

Monitoring of Social Urban Development Berlin 2025

English Abstract



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Senate Department
for Urban Development,
Building and Housing

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English Abstract

Summary

The Monitoring of Social Urban Development (MSS Berlin) analyses the socio-structural development of Berlin's neighbourhoods at a local level. It was first established in 1998 as part of the research project 'Sozialorientierte Stadtentwicklung' and has been renewed regularly ever since, the current interval being every two years. The MSS has been continuously adjusted regarding the method and dimensions. The results of the MSS act as an early warning system for the Berlin administration and can be used as a potential basis for further analysis in order to develop specific measures.

This small scaled analysis divides the city in 542 planning areas (PLR)¹, of which 535 are included in the calculation in 2025². According to the results, Areas of Special Attention regarding urban development (GmbA)³ are identified. A citywide comparison shows that these areas are disproportionately affected by social injustice.

1.1 BASICS

The MSS 2025 is based on the observation period 2023 - 2024 (data covering 31st December 2022 to 31st December 2024). Since 2013, the MSS is calculated using the tiered indexing method on the spatial level of the Berlin planning areas. It operates as a dynamic system and is therefore regularly reviewed and verified for methodical and technical accuracy. The most recent adjustment was made in 2021, when the Lifeworld-Oriented Spaces (LOR)⁴ were modified for continued use⁵.

The basic principle for the display of Status and Dynamic (change in the span of two years) as well as the calculation of the Status Index⁶ and the Dynamic Index⁷ are based on the following four Index Indicators:

- unemployment (based on SGB II⁸)
- children and adolescents in single parent households
- welfare transfer payments for non-unemployed (based on SGB II und SGB XII⁹) and
- child poverty (welfare transfer payments based on SGB II of under 15-year olds)

Overlaying of the four classes of the Status Index (high, middle, low, very low) and the three classes of the Dynamic Index (positive, stable, negative) results in the Combined Index of Social Injustice¹⁰. Therefore, the 535 included

¹ German: Planungsräume (PLR)

² In the MSS 2025 seven planning areas are excluded due to a lack of citizens (below 300 people) or outlier values

³ German: Gebiete mit besonderem Aufmerksamkeitsbedarf (GmbA)

⁴ German: Lebensweltlich orientierte Räume (LOR)

⁵ Overview of the spatial levels in Berlin since 2021: <https://www.berlin.de/sen/stadt/stadtdaten/stadtwissen/sozialraumorientierte-planungsgrundlagen/lebensweltlich-orientierte-raeume/>

⁶ German: Status-Index (SI)

⁷ German: Dynamik-Index (DI)

⁸ SGB II refers to book II of the social code and indicates welfare transfer payment for job seeking unemployed or workers with low-income jobs

⁹ SGB XII refers to book XII of the social code and indicates welfare transfer payments for low-income people either without the ability to work more than three hours per day or people of old age

¹⁰ German: Gesamtindex Soziale Ungleichheit (SDI)

planning areas are being classified in twelve categories based on their current social situation, as well as their development between the years 2023 and 2024.

In addition to the four Index Indicators another 20 Context Indicators are available in map and table form alongside the long version of the German report. They can be used for further analysis of the social situation in each planning area¹¹. In the MSS 2025 the Context Indicator K20, picturing the situation of full time employees with low-income, is being used for the first time.

The calculation of the different Indicators and classes is based on a tiered indexing method. This methodical approach takes into account the average value of all included 535 planning areas¹². Therefore, all classifications and remarks are made in relation to the average urban score of Berlin. This means that despite an absolute improvement of the Status Index, the classification of the Dynamic Index can still be negative, if the development is less positive than the development in the city of Berlin itself. Equally, a positive Dynamic Index can still correspond to an increase in social injustice. Therefore, the interpretation of the Dynamic Index always has to take into consideration the development of the whole city of Berlin.

1.2 TRENDS IN CORRELATION TO THE FOUR INDEX INDICATORS

Mostly declining trends in Index Indicators

In the observation period 2023 to 2024, the development of the four Index Indicators differs. The improving trend in the share of the unemployed based on SGB II from the MSS 2023 (2022: 4.6 percent) could not be continued (2024: 5.1 percent). This development lays within the German-wide trends. The incline of the unemployment is spread across planning areas in all districts of Berlin. Spatial hotspots can be found in Tempelhof-Schöneberg, Neukölln and Pankow. Planning areas with receding unemployment are located in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Pankow and Steglitz-Zehlendorf. The share of children and adolescents in single parent households declined from 26.9 percent to 24.5 percent while remaining on a high level. The decline is concentrated in planning areas in Pankow and Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf. The share of residents with welfare transfer payments for non-unemployed also dropped from 11.3 percent in 2022 to 10.7 percent in 2024, especially in Pankow and Mitte. Meanwhile the share of child poverty remains on a high level while receding from 24.5 percent to 23.3 percent in 2024. Key areas lay within Neukölln, Mitte and Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf.

Predominantly stable spatial distribution of social disadvantages in Berlin

The spatial distribution of social disadvantages in Berlin remains stable. Areas with a concentration thereof are located in the neighborhoods of Gesundbrunnen, Kreuzberg, Staaken, Falkenhagener Feld, Neukölln, Neu-Hohenschönhausen, Marzahn, Hellersdorf, Reinickendorf and Märkisches Viertel. Most of these neighborhoods already receive special attention through the funding program 'Social Cohesion' with Neighbourhood Management (QM)¹³ and / or the Interdepartmental Community Initiative to Strengthen Socially Disadvantaged Neighborhoods (GI- Handlungsräume)¹⁴.

Furthermore the stability of the spatial distribution is indicated in planning areas with particularly and increasingly low social disadvantages. These are located in areas of the outer city, characterized by typical family homes like in Lichtenberg and Marzahn-Hellersdorf. Overall, the share of areas with social disadvantages remains higher in the outer city (e. g. Staaken in Spandau and Köpenick in Treptow-Köpenick) than in the inner city. Positive dynamics are concentrated in planning areas of Mitte (especially Gesundbrunnen), Neukölln and Kreuzberg despite remaining high social disadvantages.

¹¹ For detailed information about the MSS including tables, maps and reports see:

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/stadt/stadtdaten/stadtwissen/monitoring-soziale-stadtentwicklung/>

¹² In contrast to the previous method, in the MSS 2025 all interim and final results of the calculation are rounded to three decimal places, as are the end results of the previous MSS that are needed for the calculation.

¹³ German: „Sozialer Zusammenhalt“ mit Quartiersmanagement (QM)

¹⁴ German: „Ressortübergreifende Gemeinschaftsinitiative zur Stärkung sozial benachteiligter Quartiere (GI-Handlungsräume)“

1.3 RESULTS: COMBINED INDEX OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE 2025

Combined Index of Social Injustice

Table 1 and Map 1 show the distribution of the 535 planning areas among the 12 groups of the Combined Index of Social Injustice as a result of the overlay of the four classes of the Status Index 2025 with the three classes of the Dynamics Index 2025. Accordingly, 67 percent of the planning areas display a middle Status Index while 16 percent show a high Status Index. More than three Million people are living in these 83 percent of the planning areas. Meanwhile, eight respectively nine percent of the planning areas are showing a low or very low Status Index. They are home to around 723.000 people.

Table 1: Number (n) and share (%) of the PLR in the 12 groups of the Combined Index of Social Injustice

planning areas (PLR)		Dynamic Index 2025						PLR total	
		positive		stable		negative			
Status Index 2025		n	% ^a	n	% ^a	n	% ^a	n	% ^a
	high	9	1,7	70	13,1	7	1,3	86	16,1
	middle	35	6,5	274	51,2	47	8,8	356	66,5
	low	7	1,3	29	5,4	7	1,3	43	8,0
	very low	15	2,8	32	6,0	3	0,6	50	9,3
PLR total		66	12,3	405	75,7	64	12,0	535	100,0

* Deviation due to rounding is possible

Urban development policy focused at Areas Requiring Special Attention (GmbA)

As a result of the Combined Index of Social Injustice 57 planning areas display a very low social Status or a low social Status in combination with a negative Dynamic (Table 1, marked grey). This is true for eleven percent of all 535 planning areas with a population of 441.000 people, one percent more than in the MSS 2023. The results indicate cumulative social disadvantages in these areas. For this reason, the Areas Requiring Special Attention regarding urban development are of special interest for the urban development policy.

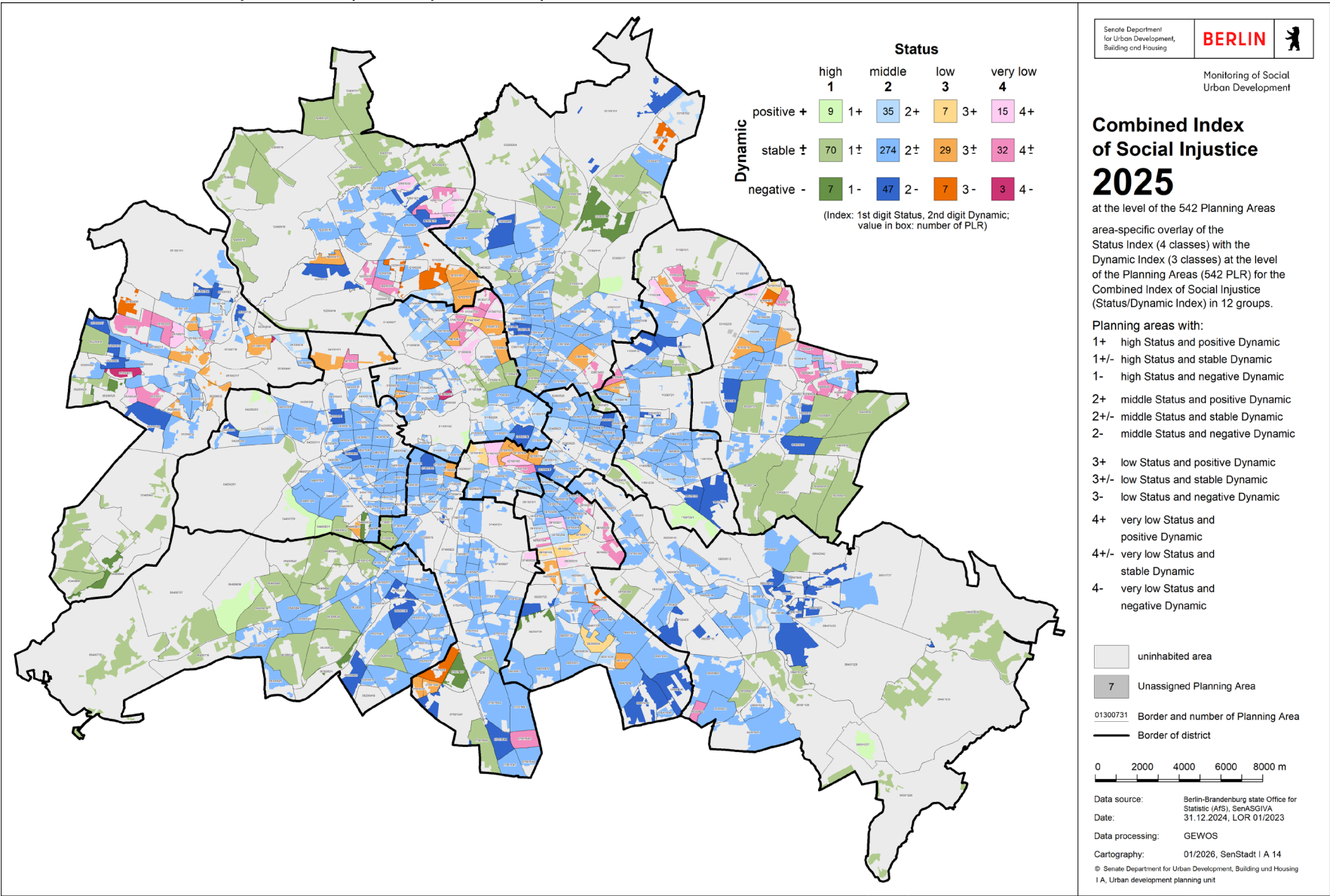
The Areas Requiring Special Attention are spread across both, outer and inner city. In the outer city, they concentrate in parts of Hellersdorf, Märkisches Viertel, Marzahn, Neu-Hohenschönhausen, Reinickendorf, Falkenhagener Feld and Staaken. In the inner city, those areas lay within Gesundbrunnen, Kreuzberg und Neukölln.

In contrast to the MSS 2023, there are twelve new Areas Requiring Special Attention. This concerns the planning areas Karower Chaussee (Pankow), Griesingerstraße, Im Spektefeld, Westerwaldstraße, Nonnendammallee (Spandau), Marienfelder Allee Nordwest (Tempelhof-Schöneberg), Ortolanweg, Goldhähnchenweg (Neukölln), Wittenberger Straße (Marzahn-Hellersdorf), Wartenberg Süd (Lichtenberg), Teichstraße and Reinickes Hof (Reinickendorf). Most of these areas show a negative Dynamic which lead to a decrease of the Status Indicators. With exception of the planning areas Westerwaldstraße and Nonnendammallee all of these areas show an increase of the share of unemployment based on SGB II.

Five planning areas that were requiring special attention in the MSS 2023 have stabilized in the MSS 2025 due to improvements of the Dynamic, which lead to a better Status. This is true for the planning areas Antonstraße, Schwedenstraße (Mitte), Freiheit (Spandau), Rosenbecker Straße (Marzahn-Hellersdorf) and Fennpfuhlpark (Lichtenberg) which are not longer part of the Areas Requiring Special Attention.

The areas most affected largely coincide with the areas covered by the urban development program 'Social Cohesion' and / or the Interdepartmental Community Initiative (GI), where different programs for the stabilization and improvement of social disadvantaged areas are focused with high attention of policy and administration.

Combined Index of Social Injustice 2025 (Status/Dynamic Index)



1.4 LONG-TERM TRENDS

The evaluations of long-term trends focuses particularly on questions of possible socio-spatial polarization (spatial separation of population groups with different social structures) and marginalisation (i. e., the ‘pushing to the outskirts’ of socially disadvantaged residents). For this purpose, the mean values of the Status Index by sub-areas are examined in relation to the Status Index for Berlin. A negative mean value of the Status Index indicates below-average levels of social disadvantage, while positive mean values indicate above-average levels. Increasing mean values thus suggest a strengthening of social disadvantage, and decreasing mean values a reduction in social disadvantage. The citywide long-term trends of spatially differentiated development of social inequality can be summarized as follows:

- The trend toward the peripheralization of social disadvantages continues. The mean value in the inner city continues its downward trend in both the eastern and western parts. For the first time, a negative value is reached in the MSS 2025, which indicates, that the social disadvantage in the inner city is less pronounced than in the citywide comparison. The opposite is true in the outer city. Here, the increase in the mean value continues in both the eastern and western parts. A positive mean value also indicates, for the first time, above-average social disadvantage. Overall, the western part of the city is affected by above average and the eastern part by below average social disadvantage.
- In 2024 most of the Status shifts were located in the outer city, especially in the western outer city, where nearly half of the shifts were counted, mostly decreases in Status (Falkenhagener Feld and Reinickendorf). This development picks up a trend from before the MSS 2023 in which the outer city is more affected by decreases in Status. This is also indicated by the Areas Requiring Special Attention located mostly in the western outer city. Meanwhile in the eastern outer city increases in Status are predominant (i. e. Köpenick und Marzahn). In the inner city shifts in Status are only documented in the western inner city, in the eastern inner part all planning areas remain unchanged.
- For the first time since 2020, the Indicator of unemployment displays an increase. This affected the years 2023 and 2024 and is mainly caused by the ongoing weakening of the German economy. The development of the other Indicators resumes the trends of the pre-Covid-period. Despite a short increase from 2021 to 2022, the Indicator welfare transfer payments for non-unemployed decreased again. The Indicators children and adolescents in single parent households and child poverty remained decreasing.

1.5 CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS

The Monitoring of Social Urban Development 2025 shows mostly continuing progress in spatial development trends. The social disparities are drifting further towards the outer city, which leads to an above-average expression there. Strategic interventions are therefore still necessary to counteract the consolidation of socio-spatial disparities. The MSS provides the necessary database for knowledge-based social urban development.

Monitoring of Social Urban Development 2025 with largely consistent priorities

This year's MSS is characterized by a high degree of consistency in its developments compared to the previous Monitoring. Current developments are strongly influenced by the increasing unemployment rate, especially in Areas Requiring Special Attention. In addition to the stagnant economy, the refugee crisis of previous years also plays a role.

Thus, the current instruments remain important, especially the funding program ‘Social Cohesion’ with Neighbourhood Management as well as the Interdepartmental Community Initiative for the strengthening of socially disadvantaged Quarters. The latter aims to better pool the resources of the various specialist departments at the state level to promote the positive development of the affected social areas. Sustainable solutions can only be achieved through interdepartmental collaboration. By consistently strengthening and improving social infrastructure, along with complementary socio-integrative services, the necessary framework can be established to address multiple social challenges. Current developments from the MSS will be taken into account in the adaptation of the Interdepartmental Community Initiative's scope of action from 2028 onwards.

Intervention through funding programs

The Monitoring of Social Urban Development plays a central role within the system of funding programs in the social city planning of Berlin. For the identification of new funding areas, current focus areas of the program ‘Social Cohesion’ as well as other funding programs for urban development (i. e. ‘Sustainable Renewal’¹⁵, ‘Vibrant Centres and Neighbourhoods’¹⁶) are compared to the development of Berlins social spaces. Based on the conclusions of the MSS, experts can conduct in-depth inspections on site. The results are also being used for school planning, for the contribution of funding for the program ‘facilitation of voluntarily engagement in neighbourhoods’(FEIN)¹⁷ and as criteria for the selection of areas for the program ‘Berlin Creates New Neighbourhoods’ (BENN)¹⁸. Socio-integrative projects as well as a district-based coordination in large housing estates are funded in the program ‘Strengthening of Berlins large housing estates’.

Housing policy interventions

Berlin-owned housing-companies required to allocate 63 percent of their re-lettings to households with housing entitlement certificate (WBS) with low rents. To ensure or restore a balanced social mix, a lower share can be agreed upon within Areas Requiring Special Attention.

Financial intervention: Value equalization

The results of the MSS (Status Index) are regularly used by the Senate Department for Finance for the budgeting of the district global budgets for selected social infrastructure products (playgrounds, general child and youth support, educational assistance, libraries, music schools, adult education centers, sports facilities, green spaces and health promotion) in the sense of a value equalization between the districts.

Further sectoral planning interventions

The results of the MSS are used at the district and state levels to describe socio-spatial characteristics and to provide a professional justification/assessment of the needs of children, young people, and their families. This is applied in the context of determining the need for childcare capacity, to justify funding decisions for expanding childcare places and for staff supplements, with a particular focus on Areas Requiring Special Attention and neighbourhood management areas. Furthermore, the MSS Status Index is incorporated as one of several indicators into the Berlin Rent Index and the Berlin Environmental Justice Atlas. The new Berlin Climate Adaptation Act prioritises measures in heat-prone neighbourhoods with a low or very low Status Index in 2023. The MSS results are also considered in other sectoral planning processes within citywide and district-level youth welfare planning. As part of the state program to improve infrastructure for single parents, the Senate funds the state coordination office as well as a coordination office and a contact point for single parents in each district. The aim is to improve the living and working prospects of single parents through easily accessible, flexible, and interconnected local services. The findings of the MSS – particularly the detailed maps – will also be considered in the deliberations of the state commission for the prevention of child and family poverty.

Development of a dashboard for short profiles of the district regions

The results of the MSS, as the central monitoring tool for Berlin's socio-economic situation, form an important component of the district region short profile dashboard that is currently under development. It enables a standardized, district-wide analysis of small-scale demographic and social developments based on the district region profiles¹⁹, which are regularly compiled by the district offices. These profiles provide a crucial foundation for socially oriented and interdepartmental planning. The goal is to ensure equal living conditions and address problems before they arise. The dashboard will offer a quick overview of key indicators and developments for each district in a concise and interactive format.

¹⁵ German: „Nachhaltige Erneuerung“

¹⁶ German: „Lebendige Zentren und Quartiere“

¹⁷ German: „Freiwilliges Engagement in Nachbarschaften“ (FEIN)

¹⁸ German: „Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften“ (BENN)

¹⁹ German: Bezirksregionenprofile (BZRP)

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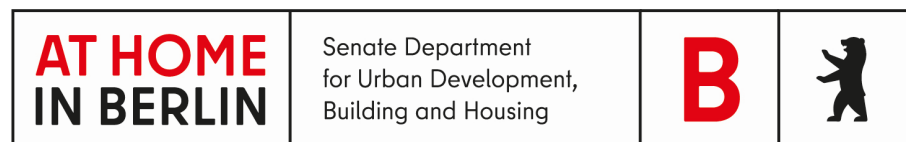
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Cover

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