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# Young Immigrants' Host Country Identification and their Friendships with Natives: Does Relative Group Size Matter?

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## Abstract

Recent network research indicates that native youth prefer to befriend immigrants with stronger rather than weaker host country identification. Surprisingly, however, no respective preference of high-identifying immigrants for native friends has been found, and there is little evidence that friends influence immigrants' identification. Seeking to make sense of these unexpected findings, my aims are twofold: First, I reproduce an earlier study using three waves of newly collected network panel data. Second, going beyond a robustness test with better data, I suggest that relative group size within school accounts for earlier findings. I hypothesize that immigrants' host country identification only affects their own friendship choices in schools with high shares of immigrants, because only in those schools they can be picky about befriending natives. Stochastic actor-oriented models support this notion, pointing to an interplay of preferences and opportunities in shaping the relation between host country identification and interethnic friendships.

*Keywords:* Host country identification, Friendship, Immigrants, SIENA, Adolescence

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