

The Housing Situation in Los Angeles

As part of a comparative housing research project, the Spatial Development and Urban Policy (SPUR) research group collected data on the housing situation in six metropolises (Berlin, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, and Paris). This data brief provides an overview of the housing situation in Los Angeles. It provides a general summary of the data and highlights some of the most interesting findings.

The survey data shows that 59.2% of respondents are concerned for involuntary housing relocation and more than two-thirds of those who are very concerned indicated that the COVID-19 situation has increased their concern. We also found that home owners have to spend less on housing compared to renters and this also shows in the level of satisfaction with respondents housing costs. Whereas two-thirds of the home owners indicated they are satisfied with their housing expenditures, only one-third of the renters indicated the same.

All data and the codebook are free to use and available on the website of the ETH research collection: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000513683>

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Introduction

Cities worldwide face a worsening housing crisis – supply shortages, speculations, and rising rents lead to housing insecurities for an increasing share of urban dwellers in many metropolises. The spread of COVID-19 has further worsened the situation for many urban residents and amplified their precarity.

In order to gain a better understanding of housing insecurities and the housing situation in global cities, we have launched a survey in early 2021 in six metropolises (Berlin, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, and Paris). Here, we focus on the data from Los Angeles. This data brief thus reflects the answers of the 2,119 survey respondents in Los Angeles. Similar data briefs have been produced for other metropolises (for an overview, see <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000514013>). All data is free to use and can be found on the website of the ETH Research Collection (Dataset: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000513683>).

Housing Situation

Considering the type of tenure, the data indicates a high share of homeowners in Los Angeles (61.2%). The rest of the sample classify themselves as renters (32.3%). Few respondents are living in other housing arrangements (6.5%), including social housing and housing cooperatives. Across the sample, participants display relatively high satisfaction with their current housing situation. The results show that 63.7% are



The median housing expenses of the respondents in Los Angeles are between \$1,300-1,599 per month.

Figure 1: Housing expenses



The average household size is 3.7 people per household.

Figure 2: Household size

On average respondents have stayed in their current apartment for 18.9 years.

...indicate having experienced discrimination when they were looking for housing.

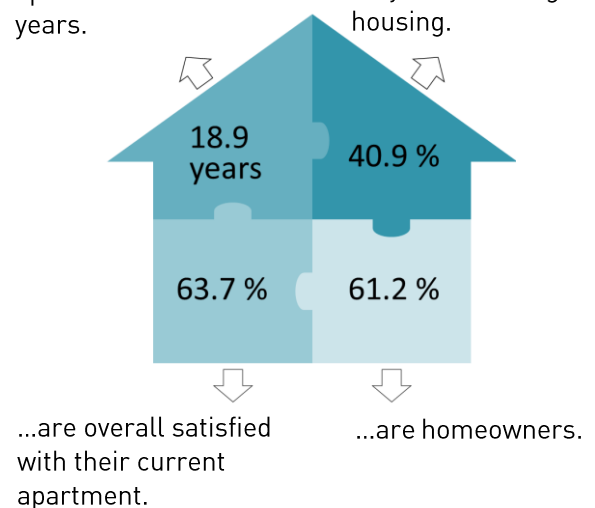


Figure 3: Housing situation

either satisfied or highly satisfied with their apartment. The level of satisfaction with the location of their residency being at 67.0%, and with their neighborhood at 65.6%. The lowest level of satisfaction is related to housing costs. Here, only 53.7% said that they were satisfied or very satisfied. Despite these high satisfaction levels, 40.9% of the survey respondents report having experienced some form of discrimination when looking for new housing.

Length of stay

Fluctuation seems to be relatively low, as people have lived in their apartments and their residential boroughs for many years. 66.4% of the survey respondents said they have lived in their apartments for more than ten years. Length of stay in their residential borough seems to be even longer with 73.4% of our sample indicating they have lived in their residential borough for more than ten years. Even though respondents tend to stay in their residential district for a long time, there is spatial variance in our data (Figure 4). For example, respondents living in District 13 have on average lived in this borough for 18.7 years. In contrast, residents

living in District 15, have been living there for 25.2 years on average.

We also see differences in the length of stay between different tenure types. While 74.8% of the homeowners indicate having lived in their apartments for more than ten years, only 49.6% of the tenants reported the same length of stay. More than one-third of the respondents who rent their accommodation (35.7%) through the private rental market indicate that they have lived in their apartments between one and five years. In comparison, 78.2% of the people living in social renting households and cooperatives indicated that they have lived in their apartments for more than ten years. Renters thus appear to have higher mobility than homeowners, whereas there is a difference in fluctuations between the private and the non-profit rental sector.

Concern for involuntary relocation

59.2% of the respondents are concerned about being forced to involuntarily leave their current homes within the next five years (32.0% of the respondents indicate

Figure 4: Average length of stay in respondents' residential district, N= 2119

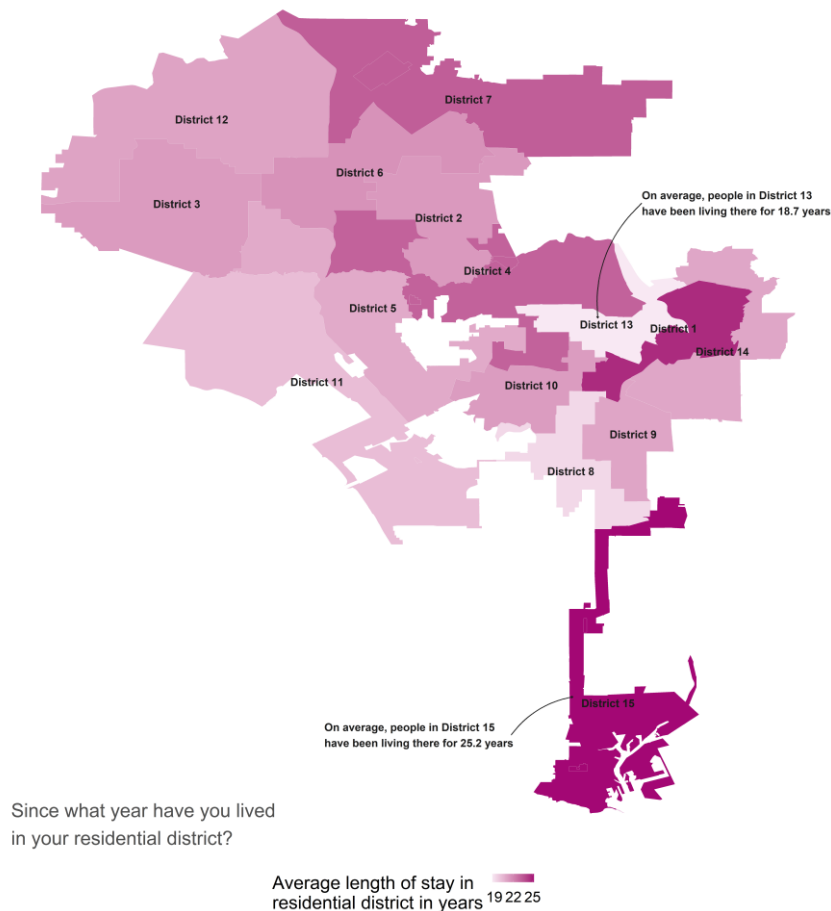
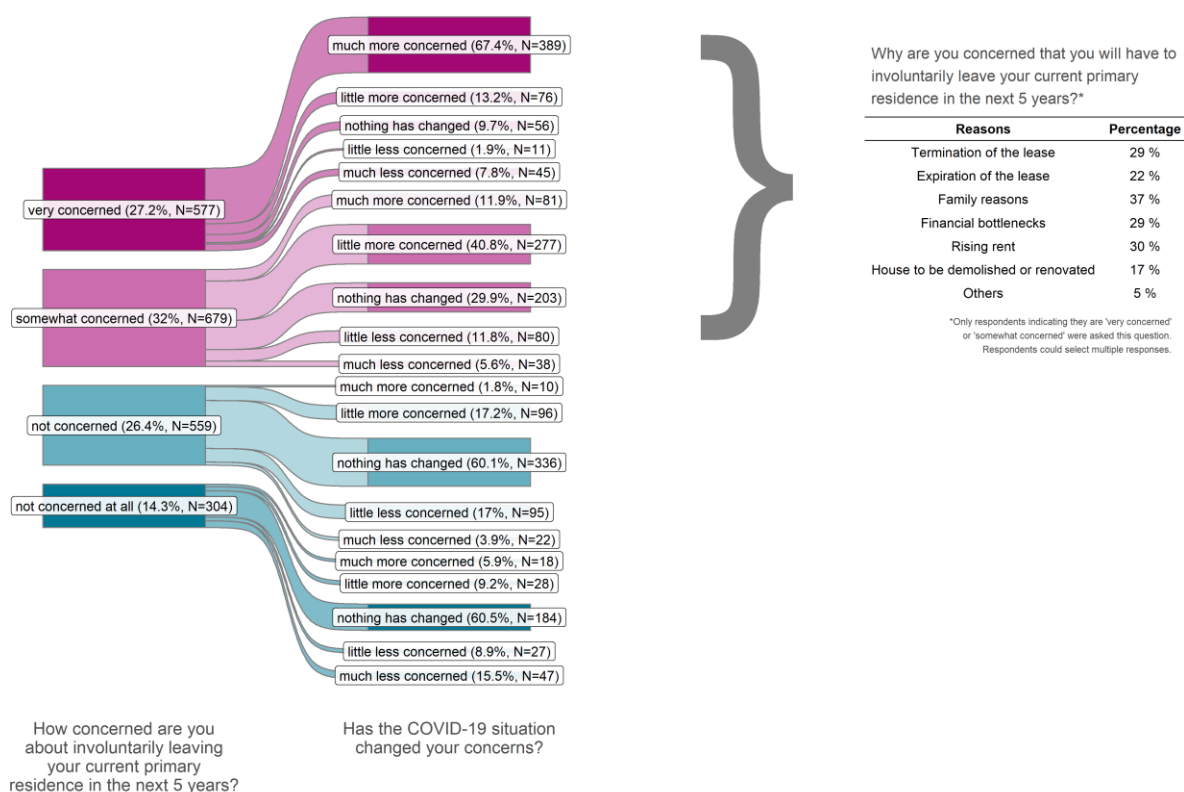


Figure 5: Housing concern and change due to COVID-19, N= 2119



somewhat concerned, and 27.2% are very concerned). Reasons for being concerned are mainly due to family reasons and housing affordability. Of those who indicated being concerned, more than one-third (37.0%) stated family reasons and 30.0% mentioned financial bottlenecks as a reason for their concern. 29% of the concerned respondents also referred to the termination of the lease causing their concern. Other reasons are linked to rising rents or expiration of leases.

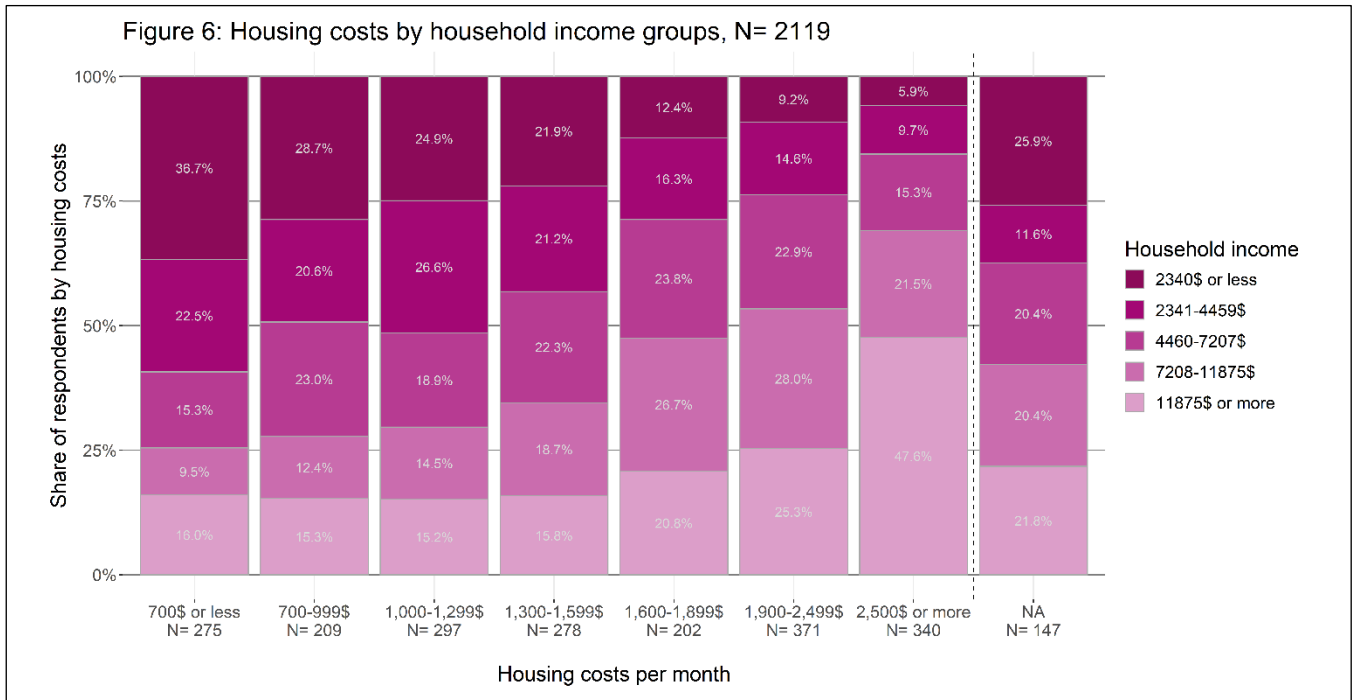
Our data also indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified precarity for some respondents and has rendered them even more vulnerable. Of those who indicated being very concerned about involuntary relocation 67.4% indicated that the COVID-19 situation has further increased their concerns. At the same time, those who do not feel concerned have a higher likelihood to not feel differently because of COVID-19.

Housing finances

Housing expenditures vary across different tenure types, rendering some residents particularly vulnerable to increasing costs. We can see that homeowners predominantly belong to the three highest household income quintiles, whereas lower-income respondents

have a higher probability of being non-homeowners. Lower-income groups thus have a lower probability of homeownership. At the same time, non-homeownership leads to higher housing costs, as homeowners pay significantly less for housing than any other tenure type. This difference also shows in the respondents satisfaction with their housing costs. Whereas 66.1% of the home owners indicated they are satisfied with their housing costs, only 32.6% of those renting their apartment indicated the same.

Housing is, however, not only an expense but for some households also a source of income. 37.7% of our sample indicated income from renting out (a) part(s) of their primary residence. Whereas 25.4% of the sample is renting out on short-term leases (less than a month at a time), 12.2% is receiving income through long term sublets (more than a month at a time). Sublets of both types are mainly done through personal contacts (46.2%), real estate agencies (39.5%), and online portals (12.7%). Also, 31.8% of the respondents said that they have at least one other official residence. Of those, 76.0% said that at least one of these additional residences are located within Los Angeles.



Data information

The data of this housing situation brief on Los Angeles is derived from a survey conducted by the Spatial Development and Urban Policy research group in spring 2021.

Research project: spur.ethz.ch/research/housing-situation

Data Brief Overview: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000514013>

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References

1. Kauer Fiona, Hofer Katrin, Wicki Michael, Kaufmann David (2021). *Survey Data of the Housing Situation in Six Global Metropolises*, Data Brief, Zurich: Spatial Development and Urban Policy (SPUR), <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000514013>.