

THE WELL-BEING OF FORCED IMMIGRANTS IN GERMANY

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Background

Between 2014 and 2016 around 1.5 million asylum seeking people arrived in Germany.
The new refugees were regionally allocated proportional to regional population
As these people typically experienced forced migration they reached a kind of safe harbor in Germany
But, integration into the German labor market requires specific marketable skills. Refugees typically don't have developed those skills
These factors may impact refugees' subjective well-being

Aim of study

Subjective well-being of refugees in Germany in the first years after arrival
We compare the new refugees (since 2014) to other population groups in Germany (refugees arrived before 2014, immigrants and natives) and we explore within-differences of well-being of the major new refugees' groups in Germany (Syrian, Iraqi, Afghans and Eritrean = 84% of all new refugees in GSOEP)
We employ both individual characteristics and use survey and regional information (on NUTS-2-level) as controls

Life satisfaction/sub. well-being/happiness

Subjective well-being is an evaluation that people make of their own lives (Amati et al., 2018).
"Satisfaction with life has to do with personal feelings towards oneself, as well one's environment, friends, social life, way of life, psychological conditions, freedom, work, and relationships [...]. (Bajwa et al. 2018: 2)
In the case of immigrants, by taking into account their perceptions and opinions about their lives, subjective well-being can be used to evaluate the integration process within the country of residence (Paparusso, 2018)

Data

- German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP) data. In detail we use waves 2016 and 2017, which deliver data of new refugees
- The dataset includes around 29 thousand individuals in 2016, of which 23.865 participated also in wave 2017 (=82%)
- In wave 2016 3.911 new refugees (since 2014) were interviewed with the GSOEP questionnaire for a first time, of which 2.311 also participated in wave 2017 (59.1%)

Modelling

- OLS models are applied
 - Model 1: total population
 - Model 2: Main groups of new refugees (arrived since 2014)
- Cluster robust standard errors
- Panel conditioning
- Regional controls on NUTS 2-level
- Controls for mode of interview, gender of interviewer and household size

Dependent variable: subjective well-being

SWL 2016	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Native	7.30	0.013	7.28	7.33
1. generation migrant	7.56	0.026	7.52	7.62
2. generation migrant	7.56	0.041	7.49	7.65
Old refugees (<2014)	7.38	0.070	7.24	7.53
New refugees (>=2014)	7.42	0.130	7.17	7.66
Syrian	7.26	0.040	7.17	7.35
Afghani	7.57	0.090	7.40	7.75
Iraqi	7.23	0.097	7.04	7.842
Eritrean	7.35	0.148	9.06	7.64

Key explanatory variables

	Model 1	Model2
	Mean (Std. Err.)	
Age	46.2(.10)	33.6 (.18)
Age squared	2450.6 (10.38)	1244.2 (13.30)
Men (ref: women)	.483 (.003)	.625 (.008)
Education level: low	.242 (.003)	.643 (.008)
Edu: middle	.479 (.003)	.186 (.006)
Edu: high	.279 (.003)	.171 (.006)
Population groups: natives	.616 (.003)	
New refugees	.134 (.002)	
Old refugees	.038 (.001)	
Second generation migrants	.060 (.001)	
First generation migrants	.152 (.002)	
Refugee groups: Syrian		.604 (.008)
Afghani		.161 (.006)
Iraqi		.169 (.006)
Eritrean		.066 (.004)
N	47,830	4,009

Model 1: Well-being - overall population groups

	Model 1	
	Coef.	Sig.
Age	-.028	***
Age squared	.000	***
Men (ref: women)	-.044	*
Year of survey: 2017	-.058	***
Education level: Ref. low		
Edu: middle	.172	***
Edu: high	.450	***
Pop groups Ref.: natives		
New refugees (>=2014)	-.277	***
Old refugees (<2014)	.0190	
Second generation migrants	-.009	
First generation migrants	.129	***
R2 (N)	.0326 (47,830)	

Sig.: +.1, * .05, ** .01 *** .001

Model 2: Well-being - mayor refugee groups

	Model 2	
	Coef.	Sig.
Age	.0065	
Age squared	-.000	
Men (ref: women)	-.262	***
Year of survey: 2017	-.344	+
Education level: Ref. low		
Edu middle	-.128	
Edu: high	-.277	**
Refugee groups: Ref. Iraqi		
Syrian	.013	
Afghani	.204	+
Eritrean	.190	+
R2 (N)	.0365 (4,588)	

Sig.: +.1, * .05, ** .01 *** .001

Summary

- Severe inflow of refugees between 2014 and 2016 into Germany
- Within the new refugees, Syrians are the dominant group, followed by Afghani, Iraqi and Eritrean
- Subjective well-being differs systematically between natives, 1st and 2nd generation migrants, old and new refugees, with new refugees less happy and 1st gen migrants most happy
- Whilst overall well-being increases with education, new refugees in Germany show a reversed pattern
- Males report lower subjective well-being scores than females
- Within the new refugee groups we observe systematic differences in well-being, with Eritrean and Afghani report highest levels
- The subjective well-being deteriorated between 2016 and 2017 especially for new refugees

Next steps

- Explaining spatial effects by introducing regional variables (migrant density and diversity, right voting behavior, etc.)
- Including wave 2018 and applying fixed effects models
- Introducing (pre-)migration variables to model 2

Measurement of overall life satisfaction/well-being/happiness in GSOEP

How satisfied are you currently with your life in general?
Scale: A value of 0 means: totally dissatisfied. A value of 10 means: totally satisfied. You can use the in-between ratings to tailor your response.

Definition of educational level

Based on ISCED: low (ISCED<3); middle (ISCED,3,4); high (ISCED,5,6)