

Willingness to Adapt to Climate Change considering different Sinus-Milieus[®]

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The impact of climate change can be noticed in an increase of weather extremes like storms, floods, heat waves etc. These events are likely to continue to increase in probability in the future. Since it is not possible to eliminate the consequences of climate change completely, people need to adapt to such events. Because of the necessity to adapt, it is likely that vulnerability and adaptive capacity to climate change will differ between social groups. In this presentation project results of a survey on adaptation to climate change in the region of Northern Hesse in Germany will be reported. The research project KUBUS¹ is part of the climate change adaptation network KLIMZUG² and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The foundation of the survey is a model, which extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) with specific variables for better matching the prediction of a certain adaptation behavior to climate change. Certain variables, like those which represent the time delay trap and the vulnerability trap, that are parts of the resource dilemma structure (Ernst, 1997) found here, are playing a relevant role for the perception of climate change and furthermore for the actions that will take place for adaptation needs.

Our empirical approach encompasses a long-term study in the form of a three-wave panel survey, with one-year intervals between the waves. The first wave has taken place in May 2010. The questionnaire was sent out to 2050 households in Northern Hesse (with a return of 450). The second wave will be sent out in May 2011.

The survey questionnaire consists of three

parts. Perception of climate change, adaptation behaviors, and the willingness to perform them under three different weather conditions (heat, storm and heavy rain) represent the first part. The second part is about the readiness to help needy people in a neighborhood during a heat wave. The third part of the survey comprises questions about the sociological lifestyle of a person using the Sinus-Milieus^{®3}, which are used as social grouping.

The goal of this research is to show how people of the different lifestyles adapt to climate change, and which variables lead to such a performance. Exemplary results of this survey are that mainstream milieus have significantly lower values in the consideration of future consequences scale (Strathman et al., 1994) than other milieus. Furthermore, for Hedonists, in comparison to other milieus, the only influence factor for performing an adaptation action, examined with the TPB, is the attitude towards the action. Hence these results point out that influences of the different variables on climate change adaptation behavior differ between the lifestyles, as will be demonstrated more detailed during the talk.

References

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¹ Supporting regional adaptation to climate change by socio-scientific surveys, simulation and scenarios

² <http://www.klimzug-nordhessen.de/>

³ <http://www.sinus-institut.de/en/products/sinus-milieus.html>