arcarius (slave or freedman),[237] *quaestor* (freedman or freeborn person) or *aedilis* (freeborn person or probably freedman).[238] Henry J. Cadbury proposed that he was a servile or freed treasurer (*arcarius*).[239] On the other hand, Theissen and many other commentators suggested that he was "a successful man who has risen into the ranks of the local notables" possibly from *quaestor* or a lesser position to *aedilis* (*Corinth* VIII.3 no. 232).[240] Murphy-O'Connor further presumed that Erastus was a person like Gnaeus Babbius Philinus who was an upwardly mobile freedman in Corinth.[241] However, due to the paucity of evidence, the debate has reached a stalemate, with some biblical scholars preferring to leave it unsettled.[242] Despite many divergences among scholars regarding Erastus' precise social status, most do not rule out the possibility that the phrase ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως implies his surplus of economic resources beyond that of ordinary people, provided that even *arcarii*[243] or *dispensatores*[244] may have been well-to-do.[245] Even if it is impossible to determine whether Erastus was *arcarius*, *quaestor*, or *aedile*, most scholars would concur that he might have been wealthier than many other Corinthian believers. If so, Erastus was more likely closer to upwardly mobile people or probably the semi-elite rather than the poor. Without any better evidence, it is meaningless to push this argument further.[246]

Stephanas would have enjoyed surplus material resources and time. As for his socio-economic status, what should be considered are his household, service at church, and travel. Firstly, while Paul rarely uses οἰκία or οἶκος to refer to household (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15; Phil

237 For legal status of *arcarii*, see Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 174.

238 Goodrich, "*Quaestor* of Corinth," 91.

239 Henry J. Cadbury, "Erastus of Corinth," *JBL* 50.2 (1931), 42-58; Friesen, "Poverty," 354-355; idem, "Wrong Erastus," 231-256; Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 135-141. Friesen further insists that Erastus was not a Christian ("Wrong Erastus," 249-256).

240 Theissen argues that Rom 16:23 reflects the early part of Erastus' life, *Corinth* VIII.3 no. 232 the later part (*Social Setting*, 75-83; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 58-59; Murphy-O'Connor, *Critical Life*, 268-271; cf. Goodrich, "*Quaestor* of Corinth," 90-115; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 46-56; Winter, *Seek the Welfare*, 179-197).

241 Murphy-O'Connor, *Critical Life*, 270.

242 Cf. Theissen, "Social Structure," 79-80.

243 Even if it is correct to say that Erastus is *arcarius*, there are various possibilities. The status of *arcarii* varied from a low clerical grade to a senior position. In particular, *arcarius provinciae* may be among senior officials of clerical grade. See P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freed-men and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 245-252.

244 Weaver, *Familia Caesaris*, 245-252.

245 Even Cadbury and Friesen who view Erastus as *arcarius* concur that he may have been wealthier than other plebs (Cadbury, "Erastus of Corinth," 51; Friesen, "Wrong Erastus," 249). But the possibility, of course, cannot be completely ruled out that he was a poor public slave (Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 141).

246 Theissen, "Social Structure," 79; Goodrich, "*Quaestor* of Corinth," 115.

4:22), two of the three occasions when the word is used are for that of Stephanas. The remaining one is used in Phil 4:22, οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας. This expression refers to slaves and freedmen in households related loosely or directly to the emperor.[247] Though its meaning is different as a house, οἶκος in Phlm 2 also refers to slaves, like Onesimus. If this usage of οἰκία or οἶκος in the Pauline letters can be applied to Stephanas' family, it can be said that Paul had in mind slaves or freedmen in his house.[248] Secondly, it may be that Stephanas' service (διακονία) entailed financial aid for fellow believers (1 Cor 16:15).[249] Not only is the economic sense of διακονία found elsewhere, especially in Acts 6:1, 11:29, and 12:25,[250] but also the expression εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις (1 Cor 16:15) is almost identical with the phrase τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους (8:4; 9:1) through which Paul encouraged the Corinthians to collect money for the Jerusalem church.[251] In light of this, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that Stephanas was actively involved in service (διακονία) in an economic sense. Thirdly, travelling in antiquity cannot be separated from financial cost and time.[252] That Stephanas visited Paul in Ephesus from Corinth means he could afford the money and time. It may imply his financial and occupational stability. As a result, it is probable that Stephanas can be placed between PS4 and PS5, or even above them, [253] while his social status may not be low.[254]

Two notable women, Phoebe (from Cenchreae,[255] Rom 16:1-2) and Chloe (1 Cor 1:11), need also to be examined. Phoebe was possibly a notable benefactor (προστάτις) in church (Rom 16:2). The noun προστάτις can be translated as a women benefactor, patron, or humble helper. Though a translation of it is somewhat controversial,[256] most scholars have

247 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 87; BADG, 557.

248 Cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 87; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 141-142.

249 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 625; Winter, *After Paul*, 197-199; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 768; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 88-89.

250 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 625.

251 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 829 note 23.

252 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 91-92.

253 Cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 95; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 58; Friesen, "Poverty," 352.

254 There is not any hint of his social status. Cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 58.

255 Phoebe came from Cenchreae which was eight miles away from Corinth. She had a certain connection with the Corinthian community, though this does not mean that she was a member of the church.

256 Some translate προστάτις as a leader (cf. Friesen, "Poverty," 355; Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* [Grand Rapid: Zondervan, 2015], 62). But it seems that the idea that Phoebe was a leader of Paul does not make sense. See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 916; V. D. Verbrugge and K. R. Krell, *Paul and Money* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 95.

accepted the idea of Phoebe's position as a benefactor or patron of many and of Paul (cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 14.444).[257] The issue is what the patronage exactly meant. The relationship, as Meggitt argues, could be applied to many social strata in Roman society.[258] However, given that Paul exalted Phoebe as a patron (προστάτις) of many (πολύς) including himself, she would have been recognized as in a higher socio-economic position than many believers.[259] If so, it is probable that she was embedded in the semi-elite described as "not many of you" (οὐ πολλοί) in 1 Cor 1:26. The contrast between πολύς (Rom 16:2) and οὐ πολλοί (1 Cor 1:26) underpins this idea. It may be that Paul's sketch of exceptional individuals presented in 1 Cor 1:26 refers to a person like Phoebe. Jewett further insists that a person like Phoebe provided financial assistance for Paul's travel, mission, and shelter.[260]

A biblical snapshot of Chloe reveals that she was an independent woman who had some slaves or business agents (1 Cor 1:11). That Paul mentioned her name, not that of her husband or father alongside her name,[261] suggests that she was independent and well known in Corinth, at least in the church.[262] Besides, Chloe sent her people, either slaves or business agents, to Ephesus on her behalf. Though it is not certain that the goal of their travel was mainly for business or for delivering a message to Paul, it seems that Chloe managed a household with slaves and freedmen or business with some agents. In either case, she was of more than modest means. Her name, Chloe which was often given to slaves, can be indicative

257 For the examples, see Robert Jewett, "Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission," in *The Social World of Formative Judaism*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 148-151; Caroline F. Whelan, "Amica Pauli: The Role of Phoebe in the Early Church," *JSNT* 49 (1993), 67-85; T. R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press), 788; C. Osiek and M. Y. Macdonald, *Women's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 158; Esther Yue L. Ng, "Phoebe as Prostatis," *TJ* 25.1 (2004), 5-6.

For woman patrons and their activities, see J. Nicols, *Civic Patronage in the Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 255-257.

258 Meggitt, *Poverty and Survival*, 147. However, Peter Oakes points out that Paul's description of Phoebe (Rom 16:2) suggests that she was at least "at the center of some local patronage network", even though she was not elite ("Urban Structure and Patronage: Christ Followers in Corinth," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, ed. D. Neufeld and R. E. DeMaris [London: Routledge, 2010], 187-188).

259 Jewett, "Phoebe," 149; Edwin A. Judge, "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents," *TynBul* 35 (1984), 21.

260 Jewett, "Phoebe," 154-155.

261 That Paul mentioned her name alone is contrasted with Priscilla who was mentioned always with Aquila though in varying order (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:9; 1 Cor 16:19). See Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 59; Jewett, *Romans*, 956-957; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 735.

262 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 121; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 141; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 57.

of her servile origin.[263] If so, and being a Christian,[264] Chloe might have been an upwardly mobile member of the Corinthian community.

If I could classify these individuals into three groups, it would be as follows (the sequence of the names moves from high to low possibilities and a few names are duplicated in two strata as we should consider both possibilities). Crispus, Phoebe (from Cenchreae), Gaius, and Erastus may be among the semi-elite. Erastus, Stephanas, Gaius, and Chloe would be upwardly mobile people. The rest may be poor or are impossible to be classified. This distinction of course is to a degree blurred as evidence for them is not enough. This, nevertheless, helps to unveil socio-economic diversity in the Corinthian community.

4.3.3. Semi-Elites, Upwardly Mobile People, and the Poor

So far, I have offered nuanced interpretations of 1 Corinthians, especially 1:5, 1:26-31, 4:6-13, 6:1-11, 7:1-16, 8:1-13, 10:23-33, and 11:17-34 and prosopography of Corinthian individuals in order to profile the Corinthians' socio-economic status. This has shown that there were likely three socio-economic strata in the Corinthian congregation and two phases of the community. In the initial phase of it, the contrast between semi-elites and the poor was conspicuous. The second period after Paul's departure made upwardly mobile people obtrusive.

The various points of evidence articulated above reinforce each other, drawing a vignette of three socio-economic strata in the Corinthian church: semi-elites ("not many of you" in 1 Cor 1:26), upwardly mobile people or nouveaux riches ("you" in 4:6-13), and the poor ("many of you" in 1:26; cf. "we" in 4:6-13). First, the semi-elite were wise, socially and politically influential, wealthy and well-born (very roughly from 5-10 per cent of the congregation). Their socio-economic status was given by birth and was unquestionable in the eyes of both insiders and outsiders. It seems that they were not those boasting of wisdom and wealth (1:27-31; 4:6-13) but were possibly the people with whom the nouveaux riches wanted to compete for honour and leadership. Crispus, Phoebe, Gaius, and Erastus are the

[263] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 43-44; J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Macmillan. Repr., Winona Lake: Alpha, 1895), 152.

[264] It is controversial whether Chloe was a Christian. There is no strong evidence for the debate, and thereby many scholars leave it unsettled (Fee, *The Corinthians*, 54; Friesen, "Poverty," 356). However, unless she was a believer, there would be no strong reason for Paul to mention her name rather than the names of people who delivered a message to him and were more important to him. On the other hand, even if she was not a believer, it indicates that the Corinthian church had strong contacts with her wealthy household.

probable candidates for this stratum. Second, upwardly mobile people, or their parents, experienced economic mobility from low to high like many Corinthian freedmen, but their social position in the Corinthian congregation and elsewhere was in question (probably 10-20 per cent). Some people in this stratum acquired some sort of wisdom through spiritual experiences or education (1:5; 4:8), misused it (8:1-13), and boasted of it in order to become recognised as influential and honourable by ingroup members (1:27-31; 4:6-13). They would also have boasted of their wealth to elevate themselves over others (11:17-22). But they seemed to struggle to achieve this elevation (4:7; 3:18). It is highly likely that these ambitious and competitive members created great tension both against the semi-elite and the poor in the Corinthian congregation (1:10-4:21; 6:1-11; 8:1-13; 11:17-34). Erastus, Stephanas, Gaius, and Chloe, or their parents, are probably among upwardly mobile people, though these individuals would be far from those boasting of wisdom and wealth (cf. 1 Cor 1:11).[265] The third stratum is the poor. They would have shared many predicaments and characteristics with Paul, his party, and possibly many Thessalonians (Chapters 2-3). They were uneducated, weak, hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, and homeless (1:26-28; 4:10-11; 11:21). They were despised, beaten, persecuted, and ashamed (1:28; 4:10-12; 11:22; cf. 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13-16; 3:1-5). They worked with their hands (1 Cor 4:12; cf. 1 Thess 2:9; 4:11). These socio-economic sufferings and vulnerability were common characteristics of the ancient poor (Chapter 3). Many Corinthian believers, possibly more than 70 percent of them, were of the poor. It can be assumed that, while the semi-elite and the poor were conspicuous in the initial phase of the congregation, upwardly mobile people became more obtrusive in the second phase of it.

If these snapshots of a diverse community at Corinth are correct, it can serve to replace the binary model for individual Christians, poor or elite. A binary model fails to embrace all the Corinthian believers from *archisynagogal* status (ἀρχισυνάγωγος) to slave, or from those having a spacious house to the poor. It does not fully unravel the socio-economic dynamic of the congregation (1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 6:1-11; 8:1-13; 10:23-30; 11:17-34; cf. Chapter 5).[266] A three strata model can also supplement Friesen's poverty scale, which only

[265] People in this stratum were not all problematic. It seems that some of them rather assisted Paul. Given that he positively mentions the individuals including Erastus, Stephanas, and Chloe, they could not be his opponents.

[266] Horrell points out that, even if one accepts Meggitt's binary model, with everyone being either the elite or the poor, and his suggestion that all the Corinthian believers shared poverty, he "has

focuses on the believers' financial aspects, by integrating many other factors, such as legal and social levels and status inconsistency.[267]

downplayed the extent and significance of socio-economic diversity among the so-called non-elite and thus among the early Christians at Corinth" ("Domestic Space," 358).

[267] Though Friesen's poverty scale (seven categories) is much more useful than the binary model, it is, in practice, almost impossible to classify the Corinthians by using the poverty scale due to the paucity of evidence. For instance, we do not know if those boasting of wisdom are under PS3, 4 or 5 and if Crispus is under PS1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. In this sense, the practical use of the poverty scale is very limited in analysing the Corinthian congregation. It seems that the biblical evidence enables us to categorise the Corinthians only into three strata in a broader sense. Besides, the PS does not count one's social and legal status and status inconsistency. See also §2.1 (esp. Chapter 2 note 21).

Chapter Five

Dynamic Socio-Economic Phenomena in Corinth: Status, Relationships, and Identity

Two noticeable features of the Corinthian congregation are their relative social harmony with non-believers (1 Cor 4:10; 5:9-13; 6:1-11; 8:10; 10:27; 14:23-25) and ingroup factions (1:10-17; 3:3-9; 6:1-11; 8:1-13; 11:17-34). The Corinthians' social relationships, which are starkly contrasted with those of the Thessalonians, have been examined through social, economic, cultural, and apocalyptic lenses. In this chapter, I will further underline the socio-economic aspects, implications, and ramifications of intergroup and intragroup relationships in Corinth, while asking how socio-economic factors influenced their relationships, internal ethic, and social identity. What I will argue mainly in the following is that the composition of the Corinthian community as a cross-section of society (Chapter 4) played a fundamental role in forming social harmony between the Corinthians and non-believers and causing ingroup conflicts.

In order to do so, first, I will survey the history of scholarship on the Corinthians' social relationships in order to provide a basis for further research (§5.1). Second, before diving into 1 Corinthians, I will first analyse the significance of ancient social networks (§5.2). This will focus on the scalability, reciprocity, and hierarchy of aristocratic relationships. Third, I will examine the issue of their social harmony with outgroup members along with its socio-economic implications in light of the ancient social relationships (§5.3). Compared to the Thessalonians, the Corinthian believers had more diverse types of relationship with the outside world depending on their own socio-economic positions. Without generalising about these relationships, I will explain who were responsible for harmony with non-believers and how and why they formed these peaceful relationships by interpreting 1 Cor 5:1-6:11, 4:10, 10:27, and 14:23-25. In addition, I will describe Paul's response to their social acceptability and adaptability. Fourth, I will negotiate questions concerning the Corinthians' internal factions (§5.4): what were the causes for and results of the conflicts? Socio-economic factors will be highlighted in analysing 1 Cor 1-4, 6:1-11, 11:17-34, and 12:12-26. Last, I will connect the snapshots of the Corinthians - socio-economic status, social relationships with non-believers and within church, and social

identity - in an order of causality through exegesis, classical studies of social connections, and a social-psychological analysis (§§5.3.2, 5.4.3, 5.5). This is an exploration of how socio-economic factors reinforced or weakened social relationships, ethics, and belief systems in relation to social identity.

5.1. A History of Previous Research and Its Implications

It is no surprise that Ferdinand C. Baur is first mentioned when one starts to deal with the issue of the Corinthians' social relationships. His study of four parties and conflict between them in the Corinthian community in 1831[1] was a modern landmark from which many biblical scholars began exploring the Corinthians' dynamic social relationships through many different lenses, recently sociological and economic. Broadly, two kinds of relationships have been examined: internal conflicts and social harmony with non-believers.

The issue of the internal factions in Corinth has long been discussed after Baur's research,[2] but still remains unresolved in many parts, especially in regard to causes for the conflict and the identities of the four parties or groups mentioned in 1 Cor 1:12. Baur suggested that the conflict transpired between Pauline Gentile Christianity (I belong to Paul) and Petrine Jewish Christianity (I belong to Peter) at Corinth, though his proposal has been criticised and rejected by many modern scholars.[3] After Baur, many plausible causes for the internal tension have been suggested: the conflict was attributed to certain Corinthians' obsession with (pre-)Gnosticism,[4] wisdom from Jewish[5] and philosophical traditions,[6] the

1 F. C. Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des paulinischen und petrinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *TZT* 4 (1831), 61-206.

2 James D. G. Dunn views the discussion as "the longest running critical question" (*1 Corinthians* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 27).

3 A few recent scholars still support Baur's idea of the conflict at Corinth. See M. D. Goulder, "Σοφία in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 37.4 (1991), 516-534.

4 W. Lütgert, *Freiheitspredigt und Schwärmgeister in Korinth* (Göttingen: Bertelsmann, 1908); Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*; Ulrich Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1959); contra Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

5 Richard A. Horsley, "Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians," *HTR* 69 (1976), 269-288; James A. Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1.18-3.20 Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984).

6 As for the Stoics' influence on certain Corinthians, see Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 158-59; John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 122-127; Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*; Terence Paige, "Stoicism, ἐλευθερία and Community at Corinth," in Adams and Horrell, *Christianity at Corinth*, 207-218; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville:

Gymnasium education,[7] or rhetoric;[8] or it was influenced by their different socio-economic statuses in Greco-Roman culture.[9] The recent trend is not to choose one of those several options but to integrate multiple plausible causes for the factions at Corinth. Particularly, Theissen's idea of the Corinthian congregation as a cross-section of society[10] has been widely accepted in that this idea has assimilated other factors, such as theological, philosophical, religious and cultural influences. For instance, some scholars contend that the wisdom of certain Corinthians, that was influenced by the Sophists, i.e. the Gymnasium education or rhetoricians, played a role as a status indicator, and this caused internal divisions.[11] In this stream, wisdom, socio-economic status, and internal conflict have been viewed as mutually pertinent, especially in 1 Cor 1-4.

Furthermore, many biblical scholars have struggled to characterise the (so-called) four groups mentioned in 1:12: Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. Though a general consensus is that wisdom, boasting, and "spiritual" identity (πνευματικός), as presented in 1 Cor 1-4 and 12-14, are at least loosely associated with the context lying behind 1:12,[12] scholars have grappled with articulating the exact connection between the passages and with delineating the identities of the four groups. A lack of evidence has led to some speculative conclusions as follows. The Paul group would have adhered to his baptism of certain Corinthians (1:13-17),[13] the founding of the church (3:6-9), Gentile mission,[14] or rejection of patronage (cf. 9:1-27).[15] The Apollos group can be linked

Westminster John Knox, 2000). As for the Cynics' influence, see Downing, *Cynics, Paul*. As for the Epicureans' influence, see Tomlin, "Christians and Epicureans," 51-72.

On the other hand, Martin argues that certain Corinthians were influenced by "philosophical commonplaces" rather than a specific philosophical tradition (*Corinthian Body*, 72).

7 Dutch, *Educated Elite*.

8 Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*; *Duane* Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Michael A. Bullmore, *St. Paul's Theology of Rhetorical Style: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 in the Light of First-Century Rhetorical Criticism* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1995).

9 Judge, *Social Pattern*; Theissen, *Social Setting*; Chow, *Patronage and Power*; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*.

10 Theissen, *Social Setting.*

11 Winter, *Philo and Paul*; Dutch, *Educated Elite*; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*; Adam G. White, *Where is the Wise Man?: Graeco-Roman Education as a Background to the Divisions in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (London: T & T Clark, 2015); Timothy A. Brookins, "The Wise Corinthians: Their Stoic Education and Outlook," *JTS* 62.1 (2011), 51-76.

12 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 123.

13 Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 26.

14 Baur, "Korinthischen Gemeinde," 61-206.

15 Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 173-175.

to Apollos' rhetorical skills and eloquence (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor 3:1-23; 1:12; 4:6; contra 2 Cor 10:10)[16] or his understanding of John's baptism (Acts 18:25; 1 Cor 1:13-17).[17] The Peter group may be gathered based on Peter's Jewish background[18] and his probable visit to Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 9:5; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.8),[19] while the Christ group can only be speculated about.[20] These depictions of the four groups, however, remain far from certain due to the lacunae in the evidence.[21]

Compared to the intense discussion of internal factions for two centuries, the Corinthians' social harmony with non-believers has not been comprehensively examined and thereby its socio-economic and theological implications and their significance have been underrated. One of the exceptions is Barclay's article in which he considers the social acceptability of the Corinthians in their larger society as indispensable in understanding the Corinthians' theological perspective and social identity.[22] In his view, their experience of social harmony contributed to their refusal or modification of Paul's eschatological teachings.[23] Following this, de Vos also underlines the Corinthians' good relation with outsiders in contrast with the Thessalonians and the Philippians.[24] Besides these studies, many scholars have viewed this issue as peripheral in Paul's letters to Corinth. When biblical scholars deal with 1 Cor 5:9-12, 6:1-6:11, 8:10, 10:27, and 14:23-25, the Corinthians' relationship with non-believers has been only briefly treated. For instance, the Corinthians' litigation (6:1-11) has been regarded as vaguely revealing that some Corinthians' strong connection with outgroup members influenced internal factions.[25]

16 Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, xxx-xxxiv; L. D. Hurst, "Apollos, Hebrews, and Corinth: Bishop Montefiore's Theory Examined," *SJT* 38 (1985), 505-513; Mihaila, *Paul-Apollos*; Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 30; cf. Richard A. Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire - and 1 Corinthians," in *Paul and Politics* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 88.

On the other hand, Barrett points out that "Paul never suggests any difference between Apollos and himself, but rather goes out of his way to represent Apollos as his colleague" (*The Corinthians*, 43).

17 C. F. G. Heinrici, *Das zweite Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus an die Korinthier* (Berlin: Hertz, 1887), 35-36.

18 Baur, "Korinthischen Gemeinde," 61-206.

19 C. K. Barrett, *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 28-39; contra Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 29.

20 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 58; Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 30.

21 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 55-56. Because of the uncertainty of the four parties' characteristics, Munck even insists that there was no division between the parties (*Salvation of Mankind*, 167).

22 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 57-72.

23 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 71.

24 de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 205-214.

25 Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 562-586; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 228-248; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 113-166; cf. Meeks, "Group Boundaries," 4-29.

Overall, three points regarding this history of research on the Corinthians' social relationships can be made. First, many scholars have come to perceive that the composition of the Corinthian congregation might have played a role in forming its members' ingroup[26] and outgroup relationships[27] and internal ethic,[28] while the intergroup relationships would have affected their belief system[29] and the ingroup conflict.[30] Though these causality links between the several socio-economic and theological phenomena are not evidently presented in 1 Corinthians, the connections have been underpinned by reasonable deductions and hunches. I will press this further by comparing the Corinthian community with the Thessalonian one, with modern groups studied by social psychological theories, and with ancient elite communities and culture. In particular, Paul's descriptions of the Corinthians' social relationships, as well as the causes for and results of such relationships, may be illuminated by Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory (see §§1.2.4, 5.3.2, 5.4.3). Second, except for a few studies, the Corinthians' social harmony with non-believers and its socio-economic implications have attracted little scholarly interest. This issue is seemingly tangential in 1 Corinthians, but it revolves around some central matters, such as the Corinthians' internal factions (5:9-6:11; 10:27) and eschatological perspective (4:8; 15:1-58).[31] In other words, a detailed explication of the Corinthians' strong connections with outgroup members and its implications may be useful in revisiting the vital themes, such as their ethic and belief system, and in further understanding their social identity as Christians.[32] Third, it should be admitted that evidence for the four groups and social harmony with non-believers is limited. Since the four groups presented in 1:12 are deemed the centre of 1 Corinthians,[33] some scholars have unduly pressed their argument far beyond biblical evidence.[34] Though 1 Cor 1:12 stimulates scholars' imaginations, the specific identities of the groups must remain veiled unless new evidence comes to the fore.

5.2. Aristocratic Social Networks and Their Socio-Economic Implications

26 Theissen, *Social Setting.*
27 Chow, *Patronage and Power.*
28 Theissen, *Social Setting.*
29 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 57-72; Brookins, "Wise Corinthians," 57.
30 Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 562-586.
31 Cf. Barclay, "Social Contrast," 71.
32 Cf. Barclay, "Social Contrast," 70-71.
33 Fee, *The Corinthians,* 55.
34 Fee underlines the uncertainty of what 1 Corinthians really reveals about the four groups (*The Corinthians,* 55-56; cf. Thiselton, *The Corinthians,* 123-129).

Before diving into the topic of the Corinthians' harmony with outsiders and conflict within their church, it is necessary to explore aristocratic social networks to shed light on the issues. This will help to explain how and why they built the good relationship through a close comparison between the Corinthians' relational codes and the elite culture.

Ancient social networks had different meanings for the poor and for the elite or wealthy. As I delineated in Chapter 3 (see also §2.4.4), for the poor, various social networks - family, associations, and work groups - were indispensable for surviving in a harsh economic environment, pursuing a sense of belonging, and ensuring the most basic dignities of life, such as funerals for family members. In particular, because of their urgency for survival, the poor made every effort to shelter their groups or themselves from economic uncertainty, even at the cost of serious, and sometimes physical, conflicts with others (cf. Aesop [Perry], *Fab*. 26). On the other hand, the elite built different sorts of social connections on the basis of their distinctive motivations, e.g. being honoured and expanding political alliances. I will illustrate some of the major points concerning the elite's social webs below.

In the Roman Empire, social relationships of those of high socio-economic status can be categorised into personal and communal levels. The personal level of social connections can be roughly distinguished into three types: patron-client, patron-protégé, and friendship.[35] Social status is the rudimentary criterion to determine the nature of the relationships. If one's status is lower, similar but low, or the same as that of others, one becomes respectively a client, a protégé, or a friend.[36] At the collective level as a mixture of interpersonal ties, one can be viewed as a member, leader, benefactor, or patron of families, associations, government institutions, towns, and political parties. All of these interpersonal and communal relationships were inextricably entwined and readily conflated (Seneca, *Ben*. 6.19.2-5). This formed one's multifaceted social web that was socially patterned by numerous criteria. I do

[35] Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 151-156; Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). The distinction between client and protégé is made by modern scholars. In particular, Saller uses the term protégé to describe a form of patronage which was coloured with friendship terms in ancient literature. Ancient writers tended to depict their close clients as though they were friends, sometimes blurring the distinction between friends and clients, which has led historians to the use of protégé. See Richard P. Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome," in Wallace-Hadrill, *Patronage in Ancient Society*, 50-62; cf. note 36.

[36] In the Principate, the distinction among the three categories was sometimes opaque. But friendship was more emotion-based between equals, while patronage was more instrumental-based between unequals. See David Konstan, Friendship and Patronage," *A Companion to Latin Literature*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 345-359; cf. Martial, *Epigr.* 3.46, 3.36, 2.55; note 35.

not intend to catalogue all features of the many sorts of social relationships in antiquity.[37] Nor will they be comprehensively articulated here.[38] Rather, even though there is a risk of over-simplification, I will explicate the multifarious social networks of the rich or elite in the Principate by selecting three key words out of many: scalability, reciprocity, and hierarchy. These three concepts will be further characterised by differentiating them from certain contrastive features of the social relationships of the poor.

There are three codes at the heart of aristocratic social webs in Roman society: unlimited scalability, mutual obligation, and justified hierarchy. First, the aristocratic relationships were not under any geographical and numerical restraints but rather tended to expand beyond boundaries.[39] Social connections could continually be expanded as much as one's resource allowed.[40] The social web of one person tended to stretch throughout the whole empire in all directions, especially horizontally and downward.[41] At a personal level, it was a prevalent practice to introduce friends, clients, and patrons to other acquaintances. For instance, the letters of Pliny the Younger describe the process of initiating and extending friendship or patronage (*Ep*. 7.7-8, 15). Pliny recommended the equestrian Pompeius Saturninus to his friend Priscus, and the two found each other congenial and continued the relationship. Such an introduction was often made to request political, material and judicial

37 There were many sorts of relationships that can be differentiated from each other based on their main characteristics. Besides, the characteristics of many relationships historically changed (cf. David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 1). In particular, Nicols traces changes in understanding of civic patronage in antiquity (Nicols, *Civic Patronage*; cf. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "*Suffragium*: From Vote to Patronage," *British Journal of Sociology* 5 [1954], 33-48).

38 For recent notable studies of social relationships in the Greco-Roman world, see MacMullen, *Social Relations*; Saller, *Personal Patronage*; idem, "Patronage and Friendship," 50-62; Nicols, *Civic Patronage*; Konstan, *Friendship*; idem, "Friendship and Patronage," 345-359; K. Verboven, *The Economy of Friends: Economic Aspects of Amicitia and Patronage in the Late Republic* (Brussels, 2002); P. A. Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971); Paul J. Burton, "Amicitia in Plautus: A Study of Roman Friendship Processes," *AJP* 125 (2004), 209-243; John T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); cf. B. Longfellow, *Roman Imperialism and Civic Patronage: Form, Meaning, and Ideology in Monumental Fountain Complexes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); A. Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire: Citizens, Elites and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); de Ste. Croix, "*Suffragium*," 33-48.

For recent research on honour in ancient relationships, see Lendon, *Empire of Honour*; Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

39 Cf. Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 151-152; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 29.

40 Cf. Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 155-156.

41 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 148, 151-152; cf. Oakes, "Urban Structure," 178-179.

assistance from friends, patrons, or protégés for other acquaintances (Pliny, *Ep*. 2.3.2).[42] According to Saller, "friends not only exchanged personal favors between themselves, but they also exchanged and were bound by favors for their clients and other friends".[43] When the request for help through the introductions was accepted, the existing friendship was further invigorated and a new relationship was initiated (cf. Pliny, *Ep*. 4.17). Pliny provides another example of the extension of relationship (*Ep*. 6.18). Sabinus (cf. Pliny, *Ep*. 4.10, 9.2) entreated Pliny to undertake proceedings on behalf of Firmum, his hometown. Even though he was overwhelmed by numerous tasks, Pliny accepted the request and expected an enduring relation with the city and its citizens as a potential patron.[44] The elite also maintained and extended their social webs through marriage or by bequeathing them, including patronage, to their progeny over generations (cf. *ILS* 6100; Pliny, *Ep*. 4.1). In these instances, one's web of relationships could straightforwardly coalesce with others' webs.[45]

The scalability of relationship led most elites to having multiple memberships in many communities and cities.[46] On the other hand, an exclusive commitment to an association or city was often unreasonable and disadvantageous for them,[47] even though there might be a preference for a certain group.[48] Nicols argues that, especially at the level of senators, equestrians, and decurions, elites valued and sought to have numerous formal client communities rather than restricted commitments.[49] This can be exemplified by the wealthy's various relations with many cities. Not only was Pliny co-opted as a formal patron (*patronum cooptavit*) in Tifernum, possibly following his father and uncle (*Ep*. 4.1), but he also provided protection (*patrocinium*) or favour (*benignitas*) for the Baetici (*Ep*. 3.4, 7.33), Firmum (*Ep*. 6.18), and Comum (*Ep*. 1.3, 2.8, 3.6, 4.13; *CIL* 5.5262-5263) as a benefactor or

42 K. Verboven, "Friendship," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. M. Peachin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 415.

43 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 25.

44 *Proinde Firmanis tuis ac iam potius nostris oblige fidem meam* (Pliny, *Ep*. 6.18). Nicols assumes that the relation between Pliny and Firmum became formalised as *patronus municipii* (*Civic Patronage*, 144-145).

45 Garnsey and Saller state that "many senators were as dependent on imperial favour as equestrians, many equestrians were more directly tied to the senatorial mediators who won them offices and honours than to the emperor, and senators and equestrians were generally integrated through kinship, friendship and patronage into a single social network" (*Roman Empire*, 156).

46 Cf. Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 8.

47 Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 17, 152.

48 For example, Pliny provided numerous benefactions for his hometown (Comum).

49 Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 131-155, esp. 155.

formal patron.[50] Similarly, P. Memmius Regulus became a patron in Ruscino, Nabonensis, and probably Corinth. The best example of this, of course, is the emperor. Most classical scholars point out that an emperor was deemed to be the top patron of all cities and citizens, sometimes called *summus amicus*, who distributed fiscal and political resources to them as benefactions.[51] Corinth and the Corinthians were no exceptions (*Corinth* VIII.3 nos. 50, 51, 72, 74, 80).[52] Saller points out an interesting characteristic of patronage in the Principate, claiming that "he [the emperor] would distribute *beneficia* in accordance with particularistic rather than universalistic criteria".[53] In other words, the emperor's relationships with a myriad of client cities, communities, and citizens were neither impersonal, metaphysical, objective, nor mechanically administrative, but rather personal.[54] Saller emphasises the emperor's considerable discretion in administrative actions that created personal aspects of benefaction bonding the givers and receivers in a moral obligation (Seneca, *Ben*. 6.19.2-5).[55] When the emperor distributed citizenship, office, water, public buildings, etc., this did not strictly follow administrative guidelines but was frequently influenced by his individual relationships (Pliny, *Ep*. 10.5-7).[56] The discretion of the emperor enabled him to strengthen and extend relationships which were not just impersonal. In a similar sense, it can be said that most patrons and benefactors widened personal relationships with numerous citizens or members in client cities and groups by exercising their social, economic, and political power based on their preference and discretion (cf. Plutarch, *Mor*. 808).

One more interesting point is that one's possession of and desire to expand relationships was by and large proportionate to one's social and economic status;[57] the higher one's socio-economic status, the more one desired to have a wider social network for

50 For a specific explication of Pliny's relations with many cities, see Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 131-147.

51 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 33; A. von Premerstein, *Vom Werden und Wesen des Prinzipats. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Hans Volkmann* (München, 1937), 13-116; G. Alföldy, *Römische Sozialgeschichte* (Wiesbaden, 1984)105; Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939); Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 112; cf. Matthias Gelzer, *The Roman Nobility*, trans. Robin Seager (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 139; Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC - AD 337)* (London: Duckworth, 1977). 135-144.

52 Cf. Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 43-51.

53 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 33.

54 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 33-37; cf. Millar, *Emperor*, 135-139.

55 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 34; Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 150.

56 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 35. For instance, the fate of the Euryclids fluctuated depending on their relationships with different emperors. See P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta. A Tale of Two Cities*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 97-104.

57 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 205; Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 55-96, esp. 96.

several practical reasons which will be delineated below.[58] The elites' obsession with larger social webs is reflected in the collapse of some wealthy families.[59] They expanded their patronage and friendships beyond their resources which as a result were depleted, and they sank into ruin: "formerly aristocratic families of wealth or outstanding distinction were apt to be led to their downfall by a passion for magnificence. … and the more handsome the fortune, the palace, the establishment of a man, the more imposing his reputation and his clientele" (Tacitus, *Ann*. 3.55).[60] Even Julius Caesar was nearly bankrupted during his aedileship as he tried to ingratiate himself with friends and clients (Plutarch, *Caes*. 5.8-9). For the elite, a passion for a large social web and its benefits were vital in their lives, even though it cost a lot. This is chiefly because the quality and quantity of one's social relationships was a mirror of one's social status and wealth, and vice versa.[61]

Second, the desire of the wealthy for relationships was fuelled by their benefits in reciprocity. Various relationships in antiquity were expressed in reciprocal exchanges of service and material.[62] A simple definition of patronage is given by Garnsey and Saller: "a reciprocal exchange relationship between men of unequal status and resources".[63] Nicols adds some words to this, "continuous and generally extra-legal or morally based".[64] Friendship (*amicitia* or *familiaritas*) was practised based on mutual exchange ideally between equals, and infrequently between unequals (cf. Cicero, *Amic*. 19; Seneca, *Ben*. 2.18.5).[65] Although he theoretically views the nature, source, and goal of friendship as affection

58 Cf. Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 156; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 205.

59 Cf. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 62; Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 155-156.

60 Loeb translation.

61 Nicols states that "the more a prominent man had been noticed in respect to wealth, household and furnishings, the more likely he would be to receive public honors and clients" (*Civic Patronage*, 156). Kloppenborg also argues that "social standing is not indexical to income but is instead a function of the strength and character of connections to one's peers and, in some cases, to the civic elite and to the city" (*Christ's Associations*, 96).

62 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 148-149; Gelzer, *Roman Nobility*, 65-68; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 24-51.

63 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 152-152. For the similar definitions, see J. Boissevain, "Patronage in Sicily," *Man* 1.1 (1966), 18; Robert Kaufman, "The Patron-Client Concept and Macro-Politics: Prospects and Problems," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16.1 (1974), 285; Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 2; Stuart Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 48-49.

Paul Veyne expatiated on the non-reciprocal nature of patronage, but his insistence has been widely criticized by many classical scholars. See J. Andreau, P. Schmitt, and A. Schnapp, "Paul Veyne et l'évergétisme," *Annales* 33 (1978), 317, 319.

64 Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 2.

65 Saller, "Patronage and Friendship," 50-62.

(*caritas*; Cicero, *Amic*. 20), goodwill (*benevolentia*), and love (*amor*; Cicero, *Amic*. 26, 18), Cicero admits that a corollary of friendship is a common advantage driven by mutual services in a practical sense (*Rosc. Amer*. 111).[66] Epicureans, on the other hand, consider friendship's origin itself as assistance and necessity.[67] Regardless of whether mutual exchange was either the nature, purpose, or (by-)product of friendship, it was in reality an essential part of Roman friendship (Seneca, *Ben*. 1.5.5; Fronto, *Ad M. Caes*. 1.3.4).[68] As such, reciprocity, to various degrees, pervaded almost all relationships amongst friends, patrons, protégés, clients, and relatives.

More significant here is what the elite exchanged in various relationships and why. In patronage and friendship, Romans gave and took incorporeal and corporeal resources, which usually could not be bought in markets.[69] Patrons and benefactors supplied services to clients and protégés. Those of higher status distributed money and food to clients (Seneca, *Ben*. 1.11.5, Fronto, *Ep. Gr*. 4-5; Pliny, *Ep*. 3.11.2), built and maintained public buildings for them - temples (Pliny, *Ep*. 4.1; *CIL* 8.26468), baths (*CIL* 5.5262), theatres (*CIL* 10.4737), markets, and aqueducts (*IGR* 3.804)[70] - defended them as advocates in court (Pliny, *Ep*. 3.4, 4.7, 6.18; Quintilian, *Inst.* 12.7.12) or in public, held games and festivals (Seneca, *Ben*. 2.21.5), promoted their status (Pliny, *Ep*. 1.19), guided political careers and activities, and granted citizenship.[71] The elite similarly offered kindness (*benignitas*) to friends, which was manifested in actions and nourished friendship (Fronto, *Ad M. Caes*. 1.3.4). Gifts in friendship, however, were more often incorporeal than in patronage.[72] For example, elites advocated for friends as witnesses and solicitors, provided loans or financial, political and emotional support in times of crisis (Cicero, *Att*. 10.11.2, 12.52.1; Seneca, *Lucil*. 9.8, *Vit. Beat.* 24.2; Juvenal, *Sat*. 3.220), were present at parties for birthdays and celebrations,

66 While many scholars underline the latter instrumental aspect of Roman friendship (Saller, *Personal Patronage*; Burton, "Amicitia," 352-381; Gelzer, *Roman Nobility*, 65-68; Syme, *Roman Revolution*, 157), others focus more on the former feature, relation based on affection (Konstan, *Friendship*; cf. Seneca, *Lucil*. 9.8, 48.2-4). See also P. A. Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 352-381.

67 Benjamin Fiore, "The Theory and Practice of Friendship in Cicero," in Fitzgerald, *Friendship*, 60.

68 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 15.

69 A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 32.

70 Ti. Claudius Erymneus donated approximately 200,000,000 denarii for an aqueduct (Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 25, 28).

71 For more detailed information on benefactions, see Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 262-273; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 23-29; Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 28-35, 71-108, 160-169.

72 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 155; Verboven, "Friendship," 414-418.

became guardians for each other's children, wrote letters of recommendation and helped friends to gain office (Pliny, *Ep*. 1.19).[73]

The services (*beneficia* or *benignitas*) morally obligated the recipients in patronage and friendship to return favours. Failure to return in an appropriate form could break the relationships (cf. Seneca, *Ben*. 7.31.1). Ingratitude was viewed as one of the most serious crimes, worse than murder, theft, and unchastity, since it was the root of immoral behaviours (Seneca, *Ben*. 1.10.1-5, esp. 4; cf. Cicero, *Off*. 1.48). The beneficiaries were figuratively indebted to givers and needed to calculate and repay debts commensurate with the initial favours.[74] Paying off these debts was often impossible, since, even though the services (*officii*) needed to be calculated (Cicero, *Off*. 1.47, 59),[75] they could not be precisely quantified and substituted for numbers and gold, or the debts were too immense to recompense (Cicero, *Fam*. 2.6.2, *Off*. 2.69-70; cf. Seneca, *Ben*. 5.2-6).[76] This ambiguity is one of the reasons it was not easy to actually liquidate debts or to break off relationships voluntarily (Cicero, *Fam*. 2.6.1-2).[77] This is also why Seneca warned that one should carefully decide whether or not to accept gifts (*Ben*. 2.18.5).

While friends exchanged similar sorts of services, clients were expected to offer things different from what they had received from patrons. Those of higher status mostly expected honour as the quid pro quo demonstrated in deference, respect, and loyalty in public. The depiction, "the elite - the men most preoccupied with honor"[78], is often implied in ancient literature (e.g. Cicero, *Tusc*. 1.2.4,[79] 2.24.58, *Phil*. 1.34; Dio Chrysostom, *Rhod*. 17).[80]

73 Verboven, "Friendship," 414-418; Hands, *Social Aid*, 32.

74 Trajan, a wealthy person, wrote down favours owed in notebooks so as not to forget them (Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 64).

75 Cicero urges becoming good accountants of favours (*boni ratiocinatores officiorum*, *Off*. 1.59) and measuring kindness (*benivolentiam*, *Off*. 1.47). But this should not be taken too literally.

76 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 16; Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 66.

77 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 17; Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 69-73.

78 Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 72; cf. Barton, *Roman Honor*, 11; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 33.

79 *Honos alit artes omnesque incenduntur ad studia Gloria*.

80 Honour of course was not the only factor to influence the elite's social behaviours. Malina has claimed as though most social phenomena in Mediterranean antiquity can be reduced to the issue of honour and shame (*New Testament World*). F. G. Downing refutes this assertion, arguing that honour can be deemed as dominant in the New Testament only where it is clearly attested ("Honor among Exegetes," *CBQ* 61 (1999), 55). Cf. Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 175-176, esp. note 8.

Honour in antiquity was not private, but was publicised,[81] "a public verdict",[82] and a visible thing (Cicero, *Vat.* 25). Public honours were mediated by those of lower status or less frequently by those of equal status who saluted, accompanied, applauded, and celebrated the elite and their achievements in public (Pliny, *Ep.* 1.19, 3.11.1; Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 1.3; John Chrysostom, *Inan. Glor.* 4-5).[83] This sometimes happened in obsequious ways (Martial, *Epigr.* 3.36, 2.55). Another way of being honoured was monuments, such as statues and inscriptions, or letters to praise the virtues and achievements of those of higher status.[84] In the monuments and recommendation letters and in public retinues, the honorands' benefactions,[85] moral superiority (*IGR* 4.1302), eloquence (Pliny, *Ep.* 1.16), education, wisdom (cf. Cicero. *Inv.* 2.66), noble birth (Sir 3:11), and wealth were formally praised and appreciated in a house, theatre, temple, agora, and association.[86]

Third, as many classical scholars have suggested, the public perception or consent of honour assigned to the elite functioned to sanction, sustain, and enhance their status, supremacy, power, and leadership.[87] According to Jon E. Lendon, "honour among aristocrats, once acquired, was not a passive possession, like an engraved watch or an honorary degree. Rather, those who had honour were able to exert power in society by virtue of the desire of others for it, and the concern of others not to lose it".[88] He goes on to argue that honour is a power that makes people obey as "a source of value", "a source of legitimate social authority", and "a social sanction" (cf. Cicero, *Off.* 2.22).[89] In the critical eyes of a satirist, it was said that "to accept benefaction is equivalent to selling liberty" (*beneficium accipere libertatem est vendere*, Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 49). Service (*officium*) was not given to the beneficiaries gratis at all. It was followed by honouring and co-opting givers in a reciprocal duty, and the granted honour exerted power over them and

81 Barton points out that, for Romans, not being seen proved nothing, even though they had done something honourable (*Roman Honor*, 58-61; cf. Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 274-276).

82 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 36.

83 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 66; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 128-129.

84 Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 239-277.

85 Nicols, *Civic Patronage*, 263.

86 Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 122-133; Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 36-47.

87 Classical scholars put slightly different emphases on the social implications of honour. Zuiderhoek argues that honour legitimated patrons' ruling over others through laws, values, and public consents, especially since those of higher status were acknowledged as morally superior (*Politics of Munificence*, 113-153). Lendon argues similarly but underlines more that honour was one form of power, along with fear, to make people obey (Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 55-106).

88 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 55.

89 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 69.

their communities. In other words, for the elite, augmenting relationships by distributing resources was neither just to flaunt and boast their opulence nor for psychological satisfaction but to publicly enhance their social influence and position. This explains why most elites were so obsessed with relationships, honour, and munificence. Some scholars press this further, claiming that, while patrons, especially the emperor, maintained their safety (Seneca, *Clem*. 1.13.5; Dio Chrysostom, *Hom*. 4.1), control, and superiority (cf. Ehrenberg and Jones, *Documents* no. 98) through relationships,[90] the ideal of patronage, along with friendship, in macroscopic view functioned not only to stabilise the unity of the whole empire by mitigating class conflicts (cf. Seneca, *Ben*. 1.4.2) but also to solidify class stratification between patrons and clients under one emperor.[91] Arjan Zuiderhoek points out that, where the rate of social mobility is high, maintaining the order of ranks in patronage and munificence is all the more imperative for the elite.[92] Similarly, the elite felt perturbed by other threats to this unified yet hierarchical system. The threats were occasioned by beneficiaries who did not accept or appreciate benefactions, nor honour them (Seneca, *Ben*. 1.10.1-5).[93] For those of higher status, the difference between those being honoured and those honouring, being dishonoured, or being less honoured was fundamental, since this indicated and justified social gradation in social webs.

The features of aristocratic social relationships which I have articulated were replicated not only by local semi-elites, the less well-to-do, and upwardly mobile people ("*imitatio domini*"[94]), but also by the plebs in different ways (cf. Martial, *Epigr*. 10.79).[95] The higher one's socio-economic status was, the more similarly one desired to imitate the codes of aristocratic relationships. Even though the poor copied some aspects of elite social networks, this was in lesser ways. When it comes to the extent of social webs, most people living around subsistence level dedicated themselves to a tiny web of relationships since their monotonous everyday activities took place in a restricted area, mostly in a shop/workshop.

90 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 149; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 38; Syme, *Roman Revolution*.

91 Syme, *Roman Revolution*, 386; Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 37-39; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), 364; cf. Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 71-112, esp. 111-112.

92 Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 110, 115-116.

93 Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 47.

94 H. W. Pleket, "Sociale stratificatie en sociale mobiliteit in de Romeinse Keizertijd," *TG* 84 (1971), 245.

95 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 95-103; Kloppenborg, "Collegia and *Thiasoi*," 21.

Their limited resources, time, and talents also did not allow them to augment social connections. As a result, their group membership was inevitably less varied and more exclusive than that of the elite. Secondly, the poor had reciprocal obligations and thus exchanged their "own" honour in relationships,[96] but with a different emphasis. Their reciprocity was more often related to other moral and behavioural codes, like survival (*CIL* 6.2.6308).[97] The main goal of reciprocity amongst the poor was neither to honour nor to be honoured, but rather protection and survival. Many maxims and stories circulated by the plebs emphasised conditional mutualism and warned of false relationships that could exacerbate their vulnerability (§3.3.4).

In sum, relationship, benefaction, honour, and socio-economic status were inextricably interlinked in Roman aristocratic society. A circle of causality between them can be encapsulated as follows. The elite planted *beneficia* or *officia* at their own expense to expand relationships. The extended social web created moral and reciprocal obligations between friends, protégés, and clients. The receivers of *officia* returned similar services or honour with *gratia* to the givers. The public honour enhanced the honorands' social status and enabled them to exert practical power, leadership, and influence over those of lower status. Lendon captured the essence of this process, stating "indeed, the greater a man's honour, the higher his position in society, the more people watched him, and the more he felt his actions hemmed in by his own rank".[98] If the bridge or system was broken down, this could be most exasperating for the elite (Seneca, *Ben*. 1.10.1-5).

5.3. Social Harmony, Status, and Identity at Corinth

One of the notable characteristics of 1 Corinthians is that it does not provide any hints of the Corinthians' social dislocation and harassment from outgroup members, except for Paul's painful alienation (1 Cor 15:30-32; 4:9-13), but rather of their social harmony (5:9-6:11; 8:10; 10:27; 14:23-25; cf. 4:10).[99] This is surprising since Paul often claims in his other

[96] Many elites did not think that slaves or the poor had honour in their own standards, but even the impoverished granted each other their own honour (Dio Chrysostom, *2 Tars*. 51).

[97] Cf. Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 97; Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor*, 56-62; Barton, *Roman Hon*or, 11-14; Joshel, *Legal Status*.

[98] Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 39. MacMullen similarly says "the Romans indeed acknowledged a goddess called Money (Pecunia); … her cult was tributary to another, Status (Philotimia)" (*Social Relations*, 118). Money and status were of course bridged by *officia*, relationship, and honour.

[99] Barclay, "Social Contrast," 57.

letters that Christians' conflict with non-believers is not only common but also natural, spontaneous and honourable (1 Thess 3:3-4; 2:14; Phil 1:28-30; cf. Diognetus 5:1-17, 6:1-10). For Paul, the Corinthians' social harmony with the outside world was rather unusual and unexpected (cf. 1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Cor 6:14-18). In this section, I will explore the exceptional relationship, answering how and why they formed these good relationships with non-believers and what socio-economic implications that had in light of Roman social relationships.

5.3.1. Obsession with Social Connection and Its Benefits (1 Corinthians 5:1-6:11)

Paul's various delineations of the Corinthians' social connections with non-believers are scattered throughout his first letter to them. An overview of them can be sketched as follows. Certain Corinthians resorted to the secular courts to resolve in-church conflicts (1 Cor 6:1-11; cf. §4.3.2). Some were witnessed to have eaten meat in the temple of idols (8:10). Not only were a few of the Corinthians invited to a private meal by outgroup members (10:27), but they also invited non-believers to their church and probably houses (14:23). Some of them were honoured by outgroup members (4:10; 1:26). Some individuals, such as Gaius, Crispus, Erastus, and Chloe, are the possible clues for such good social connections. I will neither just elaborate these snapshots one by one below nor repeat other scholars' explanations of them,[100] but focus more on what the portrayals imply in a social and economic sense in light of the Roman society.

The first point is that Paul implies that social harmony was accredited to certain Corinthians, possibly wealthy members. It is no coincidence that most passages in which Paul speaks of their good relationships with outgroup members are deemed as good points of evidence for reference to the wealthy and influential members (6:1-11; 8:10; 10:27; 4:10). As I argued in Chapter 4, certain wealthy and influential Corinthians sought litigation against fellow believers (6:1-11), were invited to non-believers' house for a meal (10:27), consumed meat in temples of idol (8:10), and were honoured by others (4:10). At the same time, these passages embody their good social connections with outgroup members as though the powerful members were responsible for them. On the other hand, the other Corinthians' social relationship is somewhat veiled. It is unclear whether or not they also enjoyed this

[100] See Barclay, "Social Contrast," 57-72; de Vos, *Community Conflicts*, 106-124.

peace. The wealthy members may have created the overall ethos of social harmony for all Christians, or Paul might not have mentioned some tensions between non-believers and some other Corinthians, probably the poor like the Thessalonians (cf. 4:9-13). The Pauline evidence does not lead to an exhaustive conclusion. But if Paul's catalogue of sufferings in 1 Cor 4:9-13 reflects some poor Corinthians' social context, it may be the case that the poor Corinthians experienced ostracism from outsiders like Paul, in contrast to the wealthy (§4.3.1). One significant assumption, nonetheless, can be clearly made: those of high status played an indispensable role in building favourable relationships with outsiders.

A few wealthy Corinthian individuals are, indeed, the examples of such good social connections (cf. §4.3.2). It is likely that Crispus built good relationships with non-believers. Crispus as a former ruler of a synagogue (ἀρχισυνάγωγος, Acts 18:8) would have maintained Jewish connections. His title, ἀρχισυνάγωγος, indicates that he was a wealthy patron or benefactor in a Corinthian synagogue. It appears that he had some clients and was admired by members of his synagogue before conversion. Even though he was converted to Christ (1 Cor 1:14), it may be that he continued his favourable relationships with them. Erastus and Chloe can also serve as examples of the Corinthians' good social relationships. It is highly likely that Erastus, described as ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (Rom 16:23), had access to the network of civic officials. If his title means *quaestor* or *aedilis*, this unmistakably indicates his wide social web in which a variety of people were connected. Even if he was a lowly official, it also means that he had, though limited, connections with other public officials. Even if, as a few scholars argue, he was not a Christian,[101] Paul's mention of him could refer to the Corinthians' solid connection with secular civic officials like him. Chloe as a businesswoman or homeowner with agents and slaves (1 Cor 1:11) would have built favourable relationships with outgroup members. Paul's mention of her own name, not that of her husband or father, means that her name was well known and easily recognisable in Corinth, at least in the Corinthian congregation.[102] Even if she was not a convert, it would mean that the Corinthians had some connections with such a prominent Corinthian woman. These individuals reasonably undergirded the bigger picture that the Corinthians had good social networks in a larger society, and this was mainly attributable to some wealthy members.[103]

101 Friesen, "Wrong Erastus," 231-256.

102 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 121; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 141; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 57.

103 Oakes points out that Phoebe, Gaius, and Erastus were at the heart of local network, and its network was connected even with imperial offices ("Urban Structure," 188).

Second, it is highly likely that certain wealthy Corinthians intended to maintain their peaceful relationship with non-believers for its significance and actual benefits. Certain Corinthians would have deemed social networks with outsiders as fundamental to their everyday lives, like most Roman elites (see §5.2). This is reflected in 1 Cor 5:1-13 and further 6:1-11. In the first text (5:1-13), especially in 5:9-10, Paul re-discusses his earlier instruction, "do not mingle with sexually immoral people" (μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις, 5:9) possibly mentioned in "a previous letter"[104] (cf. 2 Cor 6:14-7:1). He tries to redefine its meaning as "not intending for you not to mingle with all immoral people in this world but in the church" (5:10-11). It is almost certain that this was his response to some Corinthians, who misunderstood or intentionally twisted Paul's prior exhortation to find fault with him.[105] Their question might have been "how do we live in this world without associating with any immoral people?" or "should we go outside the world?" (5:10).[106] This was one of their serious questions which they raised to Paul and expected to be answered (cf. 1:11; 5:1; 7:1). The first impression of this passage is that moral boundaries between the moral and the immoral, in particular in church, were essential for Paul (5:13; cf. 5:10-11; 6:9-10; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1).[107] Certain Corinthians, on the other hand, saw an unrestricted boundary in social life as a priority that they argued over Paul's teaching on the world and church, distorting or probably misunderstanding it as a dualistic view that the two should not be mixed at all (1 Cor 5:10; cf. 10:20-21). In other words, while Paul's focus in his previous letter was "sexual immorality" (πόρνος, 5:9) and moral demarcation (cf. his similar instructions in other letters, 1 Thess 4:1-8; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1), the Corinthians subtly moved the focus to relationship with non-believers (5:10) by underscoring the phrase "do not mingle with" (μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι, 1 Cor 5:9, 11; cf. 2 Thess 3:14) and the word "world" (κόσμος, 1 Cor 5:10[*2]). The verb συναναμίγνυμι denotes a close relationship with someone, and means – with the negative "not" or "no" – a social boundary marker, like building a ghetto (Philo, *Mos*. 1.278).[108] In

104 The word ἔγραψα can be interpreted either as an epistolary aorist which denotes Paul's present act of writing (Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43 [on 16:1]) or an aorist which indicates his previous letter. The phrase ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ buttresses the latter interpretation (cf. 2 Cor 7:8). See Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 408-409; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 184-185; John C. Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (New York: Seabury, 1965), 50-53.

105 Hurd, *Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 149-152; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 242-243; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 409; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 222-224.

106 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 222; Hurd, *Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 51.

107 Cf. Peter S. Zaas, "Catalogues and Context: 1 Corinthians 5 and 6," *NTS* 34 (1988), 622-629.

108 Cf. Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 409.

comparing 5:9-10 with other passages (4:10; 14:23-25; 6:1-11), it can be assumed that the Corinthians had already built good or invaluable relationships with the world, probably even with the greedy (cf. 10:27-28), robbers, and idolaters (cf. 8:10);[109] with whom they were not willing to renounce the social connections (5:9-10).[110] In addition, it is likely that such a gravity of social relationships also forced them to eat food suspected as sacrificed to idols in temples (8:10) and in non-believers' houses (10:27) sometimes in the presence of fellow believers, and to invite the outsiders to their house church (14:23). Possibly because of the indispensability of the relationships in their view, they further associated themselves even with demonic powers (κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων, 10:20) in participating in public sacrifices, as part of their social networks. It is highly likely that, in contrast to Paul, certain wealthy Corinthians considered weightier the social connections with non-believing friends, relatives, clients, or patrons often in spite of their immorality than Christian moral distinction (cf. 4:9-13; §5.2). This is similarly presented in 1 Cor 5:1-8 and 5:11-13. An issue newly raised by Paul in the present letter was that certain Corinthians' relationship with immoral fellow Christians was so vital that they tolerated and mixed indiscriminately with them (5:11). Paul's instruction not to associate and eat with immoral believers suggests that the Corinthians had gladly mingled with them (5:10). An example of this is detailed in 1 Cor 5:1-8. In light of 5:9-13, 5:1-8 indicates that the Corinthian community under certain leaders tolerated their fellow believer accused of incest with his stepmother (5:2) and rather boasted of it (5:2, 6)[111] because of the importance of their relationship with the immoral person (5:9-13).[112] John K. Chow and Clarke further claim that the person in question was too rich and

109 Paul's main point of course is the impossibility for the believers to detach themselves from relationship with outsiders (1 Cor 5:10).

110 Cf. Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 216.

111 As for 1 Cor 5:1-8, many scholars have grappled with some more questions: whether the relationship was marriage or concubinage, whether or not the stepmother was a member of the church, and more importantly why the Corinthians tolerated it. See Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles*, 202-203; Barrett, *The Corinthians*, 121-122; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 96.

112 For the social reason, see J. Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 53; Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 139-141; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 85-88; cf. Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 52-53.

Some other theological reasons for the Corinthians' tolerance of incest have been traditionally suggested by many scholars. They argue that the Corinthians' newly found freedom (Moffatt, *The Corinthians*, 54; Barrett, *The Corinthians*, 121-1221; A. D. Nock, *St. Paul* [New York : Harper, 1938], 174; cf. Cor 6:12), Gnosticism (Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 236-237), new birth in wisdom (David Daube, "Pauline Contributions to a Pluralistic Culture: Re-creation and Beyond," in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. D. G. Miller and D. K. Hadidian [Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1971], 223-

influential as a patron to be criticised, and client believers were afraid of losing benefactions and protection from him.[113] The two scholars go on to say that this explains why he was not properly prosecuted and disciplined (cf. Jas 2:1-10), although they admit that it is difficult to corroborate that the immoral man was so wealthy and powerful as a patron in 1 Cor 5:1-8. Nonetheless, given a close connection between 5:1-8 and 5:9-13 and certain Corinthians' emphasis on social relationships presented in these passages, it is highly likely that their strong bond with the immoral believer played a certain role in embracing him in their community, even if he was not richer or more prominent as a patron. This seems to reflect, as I have argued, that social harmony with outsiders and with immoral believers could not be easily abandoned by certain wealthy Corinthians. This can be underpinned by how much the Roman elite valued their social connections (§5.2). Cherishing, sustaining, and augmenting social webs was a typical activity in elite culture that certain wealthy Corinthians possibly imitated. They did not desire to curtail beneficial social connections even with immoral believers and non-believers.

A question may be raised: why were the relationships so valuable for them? Through their social network, certain Corinthians would have endeavoured to enjoy some privileges and honour (1 Cor 6:1-11; 4:10). Paul states that a few wealthy and influential believers tried to win trivial legal cases against fellow believers in a secular court by taking advantage of their social status and connections (6:1-11). As I have already demonstrated (§4.3.2, 5.2), the rich and powerful generally enjoyed legal privileges, which means the wealthy believers did too.[114] Their social power and status per se influenced the judgements of judges and juries in thinking that social elites were less likely to commit a crime. The more important factor was the social web built among the elite (Cicero, *Fam*. 2.14, 13.59, 9.25.2-3).[115] Specifically, 1 Cor 6:4, including the verb καθίζετε, implies a legal procedure in which litigants chose judges (cf. Josephus, *A.J*. 20.200, 13.75). In a court of law, the praetor and judges had their own imperative roles. The praetor, usually an ambitious aristocrat or politician, made a list of

227), or over-realised eschatology (Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 516) enabled them to embrace incest in their community.

113 Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 139-141; Clarke, *Christian Leadership*, 85-88; cf. Matthew R. Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians: The Impact of Paul's Gospel on His Macro-Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 188 note 53.

114 Garnsey, *Legal Privilege*.

115 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 419-421; Verboven, "Friendship," 415. Bablitz points out that "the possibility was always there for a judge to be swayed by ties of friendship, by a litigant's higher status, or by bribes" ("The Courtroom," 324, 329).

potential judges among whom a few were chosen by the plaintiffs and defendants. Judges who were neither legal specialists nor elected officials made final judgements through a vote based on *formula*, evidence, and the litigants' or defendants' moral character and status. Their qualifications were birth, wealth, citizenship, and character.[116] As Kelly points out, all the praetor, judges, and juries were susceptible to the influence or pressure of social norms, like *gratia* and *potentia*.[117] The *gratia*, in particular, was formed by certain social connections like patronage in which giving and taking services was essential. Moreover, Josiah Ober summarises one of the strategies to defend wealthy litigants in court as follows: "the wealthy man who contributed materially to the state in the correct spirit of generosity, patriotism, and philotimia could request that the jury return the favor.[118] This implies that the elite's benefaction and connections could relativise the severity of their crimes. If so, it is likely that certain Corinthians took advantage of their social web in choosing judges and influencing their judgement.

Furthermore, the issue of various social relationships, along with sexual matters and moral judgements, is subtly pervasive in 1 Cor 5:1-6:11. Recent biblical commentators tend to view 5:1-6:11, or further 5:1-7:40,[119] as a large rhetorical unit in which small parts are mutually, though equivocally and inconsistently in some senses, connected.[120] The word κρίνω repeated in 5:3, 5:12 (*2), 5:13, 6:1, 6:2, 6:3, and 6:6, and the vice lists paralleled in 5:10-11 and 6:9-10 support the interrelation between the three parts, 5:1-8, 5:9-13, and 6:1-11.[121] In my view, Paul and the Corinthians were wrestling with the issue of drawing social and moral boundaries, which are delicately intertwined in 1 Cor 5-6. Firstly, in 5:1-8, the relationship between a person accused of incest and certain believers is implied as the reason for which they tolerated his moral failure (5:2) which became contagious (5:6). Secondly, the hidden issue becomes explicit in 5:9-13, as the matter of social relationships with non-believers (5:10) and within the church (5:11-13) resurfaces. In the text, certain wealthy

116 Bablitz, "The Courtroom," 324, 329.

117 Kelly, *Roman Litigation*, 42-68; Garnsey, *Legal Privilege*, 181-218.

118 Ober, *Mass and Elite*, 307.

119 Malcolm, *Rhetoric of Reversal*, 187-191; J. P. Heil, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2005), 99.

120 Will Deming, "The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5-6," *JBL* 115 (1996), 289-312; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 248; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 419; Mitchell, "Rich and Poor," 563-563. Though some scholars tend to view sexual immorality as central in the rhetorical unit, 1 Cor 6:1-8 cannot be explained only by the theme. In my view, social and moral boundaries are the major themes in the rhetorical unit.

121 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 248.

Corinthians were more concerned about their friendship and patronage than moral demarcation, unlike Paul (5:9-10). Finally, Paul continues his instruction on social relationships and moral boundaries in 6:1-11. Their social connection with non-believers is, though implicitly, associated with the main problems set out in the text. This explains why Paul employs and underlines terms relevant to brotherhood four times in this passage (6:5, 6 [x2], 8). It seems that Paul urges the Corinthians to prioritise their familial relationships in the church more than other less important matters and relationships with outgroup members. Moreover, Paul was worried lest the unjust (6:1), secular (6:2-3), and despised (6:4) outsiders' negative or biased moral judgement flow into the Corinthian congregation through social connections, even though he, to a reasonable degree, allowed the Corinthians to rub shoulders with them (5:10). Paul was trying to block the transmission of moral value and judgement from non-believers to believers, a transmission which occurred through the close connections between them (6:2-4). His emphasis on moral demarcation over social connections is strengthened by his vice lists (5:10-11; 6:9-11). Accordingly, it can be argued that certain Corinthians abused their social networks for practical benefits, like winning against fellow believers in legal courts, benefits which blinded them to moral and community problems in church.

Overall, the Apostle recognises that a social network can be a strong channel through which immorality or morality flows (cf. 5:6, 11; 6:4). His resolutions to the issue regarding moral and social boundaries are two: (1) the Corinthians should not mingle with immoral believers (5:1-13); (2) they can sustain their relationship with outgroup members regardless of their vice (5:10-12) as long as they do not accept their moral judgement and principles (5:6; 6:1-11; cf. 10:20-21). In the large rhetorical unit, he tries to fortify the moral demarcation but allow space for relationship with non-believers under some restraints.

Another advantage of social harmony with outgroup members is being honoured (ἔνδοξοι, 1 Cor 4:10). In 1 Cor 4:8-13, Paul makes a stark contrast between "you" and "we" in socio-economic status and social relationship (see §4.3.1). On the one hand, Paul and his party were toiling, being hungry, thirsty and homeless (4:11-12). This poverty is paralleled with their social dislocation and harassment from outsiders; they were beaten, persecuted, and slandered by non-believers (4:11-13). This parallel implies a chain of causation between low socio-economic status and vulnerability to social dislocation. The connection evokes the Thessalonian congregation in which poor Christian craftsmen experienced affliction from social conflicts with non-believers (§3.2). A foremost corollary of the social dislocations is

being dishonoured (ἄτιμοι, 4:10). On the other hand, 4:8-13 suggests that there is a different virtuous circle or a vicious circle in the Corinthian congregation. Certain Corinthians were satiated, wealthy, wise, and strong in contrast to "we" (4:8, 10). Given the contrast between them, it appears that Paul has in mind the Corinthians who have not been beaten, persecuted, nor slandered (4:11-13). As a result, Paul defines their social relationship just in one word, ἔνδοξοι, while underlining the contrast between ἔνδοξοι and ἄτιμοι (cf. 15:43) by suddenly inverting the order of ὑμεῖς and ἡμεῖς only in this clause in 4:10 (cf. Philo, *Ebr*. 195).[122] These two terms, ἔνδοξοι and ἄτιμοι, underline the dissimilarity between certain Corinthians' social harmony (cf. Matt 20:28) and Paul's conflict with outgroup members (cf. Matt 13:57; Mark 6:4; 1 Cor 12:23). This pair of contrasting words is a common expression unmistakably pertinent to honour and shame in various relationships (cf. 15:43).[123] Most Romans, in particular the elite, were thirsty for honour (τιμή or δόξα) in social webs. Not only do these words indicate public perception of one's achievements, (secular) moral character, benefactions, and relationships, but they also are indicative of their status (see §5.2). Besides, the more one was honoured, the more one could exert power and leadership in groups. In this sense, Paul describes the wealthy and (so-called) wise believers as though being honoured was one of the final consequences of their high status and social harmony with others. This is seen especially in 4:10 as a climax of his depictions of them (cf. 1:26-28). The causation between wealth, wisdom, relationship, and honour was typical in elite society. It can be further assumed that certain wealthy Corinthians sought to be honoured not only by outsiders but also by fellow Christians but failed to receive honour from some believers including Paul.

Considering all of this, it can be argued that some wealthy and influential believers in Corinth anomalously built good social relationships not only with certain immoral believers (5:1-13) but also with non-believers (6:1-11; 4:10; 8:10; 10:27; 14:23), unlike the Thessalonians and Philippians (1 Thess 3:3-4; Phil 1:29-30). That they overvalued the social connections over Christian moral demarcation (1 Cor 5:9-13) caused the fraternisation with and misjudgements of immoral believers (5:1), the contagion of immorality among the Corinthians (5:6), moral failures (6:7), and the influx of secular values and moral judgement into the congregation (6:6). At the cost of these, they were honoured by non-believers (4:10)

122 Cf. A. T. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914), 86; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 176.

123 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 276-278.

and probably by immoral believers (5:6) and won legal cases against fellow believers (6:1-11). The relational and behavioural codes of certain wealthy believers closely resembled those of their contemporary elites who cherished friendship and patronage through which they sought honour, prerogative, power, leadership, and status (§5.2). If so, it can be assumed that certain Corinthians sought to emulate elite culture: they desired augmenting social connections; they enjoyed being honoured through the relationships; as a result, they could exert influence, power, and leadership in communities.

5.3.2. Social Harmony and Identity through a Social Psychological lens

So far, I have examined how socio-economic status was associated with relationships with non-believers in the Corinthian community: wealthy members were accountable for social harmony with outsiders. I have also shown that Paul's description of certain better-off Corinthians (1 Cor 4:7-13; 5:1-6:11) is consonant with studies of Greco-Roman society: most elites treasured social webs for honour and benefits; the higher one's status, the wider and better relationships one sought in order to be honoured and to enjoy privileges (4:10; 6:1-11).

Social psychological theories can shed more light on this delineation of wealthy believers at Corinth. Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Social Categorization Theory (SCT) reveal that social status influences social relationships and strength of social identity. This is comparable with, though not equivalent to, certain well-to-do Corinthians' pattern of social behaviour. First, harmony with outgroup members indicates several features of ingroup members' membership and identity: a weak sense of belonging, partially shared common norms, beliefs, and values, and thereby weak group identity. SIT/SCT show that intergroup peace is produced by less intergroup discrimination and less ingroup favouritism that are generally the result of a weak sense of belonging to a certain group. The feeble sense of belonging derives from the fact that members only partly share, or dedicate themselves less to, ingroup norms, beliefs, and values. Not only is intergroup harmony an outcome of this process, but also the peace per se reinforces the process. Social psychologists define this as weak group identity or less identification (or depersonalisation) with a group. Did certain Corinthians' good relationships with non-believers mirror these phenomena? The answer is positive. Paul depicts certain wealthy Corinthians as though they do not fully understand God's wisdom, Christ, and cross which should be profoundly shared by the believers as ingroup values (1 Cor 1:18-4:21). Rather, he calls some of them σαρκικοί who follow outgroup (secular) values (3:3; cf. 9:11) in contrast to those who are described as πνευματικοί

(2:13). They treasure a secular wisdom (2:5; 4:10; 8:1-2), honour system (4:10), judgement (6:1-11), and status (1:26-31; 4:6-13) that are influenced by their contemporary elite or outgroup culture rather than the cross (1:23-24; 3:11) and God's wisdom (1:21-22). According to Paul, Jesus and his cross, along with God's wisdom, is a foundational norm of the Pauline congregations that makes the believer distinct from those of the flesh (3:11; 2:8; cf. 2:5): "boast only in the Lord!" (1:31). In Paul's view, ingroup codes are starkly contrasted with outgroup or secular codes (1:18-25; 2:6-16; cf. 2 Cor 6:14-7:1). Thus, if the term πνευματικός creates "a linguistic distinction between 'insider' and 'outsiders'" in the Pauline communities,[124] σαρκικός denotes a blurred demarcation between them. It is plausible that certain rich Corinthians did not want to be "distinctive" from the outside world and to publicly display Christian "exclusive" norms and language. The result was that harmony was built with outsiders, but a sense of belonging to church and of Christian identity was weakened.

Second, it is likely that social harmony resulted from the fact that some Corinthians possessed multiple social identities. SIT/SCT reveal that how individuals perceive multiple identities is connected with their intergroup relationship. Those who believe that they have multiple social identities tend to identify themselves less intensely with a certain group and to show lacklustre intergroup discrimination. Similarly, it may be that certain Corinthians regarded church as one of many clubs to which they belonged,[125] though Paul left scant evidence for their multiple identities or memberships. While the Corinthians to a degree followed Christian values, they also shared secular moral codes with many outgroups. Besides, Paul describes that the Corinthians invited their friends or clients to their church (1 Cor 14:23-25) and were invited by them to private houses (10:27), idol temples (8:10), and probably voluntary associations (10:20-21). In light of the elite culture, it is highly likely that certain wealthy believers had or at least desired to have multiple memberships in many groups and wanted to be seen by many as men and women of honour and status. If this is correct, it can be assumed that certain Corinthians' perception and pursuit of multiple identities led to peace with outgroup members, resulting in a weakening of Christian identity and thus a less strong dedication to ingroup norms.

124 Barclay, *Pauline Churches*, 213; cf. Paul Trebilco, *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

125 Barclay, "Social Contrasts," 200-201.

Third, social psychologists corroborate that high socio-economic status is a root of social harmony with outgroup members and of less strong social identity. Numerical and powerless minorities tend to show a strong social identity that embraces ingroup favouritism more than majorities. Even in the minority group, if there are members of high socio-economic status, the powerful members reveal the opposite tendency. They seek to minimise differences between the ingroup and outgroups and are not willing to perceive similarities and share common beliefs with the other ingroup members but rather with outgroup members. If equality with other minorities is fostered in a group, this tendency is reinforced. It cannot be insisted that all these processes are equivalent to the Corinthians' social behaviours or with ancient society as a whole, but some resemblances between them can be spotted. 1 Corinthians presents several snapshots of the Corinthians: some Corinthians were of high socio-economic status and they sought good and wide relationships with non-believers alongside honour or superiority. These descriptions of status and relationships are not irrelevant to each other. As I have stated above (§5.3.2), Paul describes that social harmony was attributed to some wealthy believers (4:6-10; 5:1-6:11; 10:27) and their chief goal was being honoured and superior (4:10). Classical scholars' studies of aristocratic social connections and honour undergird the interrelation between status and relationship. SIT/SCT further confirm that the high status of some Corinthians resulted in their good relationships with non-believers and their endeavour to sustain superiority; one of the outcomes of this is, of course, weakened social identity as a Christian.

In sum, SIT/SCT, along with research on social relationships in the Greco-Roman world, underpin pictures of the Corinthians. Certain Corinthians' relatively higher status influenced their good social relationships with non-believers and less strong Christian identity. They did not want to exclusively hold Christian norms and values that would make them distinctive or further exclude them from outgroups. Rather, they cherished secular wisdom and honour as their social norms, having possibly multiple group identities. It is likely that the Corinthian congregation was one of their groups or associations that they probably preferred but were not exclusively devoted to. A corollary of these points is a weakening of group or Christian identity. These social phenomena in Corinth - high status, good relationship with outgroups, and weak Christian identity - would have reinforced each other. One more interesting point is that many of these descriptions point to the Corinthians' intragroup factions which will be explored in the next section.

5.4. Division, Social Network, and Identity: Altering a Way of Building Relationship in Christ

Paul delineates at length various conflicts, or at least tensions, not only between the Corinthians, but also between certain Corinthians and himself (1 Cor 1:10-4:21; 6:1-11; 8:1-13; 9:1-27; 10:1-33; 11:17-34). This depiction of the internal splits can be further buttressed by Paul's repetitive emphasis on ecclesial unity (1:10; 3:6-9; 3:10-11; 12:12-26; 13:1-14). Although there are many clues referring to the conflicts in 1 Corinthians, several essential points of information and context shared and perceived between Paul and the Corinthians are omitted. The letter does not explicitly show why they have conflicts, who are mainly responsible for it, what issues Paul is exactly wrestling with, and how the passages in question are mutually related.[126] This issue is made more complex by the fact that conflict itself is an intricate socio-economic phenomenon influenced by many factors. For instance, even though conflict between two individuals may mainly be caused by an ideological difference, it becomes intertwined with many other social dynamics, such as social identity and economy, and can be triggered by unexpected or trivial events.[127] In this regard, conflicts within the Corinthian congregation cannot be unduly reduced or simplified into one cause or trigger. It is highly likely that the ingroup conflict at Corinth was a compound of theological, social, economic and political phenomena which cannot be easily separated. This section will explore the multifaceted aspects of internal conflict within the Corinthian community by looking mainly at 1 Cor 1-4, while trying to reveal how social harmony, identity, and socio-economic factors influenced the conflicts among the Corinthians. In doing so, I will argue that Paul is reorienting certain Corinthians' way of building relationships that emulates aristocratic social networks by underlining relationship with and in Christ (1:9, 30; 3:10-17; 6:1-11; 11:17-34; 12:12-26).

5.4.1. Allying and Splitting in Church: Theological Difference, Baptism, Wisdom, or Political Grouping? (1 Corinthians 1:4-17)

126 Cf. Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 27.

127 Cf. Clive Marsh, "'Who are You for?' 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 as Christian Scripture in the Context of Diverse Methods of Reading," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall*, ed. T. J. Burke and J. K. Elliott (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 175.

Paul commences the main body of his letter with a small rhetorical unit, 1 Cor 1:10-17, that contains three notable words, σχίσμα (1:10), ἔρις (1:11), and μερίζω (1:13). The first two terms are echoed in 1 Cor 3:3 (ἔρις) and 11:18 (σχίσμα; cf. 12:25). This echo of the terms, the rhetorical place of the pericope (*propositio*), and Paul's repetitive depictions of discord among the Corinthians (6:1-11; 8:1-13; 10:1-33; 11:17-34; cf. exhortation on unity, 12:12-26; 13:1-13) have led many scholars to conclude that the text, especially 1:10, is a thesis statement or an overt introduction of the whole epistle or at least of its first four chapters. Internal conflict is one of the main issues of the letter and dissolving the tension is its chief goal.[128]

The rhetorical unit, 1:10-17, seems to imply that divisions were occasioned by differences in teaching, educational background, character, missionary strategy, relationship, social activity, status, etc., among the Corinthian groups who favoured either Paul, Apollos, Peter, or Christ (1:12; cf. 3:1-9; 4:6), even if the four individuals did not instigate the splits.[129] The four (1:12) or two groups (3:1-9; 4:6) are not evidently identifiable based on Paul's letters (§5.1).[130] It may be that, as Margaret M. Mitchell adroitly analyses, he does not antagonise specific parties but factionalism itself,[131] or that Paul's mention of the four groups indicates just "inchoate dissensions".[132] Nonetheless, it is reasonable to admit that 1 Corinthians (esp. 1:10-17) indicates that there were differences among the Corinthians in terms of theological perspectives (1:10), baptism (1:13-16), wisdom (1:17), and/or social (or political) networking (1:12). In this and the next sections, I will underline the issue of social networking around which the other issues revolve.

Although a theological difference among the Corinthians cannot be relinquished as a factor contributing to dissensions in church, its gravity in this matter has been relativised.[133] A traditional way of deciphering 1 Cor 1:10 and 1:12 as a theological discord may reflect

128 As for the examples, see Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 1, 198-200; Charles A. Wanamaker, "A Rhetoric of Power: Ideology and 1 Corinthians 1-4," in Burke and Elliott, *Paul and the Corinthians*, 122.

129 Given Paul's non-hostile attitude towards Apollos, it is likely that certain Corinthians say that they are of Apollos regardless of his intention. See Barret, *First Epistle*, 43; Mihaila, *Paul-Apollos*, 7.

130 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 55-56.

131 Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, esp. 67-68.

132 R. B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 22.

133 Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, 145-167; Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 99-104; Laurence L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 88-90; Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 146; Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), ix.

biblical scholars' interpretations of other Pauline letters, in particular Galatians.[134] One of the compelling images of Paul in Galatians is a warrior fighting against false teachers and their different gospel (Gal 1:6-9; 2:11-14; 5:7-12). In 1 Corinthians, however, as a relatively gentle instructor Paul does not seem to grapple mainly with heretical theological perspectives different from his view.[135] As Stephen M. Pogoloff points out, not only does Paul neither articulate nor castigate the possible divisive doctrines and false teachers unlike in Galatians, but also even those aligning themselves with him and Christ are juxtaposed with the other groups in a negative manner (1:12-13).[136] The impression is that Paul is looking at a grouping phenomenon itself, not at theological differences regarding serious themes including soteriology or Christology. Even if there were any theological deviations among the Corinthians, they were unlikely to be severe enough for Paul to elaborate on and refute them (contra Gal 1:5-9). If so, it is of little worth to identify the four groups with certain false doctrines in order to diagnose the causes for the conflicts at Corinth by risking conjecturing beyond the Pauline evidence.[137] This is not to say that the possible theological divergence can be negated. It means that the theological divergence, if it really existed, was only a peripheral factor or was a pretext for the internal conflicts.

Baptism, at first glance, seems critical to the issue of dissentions in Corinth (1 Cor 1:13c-17a). After presenting a thesis statement of unity and discord in 1:10-12, Paul abruptly moves the discussion to his memory of baptising only a few of the Corinthians. It is reasonable to guess that some Corinthians are utilising baptism as their special connection with one of the baptisers to differentiate themselves from the other believers.[138] Fee assumes that "'who baptised whom' was part of their divisions".[139] Nevertheless, he rightly observes that "this discussion of 'who baptised whom' is quite beside the point".[140] It is highly likely that dispute on baptism was a superficial source or result of internal discord. Not only does

134 Cf. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 100.

135 John Chrysostom earlier observed that the schisms were not about doctrine, since Paul spoke gently; if it was about doctrine, he would have spoken vehemently like in Galatians (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 27 [on 11:17-22]).

136 Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 100-104; Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 89.

137 Cf. Dutch, *Educated Elite*, 20.

138 Some scholars claim that the strong bond between a baptizer and those being baptised was influenced by popular mystical cults. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 35; Richard A. Horsley, "Spiritual Marriage with Sophia," *VC* 33 (1979), 47.

139 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 63; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 140; Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 290-294.

140 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 63.

Paul quickly switch over to "the real issue", such as the Gospel, cross, and wisdom (1:17b; 1:18-4:21),[141] but he also refrains from reiterating the theme of baptism except in 15:29. It may be assumed then that the issue of "who baptised whom" is the tip of the iceberg; and the real cause for conflict, possibly social connections, is hidden below it.[142]

While negotiating the baptism issue, Paul suddenly claims that it was not in eloquent wisdom (σοφία λόγου, 1 Cor 1:17) that he proclaimed the Gospel. As far as 1:10-17 is concerned, his mention of wisdom seems incidental. However, given the Apostle's thanksgiving regarding the Corinthians' wisdom (1:5-6) and his repetitive use of terms relevant to wisdom afterwards (1:18-2:5; 3:18; 4:10; 6:5; 8:1; 8:7-13; 10:23; 12:8; 13:2), one can evidently grasp that eloquent wisdom (1:17) profoundly contributed to the loyalty of certain Corinthians to one of the four groups (1:12). Since Luke describes Apollos' Alexandrian background and eloquence (Acts 18:24), it may be guessed that his wisdom attracted certain Corinthians who were responsible for the divisions.[143] Even though it is not evident that Apollos' oratory skill and his followers are in any way connected with divisive wisdom, it is highly likely that at least one of the four or two groups treasured divisive eloquence, wisdom, or education.

The divisive wisdom against which Paul polemicises is closely related to the rhetorical and philosophical traditions of the day. Though the phrase σοφία λόγου (1:17) needs to be defined in a larger literary context, it basically denotes "sophisticated speech"[144] or "manipulative rhetoric".[145] The noun λόγος, speech, is an echo of 1:5 in which the term itself is not negative, but implies warning of its misuse.[146] 1 Cor 2:1, 2:13, and 1:12 confirm

141 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 63.

142 Cf. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 108.

143 One may raise several questions about this. The questions are whether and how Luke's description of Apollos' eloquence (Acts 18:24) is connected with Paul's dispute on wisdom (1 Cor 1-4), and whether Paul's depiction of Apollos (1:12; 3:1-9; 16:12) gives any hints of the connections between Apollos' eloquence (Acts 18:24) and his followers. Even if the impression is that Paul has in mind Apollos' skillful speech when dealing with Apollos' group and conflicts, this assumption is not tenable. If Luke's depiction of him is accurate (Acts 18:24), it is likely that Apollos was well educated as a rhetor possibly in Alexandria. If so, it may be that certain Corinthians who were obsessed with wisdom and rhetoric preferred Apollos to Paul. But there is no strong reason to believe that Acts 18:24 is a useful background source to explain Paul's discussion on conflict and wisdom (1 Cor 1-4), since Paul does not give any clue to this in his letters. He does not mention that Apollos is eloquent and his followers like his rhetorical skills. Nor does he directly associate Apollos with divisive wisdom.

144 Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 108-113.

145 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 143.

146 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 91.

that his caveat is chiefly targeted at this aspect of wisdom, i.e. rhetorical skills (cf. 1:20; 2:4; 4:20). Some scholars have more specifically suggested that the Corinthians' eloquent wisdom was influenced by a rhetorical tradition or/and education from the gymnasium (§5.1). Furthermore, Paul uses terms associated with wisdom in many different forms and ways: γνῶσις (knowledge, 1:5), σοφία or σοφός (wisdom or wise, 1:18-25; 1:26; 1:30; 2:1; 2:4-5; 2:6; 3:18-20), and φρόνιμος (clever, 4:10). Paul's *repetitio* of σοφία and σοφός in 1:18-3:23 leads readers to believe that wisdom is the central theme of 1:18-3:23 (cf. 8:1-13; 10:1:33). Many scholars have attempted to determine the nature or origin of the Corinthians' wisdom in philosophical traditions: the Cynics, Epicureans, or the Stoics (§5.1). Although paralleling wisdom with a particular philosophical tradition is valuable research, it is beyond the goal of this thesis. Here, I am rather in favour of Martin's idea that "they had been exposed to general principles of moral philosophy stemming from Cynic and Stoic traditions", so-called "popular philosophy".[147]

The more important question in this section is whether the overall theme of 1 Cor 1-4 is wisdom. It appears that wisdom is one of the sub-themes and one of several sources for conflict, and thereby it does not explain all parts of 1 Cor 1-4. Not only do some passages somewhat deviate from wisdom (1:13-16; 3:1-17; 4:1-21), but wisdom is also juxtaposed with other criteria, such as power and status (1:26-31; 4:8-10) and is likely subordinate to other themes, like boasting (1:26-31; 4:6-13; cf. 3:18-23), σαρκικός (2:14-16; 3:1-9), and building metaphors (3:10-17). Firstly, as some scholars observe, the transition from baptism to wisdom seems abrupt in 1:10-17[148] and the connection between the two is not substantial. It appears that wisdom is unrelated with Paul's discourse on baptism. Baptism may be a factor independent of wisdom causing the conflicts or there may be a higher category that entails both. Secondly, wisdom is juxtaposed with power, noble birth, and strength (1:26-31; 4:6-13). It seems that wisdom is not a superordinate concept which encompasses all the others but one of the sources for boasting and honour. This means that the gravity of wisdom in 1:26-31 and 4:6-13 is relativised, and thereby it needs to be discussed along with status, economy, boasting, and honour in a larger context.[149] Thirdly, this impression continues in

147 Martin goes on to argue that reducing the Corinthians' wisdom into either Cynicism or Stoicism is overly specific (*Corinthian Body*, 71-72, 61-68).

148 Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 101; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 37. Fee explains the abruptness, saying "the argument has started to slip away somewhat [1:13-16]; so with this sentence Paul gets himself back on track [1:17]" (*The Corinthians*, 63).

149 Cf. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*.

2:6-3:17 in which wisdom seems rather subsidiary. Many biblical scholars, especially those who try to consolidate 1 Cor 1-4 into the main theme of wisdom, have grappled with the coherence of the unit because of 2:6-16, 3:1-3:9, and 3:10-17.[150] One can unequivocally find 2:6-16 incongruous with the previous passages in terminological, linguistic and thematical senses. When switching from the first-person singular, I (2:1-5), to the first-person plural, we (2:6-16), Paul starts to discuss a positive wisdom, God's wisdom (2:6-10), in contrast to negative wisdom (1:18-2:5). Besides, this discussion of wisdom gradually fades away, and some other special terms, τέλειος, ψυχικός, and πνευματικός, rather come to the fore (2:6-16; further 3:1-17). Because of this, some scholars insist that 2:6-16 is a later interpolation[151] or rhetorical digression.[152] But it cannot be denied that divisive wisdom is related to the terms like mature and spiritual.[153] It appears that the secular wisdom is only one of the many features of the unspiritual (ψυχικός, 2:14) along with power, wealth, noble birth, and honour (cf. 1:26; 4:8-10). This idea is also underpinned by 3:1-3:9 and 3:10-17. The pursuit of negative, divisive wisdom would have been one of the goals of people of the flesh or infants (3:1-3), which the believers should avoid when building their community (3:10-17). Though it is correct to say that wisdom is one noticeable criterion that explains the internal conflict in 1 Cor 1-4, its centrality in the text will need to be reconsidered alongside the other parallel criteria and possible superordinate concepts.

Last, as Laurence L. Welborn observes, it is worth noting that Paul uses political terms to reveal internal conflicts in 1 Cor 1-4.[154] Paul draws the vocabulary from his contemporary historians and philosophers who describe political contentions in city-states: σχίσμα (1:10; cf. 11:18; 12:25), ἔρις (1:11; 3:3), and μερίζω (1:13). The noun σχίσμα denotes division, a metaphorical meaning stemming from the act of tearing a garment.[155] Furthermore, Herodotus (*Hist.* 7.219) and Diodorus (*Library of History* 12.66.2) show that

150 Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 104; Litfin, *Theology of Proclamation*, 215.

151 M. Widmann, "1 Kor 2:6-16: Ein Einspruch gegen Paulus," *ZNW* 70 (1979), 44-53; William O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 2.6–16: A Non-Pauline Interpolation?" *JSNT* 47 (1992), 75-92; contra J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Interpolations in 1 Corinthians," *CBQ* 50 (1988), 81-94; Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Hermeneutical Significance of 1 Cor. 2.6-16," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Otto Betz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 330-332.

152 Cf. W. Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. W. R. Schoedel and R. L. Wilken (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 185-186.

153 Mihaila, *Paul-Apollos*, 25-29.

154 Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 86-90; cf. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 65-111.

155 BDAG, 981.

verbal forms of σχίσμα can indicate political grouping based on different reactions to and decision making against an emergent and divisive matter like war. The term embraces behavioural differences according to different opinions over something or someone. The other terms, ἔρις and μερίζω, are in a similar vein. Their meaning is to take different positions in political disputes or to take different actions (cf. Thucydides 2.21; Josephus, *A.J*. 14.470; Appian, *Bell. Civ*. 1.1). Considering these political terms and other passages (1 Cor 1-4; 11:17-34), Welborn further argues that the Corinthians' conflict was similar to a typical struggle for power in the context of social and economic inequality in antiquity.[156] This could be so; but it is more specific and plausible to say that the conflict was a clash of two relational codes in church, that is, between fellowship with/in Christ (κοινωνία, 1:9) and certain Corinthians' imitation of an aristocratic way of building relationships. In the next section, I will develop this idea which can shed light on 1 Cor 1-4 including various themes - baptism, wisdom, status, boasting, being human or flesh-related (σαρκικός), building metaphors, and honour - and further on Paul's exhortation on the Lord's Supper (11:17-34).

5.4.2. Joining Fellowship with/in Christ versus Imitating Elite relationships (1 Corinthians 1:1-4:21; 11:17-34; 12:12-26; 15:42-49)

5.4.2.1. Imitating Elite Relationships

It is necessary, first, to state that certain well-to-do believers, especially upwardly mobile people, are at the centre of the issues of social harmony (§5.3) and internal conflict with which Paul wrestles. The analysis of 1 Cor 1:5, 1:26-31, and 4:6-13 in Chapter 4 revealed that Paul polemicises mainly against certain wealthy members. Many scholars agree that the rich, more specifically their wisdom, power, and wealth, have something to do with contentions within church. Besides, Paul criticises not just their high socio-economic status (1:26-28; 4:8-13) but their behaviour and culture, like boasting and seeking honour (1:29-31; 3:21; 4:6-7). What is interesting here is that the interconnected status, wisdom, honour, and boasting seem to evoke one thing: an aristocratic way of building relationships (§5.2). This idea would make sense given that certain rich Corinthians imitated and cherished the elite culture of social networking to seek honour (5:1-6:11; §5.3). In this section, I will suggest that Paul censured certain Corinthians for their way of building relationships which copied social elites while proposing an alternative fellowship with/in Christ (κοινωνία). It is tenable

156 Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 87, 93-101.

in 1 Corinthians that Paul conceives that the two ways of relationship are to a degree incompatible.

Certain semi-elite or upwardly mobile Corinthians, like their contemporary social elites, treasured their own social connections even at the cost of moral failures and divisions in church, as Paul elaborates in 1 Cor 5:1-6:11 (see §5.3.1). In using their own networks which consisted of both non-believers and believers (5:9-13), not only did they tolerate and boast of believers' moral failures (5:1-8), but they also filed legal suit(s) against other believers (6:1-6:11). It is highly likely that this happened because their own social webs were stronger and more important for them than social relationships within the Corinthian community itself. While their own distinct networks were strong enough to whitewash the deeds of immoral believers (5:2, 6), their relationships with other innocent believers (6:9) were so weak that they filed legal suit(s) against them by using their strong networks. This means that their own stronger and indispensable social networks weakened and even ruined in-church relationships and ethics.

Given that 1 Cor 5:1-6:11 is an extension of 1:10-4:21 in Paul's rhetorical structure, it can be assumed that the latter text (1 Cor 1-4) hints at the former one which deals with the matter of certain Corinthians' strong social networks with non-believers and immoral believers (1 Cor 5-6). There is every reason to believe that 1 Cor 1-4 and 5-6 are thematically and rhetorically connected.[157] Both discuss community factionalism and boasting. Furthermore, repetition of some terms - φυσιόω (4:6; 4:18; 5:2; cf. 8:1; 13:4), δύναμις (4:19; 5:4), and καύχημα (5:6; cf. καυχάομαι, 1:29; 1:31; 3:21) - makes the link rhetorically smoother and more solid. It may be that 1 Cor 1-6 is directed against the exact same group of people, those who were puffed up. According to Mitchell, "the function of this second subsection of proof [5:1-11:1] is first to move from the censure of the Corinthians' factionalism (1:18-4:21) into specific advice on the divisive issues".[158] This link gives the impression that Paul's discussion of certain Corinthians, in particular with regard to their own strong social networks, presented in 1 Cor 5-6, is not unrelated to his exhortations in 1:10-4:21.

If it is tenable that Paul has certain rich Corinthians' particular way of networking in mind in 1 Cor 5:1-6:11 (§5.3.1) as well as 1:10-4:21, this can explain various issues - honour

157 Mitchel, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 228; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 381; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 194-195.

158 Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 228.

(4:10), boasting (1:26-31; 3:18-23; 4:6-13), wisdom (1:18-2:16; 3:18-23), status (1:26-31; 4:6-13), baptism (1:13-17), unspiritual people (2:6-3:9), and building metaphors (3:10-17) - in a more integrative way. This can shed further light on several features of secular social relationships contrasted with fellowship with/in Christ.

First, honour was what certain wealthy believers chiefly pursued and monopolised through their own social webs and codes like aristocratic relationships (4:10; cf. 12:12-26; 15:43; see §5.2-3). Although Paul sarcastically notes that they were honoured (ἔνδοξοι, 4:10), this climactic description of them reflects their reality or at least the compelling ambition of their lives (4:6-10).[159] Provided that honour was visible and mostly mediated through relationships, 1 Cor 4:10 indicates that they enjoyed good relationships outside in contrast to Paul (4:12-13) and partly inside of the church (§5.3.1). They were at least partially successful in seeking honour through their own social networks, though this became one of the reasons for internal factions (cf. 4:10; 12:24-25). The contrast between Paul and the wealthy undergirds this impression (4:8-13): Paul was dishonoured (ἄτιμος) and persecuted because of bad relationships with non-believers, but the wealthy were not. Certain Corinthians' strong desire for honour in friendship and patronage, which was ubiquitous in an elite culture (φιλοτιμία, cf. Isocrates 5.110), would have caused ingroup conflicts with other Corinthians including Paul who worked hard with their hands, and were hungry, despised, and thereby dishonoured (4:10-13; cf. 1:26). This is plausible in view of the fact that class conflict was frequently depicted in *homonoia* speeches which are comparable with Paul's letters to the Corinthians (esp. 1 Cor 1-4).[160] Beyond the class conflict,[161] it appears that Paul and probably some other Christians were critical of certain wealthy Corinthians since they exploited and ruined church relationships for the sake of honour. This contrasts with the community ethos that Paul has been building, an idea I will argue further below.

The Apostle's goal of building relationships in church is that all may share honour, joy, and even sufferings (4:10; 12:12-26; 15:43), rather than for a few wealthy members to attain and monopolise honour. This goal and the reason why desire for honour resulted in

159 If Paul's description of the Corinthians' kingship, wealth, wisdom, and strength in 4:8-10 embraces their reality, it must be that the qualities ended up with them being honoured in antiquity. Cf. Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 36-37.

160 Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 40.

161 It seems that the main reason for Paul to oppose those monopolising honour was not just to favour and protect the socially weak (cf. Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 178-179) but more than that, possibly to protect Christian ethics conflicting with aristocratic codes of social relationship.

conflicts become clear in Paul's delineation of the ideal relationships within the Corinthian congregation as the body of Christ in 12:12-26.[162] Two of the central terms in the whole letter, σχίσμα (12:25; cf. 1:10; 11:18) and honour (τιμή, 12:23-24; δοξάζω, 12:26; cf. ἄτιμος, 12:23), appear in the text. In addition, terms such as ἀσθενής (12:22; 1:25, 27; 4:10) and ὑστερέω (12:24; 1:7), are also reiterated. The echo of these terms reflects a linguistic and thematic evocation of 1 Cor 1-4 (esp. 4:10).[163] This text (12:12-26) is the antithesis and remedy to divisiveness in the Corinthian community, in particular regarding diverse spiritual gifts including wisdom and the distribution of honour.[164] While Paul diagnoses one of the causes for conflicts with certain wealthy and powerful believers' obsession with and monopolisation of honour in 4:10 and 12:25, he provides remedies for it that subvert their value-system in his analogy of the body of Christ in 12:20-26.[165] In particular, he understands that the splits among the Corinthians are related to a matter of allocating honour in relationships.[166] Stating the ideal relationship between believers in the body of Christ, Paul declares that there will be no split (σχίσμα) if several conditions are satisfied (12:25).[167] A chief part of the conditions is that believers grant greater honour to the less honourable (12:23), like God giving the greater honour to the seemingly inferior (12:24). Paul states that factionalism would be dissolved if the Corinthian community as one body grants honour to all members regardless of their seeming necessity, worth, and status.[168] But if honour is monopolised by certain organs, it would lead to divisions. In other words, Paul has in mind the fact that a wrong or aristocratic distribution of honour causes internal conflicts. Paul's

162 There is a general consensus that the metaphor of body embodies political meanings. See Cicero, *Off.* 3.5.22; Seneca, *Ira* 2.31.7; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 211; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 157-164.

163 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 1007.

164 The main focus of 1 Cor 12:1-31 is, of course, on diversity of spiritual gifts, its consequential division, and the resolution of the conflict: unity in diversity with regard to spiritual gifts. See J. H. Neyrey, "Body Language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models for Understanding Paul and His Opponents," *Semeia* 35 (1986), 129-170. But, in this section, I will underline honour more in the discourse which reminds the recipients of 4:10.

165 Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 94-96; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 596-597; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 269.

166 Ernest Best, *One Body in Christ: A Study of the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London: SPCK, 1955), 103.

167 The first word of 12:25, the purposive ἵνα, suggests that the purpose of God's distribution of honour to all members (12:24) is "no split" (12:25).

168 Martin points out that "in these verses [12:12-27] Paul uses a variety of terms whose status significance is often lost in translation: ta dokounta (the esteemed), asthenestera (weaker), anagkaia (necessary), atimotera (less honorable), time perissotera (abundantly honored), hysteroumenos (lacking)" (*Corinthian Body*, 94).

community ideal is starkly contrasted with the reality of the Corinthians among whom some powerful members tried to exploit relationships for honour and to monopolise it while the others, like those working with their hands (the "we" of 4:10-13), were dishonoured. Such a description of certain Corinthians' desire evokes the aristocratic codes. Honour was carefully distributed according to status, achievements, nobility, and benefactions in social clubs and towns. More importantly, when more people witnessed and praised those qualities, more honour was bestowed on those having the qualities. Giving honour to an unfitting and invisible person could well dishonour the whole community (cf. Plutarch, *Mor*. 540B-C; Aulus Gellius *Noct. att.* 7.11.3). This honouring system justified a hierarchy of different statuses in every kind of community.[169] As Martin further points out, many Romans believed that "the body is hierarchically constituted and that illness or social disruption occurs when that hierarchy is disrupted".[170] In this regard, the body of Christ is profoundly countercultural and subversive.[171] Not only does God contrariwise grant greater honour to the inferior (12:24), but also regards the less respectable members (τὰ ἀσχήμονα) as more necessary who should receive greater respect (12:23). This means that honour-hierarchy in the Corinthian congregation is radically neutralised by the analogy of the body of Christ, that is, a less hierarchical relationship and distribution of honour in Christ.[172] The subversive idea culminates in Paul's eschatological vision in 15:43 which, reminding the readers of 4:10, 1:27-28, and 12:12-26,[173] delivers the message that those in dishonour (ἀτιμία) will be transformed into those truly honoured (δόξα) in the end, not by their own social connections but by their relationships with/in Christ (cf. 15:22; 1:9).[174] Therefore, Paul subverts the goal of the aristocratic social network and its honour distribution system (4:10). He urges that honour should be allocated to all members, especially to seemingly dishonourable, weak, and unpresentable ones. Such allocation is to happen through fellowship with/in Christ so that

169 Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 172.

170 Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 40.

171 Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 596; cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 432-442, 510-511

172 Even though the honour code was relative in many different groups (Cornelius Nepos, *Liber De Excellentibus Ducibus Exterarum Gentium: Praefatio* 4-7), the equal allocation of honour to all was not common, especially in an elite society.

173 The pairs of terms - honour/dishonour, weak/strong, and unspiritual/spiritual - in 1:26-31, 2:6-4, 4:6-13, and 12:12-26 are all echoed in 15:43-44.

174 Thiselton underlines that Paul's reversals of status, wisdom, honour, etc., begin from 1:26-31 and develop in 12:12-26, climaxing in 15:43-44 (*The Corinthians*, 1007; cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 505-506). Furthermore, Mitchell argues that the eschatological reward trivialises the present distinctions of honour (*Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 289-290).

conflict may be dissolved (12:20-26) - all will become honourable in him in an eschatological sense (15:43).

Second, Paul wrestles with the reality that the path to honour is to boast in exploiting social connections (1 Cor 1:26-31; 3:18-23; 4:6-13; 5:6; 9:15-16; cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.7.11-13). Honour in antiquity was essentially a public reality (§5.2). Without witness to whom to display achievements, speech, wisdom, noble birth, power, etc., honour could not be distributed. Even though one was of high status, born to a noble family and eloquent, one's honour remained unproven unless the virtues were seen and praised by friends and clients or by oneselves (cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Nest.* 3; Ennius, *Tragoediae* 261).[175] In other words, one of the popular ways of attaining honour was for the honourable to show and advertise themselves and their qualities in good relationships in public places (Dio Chrysostom, *Fel.* 3).[176] This explains why the elite put every effort into expanding social networks, and why self-praising for honour was pervasive in Roman society (cf. Plutarch, *Mor*. 539-547, esp. 539E; Cicero, *Inv.* 1.16.22; Tacitus, *Agr*. 25.1; *Rhet. Her*. 1.5.8) though it required delicacy.[177] Most Romans needed witnesses for their honour so that they sometimes risked the repercussions of self-advertising. It is plausible that Paul uses καυχάομαι (1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7; 9:15; 13:3), καύχημα (5:6; 9:15, 16), and καύχησις (15:31)[178] to negatively portray that aspect of honour and relationship or to sarcastically parody it.[179] The terms are characteristic of Paul's writings, especially of 1-2 Corinthians, given that they are not frequently found in Greek literature from around the first century.[180] Though his usage of the καυχ-stem is

175 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 60; John K. Campbell, "Honour and the Devil," in *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 152; cf. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 8.

176 Most aristocrats had plaques in their houses to advertise their accomplishments and co-optations. See Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 83; T. P. Wiseman, "*Conspicui postes tectaque Digna deo*: The Public Image of Aristocratic and Imperial Houses in the Late Republic and Early Empire," in *L'Urbs: Espace urbain et histoire* (Rome, 1987), 393-413.

177 Christopher Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986), 10.

178 For studies of the words, see R. Bultmann, "καυχάομαι," *TDNT* 3, 645-654; Ceslas Spicq, "Καυχάομαι, καύχημα, καύχησις," *TLNT* 2, 295-302; C. K. Barrett, "Boasting in the Pauline Epistles," in Vanhoye, *L'Apôtre Paul*, 363-368.

179 Paul sometimes uses those terms (e.g. 1:31; 9:15; 15:31) positively to show legitimate pride in God, while criticizing his opponents' boastful self-presentation by doing a parody. See Edwin A. Judge, "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," *ABR* 16 (1968), 37-50; Forbes, "Self-Praise," 1-30.

180 Fifty-five out of fifty-nine instances of those words in the NT are found in Paul's letters, and thirty-nine of them are in 1-2 Corinthians. This high density indicates that the Corinthians' boasting ethos was particularly problematic.

deeply rooted in the Old Testament (esp. Jer 9:23-24), it cannot be detached from an honour-shame culture in the Roman world.[181] Self-praising or boasting to gain honours was ubiquitous in Roman society, and Paul would have believed that it contaminated the Corinthian community.[182]

There are two further clues to that argument: 1 Cor 4:6-13 and 1:26-31 (cf. 3:18-23). Firstly, 4:6-13 evokes one of the common Roman norms that displaying and praising oneself to others leads to honour (cf. Aristotle, *Eth. Nic*. 4.7.11-13; Plutarch, *Mor*. 540B-C). Paul in fact does not state the relation between boasting, good social relationships, wisdom, wealth, and honour, but simply catalogues them. Nonetheless, any Corinthian would have quickly grasped the typical connection between boasting or self-praising (method) and honour (result) in relationships (the medium) lying behind the list that Paul likely has in mind. Secondly, 1:26-31 indicates a reversal of honour and shame, and thereby the meaninglessness of boasting in the Corinthian congregation. Underlining God's incongruous grace and calling (cf. Rom 9:12),[183] Paul carefully selects three verbs, ἐξελέξατο (*3), καταισχύνῃ (*2), and καταργήσῃ (*1). The term καταισχύνω, whose antithesis is honour,[184] reflects "a public phenomenon"[185] common in antiquity.[186] Provided that those of high status were commonly meant to be honoured by others, Paul's statement that they are ashamed by God is a complete reversal of the culture. As Conzelmann well observes, the verb καταισχύνῃ "paves the way for the warning against καυχᾶσθαι, 'boast'" in 1:29. It means that boasting for honour is meaningless, as God is the arbiter of shame or honour and chooses people regardless of their wisdom, power, and status (1:29-30). Overall, Paul's criticism of certain Corinthians in 4:6-13 and 1:26-31 is against their desire to be praised and to boast of their virtues for honour.

Third, the things which certain Corinthians boasted about were archetypal in elite society: wealth (ἐπλουτήσατε, 4:8), strength (ἰσχυροί, 4:10), and most importantly wisdom

181 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 186-188; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 78.

182 Ancient philosophers also revealed their concern over self-praising. In particular, Plutarch's essay, *De se ipsum citra invidiam laudando*, differentiates between wrong and legitimate self-praising. He allows people to praise themselves under certain circumstances, for example, when one defends oneself against dishonor and injustice (*Mor.* 541C-D). However, it appears that Paul does not give any space for self-praising or boasting except in the Lord (1:31).

183 Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 354, 567.

184 Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 50.

185 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 186.

186 The shame is more than a public loss of honour. It is also rooted in biblical traditions: God's judgement and condemnation of the unrighteous that leads to shame (Ciampa and Rosner, *The Corinthians*, 107; cf. Psalm 83:16-18; Isa 41:11).

(φρόνιμοι, 4:10; σοφοί, 1:26).[187] It is clear that wisdom, especially eloquence, is the most divisive element among the criteria (1:17; 1:18-31; 2:1-16; 3:18-23; 4:10),[188] and it is associated with boasting, honour, and social networks (1:26-31; 4:6-13). This calls for some explanation of why wisdom became a more central issue than other criteria, and why certain Corinthians were so enthralled by wisdom. It may be associated with the membership of the Corinthian community and the ethos of Corinth. Corinth was a freedman-friendly city in which many of the citizens sought to climb the economic ladder and some freedmen were able to (see §4.2). But only a few among them could experience social mobility. It means that there were many others who were economically upwardly mobile freedmen but failed to be socially recognised. The nouveaux riches and their children desperately sought to gain social recognition from their economic success. While these people could not change their humble birth and family backgrounds through which honour or shame were usually ascribed (Plutarch, *Mor*. 1.1.2; Seneca, *Ep*. 3.4.30.1), there were some other virtues and honours that they could acquire.[189] In this regard, presenting wisdom acquired through education was one of the clearest and most popular ways in which freedmen received social recognition.[190] For money could not buy a family tree or its legacy, but teachers and books.[191] Besides, rhetorical skill was critical in extending one's social relationships in elite society in terms of both friendship and patronage. Eloquence was a common medium through which one defended and praised oneself, friends, clients, and patrons in public, especially in courts. In this regard, wisdom was an essential skill that could show elegance and broaden and fortify relationships in which one could be honoured. This may be a mirror of the ethos of the Corinthian community in which certain members boast of wisdom. It is probable that certain upwardly mobile believers endeavoured to extend relationships and to acquire social recognition through wisdom. What should be underlined here again is that wisdom is often paralleled with power, wealth, strength, honour, boasting, and social network in 1 Cor 1-4

187 For the research on the terms, see §4.3.1.1.

188 Many studies of wisdom in Corinth show how much it played a central role in causing conflicts. See §5.4.1.

189 Some biblical scholars categorise honour into two types: ascribed and acquired honours. The ascribed honour is determined by birth (i.e. surname, gender, and familial lineage and traditions; Sir 3:10; Plutarch, *Mor*. 1.12), while the acquired honour is built up by personal achievements in war, business, politics, and social clubs. See Malina, *New Testament World*, 33-37; D. A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 28-29; cf. Zeba Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *JBL* 128.3 (2009), 610.

190 Cf. White, *Wise Man*, 58.

191 Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 125; Morgan, *Literate Education*, 27-28.

and further 5-12. This indicates that the Corinthian situation can be fully comprehended when the divisive wisdom is described in light of the other criteria.

Fourth, this Corinthian relational and behavioural code was the natural and pervasive way of Roman living, in particular of the elite, which was neither mature nor spiritual in Paul's eyes (1 Cor 2:6-3:9). In 3:3, Paul criticises certain Corinthians' merely ordinary behaviours like those of many other persons, including their obsession with wisdom.[192] He emphasises that they are merely human by using the adjective σαρκικοί (flesh-related, 3:3; cf. σάρκινος, 3:1),[193] adding the specific meaning of the word, "that is, behaving according to any human being" (καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε; cf. Rom 7:22).[194] That Paul mentions jealousy (ζῆλος) and strife (ἔρις) as the manifestations of the flesh-related behaviours (σαρκικοί, 3:3) shows that this is essentially a relational matter. Compared to Gal 5:19-21 in which Paul catalogues the fifteen sorts of work of the flesh (τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός) that include jealousy and strife (cf. Rom 13:13-14; 2 Cor 12:20), here he focuses only on relational ethics rather than on fornication, licentiousness, impurity, idolatry, etc.[195] The noun ζῆλος denotes "intense negative feelings" against others in comparison and competition with each other and an attempt to harm others.[196] It is natural to think that the envy leads to strife (ἔρις). In other words, Paul is negotiating the issue of how to build solid relationships despite jealousy and discord of the flesh. These worldly or fleshly people (3:1-4) are aligned with the natural (ψυχικός, 2:14) and immature ones (contra τοῖς τελείοις, 2:6). They all are people who live and perceive things on "an entirely human level",[197] contrasted with those driven by (the) spirit (πνευματικῶς, 2:14), in building relationships. Sometime after their conversion, certain Corinthians remained like the initiates who were stuck to their old habits and way of life (cf. 2:6; 3:1-2). It seems that, unlike the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:6, 9), they did not experience mental and social changes or distress resulting from utterly abandoning their old way of life including worshipping their traditional gods (cf. §3.2). As a result, the merely ordinary human behaviour clearly manifests itself as jealousy and discord in the relationships within the Corinthian congregation (3:3).

192 Cf. Winter, *After Paul*, 40; Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 88.

193 Fee notes that the σαρκικός (3:3) has a pejorative overtone compared to σάρκινος (3:1, *The Corinthians*, 124, 127).

194 Ciampa and Rosner, *The Corinthians*, 140-141; Fee, *The Corinthians*, 127.

195 Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *The Corinthians*, 141.

196 BDAG, 427; Stumpff, *TDNT* II, 882.

197 Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 269.

Fifth, the Corinthians in question had built their community relationships on the basis of their preference for certain individuals (1 Cor 1:12; 13-17; cf. 5:1-13) and possibly of their status differences (11:17-22). The reason Paul abruptly mentions baptism in 1:13-17 is mainly because it explicates one feature of grouping presented in 1:12. The phrase "into the name of" (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, 1:13) implies "entrance into fellowship and allegiance".[198] By using this expression, Paul sarcastically asked the Corinthians: "were you baptised into the name of Paul?" (1:13). The expected answer is clear: no, but into the name of Jesus. This rhetorical question indicates that, although the Corinthians had entered into "a unique and exclusive relationship"[199] with Jesus in baptism (cf. Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27),[200] some of them had over-inflated the role of baptizers, including Paul, and their personal connections with them as though the goal of baptism was to enter into fellowship with the baptizers. According to Dunn, this ethos is the manifestation of 1 Cor 1:12, "I am in favour of someone".[201] It can be argued, therefore, that 1:12-17 reveals that the Corinthians were building social relationships based on their personal preference for certain leaders or baptisers, not on common baptism into Christ.

The social relationships in church, furthermore, were divided into many groups possibly because of status differences among the believers as seen in Paul's discourse on the Lord's Supper (11:17-34; cf. 1:26-31; 4:6-13). As I argued above (§4.3.1), certain Corinthians' hunger was endemic due to poverty as demonstrated in Paul's language, like πεινάω, μεθύω (contra διψάω, 4:11), and τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (cf. 1:28; 4:11). These poor believers were shamed by other believers, possibly the semi-elite or the nouveaux riches, in the Lord's Supper. This was an actual manifestation of parties (αἵρεσις, 11:18; cf. 1:12) and divisions (σχίσμα, 11:19; 1:10) with which Paul was wrestling throughout the letter, in particular 1 Cor 1-4.[202] Although the exact context of the divisions in 11:17-34 is unclear, relevant archaeological and historical research provides a glimpse of it.

A good way of reconstructing the context, here, is to rewind from Paul's practical corrections for disunity (11:33-34) towards the original scene of the problematic supper. As

198 Robertson and Plummer, *The Corinthians*, 13; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 117; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), 21-23.

199 Ciampa and Rosner, *The Corinthians*, 83.

200 Schnackenburg, *Baptism*, 21-29.

201 Dunn states that "*ἐγὼ δὲ Παύλου* (v. 12) obviously means the same as *ἐγὼ ἐβαπτίσθην εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου* (v. 13)" (*Baptism*, 117).

202 Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 152.

Schrage observes, an *inclusio* is formed between 11:21-22 and 11:33-34, that is, between actual problems and Paul's concrete response.[203] After stating the tradition of the Lord's Supper and warning of wrong practice (11:23-32), Paul suggests two solutions (11:33-34) to the discords (11:21-22). The first is 11:33: ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. Calling all of them "my brothers",[204] Paul first underlines that they gather together to eat (11:33; cf. 11:18; 11:20). The verb συνέρχομαι basically means a physical gathering, but it can further denote a metaphorical unification, "to be united" (Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.6.4).[205] This word dominates the rhetorical unit (11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34), which contrasts with σχίσμα (11:18) and αἵρεσις (11:19-20) and parallels with ἀδελφοί μου (11:33) and ἐκκλησία (11:18). This indicates that Paul has in mind the fact that one of the purposes of gathering to eat is ideally to strengthen the solidarity of brothers and sisters, not just for sacramental reasons. To achieve this, Paul urges them to welcome one another (ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε, 11:33). The subtle denotation of the imperative verb ἐκδέχεσθε here is not just to wait, but to welcome or receive one another and further to share plates in a dining context (cf. Rom 15:7; P.Tebt. 33.1.7).[206] The social overtone of the ἐκδέχεσθε fits well with the goal of their gathering to eat (1 Cor 11:33a) and the nature of the Lord's Supper (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, 11:20)[207] in which believers share one body and blood (11:23-26; cf. 10:16-17).[208] If so, it is likely that the ethos which Paul chiefly rejects was not sharing food and drink for whatever reason. This impression can further be underpinned by 1 Cor 11:21: each of the Corinthians consumes (προλαμβάνει)[209] his or her own supper and some are left

203 W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 11,17-14,40)* (Zürich: Benziger, 1999), 56.

204 The phrase "ἀδελφοί μου" is rare in the whole letter, occurring only three times.

205 Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 154; LSJ, 1712.

206 Some scholars argue that, since the ἐκδέχεσθε corresponds to προλαμβάνει (11:21), the most essential overtone of it is in a temporal sense (Theissen, *Social Setting*, 151-153; P. Lampe, "The Eucharist: Identifying with Christ on the Cross," *Int* 48 [1994], 37-38). However, some others underscore that the word is used in the context of a dinner, arguing that it carries a social connotation, "to receive" or "to entertain" (Fee, *The Corinthians*, 567-568; LSJ, 503). Winter further claims that it means caring for others (Winter, *After Paul*, 151-152; cf. Lampe, "The Eucharist," 42; cf. 12:25). See also note 209.

207 McGowan states that the δεῖπνον carries the connotation of a common meal "among diners bound by kinship or common interest" ("Lord's Supper," 506).

208 Henderson points out that "Paul marshals the Lord's sayings to offer a narrative model for the community's self-giving, instead of self-serving, table practices" ("Anyone Hungers," 199; cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 148-149; Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, 77).

209 Although the verb προλαμβάνει has often been translated as "to go ahead with" in a temporal sense coming from the prefix πρό- (Barret, *The Corinthians*, 262; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*, 160-161; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 151-155), Winter claims that its usage (Gal 6:1; P.Cairo.Zen. 59562.1.12; *SIG* 3.1170; *IG* IV$_2$/1126) fits more with "to consume" or "to devour" (*After*

hungry. The ideal meal (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον) was meant to be communal (cf. 11:33, 18, 20), but the reality was multiple private meals (ἴδιον δεῖπνον, 11:21-22). In this regard, the expression κυριακὸν δεῖπνον (11:20) contrasts starkly with the ἴδιον δεῖπνον (11:21).[210] The further implied situation is that the have-nots (τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας) were left in endemic hunger and shame.[211] Paul's description of the have-nots invokes 1 Cor 1:26-31 and 4:8-13 (§4.3.1).[212] He repeats certain central terms, τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (11:22; τὰ μὴ ὄντα 1:28), πεινᾷ (11:21; πεινῶμεν, 4:12), and καταισχύνετε (11:22; καταισχύνῃ, 1:27). These words in 1 Cor 1-4 denote one's endemic poverty, hunger, and humiliation. In light of this, it is likely that the have-nots (11:22) possessed nothing and were often hungry in daily life, not to mention at the Lord's Supper. John Chrysostom earlier pointed out that, while the ideal of early Christians' feasting together and sharing everything in common (Acts 2:44-45) had been gradually abandoned, the poor were eventually left hungry and ashamed at the Lord's Supper in Corinth (*Hom. 1 Cor*. 27 [on 11:17-22]).[213] The first major matter for Paul, thus, was that certain wealthy Corinthians gathered together but did not share food, drink, and other things (cf. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-5:11; 6:1-6)[214] with other believers, denying unity (1 Cor 11:21, 33)[215] and leaving the poor to suffer from hunger.[216]

Paul's second solution is "if anyone is hungry, eat at home" (11:34; cf. 11:22). It can be suggested that this sentence is metaphorical and cynical: if anyone is hungry for honour, fill it at home. It seems that the verb πεινᾷ here has a nuance different from that in 4:11 and 11:21, since Paul's tone is sarcastic or rebuking.[217] While he uses the term in 4:11 and 11:21 to express empathy with one's endemic poverty, the πεινᾷ in 11:34 denotes the offenders' contorted desire to be full. It is highly likely that the offenders were drunken (11:21) and

Paul, 144-148). He goes on to state that the prefix πρό- is more like fortifying the meaning of λαμβάνω (Winter, *After Paul*, 148). See also Kloppenborg, "Precedence at the Communal Meal in Corinth," *NovT* 58 (2016), 198-201; note 206.

210 Many scholars often contrast between κυριακὸν δεῖπνον (communal) and ἴδιον δεῖπνον (individual). See Theissen, *Social Setting*, 147-151.

211 Cf. Winter, *After Paul*, 157.

212 Cf. Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 271.

213 Cf. Schottroff, "Holiness and Justice," 53-54.

214 Schottroff suggests reading 1 Cor 11:17-34 in light of Acts in which early Christians are described as those sharing everything ("Holiness and Justice," 51-60).

215 Henderson, "Anyone Hungers," 203.

216 Winter, *After Paul*, 157-158.

217 Fee, *The Corinthians*, 629; Elliott, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 272-273; P. Lampe, "Can Words Be Violent or Do They Only Sound That Way? Second Corinthians: Verbal Warfare from Afar as Complement to a Placid Personal Presence," in *Paul and Rhetoric*, ed. J. Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2010), 226-227.

dishonoured the poor (11:22), possibly being wealthier than those who were left hungry. Considering this, it may be that their hunger (11:34) was not purely physical but more social. The verb πεινάω literally means to feel hunger for food, but it metaphorically denotes the strong desiring for something or wanting to fill a lack (e.g. hunger for wealth, Xenophon, *Cyr*. 8.3.39; hunger for praise, Xenophon, *Oec*. 13.9; cf. appetentissimique honestatis, Cicero, *Tusc*. 2.24.58).[218] It can be guessed that Paul has both meanings in mind in 11:34; the well-to-do members' hunger was for social recognition, while the poor were hungry for food. There are several good reasons for this. Firstly, it does not make sense that the wealthy were often hungry such as to cause problems at a communal meal.[219] Hunger for food does not fit well with the rich who could be full whenever they want. Besides, although Paul was targeting their hunger as the main problem (11:34), it is unlikely that to be full of food was their everyday desire in the meal. If it was, it would not necessarily result in dishonouring the poor and despising the church of God (11:22). The results imply that their hunger was more than hunger for food, more likely a social hunger for some other things which had caused shame for others. Roman elites' chief hunger in the meal was not for food but for honour (Seneca, *Ep*. 19.10). Accordingly, the phrase εἴ τις πεινᾷ does not sound literal but sarcastic and metaphorical as though it means "if anyone is hungry for some other things like honour, praise, or wealth". Secondly, Paul sharply separates two spaces, church and home, twice: "do you not have homes to eat and drink in?" (11:22) and "eat at home" (11:34). His nuance in the contrast is that, while something is allowed at home, it is not in church. Paul believes that the dining codes in house and church should be differentiated (cf. 11:29).[220] For instance, a private meal is acceptable at home, but the Lord's Supper in church only allows for a communal meal (12:21).[221] Moreover, it is plausible that the private meal at home reflects some elite dining habits.[222] In light of studies of ancient homes and dinners, Paul's emphasis on the words οἰκία/οἶκος (11:22, 34) appears to echo a particular social hunger of the rich. Private houses for the elite were not just for shelter, but more for "visible expressions of

218 LSJ, 1354.

219 Lampe suggests that the wealthy would have felt hungry after the thermal baths ("The Eucharist," 42). But it is not tenable in the text.

220 Many scholars tend to compare the Lord's Supper mainly with meals in voluntary associations (Kloppenborg, "Communal Meal," 167-203; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 153). But Paul's emphasis on οἰκία/οἶκος also leads us to the comparison between meals at home and church.

221 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 163-164.

222 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 153-162.

gloria".[223] The size, beauty, and location of houses of the wealthy were a symbol of owners' honour and status (Plurtach, *Mor*. 800; Cicero, *Quint. Fratr.* 2.5.1).[224] The houses were normally replete with splendid ornaments, monuments, statues, and paintings to advertise their owners' achievements and wealth.[225] Dining rooms (*triclinii*) were especially designed for social displays in banquets (*cenae* or *convivii*), with fine furniture and gold and silver tableware (cf. Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 5.197a-c).[226] Lavish meals in the *triclinium* were statements of wealth and status, particularly manifested in extravagant food (Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 4.128c-e), orders and postures of sitting (cf. Juvenal, *Sat*. 5.1-179; Horace, *Sat*. 2, 8),[227] allocations of food (Pliny, *Ep*. 2.6; Cicero, *Att*. 13.52),[228] and gifts for guests.[229] "Eating at home" for the Roman elite had a strongly symbolic meaning, like expanding social networks by inviting guests and displaying honour and status in a hierarchical and competitive environment.[230] On the other hand, there were some others left ashamed or starving because of their low status: mistreated guests, and poor parasites or flatterers. Ancient satires describe client guests who were not satisfied with inferior food and hosts' manners, and thereby felt humiliated (Martial, *Epigr*. 3.60.3-10; Juvenal, *Sat*. 5.156-179). Hungry flatterers or parasites (παρασῖτοι, though originally honorific) begged for food at banquets at the cost of enduring all sorts of insult and abuse, while providing toadying praises or entertainment (Alciphron, *Ep.* 3.2.3, 3.3.1-3; Lucian, *Nigr*. 22; cf. Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 6.234-262). When they did not meet hosts' demands, they were left hungry.[231] Servants could also get leftover food, only if hosts and guests had eaten their fill (Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 4.128e). As such, in Roman elite society, the social context of eating at home was evident: while the rich were hungry for honour, the poor were hungry for food. It is likely that Paul's

223 Wiseman, "Public Image," 392.

224 Cf. Wiseman, "Public Image," 393-394.

225 Wiseman, "Public Image," 393-413.

226 Wilkins and Hill, *Food*, 42; cf. Roger Ling, "The Decoration of Roman Triclinia," in *Vino Veritas*, ed. Oswyn Murray and Manuela Tecusan (Oxford: Alden, 1995), 239-251.

227 E. Stein-Hölkeskamp, "Class and Power," in *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, ed. J. Wilkins and R. Nadeau (Chichester: Wiley & Sons, 2015), 86, 88-89.

228 Theissen, *Social Setting*, 153-163.

229 K. M. D. Dunbabin claims that formal dining in the Roman empire, compared to the Greek traditions, "was designed to express hierarchical ranking more visibly. … conveying a message of status" ("*Ut Graeco more biberetur*: Greeks and Romans on the Dining Couch," in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, ed. I. Nielsen and H. S. Nielsen [Oxford: Aarhus University Press, 1998], 98, 89; cf. Keith R. Bradley, "The Roman Family at Dinner," in Nielsen, *Meals in a Social Context*, 50.

230 Stein-Hölkeskamp, "Class and Power," 85-94.

231 Wilkins and Hill, *Food*, 73.

exhortation of "eat at home" to the wealthy (1 Cor 11:34, 22) reflects this context, hunger for honour. If so, it can be argued that certain wealthy believers did not separate dining codes at home and in church, seeking honour in both places in the same manner. They would have displayed their own extravagant meals, possibly including meat and fish (cf. 10:25), to show status differences in the Corinthian congregation (11:21) like in their homes. It is also probable that several groups of the wealthy competed with each other for honour, probably between semi-elites and upwardly mobile members. It might be that they required the poor to praise them to earn food like flatterers or parasites and that, if some refused, they were left hungry or ashamed (11:21-22). Thus, the underlying context of "eat at home" is, while the wealthy felt hungry for honour and competed for it, the poor were left hungry for food and ashamed at the Lord's Supper. Overall, if this scenario is tenable, status difference, along with honour distribution, was the crucial factor which divided the Corinthians.

5.4.2.2. Fellowship with/in Christ

Most significantly, in 1 Cor 1-4, Paul constantly and starkly contrasts human, secular or elite relationships with fellowship (κοινωνία) with/in Christ (esp. 1:9, 12-17, 30; 3:10-17; 4:10-13; 10:16-17; 11:17-34). Firstly, before articulating the issue of internal conflicts, Paul declares in the climax of thanksgiving (1:9) that the Corinthians are all called into fellowship with Christ. The word "fellowship", of course, cannot embody all the subtle and various nuances of the Greek word κοινωνία.[232] Besides, the literary context of the κοινωνία (1:9) is a thanksgiving that does not clearly give its rhetorical connotations but just foreshadows its centrality in the whole letter.[233] Some clues, nevertheless, lead to its communal implications. The κοινω-stem (κοινωνία, κοινωνός, and κοινωνέω) basically denotes sharing and participating in something in common with someone in a political, commercial, social or religious sense.[234] Paul adds to this term God's son, Christ, as its object in 1:9, i.e. the Corinthians are participating in the sonship of Christ as partakers.[235] Its further communal

[232] Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 104.

[233] Thanksgiving in ancient letters often serves to foreshadow the main arguments of the whole letter. See O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 134-135; P. Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939), 27.

[234] Cf. J. Y. Campbell, "ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ and Its Cognates in the New Testament," *JBL* 51.4 (1932), 352-380; J. Hainz, *Kirche" als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus, Biblische Untersuchungen* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982); N. Baumert, *Koinonein und Metechein - synonym? Ein umfassende semantische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 2003); Ogereau, "A Survey of Κοινωνία and Its Cognates in Documentary Sources," *NovT* 53 (2015), 275-294.

[235] Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 104-105.

overtone should also be stressed: the fellowship with Christ embraces fellowship in Christ or communal participation in Christ, that is, an intimate relationship of believers with one another in Christ.[236] The very next sentence (1:10) undergirds this interpretation of the Corinthians' fellowship with/in Christ in 1:9. Paul connects 1:9 and 1:10 by using δέ to contrast God's calling (1:9) and the Corinthians' reality (1:10-11): God has called them to fellowship with/in Christ (1:9; cf. 1:12-17[237]), but they are experiencing discord (1:10-11). He further uses the vocative form of ἀδελφός twice to remind them of the calling into one familial community and unity (1:10, 11). This communal aspect of fellowship is also presented in 1 Cor 10:16-17. Paul's logic is simple: if the Corinthians' "participation in" (κοινωνία, 10:16) Christ's body is true, then they are one as they share in one bread - his body. Turning back to 1 Cor 1:9, Mitchell rightly observes that "the unifying appeal to the Corinthians has already begun [in 1:9]. This provides a transition into the proposition of the argument".[238] The noun κοινωνία provides not just the transition here but a first glance of Paul's understanding in the whole letter of the ideal communal relationships in church (1:9), placed in stark opposition to the goals and reality of certain Corinthians' social networking (1:10-17).

Secondly, the similar idea of fellowship which contrasts with certain Corinthians' own social webs is reiterated in 1:30 and the following several passages (3:10-17; 4:10-13; cf. 12:12-26). Paul uses a contrastive δέ again in 1 Cor 1:30 to juxtapose the reality that the Corinthians are exploiting relationships to boast for honour (1:29) with his ideal of "being-in-Christ" (1:30). Though the sentence "you are in Jesus Christ" (ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 1:30) can be interpreted in various ways, its implicit social nature cannot be overlooked. Many scholars have acknowledged that the phrase "in Christ" in Paul's letters essentially connotes one's inseparable relationship with Jesus in a variety of ways. Ernest Best presses this idea further, underlining that in most cases, the relationship with Jesus is not individualistic but communal.[239] Accepting Albert Schweitzer's idea that the phrase "in

[236] George Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life*. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 5, 108; L. S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1942), 77; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 134; Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 104; Peter T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 132.

[237] Baptism into Christ connotes that individuals not only enter into the fellowship with him but are also all incorporated into the body of Christ (Schnackenburg, *Baptism*, 26-29).

[238] Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 197.

[239] Best criticises Deissmann's mystical interpretation of "in Christ", since "it is unable to give a satisfactory account of the social nature of the phrase 'in Christ'" (*One Body*, 12, 1-32).

Christ" (alongside "with Christ" and "into Christ") usually originates from the concept of "the body of Christ" (Rom 12:5; cf. 1 Cor 12:12-26),[240] Best argues that individual believers are held together "in Christ" as a corporate personality.[241]

Thirdly, Paul's building metaphors (3:9-17) are also aligned with his thought of fellowship with/in Jesus (1:9, 30). Most commentators agree that the "you" as "God's building" (θεοῦ οἰκοδομή, 3:9) and "God's temple" (ναὸς θεοῦ, 3:16) in the text is not singular but plural and communal: all the Corinthians are corporately the building and temple of God.[242] What makes the relationship unique is that it is built on no other foundations than Jesus Christ (3:11), that is, the Corinthians' inseparable relation with Jesus (cf. Philo, *Leg.* 2.6).[243] John Chrysostom early on observed these two important relational aspects of the building metaphors in the text: (1) Paul's teaching is that the Corinthians should cling to and be cemented to the foundation, Jesus, just as the head is connected to the body (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 8 [on 3:11]); (2) the building, thereby, should not be divided (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 8 [on 3:9, 11]). It can be said, accordingly, that fellowship with/in Jesus is again emphasised in Paul's building metaphors, contrasted with the ethos that the building can be damaged because of how the believers build their relationships (3:10c, 15, 17).[244]

Overall, while 1 Cor 1-4 discloses the differences and incompatibility between Paul's ideal of Christ-centred fellowship and certain Corinthians' imitation of elite social networks, Paul intends to encourage the Corinthians to solidify the former relationships by discarding the latter. Certain wealthy Corinthians are copying social elites' method of building relationships: (1) they value and seek to enhance their own social networks which intersect between believers and non-believers (1 Cor 4:10; 5:1-6:11); (2) their relationships are built on their preferences for individuals (1:12-17) and on different socio-economic statuses (11:17-34); (3) they boast of wisdom, power, wealth, and strength in order to be honoured by exploiting the relationships (1:18-2:5; 3:18-23; 4:6-13; 11:17-34); (4) even church relationships have become stratified and hierarchical based on the degree of honour received (cf. 1:26-31; 4:6-13); (5) the goal of those seeking to expand social networks and honour has

240 Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: Black, 1931), 117-123.

241 Best, *One Body*, 19-30.

242 As for the examples, see Thiselton, *The Corinthians*, 307, 316; J. A. Draper, "The Tip of an Ice-Berg: The Temple of the Holy Spirit," *JTSA* 59 (1987), 57, 61; J. Shanor, "Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians," *NTS* 34 (1988), 466.

243 Lanci, *New Temple*, 64.

244 For other important points of the building metaphor, see Lanci, *New Temple*; Shanor, "Master Builder," 461-471.

been to enhance their superiority over other members, to exert power and leadership, and to sustain and justify status stratification (cf. 11:17-34); (6) the relational code was an ordinary part (σαρκικός) of Greco-Roman society, in particular aristocratic, to which certain Corinthians have adhered even after conversion (2:6-3:4); (7) this has caused internal discord in the Corinthian congregation, since it is starkly contrasted with fellowship with/in Christ.

In several passages, Paul contrasts certain Corinthians' imitation of the aristocratic social networks with fellowship with/in Christ: (1) the believers' fellowship commences with God's calling into a familial community which leads to the altering and renewing of their old ways of building social webs (1:9-10; 1:24, 26, 30; 2:14-3:4); (2) the relationships among the believers are built on the foundation of their fellowship with Christ (κοινωνία, 1:9, 13; 1:30; 3:10-17); (3) the communal participation in Christ is manifested in the body of Christ and in the Lord's Supper in which members do not monopolise honour but share it alongside joy and suffering (12:12-26; 11:17-34), while it does not allow the Corinthians to boast for honour (1:26-31); (4) this culminates in eschatology since all believers will be transformed into truly honourable bodies in Christ (15:42-49); (5) thus, the relationships within church are ideally neither hierarchical nor divisive but united regardless of status differences; (6) for these reasons, fellowship with/in Christ is by nature subversive and countercultural against elite relational codes.

5.4.3. Socio-Economic Factors, Identity, and Division

As I have argued so far, though the discord at Corinth was chiefly due to the clash between an elite way of building social connections and fellowship with/in Christ, there were more socio-economic factors or triggers contributing to that contention. Among them, it is worthwhile to examine the issues of the Corinthians' socio-economic status and social harmony with non-believers through a social psychological approach. Social psychological theories (§1.2.4) and studies of Roman culture (§5.2) will shed more light on the socio-economic factors influencing the Corinthians' internal conflicts.

First, it is highly likely that certain wealthy Corinthians were accountable both for peaceful relationships with outgroup members and for internal contentions in church. As I argued above (§5.3), while certain wealthy members had weak Christian identities and less shared internal norms and codes with the other members due to their high social or economic status, this had resulted in relatively peaceful relationships with non-believers. This connection between high status, good intergroup relationships, less shared ingroup norms,

and weak Christian identity is also likely associated with internal tensions between members at Corinth. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT), weak group identity negatively influences group unity. Ingroup members who possess a weak social identity tend to share group norms less and to perceive similarity less with the other group members, making ingroup cohesion unstable. Besides, if ingroup members create an ethos in which equality between members is fostered and the superiority of certain members is threatened, socio-economic majorities in a group tend to show a stronger discrimination against minorities than they originally had. Even if Paul did not understand the exact social psychological process in which high status influences ingroup discord, it appears that he noticed, to a degree, that high socio-economic status (2:26-31; 4:6-13), less shared ingroup norms (1:23; 2:2, 7), a weak sense of belonging and dedication (2:6, 14, 3:1, 3), intergroup harmony (6:1-11), and ingroup contentions (1:10-11; 3:3) were mutually reinforced at Corinth. It can be said that certain wealthy members' weak identification with the Corinthian congregation fostered peace with outgroup members but discord within the group.

Second, it also appears that intergroup and intragroup relationships mutually influenced each other at Corinth. SIT/ SCT explicate that the two types of relationships are closely intertwined since social identity influences these simultaneously. A social weak identity leads to attenuating hostility towards outgroups but weakening group cohesion. As a result, intergroup peace results in the weakening or collapse of intragroup unity and vice versa. This may be the case of the Corinthians. Paul does not articulate the link between intergroup and intragroup relationships but provides a hint for it in his letters. Certain wealthy Corinthians enjoyed social harmony with outgroups (§5.3), but experienced divisions in church (§5.4). The two snapshots intersect in 1 Cor 6:1-11, the Corinthians' lawsuit(s) against each other (internal discord) in which they used their social connections with non-believers to win it (intergroup harmony). This text may be a good example of how a historical corollary of intergroup harmony weakens ingroup solidarity. If 1 Cor 6:1-11 can be rephrased in social psychological terms, it would be that the Corinthians' weak social identity in church led to their willingness to use their own social networks with outgroup members (less intergroup bias) to resolve ingroup problems (less ingroup favouritism). It is highly likely that using and solidifying intergroup connections worsened intragroup conflicts at Corinth.

Third, a socio-economic gradation of members is considered as a potential danger of ingroup factions in SIT/SCT which seems to be consonant with the Corinthians. Ingroup heterogeneity or homogeneity in any sense, like belief, norms, or status, plays a significant

role in creating ingroup ethos, especially ingroup members' identification with their group and thereby intragroup relationships. More specifically, heterogeneity in ingroup members' socio-economic statuses tends to make the members feel distant and different from each other, while generating disagreement and discord in a group. In light of this insight, it can be suggested that the composition of the Corinthian community embracing the semi-elite, upwardly mobile people, and the poor was a potential factor in creating a weak social identity and ingroup conflict. Even though it cannot be determined if Paul clearly realised this causality between the gradation of the Corinthians' statuses and internal conflict and how much this factor influenced the contention, he scatters several clues to the historical situation in 1 Corinthians that suggests that their conflicts were entangled with class stratification.

5.5. Status, Relationships, and Identity

In summary, I have reconstructed in detail four major snapshots of the Corinthians: their socio-economic status (Chapter 4), social relationships with non-believers (§5.3) and within the church (§5.4), and social identity (§§5.3.2, 5.4.3). I have also tried to connect the four in logical and historical causality to paint a bigger picture with the help of social psychological theories (SIT/SCT).

The Corinthian congregation was a cross-section of society embracing three strata: the semi-elite, upwardly mobile people, and the poor. It can be suggested that such a composition of the community influenced their social identity, behaviours, and relationships with outsiders and within the church as follows. Firstly, certain wealthy believers had a weak Christian identity so that they showed less hostile attitude towards non-believers and less strong favouritism to fellow believers. This spontaneously led to their social harmony with outgroup members and conflicts with other believers. Secondly, certain wealthy believers maintained peaceful relationships with non-believers thanks to their high status and weak social identity in church. It was natural for the rich to ask outsiders for help in a law court (1 Cor 6:1-11), to visit an idol temple (8:1-13; 10:1-33), to wine and dine with non-believers (10:27; 14:23-25), and to associate indiscriminately with immoral non-believers and believers without any reluctance (5:9-13, 1-8). They would have boasted of these behaviours and relationships. Furthermore, the relatively wealthy believers had continued, even after conversion, to imitate the Roman elites' way of social networking in which they treasured and sought to expand social connections (6:1-11; 10:27). In this way, they tried to receive honour through them (4:10). Thirdly, it is highly likely that the three factors - high status,

weak Christian identity, and good relationship with non-believers - were entangled with each other, resulting in discord within the Corinthian community. The gradation of the Corinthians' socio-economic statuses carried the potential danger of internal disagreements and divisions, and this would have been reinforced by some members' feeble social identity. For Paul, the most vehement battlefield was between fellowship with/in Christ and certain Corinthians' imitation of an aristocratic way of social networking, especially between different ways of distributing honour to members. While the ideal of the body of Christ was to share honour and suffering together (12:12-26), the reality was that those of higher status monopolised honour and power and sustained social hierarchy in church. Therefore, it is plausible to claim that certain Corinthians' high economic status played a role in forming their behavioural and relational codes that created an ethos of peace with non-believers while causing discord with fellow believers.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The chief purposes of this study are three: (1) developing a social-scientific methodology in order to achieve the other two goals (Chapter 1); (2) comparing the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations in four aspects - their socio-economic compositions, intragroup and intergroup relationships, and social identities - in order to underline manifest differences between them (Chapters 2-3 vis-à-vis Chapters 4-5); and (3) shedding light on how socio-economic factors and social relationships were interconnected in the two Pauline churches through socio-historical and social-scientific lenses (Chapters 2-3; Chapters 4-5). I will summarise these contributions in the following, while underlining some fresh readings of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians.

In the first place, before diving into interpreting 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, I clarified my own social scientific methodology while negotiating its potential dangers in Chapter 1. Since the late 1990s, some biblical scholars have been engrossed in employing modern social psychological theories including Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) in order to read the Pauline letters through an alternative angle and to grasp the social realities of early Christians through a systematic approach. But the validity of using modern theories in biblical scholarship remains controversial because of the possible traps of anachronism, determinism, reductionism, and theory-driven study. To surmount the hurdles, I suggested three essential steps of a social psychological approach to the Pauline letters which I followed in Chapters 2-5: reconstruction, a distant comparison, and semi-verification. Firstly, a vivid, detailed and accurate reconstruction of the Pauline communities, particularly of their social relationships and members' socio-economic statuses, was the indispensable groundwork for all procedures. In this sense, the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations are relatively more suitable for this socio-scientific methodology, since Paul's letters to them provide fuller and more specific social and historical snapshots of early believers compared to his other letters and other ancient Christian literature. Only relatively "thick descriptions" can facilitate and validate the social psychological approach. The second step was a "distant comparison" (§1.2.3) between the snapshots of the Pauline communities and SIT/SCT. Even though the major goal of the distant comparison was to find similar social patterns and behaviours between them, the wide discrepancies between them

should be presupposed and not be neglected. This was not an attempt to reduce early believers' social behaviours and relationships into SIT/SCT, though similar social patterns were spotted. Lastly, the results of the distant comparison were, to a degree, verified by close comparisons or contrasts between the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations, and between them and other historical data from the Greco-Roman world. The more ancient sources one brings to the table, the more successfully one can avoid bad anachronisms.

Second, I attempted to underscore that particular communities had their own socio-economic idiosyncrasies, avoiding generalisations made about the Pauline churches in contrasts between Chapters 2-3 and 4-5. Even though most scholars acknowledge that there are many notable differences amongst the Pauline congregations, the dissimilarities in certain areas and their theological and social implications have often been underemphasised or neglected. A good example is the research on early Christians' socio-economic status. Dissonance between the (so-called) New and Old Consensuses has occasioned heated debates. The problem is that scholars on both sides often consider this debate as an issue of an either-or choice regarding whether all the Pauline communities were a poor group or a heterogeneous congregation. Furthermore, many scholars presume that the Corinthian community is the archetypal church that reflects the socio-economic origins of all early Christians. In this trend, the idea that the Pauline communities were each distinctive, especially in their memberships, has been undervalued. In order to eschew the generalisations made about the Pauline churches and the neglect of the social and economic implications of the differences between them, I tried to contrast the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations in terms of their members' socio-economic statuses (Chapters 2 and 4) and social relationships with non-believers and within the church (Chapters 3 and 5).

In Chapters 2 and 4, I articulated the socio-economic statuses of the Thessalonians and the Corinthians respectively, but the aim of these articulations was to contrast them so as to underline their differences. Throughout the long history of research on early Christians' socio-economic status, scholars have been forced to choose one of two models, between the Old and New Consensuses, for all the Pauline communities. However, it would be better to argue that the two positions are not mutually exclusive; the Thessalonian church can be better explained by the Old Consensus, and the Corinthian one by the New Consensus. On the one hand, Chapter 2 revealed that the Thessalonian congregation was a fairly homogenous community of poor freed/free occasional craftsmen. In Friesen's poverty scale, the Thessalonians can be located mostly at "subsistence level" (PS6). The marginalised believers

were vulnerable to economic fluctuations and insecurity, including underemployment and low wages, and to social ridicule and economic conflicts on market streets. For this argument, I provided a nuanced exegesis of Paul's exhortations on manual work (1 Thess 4:9-12; cf. 1:3), conflicts with non-believers (1:6; 2:14-16; 3:1-5), and the connection between brotherly love and labour (4:9-12; 1:3; 2:8-9) in light of the Roman economy. On the other hand, after looking into the history of Roman Corinth regarding social and economic mobility around the first century CE, I argued in Chapter 4 that Paul implicitly differentiated between semi-elites, upwardly mobile people, and the poor in 1 Corinthians, especially in 1:26-31, 4:6-13, 1:5, and 11:17-34. The semi-elite were born to noble families, while upwardly mobile believers climbed up the economic ladder but failed to be socially recognised because of their humble origins. The Corinthians built a heterogeneous community, ranging probably from PS3 ("municipal elites") or PS4 ("moderate surplus") to PS7 ("below subsistence") on Friesen's Poverty Scale. We may conclude, therefore, that the compositions of the Pauline churches cannot be explicated by either the New or Old Consensus, but rather were perceptibly distinct from each other.

Chapters 3 and 5 articulated the differences between the social relationships of the Thessalonians and those of the Corinthians. Though the social relationships at Thessalonica and at Corinth were illustrated separately in those chapters, the aim of two descriptions was again to contrast the two congregations. While the Thessalonians enjoyed cohesion within church but experienced social harassment and dislocation from non-believers (Chapter 3), the Corinthians were confronted with ingroup discord but enjoyed social harmony in the larger society (Chapter 5). I further underlined the social and economic implications of the different social relationships. Chapter 3 argued that the Thessalonians encountered conflicts with their previous friends, fellow workers, and family members. Therefore, it was more similar to a neighbourhood affair on market streets in social and economic senses than a political scandal, such as demonstration against the Roman empire. The conflicts derived partly from and were accelerated by the Thessalonian believers' low socio-economic status that implied their social and economic vulnerability and insecurity. In spite of the social dislocation, they had built a familial community in which economic and spiritual mutualism was achieved not only as a practical survival strategy of the poor but also as a mode of ethical care for familial members. In this regard, Section 3.4 provided a nuanced exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12. The text was Paul's response to the Thessalonians' conflict with non-believers and at the same time his ideal of reciprocity within the church. In the two mutually supportive sentences (4:9-10a,

10b-12), Paul intended to create a virtuous circle: building solidarity to overcome conflicts with non-believers and circumventing the conflicts and their consequential socio-economic side-effects to shelter ingroup economic and social mutualism. On the other hand, Chapter 5 argued that the Corinthians, especially certain wealthy members, built social harmony with non-believers to seek practical benefits, such as gaining honour (1 Cor 4:10) and winning against fellow believers in a law court (6:1-11). They imitated aristocratic social networks to enhance their socio-economic status and to stabilise social hierarchy. The replication of the secular social networks resulted in a clash against fellowship with/in Christ (κοινωνία, 1:9; 1 Cor 1-6), while causing actual internal discord, in particular at the Lord's Supper (11:17-34). While the imitation of elite relational codes enabled certain Corinthians to monopolise honour and to justify class differences, the fellowship with/in Christ encouraged all members to share all kinds of honour, joy, and suffering in ecclesiological (12:12-26) and eschatological senses (15:43). As such, the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations created visibly different atmospheres in regard to social relationships, while their socio-economic implications and ramifications, e.g. economic mutualism versus honour hierarchy within the churches, were also utterly different.

Third, the contrasts between the Thessalonian and Corinthian communities raised the question of why they were so different. While trying to answer the question, we found two different circles of historical causality between four criteria - socio-economic status, intragroup and intergroup relationships, and social identity - at Thessalonica and Corinth through socio-economic and social-scientific lenses. Chapters 2 and 3 revealed that low socio-economic status, conflicts with non-believers, solidarity within church, and strong social identity mutually reinforced each other at Thessalonica. As the Thessalonians were mostly occasional and manual labourers, they were vulnerable to harassment from outgroup members and to economic fluctuation. However, they showed the tendency to protect each other from economic difficulties and social persecution, i.e. in solidarity and via mutualism within church. Also, while conflicts with non-believers forced the Thessalonians to agglomerate together and to depend on one another economically, the solidarity further worsened discords with their larger society. These dynamic social phenomena are comparable with social psychological theories, SIT/SCT. The theories show that numerical and economic minorities tend to identify themselves more strongly with their groups than with the majorities and thereby tend to display a stronger sense of cohesiveness with their group and a stronger discriminative attitude towards outgroup members. This can be summarised in one

phrase: “strong social identity of the poor”. The strong social identity, of course, reinforced intergroup conflicts and intragroup solidarity, and probably attracted the poor to the Thessalonian church. On the other hand, Chapters 4 and 5 disclosed the contrasting circle of causation between those four criteria at Corinth. As certain Corinthians were relatively rich, they created an ethos of social harmony with the larger society but generated discord within church (1 Cor 4:6-13). Plus, their strong desire for good social connections with non-believers damaged fellowship with/in Christ (1 Cor 5-6). This causality is undergirded by SIT/SCT which show that those of high status tend to identify themselves less strongly with their groups, resulting in the weakening of intergroup discrimination and ingroup favouritism. It can be said in a social psychological sense that certain wealthy Corinthians had “weak social identity”. The weak social identity was not only the result of certain Corinthians’ high status, intergroup harmony, and ingroup contentions but also the facilitator of forming such social relationships. Accordingly, we may conclude that socio-economic status was one of the major causes which led to the different community relationships, ingroup ethics, and ethos of the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches.[1] In other words, the different memberships of the Pauline churches embodied their different responses to Paul’s teachings in their social behaviours and relationships.

In conclusion, I drew a more dynamic and complete picture of the social histories at Corinth and Thessalonica through the use of a specific and sensitive social scientific methodology, the awareness of differences between Pauline congregations, and the articulation of the roles that socio-economic factors played in forming early Christians’ social relationships and identities. Paul’s teachings of grace, community, and ethics were manifested and modified in different communities in different ways because of these different socio-economic contexts.

[1] This does not indicate any social determinism or reductionism. The overall realities of the Thessalonian and Corinthian congregations were the result of the combination of social, economic, historical, religious, theological, and eschatological factors, as I have emphasised many times in the whole thesis.

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