

Title: Marginalized feelings - An empirical investigation of emotional integration courses of migrants in Germany

Reference: Kuche, Coline. 2022. Marginalisierte Gefühlswelten: Eine empirische Untersuchung der emotionalen Integrationsverläufe von Migrant*innen in Deutschland. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

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Summary:

This research focuses on emotional experiences of persons with a migration background as dimension of integration. For now, there is a lack of theoretical rework on this topic and moreover a lack of empirical investigations. Thus, this book aims to fill these gaps - by creating a comprehensive, innovative theoretical framework and investigating data on emotions of migrants.

The following research questions are discussed thoroughly and answered:

- (a) *Are emotional differences between migrants from different countries and people from the host society existing?*
- (b) *How do these emotions develop by time for migrants?*
- (c) *Which influence have other integration processes on emotional integration?*

For the theoretical framework different approaches are combined (sociology of migration, theories of integration, sociology of emotions and social psychological) in the first part of the book.

For the first question the concept of emotional marginalization - a predominance of negative compared to positive emotions relative to the so-called “mainstream” as population average - is developed. In the next step approaches, e.g. the New assimilation theory and conflict theory, are applied to describe emotional developments. After acculturation, status and networks are introduced as relevant predictors and their meaning to migrants’ emotion.

The deduced hypotheses are examined in the second part of the book. As data sources the Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP) and its waves 2007-2018 are analyzed. This data is complemented by the waves 1981-2020 of the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/EVS). The operationalization encompasses the dependent variables, emotional marginalization (summary index of specific emotion frequencies) and the single emotion frequencies (anger, fear, sadness and joy). The independent variables are group memberships, time indicators and integration process indicators as well as controls (e.g. subjective health). To examine the relations, regression analysis with two modelling techniques are applied: Random-effect and fixed-effect-models.

The main findings of the multivariate analysis shows significant emotional differences between persons with and without a migration background and a greater emotional marginalization for migrants. Furthermore, differences within the group of migrants are evident: emotional marginalization increases with cultural distance between host country and country of origin. This is also true when all other independent variables are controlled. These results suggest an unequal emotional distribution between migrants and persons without a migration background. Regarding the second question, emotional developments suggest a development being similar to expectations deduced from conflict theory. Emotional marginalization and anger are increasing to the mid-term. Emotional marginalization is stagnating in the intergenerational transition, but anger is further increasing. In contrast, the amount of joy is increasing between the generations.

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The main predictors of the emotional experiences of migrants are the following: The strongest associations are found between subjective status indicators as well as transnational networks and emotional marginalization of migrants. The acculturation indicators “German language level” and “Striving for self-fulfilment” show weak association to the measurement of emotional marginalization. The other factors do not show any significant influence.

This book highlights the relevance of emotions for migrants, entails the conceptual background for future works and contributes with comprehensive empirical evidence on migrants in Germany. The study concludes that emotional marginalization needs to be reduced if (further) social cleavages are to be avoided in the future. In particular, this includes policies, which support the prevention of and protection against discrimination and racism.