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Generalized Identification

Individuals' levels of identification with groups and its relation to personality

Elina Manninen

Supervisor: Nazar Akrami

Examiner: Anders Winman

Abstract

This thesis investigates a newly developed term coined by the author called generalized identification, which is the tendency that people who identify high with one group tend to identify high with other groups as well, and how personality variables from the Five-Factor model may relate to this tendency. A common component of identification towards 10 preselected groups was calculated ($N = 148$), with a principal component analysis. The result reveal that the generalized identification account for 41 % of the total variance. A stepwise multiple regression analysis further showed that Openness to Experience and Agreeableness from the Five-Factor model explained 26 % of the variance in the generalized identification. However, due to low reliability when measuring personality traits, the relationship between personality and generalized identification could not be interpreted in a satisfying way, and it needs to be further explored before drawing firm conclusions.

Keywords: Identification, Common Components, Generalized Identification, Personality, Five Factor Model

Introduction

The individual who, for example, is attending to a soccer game in order to cheer on his or her team has in general some sense of shared objectives with the team and with those cheering for the same cause. This kind of setting provides the individual with the opportunity to socially define him/herself as a soccer-fan through a process called identification. *Identification*, here defined as "*the [*mostly*] positive emotional valuation of the relationship between self and ingroup*" (Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013, p. 599) is a process all people rely on in order to reach a point where we can understand our social surroundings and with it form a sense of self. In other words who I am in relation to others (Ellemers, 2012; Leach et al., 2008). But what is causing some people to act out more on their identification when others do not? For instance, why is it that some soccer-fans could die for their team when others would not?

According to contemporary research, different levels of identification towards groups tend to influence both behavior and overall health. For instance, Jiménez-Moya, Spears, Rodriguez-Bailon and de Lemus (2015) demonstrate how low identifiers tend to be more willing than high identifiers to endorse radical actions. Pantaleo, Miron, Ferguson and Frankowski (2014) further reveals how increasing or decreasing group identification might have implications for group members' commitment to achieving group goals, and Mange, Sénémeaud and Somat (2015) propose that higher levels of identification associates with greater social approval. Another way in how different levels of identification contribute to specific behavior patterns is how people tend to empathize less with out-group relative to group members. In other words, how people are likely to feel pleasure in response to others pain (and pain in response to their pleasure) within group dynamic contexts (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011; Cikara, Bruneau, Bravel, & Saxe, 2014). In addition Hoogland et al. (2015) further find that this lack of empathy can be explained by individuals' identifications towards in-groups and their intergroup relationships. Identifying with multiple groups may also help individuals to maintain a beneficial mental well-being (Miller, Wakefield, & Sani, 2015; Sani, Madhok, Norbury, Dugard, & Wakefield, 2015; Wann, Brasher, Thomas, & Scheuchner, 2015) and it is longitudinally related to higher self-esteem (Benish-Weisman, Daniel, Schiefer, Möllering, & Knafo-Noam, 2015). Finally, increased levels of group identification predict greater perceived personal control, which reveal that the personal benefits of identification does not only make people feel good, it also make people feel capable and in control (Greenaway et al., 2015).

Hence, people seem to express different degrees of identification towards groups, which reasonably causes them to respond differently over situations which involve these groups. There are, however, certain areas of identification that seems to be relatively unexplored when studying earlier research on the subject. One such way of understanding identification, that will be the focus for this thesis, is whether a subject's level of identification is dependent upon the individual's [underlying] personality. In order to test this potential relationship, the present study will first examine the differentiation between people's levels of identification towards different groups, and secondly examine personality as a possible mechanism that may be a reason for this variation. Before further clarification on the current study's hypothesis and predictions, an introduction of the key-concepts regarding identification, personality and their operationalization is required.

Identification

As mentioned earlier, the current study will define identification as the [mostly] positive emotional valuation of the relationship between self and in-group. The original definition refers to identification as only a *positive* emotional valuation, this even though Tajfels (1978) work, which the authors referring to, does not make that assumption (Postmes et al., 2013, p. 599). I argue that an individual's level of identification towards the in-group does not only have to be positive. Clearly people can identify themselves in negative terms with an in-group, usually (but not always) in those circumstances when the group constitutes a negative stigma for the individual (Crabtree, Haslam, S. A., Postmes, & Haslam, C., 2010; Ellemers, 2012: Hebl, King, & Perkins, 2009; Kuppens, Easterbrook, Spears, & Manstead, 2015; Lelutiu-Weinberger et al., 2013; Nario-Redmond, Noel, & Fern, 2013). Nevertheless, a common phenomenon in the area is that people strives to achieve a positive self-esteem through their identification (Benish-Weisman et al., 2015; Cikara et al., 2011; Cikara et al., 2014; Hoogland et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2015; Sani et al., 2015; Wann et al., 2015). Though this does not necessarily have to mean that the identification itself is negative, it probably only refers to that people are not willing to openly expose their negative identification in the same degree as when the identification is a positive one. To say "mostly" positive seems more accurate since we reasonably should expect people to express their positive identification in a higher degree. However, when analyzing the results, it is equally important to keep in mind that peoples' negative identifications can (and probably also do) influence the way in which they may respond to the survey used for this study. Furthermore, there is one thing worth nothing in relation to the definition of identification in order to understand its content. We need to know that there is a distinction between social identity and social identification

(Leach et al., 2008). As concluded by Postmes et al. (2013), social identity refers to the group as a perceived entity with socially shared perceptions about its membership, norms and relationship with out-groups. Hence, there is some degree of social coherence about important features of the shared identity. Identification, on the other hand, "…*refers to the individual member's relationship to that entity. This is more individually determined*" (Postmes et al., 2013, p. 599). This last phenomenon remains the area of particular interest for this study.

Identification: common components

In order to locate if there is a static tendency in individuals' identification levels depending on personality, the present study will first examine the author's assumption whether there is a phenomena such as a *generalized identification* (the notion that people who identify high with one group will tend to identify high with other groups as well). This reasoning is mainly derived from a concept called generalized prejudice, which is when people who reject one group tend to reject other groups as well (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Bergh, 2011; Bergh, 2013; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005). The assumption that there might be such a concept as generalized identification is simultaneously derived from the notion that there seems to be a consistency in the identification process which causes people to feel and act coherently (Bizumic, Reynolds, & Meyers, 2012; Sagiv, Roccas, & Hazan, 2012). To locate the generalized identification the study will focus on a concept called *common components of identification* which is the shared variance of identification towards different targets. This is in contrast to *specific components of identification* which is the variance that is unique to a certain type of identification. Research based on this concept (though in the area of prejudice, Akrami et al., 2011; Ekehammar & Akrami 2003; Meeusen & Dhont, 2015) indicate that common components are mainly explained by personality whereas specific components are mainly explained by situational and group-specific variables. This approach is beneficial because of the intriguing nature vs nurture debate within social sciences regarding how to explain social behavior, like identification. On the one hand, social behavior can be explained by the situation. In general this means that peoples' attitudes and behavior is mainly considered as dynamic constructs which alter depending on the social situation (Brown, 2000). On the other hand, social behavior can also be explained by personality. In general this means that peoples' attitudes and behavior is mainly considered as non-dynamic constructs which does not alter as much depending on the social situation (McCrae & John, 1992). Readers of psychological literature will see these two perspectives used interchangeably, and naturally we rarely find a definition of one that does not rely on the other perspective to complete itself. Identification is one example of a multidimensional phenomenon with various

sources of explanation, which makes it rational to conclude that it cannot be explained by either concept alone. By using the concept of common components the study will not exclude any of the two disciplines, since the concept include both the shared and the unique variance to a certain type of identification. However, the potential relationship that will be tested in this thesis will only include the common components.

When measuring identification there is in general a distinction between two dimensions called self-investment and self-definition. Self-investment consist of individuals' perception of centrality (seeing the group membership as central to one's sense of self), solidarity (feeling bonded and committed to the in-group) and satisfaction (feeling satisfied about this membership). Self-definition consists of self-stereotyping (to stereotype oneself as a typical group member) and in-group homogeneity (perceiving the in-group as a similar entity) (Postmes et al., 2013). When it comes to measure the subjects level of identification for this study, there are several reliable multidimensional measurements on identification in order to embrace both these mentioned dimensions (e.g. Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Cameron, 2004; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson, 2002; Leach et al., 2008; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Haley, & Eidelson, 2008). However, these measures are time consuming for both the participant and the researcher. In order to keep the measurement of identification simple but still efficient, high in reliability, validity and well established in relation to the aim of the present study, the data collection regarding identification will be based on the principles from a single-item measurement called single-item social identification (SISI) (Postmes et al., 2013). The SISI item involves rating one's agreement with a statement followed by a 7 point Likert scale.

At first sight, it may seem a bit insufficient to use a single-item measure for a multidimensional term such as identification, but SISI appears to contain a lot of positives when conducting a study such as this. The estimated reliability of SISI is satisfactory both by absolute standards and in comparison with other single-item measures (Leach et al., 2008). According to Postmes et al. (2013) SISI seems to capture both self-investment ($r = .84$) and self-definition (though slightly lower at $r = .70$) very well in relation to a 14-item identification scale ($r = .84$) (Also see: Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995). Follow-up research further indicates a strong reliability within the SISI scale among various US samples (Reysen, Katzarska-Miller, Nesbit, & Pierce, L., 2013). A common disadvantage with a single-item measure is that the internal consistency reliability generally cannot be calculated (Wanous, & Hudy, 2001; Wanous, & Reichers, 1996; Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997).

Internal consistency is a measure based on the correlations between different items on the same test wherein higher inter-item correlations indicate stronger reliability (Lucas & Donnellan, 2012). An alternative way for single-item measurement is usually to use longitudinal data (Lucas & Donnellan, 2012), or, as demonstrated above, do comparisons within other scales and data materials. However, in order for the present study to locate if people who identify high with one group tend to identify high with other groups as well, more than one group needs to be assessed. The respondents will reflect on a broad range of 10 different social identities with which people could identify to a greater or lesser extent. This procedure provides the opportunity to assure a comprehensive assessment of reliability across different types of groups.

Personality

The second construct that will be measured in this study, in order to examine if personality may be an underlying mechanism of generalized identification, is the Five-Factor model (FFM) of personality. The FFM consist of five personality traits which are considered as more stable characteristics that reflect cognition, behavior and emotion (McCrae & John, 1992). The five factors are usually labeled as Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Simply put, Openness to Experience is characterized as intelligence, imaginative and a willingness for experiences. Those low on this dimension are likely to be conventional and inflexible. Conscientiousness is the ability to be organized and reliable. Those low on this trait tend to be disorganized, irresponsible, and careless. Extraversion is characterized as outgoing, assertiveness and positive emotionality. Those low in Extraversion tend to be reserved and quiet. Agreeableness is characterized as being altruistic, cooperative, and good-natured. Those low on this trait tend to be suspicious, ruthless, and uncooperative (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Neuroticism represents individual differences in experiencing anxiety and stress. Those low on this trait tend to be calm, poised and emotionally stable. High levels of Neuroticism tend to cause low self-esteem and engagement into irrational thinking which prevent effective coping strategies (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2012; Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). This study will score Neuroticism in the opposite direction and therefore it will be referred to as Emotional Stability in the result section. Previous research on personality and its relation to identification is, as mentioned in the introduction above, surprisingly enough quite restricted. I assume this is because the main focus might be on identity rather than identification, or that these two constructs seems to be used interchangeably which make the mere process of identification harder to locate. Though identification is the antecedent to identity, it is not hard to understand why these

advantageously can be used together or maybe get mixed up. Nonetheless, there are some notable contributions on the research of personality and specifically identification which suggest that participants' levels of Agreeableness, Extraversion and Conscientiousness correlates positively with the level of identification towards different groups (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Klimstra, Luyckx, Goossens, Teppers, & de Fruyt, 2012), whereas Openness to Experience and Neuroticism correlates negatively with the level of identification towards different groups (Luyckx, Soenens, & Goossens, 2006; Sagiv et al., 2012).

To examine if personality may be an underlying mechanism of generalized identification, a 10-item personality inventory (TIPI) measurement of the five factors will be used (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr., 2003). To measure the big-five personality dimensions with only 10-items is a rather restricted approach which inevitably, as expected, leads to complications. In relation to big-five personality tests with more items the TIPI is one of the lowest in reliability mainly because of the internal consistency (hard to control for good fit between and within traits), which naturally generates lower alpha levels. However, it should be noted that the TIPI scale was deliberately constructed to retain a significant content validity especially during circumstances when larger multiple-items scales are impractical to use (Ehrhart et al., 2009; Gosling et al. 2003; Rammstedt & John, 2007; Soto & John, 2009). Gosling et al. (2003: 516) pointed this issue that Cronbach alphas only were .68, .40, .50, .73 and .45 for the Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Openness to Experience. The low reliability of the personality items will therefore be expected. For higher reliability it is better to use instruments with more items. The reason for using such a TIPI scale for this study is primarily due to the time limitations connected to the conduction of this Bachelor thesis, together with the strive for a satisfying content validity. The use of more extensive measurements was not an option in this case.

Aim & predictions
To summarize, the aim of the present study is to examine if there is a static tendency in individuals' identification levels towards different groups depending on personality. In order to do so the present study will:

1. Examine the variation between peoples' levels of identification towards different groups. This with the assumption that there is a phenomena such as a generalized identification.

2. I further predict that the variation within the generalized identification mainly will be explained by personality. In relation to previous research I assume that Agreeableness, Extraversion and Conscientiousness might be positive predictors whereas Neuroticism might display a negative correlation. With further reasoning I contradict previous research with a new assumption that Openness to Experience might be a positive predictor to generalized identification due to the social variability that could favor this traits open-minded character.

Method

Participants

Through a convenience sample 148 Swedish participants responded. Of this we have 45 men and 99 women in the age range from 20 to 73 years ($M = 31.73$, $SD = 11.71$). Four participants did not specify their gender and two did not specify their age.

Measurements/instruments

Participants responded to a virtual survey displayed through social media consisting of two parts originally written or translated into Swedish. The first part consisted of the ten-item personality inventory (TIPI) scale were participants were asked to make a statement about their personalities on a range from 1 (Disagree strongly) to 7 (Agree strongly). The statement read "I see myself as" and was followed by ten personality characteristics. Extraversion included items such as "extraverted/enthusiastic" and "reserved/quiet" (reversed coding). Examples of items from Agreeableness are "Critical, quarrelsome" (reversed coding) and "sympathetic/warm" (for the entire survey see appendix 1). The second part consisted of the single-item social identification (SISI) scale. The participants were here asked to make a statement about their degree of identification towards 10 preselected groups on a scale from 1 (no identification at all) to 7 (strong identification). The preselected groups consisted of "Gender" (man, woman, other), "Ethnicity" (Swedish, immigrant etc.), "Profession" (e.g. student, vendor, lawyer etc.), "Political Orientation" (party affiliation, right, left etc.), "Family Role" (parent, brother, sister etc.), "Food Preference" (vegan, vegetarian, animal based diet etc.) "Sport Activity" (baseball, soccer, ice hockey etc.), "Weight" (thin, average weight, overweight etc.), "Intelligence" (Intelligent, average intelligent, not so intelligent) and "Activity Level" (diligent, average diligent, not so diligent) (for the entire survey see

appendix 2). These 10 groups where selected since they seem to be common groups to feel a group membership with.

Procedure

The survey initially began with information about the questionnaire, contact information to the researcher and the participants' ethical rights consisting of anonymity, confidentiality and the right to cancel the participation at any time. The participants had to consent to this information. Further the participants were asked to continuously answer the survey during one session, they were told to read the answer options carefully, that they could not turn back to change their answers and that the whole session would take around five minutes. All statements had to be answered in order for the participant to complete, so consequently a reminder of unanswered questions appeared if this was the case. Though personality in this case is considered a predictor to identification the survey always started with the TIPI scale for all the participants then followed by the SISI scale. At the end of the survey information about the participants age and gender where collected, the objectives of the study was presented and the contact information to the researcher were repeated.

Design

The study adapts a correlational design which is divided into two parts. The first part examine the common components of identification in order to detect the shared variance, in other words the generalized identification. The second part examines the independent variable (personality traits) and its correlation to what will become the categorical dependent variable (generalized identification) later calculated on a scale-level. As mentioned, the TIPI scale representing the predictors came first for all the participants in order to reduce the risk for the dependent variable to have an unwanted impact on the predictors.

Results

To extract the common components of identification (the variance shared by all 10-measures simultaneously, consisting of the higher identification scores) a general identification component where computed with a principal component analysis (PCA). A PCA analysis is a three dimensional technique which emphasize variation to bring out strong patterns in a comprehensive dataset. It is a form of data reduction which finds common variance between variables and combines it into one or several principal components (in this case one

component). In order to find out the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the principal component, the extraction values is needed. The extractions indicate, in percentage, how much of the variance in each variable that can be explained by the general identification component. Higher extraction values are well represented in the common factor space, while lower values would have caused contradictions in the model. The result from the extractions for each variable presented in Table 1 reveals reliable high levels above .50.

Then with the variables combined, the extraction sum of square loadings further reveals that the common component of identification accounts for 41 % of the total variance. In other words, 41 % of the subjects' responses demonstrates the tendency of a generalized identification. The correlation matrix also reveals significant positive correlations (all under $p = < .05$) between the 10-measures ($\alpha = .83$), which signify that the identification measures are unidimensional and reliable (again see Table 1).

Table 1. *Correlations among Measures of Identification with Different Groups and Loading from Principal Component Analysis.*

	Group	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extractions
1	Gender	4.97	1.60	-										.67
2	Ethnicity	4.68	1.82	.56	-									.62
3	Profession	4.60	1.76	.42	.42	-								.52
4	Political Orientation	3.74	1.98	.19	.22	.26	-							.61
5	Family Role	4.67	1.94	.32	.42	.45	.21	-						.60
6	Food Preference	3.68	1.84	.22	.30	.23	.22	.33	-					.61
7	Sport Activity	3.45	2.07	.30	.32	.32	.20	.28	.39	-				.73
8	Weight	3.85	1.88	.31	.43	.24	.30	.38	.43	.40	-			.66
9	Intelligence	4.86	1.61	.33	.39	.33	.29	.23	.27	.23	.50	-		.68
10	Activity Level	4.57	1.49	.31	.32	.33	.40	.24	.31	.37	.41	.50	-	.67

To examine the reliability within the TIPI measure a reliability analysis were computed between the non-reversed and the reversed coded personality items. As expected, the result revealed overall low alpha levels under the general acceptance level at .70. However, the alpha level for Agreeableness and Openness to Experience, presented in Table 2, unexpectedly demonstrate an unacceptably low reliability. Because of this, the original idea to base the analysis on the five personality factors was unfortunately inappropriate to implement. Further analysis will instead apply the personality facets (non-reversed and reversed coded). This might provide with future possible ideas for forthcoming research by demonstrating a more detailed illustration of the results. However, I stress that because of this

the relationship between personality and generalized identification cannot be interpreted in a satisfying way within this thesis, and it needs to be further explored before drawing firm conclusions.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, Inter-Item Correlations (r) and Cronbach Alpha for the Personality Measures.

Factor	Facet	M	SD	r	α
Extraversion	Extraverted, enthusiastic	4.40	1.51		
	Reserved, quiet (rev.)	4.72	1.69	.35*	.51
Agreeableness	Sympathetic, warm	5.01	1.43		
	Critical, quarrelsome (rev.)	5.32	1.33	.02	.04
Conscientiousness	Dependable, self-disciplined	4.76	1.56		
	Disorganized, careless (rev.)	4.68	1.66	.31*	.47
Emotional Stability	Calm, emotionally stable	4.41	1.74		
	Anxious, easily upset (rev.)	4.82	1.52	.26*	.41
Openness	Open to new experiences, complex	4.91	1.45		
to Experience	Conventional, uncreative (rev.)	5.36	1.42	.03	.05

*$p < .05$ ($N = 148$)

In the next step, a multiple regression (stepwise) analysis between the personality facets and the common components of identification extracted from the PCA analysis (the generalized identification) was computed. This was made in order to first get an idea of all the predictors' correlations with the generalized identification (presented in Table 3), and second to illustrate specifically which of these predictors that significantly can explain most of the variance when taking into account all 10 personality facets.

First, the result demonstrates mostly positive significant correlations between all the personality facets and the generalized identification. This means that higher levels of the positive correlated personality facets tend to higher levels of generalized identification (despite "calm, emotionally stable" which were non-significant). The significant reverse coded counterparts (despite "disorganized, careless" (reversed) which were non-significant) indicates the opposite that higher levels tend to lower generalized identification.

Table 3. *The Multiple Regression Analysis between the 10 Personality Items and the Generalized Identification variable.*

Factor	Predictor	β
Extraversion	Extraverted, enthusiastic	.27*
	Reserved, quiet (rev.)	-.20*
Agreeableness	Sympathetic, warm	.23*
	Critical, quarrelsome (rev.)	-.29*
Conscientiousness	Dependable, self-disciplined	.25*
	Disorganized, careless (rev.)	-.12
Emotional Stability	Calm, emotionally stable	.14
	Anxious, easily upset (rev.)	-.23*
Openness to	Open to new experiences, complex	.33*
Experience	Conventional, uncreative (rev.)	-.28*

*$p < .05$ ($N = 148$)

Second, the stepwise part of the regression analysis reveals 4 out of 10 significant predictors which together explain 26 % of the variance in the generalized identification. They are "openness to new experiences, complex" ($\Delta R^2 = .11$), "conventional, uncreative (reversed)" ($\Delta R^2 = .08$), "critical, quarrelsome (reversed)" ($\Delta R^2 = .04$) and "sympathetic, warm" ($\Delta R^2 = .03$). This indicates that "openness to new experiences, complex" explain 11% of the variance within the dependent variable, "conventional, uncreative (reversed)" explain 8%, and so forth.

The impacts these four facets have on the generalized identification are illustrated in Table 3 along with the other predictors. The positive standardized coefficients (β) indicate that higher levels of "openness to new experiences, complex" and "sympathetic, warm" tend to higher levels of generalized identification, whereas the negative standardized coefficients indicate that higher levels of "conventional, uncreative (reversed)" and "critical, quarrelsome (reversed)" tend to lower levels of generalized identification. However, considering the low reliability from the TIPI measure, these results should as mentioned be considered with care.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine if there is a static tendency in individuals' identification levels towards different groups depending on personality. To do so, the study first examined the author's assumption about a generalized identification which is that people who identify high with one group will tend to identify high with other groups as well. Second, I predicted that the variation within the generalized identification mainly could be explained

by personality. In relation to previous research I assumed that Agreeableness, Extraversion and Conscientiousness could be positive significant predictors whereas Neuroticism could display a negative correlation. With further reasoning I contradicted previous research with the assumption that Openness to Experience could be a positive predictor to generalized identification due to the social variability that might favor this traits open-minded character.

First, the result from the PCA indicated that the generalized identification account for 41 % of the total variance, and that it indeed seem to be a significant tendency that people who identify high with one group are likely to identify high with other groups as well. Second, the result from the multiple stepwise regression demonstrated 4 significant predictors, which together explain 26 % of the total variance within the generalized identification. In line with the predictions, it turned out that higher levels of "openness to new experiences, complex" and "sympathetic, warm" tend to result in higher levels of generalized identification, whereas higher levels of "conventional, uncreative (reversed)" and "critical, quarrelsome (reversed)" tend to result in lower levels. However as mentioned before, considering the unacceptably low reliability from the TIPI measure, these results should be considered with care. Notice again, that the multiple regression analysis regarding the personality facets (non-reversed and reversed coded) were, despite the lack of reliability, still implemented only to provide future research with possible ideas. For instance, to consider other measurements or hypotheses.

The result in relation to previous research
The significant result regarding the generalized identification seem to go well in line with previous research both when it comes to its characteristic resemblance with the term generalized prejudice (Akrami et al., 2011; Bergh, 2013; Dovidio et al., 2005) and the consistency within the identification process which causes people to feel and act coherently (Bizumic et al., 2012; Sagiv et al., 2012). Likewise, if the result from the TIPI test would not be so low in reliability, I guess it hypothetically could be interpreted to go quite in line with previous research concerning personality and identification. As we have seen, higher levels of "sympathetic, warm" (Agreeableness), "extraverted, enthusiastic" (Extraversion) and "dependable, self-disciplined" (Conscientiousness) significantly correlated with higher levels of identification (Bizumic et al., 2012; Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Klimstra et al., 2012; Sagiv et al., 2012). Whereas "anxious, easily upset (reversed)" (Neuroticism) significantly correlated with lower levels of generalized identification, as expected (Carver et al., 1989; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2012; Luyckx et al., 2006). These outcomes seems reasonable, for instance, individuals high in Agreeableness will be able to express their accommodating and

cooperative nature in a higher degree by identifying with several groups, wherein they can please others and comply with expectations. Individuals higher in Extraversion will be able to express their sociable nature in a higher degree by identifying with several groups, and those higher in Conscientiousness might be attaching themselves to several groups in order to perhaps gain a clear idea of their duties and responsibilities, maybe by promoting the groups values and ideologies. This also goes well in line with previous research suggesting that increased levels of group identification makes people feel capable and in control (Greenaway et al., 2015). Further, since individuals high in Neuroticism tend to be anxious, depressed and insecure it might be harder (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2012; Carver et al., 1989), or not in the center of interest, for these individuals to actively identify with several groups. At last, we need to consider that higher levels of "open to new experiences, complex" (Openness to Experience) turned out to be the strongest predictor of the generalized identification within this study. This might be, as suggested, due to the social variability that might favor this traits open-minded character. Hence, a broader social life might increase the possibilities for these individuals to express their curious, imaginative and explorative nature.

Alternative interpretations
From a different perspective, the possible conclusions above can be interpreted differently. For instance, Extraversion and Openness to Experience carries characteristics that reasonably can be expressed whether or not the person identifies with his or her groups. If so, it will naturally be difficult to interpret the cause of these correlations with the generalized identification. Furthermore, people with higher levels of Openness to Experience might not always benefit from feeling included in several groups due to the submission to groups' norms and ideologies. Hence, this restriction might instead conflict with an open-minded and change-seeking personality. Another conflict that might occur is with individuals high in Conscientiousness if they would attach themselves to several groups since this might cause more disarray rather than order. When it comes to Neuroticism, perhaps individuals with this trait instead may try to reduce their anxiety by identifying with different groups. Observe that, as a basic human need to be desired, valued and included by others, all people belong to different groups which provide a leeway "*to actively select and promote different group selves in different contexts*" (Ellemers, 2012, p. 850). Hence, this could lead people higher in anxiety and stress to counteract any negative effects, which can have an adverse impact on the individual's self-esteem, by selectively promote identifications towards different groups.

Limitations and advantages with the study

There are some issues we need to emphasize. First, the SISI measure did not control for any response bias, which is a range of cognitive biases that may have influenced how the participant replied to the survey used for this study. Due to the importance of being positively included by others (Ellemers, 2012) it is a risk, as mentioned in the introduction, that the participants inaccurately exaggerated the positive related identification(s) in a higher degree. If the majority of groups used in this study attract this kind of response the variance within the generalized identification might be overrepresented. Another concern that might have influenced the way in which the participants responded, is that the identification measure did not provide the option to not identify with a group. I particularly direct this concern to the group based on Sport Activity since all the participants might not belong to a group based on interest in sport. We could suspect the same phenomena within the TIPI test, however, there the participant had the opportunity to neither agree nor disagree with the statements which consequently can eliminate a lot of inaccurate answers. Further, as earlier noticed, the reliability of the TIPI measure turned out unacceptly low. A low reliability was expected (Gosling et al., 2003), however the alpha levels for Agreeableness and Openness to Experience was surprisingly low. Because of this the analysis of the relation between the personality traits and the generalized identification could not be interpreted in a reliable way.

Considering the statistical measurement there are also some limitations. Even if the PCA, for this thesis explorative purposes, was a suitable technique in order to emphasize variation and bring out strong patterns in a comprehensive dataset, this measure do not account for any error variance. Again, this means that the variance within the generalized identification might be overrepresented. Furthermore, the stepwise regression was especially useful for sifting through large numbers of potential independent variables and fine-tuning a model by position variables in or out. However, the main drawbacks of this technique is its tendency to overestimate or underestimate *R*-values, *P*-values and standard errors. The removal of non-significant variables in the stepwise regression does also prohibit us to consider the problem of forming or testing hypotheses more generally.

Last, due to the fact that the study used a convenience sample it follows that it cannot make generalizations about any population because it would not be representative enough. Nonetheless, a convenience sample was appropriate to implement due to the time limitations connected to the conduction of this thesis and its characteristics as a pre study for future research.

Despite the issues mentioned above, the study provides us with some valuable insights. When studying earlier research on identification this thesis seems to be the first to operationalize the term generalized identification by the concept of common components. By including both the shared and the unique variance to a certain type of identification, the approach did not exclude any of the two disciplines within the nature vs nurture debate as mentioned in the introduction. Even though the study could not confirm a significant correlation between personality and generalized identification, the study did at least demonstrate that there indeed seems to be a significant tendency that people who identify high with one group tend to identify high with other groups as well. Additional research on this generalized propensity to identify with several groups can probably tell us a lot more about how and why people identify themselves in relation to others, and what impact it might have in our everyday life. Further, a positive contribution within the study is that there seem to be a favorable variation of participants. Women seem to be slightly overrepresented, but otherwise there is a wide range of ages and disciplines, which reduces the academic bias that usually occurs when only students participate.

Recommendations for future research

At the moment, there seem to be a consistent pattern within all of the personality facets (non-reversed and reversed coded) which demonstrates a propensity for positive associated personality traits to positively correlate with generalized identification and vice versa. And also, that negative associated personality traits generate negative correlations. This imply that positive personality traits generate a higher generalized identification, however, because of the low reliability and some non-significant scores the study cannot draw any conclusions about how and why this seems to be the case. Hence, in order to find out how much of the generalized identification that may be explained by personality I recommend that future research, if possible, apply a personality test with at least 40-items in order to increase the reliability. Further, the previous thesis restricted the explanatory factors to only explain the common components of identification due to time limitations. However, to only interpret personality variables is, in my opinion, an oversimplified view on human conduct since it cannot account for the diversity within the situation. Because of this, it is equally important for future research, if possible, to include the specific components of identification (the variance that is unique to a certain type of identification) and situational and group specific variables. This would provide us with a more completed view of the phenomenon since both variances would be accounted for and the predictors would not be restricted to only personality variables.

Another matter to consider is that even though I included "mostly" into the definition of identification, to empathize that we reasonably should expect people to express their positive identification in a higher degree, the survey used for this study does not control for this potential bias. To eliminate this risk for the generalized identification to be overrepresented, I recommend for future research to use an equal amount of negative and positive related groups in the identification test to compare if there is a significant difference between the groups. Further, this thesis applied the identification statements with an open-ended character, which have its benefits if you want to explore the perspectives of several people. Though, to control for the possible confound that participants might over exaggerate positive related identification(s), for other reasons then the one intended within the identification measure used for this thesis, a suggestion for future research is to rearrange the identification statements. A potential arrangement is to specifically shape the statements to be positive or negative. This might make it more apparent if participants answer contains contradictions.

As for the PCA analysis, I think it would be interesting to implement a factor analysis to exclude potential error variance and to demonstrate only the shared variance between the identification variables, with the assumption that the total variance probably will be slightly reduced in relation to the current results. It could also be desirable to use another selection or elimination method for the regression analysis (for instances enter, forward or backwards) in order to, if the dataset meets the requirements, increase statistical power.

As a final suggestion, a valuable contribution for future research to examine is to compare various people related variables like gender, ethnicity, age or profession to analyze their potential impact on the generalized identification.

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Appendix 1

Ten-Item Personality Inventory-(TIPI)

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I see myself as:

1. _____ Extraverted, enthusiastic.

2. _____ Critical, quarrelsome.

3. _____ Dependable, self-disciplined.

4. _____ Anxious, easily upset.

5. _____ Open to new experiences, complex.

6. _____ Reserved, quiet.

7. _____ Sympathetic, warm.

8. _____ Disorganized, careless.

9. _____ Calm, emotionally stable.

10. _____ Conventional, uncreative.

_____

TIPI scale scoring ("R" denotes reverse-scored items):
Extraversion: 1, 6R; Agreeableness: 2R, 7; Conscientiousness; 3, 8R; Emotional Stability: 4R, 9; Openness to Experiences: 5, 10R.

Appendix 2

Single-Item Social Identification Inventory-(SISI)

All people belong to different social categories/groups and identify themselves more or less with different groups. What we are interested in here is not which specific groups you belong to, but the degree to which you identify with different groups. You may answer according to the following scale: No identification at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   identifies strongly.

Based on your Gender (men, women, other) - here we assume that you belong to a group from this role - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Ethnicity (Swedish, immigrant, etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on your ethnicity - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Profession (student, vendor, lawyer, etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group from this role - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Political Orientation (party affiliation, right, left etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on your political orientation - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Family Role (parent, brother, sister, etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group from this role - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Food Preference (vegan, vegetarian, animal based diet, etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on specific habits - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Sport Activity (baseball, soccer, ice hockey, etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on interest in sports - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Weight (thin, average weight, overweight, etc.) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on your weight - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Intelligence (Intelligent, average intelligent, not so intelligent) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on your intelligence - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.

Based on your Activity Level (diligent, average diligent, not so diligent) - here we assume that you belong to a group based on your activity level - think of the group and indicate the degree to which you identify with it.