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Residential trajectories of refugees in Germany

by Kerstin Tanis

AT A GLANCE

- Based on data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees, it can be seen that the majority of refugees who entered Germany between the beginning of 2013 and the end of 2016 had already moved more than once by the time of the 2019 survey. This applies in particular to persons who entered before 2016 and have a protection status.
- The length of stay in the first accommodation, which is often a reception centre, is polarised: Many people leave the reception centres after less than three months, others stay longer than 18 months.
- The main reason for relocation in 2019 is allocation by authorities. However, there are already first signs that the reasons for moving are becoming increasingly individualised.
- When looking at the distance of relocation, it becomes clear that refugees often change their place of residence and not only their accommodation.
- The analysis of the transitions from shared to private accommodation of persons with protection status shows that in 2019 most of them are already living in private accommodation. Persons whose asylum application was decided after 2016, who are younger and have no children, change from shared to private accommodation comparatively late.

Introduction

Residence defines the centre of life for every person. Numerous studies show that the housing situation is an important determinant in the integration process, especially for immigrants and their descendants (Braun/Dwenger 2020; Bratsberg/Ferwerda/Finseraas/Kotsadam 2020; Edin/Fredriksson/Åslund: 2004; Proietti/Veneri: 2018). Since the housing situation can only be shaped individually to a limited extent, the desire for change can often only be realised through a move. A change of location and/or residence therefore offers the opportunity to bring the housing situation in line with individual living conditions or needs.

Compared to other (migrant and non-migrant) population groups, however, the housing situation of refugees¹ is special, as both the place of residence and the type of accommodation in Germany are regulated by law, at least in the short term.² Especially directly after their entry, the housing conditions of refugees are strongly influenced by official allocation. However, with increasing duration of stay and recognition of a protection status, these restrictions are steadily loosened and increasingly reflect individual needs. This brief analysis explains and analyses for the first time in detail how the relevant legal regulations determine the housing histories³ of refugees since their arrival.

To this end, the first part comprehensively examines the currently applicable legal regulations. Subsequently, various characteristics of the residential history will be empirically examined: The question of the extent to which refugees are mobile and which socio-structural characteristics favour or reduce relocations will be investigated. In order to be able to make differentiated statements about the proportion of relocations due to allocation by authorities, the reasons for relocation are then analysed and differentiated according to cross-local and intra-local relocations. Finally, it is important to examine the connection between the length of stay in collective accommodation until moving into private flats and socio-demographic characteristics. On the one hand, the results are of particular interest for the design of legal regulations, on the other hand, they

also show potentials for support in the integration process.

The analyses consider data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees (Kroh et al. 2016, see Infobox) with persons of age at the time of entry who entered Germany from the beginning of 2013 to the end of 2016 and filed an asylum application. The analysis is based on a retrospective additional survey of residential history in the survey year 2019, in which each place of residence was queried including the respective length of stay, type of accommodation and reason for the move since arrival in Germany. The survey was limited to 15 dwellings. The maximum number of flats indicated by a respondent is ten.

Current legal regulations on the residential mobility of refugees

Due to legal regulations, the residential mobility of refugees is not directly comparable to that of other (migrant) population groups. In order to be able to understand the residential histories of refugees, the following is a simplified explanation of the current⁴ legislation for refugees. Figure 1 provides a condensed overview. The degree of restriction on residential (place) mobility decreases from left to right.

The vast majority of asylum seekers in Germany fall under Section 14 (1) AsylG.⁵ This means that they have to file their asylum application at a branch office of the Federal Office and report in person at a reception centre (Section 22 (1) AsylG). There they are taken in or forwarded to another competent reception centre (Section 22 (2) AsylG). Upon filing an application, these persons are then at the same time subject to a housing obligation in the assigned reception facility (Section 47 AsylG). In 2019, the obligation to live in the initial reception facility was extended to regularly up to eighteen months. However, if certain obligations to cooperate are disregarded⁶, the maximum limit can be extended indefinitely. Various family constellations remain exempt from this tightening. For asylum seekers with minor children, the time limit is reduced to up to six months.

1 The terms refugees and protection seekers are not used here in the legal sense, but as collective terms for persons who have applied for asylum in Germany, regardless of whether or how this application was decided (for a detailed description of the population considered here: Kroh et al. 2016).

2 The housing situation of refugees in 2016 or its development from 2016 to 2018 is comprehensively analysed in the BAMF brief analyses by Baier and Siebert (2018) and Tanis (2020).

3 The term "housing history" covers all places, accommodation and flats up to 2019 that the respondents have lived in since their arrival in Germany.

4 The period considered covers the years 2013 to 2019. During this period, the relevant legal regulations were amended several times, for example by the Act to Improve the Enforcement of the Obligation to Leave the Country or the Integration Act.

5 This does not include, for example, asylum applicants who have a residence title of more than six months (cf. Section 14 (2) AsylG).

6 This concerns, for example, the obligation to cooperate in the procurement of identity papers (section 15 (2) sentence 6 AsylG).

INFOBOX: THE IAB-BAMF-SOEP SURVEY OF REFUGEES

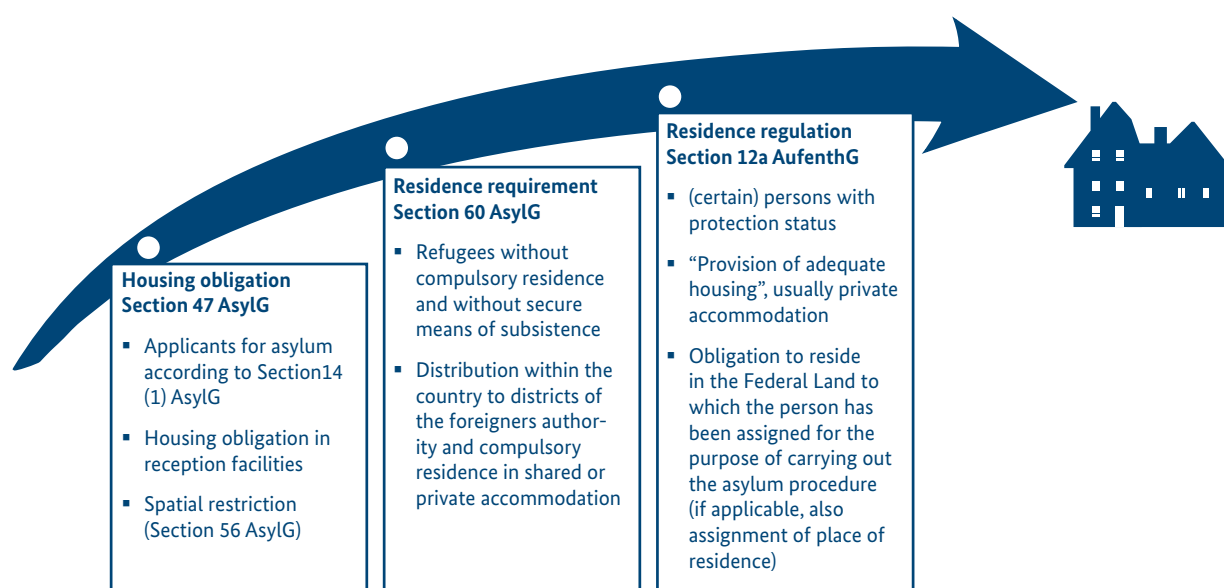
The IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees is conducted since 2016 as a nationwide longitudinal survey of persons who came to Germany between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016 and applied for asylum here, regardless of the course and outcome of the asylum procedure. Thus, both persons who were in the asylum procedure (asylum seekers) and those who had already been granted protection status were taken into account. Furthermore, persons were interviewed whose asylum application had been rejected, but whose departure or deportation had been suspended for various reasons and who had therefore predominantly received a toleration (Duldung) (Kroh et al. 2016). In addition, the household members of these persons are also interviewed. The basis for the sampling was the Central Register of Foreigners

(AZR). When statistical weighting procedures are used, the results obtained are representative for the households of the population delimited above (for a detailed description of the sampling: Kroh et al. 2016, Kühne et al. 2019; Jacobsen et al. 2019).

The survey programme is comparatively extensive (Kroh et al. 2016), which allows a comprehensive analysis of the living conditions of the refugees. In the analyses, it is therefore possible to consider a variety of relevant characteristics, such as time of entry, gender, age, country of origin, level of education or residence status.

All data refer to self-assessments by the refugees.

Figure 1: Overview of the current legal regulations on the residential mobility of refugees



Source: Own representation

If persons are obliged to live in a reception centre, they face also a spatial restriction (Section 56 AsylG). The so-called residence obligation regulates the movement radius of the persons concerned. Consequently, persons in reception facilities are not only restricted in their residential mobility, but also in their general mobility.⁷

⁷ Pursuant to Section 57 of the Asylum Act, the Federal Office may allow a foreign person who is obliged to reside in a reception centre to temporarily leave the area of validity of the residence permit if compelling reasons so require.

After expiry of the housing obligation⁸, refugees are generally no longer obliged to live in a reception centre. In most cases, the applicants are further distributed within the federal state after being accom-

⁸ The obligation to live in a reception centre ends after a maximum of 18 months pursuant to Section 47 (1) sentence 1. Or if the foreigner is obliged to live in another place or in another accommodation, has been granted a protection status, or fulfils the requirements for the granting of a residence title according to the Residence Act after marriage in the Federal territory (Section 48 Asylum Act).

modated in the reception centres (Section 50 AsylG). In this process, the Land authorities decide whether accommodation is provided in shared accommodation or permission is granted to take a private flat. Persons who are not or no longer obliged to live in a reception centre and who at the same time are unable to support themselves independently also receive a residence requirement from their competent immigration department in accordance with Section 60 AsylG. This means that refugees are further distributed by the responsible municipalities to smaller communal accommodations or private flats, where they must then take up residence.

Until 2016, asylum seekers were free to choose where to live from the moment they received a positive asylum decision, i.e. when they were granted protection status. In summer 2016, the Integration Act also significantly restricted the residential mobility of refugees with protection status. According to Section 12a of the Residence Act, beneficiaries of protection are now legally obliged to take up residence in the federal state to which they have been assigned for the purpose of carrying out their asylum procedure (section 12a (1) sentence 1 AufenthG). Furthermore, the federal states may, at their own discretion, make additional allocations to a certain place of residence (section 12a (2) sentence 1 Residence Act). As a rule, beneficiaries of protection are therefore regionally restricted in their choice of place of residence for a maximum of three years after recognition. The residence regulation

according to section 12a AufenthG pursues, among other things, the goal of “providing adequate housing” to promote sustainable integration. The residence regulation therefore still restricts recognised refugees in their residential mobility geographically, but not to a specific accommodation. Only after expiry of the residence regulation can persons with protection status be said to have unrestricted mobility decisions to satisfy individual needs and preferences (depending on their financial situation).

In summary, the residence of refugees is determined by law (in the short term) during and after their asylum procedure. This means that refugees are assigned to certain places of residence and accommodation by authorities and have no (unrestricted) freedom of mobility. While tolerated persons⁹ are affected by residence restrictions in the long term, these usually cease to apply to recognized refugees after three years after their asylum application has been approved, unless there are exceptions¹⁰.

9 Tolerated persons are foreigners who are obliged to leave the country and whose deportation has been temporarily suspended (Section 60a AufenthG). Accordingly, they are not entitled to protection.

10 The residence regulation does not apply if, for example, a minimum subsistence income from employment subject to social insurance contributions or the commencement of vocational training or studies is available (Section 12a (1) sentence 2 AufenthG). It may also be waived upon application, for example to avoid hardship (Section 12a (5) AufenthG).

INFOBOX: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECTION 47 OF THE ASYLUM ACT „OBLIGATION TO LIVE IN RECEPTION FACILITIES”

1992: The Act on the Reorganisation of the Asylum Procedure of 26 June 1992 introduced the accommodation of asylum seekers in central reception centres of the Länder for a period of six weeks, but no longer than three months.

2015: With the Asylum Procedure Acceleration Act of 20 October 2015, the maximum length of stay for asylum seekers in initial reception centres was increased from three to six months. In addition, persons from so-called safe countries of origin¹¹ were obliged to live there for an unlimited period of time.

2017: The Act on the Better Enforcement of the Obligation to Leave the Country (Gesetz zur besseren Durchsetzung der Ausreisepflicht) of 20 July 2017 introduced a limitation of the duration of stay in initial reception facilities to a maximum of 24 months in extreme cases.

2019: The Second Act on Better Enforcement of the Obligation to Leave the Country (Zweite Gesetz zur besseren Durchsetzung der Ausreisepflicht) of 20 August 2019 extended the central housing obligation in the initial reception centre to regularly up to eighteen months; if certain obligations to cooperate are not met, the maximum limit is dropped entirely. Various family constellations remain exempt from this tightening.

11 The following are considered safe countries of origin: the Member States of the European Union, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Kosovo, Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of, Montenegro, Senegal and Serbia.

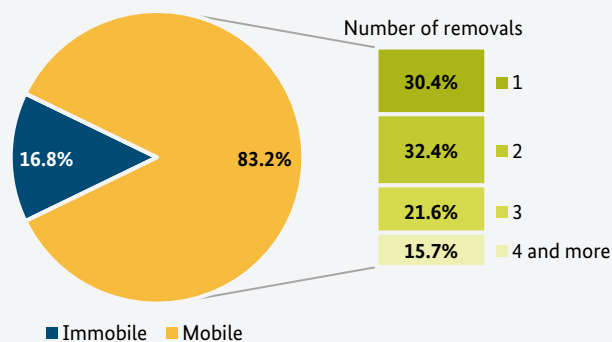
These legal regulations, their historical development and their consequences for the housing history of refugees must be taken into account when interpreting the following results. It should also be mentioned that due to the extraordinary conditions resulting from the very high numbers of asylum seekers arriving in 2015 and 2016, there are no ideal-typical histories, especially with regard to the first type of accommodation (central initial reception centre or decentralised shared or private accommodation). Many refugees were distributed ad hoc to where free accommodation capacities were available, and temporary accommodation (emergency accommodation) may also have been set up (Baier/Siebert 2018). In addition, when interpreting the results, it must be taken into account that serious differences (e.g. in accommodation type and equipment) prevail in initial and follow-up accommodation between the federal states and over time (Wendel 2014; Aumüller et al. 2015).

Mobility frequency

In view of the explanations on the legal regulations for the residential mobility of refugees, it can be assumed in most cases that refugees, regardless of the outcome of their asylum procedure, move at least once after being accommodated in an initial reception centre. Specifically, this is the move from the reception centre to a usually decentralised follow-up accommodation in the municipalities, which usually falls under the housing obligation in the case of a negative outcome of the asylum procedure and under the residence regulation in the case of a positive outcome. Many NGOs distinguish here between the term “placing”, which is used primarily for centralised accommodation, and the term “living”, which is used for accommodation in decentralised communal or private accommodation (Hinger/Schäfer 2017).

The empirical analysis of the frequency of relocation based on the data of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees confirms this assumption: The vast majority of refugees were mobile at least once during the observation period (Figure 2). A differentiation of the mobile persons according to the number of times they moved shows that about one third of all persons moved once and another third twice. One in five people moved three times (22%) and 16% moved four times or more.

Figure 2: Proportion of people by mobility and by number of moves (in percent)



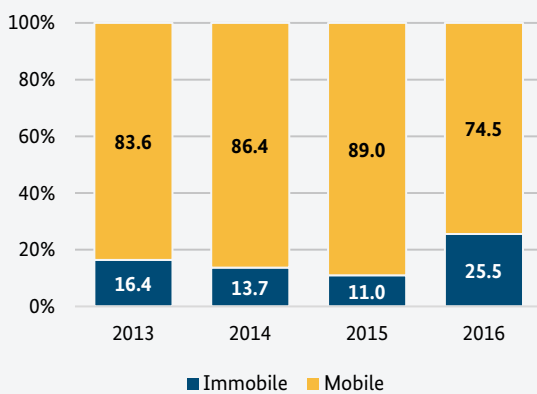
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 3,208 or 2,613 persons (data weighted).

However, it also shows that around 17% of the respondents have never moved, i.e. belong to the group of immobile people. Since only people who immigrated between 2013 and 2016 inclusive and were interviewed in 2019 are included in the analysis, this means that approximately one in five respondents (still) lives in their first accommodation. This may be due to a variety of reasons, but in this analysis only the following two hypotheses are explored. Firstly, it is conceivable that the year of arrival has an influence on mobility: In particular, people who immigrated in 2016 or later are increasingly subject to legal restrictions, which leads to a higher proportion of (involuntary) immobility. In addition, those who arrived later had less time to move by the time of the survey in 2019. Alternatively, secondly, it may also be a matter of persons who have not received recognition and/or persons who do not fulfil certain obligations to cooperate and whose obligation to live in the reception centre has therefore been extended indefinitely. In order to test the two hypotheses, Figure 3 and Figure 4 map mobility by year of arrival and residence status. Both hypotheses seem to be true: Both those who arrived in 2016 and those with toleration have a significantly higher proportion of immobility than the comparison groups.¹²

¹² Another obvious explanation for the relatively high proportion of immigrants could be that these are people who come from safe countries of origin and have to stay in reception centres until they are deported (section 47 (1a) sentence 1 Asylum Act). However, this hypothesis does not tend to apply in the present analysis, as only 1% of all respondents come from such a country.

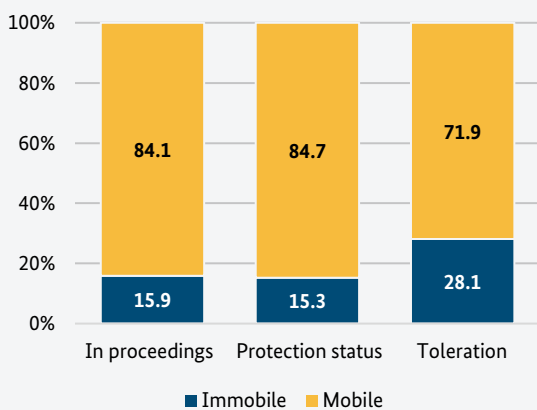
Figure 3: Proportion of (im)mobile persons by year of arrival (in percent)



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of residential history.

Base: 3,125 (data weighted), of which 4.4% arrived in 2013, 14.6% in 2014, 59.6% in 2015 and 21.4% in 2016.

Figure 4: Proportion of (im)mobile persons by residence status (in percent)



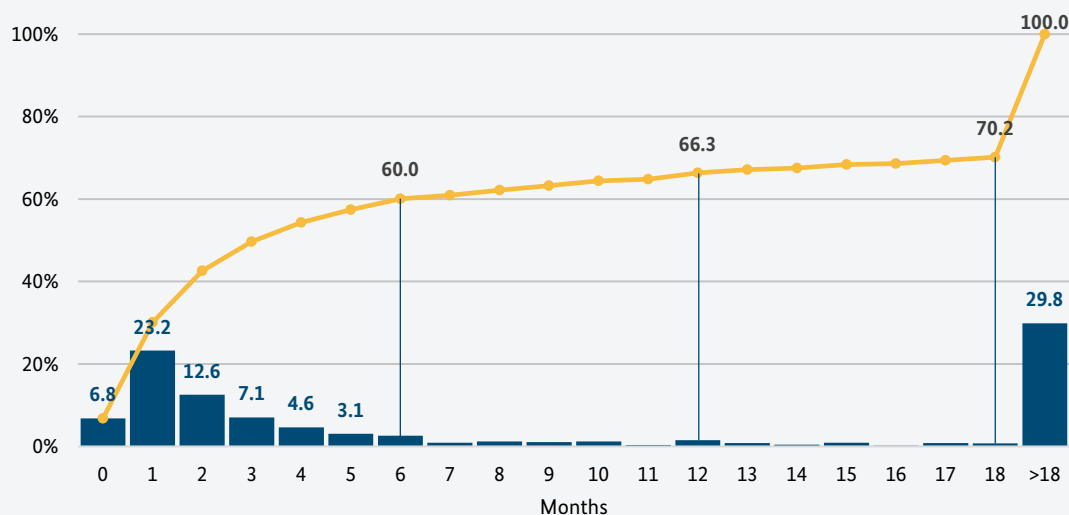
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of residential history, residence status in 2019.

Basis: 3,079 persons (data weighted), of whom 9.5% are in the procedure, 85.2% with protection status and 5.4% with toleration.

In addition to these considerations, the relatively high number of immobile persons who have lived in their first accommodation for at least three years since their entry can be explained by possible problems in the data collection: The residence biography was collected retrospectively, which means that it is assumed that all respondents remember their residences fully and in the correct order, even if they were only of very short duration (like a few days). Due to a possible “non-remembrance” of such shorter residences, it can be assumed that the proportion of persons without a move is distorted and somewhat too high. This must also be taken into account when interpreting the results.

In addition to the frequency of moves, the respective time of a move is also of particular interest when analysing housing histories. As already explained, the first accommodation that refugees occupy is usually a central initial reception facility. In principle, the stay is (currently) limited to a maximum of 18 months. The question now arises as to when refugees move for the first time. Figure 5 shows the length of stay in the first accommodation among mobile persons. It shows that half of the first moves take place within the first quarter after arrival (50%). Thus, 7% of the refugees move in the same month, around a quarter (23%) stay in their first accommodation for one month and a further 13% for two months. For almost 40% of the respondents, however, the first move lasted longer than six months, for 30% one and a half years or longer.

In summary, it can be said that the majority of refugees are mobile or have to be mobile due to official allocations. This applies in particular to persons who entered the country before 2016 and have a protection status. Among the mobile persons, a clear polarisation can be seen in the length of stay in the first accommodation: While almost half of all respondents leave the first accommodation within three months, almost 30% stay in the accommodation for longer than 18 months.

Figure 5: Proportion of mobile persons by length of stay in first accommodation in months (in percent)

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 2,143 persons (data weighted). Median: 4 months. Mean: 16 months. Values below 3 % are not shown.

Note: The bars indicate the shares per month in percent, the line indicates their cumulative shares. The sudden jump in the line after 18 months is due to the aggregation of months 19 to maximum.

Reasons for moving

As already mentioned several times, both the housing situation and the relocation behaviour of persons with a refugee background are largely determined by legal regulations, especially at the beginning of their stay. If refugees are no longer subject to external regulations, it can be assumed that the housing situation and reasons for moving will increasingly be based on individual preferences:

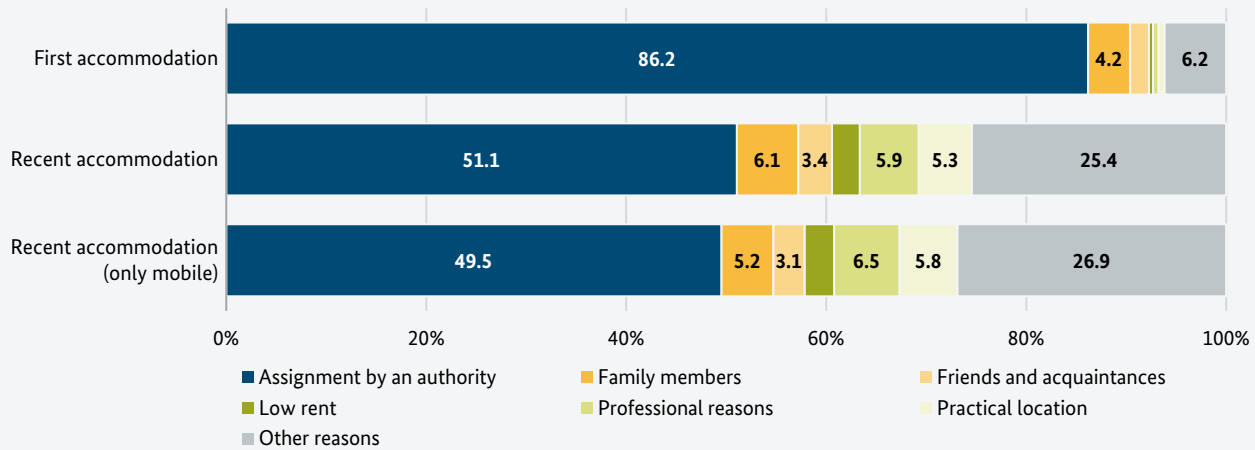
On the one hand, relocation serves to satisfy needs. For example, the need for a larger or better-equipped flat can lead to a move, as can the change to a preferred place of residence that offers certain opportunities for leisure activities, proximity to family members or acquaintances, or even to shops specific to the country of origin. In addition to these housing-related motives, there are also reasons for moving that can be attributed less to housing conditions and more to the living circumstances of persons or households. Examples of this would be the merging of individual households or taking up a new occupation. According to this, spatial mobility always occurs when living conditions and housing conditions come into conflict with each other (Scheider 1997).

In the present analysis, a significant majority of respondents (86 %) state that they moved into their first accommodation (2013–2016) because it was assigned to them by the authorities. This corresponds to the statements made above that the majority of refugees in Germany are initially subject to a housing obligation. 6 % stated

other reasons and 4 % of the respondents stated “family members” as the main reason for moving into the first accommodation. As already explained above, section 50 (4) sentence 5 of the Asylum Act, which allows close family members to express their wishes for allocation, may apply to family members in the allocation decision. Consequently, refugees can express a wish for allocation before the internal distribution within the country after the housing obligation has ceased.

When looking at the accommodation occupied in the last year of observation (2019), it is noticeable that official assignment continues to be the most frequently mentioned reason for moving overall (51 %) (Figure 6). Both mobile and non-mobile persons fall into this category. A differentiated analysis of mobile persons shows a very similar picture (50 %). However, with a significant increase of 19 percentage points, other reasons¹³ are now the second most important reason for moving (25 %). At 6% each, the move was due to family members or for professional reasons. In the case of the latter, it is evident that legal restrictions on residence can be lifted by means of a special regulation as soon as refugees are in employment that meets their needs. In addition, many of the refugees who immigrated between 2013 and 2016 inclusive are no longer subject to any restrictions. The fact that more and more refugees are free to choose their place of residence in 2019 is also reflected in the fact that the reasons “prac-

¹³ Other reasons" can include, for example, the desire to live in a private flat, the landlord's own needs, disputes with neighbours, building defects, health problems due to mould, for example, or the desire to be able to keep pets.

Figure 6: Proportion of people by reason for moving (in percent)

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 3,183 and 3,166 and 2,586 persons respectively (data weighted). Values below 3 % are not shown.

tical location” (5%) and “friends and acquaintances” (3%) have gained in importance for choosing a new place of residence. Since fewer and fewer refugees are subject to legal restrictions on where they can live as their length of stay increases, it can be assumed that these reasons will also become more important in the future when it comes to choosing a place to live.

With regard to the reasons for moving, it can be summarised that refugees continue to move and take up residence at least three years after their entry, mainly due to official assignment. However, with increasing length of stay and an increasing number of people who have a free choice of residence, this external reason loses importance and individual reasons become more important.

Moving distance and direction

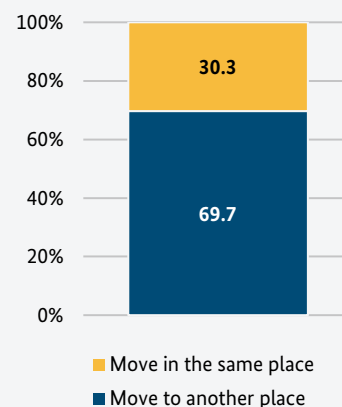
In addition to the frequency of moves, the length of stay in the first accommodation and the reasons for moving, the distance travelled is also important in the analysis of residential mobility patterns. A distinction must be made here between intra-regional (local/near-regional moves) and inter-regional moves. While in the former only the dwelling is changed, in the case of interregional moves the location also changes. Depending on the distance between the old and the new place of residence, the living environment and the associated infrastructure (e.g. urban vs. rural region) as well as the social network change. This is not, or at least usually less, the case with local moves.

Figure 7 shows that in more than two out of three (70%) of the moves that took place, not only a change of residence but also a change of location was carried

out. In one out of three moves, refugees only changed their flat, but not their place of residence, and thus retained their further living environment as well as any existing local acquaintances and friendships (30%).

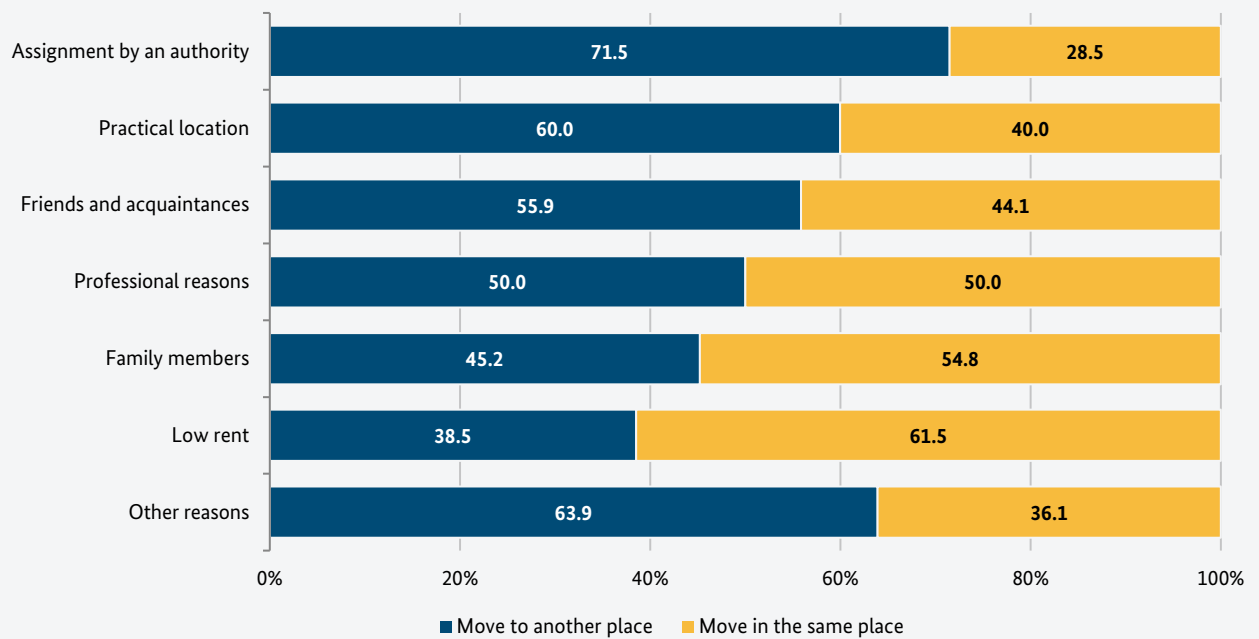
If the reasons for moving are further differentiated according to inner-city and interregional moves, significant differences can be seen (Figure 8). Moves due to family members (55 %) or low rents (62 %) mostly take place in the same locality. On the other hand, mobility due to assignment by public authorities mainly leads to a move that is also associated with a change of location.

When looking at the distance of relocation, it becomes clear that most refugees not only change their accom-

Figure 7: Proportion of people by moving distance (in percent)

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 5,846 observations (data weighted).

Figure 8: Proportion of people by reason for moving and moving distance (in percent)

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 5,832 observations (data weighted).

modation, but also their place of residence. Most of these moves are the result of an assignment by the authorities. The consequences of these changes of location are closely linked to the respective length of stay: For example, many changes of location and short periods of residence can lead to people not being able to build up local social networks. A possible negative consequence of frequent cross-location moves would therefore be fewer opportunities for social integration or continuous participation in measures, e.g. an integration course.

In addition to the moving distance, the direction of the moves is also an important feature for the description of residential histories.¹⁴ The initial regional distribution of asylum seekers is based on the Königsstein Key. The distribution quota is generally determined annually by the Federal Government-Länder Commission¹⁵ and determines what proportion of asylum seekers each Federal Land takes in. This is to ensure an appropriate and fair distribution among the federal states (BAMF 2021). Among the Flächenländer, most asylum seekers are distributed among the western Länder of

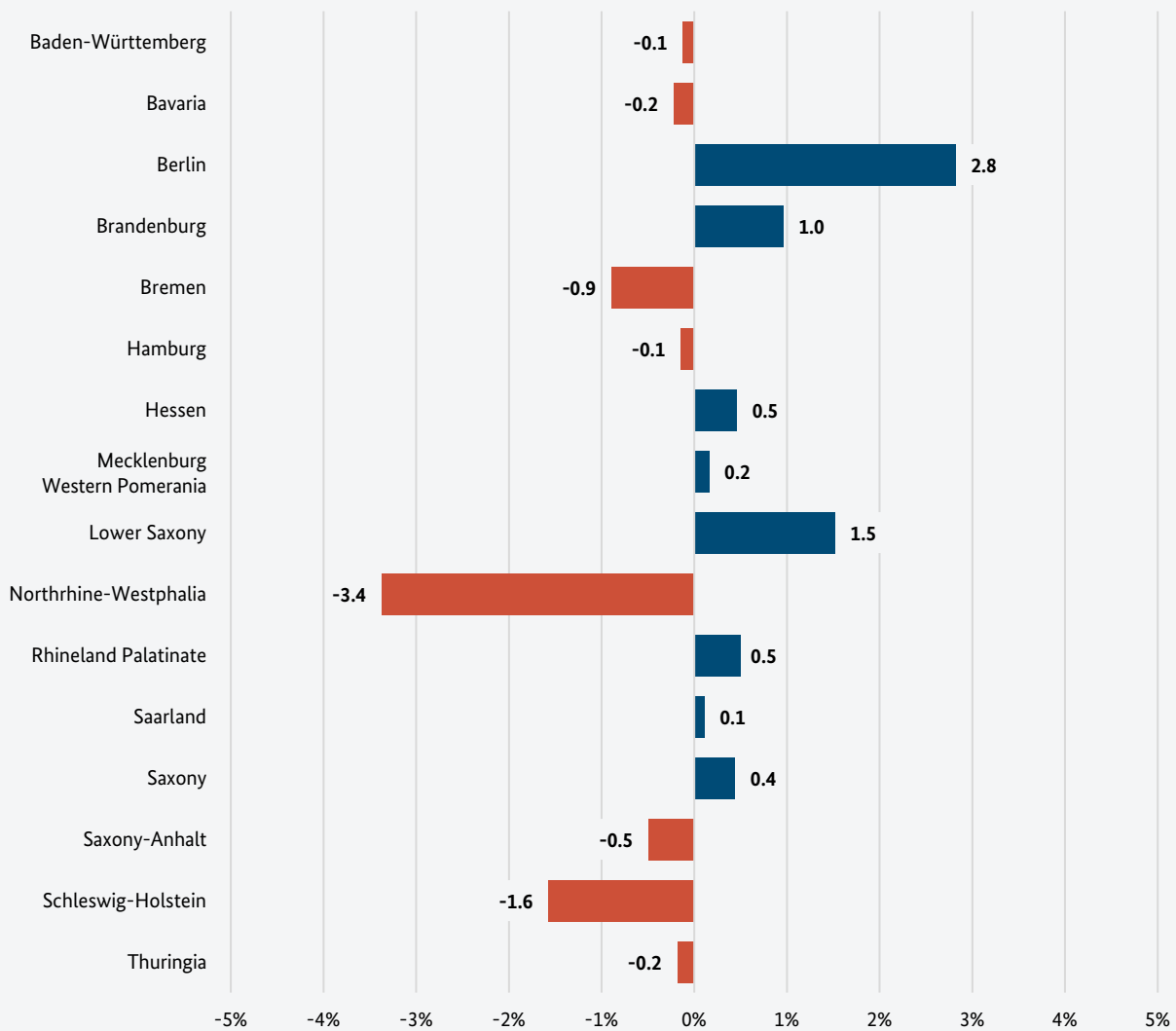
North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. The smallest number of protection seekers to be accepted will be allocated to the eastern federal states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. As a rule, refugees have to take up residence in the federal state to which they were assigned during their asylum procedure, also after the procedure. When relocation within Germany is possible depends on the year of recognition. Thus, for persons with protection status whose recognition took place before 2016, relocation across federal state borders was possible directly from the time of recognition. For refugees whose protection status was recognised in 2016 or later, relocations between the federal states are currently only possible after the expiry of the residence regulation that applies to them.

If we look at the percentage change in the number of refugees by first and current accommodation across the federal states, we see that some states achieve migration gains and others migration losses (Figure 9). The federal state with the most inflows is the city state of Berlin (+3 percentage points), followed by Lower Saxony (+2 percentage points). In third place is an eastern federal state, Brandenburg (+1 percentage point). Here it can be assumed that the influx is determined in particular by the spatial proximity to Berlin and the comparatively cheap rents. The largest migration loss between initial accommodation and current accommodation is achieved by North Rhine-Westphalia

¹⁴ The regional mobility within Germany of refugees with protection status is examined in detail in the BAMF publication by Weber (2022).

¹⁵ The distribution ratio is made up of two-thirds tax revenue and one-third population of the Länder (cf. <https://www.bamf.de/DE/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylverfahrens/Erstverteilung/erstverteilung-node.html> [15.11.2021]).

Figure 9: Percentage change in distribution among the federal states according to first and current accommodation (in percentage points)



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 3,163 or 1,981 persons (data weighted).

(-3 percentage points), followed by Schleswig-Holstein (-2 percentage points) and the city state of Bremen (-1 percentage point).

Transitions from collective to private accommodation for persons with protection status

An important parameter when researching housing histories is the type of accommodation. It can be assumed that people in shared accommodation want to move quickly into private flats (Baraulina/Bitterwolf 2016). A comparison of the first with the current accommodation shows that many refugees have already succeeded in moving into private accommodation or

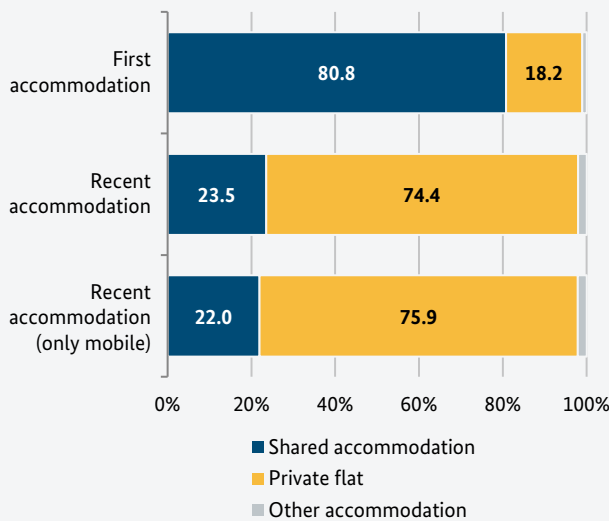
have been allocated such accommodation by municipalities (see also Tanis 2020). Only refugees who have been granted protection status are included in the following analysis, as persons whose protection status has been rejected usually remain in shared accommodation until they leave the country, which would distort the results.¹⁶

While the vast majority (81%) of persons with protection status were initially accommodated in shared accommodation after their arrival in Germany, in 2019 only one in four refugees (24%) still lives in such ac-

¹⁶ Persons whose obligation to leave the country has been suspended (tolerated persons) can move into private accommodation if their livelihood is secure (section 61 (1d) sentence 1 Residence Act). Due to the low number of cases, however, this group of persons cannot be analysed multivariately at this point.

accommodation (Figure 10). If only the accommodation of persons who were mobile during the period under consideration is considered, the proportion is reduced by a further two percentage points to 22%. In other words, of the protection seekers who arrived between 2013 and 2016, around one in four to one in five has still been living in shared accommodation for up to six years in 2019.

Figure 10: Proportion of persons with protection status by type of accommodation (in percent)



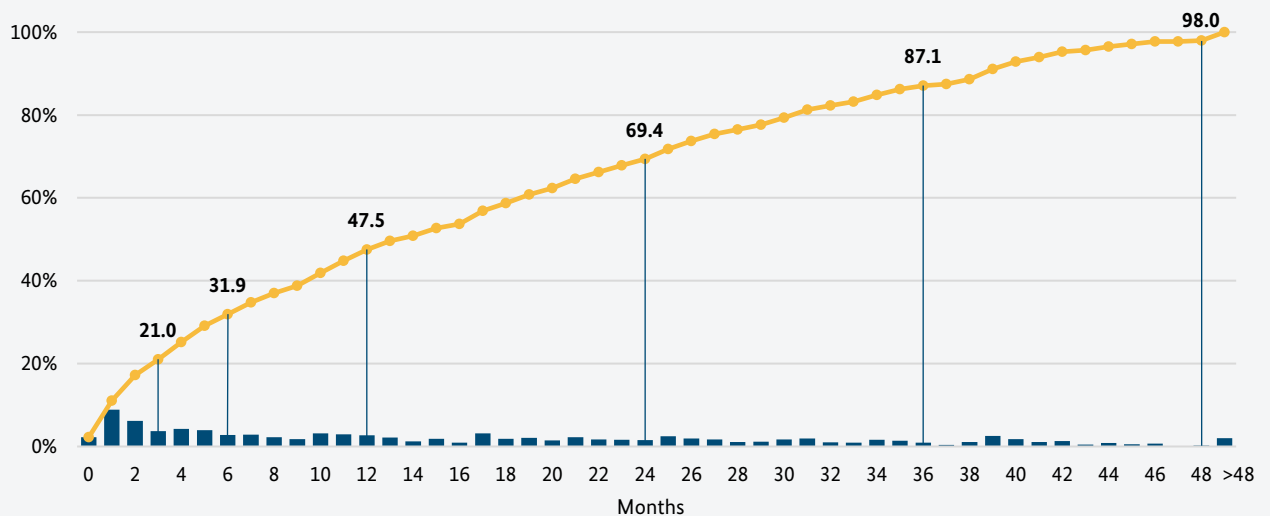
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 2,666 and 2,663 and 2,186 persons respectively (data weighted). Values below 3 % are not shown.

If the transition to private housing is successful, the previous duration of residence in collective accommodation is of particular analytical interest. Figure 11 shows for the group of persons with protection status who moved into private accommodation during the observation period how long they lived in collective accommodation before moving. Due to the data situation, it is unfortunately not possible to differentiate whether the length of stay reflects the free capacities of the municipalities in private accommodation or the extent of access to the private housing market for refugees. Around one in ten refugees with protection status moves from shared accommodation (9%) to private accommodation within the same month (2%) or after one month at the latest. Overall, every third person with protection status (32%) leaves the collective accommodation within the first six months. Almost half of all refugees (48%) who moved into private accommodation did so within one year. Consequently, the majority of persons with protection status living in private accommodation in 2019 (52%) have lived in shared accommodation for longer than twelve months before moving into this private accommodation.

The extent to which the length of stay in shared accommodation is related to socio-demographic characteristics of the refugees is shown in Figure 12. It shows the regression coefficients of a multivariate OLS regression. The variable to be explained is the “length of stay in shared accommodation until moving to private accommodation in months”. Explanatory variables are gender (female/male), age in years,

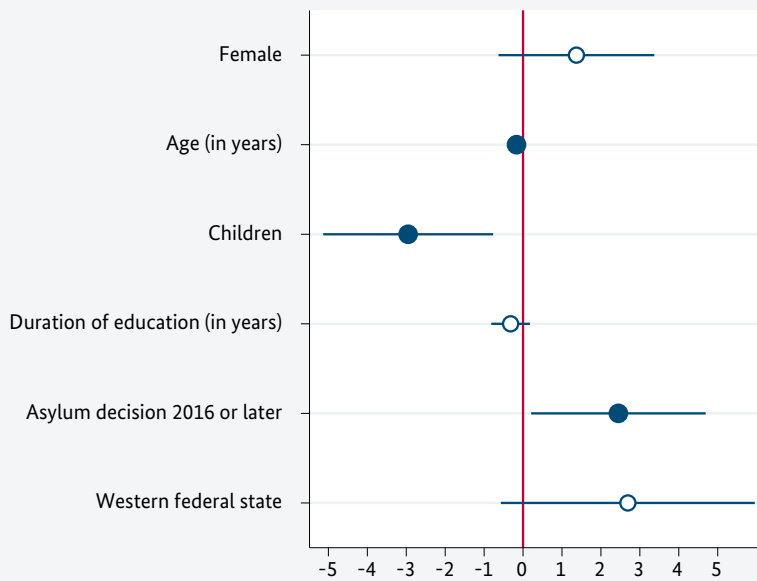
Figure 11: Proportion of persons by length of stay in shared accommodation until moving into private accommodation in months (in percent)



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 889 persons (data weighted).

Figure 12: Correlations between length of stay in collective accommodation and socio-demographic characteristics of persons with protection status (linear regression analysis, coefficients)



Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees 2019. Retrospective survey of housing history.

Basis: 803 persons.

Note: Linear regression analysis (R^2 : 0.0391). The dots indicate the respective value of the coefficients, the blue lines stand for the corresponding 95 % confidence interval. Filled dots indicate a significant correlation with a p-value < 0.05, unfilled dots indicate an insignificant correlation (p-value > 0.05). Points to the left of the red line indicate a negative correlation, i.e. the length of stay in community shelters is shortened; points to the right of the line indicate a positive correlation, i.e. the length of stay in community shelters is lengthened.

presence of children (yes/no), duration of education in years (school and training), year of receipt of asylum decision (before 2016/2016 and later) as well as a dummy variable indicating whether the person resides in a western or eastern federal state.

There is no significant correlation between gender, length of education and residence in a western/eastern federal state and the length of stay in shared accommodation. This means that women and men as well as lower and higher educated persons, controlling for the other characteristics in the model, live in shared accommodation for about the same amount of time before moving into private housing. Older people and people with children (regardless of gender) move into private housing more quickly than younger people or people without children (negative correlation). With each additional year of life, adults spend about 0.2 months less in shared accommodation. Persons with children move out of shared accommodation about three months earlier than persons without children. There is a positive correlation between the length of stay in shared accommodation and asylum decisions issued after 2015. Persons whose asylum cases were decided in 2016 or later lived in shared accommodation for approximately two and a half months longer than persons whose asylum decision was issued

before 2016. This may be a direct consequence of the described amendment of section 47 AsylG on the obligation to live.

The analysis of the transitions from shared to private accommodation shows that the majority of refugees have already made the transition. However, a non-negligible proportion of refugees who moved between 2013 and 2016 still remain in collective accommodation (22% and 24% respectively). The multivariate regression analysis of persons with protection status indicates that these are mainly persons whose asylum application was decided after 2016, who tend to be younger and childless.

Summary

This brief analysis provides initial empirical findings on the residential history of refugees who arrived in Germany between 2013 and 2016 inclusive. The analyses consistently show that their residential history in 2019 was still strongly determined by the legal restrictions on residential mobility. However, initial tendencies are already discernible that suggest an increasing individualisation of the reasons for moving. This becomes clear when comparing the first and current accommodation:

More and more people say that they moved because friends or acquaintances are nearby or because the location is convenient.

The majority of refugees have moved at least once in the observation period since their entry until 2019. This applies in particular to persons who did not enter in 2016 but between 2013 and 2016 and who have a protection status. Many persons move quickly after arrival, others stay longer than 18 months in the first accommodation. Moves currently (still) take place mainly due to official allocation. When looking at the distance of the move, it becomes clear that refugees often change not only the accommodation, but also the place of residence. The analysis of the transitions from shared to private accommodation shows that the majority of persons with protection status have already made the transition. Especially persons whose asylum application was decided after 2016 and who tend to be younger and childless seem to need more time to move into private accommodation.

The consequences of housing histories for the integration process of refugees must be researched in the future. Studies are conceivable that examine the connection between the change of residence/location ordered by the authorities and social integration, or that shed light on the influence of a longer period of stay in shared accommodation on the level of German language skills. Since assignment mobility will become increasingly less important for this study group in the future, further research into the residential histories and relocation patterns of refugees is also essential for estimating future regional migration flows and designing legal regulations.

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