Educational processes in a longitudinal perspective

A long-running household panel survey like the GSOEP offers distinct analytical potentials. However, being a multi-topic survey it cannot cover educational processes in a most encompassing perspective.

Strengths and weaknesses of a long-running household panel study

- prospective measurement over an increasingly long period of lifetime
- increasing number of observations which allows for cohort comparisons
- full coverage of household context in a longitudinal perspective including the situation at the time of birth or even before
- encompassing information on the household but few data on institutional contexts like schools
- inclusion of measures of competencies just started in recent years which cover subsamples only

What is observed in the GSOEP?

- educational attainment and educational transitions: prospective data on respondents and children in panel households
- family: information on children, parents and often grandparents in a longitudinal perspective (intergenerational analysis)
- development of competencies: new instruments implemented in recent years (see below)
- educational institutions: little information provided by respondents
- broader context: temporal and regional variation of socio-economic conditions

25 years of data collection: core topics and recent developments

Observing educational attainment since 1984

- basic information on all children (< 17 years) in panel households
- additional information on children in panel households born since 2002
- broad information on adult respondents

Topics covered:

- child care
- school attainment
- vocational education
- tertiary education
- further training

Following new-born children in panel households since 2003

- starting with the birth cohort 2002 mother-child questionnaires have been introduced (topics: pregnancy and birth, child care, child development and health, activities, changes in mother’s life)
- data available for two points in time (0-1 and 2-3 years), collection of data for 5-6 years started in 2008

Measuring cognitive potentials of adults and 17 years olds since 2006

- starting in 2006 tests on cognitive potentials have been carried out with about 17 years olds and a subsample of the adult panel population
- 30-minute test IST 2000R covering each youth cohort since 2006
  - verbal reasoning
  - numerical reasoning
  - figural reasoning
  - (data will be available in 2009)
- short test with adult CAI-sample in 2006, data set COGNIT06 available in 2008

Number of observations and recent SOEP-based studies

The “golden” cohorts

- more than 500 children born in panel households have grown into the age of respondents
- children who grew up in a panel household are interviewed at age 17 with the youth questionnaire on childhood and youth including schooling (since 2000)

Educational transitions

- increasing number of observed school enrollments and transitions to secondary school by type of school
- about 1,000 observations per cohort by pooling of observations over five years (school enrolment, transition to secondary school)

Recent studies (selected SOEPpapers)

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