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CASE STUDY:

Germany's challenges: immigration barriers in minds, economic concerns and subjective well-being Burak Erkut^r

Abstract

The analysis aims to provide the hypothesis that the emerging anti-immigration movements in Germany made use of people's concerns on the issues of immigration, trust in the political system of Germany and economic insecurity to find support. It shows on which ground anti-immigration movements in Germany reached popularity. The democratic deficit problem is a perceived problem in Germany. The Europeanlevel problem can be seen as rooted in Germany's role in the EU. Three channels are identified which shape the attitude on migration: Dislike of immigrants, economic concerns and trusting other people. The analysis provides empirical evidence within a theoretical framework to a current topic in economics which was mainly restricted to people's attitudes towards migration. Furthermore, the analysis provides empirical evidence for the corporatism hypothesis and channels shaping the attitude towards migration.

Keywords: Immigration; Germany; European Social Survey; Democratic deficit

Introduction

Both the increasing number of asylum seekers in Germany and the internationalization of the East German economy led to an ongoing debate on the role of immigration, asylum seekers and the future of European Union in the German society. Especially the rise of anti-immigrant movements such as PEGIDA in East Germany is associated with this fact.

According to a survey made by Werner Patzelt, 65.2% of PEGIDA members consider themselves as 'politically at the center', whereas only 4.4% consider themselves as 'extreme right' (Patzelt 2015). Although the political movement began towards the end of 2014, it has its roots in the anti-communist demonstrations of 1989 in the former German Democratic Republic. In the same study, 40% of the interviewed 242 PEGIDA members said that they demonstrated against the GDR regime in the past.

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In this article, the claim is that the political positions taken by current antiimmigrant movements are not new in German society; these political positions are mainly associated with socio-economic concerns and were already existing prior to the emergence of mass demonstrations against immigration. Attitudes, behaviours and beliefs on different sociopolitical issues of German people can be analyzed for identifying similar concerns which mobilized people to protest asylum seekers and immigration waves. Associating asylum seekers to domestic issues has a long tradition in Germany; especially during the long unemployment waves of 1970s and 1990s, immigrants were claimed to be competitors regarding the distribution of social goods and accused of being not interested in integrating to the German culture by some right-wing parties (Faist 1994). According to Faist (1994), immigration-related policies are a sort of welfare chauvinism, expressing the resistance of native Germans to share the benefits of the welfare state with the foreigners.

A useful data source capturing the socio-economic tendencies described above is the European Social Survey (ESS) of the European Science Foundation. ESS aims to analyze the cross-national attitudes of Europeans over time (www.europeansocialsurvey.org). The survey is done since 2002 on a biyearly basis. For the analysis the sixth round of ESS data for Germany is used.

The aim is to analyze attitudes of Germans on the issues of immigration, trust in the political system and subjective well-being by using their answers to the ESS questionnaire. The hypothesis is that these factors are related to the perception of Germans on the difficulty of life in their own country - based on their subjective interpretations of events.

Literature review

The analysis focuses on the new economic theory of migration (Stark 1991). In this model, families or groups of persons are analyzed in the background of mutual interdependence, where migration occurs as a result of a market failure in the home market. This leads to the assumption that migration would still occur regardless of wage differentials; income uncertainty or the failure of credit, insurance or labor markets are stronger motivations than individual utility maximization, which implies risk-aversion and risk-minimization of families or households (Stark 1991, Massey et al 1993, Stark 2003, Kurekova 2011).

Schiff (2002) suggests that rich countries prefer free trade to free migration, since the latter one affects culture, values and language. To be more precise, people feel more attached to those with whom they share a common culture, common values and a common language. According to the author, neither the country of emigration nor that of immigration gains from this situation unless the externalities of migration are not internalized. His findings suggest that free migration is never a global optimum regardless of the degree of internalization of the externalities.

Hillmann and Weiss (1991) point out that cultural preferences need to be considered in the theories of migration. The development of the industrial revolution in Germany was led by the state, which established the foundations of a corporatist culture in Germany (Habisch and Wegner 2005). This hypothesis suggests that people implicitly assign socio-economic duties to the state - also the ongoing debates on immigration in Germany is based on arguments which expect the state to act one way or the other. Since the state has a central role in people's lives in Germany, it would be important to capture whether interviewees trust formal German institutions. Trust into the system has a risk factor which comes from the uncertainty of the future and trust as a solely notion cannot be observed in a discrete manner - it has to be related to do a certain action (Furlong 1996).

For example, some citizens expect from the state to change (a future expectancy) the law on asylum seekers and immigration (a preference), but do not trust the system itself. The system may consist of formal institutions (state, parties, government, legal system, media, ...) but it can also contain some informal institutions (relations, traditions, customs, use of political correctness in the everyday language, ...) which are related to market transactions (taxing policies, policies contributing to a multicultural society, financing the needs of asylum seekers, investing in the integration of immigrants, promoting multicultural schools, coping against political incorrectness, ...). In other words, formal and informal institutions of the system are embedded in the market transactions.

The theory of social embeddedness (Granovetter 1985) constitutes the underpinnings of this idea, which opposes to an exogenously given notion of trust. Furlong (1996) points out that the predispositions of people on trust is shaped by the social context, and refers to Williamson's study (Williamson 1993) for six different contextual notions (societal culture, politics, regulation, professionalization, networks, corporate culture) to consider trust. In case of the social context, Katz and Stark (1987) suggest that migration also needs to be considered, since it has an important effect on the social attitudes.

Previous research with ESS data provide different findings on the issue of immigration and attitudes of natives: A Europe-wide comparison of countries based on the citizens' view of migration was done by Card, Dustmann and Preston (2005) where different channels shaping the attitude towards immigration are recognized as economy, national culture and social status of the natives.

Based on a Europe-wide comparison, Sides and Citrin (2007) find out that demographic and economic conditions of countries do not have a significant effect on the attitudes towards migration. The authors find out that cultural and national identities, economic concerns and information about immigrants are influential factors shaping the attitudes towards migration.

Rydgren (2008) focus on six different West European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, The Netherlands and Norway) to identify what

would be the motivation for voting a radical right wing party. The author identifies that skepticism towards immigration is a stronger motivation than xenophobic attitudes to vote for a radical right wing party. Furthermore, the author also shows an association between voters' support for radical right wing parties and linking immigration to criminality and social unrest.

In a Europe-wide comparison, Senik, Stichnoth and van der Straeten (2009) identify a weak negative association between the presence of immigrants perceived by natives and their support for the welfare state. The authors identify two channels shaping the attitude towards immigration; these are dislike of immigrants and economic concerns.

A comparison between Estonia and Russia on the perception of immigrants was made by Paas and Demidova (2014). They find out that unemployment is negatively associated with attitudes towards migration in Russia, but not in Estonia. The authors emphasize that country-specific conditions need to be considered for the analysis of attitudes towards migration, whereas personal characteristics do not always have a significant effect on the attitudes.

Paas and Halapuu (2012) find out that country-specific conditions, attitudes towards the institutions of the country and socio-economic security are associated with the attitudes towards migration in addition to the personal characteristics.

Analysis

Data and descriptive statistics

Data used is the sixth round of ESS, conducted in 2012. This year was preferred instead of 2014 because of the political changes with respect to Syria in 2014. The results are filtered to have only the answers of all those who were born in Germany (criterion 1) who have both of their parents born in Germany (criterion 2) and are citizens of Germany (criterion 3). This was a necessary point to be taken in order to leave aside the views of foreigners, first or second generation migrants in Germany. Out of 2957 interviewees, 2307 remain in the dataset. According to the convention, data is weighted by using the design weight provided by ESS within the dataset.

The proportion of male interviewees to female interviewees is 51% to 49%. The age of the interviewees varies between 15 and 94. 36.3% of them live in towns and small cities, 31.4% of them live in villages and only 14.3% live in big cities. Out of the 1101 interviewees who answered the question on their legal marital status, it is found out that 4.1% of the interviewees are legally married, 18.6% are legally divorced, 13% are widowed and 63.9% never got married. However, for the remaining 1232 interviewees there is no answer, which was not observed in the other cases discussed below.

The economic activity of the interviewees is captured by the main source of the household income. 59% of them have a paid work, 26.7% of them are retired, 6.8% are self-employed, 3.8% have social or unemployment benefits, the remaining interviewees have other sources of income such as savings or

farming. Within the last 12 months (prior to the time of the interview), 47.3% of them had a period of unemployment.

The answer to the question on what they feel about their own household income nowadays delivers important findings. Only 38.9% live comfortably with the present income, 49.7% say that they cope on the present income and 11.4% feel difficulties to live with the present income.

On the issue of the role of immigrants for the economy, 22.8% says that they are relatively bad for the economy (all answers from 0 to 4, 0 being 'bad'), 24.4% are neutral on the issue and the rest observe it as a positive phenomenon. Whether the immigrants make the country a bad place to live or not, 26.7% of the interviewees were negative on the issue (all answers from 0 to 4, 0 being 'bad'), 31.4% neutral and the remaining interviewees were positive.

Dimension reduction

The working hypothesis is the existence of an association between the perception of the difficulty of life in Germany and socio-economic factors. For this case, regression analysis is a useful tool. However, it also has some shortcomings. In particular, the dependent variables shall not be correlated with each other, which is a common problem described as multicollinearity (Auer and Rottmann 2011). This problem can be solved by a careful selection of independent variables, which are correlated with the dependent variable, but not with each other.

This approach can be implemented by using principal component analysis (PCA) to reduce the dimension of the data and at the same time apply an orthogonal transformation in order to have components which are not correlated with each other. The method is similar to the linear regression analysis. If the principal components are rotated, this method delivers orthogonal aggregated components based on either covariance or correlations of the observed data (Jolliffe 2002). Due to different scales of the analyzed questions, the correlation method was used in this analysis.

The components C1, C2, C3 were elaborated by a varimax rotation, where the missing values were replaced by the mean values of the corresponding variables. KMO test was significant with p=.000, indicating robust results for the PCA. The number of components was determined by a scree plot showing the corresponding Eigenvalues of the components, where three components can altogether explain 49% of the data. The method based on covariance was used to determine the principal components.

The results were rescaled for the interval between 0 and 1. Some variables with little influence (less than .450) were omitted for the representational rotated component matrix. This was done in order to give a better idea for interpretation. These were the variables on the state of health services in Germany and government's role on reducing income differences. The results of the rotated components are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Principal Component Analysis Results

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How satisfied with life as a whole .768			.455	
	How satisfied with life as a whole			.768
How happy are you .730	How happy are you			.730
Your place in society .578	Your place in society	•		.578
How satisfied with present state of economy in country .465	How satisfied with present state of economy in country	•		.465

Source: Author's own calculations using SPSS.

The three components can be interpreted as components showing the tendencies of people on the issues of their attitude towards the system (C1), immigrants (C2) and life satisfaction (C3).

The first component can be seen as playing an important role in the movements criticizing the system, since people often feel that their voices cannot be heard by the actors of the system. In this case, not only the trust in the system is involved, but also the perception of the satisfaction from the system. From the theoretical framework of Furlong (1996), it is known that trust into the system is not discrete; it has to be associated with a certain action. This component combines trust in the system together with the associated actions. To be more precise, trust in the system is reflected in government's transparency with its decisions, its policies to reduce income level differences and to protect its citizens from poverty and the objectivity of the legal system.

The second component shows the attitude towards a multicultural society, and at the same time, involves some basic economic questions involving the role of immigrants in the economy. The findings of Senik, Stichnoth and van der Straeten (2009) also support this component, since the two channels

shaping the attitude towards migration are also reflected in this component. EU enlargement's role in this component can be associated with both economic concerns and dislike of immigrants. Interestingly, the question on whether people can be trusted also belongs to this component. In addition to the present channels, also the notion of trust can be seen as a third channel shaping the attitude towards migration.

The third component is directly related to satisfaction from life involving happiness, perception of the own role in the society and satisfaction from economy, combining both subjective well-being and perceived economic state. This component can be seen as a vector of control variables for the personal characteristics. It associates market transactions in the form of satisfaction from economy with subjective variables. This association also points out the deep embeddedness of the role of economy in subjective opinions on one's own life. It can be seen as in line with the concept of social embeddedness (Granovetter 1985).

Regression analysis

Table 2. Robust OLS Estimation Results for the dependent variable 'For most people in country, life is getting worse rather than better'

Model	odel Unstandardized		Standardized T		Sig.
	Coefficie	Coefficients		Coefficients	
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.39	.016		150.97	.000
C1	.262	.016	.303	16.549	.000
C2	.192	.016	.222	12.124	.000
C3	.242	.016	.280	15.314	.000

Source: Author's own calculations using SPSS.

Based on these factors, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Results of the regression analysis are given in Table 2. Multiple linear regression analysis was done using an ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation with the dependent variable 'For most of the people in country, life is getting worse rather than better'. Since the participants of anti-immigration movements in Germany describe themselves as the 'angry citizens', the aim is to understand on which grounds the anti-immigration movements in Germany got popular. The hypothesis is that the concerns not restricted to migration were present prior to the emergence of these movements. This justifies the choice of the dependent variable. The question could be answered by Likert scales from 1 to 5, 1 implying a strong agreement and 5 implying a strong disagreement to the statement.

All coefficients are statistically significant under the corresponding confidence levels of 0%, 5% and 10%. R squared is .220. Including individual control variables did not lead to an increase of R squared. The analysis gives an association between the collective perception of the difficulty of life in

Germany and socio-economic dimensions which influence the everyday life of the interviewees.

According to the results, for every unit increase in trust and perceived satisfaction from the system of the country (C1), a .303-unit increase in the answer to the question is expected, holding the other variables constant. For every unit increase in immigration (C2), this implies a .222-unit increase, whereas for life satisfaction (C3) the predicted increase is .280 units.

Discussion and policy implications

The analysis reflects an association between the subjective perception of the country's future and subjective well-being, trust in the system and socio-economic concerns about immigration. It contributes to the emerging literature in the following ways:

On the national level, the analysis shows 'the big picture' behind the emergence of anti-immigration movements. By making use of data from the period prior to the emergence of anti-immigration movements, it is shown that not only the socio-economic concerns from immigration is an issue for the perceived difficulties in life, but also the formal and informal institutions and the subjective well-being.

The issue of democratic deficit has widely been discussed in the case of EU (Norris 1997, Follesdal and Hix 2006). Follesdal and Hix (2006) claim that it is hard to understand what is wrong with EU regarding matching voters' preferences to policies. On the European level, the analysis points out that one of the biggest problems of European Union, the democratic deficit, is also a perceived problem by German people. Since Germany has been one of the most important countries involved in the formation of a European Union, it can also be the root of the democratic deficit problem of the EU.

The analysis differs from other studies involving ESS data and migration by emphasizing the role of trust and subjective well-being in addition to migration to explain whether Germans find life difficult in their own country. The question is very specific; it does not ask whether the interviewee think that his or her life is difficult; instead, it asks whether the interviewee thinks that life is getting worse for most of the people in Germany.

Since the emergence of anti-immigration movements in Germany, a number of different topics has been widely discussed in these platforms. These topics include the weakened role of the welfare state, immigration, asylum seekers, German weapons exports, taxation policies, family policies, security policies, the introduction of the referendum system similar to Switzerland and the harmfulness of free trade agreements such as TTIP to the German economy; as an example covering these topics, PEGIDA's Dresden Theses can be given (PEGIDA, 2015).

Although their names imply the focus on anti-immigration policies, it can be seen from the analysis that these movements reflected people's concerns which were already present prior to the asylum crisis towards the difficulties in life in their own country, bringing together the issues of subjective well-being (e.g. in the form of family and security policies), immigration and trust in the system (welfare state, referendum, free trade agreements, democracy deficit) which are all reflected in the regular agenda of these movements.

The analysis provides empirical evidence for the corporatism hypothesis (Habisch and Wegner 2005). Looking at the first component from the PCA analysis, it can be seen that not only trust as a notion itself builds up this component, but also the expectation from the state to get involved into the economic activities.

By looking at the second component from the PCA analysis, not only the economic concerns and dislike of immigrants can be seen, but also the trustworthiness of people can be observed as a third channel shaping the attitude towards migration.

Trust in the system is an important concern shaping the opinion of people towards the perceived difficulty of life in Germany. Especially economic situation, transparency of government decisions and legal objectivity are perceived problems. This finding can be associated with the democratic deficit, for which the European Commission suggested more involvement of the non-governmental organizations in the White Paper on European Governance.

Transparency in government decisions, a quick reaction to the cases where legal objectivity is perceived to be lost, and giving people more security to reduce their economic concerns can be seen as the domestic challenges Germany faces. A further policy implication is to strengthen anti-poverty measures. The introduction of a nation-wide minimum wage can be seen as a step in this direction; however, it must be asked whether Germany can offer anti-poverty measures without endangering low-skilled labor force, which can be excluded from the labor market due to the minimum wage.

The analysis identifies three channels shaping the attitude towards migration: Economic concerns, dislike of immigrants and trustworthiness of people (without an emphasis on their ethnic identities). Economic concerns can be reduced by emphasizing the positive role of immigrants in the economy, especially how and whether they can be useful in branches which are not interesting from the perspective of German labor force. A discussed policy measure, providing an exception to Syrian refugees by excluding them from the system of minimum wage, can only increase the economic concerns of Germans, although its aim is claimed to integrate as many Syrian refugees as possible to the labor market.

Effective policy measures need to be done to overcome dislike of immigrants, which is also dependent on the success of integration policies. Apparently, not only trusting immigrants but trusting people in general plays an important role on shaping attitudes towards migration. More effort needs to be devoted for understanding the mechanisms behind this channel.

Concerning subjective well-being, the results suggest that not only questions on one's own happiness and life satisfaction, but also one's social status in the

society and the perceived economic situation of the country play an important role. Whether policymakers can ensure life satisfaction and happiness of individuals depends on the success of the policies they can implement to ease the everyday lives of citizens.

The analysis shows that policymakers need to look at the bigger picture which is not restricted to the challenges in migration policies. Germany's domestic challenges are involvement of people in decision-making processes as well as a well-functioning economy reducing the socio-economic concerns. At the end, not only the ideological motivation of some, but also these concerns of ordinary people are reflected in the protests against asylum seekers.

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