

Commuting & Wellbeing

An ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Initiative project (2016-17: ES/N012429/1)

Wellbeing refers to the extent to which people's lives are going well and is potentially affected by lifestyle practices such as commuting. Clear evidence is not available on the impact of commuting on wellbeing.

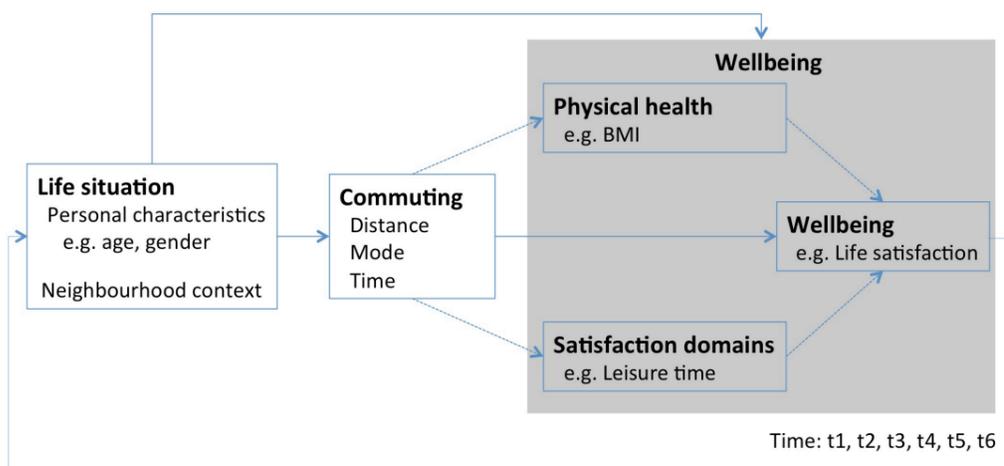
In this project we will use longitudinal data to address this gap and answer the following questions:

Research questions

1. What specific aspects of wellbeing (e.g. satisfaction with leisure time, feeling constantly under strain) are related to commuting and how do personal and spatial characteristics affect this?
2. How do different commuting behaviours influence the development of wellbeing over time?
3. How do changes in life situation (e.g. moving home, changing jobs) and commuting behaviour influence personal wellbeing over time?



For example - *Do people with long commutes become less satisfied with life over time? If so, why (reduced leisure time, for example)? How does the commute mode (driving, taking the train) influence this?*



Data and analysis

The UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS):

- Surveys 40,000 households every year
- Provides rich information on individual life circumstances, well being (life satisfaction, physical health) and commuting behaviour
- UKHLS data will be linked to neighbourhood context data: e.g. Census, accessibility indicators, Indices of Multiple Deprivation and more.
- Six waves of UKHLS data will be analysed using regression and causal path models

Outputs

- Regular short bulletins with theme-specific findings, distributed to a special interest group
- Policy briefing notes and a toolkit, mapping findings to policy objectives and interventions
- A six wave panel data set prepared for analysis of travel behaviour and wellbeing
- Self-study training worksheets for the analysis of panel data for transport and wellbeing
- Academic journal papers and articles in practitioner periodicals

Impacts

- Improved evidence of how different commuting behaviours influence wellbeing over time
- Partnerships with government (Department for Transport, Department of Health, What Works Centre for Wellbeing) to support cross-sector policies on commuting and wellbeing
- Increased research capacity in the use of longitudinal data for policy analysis



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