

Abstract for the SOEP 2016 -12th International Conference

Using the SOEP data to enable innovative research

Jianghong Li¹, Matthias Pollmann-Schult^{1,2}, and Till Kaiser¹

¹ WZB

² The University of Bielefeld

This presentation aims to show case the strength of the SOEP and the closely related data set, the Families in Germany Study (FiD) and demonstrate how we utilized the two datasets to address innovative research questions, with two examples. At the same we would like to point out the limitations of the datasets in the hope that these would be addressed in the future order to enable more vigorous, new research. The first example comes from a research publication in which we entered into an almost uncharted research area on work-family interface and examined the link between fathers' long commute to work and children's (ages 5- 6) social and emotional wellbeing. This is the first and the only study that investigates this important topic using nationally representative data. The findings show that fathers' daily and weekly commute to work was associated with more emotional and behavioural problems in children. The second example comes from a research paper that used panel data from the FiD to examine the impact of both fathers' and mothers' nonstandard work schedules (evenings, nights, and weekends) on children's wellbeing. The contributions of the paper are: 1) we demonstrate that not only mothers' nonstandard work (NS) schedules (which the majority of

previous research narrowly focuses on) but also fathers' NS schedules are linked to increases in child behavioural problems, 2) this association is partially mediated by inconsistent parenting (both mothers and father), possibly as a result of fatigue and stress associated working NS schedules; 3) thanks to the detailed information on work schedules and parenting for both fathers and mothers collected in the FiD, we were able to overcome a common methodological issue regarding endogeneity). The both studies bear implications for theory, future empirical research, and policy on work-family reconciliation and the larger issue of social inequality.