Single motherhood: A stage of life as a health risk factor?  
A longitudinal analysis of physical and mental health among single mothers in Germany

Research has shown poorer health and higher prevalence in mental distress of single mothers compared with partnered mothers. The aim of this paper is to focus on single mothers’ health and to highlight heterogeneity among single mothers. Both, interindividual and intraindividual variability of single mothers will be considered in this study. We will analyze therefore empirically determinants affecting health of single mothers and further, whether effects on health may change for an exposed single mother typology. The analysis is conducted using a large dataset from *German Socioeconomic Panel* (GSOEP) for 1984-2010. GSOEP contains information necessary to identify single mothers. The retrospective data about household and individual characteristics complements the information useful for analyzing dynamics in the life course of single mothers. GSOEP also provides for the whole survey period subjective health measures like health satisfaction or self-rated health (SRH) and the SF-12, a generic health measure for physical and mental health (measured bi-yearly for 2002-2010). We will examine a single mother typology using explorative methods of optimal matching (OM) and cluster analyses. Multivariate analyses will be then conduct for the different single mother groups with the intention of enhancing explanatory power of the effects on single mothers’ health and health inequalities.

*Keywords: Health inequalities, single mothers, SF 12, German Socio-Economic Panel Study*