Social Interaction in International Schools

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Research Question

Does providing information about limited social interactions between international students and its consequences lead to more willingness to intermingle?

Hypothesis

Having information about limited interaction and its consequences will make students more likely (willing) to reach out to people from another countries and ethnicities.

External Validity

If information provision leads to increased willingness, and thereby, more intercultural communication, this can be applied in other international settings as well.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

ONLY

3 OUT OF 10

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INTERACT WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AND THE HOST COUNTRY

According to a study conducted at the University of Victoria in the United States, graduate students in international programs have fewer interactions with people from other countries/ethnicities, particularly with students from the host country.

The results show that 27% of students solely interact with conationals, 38% interact with conationals and ethnically similar internationals, 28% interact with various internationals but exclude host nationals, and 7% interact with host nationals and conationals the bulk of the time.

Another study found that having fewer international friends, particularly from the host country, leads to overall lower satisfaction, contentment, and increased homesickness.

Furthermore, students who have little international interaction miss out on social capital, which is defined as resources embedded in one's social network, i.e., resources that can be assessed or mobilized through network ties.

In addition, the number of friends from the host country was an important factor in satisfaction levels for students from developing countries, but less so for students from developed countries.

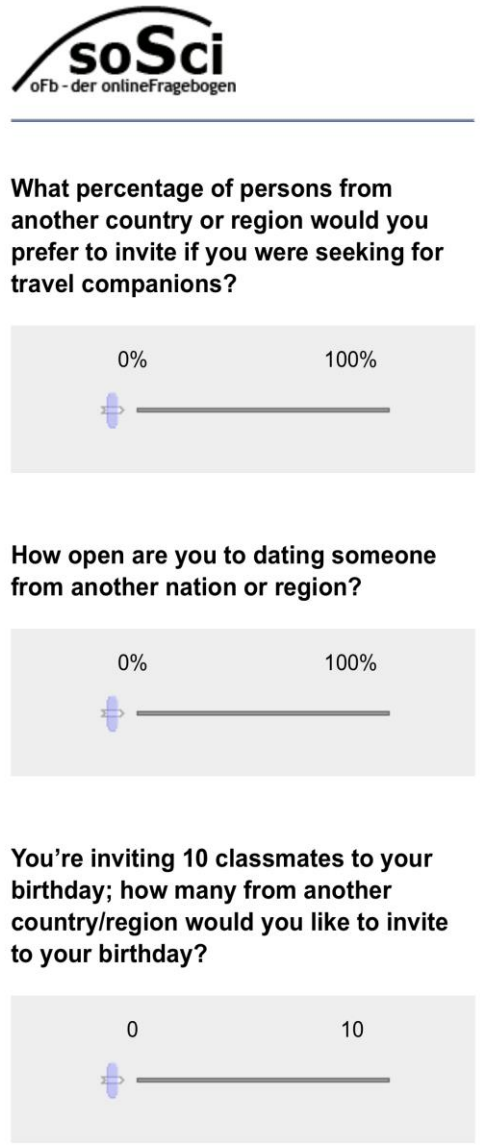
Another relevant finding of the paper was that students who spent more time with conational friends had less academic success than those who did not.

Rose-Redwood et al. 2013
Hendrickson et al. 2010

The treatment

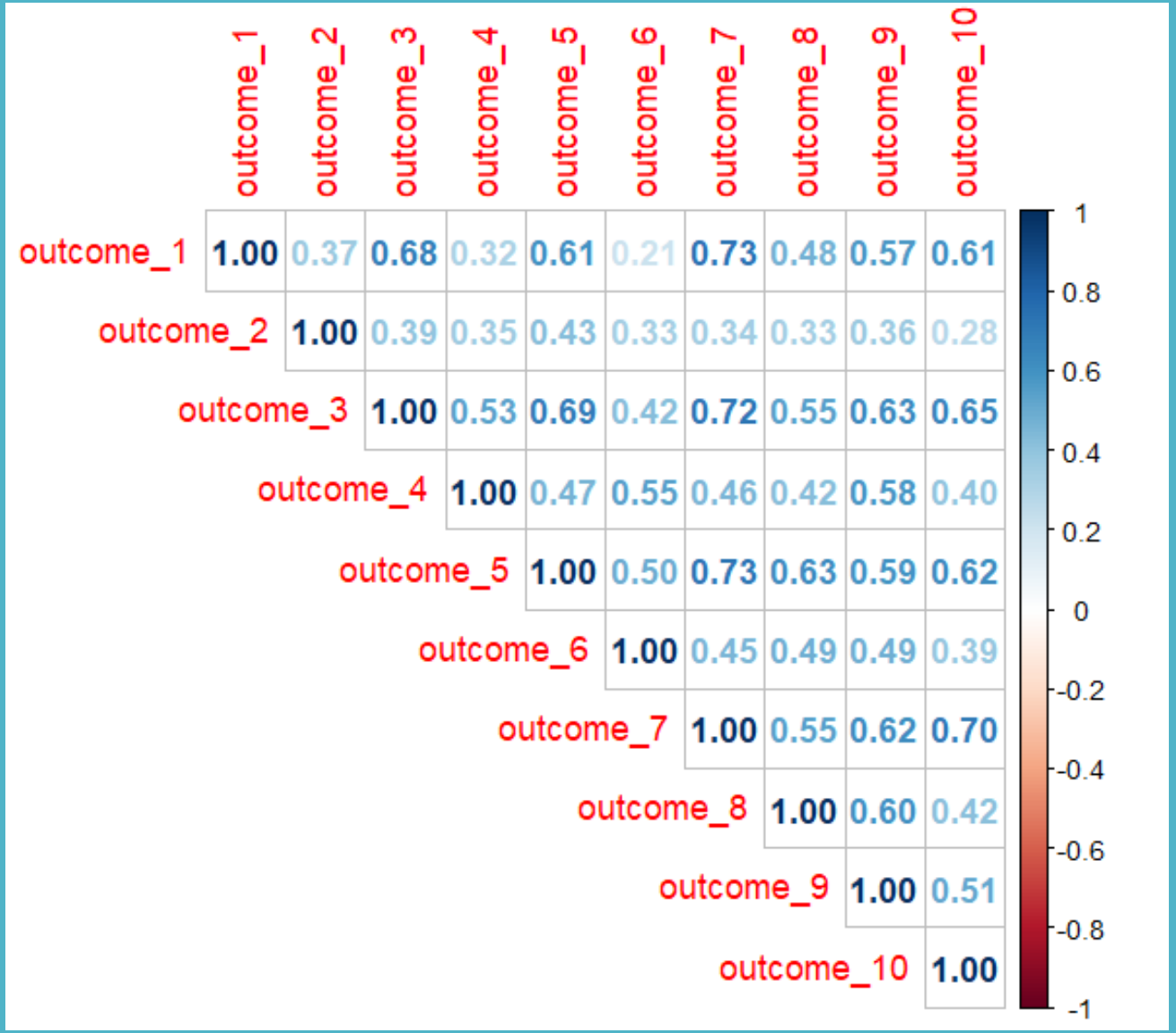
The outcome

1	How many people from countries/regions other than your own would you like to invite to a dinner you're hosting for 10 classmates?
2	You have to form an assignment group; how likely is it that you will include people from outside your home country/region?
3	What percentage of individuals from a different nation or region would you like to invite to your study group?
4	How likely is it that you will sit with students from countries/regions other than your own in your classes?
5	What percentage of persons from another country or region would you prefer to invite if you were seeking for travel companions?
6	How open are you to dating someone from another nation or region?
7	You're inviting 10 classmates to your birthday; how many from another country/region would you like to invite to your birthday?
8	If you are looking for shared flat, how likely is it that you look for a place with people from another country/region?
9	If you want to hang out, how likely is it that you will do so with people from outside your home country/region?
10	You want to go out for a drink after class with about ten classmates; how many of them would you prefer to be from another country/region than yours?



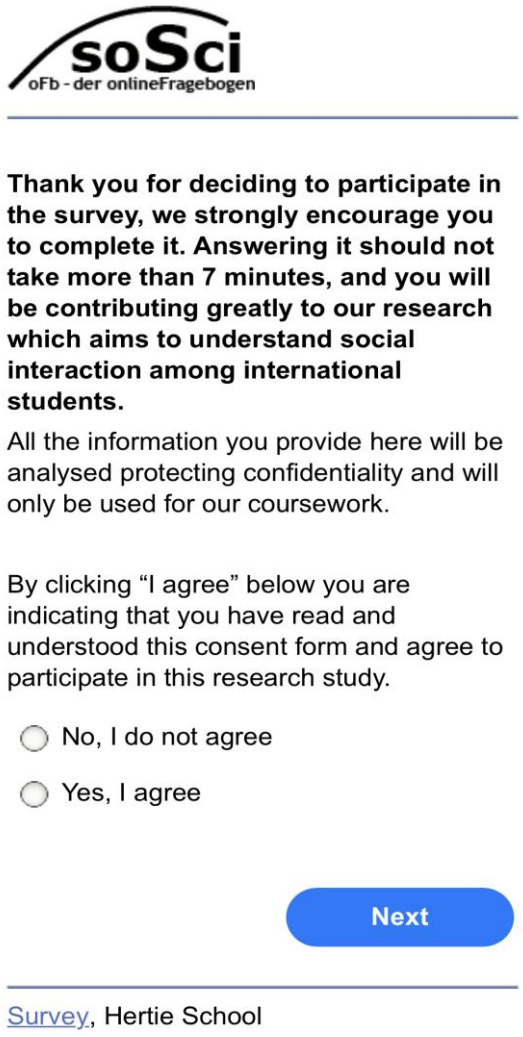
Index correlation

Outcome items are correlated, that is, they respond to the same indicator.



The sample

Period	16 days
Valid cases	179
Cases with consent	169
No. Of observations used for final analysis (Those who answered at least 6 outcome questions out of 10)	126
Treatment group	60
Control group	66



The sample

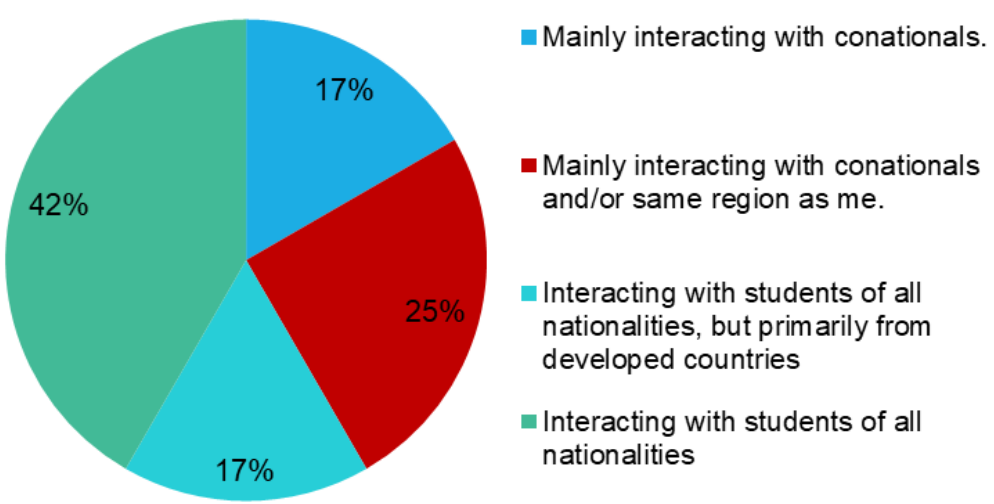
Balance testing

t and chi-square tests present no difference between **control** and **treatment** groups in:

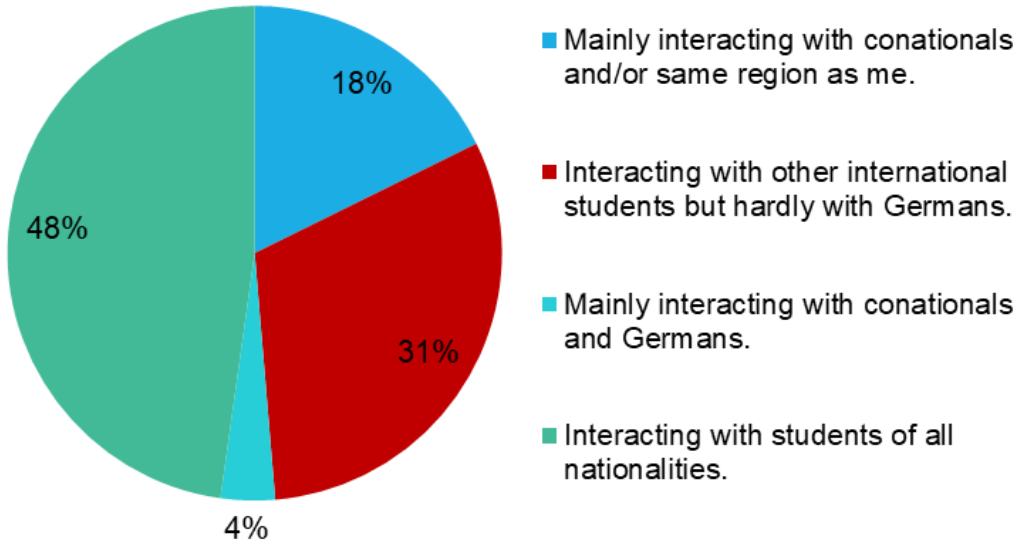
	Control mean	Treatment mean	t-value / x^2 value
Age	26.15	26.49	-0.40
Abroad experience	0.59	0.60	-0.10
Work experience	2.81	2.88	-0.22
German proficiency	0.35	0.40	-0.59
Current international interaction	0.76	0.78	-0.29
Region	-	-	3.35

Current International Interaction Status

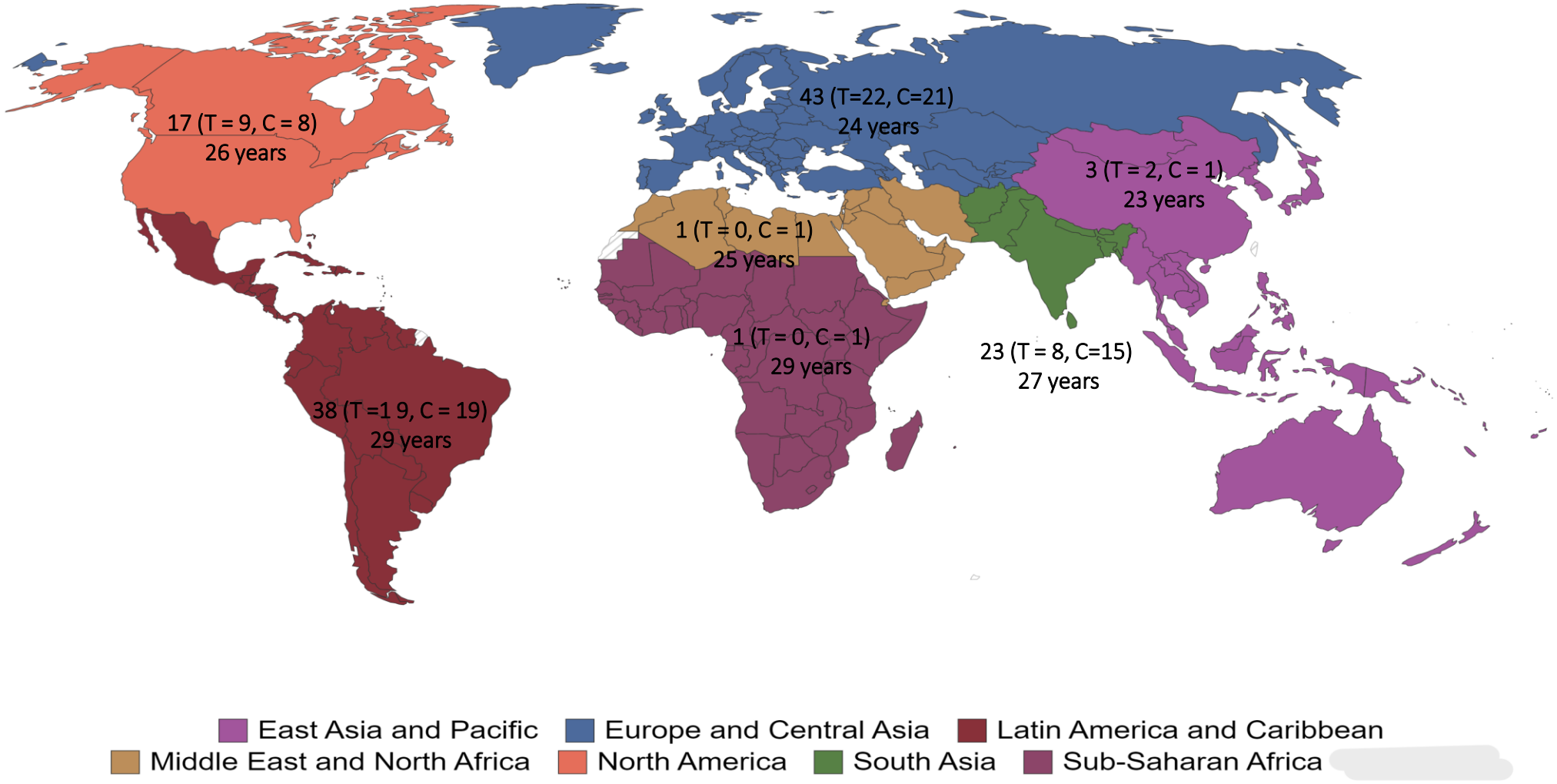
Germans



Non-Germans



Regions represented



Results

Wilcoxon signed-rank test

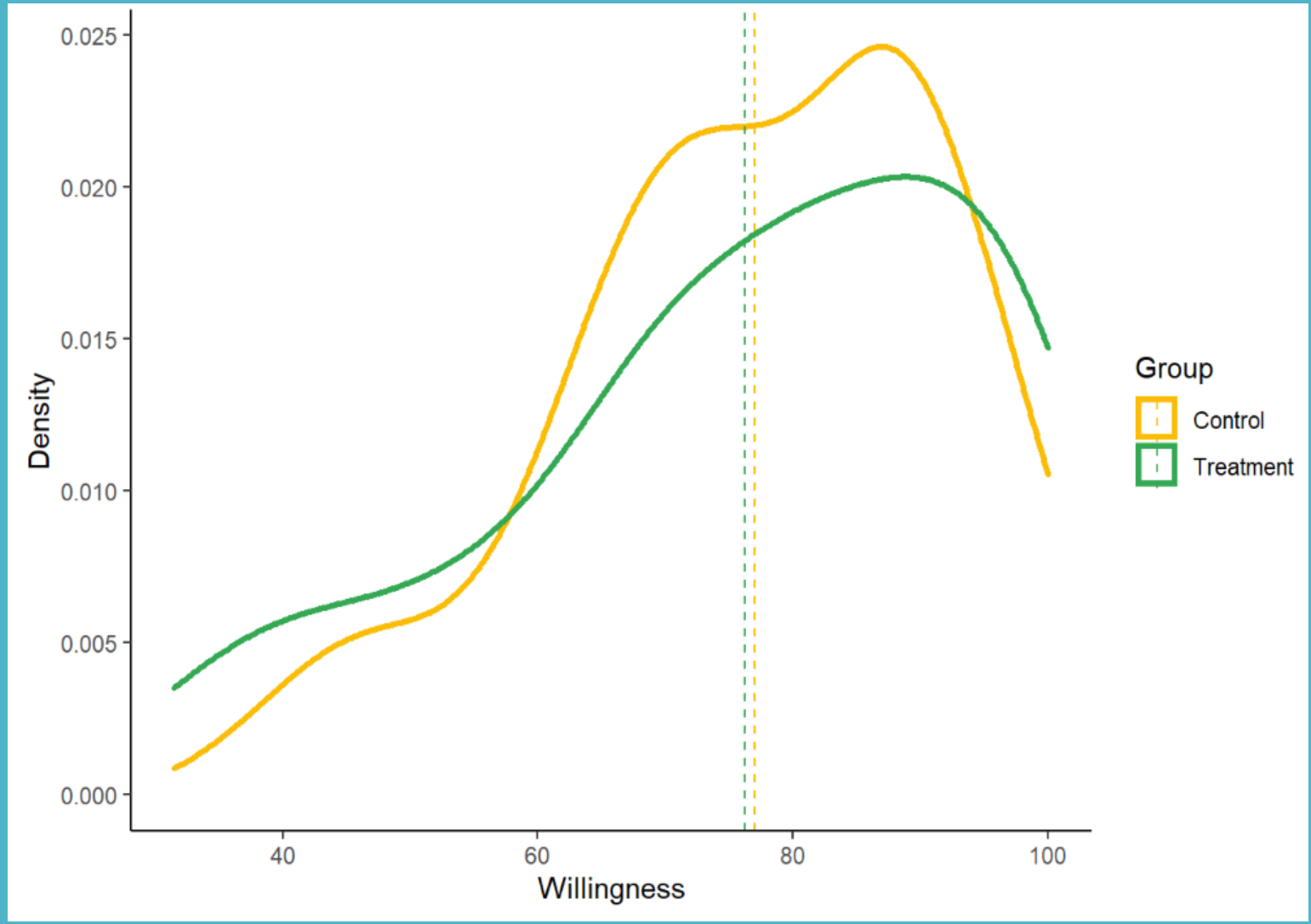
p-value = 0.897

The difference between the means is not significantly different (we cannot reject H_0)

Outcome distribution

With Shapiro Wilk test we reject that our outcome distribute normally.

group	mean
Control	77.09
Treatment	76.21

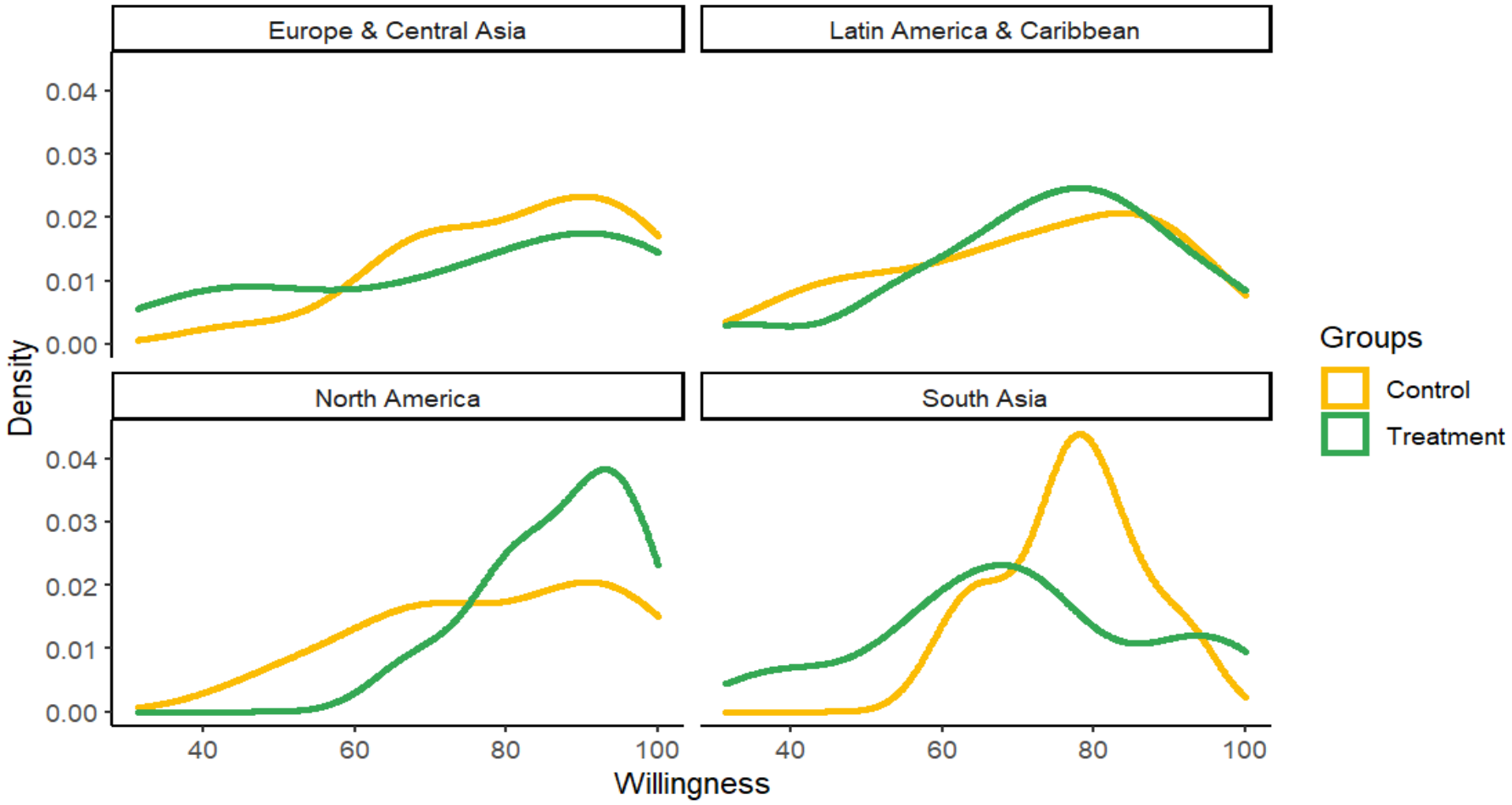


Regression

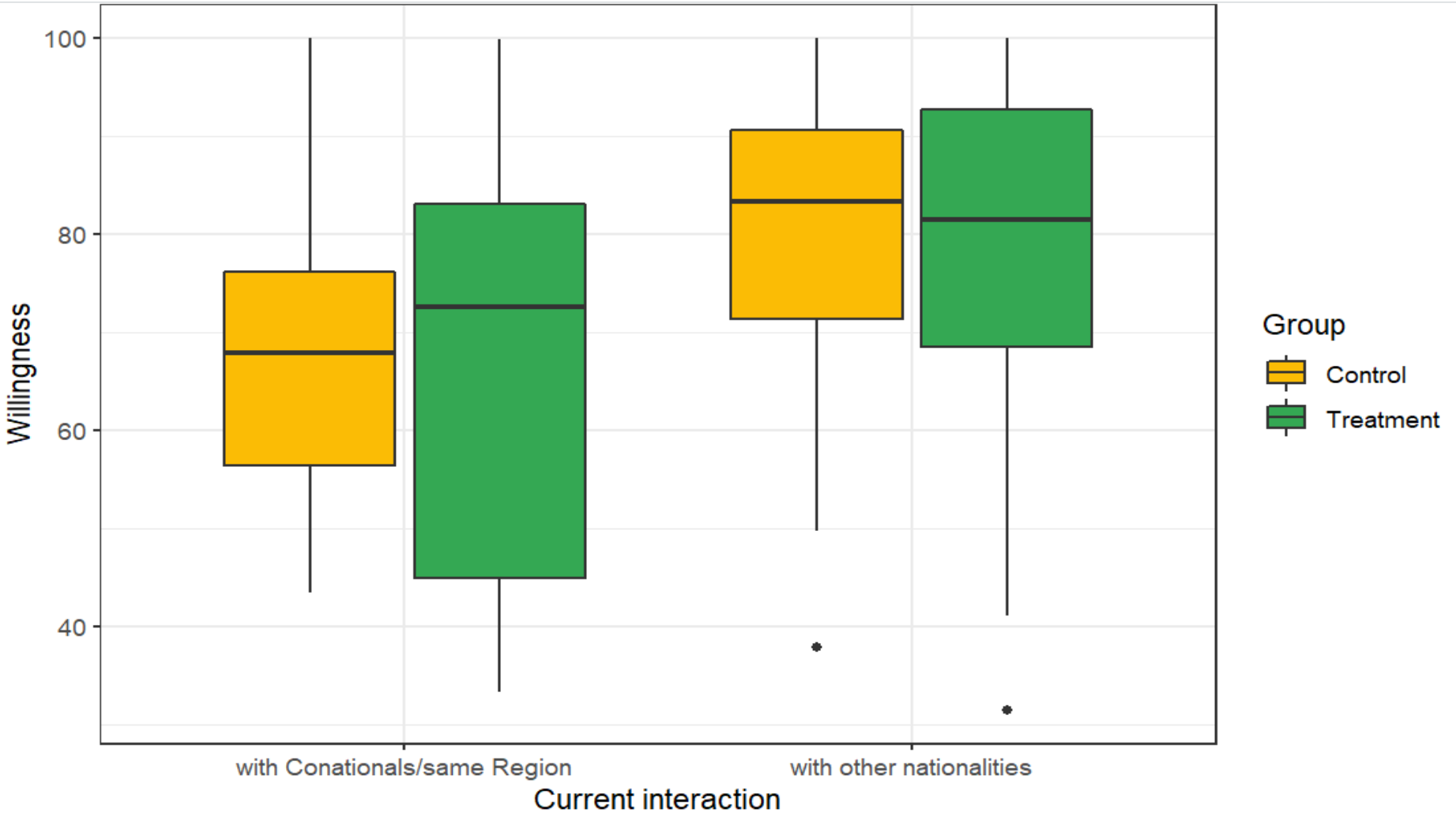
- OLS
- Five regressions with different control variables.
- Current interaction significant at 0.1%
- Abroad experience significant at 5% and 10%
- Interaction willingness decreases with rise in socio-economic status.
- People from Latin America and Caribbean region have lowest willingness to interact with other nationals.

	Outcome variable: Willingness				
	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)	Model (4)	Model (5)
Treatment	-0.787	-0.874	-0.943	-0.918	-0.965
	(3.027)	(2.919)	(2.839)	(2.886)	(2.927)
Abroad Exp		9.574***	7.365**	7.313**	6.108*
		(2.970)	(2.992)	(3.063)	(3.217)
Current interaction (with internationals)			9.779***	9.927***	10.651***
			(3.448)	(3.515)	(3.564)
Living Situation (with internationals)				-2.598	-3.049
				(3.014)	(3.057)
Low income				2.102	1.368
				(8.418)	(8.501)
Lower-middle				0.028	0.519
				(5.640)	(5.639)
Upper-middle				-1.044	-1.194
				(5.537)	(5.551)
N. America					-3.039
					(12.238)
South Asia					-7.676
					(12.207)
LatAm					-11.367
					(11.896)
Europe-C.Asia					-6.918
					(11.872)
E.Asia-Pacific					5.668
					(15.090)
Constant	77.020***	71.362***	65.259***	66.972***	74.813***
	(2.089)	(2.672)	(3.374)	(5.997)	(13.401)
Observations	126	126	126	126	126
R2	0.001	0.078	0.135	0.144	0.186
Adjusted R2	-0.008	0.063	0.114	0.093	0.099
Residual Std. Error	16.972 (df = 124)	16.364 (df = 123)	15.914 (df = 122)	16.102 (df = 118)	16.049 (df = 113)
F Statistic	0.068 (df = 1; 124)	5.231*** (df = 2; 123)	6.369*** (df = 3; 122)	2.833*** (df = 7; 118)	2.146** (df = 12; 113)
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Region wise willingness



Willingness based on current interaction status



Caveats

1. We did not ask for people's nature, if they are introvert, extrovert or shy
2. Most respondents are from Hertie, hence, possibility of underestimated treatment effect
3. Sample size too small to find any treatment effect

Conclusion

1. **Previous abroad experience plays a major role** in willingness to interact with other nationals.
2. **Current international interaction is more determining for international interaction willingness** (path dependency). Students who already interact with other internationals had no treatment effect.
3. **Students from Latin America and South Asia have the lowest willingness**. While Latin Americans responded slightly to the treatment, there was a negative treatment effect in South Asians (Still wondering why?) (One explanation can be age)
4. **31%** non-German students responded that they hardly interact with German students.