

An isometric illustration of a cityscape featuring numerous multi-story buildings in red and blue. The buildings are arranged in a dense urban layout. Several red and white striped barriers are placed throughout the scene, suggesting restricted access or barriers to entry. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on geometric shapes and a limited color palette.

Refugees and the Berlin Housing Market

Structural Barriers and Personal Struggles
in Berlin's Refugee Housing Transition

Habitat Unit

Words of thanks:

We would like to thank everyone who made this research possible. We would particularly like to thank the residents of the shelters, who gave us their time and shared their moving stories, helping us to understand their lives and living situation. This work would not have been possible without their trust and cooperation.

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FOREWORD

This study on fluctuation (turnover) in modular accommodation facilities for refugees (MUF) in Berlin was conducted on behalf of the State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF), renamed on 16 April 2026 to the State Office for Refugee Affairs and Accommodation (LFU), by the Technical University of Berlin (TU Berlin). Its primary objective is to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the reasons and contextual factors influencing turnover and length of stay in MUF. This investigation is crucial for enabling future accommodation planning based on well-founded, more concrete insights into residents' perspectives across different accommodations.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative component with a qualitative component. The qualitative approach, characterized by guided interviews and case analyses, provided deep insights into the individual motivations, challenges, and experiences of refugees. This method allowed for the capture of complex interrelationships and subjective perspectives that are of central importance for accommodation planning. However, it should be noted that the qualitative approach limits the representativeness of the results, as the findings cannot be readily generalized to the entire population of refugees living in MUF. Nevertheless, the qualitative interviews played a decisive role in the analysis and generation of insights, providing valuable perspectives.

The State Office for Refugee Affairs and Accommodation (LFU) would like to emphasize that the contents and statements of this study are based on the information and perspectives of the surveyed residents of the accommodations. These statements reflect their individual experiences and perceptions, and may also reflect misunderstandings—particularly regarding the asylum procedure, the accommodation system, legal and administrative processes, and the roles of the various stakeholders. The LFU assumes no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or interpretation of these statements.

The study serves as a scientific baseline assessment and a basis for discussion to further develop refugee accommodation in Berlin. While the LFU supports transparency and the exchange of findings, it distances itself from any liability for potential misinformation or conclusions that may arise from the statements of the respondents. Critical feedback or recommendations expressed on the basis of this study should therefore always be considered in the context of the methodological framework and the subjective perspectives of the interviewees.

CONTENT

Technische Universität Berlin
Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten
Habitat Unit
SoSe 2025

Studio and Seminar: Refugees and the Berlin Housing Market
Teaching Staff: Hellen Aziz, Dr. Hassan Elmouelhi, Prof. Dr. Anke Hagemann

Students: Sarah Levihn, Marinus Löw, Anna Gläser, Maria Kopp, Lorenz Hahnheiser, Emilie Müschen, Lena Meyer, Roberta Baxho, Sarina Schmidt, Shraddha Mahajan, Soolmaz Qaribsam, Nele Herbig, Theresa Stahl, Teresa Immler, Rebecca Maria Manolescu, Alina Willkomm, Helene Rehahn



1. Introduction	4 - 5
2. General Information	6 - 43
2.1 History of Refugees	7 - 18
2.2 Types of refugees shelters in Berlin	19 - 27
2.3 The governance system and different stakeholders	28 - 37
2.4 the integration process and the administrative system	38 - 43
3. Hypothesis	44 - 131
3.1 Housing	45 - 83
3.2 Administrative Factors	84 - 92
3.3 Integration	93 - 102
3.4 Conditions	103 - 115
3.5 Social Factors	116 - 131
4. Methodology	132 - 139
5. Field Work and Analysis	140 - 165
5.1 General Survey Results	141 - 145
5.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Findings	146 - 165
5.2.1 Housing	148 - 150
5.2.2 Administrative Factors	151 - 153
5.2.3 Integration	154 - 156
5.2.4 Conditions	157 - 159
5.2.5 Social Factors	160 - 165
6. Discussion	166 - 179
6.1 Major Findings	167 - 171
6.2 Scenarios	172 - 179
7. Conclusion	180 - 183

In 2015, Germany experienced a significant influx of refugees, marking a pivotal moment in recent migration history. Even ten years later, cities like Berlin continue to face the challenge of providing adequate housing for many of these individuals. A large number of refugees still live in temporary shelters rather than moving into permanent homes. This raises the question: Is remaining in temporary accommodation primarily a personal choice, or is it shaped by structural, administrative, and socio-economic barriers? Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective housing policies that not only meet immediate needs but also support long-term integration and social stability.

This research project, conducted in collaboration with the State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF) Berlin, investigates refugee housing in the city, focusing on six modular refugee accommodations (MUFs 2.0) located in Berlin's outer districts—Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Pankow, Steglitz-Zehlendorf, Lichtenberg, Reinickendorf, and Treptow-Köpenick—selected by the LAF to represent diverse housing systems and social environments.

The study concentrates on five key areas that influence refugee housing transitions: housing market dynamics, legal and administrative requirements, accommodation quality and conditions, social and cultural factors, and access to services and integration support. These themes form the basis of the research hypotheses.

This booklet guides readers through the research from foundational context to final conclusions. It begins with background information on the history of refugees in Germany and Berlin, outlines the types of shelters available, and describes the governance and integration processes shaping refugee accommodation. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, on-site observations, and comparative analyses. This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding by integrating statistical data with fieldwork and personal experiences.

A discussion section interprets the findings within broader social, political, and economic contexts and explores potential future scenarios for refugee housing in Berlin. The booklet concludes with key insights and recommendations aimed at improving accommodation strategies and integration policies.

By integrating empirical evidence with thorough analysis, this booklet provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges refugees face transitioning from temporary shelters to permanent housing, offering valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars alike.

Introduction

2.1 HISTORY OF REFUGEES IN BERLIN

Refugees in Berlin: After World War II

Between 1939 and 1950, a mass migration occurred in Europe, affecting approximately 25 to 30 million people (Planet Wissen, n.d). This movement was not limited to refugees and displaced persons; it also included tens of thousands of children returning from evacuation programs, hundreds of thousands of former evacuees returning home, and millions of former soldiers, freed concentration camp inmates, and forced laborers attempting to return to their home countries (Planet Wissen, n.d). The largest group affected by this migration was Germans (Planet Wissen, n.d). Estimates indicate that between 12 and 18 million ethnic Germans were subjected to flight and expulsion from the former eastern territories during and after the Second World War (Planet Wissen, n.d.; NDR, n.d.). Many suffered from hunger, cold, and disease during their journeys, often owning little more than what they could carry (Haus der Geschichte, n.d.). It is estimated that up to 600,000 individuals lost their lives during the refugee journeys (NDR, n.d.).

Following World War II, Germany underwent large-scale forced migration as a result of significant territorial losses mandated by the Allied powers through post-war settlements. The Potsdam Conference of 1945 addressed the revision of borders and the expulsion of German populations from disputed territories (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The Conference laid the groundwork for the mass relocation of millions of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, intensifying refugee flows into Germany. The Allied powers agreed that the transfer of German populations from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary to Germany should be undertaken in an „orderly and humane manner“ (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).



Figure 1: Refugees (NDR, n.d.).

Refugees were housed in camps, temporary shelters, and private homes, often facing tension with local populations (Haus der Geschichte, n.d.). These difficulties were especially acute in Berlin, where war destruction had devastated housing. By the end of World War II, approximately 600,000 apartments in Berlin had been destroyed, amounting to around 55% of the city's housing stock (Berlin.de, n.d.; Berliner Mieterverein, 2020). As a result of this destruction and mass displacement, only 2.8 million of the pre-war population of 4.3 million remained in the city by 1945 (Berlin.de, n.d.). However, by 1950, Berlin's population had grown to 3.3 million (berlingeschichte.de, n.d.), indicating a significant influx of displaced and refugee seeking individuals.



Figure 2: Berlin: (Berlin.de, n.d.)

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Berlin faced a severe housing crisis (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025). The new magistrate initiated measures to requisition vacant and under-occupied apartments, place people looking for accommodation there. Apartments were considered under-occupied if they housed fewer than one person per habitable room (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025). However, such apartments were scarce, as most larger residences had already taken in relatives displaced by bombings or flight (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025). Consequently, overcrowded housing became the norm (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025). By April 1946, over 110,000 individuals were residing in makeshift shelters, including garden houses, barracks, basements, and attics (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025). Furthermore, air-raid bunkers, military barracks, and factory halls were converted into residential spaces (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025), highlighting the urgent need for even minimal housing.

Among the makeshift shelters used during the postwar housing crisis were Nissen huts—barrel-shaped, prefabricated structures designed by Canadian engineer Peter Nissen for military use. Repurposed in Berlin's British and American sectors after 1945, they were poorly insulated, lacked basic amenities, and proved espe-

cially inadequate during the freezing winter of 1946/47 (Berliner Mieterverein, 2025). The situation worsened with the Berlin Blockade, imposed by the Soviet Union from June 24, 1948, to May 12, 1949 (NATO, 2017; Die Geschichte Berlins, n.d.). This blockade not only hindered reconstruction efforts but also intensified the East-West confrontation (Die Geschichte Berlins, n.d.). Fearing an insurmountable divide, many politically oppressed or economically dissatisfied individuals fled the Soviet Occupation Zone, seeking refuge in the Western zones and in West Berlin (Die Geschichte Berlins, n.d.). A new category of refugees emerged, prompting the establishment of temporary housing camps (Die Geschichte Berlins, n.d.). However, the provisions proved insufficient, and accommodating the continuous influx became overwhelming. In the first half of 1950 alone, West Berlin had to manage approximately 7,500 new arrivals each month (Die Geschichte Berlins, n.d.).

By 1950, 7.9 million expellees were officially registered in West Germany alone, making up roughly 16.5% of the population (LWL, n.d.; Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, n.d.). A majority originated from the former German eastern territories (56.9%), followed by those from Czechoslovakia (24%), the former Republic of Poland and the Free City of Danzig (8.2%), Eastern and Southeastern Europe (8%), and a smaller portion from Western countries or overseas (2.9%) (LWL, n.d.).

Upon arriving in the German occupation zones, expellees were compelled to rebuild their lives far from their former homes (Tagesspiegel, 2025). Despite successful integration over time, many continue to identify strongly with the regions they were forced to leave, and often appearing culturally distinct within contemporary German society (Tagesspiegel, 2025).

Refugees and Migration in Berlin: Cold War Politics, Global Crises and the Making of a Multinational Urban Society

From the aftermath of World War II through the waning years of the 20th century, Berlin evolved from a divided Cold War battleground into a multicultural metropolis shaped by successive waves of migration, refugee movements, and shifting global dynamics. The period from 1950 to 2000 is marked by three interrelated migratory regimes: Cold War displacement, labor-driven migration from southern Europe and Turkey, and refugee arrivals in response to global crises in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Each phase brought distinctive challenges and transformations to Berlin's social fabric, urban development, and political frameworks of integration (Faist et al., 2021).

In the early decades of the Cold War, Berlin was a prime destination for refugees escaping the Soviet-controlled East. Between 1949 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, approximately 2.6 million people fled the German Democratic Republic (GDR), many of them transiting through or settling in West Berlin. The Federal Reception Centre at Berlin-Marienfelde, established in 1953, processed over 1.35 million arrivals by 1961, underscoring the city's role as a key node in the Federal Republic's (FRG) refugee and resettlement policy (Heidemeyer, 1994; Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2021). These movements were not only expressions of



Figure 3: Inauguration Marienfeld reception center 1953, speech by Theodor Heuss, (Landesarchiv Berlin)

political dissent but also reflected broader demographic and labor market dynamics (Herbert, 2001). The division of the city in 1961 marked a major rupture. Migration across the Berlin border was halted by the Wall, compelling the FRG to recalibrate its migration policies. At the same time, the booming postwar economy required additional labor. Starting in the mid-1950s, the Federal Republic signed bilateral labor recruitment agreements with several countries, including Italy (1955), Turkey (1961), Greece (1960), and Yugoslavia (1968). This period also saw the signing of the Warsaw Treaty between the Federal Republic and the People's Republic of Poland in 1970, which marked a significant step toward reconciliation and had implications for the mobility of Polish nationals in subsequent years. These agreements created a framework for organized labor migration that would profoundly alter the demographic composition of cities like Berlin (Herbert, 2001; Bade & Oltmer, 2005; Glick Schiller & Darieva, 2011). By the early 1970s, more than 2.6 million guest workers were employed in West Germany, with Berlin hosting around 200,000 foreign workers—predominantly from Turkey, Italy, and Yugoslavia (Statistisches Landesamt Berlin, 1974).

Berlin's districts such as Kreuzberg, Wedding, and Neukölln emerged as sites of dense migrant concentration, marked by the establishment of ethnic businesses, cultural associations, and religious institutions. In 1973, Turkish nationals made up the largest single group of foreign nationals in West Berlin, with approximately 80,000 residents (Statistisches Landesamt Berlin, 1974). By the late 1980s, this number had

risen to around 130,000, making Turkish Berliners the largest migrant community in the city (Çınar, 2005). The presence of Italian and Yugoslav communities, though smaller, was also significant, contributing to the culinary, cultural, and economic diversification of the urban landscape (Abadan-Unat, 2011; Bade & Oltmer, 2005). Turkish and Italian migrants not only shaped Berlin's working-class neighborhoods, but also became central actors in the emerging discourse on urban multiculturalism (Leggewie & Sznaider, 2001; Papadopoulos et al., 2008).

Following the 1973 oil crisis and the subsequent halt to guest worker recruitment, Berlin, like other German cities, transitioned from a regime of temporary labor migration to one of permanent settlement. Many workers brought their families to Germany under family reunification provisions, catalyzing the formation of multi-generational migrant communities. By 1980, nearly 1.3 million foreign nationals



Figure 4: A camp like a housing estate, early 1960s (Landesarchiv Berlin)

resided in West Germany under family reunification, with Berlin accounting for a disproportionate share due to its status as a migration hub (Triadafilopoulos, 2019; Herbert, 2001).

The 1970s and 1980s also witnessed the increasing visibility of humanitarian refugee flows shaped by global crises. Political upheavals in Chile (1973), Vietnam (1975), and Iran (1979), as well as conflicts in Lebanon, Angola, and the Horn of Africa, led to the arrival of diverse refugee populations. Between 1979 and 1983, approximately 38,000 Iranian refugees entered the FRG, with Berlin serving as a key destination (Hampshire, 2013). Vietnamese "boat people," arriving in waves after the fall of Saigon, numbered around 35,000 in West Germany by 1980, many of whom were resettled in Berlin's public housing estates (Karakayali, 2008). These resettlements were often facilitated by church organizations and municipal govern-

ments, reflecting both humanitarian commitment and urban containment strategies (Ataç, 2016; Hess & Kasperek, 2010).

In response to these demographic pressures, Berlin adapted its infrastructure to accommodate the growing diversity of its population. Former military barracks and temporary shelters were repurposed to house asylum seekers, while local NGOs and church-based organizations provided essential services (Ataç, 2016). Berlin's policies during this period laid the groundwork for future integration models, though challenges remained regarding discrimination, social exclusion, and access to equal opportunities (Leggewie & Sznaider, 2001; De Genova, 2017). Educational institutions in particular faced difficulties in adapting curricula and pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of children with migrant backgrounds (Çınar, 2005).

As the Cold War drew to a close in the late 1980s, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent reunification of Germany in 1990 brought about profound demographic and institutional shifts. The unification process triggered another wave of migration, this time from the former GDR and Eastern Europe. Berlin became a destination for both ethnic Germans (Aussiedler) from the former Soviet Union and asylum seekers from the Balkans, notably Bosnia and Kosovo during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Between 1991 and 1999, Germany received approximately 320,000 Bosnian refugees, with Berlin serving as a major reception center (De Genova, 2017).

Simultaneously, migration from non-European regions persisted, with increased arrivals from Afghanistan, Iraq, and various African countries. By the mid-1990s,



Figure 6: Schoolchildren at the main entrance, 8 September 1986 (Landesarchiv Berlin, Günter Schneider)

Berlin's foreign-born population exceeded 400,000, accounting for nearly 13% of the city's total population (Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin, 1996). The largest groups continued to be of Turkish, Polish, Yugoslav, and Vietnamese origin (Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin, 1996). This increasing heterogeneity led to debates around cultural pluralism, integration policy, and the redefinition of German identity (Leggewie & Sznaider, 2001; Triadafilopoulos, 2019).

Urban policies in Berlin during the 1990s attempted to reconcile these demographic shifts with limited fiscal resources and rising anti-immigrant sentiment. The city invested in intercultural education programs, social housing strategies, and anti-discrimination initiatives, though implementation often lagged behind political ambition (Leggewie & Sznaider, 2001). The so-called "asylum compromise" of 1993—an amendment to the German Basic Law that curtailed asylum rights—illustrated the tension between humanitarian commitments and securitized border regimes (Hampshire, 2013; Hess & Kasperek, 2010).

By the turn of the millennium, Berlin had become home to one of the most diverse urban populations in Europe, with migrants and their descendants constituting over 20% of the population (Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin, 1996). This diversity was not merely demographic but structural, embedded in Berlin's labor markets, cultural life, and urban morphology. The evolution from a Cold War sanctuary to a globally interconnected city of refuge and labor migration reflects broader transformations in European migration governance and the reconfiguration of urban citizenship (Faist et al., 2021).



Figure 5: Arriving of Polish People after the Warsaw Treaty in 1970 (Stiftung Berliner Mauer, Günter Kambach)

Refugees in Berlin: 2000–2014

Between 2000 and 2014, Berlin saw a consistent influx of refugees due to conflicts and political instability across the globe. Key sources of migration during this period included Iraq, Afghanistan, and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. The city's response evolved through changing policies, grassroots movements, and significant community efforts aimed at integrating newcomers into the social fabric of the city.

The early 2000s saw a steady flow of refugees, notably from war-torn regions like Iraq and Afghanistan. These individuals, seeking asylum from violent conflict and instability, contributed to Berlin's increasing immigrant population. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), Germany consistently saw asylum applications rising in the 2000s, and Berlin, as the capital, was a key destination for many (BAMF, 2013).

In the early 2000s, Germany received around 50,000–80,000 asylum applications per year, with Berlin accounting for a notable share. By 2006, asylum numbers nationwide hit a historic low (~35,000), but began rising again by 2009–2010, driven by ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. In 2010, Berlin received approximately 2,000–3,000 new asylum applicants.

By 2013, about 1 million people in Berlin had an immigrant background, representing roughly 30% of the total population (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013). This included refugees from the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. Berlin's diverse refugee demographic included significant communities from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and several African countries (BAMF, 2014). A specific demographic trend seen in Berlin during this period was the growing Arab population, particularly from Syria and Iraq. By 2014, it was reported that Berlin hosted a large number of asylum seekers from Syria, marking a change in the city's ethnic makeup (BAMF, 2015). These shifts were part of larger European migration patterns as conflicts in the Middle East and Africa led to increased displacement. Throughout this period, Germany's asylum policies evolved, reflecting the changing landscape of European migration. In the early 2000s, asylum law was still heavily shaped by restrictive frameworks, including the "Residenzpflicht", a regulation that forced asylum seekers to remain within a designated administrative district. This policy was especially controversial in Berlin and Brandenburg, sparking protests from refugee-led and activist groups such as The Voice Refugee Forum and Karawane für die Rechte der Flüchtlinge und MigrantInnen.

By 2005, the Immigration Act (Zuwanderungsgesetz) came into effect, significantly reforming German immigration and asylum law. It introduced integration courses, established clearer legal structures for immigration, and transferred asylum policy oversight to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). In 2007, Berlin established a Hardship Commission (Härtefallkommission), enabling certain "tolerated" (geduldete) refugees to apply for residency under humanitarian grounds.

At the same time, local resistance to deportations and restrictive asylum conditions grew. Between 2000 and 2010, Berlin saw regular demonstrations, including protests against deportations, poor accommodation conditions, and the Residenzpflicht. Grassroots support, including church asylum initiatives, helped some refugees re-

main in Berlin despite legal threats.

By the early 2010s, policy began shifting toward integration. In 2014, the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act was amended, granting refugees the right to seek employment after just three months of residency (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2014). This was a significant step in facilitating the economic integration of refugees into German society. At the same time, local movements in Berlin gained visibility. Most notably, the Oranienplatz protest (2012–2014) in Kreuzberg, organized by refugees and supporters, became a symbolic center of refugee resistance. Protesters demanded better living conditions, the right to work, and the abolition of Residenzpflicht (Timm, 2013). The occupation of Oranienplatz followed earlier protests in the 2000s and built on existing activist networks that had developed during that decade.

Organizations such as Über den Tellerrand also played a vital role in promoting cultural exchange and integration. Through food-sharing events and workshops, they created spaces where Berliners and refugees could interact and share experiences (Über den Tellerrand, 2014).

Refugee crisis in Berlin: 2015–2020

Between 2015 and 2020, Berlin experienced one of the largest refugee movements since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of people fled war, violence and political persecution from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other crisis regions to Europe and Germany. As the capital city, Berlin became the central arrival point for refugees and had a special responsibility to provide emergency accommodation at short notice, adapt administrative processes and ensure social cohesion.

In the initial phase, Berlin was primarily challenged by the inadequate preparation of the authorities. The initial reception facilities were quickly overcrowded, in many cases improvised and organisationally overloaded. Gym halls, empty buildings and containers served as temporary accommodations, while the State Office for Health



Figure 7: Nach dem Flüchtlingsprotest in Kreuzberg (taz, 2025)

and Social Affairs (LAGESO) was heavily criticised for months of waiting times and chaotic conditions. Civil protection made an important contribution through the deployment of emergency services and civil protection during the peak phase of arrivals. These organisations played a key role in providing emergency accommodation, food and medical aid. At the same time, there was a remarkable commitment from civil society. Volunteers organised fundraising campaigns, helped with translations, accompanied refugees on visits to the authorities and provided support with everyday orientation. Many of these initiatives lasted for years and new forms of cooperation were established between citizens, NGOs and the administration.

The arrival of refugees triggered different reactions in Berlin society. While a significant proportion of the population saw diversity and migration as an opportunity, others perceived the changes with scepticism or rejection. Debates about cultural identity, religious diversity and social participation became more prominent. In addition to the newly formed civil society organisations, there were protests and occupations, such as the Gerhart Hauptmann School in Kreuzberg, some of which were met with rejection. These events led to an intense debate about asylum law, integration and the rights of refugees. The rise of the AfD as a right-wing populist party and the popularity of movements such as PEGIDA reflected the growing polarisation. Political discourse increasingly shifted towards restrictive migration policies.

For refugees, this development meant a constant balancing act between hope for integration and structural and social hurdles. Despite constitutional rights to protection - such as asylum under Article 16a of the Basic Law or subsidiary protection under European law - many refugees were confronted with long procedures, restricted freedom of movement (residence obligation), work bans and a lack of legal advice. Only after being recognised were they allowed to work without restrictions or live in regular rented accommodation. At the same time, the supply situation varied greatly depending on the federal state and municipality.

Overall, the period between 2015 and 2020 shows that Berlin was confronted with enormous challenges - but also underwent considerable social, administrative and technological learning processes. The refugee movement acted as a burning glass for structural deficits, but also for the potential for solidarity in an increasingly diverse urban society.

Asylerstantragsstellende und Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine 2013-2024

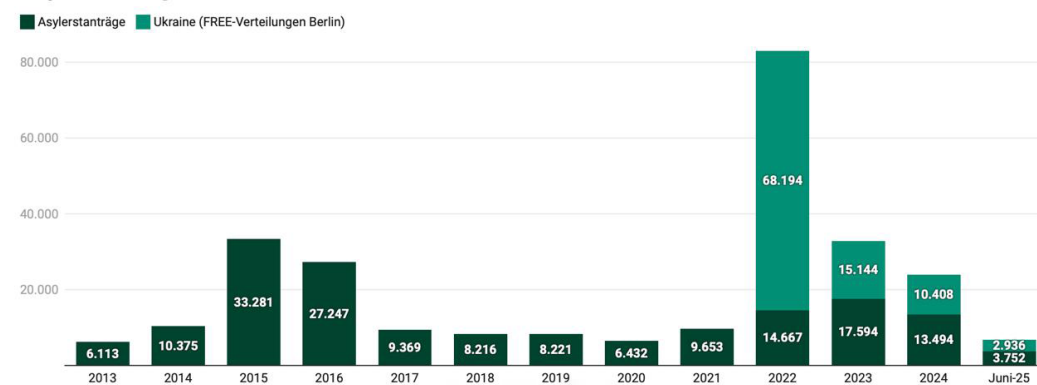
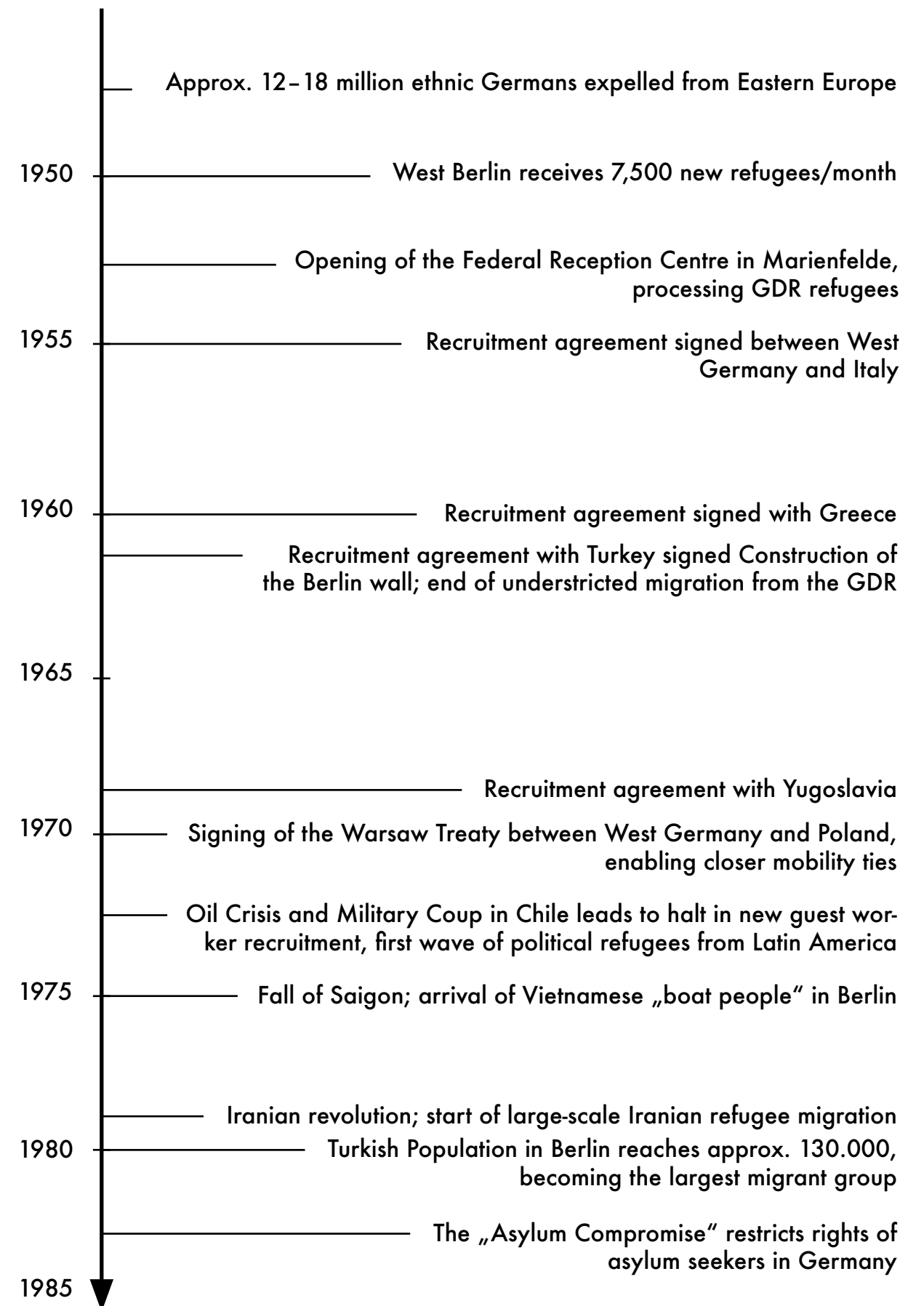
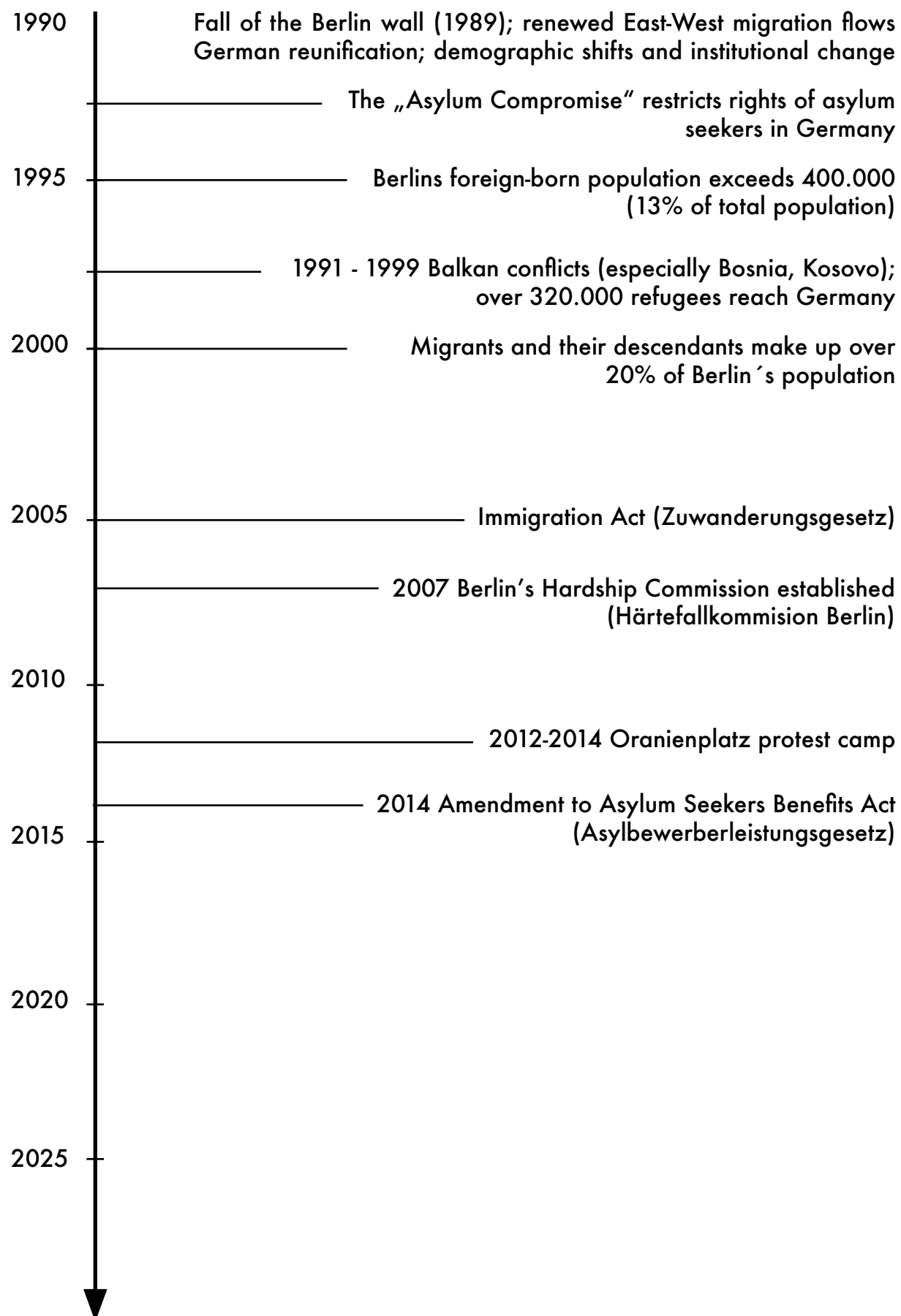


Figure 8: Asylum arrival statistics for the years 2013 to 2024 (Berlin.de, 2024)





2.2 TYPES OF SHELTERS IN BERLIN

Introduction

In 2016, following the „collapse“ of the LAGeSo in the face of rising numbers of arrivals throughout Germany.

In 2016, the Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (State Office for Refugee Affairs, LAF) was installed to oversee the administration and accommodation of refugees in Berlin. The LAF is charged with the implementation of the policies devised by the Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Services (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, SenIAS) (Sowa, 2024). As the main coordinator, it commissions the BIM (Berliner Immobilien-Management) to provide housing sites for the accommodation of people in the process of seeking asylum. The operation and provision of catering and security services is outsourced to subcontractors, many of whom are private companies (Sowa, 2024).

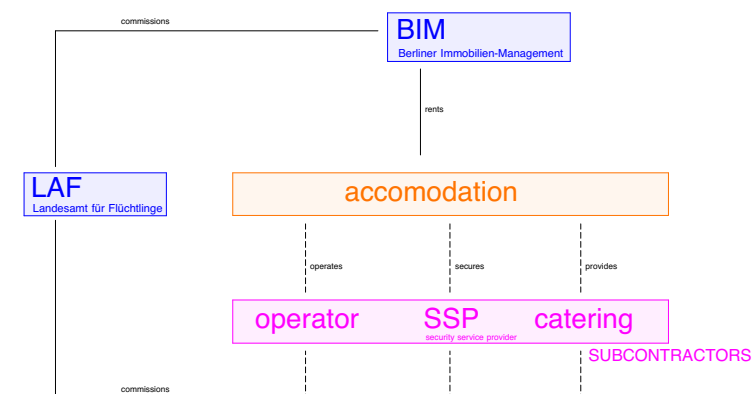


Figure 9: Public and private actors involved. Structural diagram (S.Seethaler-Wari, 2025. p. 4.)

After the closure of emergency shelters, set up in an ad hoc motion during rising numbers of arrivals in 2015/2016, three main types of shelters have been in use.

Upon filing the motion for residency, applicants are registered and housed in arrival centres (Ankunftscentren, AKUZ), intended for a short stay only. In March 2022, the arrival center on the grounds of the former Airport Tegel was installed (Mieder, 2025). After a few days at the AKUZ follows a several month-long stay at the first reception center (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung, ES/AE). Based on the provision of non-cash benefits (Sachleistungen), migrants are catered food in food halls and handed out hygiene products, bedsheets and towels (Sowa, 2024).

Whereas not required by national regulations, the shared accommodations (Gemeinschaftsunterkünfte, GU) are frequently used as longer-term accommodations for people in the process of seeking residency. These accommodations have larger capacities than the former two types, and allow for more „autonomy“ of the residents. Instead of catering, shared kitchens may be used to prepare one's own food and in-cash benefits are provided (Sowa, 2024).

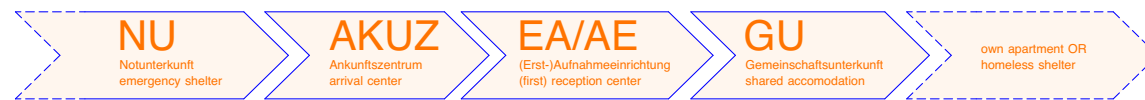


Figure 10: Diagram depicting the accommodation process in Berlin (Ch.Sowa, 2024. p. 114.)

SHARED ACCOMODATION

(WHK, WHK+, formerly known as GU1, GU1+)

Example : MUF 1.0

MUF are buildings of prefabricated modules made of reinforced concrete. Contractors include the SenSW (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, Senate Administration for Urban Development and Housing), the six municipal housing associations (degewo, GESOBAU, Gewobag, HOWOGE, STADT UND LAND, WBM), BEFU (Berliner Gesellschaft zur Errichtung von Flüchtlingsunterkünften, Berlin Association for the Construction of Refugee as well as the Evangelischer Friedhofsverbund (Federation of Protestant Cemeteries).

The MUF commissioned by the SenSW follow a design template "Amtsentwurf" with slight variations depending on their location. Generally, this design intends one "Funktionsgebäude" (functional building) and two apartment buildings. The latter are based on the aforementioned modular system with flexible floor plans due to a load-bearing central structure and have a capacity for housing 200 to 450 inhabitants, again, depending on type and location. The residential buildings are subdivided into modules, each accommodating fifteen inhabitants. Here, (gendered) sanitary facilities as well as a kitchen and dining area are shared. Each residential building comprises two schooling/class rooms as well as four wheelchair-accessible family apartments. On the ground floor a children's play area, a common area with a shared kitchenette, the washing machines and counselling are to be found.



Figure 11: Modulare Unterkünfte für Flüchtlinge in Berlin (Bauwelt, 2016, pp. 28-29)

APARTMENT FLOOR PLANS

(WGF, WGFg, formerly known as GU2, GU3)

Example : Tempohomes

The Tempohomes generally comprise eight residential and two functional „buildings“ as well as one porter's lodge. Each of the residential buildings is made up of yet again eight housing units, each constituted by three containers with an individual sanitary and cooking area. Intended for a rather short period of usage as temporary housing facilities to alleviate the acute shortage of refugee accommodations in 2015/2016. The containers were bought (instead of rented), leading to rising prices in the industry/distribution as well as a shortage in availability in Germany.

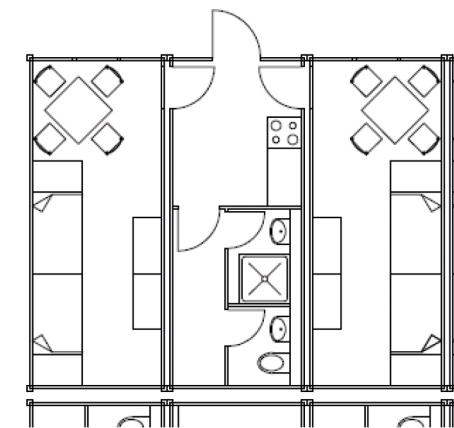


Figure 12: a single residential unit, made up of three containers. The sanitary and cooking facilities in the center is accessible from both sides. (Senatsverwaltung für Gesundheit und Soziales, 2016): tempohomes - neue Containerdörfer zur Unterbringung von Flüchtlingen in Berlin. Berliner Flüchtlingsmanagement für eine wachsende Stadt. July 2016. Zeichnung 1-Anlage zum Leistungsverzeichnis. p.5.

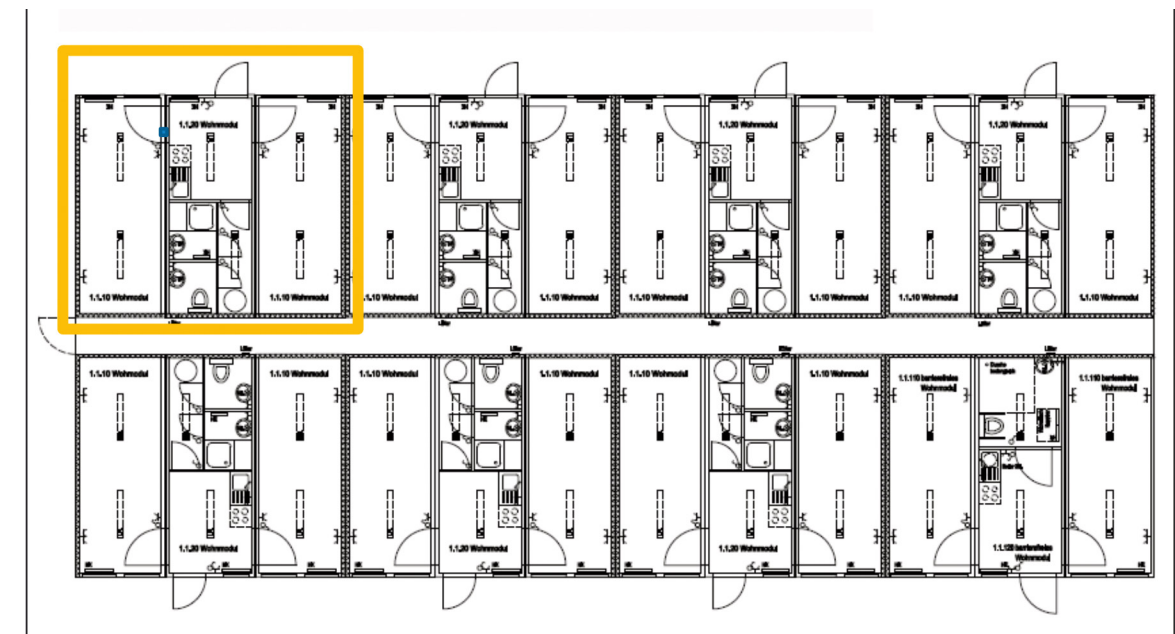


Figure 13: a residential module, comprising eight units, each made up of 3 containers. (ibd.)

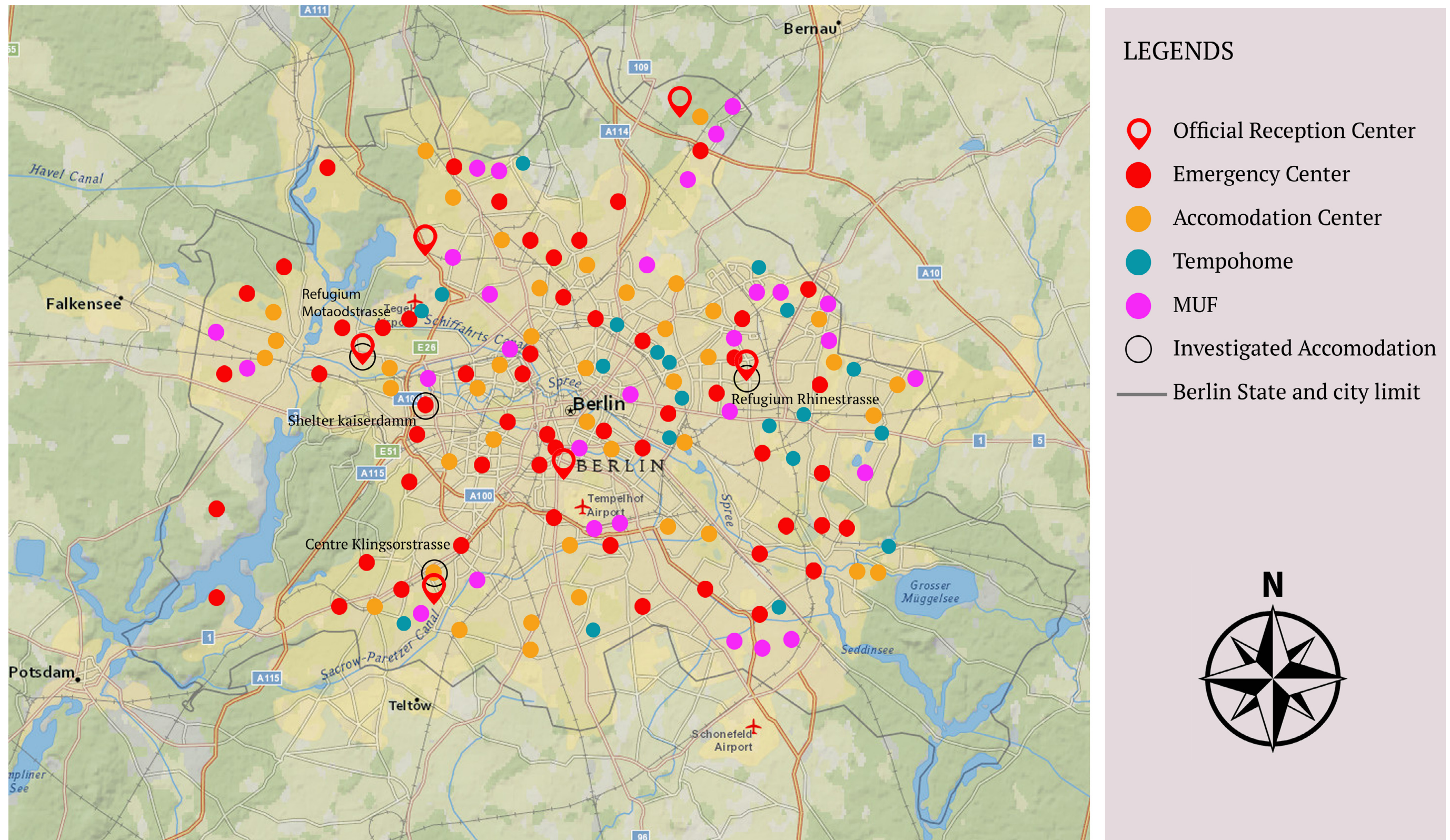


Figure 14: shelter types and their distribution in Berlin. (Seethaler-Wari, 2025)

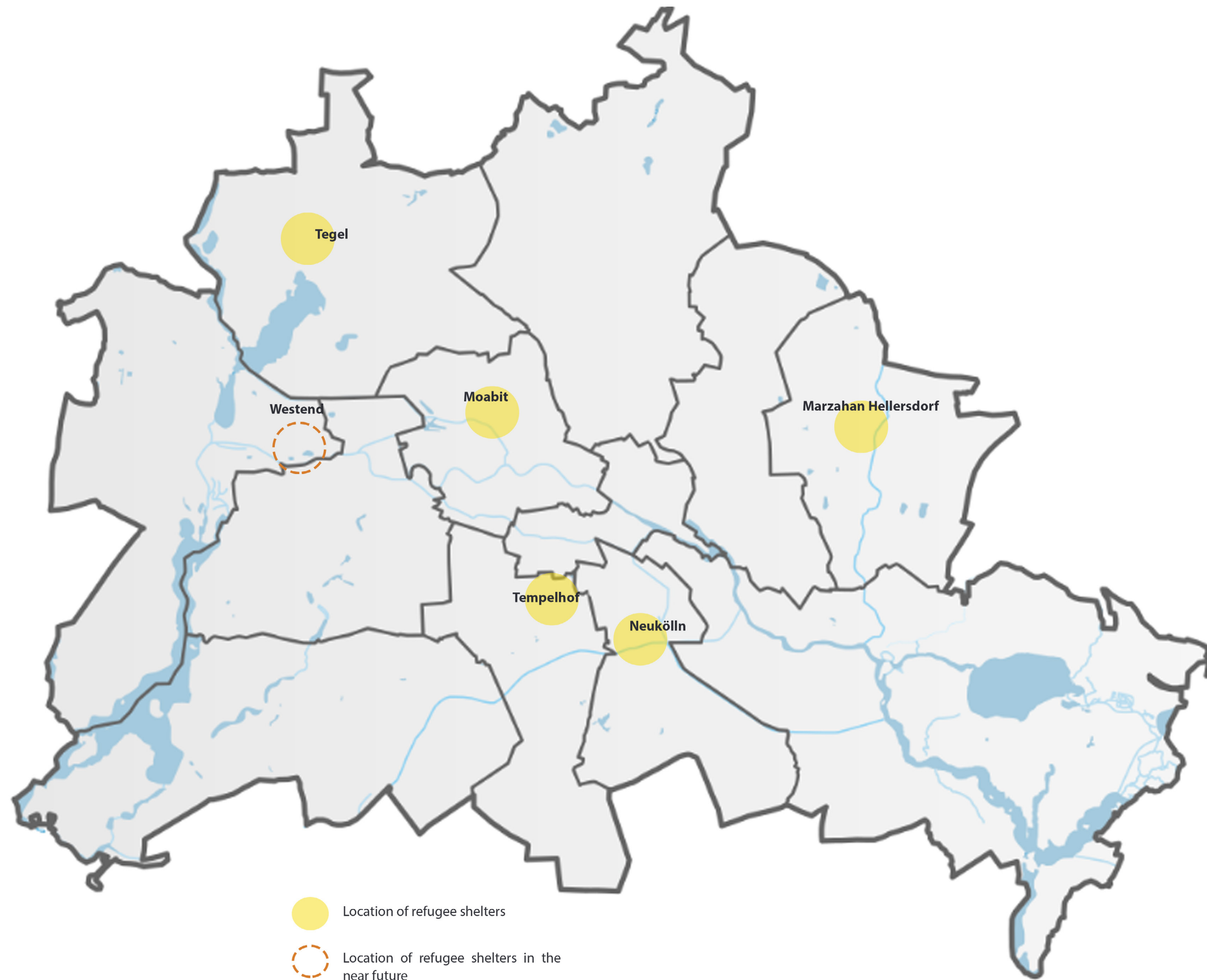


Figure 15: locations of refugeeshelters (own elaboration, 2025)

LOCATIONS

Locations of Refugee Accommodations in Berlin Refugee accommodations are distributed across various districts in Berlin

- Tegel (Reinickendorf): Hosts a large facility at the former airport, with plans for additional decentralized accommodations.
- Tempelhof: The former airport hangars have been converted into shelters housing hundreds of refugees. MUFs (Modulare Unterkünfte für Geflüchtete) in Berlin are located throughout the city in various districts. For example, in the Bezirk Marzahn-Hellersdorf, there's a MUF at Zossener Str. 156, 12627 Berlin, owned by GE-SOBAU, and another at Murtzaner Ring 68, 12681 Berlin, owned by THV. Other locations include Darwinstraße 14-18, 10589 Berlin, and Fritz-Wildung-Str. 2114199 Berlin (Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf)
- Moabit (Mitte): A former hotel has been repurposed to accommodate up to 300 individuals
- Neukölln: Home to Sharehouse Refugio, a community living project for refugees and locals. The Refugio Share House in Berlin-Neukölln is a model project of the Berlin City Mission (Berliner Stadtmission). Since July 2015, more than 40 people who have lost or had to leave their homeland, or who are looking for new communities, live and work together in an active community on five floors in a beautiful, hundred-year-old house in Neukölln. The Refugio is not a refugee home in the narrow sense of a dormitory, but a holistically oriented temporary living and working community. With its concept of integration at eye level, the community house should also become a model for similar houses.
- Citywide: Emergency shelters and collective accommodations are spread throughout Berlin, including areas like Charlottenburg, Friedrichshain, and Pankow.
- In the near future: Controversial Refugee Shelter: New Facility with 950 Beds to Open in Berlin-Westend by 2026. On a quiet residential street in Berlin's district of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf stands the sprawling office complex that Berlin's State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF) intends to convert into an accommodation facility for up to 1,500 refugees. The building is located on Soorstrasse in Westend, home to about 20,000 residents, and one of the capital's most affluent neighborhoods, where tree-lined boulevards are strewn with opulent villas, embassy buildings and well-maintained apartment blocks.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Whereas previously, the State office for health and social services (Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales, LAGeSo) had been responsible for managing migrant accommodation in Berlin, this office was not fit to meet the rising numbers of applicants seeking asylum in 2015. Underfunded since and weakened by the austerity politics of the 2000s, the lack of resources e.g. in public housing and existing shelters, but also of staff - led to a „collapse“ (Sowa, 2024). The administration process could not be effectuated efficiently and people arriving were not being housed. In the wake of this bureaucratic crisis, the State office for refugee affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF) was founded. Advising its formation was the private for-profit consulting company McKinsey (Sowa, 2024). The above diagram shows how the neoliberalization of politics has exposed state actors usually charged with public interest/the interest of common welfare to free market logics and prices. In this process, responsibilities as well as resources are outsourced to private actors, who in turn hold the lever of being able to dictate prices in the logic of (private) accumulation. This has created a situation where large privately-owned and for-profit companies manage refugee accommodations. For example, consumer delivery firm Transgourmet (daughter of the Swiss Coop Group) is found to be in charge of catering, Wisag and ALBA effectuate facility services managed by ISS (owned by the Danish ISS/AS Group) and Sicherheit Nord is recruited as a security service (Sowa, 2024). Not only do refugee accommodations create higher costs than public housing due to social, facility and security services provided, but contractors, be they private or public, face an uncertainty in budgeting due to their payment in rates (LAF grants allocation per person and day). This promotes economical calculation and, following the market logic, precarization of shelter conditions.

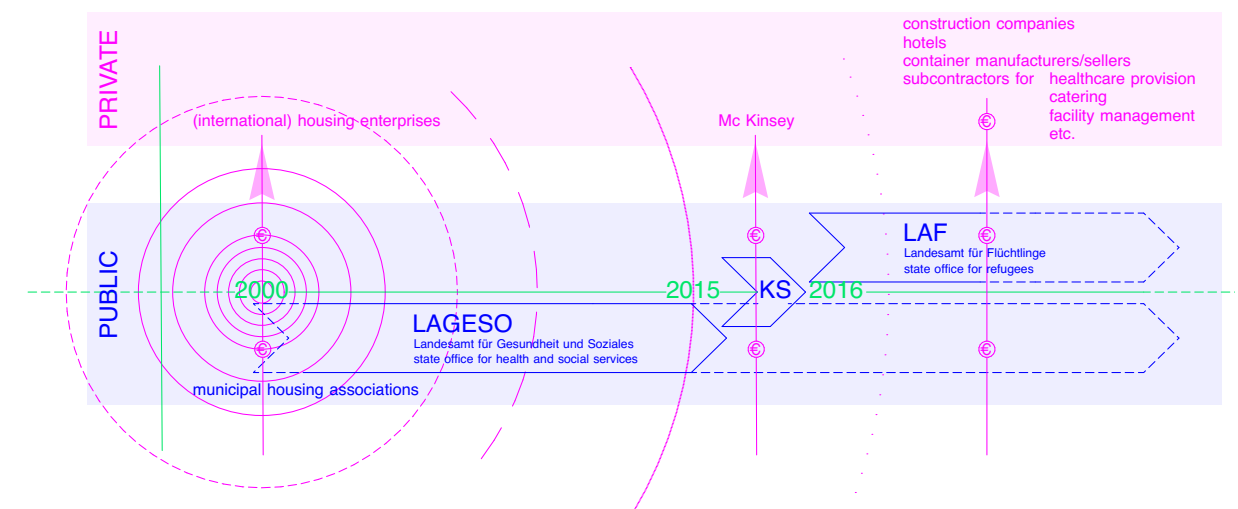


Figure 16: Outsourcing responsibilities and resources. Privatization in Berlin since the 1990s.

2.3 INTEGRATION PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

ADMINISTRATIVE

REGISTRATION PROCESS

There are seven kinds of residence permits in Germany. The settlement permit and the permanent residence permit–EU are unlimited in time, while the residence permit, EU Blue Card, ICT card, Mobile ICT card and visa are limited in time. The residence permit can be issued for the purpose of education, employment, family reasons or humanitarian/ political reasons. Asylum is assigned to the last. (BIM)

In the lexicon of the Bundesamt für Inneres und für Heimat (BIM) Asylum gets defined as:

„The Asylum Act regulates the procedure for foreigners, who seek protection as politically persecuted ... , because their life or freedom is threatened in their country of origin, because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or their political convictions.“

The definition of “refugee”, the legal protection, the aid that must be provided and refugee rights are described in the Geneva Convention. The UNHCR (United Nations Commissioner for refugees) monitors compliance and implementation of the Geneva Convention.(UNO) The responsibility for the asylum procedure lies with the Bundesministerium für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF).

An asylum-seeker must report to a state organisation like the border authority, security authority, immigration authority, reception facility, arrival centre or AnKER facility (BAMF, 2024, p. 9). They are then registered, and their data is compared with those in the Central Register of Foreigners and those of the Federal Criminal Police Office. This process investigates whether another European state might be responsible for carrying out the asylum procedure and whether an application has already been made (BAMF, 2024, p. 10). Asylum-seekers then receive proof that they have registered. This document entitles them to reside in Germany and to draw state benefits, such as accommodation, medical treatment and food (BAMF, 2024, p. 11). All Asylum Seekers are accommodated in reception facilities (Erstaufnahmestellen). The EASY quota system is used to distribute asylum seekers to each Federal Land (BAMF, 2024, p. 12). Both reception and follow up accommodation provide their residents with benefits in kind at subsistence level and a monthly amount of money to cover daily personal needs (BAMF, 2024, p. 13).

The asylum application takes place in person. Applicants are informed about their rights and duties. In this step the applicant is obliged to prove their identity (BAMF, 2024, p. 14). After the application the Applicant receives a certificate that grants

them permission to reside. The permission is restricted to the district in which the responsible reception facility is located. Persons with poor prospect to remain are obliged to live in reception facilities until the decision is taken. They may only leave the area if they have permission from the Federal Office. They are not permitted to work during this period. Persons with good prospects to remain start with the same limitations, but they cease after three months. The residence area is then expanded to cover the entire country (BAMF, 2024, p. 17).

During the Dublin procedure the Member State responsible for the asylum application is determined. During an interview the applicant is informed about the procedure and asked for reasons against a transfer to another State. In case another State is responsible, the person must be transferred within six months. A refugee can act against that decision by bringing the case to the court (BAMF, 2024, p. 16-17).

The personal interview is the most important appointment within the procedure. The objective of the interviews is to learn of the individual reasons for flight, to obtain more information and to resolve any contradictions. To this end, the decision-makers are familiar with the circumstances prevailing in the applicants' countries of origin. They are obliged to provide evidence in the form of photos, documents (...) (BAMF, 2024, p. 18-19).

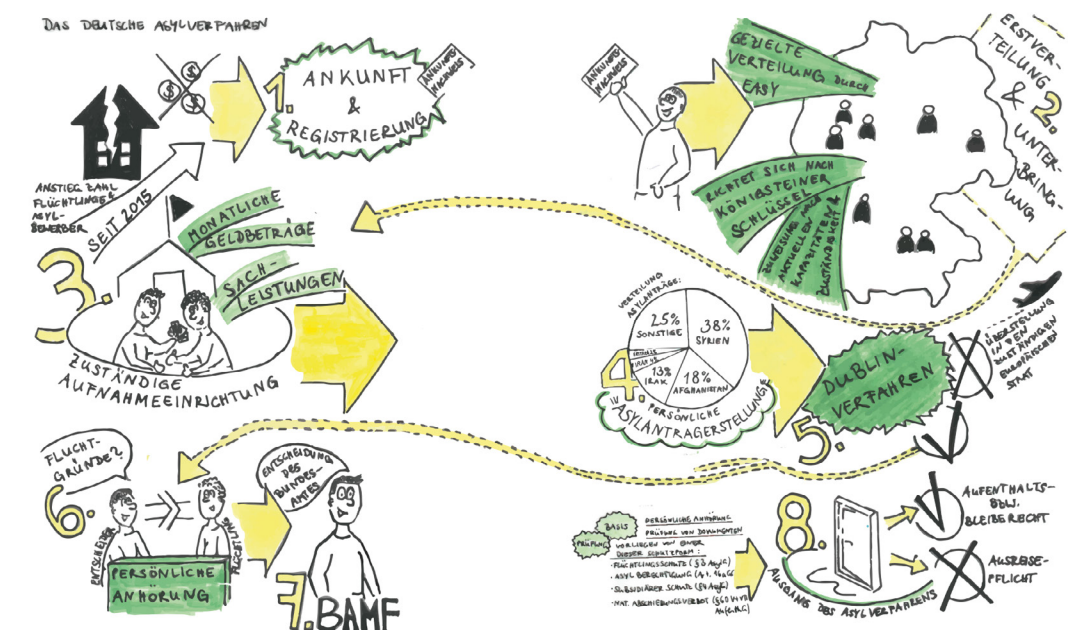


Figure 17: The asylum procedure (BBSR, 2017, p. 12-13)

RESULTS

The decision for the asylum application is reasoned in writing. On the basis of the Asylum Act the Federal Office examines which form of protection applies, in case the application was approved. There are four forms of protection: Entitlement to asylum, refugee protection, subsidiary protection, ban on deportation (BAMF, 2024, p.21) Depending on the status, the length of the residence permit, possibilities to extend the status, acquire settlement permit, access to the labour market and the entitlement to family reunification can vary (BAMF, 2024, p. 22-25).

the deadline period for leaving is only one week.” (BAMF, 2024, p.29). In both cases an individual can appeal against the decision within a short period of time. The different legal instances are then: 1. Administrative court, 2. Higher Administrative Court, 3. Federal Administrative Court (BVerwG), 4. European Court of Justice (ECJ). After all these instances, the Federal Constitutional Court (BVerfG) can take action. Beyond that, only the European Court of Human Rights remains. (BAMF, 2025)

	Entitlement to asylum	Refugee protection	Subsidiary protection	National ban on deportation
Legal basis	§ 16a Basic Law	Section 3 Asylum Act	Section 4 Asylum Act	Section 60, V, VII Residence Act
time span residence permit	3 years	3 years 3 years more every extension	3 years 3 years more every extension	3 years 3 years more every extension
settlement permit	after 3 - 5 years	after 3 - 5 years	after 5 years	after 5 years
access to labour market	unrestricted	unrestricted	unrestricted	employment possible
privileged family reunification	yes	yes	no	no

Figure 18: protection status (own elaboration, 2025)

People with asylum or refugee status are entitled to privileged family reunification. This means that spouses, registered partners, minor children or the parents (or other people responsible) for minor children can join them in Germany. The application to do so must be filed within three months after the entitlement has been granted. After three months, the person in Germany needs to prove the effort to find work and an apartment. In the case of subsidiary protection, the authorities decide who gets a permit based on humanitarian reasons. Usually, core family members (parents of minor children, partners, minor children) do have the right; siblings do not. (BAMF, 2024, p. 27)

Follow-up applications and appeals in case of rejection

There are three types of applications in the asylum procedure. The initial one is the first application, which must be filed in person. If the first application is rejected or withdrawn, a renewed application can be filed, called a subsequent application. A new procedure is only possible if the situation in the country of origin has changed considerably, or if the situation for the individual would significantly worsen in the event of a return. If that is the case, the application will be treated as an initial application. The third type is the second application. This applies if an individual’s application in a safe third country was denied and they then file another application in Germany. (BAMF, 2025)

If the application is denied with an intention to deport, there are two types of rejections: „outright rejection and rejection as „manifestly unfounded“. If the rejection is outright, the individual in question is set a deadline of 30 days in which to leave the country, whereas if the asylum application is rejected as „manifestly unfounded“,



Figure 19: The German asylum procedure brochure (BAMF, 2025)

Housing regulations and process of refugees in Berlin

Housing is a fundamental right that is particularly important for successful integration. Discrimination is particularly serious here, as homelessness makes it difficult to participate in society and integrate into education and work in the long term and accelerates chronic mental and physical illnesses. (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V., 2018, p. 2; Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2019, p. 3)

The accommodation of refugees in Berlin follows a multi-stage process that is regulated by federal and state legal provisions as well as internal administrative directives, such as the Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz, AufenthG), the Asylum Act (Asylgesetz, AsylG), the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz, AsylbLG), and the Berlin Refugee Reception Act (Berliner Flüchtlingsaufnahmegesetz, FlÜAG Bln). The Asylum Act (AsylG) stipulates that individuals seeking asylum in Germany must initially stay in a central reception facility (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung) upon their arrival. According to §47 (1a) AsylG, „Asylum seekers [...] are obligated to reside in the reception facility responsible for them. This obligation ends no later than 18 months after the formal submission of the asylum application [...]“ (translated from German). If this obligation is not fulfilled, the asylum application is considered withdrawn (§20 AsylG).

Berlin generally follows a long-standing strategy of providing refugees with their own housing (Stiftung Sozialpädagogisches Institut Berlin, 2016, p. 15) and sets the mandatory stay in initial reception facilities to a minimum of six weeks and a maximum of six months (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integration, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung, n.d.). The obligation to live in an initial reception facility can be reduced in exceptional cases, e.g. illness or the threat of violence. Only refugees from a so-called „Sicheren Herkunftsland“ (safe countries of origin) are generally required to remain in the initial reception facility throughout the entire asylum procedure and, if their application is rejected, until their departure. All other asylum seekers are usually entitled to search for their own housing after three months in Berlin, and at the latest after six months (ibid.).

If refugees do not find a suitable apartment, the State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF) provides them with alternative accommodation in temporary housing facilities, known as shared accommodation centers (Gemeinschaftsunterkünfte). As the accommodation of asylum seekers is a statutory obligation of the State of Berlin the associated costs are borne by the state level, not by the individual districts. (LAF, n.d.; Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs, 2021) The placement decision is made by the LAF pursuant to § 8 of the Berlin Refugee Reception Act (Flüchtlingsaufnahmegesetz Berlin, FlÜAG Bln). A change of accommodation is only possible upon request and with official approval. If shared accommodation in Berlin is scarce, it is possible that individuals will have to stay longer in the initial reception facility (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integration, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung, n.d.).

Although refugees in Berlin are legally permitted to seek private housing a few months after arrival, many remain in shared accommodation beyond this period. As of 2016, it was estimated that only around 12,000 to 13,000 of Berlin's 43,562

refugees lived in independent housing (Stiftung Sozialpädagogisches Institut Berlin, 2016, p. 12). In 2019, approximately 10,000 individuals continued to live in accommodation centers despite having completed their asylum procedures (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2019, p. 1).

To support the transition to private housing, refugees may apply for rent coverage (Mietübernahmeschein) during or after the asylum process. That means that if an individual does not have one's own income and is in receipt of services from the LAF or a Berlin District Office, these institutions take over the rent below a specific rent limit (Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs, 2021, p. 16). However, according to various stakeholders, actual rents in Berlin often exceed this rent limit (Berlin Governance Platform, 2024, p. 57).

Recognized refugees can also apply for state-subsidized housing with a certificate of eligibility (Wohnberechtigungsschein, WBS). However, a WBS is only issued if the residence permit of each moving individual is valid for at least eleven more months. For example, refugees with a three-year permit cannot apply in the final year, as the immigration office usually only renews permits shortly before they expire. Those with temporary legal status (Aufenthaltsgestattung or Duldung) cannot apply at all (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V., 2018, p. 7; Berlin Governance Platform, 2024, p. 58). In addition to the formal complexity of receiving a WBS, the requirements for the approval of a WBS were changed in 2023. Due to that a significantly larger proportion of Berlin's population is now eligible for WBS leading to stronger competition for social housing, which now extends almost into the middle class. (Berlin Governance Platform, 2024, p. 58)

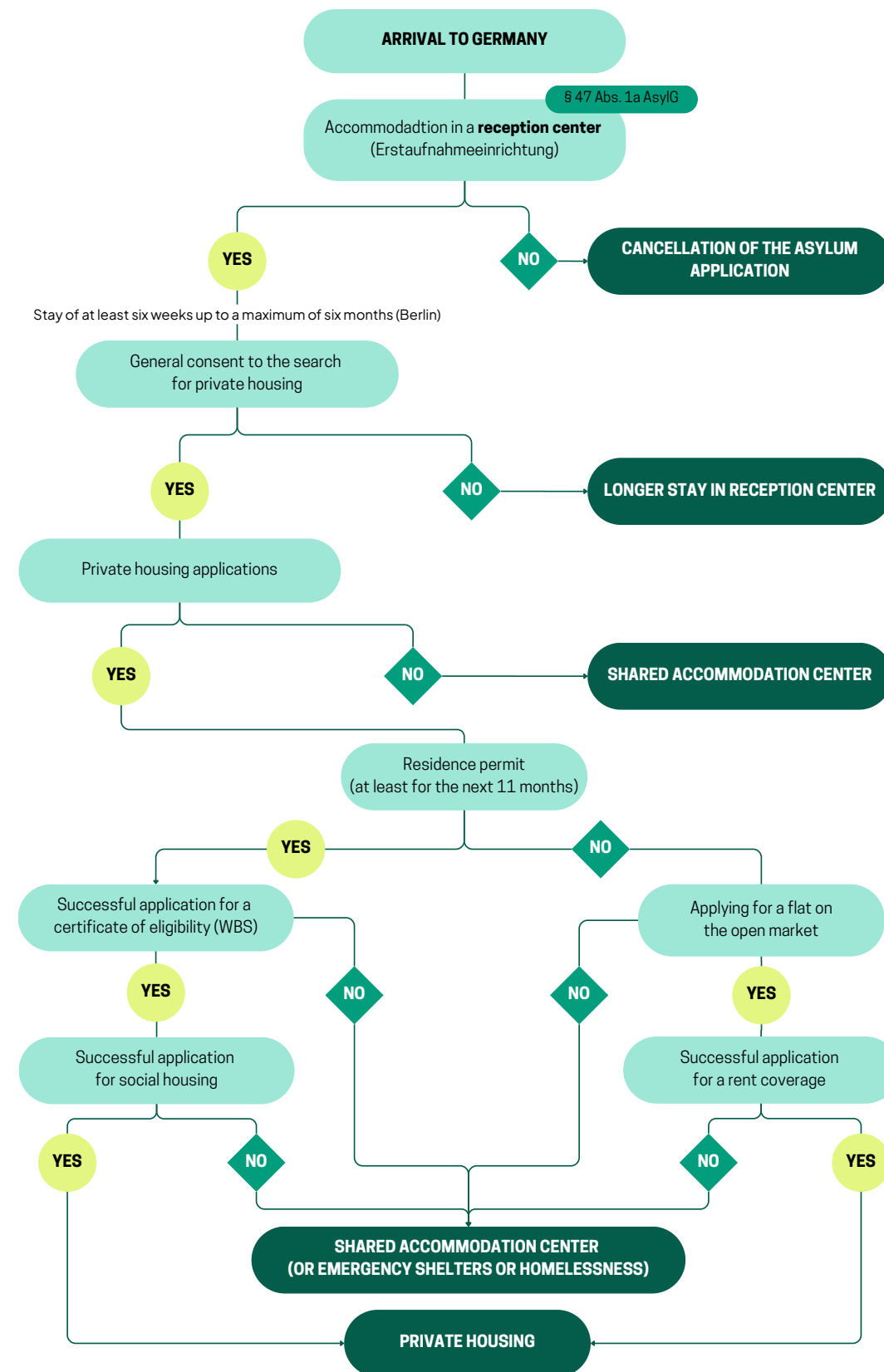
Despite bureaucratic complexities, refugees often face barriers such as missing documents, discrimination, or inflated rents. Many landlords ask for documents refugees can't easily provide, like a credit check or proof of paid rent (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V., 2018, p. 4). This, along with discrimination, less experience on the German housing market and desperation, may force them into overpriced sublets or illegal fees (c.f. Berlin Governance Platform, 2024, p. 65). Lastly, the residence requirement (Wohnsitzauflage) which forces refugees to stay in the state where their asylum process occurred for three years, limiting their access to areas with more affordable housing in other regions (ibid., p. 82).

These conditions contribute to high rates or risks of homelessness among refugees. After short stays with friends or temporary rentals many refugees lose access to accommodation centers and are forced into worse alternatives (Berlin Governance Platform, 2024, p. 70). Different sources from 2016 and 2024 estimate that around half of those in emergency shelters are recognized refugees without housing (c.f. Berlin Governance Platform, 2024, p. 70; Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V., 2018, p. 2).

Civil society groups have become essential in helping refugees find housing, deal with landlords, and manage interactions with authorities. They also support them through the bureaucratic processes, making sure their applications are filled out correctly and submitted on time.

FORMAL HOUSING PATH FOR REFUGEES IN BERLIN

*Excludes specific eligibility requirements, discriminatory practices, bureaucratic barriers, personal factors, and real estate market conditions.



INTEGRATION

Integration Term

According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), integration means that all people living permanently and legally in Germany should be included in society. This applies not only to immigrants, but also to the native population. Integration should promote equal opportunities and enable real participation in all areas of society. The Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) defines successful integration as a feeling of belonging to a community and the development of a common understanding of how to live together in society.

It is generally recognised that integration is a two-way process: on the one hand, it requires the willingness of the majority society to accept immigrants and, on the other, the willingness of immigrants to respect the rules of the host country and to actively seek to integrate. In practice and in public discourse, however, the focus is often one-sidedly on the integration efforts of migrants.

Integration policy and the actors involved

German integration policy follows the principle of „promoting and demanding“ (fördern und fördern). Integration is a complex process involving many actors, including the federal government, the federal states, local authorities and civil society organizations. This „cross-sectional task“ of integration can lead to interface problems in connection with Germany’s federal administrative structure.

The European Union plays an overarching role in integration. Integration policy is primarily a matter for the individual member states of the European Union. The EU itself limits itself to coordination, exchange of information and financial support through funding programmes.

Until the late 1990s, despite many years of immigration, Germany was not officially considered a country of immigration, which meant that there was no targeted integration policy. With the entry into force of the Immigration Act (Zuwanderungsgesetz) on 1 January 2005, integration was defined as a state objective for the first time. The Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees (BAFI) was transformed into the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and charged with coordinating integration measures. Since then, a central instrument of integration policy has been the integration course, which consists of a language course and an orientation course.

Due to the federal system, integration policy is mainly carried out at the level of the federal states and municipalities. Measures include legal regulations, support programmes such as language and qualification measures, cooperation with civil society (e.g. integration summits or the German Islam Conference) and symbolic political measures such as naturalisation campaigns. Some federal states, such as Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg, have passed their own integration laws to step up their efforts.

Berlin, has developed an ‚Overall Concept for the Integration and Participation of Refugees‘, which defines specific fields of action such as ‚arrival and residence‘

Figure 20: Formal housing path for refugees in Berlin (Own elaboration, 2025).

or ‚higher education and science‘, as well as cross-cutting issues such as LGBTQIA+ (in this case LSBTIQ+).

Measuring Integration, success Factors and Effects on individual legal processes

Measuring integration is complex. Although so-called „hard factors“ such as access to the labour market, language skills or citizenship can be measured objectively, soft factors such as social life, intercultural understanding or friendships are hardly measurable. Existing monitoring systems usually focus on structural areas such as the labour market and education, while social and cultural aspects are often neglected.

According to a study by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the success factors for integration can be divided into four categories: individual factors (educational level, vocational qualifications, language skills, age, gender and health), structural factors (education, training and labour market, housing situation), institutional factors (quality and access to integration and language support programmes, social support, official coordination) and social factors (openness of the host society, civic engagement, personal social networks).

Successful completion of a BAMF integration course, including a language test („Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer“) and a test on „Living in Germany“, leads to the award of an „Integration Course Certificate“. This can be taken into account when extending a residence permit, obtaining a settlement permit or naturalisation. Colleges, universities and employers also sometimes require proof of language skills and basic social knowledge.

In the past, integration offers were mainly directed at people with a secure right of residence, but now they are also increasingly available to tolerated persons and asylum seekers. Those who can prove that they have integrated can benefit from them under residence law.

Formal Integration Measures in Berlin

Integration Courses

Cities like Berlin generally possess long-standing and continuous experience with issues of migration and integration and typically maintain well-established institutional structures (Bormann and Werner, 2024).

One of the key formal integration measures in Berlin is the state-funded integration course program. As said before responsibility for the organization and oversight of these courses lies with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF). The courses are implemented through a network of adult education centers (Volkshochschulen, VHS) and accredited private educational providers. The curriculum is divided into two main components: a language course, which aims to build German language proficiency up to the B1 level, and an orientation course that imparts essential knowledge about the German legal and political system, history, cultural norms, as well as the rights and responsibilities of residents in Germany. (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2025).

The standard integration course comprises 700 instructional hours and can be completed either in full-time or part-time formats, depending on participants' individual circumstances. Participation is mandatory for certain groups, including recognized refugees. Additionally, EU citizens and individuals with a temporary suspension of deportation (Duldung) may also be eligible to participate under defined legal conditions. (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2025).

According to German immigration law, individuals who have received a residence permit after January 1, 2005 and who lack a basic knowledge of the German language are generally obligated to attend an integration course. This requirement is formally determined by the Foreigners' Registration Office (Ausländerbehörde) at the time of issuing the residence permit. (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2025).

Occupational Language Courses

As a follow-up to the integration course, occupational language courses are offered under the job-related language support program (Verordnung über die berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung, DeuFöV). These courses focus on workplace-specific German language skills, targeting proficiency levels between B2 and C1, and are designed to facilitate labor market integration through targeted linguistic qualification. (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2025b).

Informal Integration Measures in Berlin

In cities like Berlin, civil society initiatives, refugee support groups, and migrant organizations play an important role in integration (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2021). These actors are often more numerous and long-established than in smaller municipalities and provide low-threshold, informal support that is accessible without registration or legal status (Bormann and Werner, 2024). Such offers complement formal programs by promoting social inclusion and responding flexibly to the everyday needs of refugees and migrants (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2021).

Examples of informal integration measures in Berlin include:

- Language cafés and community spaces (e.g. neighborhood houses and district centers)
- Mentorship and sponsorship programs (e.g. Start with a Friend, which fosters personal connections between locals and people with migration backgrounds)
- Sports, arts, and cultural projects (e.g. Berlin Mondiale, a network of artists in the context of migration and exile)

2.4 GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDERS

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the governance structure and stakeholder relationships involved in the operation of refugee shelters in Germany, focusing on the federal state of Berlin. At the national level, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) and the Königsteiner Schlüssel allocation system determine which federal state is responsible for each asylum seeker. In Berlin, the State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF) is tasked with implementing these decisions and managing accommodation and services. The LAF works in coordination with various actors, including private shelter operators, social service providers, and municipal authorities. This study analyzes the roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders. Challenges arise from fragmented responsibilities, competitive contracting and bureaucratic constraints.

NATIONAL LEVEL: GERMANY

A request for asylum can be carried out by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), an initial reception center, an immigration authority, or the federal and state police. On State level, the responsible authority for the distribution of refugees is the BAMF. Using the computerized system for the initial distribution of asylum seekers (Erstverteilung der Asylsuchenden (EASY)), it is determined which among Germany's 16 federal states is responsible for receiving the asylum seeker based on the quota system known as the Königstein Key (Königsteiner Schlüssel). Calculation is based on two-thirds tax revenue and one-third population size of each federal state. The Königstein Key originates from the Königstein State Agreement of 1949, in which the federal states introduced this key to divide the shares of joint financial contributions, primarily to finance scientific research institutions. Today, the scope of the Königstein Key extends far beyond the research sector. Numerous agreements now rely on this allocation method.

The densely populated city-states like Berlin have often expressed criticism of this distribution system, as their mostly urban areas have limited available space for building new refugee accommodations despite their relatively high tax revenue and population size.

STATE LEVEL: BERLIN

Once the refugees have been assigned to the federal state of Berlin, communication between the state and LAF begins.

First, the person needs to go to Berlin's initial reception center, where some admission procedures take place. For the first weeks or months they have to stay in an initial accommodation facility (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung), managed by LAF.

After these first phases, they are assigned to an accommodation, depending on their needs and status, in a district in Berlin. Also, most of these housing solutions are managed by LAF.

LAF has in fact the „right to determine entry on behalf of the state of Berlin and enforces house regulations. It is supported by the security service provider in this respect“ (according to House regulations for reception centres and shared accommodation in the state of Berlin).

Although, the State office for Refugees Affairs (LAF) does not take its decisions freely, it operates

LAF ORGANIGRAM

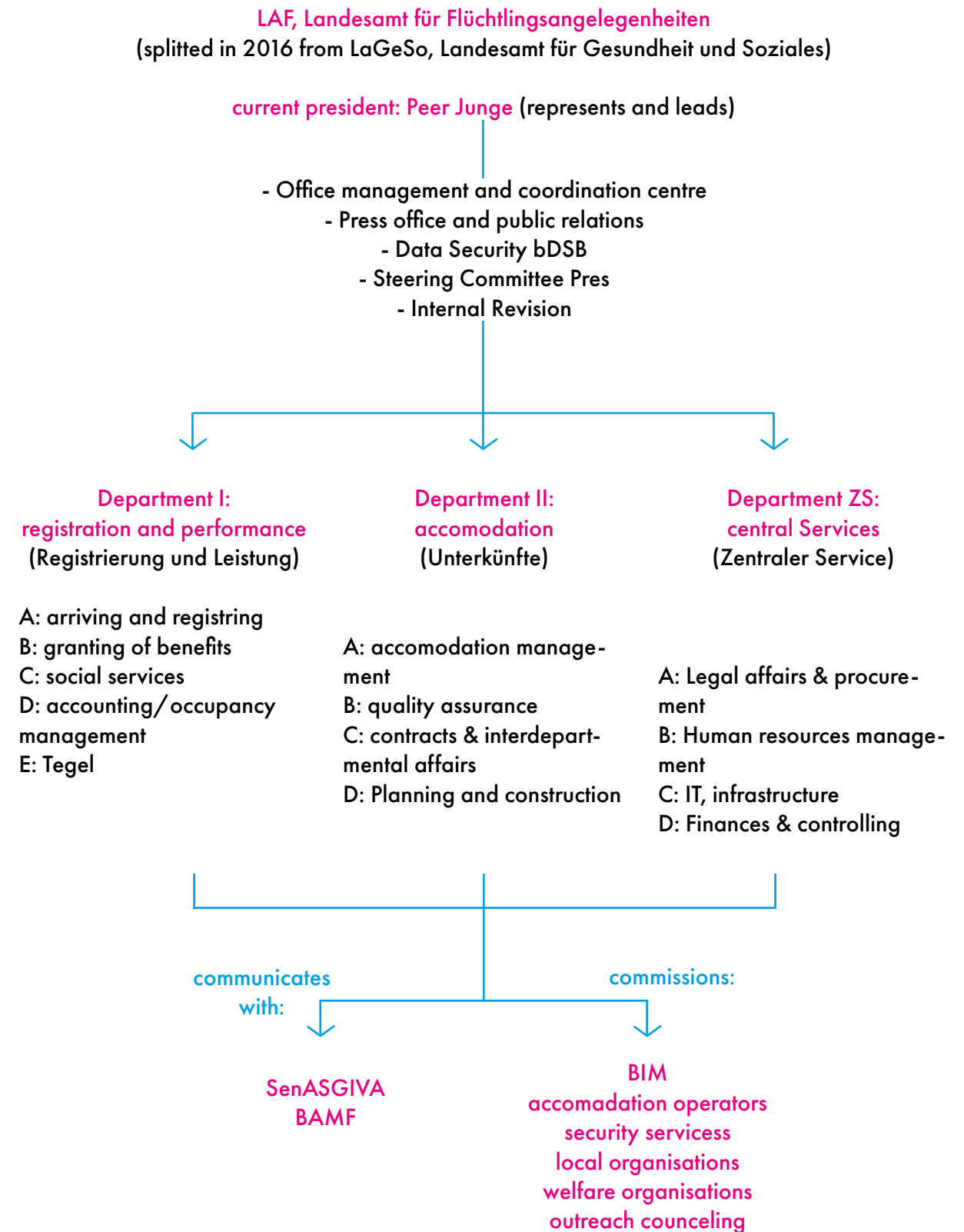


Figure 21: LAF organigram (berlin, 2025)

under the supervision of the Senate Department for Labour, Social affairs, Equality, Integration, Diversity and Anti-discrimination (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integ

STATE OFFICE FOR REFUGEE AFFAIRS (LAF):

The LAF is the central authority in Berlin responsible for the reception, accommodation, and care of refugees. It was established in August 2016 as a response to the refugee crisis in Germany in 2015/2016, following widespread criticism of the previously responsible State Office for Health and Social Affairs (Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales, LaGeSo) for failing in parts of its mandate. The LAF operates under the Senate Department for Labour, Social Affairs, Equality, Integration, Diversity, and Anti-Discrimination and is led by President Peer Junge. Its operations are supported by various administrative divisions.

Registration and social services are provided at two main locations: the Arrival Centre in Reinickendorf, which offers registration, medical care, social support, and initial trauma counselling; and the Service Centre in Darwinstraße, which provides ongoing social services, including translation in over 15 languages. At these locations, refugees receive electronic health cards for access to the healthcare system, targeted support for vulnerable groups (e.g. trauma counselling, mid-wife care), and access to the Education and Participation Package (Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket, BuT), which offers financial support for school-related needs.

The LAF is responsible for both initial reception centres and state-owned shared accommodations for refugees in Berlin. To address Berlin's housing shortage, the city developed Modular Accommodation for Refugees (MUFs) — prefabricated, quickly deployable housing units. The LAF does not operate these facilities directly; instead, it outsources management to private or non-profit operators through EU-wide tenders and framework agreements. These operators are responsible for daily operations, social support, security, and basic services. Construction and facility maintenance often fall under the responsibility of public housing companies like BIM.

The LAF works in coordination with:

- Federal agencies, e.g. the BAMF for asylum procedure coordination
- State and municipal authorities, such as youth welfare offices, immigration offices, and public health departments
- Civil society organisations, including NGOs and welfare associations
- Private, public and non-profit accommodation providers
- Security and facility management companies

The contractual framework is based on detailed service specifications and is subject to EU-wide tendering due to the scale of services involved. Security services are also contracted out through a framework agreement. The LAF's quality assurance department monitors compliance with all agreed service and security standards, ensuring that operators meet contractual obligations and that the conditions in the facilities remain appropriate and safe.

WHO OWNS WHAT? PROPERTIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

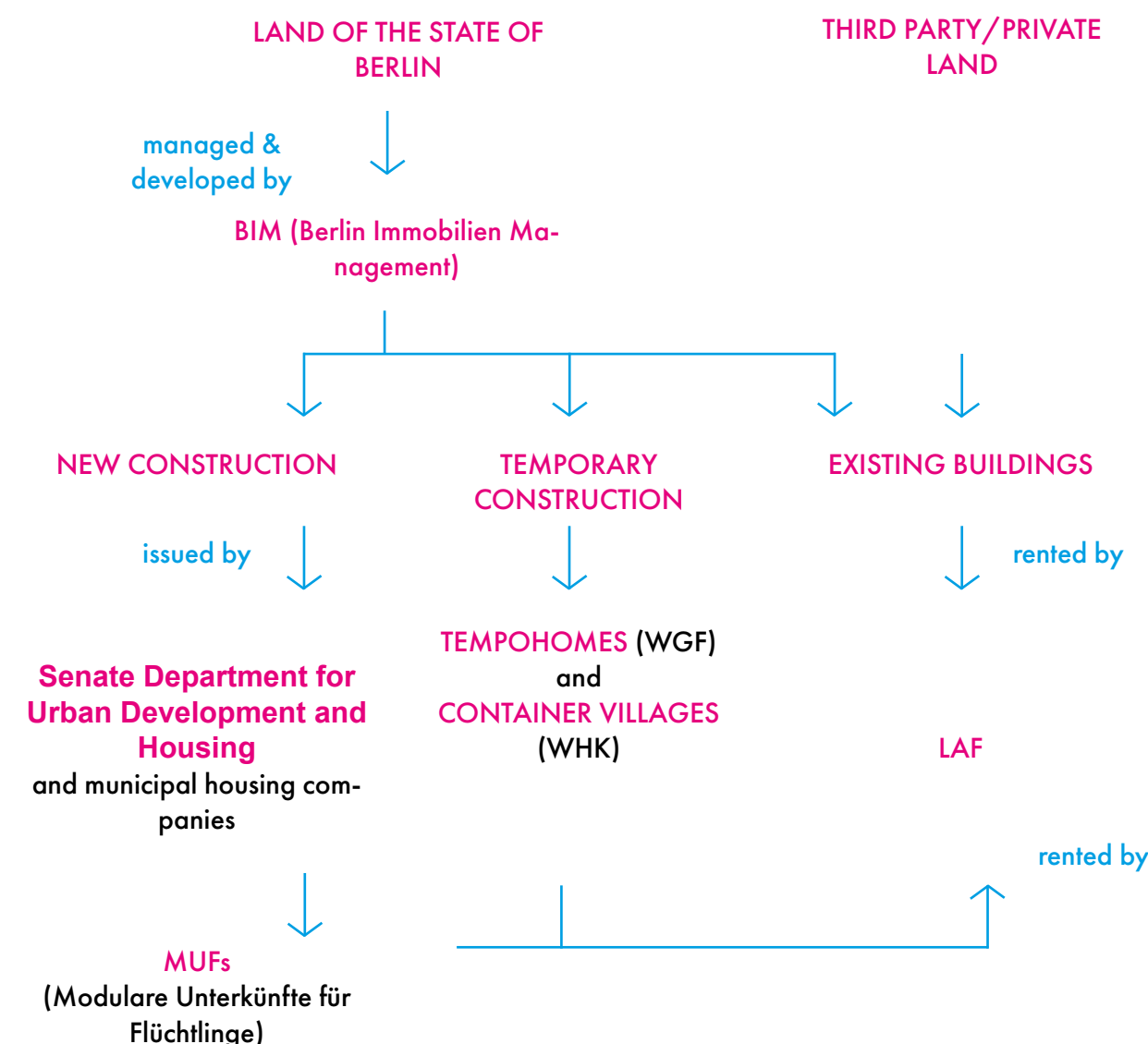


Figure 22: who owns what (berlin, 2025)

During the ongoing asylum procedure, the state of Berlin also pays for the accommodation of refugees in addition to granting benefits. For the first period after arrival, people initially live in reception centres with full board. This is provided for by law.

After one and a half years at the latest, the obligation to live in an initial reception centre expires. From this point onwards, refugees can move into their own flat. As affordable housing is still in short supply in Berlin, the state of Berlin provides refugees with shared accommodation in halls of residence as an alternative. There is more privacy there than in initial reception centres and the residents can look after themselves.

The LAF is responsible for the operation, occupancy and closure of reception centres and shared accommodation for refugees, asylum seekers and foreign nationals. The associated tasks at the LAF are divided between Departments II (Administration of Accommodation Centres) and Central Service - ZS (Allocation). This includes the following fields of activity:

- Carrying out procurement procedures for services in refugee accommodation centres (operation, security)
- Contract negotiations
- Development and review of construction quality standards for accommodation centre
- Accompanying the planning process
- Acceptance and inspection of the finished property
- Fitting out and occupancy of new accommodation
- Closure of accommodation centres
- Processing of ongoing operations
- Reviewing the services contractually agreed with the operators
- Quality and complaints management
- Processing complaints relating to accommodation

3

Hypothesis

Different Factors affecting Fluctation

3.1 HOUSING SHORTAGE AND RENTAL PRICES

Introduction

Berlin's housing market is under intense pressure. Over the past decade, population growth, stagnant housing construction, and rising rents have created a situation where affordable housing is increasingly scarce. Asking rents have risen significantly, and construction activity has slowed, particularly in the affordable segment. This supply-demand imbalance particularly affects low-income households, among them refugees.

Understanding the structural barriers refugees face in accessing long-term housing is more urgent than ever. Despite formal eligibility to leave shared accommodation, many refugees remain stuck in transitional housing for years. This paper lays the analytical foundation to understand whether the tense Berlin housing market contribute to that reality. It provides a baseline to later compare with the specific housing needs of refugees, (e.g. flat size or preferred districts) and assess how well the market meets those needs.

The analysis is divided into three sections. Section II provides a historical and structural overview of Berlin's housing market, including demographic trends, rent developments, housing stock characteristics. Section III discusses housing affordability and institutional approaches and support to finding housing. Section IV zooms in on six districts where the selected modular refugee accommodations of the wider research are located. Finally, Section V summarises the key access barriers that the tense housing market creates for refugees including affordability gaps, supply shortages and informal exclusion, and identifies directions for future research.

POPULATION AND HOUSING TRENDS IN BERLIN

Demographic Development

Population Development

Berlin is a growing city: since 2014, the German capital has increased by a total of 312,353 people. In 2023, population growth continued, though not with the same momentum as the previous year. With an increase of 26,951 people (+0.7%), the growth rate returned to pre-pandemic levels for the first time. As a result, a total of 3,782,202 people lived in the capital in 2023. Of these, 2.8 million had German citizenship and around 900,000 have foreign backgrounds. The Berlin surrounding region recorded growth of 11.8% between 2014 and 2023, reaching a population of 1,046,563 in 2023. (IBB 2024c, p. 6)

Population development in the planning areas from 2014 to 2023 (figures in percent)

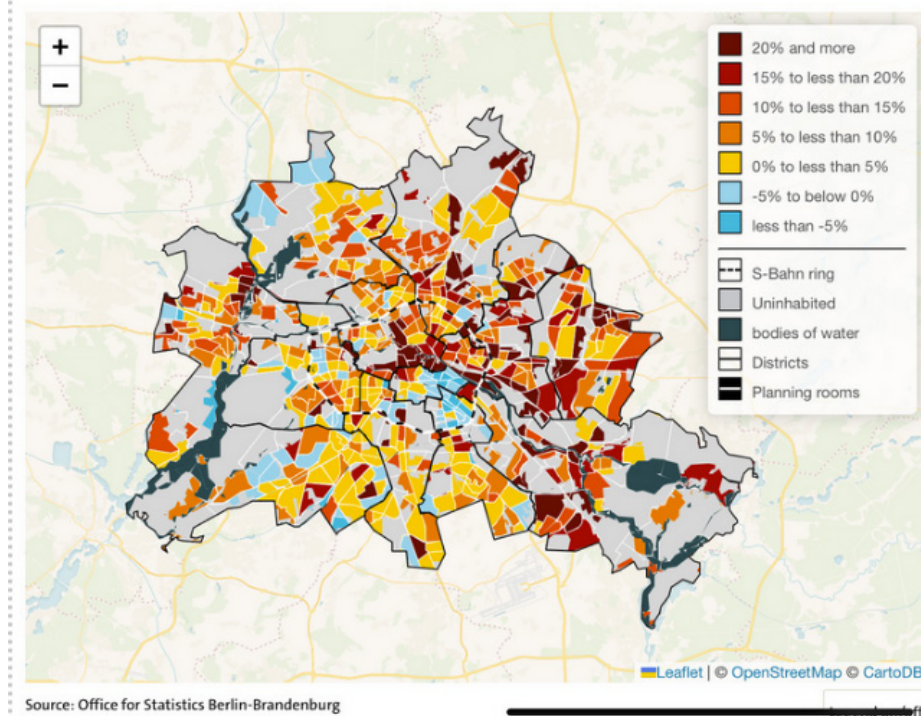


Figure 23: Population development in the planning areas from 2014 to 2023 (IBB, 2024c)

Selected indexed indicators in comparison 2014 to 2023

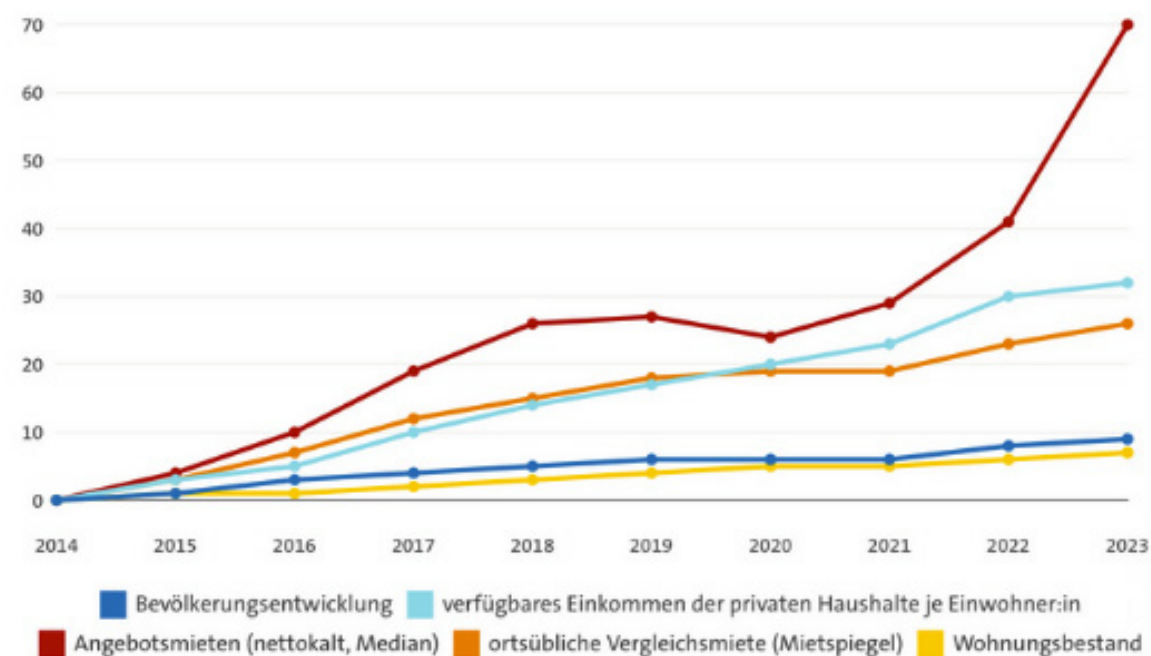


Figure 24: Selected indexed indicators in comparison 2014 to 2023 (IBB, 2024c)

Income and Household Development

In addition to the development of the population, the number and structure of households are key factors in observing the housing market. In 2023, the average household size in Berlin was 1.9 people, with approximately half of all households being single-person households. The average net household income rose to €2,575 per month but showed significant differences between districts. Pankow and Steglitz-Zehlendorf recorded the highest values at €2,850, while Neukölln (€2,275) and Lichtenberg (€2,225) had below-average monthly household incomes. (IBB 2024c, p. 4)

Growth of the Foreign Population

As of June 30, 2024, around 3,886,000 residents with main residence were registered in Berlin's population register. According to the Berlin-Brandenburg Office of Statistics, this means the German capital grew by 7,946 people or 0.2% in the first half of 2024. The growth trend continues, but the increase has nearly halved compared to the first half of 2023, when the population grew by 15,576 people or 0.4%. (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, 2024)

Nearly a quarter of Berlin residents are foreign nationals. While people from Ukraine were the third-largest group of new registrations in 2023, they climbed back to first place in the first half of 2024 (+5,140 people), surpassing new arrivals from India (+3,863) and Turkey (+2,258). Together, these three nationalities accounted for 60.6% of all new foreign registrations. (Expad, 2025)

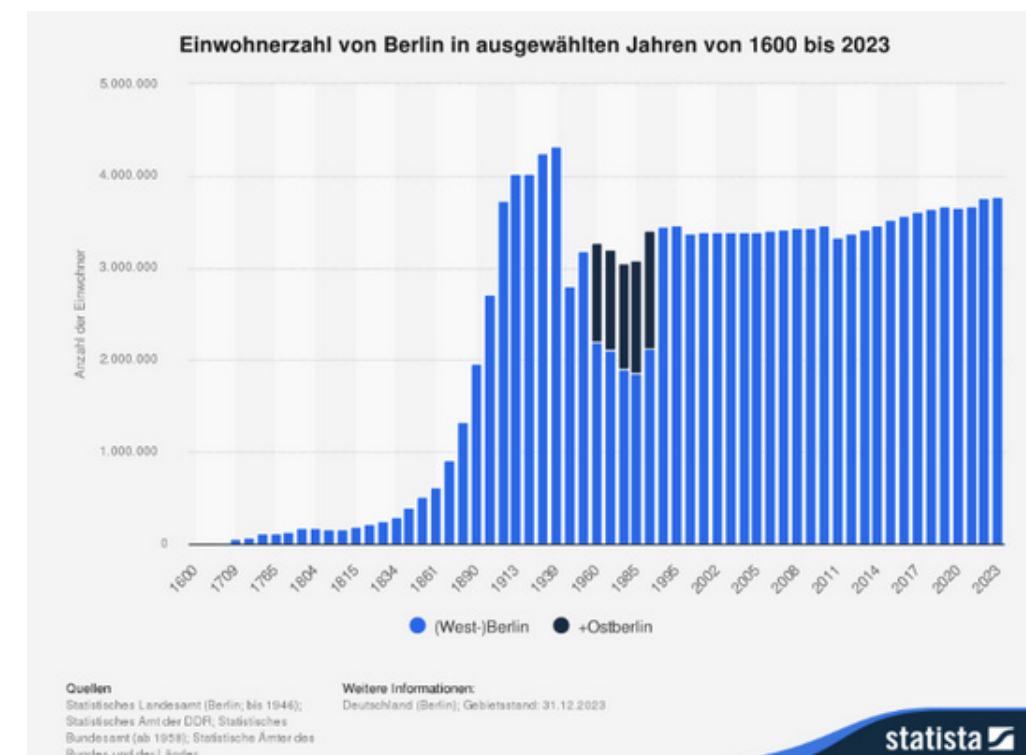


Figure 25: Number of inhabitants of Berlin in selected years from 1600 to 2023 (Statista, 2023)

As of June 30, 2024, 964,957 people with foreign citizenship were living in Berlin. Their share rose from 24.4% to 24.8%, representing an increase of 18,588 people. The largest increase in foreign nationals was again recorded in Reinickendorf, with 6,335 more people, which is a 10.6% rise compared to December 31, 2023. Apart from Mitte—which continues to have the highest share of foreign nationals at 37.4%—all districts recorded an increase in foreign population. Treptow-Köpenick remains the district with the lowest share of foreigners (16.9%). (Eurostat, 2025)

As in previous years, the decline in people with German citizenship continued in 2024, with a decrease of 10,642 people (−0.4%). (Eurostat, 2025)

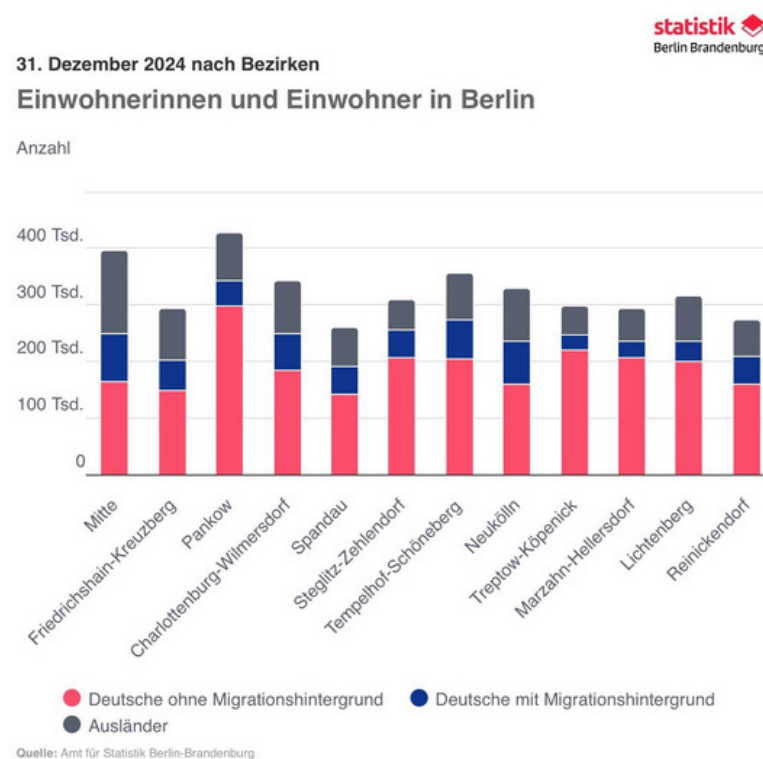


Figure 26: Number of inhabitant of Berlin by district and migration background (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, 2024)

Structural Overview of Berlin's Housing Market

This chapter analyses structural features of the Berlin housing market. It is structured around four clusters of housing market indicators: Housing market characteristics, housing supply and new construction, ownership and social housing, and rental prices. Each cluster includes specific indicators presented with a key takeaway and a summary of statistical findings. In the following chapter III, these findings are put into context discussing key concepts surrounding affordable housing and the ratio of Berlin rents and financial support for refugees.

Housing market characteristics

Data on the housing stock, in particular the building structure, provides important insights into current and future requirements.

Share of Rental Housing: *In Berlin, most people rent rather than own, making access to rental housing crucial for long-term integration.*

Berlin's housing system is shaped by a very high share of rental housing. In 2023, 85% of all dwellings in the city were rented, compared to much lower rates in many other German cities. Districts such as Lichtenberg, Mitte, and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg report rental shares above 90%. (IBB, 2024b, p. 34)

Abb. 28: Anteil der Mietwohnungen am Wohnungsbestand in den Berliner Bezirken 2023

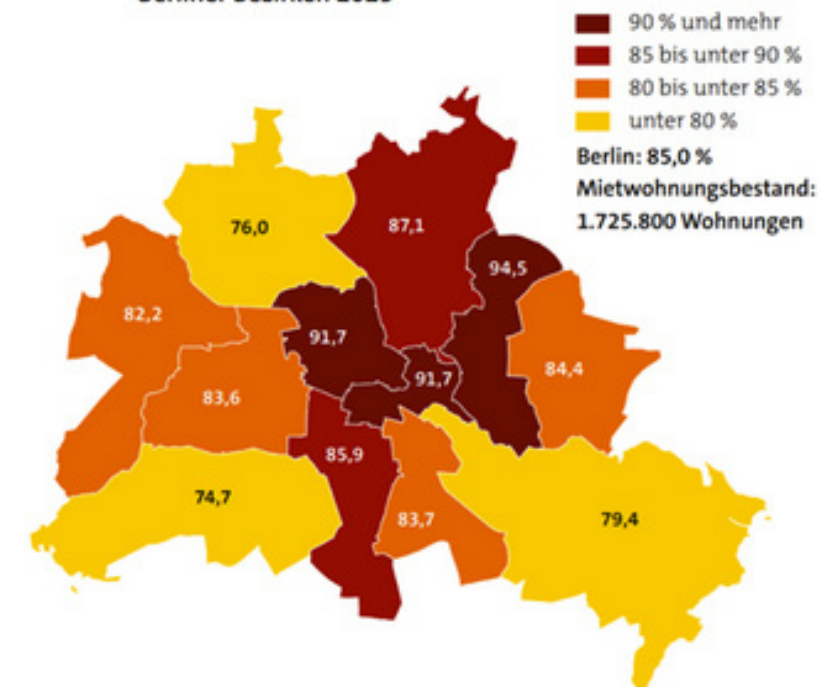


Figure 27: Share of rental flats in the housing stock in the Berlin districts 2023 (IBB, 2024b, p. 35)

Apartment Size: Most of Berlin's housing stock consists of small units, which do not meet the needs of larger refugee households.

In 2023, 56.3% of all apartments in Berlin had just one or two rooms, and only 17.4% had four or more (IBB, 2024b, p. 34). This can point at a major structural mismatch between the composition of refugee households and the apartment typologies available on the market. Additionally, over the past 15 years, apartments have become smaller, decreasing from an average of 74 to 70 square meters (IBB, 2024b, p. 78).

Per Capita Living Space: District-level disparities in living space reflect broader spatial inequalities that affect access to suitable housing.

While the citywide average living space per person was 38.3 m² in 2023. Steglitz-Zehlendorf and Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf had the highest average per capita space, exceeding 43 m², while Lichtenberg had just 34.8 m² per person. (IBB, 2024b, p. 78) These inequalities not only reflect income and class differences but also affect the kinds of units that are available in different areas.

Abb. 26: Wohnungsbestand nach Anzahl der Wohnräume 2023
Anzahl der Wohnungen/Anteil am Wohnungsbestand

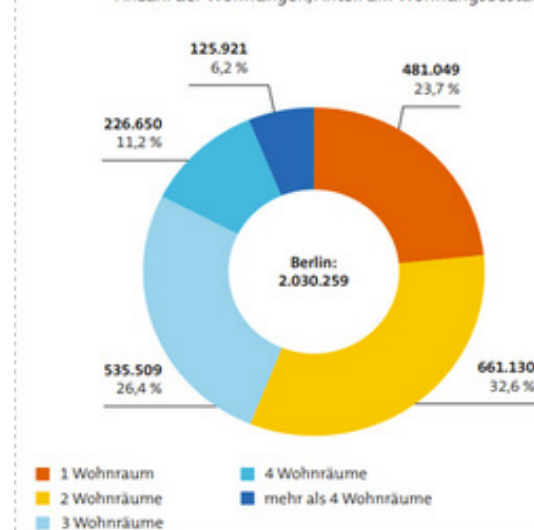
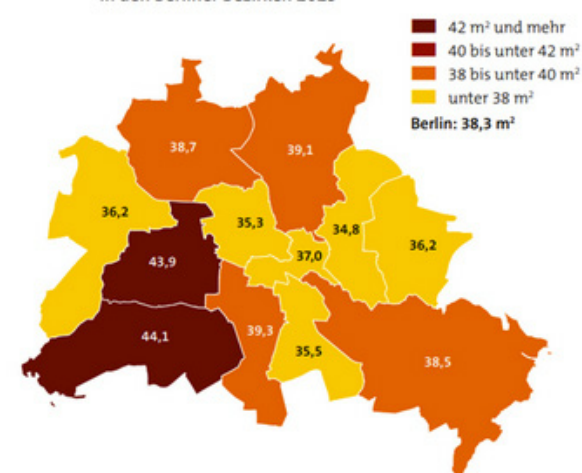


Figure 28: Housing stock by number of residential units 2023 (IBB, 2024b, p. 34)

Abb. 74: Durchschnittliche Wohnfläche pro Einwohner:in
in den Berliner Bezirken 2023



Anmerkungen: Fortschreibung auf Basis der Ergebnisse des Zensus 2011 (Wohnungsbestand einschließlich Wohnheimwohnungen); Datenbasis: Einwohnerregister
Quellen: Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg; Berechnung der Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen

Figure 29: Average living space per inhabitant in the Berlin districts 2023 (IBB, 2024b, p. 78)

Hypothesis

Age of the Housing Stock: A large share of Berlin's housing is over 70 years old, which affects both affordability and the physical quality of available units.

As of 2023, over half of all apartments in Berlin (52.8%) were built between 1949 and 2010, including large post-war estates and East German panel buildings. Another 25.3% date back to the pre-1918 period, particularly in central areas. Just 8.2% of units were constructed after 2011, indicating that newer, energy-efficient housing is still a small share of the total stock. (IBB, 2024b, p. 35) Older buildings are often less accessible, require renovation, and may lack modern amenities. At the same time, they are increasingly subject to luxury refurbishment and rent increases. For low-income tenants, including refugees, this means that old buildings do not automatically offer affordable options, and new buildings are often out of reach entirely.

Age of the residential buildings

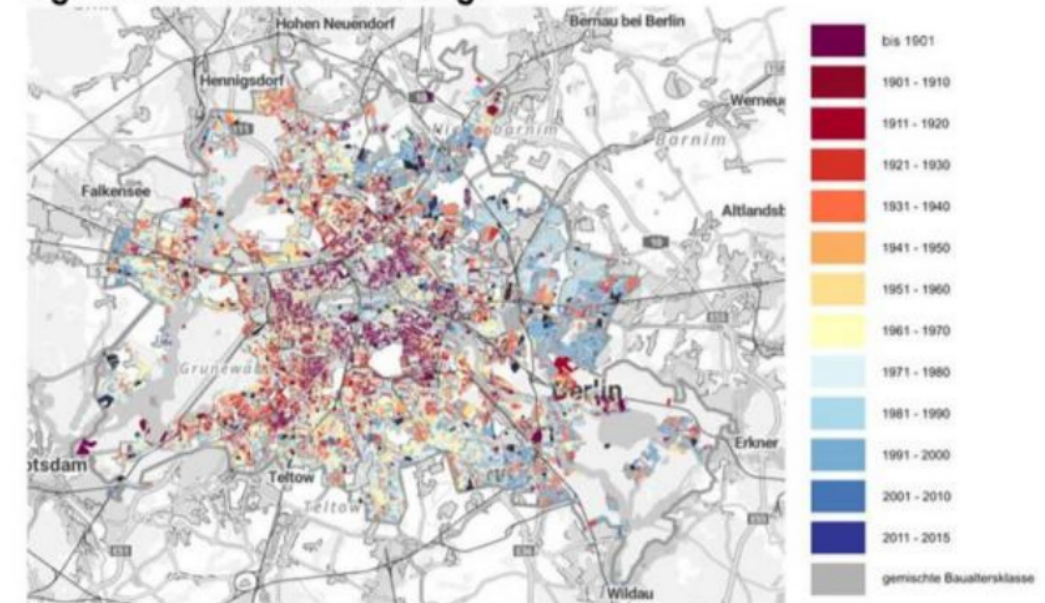


Figure 30: Age of Berlin housing stock georeferenced (Geoportal Berlin, n.d.)

Abb. 62: Angebotsmieten (netto kalt) nach Baujahrsklassen (Median) 2024
Angebotsmiete in EUR/m²

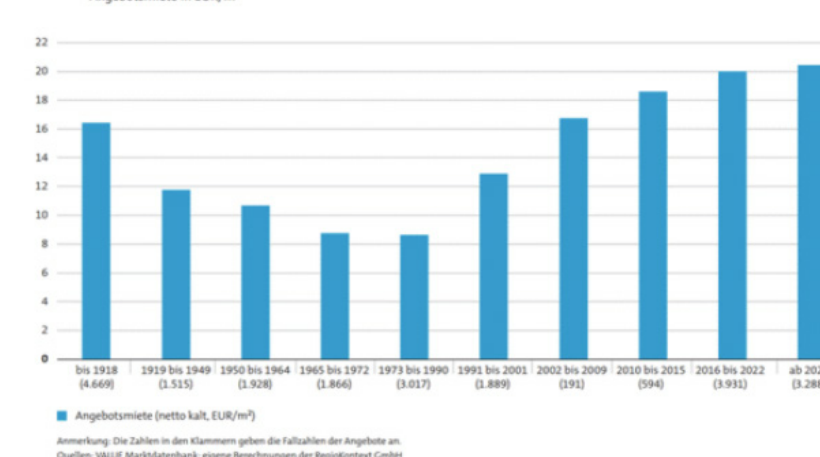


Figure 31: Asking rents (net cold) by building age category (median) 2024 (IBB, 2024b, p. 67)

Furnished Temporary Rentals: *Furnished rentals are increasingly common and bypass rent control mechanisms, reducing affordable supply.*

In recent years, the number of furnished apartments offered for temporary use in Berlin has increased significantly. These rentals target people staying for just a few months, such as professionals or students. According to §549 of the German Civil Code (BGB), temporary leases are exempt from standard tenant protections but the law does not clearly define what counts as “temporary use,” creating a loophole that some landlords exploit.

As a result, rent control laws like the rent cap law (Mietpreisbremse) and local rent index (Mietspiegel) often don’t apply. There’s also no regulation on “furnishing surcharges” (Möblierungszuschlag), giving landlords flexibility to charge higher prices without oversight.

These apartments are typically more expensive, and many tenants—despite planning to stay long-term—accept them out of necessity. In 2023, ImmoScout24 reported more furnished than unfurnished listings in Berlin. Between 2015 and 2024, the number of furnished apartments more than doubled. In 2021–2022, over half of all listings were short-term furnished rentals—far above the average in other German cities.

In response, districts like Neukölln and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg are calling for tighter rules, including bans in milieu protection areas (Milieuschutzgebiete) to help prevent displacement and gentrification.

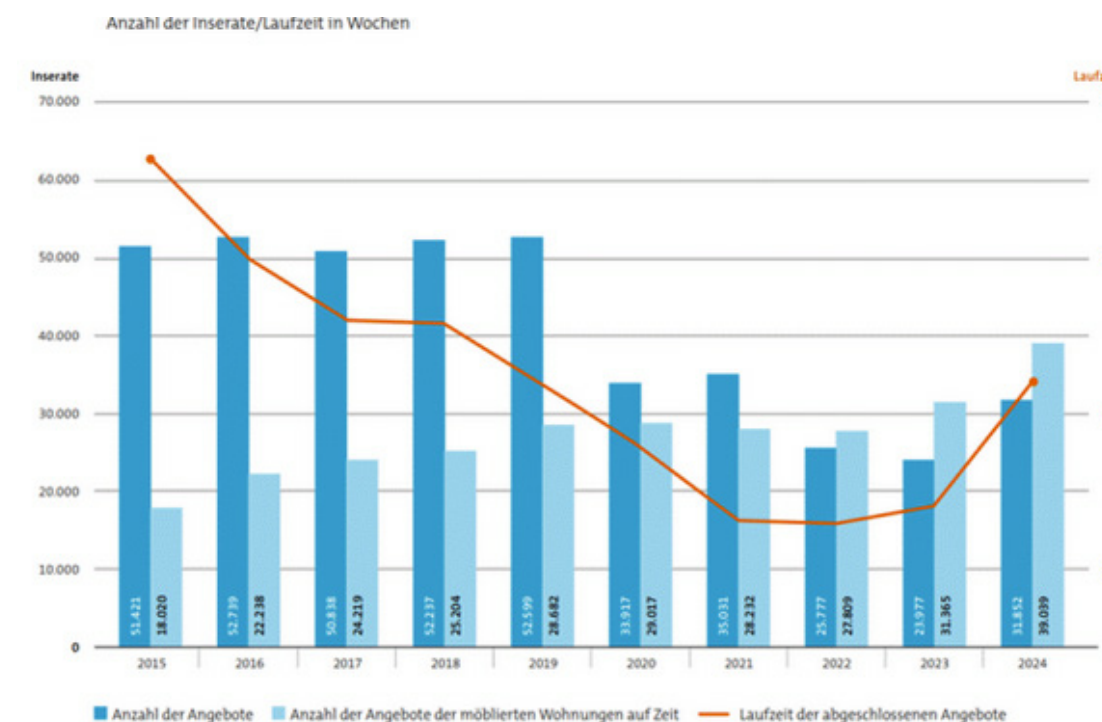


Figure 32: Rental flat advertisements and duration in Berlin 2015 to 2024 (IBB, 2024b, p. 66)

Housing Supply and New Construction

As Berlin’s population grows through immigration and natural increase, more housing needs to be built. Looking at where housing has already been built and where new building permits have been approved can show where it may be easier to find housing in the future.

Building Completions and Permits: *Berlin is not building enough housing to meet demand, and future supply is likely to decrease.*

Following a continuous increase between 2014 and 2019, the number of completions has reached a largely stable level since 2020. This has led to a supply deficit for several years, which is also reflected in the comparison of key indicators: Between 2014 and 2023, the population grew by approximately 9%, while the housing stock increased by only 7.3% (IBB, 2024b, p. 9).

As a consequence, the Senate set clear targets to build an average of up to 20,000 new flats per year, including up to 5,000 social housing units. In 2023, a total of 15,965 flats were completed, missing this political target, mostly due to rising construction costs, a shortage of skilled labour and requirements for a climate-friendly building (IBB, 2024b, p. 39).

While the completions provide an insight into the newly available living space, the building permits offer an outlook on construction activity in the coming years.

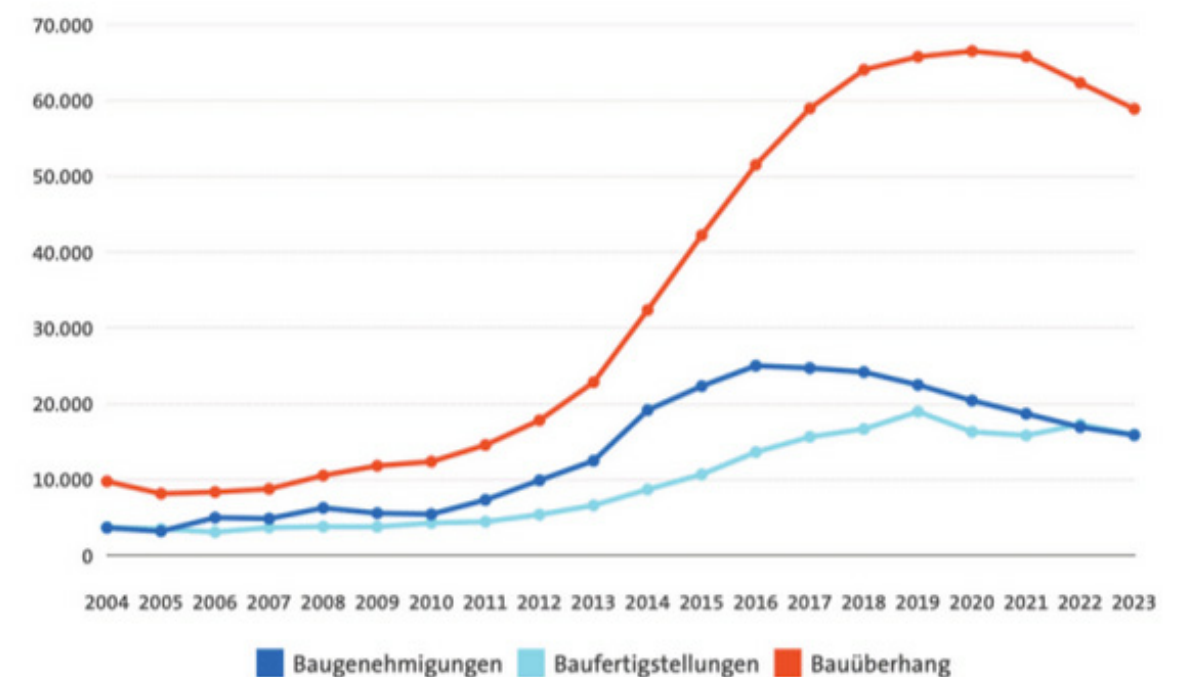


Figure 33: Rental flat advertisements and duration in Berlin 2015 to 2024 (IBB, 2024b, p. 66)

Since 2017, there has been a continuous decline in building permits, which means that construction activity is expected to decrease in the coming years. (IBB, 2024b, p. 40f.)

Geographic Distribution of Construction: Most new housing is/will be built in peripheral Eastern districts.

The majority of new construction in 2023 occurred in Lichtenberg, Marzahn-Hellersdorf, and Treptow-Köpenick, districts on the eastern edge of Berlin. Construction permits also show a concentration on these Eastern districts, led by Treptow-Köpenick. While these areas offer lower land costs and more space, they are not always connected to public transport or social infrastructure. As a result, new housing may be physically available but practically inaccessible for families without a car or with specific integration needs.

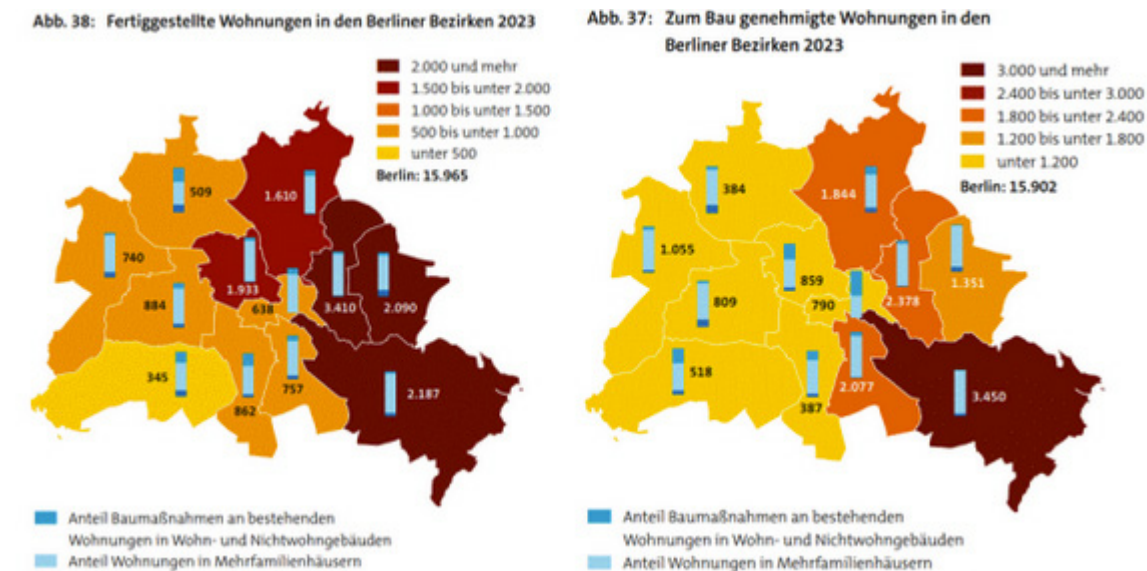


Figure 34: Completed flats and flats authorised for construction in the Berlin districts in 2023 (IBB, 2024b, p. 44f.)

Vacancy Rate: Berlin's vacancy rate is critically low, limiting availability and increasing competition for each apartment.

Data from the Berlin-Brandenburg Housing Association (BBU), whose members represent approximately 45% of Berlin's rental housing market, including municipal and several major private housing providers, offer important insights into citywide rental dynamics. According to the BBU's 2022 annual statistics, only 1.6% of a total 730,549 rental units were vacant, with even lower rates in districts such as Köpenick (0.9%) and Lichtenberg (1.0%). (BBU, 2024) Most vacant flat are available in areas such as Steglitz or Weißensee (ebd.) which on the other hand are characterised by higher rental prices and larger flat unit which might not match refugees needs.

Hypothesis

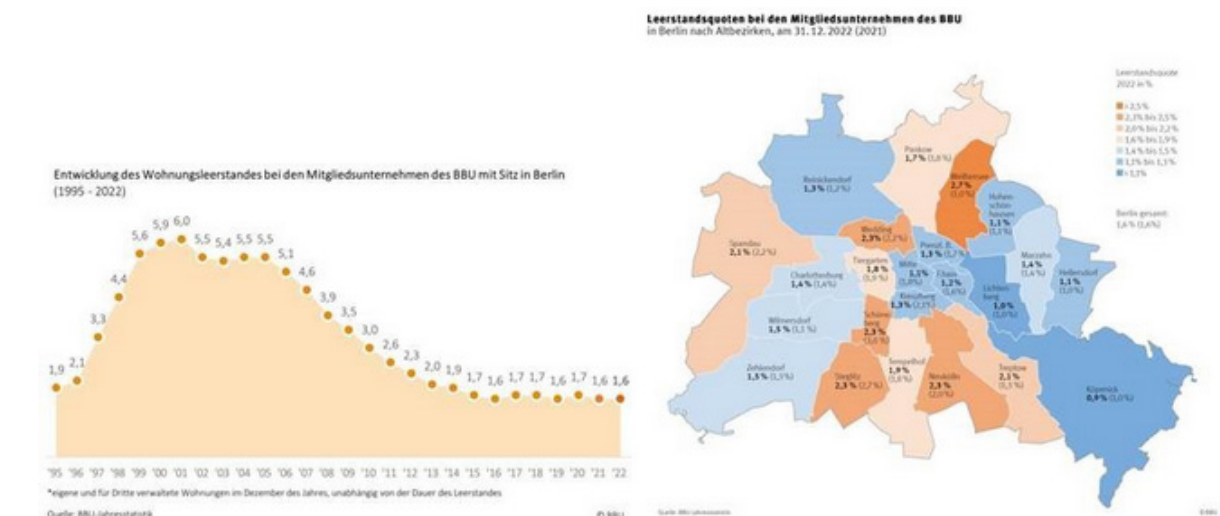


Figure 35: Development of vacancy rates at BBU member companies based in Berlin (1995-2022) (BBU, 2024), Figure 15: Vacancy rates at BBU member companies based in Berlin (BBU, 2024)

Ownership Structure and Social Housing

Ownership Rate and Composition: Berlin's housing market is dominated by institutional investors holding a significant share of the rental stock.

As part of efforts to alleviate fiscal pressures, the city of Berlin engaged in large-scale privatization of public housing assets. In 2004 alone, the city sold approximately 64,000 apartments previously owned by the municipal housing company GSW. These units were subsequently acquired by Deutsche Wohnen, which has since become Germany's largest private residential property owner. (Tagesspiegel, 2019)

Today, the rental housing market is characterized by a diverse ownership structure, with institutional investors holding a dominant position. According to Savills (2022), around 60% of rental properties are owned by professional entities, including 29% by private-sector companies, 17% by municipal housing companies, 12% by housing cooperatives, and 1% by other organizations. Major publicly traded corporations such as Deutsche Wohnen, Vonovia, and ADO Properties are key players within the private-sector segment. Municipal housing companies—specifically Degewo, GESO-BAU, Gewobag, HOWOGE, Stadt und Land, and WBM. In contrast, 24% of rental properties are owned by private individuals, and 16% are held by homeowners' associations (Savills, 2022).

Social Housing: Berlin's social housing stock is shrinking, limiting access for eligible households.

Social housing in Berlin refers to subsidized rental apartments intended for low-income residents, who must obtain a Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS), a certificate proving eligibility based on income limits. Between 1990 and 2024, the state of Berlin lost approximately three-quarters of its social housing stock, declining from

around 350,000 units in 1990 to just 85,765 in 2024. The decline is driven by expiring subsidy commitments and low replacement rates, with half of the remaining stock managed by private landlords and the rest by municipal companies. Without stronger intervention, another 46,000 units could lose their status by 2034. (rbb24, 2025)

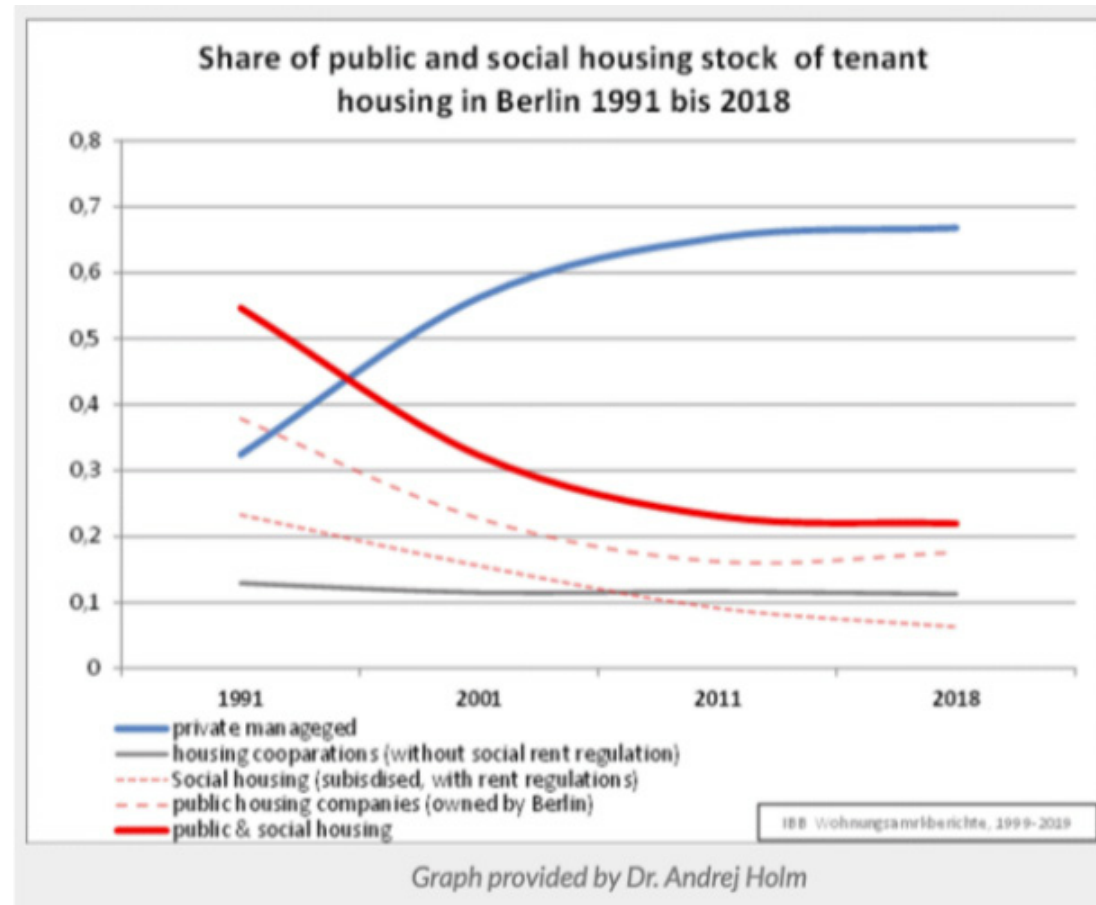


Figure 36: Share of public and social housing stock of tenant housing in Berlin 1991 to 2018. Graph provided by Dr. Andrej Holm Source: All Over the Map (no date)

In response, the Berlin Senate has increased investment in subsidized housing construction since 2014. According to the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing, around 65,500 new subsidized apartments are planned between 2014 and 2034. From 2028 onward, the forecast assumes the completion of 5,600 new units per year. If this pace is maintained, the overall decline in social housing could be stopped as early as 2026 (IBB, 2024b, pp. 47–48).

The availability of social housing also differs significantly by district. In 2023, the highest shares of rent- and occupancy-controlled apartments were found in Treptow-Köpenick (11.8%), Neukölln (9.8%), and Marzahn-Hellersdorf. In contrast, Lichtenberg recorded the lowest share at just 2.2% (IBB, 2024b, p. 47). This shows that outer districts tend to offer better availability of social housing, although not necessarily in areas where demand is highest.

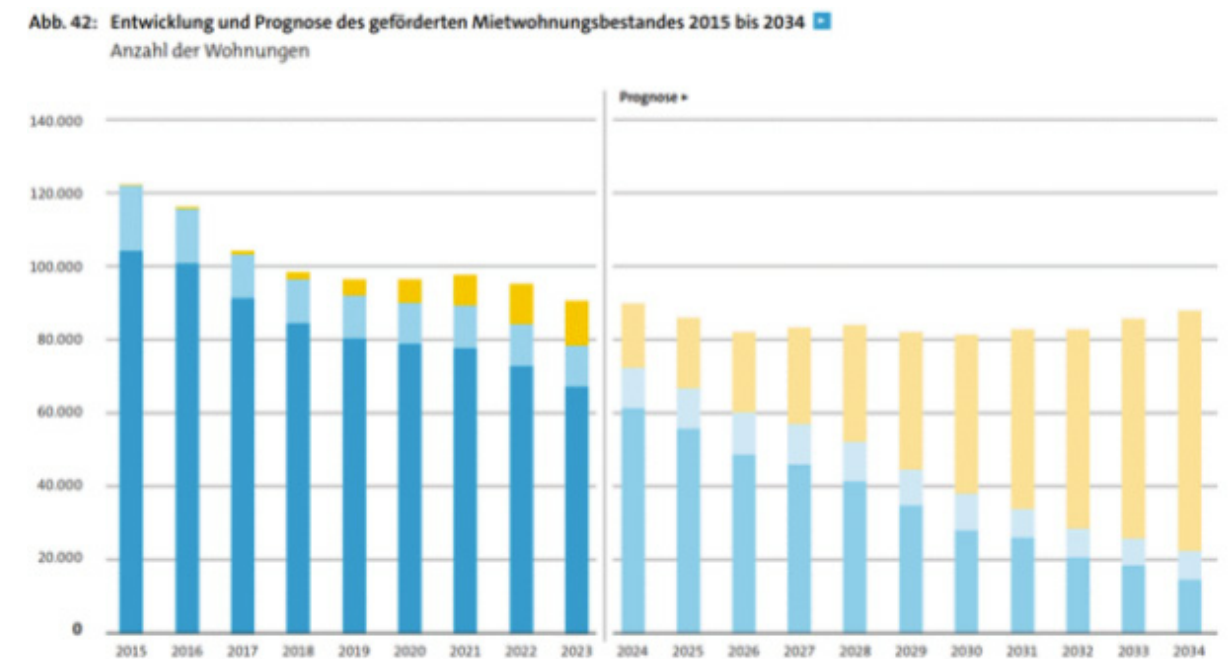


Figure 37: Development and forecast of the subsidised rental housing stock 2015 to 2034 (IBB, 2024b, p. 48)

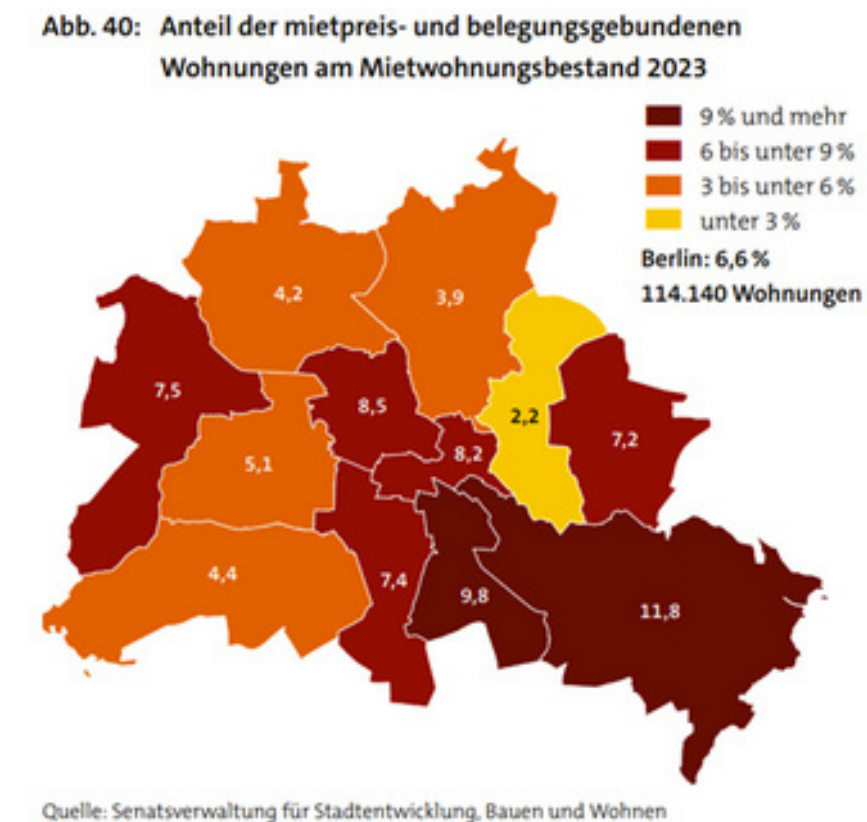


Figure 38: Share of rent-controlled and occupancy-controlled flats in the rental housing stock 2023 (IBB, 2024b, p. 47)

WBS Policy in Berlin: WBS regulations systematically excludes many refugees from access to social housing

The current allocation policy for the Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS, certificate of eligibility for social housing) in Berlin systematically excludes many refugees from accessing social housing. Individuals in ongoing asylum procedures and those with a “tolerated stay” (Duldung), even with a realistic prospect of remaining in Germany, are not eligible for a WBS. Even recognized refugees are often excluded if their residence permits are set to expire within the next 11 months, a situation especially common among families with staggered residence statuses.

A WBS is generally not only required to rent publicly subsidized social housing but can also increase the chances of securing an apartment from state-owned housing companies such as DeGeWo, GeSoBau, GeWoBag, HoWoGe, Stadt und Land, and WBM, according to the Berlin Housing Supply Act (Wohnraumversorgungsgesetz). To qualify, applicants must have a low household income and demonstrate that they are not residing in Germany merely temporarily but are capable of establishing a permanent, independent household. These criteria, however, often exclude refugees.

The Berlin Refugee Council strongly criticizes this policy, calling it a disaster for integration, and accuses the Senate of using legal justifications merely to avoid expanding WBS eligibility to refugees.

Rental Prices

Analysing rent levels is essential for assessing housing accessibility, especially for low-income and subsidy-dependent households such as refugees. The available data is usually based on Angebotsmieten, meaning offered rents published on publicly accessible real estate platforms. These prices reflect the market conditions faced by those actively searching for housing. However, they do not represent the full rent spectrum in Berlin, as they exclude existing tenancy agreements, which constitute the majority of the rental market.

The development of rents in existing contracts versus newly advertised rentals is considered a key indicator of general trends in the housing market. In Berlin, a clear divergence in rental price trends has been observable since the 1990s: while existing rents—those under ongoing tenancy agreements—have increased moderately at around 2.7% per year, asking rents for newly available apartments have risen significantly faster, averaging about 4% annually. Between 1992 and 2021, existing rents rose from approximately €3.00/m² to €6.86/m², whereas asking rents increased from €3.87/m² to €11.95/m².

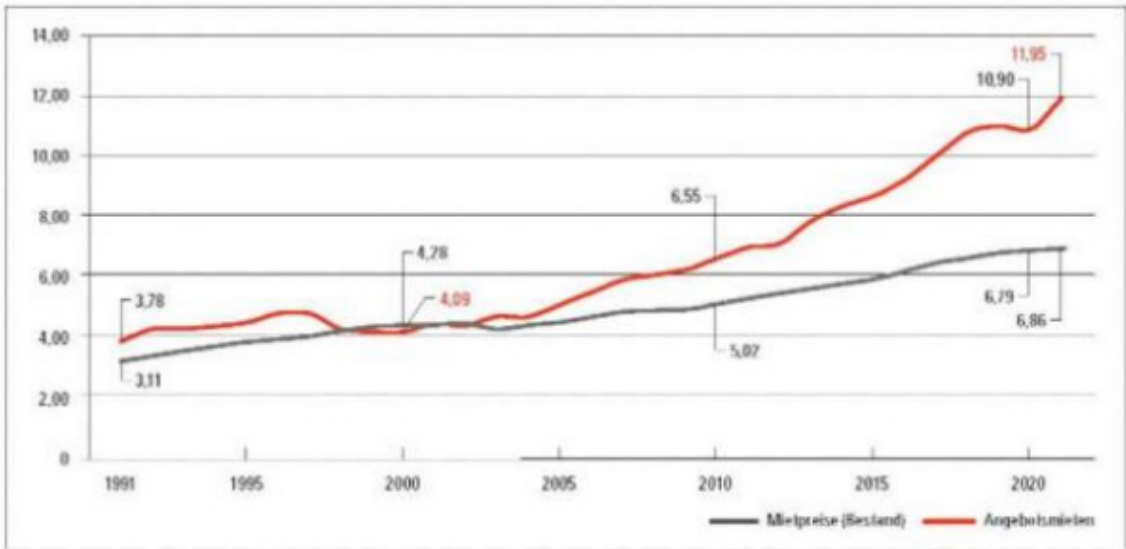


Tabelle 1: Veränderung der Bestands- und Angebotsmieten in Berlin pro Jahr (1992 bis 2021)

	1992 bis 1996	1997 bis 2001	2002 bis 2006	2007 bis 2011	2012 bis 2016	2017 bis 2021	gesamt
Bestandsmieten	4,3%	2,4%	3,3%	2,6%	3,3%	4,3%	2,7%
Angebotsmieten	4,3%	4,3%	4,3%	4,3%	4,3%	4,3%	4,0%

Quelle: IBB-Wohnungsmarktberichte 1992 bis 2021; Guthmann Immobilien: Immobilien-Marktreporte Berlin 2012 bis 2021

Figure 39: Changes in existing and offering rents (IBB, 2024b, p.83)

This development has led to a steadily growing rent gap. Prior to 2007, the difference between existing and asking rents was typically below €1.00/m². Since then, the gap has widened continuously and has remained above €4.00/m² since 2017. This disparity has substantial implications for housing access. Households currently seeking housing must pay significantly higher rents than those with existing contracts. As a result, lower-income households in particular face increasing barriers to entering the housing market. The widening rent gap also negatively impacts social mobility: many households remain in their current (cheaper) apartments even when their housing needs change, in order to avoid the high costs associated with moving—so-called lock-in effects. This phenomenon is known as the remanence effect.

Compared to other major German cities, Berlin has experienced the most significant increase in offered rents according to IBB (2024b). Between 2015 and 2024, the median asking rent rose by 85.2%. While the introduction of the Mietendeckel (rent cap) in 2020 and parts of 2021 temporarily slowed rent dynamics, its repeal led to a sharp acceleration. (IBB, 2024b, p. 83)

Abb. 79: Indizierte Angebotsmieten (netto kalt, Median) ausgewählter Großstädte 2015 bis 2024
Indexwert (2015 = 100)

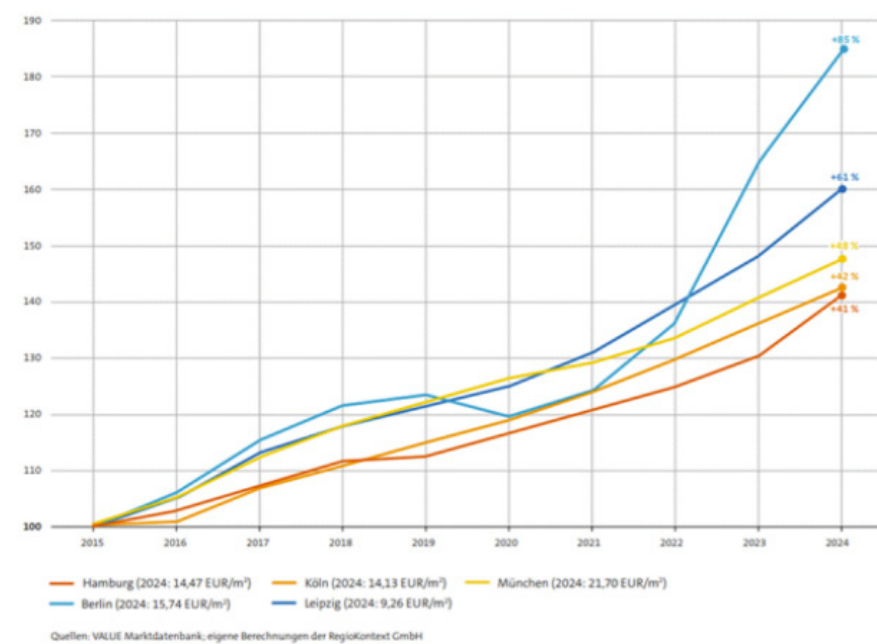


Figure 40: Indexed asking rents (net cold, median) in selected major cities 2015 to 2024 (IBB, 2024b, p. 83)

In 2024, the citywide median asking rent was €15.74/m² with rent increases in 2023 and 2024 being particularly high: between 2022 and 2024, the median offered rent in Berlin rose by €4.20/m², surpassing the total increase of €3.04/m² recorded between 2015 and 2022. (IBB, 2024b, 65)

Abb. 59: Entwicklung der Angebotsmieten (netto kalt) für Wohnungen im Neubau und Bestand (Median) 2015 bis 2024
Angebotsmiete in EUR/m²

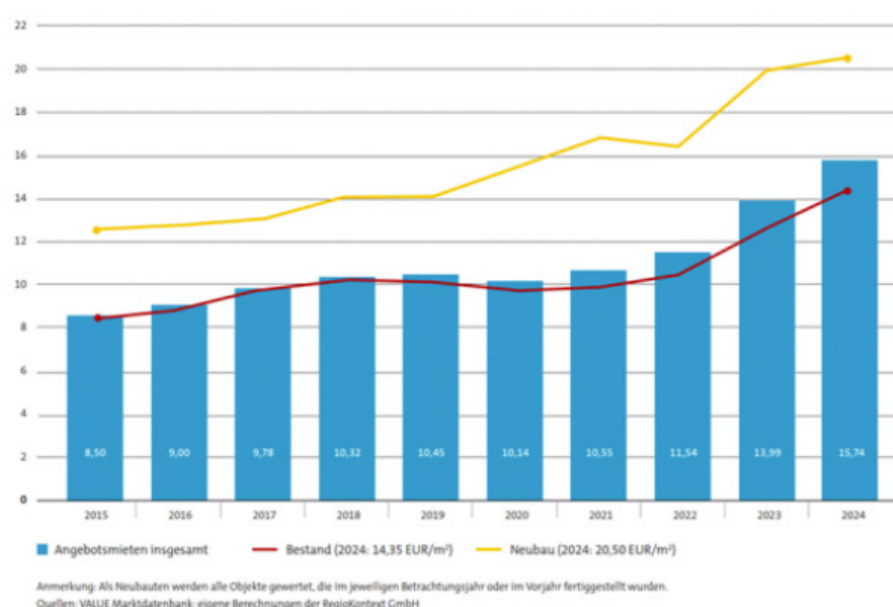


Figure 41: Development of asking rents (net cold) for flats in new and existing buildings (median) 2015 to 2024 (IBB, 2024b, p. 65)

Notably, rents increased most in the lower and middle price segments. In the lower third, asking rents averaged Euro 12.40/m² in 2024, a 12.7% rise from 2023 alone (IBB, 2024b, p. 67). This means that the type of housing most relevant for refugees and social benefit recipients has become increasingly out of reach.

Especially in districts like Mitte (Euro 19.91/m²), Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (Euro 19.42/m²), and Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf (Euro 19.39/m²) the asked rents were well above the city median. In contrast, outer districts such as Marzahn-Hellersdorf and Spandau had lower asking rents, around Euro 11–12/m². The divide between city center and outskirts continues to grow, with the strongest price increases recorded in Lichtenberg (+26.3%) and Spandau (+18.5%) between 2023 and 2024. (IBB, 2024b, p. 69)



Figure 42: Rental listing prices per district in 2008, 2018 and 2022 (Geoportal Berlin, n.d.)

Abb. 65: Struktur der Mietpreisangebote (netto kalt) für Wohnungen in den Berliner Bezirken 2024
Anteil der Preisklasse in %

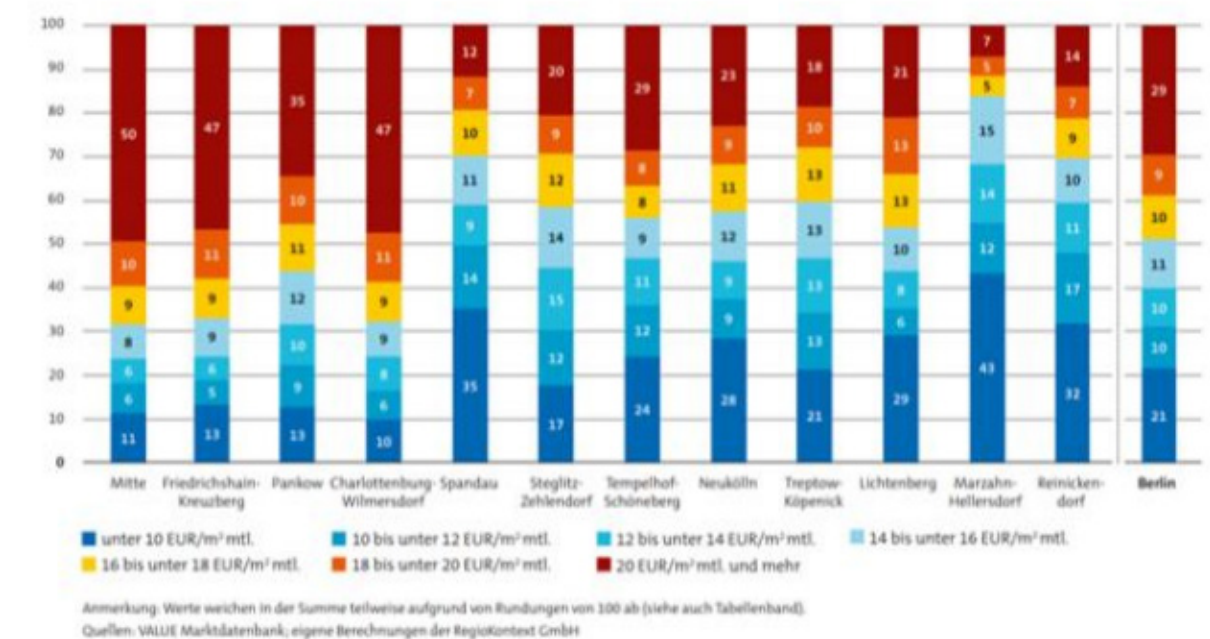


Figure 43: Structure of rental offers (net cold) for flats in the Berlin districts in 2024 (IBB, 2024b, p. 70)

Rents in Subsidized Housing: *Even in the social housing sector, rents are increasing - though at a slower pace than in the private market.*

Rents in the subsidized housing sector also show moderate but steady increases. In 2023, the average net cold rent for apartments with continued subsidies (Anschlussförderung) was €6.85/m² - 3% higher than in 2021. For subsidized units without extended support, net cold rents rose by 18.7% between 2014 and 2023, reaching €7.68/m². Gross rent (Bruttowarmmieten) for flats with continued subsidies was EUR 10.44/m² in 2023, and EUR 11.14/m² for flats without follow-up funding, also showing a significant increase (IBB, 2024b, p. 76f.). Although these levels are well below market rents, they are not fully protected from long-term price pressure. For refueven subsidized units may present a growing cost burden - especially when new contracts are signed under higher rental rates.

AFFORDABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES

Affordable Housing: Key Concepts and Measurements

Housing affordability is crucial as housing typically constitutes the largest portion of household expenditure, especially affecting low-income households (Quigley & Raphael, 2004, p. 191). When too much income is allocated to housing, families may struggle to meet other basic needs (Carswell, 2012, p. 13). Bogdon and Can (1997, p. 47) emphasize the spatial impact, noting that unaffordable housing can force lower-income households out of urban centers, limiting access to jobs and services.

The concept of affordability dates back to Engel and Schwabe, two German statisticians in the 19th century, who studied the relationship between income and expenditures (Bentzien, 2015, p. 121; Hulchanski, 1995, p. 473; Stigler, 1954, pp. 98–100; Tighe & Mueller, 2013, p. 80). Schwabe's law states that „the poorer any one is, the greater the amount relative to his income that he must spend for housing“ (Stigler, 1954, p. 100; Jenkis, 1996, p. 363). The term 'law' refers not to a legal rule but to the economist sense of an empirical rule (Jenkis, 1996, p. 363).

Affordable housing enables households to obtain suitable housing without financial hardship. However, there is no universally accepted definition of what share of income can be spent on housing without causing strain. Hulchanski (1995, p. 471) traces the origins of affordability standards to the 19th century, when the phrase “one week's pay for one month's rent” guided landlord and lender decisions in North America. Over time, this ratio increased—Canada adjusted its benchmark from 20% in the 1950s to 30% in the 1980s (Hulchanski, 1995, p. 471). The 1981 U.S. Housing and Urban Development Act formalised the 30% threshold, which remains a widely used rule of thumb for assessing housing affordability (Hulchanski, 1995, p. 472; Linneman & Megbolugbe, 1992, p. 371; Schwartz & Wilson, Ellen, 2008, p. 1; Stone, 2006, p. 152).

Yang and Shen (2008, p. 321) argue that affordability is not a feature of housing itself, but of the consumer's ability and willingness to pay. Kempson (1993, pp. 26–27) notes that spending choices vary; higher-income households are less constrained.

In sum, housing affordability is concerned with analyzing the housing market situation and measuring the affordability of a standard of housing to tenants or house-buyers, which does not impose a financial burden on the household. The measurement of housing affordability is commonly based on the proportion of the housing cost to the income of the household without having to sacrifice other necessary living costs.

To further clarify the concept of housing affordability it is essential to explore the various measurement approaches used to determine the relationship between housing costs and household income. There is a wide range of affordability measurements, some long-established and widely used, while others are more specialized.

Two primary methods are commonly used to assess housing affordability: the Residual Income Approach and the Ratio Approach. The residual income approach measures housing affordability by calculating the income remaining after a household pays for housing, which must be sufficient to cover essential non-housing expen-

ses such as food, transport, and healthcare. This method emphasizes the actual cost of living and considers factors like household size and local cost variations, offering a more nuanced and realistic evaluation of affordability. Housing is considered unaffordable if the residual income falls below a defined basic standard, often linked to poverty thresholds. (Stone, 2006, p. 157; Hui, 2001, p. 38; Yip, 1995, p. 56).

The Ratio Approach is a method which measures the proportion of income spent on housing. Housing is deemed unaffordable if this ratio exceeds a certain threshold, usually 30% (Stone, 2006, p. 162). If housing costs exceed this threshold, they are considered unaffordable. This method is straightforward, easy to apply, and widely used in policy and research. However, it has been criticized for oversimplifying affordability by ignoring factors such as household size, regional cost variations, and non-housing expenses (Hancock, 1993, p. 133).

Key subtypes of the ratio approach include:

- o Rent-to-Income Ratio and Price-to-Income Ratio: These are widely used indicators to monitor housing markets (Lau & Li, 2006, p. 4; André et al., 2014, p. 2127). Compares the price of housing to median household income. A significant rise in this ratio above historical averages often indicates unaffordability in the housing market (OECD, 2016, p. 1).

- o The House Price-to-Rent Ratio is commonly used to evaluate the housing market, focusing on the affordability for a tenant. This compares the costs of buying versus renting and can indicate the presence of speculative bubbles in the housing market (Himmelberg et al., 2005, p. 72).

There is no single, universally accepted definition or method for assessing housing affordability. While the 30% ratio remains a common benchmark, it should be supplemented by residual income models and contextual analysis to better reflect the diverse and complex realities of household finances. Such a multifaceted approach ensures more accurate, fair, and inclusive housing policies (Stone, 2006b, p. 163).

In the context of Germany's welfare system, affordability in housing is not universally defined by a single measure but is institutionally interpreted and applied through different regulatory frameworks. In Berlin, two key institutions that operationalize housing affordability are the Jobcenter, which supports mainly unemployed and low-income residents, and the Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (LAF), which is responsible for housing asylum seekers and refugees. Both authorities apply specific guidelines to ensure that individuals and families are not exposed to unreasonable housing-related financial burdens, though they do so from distinct legal and administrative perspectives.

Affordable Housing Standards in Berlin: Institutional Approaches by the Jobcenter and LAF

The Jobcenter Berlin bases its assessment of housing affordability on the Ausführungsvorschriften zu § 22 SGB II (AV-Wohnen), which outlines the acceptable limits for rent and heating costs for recipients of unemployment benefits under Social Code Book II (SGB II) (Sozialgesetzbuch II § 22, 2025). The key criterion for affor-

bility in this context is the „Angemessenheit“ (appropriateness) of housing costs, determined by fixed upper limits for the gross cold rent (net rent plus utilities) and reasonable heating expenses. These limits vary by household size and local market conditions. For example, a single adult may be eligible for a different rent threshold than a family with children. If a household's rent exceeds these limits, the Jobcenter may initiate a cost-reduction procedure, which can include requiring the tenant to seek cheaper accommodation unless a justified exception applies (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2025).

According to the Berlin Senate's AV-Wohnen – Anlage 1, the Jobcenter defines the maximum allowable housing size for recipients of Bürgergeld based on household composition. For a single person, an apartment of up to 50 square meters is considered appropriate. For two-person households, the acceptable size increases to 65 square meters. Each additional person adds approximately 15 square meters. These size limits ensure that beneficiaries have adequate living space while maintaining cost-efficiency within the public welfare system. The Jobcenter uses these benchmarks when assessing whether rent and apartment size are “reasonable” (angemessen) and eligible for full reimbursement under social welfare guidelines. (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integration, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung, 2025)

Number of Persons per Needs-Based Household (BG)	Abstract Adequate Living Space (m²)
1 <u>person</u>	50 m²
2 <u>persons</u>	65 m²
3 <u>persons</u>	80 m²
4 <u>persons</u>	90 m²
5 <u>persons</u>	102 m²
<u>Each additional person</u>	+12 m²

(Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integration, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung, 2025)

As of January 1, 2025, single adults receiving Bürgergeld (citizen’s benefit) in Germany are entitled to a standard monthly allowance of 563 € (BMAS, 2024). This amount is intended to cover basic living expenses such as food, clothing, personal hygiene, and household energy (excluding heating) (BMAS, 2024). In addition to this standard rate, beneficiaries are also eligible to have the full costs of housing and heating covered, provided these expenses are deemed „reasonable“ according to local regulations. In Berlin, the benchmark for a reasonable gross rent (excluding heating) for a single person is 449 € per month, based on the updated AV-Wohnen guidelines effective from October 1, 2023 (Jobcenter Berlin Mitte, 2024).

Gross Rent (Basic Rent + Cold Operating Costs)

Number of people per Bedarfsgemeinschaft (BG - Household Community)	Reference Value for Monthly Gross Rent in €:
1 Person	449,00
2 Persons	543,40
3 Persons	668,80
4 Persons	752,40
5 Persons	903,72
Each additional person	106,32

(Jobcenter Berlin Mitte, 2024)

Typically, rent payments are made directly to landlords. If the actual rent exceeds the set maximum, the excess amount must generally be covered by the individual unless an exception is granted. Additional allowances (Mehrbedarfe) may also be provided for specific circumstances such as pregnancy or single parenthood, subject to individual assessment. Exceptions are made in cases involving, for example, persons with disabilities, pregnant individuals, or single parents, who may be allowed

to exceed the rent limit by up to 10% (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Gleichstellung, Integration, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung, 2025, BMAS, 2024)

According to current guidelines from the Jobcenter Berlin, for a single person receiving Bürgergeld, the maximum reasonable housing cost covered is 449 €. This amount corresponds to an apartment size of up to 50 square meters, which is considered appropriate for one person. Based on these figures, the Jobcenter effectively allows for a rent of approximately 9€ per square meter (449 € ÷ 50 m²). This rate sets a benchmark for what is considered affordable and reasonable within the Berlin housing market for welfare recipients.

In parallel to the Jobcenter, which provides support for individuals participating in the general labor market, the Berlin State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF) is responsible for accommodating refugees and asylum seekers during the asylum process. The LAF aims to uphold both legal requirements and humane living standards by operating a variety of housing types, including modular buildings and converted existing structures. All accommodations are required to meet basic standards, which include access to heating, electricity, hot water, communal kitchen facilities, and a minimum living space of 6 square meters per person (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (LAF), n.d.). However, more specific guidelines are outlined in official publications. For example, the 2021 brochure Ihre Rechte, Pflichten & Ansprüche Als Bewohner*in einer Unterkunft für Geflüchtete in Berlin states that requirements differ depending on the type of facility—such as arrival centers, initial reception centers, and various forms of shared housing (GU 1, GU 2, GU 3)—and may change over time. Nonetheless, it emphasizes that the contractually agreed living space for each adult in a single-bedroom setting must be at least 9 square meters (LAF, 2021, p. 37). This variation between the general minimum standard of 6 square meters and the higher contractual allocation reflects an effort to provide more dignified living conditions when feasible.

While both institutions share the objective of ensuring secure and adequate housing, their affordability models reflect differing operational mandates. The Jobcenter applies a strict expenditure-to-income affordability model grounded in economic viability and integration into the labor market. By contrast, the LAF adopts a rights-based and humanitarian approach, focused on the immediate provision of dignified shelter and social inclusion for vulnerable populations. Both approaches align with broader interpretations of housing affordability, which recognize not only the cost of housing but also the adequacy of the dwelling and the financial resilience of the household.

While affordability thresholds set by the Jobcenter and LAF determine what is considered reasonable housing for low-income and refugee households, the actual rents on the private market are shaped by broader regulatory frameworks. In Berlin, a range of rent control policies aim to contain housing costs and protect tenants, particularly in a tight and increasingly unaffordable market. These regulations interact with welfare-defined rent limits and influence the availability of suitable housing options for those relying on public support.

Rent Regulation Policies in Berlin

While affordability thresholds set by the Jobcenter and LAF determine what is considered reasonable housing for low-income and refugee households, the actual rents on the private market are shaped by broader regulatory frameworks. In Berlin, a range of rent control policies aim to contain housing costs and protect tenants, particularly in a tight and increasingly unaffordable market. These regulations interact with welfare-defined rent limits and influence the availability of suitable housing options for those relying on public support. The policies implemented so far and having direct or indirect effect on housing for refugees are the following:

Ortsübliche Vergleichsmiete (Local Comparative Rent):

The benchmark for setting and adjusting rents in Berlin is the ortsübliche Vergleichsmiete, derived from the median of new and updated lease contracts over the past six years. These values are published every four years in the qualified Berlin rent index (Mietspiegel) and updated after two years using the consumer price index.

Geographical Protection Zones

Berlin has designated areas under two key regulatory frameworks: the „tense housing market“ (angespannter Wohnungsmarkt) and „Milieuschutz“ (social preservation areas). The entire city has been declared a tense market, which justifies stricter controls like the rent cap. Milieuschutz zones restrict conversions into ownership and major structural changes to protect existing tenant populations. As of 2021, conversion restrictions apply citywide through the Baulandmobilisierungsgesetz.

Mietpreisbremse (Rent Cap)

Introduced in 2015 and extended to 2025, the Mietpreisbremse limits rents for new leases in tense markets to a maximum of 10% above the local comparative rent. However, landlords may still charge the rent agreed in the previous tenancy. Newly built apartments and those extensively modernized are exempt from this rule.

Rent Increases

Regular rent increases are allowed every 15 months, provided they do not exceed the local comparative rent. Additionally, Berlin has a Kappungsgrenze, capping rent increases to a maximum of 15% over three years. The increase must be justified using the qualified rent index and requires tenant consent or legal enforcement.

Graduated and Indexed Rents:

Staffelmiete (graduated rent) allows for agreed-upon annual increases, even above the comparative rent, but within the limits of the rent cap. Indexmiete (indexed rent)

ties rent changes to inflation, as measured by the consumer price index. Unlike graduated rents, increases under an index lease are not subject to the rent cap but must be actively claimed by the landlord.

Social Housing Regulations:

Social housing units in Berlin are subject to both rent and occupancy restrictions. These homes are reserved for tenants with a Wohnberechtigungsschein (certificate of eligibility), which is available to households earning up to 40% above the defined income limits. Despite eligibility, many households do not apply unless they are actively moving.

Ban on the misuse of housing (Zweckentfremdungsverbot)

Over the past decade, rental prices for residential properties in Berlin have increased significantly. One factor contributing to this trend is the rise of short-term rentals via platforms such as Airbnb, which are suspected of intensifying the pressure on the housing market. Estimates suggest that the presence of just one additional Airbnb listing can increase nearby rental prices by an average of 13 cents per square meter. This effect is particularly linked to permanent Airbnb rentals, which remove properties from the regular housing supply. In response, Berlin introduced the „Zweckentfremdungsverbot“ (ban on the misuse of housing) in 2014, which significantly restricted short-term subletting. As a result, the availability of rental housing increased slightly, leading to modest rent reductions. Depending on the district, new rental contracts for a 65-square-meter apartment can be up to 38 euros cheaper per month. However, since only a small proportion of Berlin's housing stock is used for short-term rentals, the overall impact of the regulation on the city's housing shortage and rent increases remains limited.

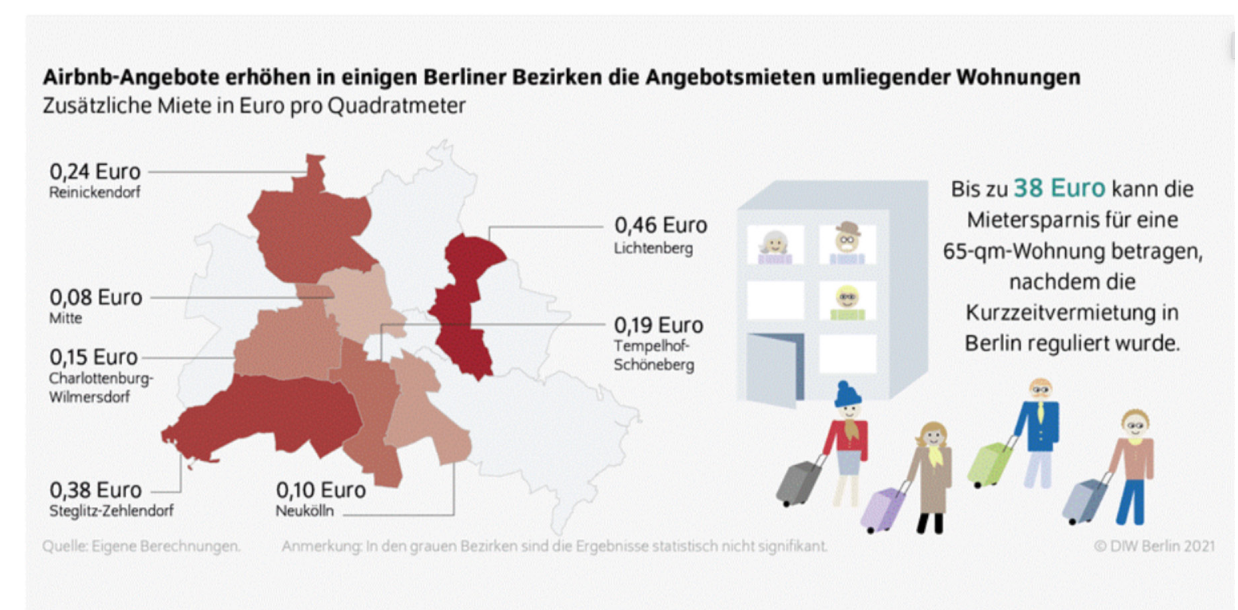


Figure 44: AirBnB offers Berlin (DIW, 2021)

DISTRICT-LEVEL ANALYSIS: LOCATIONS OF MODULAR REFUGEE HOUSING

The following chapter provides an overview of each Berlin district in which one of the selected MUFs (Modulare Unterkünfte für Flüchtlinge) included in this study is located. The focus lies on the local housing market, including demographic characteristics, income and rent levels, as well as rental share. By analysing these factors, this chapter aims to contextualise the spatial and socio-economic environments surrounding the MUFs, and to provide a foundation for understanding potential barriers and opportunities for housing access and integration.

Steglitz-Zehlendorf

Steglitz-Zehlendorf, located in the southwestern part of Berlin, is characterized by a scattered settlement structure with residential areas that are often close to nature (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 106). As of 2023, Steglitz-Zehlendorf had an estimated population of approximately 310,400 inhabitants. The proportion of foreign residents in the district stood at 17.8%, which is significantly below the Berlin-wide average of 24.4% (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3).



Figure 45: Districts of Berlin (Wikipedia,2025)

The median monthly net household income in Steglitz-Zehlendorf is 2,850 €, one of the highest among Berlin's districts, indicating relatively high purchasing power (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 106). Correspondingly, the district reported the lowest unemployment rates in Berlin at 6.7%, further highlighting its socio-economic stability (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 106, IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3).

In terms of housing, Steglitz-Zehlendorf offers the most generous average living space in Berlin: 44.1 m² per person and 85.4 m² per unit (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3). This is coupled with an average of 1.9 persons per household and per unit, reflecting low household density.

The 2024 rental market shows a wide price range in Steglitz-Zehlendorf, with offered net cold rents varying from 8.66 to 22.62 €/m² (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3), which allows for a degree of accessibility across different income levels. Despite this variation, according to the Berliner Mietspiegel 2024, the district is predominantly characterized by medium to good residential location categories (mittlere and gute Wohnlage), with only a very small proportion of simple residential areas (einfache Wohnlage) located in the southernmost parts of the district (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen, 2024).

Hypothesis

3.

Regarding ownership status, 74.7% of dwellings in Steglitz-Zehlendorf are rental units, representing the lowest proportion of rental housing among Berlin districts (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3). Consequently, this indicates that the homeownership rate in Steglitz-Zehlendorf is the highest within Berlin.

In 2024, only 4.4% of rental dwellings in Steglitz-Zehlendorf were social housing units, compared to a Berlin-wide average of 6.6%, highlighting the limited availability of affordable housing for low-income households in the district (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 107).

Demographics	Population: 310,446 foreign population share: 17.8% (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Average per capita living space:	44.1 m ² ; per unit: 85.4 m ² (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Persons per household	1.9 (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Median household net income:	2,850 € per month (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Net cold rent range:	8.66 – 22.62 €/m ² per month (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Average asked rent	14,59 €/m ² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 107)
Share of <u>rental</u> housing	74.7% (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Social housing	4.4% (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3)
Estimated average rent-to-income ratio:	~22% (44.1 m ² × €14.50/m ² = €640; €640 / €2,850 ≈ 22%) (own calculation based on IBB data)

Reinickendorf

Reinickendorf, located on the northern edge of Berlin, is characterized by spacious and dispersed development structures. The district features a diverse urban landscape including well-established single- and two-family housing estates (e.g., Heiligensee), upscale villa areas (e.g., Frohnau), large-scale reform housing estates from the interwar period, and extensive large housing estates. Additionally, Gründerzeit-era apartment buildings and post-war housing are found in the transition zones towards the neighboring districts of Pankow and Mitte.



Figure 46: Districts of Berlin (Wikipedia,2025)

As of 2023, Reinickendorf had a population of approximately 268,800 residents, with a population density of 3,009 persons per km² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. Reinickendorf). The average age of 44.6 years is significantly higher than the Berlin-wide average of 42.7 years, indicating an older population structure. The foreign resident share stood at 22.3%, slightly below the Berlin average of 24.4%, while 39.0% of residents had a migration background (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3).

The median monthly net household income in Reinickendorf was €2,625, which is above the Berlin median of €2,575, pointing to a relatively solid income level among residents. The unemployment rate was 9.9%, which is roughly in line with the Berlin average of 9.8% (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3).

Regarding housing, the average living space per person in Reinickendorf was 38.7 m², and 77.2 m² per dwelling unit, with an average of 2.0 persons per household. Of the roughly 134,600 housing units, 76% were rental properties, slightly lower than the citywide proportion of 85%, indicating a somewhat higher rate of homeownership compared to the Berlin average. The share of social housing units was 4.2%, which is below the Berlin average of 6.6%, highlighting limited availability of subsidized housing.

The rental market in 2024 showed a wide range in asking rents, from €7.40 to €21.44 per m², reflecting varied residential location qualities within the district. The median asking rent was €12.15 per m².

In terms of future urban development, Reinickendorf plans the construction of several new residential neighborhoods: around 600 units in the Karl-Bonhoeffer-Nervenklinik area, approximately 5,000 units in the new Schumacher Quartier, and about 2,000 units in Tegel-Nord.

Hypothesis

Despite a negative internal migration balance of -8,900 to other Berlin districts in 2023, the district experienced a net external migration gain of 10,549 residents, partially due to special factors such as the presence of an initial reception center for asylum seekers.

Demographics	Population: 268.792 foreign population share: 22,3% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 118)
Average per capita living space:	38,7 m ² ; per unit: 77,2 m ² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 118)
Persons per household	2.0 (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 118)
Median household net income:	2,625 € per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 118)
Net cold rent range:	9,77 – 18,43 €/m ² per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 119)
Average asked rent	12,15 €/m ² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 118)
Rental share:	76% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 118)
Social housing	4.2% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 118)
Estimated average rent-to-income ratio:	~18% (38,7 m ² × €12,15/m ² = €470; €470 / €2.625 ≈ 18%) (own calculation based on IBB data)

Marzahn-Hellersdorf

Marzahn-Hellersdorf, located in the Eastern periphery of Berlin, is characterized by its extensive large housing estates and green open spaces. Originally developed during the GDR era, the district features uniform prefabricated housing (Plattenbau) alongside more recent developments and village-like structures in areas such as Kaulsdorf and Mahlsdorf. The urban structure is defined by wide streets, large-scale residential blocks, and newer family housing in the district's southern and eastern fringes.



Figure 47: Districts of Berlin (Wikipedia,2025)

As of 2023, Marzahn-Hellersdorf had a population of approximately 291,900 residents, making it one of Berlin's more populous districts. The population density is relatively low due to its expansive layout and green space. The foreign resident share stood at 18.6%, well below the Berlin average of 24.4%, and reflects a comparatively homogenous population. The average household size was 2.0 persons, and the average age is slightly above the Berlin average, indicative of an aging population and long-term residents.

The median monthly net household income in Marzahn-Hellersdorf was €2,375—below the Berlin-wide median of €2,575—suggesting a more limited purchasing power among residents. The district's unemployment rate was not specified but is often close to or slightly above the city average.

In terms of housing, Marzahn-Hellersdorf offers an average of 36.2 m² of living space per person and 71.5 m² per dwelling unit. Of the total housing stock, 84.4% were rental units—slightly below the citywide average of 85%—indicating a modest presence of owner-occupied dwellings. The share of social housing stood at 7.2%, which is above the Berlin average of 6.6%, offering relatively better availability of subsidized housing.

The district's rental market in 2024 showed a range in asking rents from €8.35 to €15.96 per m², with a median rent of €11.38 per m². This reflects more affordable conditions than in many central Berlin districts. The estimated rent-to-income ratio is approximately 17%, based on a typical rent for the average dwelling size and median income. This suggests that housing costs are somewhat more affordable in Marzahn-Hellersdorf compared to many other districts.

Despite being somewhat less attractive in terms of centrality and prestige, Marzahn-Hellersdorf offers potential for long-term housing solutions, especially for low-income households and families. However, accessibility and integration with the broader city remain important challenges due to its peripheral location.

Hypothesis

3.

Demographics	Population: 291.948 foreign population share: 18,6% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 114)
Average per capita living space:	36,2 m ² ; per unit: 71,5 m ² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 114)
Persons per household	2.0 (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 114)
Median household net income:	2,375 € per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 114)
Net cold rent range:	8,35 – 15,96 €/m ² per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 115)
Average asked rent	11,38 €/m ² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 114)
Rental share:	84,4% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 114)
Social housing	7,2% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 114)

Treptow-Köpenick

Treptow-Köpenick, located in the southeastern part of Berlin, was formed through the merger of the former boroughs Treptow and Köpenick. Due to its expansive area stretching from the S-Bahn Ring to the Brandenburg state border, the district features a highly diverse urban structure. It includes densely built Gründerzeit-era neighborhoods in central areas, large panel-housing estates (Plattenbau), as well as single- and two-family home settlements in its outer periphery.



Figure 48: Districts of Berlin (Wikipedia,2025)

In 2023, Treptow-Köpenick had approximately 294,100 residents, marking a 17.9% population increase since 2014—the highest growth rate among all Berlin districts (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. Treptow-Köpenick). Despite this growth, the district remains Berlin’s least densely populated, with only 1,753 inhabitants per km², reflecting its vast area and suburban character.

The median age was 43.7 years, slightly above the city average of 42.7. Only 16.4% of residents were foreign nationals and 24.1% had a migration background—both significantly lower than Berlin’s averages (24.4% and 39.7%, respectively) (IBB Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3).

Treptow-Köpenick’s median net household income was €2,625, placing it among the districts with relatively high purchasing power. The unemployment rate was just 8.0%, well below the Berlin-wide average of 9.8%, reflecting the district’s favorable socio-economic conditions.

The average living space per person was 38.5 m², with an average of 72.2 m² per unit and 1.9 persons per household. Of the approximately 156,700 housing units, 79.4% were rentals, slightly below the city average, while 11.8% were social housing units—significantly above the Berlin average of 6.6%, indicating a comparatively high supply of affordable housing.

The 2024 rental market in Treptow-Köpenick displayed a broad spectrum of asking rents, ranging from €8.24 to €22.00 per m². Despite this spread, the district recorded the lowest year-over-year increase in average asking rent, at just +6.6%, with a median of €14.45 per m², indicating relative stability in comparison to other districts.

Migration patterns further underscore Treptow-Köpenick’s attractiveness: in 2023, the borough registered a positive net internal migration balance of 4,751 persons—the highest among all Berlin districts—alongside a net gain of 990 people from outside Berlin, contributing to its ongoing growth and development.

Demographics	Population: 294.081 foreign population share: 16,4% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 112)
Average per capita living space:	38,5 m²; per unit: 72,2 m² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 112)
Persons per household	1,9 (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 112)
Median household net income:	2.625 € per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 112)
Net cold rent range:	11,83 – 20,00 €/m² per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 113)
Average asked rent	14,45 €/m² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 112)
Rental share:	79,4% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 112)
Social housing	11,8% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 112)
Estimated average rent-to-income ratio:	~21% (38,5 m² × €14,45/m² = €556; €556 / €2.625 ≈ 21%) (own calculation based on IBB data)

Lichtenberg

Lichtenberg, located between the River Spree in the south and Berlin’s northern city limits, benefits from a strong transport connection to Friedrichshain and offers a diverse urban fabric. While neighborhoods such as Friedrichsfelde and Hohenschönhausen are dominated by large-scale prefabricated housing estates (Plattenbauten), rural-style single- and two-family houses prevail in areas like Malchow and parts of Warthenberg. In contrast, Karlshorst and Hohenschönhausen are also home to expansive villa and single-family housing areas.



Figure 49: Districts of Berlin (Wikipedia,2025)

In 2023, the population of Lichtenberg reached approximately 311,900 residents, making it one of Berlin’s more populous districts. With an area of just over 5,200 hectares, this results in a high population density of 5,984 inhabitants per km², well above the Berlin average. Since 2014, the population has grown by 16.2%, the second-highest growth rate among all Berlin districts, reflecting the borough’s growing appeal (IBB-Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. Lichtenberg). The average age of residents was 41.9 years, slightly below the Berlin average of 42.7. The proportion of foreign nationals was 24.4%, exactly in line with the citywide figure, while 34.6% of residents had a migration background (IBB-Tabellenband, 2024, p. 3).

The median net household income in Lichtenberg was relatively low at €2,225, compared to the Berlin average of €2,575. Similarly, the unemployment rate stood at 9.3%, marginally below the Berlin-wide rate of 9.8%, indicating moderate socio-economic challenges within the district.

Housing in Lichtenberg is characterized by relatively compact living arrangements. The average floor area per person was 34.8 m², and 65.4 m² per dwelling unit, with 1.8 persons per household on average—the lowest household size among the districts presented here. Rental housing dominates the market, accounting for 94.5% of the 166,100 housing units, the highest proportion among all Berlin districts. However, only 2.2% of units were classified as social housing, suggesting limited availability of subsidized housing options.

In 2024, Lichtenberg recorded the highest annual increase in median asking rents in Berlin, rising to €15.15 per m². The price range for advertised net cold rents extended from €7.27 to €23.64 per m², underlining the increasingly dynamic nature of the housing market.

Demographics	Population: 311.881 foreign population share: 24,4% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 116)
Average per capita living space:	34,8 m²; per unit: 65,4 m² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 116)
Persons per household	1,9 (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 116)
Median household net income:	2.225 € per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 116)
Net cold rent range:	11,07 – 20,83 €/m² per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 117)
Average asked rent	15,15 €/m² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 116)
Rental share:	94,5% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 116)
Social housing	2,2% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 116)
Estimated average rent-to-income ratio:	~24% (34,8 m² × €15,15/m² = €527; €527 / €2.225 ≈ 24%) (own calculation based on IBB data)

Pankow

Pankow, located in the northeastern part of Berlin, is the city’s most populous district, with approximately 424,300 residents as of 2023. It encompasses a diverse urban landscape—from the dense and vibrant neighborhoods of Prenzlauer Berg to more suburban and green areas like Niederschönhausen and Buch. The district includes a mix of historic Gründerzeit-era buildings, post-war housing blocks, and newer developments, making it one of Berlin’s most socially and architecturally varied areas.



Figure 50: Districts of Berlin (Wikipedia,2025)

The population density is relatively high in the southern parts of the district, especially in Prenzlauer Berg, while the northern areas are more spacious and suburban. The foreign resident share stood at 19.2%, below the Berlin average of 24.4%, and the average household size was 1.9 persons. With a median age slightly below the Berlin average and high birth rates, Pankow has a relatively young and family-oriented population.

The median monthly net household income in Pankow was €2,850 in 2023, significantly above the Berlin average of €2,575, reflecting a relatively affluent resident base. This is especially true for the southern parts of the district, which have experienced considerable gentrification and upward socioeconomic shifts over the past two decades.

In terms of housing, the average living space per person was 39.1 m² and 73.0 m² per dwelling unit. Around 87.1% of housing units were rented, a figure slightly above the citywide average. The share of social housing, however, was only 3.9%—well below the Berlin average of 6.6%—indicating limited access to subsidized housing options.

Pankow’s rental market is among the most expensive in Berlin. In 2024, asking rents ranged from €14.19 to €24.25 per m², with a median of €17.00 per m². This places a considerable burden on lower-income households, despite the district’s relatively high income level. The estimated rent-to-income ratio for an average resident is around 23%, suggesting that while many households can afford the rent, affordability margins are tighter than in more peripheral districts.

As the district continues to grow and attract higher-income residents, maintaining social diversity and housing access for vulnerable groups remains a key challenge. The limited share of social housing and high market rents underline the need for targeted policy interventions.

Hypothesis

Demographics	Population: 424.307 foreign population share: 19,2% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 100)
Average per capita living space:	39,1 m²; per unit: 73,0 m² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 100)
Persons per household	1,9 (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 100)
Median household net income:	2.850 € per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 100)
Net cold rent range:	14,19 – 24,25 €/m² per month (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht 2024, p. 101)
Average asked rent	17,00 €/m² (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, pp. 100)
Rental share:	87,1% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 100)
Social housing	3,9% (IBB Wohnungsmarktbericht, 2024, p. 100)
Estimated average rent-to-income ratio:	~23% (39,1 m² × €17,00/m² = €665; €665 / €2.850 ≈ 23%) (own calculation based on IBB data)

Conclusion: Structural barriers to housing access for refugees in Berlin

This study set out to better understand the difficulties refugees face when trying to move from shared accommodation into the regular housing market in Berlin. Our analysis shows that access to housing is shaped by a sequence of interlinked constraints that act as layers of exclusion. Each layer contributes to narrow options of accessible housing especially for vulnerable groups such as refugees.

Layer 1: Affordability – Subsidies do not match market prices

The first barrier is financial. Rent subsidies provided by LAF or Jobcenter are based on fixed ceilings (Mietobergrenzen), that do not reflect current market prices. For example, the maximum allowed gross cold rent for a single adult is €449, which translates to around €9/m²—far below the citywide median offered rent of over €15/m². Even in the lower market segments, offered rents have risen sharply, with a 12.7% increase in the lowest third alone between 2023 and 2024. Legal mechanisms such as the Mietpreisbremse offer only limited relief, as landlords often bypass them through furnished leases, short-term contracts, or renovations. As a result, many listings are unaffordable from the outset, and refugees are unable to apply - despite formal eligibility. This affordability mismatch structurally excludes many from the start.

Layer 2: Supply – A shortage of suitable and social housing

Even when rents fall within the subsidy limits, there is a clear shortage of suitable housing. Berlin is currently missing over 100,000 housing units, with demand especially concentrated in the affordable segment. The supply of social housing has declined significantly over the past decade, and larger apartments - needed by many refugee families - are particularly rare. Existing WBS systems do not guarantee access, and waiting times are long. While new construction exists, much of it is small-scale and located on the outskirts, often poorly connected to public services. Due to residence requirements, refugees also cannot relocate to more affordable areas outside Berlin. This limited supply of adequate units further narrows the options.

Layer 3: Gatekeeping – Discretionary selection and informal exclusion due to market competitiveness

The final barrier is shaped by how the housing market functions in practice. Even when a flat is affordable and available, many refugee applicants are still not selected. This is not only a matter of individual prejudice, but a result of the tight competition in Berlin's housing market, where vacancy rates are extremely low and demand far exceeds supply. In such a tense market, landlords - especially private ones, who own the majority of rental housing in Berlin - have wide discretion to choose tenants. Applicants relying on public benefits, lacking standard documents (like SCHUFA, employment proof, or a rent debt clearance certificate), or unfamiliar with informal application strategies are often sorted out early. Refugees are frequently excluded from these informal pathways, such as finding housing through personal networks or rapid digital communication. This layer of informal gatekeeping rein-

forces earlier barriers and turns structural disadvantage into practical exclusion.

Ultimately, these mechanisms combine to exclude refugees structurally, not just temporarily, from access to the Berlin housing market. This is the central hypothesis that future research should investigate more closely. A deeper understanding of refugees' housing preferences, location choices, and search experiences is needed: What types of flats are they looking for in terms of location, price and units? What conditions are acceptable? What barriers, such as discrimination or lack of information, do they face? Comparing these insights with the statistical analysis of the housing market can help clarify to what extent the Berlin housing market composition contributes to prolonged stays in shared accommodation.

3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL PROCESSES

Registration Process and Institutional Responsibilities in Berlin

	Legal Process	Administrative Process
Key Players	BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), Administrative Courts (Verwaltungsgerichte), Lawyers, Judges	Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales (Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labor, and Social Affairs), Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (LAF - State Office for Refugee Affairs), Social Workers, Accommodation Centers (e.g., MUFs)
Focus	Determines rights based on laws and courts	Focuses on the logistical and bureaucratic management of cases
Goal	To grant or deny refugee status based on legal criteria	To manage accommodation, services, and basic needs of asylum seekers
Delays	May involve legal appeals, court schedules, etc.	Often involves bureaucratic delays, backlogs in processing, paperwork errors
Outcome	Legal status (refugee status, rejection, etc.)	Practical support (housing, social services, case management)

Institution	Function
LAF Berlin	Housing allocation, basic social services, initial reception
BAMF (Berlin Branch)	Processing asylum applications
Bezirksämter (District Offices)	Registration, residence permit renewals, social benefits
Jobcenter Berlin	Employment support and benefits for recognized refugees
NGOs (e.g., Caritas, DRK)	Legal aid, housing advice, psychosocial support

Hypothesis

3.

Distribution of refugees across the Berlin districts in percent

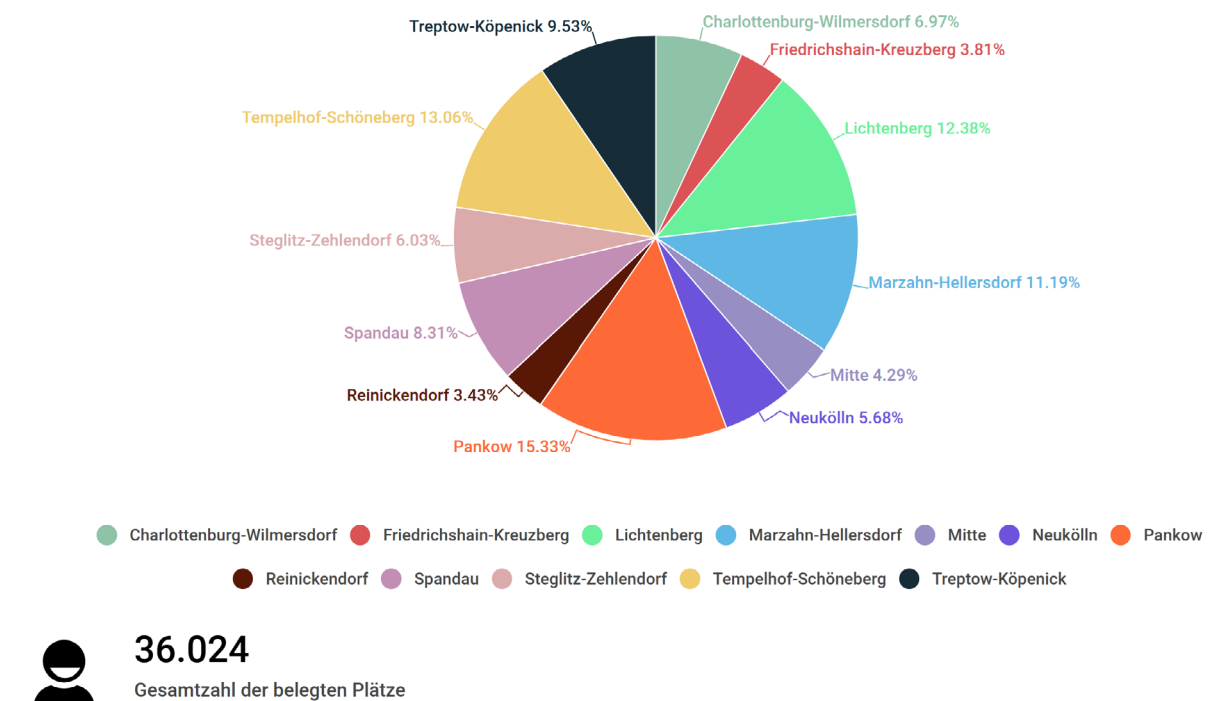


Figure 51: aktuelle Unterbringungszahlen (LAF,2025)

Decisions and Decision Rates for the applications

Over 2010–2025 Berlin’s policy on removing asylum-seekers has been shaped by changing national laws and local politics. Deportation (Abschiebung) is governed by the Residence Act (AufenthG) and influenced by EU rules (e.g. Dublin III). Berlin’s city-state government – primarily SPD-led coalitions – has at times tolerated fewer removals than other states. Importantly, most ausreisepflichtige persons (obligated to leave but not deported) hold a “Duldung” status (tolerated stay) that legally pauses deportation. For example, as of April 2017, 489 Afghans in Berlin were subject to removal orders, but 460 (94%) had Duldung. This report reviews Berlin’s legal framework and administrative practice, provides year-by-year deportation statistics, examines intra-city variations, and compares with other Länder.

Legal Framework for Deportation

German law mandates that any ausreisepflichtiger (obligated-to-leave) non-national who cannot regularize status must be deported. However, legal barriers often intervene. The “Duldung” (§60a AufenthG) suspends deportation on humanitarian or practical grounds (e.g. illness, minors, no travel documents). The prevalence of Duldung means many removal orders cannot be executed. Nationally in 2023 over 242,000 persons were obligated to leave, but 80% had Duldung. Where Duldung conditions persist, deportations stall. Berlin has also issued internal guidelines (Weisungen): e.g. since 2014 it de facto halted deportations to Afghanistan, despite no formal legal ban.

In 2022, Berlin's coalition codified a winter deportation moratorium in its contract: agreed "Aus humanitären Gründen im Winter auf Abschiebungen zu verzichten." This follows years of practice: in late 2023 the Berlin Interior Ministry announced no removals of ordinary asylum-seekers from Jan–Feb 2025, except for serious criminals (Gefährder).

Administrative Practices and Coalition Impact

Berlin's administration of deportations is centralized. The Landesamt für Einwanderung (formerly LAF) issues the removal orders; the Landeskriminalamt and Bundespolizei carry out deportations. District (Bezirks-) offices have little formal role in executing deportations. Berlin's city Senate (Innensenator) sets policy. Shifts in coalition government affected enforcement. Under the 2011–2016 SPD/CDU Senate deportations were modest (2013: 500; 2014: 603). From 2016, a SPD–Linke–Grüne (Red–Red–Green) government broadened humanitarian exceptions. For example, Interior Senator Iris Spranger (SPD) in 2022 insisted on prioritizing Ukrainian arrivals and largely blocking deportations to war-torn countries; this led Left/Green partners to remind her of the winter ban. Under the 2023 SPD–CDU Senate, the "Winterabschiebestopp" was formally adopted and is applied each year. Throughout, official rhetoric emphasized focusing on violent offenders: a Berlin interior spokesman stated the Senate remains committed to a "konsequenzen, insbesondere auf die Rückführung von Straftätern und Gefährdern ausgerichteten Abschiebungspolitik." In practice, however, Berlin has consistently removed far fewer people from certain nationalities (e.g. none to Syria/Iraq in 2016).

Berlin's deportation infrastructure is limited. The city has no large pre-removal prison; instead it maintains a special 10-bed "Gefährderhaft" unit for high-risk cases and shares a 20-bed detention facility at BER airport. Asylum-seekers are otherwise held in municipal shelters. The paucity of detention beds means many deportees are escorted from regular shelters to charter flights. Under Germany's 2019 law change, deportation custody is supposed to occur in dedicated centers; Berlin's joint BER facility opened for custody pending removal.

District-Level Enforcement in Berlin

Berlin's 12 boroughs have no distinct deportation offices; enforcement is managed centrally. Thus there are no official deportation counts by district. Informally, differences exist in how boroughs treat newcomers (e.g. providing social support), but not in formal enforcement: removals are executed citywide. One district-level issue is costs: recently the Senate proposed paying each Bezirk €700 per accommodated refugee to offset housing costs, but this relates to reception, not enforcement. In sum, while refugee distribution across boroughs varies, Berlin has no known "hot spots" of higher deportation activity – it is governed by unified state policy.

Hypothesis

3.

Number of deportations by the respective federal state or by the federal police*, 2014 to 2024, in absolute figures

	2024	2023	2022
Nordrhein-Westfalen	4440	3663	3118
Bayern	3010	2364	2046
Baden-Württemberg	2837	2087	1650
Hessen	1587	1344	1018
Niedersachsen	1347	1115	789
Berlin	1304	1375	890
Sachsen	939	855	565
Rheinland-Pfalz	884	629	576
Hamburg	675	455	379
Sachsen-Anhalt	651	500	345
Bundespolizei	599	711	471
Schleswig-Holstein	550	403	385
Thüringen	425	315	238
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	380	195	158
Saarland	202	147	122
Brandenburg	178	234	167
Bremen	76	38	28

Figure 52: The data is taken from the Federal Government's answers to minor interpellations by the parliamentary group Die Linke (BT-Drs. 18/4025, 18/7588, 18/11112, 19/800, 19/8021, 19/18201, 19/27007, 20/890, 20/5795) and the group Die Linke (BT-Drs. 20/11471, 20/14946).

*Deportations are carried out by both the federal police and the federal states. (bpb,2024)

Different Länder show strikingly divergent deportation practices. For example, in 2023 Bavaria – which runs a large Landesamt für Asyl und Rückführungen (LfAR) – carried out 2,364 deportations (about 40% of them convicted criminals), far above Berlin's 1,370 that year. In contrast, Saxony deported 841 people in 2023, up 48% from 568 in 2022, reflecting a political push to increase returns. The efficiency of deportations also varies: media reports note that of migrants held in custody (Ausreisegewahrsam), some states deport most detainees (NRW/RLP ~80%), whereas Saxony deported only ~10% of those detained in H1 2023.

Berlin – lacking its own broad detention capacity – typically transfers housed migrants directly to flights rather than detaining them. Policy differences also stand out. Bavaria and Saxony often endorse quick deportations and invest in specialized units (e.g. Bavaria's Task Force Straftäter). By contrast, Berlin's left-leaning coalitions emphasized humanitarian exceptions: for years Berlin refrained from deporting Afghans or other war-affected nationals, while Bavaria pursued flights to many Eastern countries. Even the approach to Dublin transfers differs: some states strictly execute all Dublin requests, whereas Berlin had periods of slowdown due to capacity.

These contrasts illustrate how Berlin – with its unique legal constraints (statehood plus city) and political composition – has generally lower removal rates than, say, Bavaria's or Saxony's robust return regimes. For instance, nationwide in 2023 about 16,430 people were deported, so Berlin's 1,370 was a small share. Moreover, across Germany over 31,000 deportations failed in 2023 due to cancellations or non-cooperation, reflecting barriers common to all states.

In sum, the past 15 years have seen Berlin's deportation numbers and policies fluctuate with national law changes and local politics. Deported numbers peaked around 2016 and then fell under more permissive city policies, before rising again post-pandemic. Berlin's administrative practice – centralized by the Senate – yields no large intra-city variation in enforcement. Legal provisions like Duldung and Winter-Abschiebestopp, along with coalition agreements, greatly limit removals. Compared to hardline states (Bavaria, Sachsen), Berlin has consistently deported fewer people and delayed removals for humanitarian reasons. This dynamic is documented by official Senate responses and press reports. Overall, Berlin's record reflects an ongoing tension between federal return obligations and local humanitarian considerations.

Protection Rates for Refugees in Germany Recognition and Rejection Rates of Asylum Applications Based on Decisions by the BAMF, 2015 to 2025 (rounded, in percent)

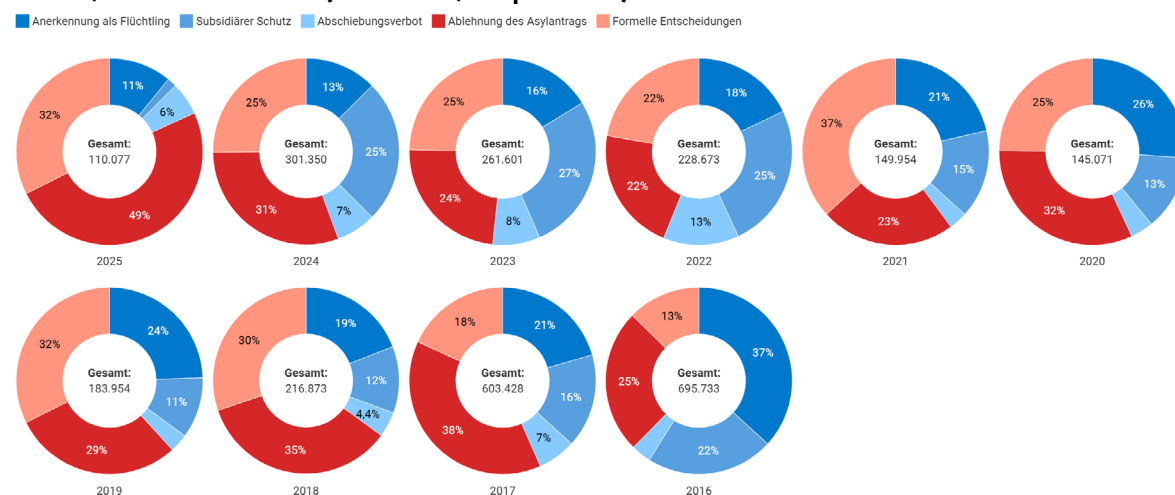


Figure 53: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Daten (bpb, 2025)

Administrative and Legal Processes in the shelter

When refugees are accommodated in Berlin's Modular Refugee Accommodations (MUFs), several legal and administrative steps are involved in ensuring that their rights are respected and that they comply with the necessary regulations.

Residence and Social Support

Refugees are assigned a residence in the MUF, where they must follow the house rules. These rules are outlined by the LAF, and all residents must comply. Legal rights, such as access to healthcare, social benefits (like Hartz IV), and housing allowances, are granted based on registration and specific needs assessments.

Income and Payments

Refugees are entitled to receive financial assistance, but they are also required to pay a contribution towards the cost of their accommodation, depending on their income. This payment is calculated by the local Jobcenter or Sozialamt, and refugees must contact these bodies for detailed financial advice and support.

Rights and Responsibilities

Refugees in MUFs have specific rights, such as the right to access social services, healthcare, and legal advice. They are also encouraged to participate in local integration programs. At the same time, they must follow the accommodation rules, maintain respectful behavior towards other residents, and adhere to safety regulations.

Support Services

Refugees are provided with access to various support services, including advisory centers for legal and social counseling, as well as specialized complaint offices (such as BuBS), where residents can voice concerns or report issues regarding their accommodation or treatment.

Integration and Participation

An important part of the administrative process involves supporting refugees' integration into German society. This includes access to language courses, educational programs, and opportunities for employment. The goal is to facilitate an autonomous life in Berlin through the creation of more self-contained housing structures (MUF 2.0).

These processes ensure that refugees are both supported during their stay in Berlin and have access to the services needed for their integration and eventual autonomy.

Administrative and Legal Processes for permanent housing

Although the WBS is a general access instrument for low-income individuals in Berlin’s social housing system, its relevance for refugees lies in the bureaucratic, legal, and structural complexities they encounter in pursuing this document. The WBS acts as a gateway to Berlin’s limited pool of rent-controlled housing units and reflects wider patterns of inclusion and exclusion within the city’s administrative landscape (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022; Droste et al., 2019).

Introduction: Legal Framework and Administrative Relevance

The Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS) is a legal certificate that entitles eligible households to apply for publicly subsidised housing units under the Wohnraumförderung system (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2023). It functions within the context of federal and state housing law, particularly the Housing Promotion Act (Wohnraumförderungsgesetz – WoFG) at the national level, and the Berlin-specific Wohnraumversorgungsgesetz (WoVG Bln) (Droste et al., 2019). In practice, the WBS serves as a prerequisite for access to rent-restricted dwellings managed by municipal housing companies such as GESOBAU and Gewobag (IBB, 2023). While eligibility for a WBS is determined by household income and size, the administrative pathways for obtaining it vary significantly depending on an applicant’s residence status (Berliner Mieterverein, 2022). Refugees, whose administrative recognition and entitlements follow a layered sequence—ranging from asylum-seeker to beneficiary of international protection—encounter a more complex set of institutional hurdles compared to other low-income applicants (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). The process is embedded within the city’s broader apparatus of integration management, yet does not offer a distinct procedural route for displaced persons (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2023).

Eligibility and Structural Prerequisites

Eligibility for the WBS hinges on fulfilling three fundamental requirements: legal residence in Berlin, income below the threshold specified by the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, and regular residence status for at least 11 months (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022; Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2023). Refugees who have been granted asylum, subsidiary protection, or another legal status under the German Residence Act (§25 AufenthG) may, in principle, apply for the WBS, provided they have completed this minimum residency period (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). Income thresholds vary by household size but, as of 2024, lie approximately at 16,800 EUR net annual income for a single person, with increments for each additional household member (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2023). Income calculation for refugees can be difficult due to unstable employment, lack of standardised documentation, or reliance on welfare benefits such as those received under the Social Code II or XII (Berliner Mieterverein, 2022). Whether social transfers should be fully counted as

income within the WBS framework is subject to administrative discretion at the district level (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022). The requirement of a fixed registration (Meldeadresse) in Berlin is a further barrier (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). For refugees housed in temporary accommodation or without a stable address, registering as a resident can pose a fundamental obstacle to initiating the WBS application process (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2023).

Grenzen Haushaltseinkommen in Euro für WBS-Berechtigung			
WBS 140	WBS 160	WBS 180	WBS 220
 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 16.800 Euro	 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 19.200 Euro	 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 21.600 Euro	 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 26.400 Euro
 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 25.200 Euro	 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 28.800 Euro	 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 32.400 Euro	 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 39.600 Euro
 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 5.740 Euro	 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 6.560 Euro	 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 7.380 Euro	 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 9.020 Euro
 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 700 Euro	 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 800 Euro	 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 900 Euro	 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 1.100 Euro
Fallbeispiel Eine alleinerziehende Mutter, bei der zwei Kinder im Haushalt leben, hat Anspruch auf einen WBS 140, wenn sie im Jahr netto 18.200 Euro (16.800 + 700 + 700) oder weniger verdient (1.516 Euro monatlich).	Fallbeispiel Zwei eingetragene Lebenspartner*innen mit einem im Haushalt lebenden Elternteil haben Anspruch auf einen WBS 160, wenn sie gemeinsam im Jahr netto 35.360 Euro (28.800 + 6.560) oder weniger verdienen (2.940 Euro monatlich).	Fallbeispiel Ein Paar mit einem gemeinsamen im Haushalt lebenden Kind könnte Anspruch auf einen WBS 180 haben, wenn es im Jahr netto 40.680 Euro (32.400 + 7.380 + 900) oder weniger verdient.	Fallbeispiel Ein Paar mit zwei minderjährigen im Haushalt lebenden Kindern hat Anspruch auf einen WBS 220 wenn sie im Jahr netto 59.840 Euro (39.600 + 2 x 9.020 + 2 x 1.100) oder weniger verdienen.
Stand 11/2023, Änderungen/Irrtümer vorbehalten			

Figure 54: Household income limits in euros for WBS eligibility (inberlinwohnen,2025)

The Application Process: Bureaucracy and Documentation

Applications for the WBS must be submitted at the local housing office (Wohnungsamt) of the Berlin district in which the applicant resides (Droste et al., 2019). The required documentation typically includes a valid passport or identity card, proof of residence registration, income statements, and a residence permit or proof of asylum/protection status (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). For refugees, compiling these documents can be particularly demanding due to language barriers, administrative literacy, and institutional recognition of foreign documents (Berliner Mieterverein, 2022). While recognised refugees have access to interpretation services or social counselling, these resources vary significantly across districts (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2023). In some districts, the appointment system for WBS applications remains paper-based or requires digital access that not all applicants possess (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022). These thresholds disproportionately affect applicants with lower educational levels, limited German proficiency, or precarious social networks (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). Processing

times can range from several weeks to three months depending on district capacity (IBB, 2023).

Institutional Landscape and Multi-Level Administration

The issuance of the WBS is managed at the district level but embedded within Berlin's multi-tiered housing and integration bureaucracy (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2023). The Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing issues annual guidance, while individual Bezirksamter carry out assessments (Droste et al., 2019). Refugees often rely on intermediary institutions such as NGOs and integration service providers to navigate this process (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). These actors assist with document preparation, translation, and contact with administrative bodies (Berliner Mieterverein, 2022). However, their involvement is contingent on local availability and funding structures (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2023). There is no refugee-specific WBS application route; instead, all applicants must follow the same administrative procedure regardless of status (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022). This reflects the principle of formal equality, but it does not account for structural inequalities embedded in applicants' starting conditions (IBB, 2023).

Legal Ambiguity and Institutional Discretion

Legal interpretation of eligibility—particularly regarding residence status and income calculation—allows for notable discretion by administrative officers (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, 2023). Cases have been reported in which temporary humanitarian residence (§24 AufenthG) led to the rejection of WBS applications due to the limited nature of such permits (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2022). Some districts consider only earned income in assessments, excluding benefits, and thereby understate household economic viability (Berliner Mieterverein, 2022). The lack of procedural standardisation across Berlin's districts leads to inconsistent treatment of similar cases (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022). Refugees are often unable to contest these outcomes due to language barriers or limited access to legal support (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2023).

This inconsistency reveals the limited legal certainty provided by the WBS framework, despite its appearance of uniformity (IBB, 2023). Interpretative flexibility may serve administrative needs but also generates uneven access outcomes (Droste et al., 2019).

3.2 INTEGRATION SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES

Education and Language Learning

Refugee integration in schools and education is an ongoing focus. Berlin runs extensive "welcome classes" for newly arrived non-German-speaking children, a model in place since 2015. For example, Berlin educated about 20,000 refugee students in 2015–2017, integrating ~8,000 into regular classes and placing the rest in dedicated language-intensive "welcome classes". This system still operates; by 2017 there were around 1,100 such classes in over 600 schools. While updated figures post-2020 are scarce, Berlin's policy continues to emphasize specialized language support and bridging courses so refugee children can catch up. Across groups, children of Syrian, Afghan or Ukrainian refugees generally enter these welcome classes first. Among adults, mastering German is repeatedly cited as a top integration task. In an SVR survey of Afghan immigrants in Germany (Nov 2023–Apr 2024), learning German was one of the "most pressing challenges," second only to family reunification. Similarly, among Ukrainians in Berlin, 82% identified lack of German-language skills as their primary barrier to finding work. To address this, Germany massively expanded integration courses for Ukrainians: from just 1,574 Ukrainians enrolled in late 2021, roughly 200,000 Ukrainians took BAMF language integration courses in 2022 – about 60% of all participants that year (versus only ~6.5% Syrians and 5% Afghans). By fall 2023, about half of Ukrainian participants had completed the courses, and over 126,000 were still enrolled as of Aug 2023. In contrast, participation rates for Syrians and Afghans have been lower. Within refugee families, mothers with young children often attend courses later or less intensively than others, contributing to gender gaps in integration progress.

Discrimination in finding permanent housing

Discriminatory mechanisms influence refugees’ access to permanent housing in Berlin. Drawing on empirical findings and interdisciplinary literature, it becomes evident that both asylum seekers and recognised refugees are disproportionately exposed to multi-layered exclusion in the housing sector. Overcrowded accommodations, extended stays in collective shelters, and protracted search processes for market-based or subsidised housing are emblematic of the systemic marginalisation embedded in Berlin’s current urban housing landscape.

Grenzen Haushaltseinkommen in Euro für WBS-Berechtigung			
WBS 140	WBS 160	WBS 180	WBS 220
 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 16.800 Euro	 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 19.200 Euro	 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 21.600 Euro	 <i>Einpersonenhaushalt</i> 26.400 Euro
 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 25.200 Euro	 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 28.800 Euro	 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 32.400 Euro	 <i>Zweipersonenhaushalt</i> 39.600 Euro
 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 5.740 Euro	 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 6.560 Euro	 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 7.380 Euro	 <i>Jede weitere Person (Kinder, Eltern, Großeltern, Enkelkinder und Geschwister)</i> + 9.020 Euro
 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 700 Euro	 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 800 Euro	 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 900 Euro	 <i>Zuschlag für Kind</i> + 1.100 Euro
Fallbeispiel Eine alleinerziehende Mutter, bei der zwei Kinder im Haushalt leben, hat Anspruch auf einen WBS 140, wenn sie im Jahr netto 18.200 Euro (16.800 + 700 + 700) oder weniger verdient (1.516 Euro monatlich).	Fallbeispiel Zwei eingetragene Lebenspartner*innen mit einem im Haushalt lebenden Elternteil haben Anspruch auf einen WBS 160, wenn sie gemeinsam im Jahr netto 35.360 Euro (28.800 + 6.560) oder weniger verdienen (2.940 Euro monatlich).	Fallbeispiel Ein Paar mit einem gemeinsamen im Haushalt lebenden Kind könnte Anspruch auf einen WBS 180 haben, wenn es im Jahr netto 40.680 Euro (32.400 + 7.380 + 900) oder weniger verdient.	Fallbeispiel Ein Paar mit zwei minderjährigen im Haushalt lebenden Kindern hat Anspruch auf einen WBS 220 wenn sie im Jahr netto 59.840 Euro (39.600 + 2 x 9.020 + 2 x 1.100) oder weniger verdienen.
Stand 11/2023, Änderungen/Irrtümer vorbehalten			

Figure 55: Household income limits in euros for WBS eligibility (inberlinwohnen,2025)

Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Structural Barriers and Everyday Exclusion

The legal and institutional architecture governing access to housing for refugees in Berlin exemplifies the tension between formal protection and de facto marginalisation. German federal law—specifically the Residence Act (AsylVfG)—grants administrative authorities the power to impose place-of-residence obligations on recognised refugees (BAMF, 2019). While initially designed as an instrument of spatial distribution and administrative order, such policies function in practice as mechanisms of spatial exclusion (Rietig, 2016). The earlier Residenzpflicht, which limited asylum seekers’ mobility within Germany for up to three years, exemplified this logic of containment and control. At the municipal level, Berlin’s housing policies are tightly linked to access regimes

such as the Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS). Though nominally inclusive, the eligibility criteria for the WBS—especially the requirement to demonstrate financial self-sufficiency—often de facto exclude refugees, particularly during the early stages of their legal stay (Wohnraumversorgung Berlin GmbH, 2022). In this sense, eligibility thresholds reproduce socio-economic exclusion and mask it behind technocratic rationality. Concurrently, the city faces a severe housing shortage. Berlin’s population growth—exceeding 400,000 new residents over the past decade—has outpaced residential construction, producing an overheated rental market (IBB, 2023). Vacancy rates are minimal, and the intensified demand has driven up rents across all segments. Refugees, typically reliant on social welfare and lacking access to standard tenancy preconditions such as SCHUFA credit histories or long-term employment, enter the market at a structural disadvantage. According to data from the Berlin Monitor (2020), rental prices have increased by approximately 44% in just seven years, severely constraining affordability even for average earners. As a consequence, refugees are disproportionately represented in collective accommodation. In early 2024, over 34,000 refugees were housed in municipal facilities, with approximately 9,000 residing in first reception centres or temporary emergency shelters (Tagesspiegel, 2024). These conditions are not merely transitional but often protracted, due to the inability of residents to exit into independent housing. Furthermore, procedural and bureaucratic obstacles exacerbate this entrenchment. Until 2016, Berlin required that every housing offer to an asylum seeker be reviewed and explicitly approved by municipal authorities—a process that often took weeks and resulted in applicants losing prospective apartments (Brüssow and Raschke, 2018). Though this specific procedure has been dismantled, administrative hurdles persist, such as the necessity of cost-coverage guarantees from welfare offices. These time-sensitive requirements intersect with high competition and lead to disproportionate losses for refugee applicants. Empirical data also confirms the salience of racialised discrimination in the private rental sector. According to a 2017 survey by the Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, approximately 80% of refugee-support organisations reported experiencing housing-related discrimination among their clients (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2017). In qualitative interviews, landlords were frequently cited as expressing overt scepticism or dismissiveness when confronted with refugee applicants, particularly those unable to present standardised documentation such as German passports or proof of stable income (Brüssow and Raschke, 2018). Such practices reflect more than individual bias; they constitute a systemic modality of exclusion operating through the guise of ‘neutral’ market selection. Even where discrimination is not overt, refugee applicants often experience being ghosted, denied viewing appointments, or met with heightened scrutiny compared to German nationals or EU citizens. Studies from DeZIM (2019) indicate that foreign applicants—even with comparable financial profiles—receive significantly fewer callbacks, with disparity rates between 10% and 15% in controlled correspondence tests.

The landlord-refugee dynamic is further mediated by culturalised stereotypes. Qualitative data reveals that landlords frequently justify their reluctance on the grounds of “cultural incompatibility” or presumed deficits in socialisation, such as failure to maintain building cleanliness or manage waste disposal (Brüssow and Raschke, 2018). These generalisations not only pathologise refugee subjectivities but also mask discriminatory selection practices beneath a veneer of housing management concerns. From a sociological perspective, this confluence of juridical restrictions, market inaccessibility, and normative prejudice represents a cumulative disadvantage for refugees. The structural logic of the Berlin housing market positions refugees at its margins—not merely as a temporary effect of supply-side bottlenecks but as a durable outcome of intersecting exclusions. The inability to secure permanent, affordable housing thereby constitutes not only a material deprivation but also a denial of the right to spatial integration and social belonging.

Infrastructures of Arrival in Berlin

Definition

The participation of newly arrived individuals is not automatically guaranteed. There are numerous linguistic, social, and even legal barriers. Integration infrastructures can provide access to crucial resources such as work, education, housing, language, and social networks. Research shows that the social participation of migrants depends not only on their own abilities but also significantly on the societal structures and frameworks that influence their arrival and integration. Services and structures that affect, support, but also potentially hinder or prevent the integration of migrants are referred to as integration infrastructures. (Neßler, 2024)

BENN - Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften:

Locally deployed integration management teams aim to foster the integration of refugees and strengthen social cohesion in the vicinity of large-scale refugee accommodation facilities. Berlin Develops New Neighborhoods is a program which the senate department of Urban Development and housing launched in early 2017. It works in close cooperation with the Berlin districts. It takes place in communities with large refugee accommodations. In the first phase until 2021, the program covered 20 neighborhoods in Berlin. Since 2022 the program has been continued in 23 Berlin neighborhoods located near communal accommodations for refugees. The BENN teams work in each neighborhood from on site offices, serving as local contact points and promoting social cohesion and participation.

Goal: The goal of the BENN program is to enhance social cohesion and facilitate integration within the neighborhood context.

This is to be realized through targeted activities and strategic interventions within the following areas of action:

Encounters and Active Togetherness, BENN supports activities that encourage encounters, dialogue, community and solidarity, fostering a stronger sense of belonging among residents. The program supports voluntary engagement and civil society initiatives and collaborates with local volunteer agencies to strengthen these

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networks.

Empowerment and Participation, BENN gathers and implements the needs and ideas of local residents, promoting self-organized representation. The program provides the necessary framework for local participation, including the involvement of children and young people. Ideas are implemented with support, including material resources.

Communication and Dialogue, BENN fosters communication and dialogue in neighborhoods with diverse perspectives, helping to prevent conflicts and strengthen social cohesion. The program actively combats misinformation and prejudice, raising awareness about racism and discrimination.

Networking and Neighborhood Development, BENN supports positive neighborhood development by fostering diversity and improving the neighborhood’s image. Key actions include creating and adapting meeting places and utilizing public spaces for community-building and networking activities. (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen, n.d.)

Quartiersmanagement (QM.)

Berlin’s Neighborhood Management program is the capital city’s implementation of the national ‘Social Cohesion’ initiative. Their aim is to help disadvantaged inner city neighborhoods and suburban neighborhoods, promoting social cohesion through involving residents in decision-making processes affecting their local neighborhood. This is possible through the creation of ‘Neighborhood Councils’ for the neighborhood participating in the program, in order to give them a voice, having discussions and consultation.

In this program, residents are recognized as ‘local experts’, since they are the ones knowing best about the neighborhood’s challenges. It also tries to improve networking by communicating with other stakeholders such as local authorities, community centers, religious organizations, and cultural associations. The core of this initiative lies in helping people to help themselves, which means empowerment. Thus it is a process in which social capital helps to compensate for a lack of financial capital. Besides the Neighborhood Councils, the core of the QM is a local office with interdisciplinary teams that can be found in each of the 34 areas in Berlin assisted by the QM. The team organizes the whole process of the program at the local level. Being a local contact point, the team is building a bridge between inhabitants, institutions and the administration.

Goals: The most important belief of the program is that all citizens should have equal opportunities for their lives. That’s why the government of Berlin has implemented the QM program to prevent the development of social segregation and urban separation over time. The Neighborhood Management program is part of the national initiative „Neighborhoods with Special Development Needs – Social City“. The program aims to support the most disadvantaged neighborhoods, which are hit the hardest by unfavorable social and economic developments. The Social City program has five main fields of action: Education, training and youth, Employment and local economy, Neighborhood (culture, integration, health), Public space, Participation, networking and the involvement of partners.

We can therefore say that it's important for them to promote integration, education and employment. The main focus is on conducting participatory activities and raising awareness and mobilization activities at the neighborhood level.

Neighborhood Councils:

Community involvement and the use of direct democracy elements constitute the innovative core of QM. The Neighborhood Councils are the heart of the QM project, having been designed to further both of these objectives. The councils give local residents the opportunity to speak about what happens in their neighborhoods, providing a platform for discussion and consultation. It also enables them to have a hand in deciding how the Neighborhood Funds allocated to their neighborhood are used. It is, in fact, also extremely important for the program to reflect the diversity of the population living in those neighborhoods and pursue a needs-based approach. That's why this program plays a crucial role also in the integration of refugees in the neighborhoods.

The work of the Neighborhood Councils significantly contributes to the development of creative pilot projects, which can then become a starting point for positive development both in their own neighborhoods and for others.

These projects occur as a result of stakeholders learning to work together towards a common goal, and when residents are motivated to take the initiative. Bringing a wide range of people with diverse ideas and experience together, the Neighborhood Councils have proved to be a good way of achieving this. QM is basically a communication-based program that encourages and helps to establish new forms of cooperation in the neighborhoods, as well as communication between residents and local authorities.

Neighborhood Fundings

In 2013, the framework of the Social Cohesion Program was newly designed and consists of four Neighborhood Funds now. The basis for all measures and funding for the neighborhood development is the integrated action and development concept, which is written every two years by the neighborhood management teams. The concept is discussed with the public and coordinated with the district administration departments. It works according to local needs, monitoring and evaluation.

Action Fund: Each neighborhood receives €10,000 annually from the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing for voluntary projects undertaken by residents. Strengthening neighborhoods, the community, and social contacts are as important as the motivation and involvement of residents and promoting the image of the neighborhood. This fund supports short-term projects with quickly visible results, with up to €1,500 available for each.

Project Fund: The Project Fund is also funded through the state budget. The aim of this fund is the implementation of projects with a sustainable impact, promoting preventive structures with the corresponding key aspects in the neighborhoods. These perennial projects are funded with a minimum of €5,000 up to a maximum of €50,000. The needs assessment for project initiatives is carried out with residents, stakeholders, neighborhood development partners, the council and the neighborhood.

Building Fund: 50% of the building fund is financed through the EU (ERDF), with the

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rest coming from state and federal funds. The Building Fund is available for construction activities costing a minimum of € 50,000.

Sustainable stabilization and development projects in neighborhood management will be implemented with these resources. Project suitability is assessed with the help of residents, stakeholders, the neighborhood council, the district administration, and development partners. The selection of projects to be implemented is carried out in a transparent process at the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing.

Network Fund: The Network Fund is funded 50% by the EU (ERDF) and 50% from state funds. With the objective of sustainable stabilization and development, proven structural measures are transferred from management at a neighborhood level to a city-wide level. Suitable project ideas are developed with participation from the neighborhood, a representative of the neighborhood management team, the district administration and the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing. Potential projects can be assisted with a minimum of €50,000 from the Network Fund.

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district administration and the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing. Potential projects can be assisted with a minimum of €50,000 from the Network Fund.

Funds – financial resources in 2017

Action Fund: €340,000
Project Fund: €8,250,000
Building Fund: €12,160,000
Network Fund: €4,250,000

Funds – financial resources in 2018

Action Fund: €350,000
Project Fund: €8,000,000
Building Fund: €11,560,000
Network Fund: €3,950,000

	Project volume (€) 2014-2020	Funding partners
Action fund	max. 1.500	City of Berlin Federal funds ("Social City")
Project fund	min. 5.000	City of Berlin Federal funds ("Social City")
Building fund	min. 50.000	EU (ERDF) City of Berlin Federal funds
Network fund	min. 50.000	EU (ERDF) City of Berlin

Figure 56: Funds (own elaboration, 2025)

What Does it Cost?

From 1999 to 2019, €472.1 million from various support programmes had been spent in the neighbourhood management areas. Funds have been allocated as follows: €107.6 million from the National government, €140.9 million from the European Union and €223.6 million from the Land Berlin.

The money had been spent mainly on the lasting revaluation of urban area and housing environment, for social and ethnical integration, and for the support of cooperation and organisation among neighbours. It was an opportunity for young people, who had already been excluded from the education and labour markets, to have new chances of access to job training and gainful employment. Altogether 7255 projects have been supported.

Volkshochschule

The 12 Berlin Volkshochschulen (Adult Education Centers) operate independently under district administration. They offer diverse, lifelong learning opportunities and promote social integration and civic participation. Their programs are open to all interested adults and youth aged 16 and above, as well as institutions and companies. They offer a diverse range of courses in personal, professional, cultural, and political development, including certified exams and personalized learning guidance. There is one Volkshochschule in each district. (Berliner Volkshochschulen, 2023)

Infrastructure of arrival at the district level

In the following, we will take a closer look at the MUF at Hagenower Ring 47, 13059 Berlin and the infrastructures of arrival located there.

The on site offices provided by BENN in the different districts have a diverse range of activities and support formats and work close with the district and other programs together to create a network in the neighborhood by being a local contact point. (Sozdia, n.d.) The specific program and offerings of the BENN teams are tailored to each location. Since the BENN teams provide space and support for ideas from the neighborhood, which vary depending on the district. BENN War-

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tenberg is the on site office which is in charge of the MUF at Hagenower Ring 47. They provide a diverse range of activities and support structure:

Integrationslots*innen work as language and cultural mediators. They provide support in navigating interactions with authorities, including the employment agency, securing daycare placements, enrolling in German language courses, and accessing information about available services.

The neighborhood café and community garden are intended to facilitate encounters among local residents. Cinema for everyone is an inclusive, low-barrier event open to all residents at no cost.

Another key offering is the 'neighborhood mothers' program, which provides low-threshold support, particularly for families and women with a migration background. (Sozdia, n.d.)

Regarding the QuartiersManagement structures, we can see that any office manages and organizes the activities in their action areas based on the neighborhood needs, but looking closer at the Hagenower Ring MUF we can notice that the only closest QM in the area is the Marzahn NordWest one. The Neighborhood Management has introduced various activities in the district like playgrounds, creative schoolyard design, creation of park areas and the redevelopment of the sports ground being among the most noticeable ones. Apart from the structural improvements, their main focus is also on interventions for livelihood improvement, in order to promote integration and ensure access to education. For example, young people and children can benefit from different recreational facilities and services, there's been the implementation of various educational projects in cooperation with daycare centers and school, pedagogic supervision. Culture is promoted at the neighborhood level to help the integration of people with migration background. Although, the just mentioned QM unfortunately doesn't operate in the mentioned MUF's area. Also for the Volkshochschulen there is an issue in their distribution around the districts and there can't be found any close to the MUF in Hagenower Ring.

Verein für aktive Vielfalt

Another Infrastructure of arriving is Verein für aktive Vielfalt e.V., based in Berlin since 1991, is a non-denominational, politically independent organization focused on intercultural work. It provides youth welfare services and is active in local networks, and co-founded the Federal Association of Family Centers. (Verein für aktive Vielfalt e.V., n.d.) In Neu-Hohenschönhausen the 'Kinder und Familienzentrum Leuchtturm' is located with a focus on supporting Families and their children. There are two community centers, Welsekiosk and the community center Ostseevierviertel. The community centers serve as a socio-cultural center for the local community (Verein für aktive Vielfalt e.V., n.d.).

Nevertheless, state-funded infrastructures represent only part of the picture. Informal structures as previously mentioned, also play a significant role. Furthermore Social contact points and religious institutions play an important role when talking about integration.

Challenges

It has been previously briefly mentioned how analyzing closer one of the MUFs area we noticed how the facilities are not well distributed and make it difficult for people who need them to access because of the distances, but also the action area in which each district office operates, which is limited to certain borders.

Since the demand for language courses differs across districts, the available courses at some Volkshochschulen do not fully meet local needs. For example, in Lichtenberg, there is only one Volkshochschule. An examination of the MUF at Hagenower Ring 47 reveals that there is no Volkshochschule in the district of Neu-Hohenschönhausen. It takes approximately 40 minutes to reach the Volkshochschule Lichtenberg from the MUF at Hagenower Ring 47 by public transport. Individuals are, in fact, experiencing difficulties in accessing language courses. It's important for them and for their integration to find public institutions and social infrastructures, like advice centers and language courses, within walking distance.

Accessibility is therefore a crucial aspect for the integration: having public spaces close to their homes can offer migrants opportunities to meet others and are thus important contexts for building social contacts and potentially social capital. (Hanhöster H. & Wessendorf S., 2020) This is actually where many integration institutions struggle for lack of enough facilities close to the arrival facilities, as we have previously mentioned. The reasons can be many, but one of the most important is usually the lack of enough fundings and social capital helping in improving and developing better conditions.

Successes

Even with all the challenges that people and institutions can face to receive and provide best integration practices, it is evident the attempt for the associations to create opportunities for the neighborhoods to get together and find solutions to their problems. It is positive the fact that institutions such as QuartiersManagement give space to the residents to discuss and base their work on what people need. We have seen how all this actors try to involve all the community through activities, discussions, creation of social spaces like parks and playgrounds, and this are all practices that put together and with a deeper work in allowing access to anyone, through better distribution, could really make a difference for those with a migrational background who struggle integrating in the society.

3.3 CONDITIONS IN THE ACCOMMODATIONS

What is a MUF?

MUF, short for Modular Refugee Shelter (MUF) have a capacity of up to 450 places. Unlike the modular housing units of housing associations, they are not designed as apartment buildings, but rather as dormitories. Once they are no longer used as refugee accommodation, they can be allocated to the social or general housing market, for example, as student accommodation or a retirement home, to meet the strong demand for affordable rental housing.

The buildings are equipped with a load-bearing central section, allowing the walls of the individual floors to be designed flexibly. The buildings are high-quality buildings constructed from prefabricated concrete modules. The modular construction method allows for the completion of a high-quality, durable building in a relatively short construction period. The buildings come with an 80-year manufacturer's warranty. (Berlin.de, 06.2018)

Who is the developer of MUF?

The respective projects are being implemented by different developers. The clients are the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing. The department decided three times to build new shelters, resulting in the construction tranches MUF 1.0, MUF 2.0 and MUF 3.0.



Figure 57: Modulare Unterkunft für Flüchtlinge 1.0 (Alexander Schippe)

CONDITIONS

MUF 1.0

In the first tranche, between 2016 and 2021, the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing built a total of 18 MUF with 6,638 beds.

Modular Design and Functional Configuration

The MUF 1.0 prototype consists of a basic module for accommodating refugees and a functional building. Each basic module can accommodate up to 15 residents in a shared apartment with shared kitchen and sanitary facilities.

By combining individual modules to create up to five floors and interconnecting two to four buildings, various sizes can be constructed. This modular construction method allows for flexible urban adaptation to the diverse local conditions of the respective properties while maintaining a high level of urban quality.

The building materials and systems used are simple but durable. The floor slabs and the loadbearing walls are made of reinforced concrete, while the internal divisions are executed with lightweight plaster panels. The facades, which also have a structural function, are composed of a loadbearing layer of reinforced concrete, an external cladding of mineral wool, and a coating of dyed plaster. The rationality of the design and the solidness of the construction system together yield an image of sobriety that does much to give the residential complex a distinctive identity.

On the ground floor of a basic module there are barrier-free living units, a social worker's room and a room for communal use. Access to the property is via the functional building. It also houses the rooms for all technical services, a laundry room, areas for social workers, and a large multi-purpose room.

Standardized open space elements were also developed for the outdoor areas, offering residents intergenerational recreational and leisure activities. These include a village square, children's play areas, a cultivated garden, a sports field, and a multifunctional lawn. (Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, 28.09.2024)

Implementation Strategy and Phased Use in Berlin

The first two volumes that have been built are in the Reinickendorf borough of northwest Berlin and rise 3 and 9 floors. In response to urgent housing needs, occupation is organized in two phases: first temporary, intended for refugees – individuals and families – until they are able to find definitive accommodations; then permanent, providing subsidized housing for all sectors of the population. The construction adapts to this phasing program through the modular composition of its design, which is based on a 2 x 1.35-meter grid. (Arquitectura Viva, n.d.)

Due to the widespread acceptance of MUF 1.0 and additional needs, a second MUF series was launched.

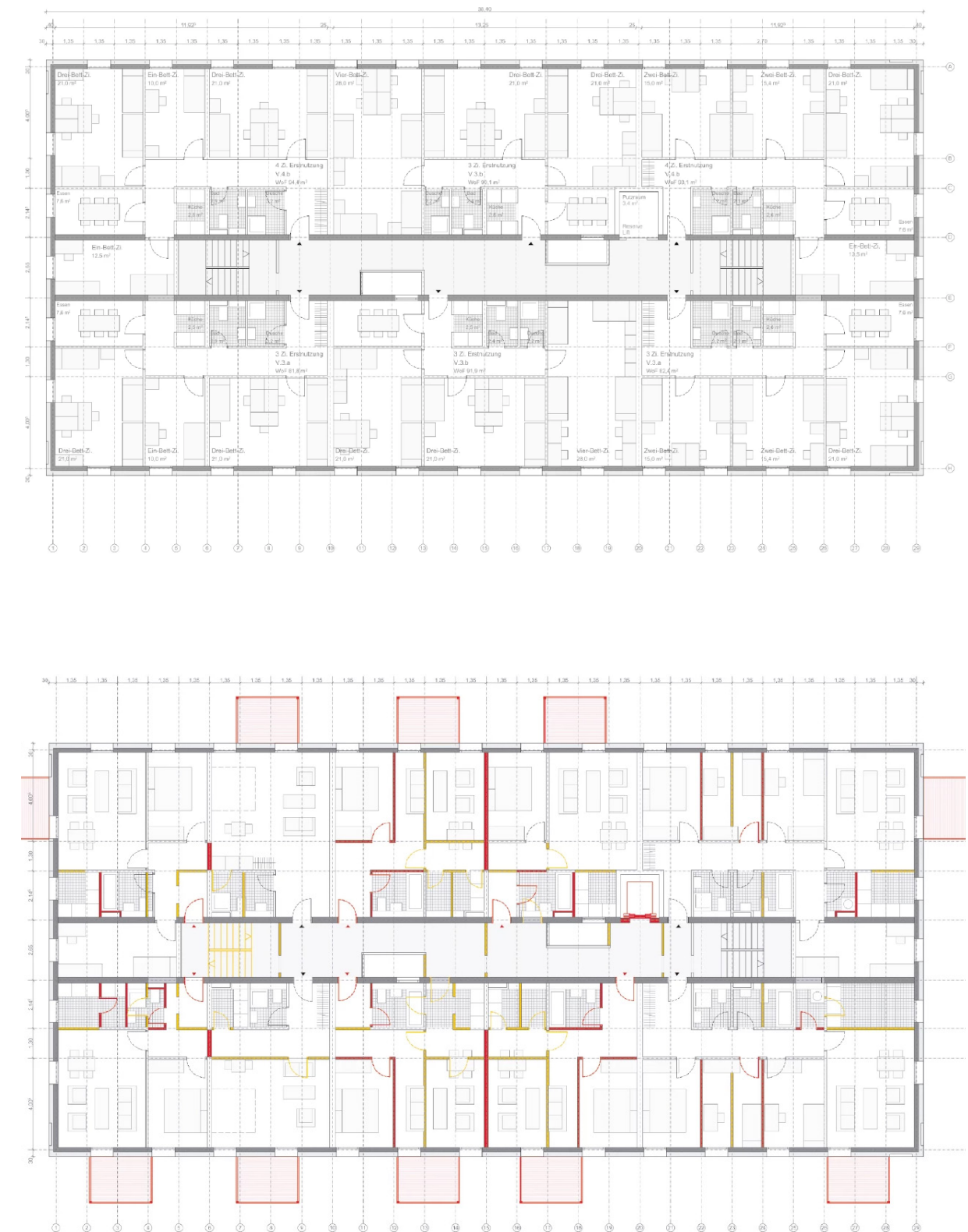


Figure 58: MUF 1.0 – First (top) and second (bottom) phase of occupation (Baumschlager Eberle Architekten)

MUF 2.0

Between 2018 and 2021, a second tranche of 1,720 places in 372 residential units – MUF 2.0 – were built on nine plots, providing accommodation in apartment-like structures. Like the MUF 1.0 they provide community accommodation for a maximum of 480 refugees. The length of stay into these buildings is estimated until recognition (6-9 months). Further some social infrastructure facilities have been integrated into the ground floors, like a daycare center with 65 places on Murtzaner Ring, a neighborhood club on Salvador-Allende-Straße, and a child day care facility on Osteweg.

Characteristics of the buildings

When it comes to characteristics of the MUF buildings they are high-quality, sustainable buildings made of reinforced concrete construction with prefabricated elements. They have fenced plots that can be accessed only via a gatekeeper.

The estimated longlife is at least 80 years outdoors, ie they are solid buildings for long-term use and they have load-bearing facades and interior columns with a 3.12 and 3.75 m grid.

Characteristics of apartments/rooms

The modular apartment buildings are composed of eight manageable units, each rising five stories high. Every floor contains 15 mixed-size apartments, designed with high acoustic insulation and intended for a long indoor lifespan of approximately 50 years. The modular construction system allows for later adaptation: initially designed

as refugee accommodation, the units are convertible into standard apartments, enabling future integration into the general housing market for groups such as students or low-income families.

Each residential floor includes a shared sanitary area for men and women, fully equipped with modern facilities, and a communal kitchen fitted with two stoves, adjacent to a shared dining room. Each module accommodates up to 15 residents. Two training rooms are located on the first floor; the ground floor houses a children's playroom and a consultation room for support services. Four barrier-free apartments for families are integrated into the layout, each with accessible bathrooms.

Apartments have underfloor heating—comparable in cost to radiators—and linoleum flooring. Access is controlled via a transponder locking system with designated permissions per floor and for shared facilities like the laundry room. The units are designed without through-rooms and offer at least 14 square meters of living space for two residents. All rooms allow conventional furnishing. Buildings feature a mix of unit sizes within each block, creating a diverse housing typology. Vertical access cores in “head” or “intermediate” configurations enable efficient circulation and combinations of small, medium, and large units. The interior structure is non-load-bearing, based on a modular grid that accommodates all room types. Central aisle access and dual escape routes are integrated, eliminating the need for external fire access or bypasses. (Berlin.de, 2020)



Figure 59: Playground (Alexander Schippel)



Figure 60: Entrance (Alexander Schippel)



Figure 61: Exterior view (Alexander Schippel)



Figure 62: Kitchen (Alexander Schippel)

MUF 3.0

MUF 3.0 was started with the goal to create more sustainable, urban compatible, and mixed used designs. since the previous MUFs were far off the city and not well connected with the neighbourhood. MUF 3.0 has a vision to integrate into mixed residential neighbourhoods and their acceptance in the society. In 2022, a proposal was brought for further new construction of modular accommodation for refugees, known as MUF 3.0. This proposal was initiated by the Former Finance Senator Matthias Kollatz. According to him, accommodating 15,000 refugees in hotels costs €160 million annually and this could add up to a large amount. so the new facility would be worthwhile because it could be used for long-term use. These additional MUFs can accommodate 44,000 people who are currently living in the emergency shelters or private apartments. At that time, there were some 32 state owned plots of MUF 3.0 which were identified during the 2018/19 refugee crisis. (Ralf Schönball, 2022)

Berlin House of Representatives (Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin), 19th legislative period

It is the request by the CDU Parliamentary group to "Create 25,000 Additional Social housing units by 2025". The Senate is requested to construct 25,000 new social housing units by the year 2025. For this purpose, state-owned building sites identified for "MUF 3.0" as well as additional private properties are to be used for the construction of modular housing under the special building law for the accommodation of refugees. Subsequently, these are to be converted into social housing. 30% of the newly built modular apartments are to be sold to owner-occupiers.

It has also mentioned that - From 2023 Berlin will invest 1 Billion euros in the special fund "Housing Promotion Fund Berlin" (budget item: Chapter 1295, Title 88402), administered by the IBB (Investitionsbank Berlin), and will build 25,000 new apartments on both public and private land by 2025.

Initially, these apartments will be used to accommodate refugees currently housed in hostels and hotels at the state's expense. This will save Berlin approximately 160 million euros annually. (Drucksache 19/0644, 2022)

Planned Action

There are upto 10 sites with upto 600 units per site. The Accommodation will have double rooms with shared bathrooms for every 2 rooms. Along with that communal kitchens and social infrastructure in ground floors. There are sites that are still being identified by the government. A needed document (space, function, equipment) will be developed in cooperation with relevant departments. Based on the MUF 2.0, standardized building plans (BPU) will be adapted to MUF 3.0. (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen, 2024)

Currently the MUF 3.0 is still in process and the sites are not yet disclosed by the authorities but they are expected to start the materialisation in 2025.



Figure 63: Provisional first reception facility - little privacy, stigmatization and little connection to urban society (Dirk Dähmlow)



Figure 64: MUFs, on the other hand, create a visibly higher quality of life and are widely accepted. This is why they will soon enter their third construction phase. (Michael Lindner)

COMPARISON

MUF 1.0**4.1. Functionality**

A building's functionality refers to how well it satisfies the needs of its users. A functional building provides a comfortable and efficient environment that facilitates the activities that occur within it.

Number of People:	in total 4.305 people 200-450 people per location, each residential module offers space for up to 15 people
Privacy:	shared flats with shared communal kitchens and bathrooms and two-bed and single-bed rooms Small flats for families are available.
Common areas:	Social worker room and a room for communal use on the ground floor Laundry room and a large multi-purpose room
Kitchen:	Communal kitchens
Hallway (Entrance):	Access to the site is via the functional building

4.2. Construction

The work of building or making something, especially buildings, bridges, etc. The particular type of structure, materials, etc. that something has.

Storey Height:	Modules with up to 5 storeys
Facade:	Prefabricated reinforced concrete sandwich elements, clad with high-grade panel materials
Light:	floor-to-ceiling windows
Balcony:	no balconies

MUF 2.0**4.1. Functionality**

Number of People:	in total 1720 people Community accommodation for a maximum of 480 refugees One residential module offers space for 15 residents
Privacy:	There are different typology of apartments : a) 2 bedroom apartment with kitchen area and bathroom for 4 persons, b) double standard room , c) standard room for one person
Common areas:	on the ground floor and municipal infrastructure facilities such as daycare centers, neighborhood clubs, and day care. Shared sanitary area for men and women ,a shared kitchen with two stoves and a communal dining room,two training rooms on the first floor
Kitchen:	Communal kitchens
Hallway (Entrance):	Access to the site is via the functional building.

4.2. Construction

Storey Height:	Modules with up to 5 storeys
Facade:	Reinforced concrete construction with prefabricated elements
Light:	floor-to-ceiling windows
Balcony:	Not all – but usually MUF 2.0 have balconies

MUF 1.0**4.3. Furniture**

Furnishing:	Furnished:, bathroom fittings, beds and a few shelves
Wardrobe / storage room:	For all those who move in and don't have anything yet, there is some basic equipment in addition to the few pieces of furniture
Floor surface:	Linoleum floor coverings
Kitchen appliances:	Fitted kitchens, Pots and pans, piles of plates and cups,
Heating:	Underfloor heating

4.4. Outdoors:

The outdoors of a building typically refers to the exterior spaces and features surrounding the structure, including elements like the façade, landscaping, pathways, and surrounding areas. This can also encompass outdoor structures like patios, decks, or pergolas.

Exterior Surface:	'village square' as a meeting place for residents with seating and picnic tables
Playground:	play and sports facilities
Garden:	landscaped outdoor area with lawns and flowerbeds

MUF 2.0**4.3. Furniture**

Furnishing:	Conventional
Wardrobe / storage room:	Based on the plans, some of the rooms have wardrobes some others no (half furnished)
Floor surface:	Linoleum floor coverings
Kitchen appliances:	Kitchen with two stoves and a communal dining room
Heating:	Underfloor heating

4.4. Outdoors:

Exterior Surface:	Inner courtyards with relaxation areas and outdoor cinema in the summer.
Playground:	play and sports facilities
Garden:	The new buildings have integrated public daycare center on ground floor. Outside, the daycare center has its own recreational and playground areas

MUF 1.0**4.5. Accessibility**

In the context of the design of buildings and public spaces, accessibility refers to the adaptation of these spaces so that they are easily accessible and usable by all people, whatever their age or needs. This may include the installation of ramps and lifts for people with physical disabilities or mobility problems, the design of accessible toilets and the location of switches and sockets at an accessible height for people in wheelchairs.

Stairs/Elevator: Three wheelchair-accessible flats are also available on each floor , or wheelchair-accessible flats on ground-floor

Ramps: They have ramps and disability access

4.6. Security

The protection of property, assets, and occupants from intruders, perpetrators of violence, and unsafe or hazardous situations that can cause them harm or damage

Guard: MUF 1.0 is equipped with security measures, including the presence of security personnel.

Visitor Rules: Visits are typically allowed during designated hours.Visitors may be required to present valid identification upon entry. In some cases, visits might need to be supervised by facility staff

Check-In Rules: Refugees are not obligated to check in and out of their accommodation on a daily basis.

Time to return: They don't have a specific time to arrive or leave but if a resident is absent for two weeks or more, the local management is required to officially unregister them.

Crime Rate in area around shelter: Studies by the ifo Institute have shown that there is no statistical correlation between the proportion of foreigners or refugees in a district and the local crime rate. This holds true even for violent crimes such as homicide or sexual assault.

Tenancy: Without a tenancy agreement and without tenant rights

MUF 2.0**4.5. Accessibility**

Stairs/Elevator: They have elevators

Ramps: They have ramps and disability access

4.6. Security

Guard: MUF 2.0 is equipped with security measures, including the presence of security personnel

Visitor Rules: Visits are typically allowed during designated hours.Visitors may be required to present valid identification upon entry. In some cases, visits might need to be supervised by facility staff

Check-In Rules: Refugees are not obligated to check in and out of their accommodation on a daily basis

Time to return: They don't have a specific time to arrive or leave but if a resident is absent for two weeks or more, the local management is required to officially unregister them

Crime Rate in area around shelter: Studies by the ifo Institute have shown that there is no statistical correlation between the proportion of foreigners or refugees in a district and the local crime rate. This holds true even for violent crimes such as homicide or sexual assault.

Tenancy: Without a tenancy agreement and without tenant rights

3.5

SOCIAL, LOGISTICAL, CULTURAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

In the following chapter, logistical, social, cultural, and psychological factors will be examined and described that may influence fluctuation in the MUFs (Modular Accommodations for Refugees). While there are interconnections between these different areas, they are categorized into these four dimensions. Logistical factors relate to the location, surroundings, and accessibility of the accommodations, all of which impact the daily lives of refugees. Social factors describe interpersonal relationships and the social networks of the residents. Cultural factors include cultural capital and all forms of active and passive engagement with cultural practices. Finally, psychological factors refer to aspects related to individual mental well-being and mental health challenges, which may stem from life in the country of origin, experiences during flight, or the situation after arriving in Germany.

LOGISTICAL FACTORS

When we speak of logistical factors, we are referring to the places refugees travel to from their accommodations. This includes both formal and informal places. Formal places are those that people must visit as part of everyday life—for food, education, work, and similar needs. Informal places, by contrast, are chosen voluntarily and differ from person to person, yet still play a central role in daily life. These include recreational activities, meeting places, and support services. In this context, it is also important to consider the geographical characteristics of the MUFs. What amenities are available, and how well are the MUFs connected to the places residents regularly visit? In addition to the connectivity of the accommodations, the surrounding district and neighborhood should also be examined for further characteristics: What kinds of social support infrastructures exist in the area, and what specific services for refugees are offered?

Location of the Different MUFs

The selection of accommodation sites is made by the Senate in consultation with the LAF (Berlin's State Office for Refugee Affairs) and the respective districts. This process involves a "Quick Check" by the Senate, which assesses the potential of various locations, and a social space analysis by the LAF that determines whether a site is suitable. The Quick Check evaluates criteria such as planning law, urban integration, environmental protection, noise pollution, and historical preservation. The social space analysis considers the residential environment, access to public transport, social surroundings, availability of daycare and school places, green spaces, and neighborhood management (Berlin, 2025). Due to the lack of available land in central parts of the city and the decisions made by district administrations, most

Hypothesis

3.

MUFs are located outside the city's central S-Bahn ring, often in outer districts. (IZR, BBSR, 2017, p. 28)

- The MUF in Hellersdorf is near the U-Bahn station Louis-Lewin-Straße. It is accessible via the U5, as well as the tram M15 and bus line X54. However, its peripheral location makes access to the rest of Berlin more difficult, and the district is considered socioeconomically weaker.
- The Lichtenberg MUF is close to the S-Bahn station Hohenschönhausen. Buses and trams are also available nearby.
- The accommodation in Treptow-Köpenick lies between the Britz Canal and the A113 highway. Public transport here primarily consists of buses and a somewhat distant S-Bahn station.
- Similarly, the MUF in Reinickendorf is served only by a nearby bus line.
- The Pankow MUF near the A10 highway, is accessible via the S-Bahn line S2 at Buch station, in addition to bus connections.
- The MUF in Steglitz/Zehlendorf lies along the Teltow Canal and is mainly accessible by bus.

Due to limited possibilities such as no driving license, no monthly ticket or no experience with the public transportations refugees often deal with less mobility compared to non-refugee-persons. Therefore the neighborhood and the places that can be reached easily play a significant role.

Formal Places

Cultural and social factors, which can also be manifested in formal or informal places, play a central role for refugees in particular and can contribute significantly to improving their subjective well-being, as will be described in more detail below. In the following section, we will first look at the importance of the immediate surroundings of the accommodation and the effects on the willingness to relocate.

The significance of an MUF's location depends on the places refugees need to access regularly. For example, if children attend kindergarten or school, these institutions may play a key role to stay in the area to avoid disrupting their daily routines. Relocating could mean the children would have to change schools or kindergartens, which can be particularly disruptive. Schools and kindergartens play a vital role not only in education but also in the integration of refugee children, as they often represent their first point of contact with society. According to UNICEF studies, children express a strong desire to attend school in order to participate in social life (UNICEF, 2023, p.41-46). Employment is similarly significant for working-age refugees. Studies show that migrants can only achieve long-term social integration through employment (IZR, BBSR, 2017, p.106-107). Whether a refugee is already employed, and the location of their workplace, can either encourage or discourage relocation.

The same applies to the commute to language schools, which are essential for integration and daily routines. This topic is addressed further in a later section.

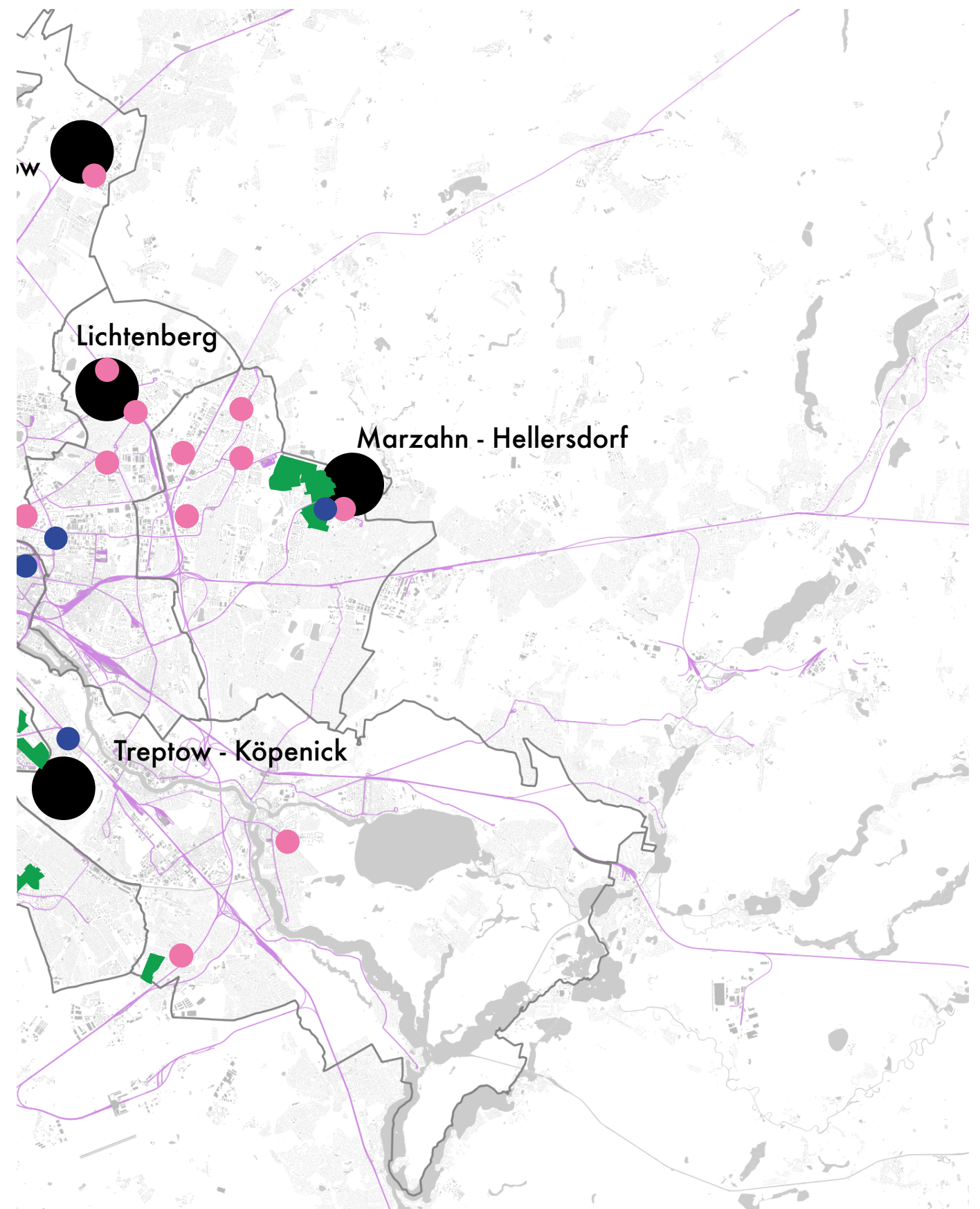
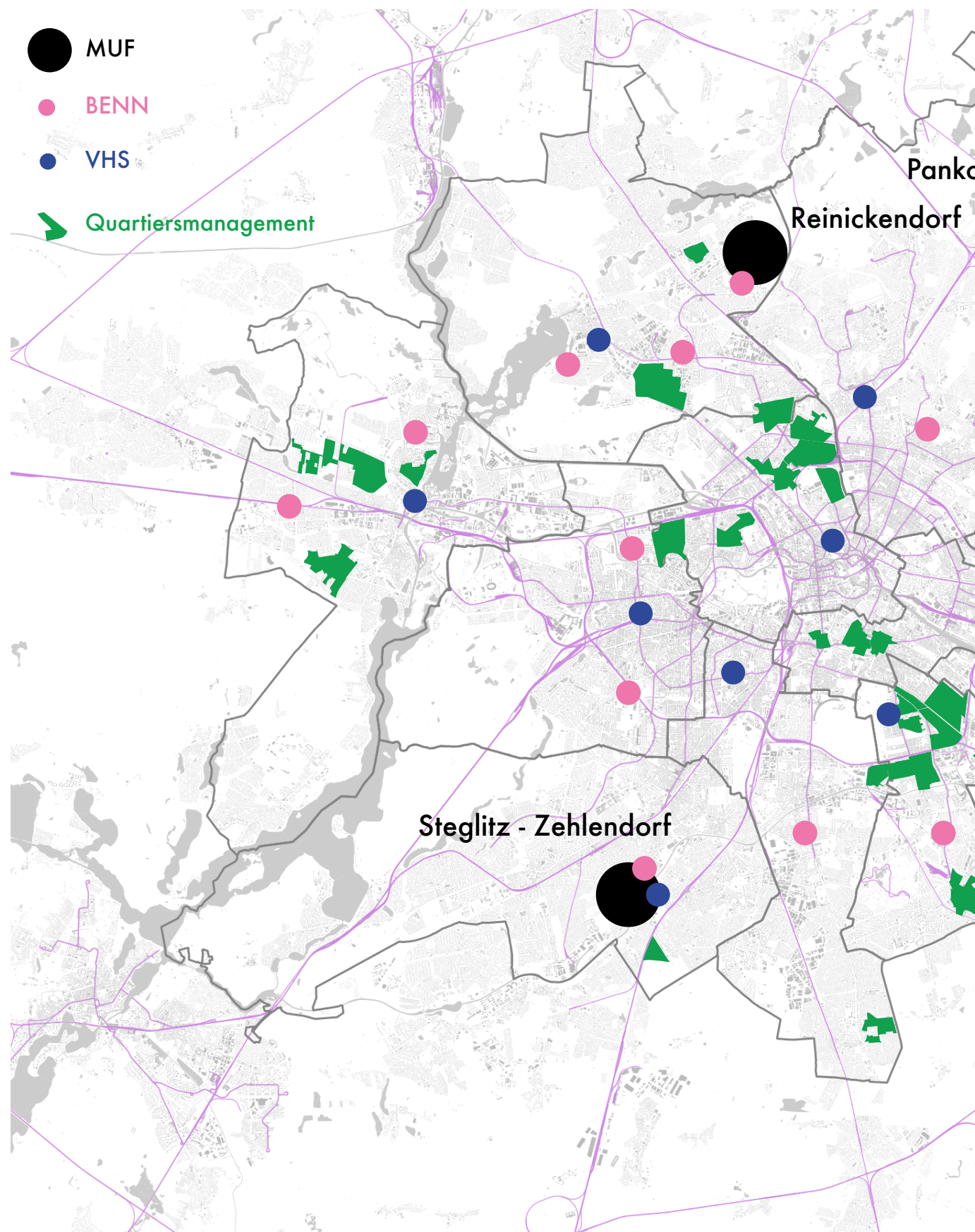


Figure 65: Map of Berlin with locations of MUF, BENN, VHS and Quartiersmanagement (own elaboration, 2025)

ence their willingness or reluctance to move.

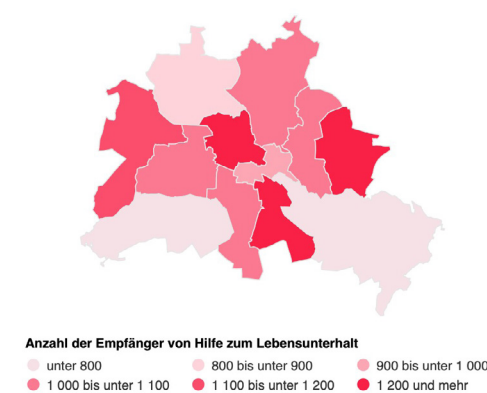
Infrastructure

In addition to the logistical location of the MUFs, the characteristics of the districts and neighborhoods are also important. Many outer districts are considered socially disadvantaged areas (BBSR, 2017, p. 74), particularly parts of Lichtenberg, Hellersdorf, Pankow, and Reinickendorf (cf. Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, 2025). However, certain social structures already exist in all neighborhoods, which influences site selection from the outset.

In many cities, neighborhoods with affordable housing are viewed as especially suitable for refugee accommodation. This is partly because these areas already receive focused attention from local authorities and host various social support services originally designed for low-income residents (BBSR, 2017, p. 74). Additionally, most available housing tends to be located on the outskirts or in socioeconomically weaker neighborhoods, where vacancy rates are higher. This applies to MUFs as well. In these areas, social support is particularly important. There is evidence that integration measures and support networks are already being implemented (IZR, BBSR 2017, p. 27). These structures may be either formal, such as city-run support services, or informal, such as help from other refugees or civil society initiatives.

Examples of formal infrastructures include the BENN (Berlin Develops New Neighborhoods), the Quartiersmanagement (Neighborhood management programs) and Adult education centers (Volkshochschulen) that provide mandatory language courses for refugees. Such services are often located near refugee accommodations (Berlin, 2025). Both formal and informal infrastructures are essential for the integration process and influence access to the housing market (BAMF, 2020, pp. 6–13). These factors, in turn, affect fluctuations in refugee accommodations.

Sozialhilfe nach SGB XII 2023¹



Empfänger von Asylbewerberleistungen

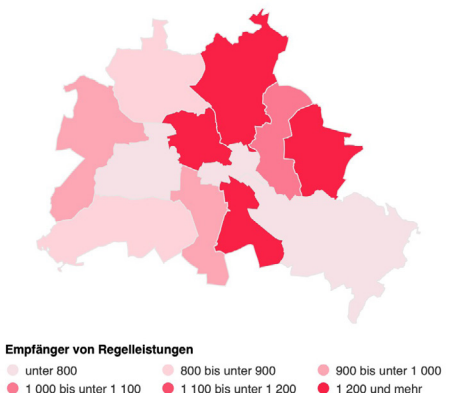


Figure 67: Statistics on social help and people who receive asylum help (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, 2025)

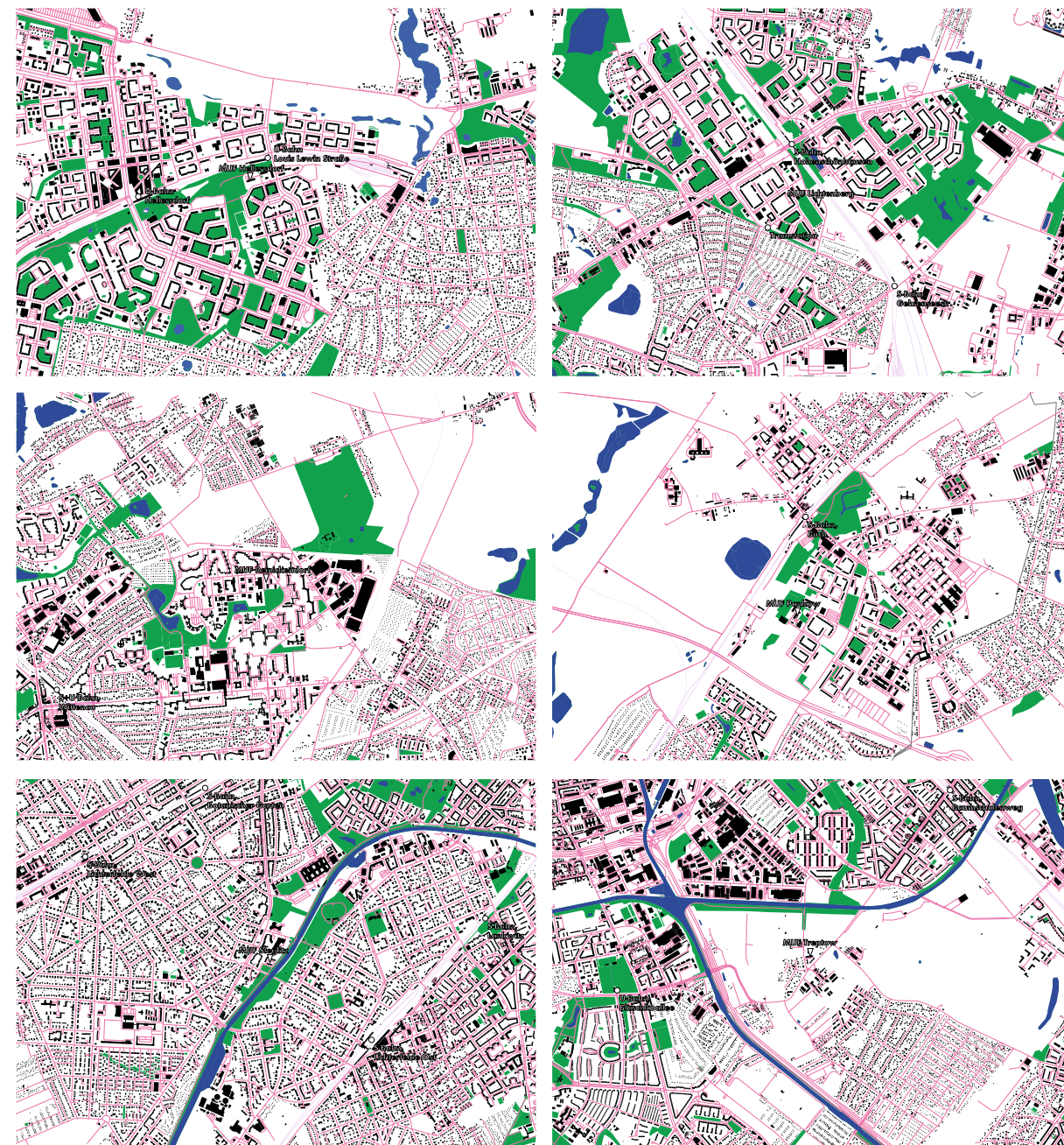


Figure 66: Locations of MUFs and public Transportation (own elaboration, 2025)

Informal places

Shopping is another everyday activity. A study by HCU Hamburg shows that shopping—particularly for products from countries of origin—is highly relevant for many refugees. If such stores exist nearby and are frequently visited, they may become another reason to stay in the current area. Recreational opportunities, such as parks or playgrounds, are also important, although their role will be examined in more detail later (Arouna, 2019, p.238-242).

All these places—how they are accessed, how often they are used, and whether they are located near the accommodation—affect refugees' daily lives and may influ-

To better understand the role of social factors in the process of moving out of refugee accommodations, it is important to first define the relevant dimensions of social relationships. According to August and Rook (2013), social relationships are the connections between individuals who engage in repeated, personally meaningful interactions. This includes ties to family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and other significant partners, while excluding fleeting or incidental contacts perceived as insignificant. Social interactions within such networks are often positive and can involve emotional and material support, companionship, and the promotion of health-related behaviors. However, as August and Rook (2013) also emphasize, these interactions may sometimes be negative, involving insensitive, intrusive, or hurtful behavior. Social relationships can serve as a buffer against stress, as they often provide access to various forms of social support – including emotional, instrumental, and informational support (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Each type of support can be particularly relevant in relation to different kinds of stressors and thus plays a critical role in coping processes.

Refugees and Social Relationships

According to a study by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Siegert, 2019), social relationships in the host country play a crucial role in helping refugees navigate and adapt to their new environment. Social contacts can provide essential information about the functioning of key institutions within the host society – such as how to find housing and employment, access medical care, or apply for social benefits. Beyond information-sharing, these networks often offer practical assistance, for example by helping with childcare, administrative procedures, or securing housing and jobs. They can also offer emotional support, reducing feelings of loneliness and preventing social isolation.

In the same study, refugees were asked whether they had people with whom they could share personal thoughts and feelings. About 14% reported having no one to confide in, while approximately half of the respondents indicated knowing one to two people they could talk to about personal matters. Around 30% reported having three to five such contacts. (Siegert, 2019, p. 6)

Family as a Social Anchor

Given that children live in approximately 75% of the 497 refugee households surveyed – amounting to 371 households in total (LAF, 2025, p. 26) – the role of family life is central to understanding refugees’ housing trajectories. While statistical data suggest that families tend to transition to private accommodation more quickly than individuals (BAMF, 2020, p. 13), they nonetheless face significant challenges in securing appropriate housing. These include not only structural barriers in the housing market but also the specific needs and constraints related to children’s wellbeing and family life. Furthermore, close personal ties among refugees are predominantly familial, making up roughly 80% of all strong social connections. This figure is even higher among female refugees (89%), compared to 76% among male refugees (Siegert, 2019, p. 7).

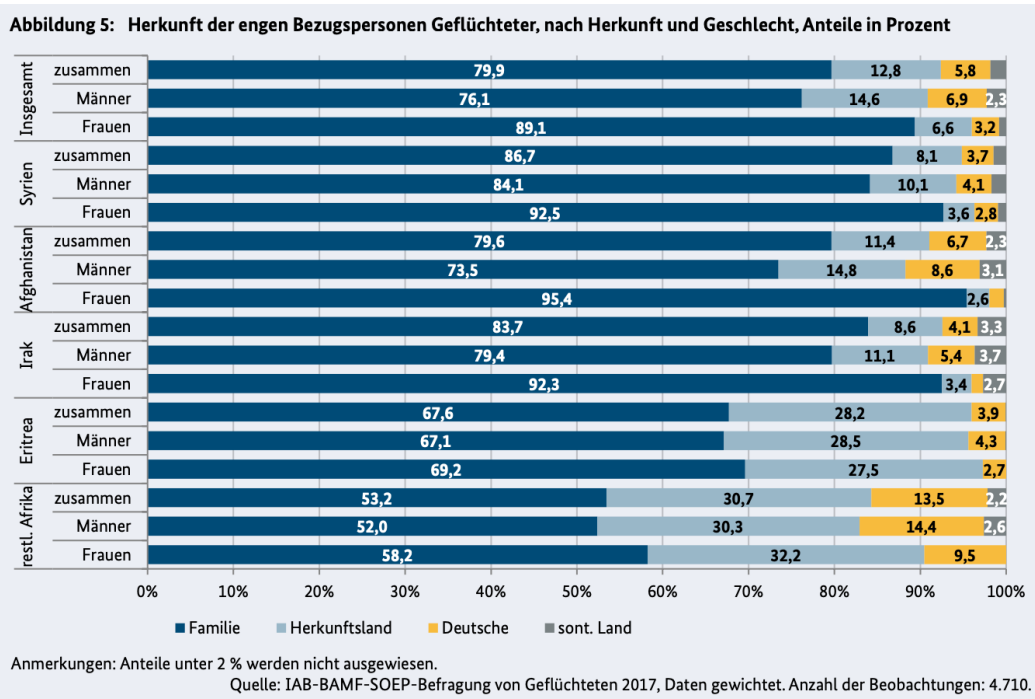


Figure 68: Origin of close contact persons (BAMF, 2017, p. 7)

These findings raise a key question for further investigation: To what extent does living with one’s family – often the primary source of emotional and practical support – encourage a collective move out of refugee accommodations? Conversely, it is also important to explore how the absence of close family ties within the accommodation might influence an individual’s decision to relocate, potentially driven by feelings of isolation or a desire for autonomy.

Contact with Non-Familial, Non-German Individuals

According to a study by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Siegert, 2019, p. 7), close personal contacts outside the family circle most often involve individuals who share the same country of origin as the surveyed refugees. These relationships can offer emotional support, a sense of belonging, and practical help within the context of shared accommodation. However, the presence – or absence – of such connections in refugee housing raises an important question: To what extent does having, or not having, close non-familial relationships with other non-German residents from similar backgrounds influence the decision to move out of refugee accommodations?

Contact with German Individuals

The quality and usefulness of information and practical support provided through social contacts largely depend on the knowledge and familiarity these individuals have with the host society. Since German citizens or individuals without a refugee background typically possess greater insight into local institutions and cultural norms,

their support can be especially valuable for refugees – particularly in matters such as navigating the housing market (Völker et al., 2008, p. 344).

In 2017, nearly half of all surveyed refugees reported spending time with Germans several times a week or daily, while about one-fifth had no contact with Germans at all. Between 2016 and 2017, the share of refugees reporting frequent interactions with Germans increased (Siegert, 2019, p. 1). The most common settings for these interactions were the workplace or educational institutions (approximately 37%), followed by friendships (28%) and neighborhood contacts (21%).

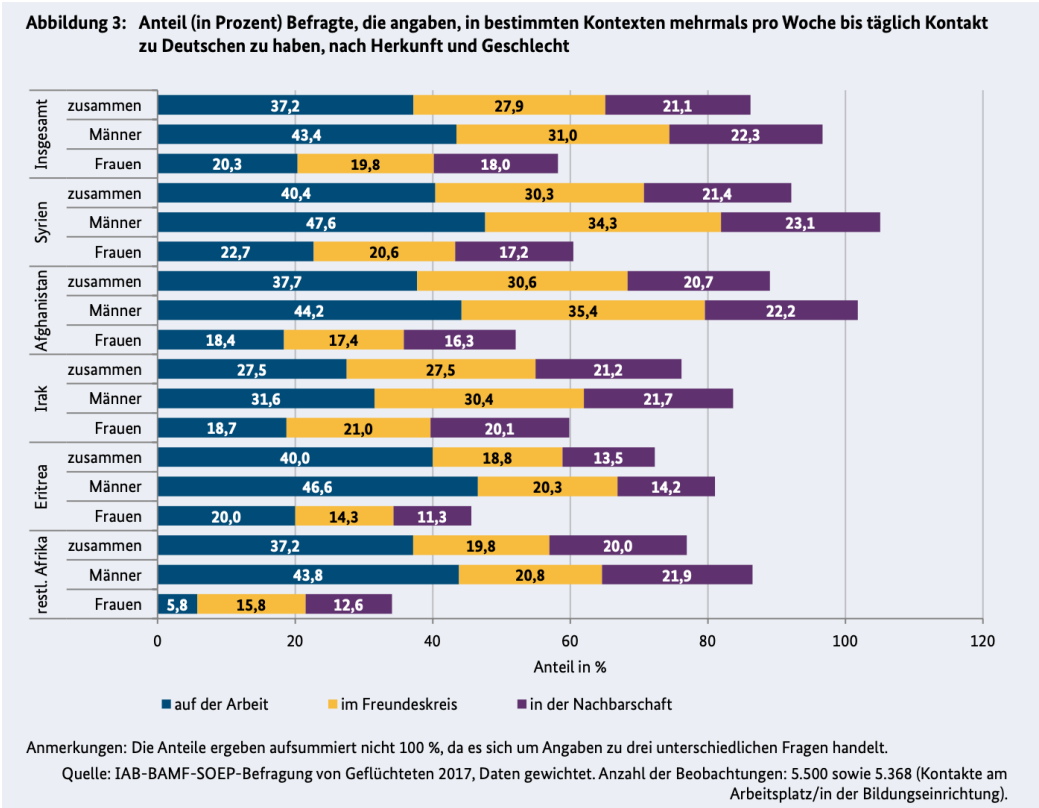


Figure 69 (BAMF, 2017, p. 5)
These findings lead to an important question: To what extent does contact with German individuals – and the potentially greater access to information and assistance it provides – contribute to a faster transition out of refugee accommodation?

Contacts within the Local Environment and Surrounding Neighborhood

Many refugees actively participate in religious, sports, or cultural activities, with institutions such as churches, mosques, and sports teams often playing a central role in their social lives (Siegert, 2019, p. 7). According to the 2020 Implementation Report on the Comprehensive Concept for the Integration and Participation of Refugees, there has been a positive development and expansion of initiatives in the field of socio-spatial integration, culture, and sports – especially following the arrival of many Ukrainian refugees after the onset of the Russian war of aggression (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2021, p. 30). These initiatives primarily aim

to strengthen refugees’ connection to their local neighborhoods, which is closely tied to the development of personal social relationships.

Two examples of such initiatives include:

The BENN Program: Active in 23 Berlin districts with large refugee accommodations, BENN promotes civic participation and social cohesion by building local networks and partnerships. The program particularly responds to the high demand for support among refugees and for stronger cooperation between actors in the neighborhood (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales, Integration, Gleichstellung, Antidiskriminierung und Vielfalt, 2024, p. 85).

The SPORTBUNT Project: Through membership in sports clubs, refugees can easily establish social contacts within the broader urban community. Shared physical activity often leads to lasting bonds and friendships, fostering sustainable integration into the local environment (ibid., p. 88).

These developments give rise to a central research question: To what extent does strong integration into the local social environment influence refugees’ decision to move out of accommodation facilities?

CULTURAL FACTORS

Definition cultural capital

When considering the impact of cultural factors on the reality of the lives of refugees, the work of Pierre Bourdieu is a suitable aid due to the different definitions and approaches that are widely used. Bourdieu distinguishes between economic, social and cultural capital, which together determine an individual’s social position (Bourdieu 1986). Cultural capital, which is the subject of the following section, comprises the skills, forms of knowledge and symbolic resources that people acquire in the course of their socialization and, in particular, through education. These include, for example, organizational skills, language styles, beliefs and social norms (Giovanis 2022). Bourdieu divides cultural capital into three forms: Incorporated capital, which is reflected in taste and habitus; objectified capital, which materializes in works of art or musical instruments, for example; and institutionalized capital, which is embodied in educational qualifications and certificates (Bourdieu 1986; Giovanis 2022).

In the context of cultural participation, UNESCO also emphasizes that cultural participation is not limited to the consumption of cultural offerings, but encompasses all forms of active and passive engagement with cultural practices. This includes both active creation - such as writing music or acting in plays - and passive experiences, such as attending concerts or sporting events (Giovanis 2022).

Relevance

The relevance of cultural participation is particularly evident in the context of subjective well-being (SWB). Cultural activities not only contribute to the formation of individual identity and the ability to express oneself, but can also have a positive effect on well-being - a factor that in turn is considered to be the basis for the development of human capital and social participation (Giovanis 2022).

Research shows that people with higher sociocultural participation generally have a higher level of education and greater self-confidence, which in turn has a positive impact on their self-determination, health-promoting attitudes and psychological well-being (Giovanis 2021).

Migrant specific Capital

For migrant groups, cultural participation also represents an opportunity to preserve and validate migrant-specific cultural capital - such as language, cultural norms and customs from the country of origin. "This allows migrants to maintain aspects of their cultural heritage" (Smith et al. 2018: 6), which is of central importance to many.

Integration

Furthermore, participation in cultural activities can lead to the development of new forms of cultural capital that are recognized within the majority society. The studies suggest that these new cultural resources help migrants to integrate or assimilate into the host society (Smith et al. 2018). Socio-cultural participation also strengthens a sense of community and social ties, promoting social solidarity and integration (Giovanis 2021).

Research also suggests that cultural participation can help to reduce the difference in subjective well-being between natives and migrants. This provides a policy starting point: cultural integration can be an alternative strategy to create inclusive, safe and more liveable communities (Giovanis 2021).

Exklusion

Despite the integrative potential of cultural capital, its role for refugees can also have ambivalent effects. Lamont and Lareau (1988) emphasize that cultural capital itself can be part of processes of socio-cultural exclusion. This is because not all facets of cultural capital are easily transferable across national borders. Refugees in particular often face the challenge that the cultural capital they bring with them is little recognized or even devalued in the host country (Erel 2010; Smith et al. 2018). According to Smith et al. (2018), these paradoxical requirements can lead to a selective recognition of cultural diversity: While food, clothing or language are often considered enriching, cultural values or religious expressions are not infrequently perceived as a threat. An example of this is provided by the study by Long and Hylton (2012), in which it becomes clear that Polish migrants found it easier to access sports contexts than African migrants - not least because they were more familiar with the cultural codes of leisure activities and were perceived as "less foreign" due to their skin color. "Whiteness afforded them greater invisibility", according to Long and Hylton (2012: 387).

Socio-economic factors also make it more difficult to develop cultural capital. A lack of economic or human capital has an inhibiting effect on the opportunities to further develop cultural capital (Smith et al. 2018). Participation in socio-cultural activities - whether in sports clubs or in the area of food culture - is therefore not just a question of interest, but depends heavily on whether existing resources are recognized and new access is made possible. The significance of cultural capital in the context of sport and food is examined below.

Sport

Sporting activities within ethno-specific contexts offer migrants an important opportunity to strengthen social cohesion within their own diaspora. Such contexts promote so-called bonding social capital, i.e. social connectedness within one's own ethno-cultural group (Smith et al. 2018). Jeanes et al. (2014) show that newly arrived refugees often seek contact with people from similar backgrounds outside of established sports clubs, as they feel more comfortable and better supported there. These spaces not only serve to promote well-being, but also cultural protection: "Participation in ethno-specific spaces allows migrants to feel supported, safe and culturally affirmed" (Smith et al. 2018: n.p.).

Such leisure activities offer not only retreat, but also agency. Within familiar cultural contexts, it is easier for migrants to mobilize against discrimination and preserve cultural traditions (ibid.). Tirone and Pedlar (2000), for example, report that South Asian participants in Canada were able to wear traditional clothing and maintain their native language through sporting activities within their own community - an expression of active cultural self-assertion. At the same time, sport can also be a place of cultural learning. For example, the study by Doherty and Taylor (2007) shows that children of migrants were able to acquire skills that are valued in the host country by participating in mixed sports groups. These include improved language skills, knowledge of culturally influenced behavior and a confident approach to social norms, for example with regard to clothing or changing rituals (ibid.).

Such examples illustrate that sport can be both a means of cultivating a culture of origin and a place to acquire new cultural resources. The decision as to whether migrants move into "bridging" or "bonding" spaces is not only strategically but also emotionally motivated - because the constant adaptation to the dominant culture can be tiring (Smith et al. 2018).

Food

Food plays a central role in the integration process of refugees, as it not only serves to provide nourishment, but also fulfills a variety of social, symbolic and emotional functions that are closely linked to individual and collective identity (Bublitz et al. 2013; Al-Sayed & Bieling 2020). Food not only functions as a means of maintaining physical health, but also as a vehicle for cultural affiliation, social connection and individual expression. "Food is not merely about nutrients, but has various social, symbolic and hedonic functions, which are central to human identity and culture" (Al-Sayed & Bieling 2020).

Preparing and sharing food with others in particular generates positive psychological effects. Refugees report that making others happy gives them satisfaction - a process that strengthens intimacy and social relationships (Al-Sayed & Bieling 2020). These functions of food enable a form of cultural capital that is not only important within one's own community, but can also contribute to recognition in the majority society. At the same time, the experiences of Syrian refugees in Germany also show the challenges associated with access to ethnically appropriate food. Many have to travel long distances to reach Arabic or Turkish grocery stores, as there are no suitable options near their accommodation. An ideal supply situation would be guaranteed by better accessibility or greater consideration of cultural preferences among large providers.

Economic uncertainties further exacerbate the situation. Single people in particular, who have no experience of cooking, are increasingly turning to fast food and processed foods. This not only leads to unhealthy diets, but also has a negative impact on subjective well-being. One refugee describes his situation as follows: "I'm not at home here, I can't cook the way I want. I have no work, so no money [...] of course I am less satisfied" (Al-Sayed & Bieling 2020). The food practices of refugees are thus an ambivalent field: on the one hand, a source of cultural identity, social belonging and well-being - on the other hand, characterized by material restrictions and structural barriers that limit the potential of this resource. (Al-Sayed & Bieling 2020).

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Displacement and migration places individuals under immense psychological stress. Risk factors for mental health problems can arise at all stages of the flight process, in their country of origin, as well as through conditions refugees encounter upon arrival in the host country. The prevalence of psychological disorders like PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders among refugees is higher than in the host country's general population - including among children and adolescents. In Berlin, housing arrangements for refugees must address not only logistical and infrastructural needs but also complex psychological dimensions. Understanding the psychological factors interrelated with the refugees' housing situation, can give us an insight in the duration of stay and requirements for humane refugee shelters.

Psychological factors that influence or are influenced by the housing conditions of refugees are generally divided into pre-displacement psychological factors, which are present before arrival in the host country, and post-migration exposures, which arise or intensify during the stay in the arrival country.

Classification of pre-displacement factors

Refugees and asylum seekers are frequently subjected to a range of psychological stressors throughout the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases. Pre-displacement psychological factors often include traumatic events like the inability to meet basic survival needs such as access to food, water, shelter, and medical care,

as well as the constant fear for one's life, the death of loved ones, forced separation from family, imprisonment, and the prolonged exposure to violence, including bombings, shootings, and other war-related experiences (Hajak et al, 2021). Many refugees experience these conditions while living in environments characterized by instability, insecurity, and a lack of adequate infrastructure like warzones or refugee camps.

Exposure to traumatic events is a major risk factor for the development of mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety disorders, among others (Hajak et al, 2021). Despite their elevated risk for psychological disorders, prevalence rates of mental disorders among asylum seekers and refugees in Germany vary widely across studies, with reported rates ranging from 21.7% to 57.1% for depression, 35% to 53.3% for anxiety disorders, and 13% to 34.9% for PTSD (Hajak et al, 2021).

The relevance of psychological health extends beyond individual well-being; it has significant implications for social integration and thus housing transitions. Mental health conditions can impede a person's ability to engage with bureaucratic systems, pursue employment, learn a new language, and secure stable housing. Without counseling and support during the housing search, it is nearly impossible for individuals to meet the requirements, their condition may cause them to remain silent, feel ashamed, avoid mentioning crucial details out of fear or insecurity.

In this context, psychological stabilization becomes a prerequisite for long-term autonomy.

post-migration exposures

In addition to traumatic events before and during migration, adaptation to a new post-displacement environment includes potential socioeconomic, social stressors, as well as migration-related barriers to legal residence in the staying country, that have been associated with impaired psychological functioning and poorer mental health.

Those conditions in the arrival country are collectively referred to as post-migration exposures. These psychological factors subsume income, unemployment, language skills, asylum procedure status, social support, isolation, and discrimination but also housing conditions in the country of stay (Schönfeld, 2022, p. 618). Compared with Italy and the United Kingdom (UK), refugees in Germany not only had the highest prevalence rates of mental disorders, but also reported the highest number of post migration stressors ().

Especially in housing, Schönfeld et al. (2022) highlights that noise, lack of privacy, and insufficient opportunities for personal retreat within accommodations can negatively impact refugees' mental health. Summaries of various qualitative studies on communal living environments further support this, pointing to hygiene deficits, safety concerns, social isolation, and the lack of control over one's living environment as significant psychological stressors.

On the other hand, accommodation contributes to successful arrival and integration when it is adequate, affordable, and safe (Flatau et al., p. 97). It serves as a place of retreat and can support access to educational opportunities, entry into employment,

and the stabilization of both mental and physical health (Breckner, Sinnig; 2019).

Differences in housing forms

The findings of international studies have long shown that refugees housed in temporary or collective accommodations suffer more frequently from mental health problems than those who are allowed to live permanently in private housing (Porter & Haslam, 2005). Living in shared asylum accommodations was associated with an increase in reported psychological distress. Structural features of collective accommodations often described in combination with post-migration stressors reflected in the design and management are sanitary facilities that are shared which often leads to women avoiding the path there alone at night, no possibility to lock private spaces, small room sizes, temporary walls (BAFF, 2019). Additionally, refugees living in asylum centers experienced more instances of discrimination than those living in independent apartments, which, in turn, also contributed significantly to psychological problems.

Conversely, refugees living in private or independent accommodations had better mental health as indicated by higher mental health (S.22, BAFF).

One aspect that warrants further investigation is access to psychosocial counseling and support services both within refugee accommodations and after leaving them. Although refugees represent a particularly vulnerable population, they make significantly less use of psychological support services than other groups (BAFF, 2019). While medical and psychological care within accommodations is often insufficient, a variety of peer support initiatives and lay-helper programs aim to facilitate low-threshold access to the regular healthcare system. However, accessing services outside these structures often fails due to language support or furthermore, the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic care system is generally under-resourced, particularly when it comes to the treatment of trauma-related disorders.

Conclusion

The factors discussed primarily relate to which places are visited regularly by refugees and whether these places are located within the surrounding neighborhood. If that is the case, residents may be discouraged from moving due to the convenience and familiarity of their environment – or they may feel attached to the neighborhood for other reasons. However, these factors may become irrelevant if the person manages to find housing within the same neighborhood. As will become clear in the following chapter on Housing, choosing a specific district is particularly difficult in Berlin due to the housing shortage and limited options for refugee tenants. Therefore the question is, does the infrastructure of the neighborhood as well as the location, when people visit the mentioned places make it hard for refugees to move away or maybe help to do so?

Depressive Symptome

Summenindex PHQ-4

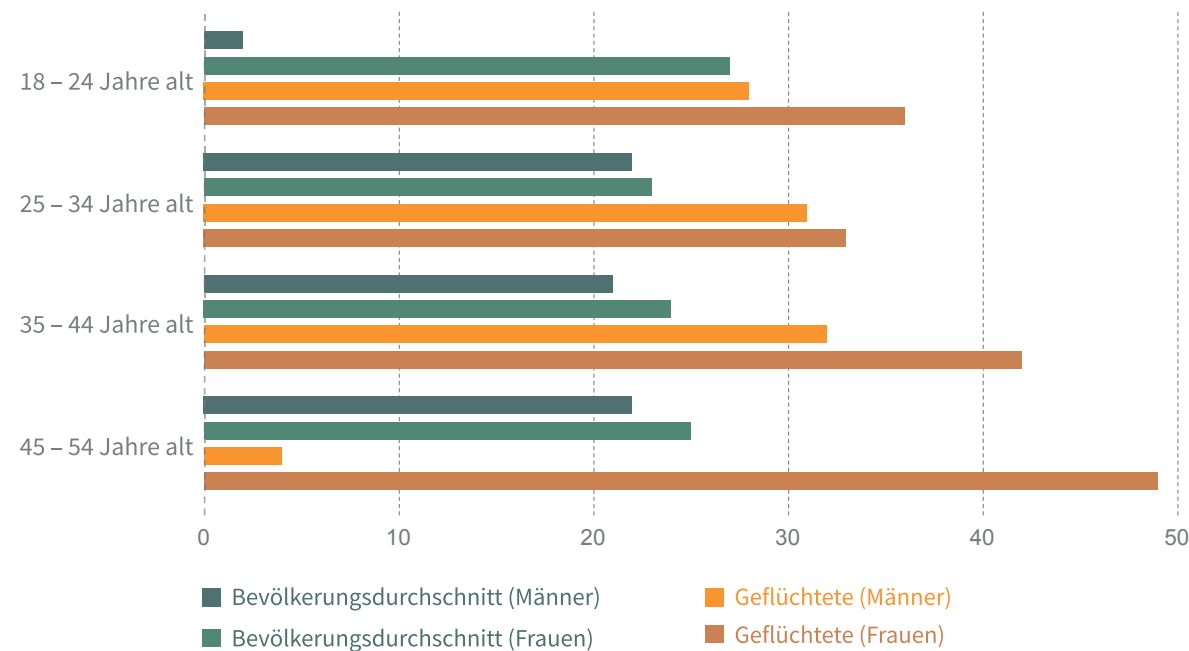


Figure 70: Comparison of depressive symptoms in the average population and refugees (BAFF, 2019, p. 13)

Risikogruppe PTBS

Anteil in Prozent

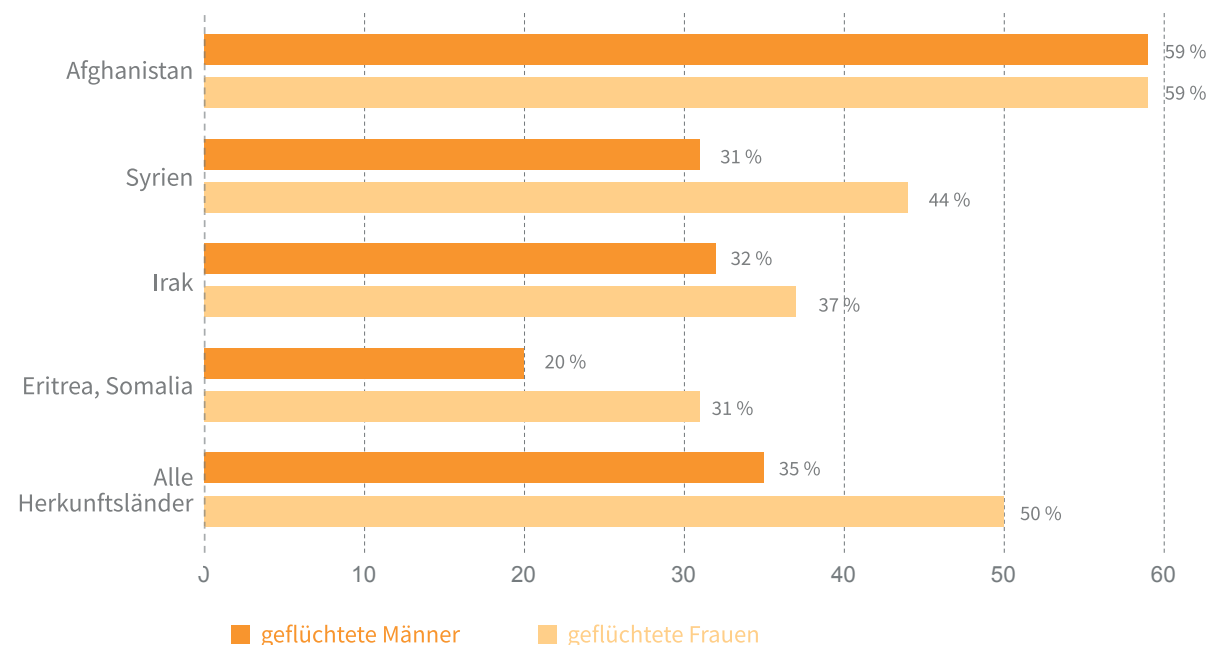


Figure 71: Post-traumatic stress disorder risk group Men and women (BAFF, 2019, p. 13)

This field investigation was designed as an initial empirical exploration into the factors influencing the length of stay and fluctuation of residents in Berlin's Modular Accommodations for Refugees (MUFs) with integrated residential units (WGF). The study aimed to generate a foundational understanding of why some residents remain in these accommodations for extended periods, while others leave earlier. Though not representative in scope, the findings are intended to serve as a basis for future, more comprehensive research.

The overarching research question was:

What factors influence the duration of stay and fluctuation of residents in Modular Accommodations for Refugees (MUFs)?

From this and informed by previous research from LAF, the following focal points and sub-questions were developed:

Integration outcomes: To what extent do language barriers, financial resources, and experiences of discrimination affect residents' decisions to move or stay?

Housing availability and affordability: How do structural factors like rental prices and housing supply shape residents' ability to leave MUFs?

Social and logistical dynamics: What role do family ties, education, or social networks play in influencing housing decisions?

Legal and administrative processes: How does a person's legal status or delays in bureaucratic procedures impact their housing trajectory?

Psychological and cultural influences: In what ways do trauma, uncertainty, or cultural expectations affect residential stability?

Conditions within the accommodation: How do the physical and social conditions within the MUF (e.g., privacy, safety, infrastructure) influence satisfaction and mobility?

Other practical constraints: Are there additional, unaddressed factors—such as discrimination in the housing market or lack of digital access—that hinder residents' housing options?

The research team began with a theoretical engagement phase, where small working groups focused on the themes outlined above. Each group reviewed prior studies, statistical data, and local housing context to identify relevant indicators and formulate hypotheses. These preparatory insights directly informed the development of survey instruments and interview guides.

For the field phase, the team was reorganized into sub-groups assigned to each MUFs. Each field team was interdisciplinary and included members from different thematic groups to ensure expertise across all focus areas during on-site visits.

Site Selection and Context

The six selected MUFs with integrated residential units were located in various outer districts of Berlin, all beyond the S-Bahn ring. The chosen sites intentionally represented two different structural typologies (Heimgrundriss, referred to as shared and

Methodology

Wohnungsstruktur, referred to as apartments) allowing comparative analysis. All six sites had rental agreements set to expire by 2028, and each location had the legal potential for future residential use under Berlin's building code. The geographical and structural differences between the chosen MUFs enables reflection on the role of neighborhood connectivity, spatial integration, and infrastructure in shaping residents' housing experiences.

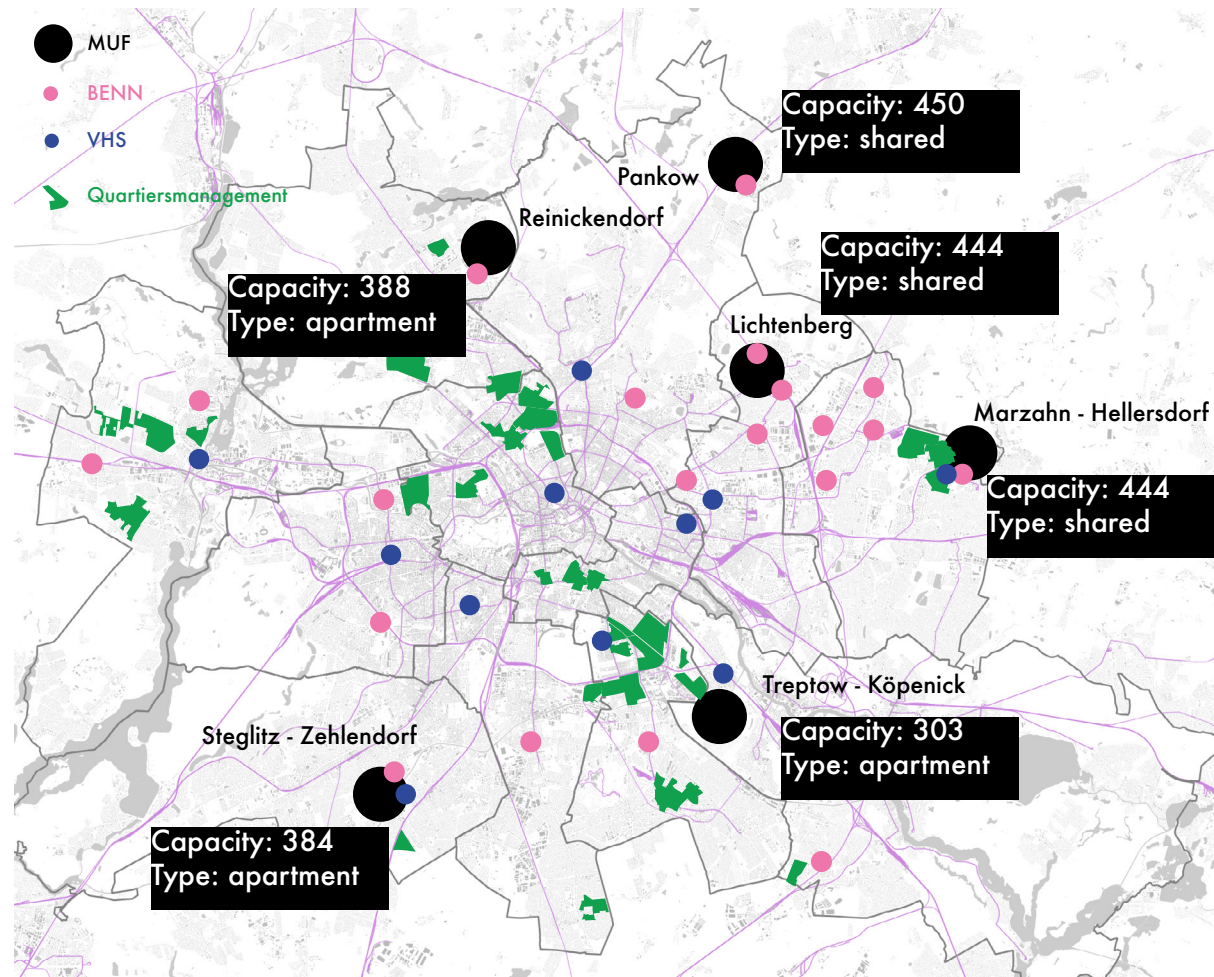


Figure 72: Location, capacity and type of selected MUFs for the fieldwork. Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

Methods and Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach was applied to collect both quantitative and qualitative primary data.

Quantitative method: Resident survey

A structured online survey was developed using LimeSurvey and offered in 12 languages to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness: Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Russian, Ukrainian, German, English, Spanish, French, Swahili, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete and covered a range of topics, including:

Methodology

4.

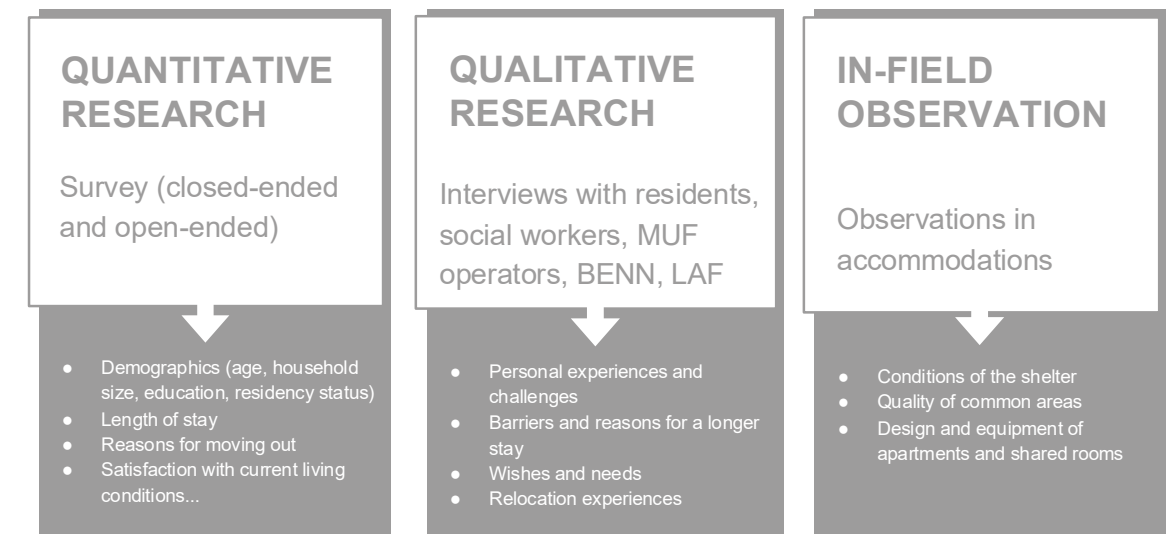


Figure 73: Data collection methodology following a mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

Sociodemographic background: age, country of origin, gender, marital status, number of children, level of education

Housing history: length of stay in Germany, duration in the current MUF, number of previous moves within Berlin, current efforts to find housing, support received in the search

Legal and administrative status: current residence status, contact with social workers or government institutions

Living conditions: housing type (shared vs. apartment), building and room quality, access to privacy, perceived safety

Social and spatial ties: daily destinations, presence of community, attachment to neighborhood

Integration indicators: German language proficiency, attendance in integration courses, contact with BENN, QM, or other local institutions

Two open-ended questions invited respondents to share any additional reasons why they were unable or unwilling to leave their current accommodation, or barriers to finding housing that had not been covered in the survey.

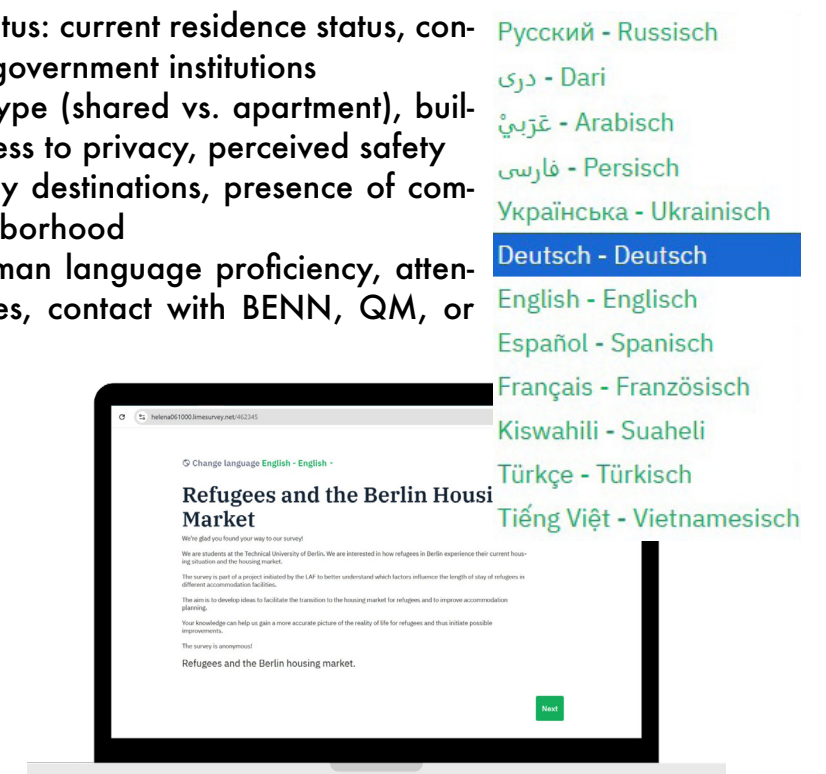


Figure 74: Online survey on LimeSurvey (own elaboration, 2025)

To encourage broader participation, posters with QR codes linking to the survey were displayed in each accommodation for several weeks. Flyers were also distributed during the events and later made available by the site operators.

Qualitative method: Semi-structured interviews

In addition to the survey, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents. These interviews, lasting between 20 and 30 minutes, enabled deeper exploration of emotional, psychological, and practical dimensions of housing decisions. Topics included personal needs, constraints, coping strategies, and aspirations. To encourage participation and build trust, small “Meet & Talk” events were held at each MUF. These informal meetings, arranged in agreement with the site operators, offered drinks and snacks and created a friendly space for conversation. They took place in visible, busy areas such as courtyards or entrance halls, where many residents pass by. Events were usually scheduled in the afternoon or evening, on both weekdays and weekends, so that people with different daily routines could attend. For most sites, participants for interviews were approached at random by starting conversations with people passing by. The only exception was the MUF in Lichtenberg, where the operator team selected interviewees in advance to include people with fewer language barriers and enough time to take part. Before each event, the site operators informed the research team about the main languages spoken at that MUF. This allowed the team to arrange interpreters so that residents could speak in their native languages, making it easier for them to take part and share their views.

Additional Data Sources

Complementing the resident interviews and surveys, a number of external actors were also interviewed. These included:
The press office of the Berlin State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF) (online interview)
Operators of all six MUFs (on-site interviews), Social workers working within the MUFs, BENN offices (on-site and written interviews).
These expert interviews offered further context on institutional practices, housing management, administrative processes, and support services available to residents. On-site observations were also conducted during visits to each MUF. These allowed researchers to assess the physical conditions of shared and semi-private spaces, such as courtyards, bathrooms, kitchens, and in some cases private rooms which enriched understanding of the residents’ everyday environments.
The number and distribution of completed surveys and interviews are presented in the figure on the right side.



Figure 75: Overview of fieldwork participants. (own elaboration, 2025)



Figure 76: Impressions from the Meet & Talk events organised in each MUF. Source: Own elaboration, 2025.



Figure 77: Posters and flyers that were distributed in the MUFs including a QR code to the online survey. (own elaboration, 2025)



5.1 GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS

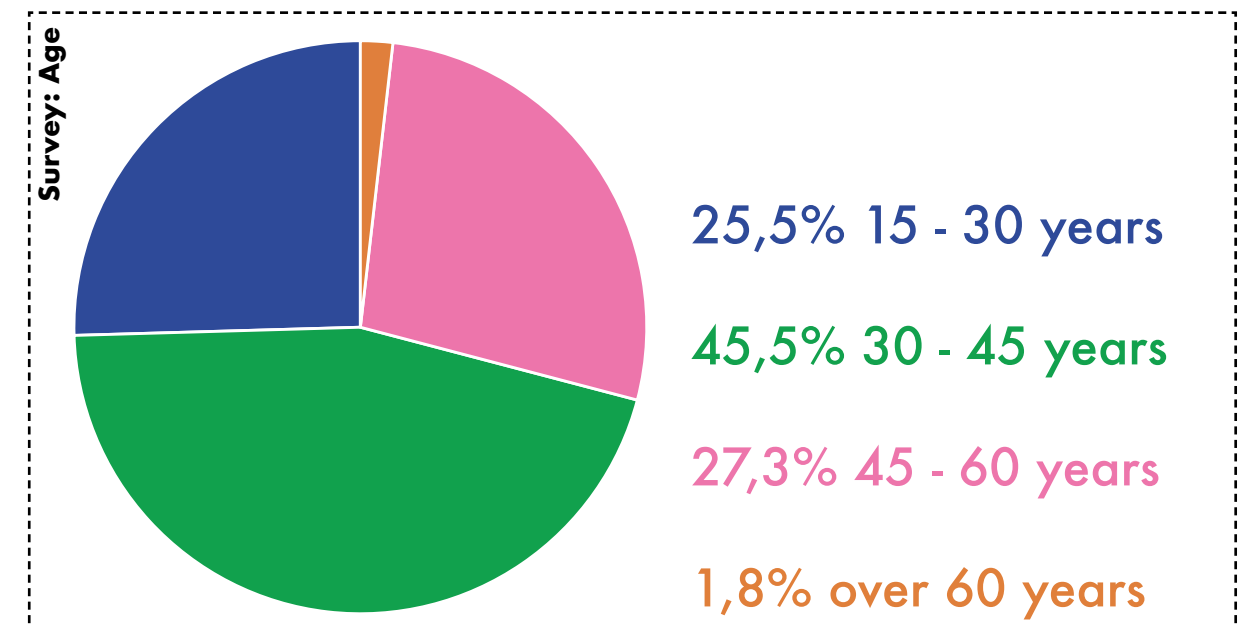
For our study research we conducted 24 qualitative interviews, including 2 with children and 56 quantitative (surveys) interviews with residents of 6 shelters located in Berlin. In addition to these resident interviews, we carried out 4 interviews with representatives from BENN, 5 with social workers, 1 with the LAF, and collected 8 survey responses from shelter operators.

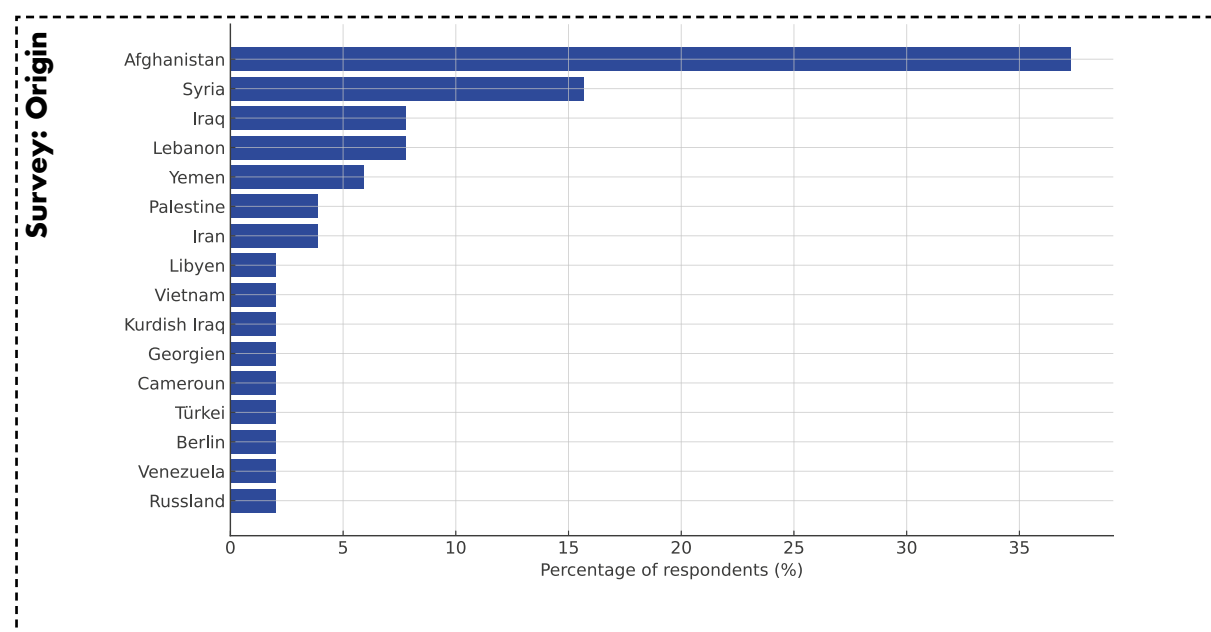
The age distribution of residents surveyed was as follows: 25.5% were between 15 and 30 years old, 45.5% were between 30 and 45 years, 27.3% were between 45 and 60 years, and 1.8% were over 60 years old which indicates that the majority of residents fall within the 30 to 45-year age range, accounting for nearly half of the participants. Together, younger adults (15-30 years) and middle-aged residents (45-60 years) also represent a significant portion of the population, while residents over 60 years are notably underrepresented. This suggests that the shelters primarily serve a working-age demographic.

The gender distribution among surveyed residents was 53.6% female, 44.6% male, and 1.8% identifying as other, while 70% of the residents have children and 30% do not, highlighting the importance of family-oriented support and services within the shelters.

The majority of residents originated from Afghanistan, accounting for over 35% of the population. Residents from Syria comprised 16%, while those from Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen each represented between 5% and 10%. Less than 5% of residents came from a diverse range of countries including Palestine, Iran, Libya, Vietnam, Kurdish Iraq, Georgia, Cameroon, Turkey, Berlin, Venezuela, and Russia.

Regarding long-term stays in shelters, the survey revealed that 60% of residents have lived in the MUF for over two years. Additionally, 19% have stayed between





one and two years, 11% between six and twelve months, and 8% for less than six months.

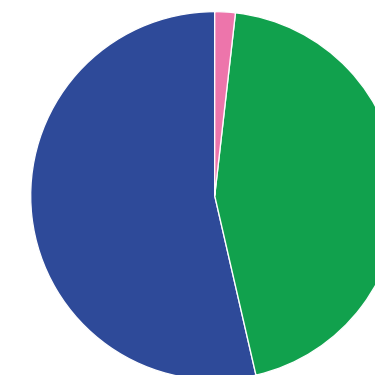
Across the shelters, more than 50% of residents have stayed for over two years, except at the MUF in Marzahn - Hellersdorf, where the majority reported a stay of one to two years. Among residents who have stayed in the MUF for more than two years, 70% have children, while 30% do not. This suggests that families with children face greater challenges in moving out and securing stable housing, while from all interviews : 53,6% of them are female 44,6% male 1,8% other. Regarding the topic of house searching, 80% of residents are actively looking for housing, while 20% are not.

Among residents not actively searching for an apartment, several reasons were given for their decision to stay in the shelter. Many expressed satisfaction with the support provided by social workers and highlighted the importance of emotional safety and stability for their children. Key factors included childcare support, social ties such as schools and daycare, and access to support services.

Some residents are not actively searching but still wish to move out eventually. They mentioned challenges such as needing time to improve language skills and understand the system to secure employment and housing. Others reported practical barriers like lacking the necessary housing permit (WBS) or financial resources, which makes leaving difficult. Several also noted the desire for more space and peace for their children, though they currently feel restricted by shelter rules. 25,5% of the residents were 15 - 30 years 45,5% were 30 - 45 years , 27,3% were 45 - 60 years and 1,8% over 60 years.

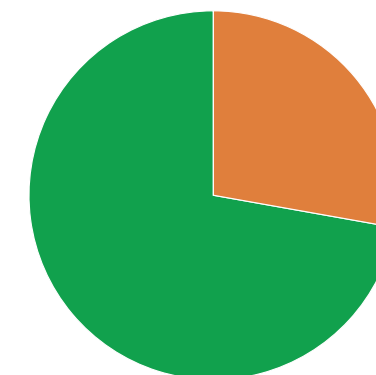
Residents cited a variety of reasons for seeking their own apartment. The most frequently mentioned reason was the need for more space, especially for families, which came up 17 times. Privacy was the second most common reason, mentioned 10 times. Other significant factors included dissatisfaction with shelter rules and a desire for independence or to live their "own life," each mentioned 8 times. Noise

Survey: Gender overall



53,6% female
44,6% male
1,8% other

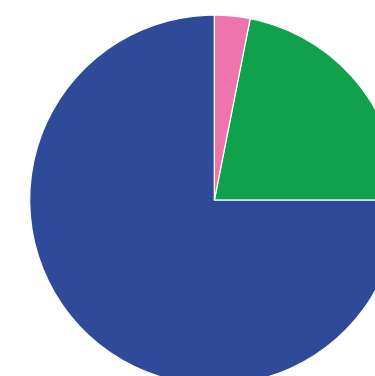
Survey: Children overall



70% with children
30% no children

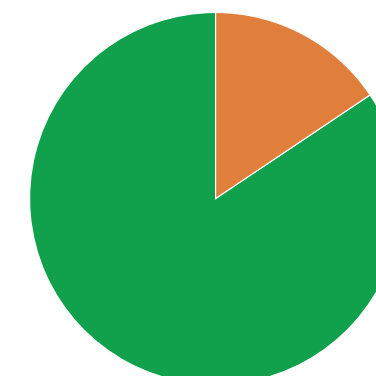
Survey: residents staying longer than 2 years

Survey: Gender staying longer than 2 years



75% female
22% male
3% other

Survey: People staying longer than 2 years

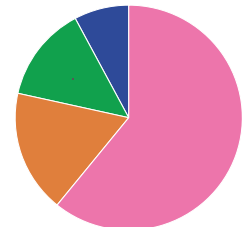


84,5% with children
15,5% no children

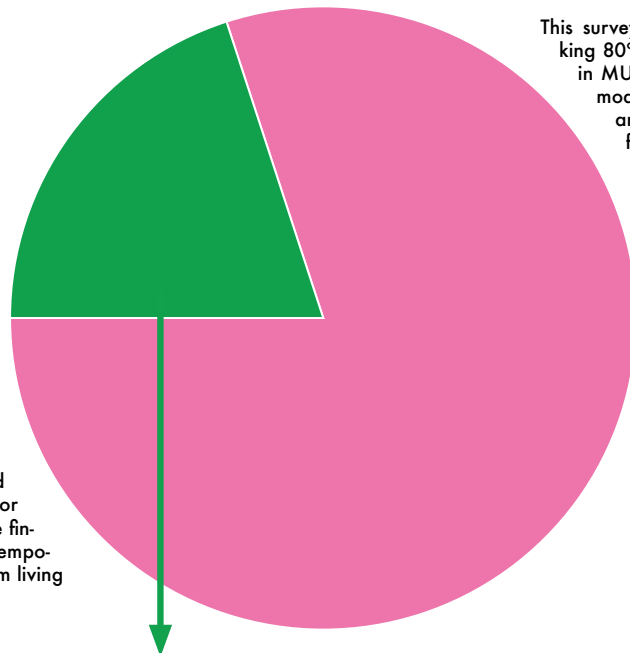
and the need for peace were noted 7 times, followed by better living conditions (6 mentions). Less frequently mentioned reasons included family planning and conflicts (2 times each), and single mentions of better location, work opportunities, and feelings of unfulfillment.

Survey: Are you looking for an apartment ?

60% more than 2 years
19% 1 - 2 years
11% 6 - 12 months
8% less than 6 months



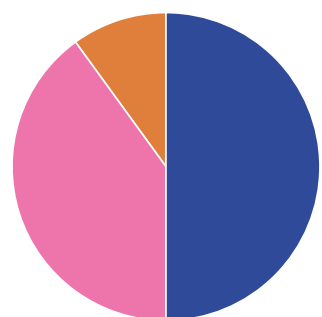
The survey reveals that most MUF residents have been living there for several years. Only a small portion moved in recently, while others have stayed for shorter or medium periods. Overall, the findings suggest that what is meant to be temporary housing often turns into a long-term living arrangement.



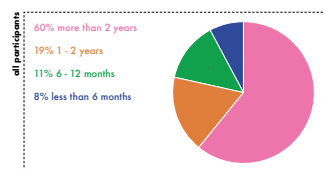
This survey shows that a striking 80% of residents living in MUF (Modular Accommodation for Refugees) are actively searching for new housing, indicating a strong desire to move out of temporary accommodation.

20% OF RESIDENTS ARE NOT ACTIVELY SEARCHING FOR AN APARTMENT

Duration of stay in MUF non searchers



Non-searching residents tend to be newer in MUF, while long-term residents are more likely to be actively looking for housing. This suggests that the desire to move increases with the length of stay.



40% more than 2 years
10% 1 - 2 years
50% less than 6 months in MUF



SURVEY ANSWERS:

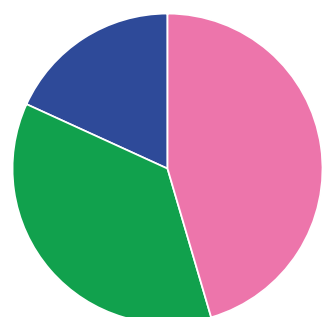
Reasons to stay:

- Happy about social workers
- I need support in childcare
- Emotional safety
- Stability for children
- Social ties (schools, daycare)
- Access to support services

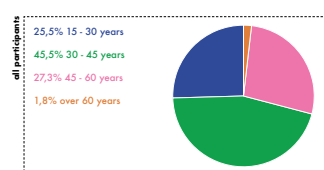
Not actively searching, but desire to (eventually) move out:

- „I struggled for a long time, but thankfully I found an apartment now“
- „We are satisfied for now, but it would be nice to have an apartment because of all the rules here and we need more space and peace for the kids.“
- „I first need a toolkit of language and understanding the system to find a job and a flat.“
- „I can not leave the accommodation because of the WBS.“
- „I can not leave the accommodation because we have no money, no job. But we feel like we don't have freedom because of the rules.“

Age of non searchers

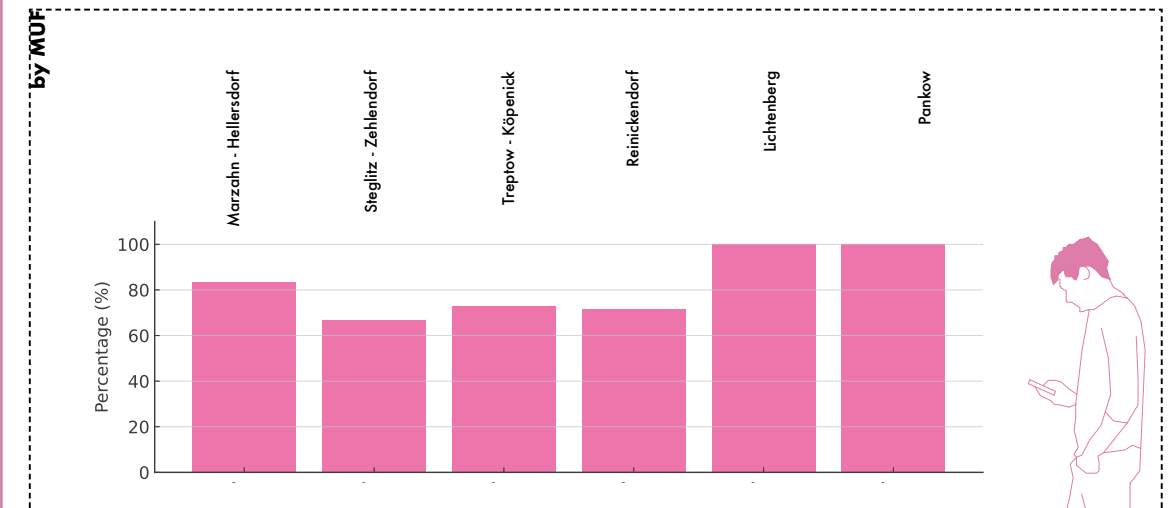


Non-searchers tend to be older, while younger residents are more likely to be actively looking for housing. This points to age as a factor influencing search behavior.

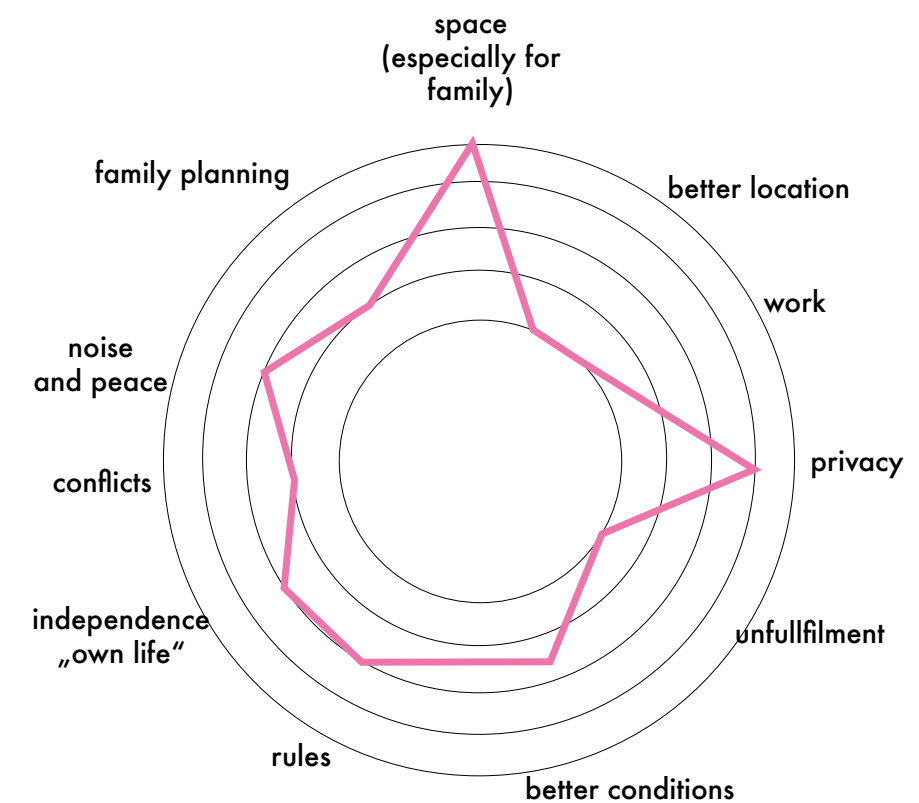
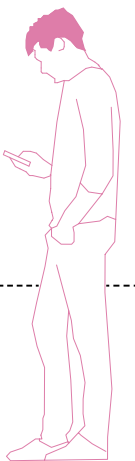


18% 15 - 30 years
36% 30 - 45 years
46% 45 - 60 years

80% OF RESIDENTS ARE ACTIVELY SEARCHING FOR AN APARTMENT



Residents from all MUF express a desire to move. This indicates that the motivation to leave exists regardless of where they currently live, suggesting that the wish for change goes beyond the specific living conditions of MUF.



4.2 QUALITATIVE: INTERVIEWS

CODING PROCESS

To analyze the interviews, we began with a qualitative coding approach based on identifying frequently used words and recurring themes. The first step involved carefully reading through the transcripts to detect keywords that appeared often or carried particular relevance to the participants' experiences. These keywords were then used to define initial coding categories.

We applied a color-coding system to highlight these key terms directly in the transcripts. Sentences and statements containing similar themes were grouped together under the same code. This helped us structure the data more clearly and allowed us to observe emerging patterns. Our main topic, housing search, was strongly reflected in the interviews. Words such as housing, searching, rent, expensive, landlord, and looking for a house appeared frequently and were central to participants' narratives. In some cases, certain keywords overlapped with other thematic areas (e.g. job, language, or security), requiring us to decide on the most contextually appropriate code.

Midway through the process, we decided to use a qualitative analysis software tool, MAXQDA, to support the coding. This helped streamline the organization of the data, improved consistency in code application, and enabled us to better manage and compare results across different interviews.

At the end of the coding process, we found that the terms searching and housing were mentioned very frequently. When we compared these findings with survey results, a clear pattern emerged: many people are continuously searching for housing, but face significant barriers. These include a shortage of large apartments suitable for families, high rental costs, and, in some cases, brokers demanding large sums of money to secure housing. We use these coded results as supporting evidence to back up and validate the findings from the survey data.

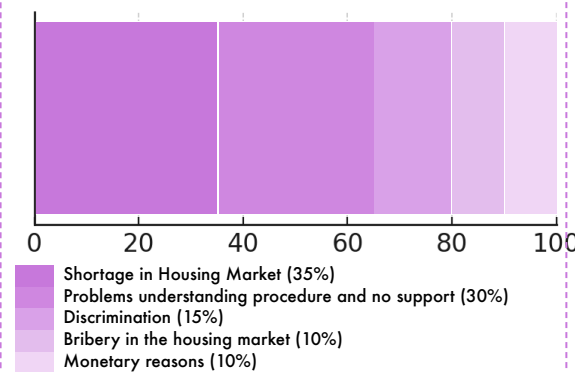


Figure 78: Impressions from the Meet & Talk events organised in each MUF. (own elaboration, 2025)

5.2.1 HOUSING

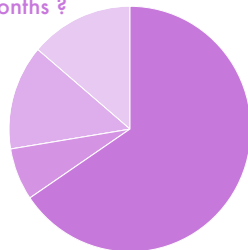
SURVEY

Why is it hard for you to find housing?



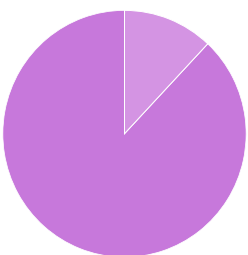
If you are looking for housing how many applications did you send in the last 6 months?

67 % more than 10
7 % 6 to 10
13 % 1 to 5
13 % 0



If you don't get help, would you like some help searching for an apartment?

88 % yes
12 % no



Our fieldwork, based on semi structured interviews with refugee families in Berlin, revealed several interconnected challenges related to accessing stable housing. Through systematic coding and analysis of the interview data, we identified four major thematic areas: structural barriers in the housing application process, the limitations of support systems, the tension between emotional security and the desire for autonomy, and the diverse strategies used to navigate the housing search.

Application Challenges

A central finding is the inadequacy of the available housing stock for large families. Participants with more than three children consistently reported that they were unable to find apartments that met their basic spatial needs. In addition to this mismatch, many interviewees described experiencing discrimination during the application process, often based on their refugee status, perceived ethnicity, or financial situation. Several reported long waiting lists without receiving a positive response to housing applications, despite continuous effort.

Another serious concern raised in multiple interviews was the prevalence of broker fraud and informal bribes. Some families

reported being asked to pay between €5,000–15,000 in illegal fees to brokers or intermediaries, either for access to listings or to secure substandard accommodation. In many cases, the listings turned out to be fraudulent or the housing conditions were extremely poor. These practices significantly increase economic vulnerability and deepen existing cycles of poverty and debt.

In general, the housing market in Berlin is highly competitive and unaffordable, especially for low-income households. Even families holding a Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS), the housing entitlement certificate, face difficulties, as available units often exceed what they can afford. In addition to market pressures, bureaucratic

Analysis



„I've been looking for over two years. I've done over, 50. viewings.“

- single, male, 22, MUF Marzahn-Hellersdorf

and legal barriers further complicate access to housing. Many participants lack regular access to printers, computers, or the internet, which are necessary to submit applications and supporting documents. Institutional support, such as from the Jobcenter or the Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (LAF), was often described as inconsistent, slow, or unclear. Moreover, rigid systems, including the requirement for a SCHUFA credit report, create further exclusion, particularly for recent arrivals who lack such documentation.

Support Structures

While formal support mechanisms exist, their impact is often limited. BENN (Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften) teams can offer referrals and basic information but do not provide active assistance with the housing search. Social workers and accommodation operators are theoretically responsible for supporting residents but are frequently overburdened and unable to offer individualized help.

As a result, many families rely on external or informal sources of support, including NGOs, charities, private actors, and personal networks. However, access to these resources is highly uneven and often depends on language skills, social capital, and knowledge of available services. Some interviewees reported receiving help through workshops, referrals, or assistance with documents, but this was not consistent across cases or locations.

Motivation to Stay vs. Desire to Move Out

A recurring theme in the interviews was the tension between the emotional safety associated with current accommodation and the desire to move into independent housing. Many families expressed a sense of comfort in their existing location, particularly due to established routines, proximity to schools and daycare centers, and a general feeling of stability. These emotional and social ties made the idea of moving out complex and ambivalent.

At the same time, there was a strong and persistent motivation to secure private housing. Families often cited the need for privacy, personal space, and autonomy, which were lacking in shared shelters. Basic living conditions, such as access to one's own kitchen, bathroom, and living room, were described as essential to re-

„Documents have to be entered online. All this work means a lot of work on the phone, paper is better. Many people are illiterate, so the bureaucratic work has to be done for them.“

- Social worker, MUF Marzahn-Hellersdorf



„And sadly, a lot of housing can only be rented under the table. Some people pay under-the-table money, up to €10,000–€12,000, just to get a rental contract. Then they're in debt, and that's another problem.“

- Operator, MUF Lichtenberg

gaining a sense of dignity. Moreover, many participants saw a private lease not only as a practical necessity but also as a symbol of integration, reflecting their aspirations for employment, language acquisition, and long-term social inclusion.

Housing Search Methods

Participants reported using a combination of formal digital platforms and informal social networks in their housing search. Commonly mentioned online platforms included ImmoScout24, Immowelt, Check24, HOWOGE, IBW Wohnungsfinder, DGWO, and GesoBau, as well as a commercial app with a €20 monthly subscription. Many residents also applied for or updated their WBS certificates, which are required for public housing.

Given the limitations of the formal market, informal strategies played a crucial role. Refugees often relied on friends, relatives, colleagues, and even clients to receive housing leads. Social media platforms, especially Facebook, were frequently used to locate available apartments. In some cases, other individuals conducted searches, filled out applications, or contacted landlords on behalf of the applicant. Assistance from aid organizations (e.g., Caritas) and family helpers also emerged as a vital resource in navigating the complex and often exclusionary housing system.

„And then the problem is that there are no large flats or they are too expensive.“

- mother, 34, MUF Treptow-Köpenik

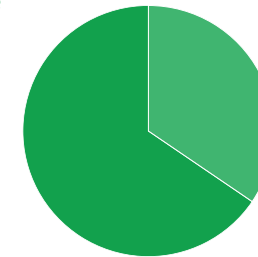
„Yes, definitely. We support them, show them how and where. Yes, the social services do that, but unfortunately it's not possible for the social services to sit down with the residents and simply look for apartments.“

- Operators, MUF Lichtenberg

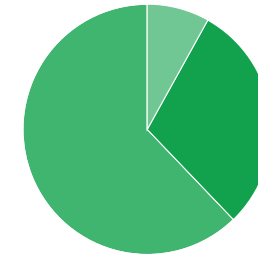
5.2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL

SURVEY

Do you think your legal status affects your chances to find housing?
65% yes, 35% no



How important is help with bureaucratic affairs?
60% important
30% very important
8% not important



A central finding is that legal and administrative obstacles severely complicate the transition of MUF residents into independent housing and long-term integration. One of the most significant of these obstacles is the **Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS)**, a prerequisite for accessing social housing in Berlin. While designed as an instrument of fairness and regulation, in practice the WBS often becomes a barrier in itself. Many residents report that the certificate arrives too late to be of practical use, expires before a suitable apartment can be secured, or is issued only in partial form—for example, for one adult but not the entire household. As one resident in Marzahn-Hellersdorf explained, “I’ve taken three WBS,

they all expired, and I still can’t get a flat. WBS also takes a long time, it’s not easy.” This procedural inefficiency creates immediate mismatches, particularly for families with children, as the housing stock that matches the official WBS allocation (e.g., number of rooms) is scarce and frequently unaffordable. Larger households are disproportionately disadvantaged, since Berlin’s social housing landscape is dominated by smaller flats, leaving these families with limited pathways into independent housing.

The problems are exacerbated for those with insecure legal status, such as individuals living under Duldung (tolerated stay). They are frequently excluded from WBS eligibility altogether, creating a **structural cycle of exclusion**:

„The WBS and the residence status - those are the biggest problems.“

- Management, MUF Lichtenberg

without a secure residence permit, no WBS can be obtained; without a WBS, affordable housing is inaccessible; and without housing stability, employment opportunities and long-term planning are blocked. One social worker from Lichtenberg summarized this dilemma succinctly: “If you only ever get a temporary residence permit, you don’t get a WBS certificate and therefore have little chance of finding an apartment.”

Administrative practices further complicate this landscape. Residents report constantly shifting requirements, unclear communication bet-



„Applications are more likely to be rejected if someone doesn't have a ,German-sounding' name.“

– Social Worker, MUF Treptow - Köpenik

between agencies, and repeated demands to resubmit documents that are often lost in the system. The shift toward digitalized procedures—such as online applications, document uploads, and electronic correspondence—adds another layer of complexity, as many residents **lack the digital literacy**, equipment, or language skills required to manage these processes independently. Simple tasks,

such as scanning documents or navigating online portals, can become insurmountable hurdles, reinforcing dependence on social workers and other support staff. Staff often act as translators, advocates, and case managers, but they do so under severe constraints: **staff-**

to-resident ratios are low, workloads are dominated by crisis management, and cooperation with key institutions such as the Jobcenter is described as slow and fragmented. Consequently, residents may remain in temporary accommodation not because of a lack of motivation, but because the system does not provide the clarity, consistency, or timeliness necessary for transition. Furthermore, after several years of unsuccessfully attempting to obtain housing, many residents lose motivation and hope.

A further issue is the **lack of clarity about legal rights**. Residents frequently do not

know what rights they have regarding housing, employment, or family reunification. Information from authorities is often missing or contradictory, leaving people uncertain about eligibility for support programs. This lack of transparency contributes to confusion and discourages some residents from applying altogether.

Even when formal requirements are met, residents face structural discrimination in the housing market. Numerous reports indicate that landlords reject applications based on foreign-sounding names, reliance on Jobcenter benefits, or non-standard documentation. One MUF staff member in Lichtenberg noted, “Applications are more likely to be rejected if someone doesn't have a German-sounding name.” Discrimination, combined with the acute shortage of affordable housing in Berlin, creates a highly exclusionary market. Application procedures often demand comprehensive documentation such as Schufa reports, rent clearance certificates, and formal employment contracts—materials that many refugees cannot provide, reflecting structural rather than

„I received a WBS, but only for myself, not for my children.“

– mother, 20, MUF Lichtenberg



Analysis

5.

individual disadvantages. The existence of an informal “shadow market,” in which exorbitant sums are demanded to secure rental contracts, further underscores both the desperation of applicants and the exploitative dynamics created by scarcity. Taken together, these findings illustrate how insecure legal status, bureaucratic complexity, lack of transparency, and market discrimination interact to maintain many residents in prolonged dependency on temporary accommodation and limit their opportunities to move toward independent housing.

„There's just so much paperwork, and things constantly get lost. I feel like we're stuck in a deadlock.“

– Social Worker, MUF Lichtenberg



5.2.3 INTEGRATION

Integration, as articulated by MUF residents themselves, is not an abstract concept but a concrete set of aspirations: the ability to communicate in German with confidence, to find stable employment, and to move into an independent home. These three elements—language, work, and housing—emerge as the central markers of belonging, while their absence translates directly into feelings of frustration, stagnation, or even despair.

Language acquisition stands out as the most immediate and universal challenge. Proficiency in German is essential for navigating administrative requirements, accessing education and employment, and building social connections. Residents employ diverse strategies to learn: some rely on formal language courses, others turn to digital resources such as YouTube or language learning Apps and many pick up skills informally through work or social interactions. Yet access to structured courses is uneven and often contingent on residence status. Mothers with young children and older residents are particularly disadvantaged, as childcare options are limited and prior educational experience may be lacking. Even where courses exist, many participants hesitate to speak German actively, reflecting both limited confidence and the absence of low-threshold spaces for everyday practice. As one MUF operator in Steglitz-Zehlendorf observed, “Most of them speak good German, but often the women do not speak any.” The cumulative effect is that insufficient language skills not only impede integration in practical terms but also reinforce isolation, dependency, and low self-esteem.

This isolation is mirrored in the social dynamics of MUFs. Interview data consistently highlight ethnic clustering, inter-group conflicts, and a general lack of integration into the surrounding neighborhoods. Some residents, particularly women and children, describe the MUF environment as unsafe or socially hostile, further discouraging outside contact. One resident in Marzahn-Hellersdorf put it clearly: “I want to have friends and social life... My German language is

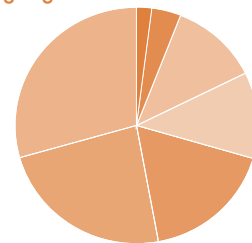
„There are courses for women with children, but not enough. Huge demand exists for language courses with childcare.”

– Social Worker, MUF Reinickendorf

SURVEY

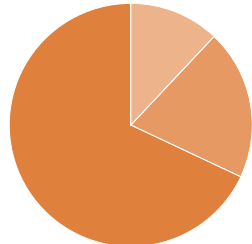
What is your German language skill?

2,0 % C2
3,9 % C1
17,6 % B2
23,5 % B1
29,4 % A2
11,8 % A1
11,8 % no skills at all



What is your current employment status?

68 % unemployed
20 % in training
12 % Full time / part time



Analysis

5.



„Maybe the only thing that makes you feel independent and happy is if you find a home, which is impossible in Berlin.”

– Mother, 34, MUF Steglitz - Zehlendorf

only at five percent, so I still don’t have the capability to have German friends.” Trauma histories, coupled with limited language proficiency, exacerbate these difficulties, restricting opportunities for cross-cultural bonding both inside and beyond the accommodation. The limited permeability between MUFs and the local community effectively reproduces segregation, undermining the policy goal of temporary housing as a bridge to integration.

Residents consistently frame self-sufficiency—through employment and private housing—as the ultimate markers of successful integration. Work is seen not only as a source of income but as the key to dignity, participation, and recognition in German society. “If you don’t work, you won’t feel that you are integrated.” explained one

resident in Steglitz-Zehlendorf. However, when structural barriers prevent access to housing and employment, frustration grows. Some residents express profound disillusionment, to the extent of considering return migration, even when this involves returning to unstable or unsafe conditions in their countries of origin.

The significance of mental health cannot be overstated. Interviews reveal widespread and urgent psychological needs, yet the supply of appropriate services in Berlin is gravely insufficient. Refugees face long waiting times for therapy, a lack of culturally and linguistically competent

providers, and systemic underinvestment in psychiatric infrastructure that already fails to meet the needs of

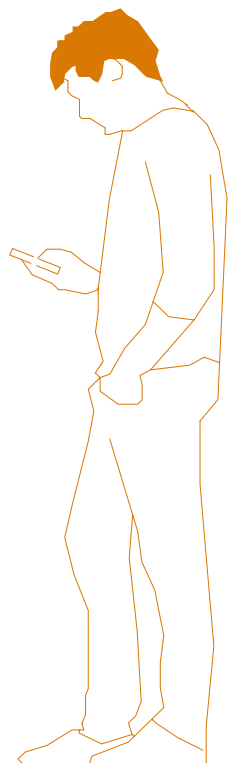
the wider German population. Staff repeatedly emphasize that trauma, depression, and addiction are pervasive but remain under-supported, undermining residents’ ability to engage in language learning, work, or social participation.

Despite these challenges, community-based initiatives provide critical counterbalances. Programs such as BENN (Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften) and local volunteer networks offer low-threshold activities ranging from housing workshops and counseling to sports and family-oriented events. BENN, in particular, has been established in several districts to strengthen exchange between MUF residents and the surrounding neighborhood. Weekly activities include language cafés where residents can practice German in an informal setting, and workshops on navigating housing or administrative systems.

However, participation remains uneven. Staff report that programs are sometimes underutilized because residents lack time, face conflicting priorities, or do not find the offers aligned with

„I need to find a job in order to afford a new accommodation..”

– male 35, married, MUF Lichtenberg

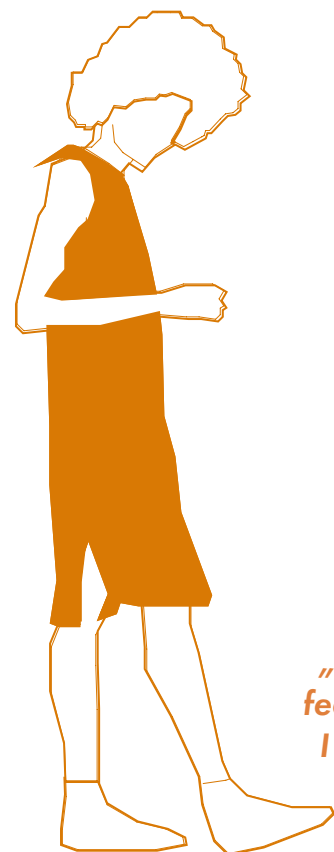
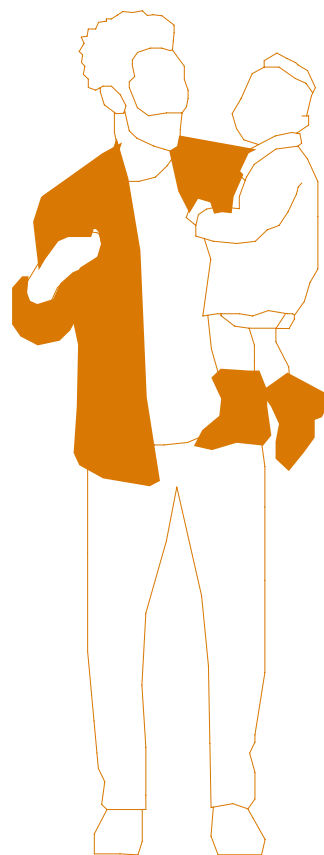


their needs. One operator suggested that greater responsiveness to resident interests could improve engagement: asking residents directly what they want and tailoring activities accordingly. Where programs succeed, they create valuable points of contact, but their potential is not fully realized without sustained investment and participatory design.

Overall, the findings indicate that integration in MUFs is neither linear nor uniform, but rather shaped by a combination of individual motivation and structural opportunities or constraints. Language, employment, and housing remain central goals, while mental health and social participation significantly influence residents' capacity to pursue them. Community-based initiatives offer valuable support, but their impact depends on accessibility and sustained engagement.

„You can't tackle the problems of integration and housing shortages if you're preoccupied with other issues, such as the family situation in Syria and taking care of the family.“

- father, 30, MUF Marzahn - Hellersdorf

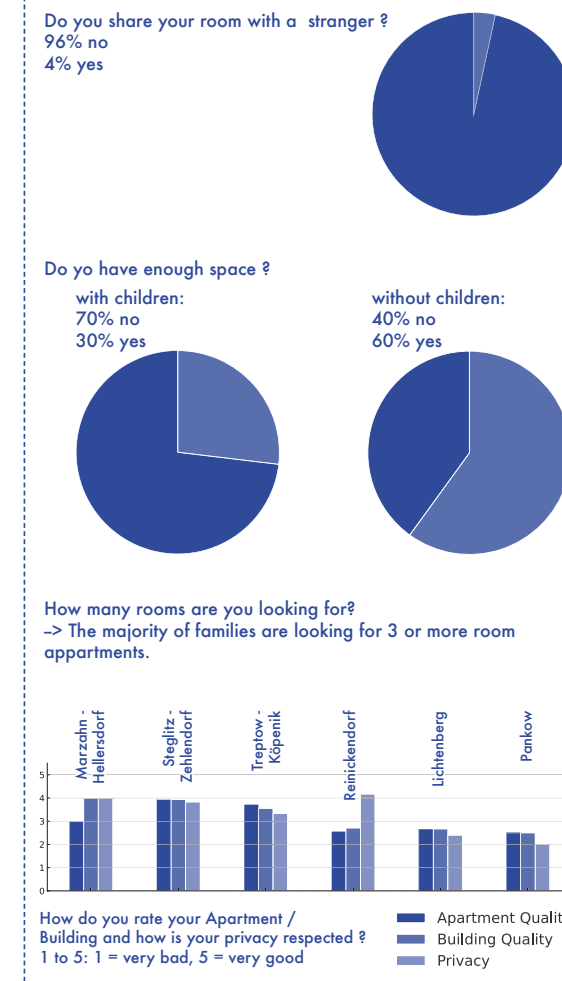


„Integration means that I belong here. I will feel fully integrated when I have a job, when I communicate easily with other people and when I will have my own house.“

- iranian women, 37, MUF Pankow

5.2.4 CONDITION

SURVEY



The quality of housing in Berlin's MUFs (Modular Accommodation for Refugees) varies significantly depending on location, building design, and the specific needs of residents. Our fieldwork—based on semi-structured interviews with refugee families—highlighted several key challenges related to living conditions in these accommodations. Through systematic coding and analysis of the interview data, we identified the following main issues and findings: living with their families, lack of privacy (particularly in large families), poor apartment conditions (hygiene, furniture etc), lack of security and safety, restrictive rules and regulations and inadequate accessibility for people with disabilities. These factors often motivated residents to search for alternative housing. However, for larger families, finding a suitable apartment proved to be far more challenging than for smaller households.

Living with their families

Many inhabitants note that one of the more positive

aspects of living in the MUFs is the ability to share apartments only with their immediate families rather than being placed with strangers. This arrangement fosters a greater sense of comfort, safety, and personal

„It is designed for 1 or 2 people max, like with the special needs, but because they are family of five and the kids happened to be a special needs kid, they cannot move him to a higher floor, which might have like more rooms. But you know how the situation is. That's why they are only on the ground floor. So they have their own kitchen and bathroom. That's the idea of the ground floor, but not enough space because it's planned for 1 or 2 people.“

- father, 39, MUF Marzahn - Hellersdorf



„Hygiene is a very big topic .When it comes to how clean and sanitation of the kitchen as well as the bathroom, but in general yes, we get along but cleanness this is an issue.

Really important to mention that when I talk about hygiene, it's not that the management is not doing the right job. It is about us so the people have wrong patterns and they leave their stuff and this is really important for me to mention because people here as management. They are doing their job.”

- father, 30, MUF Marzahn - Hellersdorf



space, allowing families to maintain their own routines and cultural habits without constant intrusion from unfamiliar people. However for big families this can lead to being accommodated in different apartments or sometimes not having enough privacy.

Lack of privacy

One of the most pressing issues is a shortage of adequate space. While smaller households may manage, families with more than two children often find their apartments too cramped, resulting in overcrowded rooms or, in some cases, the splitting of family members across separate units. Such separations can cause emotional strain, disrupt family life, and deprive children of regular contact with siblings or parents. Privacy becomes extremely limited, and tensions may rise within households that must share a single small bedroom or living area.

Hygiene remains a persistent challenge, particularly in shared facilities. Communal kitchens and bathrooms are often found in an unclean state—not necessarily due to neglect by cleaning staff, but rather a lack of cooperation and shared responsibility among some residents.

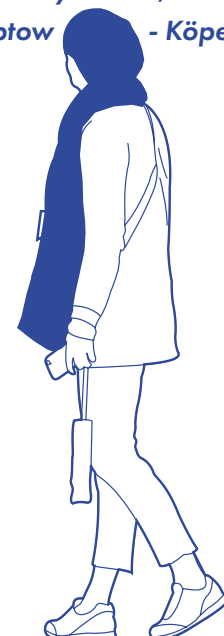
These issues are compounded by broken washing machines, irregular maintenance, and occasional heating failures. In some units, there are not enough beds for all household members. While residents may wish to bring in additional furniture or small appliances to improve their living conditions, strict regulations prohibit this, and any exceptions require prior permission, often delaying or preventing necessary improvements.

Lack of security and safety

Safety and security are further affected by occasional incidents involving individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Such situations, while relatively rare, can lead to arguments, property damage, or feelings of insecurity among residents. Noise is another recurring issue, particularly in warmer months when children play outside for long hours. While such activity is normal and healthy, it can be disruptive for those who

„I need my private life. I need... That's my room.. ”

- 19 year old, female, MUF Treptow - Köpenik



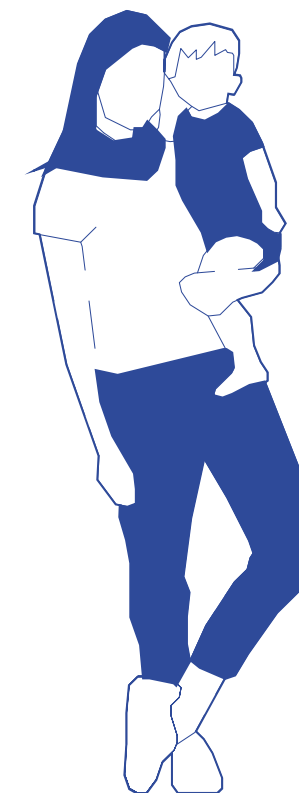
work, study, or need rest.

Restrictive rules and regulations

Beyond the physical environment, many residents express frustration with restrictive rules and regulations that govern their daily lives. In some MUFs, people report being allowed to leave the building only three times per week, under threat of deregistration if they fail to comply. Visitors must depart by 10 p.m., and requests for overnight travel are frequently denied. These measures—intended to maintain order—are often perceived as overly controlling, with some residents likening the experience to living in a trap rather than a temporary home.

Inadequate accessibility for people with disabilities

Accessibility for people with disabilities is another major concern. Ideally, residents with mobility issues should be housed on the ground floor, but the limited number of suitable units means that this is not always possible. In buildings without elevators, stairs can present an almost insurmountable barrier, making everyday activities—from visiting friends to accessing the dining area—painful or even impossible.



„The only thing I dislike are the new rules that you can not leave the building more than 3 times / week otherwise they will deregister you. The visitors have to leave by 10 pm and this makes me feel like I don't have complete freedom. Even if we want to travel, we can't because we ask permission and it gets denied...No I like the place. The place is very clean and calm. The only problem we have are the managers...As I mentioned before, I feel trapped.”

- female, married, 49, MUF Reinickendorf

5.2.4

LOGISTICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL

LOGISTICAL

Daily Routines and Everyday Places

The residents' everyday mobility primarily revolves around essential destinations such as language schools, supermarkets, medical facilities, and government offices. In some cases, workplaces or religious institutions like mosques also feature regularly in their daily itineraries, while children typically attend local schools or kindergartens (Kitas). Although occasional social connections emerge through these everyday interactions, for example, friendships formed in language courses, these places generally do not foster a strong sense of attachment. This is partly because such destinations are often temporary or located in other districts and residents are already accustomed to traveling longer distances by public transportation. Even older residents, who frequently attend language classes at various locations, tend to view commuting as routine, with location posing little constraint.

Attachment to the Neighborhood

Residents' bonds to their neighborhoods are often closely linked to their children's lives. Some adults also develop social ties near the shelter, participating in activities

„Yes, if I could find something here it would be great. My daughter goes to school here. She can walk on her own, it's safe here. But there are no apartments here, very difficult. „

- mother, 40, MUF Lichtenberg

such as local football clubs, attending nearby mosques, or enjoying walks in local parks. While many interviewees expressed an appreciation for their current area and indicated a preference to remain there, this fact was consistently secondary to their dominant desire to move out of the accommodation. Most residents were practical about this and noted that, due to the lack of available housing, they would be willing to move to a different district.

Leisure Time Within and Beyond the Accommodation

Within the accommodation facilities, leisure time is largely shaped by communal life. Children often play together, some families cook collectively, and many residents dedicate time to homework from language courses. However, numerous parents highlighted that leisure activities



Analysis

5.

are constrained by the multitude of bureaucratic and personal responsibilities they must manage. Outside the accommodation, residents sometimes engage in sports or meet friends, frequently seeking out spaces where they can connect with others from similar backgrounds. Nevertheless, the limited availability of free time remains a recurring challenge, both within and outside the shelter.

Children's Lives and Educational Considerations

The daily lives and needs of children emerged as a central theme across the interviews. Educational institutions, schools and Kitas, not only occupy most of the children's time but also represent their primary sites of social interaction. Views on how this influences residential decisions varied considerably: while some families preferred to remain close to maintain school continuity and friendships, others indicated that relocating would not pose a problem. In certain cases, children themselves expressed a desire to change schools. Beyond educational concerns, inadequate space in the accommodations, lack of quiet study environments, or conflicts with other children were cited as reasons for wanting to move. Conversely, ties to local schools or sports clubs occasionally motivated families to seek housing nearby. Overall, however, the aspiration for a private apartment, offering greater freedom, space and improved living conditions for the children, typically outweighed concerns about proximity to current educational institutions.

Employment and Workplace Accessibility

Employment played a comparatively minor role in determining the desire or ability to move out. Many of the interviewees were not employed at the time of the study, often viewing employment as a prerequisite for accessing the private rental market. Among those who did work, jobs were frequently located in other parts of the city and were easily reached via public transportation. For most, workplace location did not constitute a significant logistical factor influencing housing decisions.

„Our friends and schools are here, and we've been here for six years. Our lives here don't take us too far. The kids are thinking about work and pursuing a career, but they want to stay in the area.“

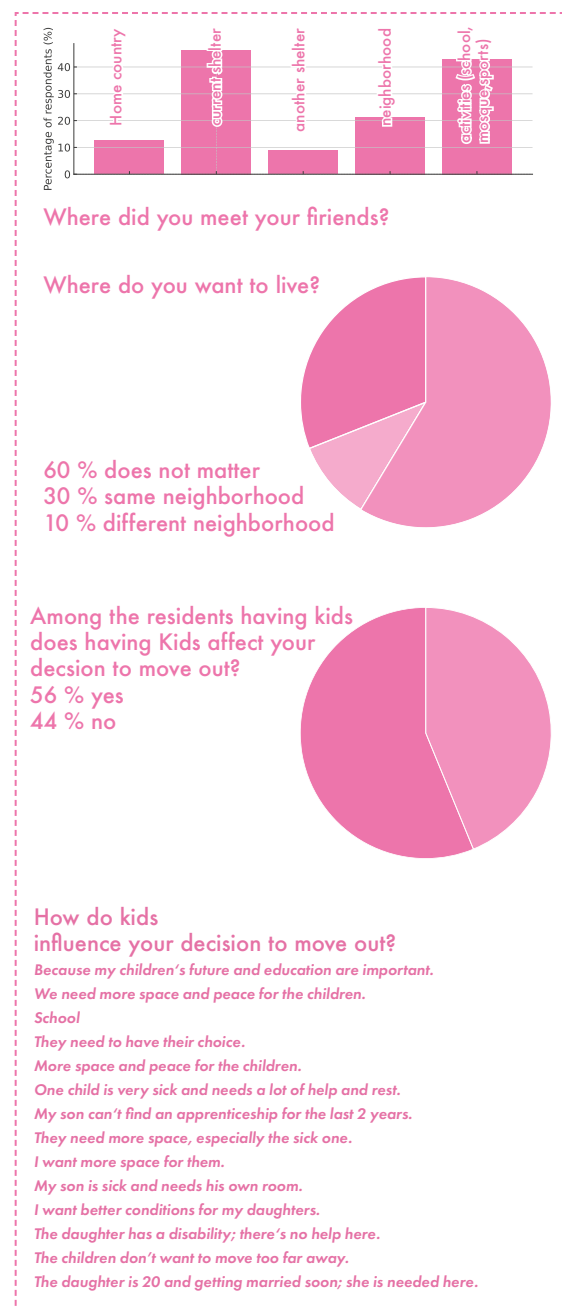
- mother, 34, MUF Steglitz - Zehlendorf

Mobility and Public Transport Usage

Public transportation emerged as a crucial element of residents' everyday lives. Given that refugee shelters are often situated on the urban periphery with less direct connections to the city center, regular use of public transit is commonplace. Most residents demonstrated considerable flexibility and willingness to travel longer distances, indicating that the location of future housing, even if further afield, would be acceptable. In some instances, children attended schools close enough to walk, but overall, high mobility characterized the residents' approach to navigating Berlin.



SURVEY



SOCIAL

Family Structures and Housing Needs

Family emerged as one of the central aspects shaping the residents' social lives and daily experiences. It also significantly influenced decisions around moving out. The suitability of available apartments was often evaluated in terms of family needs, whether concerning adequate space for children, the presence of a family member requiring care, or simply the challenges faced by larger families in securing housing. Many participants highlighted the general scarcity of appropriately sized apartments for bigger households, compounded by high costs. In contrast to the more individualistic living arrangements prevalent in many German urban contexts, the housing market often lacks options that accommodate collective family living. Additionally, it was not uncommon for extended family members to reside together in the same shelter.

Friendships and Social Networks

Close social ties were frequently embedded within the family itself. Beyond this, friendships were typically formed in the shelter, through school, or during organized activities. An interesting dynamic emerged when discussing friends who had already moved into private apartments: visiting these

friends often reinforced residents' own hopes of securing independent housing. Notably, friendships were never cited as a reason for wanting to remain in the shelter; people generally planned to maintain these relationships through visits regardless of where they lived. More significant were the children's friendships formed at school or in local sports clubs, which sometimes contributed to their desire to stay in the same educational or recreational environment.

Activities, Informal Communities, and Supportive Networks

Residents' social lives included a range of activities such as spending time in parks, going for walks, shopping, learning German, meeting friends or cooking together.

Analysis

5.

Some participated in sports clubs or frequented religious institutions. In addition, organizations like BENN offered specific programs, especially for children, including language cafés, excursions or creative activities.

Social connections often developed around shared backgrounds, hobbies, or participation in these organized events. However, while occasional community-like bonds emerged, for instance, through cultural celebrations or women's breakfasts, most residents did not report feeling integrated into a broader community beyond their immediate family. In some cases, networks outside the shelter proved more meaningful and social workers noted that such connections sometimes facilitated access to private housing.

Social Life Inside and Outside the Shelter

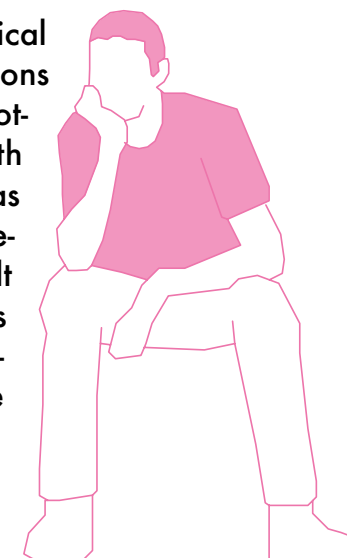
Social life outside the shelter encompassed meeting friends, engaging in sports, attending religious gatherings and participating in events organized by BENN or other local actors. Social interactions also naturally arose in workplaces, schools and language courses. Because many residents were accustomed to traveling long distances, often over 40 minutes, changes in location were generally not viewed as problematic for maintaining these aspects of their social lives.

Inside the shelter, children's social lives largely centered on playing with other children. Adults sometimes cooked together or maintained regular informal contact with fellow residents. Organized activities and festivals also fostered interactions. However, experiences varied widely: some residents found the shelter environment chaotic, noisy, and marked by conflicts among children, which negatively affected their social well-being. Others described supportive relationships and mutual assistance. Still others reported limited social contact, spending much of their time alone in their rooms.

Experiences of Isolation and Social Stigma

Many residents spoke about feelings of social isolation resulting from the shelter's regulations and its physical and social separation from the broader community. Restrictions on visitors, or feelings of shame that discouraged inviting others, compounded these challenges. Living in a shelter with security controls and shared rooms was often described as affecting personal development and social integration. Residents recounted instances where they or their children felt stigmatized, for example, a mother shared that her child was bullied at school for living in the same room as his grandmother. Such experiences of social stigma were among the most pressing concerns associated with life in the shelters, undermining residents' sense of belonging, their self-worth and their opportunities to participate fully in society.

*"It doesn't matter, as long as it's a flat."
- divorced father, over 40, MUF Lichtenberg*



CULTURAL

Cultural Engagement Beyond the Shelter

Residents' cultural needs were often met through activities and places outside the accommodation that connected them to their cultural background and heritage. Many participants mentioned visiting mosques or frequenting markets where they could purchase foods reminiscent of their home countries. Such activities also frequently served as opportunities to meet people of similar origins. While engagement with broader cultural offerings in the city, such as art museums or cultural events, was theoretically of interest, it was rarely pursued in practice, largely due to residents' limited time and capacity.

Cultural Expressions Within the Shelter

Inside the accommodation, cultural needs were primarily fulfilled through shared practices such as cooking traditional dishes together, celebrating cultural or religious festivals, or engaging in activities like reading. Residents generally appreciated these opportunities, describing them as moments of lightness amid otherwise challenging living conditions. However, such cultural expressions were not cited as reasons to remain in the shelter; rather, they were seen as welcome but incidental aspects of daily life that did little to create a sense of attachment to the accommodation itself.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Personal Development and Social Support

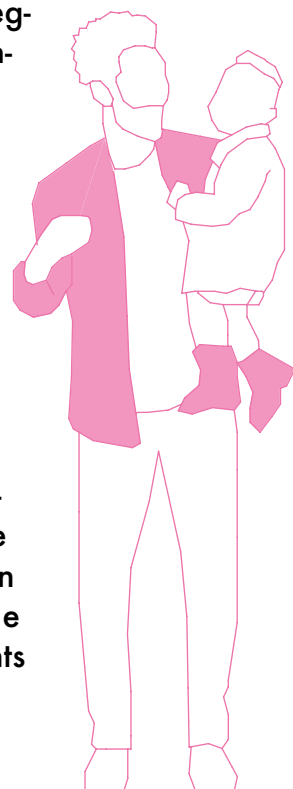
Residents' opportunities for personal development were notably constrained by the living conditions in the shelters (MUF). As previously discussed, experiences of social stigma and isolation made it difficult for individuals to see themselves as valid members of society or to progress meaningfully in processes of integration. This lack of personal and social development also contributed to challenges on the housing market. While there were some support services offered by initiatives such as BENN and other organizations, these were used by only a few and were often criticized for not effectively assisting residents in securing private housing.

Independence and Structural Barriers

Closely linked to the issues of social stigma, isolation, and limited personal development was the residents' strong desire for independence. Gaining autonomy by moving into their own apartment was described as a major motivation for leaving the shelter, affecting adults and children alike, as well as parents

„These problems affect the children a lot. Having a big house. It has become a dream for my children.“

- father, around 40, MUF Reinickendorf



Analysis

5.

who sought greater freedom for their children. Independence was also identified as a crucial factor for successful integration and broader participation in society. Many residents found themselves caught in cycles of dependency: lacking residence permits prevented them from securing employment, which in turn led to financial reliance on state support, ultimately limiting their ability to compete on the housing market. Although this will be elaborated on in further sections, it is important to highlight that achieving greater independence could open pathways to learning the language, building social connections, earning income and thus gaining a foothold in the broader community. However, existing rules and restrictions within the shelter environment significantly curtailed these opportunities for development and autonomy.

Psychological Struggles and Stress Factors

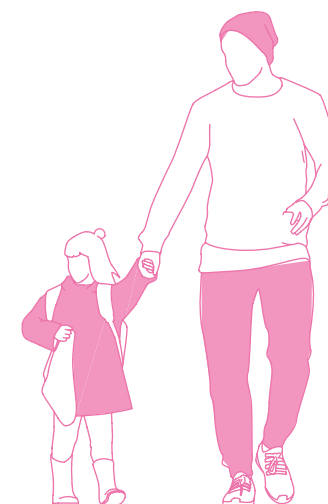
Many residents faced considerable psychological burdens, including trauma and stress. These stemmed both from experiences prior to arriving in Germany and from the circumstances within the shelters themselves. Such psychological challenges directly limited residents' capacities to actively search for housing. In addition, there was growing frustration at the lack of success in finding accommodation and the slow, often vague administrative processes.

Availability and Acceptance of Psychological Support

Social workers highlighted a substantial need for psychological support among residents. However, they pointed out two main issues: first, there was a shortage of available services; second, some residents were reluctant to seek or accept help. Nonetheless, obtaining psychological support was viewed as a key step that could ultimately lead to improvements in many of the deficits discussed above, potentially easing pathways toward integration and better living conditions.

„It's not for me. Like for me, I can sleep on the street, on the ground, like anywhere. I swear to God, it's just for my family. I want to please my family, I want to make them happy.“

- father, 39, MUF Marzahn - Hellersdorf



6.1 MAJOR FINDINGS

Our research has shown that 80 percent of residents of Berlin's Modulare Unterkünfte für Flüchtlinge (MUFs) share the same wish: to move into regular housing where they can have privacy, stability, and normalcy. For many, this hope is tied to becoming part of everyday life in the city, rather than remaining on its margins. Only a small number of residents choose to stay in MUFs by preference, and even then it is usually due to specific circumstances. This includes people who have been at the MUF for less than six months, are waiting for a decision about their asylum procedure, and are waiting to be reunited with their families. Those facing challenging everyday situations, such as parents caring for sick or disabled children and single elderly people without family support, also prefer to remain in the accommodation. While their needs for privacy, stability and a normal life may not be met here, they depend on the close support network at the MUF.

Yet for the majority, this aspiration to move out remains far from reality. The path out of MUFs is shaped by a web of barriers: structural, bureaucratic, and personal. The barriers reinforce one another and make the search for accommodation complicated and situation that only a few people manage to navigate successfully. Around 60% of residents have been living in MUFs for between two and ten years, a striking indication of how persistent these barriers are.

One of the most immediate and well-known obstacles is the housing market itself. Affordable apartments are scarce in Berlin, and the shortage is particularly severe for larger flats that can accommodate families. Almost all residents are dependent on support from the job center to pay their rent, but the limit set by the job center does not match the prices of available housing. Public housing providers like HOWOGE have limited capacity, and in the private rental sector, refugees additionally face discrimination. Even when a suitable apartment appears, that fit the rent budget, the financial hurdles are steep: excessive broker fees and illegal payments, which can reach up to €10,000, make these opportunities unattainable for most MUF residents. In such a competitive market, those with fewer resources, weaker networks, or less familiarity with the system find themselves consistently pushed to the back of the line. Legal and bureaucratic barriers only deepen this exclusion. A crucial requirement for many affordable rentals is the Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS), which can only be obtained with a residence permit. Refugees with temporary status are therefore excluded from applying altogether. Even for those who meet the criteria, obtaining a WBS is slow, the document expires quickly, and it may not cover all family members and therefore making it impossible for households to move together. The application process demands substantial paperwork, familiarity with digital tools, and the ability to navigate complex procedures, which are skills and resources many residents do not have. Residents report feeling of being lost, endless waiting time and always missing a criteria or document. Delays from the Jobcenter and the Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (LAF) in providing necessary documents create additional bottlenecks, leaving families in a state of limbo.

The challenges of language and digital literacy make these bureaucratic processes

Discussion

even harder to overcome. Many residents struggle with German, and language learning is often uneven. Particularly affected are women and older adults due to limited access to courses or differing life situations. Social isolation within MUFs reinforces these language gaps: because contact with the broader community is minimal, residents have fewer opportunities to practice or improve their skills.

Limited language proficiency not only blocks access to the housing system but also significantly reduces chances of finding a job. Without employment, residents have worse prospects for obtaining a permanent residence permit. A situation that seems almost impossible to overcome arises when proof of a permanent residence permit is required in order to sign an employment contract or training contract, which happens from time to time. A permanent residence permit is additionally a key step toward qualifying for a WBS. Without a WBS most affordable housing options remain entirely out of reach, creating a closed loop that locks people into MUF accommodation. mEconomic insecurity underlies many of these challenges. Without stable employment, residents cannot afford market rents, even when partially subsidized. Finding work, however, is closely tied to both language skills and integration. This creates a cycle: without a job, securing housing is nearly impossible; without housing stability, it becomes harder to find and keep a job.

Life inside MUFs also shapes residents' ability to move forward in less visible but equally important ways. During our research, it was found that the living conditions inside the accommodation create strong personal struggles and, therefore, barriers that need to be overcome when looking for housing.

The strict rules and limited access to the accommodation foster a sense of disconnection. Residents of the MUF report feeling of living in isolation. In particular, residents mention not being allowed to freely invite friends to stay with them, prohibited activities within the MUF, not being able to furnish their own rooms, and overall restrictions that prevent them from participating in normal community life. The physical separation from the neighbourhood through living inside a accommodation with fence and access controls creates an additional burden, as residents said they also feel socially stigmatised because they live in a MUF.

While internal social networks sometimes form, often based on shared language or country of origin, these rarely almost never extend to interactions with non-refugee neighbors.

The research has shown that the leisure is often spent on basic errands such as grocery shopping or medical appointments, with few opportunities for recreation or personal development. Activities inside the accomondation like cooking, smoking or chilling dominates. While children benefit from better-organized activities, adults, especially women, rarely find culturally suitable or appealing options.

The previous described isolation and disconnection lead to poor mental health and the monotony of daily life, which again reinforces isolation: without diverse social contacts, meaningful activities and with an overall feeling of stagnation residents are more likely to experience hopelessness and depressive symptoms. Another important factor that we could not examine in this research is the suspected past trauma

that the residents experienced as refugees. Combined with their current burdens, residents talk about feeling stuck and demotivated, and about questioning their self-worth.

In turn, psychological strain makes it harder to engage in job searches, attend language courses, or tackle bureaucratic challenges, further prolonging stays in MUFs and again influencing as a stress factor the mental health.

Support systems are crucial for the residents. Social workers are highly valued for providing stability, guidance, and assistance with bureaucratic tasks. The provided support varies by facility, but most employees say more services are urgently needed. Yet the strong reliance on these professionals means that losing this support after moving out can be intimidating. However, this is not a reason for most residents to stay because of the described challenges of living in the MUF. Employees, which are still in contact with former residents, report that moving out can cause a "shock" for some, due to dependence on in-house support.

Finally, financial structures and misinformation play a role in keeping residents in place. The LAF pays high daily rates per resident to operate MUFs, which places strain on public resources. At the same time, many residents wrongly believe that if they begin working, they will be personally responsible for paying similarly high rents. This misconception discourages some from seeking employment, reinforcing both joblessness and housing dependency.

Taken together, these findings reveal an interconnected system of barriers. Isolation undermines language learning and digital skills, which in turn block access to employment.

Without a job, obtaining a permanent residence permit becomes far less likely ;without that permit, a WBS and therefore affordable housing remains out of reach. Housing shortages and bureaucratic delays intensify the situation, while mental health struggles and limited daily activities reduce residents' capacity to act. Each problem reinforces the others, creating a more than one closed loop that keeps people in MUFs for years, often far longer than they ever imagined when they first arrived.

MUF

Leisure & Daily Life

Residents' time is unfulfilling and often spent on **chores** (shopping, doctor visits). Activities like **cooking or staying inside** dominate. Conflicts are **rare** and mostly internal (e.g., within families, over noise/space). Children form cross-cultural friendships, **unlike adults**.

mutually reinforce

Isolation & Social Disconnection

Residents often feel isolated and say they do not have complete freedom while living in a MUF. Severe rules and access restrictions **prevent participation** in community life outside the accommodation. There is little contact with non-refugees.

mutually reinforce

Mental Health & Psychological Strain

Lack of progress, strict rules, and uncertainty trigger **hopelessness and depressive symptoms**. Past trauma, combined with current stressors, worsens mental health. Residents report **feeling stuck, demotivated, and questioning self-worth**.

Berlin Housing Market

"I want to move out!"

Desire to move out

80% of the residents want to move out – the reasons to leave (privacy, integration, normalcy) far outweigh the reasons to stay. Those who want stay often do so only because of pending asylum or family reunification or elderly people with no children.

operator

Residents

LAF

60% of the inhabitants live between 2 and 10 years in the accommodation.

mutually reinforce

Financial Strain and Misinformation in MUFs

The LAF pays high daily rents per person staying inside the MUFs, creating **financial pressure** that needs addressing. At the same time, many residents mistakenly believe they would have to pay the same high rent if they started working.

Support Systems

Social workers are highly valued and bring stability. Residents often rely on social workers to navigate life and paperwork. Support varies by facility—most say more services are urgently needed. Many fear losing social support when moving out, making it hard to leave. Moving out causes **"shock"** for some, due to dependence on in-house support

non-refugees

immigration office

German A2? B1?

Language, Technology & Information Gaps

Many residents have **limited German** and struggle with **digital tools**. Little knowledge of how the system works; many feel lost in the process. Language Learning is often uneven—particularly among women and older adults—due to limited access or different life situations.

Unemployment

Without a job, many can't afford market rents even with public aid. Lack of income **blocks integration**, flat search, and independence. Employment and language learning are interconnected, but both are hard to access.

Housing Market Constrains

Public housing options (e.g., HOWOGE) are limited; **Severe shortage** of affordable, large apartments, especially for families. Private landlords often **discriminate**. High broker fees and illegal payments (up to €10,000) further restrict access.

Legal & Bureaucratic barriers

Refugees with temporary status can't get a WBS or rental contract. The WBS system is slow and **expires quickly**. Furthermore not all family members receive a WBS, what makes it difficult for families to get an apartment together. Applications require documents, tech skills, and coordination most residents lack. Jobcenter and LAF are slow in proving requisite papers, causing delays and stress.

WBS only with residence permit!

housing authority

jobcenter

inter-depend

finances

BERLIN

finances

access only with WBS

mutually reinforce

mostly no contact

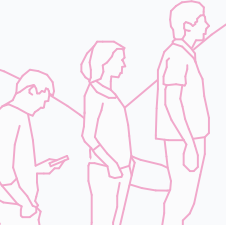
leads to

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6.2 SCENARIOS

The following chapters present different scenarios that show certain challenges refugees face when searching for housing and integrating into the regular housing market. These cases highlight that the difficulties vary greatly – from the individual needs of single persons to structural obstacles faced by entire families.

The examples show that moving out of shared accommodation (MUF) into independent housing is not only an organizational process but also a social and legal challenge. In this transition, social work plays a central role: refugees need a reliable contact person who can provide support even after they have moved out. At the same time, limited access to the labor market or uncertain residence status often create additional barriers to finding suitable housing.

Moreover, bureaucratic hurdles such as applying for a housing entitlement certificate (WBS) are especially significant for larger families who require affordable apartments of sufficient size. Lengthy procedures, short validity periods, and dependency on residence permits make the situation even more difficult.

These cases demonstrate the urgent need for improvements in the cooperation between authorities, social services, and housing providers. Only through targeted changes can it be ensured that refugees not only find temporary accommodation but also gain long-term access to stable housing.

SCENARIO 1: A PERSON IN NEED OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AFTER MOVING OUT



„Because of the help that I’m receiving here. I’m afraid if leave the MUF will be all alone without support”

Issues

One certain issue faced by individuals and families in MUFs is the fear of losing access to social and financial support once they move out. Many residents believe that the assistance they currently receive from authorities is tied directly to living in

the shelter. This perception leads them to hesitate, as they are uncertain whether they will still receive adequate help in the form of money, counseling, or access to welfare offices after transitioning to independent housing. The fear of being left alone without guidance or resources creates a strong dependency on the MUF system.

Closely related to this is the problem of insecurity about the future. Refugees often describe life outside the MUF as “insecure,” largely because they are uncertain about their financial stability. The prospect of paying rent, covering utilities, and navigating bureaucratic procedures without the economic safety net they currently have is overwhelming. This insecurity leaves many with a sense of vulnerability and fear, which discourages them from pursuing the step toward integration into regular housing.

Financial strain itself represents another major obstacle. Many residents struggle with the way rental costs are handled by institutions such as the Jobcenter. If an apartment is considered “too big,” for example, the Jobcenter does not cover the full rent, and the family has to pay the difference from their own pocket. For households with little to no income, this gap is unmanageable. Instead of providing a way forward, this rule reinforces the feeling that moving out would expose them to unpayable expenses and even debt.

Elderly residents face a specific set of difficulties tied to their age and vulnerability. For them, the absence of guaranteed senior housing or long-term social housing options creates additional anxiety. They fear not only financial insecurity but also social isolation, as they may not have the physical or social resources to manage life independently after leaving the MUF. The lack of assurance that they will continue to be supported as they grow older makes the idea of moving out even more daunting.

Families with disabled members are particularly at risk. Inside the MUF, they often receive targeted forms of support that help them manage daily life and access necessary care. Outside of the shelter system, however, such assistance is much harder to secure. Because of this, many families feel trapped: leaving would mean losing crucial services for their disabled relatives, yet staying indefinitely also prevents them from building a stable, independent future. This creates a cycle of dependence where the need for continuous support prevents them from taking the step toward regular housing.

Together, these issues demonstrate why so many MUF residents hesitate to move

on. The combination of fear of losing support, insecurity about the future, financial burdens, age related vulnerabilities, and the special needs of families with disabled members forms a web of barriers that keep people inside temporary housing much longer than intended.

Field of Action

One of the most urgent steps is to ensure continuity of support after residents leave the MUF. This means creating a structured transition period during which families continue to receive financial assistance, counseling, and guidance. Authorities should clearly communicate that moving out does not mean losing access to welfare services. Dedicated caseworkers could accompany families for several months post transition, helping them navigate bureaucratic processes and maintain stability.

To address the widespread insecurity about the future, programs should focus on financial empowerment and integration. This includes offering high quality language courses, job readiness training, and increase employment opportunities. Reducing the amount MUF residents must pay when they start working would allow them to save money for future housing costs. Additionally, simplifying the process of moving from MUF to social housing would remove a major psychological and administrative barrier.

Financial strain can be mitigated by bridging rent gaps. Institutions like the Job-center and LAF can provide temporary subsidies when apartments exceed standard size limits, ensuring families are not penalized for finding suitable housing. This measure would prevent households from falling into debt and make the transition to independent living more realistic.

For elderly residents, it is essential to guarantee long term security. This could involve reserving units in senior housing or social housing specifically for those leaving MUFs, as well as ensuring continued access to social support networks. In cases where relocation is not feasible, authorities should consider allowing elderly individuals to remain in MUFs or move directly to senior friendly facilities, reducing the stress associated with displacement.

Families with disabled members require specialized housing pathways. After leaving the MUF, they should have priority access to units adapted for disability needs and continued access to care services. Coordination between social services, healthcare providers, and housing authorities is critical to prevent these families from losing essential support. Without such measures, they remain trapped in a cycle of dependency.

Together, these actions aim to dismantle the web of barriers that keep residents in temporary housing. By ensuring continuity of support, reducing financial risks, and addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups, the transition from MUF to independent living can become a realistic and empowering step toward integration.

SCENARIO 2: INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES WITHOUT EMPLOYMENT NEEDING JOB AND HOUSING SUPPORT

„I need to find a job in order to afford a new accommodation..“

Issues

Many refugees in Berlin find themselves caught in a persistent and often inescapable cycle, where they lack of stable housing and limited access to employment are deeply intertwined. One of the primary issues they face is the difficulty in securing stable housing because they do not have a job or have irregular incomes and often can not get a job because of their uncertain legal status.

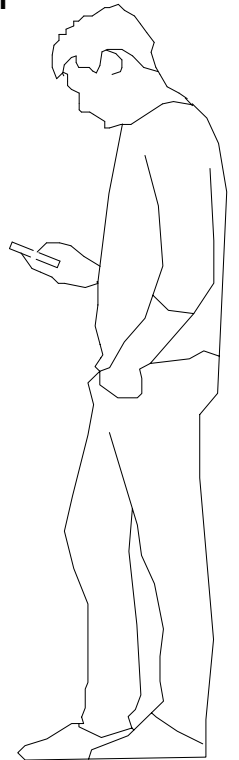
A key obstacle lies in the temporary nature of the residence permits granted to many refugees. Often, individuals receive short-term documentation, sometimes valid for only 3 or 6 months, which, although typically extended on a rolling basis, fail to offer the legal stability or long-term certainty that employers seek. As a result, many employers remain sceptical to hire refugees whose residence status may appear precarious or temporary.

This creates a paradoxical situation: even the highly skilled or motivated refugees find themselves excluded from the job market not because of a lack of ability or willingness, but because of bureaucratic and structural limitations. Without access to employment, individuals lack a steady income, making it nearly impossible to transition from temporary accommodation to stable, long-term housing. Many are forced to remain in emergency shelters, or MUFs for extended periods, due to a lack of alternatives.

The housing crisis in Berlin only intensifies this issue. The city's private rental market is highly competitive, with high demand and rising prices that place it far out of reach for most refugees without regular income. Moreover, many government-supported housing programs require proof of employment or a certain level of financial independence, which refugees are unable to provide under current conditions.

This lack of access to stable employment and housing doesn't just affect material living conditions, it also deeply affects processes of integration. Without a job, individuals struggle to build social networks, improve their language skills, or engage with local communities. Moreover another reason that makes this integration process even more difficult is also the "stigma" of living in a refugee housing. Planning for the future becomes nearly impossible and they end up spending years in the same situation. The inability to access education

„Struggles with application also with the process and documents. For example he couldn't get the rent belief from the MUF operator. Rental debt exemption. You need this paper. There's always just... It's just a stamp, yes. A stamp from this cure that so far no application...“



on, professional development, or long-term residency pathways leads to frustration, isolation, and in some cases, despair.

In essence, the very big issue stands on the legal uncertainty surrounding refugees' right to remain. Until more secure and predictable residence statuses are provided, many refugees in Berlin will remain stuck in a vicious cycle.

Field of Action

To effectively address the challenges refugees face in accessing employment, it is necessary to provide legal clarity and proper documentation. The LAF should issue official confirmation that a refugee's residence permit will be extended if they secure a job offer. This documentation would help reassure employers and increase the likelihood of refugees successfully finding employment. In addition, a formal mechanism should be established between the LAF and local immigration authorities (Ausländerbehörde) to simplify cases where refugees have pending job offers. Such coordination could include pre-approval processes or fast-track procedures for individuals with confirmed employment prospects.

Moreover, the LAF, working alongside job market agencies and non-governmental organizations, should provide clear guidance to employers about the legal framework for hiring refugees with short-term permits. Many employers remain unaware that hiring under these conditions is possible or are uncertain about how to proceed. It is also important to provide dedicated case management and individual support to job-seeking refugees. Caseworkers should assist with permit-related documentation, job applications, and communication with potential employers, focusing especially on highly motivated individuals who face legal obstacles rather than lacking the necessary skills.

By offering legal certainty, improving communication with employers, and providing support to refugees, Berlin can take meaningful steps toward breaking the vicious cycle of unemployment and housing exclusion.

SCENARIO 3: LARGE FAMILIES NEEDING ADEQUATE SOCIAL HOUSING AND WBS

„I received a WBS, but only for myself, not for my children.“



Issues

Refugee families in Berlin face particularly severe difficulties when looking for housing. The general housing market is under extreme pressure, with rising rents and limited availability across all segments. For large families, the situation is even more difficult, as most available or newly built apartments are designed for single persons or couples, while larger units of four or more rooms are scarce.

This structural shortage forces families into overcrowded situations, prolonged stays in temporary housing, or extended periods in refugee accommodation. In addition, refugee households often face language barriers, lack of knowledge about administrative procedures, and, in some cases, discrimination in the private housing market.

The Wohnberechtigungsschein (WBS) is a central instrument for gaining access to social housing in Berlin. To obtain it, households must demonstrate that their total income is below the legal income threshold, submit official documentation for all household members, and confirm residence in Berlin. Required papers include identity cards or passports with residence permits, registration certificates, income or benefit statements, and tax documents. While the eligibility rules are relatively clear on paper, in practice the process often presents major hurdles.

A key issue is the waiting time: on average, families wait about eight weeks for their WBS, while in some districts such as Steglitz-Zehlendorf or Marzahn-Hellersdorf, processing can take twelve to thirteen weeks. This delay is highly problematic, because families who find a suitable apartment cannot move in without the certificate and often lose the opportunity. Furthermore, many applications are delayed because documents are missing, incomplete, or misunderstood, which is especially common among refugee families struggling with complex German forms and terminology.

Another common problem is the way income is calculated. Different types of income are treated differently: some benefits are fully counted, others partially, and some not at all. This makes it very difficult for households to know in advance whether they are eligible. Refugees receiving Bürgergeld or Sozialhilfe are in principle entitled to a WBS, since their income is below the threshold, but many are not aware of this or struggle to prove their status with the required documents.

Finally, even with a WBS, the chances of finding an apartment remain slim. In Berlin, more than 1.2 million households are eligible for social housing, but only 3,000 to 4,000 units become available each year. This mismatch between entitlement and actual availability means that a WBS often functions more as a formal certificate than as a real guarantee of housing.

Field of Action

WBS:

To address these issues, several improvements are needed. First, the processing time for WBS applications must be shortened. Families should be able to receive a certificate within four weeks at the latest. One possible solution would be to introduce preliminary WBS certificates, allowing families to begin searching for apartments while their full application is still under review.

Second, the WBS should always apply to the entire household, not only to individual members. This would ensure that families can use the certificate collectively to secure larger apartments, avoiding the current problem where only one adult receives a WBS and the rest of the household is not formally included.

Third, the application process should be simplified and made more transparent. Clearer rules for income calculation, multilingual guidance, and digital application systems could help reduce misunderstandings and incomplete submissions. Standard-

ized checklists of required documents, translated into the most common languages among refugee households, would also make a significant difference.

Finally, the structural shortage of suitable housing must be addressed. This requires a stronger political commitment to building and maintaining larger social housing units. New housing programs should not only focus on small apartments, but also on layouts that accommodate families with three or more children.

For the LAF:

The State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF) also has a crucial role to play in supporting refugee families. The office should ensure greater transparency and clarity in communication by offering multilingual information and regular updates on the status of housing-related applications. Digital tools, such as online portals where families can check the progress of their applications, would reduce uncertainty and frustration.

Furthermore, the LAF should strengthen its cooperation with municipal housing companies (such as Degewo, and Howoge), with housing cooperatives, and with private landlords. This networked approach could help refugee families with a WBS to be directly matched to available apartments. Dedicated caseworkers could support families through the process, helping them to prepare documents, communicate with landlords, and avoid losing opportunities due to bureaucratic delays.

In addition, the LAF could provide housing counseling services in multiple languages, explaining to families how the WBS works, how to search for apartments, and what rights they have in relation to the Jobcenter and rental contracts. By ensuring stronger personal support and building trust with families, the LAF could significantly improve the effectiveness of housing placement.

SCENARIO 4: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND HOUSING ACCESS: THE ROLE OF THE LAF FOR REFUGEES IN BERLIN

Issue

Securing adequate housing remains one of the central challenges for refugees in Berlin. While collective accommodation provides an important safety net, ensuring that no refugee is left without shelter, prolonged stays in such facilities can slow down social integration and limit opportunities for independent living. The transition into the regular housing market is often protracted and difficult, shaped by both structural barriers and institutional shortcomings. The State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF) plays a crucial role in this process, yet its current approaches to communication, data management, and cooperation with external stakeholders constrain the effectiveness of its support.

One persistent problem is the lack of clear and accessible information. Refugees frequently report uncertainty regarding the steps required to access housing, bureaucratic procedures, and the support available to them.



Miscommunication and misinformation can delay their transition to independent housing. At the same time, the LAF holds incomplete and fragmented data on refugees' housing needs, making it difficult to systematically match individuals with available housing opportunities or coordinate effectively with housing providers.

Fields of Action

Institutional measures:

Improving internal communication between accommodation operators and the LAF is essential to ensure that refugee data is consistently updated and that individual housing needs, preferences, and eligibility are accurately documented. Increasing data transparency would enable more informed decision-making and strategic planning, allowing the office to anticipate housing demands and identify suitable solutions more efficiently.

Equally important is strengthening the LAF's institutional linkages with external housing providers. At present, cooperation with private housing companies, state-owned housing associations, housing cooperatives, and the BIM seem to be limited in scope and intensity. Establishing systematic, long-term partnerships would allow the LAF to act as a central coordinator between refugees and the housing market. By integrating the LAF more closely into the network of private and public housing actors, the office could facilitate faster identification of available apartments, negotiate priority access to certain units, and support refugees in navigating application and rental processes. This connected approach would expand housing opportunities and shorten refugees' stays in collective accommodations, enabling a smoother transition to independent living.

Support for refugees:

While institutional improvements create the framework for effective housing support, refugees themselves require clear, timely, and accessible guidance to navigate the housing process successfully. Although they are not forced to leave collective accommodations, timely support can accelerate their transition into independent living. Multilingual informational materials, counseling services, and structured orientation programs are essential to help refugees understand the rental system, tenancy agreements, and interactions with housing authorities.

Beyond general guidance, the LAF can play an active role by linking refugees directly with potential housing opportunities through its strengthened partnerships with private and public housing providers. Maintaining a regularly updated database of available units and matching individuals to apartments that meet their needs can significantly improve outcomes. Counseling sessions and practical support during the application and rental process ensure that refugees can navigate bureaucratic requirements efficiently.

By combining clear information with facilitated access to the housing market, refugees gain greater confidence and autonomy while reducing the time spent in collective accommodations. This approach positions the LAF as both an information provider and an active connector, bridging the gap between refugees and housing providers and supporting a faster, smoother integration into independent housing.



Figure 79: Courtyard of a MUF. (own elaboration, 2025)

Strong Desire, Little Mobility

Throughout our research, it became overwhelmingly clear that many refugees currently living in Modular Accommodations for Refugees (MUF) in Berlin have a strong desire to move out. Their motivations are rooted in a need for privacy, long-term stability, and genuine social integration. However, this aspiration is met with deeply entrenched obstacles. Legal complexities, rigid bureaucratic systems, and financial constraints leave many residents feeling immobilized, caught in a system that recognizes their needs but fails to provide viable pathways out of temporary housing.

Housing Crisis as a Barrier to Integration

The broader housing crisis in Berlin severely limits the availability of affordable family-sized units. Discrimination in the private rental market further complicates the search for independent housing, especially for large families or those without steady income. Meanwhile, institutional processes, such as delays in issuing WBS certificates (Wohnberechtigungsschein), slow responses from the Jobcenter, or unclear support from the LAF (State Office for Refugee Affairs), create a systemic deadlock that prevents meaningful progress toward integration. The result is that many refugees remain in MUFs far longer than originally intended.

Hidden Costs: Mental Health and Misinformation

Prolonged stays in MUFs are not only a logistical problem but a psychological one. Residents report feelings of isolation, hopelessness, and stagnation. These mental health struggles are exacerbated by misinformation about rent, employment, and social benefits. Many residents mistakenly believe that getting a job might endanger their financial support or legal status, which in turn discourages steps toward inde-

Conclusion

pendence. This misunderstanding leads to passivity and reinforces cycles of dependency.

Call for Coordinated, Cost-Saving Solutions

To break this cycle, a more coordinated housing strategy is needed, one that bridges the financial gap between the cost of MUF accommodation and private market rent. A so-called “cost-bridge mechanism” could not only enable a smoother transition into regular housing for refugees but also reduce public expenditure in the long run. This approach requires cooperation across institutions (e.g., LAF, Jobcenter, housing authorities) and policy innovation to prioritize long-term integration over temporary shelter.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Language Barriers and Cultural Framing

Due to limited translation resources, particularly for languages such as Vietnamese, not all residents could be equally represented in interviews or surveys. Furthermore, cultural differences may have shaped how openly participants responded, especially regarding sensitive issues such as trauma, family dynamics, or dissatisfaction. Some participants may have misunderstood the intent of questions due to cultural framing or unfamiliarity with research norms.

Power Dynamics and Social Desirability Bias

Given that most of the interviewers were students who did not share the same social background as the interviewees (need to be mentioned some students have migration background), trust may have been limited. Refugees may have answered in ways they believed were expected or “safe”, especially if they thought it could impact their asylum case or housing situation. This social desirability bias may have restricted the depth and honesty of some responses.

Lack of Longitudinal and Comparative Data

This study offers a snapshot in time, not a long-term view. Without follow-up interviews or repeated data collection, we cannot track how residents’ situations or attitudes evolve. Furthermore, we lacked a systematic comparison group (such as residents from GU1 or GU3 shelters), making it difficult to determine whether the issues reported are specific to this type of MUF or reflect broader patterns.

Language Interpretation Risks

Most interviews required translation, which introduces another layer of complexity. The interpreters’ choices in translating certain phrases, emotions, or cultural references may have altered the original meaning or tone of responses.

Self-Selection Bias

Participation was voluntary, meaning the findings reflect only the views of those

willing to take part. Individuals facing extreme psychological stress, language limitations, or distrust in institutions may be underrepresented.

Technological and Educational Exclusion

Not all residents had access to smartphones, technical literacy, or reading/writing skills. As a result, the survey component was not fully accessible to everyone, particularly elderly individuals or those with lower education levels.

Time Constraints and Incomplete Data

The project operated under a limited timeframe, which affected the number and depth of interviews that could be conducted. Additionally, not all respondents answered every question fully, making comprehensive analysis more challenging.

External Context and Internal Bias

Geopolitical developments, such as wars in Ukraine, Iran, or the Israel/Palestine conflict, as well as changes in German migration policies, may have influenced how secure or insecure residents felt during the interview period. Within the project team, there may have been an unconscious bias toward interpreting data in a way that does not overly criticize the shelter system.

Perspective: Where to Go From Here

Policy Impact and Long-Term Outlook

Future research should closely examine how policy shifts, such as changes to family reunification laws or asylum procedures, affect refugees’ ability to leave temporary housing. These changes often alter not only people’s rights but their levels of stress, trust, and motivation to integrate.

Digital Exclusion and Access to Services

More attention must be given to the digital divide. Without access to devices, internet, and digital literacy, many refugees are unable to navigate housing applications, legal paperwork, or social services. Addressing digital exclusion is key to equitable participation.

The Value of Longitudinal Research

Repeating interviews with the same participants over time would allow for deeper understanding of how their situation, coping strategies, and outlook change. This kind of data could better inform policy and support services in the long run.

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APPENDIX: survey

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
2	Response ID	Date submitted	Last page	Start language	Seed	At which of the following addresses do you live?	Wie alt bist du?	Where do you come from?	What is your gender?	Are you married?	Do you have children living with you?	How many children?	What is your highest level of education?	How long have you been in Germany?	How long have you been living in your current accommodation?	Since you've been in Berlin, how many times have you had to move?	What accommodation did you live in before?
3	14	1980-01-01	8	ru	1711201067		between 45-60 years	Russland	female	Yes	Yes	3	secondary school certificate	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	Wohnheim
4	15	1980-01-01	8	fa	1865515780		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	2	Bachelor	1-2 years	6-12 months	2	Heim
5	20	1980-01-01	8	ar	1465943330		between 15-30 years	Syrien	masculine	Yes	Yes	1		6-12 months	6-12 months	1	Tegel
6	27	1980-01-01	8	fa	1284846949		between 15-30 years	Afghanistan	masculine	No	No		high school diploma	more than 2 years	1-2 years	2	Wohnheim
7	28	1980-01-01	8	fa	546870490		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	3	Bachelor	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	0	Bis jetzt in Hotel
8	32	1980-01-01	8	fa	1563213228		between 30-45 years	Iran	masculine	Yes	Yes	3	high school diploma	more than 2 years	1-2 years	2	Tempelhof
9	36	1980-01-01	8	es	1552720047		between 30-45 years	Venezuela	female	No	Yes	2	master	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	3	Grüngerhalle
10	37	1980-01-01	8	fa	110681030		between 30-45 years	Lebanon	female	Yes	Yes	4			more than 2 years	4	Halmerstrasse
11	38	1980-01-01	8	fa	843617554		between 30-45 years	Berlin	female	N/A	No		high school diploma		more than 2 years	0	"I used to live in my home country
12	40	1980-01-01	8	fa	1356186623		between 45-60 years	Alfanstan	female	Yes	Yes		Primary school leaving certificate	more than 2 years	more than 2 years		
13	41	1980-01-01	8	fa	1886150237		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	masculine	Yes	Yes	2	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	Hotel
14	52	1980-01-01	8	en	527268170		between 45-60 years	Türkei	female	Yes	Yes	5	high school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	Hospital
15	53	1980-01-01	8	fa	1142591897		between 45-60 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	2	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years		Vergessen
16	54	1980-01-01	8	ar	1002719372		between 15-30 years	Syria	masculine	No	No		secondary school certificate	1-2 years	less than 6 months		Spandau
17	55	1980-01-01	8	de	366652486		between 30-45 years	Irak	masculine	No	No		secondary school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	2	Heim
18	58	1980-01-01	8	ar	1321842709		over 60 years	Syria	female	Yes	Yes		Bachelor	more than 2 years	more than 2 years		Tempelhof سوات ٦ بعدين هنا
19	59	1980-01-01	8	de	1840834815		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	3	high school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	3	Tempohomes
20	61	1980-01-01	8	fr	1943619742		between 15-30 years	Cameroun	female	No	Yes	3	no educational qualification	6-12 months	6-12 months	3	Nur hier
21	63	1980-01-01	8	de	799449659		between 15-30 years	Syrien	female	No	No		secondary school certificate	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	4	Tempelhof
22	64	1980-01-01	8	fa	189959106		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	6	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	5	Container or prefab unit
23	65	1980-01-01	8	en	488244850		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	masculine	Yes	Yes	4	master	1-2 years	1-2 years	0	Same place
24	67	1980-01-01	8	fa	1922902645		between 45-60 years	Yemen	masculine	Yes	Yes	5	Primary school leaving certificate	more than 2 years	less than 6 months	3	Am Oberhafen 7, 13597 Berlin
25	68	1980-01-01	8	fa	1074697753		between 30-45 years	Lebanon	female	No	Yes	2	high school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	4	Tempo home
26	70	1980-01-01	8	de	2013240638		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	masculine	Yes	Yes	4	Bachelor	less than 6 months	less than 6 months	1	Erstankunft
27	71	1980-01-01	8	de	495653667		between 45-60 years	Georgien	masculine	Yes	Yes	3		more than 2 years	more than 2 years	0	
28	73	1980-01-01	8	ar	1509791130		between 45-60 years	Iraq	masculine	Yes	Yes	3	secondary school certificate	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	3	KOLOMBIADAMM TEMPELHOF
29	74	1980-01-01	8	en	306983689		between 30-45 years	Kurdish Iraq	masculine	Yes	Yes	3		more than 2 years	more than 2 years	3	Temporary accomodations
30	75	1980-01-01	8	de	1429095574		between 30-45 years	Syria	masculine	Yes	No			1-2 years	less than 6 months	4	Place at Julio 35, Tegel Airport, Hotel at Alexanderplatz
31	76	1980-01-01	8	de	1854067566		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	4		more than 2 years	more than 2 years		
32	78	1980-01-01	8	de	1521513214		between 15-30 years	Syrien	masculine	Yes	Yes	1		1-2 years	1-2 years	1	Marzahn
33	79	1980-01-01	8	de	158834599		between 30-45 years	Syrien	masculine	Yes	No			1-2 years	1-2 years	1	Tempelhof
34	80	1980-01-01	8	de	209938776		between 15-30 years	Syria	masculine	No	No			more than 2 years	6-12 months	1	Hannover
35	81	1980-01-01	8	de	1374972258		between 45-60 years	x Iraq	no answer	Yes	Yes	4	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	4	accomodation in Spandau
36	82	1980-01-01	8	de	1563512301		between 30-45 years	X	female	Yes	Yes	6	Primary school leaving certificate	more than 2 years	1-2 years	2	Tempelhof and Lichtenberg
37	83	1980-01-01	8	de	2098199895		between 15-30 years	Afghanistan	masculine	No	No		Primary school leaving certificate	more than 2 years		3	Acommodation in Spandau
38	84	1980-01-01	8	de	1682437057		between 15-30 years	Vietnam	female	No	Yes	2	secondary school certificate	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	4	forgot
39	85	1980-01-01	8	de	604363030		between 45-60 years	x	female	Yes	Yes	2	master	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	0	Brandenburg
40	86	1980-01-01	8	de	74337594		between 30-45 years	X	female	N/A	Yes	1	master	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	0	I came directly here
41	87	1980-01-01	8	de	1756212340		between 15-30 years	Libyen	masculine	No	No		high school diploma	more than 2 years	1-2 years	3	Gutzkowstraße / Turmstraße
42	89	1980-01-01	8	en	1712902559		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	3	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	Wohnheim in Wittenau
43	90	1980-01-01	8	en	1940895968		between 45-60 years	Irak	female	Yes	Yes	4	Primary school leaving certificate	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	MUF
44	91	1980-01-01	8	en	2080058924		between 30-45 years	Palestinian	masculine	Yes	No		Bachelor	more than 2 years	1-2 years	2	First month: temporary reception center (initial Heim) Then: stayed at aunt's house Then: shared accommodation in Regna (near Köpenick) - better conditions but far from center (-2 hrs for appointments)
45	92	1980-01-01	8	en	1666653129		between 30-45 years	Lebanon	female	Yes	No		master	more than 2 years		2	In another MUF
46	93	1980-01-01	8	en	878148136		between 45-60 years	Afghan	female	Yes	Yes	4		more than 2 years	1-2 years	4	not specified
47	94	1980-01-01	8	en	291210628		between 45-60 years	Yemen	masculine	Yes	Yes	2		more than 2 years	less than 6 months	2	
48	95	1980-01-01	8	en	1448804112		between 15-30 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	4	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	1 year in accommodation without kitchen, catering only
49	96	1980-01-01	8	de	1735396837		between 30-45 years	Iran	female	Yes	Yes	4		more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	
50	97	1980-01-01	8	de	370514045		between 15-30 years	Palästina	female	No	No		secondary school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	0	
51	98	1980-01-01	8	de	33238801		between 15-30 years	Afghanistan	masculine	No	No						
52	99	1980-01-01	8	de	1104858505		between 45-60 years	Afghanistan	masculine	No	No		high school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	2	Anderes Heim
53	60		7	de	1023300691		between 30-45 years		female	N/A	N/A			more than 2 years			
54	62		3	ar	729763991		between 30-45 years	Lebanon	female	No	Yes		high school diploma	more than 2 years	more than 2 years		
55	66		4	fa	814645302		between 45-60 years	Yemen	masculine	Yes	Yes	5	Primary school leaving certificate	more than 2 years	less than 6 months	3	Am Oberhafen 7, 13597 Berlin
56	69		7	de	1150414243		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	masculine	Yes	Yes	4	high school diploma		less than 6 months	1	Erstaufnahme
57	77		7	de	2023393981		between 30-45 years	Afghanistan	female	Yes	Yes	3	no educational qualification	more than 2 years	more than 2 years	1	Wohnheim in Wittenau
58	88		0	en	1596108698					N/A	N/A						

A	R	S	T	U	V	
			If you are unemployed, are you currently looking for a job?	Suchst du gerade oder in der Vergangenheit nach einer neuen Unterkunft oder Wohnung in Berlin?		
2	Response ID	Why did you leave your previous accommodation and now live here?	What is your current employment status?		Why were you looking for new accommodation or an apartment?	
3	14	Mein Sohn	in training	N/A	Yes	5 Personen 2 Zimmer mein Sohn ist krank mit Schwestern und Nichte Schlafen
4	15	Because it was a temporary accommodation	in training	N/A	Yes	Privacy and a better location
5	20		unemployed	Yes	Yes	
6	27	Ich wohne jetzt auch in Wohnheim	Full-time or part-time work	N/A	Yes	A better location
7	28		in training	N/A	Yes	Because I have been living in a small room for two years and six months with my husband and our three children (aged 9, 8, and 4), and it is difficult in every way. Our children go to school and need a quiet environment so they can concentrate on their lessons and homework. We also have problems with the food provided by the accommodation; it does not match their preferences. There are many other difficulties... overall, the situation is very challenging in every respect.
8	32	Ja	in training	N/A	Yes	Privacy
9	36	Wir hatten nicht genug Platz	Full-time or part-time work	N/A	Yes	Hier ist so klein um 3 Personen zu leben.
10	37	Ja		N/A	Yes	
11	38	"I need housing	in training	N/A	Yes	Privacy and work
12	40		in training	N/A	Yes	
13	41	Wurden in Unterkunft untergebracht	unemployed	Yes	Yes	Wegen Lautstärke, wegen Regeln
14	52		unemployed	No	No	
15	53	Weil alles da gemeinschaftlich genutzt wurde	unemployed	No	No	
16	54	The place is bad, the food is German and difficult, and the assignments are specific.	unemployed	No	No	
17	55	Anderes Heim wurde geschlossen	unemployed	No	Yes	Probleme: mit Security und Regeln
18	58	They are the ones who moved	unemployed	Yes	Yes	Small (a room and a half). 3 people: my husband, my son, and I.
19	59	Lageso hat das entschieden	in training	N/A	Yes	Zu kleine Wohnung, zu viel Unruhe im Wohnheim, Security manchmal anstrengend, viele Regeln
20	61	Je nai pas encore vbs	unemployed	No	Yes	I'm not on the same wavelength here
21	63	Weil die geschlossen wurde	unemployed	No	Yes	„Ich habe eine neue Wohnung gesucht, weil wir eine große Familie sind und mein kranker Vater mehr Ruhe und Platz für seine Betreuung braucht.“
22	64	Because that place is closed, but I have a lot of problems here too. Overall, we have been living in different places since 2015.	unemployed	Yes	Yes	Because we have a lot of problems here.
23	65	I didn't	unemployed	Yes	Yes	As family arrangements
24	67	Heim is closed	in training	N/A	Yes	Because I want housing that is suitable in size for me and my family of four, and the lack of privacy is also a reason.
25	68	Rent is finished	in training	N/A	No	
26	70	Wurden hier her geschickt, mehr platz für kinder	unemployed	No	No	
27	71		unemployed	No	Yes	bessere Wohnung
28	73	THEY MOVED US HERE	unemployed	Yes	Yes	PRIVACY, TO BE ABLE TO HAVE GUESTS OVERNIGHT
29	74	There wasn't enough space for the family, in particular on the ground floor since one children is on a wheelchair	unemployed	Yes	Yes	For having more space, in particular for the sick children who has more needs.
30	75	In the previous Shelter it was Not possible to cook, the Hotel gives the Food to you.	unemployed	N/A	No	
31	76		Full-time or part-time work	N/A	Yes	Sauberkeit, Privatsphäre, mehr Platz. Beide von den Eltern arbeiten. Das ist kein Leben in dem Shelter. Es gibt viele Regeln: Kinder müssen um 8:00 abends in den Zimmern sein, man darf keinen Besuch mitbringen. Wir sind integriert. Es gibt Insekten in der Unterkunft. Die Gebäude wurden zu schnell gebaut, schlechte Qualität. Es gibt zu viele Menschen in der Unterkunft: Wenn es nicht genug Platz gibt, sollte Deutschland aufhören, Geflüchtete aufzunehmen
32	78			N/A	Yes	Privatsphäre, Ruhe, Familiengestaltung
33	79	LAF hat den Umzug organisiert.	unemployed	Yes	Yes	Ein Freund hilft bei der Suche.
34	80	Because my Family lives here		N/A	Yes	
35	81	In the other accomodation you were not able to cook for your own, doesnt have the right qualitys (transformed school building)	unemployed	No	Yes	Its never quiet and way to less space for her family Its to hot to close the window, but way to loud to leave it open If you work full-time like her husband you need peace, rest and a quiet space, often people are having phonecalls in the courtyard to midnight Also washing machines are not enough You are not allowed to bring anything to the unit, smuggeld somethings in
36	82		unemployed	No	No	
37	83	tried to come to a accomodation with better spatial conditions, the option to cook for example, then Buch was a proposal	unemployed	Yes	Yes	difficult, 500 people for 12 washingmachines His friends say to him he is living in a prison A lot of broken elements in the building (doors, windows, lamps..) Last janitor did not do anything about it, with the new operator everthing got better Home Managment helps but not with looking for flats
38	84	Not enough space there	unemployed	No	Yes	The main reason to move out ist he lack of space in this accomodation. Her kid is disabled and seriously ill and is depented on a wheelchair breathing machine. She need a bigger space for that.
39	85	Because of my son. he is very sick and need to go to the hospital very often	unemployed	No	Yes	Privacy for my son
40	86		unemployed	No	Yes	space and privacy
41	87	hat geschlossen		N/A	Yes	Selbstständig sein, nicht mehr eingesperrt sein, mehr machen können
42	89	We were instructed to move, but this place in Buch is better - before, there was not enough space and no kitchen.	Full-time or part-time work	N/A	Yes	there are many conflicts. I am verbally and physically attacked for wearing "men" clothes, sometimes for not wearing a headscarf, or for not fitting into the typical picture of a women having short hair. These issues are a big reason I want to move out as I don't feel comfortable and safe here. There are issues with the sink, heating, plumbing, and kitchen. The bathroom also has problems.
43	90	The previous did not have good conditions. No my previous accomodation is not closed.	unemployed	Yes	No	
44	91	We requested transfer via LAF for better location, as the other housing was super far from everything. We applied for a Wohnheim but it did not work, so we were brought here.	unemployed	N/A	Yes	mainly due to lack of privacy and space. No privacy - feels like a prison Not enough space - shares one room with husband and sometimes want to do different things which is impossible in one room No shared or public areas for adults (previously a TV room existed but not anymore). issues with the sink, heating, plumbing, kitchen, and bathroom.
45	92		unemployed	Yes	Yes	Better conditions, larger space, I can invite friends or family to sleep over.
46	93	not specified	unemployed	No	Yes	Lack of space. Shared facilities are unpleasant , dirty washing maschines. No real attachment to the place - wants to get out of the shelter environment
47	94	It was closed and now we are transfered here.	unemployed	Yes	No	
48	95	Requested the move due to poor conditions (animals, no cooking) in previous place	unemployed	N/A	Yes	The apartment is small and cramped It is loud No space for children to play The second floor is very dirty Cleanliness could cause conflicts in shared areas She feels depressed in that housing and forced to live there. She doesn't want her children to grow up in the shelter. They're exposed to bad language and a negative environment. Too little space for a family.
49	96	Hier hin geschickt		N/A	Yes	Eigene Wohnung, mehr Platz und Ruhe für Kinder, viele Regeln hier, Fahrstuhl für behindertes Kind
50	97		in training	N/A	Yes	Keine Privatsphäre, viel Unruhe, auch mit den anderen Kindern hier, Ich will ein privateres Leben und eigenes Zimmer
51	98		unemployed	Yes	Yes	Eigene Wohnung ist gut
52	99	Weil die Kinder in Lichtenberg wohnen	unemployed	Yes	Yes	Wohnung zu klein, eigene Wohnung, man will ein richtiges Leben mit eigener Wohnung
53	60			N/A	N/A	
54	62	They are the ones who moved us	Full-time or part-time work	N/A	Yes	I managed to find accommodation
55	66	Yes, it has been closed.	in training	N/A	Yes	The housing lacks privacy for my family and my two daughters, especially because of its small size."
56	69	Wurden hier her geschickt	unemployed	N/A	No	
57	77	Wir wurden von LAF in das Shelter in Buch überführt, aber hier ist es auch besser als in Wittenau.	Full-time or part-time work	N/A	Yes	Sicherheit, Privatsphäre, Platz. Ich lebe über 7 Jahre in dieser Unterkunft. Ich werden von anderen Bewohnern verbal und körperlich angegriffen, weil ich "Männerkleidung" trage, kurze Haare habe und zum Teil weil ich kein Kopftuch trage. Ich fühle mich dadurch sehr unwohl und unsicher hier. Außerdem sind die facilities nicht gut, die Waschmaschinen sind nur manchmal geöffnet und müssen geteilt werden, Küchen und Bad werden teilweise dreckig hinterlassen.
58	88			N/A	N/A	

A	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH	AI
Response ID	How did you look for a new accommodation or apartment?	Do you get help finding new accommodation or an apartment?	Would you like help?	Who do you get help from?	Are you currently looking for a new apartment?	What is the current status of your asylum application?	Do you think your legal status affects your chances of finding a new apartment?	Why?		How often do you ask for help from the social workers in your accommodation with administrative processes or to understand official letters?	Is this kind of help important to you?	Do you share your apartment with someone else?	With how many people?
14	Mit Internet	No	Yes		No	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			very frequently (every Woche)	Yes, very important	No	
15	Immoscout	No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Because sometimes there are problems for immigrants.	Discrimination on the basis of origin	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
20		No	Yes		Yes	Asylum application has not yet been decided	No			Sometimes (every few months)		Yes	2
27	Private	No	Yes		Yes	Granting of subsidiary protection	No			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
28	Yes, I search for an apartment on websites every day, but I have not been successful in finding one so far.	No	Yes		Yes	"Duldung" / toleration	Yes	I applied for WBS several times, but it was rejected due to having a dual citizenship.	Missing or expiring residence permit in connection to WBS	Rarely or never (once in a year)	No	N/A	
32	Immoscout	No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	No			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
36	Verschiedene Webseiten und unter bekannten	No	Yes		Yes	Granting of subsidiary protection	No			Rarely or never (once in a year)	Yes, very important	No	
37	On line	No	Yes		Yes		No			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
38	No	No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Because of the VBS degree	Missing or expiring residence permit in connection to WBS	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
40		No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
41	Online	No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, important	Yes	4
52		N/A	N/A		No	"Duldung" / toleration	N/A			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, important	No	
53		No	N/A		No	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			very frequently (every Woche)	Yes, important	Yes	3
54		No	No		No	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, very important	Yes	
55	Mit Jobcenter	Yes	N/A	Jobcenter	No		N/A			Rarely or never (once in a year)	Yes, important	No	
58	My son is the one looking through agencies/companies.	No	Yes		Yes	Granting of subsidiary protection	No			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, important	Yes	
59	Internetseiten	No	Yes		Yes		Yes	Diskriminierung	Discrimination on the basis of origin	Rarely or never (once in a year)	No	Yes	6
61		No	Yes		Yes	"Duldung" / toleration	Yes	Because I m not german	Discrimination on the basis of origin	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
63	Immo Scout24	No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Abhängig vom Jobcenter	Missing work permit and thus unemployment	Rarely or never (once in a year)	No	No	
64	On websites like immoScout and others	No	Yes		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	One hundred percent		Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, very important	N/A	
65	However, immos, Benn	Yes	N/A	Friends	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	With legal job it's easier to have a house	Missing work permit and thus unemployment	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, very important	No	
67	I am looking for an independent apartment, not a shared one, through the social services, but without success.	No	Yes		Yes	"Duldung" / toleration	No			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, important	N/A	
68		Yes	N/A	No one is helping me	N/A		N/A			Rarely or never (once in a year)	Yes, important	Yes	1
70		No	No		No	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, very important	Yes	5
71		No	N/A		No		N/A			very frequently (every Woche)	Yes, very important	Yes	4
73	DIFFERENT WAYS	Yes	N/A		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	, NO HIGH INCOME, THEY MIGHT BE AFRAID THAT I WILL BE DEPORTED	Missing work permit and thus unemployment	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	No	
74	Everywhere. Institution, charity organisations	Yes	N/A	One of the social workers of	Yes	Appeal process ongoing	Yes					No	
75		N/A	N/A		No		N/A				Yes, very important	Yes	18
76	Immoscout: private Kontakte	No	N/A		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Rarely or never (once in a year)		Yes	5
78	Alles oben genannte, Telegram	Yes	N/A	Arab aid organization, Carit	Yes	Granting of subsidiary protection	Yes	Die Tochter hat einen anderen Asyl Status als die Eltern	Missing or expiring residence permit		Yes, important	No	
79	Ein Freund organisiert die Wohnungssuche.	Yes	N/A	Von einem Freund.	Yes	Granting of subsidiary protection	N/A					No	
80	ImmobilienScout, HOWOGE, landeseigene	N/A	N/A		Yes	Granting of subsidiary protection	N/A			Rarely or never (once in a year)		Yes	1
81	everywhere	Yes	N/A	Jobcenter	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	N/A					Yes	6
82		N/A	N/A		No		N/A					Yes	7
83	überall	N/A	N/A		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	No			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	Yes	1
84	überall	Yes	N/A	Freund aus Wittenberg	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	No					Yes	2
85		N/A	N/A		No	"Duldung" / toleration	N/A					Yes	4
86	I didn't look on my own. It was with an organization and family helpers. And many others.	Yes	N/A	organization and family help	No	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Asylum status is just limited for 3 years. I don't know what will happened after that time and if they have expectations on	Missing or expiring residence permit	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	Yes	1
87	Stadt und Land und andere Institute	Yes	N/A	Bekommt Hilfe, aber wünscht	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	N/A					No	
89	Websites like ImmoScout. I also use social media, WhatsApp groups, and ask friends.	No	N/A		Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	My asylum status was just renewed. I had a WBS (Wohnberechtigungsschein) twice before, and I've applied again now with the new asylum extension.	Missing or expiring residence permit	Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, very important	Yes	4
90		No	No		No	Asylum application has not yet been decided	N/A					Yes	5
91	mostly apps, and personal contact. Many apps are hard to use.	No	Yes		Yes	Asylum application has not yet been decided	Yes	We tried to get a Wohnheim and a WBS but couldn't due to lack of residence permit.	Missing or expiring residence permit			Yes	1
92	Some sites recommend by friends.	Yes	N/A	Friends	Yes	Asylum application has not yet been decided	No			Sometimes (every few months)	Yes, important	Yes	1
93	Internet apartment platforms (e.g., ImmoScout	Yes	N/A	My son. He searches online	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Sometimes (every few months)		Yes	6
94		N/A	N/A		No	Asylum application has not yet been decided	N/A			very frequently (every Woche)	Yes, very important	Yes	3
95	ImmoScout Notices and recommendations from other residents Has also heard of people paying money to find apartment	Yes	N/A	I receive help from the house	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Apply for WBS. Better chances to work. It is expected that both parents work to get housing.	Missing work permit and thus unemployment	Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, important	Yes	6
96	Internet	No	Yes		Yes		N/A					N/A	
97		Yes	N/A	Sozialarbeiter	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Mit Arbeitserlaubnis usw.	Missing work permit and thus unemployment			Yes	7
98	Online	No	Yes		Yes		Yes	Wegen Arbeits Erlaubnis	Missing work permit and thus unemployment			Yes	7
99	Alle möglichen Anbieter, verschiedene Apps, persönliche Anfrage	No	Yes		Yes		Yes	Arbeitserlaubnis, Aufenthalts Status das macht es leichter	Missing work permit and thus unemployment			No	
60		N/A	N/A		N/A		N/A					N/A	
62	I ask my work colleagues or senior relatives	Yes	N/A	Relatives	Yes	Other	Yes					N/A	
66	The search was futile due to being confronted with a request for an illegal brokerage fee.	No	Yes		Yes	"Duldung" / toleration	No			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, very important	No	
69		Yes	N/A	Sozialarbeiter	No	Recognized as a refugee	N/A			Frequently (a few times a month)	Yes, very important	Yes	5
77	Ich suche im Internet, zum Beispiel Immoscout. Ich nutze auch soziale Medien, WhatsApp-Gruppen und frage Freunde. Ich hatte viele Besichtigungen, alle Wohnungen wurden über Immobilienmakler vermittelt.	Yes	N/A	Von meinem Sohn	Yes	Recognized as a refugee	Yes	Meine Aufenthaltsgenehmigung wurde gerade erst verlängert und in der Vergangenheit hatte ich schon 2 mal einen WBS wofür ich den rechtlichen Status brauche.	Missing or expiring residence permit			Yes	4
88		N/A	N/A		N/A		N/A					N/A	

A				
AZ		BA	BB	BC
Response ID	How many rooms are you looking for in an apartment? How many square meters?	Why this size?	How many apartments have you applied for in the last 6 months?	Why do you think you haven't found an apartment yet?
14				
15	2 Zimmer (+/- 65 Quadratmeter),	Because there are three of us, meaning myself and my two sons.		0 Because I don't have a warrant to search the house.
20	1 room (+/- 50 square meters)	It's an apartment		0 Brokerage (receiving bribes)
27	1 room (+/- 50 square meters)	Sufficient for me	more than 10	I don't know the reason.
28	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Because my family consists of five people.	more than 10	I don't quite understand, but I think it might be legal issues.
32	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Because each family member has their own suitable and personal space.	more than 10	Low supply and high demand for apartments
36	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Weil meine Tochter 18 und mein Sohn 12 sind	more than 10	Da die Wohnungsmiete gestiegen sind und ich verdiene nicht genug Geld..
37	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Wir sind große Familie	more than 10	Ich habe keine wbs
38	1 room (+/- 50 square meters)	Because I am one person.	more than 10	Due to higher demand and fewer apartments
40	5 rooms (+/- 110 square meters)			Finding a house in Berlin is difficult.
41	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	Wegen der Kinder und Privatsphäre	more than 10	es ist sehr schwierig in berlin, die Leute geben den Maklern Geld um die Wohnung zu bekommen
52				
53				
54				
55				
58	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	3 people	6-10	Small
59	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Wegen Kinder und Oma	more than 10	Vor allem Diskriminierung, Wohnungen zu klein, Aber auch zu teure Wohnung
61	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)		1-5	
63	5 rooms (+/- 110 square meters)	Weil wir eine große Familie sind	6-10	Weil es keine passende gibt
64	5 rooms (+/- 110 square meters)	Because there are eight of us.		
65	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Regular	1-5	I don't know all the documents and procedures
67	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	Because my family consists of 4 members and we need privacy among ourselves.	0	Because I relied on ordering via social media to no avail
68				
70				
71				
73	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	2BOYS IN A ROOM, DAUGHTER IN A ROOM, ME AND WIFE IN A ROOM	1-5	COULD BE RACISM, OR BECAUSE OF MY LOW INCOME
74	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	I mostly care for my children	more than 10	They tell me I don't have the criteria, I don't have wbs, residency and a work contract. How can I have it? When they didn't give me the residency, the wbs and I cannot work because I don't have a permit
75				
76	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Familie mit 4 Kindern plus 2 Eltern		Diskriminierung als Familie. Mir wird gesagt, ich nehme lieber 4 Hunde als 4 Kinder in meine Wohnung. Nach den Besichtigungen höre ich nichts mehr. Selbst habe ich kein Verständnis warum ich keine Wohnung finde. Wir sind integriert, haben beide Eltern einen Job, können die Wohnung selbst zahlen, sprechen fließend deutsch. Es gibt Wohnungen in der Größenordnung die wir suchen, aber wir werden als Familie diskriminiert.
78	2 Zimmer (+/- 65 Quadratmeter),		more than 10	Man wird nie ausgewählt, Es ist unklar wann die Wohnunvsinterviews starten
79				0 Die Termine und der Treffpunkt von Wohnungsbesichtigungen ist oft unklar.
80	2 Zimmer (+/- 65 Quadratmeter),	For my father and me	more than 10	
81	5 rooms (+/- 110 square meters)	4 Kinder	more than 10	to expensive not enough flats
82				
83	2 Zimmer (+/- 65 Quadratmeter),	umziehen zusammen mit Bruder	more than 10	There are always problem: either the jobcenter does not cooperate or the WBS doesnt apply to his case because of his Aufenthaltstitel (always just for one year, is not enough to apply for WBS) Is in Need of money, with the money from jobcenter you are not able to survive not to mention to live
84	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	because of the kids	more than 10	
85				
86				
87		Sucht nach barrierefreier Wohnung		
89	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	We are currently searching for a 3-room apartment for 3-4 people. My son (23) is looking for a flat on his own, but also not successfull.		I've been looking for a flat for years. I had many viewing but never successful. Apartments are too expensive. Even when we find something, we're never successful.
90				
91	x			They received a deportation letter ("Abschiebungsbrief"), but their lawyer reopened the case. Administrative obstacles, especially around WBS, felt unfair. Official letters are not immediately clear. Relatives often help with translation. not many apartment viewings yet. The digital tools and apps are often difficult to navigate. High broker fees - brokers ask for too much money. If you pay someone to find housing you can be successful. A friend moved out of the shelter because she paid the high fee of a broker. I don't think without it it is possible to find housing. The process isn't regulated enough by the government. A job would help to move out, but I want to improve my German first and finish my classes.
92	1 room (+/- 50 square meters)	Because we are only 2	1-5	Because we can not afford to pay a lot of money the brooker.
93	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	We are a family of 6.		It doesn't matter how much you earn or what you do – you still get rejections. There is simply not enough housing available. No clear support system, I am actively seeking help, but there's a lack of support. Currently more support from the accommodation operator than before - earlier, things were worse. Processes are slow and not well managed: for example, we applied for another accomodation but the staff in the shelter couldnt help. So we tried to apply through LAF, but we couldnt get an appointment with them. Housing is not a reason to get an appointment with LAF. Jobcenter also couldnt help. Everyone refers you to someone else but noone can help.
94				
95	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	We are a family of 6.		discrimination was experienced due to being a foreigner and not having employment. There's pressure that both parents should be working. no clear responsibilities. People are constantly sent back and forth between offices. We search a lot but often do not receive answers. Also there is not many big apartments. There simply need to be more apartments available. She feels that even with good documents, people still get rejections. Support with applications, viewings, and notifications about available units would help
96	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	reicht für Familie	more than 10	WBS sagt 4, 5 Zimmer aber das ist zu teuer, es reichen 3 aber die großen Wohnungen sind zu teuer, viele absagen
97	4 rooms (+/- 95 square meters)	Viele Menschen	more than 10	Schwierig was zu finden,Die Größe ist schwierig, es ist zu teuer und Job Center zahlt dann nicht mehr wenn zu groß, aber mein Vater er darf leider noch nicht arbeiten
98			more than 10	Es ist schwierig was zu finden, und der Vater ist krank, das macht es auch schwierig zu suchen
99	2 Zimmer (+/- 65 Quadratmeter),	Für mich und meine Kinder, die bei der Frau wohnen	more than 10	Wohnungsmarkt sehr schwierig, Andere zahlen hohe Provisionen, Wohnungen sind einfach nur Business
60				
62				
66				
69				
77	3 Zimmer (+/- 80 Quadratmeter),	Weil wir eine Familie mit 3 Kindern sind. Wir suchen für 3-4 Personen. Mein Sohn (23) sucht nach eigener Wohnung, aber hat auch keinen Erfolg.		Wohnungen sind zu teuer. Selbst wenn wir etwas finden, sind wir nie erfolgreich. Ich suche für 500-800 Euro.
88				

	A	BD	BE	BF	BG	BH	BI	BJ	BK	BL	BM	BN	BO	BP	BQ	BR	BS	BT	BU
			Do your children influence your decision to move out?	Why do children influence the decision?		Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood? [School]	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood?	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood? [workplace]	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood?	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood? [park]	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood? [fitness]	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood?	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood?	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood?	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood?	Do you or your children visit any of these places in your neighborhood? [sport]	How do you or your children reach these places? [public transportation]	How do you or your children reach these places? [car]	How do you or your children reach these places? [Bicycle]
2	Response ID																		
3	14		No			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
4	15	Bribery on the housing market	N/A			Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
5	20	Shortage in Housing Market	No			Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
6	27		N/A			No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
7	28	Legal Issues	N/A			Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
8	32	Shortage in Housing Market	Yes	Because my children's future and education were important.	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
9	36	monetary reasons	No			Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
10	37		N/A			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
11	38	Shortage in Housing Market	N/A			No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
12	40	Shortage in Housing Market	No			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
13	41	Bribery on the housing market	Yes	Wir brauchen mehr Platz und Ruhe für die Kinder , außerdem können die Kinder abends nicht raus, weil es nicht so sicher ist.	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
14	52		Yes	Schule	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
15	53		No			Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
16	54		N/A			No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
17	55		N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
18	58		No			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
19	59	Discrimination	Yes	Ja die brauchen	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
20	61		Yes			No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
21	63	Shortage in Housing Market	N/A			Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	64		Yes			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
23	65	bureaucratic obstacles	Yes	They need to have their choice	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
24	67	problems understanding the application procedure and no support	N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
25	68		N/A		social help in the accommodation	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
26	70		Yes	Mehr platz und Ruhe für die Kinder	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
27	71		Yes	Ein Kind ist sehr krank, das braucht viel Hilfe, hier gibt es Hilfe, anderen Kinder haben sich an alles in der Nachbarschaft gewöhnt	The desire to provide a better life for their children especially because of a child with a disability	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
28	73	monetary reasons	Yes	MY SON CANT FIND AUSBILDUNG FOR THE LAST 2 YEAR IN BERLIN	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
29	74	Missing work permit	Yes	They need more space, in particular the sick one. We just have a room together	The desire to provide a better life for their children especially because of a child with a disability	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
30	75		N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
31	76	Discrimination	No			Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
32	78	problems understanding the application procedure and no support	Yes			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
33	79	problems understanding the application procedure and no support	N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
34	80		N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
35	81	Shortage in Housing Market	No			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
36	82		Yes	I want more space for them	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
37	83		N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
38	84		No			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
39	85		Yes	My son is sick and needs his own room	The desire to provide a better life for their children especially because of a child with a disability	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
40	86		N/A			Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
41	87		N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
42	89	monetary reasons	No			Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
43	90		No			Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
44	91	Legal Issues	N/A			No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
45	92	Bribery on the housing market	N/A			Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
46	93	Discrimination	No			Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
47	94		Yes	I want better conditions for my daughters	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
48	95	Discrimination	No			Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
49	96	Shortage in Housing Market particularly affordable housing	Yes	Die Tochter hat eine Behinderung, hier gibt es kein Fahrstuhl	The desire to provide a better life for their children especially because of a child with a disability	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
50	97	Shortage in Housing Market particularly affordable housing	N/A			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
51	98	Shortage in Housing Market	N/A			Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
52	99	Bribery on the housing market	N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
53	60		N/A			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
54	62		N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
55	64		N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
56	69		Yes	Platz und Ruhe für Kinder	The desire to provide a better life for their children.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
57	77	Shortage in Housing Market	No			Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
58	88		N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	A	BV	BW	BX	BY	BZ	CA	CB	CC	CD	CE	CF	CG	CH	CI	CJ	CK	CL	CM	CN	CO	CP	CQ	CR
	Response ID	How do you or your children reach these places? [by foot]	How do you or your children reach these places? [Other]	Do you or your children have a social network with family members or friends?	How did you or your children meet the friends? [in my home country]	How did you or your children meet the friends? [in my current accommodation]	How did you or your children meet the friends? [in another accommodation]	How did you or your children meet the friends? [in the neighborhood]	How did you or your children meet the friends? [From other social circles (e.g. mosque, gym, children's school)]	Do you feel part of a community?	What kind of community? [same home country]	What kind of community? [sport]	What kind of community? [other hobbies]	What kind of community? [in the accommodation]	What kind of community? [in the neighborhood]	What kind of community? [other]	Where would you like to live in Berlin? [In the same neighborhood]	Where would you like to live in Berlin? [In another neighborhood]	Where would you like to live in Berlin? [I don't care.]	Are you currently taking an integration course or have you already completed one?	Which one?	How would you rate your German language skills?	Do you participate in social activities outside of your accommodation?	Which ones?
2	14	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	A2 und Altenpflege	A2	Yes	25b
3	15	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	B1 Integration Kurs und Leben in Deutschland	B1	Yes	Manchmal beim Malteser Integration Zentrum (MIZ)
4	20	No	No	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A		no language skills	No	
5	27	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	B1	B1	No	
6																								
7	28	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	I finished up to level B1 and living in Germany.	B1	Yes	Sports and educational departments.
8	32	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	B1 Intergeration	B1	Yes	School and kindergarten programs and neighborhood celebrations
9	36	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	B2	B2	No	
10	37	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A			B1	No	
11	38	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	language class	B1	Yes	Computer course
12	40	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	language course	A2	Yes	
13	41	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Deutsch und förderkurs	A1	Yes	Kulturleben Berlin, selten
14	52	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Deutsch Kurs	A1	N/A	
15	53	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	Kein anung		no language skills	No
16	54	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Alohabeta	A1	Yes	Football
17	55	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No			no language skills	No
18	58	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		A2	No	
19	59	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Mit Deutschkurs	B2	Yes	Nachbarschaftscafe
20	61	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No			no language skills	No
21	63	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	A1	C2	Yes	Musik und sport
22	64	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		A2	No	
23	65	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	A2	A2	Yes	Sports
24	67	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Wait for the registration after the completion of job center documents		no language skills	No
25	68	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		A2	Yes	Sprache cafe/Benn
26	70	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	deutschkurs	A2	Yes	In den Park
27	71	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	N/A		A1	No	
28	73	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LEBEN IN DEUTSCHLAND	A2	Yes	MEET FRIENDS OR RELATIVES
29	74	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		B1	N/A	
30	75	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes			no language skills	No
31	76	Yes	No	N/A	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A		C1	N/A	
32	78	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A			N/A	
33	79	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A			N/A	
34	80	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	I finished B1	B1	Yes	Meeting Friends
35	81	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		B2	No	
36	82	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		A1	N/A	
37	83	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		B2	Yes	
38	84	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		A2	N/A	
39	85	No	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		A2	N/A	
40	86	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		B2	Yes	Ichruch
41	87	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		A2	N/A	
42	89	Yes	No	N/A	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	x	A2	N/A	
43	90	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	I have completed A2 level of german.	A2	No	
44	91	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Language course	B1	Yes	Activities to meet other local people
45	92	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	I have completed B1 level of german	B1	Yes	
46	93	Yes	No	N/A	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Language courses	B2	N/A	
47	94	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes			N/A	
48	95	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Language course	C1	No	
49	96	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Deutschkurs	A2	No	
50	97	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		B2	No	
51	98	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Deutschkurs VHS	A2	Yes	Schwimmen, Treffen mit Freunden, Moschee
52	99	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Deutschkurs	B1	Yes	Ehrenamtliche Arbeit, sprachcafe
53	60	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A			N/A	
54	62	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	
55	66	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	
56	69	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Deutschkurs	A2	N/A	
57	77	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	N/A		A2	N/A	
58	88	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	

A		CS	CT	CU	CV
		Hattest oder Hast du Kontakt mit BENN			
2	Response ID	oder QM?	Mit Wem und für Was?	That's almost it! Are there any other reasons you'd like to share with us as to why you don't want to or can't leave your current accommodation?	
3	14	No		Nein	
4	15	No		I don't know why, but I really want to find a private apartment so that I can reach my academic goals with my children in a quiet space.	
5	20	N/A			
6	27	No		I want to move to a suitable location so that I can maintain my privacy and live with peace of mind.	
7	28	No		Solange wir vom LAF (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten) finanzielle Unterstützung erhalten haben, haben wir mehrmals unserer Sozialarbeiterin, Frau Jenny Reimer, vorgeschlagen bzw. darum gebeten, dass wir schon lange Zeit im Hotel oder in einer Erstunterkunft leben und große Schwierigkeiten haben. Wir baten sie, uns zumindest eine dauerhafte Unterkunft (Heim) zu geben, damit ein Teil unserer Probleme gelöst werden kann. Sie sagte uns immer nur, dass sie unseren Namen auf die Warteliste gesetzt habe, aber sonst hat sie nichts getan. Vielleicht hatte sie auch andere Absichten. Und jetzt, wo wir vom Bezirksamt Unterstützung bekommen, sagen sie auch, dass sie uns nicht helfen können, solange wir keinen WBS-Schein haben	
8	32	Yes	Benn, Mrs. Tosca and Chrissie etc.	We have submitted many apartment search requests, but unfortunately it has not been possible yet. I may have sent more than four requests to different sites.	Shortage in Housing Market
9	36	No			
10	37	No			
11	38	N/A		Because I couldn't find a new home.	
12	40	N/A			
13	41	No			
14	52	No		Sehr froh über sozial Arbeiter	
15	53	No		Ich brauche Erziehungsunterstützung	
16	54	No		The internet is weak	
17	55	No			
18	58	No		Washing machines	
19	59	Yes	Mit benn für Projekte wie Ausflüge oder Frauenfrühstücke und Feste		
20	61	No			
21	63	No		Ich will sie verlassen aber es gibt keine für uns passende Wohnung.	Shortage in Housing Market
22	64	No		The clue is that we want to have a house, but we can't afford to buy it.	
23	65	Yes	Khalil for social gathering	This is good, but if I find a suitable place I will go, otherwise this is okay	
24	67	N/A		I didn't understand the question	
25	68	Yes	Abend kochen oder frauen meeting	I struggled for a long time, but thankfully I found	
26	70	No		Wir sind erstmal zufrieden, aber wäre schön eine Wohnung zu haben wegen der ganzen regeln hier und Einschränkungen	
27	71	No		In dieser Unterkunft gibt es viel Hilfe, die wir brauchen für meine kranke Frau und kranken Kind	
28	73	No			
29	74	N/A			
30	75	Yes	Benn for Sprachcafe	I First Need a toolkit of Language and understanding the System to find a Job and a Flat	
31	76	No		Das ist kein Leben hier, es fühlt sich an wie ein Gefängnis, es gibt keine Perspektive. Zu viele Regeln und dreckig. Es führt dazu, dass ich die Lebenswürdigkeit meines Lebens hinterfrage. Es sind einfach zu viele Menschen hier, dann muss Deutschland aufhören, neue Personen aufzunehmen.	
32	78	N/A			
33	79	N/A		Andere verzweifeln an der Wohnungssuche. Die Familie hat keine Perspektive auf Nachzug, das verringert die Motivation. Er muss schauen, dass seine Schulden nicht weiter steigen.	
34	80	N/A			
35	81	No			
36	82	No			
37	83	No			
38	84	N/A			
39	85	N/A			
40	86	N/A			
41	87	Yes			
42	89	N/A		Mainly personal safety, and better quality (space, common areas)	
43	90	N/A		I can not leave the accomodation because of the WBS.Half of the family is registered and half no. Finding accomodation without WBS expensive.	
44	91	N/A		no	
45	92	N/A		I don't like the apartment, shared areas are very unclean. They do not solve issues when something breaks down or is not working. You have to wait a lot of time to solve it.I can't leave because I need to have money to find another one. I need to work and to work I need to get B2.	
46	93	N/A		Community within the shelter is not a reason for staying – just want to leave	
47	94	N/A		I can not leave the accomodation because we have no money, no job.	
48	95	Yes	Sometimes she went to Benn; now the family center helps with applications and forms. Seek help for application, viewings	My kids want to move out too, they want to go to other schools and get to know new people.	
49	96	No			
50	97	No			
51	98	No			
52	99	Yes	BENN	Es ist schmutzig, es sind viele verschiedene Personen und Chaos, keine Ruhe	
53	60	N/A			
54	62	N/A			
55	66	N/A			
56	69	N/A			
57	77	No			
58	88	N/A			

A		CW
2	Response ID	Are there any other reasons why you find it difficult to find an apartment, we didnt ask for?
3	14	Ja
4	15	Yes, I have not been able to obtain the WBS form yet because I do not have my children's birth certificates from Afghanistan with me.
5	20	
6	27	High demand for housing and lack of attention from responsible institutions to citizens' needs
7	28	I don't understand, but we were so tired of looking for an apartment, but to no avail.
8	32	I don't know, maybe it's because of the religious name.
9	36	
10	37	
11	38	Shortage of houses in Berlin
12	40	Demand is high, houses are scarce.
13	41	
14	52	
15	53	Nein
16	54	
17	55	Es ist schwer, es ist eine Lüge, es gibt keine Wohnung und man kann keine Wohnung finden. Außerdem ist es schwer wenn man krank ist.
18	58	
19	59	
20	61	So that my children get the right education
21	63	Weil der Wohnungsmarkt in Berlin abgegrast ist
22	64	nope
23	65	The language is a barrier
24	67	Yes, the lack of a co-operative body to help me get an apartment
25	68	
26	70	Wir sind gerade erst angekommen, es gibt viele Sachen, um die wir uns kümmern müssen, deswegen noch keine Zeit eine Wohnung zu suchen und erstmal dankbar was zu haben
27	71	Keine Zeit und kraft
28	73	
29	74	It's harder for me than for a German person or someone who knows the system, they could help for sure
30	75	
31	76	Diskriminierung als Familie mit 4 Kindern
		Die Menge an Dingen, die es zu organisieren gibt, nimmt sehr viel Raum im Kopf ein. Es ist jedoch nicht wirklich möglich eine Auszeit von dem Ort zu nehmen. Alles ist schwierig und manchmal hat man das
32	78	Gefühl, dass es leichter wäre, einfach wieder zurück zu gehen.
33	79	
34	80	
35	81	She needs help with looking for a flat, if familys are fighting with diseases you need to help themShe gets viewing but only rejections afterwards
36	82	
		does not understand the whole system with these diffrent WBS, Gets invited sometimes/often but doesnt get the flat, There are alway problem: either the jobcenter does not cooperate or the WBS doesnt apply
37	83	to his case because of his Aufenthaltstitel (always just for one year, is not enough to apply for WBS)
38	84	She has big difficulties, she gets invited to housing viewings but they always say no in the end.
39	85	
40	86	
41	87	
42	89	Better housing availability, more affordable options. Documents are complex, my 23-year-old son helps me fill out all forms and documents.
43	90	WBS only.
		A good job. I do not trust brokers and want to avoid them. Many apps are hard to use
		The government should better regulate the apartment search process
44	91	Without a broker, it's hard to find housing quickly - but brokers are expensive
45	92	I need to find a job in order to afford a new accomodation.
46	93	No, in general terms I would wish for more events also to get to know more local people. And I often visit the family center who support us in the process.
		Yes. We feel like in prison because of the rules. We can not celebrate or invite my son who lives here in Germany but not in MUF because you can not take people to sleep over. Also my daughters are growing
47	94	and have no privacy in their room.
48	95	no
49	96	
50	97	
51	98	
52	99	Ja auch einfach an Formalitäten und schlechte Politik
53	60	
54	62	
55	66	
56	69	
57	77	
58	88	



Landesamt
für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten

BERLIN



TU TECHNISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
BERLIN