

Legitimately Illegitimate? Migrants' Consumer Identity in Institutional Complexity

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Abstract

Consumer acculturation researchers have examined consumer identity negotiations as well as relational and structural influences on migrants' experiences. In most research on consumer acculturation and migration, institutions act consistently in shaping consumers. Using legitimacy as a theoretical lens, we show that important macro forces, state and market, as well as meso-forces in the form of group-specific institutions, can be conflicted both inter- and intrainstitutionally. These institutional inconsistencies as well as inconsistent perceptions of the indigenous populations result in inconsistent notions and perceptions of legitimacy for the migrant group. This ethnographic study shows how this complexity triggers certain consumer strategies: sustaining an illusion of legitimacy, extending the indigenous consumer culture, and re-diasporization. Furthermore, this study distinguishes itself by involving a migration pattern previously overlooked in research, repatriate migration.

Keywords: *Consumer acculturation; Consumer identity; Legitimacy*

Track: Consumer Behaviour