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Research Report

SOEP-IS 2013 - Project "Mobility and Identity"

SOEP Survey Papers, No. 1090

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SOEP-IS 2013 – Project "Mobility and Identity"

Module Title in SOEP Documentation: Regional Identification

Franz J. Neyer, Julia Zimmermann, Elisabeth Schubach

Project "Mobility and Identity"

Spatiotemporal mobility - the permanent or temporal, voluntary or forced change of residence - constitutes extensive challenges and opportunities to individual life plans in the 21st century. Mobility experiences may either enrich or challenge individual identities. At the same time, identity may determine whether individuals engage in mobility experiences or not. However, until today the psychological conditions and consequences of spatiotemporal mobility have hardly ever been researched (cf. Oishi, 2010). With the current project we aim to provide the scientific framework for a research program that systematically investigates mobility from the perspectives of developmental, social and personality psychology. The project is funded by the Thüringer Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, und Kultur (TMBWK). Several chairs at the Institute of Psychology at FSU Jena are involved and focus on either developmental (Prof. Dr. Andreas Beelmann, Prof. Dr. Peter Noack, Prof. Dr. Klaus Rothermund), social (Prof. Dr. Thomas Kessler, Prof. Dr. Melanie Steffens) or personality (Prof. Dr. Franz J. Neyer) related issues of the overall topic.

Research Questions

Within our project "Mobility and Identity", one of our main goals is to analyse the dynamic interplay of personality traits, regional identification and geographic mobility based on representative and longitudinal survey data.

First, we will investigate the concept of regional identification empirically, e.g. its temporal stability and whether a bidirectional relationship between regional identification and residential mobility exists, i. e. to what extent regional identification predicts mobility decisions and vice versa. Second, we will analyse regional identification in the context of other meaningful psychological constructs (e.g. the Big Five personality traits). Previous research revealed the Big Five predicting moving behaviour within countries (Jokela, 2009; Jokela, Elovainio, Kivimäki, & Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2008) but also moving behaviour catalysing personality development in the core traits (Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011).

This is particularly surprising, given that personality traits may also moderate the effects of geographic mobility decisions on developmental outcomes. For example, childhood geographic mobility experiences were found to impair the well-being of introverted but not extraverted adults (Oishi, & Schimmack, 2010). However, to the best of our knowledge, the dynamic interplay of the Big Five personality traits and regional identification with respect to geographic mobility experiences has not been examined before. Hence, a simultaneous and longitudinal assessment of these psychological constructs is a prevalent desiderate of our research project. In 2009, the Big Five and regional identification were both assessed within in the SOEP for the first time. In 2013, the Big Five will be reassessed, and it would be desirable to include a reassessment of regional identification that would provide us with the data to close that research gap.

Proposed Survey Question And Issues Related To Data Collection

In order to assess regional identification, we propose a single-item assessment identical to the one in 2009 (ZP145).

„Wie sehr fühlen Sie sich dem Ort und der Gegend hier, in der Sie wohnen, verbunden?

Sehr stark □
Stark □
Weniger □
Eigentlich gar nicht □

The proposed mode of data collection is computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI). The requested sample size is the entire SOEP-IS. The estimated length of interview time needed is 1 additional minute.

Literature

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