

Income Distribution and Concern About Crime: Evidence from Germany

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Abstract

We explore the link between concern about crime and income inequality in Germany. We here not exclusively rely upon the Gini index as a global measure of inequality but consider other aspects of the income differences between individuals such as measures of inequality at the individual (individual polarization, relative deprivation, relative satisfaction) and at the societal level (aggregate Polarization, Gini index). By making use of microdata from the German Socio economic Panel (SOEP) for the years from 2004 to 2016, we show, that both individual polarization and relative deprivation are found to have a statistically significant effect on the expressed level of concern about crime, while relative satisfaction play no relevant role. That is people who are more at the bottom of the income distribution c.p. may be less likely to perceive and express concern about crime relative to higher-income individuals. At the aggregate level we find that aggregate polarization is the main driver to explain fear of crime, while the standard index of inequality namely the Gini no longer have a significant effect.