

# **Between Two Cultures: Bicultural Identity Integration and Career Outcomes**

— Evidence from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP)

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Global demographic change and migration are reshaping societies and labor markets. In Germany alone, 28% of the population has a migration background, and second-generation migrants represent a substantial share of the workforce (Destatis, 2023). Bicultural individuals simultaneously engage with cultural frameworks and meaning systems of their country of residence and their ancestral homeland.

Prior research in international business has highlighted the cognitive and behavioral advantages associated with biculturalism. However, less is known about how bicultural identity integration relates to individuals' career outcomes. Addressing this gap, this study examines how identification with the country of origin and identification with Germany jointly influence career success outcomes.

Drawing on ethnic identity development theory, we argue that the combination of attachments to cultural contexts may have important implications for individuals' career success variables, including income, working hours, employment status, and job satisfaction. Bicultural identification may provide access to broader social networks, diverse cultural competencies, and increased adaptability, which can positively influence career success. At the same time, imbalances in identification across cultural contexts may be associated with different career trajectories.

To examine these relationships, we analyze panel data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) from 2020 onward. Using polynomial regression analysis, we model the joint effects of identification with the country of origin and identification with Germany on several career success indicators. This approach allows us to capture not only the independent effects of each identification dimension but also their alignment or misalignment. By integrating insights from multiculturalism research with large-scale longitudinal data, this study contributes to a better understanding of how bicultural identity integration shapes individual's career outcomes. The findings provide empirical evidence on how bicultural individuals navigate labor market success in contemporary societies.

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