

Growing Disparities in Youth Development. The Effect of Family Affluence on Health and Well-Being.

Abstract submitted for the
8th Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI)
Children's Rights and Opportunities in an Unequal World - Research, Policy and
Intervention
25 - 27 May 2022, Gramado - Brazil

Prof. Dr. Andreas Klocke (Corresponding author & Presenter)
Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences
Nibelungenplatz 1
60318 Frankfurt, Germany
E-mail: andreas.klocke@fzdw.de

Dr. Sven Stadtmüller
Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences
Nibelungenplatz 1
60318 Frankfurt, Germany
E-mail: sven.stadtmueller@fzdw.de

Thematic importance:

Data from Germany challenge the well-established thesis that social inequality (SEP) in health declines in the process of entering early youth and emerges again in the transition from youth to adulthood. This was put forward by West (1997), West/Sweeting (2004) and Sweeting et al (2016). Their main argument was that the school and youth culture have a levelling effect and results in an “equalisation in youth”. By contrast, we identify an increase of social inequality in health and well-being between age 10 to 17.

Introduction and objectives:

The paper addresses the impact of family affluence (FAS) on health and well-being between age 10 to 17. Using panel data we can make a clear account of the changes which take place in family affluence on health and well-being between age 10 to 17.

Method:

Data from the German survey “Health Behaviour and Injuries in School-Age – A Panel Study 2013-2020” will be used. The Panel Survey started 2014/15 with the mean age cohort 11 years old. Data from six waves will be analysed, with more than 50.000 observations. Social Inequality is measured according to the Family Affluence Scale (FAS). In multivariate modelling it will be analysed in which way the effect of FAS on health and well-being varies over time.

Results:

Findings show that there is quite a small effect of family affluence on health and well-being at age 11. Instead of declining or being constant according to the “equalisation thesis”, this effect is significantly increasing while young people are getting older. Accounting for age effects (interaction age*FAS) the differences in well-being at age 17 varies by about 15% between FAS status groups.

Conclusion and Implications:

The paper concludes that social inequality has a growing effect on health and well-being in youth development. This challenges the well-established equalisation theses. Whether this is a pure German phenomenon or reflects period effects (1990s vs 2010s) in youth culture and societal prospects will be discussed at the venue.