Housing conditions in Vienna: Requirements of an integration-oriented housing policy.

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Housing conditions result from two-way processes ocurring in the dynamics of demand and supply on urban housing markets. In this context, economic, technological and socio-demographic trends of development are regarded highly important in terms of impacting both demand and supply composition. The economic characteristics of dwellings/apartments as traded goods as well as the particular behavior of supply and demand sides strongly affect urban housing conditions in regard to housing quality, costs and housing chances.

In this study housing quality, costs and housing chances are investigated empirically on the level of individual households. They have been classified into types of household subject to their individual profiles in terms of socio-economic attributes, ability to pay and immigrant background, respectively. Thus, it is possible to characterize group-specific housing conditions and to identify segmented housing conditions of disadvantaged groups. Already at this stage it began to show that individual dimensions of housing quality (e.g. amenities, flat occupancy or type of contract) are heavily determined by household-specific ability to pay (degree of risk of poverty) and immigrant background. Consequently, low-income households and housholds with non- Austrian citizenship frequently face problems in maintaining decent levels of housing quality at acceptable cost-value ratios. This is especially true for households that are not able (for whatever reasons) to access social housing schemes.

Group-specific housing chances are referred to as relative chances of accessing individual housing segments and housing qualities, respectively. Adopting the statistical technique of correspondence analysis allows for ranking group-specific chances, visualizing the group's competitive position on the market for particular dimensions of housing conditions and eventually identifying housing attributes that are likely to segment the market. Today's household compositions becoming more and more heterogenous results in a complex pattern of group-specific housing chances that reflects manifold overlaps of social status, lifestyle, housing needs and immigrant background. While on market segments with unregulated pricing chances are largely determined by a household's ability to pay, social housing schmemes become accessible subject to particular sets of migrational qualifications and social needs.

In order to establish a spatial context of housing conditions the urban area of Vienna was sub-divided into areas of homogenous housing and socio-demographic structures. While the former classification focusses on characteristics of houses and built environment the latter keeps a societal perspective by identifying areas of alike neighborhoods. Spatial allocation trends of housing conditions are disclosed by overlapping the above defined areas: among other findings it became apparent that neighborhoods with large shares of young population and immigrants tend to live in areas that are primarily made up of old buildings, small flats and few amenities. At the same time bigger-sized flats with better standard are mainly occupied by neighborhoods with high average levels of education. Thus, group-specific WOHNCHANCEN can be put into a spatial dimension by investigating the links between houshold types and individual areas of homogenous housing structures. Put differently, the assumption that housing market segments create spatial segments could be verified.

Based on this analysis, housing policies centered on integration should meet the following requirements:

- providing a wide variety of homes in order to meet the needs of the increasingly heterogenous demand on the housing market, in general;

- increasing supply quantities in the rented flat segment while regulating pricing in the sublease segment, in particular;

- reducing misallocation and increasing supply quantities in social housing segments through an increase of mobility;

- establishing a mixture of contract types (i.e. owner occupied flats, rented flats and social housing) in new housing supply,

- avoiding trouble hotspots by adopting allocation concepts centered on spatial integration through a mixture of contract types particularly in centrally located housing areas.