

Tomasz Besta*
Maria Kaźmierczak
Magdalena Błażek

Identity Fusion and Status of the Evaluator as Moderators of Self-Enhancement and Self-Verification at the Group Level of Self-Description

Abstract: We examined the influence of identity fusion and status of evaluator on willingness to fight for one's group after group-descriptive or not group-descriptive feedback. The valence of evaluative information was varied as well: feedback either support negative group-stereotype (negative but descriptive condition) or contradict negative group-stereotype (positive but not descriptive condition). In two studies ($N=208$ & $N=119$) we partially replicated previous findings on self-verification. Individuals fused with one's group were more prone than non fused to fight for group members after receiving, challenging, not group-describing feedback, but only when evaluator's status was high. When the evaluator's status was low, fused participants (vs. non fused) engaged in self-enhancement strategies: that is they endorse radical behavior after negative, even if group-describing, feedback. We discuss the importance of identity fusion and evaluator's status for determining when self-enhancement and self-verification will and will not be evoke.

Key words: Identity fusion; social status; self-verification; self-enhancement; motivation; self-threat

Self-verification and self-enhancement have been long considered basic needs that drive human behavior (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides, Gartner, & Toguchi, 2003; for meta-analysis see: van Dellen, Campbell, Hoyle, & Bradfield, 2011). Both perspectives are firmly grounded on empirical studies and currently researchers concentrate on analyzing conditions under which one of these motives is predominant (Kwang & Swann, 2010; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989).

Although initial research on self-verification focused on personal characteristics, in recent years there is a growing interest in the role of self-verification at the level of group identity (Bilewicz & Kofta, 2011; Chen, Chen, & Shaw, 2004; Chen, Shaw, & Jeung, 2006; Gómez, Seyle, Huici, & Swann, 2009). For example, Gómez, et al. (2009) showed that the motivation for self-verification transcends the self-others barrier: people are motivated to verify their group identity (e.g. 'Americans are loud') even when they do not personally endorse such identity (e.g. 'I am quiet').

Likewise, the motivation for self-enhancement also operates at the group level. In fact, the need to achieve and maintain a positive social identity is a basic tenet of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The aim of this paper is to extend previous findings in the field of self-verification and self-enhancement, specifically in the area of group-level of self-definition. To that end, we examined the influence of two proposed moderators related to group identity, namely identity fusion and the status of the evaluator, on reactions to verifying or non-verifying feedback.

Identity Fusion. Fusion between individual and social identities is considered a state in which borders between the self and the group are blurred and self-schemas used for self-definition overlap with cognitive representations related to group-description (Swann, Gómez, Seyle, & Morales, 2009). These porous borders raise the possibility that the personal and social self, rather than compete, combine synergistically (Swann, Jetten, Gómez, Whitehouse & Bastian, 2012). As a consequence,

* Institute of Psychology University of Gdansk, ul. Bażyńskiego 4, 80-952 Gdańsk, t.best@ug.edu.pl

Preparation of this manuscript was supported by the Statutory Research Grants (Faculty of Social Science, University of Gdansk) to the first author [grants number: 538-7413-0694-11 and 538-7413-0891-12]. The authors would like to thank Angel Gómez and Alexandra Vázquez and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier versions of this manuscript.

fused individuals can compensate for a threat either to their personal or to their social identity by increasing their willingness to enact extraordinary actions on behalf of the group with which they are aligned (Gómez et al., 2011a; Gómez, Morales, Hart, Vázquez, & Swann, 2011b; Swann et al., 2009, Swann, Gómez, Dovidio, Hart, & Jetten, 2010a; Swann, Gómez, Huici, Morales, & Hixon, 2010b). In particular, Swann et al. (2009) demonstrated that the failure to achieve verification for personal characteristics encouraged fused participants, but not non fused participants, to increase their willingness to fight and die for their group. Fused persons, for whom their group identity constitutes a central part of their self-definition, might be especially sensitive to verification of group characteristics. As their personal and group identities are deeply interconnected and functionally equivalent (Gómez et al., 2011; Swann et al., 2009). Threat to their social identity should also affect their personal identity, motivating higher endorsement of extreme pro-group actions than non fused individuals after group related feedback is provided.

In the present work we explored the compensatory reactions regarding extreme pro-group actions that fused and non fused individuals exhibit when their social identity is threatened. Importantly, we assume that such reactions might depend not only on fusion, but also on the social status of the evaluator.

Social Status. Although some researchers perceived social status as irrelevant to self-verification theory (Chen et al., 2004), this statement could be questioned on the basis of different approaches. Studies on dimensions of social perception, namely competence/agency and warmth/communion, demonstrated that high-status individuals are more respected than low status individuals and are assessed as competent, agentic and intelligent unlike low-status individuals (Fiske, Cuddy & Glick, 2007; Wojciszke, Abele & Baryla, 2009). According to the information search model from Vorauer (2006), members of low status groups attach great pragmatic importance to the opinion of higher status groups insofar as they presumably possess more competence to provide valid evaluations. Considering data from social influence area, that acknowledge the role of the information source (e.g. credibility, competence) in feedback acceptance (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004), feedback from a higher-status evaluator should induce a different reaction than feedback from a lower-status evaluator.

Higher vs. Lower Status Evaluator. Swann and Schroeder (1995) argued that, just after receiving feedback, people categorize it as favorable or not. When there is no motivation to deeply analyze the information, people do not compare that feedback with their current self-construct. That is, they do not seek verification, but positive evaluations. Consistent with this analysis, Hixon and Swann (1993) demonstrated, that in the low epistemic consequences condition, with low-credible partners, participants displayed preference for a favorable partner, whereas with trustworthy partners, participants preferred an unfavorable, but verifying partner.

Based on above-mentioned theories, we assume and propose that an evaluator from a low-status outgroup

might be perceived as low in competence and credibility. In this situation, people are not motivated to verify self-concept, but to achieve a positive evaluation. Thus, as negative feedback is threatening to self-worth, participants may engage in strategies and behaviors directed to restore their positive self-view (e.g. adhere to group values; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). In contrast, as positive feedback (group-describing or not) satisfies the need for positive evaluation, participants will not implement self-enhancement strategies.

On the contrary, an evaluator from a high-status outgroup might be perceived as high in competence and credibility. In this case, the motivation for strategic self-verification would be predominant over self-enhancement (Hixon & Swann, 1993). When a high status outgroup member provides self-descriptive, although negative information, the motive for self-verification is satisfied. When a high-status evaluator presents a not self-descriptive statement, his/her feedback could be especially threatening to the self-view's cohesion. This threat could trigger a desire to reinforce group identity by expressing more endorsement of extreme pro-group actions.

To sum up, the social status of the evaluator moderates the responses to feedback. Specifically, we propose that when both, challenge of group identity and status of the evaluator are considered, participants whose self-concept is strongly related to group-schema (e.g. fused persons) would declare more endorsement of extreme pro-group actions after group-describing feedback from a low-status outgroup (to secure self-esteem) and after not group-describing feedback from a high-status outgroup (to reinforce self-cohesion).

Study 1

In the first study we tried to test our predictions with an anonymous Russian as the low status outgroup member and an anonymous German as the high status outgroup member. Similar to Gómez et al. (2009) we focused on natural groups and preexisting group beliefs. Both Russia and Germany had troubled relations with Poland over the course of history and Poles' positive feelings towards Russians and Germans are on a similar level: 39% of Poles declare liking Germans and 34% declare liking Russians (CBOS, 2010; national sample, $N = 1052$). Additionally, in a pilot study, users of Internet social networks ($N = 45$) declared their level of sympathy towards the average Russian and German ("Mark on a scale from -5 very low to 5 very high how much you like average [Nation]") and assessed their social status ("Mark on the scale from -5 to 5 your opinion about socio-economical status of average [Nation] as compared to averaged Pole", when -5 was describe as "much lower than the average Pole", 5 as "much higher than the average Pole", and 0 as "the same social status as a average Pole"). German and Russian did not differ on the liking dimension ($M = .42$ and $M = .80$ respectively; $t(44) = 1.026$; $p = ns$). In accordance to our prediction, the status of the average German was perceived as higher ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 2.20$; $t(44) = 12.128$; $p < .001$) and the status of the

average Russian as lower ($M = -1.80$, $SD = 1.59$; $t(44) = 7.595$; $p < .001$) than the status of a Pole.

As for the collective self-schema used for manipulation, one of the most widely accepted stereotypes was chosen: complaining. Previous research in Poland demonstrated that Poles live in a so-called ‘culture of complaining’ (Wojciszke, 2004) and ‘Poles as complaining people’ is a very vivid collective self-schema in Poland. The design is a factorial 2 (fusion: fused vs. non fused) x 2 (outgroup status: low vs. high) x 2 (feedback: verification vs. challenge) with identification as control continuous measure.

Participants. A sample of 208 people took part in the research (55 women). Average age was 26.4 ($SD = 8.7$). Study 1 was carried out via Internet, an invitation to participate was placed on a number of Internet social network sites.

Measures. Identity fusion was measured with a pictorial scale with two circles, representing ‘Self’ and ‘Poland’. Participants were asked to indicate how much the two entities overlap (with five symmetrical degrees of overlap 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%, last position ‘E’ is designated to tap identity fusion; Swann, et al., 2009; see Figure 1). As a measure of group identification Mael and Ashforth (1992) scale was used ($\alpha = .79$). In most previous studies on identity fusion, researchers controlled for level of group identification, as identity fusion is related to but distinct from identification (for detailed discussion of differences and predictive powers of both constructs see: Gómez, et al., 2011).

Afterwards, participants learned that they were collaborating in a cross-cultural study. They were asked to read an opinion about Poland written by a foreigner and evaluate how accurate his/her opinion was. Participants in the *low-status outgroup condition* learned that they would read an opinion written by a Russian, whereas participants in the *high-status outgroup condition* learned that they would read an opinion written by a German. Participants randomly assigned to a *group-identity verification condition* learned that the author had a general good impression about Poland, but he/she was surprised and could not understand why Poles are complaining so much about almost everything:

“I have been to Poland several times. I have a couple of friends and to some of people I do not feel sympathy. In my opinion, in general Poland has hugely advanced since the fall of communism; one can notice that it becomes more modern country. I used to have different vision of this country. What surprised me the most is the fact that Poles are complaining so much and cannot appreciate what they have. You can see that they grumble about almost everything. Despite this, I will be glad to come back to Poland.”

In the *group-identity challenge condition* the author had a general good impression about Poland and was surprised that Poles are complaining very rarely and are thankful for what they have (same text as above with only bolded part changed). As a manipulation check, a three items’ scale (e.g. ‘Did outgroup member’s opinions about Poland described Poles accurately?’) was used ($\alpha =$

.83). To strengthen the cover story couple questions about future engagement in cross-cultural studies were asked as well. Afterwards, participants expressed their willingness to fight for one’s group (Swann et al., 2009). Participants rated their agreement with five items, on a 7-point scale ($\alpha = .75$) ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree), e.g. ‘I would fight someone who was physically threatening another Pole’ or ‘Hurting other people is acceptable if it means protecting the group.’

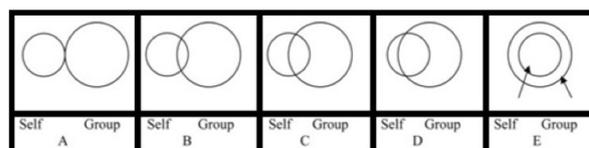


Figure 1. Identity fusion scale

Results. Of all participants 26.9% chose option E. The relationship between identity fusion and group identification was significant, $r = .29$; $p < .001$.

The manipulation check showed that the manipulation was valid. An analyze of variance (ANOVA) on this manipulation check was conducted considering identity fusion (effect coded, -1 non fused, 1 fused), group-identity challenge (effect coded, -1 challenge, 1 verification) and out-group status (effect coded, -1 low status, 1 high status) as fixed factors. A main effect of group-identity challenge emerged, $F(1, 200) = 17.14$; $p < .001$, showing that participants in the verification condition perceived that the evaluator’s feedback described Poland more correctly than participants in the challenge condition ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.09$ vs. $M = 2.59$, $SD = .90$ respectively). No other effect was significant, $ps > .10$.

To corroborate if the proposed three-way interaction effect was significant, an ANOVA was conducted with identity fusion, outgroup status and group-identity challenge as independent factors and willingness to fight for one’s group as depended variable. Levene’s test of equality of error variances reveled no significant differences ($p = .446$). An ANOVA with outgroup status (high vs. low), group identity challenge (challenged vs. verified) and self-rated identity fusion (fused vs. non fused) as independent factors revealed the main effect of identity fusion $F(1, 200) = 11.084$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .053$. This was qualified by predicted three-way interaction between identity fusion x out-group status x group identity challenge $F(1, 200) = 4.326$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .021$. Fused participants endorsed more radical pro-group actions when group identity was challenged by a high-status outgroup member than non fused participants ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.08$ vs. $M = 2.45$, $SD = .75$ respectively; $t(30) = 2.418$, $p < .05$). However, when the status of the outgroup was low, fused persons were more willing to fight after group identity was verified than non fused persons ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .99$ vs. $M = 2.38$, $SD = .87$ respectively; $t(44) = 2.822$, $p < .01$; see Figure 2). No differences were found between fused and non fused participants when their group identity was challenged by a low status outgroup member

($M = 2.70$, $SD = .94$ vs. $M = 2.49$, $SD = .99$ respectively; $t(44) = -.61$, $p = .55$) or when their group identity was verified by a high status outgroup member ($M = 2.70$, $SD = .79$ vs. $M = 2.54$, $SD = .86$ respectively; $t(51) = -.61$, $p = .54$).

Figure 2: Low-status outgroup

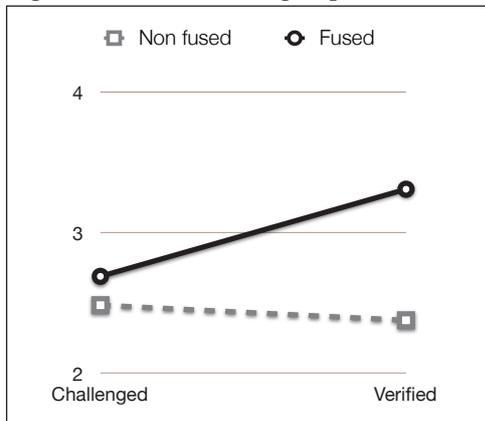


Figure 2: High-status outgroup

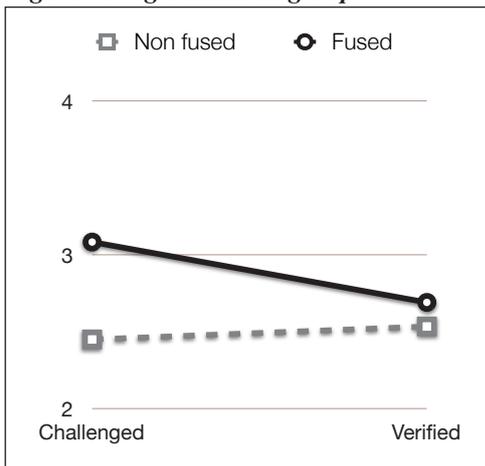


Figure 2. Mean ratings of willingness to fight for a country as a function of challenge to one's group identity and identity fusion (Study 1). Higher scores indicate stronger willingness to fight for a group.

Overall, study 1 supports our hypothesis that the status and identity fusion moderate the prevalence of the self-verification motive and shows that fused people tend to be more willing to defend fellow Poles after their negative group schema was challenged by high status outgroup member and verified by low-status one. Fused persons seem to be more sensitive than non fused to verification of or challenge to their group identity.

However, it could be argued that our results are due to the recent twist in international relations between Poland and Russia (e.g. Smolensk tragedy; Borger & Pidd, 2011), which might affect opinions about the average Russian. To counteract this criticism, in study 2 we focused on the replication and generalization of the effects with a member of a different low-status outgroup. Additionally, we include a different dependent variable.

Study 2

To replicate findings from study 1 with a different low-status outgroup, an anonymous citizen of Bulgaria was chosen. Among Poles, positive feelings towards Bulgarians and Germans are on a similar level: 39% of Poles declare liking Germans and 37% Bulgarians (CBOS, 2010). In the pilot study, German and Bulgarian did not differ on the liking dimension ($M = .42$ and $M = .82$ respectively; $t(44) = .848$; $p = .10$). In accordance to our prediction, the status of the average Bulgarian was perceived as lower ($M = -1.49$, $SD = 2.09$) than the status of Pole ($t(44) = 4.791$; $p < .001$).

Participants. 119 undergraduates (66 women) with average age of 21 years ($SD = 1.7$) participated in this study in exchange for course credits.

Measures. Measures of identity fusion, group identification ($\alpha = .86$), manipulation procedure and manipulation check items ($\alpha = .88$) were identical as in study 1.

For the willingness to fight for one's group, one more item, tapping extreme self-sacrifice, was added to those used in study 1 ('I would sacrifice my life if it saved another group member's life'). Also a second dependent variable that was expected to be less sensitive to self-presentation bias as compared to the explicit questions about one's willingness to defend the group was introduced. In study 2, based on the method used by Swann et al. (2009) in one of their preliminary studies and aiming to replicate their results, we created a difference score: perception of one's willingness to fight and die for the group minus perception of other group member's willingness to fight and die for the group. That is participants completed a measure of this dependent variable twice: once for themselves (6 items; $\alpha = .74$) and once for other group members ($\alpha = .79$). A positive difference score indicates that participants thought they would be more willing to fight for the group than others, whereas a negative score indicates that they thought others would do more for the group.

Results. As for the identity fusion 27.7% of participants chose option E. The relationship between identity fusion and group identification was significant $r = .38$; $p < .001$.

The feedback manipulation was valid. An analyze of variance (ANOVA) on the manipulation check was conducted considering the same independent variables as in Study 1 as fixed factors. A main effect of group identity challenge emerged, $F(1, 111) = 23.165$; $p < .001$, showing that participants in the verification condition perceived that evaluator's opinions described Poland more correctly than participants in the challenge condition ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .92$ vs. $M = 2.73$, $SD = .89$, respectively). No other effect was significant.

As for our main hypothesis, Levene's test of equality of error variances revealed no significant differences. An ANOVA with difference score as depended variable and outgroup status (high vs. low), group identity challenge (challenged vs. verified) and self-rated identity fusion (fused vs. non fused) as independent factors revealed no

main effects. The predicted three-way interaction between identity fusion \times out-group status \times group identity challenge was significant $F(1, 111) = 6.478, p < .05, \eta^2 = .055$.

Fused persons perceived themselves as relatively more willing to fight for their country when their group identity was challenged by high-status evaluator than non fused participants ($M = -.05, SD = .94$ vs. $M = -.68, SD = .83$ respectively; $t(29) = 1.958, p = .06$). However, when the outgroup status was low, fused persons, compared to non fused, perceived themselves as relatively more willing to fight when group identity was verified ($M = .23, SD = .74$ vs. $M = -.52, SD = .79$ respectively; $t(21) = 2.216, p < .05$; see Figure 3). In contrast, no differences were found between fused and non fused persons when their group identity was challenged by low-status evaluator ($M = -.37, SD = .77$ vs. $M = -.12, SD = .72$ respectively; $t(36) = .70, p = .49$), or when their group identity was verified by high-status evaluator ($M = -.65, SD = 1.14$ vs. $M = -.50, SD = .80$ respectively; $t(25) = .39, p = .70$).

Figure 3: Low-status outgroup

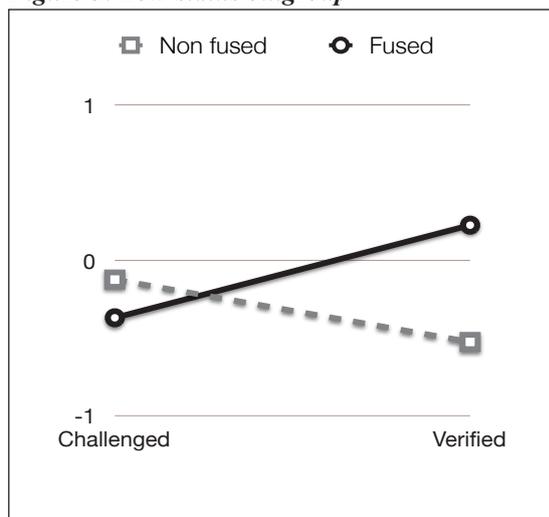


Figure 3: High-status outgroup

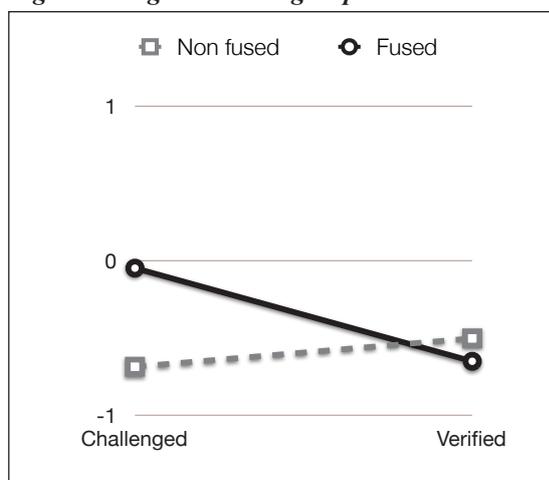


Figure 3. Mean ratings of willingness to fight for a country as a function of challenge to one's group identity and identity fusion (Study 2). A positive difference score indicates that participants thought they would be more willing to fight for the group than others.

Regression analyzes and effects of identity fusion, out-group status and group identity challenge while controlling for group identification

As mentioned before, in most previous studies on identity fusion, researchers controlled for level of group identification, in order to demonstrate that identity fusion is related to but distinct from identification. There is ongoing dispute if measures of overlaps between personal and group identities allow to recognize distinct psychological entity – namely identity fusion – or that those measures not necessarily describe construct distinct from other forms of group identification (although without a doubt they help to identify people with strong group adherence). Researchers from identity fusion camp are pointing that introducing this construct helped to explain inconsistencies that have accumulated over the years in studies of group identification in the context of self-categorization theory. For example, the assumption is undermined that group identification fluctuates in response to changes in context or that there exists a functional antagonism, i.e., a zero-sum relationship between personal and social identity (Swann, et al., 2012). Although this current paper is not directed toward resolving this issue, we did examine if inclusion of the well-established measure of group identification in the analyses, will influence above-mentioned results. To explore if established interaction effect would be significant when controlling for the level of group identification additional regression analyses were conducted, based on enter method with identity fusion, group identification, outgroup status, group-identity challenge and the two-way, three-way and four-way interactions as predictors. Results are presented in Table 1 (page 376).

After including group identification variable, postulated three-way interaction was significant only in study 2. In study 1 four-way interaction was significant which means that perceived strength of group identification additionally complicated interaction effect of identity fusion \times social status of out-group \times challenge, on willingness to fight for a country. This could be attributed to positive correlation between measures of identity fusion and group identification or to the overlaps between those two constructs. To sum up, it should be noted that postulated influence of fusion, status and stereotype verification on radicalization of attitudes is weakened when controlled for the level of group identification, although significant results from two analyses of ANOVA and from regression analysis from study 2 suggest that hypothesized effects could be identified.

Summary and discussion

As mentioned before, we used measure of overlap between personal and group identity recently developed in the realm of identity fusion theory. Our choice was based on the fact that measures of identity fusion (both verbal and pictorial) are often stronger predictors of pro-group attitudes than other scales of group adherence (e.g. group identification). As such identity fusion scale allow us to identify people with very strong ties to the country. The

Table 1. Results of regression analysis on participants' willingness to fight for one's group in studies 1 and 2.

Predictors	Study 1		Study 2	
	β	t	β	t
Fusion	.080	.942	.045	.420
Identification	.425	5.168***	.563	4.428***
Status	.045	.470	.049	.407
Challenged	-.009	-.099	-.146	-1.238
Fusion * Status	-.009	-.089	.032	.267
Fusion * Challenged	-.039	-.410	.185	1.576
Fusion * Identification	.060	.754	.075	.629
Identification * Status	.041	.493	-.244	-1.926
Identification * Challenged	-.048	-.588	-.132	-1.1036
Status * Challenged	-.002	-.025	.004	.033
Fusion * Identification * Status	-.021	-.254	-.324	-2.554*
Fusion * Identification * Challenged	-.021	-.257	.156	1.231
Fusion * Status * Challenged	-.139	-1.454	.236	2.004*
Identification * Status * Challenged	.036	.437	-.168	-1.332
Fusion * Identification * Status * Challenged	-.173	-2.109*	-.005	-.038

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$; adjusted R Square = .170 for study 1 and = .362 for study 2.

question remains if obtained results are specific for the people fused with the country or could be generalized on the persons with highly developed social or group identity as measured by different psychological tools (e.g. recently developed group identification scales by Cameron (Obst & White, 2005) or by Leach and colleagues, 2008). It should be noted as well that conducted studies are exploratory ones and caution is required when generalizing the results. We tackle specific field of inter-group relations in the context of attitudes toward neighbor countries with troubled history with Poland. Although we tried to control for the level of liking and used two different low-status out-groups, our results are still related to context-specific national relation and future studies with other challenges to social identities (e.g. to gender or work identity) are needed.

Results of two studies suggest that mostly people fused with a country are sensitive to verification and challenge of group stereotype. It is not fully consistent with previous studies were self-verification effects could be identified despite the strength of group identity (e.g. Bilewicz & Kofta, 2011). We could explain those results

in the light of the theory of Reactive Approach Motivation (RAM) by McGregor, Nash, Mann, and Phills (2010). This theory highlights that in the face of aversive uncertainty (in our case when clarity of group-description is challenged) people tend to engage themselves in actions and goals related to active and easily available ideas or ideologies. When it comes to reactions of fused persons to uncertainty, challenging collective self-schema by a credible and competent evaluator may motivate them to endorse a silent ideology and goals related to defending the country (McGregor et al., 2010). This is not true for non fused people, as ideas related to fighting for one's group probably do not organize their goals and are not easily available.

But even for fused persons this only happened when collective self-schema was challenged by higher-status evaluator (presumably perceived as credible and competent). Why fused people do not react in this way after reading negative, but group-describing opinion of a lower-status evaluator? Our reasoning is in line with Swann and Schroeder (1995) argumentation that self-verification occurs when motivation (e.g. related to the

evaluator's credibility) to deeply analyze the information received is evoked. As high-status (vs. low-status) others are perceived as more credible and competent (as we theorized), the feedback they provide should more easily evoke motivation for verification. Additionally, verifying negative opinions can help building shared group identity with high-status outgroup members and elevating one's social status through re-categorization, (and it is not true for lower-status outgroups; González & Brown, 2006). In contrast, negative, even if self-describing, feedback from less respected and disregarded out-group is not only threatening to self-esteem because of its valence. We can speculate, that although this feedback verifies the group identity, this verification comes from low-status evaluator, thus, as a way of priming similarities between groups, is a danger for positive self-view. As a way of resisting re-categorization (and thus avoiding a decrease in their status caused by sharing beliefs or attitudes with disregarded low-status out-group), person who received negative but group-describing feedback would be motivated to distance himself or herself from a low-status evaluator. Thus, feedback from a low-status evaluator would evoke endorsement of group values and in-group favoritism when negative self-describing information is provided. Similar conclusions can be drawn based on Hixon and Swann results (1993), that people choose a self-verifying partner to interact, when they perceive the consequences of selecting that partner to be important. In our examples it could be the re-categorization to gain status that is crucial.

Limitation of the studies should be highlighted as well. First concern is related to the manipulation itself. It is not clear if participants found information challenging group-identity (e.g. Poles do not complain) trustworthy. As "Poles like to complain" self-stereotype is vivid in Poland it is possible that more positive information about Poles could be disregarded as the result of lack of knowledge or carelessness in observation of polish culture. Thus, replications with different experimental manipulations are needed. Second point that could be made is a lack of direct measure of perceived competence of the evaluator. We can only speculate and indirectly infer on the proposed link between low-status of outgroup and his/her perceived lack of competence or credibility. As this association is crucial to our explanation of the explored relationships it should be addressed more directly in the future research. Finally, although we controlled for a level of liking of the outgroup member, we did not use any direct measure of affect. Thus, based only on conducted studies we are not able to say how emotional arousal could influence participants' reactions.

Summing up, although some concerns could be raised, we think that our studies do cast a new light on motivation for self-verification. Status of evaluator, variable previously considered as irrelevant to self-verification, proved to moderate whether people with strong adherence to the country endorse radical pro-group behavior after group identity verification or challenge.

References

- Bilewicz, M. & Kofta, A. (2011). Less biased under threat? Self-verification reactions to social identity threat among groups with negative self-stereotype. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 41*, 2249-2267.
- Borger, J. & Pidd, H. (2011). Smolensk air crash – a year on and the scars are yet to heal. *Guardian, Friday 8 April 2011*. Retrieve 6 September 2011 from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/08/poland-smolensk-air-crash-conspiracy>
- Chen, S., Chen, K. Y., & Shaw, L. (2004). Self-verification motives at the collective level of self-definition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86*, 77-94.
- Chen, S., Shaw, L., & Jeung, K. Y. (2006). Collective self-verification among members of a naturally-occurring group: Possible antecedents and long-term consequences. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 28*, 101-115.
- Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology, 55*, 591-621.
- Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Glick, P. (2007). Universal dimensions of social perception: Warmth and competence. *Trends in Cognitive Science, 11*, 77-83.
- Gómez, A., Brooks, M. L., Buhrmester, M. D., Vazquez, A., Jetten, J., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2011). On the nature of identity fusion: Insights into the construct and a new measure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*, 918-933.
- Gómez, A., Seyle, D. C., Huici, C., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2009). Can self-verification strivings fully transcend the self-other barrier? Seeking verification of ingroup identities. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*, 1021-44.
- González, R., & Brown, R. (2006). Dual identities in intergroup contact: Group status and size moderate the generalization of positive attitude change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 42*, 753-767.
- Heine, S. J., Proulx, T., & Vohs, K. D. (2006) Meaning maintenance model: On the coherence of human motivations. *Personality and Social Psychology Review 10*, 88-110.
- Hixon, J. G., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (1993). When does introspection bear fruit? Self-reflection, self-insight, and interpersonal choices. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*, 35-43.
- Hogg, M. A., & Mullin, B.-A. (1999). Joining groups to reduce uncertainty: Subjective certainty reduction and group identification. In D. Abrams & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *Social identity and social cognition* (pp. 249-279). Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 1-27.
- Kwang, T. & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2010). Do people embrace praise even when they feel unworthy? A review of critical tests of self-enhancement versus self-verification. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14*(3), 263-280.
- Leach, C. W., Zomeran, M. V., Zebel, S., Vliek, M. L. W., Ouerker, J. W., & Spears, R. (2008). Group-level self-definition and self-investment: A hierarchical (multicomponent) model of in-group identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 144-165.
- Mael, F. A., & Ashforth, B. E. (1992). Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13*, 103-123.
- McGregor, I., Nash, K., Mann, N., & Phillips, C. E. (2010). Anxious uncertainty and reactive approach motivation (RAM). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99*, 133-47.
- Obst, P. L., & White, K. M. (2005). Three-dimensional strength of identification across group memberships: A confirmatory factor analysis. *Self and Identity, 4*(1), 69-80.
- Oldmeadow, J., & Fiske, S. T. (2007). Ideology moderates status = competence stereotypes: Roles for Belief in a Just World and Social Dominance Orientation. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 37*, 1135-1148.
- Schubert, T., & Otten, S. (2002). Overlap of self, ingroup, and outgroup: Pictorial measures of self-categorization. *Self & Identity, 1*, 535-576.
- Sedikides, C. (1993). Assessment, enhancement, and verification determinants of the self-evaluation process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*, 317-317.
- Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., & O'Mara, E. M. (2011). Individual self, relational self, collective self: Hierarchical ordering of the tripartite self. *Psychological Studies, 56*, 98-107.

- Swann, W. B., Jr., Jetten, J., Gómez, A., Whitehouse, H., & Bastian, B. (2012). When group membership gets personal: A theory of identity fusion. *Psychological Review*, *119*(3), 441-456.
- Swann, W. B., Jr., Gómez, A., Dovidio, J. F., Hart, S., & Jetten, J. (2010a). Dying and killing for one's group: Identity fusion moderates responses to intergroup versions of the trolley problem. *Psychological Science : a Journal of the American Psychological Society*, *21*(8), 1176-1183.
- Swann, W. B., Jr., Gómez, A., Huici, C., Morales, J. F., & Hixon, J. G. (2010b). Identity fusion and self-sacrifice: Arousal as a catalyst of pro-group fighting, dying, and helping behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*(5), 824-841.
- Swann, W. B., Jr., Gómez, A., Seyle, C. D., Morales, J. F., & Huici, C. (2009). Identity fusion: The interplay of personal and social identities in extreme group behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*, 995-1011.
- Swann, W. B., Jr., Pelham, B. W., & Krull, D. S. (1989). Agreeable fancy or disagreeable truth? Reconciling self-enhancement and self-verification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*, 782-791.
- Swann, W. B., Jr., & Schroeder, D. G. (1995). The search for beauty and truth: A framework for understanding reactions to evaluations. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *21*, 1307-1318.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In: W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole.
- van Dellen, M. R., Campbell, W. K., Hoyle, R. H., & Bradfield, E. K. (2011). Compensating, resisting, and breaking: A meta-analytical investigation of reactions to threat. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *15*, 51-74.
- Vorauer, J. D. (2006). An information search model of evaluative concerns in intergroup interaction. *Psychological Review*, *113*, 862-886.
- Wojciszke, B. (2004). The negative social world: Polish culture of complaining. *International Journal of Sociology*, *34*, 38-59.
- Wojciszke, B., Abele, A. E., & Baryla, W. (2009). Two dimensions of interpersonal attitudes: Liking depends on communion, respect depends on agency. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *39*, 973-990.