

It is the local status that matters: More permeable identities and more acceptance of the outgroups among local minorities

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If minority perspective is addressed in research on intergroup relations, it is typically the perspective of state level (national) minorities. However, people's worldview might differ even more depending on the local status of their ethnic group. This is especially important as the same ethnic group can be a majority in one region/city, but a minority in other. We, therefore, compared the identities and intergroup attitudes of 767 young people from Serbia, B&H, Macedonia, and Kosovo, depending on the local status of their ethnic group. Across the countries, we sampled youth from two cities, one in which an ethnic group is a majority and another, in which the same group is a minority. We measured the perceived overlap between national, ethnic, and religious ingroups (social identity complexity), the number of people individuals identify with among those who share all, some, or none of their identities (social identity inclusiveness), along with the distance and feelings towards ethnic outgroups. We registered consistent patterns of more complex and inclusive identities among local minorities in comparison to local majorities, as well as less distance and warmer feelings towards outgroups, independent of their status at the national level. These effects were mediated by the strength of ethnic identification and the quality of contact with the outgroups. The patterns of multiple identifications and intergroup outcomes seem to depend on the group's local status and are consistent across different ethnic groups. The youth coming from diverse contexts could thus play a facilitating role in the intergroup dialog.

Keywords: local minorities, social identity complexity, social identity inclusiveness, outgroup attitudes, ethnicity

Short abstract (40 words): On a sample of 767 youth from Western Balkans, those belonging to local minority groups showed more complex and inclusive identities, as well as more favorable outgroup attitudes than local majorities. Lower ethnic identification and favorable contact mediated these effects.