

## SOCIAL AND SPATIAL DISPARITIES IN CITIES – THE FLIP SIDE OF URBAN PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH

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### Abstract

Cities in Germany become increasingly segregated. This might be due to a changing urban labour market. Ten years before, the share of employees without any formal education was higher than for those with a tertiary education in the ten largest cities of Germany – 17.6 % versus 12.6 %. Nowadays, the picture has changed, and urban labour markets provide increasingly employments for highly skilled persons. The respective figures are 13.2 % and 17.3 %. Furthermore, foreigners and long-term unemployed persons face higher problems in getting a job in the major German cities than in the rest of the country.

This changing labour market has a positive effect, as the urban productivity increases. Thus, cities strengthen their role as the drivers of national growth. But there is also a negative side: Cities have traditionally been heterogeneous places with higher intra-urban income disparities and stronger differences in social status than in rural areas – being most obviously displayed in different kinds of buildings and densities. But cities are increasingly a place for people of a higher social status – concerning employment and income chances and the financial means to pay for higher house prices and rents. Thus, the question arises how this affects the living of the less advantaged urban dwellers and which consequences arise for the whole city.

Some of these consequences are e.g.:

- With an increasing percentage of welfare recipients, the share of households with excessive indebtedness rises. This can be demonstrated with the example of the city of Duisburg.

- Especially on group of people has a very high risk of impoverishment, namely single mothers depending on social welfare. E.g. the share of all single mothers and fathers (the statistics do not differentiate between the genders) was up to 83 % in Cologne-Chorweiler. This urban district has, with 41 %, the second highest percentage of welfare recipients in this city.
- The next generation gets a burden: E.g. 21 % of all children living in Hamburg depend on social welfare. One third of these children live in merely 10 out of the 99 urban districts of Hamburg – leading to future problems if not good chances for these children can be provided.
- The higher the percentage of children in welfare recipient families in the urban districts of Duisburg, the lower the share of pupils going after primary education to grammar school, which ends with an university-entrance diploma.

Thus, it can be expected that quarters with more people and households being dependent of the social welfare system provide less chances concerning the social upward mobility for the children growing up there. The fear is that such structures can be intensified – both in selected urban districts due to a higher concentration and in families throughout the generation.

Furthermore, it can be shown that the higher the share of welfare recipients in the different quarters the lower is the participation in elections. There is a lack of interest of many socially disadvantaged inhabitants in political topics (if there is no ecological fallacy). Contrary to this, urban dwellers in better-off wards have via networks, education or eloquence better possibilities to lobby for such political decision which favor their places of living. This is a further factor for increasing spatial disparities. E.g. in German cities there are presently many discussions about the location of new homes for refugees. Will they be rather erected in disadvantaged urban districts, because more educated inhabitants can prevent that they will be built in their quarters? The picture is not quite clear, but there are hints for this hypothesis, as the analysis will show.

The presentation will not focus on traditional versus new methods, but rather on traditional and new sources of data. Urban statistics looking at the ward-level are not in all German states regarded as official data. This is to some respect weird, as they come from municipal offices. But it is also somehow understandable, as there is e.g. no shared data catalogue, and some cities use rather unconventional sources to provide data. This is a challenge for the

user, because not every aspect can be empirically shown with each city. It is therefore necessary to select the cities according to the topic to be highlighted. Only this way allows drawing a wider picture on spatial and social disparities in cities and the consequences which are due to an increasing or at least more spatially concentrated number of welfare recipients.