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On the Road to Wider

Divergence? Ethnocentrism and its
Drivers in Germany, Post-Refugee
Influx 2016

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ABSTRACT

Ethnocentrism is reemerging as an increasingly pertinent issue worldwide. Especially in Germany, as a result of high levels of immigration over the last three years, voices and actions against refugees have become more prominent. Given this, it is imperative to study the drivers which contribute to the formation of ethnocentric views. This thesis therefore aims to provide an updated analysis of ethnocentric sentiments in Germany and their contextual and individual drivers, with a special focus given to the presumed regional differences between the East and West. It tests the assumptions of Realistic Group Conflict Theory on this case. This thesis utilizes ALLBUS 2016 to apply a quantitative approach. The findings confirm that contextual characteristics such as the level of economic dynamics, unemployment rate and share of foreign population significantly influence the level of ethnocentrism. However, on the individual dimension, only the level of education proved to impact ethnocentrism. Thus, it can be concluded that contextual characteristics may have a more substantial impact on such sentiments than individual characteristics. This study aims to update the research into an extremely topical issue which is of great relevance for policy makers, as well as society as a whole.

Key words: Ethnocentrism, Realistic Group Conflict Theory, Germany, individual characteristics, contextual characteristics, East-West cleavage

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2014, Europe has been facing an unprecedented influx of refugees. Numerous trouble spots across the globe triggered millions to leave their homes in the hope of finding a safe future. In 2015 alone, more than 1.3 million individuals applied for asylum in Europe, with Germany registering the highest total number among European countries, at 890.000 asylum seekers (Eurostat 2017). Therefore, currently, over one in eight members of the German population is an immigrant (German Statistical Office 2017).

In general, the presence of foreigners, has increased levels of xenophobia in parts of native populations and immigration is often perceived as negative (Lubbers et al. 2002). Especially in Germany, the high influx of refugees¹ over the past three years threatens to revive opposition to immigration and foster anti-immigrant attitudes. These negative attitudes can be described with the concept of ethnocentrism². This concept is used as a narrowly-defined, negative dimension of attitudes towards immigration. The historic success of the populist anti-immigration party *Alternative for Germany* (AfD) in the most recent German elections (2017) seems to be an indicator that attitudes towards immigration have become more negative. These sentiments are in strong contrast to Merkel's 'open arms' refugee policies (The Economist 2017) and managing these latent sources of social tension presents serious challenges to German politics.

Throughout the last decades, German citizens voiced a clear tendency toward curbing immigration, however with a fluctuating intensity (Abali 2009). Therefore, researchers from various fields of expertise debate what factors actually influence these hostile sentiments and consequently argue that at least partially, factors on the contextual and individual level are expected to impact the level of ethnocentrism.

Besides these assumed predictors, it is argued that despite 28 years of a reunified Germany, vast differences in many aspects of life persist between the two previously separated regions. Especially on issues of immigration, the average citizen of East and West Germany³ does not seem to agree. To illustrate – relative to population size, all federal states in East Germany recorded higher rates of violent attacks against foreigners (Amadeu Antonio Foundation 2017). Voting behavior also differs between the two regions, with the AfD receiving 22% of the votes in the new federal states, whereas in the West only reached 11.2% (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2017). Moreover, research indicates that

¹ The author intentionally refrains from the commonly used word "refugee crisis", since she believes that the connotation of the word 'crisis' sends out the wrong message.

² Developed by Sumner (1906). Ethnocentrism and negative attitudes towards immigration will be used interchangeably in this thesis, since high validity between both concepts subsist.

³ When the author talks of East and West Germany, she means the old and new federal states, of which the new ones were "created" after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

the East is still less economically dynamic⁴ after almost three decades of reunification, a fact which is anticipated to impact the level of ethnocentrism (e.g. Bruda 2012). This variance is examined in this thesis.

The recent historically high influx of immigrants and the corresponding success of anti-immigration movements in Germany call for an up-to-date analysis of the factors influencing levels of ethnocentrism. This thesis provides an analysis of negative attitudes towards immigration in Germany, with the most recent available data (ALLBUS 2016⁵) and therefore signifies a step forward in the current academic debate on ethnocentric sentiments.

Thus, this thesis asks: *To what extent do contextual and individual characteristics influence the level of ethnocentrism?* Going into greater detail, two explanatory models are presented: Firstly, contextual characteristics such as – (1) level of economic dynamics⁶, (2) unemployment rate and (3) proportion of the foreign population are used to predict the level of ethnocentrism. Secondly, it investigates the individual characteristics, such as (4) level of education (5) employment status and (6) perceived fear of job loss to make more accurate deductions about the concrete factors that influence ethnocentrism.

This research draws upon the theoretical framework of realistic group conflict theory (RGCT), an established theory in the fields of economics and sociology, to derive its guiding hypotheses and subsequently test the validity of this framework quantitatively. Consequently, this thesis aims to identify the driving factors, which influence ethnocentrism in an effort to complement the existing academic work with an updated analysis and to test the framework of RGCT accordingly.

The timeframe 2016 is chosen not only due to reasons of data-availability, but also to show the attitudes after the critical stages of the refugee movement, in which Germany was a protagonist⁷. Additionally, the recent election of a far-right party into the German parliament shows the imminent need for a study which scrutinizes possible drivers for such a development, since it is assumed that far-right ideologies are a manifestation of higher levels of ethnocentrism (Hooghe 2008). The inclusion of the East and West variable offers important insights for possible policy deficiencies, since despite massive convergence efforts by the government, several key societal traits are still far from merging. Concerning its societal relevance, this evidence-based thesis could pave the way to a successful management of plural societies and may subsequently have implications for policy making.

⁴ For the purpose of this paper, economic dynamics is the study of an economy in which rates of output are changing (Burda 2012).

⁵ The German General Social Survey (ALLBUS - *Die Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften*) is a national data generation program, which is similar to the American General Social Survey.

⁶ Operationalized as East and West Germany, with the East implying a low level of economic dynamics.

⁷ This one-case focus entails some limitations on external validity, however some level of generalization can be achieved with the focus on other parliamentary systems, including a similar political culture, demographics and societal circumstances.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. First, it provides a brief overview of the literature on attitudes towards immigration and its determinants. Next, it discusses the theoretical framework of RGCT, which generates the guiding hypotheses. Subsequently, the ALLBUS dataset is described and the methodology is outlined. This leads to the analysis that guides this thesis to the results of the correlations and regression analyses. Finally, the conclusion connects the outcomes to the possible implications and potential further areas of study.

2. DEBATES ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION

There is extensive academic literature on attitudes towards immigration, yielding valuable insights, which can be grouped into two distinct approaches. First, ample literature has found evidence that attitudes towards immigration are systematically interconnected with individual characteristics such as economic interests (Malhotra et al. 2013; Fetzer 2000), educational level (Coenders and Scheepers 2008; Hagendoorn and Nekuee 1999), religiosity (Billiet 2003), perceived cultural threat (Semyonov et al. 2004), values (Davidov, et al. 2008) and social engagement (Fitzgerald 2012). Additionally, a new aspect within this area of research evolved recently, in which neuroscience and psychology play the protagonist in influencing attitudes towards immigration (e.g. Alberston and Gadarian 2015). Most notably, the work of Arøe et al. (2017) links disgust, a nonconscious but powerful basic human emotion, to opposing attitudes towards immigration.

Second, researchers from various fields of expertise have come to the conclusion that, besides individual characteristics, contextual circumstances of the whole society are crucial in shaping attitudes towards minorities (e.g. Quillian 1995). Along those lines, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) assert that personal economic circumstances are not strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigration, but sociotropic concerns about national-level impacts are. Interestingly, Stein et al. (2000) argue that economic circumstances and the size of the minority group relative to the native population are factors which correlate with attitudes towards immigration. These explanations are mostly based on evidence from Europe and North America.

Hence, the main debate among researchers revolves around whether these attitudes are influenced by individual traits or contextual, sociotropic factors.

The concept of ethnocentrism, coined by Summer (1906) is the underlying concept of negative attitudes towards immigration. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own cultural or ethnic group is superior to other cultural or ethnic groups (ibid.). This concept laid the foundation for numerous theories on attitudes towards immigration. Two major opposing theories need to be considered, both referring to the social element of attitudes towards immigration. First, group threat theory (Blalock 1967; Bobo 1999) states that when a minority group challenges the societal position of the majority group, the negative attitudes towards the minority group increase. For instance, upholding their own cultural traditions, the majority group will feel threatened, become less open to diversity and consequently develop negative attitudes towards immigration (Davies et al. 2008). It further contends that a threat increases when the size of the minority group is large (Schlueter and Scheepers 2010).

In contrast, the main premise of contact theory is that contacts between foreigners and host country nationals decrease negative attitudes (e.g. Pettigrew 1998; McLaren 2003). Accordingly, contact theory claims that when a minority group is large, more potential for intergroup contact can occur and

consequently this will lead to more positive attitudes towards immigration (Stein et al. 2000). Although several studies have intended to investigate these conflicting theories (see Savelkoul et al. 2011), results have been inconclusive so far. While different in their assumptions, both theories split society into two groups.

Within the political economy literature, one pioneering article is Scheve and Slaughter (2001), which delves into the economic perspective of attitudes towards immigration. It argues that economic self-interest suggests that low-skilled workers will be opposed to influxes of low-skilled immigrants. Further, Campbell (1965) affirms that group conflicts result from competition over scarce resources. Group-conflict theory, mainly developed by Tajfel and Turner (1987) combines the social and economic dimension and articulates that hostility between ethnicities is a clash of cultural identities since society is split into the ingroup (natives) and the outgroup (immigrants).

In general, various scholars conducted inter-country comparisons, between two or more countries (Card et al. 2015; Markaki and Longhi 2013), or in Germany as a whole (Schmidt and Weick 2017; Wiegand 1992) resulting in a scarcity of examinations with a special focus on the assumed East-West divide. To the author's knowledge, there is only the study of Terwey (2003) and Alba's and Johnson's work (2000), which specifically examine differences in attitudes towards immigration between East and West Germany. However, these comparative analyses only offer outdated findings (1994-2000).

As it is apparent from this brief literature outline, the variety of approaches measuring attitudes towards immigration is diverse. Obviously, this is a dynamic field of study, which is not only discussed in academia, but also practitioners, such as NGOs, contribute to this debate. Unfortunately, they only provide outdated findings, which are not able to reflect the current state of the German population on this issue. This underlines the need for an in-depth, intra-country empirical analysis with the most recent data (2016), to determine the causal links between attitudes towards immigration and its assumed predictors. This work contributes to the broader academic debate on regional divergence of attitudes towards immigration and its implications. Moreover, it tests the theory of RGCT in light of its assumptions. This evidence-based thesis also provides great societal relevance as its findings are pertinent to policy making. Furthermore, it sheds light on the changing needs of an increasingly diverse population and the implications they bear, a topic which German politics and public discourse have long ignored.

In this age of mass movements of refugees and increasing negative attitudes towards immigration within Germany but also in other parts of the world, this analysis provides realistic insights into the driving factors of attitudes towards immigration.

3. REALISTIC GROUP CONFLICT THEORY AS A FRAMEWORK

This section lays out the concept of ethnocentrism and then develops the ideas of RGCT. It formulates the guiding hypotheses for the analysis in line with the assumptions made within the theoretical framework.

Ethnocentrism is a nearly universal syndrome of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors (Sumner 1906; LeVine and Campbell 1972). The term is applied to the cultural or ethnic bias – whether conscious or unconscious – in which a person perceives the world from the perspective of his or her own group as archetypal, rating all other groups with reference to this ideal (Baylor 2016). Sumner (1906), who coined this concept, defines ethnocentrism as "the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (p. 13). Further, he maintains that ethnocentrism nourishes a group's pride and vanity while looking on outsiders, or outgroups, with contempt (*ibid.*). Consequently, the facets of ethnocentrism are exemplified by attitudes towards ingroups versus attitudes towards outgroups. This form of tunnel vision often results in: (1) an inability to adequately understand cultures that are different from one's own and (2) value judgment that prefers the ingroup and asserts its inherent superiority. Thus, the concept of ethnocentrism is linked to multiple forms of prejudices, including nationalism and racisms (Baylor 2016).

Therefore, ethnocentric groups see themselves as virtuous and superior, see their own standards of values and culture as universal and intrinsically true. In contrast, outgroups are seen as contemptible, immoral, inferior and weak (Neuliep and McCroskey 2009). This kind of ethnocentric tendency for ingroup favoritism is recognized as a worldwide phenomenon experienced in all cultures (Segall 1979). Various scholars have further advanced Sumner's initial definition of ethnocentrism. For instance, Lewis (1985) contends that ethnocentrism is a natural condition, which affects most people of the world in a way that they do not like foreigners and openly display feelings of hostility and fear towards them. It is important to note that the ingroup, as well as the outgroup are not homogenous in themselves. Obviously, differences, such as socio-economic characteristics, within both groups exist, which are assumed to explain variations in the level of ethnocentrism. For the purpose of this thesis, the analysis only includes the ingroup and treats the outgroup as a constant to assess variations in the level of ethnocentrism. To connect this concept with the guiding research question, ethnocentrism can be seen as the foundational concept of negative attitudes towards foreigners.

The concept of ethnocentrism predominantly influences theories and research in social psychology. Arguably, this influence has been most prominent in the fields of prejudice and intergroup relations (Bizumic 2014). In fact, major social theories in these fields, such as realistic group conflict theory (RGCT) (LeVine and Campbell 1972), were developed, at least in part, to explain ethnocentrism. According to this theory, competition between groups for valuable but limited and/or symbolic

resources, which are perceived to be scarce (regardless of whether they truly are scarce) breeds hostility (Jackson 1993). Again, this theory assumes a division of the population into an ingroup and an outgroup, which in this context, is the native population as the ingroup and the foreigners as the outgroup. The resources in question can be physical (such as land, food or water) or psychological (such as status, prestige or power). Only one group needs to believe that competition over scarce resources exists for hostile attitudes and discriminatory behavior to follow. At the very least, negative stereotypes about the other group are generated and mistrust and avoidance results.

Hence, RGCT implies that ethnocentrism can be driven by workers' sociotropic assessments about the impact of migrant labor on their industries overall (Dancygier and Donnelley 2013). The concept of sociotropic consideration explains that attitudes are not only influenced by economic self-interest but also by regional-level economic factors (e.g. Manfield and Mutz 2009). The notions of economic competition, and the concern of the native population over perceived scarce resources can thus be linked to three variables: First, economic hardship might influence stereotypical thinking (Citrin et al. 1997). Second, the size of the outgroup is a significant factor. RGCT might explain why interracial tensions surface in communities as racial diversity within them increases (Brief et al. 2005). In other words, the bigger the outgroup, in this case – foreigners – the more intense the fight over these scarce resources is expected (Quillian, 1995). Additionally, another belief is that a large outgroup has an immense potential for political mobilization, which again, could threaten the ingroup (Blalock 1967). Thirdly, exogenous economic conditions influence the level of perceived threat. If unemployment is widespread within a region, the fight over these already scarce resources becomes more intense and vice versa (Scheepers, et al. 2002). These factors are connected to the contextual characteristics, which are found on a meta-dimension and are assumed to influence attitudes towards immigration. The three contextual hypotheses are therefore derived from RGCT:

H(1): In comparing individual adult German citizens, those living in less economically dynamic regions will tend to show higher levels of ethnocentrism, than those living in more economically dynamic regions.

H(2): In comparing individual adult German citizens, those living in regions with a higher unemployment rate will tend to show a higher level of ethnocentrism than those living in regions with a lower unemployment rate.

H(3): In comparing individual adult German citizens, those living in regions with a higher proportion of foreigners will tend to show a higher level of ethnocentrism than those living in regions with fewer foreigners.

An alternative perspective of RGCT offers the assumption that there is a connection between an individuals' position within a society and his or her attitudes towards immigration (Neuliep and McCroskey 2009). 'Members' of the ingroup that move in the same circles as the outgroup (in this case foreigners) may perceive the fight over resources as more intense, which could consequently affect attitudes towards immigration negatively. In Germany, people with a migration background are often overrepresented in the lower strata of society, as a consequence of a low level of education, which might result in unemployment (Pielage et al. 2012). Following this train of thought, it can be stipulated that members of the ingroup, who share the same low social status as the people of the outgroup, feel threatened since they have to compete over the same resources, which are perceived to be scarce. Hence, individual characteristics such as employment status and the level of education influence attitudes towards immigrants. Also, the level of perceived threat of job loss is predicted to influence attitudes towards immigration, ergo if an individual is afraid to lose his or her job, attitudes towards immigration are assumed to become more hostile. The following individual hypotheses are articulated accordingly:

H(4): In comparing individual adult German citizens, those with a higher education will tend to show a lower level of ethnocentrism than those with less education.

H(5) In comparing individual adult German citizens, those in employment show a lower level of ethnocentrism than those being unemployed.

H(6): In comparing individual adult German citizens, those with less concern of job loss will tend to show a lower level of ethnocentrism than those with higher concerns of job loss.

4. DATA AND METHOD

Having derived the guiding hypotheses, this thesis now turns to the case selection and methodology. This chapter is split into four sections, starting with the case selection and data collection method. Next, the assumed predictors are discussed and lastly, the guiding methodology of this research is introduced.

4.1 The Intriguing Case of Germany

This study employs a large-N study by scrutinizing the level of ethnocentrism and its assumed drivers. The static point in time (wave 2016) is highly interesting, since the unusual high influx of refugees in 2015 and 2016 is assumed to have intensified the attitudes towards immigration. Focusing specifically on the two regions East and West is especially interesting because although they have been united in one country for over two decades, scholars across various disciplines contend that they differ in many areas, such as employment situation, foreign population density, age etc. (e.g. Zick and Klein 2014).

With respect to the selection of Germany as a case study, three reasons must be stressed. Firstly, while several quantitative studies have been conducted on Germany as a whole on this issue, none of them provides an updated version, nor especially highlight the differences within the two regions. In light of the high influx of refugees and the following heated debate in the political sphere and civil society in Germany around the topic immigration, the societal relevance in updating and conducting a quantitative study is fulfilled. Also, looking at the bigger picture, Germany is in fact not the only country experiencing a significant rise of far-right movements (e.g. France and Greece), and other countries too, show especially on this topic big divergences among regions (e.g. Italy North-South divide). Secondly, the availability of high-quality panel data from ALLBUS, which introduced new variables and indicators to the time wave 2016, focusing on attitudes towards immigration makes this study highly reliable and thus facilitated the case selection considerably. Thirdly, although Germany only labelled itself as an “immigration country” in 2005, immigration is definitely not a new phenomenon. Most notably the arrival of the “guest workers” in the 1950s generally from Turkey and Italy shaped recent German development (*Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung* 2015).

To examine attitudes towards immigration and learn more about its driving forces, this study utilizes the most recent time wave (2016) from the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS)⁸, a biennial survey that has been conducted since 1980 and entails 793 variables. Like all previous ALLBUS data sets, this survey includes information on attitudes, behaviors and socio-structural data of the German adult population (age 18+). “A representative cross-section of the population is questioned using face-to-face interviews⁹” (GESIS 2017), which are comparable in terms of methodology and sample population across all measurement years. ALLBUS constitutes the most extensive survey ever conducted on attitudes toward ethnic minorities in Germany (Alba and Johnson 2000). Interestingly, each time wave presents a focal topic, which for 2016 is named “acceptance towards immigration and attitudes towards ethnic and religious minorities in Germany” and thus enables the study of these attitudes. In terms of sampling criteria, because the focus is on the German population, the analysis only includes respondents who possess German citizenship, which are 93.8% (N=3271) of the whole sample (N=3487). This is also in line with the German Basic Law, which states that “a German within the meaning of this Basic Law is a person who possesses German citizenship [...] (Article 116, 1). When looking at the number of respondents within the regions the survey is designed with an oversampling of the Eastern-German residents to assure a large enough sample for separate analysis. This results in N=2135 respondents from the West and N=1136 from the East.

Three items of ALLBUS 2016 show attitudes towards immigration. Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale the degree to which the items on the scale applied to them. A conducted principal component analysis (PCA) reduced them into one single component which is named

⁸ ALLBUS time wave of 2016 is only available in German; hence the author translated the wording.

⁹ Method: CAPI – Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing

Ethnocentrism Scale¹⁰, and thus defines the dependent variable of the following analysis. The KMO¹¹ and Bartell's Test prove that the variables are highly significantly correlated ($p < .001$). Also, the component matrix proves that all factors load meaningful on the component. Table 1 shows the items which were reduced through a one-dimension reduction. In the end, a six-point Ethnocentrism Scale was developed (1- extremely low – 6- extremely high).

Table 1: *Question formulation of the attitudes towards immigration item*

Question wording	Answer categories	Factor loading
<i>Variable 1: Foreigners should go home when jobs get scarce</i>	1 (completely agree) – 7 (completely disagree)	.824
<i>Variable 2: Foreigners should not be allowed to participate in German politics</i>	1 (completely agree) – 7 (completely disagree)	.828
<i>Variable 3: The presence of Muslims results in conflict</i>	1 (completely agree) – 7 (completely disagree)	.634

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

All three items refer to the normative and therefore evaluative, dimension. The first two items refer to foreigners in general, whereas the third item specifically refers to Muslims. Admittedly, this could influence the level of reliability and validity, which is however assumed to be marginal for the purpose of this paper. Additionally, studies find that the description of how to name a foreigner has evolved from guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s, to foreigners and now a significant portion of the population equals foreigners with Muslims (Mercator Foundation 2015). Although this is clearly wrong, people tend to apply this religious grouping above the more general term – foreigners (Didero 2014). Nevertheless, the number of Muslims in Germany is with 4.25 million (4.9% of the total population) rather large and increased by 12.5% between 2015 and 2016 (Fowid 2017). Therefore, especially with the help of media coverage the perception of an “Islamic invasion” (Friedman 2017) formed general attitudes towards immigration in Germany in the last three years and can thus be seen as a robust item for the Ethnocentrism Scale.

Moreover, all three items refer to another dimension of ethnocentrism and factors that are supposed to influence attitudes towards immigration. Variable 1 alludes to the economic dimension, whereas variable 2 covers the political dimension. Lastly, variable 3 includes the social dimension.

¹⁰ This Ethnocentrism Scale must not be mistaken with the one developed by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997).

¹¹ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test for Sampling Adequacy

4.2 Contextual Characteristics

In order to capture the drivers which are exogenously given but assumed to influence ethnocentrism, the respective region and thus contextual characteristics must be taken into account.

RGCT allows one to derive hypotheses that connect effects of contextual characteristics to attitudes towards immigration (Coenders and Scheepers 2008). Thus, to test the hypotheses rigorously and in light of the theoretical framework, this study operationalizes statistical data to account for the societal conditions and links these to the levels of ethnocentrism. All of the following predictors are used as independent variables.

First, to increase the reliability of the analysis, the new and old federal states are operationalized to test the first hypothesis. It is assumed that the East is less economically dynamic than the West. This could originate from several reasons, such as the communist legacy and its path dependency (Padgett 1999). However, this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. At issue is whether the population of the East has on average a more ethnocentric orientation. Therefore, the *statistical territory of whether the respondent lives in East or West Germany* is included in the analysis and is coded as dummy variables.

Second, unemployment rate is expected to influence attitudes towards immigration. Thus, *unemployment rate on a district level* is used as an ordinal variable to facilitate a comprehensive quantitative analysis. It is aggregated into four categories, beginning with 1 – until 4% and ending with 4 – above 10%.

Third, the thesis dissects the *percentage of foreigners living within a given district*, hence the density of the foreign population. ALLBUS provides an ordinal variable with initially 14 categories, however through recoding aggregated into seven categories. Starting with the 1 – 0%-below 4% and ending with 7 – 24%-below 28%.

ALLBUS based both latter empirical inquiries on data collected by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development and integrated this data in the ALLBUS dataset for the first time of its existence, which opens up new possibilities for investigation.

4.3 Individual Characteristics

ALLBUS covers a large number of demographic variables, of which some constitute the foundation of this study's explanatory model and thus represent further independent variables. Only minor recoding of the initial indicators was necessary to facilitate the quantitative analysis.

Education is rated as a meritocratic cornerstone of social stratification (Terwey 1987) and is measured at the highest completed general education level. The coding excludes those who are still attending school and is accumulated into five groups: 1 – no certificate, 2 – lowest level, 3 – intermediary level, 4 – qualification for university of applied sciences, 5 – qualification for university.

Employment is a dichotomous variable, and split into two dummy variables, grouping full-time and part-time working respondents into the employed variable, since this thesis assumes negligible effects of this simplification. Furthermore, this component does not differentiate between occupational groups, which would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

The acceptance of ethnic strangers could also be reduced by diffuse economic fears of the perception of personal material deprivation. Durckheim (1951) contends that subjective evaluation of economic conditions is expected to be an important driver behind diverse opinions and views. Therefore, the *level of perceived concern of becoming unemployed* is also included in the analysis. It is a split variable on an ordinal scale, since it only includes respondents who are employed. Starting with 1 – great concern and ending with 4 – no concern.

Table 2 shows the basic descriptive statistics of the independent variables, but also the dependent variable Ethnocentrism Scale compared by East and West Germany.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of independent and dependent variables: 2016

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Ethnocentrism- Scale		1	6			
East	1101			3.2	3	1.48
West	2053			2.6	2	1.28
Contextual Characteristics						
Region (Dummy)						
East	1136	0	1	.35	0	.48
West	2135	0	1	.65	1	.48
Density of foreigners on a district level						
East	1136			1.36	1	.83
West	2135			2.88	3	1.21
Level of unemployment on a district level						
East	1136			3.3	3	.65
West	2135			2	2	.9
Individual Characteristics						
School leaving certificate						
East	1127			3.4	3	1.1
West	2110			3,4	3	1.22
Employment Status (Dummy)						
Unemployed						
East	557	0	1	.49	,00	.5
West	925			.43	,00	.49
Employed						
East	579	0	1	.51	1	.5
West	1209			.57	1	.49
Fear of job loss						
East	314			3.14	3	.83
West	695			3.33	4	.83

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

4.4 A Statistical Approach

This thesis conducts three types of quantitative analysis and thus goes beyond the sole use of descriptive statistics by introducing inferential statistics, which allow for some degree of generalization about the populations. First, it conducts two Mann-Whitney U Tests, non-parametric test, which are used to assess significant differences in a scale variable by a single dichotomous independent variable (Sawilowsky 2005). Additionally, it does not require the variable to be normally distributed¹². Since these assumptions are fulfilled by the conditions of the variables in question (Ethnocentrism Scale and East - West Germany/ employment status) it is an appropriate test if the two regions statistically differ in their level of ethnocentrism. Additionally, the test statistics allows for a calculation of the effect size, which will be interpreted with Cohen's effect size estimates (2008)¹³, using the following formula:

$$r = \frac{z}{\sqrt{n}}$$

whereby r is the strength of association using the standard normal deviate (z), and n is the number of cases in the sample.

To complement the outcomes a Chi Square test of independence, which is also robust with respect to the distribution of the data will be conducted as well.

Second, to examine the influence of the ordinal, independent variables (contextual and individual) on the dependent variable of ethnocentrism, this thesis performs bivariate correlations. Since the level of ethnocentrism and the independent variables are ordinal, a Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation is the suitable test. This statistical analysis measures the degree of association between the variables in question or in other words identifies the strength of a monotonic relationship. The value is called Spearman's correlation coefficient (r_s)¹⁴¹⁵, which is formulated as follows:

$$-1 \leq r_s \leq 1$$

Third, a multivariate ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression is performed, to verify the degree of correlation of the different independent variables with the dependent variables.

As a predictive analysis, the OLS regression is used to explain the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and the proposed independent variables. Since the variables meet the crucial assumptions of OLS regression, except the normality rule, this type of analysis is a litmus test of consistency. In direct connection, the normality assumption is due to the large sample size ($n > 50$) not essential. Additionally, tests for multicollinearity indicated very low levels of multicollinearity are

¹² Levene statistics indicate that the assumption of equal distribution is not satisfied.

¹³ Very small: $r = 0,01$; Small: $r = 0,2$; Medium = $0,5$; Large = $0,8$; Very large: $r = 1,2$

¹⁴ The closer r_s is to ± 1 the more robust is the monotonic relationship

¹⁵ r_s : ,00-.19 – 'very weak'; ,20-.39 – 'weak'; ,40-.59 – 'moderate'; ,60-.79 – 'strong'; ,80-.1.0 – 'very strong'.

present (*VIF*= 1.01 for economic dynamics; 1.07 for the level of education; 1.02 for fear of job loss; 1.007 for employment status; 1.046 for unemployment rate; 1.079 for share of foreign population). This gives rise to a specification of the following formula:

$$y = \hat{a} + b_1(\text{economic dynamics}) + b_2(\text{unemployment rate}) + b_3(\text{size of foreign population}) + b_4(\text{education}) + b_5(\text{employment status}) + b_6(\text{fear of job loss}) + e$$

whereby *y* is the dependent variable “level of ethnocentrism”, *a* the intercept, *b* the predictor variables or independent variables, and *e* the random error term.

All in all, this thesis comprises a quantitative analysis, which assesses assumptions of RGCT. The next chapter applies the theory and the methodology to the case study of Germany in 2016.

5. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THE DRIVERS OF ETHNOCENTRISM

This chapter examines the analysis, presents the results in light of the theory set out in chapter three and collates them with the initial hypotheses. Therefore, it is divided into three sections and begins with an examination of the contextual characteristics, which is followed by the individual characteristics. Lastly, OLS regression is executed to complement the findings of the first two parts.

5.1 Do Regions Matter?

The assumption is derived from a component of sociotropic theory, which asserts that people are likely to form their opinions about immigration by referring to the regional environment where they live rather than on the average characteristics of their country (Markaki and Longhi 2013). Hence, social conditions were identified as explanatory variables pertaining to unfavorable attitudes towards outgroups.

First of all, a comparison between East and West Germany, as an operationalization of the level of economic dynamics and the general level of ethnocentrism needs to be executed. This is done best with a Mann-Whitney U Test, which is shown in table 3.

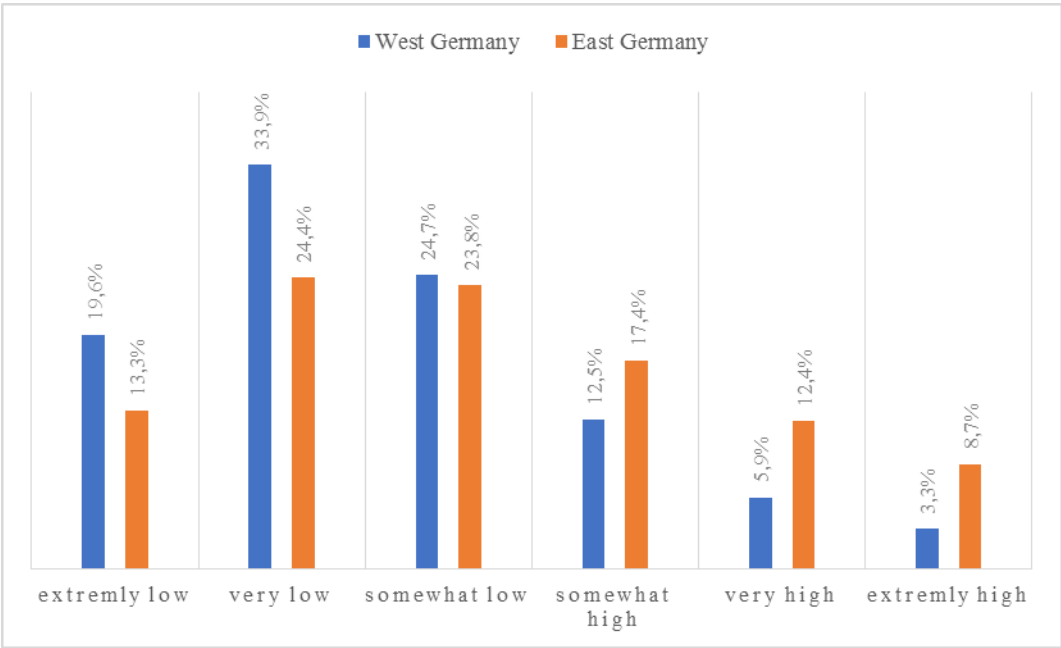
Table 3: *Statistics of Mann-Whitney U Test – East West Germany and level of ethnocentrism*

Mann-Whitney U	886048.000
Wilcoxon W	2994479.000
Z	-10.285
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the level of ethnocentrism is greater for respondents living in East of Germany (Mdn= 3) than for respondents living in West Germany (Mdn=2), $U=886048$, $r=.2$. Additionally, the difference in the level of ethnocentrism is statistically highly significant ($p \leq .01$). The effect size, however low, explains some part of the variance between the level of ethnocentrism in the East and West. Hence, this test verified that the level of ethnocentrism differs between both regions, with the population of East Germany showing higher levels of ethnocentrism. To corroborate these findings with another statistical test, the chi-square test of independence indicates similar results. The relation between these variables was significant, $X^2(5, N = 3154)$, $p < .01$. Also, looking at Figure 1, 9.2% of respondents living in the West indicate very high to extremely high levels of ethnocentrism, whereas 21.1% in the East show the same intensity of ethnocentrism. Therefore, it can be affirmed that respondents living in East Germany show higher levels of ethnocentrism. Since this thesis operationalized East and West as the level of economic dynamic, which was derived from RGCT, $H(1)$ is confirmed.

Figure 1: Ethnocentrism Scale correlated with East and West Germany



Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

This phenomenon is linked to each region’s distinct social and political history (Malik 2013). Numerous reasons are assumed to have influenced this picture. Fraternal relative deprivation is often put forward as an argument. This concept describes the perception of one group, in this case the population of East Germany, to be collectively discriminated against another, more advantaged group, such as the population of West Germany. Studies confirm that this sentiment is relevant for the formation of ethnocentric views (e.g. Zick et al. 2016). Others emphasize the influence of homogenous social structures in the East and the effect of a lack of intercultural contact on ethnocentrism (Asbrock

et al. 2012). In contrast, Grau et al. (2012) refer to the importance of structural differences, especially related to economic dynamics, such as high unemployment rate.

On the basis of this discussion it can be argued that various reasons play a role in the comparably high levels of ethnocentrism in East Germany but most of them are interrelated to lower economic dynamics. Therefore, to investigate those differences, which are anticipated to influence economic dynamics more rigorously, this thesis continues with an analysis of the unemployment rate in relation to ethnocentrism.

RGCT suggests that job scarcity can trigger ethnocentric views due to an increased labor market competition. Therefore, this thesis assesses $H(2)$ by running a Spearman's correlation, to test the relationship between the level of ethnocentrism and the unemployment rate on a district level of the German population. The analysis shows a very weak, positive correlation between both variables, which is, however highly statistically significant, $r_s = .058$, $p < .001$ (see Table 4). Previous research has so far only shown that on a national level unemployment rate and attitudes towards immigration are linked, hence this analysis is a step forward, since it utilizes district-level data. In fact, this analysis reveals that a high unemployment rate in a specific district is correlated with high levels of ethnocentrism. Consequently, it reconfirms previous findings and is also in line with RGCT. Thus $H(2)$ is confirmed.

Assuming that unemployment rate is an element of economic dynamics it additionally strengthens the validity of both $H(1)$ and $H(2)$, as the Federal Labor Office finds huge differences in unemployment numbers in 2016, between East, averaging at 8.2% and West Germany, with around 5.4%.

Table 4: Correlation between unemployment rate, share of foreign population and ethnocentrism

	Unemployment Rate		Share of foreign population	
Ethnocentrism Scale	N		N	
	3253	.058***	3154	-.2***

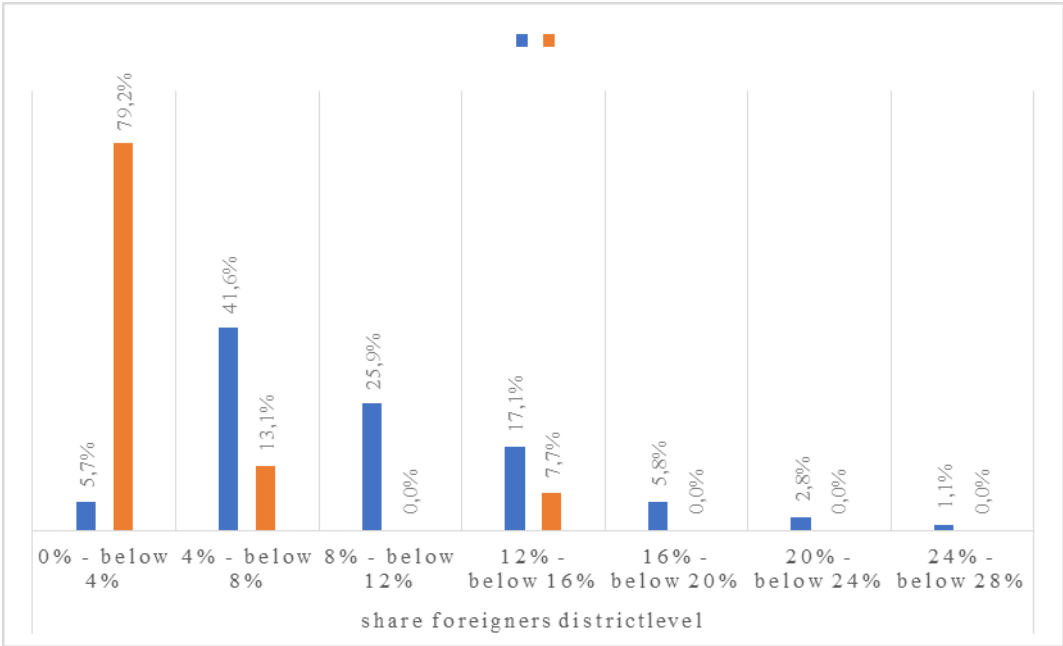
Note: *** $p < .001$

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

Next, this thesis turns to the examination of $H(3)$, by scrutinizing the relationship between the percentage of foreigners on a district level and the level of ethnocentrism. Rooted in RGCT, feelings of threat among natives are expected to be higher in areas which are less affluent and with more immigrants. However, table 4 indicates a weak, negative correlation between both variables, which is highly statistically significant, $r_s = -.2$, $p < .001$, meaning that a high share of foreigners decreases levels of ethnocentrism. This not only refutes $H(3)$ but also sheds reasonable doubt on the validity of RGCT,

which theorizes that ethnocentrism is high in regions where immigrant groups (outgroup) are big. This finding rather validates the contact theory, established by Allport (1954), who contends that intergroup contacts, which are assumed to increase due to a big outgroup, are likely to reduce negative attitudes. Furthermore, data from the German Federal Statistical Office (2018) also confirms contact theory and again refutes *H(3)* (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Share of foreigners living in East and West Germany 2016



Source: Based on German Federal Statistical Office, 2018

It shows that in the East, which *H(1)* confirmed to have higher levels of ethnocentrism, fewer foreigners reside, and vice versa. The comparatively high level of ethnocentrism in the new federal states underlines that this set of attitudes does not necessarily have to correlate with the number of foreigners in the population. A small outgroup that is viewed as unwelcome, can attract aversion or serve as a scapegoat for the hostility awakened by problematic social changes (Merkl and Weinberg 2008). Especially in the new federal states, the demand for immigrant remigration when the labor market is tight increased strongly. This leads to the assumption that in an economic situation perceived as falling well below expectations, the criticism of foreign minorities provides an outlet for negative sentiments towards foreigners. This conclusion might be seen as support for competition-based theories of ethnocentrism in a period of social transformation.

On the basis of this discussion, this analysis now turns to an assessment of the individual characteristics to offer a complementary approach of argumentation.

5.2 Differences Across Individuals

Education is often hypothesized to have positive effects on the level of ethnocentrism. In the literature, this is explained in two ways. First, education, so the standard argument claims, in the conventional view, confers knowledge, moralities, and experiences that together act as a counterweight to the “natural” inclination toward prejudice (Kinder and Kam 2010). Likewise, more educated individuals are less likely to evaluate immigration as having a negative effect on culture, crime or the economy (Herreros and Criado 2009). Second, according to the labor market competition theory and also connected to RGCT, since immigrants mostly work in low-skilled manual jobs, they are likely to complement- rather than substitute for - highly educated natives (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). These assumptions are tested with $H(4)$. The conducted Spearman correlation, shown in Table 5, indicates a weak, negative correlation between both variables, which is highly statistically significant, $r_s = -.36$, $p < .001$. 21% of the respondents with the lowest level of education in Germany show extremely high levels of ethnocentrism, whereas only 2.8% of the people having experienced a university education have proven extremely high levels of ethnocentric tendencies. Both findings confirm $H(4)$.

Table 5: Correlation between level of education and ethnocentrism

	Level of Education	
Ethnocentrism Scale	N	
	3123	-.362***

Note: *** $p < .001$

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

However, in how far the actual formal education has an impact, or also the interfuse factors such as different socialization effects, which work inside and outside the education context, cannot be included in the analysis.

A key individual variable missing from the analysis up to now is employment status, thus the following empirical analysis includes a variable indicating whether the respondent is unemployed or not. $H(2)$ already investigated the component of employment, however only on the contextual level with sociotropic considerations. Now, the individual level intends to capture another important indicator of ethnocentrism. Consistent with RGCT and also rational competition theories, employment status has been proven to be a crucial predictor of ethnocentrism. Unemployed people are more likely to show higher levels of ethnocentrism since immigrants are more likely to be low-skill workers and more likely to compete with the unemployed native population (Gorodzeisky, 2013). This also applies to the German population. A Mann-Whitney U Test, shown in Table 6, indicates that ethnocentric inclinations are significantly higher for unemployed people ($Md=3$) than for employed people ($Md=2$),

$U=1042243.50$, $p<.001$. The effect size, however low ($r=0.14$), still explains some part of the variance between the level of ethnocentrism and employment status. Therefore, $H(5)$ is confirmed.

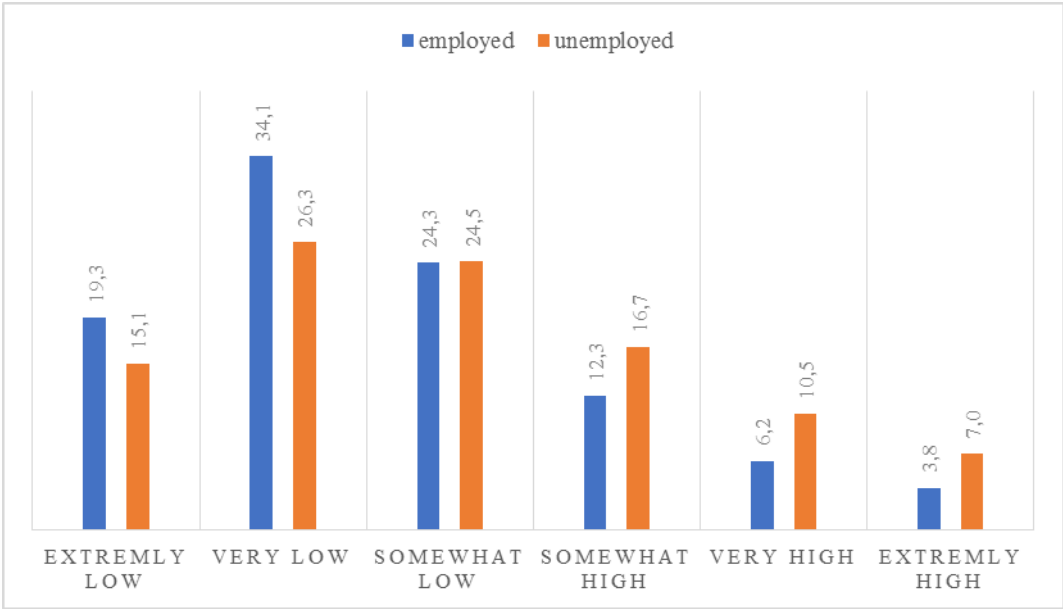
Table 6: Statistics of Mann-Whitney U Test – Employment status and level of ethnocentrism

Mann-Whitney U	1042243.50
Wilcoxon W	2539558.50
Z	-7.617
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

Figure 3 visualizes the relationship between both variables. Interestingly, 17.4% of the unemployed respondents show very high to extremely high levels of ethnocentrism, as opposed to 10% of people who are employed, again verifying $H(5)$. It can be assumed that this is closely interrelated with the level of education, since unemployed are disproportionately less-educated (Card et al. 2015). Obviously, this is a simple answer to complex circumstances, but a multivariate analysis in the next chapter will shed some light on the interrelation between these variables.

Figure 3: Employment Status and level of ethnocentrism, 2016



Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

Global economic competition is growing which often results in the perception that jobs are scarce and subsequently revives fears of job loss and individual economic insecurity among many. $H(6)$ assumes that this could stimulate feelings of hostility of the ingroup towards the outgroup, since the ingroup might have the perception that immigration is at the root of their fears. Besides, there is also

considerable evidence in the growing literature on the economics of happiness which suggests that job loss is considered one of life's most traumatic events (e.g. Layard 2006). However, a Spearman correlation confirms that this assumption is statistically insignificant ($p > .05$) and thus this thesis refutes $H(6)$. This could stem from the fact that Germany in general has high job securities in most sectors. Of all valid employed respondents in the ALLBUS 2016, 89.6% possess an indefinite job contract, which gives individuals a feeling of security. Furthermore, the country's strong economic performance and low unemployment rates in recent years, might have strengthened the feeling of security.

In light of this analysis, the need for a regression analysis becomes apparent, to make better estimates from multiple predictors. However, it should be noted that the regression is a complementary approach next to the bivariate correlations executed in this section.

5.3 Regression

As a litmus test of consistency this thesis now turns to the OLS regression, to inspect the interdependence between both sets of characteristics as the independent variables and the level of ethnocentrism.

Table 7: *Ethnocentrism regressed on the independent variables*

		Regression Results		
		B	SE	B
(Independent) variables	<i>Economic dynamics</i>	.508***	.105	.186
	East (dummy included)			
	<i>Unemployment rate</i>	.063**	.028	-.082
	<i>Share of foreign population</i>	-.029**	.026	-.034
	<i>Level of education</i>	-.403***	.035	-.346
	<i>Employment status</i>	-.730	.265	-.081
	Employed (dummy included)			
	<i>Fear of job loss</i>	-.052	.046	-.034
Test statistics	<i>Constant</i>	3.656		
	<i>Adj. R²</i>	.286		
	<i>F-statistics</i>	31.654***		
	<i>N</i>	971		

Note: ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

Source: Based on ALLBUS 2016

Table 7 presents the central results of the OLS regression. First, the $R^2_{Adjusted}$, which shows the explanatory power of the regression model, is quite low, ($R^2_{Adjusted} = .286$, $F(31.654)=3.656$, $p<.001$). However, this should not be a concern, since this model tries to predict human behavior which ultimately results in a low $R^2_{Adjusted}$. Therefore, this is not assumed to influence the validity of the study. It was found that economic dynamics, unemployment rate and level of education significantly predict the variance in the level of ethnocentrism. With regards to economic dynamics, the analysis proves to be highly significant. In other words, low or high levels of economic dynamics can be seen as predictors of ethnocentrism, which again proves $H(1)$. The sociotropic variable unemployment rate is also statistically significant, as for a one unit (category) increase in the unemployment rate, the level of ethnocentrism rises by .063 units, holding the other independent variables constant. Hence the OLS regression also reconfirms $H(2)$. The share of foreign population again is found to be significant, however not according to the formulated $H(3)$. A bigger foreign population is associated with lower levels of ethnocentrism. This also reconfirms the explanations voiced in section 5.1. Connecting this result to RGCT, a debate arises that this theory may not be ideal to explain ethnocentrism to a full extent. In contrast, the level of education has proven to predict the level of ethnocentrism. Additionally, the coefficient shows a negative relationship, which again confirms $H(4)$, which hypothesized that a higher education, decreases the level of ethnocentrism. Employment status ($H(5)$) and also the fear of job loss ($H(6)$) are not statistically significant anymore. For future analysis, it might be interesting to differentiate between distinct occupational groups. This could reveal nuances with regards to the individual employment situations and their impact on ethnocentrism.

All in all, this OLS regression shows that rather contextual, sociotropic indicators drive the level of ethnocentrism. Especially the impact of unemployment on a contextual level but not the individual level stands out as noteworthy results.

6. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The integration of the increasing immigrant population is one of the major issues facing Germany today. However, with a diverse population, voices and actions guided by ethnocentrism within the native population seem to be growing louder. Therefore, this thesis set out to identify the drivers which are assumed to influence ethnocentrism. To return to the research question, of how contextual and individual characteristics influence ethnocentric inclinations, the paper first created an ethnocentrism scale, which was a reflection of three questions of the ALLBUS 2016 survey concerning attitudes towards immigration. RGCT framed the entire analysis, which however proved to only hold partially, with regards to the formulated hypotheses. Bivariate correlations and a supplementary OLS regression were run to test them quantitatively.

The operationalized regions of East and West Germany, and their implied differences in economic dynamics proved to be a solid predictor of the level of ethnocentrism. Moreover, the proof that the sociotropic element of unemployment rate plays an important role in predicting ethnocentrism is noteworthy, since the individual employment status and the subjective fear of job loss did not prove to be significant. Interestingly, the argument here is that factors such as unemployment on the collective level matter more for opinion formation than the individual level. Next, the share of the foreign population within a district in connection to ethnocentrism turned out to behave inversely as hypothesized. Consequently, with a big outgroup, levels of ethnocentrism become lower. This again questions the validity and applicability of RGCT and instead supports contact theory. Lastly, the effect of education on ethnocentrism is salient, but it cannot be easily interpreted. On the one hand, educated people could hold less ethnocentric views because they have better prospects to acquire ethically positive views of the world, but it needs to be acknowledged that higher education might increase the ability of responding to survey questions with socially accepted opinions (social desirability effects¹⁶).

All in all, this thesis contributes to an overall understanding of ethnocentrism and its drivers and offers insights into the particularly interesting case of Germany, with special attention given to an assumed East-West cleavage. An updated research is particularly pertinent due to the vast immigrant influx which entered Germany since 2014. This is especially relevant for policy makers, who have to manage the increasing pressure towards the right within the population but also within the political sphere.

This thesis offers a quantitative assessment on ethnocentrism through the lens of RGCT. Accordingly, a number of limitations need to be discussed. Admittedly, the list of predictors on both the contextual and individual level is far from exhaustive and could be extended. However, since many of them are assumed to be interrelated, an inclusion of them could result in problems of multicollinearity. On a methodological note, one needs to bear in mind that the number of aggregated variables which construct the Ethnocentrism scale could be expanded, in the hope of providing a more holistic picture

¹⁶ See Krebs & Schuessler, 1987.

of all the components ethnocentrism entails. Also, the common problems often encountered in survey research such as framing effects and internal validity need to be considered.

To overcome those limitations and build upon its findings, future research needs to be conducted on the phenomenon of ethnocentrism. Due to the changing situation and composition of the German population within the last three to four years, a comparative and more dynamic approach seems highly relevant. In other words, to compare the level of ethnocentrism before and after the historic influx of refugees. Also, an analysis which includes the different characteristics of the immigrants, hence not treating the outgroup as a homogenous group, for instance a differentiation between economic migrants and war refugees could shed light on a much more nuanced picture of ethnocentrism. Lastly, it would be interesting to supplement these quantitative findings with qualitative interviews to gather more detailed information and to better understand the dynamics of such sentiments.

In a nutshell, this empirical study of contextual and individual characteristics raises awareness that ethnocentric sentiments still remain prevalent in society. It is important to understand the drivers of such sentiments as this is the first step to prevent a divergence within a population.

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