Housing Quality in Europe – A Comparative Analysis Based on EU-SILC Data

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Abstract:

Access to adequate housing belongs to the basic human rights and the quality of housing is among the essential components of living conditions and the quality of live. Modern welfare states are thus aiming to ensure adequate housing and to enhance the housing conditions of their citizens through diverse policy measures. Housing conditions are also within the scope of supranational policy making (e.g. United Nations, European Union). As part of their social inclusion strategy, the EU for example has decided to include housing indicators into their set of primary social inclusion indicators.

As a result of the recent enlargement, the scope and inequality of living conditions within the EU has increased considerably. This paper explores and compares the housing situation and residential quality across the current member states of the EU. While looking at individual countries too, this study primarily aims to compare the housing situation in Germany with two groups of countries: the Eastern European member states and the former EU-15 member states (except Germany). The analysis covers various dimensions of the adequacy and quality of housing (home-ownership, type and condition of buildings, size and equipment of dwellings, quality of neighbourhood) and does not only identify inequalities between countries and groups of countries, but also explores whether and how differences in housing qualities depend on socio-economic characteristics of households within countries. In addition to objective indicators, also the satisfaction with the accommodation will be used as a subjective indicator to compare housing quality in Europe as well as to assess the impact of major characteristics of the housing situation on subjective well-being in terms of satisfaction with the accommodation.