

Housing and Living in the Leipzig-Grünau Large Housing Estate: A Long-Term Study on Residents' Perspectives on Housing Conditions and Social Interaction

Picture: Kabisch



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The development of the Leipzig-Grünau housing estate has been monitored from a sociological perspective since estate's construction began. The first survey was conducted in 1979, and the 12th in spring of 2025.

Profile Grünau

- Laying of the foundation stone in 1976 at the Western fringe of the city of Leipzig
- Prefabricated buildings on an area of 4.5 km², of which 2.3 km² are green areas
- By 1987: 37,400 apartments for 85,000 inhabitants
- After 1990: population decline and residential vacancy
- Demolition of 6,800 apartments, simultaneous renovation of selected residential buildings
- Since 2010: increased influx and returning residents
- 2015: new residential buildings on former demolition sites
- Since 2020: school renovation and new construction
- Current population 2025: 47,800 inhabitants

Methodology

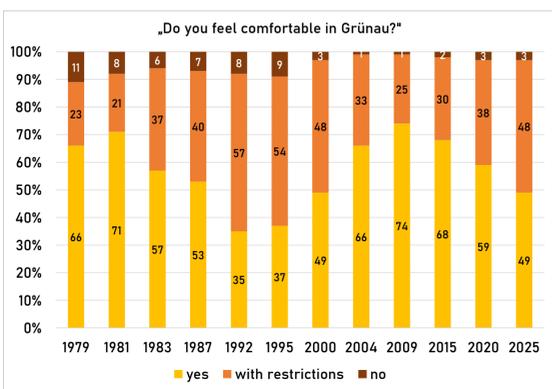
- Resident survey (address panel) using a semi-standardised questionnaire that is delivered and collected again in-person as main method
- Questionnaire includes identical questions for long-term comparison alongside recent topics
- Expert interviews, group discussions, observations, secondary data analysis, photo documentation and mapping as part of the mixed-method design
- Statistical evaluation of data, interpretation, textual and graphical presentation in the final report
- Presentation and intensive discussion of the results with residents, planners, housing associations, politicians and local institutions



Picture: Künzelmann, UFZ

12 Surveys 1979-2025

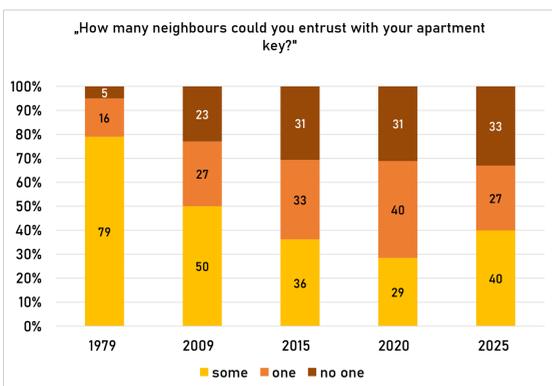
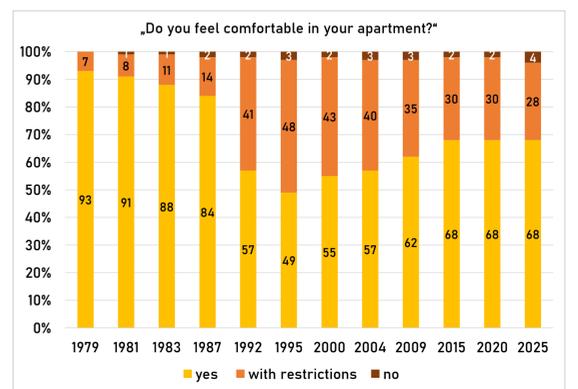
No.	Year	In-habitants	Sample Size	Response rate in %
1	1979	16.000	310	94
2	1981	36.000	578	92
3	1983	60.000	346	92
4	1987	85.000	330	88
5	1992	78.000	415	85
6	1995	74.000	466	82
7	2000	61.000	560	83
8	2004	49.400	672	79
9	2009	45.400	710	80
10	2015	42.000	709	75
11	2020	44.500	736	73
12	2025	47.800	699	78



General well-being in Grünau continues to decline, well-being in one's own home remains high

Since the 2009 survey, well-being in Grünau has been increasingly assessed more critically despite appreciation of green spaces and utilities. Among residents over 65, the proportion of those who feel fully comfortable has significantly declined. The primary reasons mentioned are the growing amount of waste and safety concerns, along with the varying attractiveness of sub-areas within Grünau.

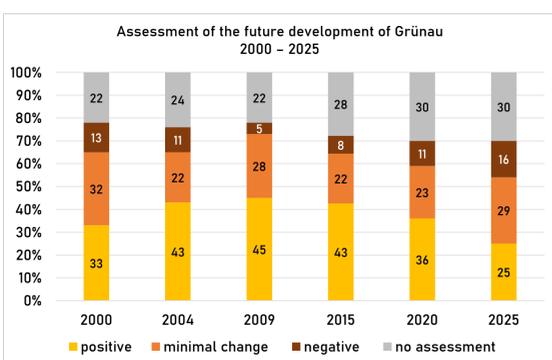
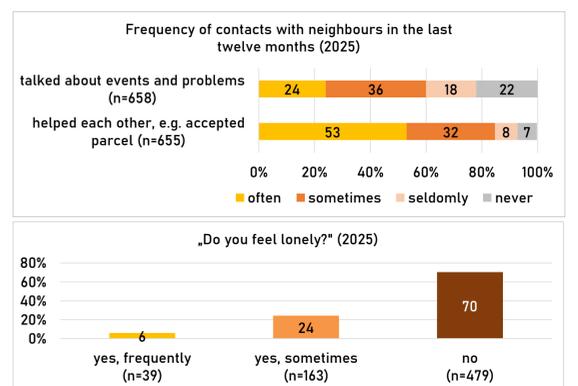
On the other side, respondents highly appreciate the size, location, balconies, furnishings, and the (still) affordable nature of their apartments. However, the affordability of rents in the future and rising heating costs are becoming an increasing concern for many.



Supportive and trusting neighbour relationships are prevalent

Neighbourly cooperation is primarily characterised by functional and practical forms of exchange. Two-thirds of respondents would entrust their apartment keys to one or more people in their building. This proportion has remained stable over the past ten years. Social ties are particularly close in cooperative housing portfolios. To intensify neighbourly coexistence between people with and without a migrant background, requires more opportunities for exchange and respectful interaction.

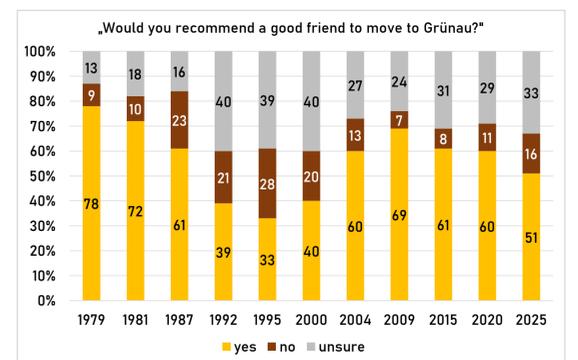
Good contacts in the neighbourhood counteract the development of loneliness, especially among people living alone and those with health restrictions.



A rather cautious view of the area's future affects the recommendation to a good friend moving to Grünau

The proportion of respondents with an optimistic outlook on Grünau's future development is decreasing over time. Although there is recognition of the area's potential, such as the many committed residents or renovation efforts by housing companies, negative aspects are emphasized, e.g. perceived disrespectful interactions and the feeling of being neglected by city politics.

This sentiment also affects residents' declining recommendation about moving to Grünau. Younger people, in particular, are less likely to advise a good friend to move to Grünau. Given the rapidly aging population, this trend is concerning.



Wishes for Grünau on the 50th anniversary of its foundation stone laying on June 1, 2026

„My wish for Grünau is that...“

The wishes reflect the concerns, unmet needs, and bothersome issues for the locals. The peaceful coexistence within a friendly social environment is the most frequently mentioned desire.

... we can live in peace for many years to come

... it gets cleaner and there are more benches

... many young people are relocating here, and that it always remains pleasant and green

... it develops into a safe and affordable urban district, the open spaces remain undeveloped.

... friendliness and mutual respect of all people living here will improve again. It used to be like that

... the bad image will disappear. I enjoy living here and would like to stay

... social inequalities are reduced, cultural understanding is enhanced and cooperation is established

... vacant buildings are renovated, sidewalks with tripping hazards are renewed

... it remains a place worth living in for all generations - with lots of greenery, safe streets, affordable housing, good infrastructure, a wide range of leisure activities and strong social interaction