



Governing Urban Diversity:

Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities

Report 2k

Fieldwork inhabitants, Leipzig (Germany)

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1 Introduction

There is a growing conventional wisdom in writings on European cities that presents them as centres of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). This refers specifically to their increasing ethnic diversity and to the demographic diversity between and within such ethnic groups. Indeed, cities are becoming increasingly diverse, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities. To indicate this enormous diversity, Tasan-Kok et al. (2013) proposed using the term hyper-diversity.

Within cities, groups can be segregated or relatively mixed. Urban neighbourhoods may be fairly homogeneous residential areas in terms of housing and population, but they may also be strongly mixed with respect to types of housing (tenure, type, price) and population categories (income, ethnicity, household composition, age). In addition, individuals who belong to the same ‘official’ demographic category may possess quite different lifestyles and attitudes and involve themselves in a wide range of activities. Some may, for example, have a very neighbourhood-oriented life, with all their friends and activities in a very small area, while others may extend their social activities over the whole city, or even beyond. Residents of mixed urban neighbourhoods may happily live together, live parallel lives, or be in open conflict with each other (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

This report is written as part of the EU-FP7 DIVERCITIES project. In this project, we aim to find out how urban hyper-diversity affects the social cohesion and social mobility of residents in deprived and dynamic urban areas, as well as the economic performance of entrepreneurs and their enterprises in such areas. In this report, we focus on the findings from our interviews with residents, in which we explored their experiences of living with hyper-diversity and how it affects their lives.

In this report, we seek to combine two research foci. On the one hand, we want to analyse how residents in the two areas experience diversity in their daily lives, how they perceive it and in what ways it affects their lives. We will analyse how diversity affects social cohesion among people and how it impacts on well-being, satisfaction, contacts and trust in personal contacts, as well as on the daily activities of the interviewees (see e.g. Van Kempen & Wissink, 2014; Blokland & Van Eijk, 2010; Schmid et al. 2014; Camina & Wood, 2009). On the other hand, we want to reveal the role that the urban neighbourhood plays in coping with diversity (Forrest & Kearns, 2001: 2130). In this respect, two general approaches appear to be relevant for our case study: Firstly, Forrest and Kearns highlight the importance of the neighbourhood as the area where “residentially based networks” occur and “perform an important function in the routines of everyday life” (Forrest & Kearns, 2001: 2130). Secondly, and in contrast, other positions see a diminishing role of local neighbourhoods for community building and an increasing role of global modes of communication and flows (Van Kempen & Wissink, 2014).

Set against this research interest, our analysis summarises the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees we talked to about their dwelling, their perception of neighbours, personal networks, their use of public space and perceptions of public policies. We want to find out what role the neighbourhood plays for our interviewees and whether or not they are tied to specific areas. Additionally, we aim at understanding the role of heterogeneous neighbourhoods in an era of increasing diversity.

These general aims can be broken down into more detailed and concrete research questions. They are the focus of the chapters in this report:

1. Why did people move to the diverse area they live in now? To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor? Or were other aspects (such as the availability of inexpensive dwellings) a much stronger motive to settle in the present area? (Chapter 3)
2. How do residents think about the area they live in? Do residents see their neighbourhood's diversity as an asset or a liability? (Chapter 4)
3. How do residents make use of the diversified areas they live in? Do they actively engage in diversified relationships and activities in their neighbourhood? To what extent is the area they live in more important than other areas, in terms of activities? (Chapter 5)
4. To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion? Which elements foster social cohesion, which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the area? (Chapter 6)
5. To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility? Which elements foster social mobility and which elements hinder social mobility? (Chapter 7)
6. How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the area? (Chapter 8)

The research in this report focuses on the city of Leipzig. This city currently has 551,000 inhabitants (end of 2014). After the political changes in 1989, the city of Leipzig suffered from massive out-migration and heavy deindustrialization, resulting in a loss of about 100,000 inhabitants and 80,000 jobs from 1989-1998. From the 2000s onwards, Leipzig has been growing considerably; the city became the most prominent example of reurbanisation in eastern Germany. At the same time, unemployment and poverty rates remained at an above-average level, compared to national figures. Due to diverse strands of in-migration and immigration, the makeup of Leipzig's population has become increasingly diversified in the last years.

Within Leipzig, the research has been conducted in two areas: the inner-city area of Leipzig Inner East and the large housing estate Leipzig-Grünau. Our two case study areas provide quite distinct settings.

Leipzig Inner East represents a former workers' area that developed between 1850 and 1920. It has approximately 45,000 inhabitants. Due to large-scale dilapidation and physical decay in the GDR period, it experienced a selective wave of out-migration. Therefore, the residential diversity of Leipzig's Inner East is currently characterised by, on average, higher proportions of older, poor, and socially disadvantaged people. The first waves of in-migration occurred when migrants started to (re)populate the district in the late 1990s. In the meantime, the area has developed into Leipzig's first real migrant area, and currently has shares of around 30%¹ of migrants in some districts. In addition, the area includes some of Leipzig's recent hotspots of population growth and upgrading.

¹Stadt Leipzig (2013). Stadt Leipzig: Statistisches Jahrbuch 2013 [Statistical Yearbook 2013], Leipzig Amt für Statistik und Wahlen, p.: 236



Figure 1.1: Eisenbahnstraße Leipzig Inner East. Photo Annegret Hasse (left). Old built-up housing stock in Leipzig Inner East. Photo Thomas Arndt (right).

Leipzig Grünau, a large housing estate built during GDR times, lost large segments of its population after 1990 and has only recently experienced an influx of population. By the end of 2014, it had 47,000 inhabitants. Ageing is a dominant process. The majority of the population has been living there for 20 years or more and is relatively homogeneous in socio-demographic terms: An older, German, white population with a lower-middle to middle social status. In-migration is gradually bringing a more diverse population to the estate. The 1990s brought in Germans with a Russian migration background; in recent years, the share of migrants has grown, introducing a variety of ethnic backgrounds, even though the total numbers are still low. Within the estate, foreigners concentrate in the central parts (see Großmann et al., 2014). Furthermore, in-migration is bringing in a larger share of households with lower social status, even though in-migrants include a variety of social strata. The estate struggles with a negative image of being an unattractive place to live, both in terms of architectural design and as a socially deprived location.



Figure 1.2: Leipzig Grünau. Photos Katrin Grossmann

We conducted 50 interviews with residents of both areas, 25 in each case study area. These interviews were held between November 2014 and March 2015. In the next chapter, we first provide some more information on the methodology that was adopted. This is then followed by six chapters in which we answer the research questions above. In the conclusions, we summarize the main results and address our main questions. We also present some broader guidance for policy-making.

As indicated by the case study descriptions, our interviewees come from quite different housing backgrounds. We elaborate on this in Chapter 2.

2 The interviewees

2.1 Selection procedure: how did we select our interviewees?

When recruiting our interview partners we sought to reach out to a wide range of persons who are characteristic for the research areas. In each area, Leipzig Grünau and Leipzig Inner East, 25 interviews were conducted, for which certain profiles were chosen.

We contacted the interviewees mainly via intermediate institutions that work in the research area. Both case study areas are characterised by a variety of administrative and civic-societal institutions and associations. We used these as entry points in our fieldwork. Once we established contact with interviewees, we made use of the snowball system in order to acquire a more varied sample by including respondents without direct ties to the intermediate institutions. Additionally, we reached out to some interviewees via personal and work-related networks as well as by getting in touch with people on the street. In preparation for the fieldwork, we identified the following groups that were to be included in our sample:

Leipzig Inner East

Due to the specific history of the research area, the following groups are relevant for the analysis: 1) *Native-born, long-term residents* who have lived in the area for more than 15 years, mainly older people, originating from Leipzig and from different socio-economic backgrounds. 2) *Reurbanites* who moved to the area in the late 1990s or early 2000s, among them various groups such as non-traditional households (flat shares, cohabitees, LAT², singles), single parents and low-income families, as well as international migrants. 3) *Recent in-migrants* who moved to the area within the last five years (i.e. in the 2010s), among them young people belonging to the creative segment, people involved in housing projects, students, migrants, and the unemployed.

In Leipzig Inner East, we found access to these residents via the local Labour Shop East and the Office for Senior Citizens East. Both institutions also act as community centres and as spaces for encounters. Additionally, we used our personal networks to reach out to better situated interviewees and students. Generally, our sample is comprised of a diverse set of people but with an emphasis on the relatively deprived, reflecting the local characteristics of Leipzig Inner East.

Leipzig Grünau

Due to the specific history of this large GDR housing estate, we identified the following groups as relevant: 1) *Long-term residents* who are older people with professional careers in the GDR period (e.g. factory workers, teachers, etc.) who aged in the district and who, today, are pensioners or unemployed. This group also includes young people who grew up in the area and never left Leipzig Grünau. 2) *In-migrants* who are mainly represented by younger people with a below average income or unemployed, with a German or migrant background. We also reached out to older returning migrants who grew up in the area, out-migrated in the 1990s and then returned to the district.

In Grünau, we followed a threefold strategy to access interview partners: Firstly, we found access via the local office for senior citizens and a local community centre. Both institutions provide a low threshold access to educational and leisure activities for local inhabitants. Secondly, we distributed flyers in local kindergartens. Thirdly, we ran an advertisement in the local newspaper. With this strategy, we reached out to diverse interview partners in socio-demographic terms. We were therefore able to include interviewees with very heterogeneous socio-economic backgrounds into our analysis.

²Living apart together

Interviewees received 20 Euro as compensation for their participation. However, sometimes, it proved to be difficult to win interview partners. Even before offering reimbursement, underprivileged persons, in particular, asked actively for compensation for an interview, which is quite unique, compared to other case study areas (e.g., Toronto case study).

The entire sample of both case studies is not designed to be representative of the respective neighbourhoods. Although it includes a wide range of groups with diverse backgrounds and socio-demographic characteristics, it emphasises underprivileged groups. Our aim was to talk to those persons who are normally not involved or heard in the local discourse but are keys to understanding the changing dynamics in the neighbourhoods.

2.2 Which groups did we miss?

More focus on underprivileged, low-income households meant leaving out high income households. The highest income level of people we talked to is at about 2,000 Euro net per month for an individual and 4,000 Euro for a couple. Persons receiving social security money or having an income as low as 500 to 1,000 Euros in single households are more prominently represented in our sample.

We easily managed to contact residents who are involved in voluntary work for the neighbourhood. However, approaching people who do not visit the go-between institutions that helped in the recruiting process was challenging. It was particularly difficult to recruit interviewees on the street. Many were sceptical towards being interviewed and towards the objectives of the project. Another challenge was language barriers in Leipzig Inner East in approaching recent international in-migrants on the street. In many cases, they were doubtful towards us or were interested in asking for help and advice with respect to administrative asylum procedures. Generally, it was easier to talk to women than men.

Our sample is not representative for the whole city of Leipzig. Our findings, therefore, always need to be reflected with respect to the specific structure of our sample. In general, we think that the chosen research method (individual interviews) has led to a situation where interviewees responded to the social situation a lot. The interviewees were confronted with interviewers with quite different socio-economic background which is why we need to assume that a number of responses were filtered according to what interviewees expected us to regard a socially appropriate response. To give an example, instead of a narrative, a frequent response to the question, "Please describe the people who live here." was to say, "I never had any problems." This means that interpretation of the results needs to consider that we might not have a reliable insight into negative aspects of the perception of the diverse groups in the neighbourhood and that some conflicts were intentionally hidden from us. Focus groups might be a way out of this dilemma for further research on the topic.

2.3 Some general characteristics of the interviewees

In the following we list the basic characteristics of our sample of 50 interviewees (Additionally, a list of our interviewees is attached to this report in the appendix):

Leipzig Grünau

With regard to our selection of interviews, 12 were classified as long-term residents, which means they are natives and aged in the area. The remaining 13 interviews were conducted with in-migrants: younger people or those who left the area in the 1990's and returned to the district. Out of the 25 interviews that took place in Grünau, 13 respondents were between 61 and 75 years old. The other age groups (from 18 to 30, from 31 to 45 and from 46 to 60 years old) numbered 4 participants each. With respect to employment status, 8 respondents declared themselves

as retired, while 6 persons declared themselves as employed and another 6 as unemployed. Regarding the highest level of education, 6 persons stated that they had Abitur (A level) and another 6 higher education (university or college). Another 5 persons in the district reported that they had completed an apprenticeship (*Ausbildungsabschluss*). Concerning household status, 11 of the interviewees were couples, 6 were couples with children and 8 lived in single households. With regard to income, 9 respondents declared receiving earnings from 500 to 1,000 Euros and 9 declared receiving more than 2,000 Euros. The vast majority of the respondents in Grünau had neither a migration background nor were immigrants themselves.³ Only one respondent from the total had a migrant background.

Leipzig Inner East

In our second case study, 8 respondents were native-born in the area or had lived there for at least 15 years. Nine persons fitted the profile as reurbanites and had settled in the neighbourhood in the 1990's or 2000's; and, finally, 7 interviewees recently arrived in the neighbourhood (from 2010 onwards). The interviewees in Leipzig Inner East are in general younger than in Grünau, with 8 respondents belonging to the age group 31-45, 6 to the age group 18-30, 5 to the age group 46-60 and a further 5 to the age group 61-75. Only one respondent was older than 75. With respect to employment status, 7 interviewees reported being currently employed, while 5 reported current involvement in an apprenticeship program and another 5 persons stated being unemployed. Almost half of the interviewees, 10 persons, reported having higher education (university or college), followed by 3 who had completed the 8th grade in the school system of the GDR time, and 2 who had finished an apprenticeship programme. With regard to household status, 8 interviewees reported living in a single household, 5 were single mothers, and 4 lived in shared flats. Four respondents reported earnings of 0-500 Euros. More than half of the respondents (11) declared earnings from 500 to 1,000 Euros monthly. The two categories of 1,000 to 1,500 Euros and more than 2,000 Euros were represented by 4 respondents each, while earnings ranging from 1,500 and 2,000 Euros were reported by only one respondent. Only 7 respondents declared that they had a migration background or were immigrants themselves.

A final note on how we describe the characteristics of interviewees when using direct quotes from the conducted interviews: After each quote, we provide the abbreviated number of the interviewee: "Leo[number]" indicates that this interview was conducted in Leipzig Inner East; "Gru[number]" indicates that this quote stems from an interviewee living in Leipzig-Grünau. Characteristics such as age, gender, migration background, and income level of the respective interviewees can be found in the appendix. We deliberately decided to not give information on these general characteristics of interviewees after each quote. This decision is based on the acknowledgment of the limits that such general information provides about a person's identity, while suggesting that the categories are an appropriate representation. Both the concept of hyperdiversity (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014) and the debate about intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Lutz, 2014) make clear that early categorisations can lead to inappropriate and unnecessary stigmatisations. In order to clarify an interviewee's position, we instead provide characterisations necessary for understanding the specific quote in the text directly before or after the quote (e.g., "A foreign born young man highlighted that he feels uncomfortable in parts of Leipzig Inner East with a high proportion of migrants in public space: "*Quote*" [number]).

³ The difference between people with migration background and immigrants is that the former are Germans by nationality and the latter have non-German nationalities.

3 Housing choice and residential mobility

3.1 Introduction

Since 1989/90, Leipzig's housing market has undergone tremendous changes within a short period of time. These changes have been especially dynamic in the inner city: Whereas, in the 1990s, the centre was hit by a significant population loss (20% between 1989-1998) that resulted in high levels of housing vacancies at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s (20% vacancy rate of the total stock), the second half of the 2000s brought about a revitalization and new attractiveness of many inner-city districts. Since then, housing vacancies have decreased considerably and reurbanisation and – in some areas – gentrification are the predominant trends in inner-city districts. In contrast, large housing estates and outer city districts have, until the very recent past, been characterized by an ageing population and continuous population losses. This development also reshaped patterns of socio-spatial differentiation in the city as a whole and in its various localities. While residential mobility since the early 2000s has been high, due to the huge supply surplus and low rent levels, the housing market has been subjected to pressure in the 2010s, due to increasing in-migration and growing demand (currently, Leipzig is seeing a (re)growth rate of more than 2% per year). Rents and housing costs have risen continuously throughout the last years. Low-price housing has become scarce in the city and is concentrated in hitherto less appreciated areas, such as Grünau and Leipzig Inner East (Rink et al. 2011, Haase and Rink 2015).

With respect to the tenure distribution, Leipzig is a tenants' city: About 87% of the population are renting a flat; owner-occupied housing runs at 13% (Rink et al., 2014; Stadt Leipzig, 2015). In Leipzig Inner East, there is only a share of just 4% of owner-occupied housing; at the neighbourhood level, it varies between 2 and 7%. In Leipzig-Grünau, the share of owner-occupied housing is comparable with the overall city level (13%) ranging, at the neighbourhood level, from 0 to 53% (the latter share can be found in an old, single family settlement area located next to the large housing estate that stems from the pre-WWII era).

This chapter investigates the following questions for these two neighbourhoods: Why did people move to the diverse area they live in now? To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor? Or were other aspects (such as the availability of inexpensive dwellings) a much stronger motive for settling in the current area?

3.2 Why did the residents come to live here?

Housing choice is influenced by pragmatism and constraints. The process underlying why people move to a certain neighbourhood is influenced by pragmatic reasoning and combines various factors such as the need to make a speedy decision, price, location, networks, infrastructure, and the availability of housing. Most interviewees in our sample do not refer to specific preferences when they talk about the decision to move to the neighbourhood. However, if preferences are named at all, it is the location and connectedness of the place of residence. The location of the place is often regarded in relation to the existing infrastructure. A resident in a collective housing project⁴ says that the people who founded the housing project

⁴ A housing project ("Hausprojekt") is a form of collective housing where a group of people develops, lives and maintains a house together and shares certain facilities. In Leipzig, housing projects mainly are developed out of vacant buildings.

“... had many important things in their head. [...] these are all people who commute. Or many of them. And there needed to be the proximity to the station” (Leo04).

Other interview partners state that the place of residency had to be “close to the centre” (Leo01). For the interviewed residents of Leipzig Inner East, the proximity to the centre and to major transport infrastructures, mainly the main railway station, is one of the main reasons for choosing their place of residence. In Grünau, proximity to road infrastructures is an important factor. Another major factor for moving to the neighbourhood is the uncomplicated availability of housing and the high vacancy rate:

“[T]here were not many vacant housing opportunities to be considered [...] I believe one should not interpret this too much. If the house was in Schleußig, it would also be nice” (Leo04).

We came across similar statements in Grünau:

“And since many flats are vacant in Grünau, well there is the possibility of moving into a place somewhere immediately, this seemed natural for now” (Gru12).

By far, the most frequently mentioned reason to move to the respective neighbourhood is, nevertheless, the low rent level, as the following collection of statements illustrates:

“It’s reasonable.” (Gru12) or: “Rents for sure are an important factor why you don’t want to move away, certainly very reasonable here. “(Gru21) or: “It was reasonable. It was good.” (Leo01) or: “Well, I’m attached to this flat. It is also very reasonable in comparison” (Leo05).

Marriage, furthermore, is another motivation for people to move to certain places. Particularly in the sample of Grünau, we can discover what Kley (2011: 473) reports: “marriage and cohabitation are among the most important motives for long-distance moves in early adulthood”. A pensioner who moved to the area after retirement, describes:

“I used to live in West Germany. I have married a woman from Leipzig and moved to her place” (Gru01).

Another younger resident from Grünau explains:

“I am originally from Hannover. I got to know my husband one and a half years ago and then I moved in with him” (Gru20).

A similar motivation is confirmed by another interviewee:

“Well, I moved here in April ’95 because – to my husband. He has been living here since – its first occupancy” (Gru21).

Additionally, marriage as a reason to move to a certain area is further underpinned in a mobility survey that was carried out in Leipzig in 2014 (see Welz et al., 2014).

Furthermore, personal networks of residents play an important role in the decision process. In particular, the proximity to family and friends motivates people to move to a certain neighbourhood, a point highlighted by many interview partners (e.g. Gru16, Gru20, Leo01). To give an example from Grünau, a mother of two states:

“And then the proximity to my parents. When you have family, this is a crucial factor, of course. And, my former surrogate grandma still is in Grünau” (Gru12).

The role and types of personal networks in the neighbourhoods will be further elaborated in Section 6.2.

In many cases, the decision to move to a neighbourhood is influenced by a combination of the mentioned factors, such as low rent levels, availability of flats, and partnership. Additionally, former ties to the neighbourhood are important for moving back to Grünau:

“[I] grew up in the West [...] Married a woman from Leipzig who lived a few blocks away in the high rise [...] and we thought of moving to Hamburg. That was too expensive for us. Then we thought of moving to Berlin [...] that was a bit too expensive. [...] And then we thought: Where can we optimally spend our retirement? [...] Leipzig-Grünau, the place you came from” (Gru01).

Some residents describe personal or institutional restrictions as crucial factors for staying in a certain neighbourhood:

“[...] because I had trouble with my first boyfriend, [...] slipped into back rent, because of my ex. And yes, now I'm in the flat [...] those from the employment agency pay for the rent” (Gru22).

Not only interviewees from Grünau reported on this issue; interviewees from Leipzig Inner East also suffer institutional restrictions bounding them to a certain neighbourhood or preventing them from leaving.

In our sample, interviewees mention very pragmatic reasons that guide the decision processes to move to a certain neighbourhood in Leipzig, a finding that does not correspond with other case studies (e.g., in Zurich) in which people deliberately chose a certain neighbourhood due to its diversity and the presence of many different groups. The diversity of the respective neighbourhood has never been mentioned as being a pull factor to move to either Leipzig-Grünau or Leipzig Inner East. Nevertheless, many mention that the socio-economic and/or ethnic diversity of the neighbourhoods influences their wellbeing in both positive and negative ways. It has, however, not been a consideration in their choice for a place of residence. An interviewee who grew up and still lives in Leipzig Inner East, complains about the influx of ethnic businesses to the neighbourhood:

“Like in former times, the small corner shops. I liked it then. We need more German shops again. And now, there is one Döner restaurant after the other” (Leo08).

Others, however, came to appreciate the heterogeneity of the neighbourhood. A recent immigrant states in this context:

“My partner and I, we always wanted to move to a quarter that is not homogeneously German. I think this is nice. Well, I feel very well here” (Leo04).

3.3 Moving to the present neighbourhood: reflections

This section evaluates mobility processes of our interviewees by analysing why residents want, or at times, are forced, to stay put and why some of them want to move out of the neighbourhood. In the following we will analyse how respondents reflect on their situation of living in the case study areas, how they evaluate their decision to move to the area, and whether they are dissatisfied with their situation and wish to move somewhere else. Hence, rather than talking about moving to the neighbourhood as an improvement or not, respondents shared their reflections on why it was a good or bad decision to move into the case study areas.

When neighbourhood change is appreciated, the decision to move to the neighbourhood is confirmed as correct. A perceived positive neighbourhood development during the time of residency often results in a satisfaction with the neighbourhood choice. This perspective is particularly found amongst younger people and those with higher education levels.

For interviewees living in Leipzig Inner East, the recent upgrading of the area reinforces the satisfaction with the neighbourhood. Assurances by people they trust further confirm this: *“Another friend of mine, who at the moment is looking for a housing project or some other alternative forms of housing, said, ‘you live in the East, gosh, how cool’”* (Leo01). Positive neighbourhood development furthermore includes the openings of new bars and organic food stores through which the neighbourhood becomes more appealing (e.g. Leo01, Leo16, Leo16). Another example that interviewees gave for improvements in the neighbourhood are new gardening projects and their potential for fostering diversity:

„Especially such an urban gardening project, in my opinion, can be very interesting for families, young people, also the elderly. In certain respects, it gets more colourful, which I think is good” (Leo13).

In Grünau, improvement of the neighbourhood is connected with infrastructural enhancements such as additional green spaces and urban redevelopment: *“It got greener and now we don’t want to move away from here”* (Gru03). In various interviews (e.g. Gru02, Gru04, Gru05, Gru06, Gru13), the resumption of service of the public transport infrastructure connecting the area with the city centre (S-Bahn) is also seen as a major improvement within the last years: *“And since the S-Bahn is here, it has gotten even better”* (Gru04).

Those residents who already moved to Grünau during GDR times refer especially to the improvement in terms of the new housing stock, compared to older buildings they had lived in that had lacked good heating and insulation, and also had poor sanitary conditions. In addition, the better relationship with the neighbours has been mentioned as an improvement. Generally, residents often referred to the bad reputation of their respective neighbourhood. Most of them think that the reputation is much worse than it actually is: *“Those who speak badly about Grünau don’t know it. It’s – in principle, it is bullshit”* (Gru11).

People consider moving out of their neighbourhood when they feel uncomfortable with their dwelling. Studies in neighbourhood research have argued that “the desire to relocate was widespread, and that ‘complaints’ about the dwelling and the housing environment explained a great deal of this desire. ‘Complaints’ referred mainly to the size of the dwelling and were found to be rooted in the changing needs due to a changing family composition” (Kley, 2011: 471). In both of our case study areas, we found similar reasons why people moved in or out of the neighbourhood:

“Well, I came to Grünau in ’81, [...] in fact I had lived in Thekla before and we had two kids and the flat was too small and then I moved from Thekla to Grünau heavy-heartedly and today I wouldn’t want to move back. First I moved to a 4-room flat, afterwards into a 3-room flat with the kids. Finally, I moved into a 2-room flat because the size of the family changed” (Gru16).

Interview partners from Leipzig Inner East also responded similarly.

Apart from the role of a changing demand due to family size, the “anticipation of financial, social and emotional costs play a role” (Kley, 2011: 474) in considerations to move out of a neighbourhood. Our case study shows that, even if people have the desire to move out of the neighbourhood, personal restrictions, often a lack of economic resources, prevent them from doing so: *“I do not feel comfortable in the neighbourhood [...] My favourite neighbourhood would be Schleußig but I cannot afford to move there”* (Gru08); another example illustrates: *“If I could move away, I would move away”* (Leo20). A lack of economic resources is often also related to the dependence on social services to pay for rent and the associated restrictions this imposes on moving away: An interviewee in Leipzig Inner East states:

“My case officer from the employment agency [...] I think they simply don’t want [...] Because I don’t want anything impossible, I don’t want an expensive flat, I even don’t want

money for moving, like for the transportation of furniture or something. I just want to move, nothing more. That matters a lot to me at the moment. Actually, I'm quite unhappy at the moment" (Leo21).

Interviewees who are, potentially, financially capable of moving out, nevertheless stay in the neighbourhood, even though they are somewhat disappointed. Reasons for not moving away can vary. For example, for Gru07, a self-employed woman, the proximity to the highway infrastructure and house ownership are more important reasons to stay than dissatisfaction with the residential environment. Gru12, a single mother, misses the closer relationship to her neighbours in the area where she lived previously:

"I think we are Gesellschaftsmenschen [meaning here: socially active] who like to do stuff. This is what we miss in Grünau [...] I feel like Grünau is a lazy neighbourhood. And I remember that, in Lindenau, contacts always developed within the house, regardless of age. We always had a little chat. This just happened without really knowing each other or spending time together. It was just talking and I remember that I brought up the mail to the older lady. Very small social issues that I very much miss here" (Gru12).

Despite her dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood, Gru12 stays put. She grew up in Grünau and her parents still live there. Six years ago, she decided to move back temporarily because she had to move out of her former flat. Nevertheless, the temporary became permanent, although she does not feel very comfortable in the neighbourhood.

Generally, interviewees in our sample do not refer to diversity in its various forms (for instance, the coexistence of older people with young professionals, of Germans with migrants, etc.) when they evaluate their decisions for moving to the area they live in.

3.4 Conclusions

The reasons for residents' housing choices are varied. We have shown that, generally, a combination of pragmatic location decisions and personal decision patterns characterizes people's residential mobility behaviour. Particularly the rent levels of a place, the size of the household, and the availability of affordable housing impact on the decision to stay in or leave a neighbourhood. Although residents describe a socio-economic and ethnic diversity of their neighbourhood that affects their well-being in the neighbourhood, it was never mentioned as a specific reason to move to or out of a place. Instead, personal reasons and resources usually determine the decision to move.

4 Perceptions of the diversity in the neighbourhood

4.1 Introduction

In our study, we are investigating perceptions of diversity in two specific urban areas. In order to understand how people perceive the diversity of their residential environment, it is important to consider the characteristics of urban neighbourhoods (such as the built environment, architecture, social infrastructure, transport connectivity, location, green areas, accessibility and quality of public spaces), the composition of the population (in terms of e.g., social, ethnic, economic. indicators), as well as the changes over time. Therefore, it is crucial to recall that the two areas under investigation, Leipzig Grünau and Leipzig Inner East, have experienced considerable changes of both their physical and social structures within the last 25 years. Both areas saw massive population losses (and subsequent housing vacancies) in the 1990s, and various forms of urban restructuring. While Leipzig Inner East has seen waves of reurbanisation and (mainly young) immigration since around 2000, Grünau has seen massive demolition of housing and experienced population stabilization only within recent years. Stabilization and migration to the area have

brought new groups of residents, accompanied by diversification and rejuvenation of its residential structure. Both areas have also experienced an increasing fragmentation of their residential populations.

In this chapter, we investigate how residents think about the area they live in and, more concretely, whether they see their neighbourhood's diversity as an asset or a liability.

4.2 Description of the boundaries of the neighbourhood

Before going into details of people's perceptions of their neighbourhood boundaries, it is useful to present some contextual clarifications: The German term for neighbourhood differs markedly from its Anglo-Saxon counterpart. *Nachbarschaft* refers to a smaller and more personal context than the English concept of "neighbourhood". Therefore we introduce four terms that we use in our report:

- When referring to the *research area*, we mean Leipzig Inner East and Leipzig Grünau. Both areas comprise several districts.
- A *district* describes an administrative unit. Interviewees usually do not refer to the districts when they talk about their residential area because of its administrative character. Hence, we do not use this term unless we are referring to a specific administrative unit.
- The term *neighbourhood* (*Wohngebiet*) describes the area where people spend their daily lives. It includes short distances to shopping facilities and areas "just around the corner". Compared to the residential environment (see below), the neighbourhood usually includes more streets, more groups of people, including strangers, and even contact with community building actors, in a spatially larger area than the residential environment.
- The *residential environment* or *Nachbarschaft* refers to the smallest and most private residential unit. People use the term *Nachbarschaft* to describe the unit closest to their house. This relates to just one or two houses besides their own place of residence. *Nachbarn* (neighbours) are the people who live next door or on the next floor.

While Grünau is considered to be a coherent area, Leipzig Inner East is perceived as being rather fragmented. In our interpretation, one reason behind this differentiated perception of the two neighbourhoods is the built environment. In Grünau, we have a rather homogeneous built environment consisting of prefabricated housing stock built in the 1970s and 80s in the GDR period that symbolises the district. Leipzig Inner East, in contrast, consists of a variety of built structures including old built-up housing stock from the turn of the 19th to the 20th century (Wilhelminian period) as well as GDR-era housing infills. In the perception of residents, both districts have anchor symbols that symbolise the neighbourhood. For Leipzig Inner East, this is a specific street, the *Eisenbahnstraße*, which became a symbol for immigration to the city. For Grünau, the research area is symbolised by GDR housing stock. Grünau is perceived as one coherent, connected district that consists of smaller housings complexes that have their own infrastructural centres.

Many residents refer to the entire case study area of Grünau, without differentiating between the districts, when they talk about the image or general aspects of Grünau. The perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood are related to the architectural design of this large-scale housing estate. Especially older residents in Grünau (e.g., Gru01, Gru02, Gru15) understand their housing environment in terms of more small-scale spatial units and refer to and subdivide their housing environment into housing complexes (in German *Wohnkomplexe*, in the following WKs), a construct used in the GDR housing period in the 1970s and 1980s. These complexes are residential areas with a specific social infrastructure that included certain facilities such as schools, kindergartens, medical care and shopping facilities. Interview partners distinguish between their own and other

Wks, whereby the other Wks are perceived as different from their own, with regard to the social structure. Younger, long-term residents aged 20 to 30, as well as in-migrants, instead of referring to Wks, describe their neighbourhood along landmarks and places of everyday practices such as shopping facilities, parks, kindergartens, or playgrounds. One of the major reference points of neighbourhood interaction and activity is the central shopping mall, the *Allee Centre*, regardless of the spatial distance to the residential location.

Generally, residents in Leipzig Inner East describe their own and other neighbourhoods as small-scale spatial units. Therefore, we identified a number of neighbourhoods that people distinguish between. Leipzig Inner East is thus not perceived as one coherent area but rather as fragmented, and consisting of several neighbourhoods:

“I am aware that Leipzig Inner East is spatially larger than where we move around in our everyday lives [...] However, this is my Leipzig Inner East” (Leo16).

To describe the boundaries of their personal neighbourhoods, younger residents refer to adjacent streets, as well as parks, shopping facilities, and crossroads, which is quite similar to Leipzig Grünau. Older residents found it difficult to describe the boundaries of their neighbourhood and stated that they are familiar with a rather large area of several districts. The role of the small-scale neighbourhoods for everyday practices will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5.

The fragmented perception of neighbourhoods combines physical and social (sometimes even ethnic) structures in order to distinguish sub-spaces in the neighbourhood. When interviewees were asked to describe the boundaries of their neighbourhood, we find small-scale fragmented descriptions of people’s *residential environments*, marked either by streets or landmarks such as parks, a lake, a shopping street. In line with Van Kempen (2014: 103) who suggests to “not approach neighbourhood as a closed space [...] in times of increased mobility”, we did not offer a spatial definition of neighbourhoods but instead asked the interviewees to describe their neighbourhood through their personal feeling. We discovered that the mental maps of their neighbourhood are very fragmented for Leipzig Inner East and – in a slightly different way – also for Grünau.

In Leipzig Inner East, we identified several neighbourhoods that mismatch with district borders. People associate different groups of people with these different neighbourhoods. For instance, while the entire district of Leipzig Reudnitz is perceived as consisting of students, Leipzig Ostplatz – an area located within Reudnitz – is perceived as consisting of mostly middle-class people (Leo13). In addition to the socio-spatial differentiation, a physical diversity in the perception of the area can also be identified. Leo04, who moved to Leipzig Inner East quite recently, shares her understanding of her neighbourhood as being full of contrasts:

“I still know too little about the quarter. But I think, obviously there are two worlds: on this side and on that side of Rabet. And I have the feeling, left of Eisenbahnstraße – Neustadt-Neuschönefeld is just a small block, isn’t it? [...] It is very, very refurbished here and chic and very bourgeois and clean. And on the other side of Rabet, Konradstraße and so on, that is atmospherically more left behind and more gloomy and, I have the impression, a bit more difficult” (Leo04).

Such a fragmented perception of neighbourhoods combines both physical and social structures in Leipzig Inner East and oftentimes is illustrated by spatial descriptions such as “*in front of/behind*” Rabet (Leo04) or “*the beginning/the back of*” Eisenbahnstraße (Leo08). Although physical differentiation does not play a particularly important role in Grünau, we still recognise similar socio-spatial differentiations in this research area as well:

“High income earners on the Kulkwitz lake, Hartz IV [social welfare] all along the road Stuttgarter Allee, asylum seekers way back in WK8, Schönauer Straße with maladjusted adolescents and problematic social groups” (Gru22).

The maps in Figure 4.1 visualize the described neighbourhood boundaries of the respondents. These (cognitive) maps show the respective research areas. All individual respondent perceptions of the boundaries of their neighbourhood highlight the small-scale spatial units people refer to with regard to their neighbourhood. In Grünau (red) the perception of the neighbourhood is relatively homogenous across the interviewees and corresponds largely with the border of the research area and the administrative borders. In Leipzig Inner East (blue), however, the perception of the neighbourhood boundaries is much more fragmented and heterogeneous across the sample. There are some “blind spots” in the case study area that were not mentioned at all as part of the residents’ local neighbourhood.

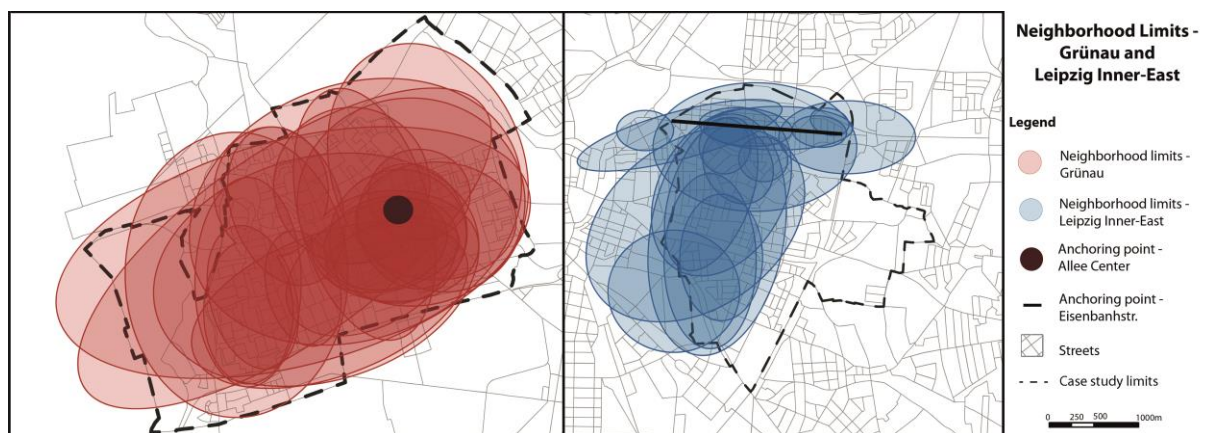


Figure 4.1: Perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood: Leipzig Grünau (left) and Leipzig Inner East (right).

4.3 Perception of neighbours

In this section, we describe the social composition of the neighbourhood from the perspective of the residents. The first part is descriptive and highlights the perception of different groups in the two case study areas. Subsequently, we present overlapping findings for the two case study areas.

Leipzig Grünau

A large and growing share of seniors characterizes the age structure in Leipzig Grünau. Nevertheless, the share of young families has always been higher than the city’s average. Long-term residents refer to the heavy population loss and describe a declining liveliness. It is further reported that, recently, the estate has increasing numbers of young families with children. Fluctuation and declining social contacts are an issue in interviewees’ perceptions. A good neighbourhood is associated with residents who reside in the area for decades; high fluctuation in tenancy is perceived as uncomfortable because *“we don’t even know who our neighbours are”* (Gru16).

Interviewees describe their neighbours as *“normal people”* (Gru17) and regarding this, they speak about a mix of professions: *“I’d say engineers, doctors, normal workers, pensioners. Everyone lives here, it’s mixed.”* (Gru02). Hence, being employed is perceived as normal, in particular by seniors. Both older and younger long-term residents frequently mention the large number of unemployed people addicted to alcohol (many interviewees call them *Assis*, which can be translated as antisocial persons and carries connotations of underclass or being a drop-out).

Interaction between migrants and other residents is relatively rare or characterized by suspicion. Gru20, a recent in-migrant reports being frequently confronted with insults. Especially older people insult her *“because they probably have more prejudices”*. While some residents report not having

any issues with migrants living close by, others directly express their aversion (e.g. Gru21, Gru22, Gru23, Gru24). However, interestingly, the (very recent) influx of immigrants has not been a major issue in the interviews, even though it has been a prominent topic for stakeholders and the previously analysed governance arrangements in Grünau (cf. Grossmann et al., 2014). It seems to be a taboo to openly express discomfort. Many interviewees do not know how to speak about migrants and react evasively and/or speechlessly.⁵

Leipzig Inner East

The perception of the social composition of Leipzig Inner East is more heterogeneous, compared to Leipzig Grünau, in terms of ethnicity and age structure. Interviewees make use of different categories to describe the groups they perceive in the neighbourhood. Concerning age groups, interviewees refer to children, students and seniors; concerning social groups, they refer to deprived and underprivileged groups; concerning ethnicity, interviewed persons refer to migrants in general, Russians and Turks in particular, but also to Germans.

With regard to the social composition of Leipzig Inner East, certain neighbourhoods are linked to certain groups. For example *Eisenbahnstraße* is a street generally linked to migrant groups. Other neighbourhoods are characterized by many children and less seniors.

Interviewed migrants see their native German neighbours as senior long-term residents who eventually got used to the fact of being surrounded by migrants: *“they live with it, now they’ve got used to it”* (Leo3). Such quotes relate to the implicit understanding that German long-term residents previously had more difficulties in getting along with the presence of migrants than they have now. Well-educated in-migrating younger residents among the interviewees, on the other hand, expressed their interest in having contacts with migrants.

Interviewees from different backgrounds perceive native German inhabitants in different ways. On the one hand, people with a migration background perceive them as *“normal”* neighbours (Leo03). On the other hand, those without a migration background perceive local German inhabitants as being socially frustrated and less educated. This relates to the specific history of Leipzig Inner East. After the political turnaround in 1989 and its consequences Leipzig Inner East experienced a massive population loss of better-situated inhabitants. Therefore, mostly residents with less opportunities for moving away and relatively piecemeal employment biographies remained in the area. Today, these people are perceived as having a low level of education and as long-term unemployed and are, therefore, upwardly socially mobile to a lesser extent (see also Chapter 7).

Furthermore, some neighbourhoods are perceived as being spatially divided also in terms of the housing stock. Interviewees frequently associate certain types of buildings with certain types of residents: The GDR housing stock is occupied by senior residents whereas young and hip students live in older buildings:

“In Kohlgartenstraße, for instance, it is spatially divided. Here it is even divided in the same street, to some extent, because on the one side of the street you find GDR-prefabricated housing and on the other side you find old housing stock. And this is exactly how the people differed from each other and that was pretty incredible” (Leo02).

According to our interviewees (e.g. Leo02, Leo06, Leo13), students have only recently started to settle in Leipzig Inner East and are, thus, seen as a newly emerging group in the neighbourhoods. The fact that they increasingly come to Leipzig Inner East is seen as positive from the perspective of some of our interviewees because *“something is happening in the neighbourhood”* (Leo03).

⁵ We assume that other forms of interview methods like focus group discussion would have brought further insights on emotional and personal attitudes in this context.

In the following second part, an analysis is developed that compares the perceptions of different groups in both neighbourhoods.

Interviewees apply generalized terms when they talk about groups in the neighbourhood, irrespective of including or excluding themselves from these groups. In order to come up with their own categorisation and group specifications, we purposely did not provide our interviewees with certain categories they should refer to (e.g. foreigners, migrants, etc.). In both case study areas, interviewees make use of the following distinctions to describe ‘the other’: ‘the Germans’, ‘the foreigners’, ‘the socially disadvantaged’, ‘the students’, ‘the pensioners’, ‘the migrants’. Migrants are designated according to their origin, regardless of any precise knowledge of the place of origin, as a statement from Grünau shows. Gru08 talks about “*the Albanians* and “*the gypsies*”. Migrants refer to themselves as migrants or as the foreigners. An example from Leipzig Inner East (by Leo09, originally from Zambia) is illustrative: “*I do connect Leipzig Inner East with the migrants*” (Leo09). Some migrants stated that they know each other in the area:

“They know my mother, they know where I belong to, which nationality I have, which religion I belong to and who I am. ... With foreigners, it’s like that, they don’t need to have contact with each other. We know directly to which race, where they belong to, only by appearance” (Leo03).

Studies in other cities find similar types of small-scale segregation (see study of the Greek team for example). Forrest & Kearns (2001) argue that gender, age, and religion serve as mechanisms for distinction, a fact that we could also identify in our sample. Generally, groups are isolated from one another. Homogenous groups talk about ‘the other’ groups indicating that they are different from themselves. Furthermore, when Germans talk about Germans we could also identify that they make distinctions through applying structural features like ‘poor, alcohol-addicts, uneducated’.

The German term *bunt*, which means ‘colourful’, is the most common or least ‘contested’ attribute for people when they talk about diversity. Interviewees use the term “*bunt*” basically within four different contexts:

Firstly, *bunt* is a term for social mix that also expresses tolerance towards various groups. The changing composition experienced in the neighbourhood is described as becoming more colourful. Colourful refers to a mix of individuals or groups distinguished by certain attributes of which ethnicity, socio-economic status, age and religion are the aspects addressed most often. Additionally, interviewees apply the term colourful to avoid devaluation of certain groups or individuals in the neighbourhood. At the same time, colourful is also a term used by politicians and city administration to positively describe the direction the city strives for: “*Leipzig is colourful and tolerant*” (see also documents of WP4 Grossmann et al. 2014). Leo01, a young woman states:

“Well, here I think it is relatively student- and family-based. Where I used to live before, in Neustadt-Neuschönefeld, well, there were a lot more poor, migrants, socially deprived, but also pensioners who were somewhere in between; nevertheless, there were also students; so it was colourful indeed” (Leo01).

Bunt here is not intended as a euphemism but rather as an expression of political correctness and always used with the connotation of “*I am open to it, I am OK with it, I am tolerant*”. Secondly, *bunt* is an alternative term for describing mix that cannot be characterized in other words:

“Well, nowadays, at Neustädter Markt, there are many artists. A lot of students are coming. There are also foreign fellow citizens; it is pretty colourful, many families and so forth. I

think it is difficult to delimit. Well, I wouldn't, like, I don't, well – well, I think it is easier to describe Plagwitz and Lindenau, Schleußig as well” (Leo14).

Thirdly, *bunt* is used in situations when interviewees are lost for words in the willingness to reply politically correctly, and attempt not to devalue. People also possibly use this wording to avoid talking about problems and conflicts. In various parts of the interview, Leo01 is struggling for words when it comes to her perception of diversity:

“I think it is mixed, according to the people, well, it's not insincere, or like that, well, somehow totally, how it is, colourful ... It makes for a positive, very normal neighbourhood impression, somehow, not that I want to put it into a category somehow” (Leo 01).

Fourthly, the term *bunt* or colourful is employed when people describe a diversity which, in their perception, is out of the ordinary or something that is not usual: A middle-class couple with an academic background report in this respect:

“It still is a colourful mix, but it is more pleasant now, a little bit more colourful. Previously it was – well can I express this? Normal is such a foolish term, but well” (Leo16).

When asked what they meant by normal, the answer was:

“No Hipsters from Südvorstadt. And, well, on the other side [...] where some migrants and definitely also the socially deprived live; somehow in-between [this] I would say is normal. Exactly, somehow in between.” (Leo16).

What this quote of Leo16 explains is that a neighbourhood understood as *bunt* – meaning diverse – is actually not something that is considered as normal. Diversity is perceived as being out of the ordinary.

There is a discrepancy between the personal opinion about certain groups and the personal relationship to residential neighbours belonging to this group. For instance, the relation to the Russian family living next doors can be good, or at least pragmatic, as one interviewee explains:

“Well, in my house, in particular I would say, only normal people. [...] I believe there are also two Russian families, but they are inconspicuously ordinary” (Gru21).

Van Eijk (2012: 3013) describes these kinds of relationships with residential neighbours as “friendly relations”. However, the same interviewee refers to the presence of other ethnic groups in the surrounding neighbourhood as an indicator for the neighbourhood's decline:

“The open youth centre, Völkerfreundschaft, very sad, I went by the other day, there were only foreign children – I am not so much against foreigners – but still. One has some prejudices, but it is sad, it [the area] degenerates a little through that.” (Gru21).

With this perception the interviewee keeps “boundaries, differences and stereotyping intact” (Van Eijk, 2012: 3013). This example demonstrates that the relationship to the family living next door can be positive while, at the same time, the narrative about foreign social groups can be negative.

4.4 Perception of the neighbourhood: positive and negative aspects

This section concentrates, in the first part, on perceptions of change in the two case study areas. In the second part, positive and negative aspects of how people perceive their neighbourhood will be analysed in terms of the aspects they refer to.

In **Leipzig Grünau**, older interview partners placed emphasis on the residential communities of the GDR, which they describe as (formerly) well-functioning social units. They describe the remainders of old neighbourly networks. In the early days of Grünau, the residential composition was characterized by relatively homogenous age groups (e.g., young parents) with similar lifestyles (e.g., working class). The old communities contrast with today's residential communities that are marked by fluctuating compositions. This fluctuation is related to an influx of young population. However, older interviewees are happy about the influx of young people. For them, this influx also marks the end of population losses; population growth is described as a momentum that could be followed by new investments into the neighbourhood.

In Grünau, a mix of occupations but with similar incomes characterized former housing communities of the GDR period. Furthermore, there was a mix of educational levels. After 1989/90, however, this specific character of the residential environments broke down; many people moved away and the neighbourhoods, formerly characterized by residents with similar income, now are home to groups with a range of incomes.

Most of the older residents report in a very positive way about their residential environment and state that they *"never had any problems"* (Gru15). We interpret this as a counterpoint to the stigmatization of Grünau. They used to and still do find any required infrastructures and services in close proximity which, for them, is one of the most important aspects of being satisfied with living in the area. For them it is difficult to understand why the districts in Grünau are still stigmatised as an area where poor and deprived people live.

In the perception of interviewees, negative aspects of Grünau are mostly related to social deprivation of German people who drink on the street and do not work, as well as to untidy streets filled with rubbish.

The fact that **Leipzig Inner East** is and has been changing considerably is also clearly recognized by the inhabitants. Interviewees particularly mention the influx of young people (students and non-students), creatives, German resettlers from the former USSR, and migrants in general. Long-term residents emphasize that the population of the area has always been mixed, in the past and today. The composition of this mix, however, changed. This has been observed for certain places like the park area Rabet, which is currently characterized by the strong presence of students and migrant families. Interviewees generally appreciate the change towards a younger, international population and describe this form of diversification as pleasing: *"It is a good mix [today]"* (Leo03).

The change was also perceived with respect to the emergence of new shops that did not exist before (e.g., selling organic food), or bars for young people and *"sub-cultural places"* (Leo01). In the past, some areas were characterized by a strong presence of German junkies; today, however, crime is associated with Arabic and German youngsters. In contrast to its bad image, younger interviewees report that friends perceive Leipzig Inner East as *"cool and hip"* (Leo1). GDR housing has been renovated and parks were regenerated. Interviewees described the Bülowviertel neighbourhood as a good example for how the area has been changing in a good way: today there are less abandoned and dilapidated buildings; instead, houses have been renovated by young immigrants. Generally, some interviewees perceive today's Leipzig Inner East as a better place that is *"happier, pleasant, colourful, nice"* (Leo2).

Feeling comfortable depends on the presence of peer-group members⁶. Residents especially feel positive about their neighbourhood when people who could potentially belong to their own personal network are living close by; hence wellbeing in the neighbourhood is greater when peer-group members are present. To illustrate this, a student in her late twenties, explains:

⁶See also chapter 6 that emphasizes that our interview partners have rather homogeneous networks.

“Well I moved, because I grew lonely and I also didn’t like the neighbours in my building that much; well, there were few young people, some of them right-wing, some simply too old. And then I moved into a flat share. ... after one semester, in February, March 2009, effectively. And that was very nice. Then social life began, so to say. You went out from time to time and you saw some things and got to know some things. Also in the quarter. They didn’t go to the South or so, but rather you went around the corner” (Leo02).

A long-term resident who has lived in one of Grünau’s housing complexes for 30 years points in the same direction:

“That is Wohnkomplex 3. Yes. That’s the best one. That is the best residential area in Grünau, there are many long-time residents who moved in 30, 31 years ago; this was built 31 years ago, the building, and many have lived here right from the start” (Gru04).

Conversely, if people have the impression that like-minded people belonging to the same peer group are absent, they tend to feel uncomfortable. Especially for long-term residents, a changing composition of residents can have negative effects on their sense of wellbeing in the neighbourhood. Studies from the Netherlands have shown that “long-term residents who have seen the area transform into a multicultural neighbourhood (Reijndorp, 2004) are uncomfortable with increasing diversity and the changes that this has brought” (Van Eijk, 2012: 3020). This is related to both the social and the built environment. In our case study areas, both young and older people express their discomfort with the changing composition of the neighbourhood by explaining that German small-scale infrastructure is disappearing (stationery shops, butchers etc.) and instead more and more Kebab restaurants are visible. The disappearance of certain shops is described as negative and as a loss of peer group-related built environment and infrastructure.

Social and green infrastructures, as well as the availability of a diversity of services, contribute to a positive perception. When these are missing, interviewees lament. In Leipzig Grünau, the proximity to nature is especially perceived as a benefit. Furthermore, the generally good infrastructure is highlighted, as Gru01, a retired resident, elucidates: *“There are nicer places than Leipzig-Grünau. But what is really nice to have is the great infrastructure”*. Furthermore, interviewees frequently mention positively the number of shopping facilities, access to public transport, and access to medical care. However, restaurants are currently lacking. Older residents who moved into the area in the late 1970s and early 1980s with their children report about their happiness to have moved into the flats from relatively dilapidated areas of the city. In Grünau, they found kindergartens and school for their children close by.

Newcomers to Leipzig Inner East see advantages in the growing diversity of the neighbourhood, especially when they connect local diversity to the food provided in the restaurants and supermarkets in the area. Migrants’ shops and restaurants are highlighted as an enrichment and as of how diversity becomes visible. A resident of a housing project, states:

“All the culinary delicacies are met with great pleasure. Well, there are many gourmands in the building. So, our barbecue nights were not prepared with pork sausages but somehow with Köfte and a lot of lamb. Well, I think, that is much enjoyed. Right, we have many butchers and halal butchers, and greengrocers. And also, there is an old traditional butcher around the corner, up front, which is also quite cool” (Leo04).

It is particularly the young, educated residents who enjoy a positive neighbourhood development and the appearance of “more pubs” (Leo01), and the arrival of “more young people” (Leo16). The sense of well-being here is strongly connected to a growing supply of services for groups they feel comfortable with.

Conflicts between different groups, stigmatization, crime and the feeling of insecurity are negative aspects in the perception of the neighbourhood. In particular, conflicts between

different age groups are frequently referred to. Narratives about youngsters who do not behave in line with middle-class values are common:

“We have young people here, don’t we? There are also people that disturb each other, because they make a racket in the evenings in front of the Allee Centre.” (Gru01).

“That can also be a bit spooky at times. When there are so many teenagers with bottles of beer and big dogs molesting other people.” (Gru15).

A young couple with one child, explicates in this respect:

“We had youngsters in front of our door, standing in the hallway, waiting for the younger ones, to rip their phone off, run after them, and beat them up. Well, I tell myself, after 11pm you are not safe around here at all. [...] Crime is pretty high. Yeah, well compared to the old days – I grew up in Grünau – Compared to the old days, criminality has increased” (Gru22).

Crime and feelings of insecurity are present in both case study areas: *“Well at night, I’ve heard, you shouldn’t walk along here. Well, many elderly women have been mugged.” (Gru16).* One interviewee reports about drugs that are given to children and youngsters in the area. This is also a major topic in Leipzig Inner East. There, interviewees especially perceive disadvantaged residents who tend to move towards the criminal milieu as negative.

Moreover, in Grünau, xenophobia has reportedly been a major concern for interviewees with a migration background. A young woman reports:

„Insults, frequently. I had to face them, unfortunately. Well, from older people, more likely because they are more biased, I think. Um, yes, looks like that is what you get all the time. Well, I also get that in Grünau, but it is different nevertheless” (Gru20).

Furthermore we could also identify resentment against migrants in our interviews. Gru21, mother of 2 children, explains that she gets along with migrants pretty well as long as they have no direct negative impact on the development of her children. With respect to migrants, she states:

“But in the surrounding area, meaning the supermarket and in front of the Allee Centre, or in front of the Völkerfreundschaft youth centre, there one can see things. How can I explain? Well, not the clientele that one likes. Well, at the playground, there are [...] many people who I didn’t want my kids to get in contact with. That is why they don’t go to school in Grünau” (Gru21).

Both neighbourhoods have been stigmatized as being bad places to stay in Leipzig. These narratives can also be found in our interviews. In Leipzig Inner East, *Eisenbahnstraße*, in particular, has a bad reputation that is described in the narratives of some interviewees as an area perceived as particularly dangerous: Leo01 states: *„Ok, maybe I sometimes felt quite scared on Eisenbahnstraße“* and Leo16 explains: *“Eisenbahnstraße is a No-Go“*. Furthermore Leo23, a migrant herself, explains that, due to the influx of migrants, the street no longer is as it used to be:

“In former times, Eisenbahnstraße was busy, impressive and nice and cosy during GDR times. Then many moved out and then the foreigners came. There are good foreigners and very criminal ones” (Leo23).

However, many amongst our interviewees see the bad reputation of the areas as out-dated and not true. For the case of Leipzig Inner East, Leo19, for example, illustrates: *“Well many say that Eisenbahnstraße is bad. I don’t think it’s that bad”*. Similarly, Gru11 describes for Grünau:

“Those who talk bad about Grünau, don’t know the area. [...] People who misbehave can be found in Grünau, and also on Eisenbahnstraße, but also in North [Leipzig] or the South” (Gru11).

The interviewees perceive diversity differently: in some cases, they defined it as “desirable”, in others, as rather “undesirable”. Various studies on social mix in neighbourhoods reveal that people are drawn to (especially gentrifying) neighbourhoods due to their diversity. Especially the middle classes enjoy “the presence of working-class residents and ethnic minorities” and see this as “an opportunity to ‘learn’ about other cultures” (Blokland & Van Eijk 2010: 317). While some of our interview partners show a similar attitude towards migrants in Leipzig Inner East – Leo04 states, for instance, that she hopes to reach out to migrants with the housing project she is involved in – most interviewees refer to these groups in a negative way. They feel disturbed in their daily lives just by noticing them drinking in the streets or in front of supermarkets, and not working. In our case study, we understand the presence of deprived, less advantaged social groups as a form of undesirable diversity.

“The people who come here are a bunch of Assis [antisocial persons] and they spread out. I, for example, don’t like to go to the Konsum [supermarket] anymore. (...) Because there, drunkards hang out in front of the entrance” (Gru08).

Some interviewees express an interest to get in contact with other groups (e.g.: migrants and newcomers).

“I hope we manage to not just rotate around ourselves [with the housing project], but can be an inspiration for the district. And this means: Not only for the German population, but, in contrast, for people who tend to withdraw to their flats: Migrants, newcomers” (Leo04).

This does not apply to the disadvantaged German population. In this and other parts of the interview, Leo04 clearly states with whom she desires to have more contact. The capacity to choose and being consciously selective in making contacts is an expression of power relations that are embedded in the neighbourhood (Bridge et. al, 2014: 1138). Not only does the interviewee choose whom she gets in contact with. She also expresses her lack of understanding for certain behavioural attitudes of residents that she does not like to interact with. Bridge et al. highlight, in their study, that the undesired residents are not expected to move out “but rather to control their behaviour in ways that are compatible with middle-class norms and expectations” (1138). To illustrate this, the following quote needs to be considered:

„And, what really stands out right now are socially deprived young families. Well, Germans. And how ruthlessly they treat their children. Yes, there is much violence in the language, and also in their actions. This is conspicuous [...], also drunken people. Yes, and people who are socially deprived, in any form. Yes. That is very conspicuous. Especially if you had lived in Südvorstadt⁷ for 13 years. For sure, that was also in a bubble” (Leo04).

4.5 Conclusions

The term diversity is difficult to address in Leipzig. It is not an important category that people make use of to describe their neighbourhood or neighbours. It is, rather, the composition of the changing social make-ups of the residents, and their social positions that interviewees tend to describe. They never apply the term diversity to explain the specific composition of the population of their neighbourhoods. Hence, there is no single or common understanding of diversity. However, respondents do use the term *bunt* when talking about issues of diversity in a politically correct way.

⁷ *Südvorstadt* is an inner city district with inhabitants of higher social status.

Diversity in Grünau is firstly related to socio-economic issues and aspects of social inequality. Respondents in the research area emphasize long-term unemployed persons, pensioners, employees and, recently, young families.

Super- and hyperdiversity do not play a major role in Leipzig, due to its post-socialist background. Ethnic diversity plays a more important role in Leipzig Inner East. Interviewees perceive in-migration, which has become more dynamic during recent years, as a threat with respect to changing the composition of the neighbourhoods: On the one hand, the influx of creatives, students, and people with higher income is seen as a harbinger of upgrading and rising rents. On the other hand, the influx of migrants is associated with changes in the overall character of the area and its qualities and service offers that are not especially welcomed by some interviewees. Long-term German residents are mostly perceived as deprived; students as young, creative, and “change-bringing”.

However, our analysis reveals that a type of desirable diversity increasingly appears in Leipzig Inner East with in-migrating newcomers who are interested in a world of difference and otherness, with regard to migrant lifestyles. Well-educated residents express interest in making contact with migrants. However, this might be an accompanying factor of their relocation; it is certainly not a central motivation to move to Leipzig Inner East. Yet, the influx of migrants is perceived positively especially associated with the diversification of shops and restaurants in the district. Particularly, the very deprived long-term unemployed are less accepted and are therefore part of a type of diversity we can refer to as unwanted or undesirable. This undesired diversity was evident in both research areas.

More generally, perceptions of neighbours are shaped by two somehow contradictory forces: On the one hand, forms of social isolation and segregation tendencies in various areas of the neighbourhoods are identifiable. On the other hand, a somewhat mainstream rhetoric of tolerance and openness towards other groups is used, most explicitly by frequent reference to the term *bunt*.

5 Activities in and outside the neighbourhood

5.1 Introduction

Several scholars have argued that public and open spaces of neighbourhoods play a very important role in the shaping of social contacts as well as of social conflicts (Peters & De Haan, 2011: 170). Furthermore it has been pointed out by a number of studies that they are an “extension of the home” and “hence extremely important in identity terms” (Forrest & Kearns, 2001: 2130). This chapter seeks to understand how – and if at all – people in Leipzig Inner East and Grünau make use of their diversifying neighbourhoods and the public spaces in and around them. Do they actively engage in diversified relationships and activities in their neighbourhood? To what extent is the area they live in, in terms of activities, more important than other areas?

5.2 Activities: where and with whom?

The neighbourhood turned out to be the centre of everyday activities of most interviewees. They refer to activities related to their daily needs, including leisure time, meeting people, grocery shopping and pursuing hobbies. Looking at the activity spaces as described by our interviewees, these are very much related to the kind of relationships and social networks they have. The activities differ according to the lifestyles of the interviewed persons and are closely related to the specific personal networks (e.g., networks of students, life as pensioners, being a parent, being politically active, or being unemployed). Because personal networks differ with social status, with resources of households, with ethnic background, and of course with age, we also find a reflection

of these social characteristics in the activities of people. Interestingly, the neighbourhood plays a very important role as an arena for activities and contacts, especially for the relatively poor and disadvantaged inhabitants among our interviewees.

In Chapter 6, we describe a typology of interviewees' personal networks. People with these different types of networks also follow different activities. People who have the centre of their personal networks inside the neighbourhood stated that they spend time with their friends and family, both in public spaces or at people's homes:

"My daughter lives in WK8, at the lake there, in a six-storey building, and yes, she has three kids there. And then she is on the move all the time, also with the kids or there is something else. I am there from time to time and help of course but, doing something together - not so much of that." (Gru04).

Other interview partners with networks inside the neighbourhood spend a lot of their time at home without having an extensive action space. Besides this, activities like shopping or walking the dog and meeting friends were mentioned as regular activities:

"No, I, well I myself don't, but not so often, I am not this kind of - I don't know, let's say leisure person. I'm at home a lot" (Gru24).

With regard to demographic diversity, this applies to different age groups. What these people have in common is that they are not integrated into the labour market.

The group of interviewees whose personal networks exceed the boundaries of the neighbourhood maintains activities according to their personal interests and with people who share these interests in places in and outside the neighbourhood:

"Well we have a bungalow down in Lausen - Well, we have it really nice there - only 30 meters to the water - And we meet from time to time or, in the summer, they visit us. Kulkwitzer See. - I also played soccer in Miltitz; I still know some people there, and still have connections" (Gru02).

People who maintain citywide networks seem to have a broader range of activities and larger action spaces:

"I'm on the road a lot. Well, like [...] I haven't been to the city centre often. Because, basically, we are always everywhere..." (Leo04).

People who are rather alone or who have hardly any contacts in everyday life stated that they often spend time at local associations in the neighbourhood:

"People know me because of my volunteer engagement, they know me out from the Volkmarshdorf civic association⁸. Because of my work there, I was travelling a lot and I did a lot of things." (Leo12).

5.3 The use of public space

This section aims at pointing out which influence social diversity exerts on the use of public space among our interviewees. Therefore we chose a twofold approach: 1) we discuss issues of the use of public space inside the neighbourhood and 2) we elaborate on the meaning of spaces outside the neighbourhood with regard to diversity.

Generally, in Leipzig, many green and public spaces have been either improved or newly created after 1990 in the context of shrinkage, demolition of housing stock, and urban restructuring. This

⁸The civic association Volkmarshdorf is a local association of citizens in the Volkmarshdorf district. It can be considered as a neighbourhood association.

framed the opportunities to use public space in a new way. Set against this context, our two case study areas differ when it comes to the use of public spaces and how this affects contacts between people. In Grünau, there is an abundance of open space; the district has a number of smaller centres, but not very much life on the street. Leipzig Inner East has a rather restricted centre of public life, with the *Eisenbahnstraße* as the main street for shopping and restaurants. In Grünau, public space is large-scale; it hardly serves as a contact zone. By contrast, *Eisenbahnstraße* is a dense space that exhibits the well-known positive and negative aspects of contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.” (Pratt, 1992 cited in Peters & De Haan, 2011: 171).

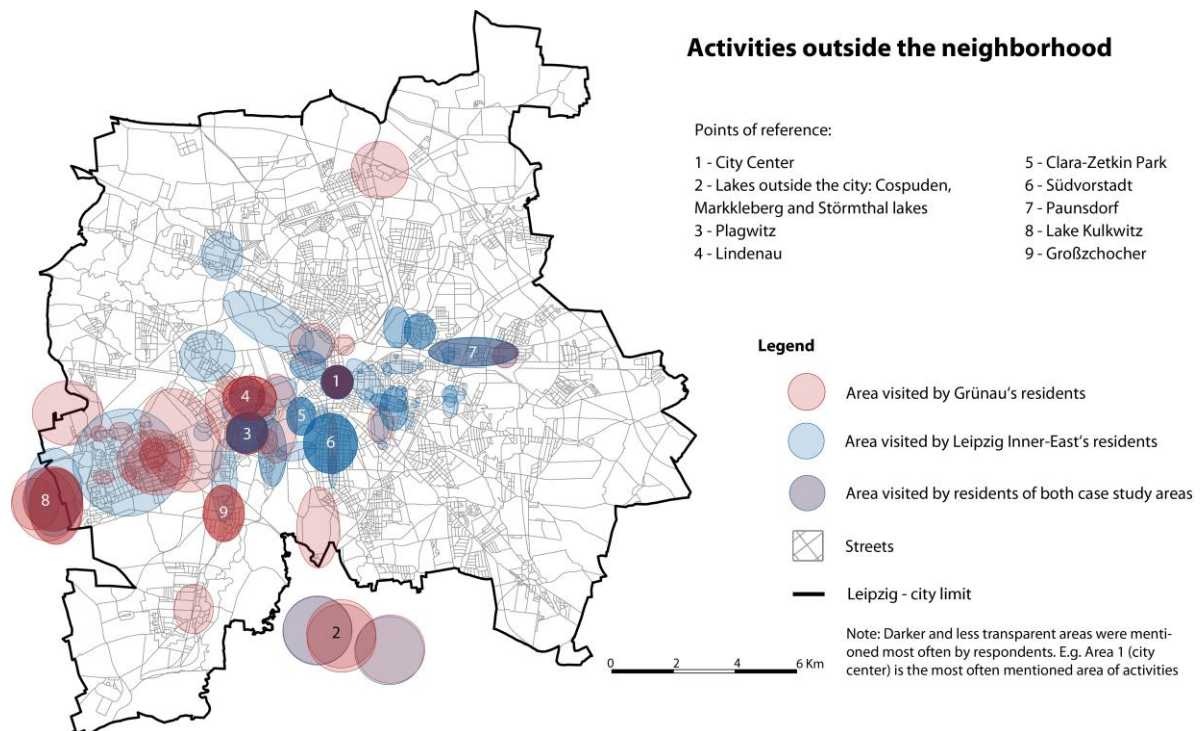


Figure 5.1: Activity spaces of interviewees.

Figure 5.1 shows those spaces that were mentioned by interviewees when asked which public spaces they use. Interestingly, the neighbourhood itself is not often represented in this map, but this is skewed by the interview question that evokes an emphasis on activities different from every day routines. However, when asked about how interviewees use the public space in the neighbourhood, emphasis was given to infrastructural facilities. Other descriptions about the use of public space in the neighbourhood focussed on local parks, shopping facilities, play grounds, restaurants, and doctors.

There are specific spaces that serve as anchoring points, as orientation and points of reference when people talk about their use of public space. These anchors differ with respect to the perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood. In Grünau, people refer to two central places when talking about their everyday use of public space. The Allee Center (a big shopping mall) and the Kulkwitzer See (a close-by lake) were named as reference points in the neighbourhood:

“Also, when I see it like this, the essential core of Grünau should be between PEP [shopping mall] and Allee Center, this area. That’s the centre, basically, at least [...] for this part of Grünau” (Gru01).

In contrast, in Leipzig Inner East, this is the *Eisenbahnstraße*, the central and most lively street that evokes ambivalent emotions and narrations (see below). Moreover, interview partners referred to the proximity to the city centre as an advantage of Leipzig Inner East:

“Um, the location in the centre, well, on the bike we only need ten minutes to the inner city. That’s great. You can reach everything from here” (Leo16).

As mentioned above, parks and lakes play an outstanding role. Interviewees emphasize such recreational areas for being outside, experiencing nature, seeing people, walking dogs, playing with children, for sports, and as a space for getting in touch with people. The use of these spaces is free of charge, as opposed to commercial offers such as shopping or restaurants:

“Sometimes, we have an idea: ‘C’mon let’s have a picnic’. Everybody brings something [...] Exactly, we basically eat all the time.” (Leo19).

Public green spaces thus are spaces of low-threshold encounter where people can experience the diversity of the neighbourhood. A young unemployed academic stated:

“The Lene-Voigt-Park is rather boring, actually. But what I really liked back then was that the people at Lene-Voigt-Park are so simple. It was peaceful. You can go there, spend time there, play badminton or take a ball with you. There are also fields for volleyball” (Leo13).

However, spending time in a park does not automatically lead to more frequent contacts or conversation among diverse inhabitants. People tend to spend time with others of their own kind. The described activities are located within personal networks.

In both districts, most public spaces have a positive connotation. Only the *Eisenbahnstraße* in Leipzig Inner East appears as a space that some interviewees, and particularly women, avoid. For some interviewees, it does have the character of a “spaces of fear” (Peters & De Haan, 2011: 174). What is important, however, is that this street is a gendered space of fear. It is the presence of, young, male foreigners that evokes unrest or even fear among women, among them German but also migrant women. An older German woman said:

“If you’re standing there at half past five in the morning, actually this is – the last ones are crawling out of their holes in the Eisenbahnstraße and – [...] I really am – Well, I have to say, usually I am not that anxious, usually. But I am afraid there” (Leo08).

The ascription of the men present in *Eisenbahnstraße* is also laden with connotations about their potential degree of danger: Leo08 goes on to say:

“Well, the way they like... like... like. When they look at you or walk by. Like that aggressiveness, you can see it in their eyes” (Leo08).

A middle-aged migrant woman also avoids some parts of the street, but from a perception of continuous molestation. She says:

“As a Muslim Kosovo-Albanian woman, you cannot keep up contact with men because [...] they see everything very sexually, so to say. You cannot do this” (Leo08).

A young migrant woman confirms this:

“Um [...] well as an example, when I walk through Eisenbahnstraße, I think thousands of eyes are on me. As if they never had seen a foreigner, or some normal girl walking down the street, for example” (Leo19).

With respect to activities outside of the neighbourhood, interviewees referred to specific places that are considered as attractive for the whole city. As the map of activity spaces shows (Figure 5.1), common city-wide destinations are Clara Zetkin Park, Plagwitz, Cospudener Lake and Lindenau for people from Grünau. Additionally, interviewees from Leipzig Inner East prefer the Südvorstadt and some local green spaces closer to their neighbourhood. The city centre is, of course, among the most prominent public spaces for residents of both districts (see purple ellipse in the middle of Figure 5.1). It is a space of attractions, but also a commercialised space:

“If we need something, we go to [the centre]. But not all the time. In case there is something going on, yes. Like a market or the Christmas market, something like that, then we go there” (Gru19).

Getting to the centre is already an expensive ride for some of our interviewees and thus not often used:

“Well, we are not much in the city, actually. Firstly it’s expensive with the train ticket, and by car it’s difficult, due to parking” (Gru04).

5.4 The importance of associations

In general, associations are mentioned as important with respect to leisure and volunteer activities/social engagement. This can be the sports association, a chess club for seniors, or recreational offers of the church. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the lonelier people are and the smaller their personal networks, the more important are associations and public offers for meeting places and activities. In some cases, associations provide opportunities that other services and activities, as well as social networks, cannot. A young unemployed man, for instance, who was disappointed about the cold and unfriendly cohabitation in another district, decided to trust in faith and therefore he recounts his contact to the church:

“Not Orthodox, it’s a Baptist church. Well, and they are around the corner, and I wanted to move and this fitted well. I was lucky to find a flat there. That’s how it was” (Leo13).

Associations that are located in and tied to the neighbourhood are part of the daily life of people: *“I meet my chess partner every week in the AWO, there I meet my neighbour as well” (Gru01).* Furthermore, other interviewees stated that they profit by meeting other people, due to their social work in associations:

“Also from the city, from the welfare agency, I am with the seniors’ visiting service; there I have people around the area that I visit regularly. That’s how things turn out. Actually, I am quite familiar with all the corners” (Gru15).

With respect to social diversity, some interviewees stated that associations serve as spaces of encounter and social integration. A man with a migration background said that a specific sports association helped him to find contacts with other people:

“There were times when more - also with compatriots. Also the acquaintanceships with women that we have with soccer in the sports clubs. That’s how you also had contacts to other families coming from all over Leipzig. Also, some were from the area surrounding Leipzig.” (Leo25).

However, making use of these associations requires resources, e.g., being able to pay membership fees:

“Those who have slightly more possibilities, they can afford, - sports clubs. That is also a possibility to integrate because, when I see families that are economically weak and have a lot of kids, they have fewer possibilities than others” (Leo25).

This statement is confirmed by what was reported by a German single mother who is dependent on welfare payments:

“Well, my daughter now is, - I enrolled her for karate, and I myself started with kickboxing. But clubs always cost money. 35 Euros and, together with my daughter, it’s even 70 [per month] and then one needs this and that, right? - You have to restrict yourself a bit” (Leo21).

5.5 Conclusions

In interpreting the data, we found that activity spaces are located at the intersection of financial resources, social relations of interviewees, and life styles. With a smaller household budget, spaces that can be accessed without high cost or that enable less costly activities become important and these are often located close to the residential environment. Parks, public green spaces, play grounds, etc., are prominent in the action spaces of people in their everyday lives. However, few financial resources restrict reaching them. Public transport in Leipzig is expensive and thus the neighbourhood is more important for poorer households. For the better-off interviewees with a broader network, the activity space has a much wider range. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood remains an important space with respect to everyday life and life with children.

For poorer residents, neighbourhood activities and public space in close proximity are thus important in empowering the underprivileged; an observation that is valid for both research areas. If the neighbourhood offers low cost, low threshold places usable for a range of people, people can organise their activities and their contacts around a spatial proximity to the residential environment and around personal interests. This fosters networks of people at similar life stages (for example, families with children) or who share similar interests.

With respect to diversity, green areas also serve as spaces to see diverse people. Several times, interview partners mentioned recognising others. Although people do not actively encounter in parks and green spaces, such public spaces are perceived as areas of visible “colourfulness”. However, what our material does not confirm is the role of public spaces as an enabler of positive contacts between diverse groups, as emphasised by the ‘contact hypothesis’ that claims that “inter-ethnic contact has positive consequences for the attitudes towards other ethnic groups; more structural contact leads to fewer prejudices and less stereotyping” (Allport, 1954, cited in Peters & De Haan, 2011: 172). In the open green spaces, the smaller facilities like playgrounds or the prominent, highly frequented centres of the district, even in associations, our interviewees keep to their own peers; contact between different groups is (still) rare in these only recently diversifying neighbourhoods. Instead, stereotyping is relatively common. In terms of activities and use of public space, social diversity seems to be highly connected to the resources interviewees have available. Therefore, diversity becomes visible more with respect to structural differences than in relation to personal attitudes.

6 Social cohesion

6.1 Introduction

Social cohesion and everyday practices of living together are crucial factors in learning about the impact of diversity on an urban neighbourhood and its residents. Therefore, we particularly in-

investigate what role diversity plays in the personal networks of residents and, furthermore, how relationships to neighbours affect social cohesion. The central research questions for this chapter are:

To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion? Which elements foster, and which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the case study areas?

The perspective of the residents and the role of the specific context of the neighbourhood in personal networks are important when analysing how social cohesion and diversity are inter-linked. In order to meet these research objectives, a two-step procedure concerning personal networks is developed (6.2): Firstly, we propose a typology of interviewees' personal networks. Secondly, with the help of the previously developed typology, we discuss the role of diversity. In the subsequent section (6.3), we elaborate on the relationships among neighbours and forms of mutual support. With this procedure, we seek to address the different character of our interviewees' relationships with their neighbours.

Social cohesion has become a buzzword over the last few decades. It may have very different meanings and connotations and, with respect to its conceptualization, remains a fuzzy issue (Novy et al., 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to explain what it means in the context of this chapter. On a very general level, social cohesion refers to the glue that holds a society together (Maloutas & Malouta, 2004) or, in other words, it can be defined as the internal bonding of a social system (Schuyt, 1997). More specifically, as Kearns and Forrest (2001) pointed out, social cohesion is not a one-dimensional concept but, instead, is constituted by common values and a civic culture, social order and social control, social solidarity, social networks, and place attachment and identity.

Building on such an understanding of social cohesion, we set out to address the questions mentioned above concerning the interlinkages between social cohesion and diversity in the following sections.

6.2 Composition of interviewees' personal networks

Personal social relationships of our respondents with respect to the neighbourhood they live in are varied and range from hardly any contacts to family ties and close relationships inside and beyond the neighbourhood. These variations led us to set up a typology consisting of a set of different types of personal networks. The elaboration of this typology was crucial to distinguish between the different kinds of meaning of the neighbourhood for our interview partners. After introducing the typology, we discuss the role of diversity with respect to the personal networks of our interview partners.

Type 1: Hardly any personal contacts

Interviewees who are subsumed within this type have hardly any close relationships with other people and understand themselves as being alone in their life and, at times, also lonely. Contacts these interviewees maintain are loose and can be classified as acquaintances. A commonality within this group is that their family either lives far away or has already passed away. Besides this, interviewees within this type differ with respect to the stages they have reached in their life cycles; e.g., well-educated pensioners, very old persons, long-term unemployed persons, young unemployed academics, etc. In this respect, an elderly woman explains that access to encounters seems to be limited: *"If you are living alone, you will not be contacted. But, I don't involve myself too much"* (Leo15). Gru08, unemployed and isolated, has lost trust in people and states: *"I don't feel very well here"* (Gru08). Another interviewee in a wheelchair mentions being open-minded with neighbours and passers-by, but feels insecure about contacts with others: *"I have two or three people that I like to talk*

to. *But, I don't know if people are deterred because of my handicap*" (Gru18). A young adult lost trust in other people due to bad experiences in the past. Consequently, faith helps him to overcome these experiences and his Baptist church is the only anchor left (Leo13).

Generally, interviewees with hardly any contacts both inside and outside their neighbourhood seem to have lost trust in other people and are socially disappointed.

Type 2: Kinship and personal networks inside the neighbourhood

Under the second type of network we subsumed those interviewees who have the centre of their everyday life inside the neighbourhood; they stated that they maintain relationships to persons mostly only from within their neighbourhood. In this context, two sub-types of personal networks emerge:

Firstly, there are interviewees whose contacts are centred within family life. These persons stated that family members are their main and only contacts in everyday life. They often appear to be rather alone, despite the fact that the family lives in the same neighbourhood: *"But that [flat] was too far away, because I have the biggest part of my family here. My sister and the kids stayed here. Mh, so that I am not that alone. That we can visit each other"* (Gru16). Activities of these interview partners are organised around family networks. This sub-type includes parents whose life is centred on the routines of their adult children and interviewees who organise themselves around the life of partners and siblings:

"But, most important is my wife. She is the most important contact in my life. Let me say it like this: First there is my wife then, after a while, there are my children⁹ and grandchildren. After that there is nothing. The rest of the world can kiss my ass" (Gru01).

Some of these interviewees do not have contacts in the neighbourhood because all available friends have moved away in the meantime. They have contacts to people in other cities, often maintained via telephone and the internet. But with regard to their every-day routines, they state that they miss contacts to others close by: *"Everybody moved away, and that's the problem"* (Gru03).

A second sub-type includes interviewees who reported that their major contacts and deepest relationships are located in the neighbourhood. This includes both the presence of family members, as well as friendships and acquaintanceships. These interviewees stated that family relationships are their major anchors in life. This appears to be independent of in the interviewees' stage in life (i.e., it is the same for younger and older interviewees). Additionally, these interviewees reported having friends located in the neighbourhood. Descriptions about friendships outside of the neighbourhood are lacking within this sub-type. In addition, narrations about friendships and acquaintanceships contain descriptions about common activities, e.g., leisure time or activities related to the daily life of children. The personal networks of interviewees of this sub-type seem to be more or less strongly focused on the neighbourhood. Contacts and activities outside of neighbourhoods are relatively rare.

Among interviewees belonging to type 2, a considerable proportion of persons is unemployed, working part-time, or on maternity leave. Additionally, this sample consists of interviewees with different backgrounds; e.g., different age groups, persons with or without children, persons living together with or without a partner.

⁹The children and grandchildren of this interviewee live 300 km away; they are not located in the neighbourhood.

Type 3: Networks exceeding the neighbourhood's boundaries but in spatial proximity

This type contains personal networks that are not necessarily located in the neighbourhood. Interviewees reported that their friends live in adjacent districts. Related to these narrations, common activities and interests were mentioned. For example, an older couple described maintaining relationships organised around allotment gardens and spending time at a local lake. Their friends share these interests. Within this type of network, the neighbourhood appears as the place where interviewees reside (residential environment). But it is not the place where personal contacts are located or leisure activities are undertaken. A 35-year old mother of two children stated:

“They are my friends. They are located outside of Grüna. I experience being with them as my social feel-good environment. [...] I perceive that environment as more beautiful. It's about living actively and to live together; to think together, to make plans” (Gru12).

Additionally, we found evidence within our sample that migrants in Leipzig Inner East build networks according to their ethnic backgrounds. These networks are located within our research area but, however, not necessarily within the area that interviewees perceive as their neighbourhood. Additionally, participating within these networks does not depend on the place a member lives. Instead, language skills and ethnic background are crucial for belonging to such networks. A young migrant woman stated:

“We don't receive so many visitors, just if we invite someone. When we meet each other, we meet at their places because most of them live in the same area. There are some streets where you think: ‘Yes, this, that, and that person lives here as well” (Leo19).

Additionally, these networks seem to be exclusive, somehow isolated and not approachable for outsiders. A middle-aged German mother comments on these networks:

“It is sad that they encapsulate themselves. If you don't belong to their group, you cannot become a member, just by coincidence. [...] If you meet them, the language is Russian or Arabic. So, I don't understand anything and I can't get involved. So, I'm out” (Leo21).

Family ties and contacts between children are the catalysts for these networks. Interestingly, the accessibility to networks based on ethnic backgrounds differs, depending on the generation. In contrast to the woman quoted above, a 21-year old female interviewee stated:

“Of course, I have foreigners as friends but I have German friends as well. They are Germans who mutated to foreigners, which happens if you live together for a long time” (Leo19).

Type 4: City-wide personal networks

Some of our interview partners described having their personal networks stretched out over the entire city. Various contacts to friends were mentioned. This type especially includes students, persons with an academic degree, or persons who are highly socially engaged. On the one hand, interviewees in this type just recently moved into the area and therefore refer to persons who are not located in the neighbourhood as their major contacts. On the other hand, interviewees describe relationships that were developed because of personal interest and social engagement (politics, cultural activities, etc.).

However, few personal contacts in the neighbourhood do not render the neighbourhood less important. Interviewees stressed that having contacts in close proximity to their residential environment or in the neighbourhood is very important to them. In particular, meeting people by chance and chance acquaintances that develop into friends were highlighted in this context:

“So, within the last year, I developed contacts or, better, intensified contacts that I have in close proximity. And that is easier if these persons live just around the corner. I mean, I want to do something with my colleagues¹⁰ but it is always too much effort for me” (Leo01).

In contrast, interviewees experience missing contacts in their neighbourhood as a lack in their life: *“Of course I want my friends to live close to me [...]at the moment, nobody lives in my neighbourhood [...]nobody who I would call a friend” (Leo06).*

The above-mentioned types of interviewees’ personal networks can be considered as prototypes. When analysing aspects of social cohesion in the neighbourhood, it is crucial to understand which overarching communalities and differences exist with respect to personal networks. Therefore, in the following, we discuss the impact of urban diversity on personal networks and on social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

Personal networks appear to be relatively homogenous. When talking about their personal networks, interviewees refer to specific situations where they have met people that now have become a part of their personal network. Spaces of encounter where people get to know others turn out to be specifically linked to the stage in life of the interview partners. Therefore contacts are predominantly between people who have similar interests and share the same stage in life. This applies for all types of networks that have been introduced above.

For instance, students who maintain city-wide personal networks stated that they get to know people at places where other students spend their time. Common activities can be considered as being at the core of building personal networks:

“The nucleus was our shared flat. And the other shared flats in our house. [...] And we did a lot of things together. [...] On the one hand, we spent time together inside the flat, and, on the other, we went outside. We went to a pub, or visited concerts, or just hung out in a park” (Leo02).

By contrast, parents whose networks are subsumed under network type 2 frequently stated that their life is organised around their family. With respect to the needs of children, parents stated that they encounter other parents at places where their children spend their time; e.g., at the playground:

“We meet people from our house. Or there we meet [Anonymous 1] with her daughter or the cousin of [Anonymous 2]. That is either by coincidence or we plan it. To make sure that the kids can play soccer with each other.” (Leo16) or: “I believe that the children have a greater bonding or something. They have more to do with each other and then they say to their parents: ‘come, join me visiting my friends, you can go out as well’” (Leo19).

In the case of parents, these activities and spaces of encounter are often located inside the neighbourhood within a short walking distance to the residential environment. Additionally, parents engage with others at meetings in school. Similarly, just as parents form networks with other parents, seniors also prefer to spend their time with other pensioners.

Within our sample, there is only one exception of a young migrant woman who reported having German and foreign friends, and that this appears natural to her. She has been living in the area for 14 years. As an integrated member of a local migrant network, our interviewee stated that the children of the area get to know each other independently of possible migration backgrounds. Therefore, we can assume that the younger migrants in Leipzig Inner East mix with German youngsters in the area. Having different migration backgrounds seems to be of less importance to them: *“Take me as an example: Of course I have foreign friends and so on. But, I also have a lot of German*

¹⁰ Her colleagues live in the western parts of Leipzig.

friends. For me that is always funny” (Leo19). Additionally, this interviewee stressed that relationships between children also contribute to the personal network of parents.

Nevertheless, narrations about diverse or multi-generational friendships or contacts between different lifestyles are lacking within our sample. Therefore, we can state that social diversity in Leipzig Inner East and Leipzig Grünau does “not automatically result in frequent contacts of mixed social networks” (Van Kempen, 2014: 99). Interviewees’ personal networks seem to be concentrated on persons who share the same interests. As Stolle et al. claimed: “Trust seems easier to develop when we are familiar with people around us, and particularly when they appear similar to ourselves” (Stolle et al., 2008: 58-59). Therefore, the role of and the access to spaces of encounter should be further investigated in neighbourhood research. The places where migrant and German youngsters meet and start to get to know each other are thus interesting objects of research.

Length of residence impacts on the intensity of personal contacts. Several interviewees reported maintaining relationships to persons they have known for a very long time and via their housing history. Contacts inside the neighbourhood are directly connected to the duration of residency. This applies for both friends and acquaintances and especially for those personal networks that are located inside the neighbourhood (type 2). Therefore, the neighbourhood can be seen as an arena that opens the opportunity for contacts to develop into something more:

“I have two super great friends; one for 30 years and the other for nearly 40 years. I met them through my kids [...] both friends are still living in Grünau.” (Gru15) or: *“most of them are in my close environment, I mean my house, let’s say, for 35 years I have had the same people around me”* (Gru13).

Even acquaintance with former neighbours becomes part of the personal network: *“Yes, and then there are some normal people. Former neighbours from the past, where I lived before; I do small-talk with them”* (Leo03). In contrast, interviewees who just recently moved to the neighbourhood lack these long-term contacts: *“It is like that, my friendships are rooted in the west of Leipzig. Therefore, it was a challenge to move to Leipzig Inner East”* (Leo06).

The duration of residency does not influence the number of personal contacts in general. However, it evidently increases the opportunity to develop contacts into trustful relationships. Especially interviewees whose personal networks are located inside the neighbourhood (type 2) stated that they had long lasting relationships in their more immediate environment (compare 6.3). With respect to social diversity, these contacts do not develop between relatively diverse persons. However, within our sample, we could identify looser acquaintanceships among diverse people that have developed into stable contacts but not real friendships, but these remain the exception. In summary, socially diverse neighbourhoods open up opportunities for encounters in a slow and smooth way over time, which further opens the door for social diversity. Nevertheless, people tend to build up stronger relationships with people of their own “kind”.

Contacts in spatial proximity are relevant for personal networks. With respect to the everyday life, interviewees stressed the importance of contacts to persons who are available in spatial proximity. A linguistic indicator for this is the expression *“around the corner”* (Leo01) which was frequently used by interview partners. This applies especially for networks of type 2 and 4. A younger couple with children stated:

“We have some friends here who live around the corner [...] we see each other twice a month. And the other friends are spread over the whole city. Them, we don’t see that often, that’s more a loose contact” (Leo16).

To meet people who are in spatial proximity means making less effort to arrange meetings. Compared to contacts outside of the neighbourhood, these encounters can be organised in a more

spontaneous and random way: *“Within the last year, I intensified contacts with persons who are close by. And this is easier when you are just around the corner”* (Leo01). Some of our interviewees build their whole network around contacts that are available close by: *“Nearly everyone that I know lives here”* (Gru14). Meeting these people is part of everyday life, leisure, and wellbeing in peer groups. Spatial proximity is also relevant with respect to family ties. These networks appear as major anchors for several of our interview partners. Especially interviewees represented in network type 2 reported that having kinship relations close by is *“... very important. For me, that is the best thing, to have the family close by. And they are also glad that we live close by”* (Gru02). This applies for younger interviewees with children as well as for older persons who live in the same neighbourhood as their siblings and other relatives:

“The main contact is my sister.” (Leo16) or: *“Yes, I think it’s really good, for me. I mean for me personally. If I did not have my family around me, I would freak out. I really would freak out, if nobody was there for me”* (Gru22).

Furthermore, interviewees stated that they miss these contacts when they are not available in daily life: *“Yeah, that would be great. I mean, we have the family in the city, that is all right. But sometimes it would be really nice to have them close by”* (Gru21).

Within our sample, we have people who maintain contacts mainly within the neighbourhood as well as interview partners who have citywide networks. In line with Forest & Kearns (2001), we cannot detect “sharp polarisations” (Forest & Kearns, 2001: 2133) among different lifestyles. Contrary to theoretical approaches that question the importance of the neighbourhood (see Van Kempen and Wissing, 2014), our sample demonstrates that, for the majority of our interview partners, the neighbourhood is very important for their everyday life. Even relatively cosmopolitan interview partners highlighted spatial proximity of contacts as necessary for their wellbeing.

Relationships to former and current colleagues play a minor role. In general, interview partners did not automatically talk about professional colleagues. When asked about them, they are described as specific kinds of personal contacts that cannot be primarily considered as friendships. People whose networks are concentrated in the neighbourhood, especially interview partners with children, stated that:

“We don’t go out with our colleagues. They are young people like us [...] we like each other and we have fun at work. But, we have kids and therefore less leisure time to spend with our colleagues” (Leo16).

Others make a clear distinction between private and professional contacts: *“No, no. They are just colleagues. You call them colleagues and that’s it.”* (Leo09) or: *“I could have contact with former colleagues. But I don’t want that”* (Gru14). In contrast, for other interview partners, colleagues appear to serve as anchors. A recently retired woman whose personal network is located inside the neighbourhood stated: *“There is still contact. And we chat regularly. I also was invited to the annual Christmas party [...] So they still mean something to me”* (Gru06). Although it seems to be important to have these contacts available, they are not the most important relationships that most of our interview partners maintain.

A young woman who recently moved to the area stated that colleagues can act as a bridge to develop contacts. Therefore, for newcomers, colleagues can serve as the first anchors in developing new contacts: *“I was new in the city. So you move to a new town and you have colleagues and then something is opened that can develop”* (Leo01).

6.3 Living together with neighbours: bonds, forms of mutual support, etc.

Relationships with neighbours can be considered as contacts by chance and not by choice. Therefore, the residential area is a specific playground for social interaction. Relationships with neighbours can be understood as horizontal relationships that take place in a spatially specific area of

“repeated interactions” (Chan et al., 2006: 289). Therefore, neighbours can be considered as specific contacts in the everyday life of interview partners. As Van Eijk stresses: “Neighbouring means balancing proximity and privacy and an important norm of good neighbouring is that people keep their distance and respect each other’s privacy” (Van Eijk, 2012: 3010).

As has already been stressed in Chapter 4, in the German context, interviewees referring to their neighbours talk about people in their immediate proximity. Neighbours are those who live next door, in the same house or, at the most, the house next door. In the following we (1) introduce various levels of cohabitation between neighbours that occur in the Leipzig case and (2) point out which impact social diversity has on relationships amongst neighbours and which role a socially diverse neighbourhood plays in this respect.

In the case of Leipzig, we can distinguish **four levels¹¹ of cohabitation among neighbours: a) relationships of mistrust and disaffirmation, b) acknowledgement contacts, c) conversational and trustful cohabitation and d) intense relationships.**

The lowest level of living together with neighbours is relationships of mistrust and disaffirmation. In these cases, interviewees stated that they even don’t greet their neighbours, “*How is the contact when you meet in the hall? – It’s nothing, I pass them and that’s it*” (Leo21). Rather problematic situations of mistrust and defamation of other people were described. This ranges from purely ignoring each other to accusation and stalking. A mother of a disabled child described her contact to neighbours like this: “*It is not a good social climate here*” (Gru16). The interviewees who maintain this level of cohabitation are long-term unemployed and from different life cycle stages.

The next level of neighbour relationships occurring in the Leipzig sample is contacts of acknowledgement and greeting. Even when neighbours live together for a very long time, some do not maintain a closer or more intense relationship. Narrations about mutual support are rare within this level of neighbour relations. To greet each other appears as the lowest level of exchange neighbours share with each other:

“So, you greet everyone who you meet and they greet back. It is always ‘hello’ and ‘how are you?’ – and that’s it. It is not like in the movies: you bake a cake and share it with your neighbours” (Leo21).

A third level of neighbour relations within our case study is characterised by a conversational and trustful relationship. Interviewees refer to common activities and mutual support. Nevertheless, they still do not call them friends:

“In my house, I have good contact with some neighbours. It is more than just ‘hello’. When they have a barbecue in the backyard, you go there and sit together with them. Or, if you have problems, you ask them and get help” (Leo09).

The fourth level of cohabitation among neighbours is relationships that are more than just neighbouring. In these cases of intense relationships, neighbours are part of the personal network of interviewees. First, we found evidence for networks of neighbours who share the same activities (“*Yes, together we know other people, from other entrances, from other blocks close by.*” (Gru04)) and examples of cohabitation in housing projects that aim, from the very beginning, at sharing more than just neighbouring: “*It is more than just living together with neighbours. [...] We need to stick together, because we want to fill this house with life*” (Leo04). Second, some interview partners mentioned relationships to specific neighbours as anchors in their everyday lives: “*I’m very lucky with one of my neighbours*” (Leo08). These relationships to individual neighbours seem to impact on the housing choice and seem to compensate for bad relationships to other neighbours: “*That is a reason to stay, to see that there is one person who you really like. That consoles me for the rest*” (Gru12).

¹¹ The approach of ranking neighbour relations is inspired by the model of Henning and Lieberg (1996).

Spaces of encounter and mutual support contribute to neighbour relationships. Neighbour relations as contacts by chance and not by choice are dependent on easily accessible spaces of encounter, to develop into closer relationships. A middle-aged female worker stated:

“There are some steps before chatting with each other. I mean, greeting each other or just looking them in the eye.” (Gru12) or: *“After a while, you have more contact with each other. So that you start helping each other [...] These structures evolve over time”* (Leo15).

Additionally, mutual support occurs as a benchmark for good neighbour relationships within our sample. Especially in cases where mistrust and disaffirmation prevail, narrations about mutual support are lacking. By contrast, mutual support increases stepwise with respect to different levels of neighbour relationships; it is often described as good moments for encounter: *“My neighbour had problems with her bike from time to time, so I helped her to repair the bike. Logically, we started to talk”* (Gru24). These encounters are also conversations about pets, the weather, or they develop during elevator rides. Nevertheless, mutual support is dependent on balancing closeness and distance, to develop a sustainable basis with neighbours. A middle-aged unemployed woman stated: *“I told him I can’t just give away all these things and that I want something in exchange. Yes, and then it was over”* (Gru16). Hence, when neighbours share conversational and trustful relationships, this exchange of mutual support can be found across different age groups and across various stages in life cycle. A student, for example, stated: *“From that older couple we borrow tools and they have our spare key, in case we lock ourselves out”* (Leo05).

Sharing the same lifestyle/stage in life cycle fosters neighbour relations. Relationships among neighbours that are considered to be conversational, trustful and intense often exist between relatively similar persons. For instance, students highlighted neighbouring with other students and families stated that they appreciated having other parents as neighbours: *“No, in our house there are just older people. Those who we engage with is a younger family; they have three children, just like we do”* (Gru22). Stronger relations among neighbours from different age groups do not go beyond acknowledgement and exchange of support services. However, narrations about private conversations or common activities occur with respect to sharing the same stage of life:

“Okay, she is 64 years old, that fits with my age [...] and our conversations are friendly and close, we also talk about quite private things.” (Gru15) or: *“Therefore we had contacts to other shared flats[...]it was the same way of living, to study, to share a flat, [...] and therefore some kind of cohesion developed. So we invited each other for cooking meals or helped when someone was moving house”* (Leo13).

However, problems among neighbours mentioned by interview partners often refer to conflicting lifestyles, instead of different stages in the life cycle:

“A drinker with children moved in below her. And they had a lot of problems. [...] That neighbour was quite loud and wanted to party, [...] she also thought about moving” (Gru21).

What is apparent in our data is that conflicts often lack an appropriate culture of talking about problems: *“They didn’t come to my door and say that they have a problem. I have a disabled kid, but they didn’t ask me, they went somewhere else; they go to the ASD¹² to complain”* (Gru16).

Former GDR housing communities represent an ideal of neighbour cohabitation. People who grew up in the GDR era tend to refer to their former housing communities as best practice examples of a cohesive cohabitation among neighbours. This applies for both of our research

¹²ASD is a municipal service for social support and emergencies in Leipzig

areas. Interestingly, also younger residents who did not experience this form of living together repeated the narrations of their parents and family.

Interviewees stressed that, due to the huge governmental impact and the constant lack of resources during state socialism, local people started to build up cohesive support structures for cohabitation:

“Let’s say, it was different during the GDR period. We didn’t have much money. Nevertheless, having money would have changed nothing. In general, there was not much. So, if you needed a plumber, you needed to know someone who was able to plumb. Somebody else knew someone who could repair a car. So everyone needed everyone. [...] Today it is like this: someone who has money can order a service, but in the past, that was different. By necessity, there was no other way to live” (Gru02).

Such support was manifold and related to informal responsibility and appreciation: *“In the past no one asked for money. [...] Depending on the help needed, you bought the person a beer, [...] or you gave him/her a packet of coffee” (Gru08).*

Additionally, government-initiated situations of encounter are remembered when comparing the past and the present. Due to obligations such as supporting the construction of the houses or festivities in the housing units, people made contact with each other.

Interviewees stated repeatedly that living together with neighbours today is colder and characterised by anonymity. GDR housing communities are described as catalysts of neighbouring in the daily life of the past. In particular, activities in common are described as supports for former neighbour relationships. Narrations are always somewhat sentimental. Especially the lack of holding to earlier rules and traditions are mentioned with respect to cohabitation among neighbours;

“But, those who are new in our building! They do not introduce themselves. So, you don’t know who is living in your building. Suddenly, there is a new name at a door. Most of them are not open towards their neighbours; they don’t know how to deal properly with neighbours” (Gru06).

When describing the past, interview partners rarely employ narratives of distrust. Instead, they positively describe living together in former times, in order to express what has changed with respect to today’s cohabitation. Therefore, we consider that the societal shift of the last decades and the specific development of our research areas impacts on the neighbourly routines interviewees maintain today. A positive image of the GDR past is related to the drastic changes former GDR citizens experienced (e.g., out-migration, loss of jobs, interrupted work biographies, change of the political system). The past might be idealized at times because, for the majority of our interviewees in this group, their situation worsened after 1989/90.

Relations towards migrant neighbours are characterised by distance and repeated stereotypes. Within our research, we did not ask explicit questions about neighbours with a migration background. Additionally, the sample contains only a few migrants, compared to the number of interviewees with a German background. Nevertheless, engaging in neighbourly relationships with migrants was especially emphasised by German interviewees, for various reasons.

Those who talked about migrants drew a heterogeneous picture. Interviewees described mostly distanced relationships (compare Chapter 4). Interview partners grouped migrant neighbours according to their country of origin and described them stereotypically. However, most of these narratives are about not having problems with them:

“With foreigners, it is ok. [...] In my house there is a Turkish family and one Russian woman and I don’t have a problem with that. In the house next door there is a Vietnamese family, but they have always been ok” (Leo08).

What is absent in the interviews are accounts about conversations or common activities. People seem to live together in the same house without maintaining more intense forms of contact. Especially, narrations about mutual support between ethnic groups and their German neighbours are missing. This applies nearly for all interview partners who talked about migrant neighbours.

Additionally, a migrant woman stated that she was confronted with cold and distanced behaviour by some of her German neighbours:

“Again, it is this older generation of Germans [...] they don’t say ‘good morning’ when we meet in the hall. When I recognise them, I greet them, but I don’t know if it is because I am strange to them” (Gru20).

In contrast, a long period of cohabitation seems to have a positive effect on people with a migration background living together with Germans:

“In that building, the family of my husband is the only migrant family. Mb, maybe it’s because they have lived there for a very long time. But, they have very good contact with their neighbours [...] they always exchange help and, if there was a festivity, we always brought a cake” (Gru20).

Besides this, there are two exceptions related to behaviour towards migrant neighbours: Firstly, an older pensioner in Grünau who is actively trying to get involved with a new neighbour in the hall of their house:

„Last year, a young man moved to our building. He is from Syria, and he wants to learn German. You know, I like languages. So I try to talk to him in Syrian. [...] I never saw anyone else talking to him” (Gru10).

Secondly, and in contrast, a middle-aged German mother of six children said that she avoids her neighbours because they are all migrants: *“There are migrants living on the first floor. And in our rear building, there are also migrants. But, if possible, we keep out of their way” (Leo20).* In this case, racial prejudices and overt racism are influencing behaviour.

6.4 Conclusions

The focus of Chapter 6 was on the extent to which the diversity of the residential area is important for social cohesion and which elements foster or hinder the development of social cohesion in the area. With respect to the first question, we can conclude that the interviewees’ personal networks appear to be relatively homogenous. Contacts exist between people who share the same stage in life cycle and interests. This is also true for neighbourly relationships. Diversity, subsequently, is not an important trigger of social cohesion; one could even say it is, in most cases, not a real trigger for social cohesion at all, no matter what type of personal networks an interviewee has. For the majority of interviewees, the duration of housing occupancy and the settings of neighbourly relationships are much more important for creating social networks and cohesion through these networks. In many cases, the spatial proximity of contacts, activities and (daily) routines (“around the corner”) were mentioned as being important.

Ethnic diversity impacts in different ways on social cohesion; currently, it does not seem to be a factor that, at first sight, strengthens cohesion. Instead, many interviewees say that it does not disrupt living together, whereas others are very hesitant and distance themselves from closer contacts.

Which elements foster, and which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the case study areas? According to our findings, those issues that most strongly foster the development of social cohesion are the same/similar stage in life cycle and similar interests of interviewees, a longer housing occupancy in the neighbourhood, as well as a shared GDR past. These factors are decisive for building trust among the residents. Within this context, the presence of peers in the neighbourhood and the perception of “colourfulness”, i.e., diversity, contribute to the in-

crease of wellbeing of many interviewees that, in turn, contribute to their attachment to the area and its population in general. Factors that hinder the development of social cohesion are, consequently, a different stage in life cycle and different interests among interviewees; the fact that someone is new in a neighbourhood and comes from outside (e.g., not from Leipzig, with a migration background) was also reported as a reason for distance from neighbours, mistrust, etc. We observed a latent isolation of several population groups from each other; there are only few narrations about “the others”, few elements that might create a link between the groups. There is, moreover, also a lack of mutual support among neighbours in some cases.

7 Social mobility

7.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates how the diversity of the two neighbourhoods in Leipzig affects social mobility of its inhabitants. Social mobility herein is understood as the “opportunity of individuals or groups to move upwards or the risk of descending the ‘social ladder’, such as with respect to jobs, income, status and power.” (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013: 8) Particularly, we will analyse respondents’ occupation biographies and how personal networks as well as institutions influence them. Furthermore and more broadly, we present an analysis of the support people get related to integration, getting to know other people and learning other languages. The questions we address in this chapter are: To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility? Which elements foster and which elements hinder social mobility?

7.2 Interlinkages between diversity and social mobility

In terms of professional status, our sample consists of a heterogeneous group such as pensioners, self-employed, craftsmen and skilled workers, employees, volunteer workers, students, people working in precarious jobs, and unemployed. Generally, many interviewees have had a rather diverse employment history, working in many different kinds of jobs. According to the design of our sample (see Chapter 2), the emphasis is on people with few financial resources and those living precariously.

Before setting out to analyse how social mobility is interlinked with the fact of living in a diverse neighbourhood, we need to clarify that neither Leipzig Inner East nor Grünau are socially deprived areas, in comparison to other metropolitan centres in Europe. Both districts are perceived differently, yet, both are in a situation characterised by social transformation: Leipzig Inner East is marked by a trend of upgrading whereas Grünau has a slight downwards tendency in terms of changes in its socio-economic composition.

Personal networks inside the neighbourhood do not contribute to finding a job. With only few exceptions, the personal networks inside the neighbourhood are not important for finding a job. More important, if at all, are contacts beyond the close local surroundings. Most of our respondents are not able to make use of neighbourhood-based resources or networks in order to find a new job when they are unemployed or when they want to find a better-paid job. This is valid for both our case study areas. Mostly, it is reported that support from within close proximity is absent (e.g. Leo05, Leo06, Gru05). For example, one respondent, when asked about whether he receives assistance from inside the neighbourhood to advance professionally, is surprised: “*Oh, you mean professionally – not here where I live – no*” (Leo09). Even assistance in this issue from outside their immediate environment is not very relevant for some. A young student explains, when asked if there is help from outside the neighbourhood: „*Certainly [...] But I cannot think of anything at all right now*“ (Leo05).

A few interviewees reported that the neighbourhood may even be a hurdle to finding a job, due to its bad reputation:

“And, um, I don’t know, but I also think that, if you apply for a job, and ‘Eisenbahnstraße’ appears on the application, you have fewer chances, very obviously [...] that is why I let my things get sent to Eutritzsch, to my daughter” (Leo21).

Generally, however, we cannot register much evidence suggesting that diverse neighbourhoods have an impact on social mobility, neither upward nor downward. The interlinkage of diversity on the neighbourhood level and social mobility is minimal.

If there is any help from within the respondents’ personal networks, they mention either support from family (Gru05), friends (Leo20: *“The job that I have now I got from a friend of mine [...] in catering”*) or placement in follow-up occupations via colleagues (e.g. Leo08, Leo09). The instances in which people found work via colleagues are only for jobs that are precarious, low paid and - specifically to our sample - in the building industry. Furthermore, some interviewees received recommendations through an acquaintance, as in the case of a 63 year old woman :

“And I have an acquaintance who worked at the concrete factory, together with her husband. I have known her since East German times. And she told me: ‘Why don’t you come to us?’ And that worked out.” (Gru09)

Research on less-educated urban workers suggests that poor people mostly rely on informal, non-institutional channels for finding a job (Elliot, 1999), as exemplified by this quote. Nevertheless, informal channels for finding work are rare in our sample.

With respect to finding a job, institutions are important in different ways. Especially for people living in precarious situations and for the unemployed, formal institutions like job centres and welfare departments play a major role in their everyday lives and in their professional opportunities. Germany’s welfare system (Hartz IV) provides basic financial resources and rent support for those in need. Furthermore, people depending on social benefits are expected to find an occupation as soon as possible, for which there is formal assistance. This is why other forms and networks that could help in finding a job are not as pronounced. Job centres and welfare departments, however, are generally perceived negatively, or are at least met with suspicion. A long-term unemployed single mother mentions: *“I don’t expect anything from the [welfare] agency, nothing”* (Leo21).

In contrast, Labour Shops¹³ are perceived much more positively (Gru15, or: *“Yes, the Labour Shop is not bad”* Leo21). Labour Shops are decentralised local institutions that assist people who have severe difficulties in finding a job. Their positive reputation relies on the facts that they are close to the place of residence, that they have a low-threshold access, that their employees hardly ever ask for qualifications, and that they are not set up to control people. Principally, all they offer is support. Therefore, Labour Shops, as institutionalised offers of assistance for unemployed, can be considered as supporting social mobility within the neighbourhoods. Yet, at the same time this offer is a rather new approach in our research areas (since 2012) and it remains unclear how many respondents they advised. Additionally, Labour Shops were one of our main entry points to reach out to our interview partners. Therefore, our sample may be considered biased with respect to the evaluation of the impact of Labour Shops on social mobility in the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the approach of Labour Shops stands in stark contrast to state-instituted job centres. Furthermore, people rely on job centres financially, whereas there is no financial dependency

¹³ The Labour Shop is a third party funded project initiated by the city administration and run by a local association. This project offers low threshold support for job-seekers, on the one hand, and serves local entrepreneurs with consultation, on the other.

with Labour Shops. From this vantage point, we can say that, compared to Elliot's (1999) research in North American cities, in contexts with stronger welfare states, such as Germany, informal channels of finding a job are less significant, due to the stronger influence of institutionalised job services.

There is no real impact of the neighbourhood or its diversity in terms of improving the precarious socioeconomic situation of the interviewees. Those with low income and living in precarious situations have limited opportunities to increase their quality of life. With respect to social mobility, we rarely found hints at existing upwards mobility. Instead, interviewees described their strategies to not worsen their situation. There are many people in our sample who suffer from poverty and precariousness. Even as pensioners, some are still economically pressured to work, in order to make ends meet. The same is true for those living on social welfare. Most of them have to cope with precariousness for a long time and, in some cases, their situation in the recent past has even worsened. This applies to interviewees in both neighbourhoods. Leo21, who is living on social welfare benefits, tries to express her precarious and hopeless situation and her disillusion with the welfare agency like this:

“How should I put it? One needs to be careful that the money is not cut. Um, [...] I'm already thankful that they [the welfare agency] pay my rent and it is enough for food. But with respect to assistance, well [...] there is nothing, right. At most, some penalty measures, so that I don't feel too well. But otherwise [...]” (Leo21).

She, furthermore, sees herself forced to adapt to her precarious life: *“You need to adjust your claims and then it works somehow, [...] you need to control yourself, with respect to wishes you have, and to demands” (Leo21)* Many other respondents talk about the fact that they needed to get used to living on few economic resources (e.g., Gru16 or: *“I don't need much money. I save money but do not save myself to death” (Leo23)*). Adaptation, humility, and becoming accustomed are, for most, the only options to cope with the bad situation they are living in, without having any prospects that things will get better.

We confirm, in line with Elliot's (1999) argument, that upward social mobility for people in precarious situations cannot be identified. Furthermore, this group of people is rather isolated – both in professional as well as private terms – and very much “locked” in their neighbourhoods, and their radius of activities is very small. However, as in the case of Gru04, a recipient of social benefits, we can identify some significant self-initiative:

“Well, I receive ALG II [social benefits], also do volunteer work and have a small business. I help elderly people; I take care of seniors at their home. A small-scale business [...] Well, I did not wait until I got a job, but I told myself that I will do something. Senior care. I was one of the first ones who did this. I said, I will go to the seniors [...] and [people said:] ‘nobody will pay for it.’ On the contrary, they pay for it! Of course, it is applied against ALG II, for sure, but a bit is left over and I can make ends meet” (Gru04).

This case of successful self-initiative, however, remains an exception in our sample.

Furthermore, in contrast to the literature (e.g. Pinkster, 2014), we did not find evidence of much mutual support within migrant groups. Without referring to herself, Leo03 explains, when asked whether people help each other in the neighbourhood: *“Sometimes, I would say, yes, primarily young and foreign men, yes. For them, this is important. [...] that is their social network. That is replacement of family [...], they feel secure thereby, since they don't have family here” (Leo03)*. However, we need to be wary concerning this point because, as explained in Chapter 2, our sample does not contain many people with migrant backgrounds.

The post-socialist transition and its consequences have been significant with respect to professional lives. Within the group of people who already started their professional career in

the GDR, a clear disruption in their work biographies is identifiable after reunification, a fact that we particularly found in our sample from Grünau. Especially after the systemic change in Eastern Germany, the job situation worsened for many people. Either they lost their job and did not find a new one or they worked under conditions of short-term contracts and low wages. Some of them could find a lower-skilled job in the companies from western Germany that opened new branches in Leipzig. However, many of these businesses closed again after a couple of years and left workers unemployed. A 65-years old man explains the differences between socialist and post-socialist times: *“And [in the GDR] it was more like [...] well everybody needed everybody. Like that, well [...] and today [...] those who have money employ people to fix it [...]”* (Gru02). Additionally many specialized occupations and much skilled labour that were needed in the GDR later became redundant and people could no longer find a job in their profession. For example, Gru16 was trained and worked as a bookbinder, which she could no longer practise afterwards. Therefore, the former GDR residents in our sample are generally challenged to deal with descending the social ladder, due to the ruptures that the systemic transition left behind in their occupation biographies. However, a significant part of this group, especially from the sample in Grünau, is now retired. For them, social mobility plays a minor role.

Personal networks and integration into educational or civic environments contribute to where people identify both chances as well as limits of moving forward. For a significant part of our sample, civic institutions and associations are important for advancement in their lives. Leo11, for example, is engaged in a senior community centre and several other associations; some learn languages (e.g. Gru04). There are also instances where people are enthusiastically engaged in political activities and associations (e.g., Leo04, Leo11, Leo12).

Not only are civic institutions seen as significant with respect to social mobility, but schools have also been mentioned several times as either limiting or facilitating future possibilities, particularly with reference to issues of ethnic diversity. However, the diversity within the schools is perceived quite contrarily. Migrants tend to see ethnically mixed classrooms as advantageous for children to find new contacts and friends but also to learn German. Germans, however, sometimes fear that their children will not succeed in such environments¹⁴: *“Yes, and then I think that maybe, um... her educational opportunities will diminish if she has to stay at this school”* (Leo21).

7.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, we can assert that social mobility in the case of Leipzig is not bound to the neighbourhood level. Our sample clearly indicates that the place of residence and the diversity of the neighbourhood do not foster resident's social mobility, neither improving nor worsening their situation. We have shown that the only exception is the bad reputation of parts of Leipzig Inner East that, in respondents' perceptions, limits job opportunities. People rely more on institutions than on personal networks when looking for a new job. Generally, we have not identified upward social mobility in our sample. Downward social mobility, especially with reference to professional careers, is fostered mainly through massive structural transformations and is influenced by the consequences of the post-socialist transition. Civic and educational institutions are perceived to impact on opportunities residents can take or are limited to. People already living in precarious situations have few opportunities for advancement. Within this group, narratives about social precariousness and the adaptations to it were more prominent than narratives about social mobility.

¹⁴ Within the German system, parents also have the option of sending their children to private schools. However, this is not affordable for the underprivileged groups represented in our sample.

8 Perceptions of public policies and initiatives

8.1 Introduction

In this section, we deal with policy perceptions and preferences of our interview partners. What is crucial with respect to our case studies is that both areas experienced decisive shifts during the last few decades. As already mentioned, in Leipzig Grünau transformations in the form of shrinkage, demolition and renewal of the housing stock have had a significant impact. In Leipzig Inner East, population decline and the dilapidated housing stock have been major issues during the last decades. Today, both areas are marked by population growth and diversification.

In Leipzig, there is no overarching municipal policy tackling diversity or diversification. Policies dealing with diversity-related issues are subsumed under global goals such as the city master plan envisioned in the *Integrated Concept of City Development* (see Grossmann et al., 2014).

In both districts, Leipzig's municipality has developed smaller spatial planning concepts that aim to define the development of the areas. For Leipzig Inner East, the municipality adopted a development concept in 2013, the so-called *STEK LeO 2013*. Equivalent to this, the development concept is expressed in the *Strategy of development Grünau 2020* for Grünau that has just recently become part of discussions. Both strategies are based on participatory approaches (Stadt Leipzig, 2013b: 3).

With respect to reaching out to our interview partners, local associations played a major role. Therefore, we need to consider our sample as selective also with respect to information about what people know about public policies and institutions. This needs to be kept in mind when aiming at answering the research question of how diversity-related policies are perceived by the inhabitants of our research areas. In the following we first deal with which policies are known by our interview partners and then, what priorities interviewees have with respect to their diverse neighbourhoods.

8.2 Perception and evaluation of existing policies and initiatives: what do residents know?

When asked what they know about municipal policies regarding their neighbourhood, interviewees in Leipzig Grünau talk about a wide range of different issues. Mainly, interviewees refer to the infrastructural improvements of the last decades: the renovation of kindergartens, the reactivation of public transport (suburban trains), the renovation of schools and the communal housing stock. In general, they appreciate the physical and, therefore, visual improvement of the last decades. However, political activities or policies in general are not addressed. Interviewees are uninformed about local policies. Generally, older persons expressed more pronounced opinions about the improvements or gaps in development within recent years. In contrast, younger people did not offer such observations or a decisive opinion with regard to local administrative or municipal activities: “No, not really, not really” (Gru21).

In Leipzig Inner East, interviewees referred to rather different policies regarding several issues of diversification. Issues addressed were very diverse: the bad condition of streets and houses, municipal debt burdens, lack of bicycle paths, and the work of associations. Furthermore, interviewees talk about the increasing presence of the police in order to tackle the drug and crime problem, the local trend of upgrading the area, and their fear of rising rents and being displaced. In general, inhabitants of Leipzig Inner East seem to be more sensitized with respect to policies. Compared to Grünau, people in Leipzig Inner East reflect on recent housing improvements or physical changes to a lesser extent. Nevertheless, some of them address the renewal of green spaces within the area (Rabet Park and Lene-Voigt-Park) that is appreciated and related to the

provision of playgrounds for children. Interviewees do not reflect on or name specific policies. Development concepts that affect the area such as the integrated concept for Leipzig Inner East (*STEK LeO 2013*) are not known or addressed by the interviewees.

Generally, and not only with respect to diversity, interviewees frequently do not distinguish between political and other bodies as well as between policies and other measures.¹⁵ As mentioned above, interviewees seem to have little knowledge about concrete policies or political movements related to their neighbourhood. Instead, interview partners tend to confuse administration and municipality with other institutions, e.g., transportation services, communal or private housing cooperatives, the Job Centre, associations, and district management. Interviewees refer to the work of associations they recognise within the neighbourhood. Hence, these are partly involved in realising municipal policies. However, often these organisations are private or civic society organisations. Quotes presented in the following represent examples of what interviewees refer to when asked about policies and activities of the municipality:

“I’m happy that new buildings are being constructed in Grünau. And that they are renovating the facades.” (Gru07) or: *“People are always complaining that there are too many cars in the city. But taking the tram is too expensive altogether.”* (Gru19) or: *“There is something like a club where children who have problems in school can go and they get support”* (Leo09).

Interviewees recognise detachment towards politicians and administrative activities.

Many interview partners perceive a distance between themselves and local authorities:

“Administration? Yes, in the past that was different. But, today, they only concentrate on the periods before an election. Then politicians come to our district and talk. But, besides this, we hardly have any contact to the municipality.” (Gru06) or: *“But, closer contacts between citizens and politics? Not, not that I know of. OK, activities concerning elections, but that is not the same.”* (Gru19) or *“Do they recognise me? Do I feel recognised by them? No, I don’t feel recognised and I don’t expect someone to recognise me. Why should they?”* (Leo21).

Interviewees reported being disappointed with politics and perceive political participation as having limited or no influence. One older woman stated that she quitted contributing to municipal participation offers when she experienced that her engagement was not influencing any development. She felt that policy makers are not listening to suggestions of the inhabitants, although they were involved in participatory processes:

“I was on the advisory board for Leipzig Inner East. But, it was like this: We could discuss and say something but, in the end, nothing of our suggestion was implemented. So, I thought, what am I doing here if I don’t have the power to change something” (Leo12).

If people understand themselves as not having the power of implementing their interests, political participation is perceived as inoperable. However, on the other hand, the presence of participatory processes is appreciated by some interview partners:

“They [the administration] organised citizen conferences, [...] about the development of Grünau. People from the administration spoke there. [...] So, I think the administration cares about Grünau. [...] But it takes longer until you recognise that something changes” (Gru03).

¹⁵ When we say other bodies, we mean, e.g., housing companies or civic society associations; when we say other measures, we mean, e.g., refurbishment and renovation activities or cultural offers made by private actors.

Other interview partners concluded that they did not recognise the administration at all: *“The administration? Ok, you don’t recognise them, just in case you need them. Otherwise I don’t need administration if everything is ok”* (Gru19). We rarely found narrations about fruitful exchanges between local inhabitants and political decision-makers.

In both districts, resources from European funds were invested to renew the areas. These processes are perceived as good when the change of the built environment was visible. Yet, again, bodies such as the European Union or structural funding programmes are not mentioned by interview partners. Additionally, semi-public institutions like the local district management are rarely addressed and, if they are, they are considered to be useless: *“There is this District Management. But, nothing happens there. Everything that happens in this neighbourhood is out of volunteer engagement of some people”* (Leo06).

Policies focussing migration and integration are rarely addressed. Leipzig Inner East and Leipzig Grünau are districts with relatively disadvantaged populations. However, narrations about social issues are rare. For example, in Leipzig Inner East, a district with the highest number of migrants in Leipzig, only four interviewees referred to policies of integration. Their perception is that the municipality is doing something; however, at the same time, interviewees stated that they have doubts about the accuracy of those policies: *“A citywide policy of integration could be hindering the processes as well. How can I say it: if it is resulting in people [migrants] being alone, [...] are left alone with their situation”* (Leo04). In contrast, another unemployed single German mother stated: *“They always say, ‘Yes, we are pro integration’. And then I think, ‘Ok, I don’t feel so integrated”* (Leo21). Hence, semantics about the integration of migrants into the majority are covered by the perception that policies seem to miss the needs of local inhabitants.

Our experiences during fieldwork are related to this. Most migrants we asked for an interview considered us to be from a public consulting service. They expected us to give advice regarding legal procedures, social consulting, and migration issues.

Despite the fact that many of our interviewees are unemployed, policies like the *Leipzig Pass* were hardly addressed. The *Leipzig Pass* is a smaller-scale policy to support underprivileged people in accessing infrastructural and cultural offers through reduced admission charges for public offers (e.g., public transport, swimming pools, cultural events). Of the entire sample, just three persons referred to this municipal policy. Maybe this is because people do not perceive this as a policy at all.

8.3 Policy priorities proposed by interviewees: what do residents want?

Despite the fact that our research sample contains quite different interviewees and lifestyles, they share similar priorities with respect to policy development. The factors presented in the following cut across different lifestyles, age groups, and employment status.

Further urban renewal, refurbishment of the housing stock, and a cleaner environment are desired by interview partners. In Leipzig Grünau, interviewees prioritise a continuation of the renewal of the area and buildings. This includes building larger playgrounds as well as the refurbishment of school buildings:

“Public schools are often like a garbage dump and dirty. And private schools shine and are painted colourfully [...] I mean, public schools don’t need to shine. But, it would be nice to have. If you go to the schoolyard, there is nothing for the kids. The playgrounds are closed because they are in disrepair and nobody is allowed to enter. It takes years until this is done” (Gru24).

Other issues addressed are cleanliness in the streets and the lack of rubbish bins: *“with respect to cleanliness, that could be better”* (Gru11).

In Leipzig Inner East, interviewees also shared similar policy priorities. Interview partners said that they appreciated the provision of housing for all levels of income (*“With respect to dwellings. I would say offer something for all levels of income”* (Leo01).) and a cleaner environment and the renewal of road surfaces (*“The streets are in a bad condition”* (Leo07).).

Interviewees wish for more spaces of encounter in their neighbourhood. On the one hand, interview partners wished that centres that exist in the area survive and be supported by the municipality (*“First of all, these plans to close the KOMM-Haus¹⁶. If this were to be cut away, that would be terrible. It is the only contact point in our neighbourhood”* (Gru17).). On the other hand, interviewees would appreciate more spaces for encounters in the neighbourhood: *“In general, a centre for encounter. That is important. So that people get to know each other [...] to do something together”* (Gru19). A middle-aged mother of two children stated: *“Improvement for Grünau? Mh, more places of encounter, more restaurants and cafes, more and better distributed spaces of encounter, better distributed in Grünau, more publicity”* (Gru12). This also applies for Leipzig Inner East: *“They should offer more houses of public encounter. Where different people can meet and complement each other”* (Leo07). A young unemployed man stated:

“I recognised that more and more public places, let’s say social meeting points, were being rebuilt and dissolved. [...] Opportunities where people can meet in public space. [...] It becomes denser. [...] My impression is that these spaces are being increasingly displaced in favour of streets, shops; in the end, for the economy” (Leo13).

The support and preservation of local associations as spaces of encounter that also provide social support was especially emphasised. In Leipzig Inner East, the support for civic associations was the major issue interview partners reported as their policy priorities. This includes better communication between municipality and local associations:

“There are many associations and initiatives. A couple, really! But, for them, it is often not an easy situation. And not everyone recognises them. And I think they should be taken to the foreground and that the cooperation with them should be better” (Leo02).

Interviewees also stated that they desire more and better information about the work of associations. A middle-aged migrant woman stated: *“I would like to have an A4 paper, with all the necessary information, in my mailbox. I mean highlights of the month, or something like that. It mustn’t be printed in colour. Black and white is enough”* (Leo03). Interview partners also highlighted the meaning of associations with respect to social consulting and support for people in need of help:

“They should take care of the associations and leisure organisations. That this mixing stays alive. These associations do a good job for parents [...] Parents can bring their kids and kids can have leisure activities. [...] They closed a centre of encounter for seniors. [...] These things need to be preserved” (Leo12).

Additionally, one interviewee suggested offering better consultation services with respect to external funding opportunities for local associations.

In Leipzig Grünau, interview partners referred to the lack of offers for youngsters and that publicity of existing offers is missing. A young man stated:

“Yes, they should do more for the youngsters and they need to publish what they do. Often I don’t know what they offer. [...] If you are searching for table tennis you can find something in the internet, but nothing more. They should do more advertising for their offers” (Gru21).

¹⁶ The KOMM-Haus is a local community centre that, on the one hand, offers educational and leisure activities and, on the other, serves as meeting point for several groups.

Interviewees with a higher educational background ask for a general change in the policy approaches in the neighbourhood. In our sample, there are only a few interview partners with higher educational qualifications. With respect to policy priorities, this group is more politically ambitious and critically reflective. In both research areas we identified narrations tackling the current style or mode of policy making in the neighbourhood. A middle-aged woman with two children stated: *“They should not codify everything and the outcomes of every project. Instead they should say ‘ok, we try something and see what the outcome is. [...] Maybe things develop and evolve over time”* (Gru12). These sentiments were also expressed in Leipzig Inner East:

“They should say: We respect that we don’t know what the outcome will be and we will just try to find out over time. We will let things develop. These things can develop out of themselves; that is what I would like to see” (Leo17).

Additionally, interview partners desire municipal actors to be more sensitive with respect to the involvement of individual local persons and local entrepreneurs. This is mentioned with respect to the local trend of increasing the influx of large franchise chains that are attracted in order to foster the economic development of the city. Interviewees demand decentralisation: *“They should work more spatially limited, let’s say more regionally, as far as that is possible within a city. I would appreciate smaller shops, instead of big franchise companies”* (Leo01). A middle-class couple also confirmed this:

“If the municipality has the choice: On the one hand, to choose the great investor who is refurbishing a building with golden taps. And, on the other hand, there is someone who has tradesman’s skills and will renew a building on his/her own initiative. I would wish that the municipality always chooses the trades person” (Leo17).

8.4 Conclusions

There is no clear or explicit knowledge about local urban policies among most of our interview partners. Interviewees refer more to changes they perceive in the areas than explicitly to policies or municipal strategies.

In general, interview partners frequently confuse several public and political bodies when talking about policies. In particular, local associations were acknowledged for their good work for the neighbourhood. By contrast, interviewees perceive a distance between politicians and local inhabitants. Additionally, political participation is rarely mentioned and not well-known by interview partners. Those people who refer to participatory experiences stated that they were disappointed. Less advantaged inhabitants are not familiar with municipal semantics and offers of participation. This appears as a confirmation of distributional injustice with respect to offers of political participation. In the German context, mainly white, better-educated persons have access to political participation (Heß-Meining, 2015). In comparison, relatively deprived persons are barely integrated into the political decision-making process.

Diversity has no/low impact on the perception of public policies or on (politically initiated) change of the neighbourhoods. Furthermore, a lack of political knowledge in general can be attested that could also indicate a lack of political education and political practice. Policies fostering integration of migrants are rarely addressed in both research areas. Hence, with respect to the perception of public policies, ethnic diversity does not seem to be worth addressing or considering as a political topic in the first place. This is the same for policies regarding socio-economic differences or demographics. Furthermore, better educated interviewees stated that they were not familiar with approaches of the municipality.

It might be possible that the conceptualised rhetoric of policy makers is not able to connect with our interview partners. There also seems to be a lack of information between administration, policy makers, and inhabitants within our research areas. Although neighbourhood-specific poli-

cies aim to match the interests of local inhabitants, in our cases, Leipzig's administration could not reach out to those people we talked to.

Many of our interview partners share the same priorities with respect to local policies. The main aspects addressed are: Further renovation of buildings and renewal of the districts, support for associations as providers of spaces of encounter, and support for people in need.

Generally, interview partners desire more spaces of encounter in the neighbourhood. Furthermore interview partners appreciate offers for children and youngsters, as well as educational offers, in order to prevent young people from spending time in the streets. Both the provision with spaces of encounter and the preservation of local associations are most crucial for our interview partners.

With respect to diversity, associations can be considered as providers of diversity-related offers. Nevertheless, interview partners do not relate the work of associations to how diverse neighbourhoods could be governed.

Additionally, in both research areas, we identified the desire to change the approach of local policies. Interviewees expressed the wish that projects should have more freedom with respect to their success and outcome and that associations and projects should not be obliged to provide a decisive concept for every outcome they are aiming at. Furthermore, people wish for allowing more creativity and for room for things to just develop.

9 Conclusion

In this report, we analysed how residents in two areas of Leipzig, Grünau and Leipzig Inner East, experience diversity in their daily life, how they perceive it, and in what ways it affects their lives.

On the one hand, we analysed how diversity affects social cohesion among people and how it impacts on wellbeing, satisfaction, contacts and trust in personal contacts, as well as on the daily activities of the interviewees. With respect to this, we will show that diversity is not a top-priority issue for the people interviewed in the two areas and that, for them, diversity remains a rather abstract concept. On the other hand, we dealt with the role and importance of the neighbourhood for the daily life of its (diverse or diversifying) residents. Here, our findings point to the fact that there is no uniform understanding about the role of the neighbourhood, but the importance of the role that the neighbourhood plays in people's everyday lives differs from group to group. Moreover, processes at the neighbourhood level are often strongly intertwined with processes on larger scales: e.g., the scale of the city as whole or even on the national level.

In this concluding chapter, we, briefly summarize, in the first part, our responses to the research questions that guided Chapters 3-8 (9.1). In the second part, we synthesise and elaborate on the two overarching points in question concerning people's coping strategies when dealing with diversity and the roles of the neighbourhood that were mentioned above (9.2).

9.1 Responses to the research questions

With respect to the individual chapters of the report, our findings can be summarized as follows:

Chapter 3 dealt with the questions of why people moved to the diverse area they live in now and to what extent the diversity of the area has been a pull-factor. Answering these questions, we can conclude that the reasons for residents' housing choices are varied. We have shown that, generally, a combination of pragmatic location decisions and personal decision patterns characterise people's residential mobility behaviour. In particular, the rent levels of a place, the size of the household, and the availability of affordable housing impact on the decision to stay in or to leave

a neighbourhood. Despite the fact that residents describe a socio-economic and ethnic diversity that influences their wellbeing in the neighbourhood, diversity was never mentioned as a specific reason to move to or out of a place. Instead, personal reasons and resources usually determine the desire to move.

Chapter 4 analysed how residents think about the area they live in and whether they see their neighbourhood's diversity as an asset or a liability. With respect to this, we can summarize that, in the case of Leipzig, the term diversity is difficult to address. It is not an important category that people make use of to describe their neighbourhood or their neighbours. It is, rather, the composition of the changing social make-up of the residents and social positions that people describe. Respondents often refer to the term *bunt* (colourful) when talking about issues of diversity in a politically correct way or when referring to relatively obvious differences or varieties of what people look like, how they speak, behave, etc. In Leipzig-Grünau, diversity is primarily related to socio-economic issues and aspects of social inequality. Respondents group people along categories such as long-term unemployed persons, pensioners, employees, and young families. In Leipzig Inner East, ethnic diversity plays a more important role although super-diversity does not play a major role in Leipzig overall, due to its post-socialist background. Well-educated residents expressed interest in getting in touch with migrants. However, this might be a factor accompanying their relocation; it is certainly not a central motivation to move to Leipzig Inner East. In particular, the very deprived long-term unemployed are less accepted and are therefore part of a type of diversity we would refer to as unwanted or undesirable. This undesired diversity was visible in both research areas.

Chapter 5 highlighted the questions of how residents make use of the diversified areas they live in, whether they actively engage in diversified relations and activities in their neighbourhood, and to what extent the area they live in is more important than other areas, in terms of activities. In interpreting the data, we found that activity spaces are located at the intersection of financial resources, social relations of interviewees, and lifestyles. With a smaller household budget, spaces that can be accessed without high costs or that enable less costly activities become important, and these are often located close to the residential environment.

Although people do not actively encounter one another in parks and green spaces, such public spaces are perceived as areas of visible "colourfulness". However, what our material does not confirm is the role of public spaces as an enabler of contacts between diverse groups. Frequently, contacts between people using public spaces are made between those sharing a certain situation in life (e.g., having children) or lifestyle (e.g., having a dog). However, and no matter whether in the open green spaces, in smaller facilities like playgrounds, or even when visiting indoor places of encounter, our interviewees keep to their own peers; contact between various groups is rare in these just recently diversifying neighbourhoods. Instead, stereotyping is relatively common. In terms of activities and use of public space, social diversity seems to be highly connected to the resources interviewees have available to them. Therefore, diversity becomes visible more with respect to structural differences than out of personal attitudes.

The focus of **Chapter 6** was on the extent to which the diversity of the residential area is important for social cohesion and which elements foster or hinder the development of social cohesion in the area. With respect to the first question, we can conclude that the interviewees' personal networks appear to be relatively homogenous. Contacts exist between people who share the same stage of life and similar interests. This is also true for neighbourly relationships. Diversity, consequently, is not an important trigger of social cohesion; one could even say that, in most cases, diversity is not a real trigger for social cohesion at all.

For the majority of interviewees, the duration of housing occupancy and the setting of neighbourly relationships are much more important for creating social networks and cohesion through

these networks. According to our findings, the issues that most strongly foster the development of social cohesion are sharing the same/similar stage of life and similar interests of the interviewees, a longer housing occupancy in the neighbourhood, as well as a shared GDR past. These factors are decisive for building trust amongst people. Factors that hinder the development of social cohesion are, consequently, a different stage of life and different interests among interviewees. The fact that someone is new to a neighbourhood and comes from outside (e.g., not from Leipzig, has a migration background) was also reported as a reason for distance or mistrust by neighbours.

Chapter 7, dealing with the impact of diversity on social mobility, brought us to the conclusion that, in the case of Leipzig, social mobility is not bound to the neighbourhood level. Our sample clearly indicates that the place of residence and the diversity of the neighbourhood do not foster residents' social mobility, neither improving nor worsening their situation. We have shown that, in respondents' perception, limits job opportunities, which is the only exception that exists. People rely more on institutions than on personal networks when looking for a new job. Generally, we did not identify upward social mobility in our sample. Downward social mobility, especially with reference to professional careers, is fostered mainly through massive structural transformations and is influenced by the consequences of the post-socialist transition. Civic and educational institutions are perceived to impact on life chances that residents have, both in a positive or negative sense, depending on the background of interviewees.

Summarizing the findings from **Chapter 8**, which dealt with the perception of policies and initiatives, we conclude that there is no clear or explicit knowledge about urban policies amongst most of our interview partners. People talked more about changes they see in the areas than explicitly about policies or municipal strategies. Moreover, interviewees confused several public and political bodies when talking about policies. Local associations have been especially praised or acknowledged for their good work for the neighbourhood. By contrast, interviewees perceive a distance between politicians and local inhabitants. Less-advantaged inhabitants are not familiar with municipal semantics and offers of participation. Diversity has either no or, at most, a very low impact on the perception of public policies. This applies to policies addressing socially disadvantaged residents or specific age groups. Furthermore, better-educated interviewees stated that they were not familiar with approaches of the municipality. In most cases, interview partners do not connect the support of associations with governance for a diverse neighbourhood. Instead, they simply desire public places to communicate and chat with others. This does not mean that they would become involved with other, diverse people. As Chapters 4 and 6 demonstrated, our interview partners tend to stick to their own peers.

9.2 Responses to the overarching objectives of the report

With respect to the overarching research objectives of this report, we can – building on the responses to the research questions in the previous section – conclude the following: Generally speaking, diversity is not a primary issue for our interviewees. However, if diversity is addressed, our respondents' experiences do not only refer to diversity in ethnic terms but reflect various other dimensions. This broader understanding of diversity is in line with the arguments that seek to open up the debate beyond focussing solely on ethnic diversity (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013; Vertovec, 2007). In particular, differences are experienced in terms of generational diversity.

However, and furthermore, gender, social status, lifestyle, and educational diversity influence people's everyday lives in the neighbourhood. We conclude that the comprehension of diversity is complex and residents experience and perceive differences not along single and distinct dimensions but rather at their intersection. This comprises horizontal differences but also vertical ones such as educational status and incomes. When residents characterise others, they tend to pool

people into groups that are perceived at intersections of multiple dimensions and characteristics (poor Germans, unemployed youth, etc., students, or well-situated long-term residents.).

Generally, however, diversity remains an abstract concept for the interviewed people. Talking about diversity or finding a language for it, thus, was challenging for our respondents. Sometimes even associations other than social associations were evoked by the term, such as the diversity of housing and open spaces in the neighbourhood. People repeatedly employed a relatively ambiguous rhetoric on general issues of diversity, most explicitly when they employed the term *bunt* (colourful) as a politically correct expression to talk about diversity. We could clearly identify inherent uncertainties, as well as the effort to speak in “politically correct” terminology, in the way in which people frame, talk and evaluate diversity and diversification. However, these results need to be reflected in light of the methodological approach of this report. Most of our respondents were not very familiar with the situation of a direct interview. They, at times, felt intimidated and insecure and were apparently reserved in their responses. Therefore, their insecurities and hesitations when talking about diversity might partly be an outcome of the communicative situation respondents found themselves in.

When evaluating the residents’ experiences of diversity, the distinctive local context and historical development of Leipzig as a post-socialist city need to be considered. The current discourse around social mix, incoming migrants, and socio-spatial differences is a relatively new phenomenon in the city. During the years of state socialism, socio-spatial as well as socio-economic differences were not very pronounced. Housing allocation was not based on market principles; flats were assigned to households by the municipal housing administration. Moreover, housing mobility was low and neighbourhoods comparatively stable. In the post-socialist era of the 1990s, due to the significant outflow of skilled and young people, many of the neighbourhoods experienced a kind of homogenisation in terms of the composition of residents. Only for the last 20 years, a new and – for certain areas quite significant – in-migration of a variety of residential groups considerably contributed to the diversification of the city’s neighbourhoods (Haase and Rink 2015, Grossmann et al., 2015). In some areas of Leipzig’s Inner East, an almost complete exchange of the residential population has occurred since the 1990s. Such recent developments, together with the shifting experience of decline and recently accelerated growth, have rendered many communities relatively instable and have created challenges for dealing with diversification. Especially the influx of different ethnic groups is a new experience and people, as well as institutions, are therefore still in a learning process of how to best deal with diversification. With respect to our two research areas, everyday dealings with diversification are not only associated with the changing composition of residents but at the same time are mirrored in the transformation of the built environment. Not only upgrading and restructuring but also the developments of housing prices play an important role with respect to perceptions. People perceive these local changes differently. Some develop a positive attitude towards these changes, especially in relation to upgrading of infrastructures and the built environment. However, diversification also fosters worries in residents’ perceptions: in particular, the prospects of rising rents and impending processes of gentrification that people experience are associated with the influx of better-off newcomers.

These different evaluations of residents’ perception of diversity led to the conclusion that people distinguish between desirable and undesirable diversity. For example, on the one hand, we found evidence of appreciating cultural diversification, while Germans living precariously are perceived as a negative aspect in the social composition of the neighbourhoods. On the other hand, long-term German residents, living in difficult economic situations themselves, comment negatively on the increasing ethnic diversity of the neighbourhoods. There were even foreigners who commented negatively on the presence of other groups of foreigners. Gender is crucial here: quite clearly, anxieties and negative comments mostly refer to male young migrants; most of them were

expressed by female respondents. The perception of diversity therefore is a matter of the residents' own positions and experiences which draw from the repertoire of mutual ascriptions of groups.

Perception of diversity in one's neighbourhood is also a procedural, incremental practice; ascriptions are likely to shift over time. Thus, the perceptions described in this report depict a specific moment in the diversification of Leipzig's population and the two neighbourhoods. At the time the interviews were conducted, they reflected the consequences of the "booming" in-migration in Leipzig Inner East, an issue that developed throughout the last few years, whereas, in the early 2000s, the predominating perceptions would have been different (relating more to vacancies, refurbishment, and the enlargement of parks, as well as to in-migration of migrants). In Grünau they reflect the experience of a recent demographic stabilisation of a district that underwent heavy population losses.

Dichotomous and at times even eclectic perceptions are indicative of the limits of social diversity as a conceptual framework for neighbourhood research. At such points, in our opinion, the explanatory power of the concept of diversity reaches its limits. We suggest that research has to investigate intersections of the diversity discourse with other discourses, e.g., on inequalities, poverty, or justice. These aspects are often forgotten and overlooked in the diversity debate, despite the fact that they need to be considered as inherent characteristics of (a complex understanding of) diversity. This also has clear implications for which terms and frameworks should be used when talking about challenges in the city and its neighbourhoods.

In the second overarching research objective, we sought to evaluate the role that urban neighbourhoods play in coping with diversity. Before setting out to tackle this question, we need to remind the reader that our sample is not representative of the composition of residents in the neighbourhoods but is biased in terms of privileging the voices of people living in precarity. The importance of the neighbourhood is discussed in a twofold manner in neighbourhood research: While, on the one hand, some research attests an unchanged importance of the neighbourhood in people's everyday lives (e.g., Forrest & Kearns, 2001), other approaches suggest a diminishing role of the neighbourhood, due to new and less place-based patterns and flows of mobility (for an overview, see Van Kempen & Wissink, 2014). Our case study areas reflect both trends. The neighbourhoods are still important for residents' daily routines. They especially refer to the availability of local infrastructures such as public transport, shopping facilities, social infrastructures like schools and kindergartens, public spaces and spaces of encounter. Whether this is important to people, however, varies between different groups. People with lower financial capacities and more local networks tend to be more dependent on the availability of public spaces and parks in close proximity, compared to those who have more resources available and have social networks beyond the neighbourhood scale. The neighbourhood, for many of our respondents, is a place of spontaneous everyday contacts, of everyday life and proximity, especially when friends, family, and peers live in the same neighbourhood. For most of our interviewees, contacts in the neighbourhood, or "around the corner", are important, especially for those with relatively restricted social networks. However, contacts across groups are rather loose, if they exist at all. Despite their residence in a diverse neighbourhood, people tend to stick to their own peers and maintain quite homogeneous social networks in their everyday lives.

Generally, it is important to keep in mind that processes taking place at the neighbourhood level are often closely related to processes at the overall city level. The fear of gentrification can be rooted in the city-wide attention towards incipient signs of gentrification that are further fuelled by national debates about rising housing costs, property speculation, and evictions. Consequently, issues that we might interpret as just neighbourhood issues can be repercussions of processes and

debates taking place on higher levels, e.g., in the city or even beyond. In the case of Leipzig, shrinkage until the early 2000s and strong regrowth (and, associated with this, the diversification) in the 2010s form the backdrop of how people perceive changes in their neighbourhoods. The experience of shrinkage directed residents' attention to the fear of neglect, decay, and further population decline. This has started to shift only just recently. Both of our case studies received policy attention with respect to infrastructure upgrading, housing quality improvement, and quality of life enhancement. With respect to the neighbourhood scale, policies in Grünau have focussed on improvements of the built environment and of infrastructure, which is predominantly perceived as the main transformation by residents. Furthermore, aging as a result of shrinkage is also perceived. In Leipzig Inner East, infrastructure improvements have also been implemented; however the recent influx of new groups of people is currently perceived more strongly and has shifted the focus away from perceptions of change related to infrastructure upgrading. Hence, aspects of neighbourhood diversification are not only relevant on the local scale. In fact, in the case of Leipzig, perception of neighbourhood processes and city-wide developments have mutual repercussions.

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Appendix

Interviewee	Age group	Gender	Position in household	Monthly household net income in Euro	Ethnic group (or region/ origin) ¹⁷
Leo01	18-30	F	In shared flat, one flatmate	500-1000	No migration background
Leo02	18-30	F	In shared flat	500-1000	No migration background
Leo03	31-45	F	With husband, brother on an interim basis in their flat	500-1000	From Kosovo
Leo04	31-45	F	Housing project	1000-1500	No migration background
Leo05	18-30	M	In shared flat	500-1000	No migration background
Leo06	18-30	M	In shared flat	500-1000	No migration background
Leo07	31-45	F	Single mother with one child	500-1000	No migration background
Leo08	61-75	F	Single household	500-1000	No migration background
Leo09	46-60	M	With wife and three children	1500-2000	From Zambia
Leo10	*	M	Single household	0-500	No migration background
Leo11	61-75	M	Single household	1000-1500	No migration background
Leo12	61-75	F	Single household	500-1000	No migration background
Leo13	31-45	M	Single household	500-1000	No migration background
Leo14	46-60	F	Single mother, one child, sister in the same building	1000-1500	No migration background
Leo15	>75	F	Single household	*	No migration background
Leo16	31-45	F, M	Heterosexual couple with two children	>2000	No migration background

Leo17	M: 31-45	F, M	Heterosexual couple in separate flats but same building	>2000	No migration background
Leo18	31-45	M	House project, child on part time (1/3) basis	0-500	No migration background
Leo19	18-30	F	With parents and five siblings, the mother is at home (house wife)	0-500	Born in Germany, parents unknown nationality
Leo20	46-60	F	With husband and six children	>2000	No migration background
Leo21	46-60	F	Single mother with one child	500-1000	No migration background
Leo22	18-30	F	Single mother with two children	500-1000	From Bangladesh
Leo23	57	F	Widowed mother with one child	1000-1500	From Vietnam
Leo24	61-75	F	Husband passed away recently, living alone close to daughter	0-500	From Ukraine
Leo25	43	M	With wife and three children	>2000	From Sudan
Gru01	61-75	M	With wife	>2000	No migration background
Gru02	61-75	M	With wife	1500-2000	No migration background
Gru03	*	F	Single household	1500-2000	No migration background
Gru04	*	F	Single household	500-1000	No migration background
Gru05	61-75	F	With husband	500-1000	No migration background
Gru06	61-75	F	With husband	>2000	No migration background
Gru07	61-75	F	With husband	>2000	No migration background
Gru08	46-60	M	Single household	0-500	No migration background
Gru09	61-75	F	With husband	>2000	No migration background
Gru10	61-75	M	With wife	*	No migration

					background
Gru11	61-75	M	With wife	>2000	No migration background
Gru12	31-45	F	With husband and two children	2000	No migration background
Gru13	61-75	M	With wife	>2000	No migration background
Gru14	31-45	M	Single household	500-1000	No migration background
Gru15	46-60	F	With husband, mother who is living close by is suffering from dementia, care work.	500-1000	No migration background
Gru16	46-60	F	(Single household?) Sister and children living in the neighbourhood	*	No migration background
Gru17	46-60	F	Single household	>2000	No migration background
Gru18	61-75	M	Single household	500-1000	No migration background
Gru19	61-75	M	With wife	1000-1500	No migration background
Gru20	18-30	F	With husband, pregnant	1000-1500	Born in Germany, parents unknown nationality
Gru21	31-45	F	Two children and husband	>2000	No migration background
Gru22	F: 18-30 M: 31-45	F, M	Heterosexual couple with toddler	500-1000	No migration background
Gru23	18-30	F	With daughter and boyfriend, parents and sister in the same building	1000	No migration background
Gru24	18-30	M	With girlfriend and her daughter	1000	No migration background
Gru25	31-45	M	Single household	1000	No migration background

* Missing values

