

Thorsten Lunau



Biography

Thorsten is a researcher at the Institute for Medical Sociology, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf. He holds a Master degree in Sociology, Psychology and Political Science. His major research focuses are health adverse psychosocial working conditions. He investigates the association between psychosocial working conditions and health outcomes (especially mental health). His key research area is the influence of social and labour market policies on psychosocial working conditions.

Talk summary

Work-life balance and wellbeing in European welfare states

It is now widely acknowledged that welfare states are important macro-level determinants of health and well-being. One possible explanation for this association is the influence of welfare state regimes on the working environment. A work related factor with possible influences on health and well-being is a poor work-life balance. We therefore wanted to study the association between a poor work-life balance and mental well-being across a variety of European countries and investigate the influence of welfare state regimes on the work-life balance of employees. Data for our analyses were obtained from the European Working Conditions Survey in the year 2010. The results of our analyses show that men and woman reporting a poor work-life balance have a higher chance to report a poor mental wellbeing than men and woman with a good work-life balance. We explore the prevalence of poor work-life balance by welfare state regimes and found that the best work-life balance is reported by Scandinavian men and women. The worst work-life balance is reported by men and women in the Southern European countries. In these countries, there is little public provision and part-time options are largely unavailable. In the Scandinavian countries, a variety of reconciliation policies can be found that facilitate the combination of participation in paid employment with private life. This indicates that welfare regimes might have an impact on the way employees can reconcile their work and family life and therefore promote mental well-being.