

Presentation title:

How emotional are extremists? The connection of discrimination, anger and political violence

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Experiences of discrimination and marginalization affect large parts of societies and can have far-reaching consequences for attitudes and actions of affected individuals. This contribution investigates how the consequences of discrimination, the perception of injustice or the feeling of being treated unfairly impact the emergence of extremist attitudes and the acceptance of politically motivated violence. The research is framed by the General Strain Theory (GST), whereby perceptions of discrimination and marginalization are conceptualized in terms of strain, i.e., a subjective experience of stress. In conjunction with negative emotions, strain can lead to deviant behaviour, including extremist attitudes and behavioural intentions. I distinguish between discrimination as individual and perception of marginalization as collective experience of strain. It is shown how these two dimensions of strain affect the development of extremist attitudes and the acceptance of politically motivated violence. I further investigate the influence of emotional consequences of strain as mediator variables. Here I distinguish between disappointment as an inwardly directed emotion and anger as an outwardly directed emotion. Thus, the models establish a direct comparison between different types of strain and emotions. The analyses are based on data from a representative population survey in Germany with 4,483 respondents. The survey includes oversamples of Muslims and immigrants in Germany, which allows for representative subgroup analyses. Differences and similarities in the effects of discrimination experiences on political-extremist attitudes and violent behavioural intentions are discussed.