Do You Actually Eat, What You Are?
Predictors of Healthy Nutrition in German Children and Adolescents

Sebastian Mader

**Background and Relevance**

> Not only in Germany are chronic and degenerative diseases related to nutrition such as obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus a huge burden on the welfare system and the individual’s quality of life.
> In order to generate effective political strategies and to establish healthy nutrition early, knowledge of the predictors of healthy nutrition is crucial.
> Nevertheless, research in the field of nutritional behaviour in Germany is at the initial phase of explanation.

**Purpose**

> Therefore, this Master’s Thesis pursues the target of approaching the question of whether you actually eat, what you are.
> Thus, it is aimed at the contribution to the construction of a theory in the field of nutritional behaviour.

**Methods**

> **Model:** This examination is based on the analytical ‘Triple-A’-Model, which is informed by Behavioural and Neuro-Economics.
> **Data:** The study is grounded on the social-epidemiologic cross-sectional data of the basic KiGGS survey 2003-2006 for children and adolescents aged 1 to 17 years living in Germany.
> **Analytical Strategy:** The study of associations comprises three analytical steps, namely univariate respectively multivariate, multiple linear as well as multinominal logistic regression on (food group specific) overall intake in g/d and kcal/d and the degree of deviation from the individual’s balanced diet.

**Results**

**Description:**

> Children and adolescents in Germany deviate to a great extent from the nutritional recommendations ‘optimIX’ of the Research Institute of Child Nutrition (FKE) (Figure 1).

**Inference:**

> Seen as a whole, the results reveal the empirical relevance of the three dimensions of Affordability, Availability and Accessibility of the ‘Triple-A’-Model as predictors of the healthy nutrition of girls and boys in Germany between 2003 and 2006 (Figure 2).
> In particular, a high educational background and part time employment of the parents emerge as protective factors.
> Disposable income is a neutral factor.
> Regional deprivation, older birth cohorts, migration background and full time employment of the parents appear as risk factors.

**Conclusion**

> **Scientific:** To summarise, the partly complex structure of the results justifies further research regarding modelling and the strategy of analysis. Especially causal-analytical replications based on panel data are essential for further theorising (feasible for KiGGS from 2016 on).
> **Political:** Simultaneously, the study at hand refers to the necessity of setting-based health promotion based on effective novel approaches with the purpose of an early establishment of the direction for the sake of nutritional health equality.