

## Call for Papers: IGJR issue 1/2020

# Housing crisis: How can we improve the situation for young people?

The Intergenerational Justice Review ([www.igjr.org](http://www.igjr.org)) is a peer-reviewed English language journal, reflecting the current state of research on intergenerational justice. The IGJR publishes articles from humanities, social sciences, and international law. The journal is released biannually and employs a double-blind peer review process. Its editorial board consists of about 50 internationally renowned experts from ten different countries. IGJR is indexed under Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

The topic of issue 1/2020 (which is planned to be the first part of a double issue) will be

**“Housing crisis: How can we improve the situation for young people?”**

We welcome submissions to the issue 1/2020 that analyse the housing situation of the young generation.

### Topic outline

In many European countries, and especially in large cities and university towns, affordable housing is a pressing and sometimes explosive issue.

In the debate about such questions as home ownership or rent increase caps (Mietpreisbremse – German: rent brakes), the intergenerational perspective is often forgotten. But different generations are affected in noticeably different ways. Rising rent and purchase prices and the failure of housing construction programmes make it ever more difficult for young people to access the housing market. The quality of housing is a key factor in living standards and wellbeing, as well as an integral element of social integration, yet in 2014 a total of 7.8% of young people in the European Union (aged between 15 and 29) were in severe housing need, 25.7% of the young people in the EU lived in overcrowded households, and 13.6% lived in households that spent 40% or more of their equivalised disposable income on housing (Eurostat 2016).

In response to the 2008/9 financial crisis, government programmes for public and social housing aimed at the poorer parts of the population were cut back, leading to diminishing access to affordable housing, especially in urbanised areas. For young people, this means that they have to pay higher rents. Today, therefore, they often live longer in their parental homes, or in the private rental sector, than previous generations (Ronald/Lennartz 2018).

What is often referred to as a “housing crisis” can certainly be seen as a question of intergenerational justice, because the baby

boomers had easier access to housing or to the means to finance it. Today, the baby boomer generation benefits from housing inequality in two ways: through property values and rental income. At the same time, with pension systems under pressure because of ageing populations, the ownership of residential property has become an important component of old-age provision (Helbrecht/Geisenkauser 2012).

Younger generations, on the other hand, are disadvantaged in two respects: today's increased demand leads to further pressure on the housing market in the low-price segment, which in turn leads to an increase in the rent burden for lower and middle income groups, and also makes the purchase of residential property more difficult. In many parts of Europe, such as the Southeast of the UK, in the 1980s the average cost of a first home was three to four times the annual average salary; today it can be ten or twelve times the annual average salary.

From this perspective, it can certainly be argued that the housing market situation is not intergenerationally fair. And in many European countries, ownership of real estate has become a much greater source of wealth inequality between generations than salary differentials.

This gloomy picture of housing and home ownership is, however, by no means universal. Statistics point to significant differences between countries, and international comparisons show that successful housing policies are possible. An EU comparison shows that the percentage of households managed by a person aged 18–29 who spends 40% or more of their disposable income on housing costs ranges from 1.3% (in Malta) to 45.4% (in Greece) (Leach et al. 2016). It is clear that some countries perform significantly better than others in providing affordable housing for the next generation.

Articles could approach the topic through a broad range of questions, including:

- How did the housing crisis come to be and how can housing inequality for young people be improved?
- Why are some countries better than others at providing affordable housing for the next generation? What are the similarities and differences? What lessons can be drawn from cross-country comparisons?
- What political levers, such as subsidies, could be introduced to help the younger generation achieve more affordable and long-term housing security? Is the German Mietpreisbremse a successful instrument for this and how does it affect the young generation?
- Planet vs. people: It is often suggested that the solution to the housing crisis is to build more homes, but this raises the question of encroaching on green spaces and the environmental impact that this implies. How can that tension be resolved? How can urbanisation and the housing market become more environmentally friendly?
- Another solution is to use existing housing stock more efficiently. Can government policy help to bring this about, for example by incentivising the fuller occupation of large houses with unused spare bedrooms, or by discouraging the ownership of second homes through higher taxation? What is the potential of new forms of housing, such as shared housing, multi-generational housing, homeshare (housing for help)?

- How does homelessness affect young people in particular and how can it be combated?
- How can those who work in the media be encouraged to address this topic?

### Submission Requirements

Submissions will be accepted until 31 December 2019.

Articles may be submitted electronically through the IGJR homepage (see "Submissions").

Articles should be no more than 30,000 characters in length (including spaces but excluding bibliography, figures, photographs and tables). For details, see the author guidelines: [http://www.igjr.org/ojs/igjr\\_doc/Author\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.igjr.org/ojs/igjr_doc/Author_Guidelines.pdf)

**Demography Prize:** Note that this topic is closely related to the subject of the next Demography Prize promoted by the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (FRFG) and the Intergenerational Foundation (IF). The prize is endowed with 10,000€ and has 31 December 2019 as its deadline. Young researchers may also wish to participate in this essay competition, and it is hoped that this edition of the IGJR will contain a selection of the best prize submissions in English. More information will become available shortly on [www.intergenerationaljustice.org](http://www.intergenerationaljustice.org) and [www.if.org.uk](http://www.if.org.uk).

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### Recommended literature

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