

ifb-Forschungskolloquium

Datum/Ort	Dienstag, 29. März 2022 online über Zoom 10:00 bis 11:30 Uhr
Referentin	Dr. Mine Kühn, MPI Rostock
Thema	Single parents, gender, and health inequalities
Abstract	<p>Several studies have shown that single parents are a disadvantaged group in terms of health. However, we know relatively little about the influence of life course contexts on the health effects of single parenthood. In this presentation, Mine Kühn draws on three papers, which investigate single mothers' (and fathers') health by using three different datasets and health outcomes. The first paper is based on high-quality register data of the total Danish population and 1) compares the mortality risk of single and partnered parents, and 2) investigates heterogeneity in mortality among single parents by considering pathways into single parenthood and repartnering. Results show that single fathers have the highest all-cause mortality risk of all parent groups. Repartnering diminishes the negative impact of single parenthood. The second paper analyses potential differences in anti-depressant trajectories of single mothers by focusing on pathways into and out of single motherhood. The authors used the total population registry data on Finnish women who experienced the life events of separation, widowhood, or childbirth. Single mothers were compared with women who experienced the same life event, but without becoming a single mother. Our results show long-lasting effects on single mothers' mental health. The third paper compares mental health inequalities by family type and gender before and during the pandemic in Germany, analyzing three dimensions of mental health – stress, exhaustion and loneliness. The study has two key findings: First, two-parent families emerged as a vulnerable group, as their levels of stress and exhaustion converged with those of single parents, who were already vulnerable to low mental health prior to the pandemic. Second, a gender gap emerged within this group, with partnered mothers experiencing the greatest mental health declines during the early stage of the pandemic.</p>