

IAB-Colloquium

zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

Does globalization turn people into materialists? The impact of economic integration on work attitude and preferred job characteristics.

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The dynamics of globalization transform the national economy. Previous empirical research has revealed the influence of economic integration on the shrinkage but also the growth of entire industrial sectors, on global and sectoral unemployment rates, on wage levels and wage inequality, and on labor market institutions. We know, however, little about how globalization affects the single individual. This paper sheds light on how people's attitudes towards their (potential) jobs change as globalization intensifies, using a data set of self-report attitudes of more than 300'000 persons in more than 80 countries from 1981 to 2008, obtained from the World Values Survey. In general, I find that people develop a more materialistic stance towards their work: as globalization intensifies job security and a good pay become more important. In contrast, having a pleasant social environment at work or doing a job useful for society loose in importance dramatically. These effects are particularly pronounced in transforming economies. The transmission mechanisms of globalization – GDP, growth, income inequality, unemployment and labor market institutions – are also investigated.

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