

Emotions from Below: Affective Inequalities and the Politics of Protection

Protection offered to citizens and migrants is never neutral: it is shaped by normative ideas of citizenship, belonging, and rights, and by the emotional dynamics that sustain them. States are positioned as legitimate protectors of life, borders, and also values and identities, producing unequal entitlements to protection and belonging across legal statuses. In Europe, “protective politics” framed by migration, security, and identity crises has intensified disputes over whose emotions and needs count. While citizens’ fears are often centered, migrants’ and refugees’ emotional needs remain understudied.

This Research Topic foregrounds how insecurity, trust, fear, and belonging are distributed, represented, and governed across status and identity, and how affective politics reproduce hierarchies of recognition and protection. We welcome interdisciplinary empirical and theoretical contributions on emotional governance, social representations, feeling rules, discourse, trauma/credibility, and consequences for democracy, participation, and trust, across diverse regimes and methods.

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