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Residential Mobility

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The Psychology of Residential Mobility

Implications for the Self, Social Relationships, and Well-Being

Shigehiro Oishi¹

Abstract

Residential mobility is an increasingly important personal and societal issue in both the United States and the world in general. However, it has received relatively limited attention in psychological theorizing and research. This article demonstrates the importance of residential mobility in understanding the self, social relationships, and well-being. Recent research has shown that residential mobility (number of moves for an individual or percentage having moved recently for a neighborhood) is associated with the primacy of the personal over the collective self. It is also associated with “duty-free” friendships and group memberships rather than obligatory friendships and group memberships. Overall, residential mobility is associated with lower levels of well-being at the individual level of analysis. Finally, residential mobility is associated with personal

forms of subjective well-being (based on self-esteem, the verification of the personal self) as opposed to interpersonal forms of subjective well-being (based on social support, the verification of the collective selves). In short, residential mobility is a powerful, parsimonious explanatory construct in the self, social relationships, and subjective well-being and may be a key to understanding the future of mind and behavior in the increasingly mobile world.

Keywords: residential mobility, the self, social relations, well-being

Every year millions of Americans move to a new city for a better education or a better job, in their pursuit of happiness (Florida, 2002; Schmitt, 2001). In addition, millions of Americans move to retire, in search of a better quality of life. This trend is likely to increase, as 27% of baby boomers surveyed said they were fairly certain they would move to a new city when they retire (AARP, 2004). This finding is not surprising, considering that residential mobility has been a defining characteristic of American culture (Oishi & Kisling, 2009; Tocqueville, 1835/2003; Triandis, 1995; Turner, 1921; Van Minnen & Hilton, 2002). What is surprising is that residential mobility is no longer limited to the United States—the land of opportunity famous for its relentless pursuit of happiness. Increasingly, people across the globe are moving to new cities, countries, or even continents to pursue better quality of life. According to the World Migration Report (International Organization for Migration, 2005), 175 million international migrants were living in countries different from where they were born in 2000, compared with just 76 million in 1960. The United Nations Secretariat recognizes residential mobility as a key

factor underlying globalization—the growing integration of economies and societies around the world—and now holds regular high-level meetings on this topic (e.g., international migration and development was discussed on August 11, 2008, at the United Nations General Assembly). As residential moves become common experiences for most and even a way of life for some of the world population, it is critical to understand exactly how residential moves affect mind and behavior.

The importance of residential mobility is widely recognized in other social and behavioral sciences including sociology (Sampson, 1991), demography (South & Crowder, 1997), epidemiology (Jelleyman, & Spencer, 2008), psychiatry (Wood, Halfon, Scarlata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993), education (Tucker, Marx, & Long, 1998), and gerontology (Sergeant, Ekerdt, & Chapin, 2008). In contrast, despite the growing importance of residential mobility in individuals' everyday experiences and society at large, it has received relatively little research attention in psychological science, with notable exceptions in developmental and community psychology (Adam, 2004; Kennedy, 1984; Kling, Ryff, & Essex, 1997; Stokols, Shumaker, & Martinez, 1983). This article summarizes recent developments in the psychology of residential mobility as well as research on residential mobility in other social and behavioral sciences and calls for further research attention on this topic in psychological science. In this article, I present a social network model of residential mobility and postulate the ways in which residential mobility affects the characteristics of one's social networks, which in turn influence one's self-concepts, social relationships, and well-being (see Figure 1).

Drawing from various sociological and historical writings, I first review historical changes in the relationship between society and individuals and propose that accelerated

residential mobility, along with many other well-known factors (e.g., industrialization, a larger scale trade), has contributed to an increasingly individualistic notion of the self and social relationships. The main story is a historical change from a deeply rooted sense of self and duty-based social relationships to a rootless sense of self and transient social relationships (Baumeister, 1986; Taylor, 1989), and my proposal is that an increased rate of residential mobility played a role in the historical shift from rootedness to rootlessness. This historical analysis provides the basis for the main hypothesis regarding individual and cross-societal differences in the self, social relationships, and well-being: Residential mobility leads individuals and society to be individualistic in their self-concepts, social relationships, and well-being (Triandis, 1989, 1995). Next, I summarize recent empirical findings on the relationships between residential mobility and an individualistic notion of the self and between residential mobility and social relationships. I then extend these analyses to the well-being of individuals and society. Finally, I consider other theoretical issues (e.g., causal directions, moderations) that are important to the future development of the psychology of residential mobility. The goal of this article is to demonstrate the importance of residential mobility in understanding mind and behavior, especially considering the increasingly dynamic nature of our world.

/h1/WHY RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY?

Residential mobility can be defined as the frequency with which individuals change their residence. At the individual level, it can be conceptualized as the number of residential moves an individual experienced during a certain period of time or expects in the future. At the macro level, residential mobility can be conceptualized as the proportion of residents in a given neighborhood, city, state, or country who

moved during a certain period of time or expect to move in the future. Besides the fact that many people move today, there are several theoretical reasons residential mobility is an important concept in psychology, which is often defined as the scientific study of mind and behavior (Myers, 2007).

Residential mobility is a useful construct for psychological theorizing and research because it provides a context in which individuals' social networks are situated. For instance, in a highly mobile society, individuals' social networks are on average likely to be more open and transient (e.g., people become friends quickly, but relationships do not necessarily last long; Whyte, 1956) than in a stable society. Lewin (1936, 1939) advanced the concept of *lifespace*, or the interdependent field of which the person and psychological environments are part. In a sense, residential mobility is a key factor that affects one's lifespace (e.g., how grounded one's lifespace is). To the extent that most human emotions, cognitions, and actions emerge in the context of interpersonal relationships and lifespace (Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000), then, residential mobility plays a distal yet important role in individuals' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Second, residential mobility can be measured at both individual (e.g., individual differences in personal history of residential moves) and societal levels (e.g., mobility rate in a neighborhood block, city, state, or even nation); thus, it presents a flexible and versatile construct that could account for individual, regional, and international differences in basic topics such as the self, emotion, and interpersonal relationships. Third, because residential mobility changes over time in a given society (see Hochstadt, 1998, for Germany), it could help document changes of social structures over time and predict

whether such changes will in turn give rise to cultural changes in the self, emotions, and social relationships over time.

As shown in Figure 1, the present model posits that residential mobility is likely to create an open and transient social network, which in turn leads to the centrality of the personal self (the self defined by personality traits, skills, and abilities), the formation of broad but weak social ties, conditional identification with group and community, and a personal well-being based on self-esteem. This model is probabilistic, however, in the sense that residential mobility does not always lead to a certain type of self-concepts, social relationships, or subjective well-being; rather, residential mobility or stability affords certain types of social networks (open, flexible, and transient social networks or closed and stable social networks, respectively), which in turn increases the probability of the emergence of particular patterns, meanings, and practices of self-concepts, social relationships, and well-being.

/h1/ HISTORICAL CHANGES IN THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY AND INDIVIDUALS

As a retired industrialist who was the head of a technology transfer center in Ottawa, Canada, told me: “My father grew up in a small town and worked for the same company. He knew the same fourteen people in his entire life. I meet more people than that in any given day.” (Florida, 2002, p. 7)

Sociologists have documented changing relationships between society and individuals over time generally from a primacy of society to a primacy of individuals, from rootedness to rootlessness (see Nisbet, 1966, for a review). Tönnies’s (1887/1957) famous distinction between *gemeinschaft* (residentially stable, traditional community) and *gesellschaft* (residentially mobile, modern society) clearly delineates this historical shift. *Gemeinschaft* is exemplified by a medieval village in Europe,

where tight-knit families, kinship, and church congregations would have been the basic units of social reality. In a medieval village where most residents were born, lived their lives, and died, ascribed status, such as family lineage, would have provided a great deal of information about individuals because implicit codes of conduct were often based on such status (Parson, 1951). In *gemeinschaft*, social relationships are also all-purpose, not limited to specific activities; individuals engage in a variety of activities with the same group of friends. Although individuals lack opportunities for upward social mobility in these traditional societies, their positions in life are stable, and their sense of who they are (i.e., identity) is also well-grounded (Baumeister, 1986, 1987).

Over time, with greater industrialization and residential mobility, *gesellschaft* (residentially mobile, modern society) emerged (Tönnies, 1887/1957). In this framework, interest-based associations (e.g., labor unions, professional associations) play a large role, and family and kin relationships become less binding. Whereas ascribed status was central in a stable, traditional society, people in a mobile, modern society evaluate each other on the basis of achieved status that characterizes one's unique abilities and skills (Parson, 1951). Social relationships shifted from all-purpose (e.g., working, going fishing, drinking together with the same group of friends) in a stable, traditional society to activity specific (e.g., fishing friends different from drinking friends) in a modern society (Parson, 1951; see also small vs. large in-group in Triandis, 1995). In a sense, just as jobs became increasingly specialized in an industrialized society, social relationships became increasingly specialized in a mobile, modern society.

With the societal shift from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*, from rootedness to rootlessness, and from stability to freedom, two important changes occurred related to mind and behavior. First, the source of the self shifted from society (how others view individuals) to individuals (how individuals view themselves). The philosopher Charles Taylor (1989), for instance, described this historical shift as follows: “No longer are we winning fame in public space; we act to maintain our sense of worth in our own eyes. There is a shift in the virtue terms” (Taylor, 1989, p. 152; see also Nisbet, 1952, 1966). Similarly, the psychologist Roy Baumeister (1986, 1987) proposed that the private self (inner feelings, intentions, preferences, personality traits) became the most prominent aspect of the self in Western Europe between 1500 and 1800, when religious reformation, industrial revolution, and political revolution brought about residential mobility. Many people no longer lived in the community where they were born and raised. As these people changed jobs, residences, and friendship networks, the basis of self-definition shifted from collective attributes (e.g., family lineage, group membership, and social–organizational affiliation) to individual attributes (e.g., unique skills, abilities, and potentials). Baumeister’s historical analysis of societal change, then, suggests that residential mobility is associated with increased centrality of the personal self and decreased centrality of the collective self.

A historical analysis of the English language confirms the observations made by Taylor (1989) and Baumeister (1986, 1987). Authority and conformity are more salient in a residentially stable, traditional community (or *gemeinschaft*) than in a residentially mobile, modern society (or *gesellschaft*) because in *gemeinschaft*, a code of behaviors is dependent on your position in a specific hierarchical relationship

(Nisbet, 1966). In contrast, in residentially mobile, modern society in which one has to interact with many strangers, sociability and trust play important roles. Sociability enables an individual to initiate an interaction with a stranger, and trust enables an individual to enter into a contractual relationship with a stranger. It is interesting, then, to observe that synonyms of *dominant* and *submissive* (terms associated with authority and conformity) officially entered the Oxford English Dictionary before terms that are important when interacting with strangers, such as *sociability* and *trust*. Specifically, Wiggins (1991) reported that the average years in which various traits related to the terms *dominance* and *submissive* entered the English language were 1474 and 1487, respectively. In contrast, the average years in which the traits related to *trust* and *sociability* entered the English language were 1569 and 1590, respectively. The time period during which *trust* and *sociability* entered the language corresponds to the rise of residential mobility in the 1500s, when there was a shift toward emphasizing the personal self as a prominent self-defining feature (Baumeister, 1986, 1987).

In addition, Taylor's (1989) observation that the sources of the self shifted from public honor to private dignity and self-esteem can be seen by Cohen's (2003) linguistic analysis of *shame* and *guilt* in American English. Cohen found that *shame* (an emotion strongly associated with the public self) was more prominent in the 1830s than it is now, as indicated by a decrease over time in the number of words used to describe *shame* relative to *self-esteem*, *pride*, and *dignity* in Webster's dictionary from 1828 to 2003. In addition, Cohen demonstrated that the use of the word *guilt* (a feeling associated with judgments made by the private self) has become more prominent over the same period of

time. In short, Wiggins (1991) and Cohen (2003) illustrated a historical change from residentially stable community to residentially mobile, modern society and corresponding changes in the concern from public to private aspects of the self.

The second major change that entailed the societal shift from a residentially stable community to a residentially mobile, modern society concerns the communicative utility of ascribed status (e.g., family lineage). In the former type of community, when communicating about a particular person, one could say “he is a son of Miller.” In the latter type of community, in contrast, when communicating about a particular person, ascribed status becomes less useful, because residents are not necessarily aware of the implication of being a son of Miller versus Muller. Because shared understanding of ascribed statuses is missing in a residentially mobile society, people have to rely on other kinds of information that do not require prior local knowledge. In this sense, personality traits are very useful when one has to describe a target person to another person because, unlike kinship and group memberships, traits do not require both parties to share any information about the target’s family or group. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that personal selves became an important aspect of self-identity later in human history, when people started interacting with strangers with whom they shared neither a common background nor knowledge about particular groups or clans. In short, it is expected that the change from a residentially stable community to a residentially mobile, modern society corresponds to the shift in the central aspect of the self from the collective to the personal and the nature of social relationships from duty-based to duty-free.

/h1/FROM HISTORICAL CHANGES TO CROSS-SOCIETAL AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

In the United States, a man will carefully construct a home in which to spend his old age and sell it before the roof is on.... He will settle in one place only to go off elsewhere shortly afterwards with a new set of desires. (Tocqueville, 1835/2003, p. 623)

The foregoing historical analysis presents a rather sweeping view of a fundamental shift in the relationship between society and individuals. It is important to note that the historical analysis refers to a general trend and that there are various exceptions to the general trend. First, some highly industrialized, modern nations such as Japan and Denmark have had a relatively low rate of residential mobility, whereas others such as the United States and Australia have had a high rate of residential mobility. Second, even in the United States, one of the most residentially mobile nations in the world, there are a number of towns and cities that are residentially stable (e.g., Philadelphia, Pittsburgh). Third, although many Americans have experienced residential moves, others have not. Thus, there are important individual differences among Americans in personal history of residential mobility. The historical analysis is important in that it provides a theoretical background for the main hypothesis regarding systematic cross-societal and individual differences in the self, social relationships, and well-being: Residential mobility leads individuals and society to become individualistic. In addition, it provides a clue to within-society changes over time in the self, social relationships, and well-being.

/h2/Residential Mobility and Self-Concepts

/h3/Cross-Societal Differences

The United States is one of the most mobile nations in the world, whereas East Asian nations tend to be less mobile (Long, 1992). In fact, about 50% of the American population moved between 1995 and 2000 (Schmitt, 2001); only 28.1% of the Japanese population moved during the same 5-year period (Statistics Bureau & Statistics Center of Japan, 2001). These societal differences in residential mobility should give rise to cross-societal differences in the centrality of the personal versus the collective self. Indeed, Cousins (1989) found that 58% of Americans' top five sentence completions in the 20 Statements Test ("I am ...") were composed of personality traits such as "honest" and "hard working," whereas only 19% of Japanese's top five responses included personality traits. In addition, among Americans, only 9% of the top five responses referenced social roles such as "college student," whereas among Japanese, 27% of the top five responses mentioned social roles (see also Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989 for review).

Similarly, Shweder and Bourne (1991) found that the concept of the person in Orissa, India (a residentially stable, traditional city), is much more occasion bound and context dependent than Americans' concept of the person; Shweder and Bourne called the former concept of the person *sociocentric-organic* and contrasted it with the latter *egocentric-contractual* concept of the person (see also Chen, Chiu, & Chan, 2009 for the importance of role personalities for high job performance in Asia). Likewise, Ma and Schoeneman (1997) showed that members of traditional, residentially stable tribes in Kenya defined themselves primarily by social roles, whereas college students in Nairobi, who were more residentially mobile, defined themselves in terms of personality traits and skills. Likewise, Kashima et al. (2004) found that people living in large metropolitan cities, where residential mobility is

presumably high, regarded their personal self as more important than did their counterparts in medium-size cities, where residential mobility is presumably lower. Finally, cross-linguistic analysis also gives rise to similar cross-societal differences in the centrality of the person. For instance, East Asian languages (e.g., Japanese, Korean) do not require speakers to explicitly state the subject (i.e., pronoun can be dropped), whereas the English language does. Indeed, Kashima and Kashima (2003) showed that pronoun drop is more prevalent in collectivist nations than in individualist nations, implying that the actor is less emphasized in the language with the pronoun drop. These findings also suggest that in a residentially stable society, speakers are able to communicate without using a direct and explicit manner, whereas in a residentially mobile society, where speakers interact with strangers often, speakers need be more direct and explicit in communication (Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, & Nishida, 1996). In short, these cross-societal analyses showed that the individualistic view of the self is more common in residentially mobile societies, and the collectivistic view of the self is more prevalent in residentially stable societies.

/h3/Individual Differences

If residential mobility indeed underlies cross-societal differences in self-concepts, people who moved frequently while growing up and people who never moved should also show individual differences. After all, when someone lives in a community for an extended period of time, he or she will likely develop stable relationships with other members, occupy a unique role in the community, and consequently come to view himself or herself in terms of the role or position he or she occupies in the community. When someone changes residence often and thus changes

groups often, his or her role also changes, and he or she is unlikely to develop a self-perception based on his or her roles. In such a mobile condition, a person is likely to base his or her self-definition on relatively permanent attributes, such as personality traits and skills. For instance, an adolescent basketball player who moves frequently may begin to view himself primarily as a good point guard rather than as a member of any particular local team; he knows that although team membership can last only as long as he stays in the area, his skills will remain constant regardless of where he lives. In short, residential mobility should be associated with increased importance of the personal self but decreased importance of the collective self.

As an initial test of this hypothesis, Oishi, Lun, and Sherman (2007, Study 1) collected data from American college students. They assessed how many times the students had moved to a different city before attending college. In addition, the students were asked to describe themselves using personality traits and to list important group affiliations. Then, they were asked to rate how central each personality trait and group affiliation is in defining who they are using a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all central* to 7 = *extremely central*). As predicted, students who had moved more often while growing up viewed their personal selves to be more central to their self-definition relative to their collective selves than did students who had not moved (see Figure 2). In this study, frequent movers also had a fewer number of important group affiliations than nonmovers, providing another piece of evidence that residential moves are associated with decreased importance of the collective self-concept.

/h2/Residential Mobility and Friendship

As discussed above, residential mobility should affect not only how people view themselves but also how they view their social relationships. When Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States, he was amazed by the ease with which Americans change their residence (Tocqueville, 1835/2003). This restlessness, along with individual freedom and democracy, has contributed to the formation of American social relationships that are distinct from others: namely, open and transient social networks (Oishi & Kisling, 2009). Compared with other nationals, for instance, Americans are eager to talk with strangers and become friends quickly, although these relationships do not necessarily last for a long period of time (Tocqueville, 1835/2003). In his influential monograph “The Organization Man,” William Whyte Jr. (1956) described the *professional* attitudes of American organization men and their families (i.e., frequent movers) toward human relations as follows:

They *have* to be professional. On the one hand, they cannot sink roots too deep. They will be moving on some day, and if they become too involved they risk an emotional shock they do not wish to sustain. On the other hand, however, they cannot forever wait for the eventual home, for they do not know when, if ever, they will find it. They must, in short, make a home of the home away from home, and to accomplish this feat they must act in the present.... If one loses some old friends, there will always be comparable ones to replace them. (pp. 328–329)

/h3/The Size of Friendship Networks

According to Tocqueville (1835/2003) and Whyte (1956), then, Americans’ residential mobility and willingness to leave home (and family origin) seem to have contributed to Americans’ tendencies to have a wide and relaxed (relatively obligation-free) social network and almost professional attitudes toward their social relationships (see also Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). It is conceivable that Americans are willing to make new friends more than others, in part

because they know they will lose some of them when their friends or they themselves move away. Because of the relatively high attrition rate of friends, Americans try to make more friends than those in more stable societies where attrition rates might be lower. The diversification of social networks is conceptually akin to the diversification of one's financial investments in anticipation of market volatility. In a way, in a mobile community, friendship has more growth potential but is more volatile than friendship in a stable community. Consistent with this hypothesis, Americans reported having more friends than did Ghanaians (Adams & Plaut, 2003). Furthermore, first-year college students who had moved frequently during childhood had larger social networks, namely, more Facebook friends on campus, than those who had not moved (Seder & Oishi, 2008). Interestingly, when the number of Facebook friends on campus was examined 2 months later, frequent movers had made more new friends on campus than had nonmovers. Thus, there is evidence that residential mobility is associated with a larger friendship network at the individual as well as societal level of analyses.

/h3/The Basis of Friendship

Besides the friendship network size, residential mobility should affect the basis for friendship. In a residentially mobile society, individuals have more freedom to choose friends on the basis of their own preferences than do residents of a stable community. In a residentially stable society, in which ascribed status (e.g., family lineage, group membership) plays a major role in individuals' daily lives, people are more likely to become friends not necessarily because of shared interests and similarity in values and personality but because of shared group membership. Indeed, Heine and Renshaw (2002)

found that friendship in Canada was based on perceived similarity in personality, but friendship in Japan was not based on personal similarity. Furthermore, Schug, Yuki, Horikawa, and Takemura (2009) found that individuals high in relational mobility (those who think there are lots of opportunities to make new friends) showed the similarity–attraction effect of friendship, whereas individuals low in relational mobility (those who perceive less opportunities to make new friends) did not. Thus, friendship for mobile individuals in a mobile society is often formed on the basis of perceived similarity in personality and shared interests, whereas friendship for rooted individuals in a rooted society is often formed on the basis of shared group membership.

/h3/The Image of Friends

In addition to the size of friendship network and the basis of friendship, residential mobility should be associated with duties and obligations in friendship. In a smaller, tight-knit network, relationships come with more obligations than in a larger, looser network (Ho, Rousseau, & Levesque, 2006). Thus, the image of friendship should be less positive in a residentially stable society than in a mobile society. Indeed, Adams and Plaut (2003) found that respondents in the San Francisco Bay area (a highly mobile community) spontaneously associated the concept of “friend” with positive attributes, such as *trust* and *support*. In contrast, in Ghana, where residential mobility is limited and people tend to stay in the same community for their entire life, respondents associated “friend” with some negative attributes, such as *need to be cautious with friends*.

Ghanaians feel that they must be cautious with friends because in Ghana, friendship comes with various obligations, including financial assistance. For instance, 56% of Ghanaian respondents spontaneously mentioned material and practical help when asked

about friends, whereas only 12% of American respondents did. Thus, having many friends could be overwhelming because of the associated responsibilities and obligations in a residentially stable society like Ghana. In fact, 29% of Ghanaian respondents in Adams and Plaut's study felt that having many friends is foolish or naive, as opposed to only 4% of American respondents. In summary, the image of friendship is lopsidedly positive and "duty-free" in a residentially mobile society, whereas it is balanced (both positive and negative) and duty based in a residentially stable society.

Besides the role of duties and obligations in friendship, the image of good friends seems to vary across societies, depending in part on residential mobility. For instance, in Japan, where residential mobility is low and friendship networks tend to be small and stable, sensitivity was deemed a critical factor in satisfying friendships (Wada, 1993; see also Heine & Lehman, 1999, for a similar result on the characteristics to be "successful" in Japan vs. Canada). In similar studies conducted in the United States (e.g., Davis & Todd, 1985), sensitivity was not mentioned. Interestingly, in the United States being "active," "energetic," and "creative" were deemed important qualities in good friends (Cole & Bradac, 1996), whereas in Japan these characteristics were not considered particularly desirable in good friends (Maeda & Ritchie, 2003). In a residentially mobile society, then, doing something together and having fun seem to be of high importance, perhaps reflecting the restlessness described by Tocqueville (1835/2003) and Higgins (2008).

/h3/Friendship Strategies

In the preceding sections, I have shown the divergent friendship network size and the basis and the image of friendship between mobile and stable societies. It is important

to examine whether different forms of friendship have adaptive advantages in different contexts. That is, do the larger friendship network size, relatively duty-free concept of friendship, and similarity-based friendships have an adaptive advantage in a residentially mobile society? Similarly, do the small, but deep, duty-based and group membership-based friendships have some adaptive advantage in a residentially stable society? Kesebir, Oishi, Lun, and Roth (2008) tested these questions using agent-based modeling (Smith & Conrey, 2007). Specifically, the breadth and depth of friendships and the level of residential mobility (i.e., varying how many friends “agents” have, how many of them are very close vs. distant friends, and how many of the current friends will likely move away in the near future) were manipulated. As predicted, individuals with broad, weak ties were better off than those with deep, narrow ties, especially in a residentially mobile context. Specifically, the likelihood of receiving help in a minor crisis was greater among individuals who had broad, weak ties than among those who had deep, narrow ties. The advantage of friendship diversification is consistent with sociologist Mark Granovetter’s (1973, 1974) famous finding on the strength of weak ties in search of a job. Interestingly, however, the one condition in our simulation in which individuals with deep ties had an advantage over those with weak but broad ties was when residential mobility was low and when there was a major crisis (in which the cost of helping is large). Thus, Kesebir et al.’s simulation study shows that when residential mobility is low and there is a high probability of a major crisis occurring (e.g., in Ghana), establishing a few deep friendships would be the most advantageous strategy, whereas when mobility is high and the chance of a major crisis occurring is relatively low (e.g., in the United States), cultivating a wide range of friendships would be a better strategy. These findings seem to

confirm the rationality of both the Ghanaian friendship strategy, characterized by reluctance to form too many friendships, and the American friendship strategy, in which individuals are willing to form friendships with many (Adams & Plaut, 2003).

In addition to cross-societal differences, there should be individual differences in friendship strategies, depending on the personal history of and expectation for future residential mobility. Frequent movers should prefer individuals who are helpful to strangers to those who are helpful only to in-group members because movers are more likely than nonmovers to be strangers themselves in a new place in the future. Indeed, in a scenario-rating task, frequent movers showed a preference for a target person who helped a stranger, whereas those who had not moved while growing up did not show such a preference (Lun & Oishi, 2008, Study 1). In addition, participants who were asked to think about future residential mobility showed a preferential liking of a target person who helped a stranger compared with a person who helped only a close friend (Lun & Oishi, Study 2). In contrast, participants who were asked to think about staying in one location for an extended period of time did not show any preferential liking of a target person who helped a stranger. Thus, both the past experience of moving and the anticipation of moving lead individuals to prefer people who are helpful to strangers.

In summary, residential mobility is associated with having a shallow but broad friendship network, a positive image of friendship not linked to obligation, diversification of the friendship network, and preferential liking of people who do not sharply distinguish in-group from out-group members in a helping situation. Equally important, the diversification of the friendship network seems to have an adaptive

advantage in a residentially mobile society, whereas the narrow, duty-based friendship seems to have an adaptive advantage in a residentially stable society.

/h2/Residential Mobility and Conditional Identification With Group

If residential mobility affects how individuals think and feel about their friends, does it also affect how individuals think and feel about their groups? As described earlier, in Tönnies's (1887/1957) *gemeinschaft* (residentially stable, traditional community), one's association with a group was often for life (e.g., church, guild), whereas in a residentially mobile, modern society, or *gesellschaft*, one's association with a group (e.g., book club) is rarely expected to last for the duration of one's life. One's affiliation with a group should, on average, be shorter in a residentially mobile community than in a stable community, so it follows that an individual should be less likely to develop a strong identification with a group in a mobile community than in a stable community. Indeed, individuals who had moved often while growing up had fewer personally important group affiliations than those who had not moved (Oishi, Lun, & Sherman, 2007, Study 1).

In a mobile society, the primary source of identity lies in the personal self. Thus, it is conceivable that individuals in such a society identify with a group only to the extent that the identification boosts their self-esteem (Y.-R. Chen, Brockner, & Katz, 1998; Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Existing social psychology research suggests that conditional group identification (the tendency to identify with a group only when the identification is favorable) is prevalent among North Americans, whose mobility is higher than residents of other countries like Japan. In a classic field study, for example, Cialdini et al. (1976, Study 1) found that the proportion of students who

wore school-identifying apparel was higher at American colleges where the football team had won the previous weekend than at those where the team had lost. They also found that when asked to describe the outcome of a specific football game, college students were more likely to use the pronoun *we* to describe a home-team win but the pronoun *they* to describe a home-team loss. Similarly, Stelzl, Janes, and Seligman (2001) showed that when Ben Johnson, a Jamaican-born Canadian citizen, won the 1988 Olympic gold medal for the 100-m sprint, the Canadian media emphasized Canada's connection to him by describing him as Canadian. However, the same media described Johnson as Jamaican-born when he was later disqualified for steroid use, thereby distancing Canadians from the disgraced athlete. In short, these findings suggest that the meaning and the content of *we* often varies across contexts, depending on the favorability of the relevant entities (i.e., the self-centered concept of "group") in North America.

Because Americans are on average more mobile than Japanese (Schmitt, 2001; Statistics Bureau & Statistics Center of Japan, 2001), group identification should be more conditional among Americans on average than among Japanese. Indeed, Americans more strongly identified with a successful alumnus of their university than did Japanese, whereas Japanese showed a stronger identification with an unsuccessful alumnus than did Americans (Oishi, Ishii, & Lun, 2009, Study 1).

Moreover, if cross-national differences in the conditionality of group identification indeed originate from differences in residential mobility, there should be regional differences within a nation, such that the group identification of individuals in a mobile community is more conditional than that of individuals in a

stable community. As expected, residents of mobile Japanese cities engaged in conditional group identification, whereas those of stable cities did not. Specifically, residents in mobile cities attended home baseball games much more often when the home team had a winning record than when the team had a losing record (Oishi, Ishii, & Lun, 2009, Study 2). In contrast, residents in stable cities attended home baseball games even when the home team was losing (see also Oishi, Rothman, et al., 2007, Study 2, for parallel findings in the United States; see Figure 3). These results were obtained even when differences in the population size and median income were statistically controlled.

Finally, frequent movers should show a greater degree of conditional identification with group than nonmovers. Indeed, students who had never moved before entering college identified with their college more unconditionally than did students who had moved frequently (Oishi, Ishii, & Lun, 2009, Study 3). Specifically, students who moved frequently identified strongly with their college when they read a story that described it very positively, whereas they showed less strong identification with their college when the story described it less positively. In contrast, students who moved less frequently did not show different levels of identification with their college, depending on the favorability of their college.

In summary, recent empirical work has demonstrated that residential mobility is associated with conditional group identification at the individual, regional, and national levels. One's relationship with a group in a residentially mobile society is determined by one's liking or by the degree to which group affiliation brings a favorable view of the self (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). This view is in stark contrast to

the sentiment that there is no individual without society in the Middle Ages (Nisbet, 1952, 1966). Instead of the supremacy of society over individuals, there is a distinct sense that individuals come first and that the society comes second in a residentially mobile, modern society and among frequent movers.

/h2/Summary on Residential Mobility, the Self, and Social Relations

Many great thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries observed a dramatic change in the individual's view of society (see Nisbet, 1966, for a review). Before the industrial and French revolutions, individuals perceived themselves as part of a community and understood that they could not exist without society (Baumeister, 1986; Nisbet, 1952, 1966). Whereas one's loyalty to *gemeinschaft* (a residentially stable, traditional community) was often unquestioned in the 17th century, loyalty toward society became optional, as individuals became more rootless in a residentially mobile, modern society, or *gesellschaft*. Cultural psychologist Joan Miller (1994) characterized North American middle class morality as individualistic "rights"-based morality because individuals can decide when and whom to help. Miller contrasted this rights-based morality with Indian duty-based morality, in which individuals must help a person if they have a duty-bound relationship with that person (e.g., kinship). Similar to the duty-based morality, historical writings and recent empirical findings indicate that one's relationship with others is duty based in residentially stable communities or among residentially stable persons, whereas the relationship is rights based or duty-free in residentially mobile communities or among mobile persons. In summary, residential mobility plays an important role in the meanings and practices surrounding self-concepts and various social relationships, ranging from one's friendships to one's identification with groups.

/h1/RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY AND THE WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY

Why Americans are so restless in the midst of their prosperity.... In America, I have seen the freest and the best educated men in the happiest circumstances the world can afford; yet, it seemed to me that a cloud usually darkened their features and they appeared serious and almost sad even when they were enjoying themselves. The main reason of this is that [Americans] constantly muse on the good things they are missing. (Tocqueville, 1835/2003, pp. 622–623)

/h2/Residential Mobility and the Well-Being of Individuals

/h3/Restless and Unhappy?

The role of residential mobility does not stop at self-concepts or social relationships. Rather, it extends to the well-being of individuals and society. Millions of Americans move to a new city believing that a new life in a new city will bring them more happiness (Mongeau, 1986; Oishi, Whitchurch, Miao, Kurtz, & Park, in press). Is that so? On the one hand, many voluntary movers are moving for a better paying job or a larger house, and therefore, a residential move should be associated with an increase in well-being. On the other hand, however, the disruption in social networks that residential mobility causes and the stress associated with a move could adversely affect one's well-being.

Among adults, previous research has provided mixed results. Some research found an increase in well-being after a move (Kling et al., 1997; Smider, Essex, & Ryff, 1996), whereas other research found a decrease in well-being after a move (Larson, Bell, & Young, 2004). In one telling study, mobile adults who were asked to transfer by their employers every 2 years reported that they were leading a more interesting life than stable adults who had the comparable level of education, job title, and pay with the mobile adults (Brett, 1982). In addition, mobile adults were more

satisfied with their marriage and family than were stable adults. However, mobile individuals also reported stomach upset and shortness of breath more often than did stable adults. Finally, mobile adults were less satisfied with friendships than were stable adults. These findings suggest that although many Americans move to a new city in hope of becoming happier, they might underestimate the relational cost associated with a residential move. Indeed, one recent study showed that when thinking about a retirement location, working adults overestimated the importance of the novelty factors (e.g., climate, cultural opportunities) while underestimating the social relationship factor (Oishi, Whitchurch et al., in press).

Oishi and Schimmack (2009) analyzed the Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) data, which are based on over 7,000 healthy adults between the ages of 25 and 74, and found a small, negative correlation between the number of childhood moves and various psychological well-being indices (e.g., life satisfaction, a sense of autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships) after controlling for age, race, and education. Furthermore, frequent movers were marginally more likely than less frequent movers to have died before the 10-year follow-up data collection, demonstrating a dark side of residential mobility. Equally important, we found that the detrimental effect of residential moves on well-being was particularly strong among introverts. These findings indicate that the relationship between residential moves and well-being varies systematically across individuals, depending on their personality. Introverts tend to have a harder time making new friends than do extraverts, which in turn makes a move psychologically more taxing. The most dramatic finding was related to the mortality rate over the 10-year period of the

MIDUS participants who were 50 years old or older at the beginning of the study: Introverts who had moved frequently in childhood were more likely to have died before the 10-year follow-up data collection than were introverts who had not moved. No such relationships were found among extraverts. These findings indicate important individual differences in the role of residential mobility on one's well-being. Introverts are more likely to be hurt by residential moves than are extraverts.

Whereas the relationship between residential mobility and well-being is far from straightforward among adults, residential mobility has been repeatedly shown to be associated with ill-being among children and adolescents (see Adam, 2004; Jolleyman & Spencer, 2008, for brief reviews). In a nationally representative sample, for instance, 18% of children who moved frequently had four or more behavioral problems, whereas only 7% of children who never moved or moved infrequently showed such problems (Wood et al., 1993). Similarly, a recent large-scale epidemiological study ($N > 8,000$) showed that residential mobility in childhood was associated with smoking, alcoholism, depression, and attempted suicide in adulthood (Dong et al., 2005). These associations were observed even when other demographic variables, such as parental education and race, were statistically controlled.

Residential mobility at the level of community is also associated with higher rates of mental illness. For example, Silver, Mulvey, and Swanson (2002) found in the National Institute of Mental Health's Epidemiological Catchment surveys ($N = 11,686$) that the rate of schizophrenia, major depression, and substance abuse disorder was higher in residentially mobile neighborhoods than in residentially stable neighborhoods, after controlling for individual-level variables such as age, sex, race,

education, and income. Thus, even when residents themselves do not move, those living in highly mobile neighborhoods seem to be negatively affected by the residential moves of their neighbors (see, however, Ross, Reynolds, & Geis, 2000, for an opposing view).

Personal Versus Interpersonal Forms of Well-Being

Besides the link between residential mobility and the levels of well-being, residential mobility seems to affect the sources of well-being, namely, whether well-being is based on self-esteem or social support. Among Japanese and Filipinos (residents of stable countries), social support had a direct effect on subjective well-being above and beyond self-esteem, whereas social support did not predict subjective well-being among Americans (residents of a highly mobile country), beyond self-esteem (Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, & Morling, 2008). Namely, social support was associated with subjective well-being among Americans to the extent that it was associated with self-esteem. Once self-esteem was statistically controlled, social support did not uniquely predict subjective well-being for American students. Only self-esteem uniquely predicted the well-being of Americans. That is, Americans as a group showed the personal form of well-being (well-being based on self-esteem), whereas Japanese and Filipinos showed the interpersonal form of well-being (well-being based on social support).

Interestingly, Sato, Yuki, Takemura, Schug, and Oishi (2008) replicated Uchida et al.'s (2008) cross-national differences in the role of social support and self-esteem in subjective well-being and further demonstrated that perceived relational mobility (the degree to which individuals perceive their environments to provide individuals with

opportunities to meet new people and form new relationships) accounted for these cultural differences. Sato et al. also showed within-nation individual differences such that among Japanese students who perceived plenty of opportunities to create new friends, social support was associated with subjective well-being only to the extent that it was associated with self-esteem. These findings suggest that the cultural differences in the role of social support and self-esteem in predicting one's subjective well-being are due in part to societal differences in opportunities to create new social relationships, which are in part determined by societal residential mobility (see also Takemura & Yuki, 2008).

Because one's personal history of residential moves is associated with the centrality of the personal self (Oishi, Lun, & Sherman, 2007, Study 1), individuals who moved frequently might feel happy when the interaction partner accurately perceived their personal selves. In contrast, because individuals who did not move tend to view their collective selves to be central, nonmovers might feel happy when the interaction partner accurately perceived their collective selves. In both a laboratory interaction study and a 2-week event -sampling study, frequent movers felt happy when their personal selves were confirmed, whereas nonmovers felt happy when their collective selves were confirmed (Oishi, Lun, & Sherman, 2007, Studies 2 and 3). Interestingly, European Americans on average felt happy when their personal selves were accurately perceived by their interaction partner, whereas Asian Americans felt happy when their collective selves were accurately perceived (Oishi, Koo, & Akimoto, 2008). Thus, Asian Americans as a group showed the patterns similar to nonmovers, namely, that verification of their collective selves led to felt happiness in social interactions, whereas European Americans as a group showed the

patterns similar to frequent movers in Oishi, Lun, and Sherman (2007), namely, that verification of their personal selves led to felt happiness in social interactions.

Other recent studies have also confirmed the association between residential mobility and the personal form of well-being. For instance, Koo and Oishi (2009) recently found that the effect of friends on happiness differs systematically across individuals, depending on their personal histories of residential mobility. Specifically, movers felt happier when they thought about an incidence in which their friends had a positive influence on their personal selves (e.g., personality traits, values, skills, or abilities) than when they thought about an incidence in which their friends had a positive influence on their collective selves (e.g., social status, group membership). In contrast, nonmovers felt happier when they thought about the positive influence of others on their collective selves than when they thought about the positive influence of others on their personal selves.

/h2/Residential Mobility and the Well-Being of Society

Does residential mobility hurt communities, too? The foregoing analysis focuses on the association between residential mobility and the well-being of individuals. Considering that residential mobility is also a phenomenon at a societal level, it could have implications for the well-being of society, namely, whether society is functioning well. In this case, a well-functioning society can be defined as a society in which residents engage in prosocial and procommunity actions as opposed to antisocial, criminal behaviors. As summarized earlier, residential mobility could cause individuals to view their relationship with the community conditionally rather than unconditionally. It is plausible then that residential mobility would discourage residents from taking actions for

the sake of their community. Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) found empirical support for this hypothesis, showing that crime rates are indeed higher in residentially mobile communities than in stable communities. Residents in stable communities were also more likely to purchase a “critical habitat” license plate to support the local natural habitats than were those in mobile communities (Oishi, Rothman, et al., 2007, Study 1).

However, why do residents of stable communities engage in prosocial behaviors more often and antisocial behaviors less often than do residents of mobile communities? One possibility is that the longer people live in one place, the more local friendships they form, and the stronger psychological attachment to community they have (Kang & Kwak, 2003; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Sampson, 1988, 1991). Another way in which residential mobility versus stability gives rise to different rates of crime is by means of local monitoring. Indeed, in a large-scale epidemiological study, Sampson et al. (1997) demonstrated that residential mobility was associated with low collective efficacy (the ability to solve the community’s problems collectively), which in turn was associated with a higher crime rate.

Yet another possibility is that residential stability fosters an identity as a community resident (e.g., a sense of belonging to the community and positive affect associated with being a community resident), which in turn leads to more procommunity action. In a laboratory experiment, Oishi, Rothman, et al. (2007, Study 3) manipulated the residential stability of groups and tested the causal effect of residential stability on procommunity actions. In the stable condition, participants completed three different group tasks with the same members before the final critical task. In the mobile conditions, participants completed three different group tasks with three different sets of members. In

the critical final task, in which participants performed a trivial pursuit game for an individual prize, a confederate acted confused and subtly elicited help from other group members (e.g., sighed, uttered “I have no idea”). The researchers videotaped the session and later coded which participants offered help to which participants. The results indicated that participants in the stable condition helped the confederate as well as other group members more often than those in the mobile condition. Furthermore, the effect of residential stability on procommunity behaviors was mediated by the degree of identification with the group.

Note, however, that previous research repeatedly found that individualistic nations were higher in life satisfaction, the United Nations Human Development Index (e.g., literacy rate, human right), and economic productivity than were collectivist nations (e.g., Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995). The findings at the level of nations, then, appear to contradict those at the individual and community levels of analysis. Considering that most individual and community level studies were conducted within individualist nations, residential stability may be beneficial in the individualistic macro context (i.e., it is generally good if people are staying in the same neighborhood, even if they could move elsewhere). In contrast, residential stability at the national level might signal the lack of individual freedom, which is negatively associated with well-being. It is important for future research to identify the boundary conditions of residential stability on the well-being of individuals and society.

In summary, residential mobility has several important implications for the well-being of individuals and society. The existing literature indicates that (a) residential mobility is generally negatively associated with well-being at the level of individual; (b)

it is particularly negatively associated with the well-being of introverts; (c) in a residentially mobile society or among frequent movers, self-esteem and the verification of the personal self predict subjective sense of well-being (i.e., personal form of well-being), whereas social support and the verification of the collective self predict subjective well-being in a residentially stable society or among nonmovers (i.e., interpersonal form of well-being); and (d) residential mobility can reduce the well-being of the community, as it discourages residents from engaging in procommunity actions.

/h1/OTHER THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Up to this point, my discussion has largely assumed that residential mobility has a causal effect on self-concepts, social relationships, and subjective well-being. There are two studies in which residential mobility was experimentally manipulated and shown to have a causal effect (Lun & Oishi, 2008, Study 2; Oishi, Rothman, et al., 2007, Study 3). In addition, historical analyses typically show that changes in societal structure (including residential mobility) precede changes in self-concepts and social relationships (Baumeister, 1986; Nisbet, 1966). However, as Figure 1 illustrates, such analyses do not prove that the opposite direction of the causation is impossible. Indeed, Jokela, Elovainio, Kivimäki, and Keltikangas-Järvinen (2008) recently found that temperament “activity” (the tendency to be energetic and vigorous) and “emotionality” (the tendency to experience negative emotions) predicted the probability of residential moves in Finland, although the effect sizes were modest (odds ratio = 1.17 for activity and 1.12 for emotionality). Similarly, Jokela (2009) found that high openness to experience and low agreeableness were associated with more frequent residential moves both between and within states in a large U.S. adult sample. Kling, Oishi, and Ryff (2002) also found that

openness to experience and lack of conscientiousness predicted the number of lifetime residential moves among middle-aged women (no such correlation was observed among college students, however, perhaps because college students' prior residential moves are driven by their parents). Thus, it is conceivable that the ethos of a residentially mobile society is created in part because of particular personality traits that many residents in such a society possess. For instance, the conditional identification with local baseball teams that Oishi, Rothman, et al. (2007, Study 2) found could be in part explained if mobile cities like Atlanta and Miami attracted more residents high in openness to experiences, compared with stable cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

At the international level, nations founded by immigrants, such as the United States and Australia, have on average higher rates of residential mobility than older nations, such as Japan, China, and Germany. The American ethos of mobility observed by Tocqueville (1835/2003) is still present and distinct today from other European nations, even though residential mobility is on the rise in many nations (e.g., Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa, & Uskul, 2009). For example, it is interesting to note that in Germany, Wal-Mart failed in part because German executives were not willing to move to new locations. Landler and Barbaro (2006) reported in the *New York Times* as follows:

Compounding the problem, Wal-Mart shut down the headquarters of one of the chains, infuriating employees who opted to quit rather than move. Such a decision would have been routine in the United States, where Ms. Keck said, "moving is a big part of the Wal-Mart culture." In Germany, she said, it prompted an exodus of talented executives.

These observations suggest that national differences in residential mobility could be in part accounted for by the particular genetic distribution of personality traits in each nation

(McCrae, 2000). It is possible that individuals high in openness to experience moved to a new country and those low in openness to experience stayed in the old country (see also Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006, for relevant findings). If this is true, national differences in social ecology (e.g., residential mobility) and cultural traditions may be partially explained by the particular distribution of personality traits and genes. Interestingly, C. Chen, Burton, Greenberger, and Dmitrieva (1999) examined the world-wide distribution of the dopamine D4 receptor gene (DRD4) and found that the proportion of long alleles of DRD4, which have been implicated in novelty seeking, was higher in populations that had moved a longer distance from their origins. C. Chen et al. (1999) speculated that “the long alleles of the DRD4 gene were selected by migration because they had adaptive value in migratory societies” (p. 320). These findings suggest that a society’s residential mobility could in part be due to the population’s genetics. It is thus important for future research to clarify the role of genetic factors in the creation of cultural traditions and in self-concepts, social relationships, and subjective well-being.

In addition to the causal direction, it is important to explore precise mechanisms that translate residential mobility to the relative centrality of the personal self, diversification of friendship, conditional identification with group, and self-esteem-based well-being. Although my explanations rest on changes in social network, residential mobility is also associated with a host of other relevant variables, and these variables could be responsible for the links between residential mobility and the self, social relationships, and well-being. For instance, previous research showed that individuals who moved frequently were more autonomous, cognitively complex, and socially skilled (Mann, 1972; see also Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008, for cross-cultural

experiences and cognitive complexity). It might be the cognitive complexity and social skills of frequent movers that are driving the diversification of friendship and conditional identification with groups, whereas the autonomy that frequent movers acquired over time might be giving rise to the self-esteem-based well-being. If this is the case, frequent travel might also result in similar changes in the self, social relationships, and well-being.

The previous discussion has focused largely on the direct relationship between residential mobility and the target psychological phenomena. As research on residential mobility matures, the model should become more complex. First, as noted by Cohen (2001), the link between ecology and culture is not always straightforward. The same ecology can give rise to different cultures, and different ecologies can give rise to similar cultures. In Cohen's examples of Illinois farming towns, preexisting cultural traditions and the "founder" effects (e.g., the founders of the communities being Yankee farmers vs. German farmers) provided the emergence and maintenance of a particular cultural tradition in the ecologically similar prairie towns. Similarly, Aoki (2001) compared 18th century rural villagers in Japan and Korea (both highly residentially stable) in terms of their collective solution to a common problem: maintaining an irrigation system for rice farmers. Although rural Japan and rural Korea had almost identical ecologies, their social structures were quite different. In the 18th century, rural Japan was inhabited almost exclusively by small-scale farmers and was therefore free of class conflict within villages; however, rural Korea consisted of three distinct social groups, specifically *yanban* (an aristocratic class), farmers, and *nobi* (slaves of the *yanban*). Because the construction of reservoirs requires large-scale labor contributions, construction is successful only when residents cooperate with one another. Aoki found that in the 18th

century, there were more irrigation systems in Japan than in Korea. The more egalitarian structure of rural Japan at that time was more conducive to cooperative projects, such as constructing an irrigation system, than was the highly hierarchical social structure of 18th century rural Korea. This example shows that residential stability alone is not sufficient to generate procommunity action, but when there are few class disparities, residential stability leads to cooperation and procommunity action. The role of preexisting cultural traditions and social structures in the relationships between residential mobility and self-concepts, social relationships, and the well-being of individuals and society needs to be recognized in future research.

In addition to the founder effect (Cohen, 2001) and preexisting social structures (Aoki, 2001; Cohen, 1998), various factors such as the size of the nation, economic system, religious institutions, and family structures can moderate the proposed connection between residential mobility and the psyche. For example, I posited that residential mobility would result in decreased importance of the collective self. However, in a society in which residential mobility does not entail changes in group membership (e.g., moving from a Tokyo branch to an Osaka branch of the same company) or the size of nation is small enough that a residential move does not entail a major change in social network, residential mobility should not automatically reduce the centrality of the collective self. In fact, a move within such a context could increase the centrality of the collective self (e.g., military families). Moreover, even in a residentially stable society, if the economy is highly volatile, there will be considerable instability in work relationships, which could result in decreased importance of the collective self (Takemura & Yuki, 2008). In contrast, in a highly mobile society, if the majority of employers take a

paternalistic view of employees and provide employees with flexible work hours and health benefits, employees might develop a strong sense of identity with the company (cf. Whyte, 1956), and residential mobility should not necessarily result in a focus on a personal or “free agent” view of the self (cf. Pink, 2001). At the individual level, the reason for a residential move (e.g., upward move, move due to divorce, move with or without family) can show different consequences for the self-concept, social relationships, and subjective well-being (Stokols & Shumaker, 1982).

In short, although there is evidence that residential mobility has a causal effect on self-concepts, social relationships, and well-being (Lun & Oishi, 2008; Oishi, Rothman, et al., 2007), it should be noted that temperament and personality traits in part account for individual and societal differences in residential mobility (Jokela et al., 2008; Kling et al., 2002). In addition, the consequence of residential mobility is likely to be moderated by the preexisting local history, individual’s temperament and personality traits, and other factors such as financial conditions and class structure. It will be critical for future researchers to delineate dynamic relationships among residential mobility, preexisting local history, social structures, and other factors to deepen our understanding of the self, social relationships, and subjective well-being. As shown in Figure 1, the presumed effect of residential mobility on the self is mediated in large part by changes in social networks and by the perceived desirability of such changes. Thus, the effect of residential mobility could be nullified or intensified, depending on the degree and type of change in the social network that is caused by residential moves. Future psychological work is needed to investigate the role of social networks in the psychology of residential mobility (see Fiske & Fiske, 2007; Morris, Podolny, & Ariel, 2000, for a similar view).

/h1/SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Residential mobility is an increasingly important personal and societal issue, both in the United States (e.g., AAPR, 2004; Florida, 2002) and in the world at large (e.g., International Organization for Migration, 2005), as more people move to a new city, state, or country in search of prosperity, political freedom, or happiness. However, it has received relatively limited research attention in psychology, and therefore it has been unclear what happens when people move. The main goal of this article was to demonstrate the importance of residential mobility in psychological understandings of the self, social relationships, and well-being. First, residential mobility is associated with the primacy of the personal self over the collective self (e.g., Oishi, Lun, & Sherman, 2007). Second, it is associated with duty-free friendships and group memberships rather than duty-based friendships and group memberships (e.g., Oishi, Ishii, & Lun, 2009; Oishi, Rothman, et al., 2007). Third, it is also associated with personal forms of subjective well-being (based on self-esteem, the verification of the personal self) as opposed to interpersonal forms of subjective well-being (based on social support, the verification of the collective self; Sato et al., 2008). Finally, residential mobility is associated with lower levels of well-being and, most dramatically, a higher mortality risk, especially for introverts. Thus, although the allure of residential mobility is undeniable in terms of economic opportunities and freedom, it has a dark side as well. Residential mobility is a double-edged sword.

In psychological theorizing and research, residential mobility is a versatile construct because (a) it provides a macro context in which individuals' interpersonal networks are situated, which in turn provide contexts in which most human emotions and

cognitions are experienced (Berscheid & Reis, 1998); (b) it can be measured and manifest itself at various levels, ranging from personal history of residential mobility to the proportion of residents who have moved in or out during a given time period in a neighborhood, a town, a city, a state, a region, or a nation; and (c) it can capture social structural changes over time within a given society, which can be further examined in terms of its covariation with changes in cultural norms, practices, and artifacts over time. Thus, residential mobility proved to be a powerful, parsimonious explanatory construct at multiple levels of analysis in the self, social relationships, and the well-being of individuals and society.

In conclusion, residential mobility shows predictable relationships with the meanings and practices surrounding self-concepts, social relationships, and the well-being of individuals and society. As discussed earlier, the importance of residential mobility has been widely recognized in sociology (e.g., Sampson et al., 1997), epidemiology (e.g., Silver et al., 2000), psychiatry (Wood et al., 1993), education (Tucker et al., 1998), and gerontology (Sergeant et al., 2008). However, residential mobility has not been adequately incorporated in psychological theory and research. As residential mobility becomes a major concern for individuals and society at large across the globe, it is critical to incorporate residential mobility in psychological theorizing and research. It might even hold a key to understanding the future of mind and behavior in the increasingly dynamic, mobile world of today and tomorrow.

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Figure 1. The relationships between residential mobility and the self, social relationships, and well-being.

Figure 2. The relative centrality of the personal versus collective self as a function of the personal history of residential moves (1 = *not at all central*; 7 = *extremely central*). Error bars indicate standard error.

Figure 3. The association between residential mobility and the within-team performance–attendance correlation from Oishi, Rothman, et al. (2007, Study 2). Ang = Los Angeles Angels; Ari = Arizona Diamondbacks; Atl = Atlanta Braves; Bal = Baltimore Orioles; Bos = Boston Red Sox; Chic = Chicago Cubs; Chiw = Chicago White Sox; Cin = Cincinnati Reds; Clev = Cleveland Indians; Den = Denver Colorado Rockies; Det = Detroit Tigers; Dog = Los Angeles Dodgers; Hou = Houston Astros; KC = Kansas City Royals; Mia = Miami Florida Marlins; Mil = Milwaukee Brewers; Min = Minneapolis Minnesota Twins; Nym = New York Mets; Nyy = New York Yankees; Oak = Oakland Athletics; Pit = Pittsburgh Pirates; Phil = Philadelphia Phillies; Sd = San Diego Padres; Sfg = San Francisco Giants; Sea = Seattle Mariners; Tam = Tampa Bay Rays; Tex = Texas Rangers.