Suburbanisation, Mobility and the 'Good Life in the Country': A Lifestyle Approach to the Sociology of Urban Sprawl in Germany

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Abstract

It seems to be almost a law of nature that cities are expanding into their hinterlands and that networks of low density settlements are forming along transport routes. What is driving this process? Who is settling in the urban sprawl, and why? These questions are explored in the following article. In the suburbanised region to the north of Frankfurt am Main in Germany, a total of 1359 households in 67 locations were investigated with respect to their lifestyles and mobility habits. The results show that the spread of urban sprawl is not due to the living preferences of the general populace. The assumption can be made that elements of the common societal structure, such as the financing structure of communities and municipalities, promote the urban sprawl in Germany. Furthermore, the usefulness of the lifestyle approach is discussed.

'Urban sprawl' is the term used to refer to the formation of settlements consisting of small to medium-sized urban locations collected around a city, which transform rural settlements into urban landscapes (Duany *et al.* 2000). The German language lacks an equivalent expression. The adjective *'zersiedelt'* (overdeveloped) has a derogatory undertone and is used to describe a countryside or region spoiled by development. However, the German term implies only that the countryside has been defaced by an excessive amount of building. It does not convey any sense of direction or cause and therefore does not express the notion implicit in urban sprawl of a movement from the city to the country. On the other hand, when one refers in Germany to the expansion or even the omnipresence of urban life (e.g. Strubelt 2001, p. 682) this does not carry the sense of a conversion of rural to urban land cover. It articulates first and foremost the change in behavioural patterns and ways of living. Depending on the individual point of view, these changes either awaken fears of

losing a familiar condition or they are observed with satisfaction, because city air, as is well-known in Germany, is liberating.[1]

These various different semantics reflect the distinctive features of urban sprawl in Germany. Two traditions are of a particular importance for an understanding of the development of this phenomenon. First of all, there is a long and well-established tradition of planning which has underpinned the development of the entire nation. '*Raumplanung*' (spatial planning) is the German term which combines the abstract concept of space with the concrete, applied concept of planning. Spatial planning was developed as an academic discipline in the German-speaking world between the 1920s and 1930s and was established as an important administrative instrument during the Third Reich (Boesler 1982; Schliebe 1985; Langhagen-Rohrbach 2005). Hence, spatial planning in the Federal Republic of Germany is a formal planning process regulated by law for the current and future use and structuring of geographical space.

Despite all efforts of spatial planning, urban sprawl has developed in Germany. According to the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, German cities are surrounded by suburbanised areas (see also Strubelt 2001). Three-quarters of the population in the so-called old states, former West Germany, live in cities and their surrounding areas. In the so-called new states, only three-fifths of the population live in cities and their surrounding areas. In 1996 11.8 per cent of Germany's territory was used for settlements and transportation infrastructure, while in 2004 12.8 per cent, or to be more precise, 4.5 million ha were used (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2005). There is a tendency for people to move away from inner cities and a growing number of people live in the surrounding areas of cities.

What got this development of suburbanisation going is no different from the trigger effect of suburbanisation in other modern, industrialised societies. The declining importance of agriculture in occupational and income structures (Kötter 1985; Henkel 1999) also forced Germans to leave rural areas in order to find work in other economic sectors. The expansion of traffic infrastructure, especially of local public transport, and also the spread of the automobile has made it possible to decouple places of residence, to a greater or lesser extent, from the places of work, education and leisure as well as of shopping and consumption. This possibility not only enables people living in rural areas to drive to the city to work, but it also allows people in urban areas to settle in more rural areas (Cronon 1991). The outcome is a vicious circle of the use and growth of the mobility infrastructure, which has significantly advanced and continues to facilitate the process of suburbanisation. The problem appears to feed on itself (Hart and Spivak 1993).

Why do people live in the surrounding areas of cities? Why do they move to places that they know are part of the suburbs or may become suburbs soon? In the light of these questions, we need to take a look at another German tradition in order to explain the phenomenon of urban sprawl. Traditionally, rural life is defined as an authentic, true and warm way of living; a way of living in a relatively small and cohesive community (Sadowsky 1998; Zimmermann 2001). This tradition is part of a discourse about the most desirable form of social existence which has been going on since the German Romantic movement (Sieferle 1984). Rurality and urbanity are understood as two different concepts of social life in the context of this discourse.

The structure of this discourse can be explained by looking at Ferdinand Tönnies' well-known differentiation of community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*) (Tönnies 1991).[2] According to Tönnies a 'community' is authentic, natural and free and consists of relationships between human beings that do not serve a specific purpose. Family life and rural life are typical communities. In German it is superfluous to emphasise that rural life takes place in villages and not in dispersed settlements (even though these kinds of settlements are quite typical for the north-west of Germany). In opposition to 'community', 'society' is defined by means–end calculations and contractual relations, which means people associate with one another to accomplish goals and to protect themselves legally. In contrast to the natural aspects of community, relationships within society are secondary, or even degenerate and estranged. Typically, life in big cities resembles a society, since big cities are places where commerce and business dealings culminate.

The perception of rural life, as described by Tönnies' conceptual scheme, is still current today. The 'good life in the country' remains a quotation familiar to many Germans, although not everybody feels the same way about it. The structural changes in agricultural and the de-ruralisation of villages since the 1950s (Kötter 1972) have not affected this ideal. It is still in effect and is crystallised in the self-concepts of rural inhabitants (Brüggemann and Riehle 1986, 1987; Pongratz 1990; Becker 1997).

Is the desire for a 'good life in the country' and the simple way of life in rural villages the driving force behind suburbanisation in Germany? Is it this desire that makes people live in suburbanised villages and deal with the daily commute to their workplace in the city or the region? And does this desire drive people out of the city, away from the diverse opportunities there of work, leisure and consumption? We know from a previous study that the attractiveness of rural residential areas that are populated in the process of suburbanisation is not determined decisively by economic factors (Bauer 1986). It seems more likely that a mentality independent of social class or lifestyle is the reason for the spread of urban sprawl.

This assumption is our starting point and we subsequently investigate the connection of suburbanisation and mobility. We will develop an explanatory model for two forms of mobility: residential mobility and everyday mobility. We claim that everyday mobility is a burden for humans and we are therefore interested in why people take on such burdens or even cause them by moving to rural areas. Since it is evident that spatial–temporal activity and movement patterns are indicators of lifestyles (Cloke *et al.* 1994; Luedtke 1995; Nutley and Thomas 1995), we have based our study on the concept of lifestyle. We begin with some theoretical considerations on the interdependence of mobility and lifestyle and then precede to exam the empirical design of our investigation, which include both the construction of typologies of lifestyles and patterns of mobility. We conclude by presenting and discussing our findings.

Theoretical considerations – lifestyle and mobility

Among the most important changes that urbanisation and globalisation bring about in the ways of living favoured by those affected by these processes is the enormous

increase in mobility, not only of goods, but also, and particularly, of people (Prato and Trivero 1985; Urry 2000, 2003). As the progression of modernity has been accompanied by the expansion of communication technologies which have also been promoted with the argument that they provide alternatives to physical travel and occupational removal, mobility among people in particular requires an explanation, because, as Urry (2002, p. 256), asks: 'Why travel?' He answers this question by referring to the 'compulsion to proximity' (Boden and Molotch 1994). Communication processes cannot be reduced to the transmission of information; physical co-presence is therefore necessary if the desire or need for the most complex, close and, in particular, confidential communication is to be fulfilled within the family and the leisure sphere, as well as in working and business relationships. We proceed from the assumption that this requirement operates not only in everyday mobility, but also in residential mobility. As a consequence, long-term strategic decisions concerning the way of living become more significant, which can, in turn, have an effect on everyday mobility.

A further explanation is needed for the fact that the same requirement leads to different patterns of behaviour. To this end, we expand on the model developed by Cass *et al*. (2002), who, like Reckwitz (2002), see mobility as a social practice which is shaped in the course of interaction with individual resources and physical infrastructure (Shove 2002, pp. 3–5). In doing so, we employ a lifestyle approach (Bögenhold 2004) in order to take into account the concrete life practices of individuals and families and to explain which forms of ways of living are linked to which forms of everyday mobility, or to the decision to live in the countryside. In accordance with the lifestyle concept developed by Luedtke (1995), we see households as the central point for the organisation of daily life. The individual members of a household arrange their everyday life by communicating with each other. In so doing, they are required to organise their personal life practice while taking into account the structural constraints of their respective life situation. The concept of lifestyles, therefore, goes beyond explanations of behaviour which are solely oriented to values, exposing situational patterns of behaviour and linking them to variables in life circumstances.

In our explanatory model (Figure 1), we link the lifestyles with spatial-temporal action and movement patterns (STAMP). In doing this, we expand on the so-called concept of action–space, taking into consideration the sociological reception of time geography (Giddens 1984), in order to record space–time convergences in ways of living. As a consequence, questions concerning the functions of an action are ranked lower in this concept than the questions of their spatiotemporal basis. Where is a person when? In answer to the question of what a person does where, the STAMP concept differentiates only between work (including training, housework, military service, and so on) and leisure. On this basis, lifestyles can be represented as a spatiotemporal reality. Thus the influence of specific structures of household and family, of the phase of life or also of particular events on mobility behaviour can be determined with regard to both everyday mobility and to residential mobility.

Our explanatory model for mobility behaviour (Figure 1) presents the variables of everyday mobility which require explanation in a relationship of dependence to
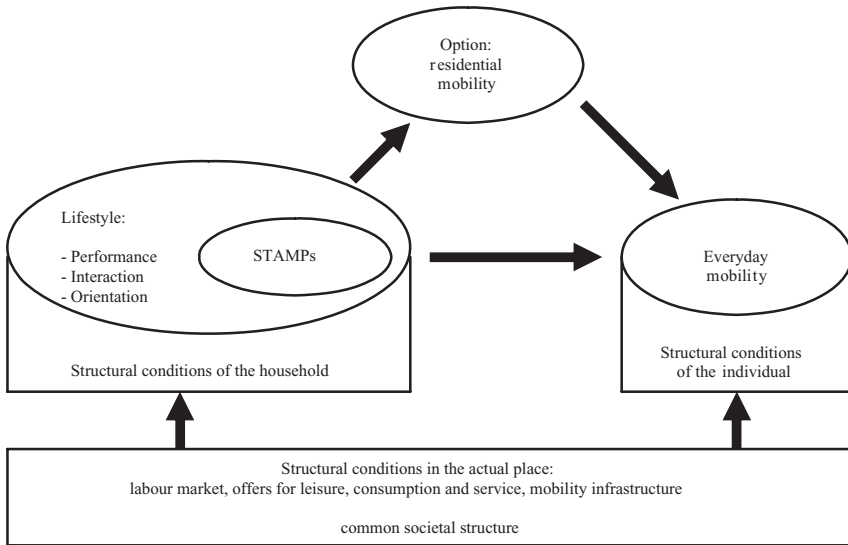
Figure 1: *Explanatory model for mobility as a social practice*

various other complexes of variables. The everyday mobility of individuals, then, is directly dependent on their individual life situation, for example, on their personal employment situation, on individual preconditions for mobility (ownership of a driving license, physical limitations, and so on), as well as on their personal preferences. It has been shown, however, that the explanatory variables which are directly related to the individual in question offer only an inadequate explanation for mobility behaviour, as it is determined to a significant degree by the general way of living. At the core of the explanatory model, therefore, is lifestyle, which represents the daily way of living in its entirety.

Lifestyle is constituted by three dimensions (Luedtke 1989):

- Performance, which encompasses behaviour as the expressive and distinctive dimension of the way of living. By means of their patterns of activity, people stylise themselves and distinguish themselves from others.
- Interaction, which refers to the social dimension of the way of living. This is concerned with the people with whom contact is maintained, with a view to uncovering the social networks in which people operate.
- Orientation, which refers to the interpretative dimension of the way of living, focusing on the values and norms according to which people organise their way of living.

The basis of lifestyle is the structure of the household. This involves certain constraints which constitute the general framework for lifestyle, for example, financial resources, the specific features of the life phase, the number and age of the children living in the household and so on.

Embedded in the lifestyles are the STAMPs, which highlight the spatiotemporal implications of the way of living and, in so doing, increase the explanatory force of the lifestyle for their everyday mobility behaviour. The mobility disposition of a person as a part of a household derives from the combination of their lifestyle and STAMP. The form that their everyday mobility behaviour takes is, in the final analysis, dependent on the local transport infrastructure. People shape their specific pattern of everyday mobility through their habitual use of the available mobility options.

These correlations on the level of the concrete life situation need to be examined in the context of the general social framework. This is particularly true with regard to the question of the development of mobility behaviour over time. The social framework encompasses, in the first place, general social and political developments, for example, in transport policy and the planning of residential areas. The infrastructural conditions in the locality are also significant, ranging from the local job market through to the leisure, commercial and service provisions.

Like everyday mobility, residential mobility can also be explained, to a large extent, with reference to lifestyle and to the STAMP of the mobile household. It is to be expected that, in particular, changes in the individual and familial life situation, for example, a change of job or withdrawal from working life, the birth of a child or a separation of partners will increase the probability of individuals exercising the option of residential mobility. The exact nature of the concrete choice of a place of residence depends fundamentally, for its part, on the general way of living, that is to say, on the habitual lifestyle and the STAMPs.

If the individual- or household-dependent mobility dispositions encounter a changed spatiotemporal system of co-ordinates or a changed transport infrastructure as a consequence of residential relocation, the pattern of everyday mobility is restructured. One can even say that, in general, the phase following relocation is characterised by the necessity of reorienting everyday mobility behaviour. Taking these factors into account, we analyse, firstly, the everyday mobility of the residents in a suburbanised region and secondly, their residential preferences. Our objective is to ascertain what lifestyles are connected to what perspectives concerning everyday mobility, and for what reasons people move to the countryside or to rural areas close to a city.

Research area

This problem requires the construction of a body of spatial data. Our area of investigation is located in the Wetterau, an old cultural landscape with an eventful past (Kerber 1964; Schwarzenberg 1976) directly north of Frankfurt/Main in the state of Hesse (Figure 2). This region belongs to four different administrative districts. The Wetterau district is in the centre of the region. Other parts lie in the Main–Kinzig district, in the rural district of Giessen and in the district of Frankfurt/Main.

According to the criteria of spatial planning, the Rhein–Main region, in which the Wetterau is situated, is a high-grade densely populated agglomeration area. It is dominated by a city with more than 500,000 inhabitants and the surrounding area has a population density of 300 inhabitants per square kilometre. The region altogether has a population density of 549 inhabitants per square kilometre and therefore constitutes an exception among the regions in Hesse. For example, the
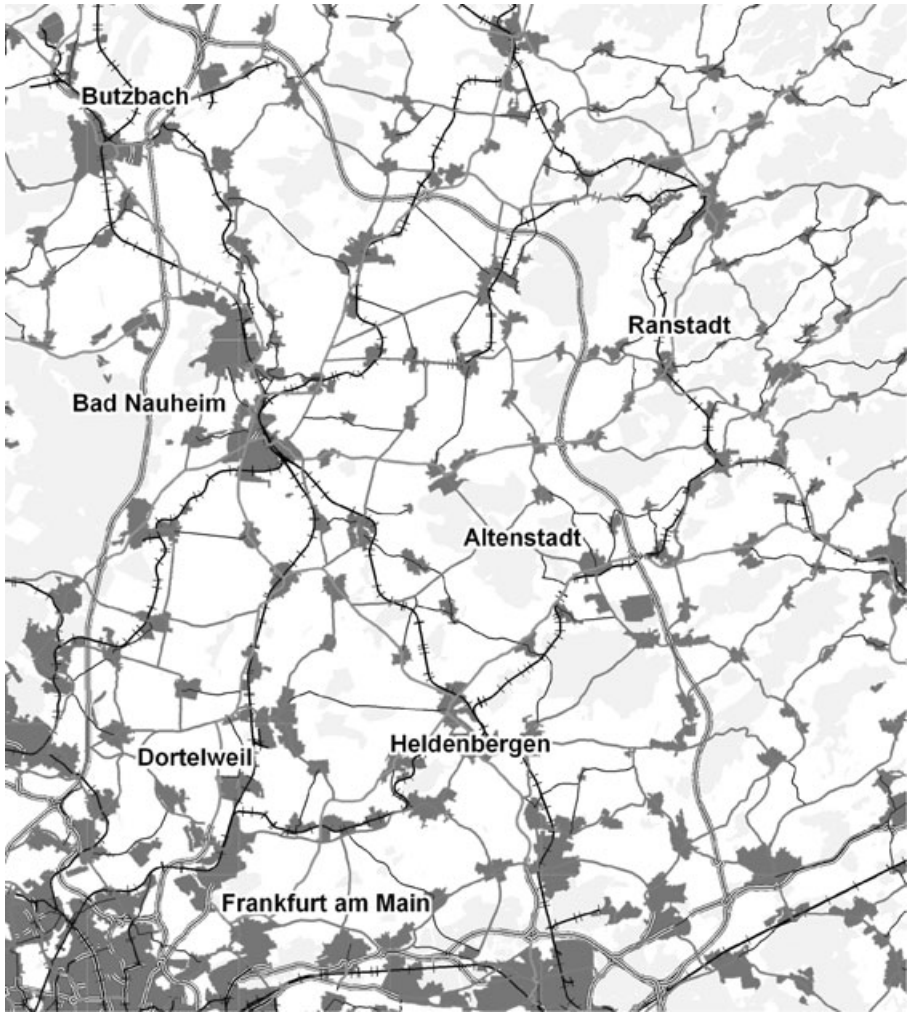
Figure 2: *The research area, the Wetterau, north of Frankfurt am Main*
Source: Ronald Bialozyt, University of Marburg, in Arc-GIS 9.1

Middle Hesse region to the north has only 197 inhabitants per square kilometre (Statistisches Bundesamt 1998).

Research design and data analysis

We selected 67 locations in this region, which constitute a sample that is as hetero-geneous as possible in terms of population count, transport connections and infrastructural provisions and which are scattered over the entire areas. Between July

2003 and February 2004, a total of 1359 households was selected at random in the 67 locations and interviews were conducted in the form of a standardised paper and pencil interview. After a general questionnaire in which statements and attitudes were solicited on the topics 'household and family', 'house and garden', 'activities' and 'life in the region', a personal questionnaire was also filled out, recording details of the situation and mobility patterns of each household member. Of the interviews (N = 1359), 52 per cent were conducted with women and 48 per cent with men. The average age of the interviewees was 50 years (SD 14.8). Eleven per cent of all the households investigated were single housholds, 39 per cent were households of two people, 20 per cent were households of three people and 30 per cent were housholds of four and more people. Using the personal questionnaires, information was gathered on 3787 people, of whom 50 per cent were men and 50 per cent women. The average age was 39.5 years (SD 21.7).

The classifications of lifestyles and STAMPs were carried out by means of explorative cluster analyses with the module 'Quickcluster' in SPSS 13.0. We constructed the variables which had to be taken into account by explorative factor analyses (principal components analyses) with orthogonal rotation (varimax). The criteria for the selection of extracted components was 'eigenvalue > 1'. Exceptions are mentioned. To analyse the relations between two nominal scaled variables on two dimensions we relied on correspondence analyses (distance measure: chi-square, normalisation method: symmetrical). Furthermore, we calculated z transformed partial utility values of the selected attributes for lifestyles and STAMPs by conjoint analyses. Principal component analyses, correspondence analyses and conjoint analyses were also done using SPSS 13.0.

Results of lifestyle classification

The classification of lifestyles takes into account 31 variables that result from six factor analyses for a range of variable complexes and operationalise the following three lifestyle dimensions:

- Performance:
  characteristics of household (5 factors)
  leisure activities (8 factors)
- Interaction:
  membership of societies (4 factors)
  personal contacts (5 factors)
- Orientation:
  importance of various spheres of life (5 factors)
  values (4 factors)

On the basis of these factors, eight lifestyles (LS) can be distinguished, as shown in Table 1.

These eight lifestyles constitute a typology of general life circumstances in a rural region of West Germany. Particularly indicative of this are LS 4, 'local elite', and LS 6, 'sociable and rooted in the locality', with the strong connection to the locality. These rural lifestyles cannot be found in the same form in typologies that are based on samples taken from the entire population of the Federal Republic of Germany

Table 1: *The lifestyles in the region of investigation and their characteristics*

Lifestyle no	Lifestyle	Percentage	Characteristics
1	Unconventional and active	17	Participation in diverse activities, integration of elements both from 'high' and 'low' or 'trivial' culture, or elements causing cultural tension Affinity with entertainment technology High frequency of extra-familial social contacts Rejection of system- and tradition-related values
2	Established citizens	14	'High' cultural activities Extensive use of technology to equip and safeguard homes (homeowners) Active members of societies Orientation to the community and general public Rejection of hedonism in favour of community values
3	Adult children	11	Pleasure-oriented activities, particularly outside the home Affinity with modern work-saving household technology No membership of societies, friends as preferred social contacts Orientation to hedonistic values, but also traditional and system-oriented attitudes
4	Local elite	6	Broad spectrum of activities Technically well equipped Pronounced political involvement Membership of numerous societies Orientation to the general public and community Values: traditionalism and individual responsibility
5	Self-focused and searching	10	Exhilarating activities outside the home, but also domestic withdrawal A large amount of entertainment technology, otherwise below average technical equipment No membership of societies, friends and colleagues as preferred personal contacts Emphatic rejection of family and community control Values: hedonism and social individualism

Table 1: *Continued*

Lifestyle no	Lifestyle	Percentage	Characteristics
6	Sociable and rooted in the locality	17	Diverse 'low/trivial' cultural activities Extensive technical equipment Membership of local societies Neighbours and other society members as preferred personal contacts Orientation to community, high importance placed on career and profession Traditional and conventional values, but also hedonistic attitudes
7	Deprived and domestic	10	Limited spectrum of activities, virtually no activities outside the home Below average technical equipment Few society memberships Only family members as contacts for interaction Emphasis placed on family and community Traditional and system-related values
8	Retiring and family-centred	15	Domestic activities Homeowners with above average entertainment, technology and household equipment Few society memberships Only family members as contacts for interaction Little orientation to outside the home, retreat within nuclear family Rejection of general values, concentration on welfare of the family

Note: High' or 'advanced' culture summarises typical bourgeois activities like going to the theatre or the opera. 'Low' or 'trivial' culture consists of typical working-class activities.

(Wahl 2003, pp. 125–126). By contrast, the LS 2, 'established citizen, LS 3, 'adult children' and LS 7, 'deprived and domestic' are widespread forms of ways of living, which can be found both in towns and in the countryside. These lifestyles can be clearly ascribed to a 'high' or 'low' cultural scheme of everyday living, or one which involves a tension between the two. LS 1, 'unconventional and active', overrides the separation between different cultural spheres and integrates various lifestyle elements within a way of living. LS 5, 'self-focused and searching' and LS 8, 'retiring and family-centred', are, in the final analysis, typical of particular life phases; whereas the former are single and childless and their life prospects are still open and indeterminate, the latter have begun a family with children and are in the process of establishing a long-term way of living. This is indicated in particular by the correspondence analysis in which the lifestyles are linked to familial life situations by means of a

household typology (Figure 3). Here, lifestyles and household types are plotted on the x axis according to average age, whereas the y axis shows whether, and to what extent, the life prospects are fixed or still open.

Results of the classification of the spatiotemporal action and movement patterns (STAMPs)

The classification of the STAMPs is also carried out by means of an explorative cluster analysis. This cluster analysis takes into consideration 17 variables, which record six differing mobility aspects as dimensions of the results of factor analyses or as z-standardised individual variables:

- everyday activity locations (leisure and consumption radii)
- unusual activity locations (holiday radii)
- residential locations of the family
- use of a car
- variables characterising the residential situation
- attachment to place of residence

Eight STAMPs, shown in Table 2, can be identified on the basis of these factors. The STAMPs can also be described by reference to two criteria of a qualitative nature (Table 3):

Mobility rate (frequency of everyday mobility) on a scale of one to five, from 'very low' to 'very high', corresponding roughly to the following categories: less than 4 journeys per week; 4 to 6 journeys per week; 1 to 2 journeys per day; 3 to 4 journeys per day; more than 4 journeys per day.
Mobility radii (reach of everyday mobility) on a scale of one to five, from 'very near' to 'very far', corresponding roughly to the following activity locations: home and garden; neighbourhood and locality; region; Frankfurt; outside the region.

The integration of the STAMPs in the lifestyles – residential situation and the perspectives related to everyday mobility

The process of integrating the STAMPs into the lifestyles is also carried out by means of a correspondence analysis. In the graphic representation, the dimensions of the residential situation are represented on the axes by reference to standardised values (Figure 4). Lifestyles and STAMPs are plotted according to length of residence on the x axis. The STAMPs of the renting tenants and new bourgeoisie who are newcomers to the area in the left-hand, negative section of the axis stand opposite the long-established residents and those bound to the locality in the right-hand, positive section of the axis. The 'young' lifestyles of the self-focused, searching group and the unconventional and active group, in particular, occur on the side of short-term residence, whereas the 'aged' lifestyle of the deprived and domestic group is long-established within the current residential situation. The y axis reflects the residential perspective. In the lower, negative section of the axis, the
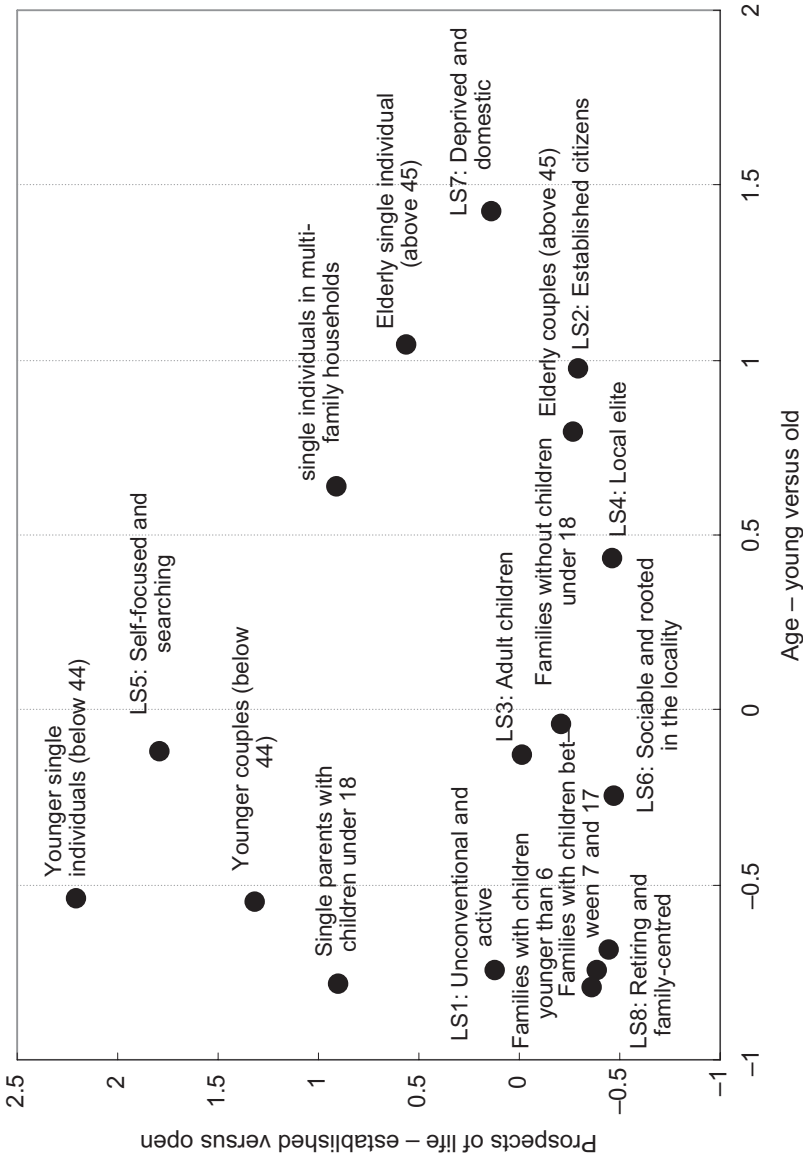
Figure 3: *Lifestyles and types of structural conditions in the household*
Note: Ls, lifestyle

Table 2: *The STAMPs in the region of investigation and their characteristics*

Lifestyle no	STAMP	Percentage	Characteristic
1	Bound to the locality with a limited radius	11	No leisure mobility beyond the garden No vacations away from home Family in the vicinity of the place of residence Strongly rooted in the home (homeowner) Strong attachment to the locality
2	Newcomers to the area with diverse radii	18	Pronounced affinity with the garden, but also leisure mobility beyond the place of residence Many vacations abroad Consumption within the locality Family outside the place of residence Above average use of car Newcomers to the area, homeowners
3	Mobile tenants without relation to the locality	9	Leisure mobility going far beyond the place of residence, urban locations for leisure activities Vacations abroad Consumption outside of the locality No family in the place of residence Renting residents Very weak attachment to the locality
4	Long established residents	15	No leisure mobility beyond the place of residence Garden as preferred leisure location Vacations within Germany Consumption within the place of residence Strongly rooted in the home (homeowner) Strong attachment to the locality
5	Mobile new bourgeoisie	13	No leisure activities in the place of residence, urban locations preferred for leisure activities Vacations abroad Consumption far outside of the locality No family in the place of residence Above average use of car Newcomers to the area, homeowners Weak attachment to the locality
6	Domestic tenants without garden	8	Very little leisure mobility No garden No vacations away from home Consumption within the locality Below average use of car (Urban) renting residents
7	Locally attached with family in the locality	11	Leisure in the garden, in the place of residence and in the region Vacations within Germany Consumption outside of the place of residence Family within the place of residence Above average use of car Homeowners Strong attachment to locality

Table 2: *Continued*

Lifestyle no	STAMP	Percentage	Characteristic
8	Home-builders with local radius	15	Leisure mobility focused on garden and place of residence Vacations within Germany Consumption within the locality Above average car use Newcomers Homeowners Resident in new building

Table 3: *Comparison of the STAMPs by mobility rate and mobility radii*

STAMP	Mobility rate	Mobility radii Very near – near – medium – far – very far
STAMP 2: Newcomers with diverse radii	+ +	
STAMP 3: Mobile tenants without relation to the locality	+ +	
STAMP 5: Mobile new bourgeoisie	+	
STAMP 7: Locally attached with family in the locality	+	
STAMP 8: Home-builders with local radius	O	
STAMP 6: Domestic tenants without garden	–	
STAMP 4: Long-established residents	– –	
STAMP 1: Bound to the locality with a limited radius	– –	

lifestyles and STAMPs with an insecure residential perspective are plotted; here the self-focused, searching group is particularly representative, as such people are very often renting tenants and have no relation to the locality. In the upper, positive section of the axis, on the other hand, the lifestyles and STAMPs with a secure residential perspective occur. Here the sociable people who are well integrated within their village and strongly attached to their place of residence are particularly representative.

From the residential situation we can ascertain what perspectives the various lifestyles and STAMPs display with regard to everyday mobility. Here, four perspectives on mobility can be identified by interpretation (Figure 4).
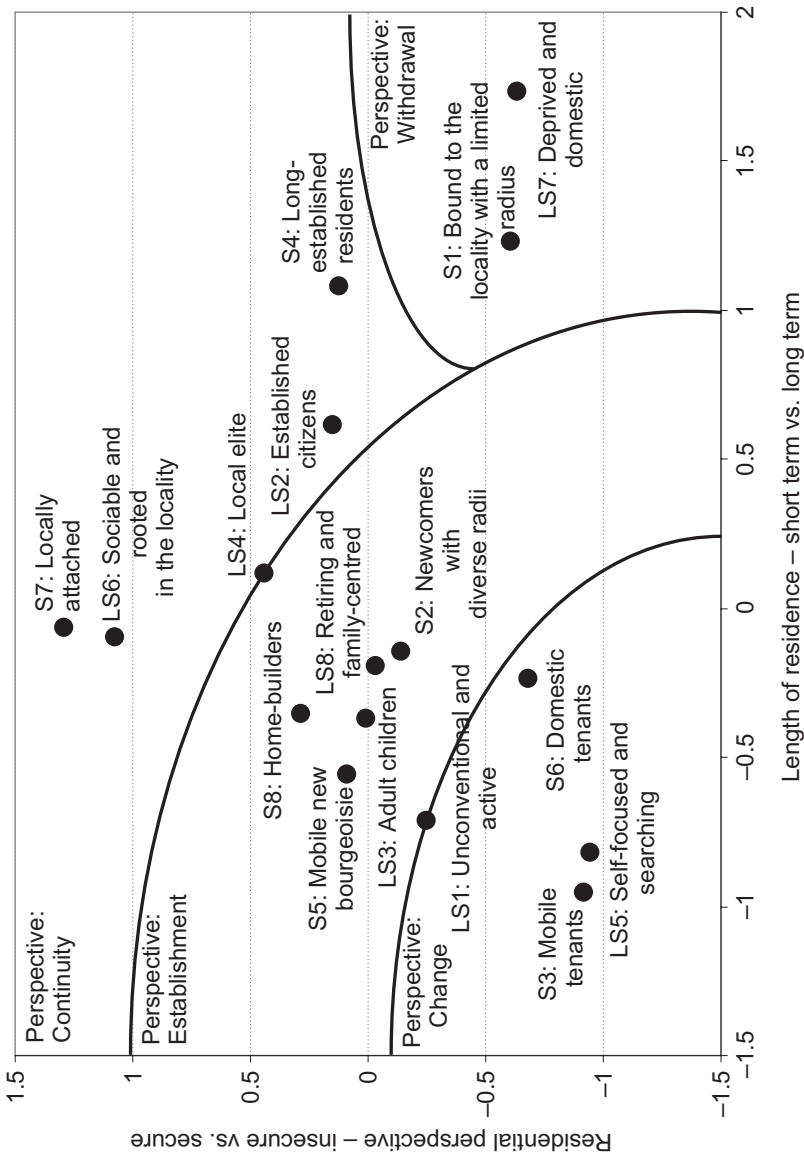
Figure 4: *The integration of the STAMPs within the lifestyles and perspectives relating to mobility*
Note: LS, lifestyle; S, STAMP

Change

It is obvious that renting a place of residence is not, particularly in rural and commuter regions, a long-term arrangement. The renting STAMPs overlap to an extent with the lifestyles of the self-focused and searching and the conventional and active individuals, who evince a very high probability of residential mobility. It is to be expected that the everyday mobility behaviour will also change with relocation. This is probable not only because there could be different public transport facilities in a new place of residence, but also because the lifestyles are very flexible and are open to new possibilities for mobility.

Establishment

This perspective with regard to mobility is characteristic of families with children, who have built their own house or purchased their own home as members of the new bourgeoisie. As a consequence, their residential situation is geared towards the long term. However, as they have not yet been living for a long time in their place of residence, their everyday mobility patterns have not yet become a habit and definitively established; instead, they are open to new possibilities for mobility. All in all, these families are anxious to establish their residential and life situations in the long term.

Continuity

This perspective on mobility encompasses those lifestyles and STAMPs which are characterised by a tested by time subjective life practice. The STAMPs of locally attached and long-established individuals come together with the lifestyles of the established citizens, the locally rooted and the local elite (proportionally). A change in the residential situation is not likely to take place. The everyday mobility patterns are well established and will not, in all likelihood, be changed. The mobility perspective is therefore directed towards continuity of habitual behavioural patterns, with the result that new possibilities for mobility are rarely pursued.

Withdrawal

This mobility perspective is closely related to the lifestyle of the deprived and domestic individuals who are rooted in the locality and exhibit only a very restricted mobility radius. The individual physical constitution allows only a very low mobility rate. The residential situation is characterised by a very long length of residence; however, the residential perspective is precarious, because there is no longer any certainty how long the individual can cope with a life within his or her own four walls. It is to be assumed that the option of residential mobility will only lead to an increase in the mobility rate and an extension of the mobility radii in the minority of cases. Generally, this perspective is connected to a withdrawal from everyday mobility.

Residential preferences – the 'dream house' in the country

Of significance for the analysis of residential mobility behaviour are, among other things, preferences for a particular type of residence. The detached house in the country remains the most attractive type, although it has declined noticeably in terms of its lifestyle and STAMP affiliations. This is indicated by the results of conjoint analyses. The same dream house is often chosen on the basis of quite different residential wishes, which can vary in intensity and even run counter to each other: on the one hand, the desire to own one's own home, free from landlords or co-proprietors and, on the other hand, the desire to live in the countryside (Figures 5 and 6).

The preference for a detached house in the countryside is related, in the case of the group of individuals who are sociable and rooted in the locality, to the dominant desire to live in the country, where they are well integrated into the village community. The detached house as a type of residence is less significant; it could also be a multifamily residence which they share with their children's families. The retiring and family-centred group, on the other hand, associates the dream house primarily with the independence of living in a detached house. They are less enthusiastic about the fact that this involves deciding to live in the countryside. Similarly, the STAMP of the homebuilders indicates that, although they have fulfilled their desire for their own four walls, they cannot (yet) entirely reconcile themselves to living in the country.

Discussion

In the course of our investigation we have successfully demonstrated that, in a rural region close to a city, both everyday mobility and residential mobility correlate with various forms of ways of living. The analysis of residential preferences implies that the lifestyles of people who are 'sociable and rooted in the locality' (LS 6), of the 'local elite' (LS 4) and of the 'deprived and domestic' (LS 7), are anchored in the countryside. This is particularly true, as a glance at the residential preferences according to STAMPs confirms, of those who have always lived in the country: the long-established individuals and people with family in the locality, for example, elderly people.

The other lifestyles and STAMPs are essentially the promoters of urban sprawl. They live in the country, although they are not oriented towards the locality as far as either their professional or their leisure activities are concerned. Their motives for living in areas that are already suburbanised or are still rural in character can be very diverse. The fact that the lifestyle of the established citizens includes the mobility perspective of 'continuity' suggests that this group of individuals will make the longest contribution to diversifying the range of the lifestyles found in the countryside. This lifestyle, which is pursued by newcomers to the area as well as by those who are native to the area, has taken over the pioneer function within the invasion/succession cycle (see Park *et al.* 1925). In order to live away from the tumult of the city but still within reach of the opera, theatre and art exhibitions, the 'established citizens' have exploited the mobility possibilities that exist between town and country. Settlements which are close to the city or situated conveniently in terms of public transport,
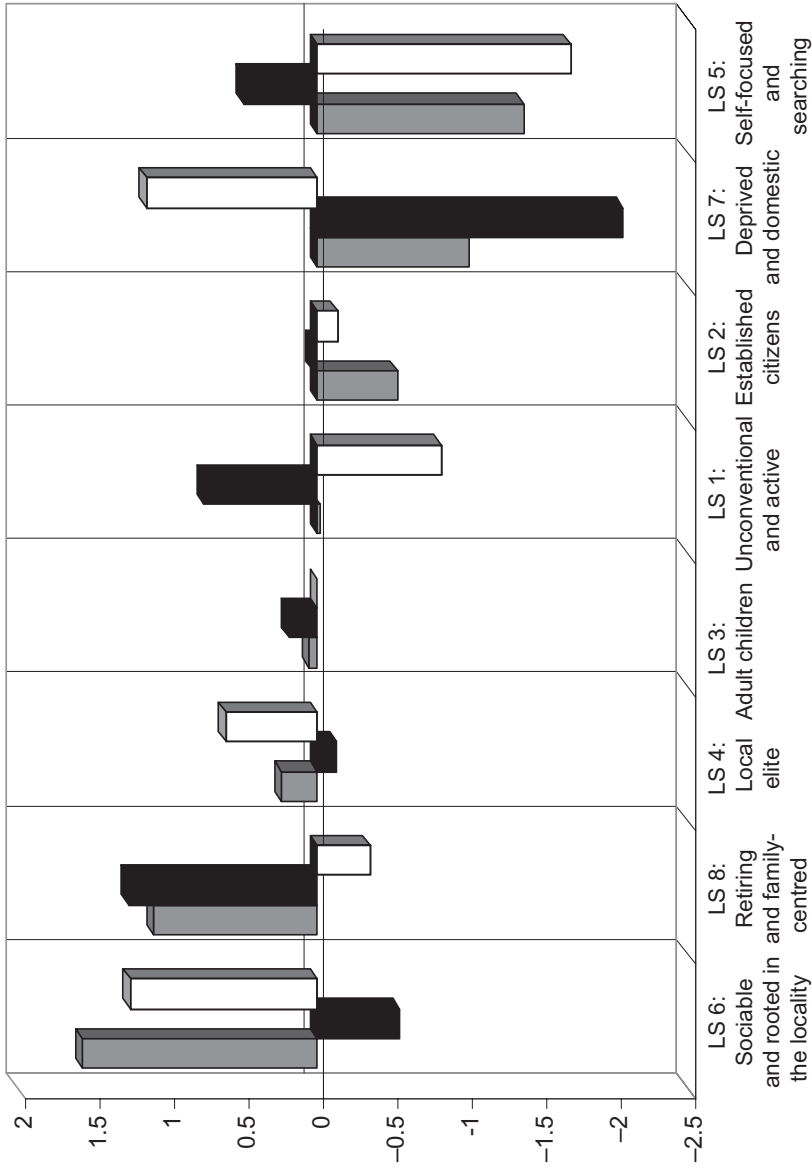
Figure 5: *The 'dream house', a detached house in the countryside – preferences according to lifestyles*
Key: ■, detached house in then countryside; ■, detached house; □, in the countryside Note: LS, lifestyle,
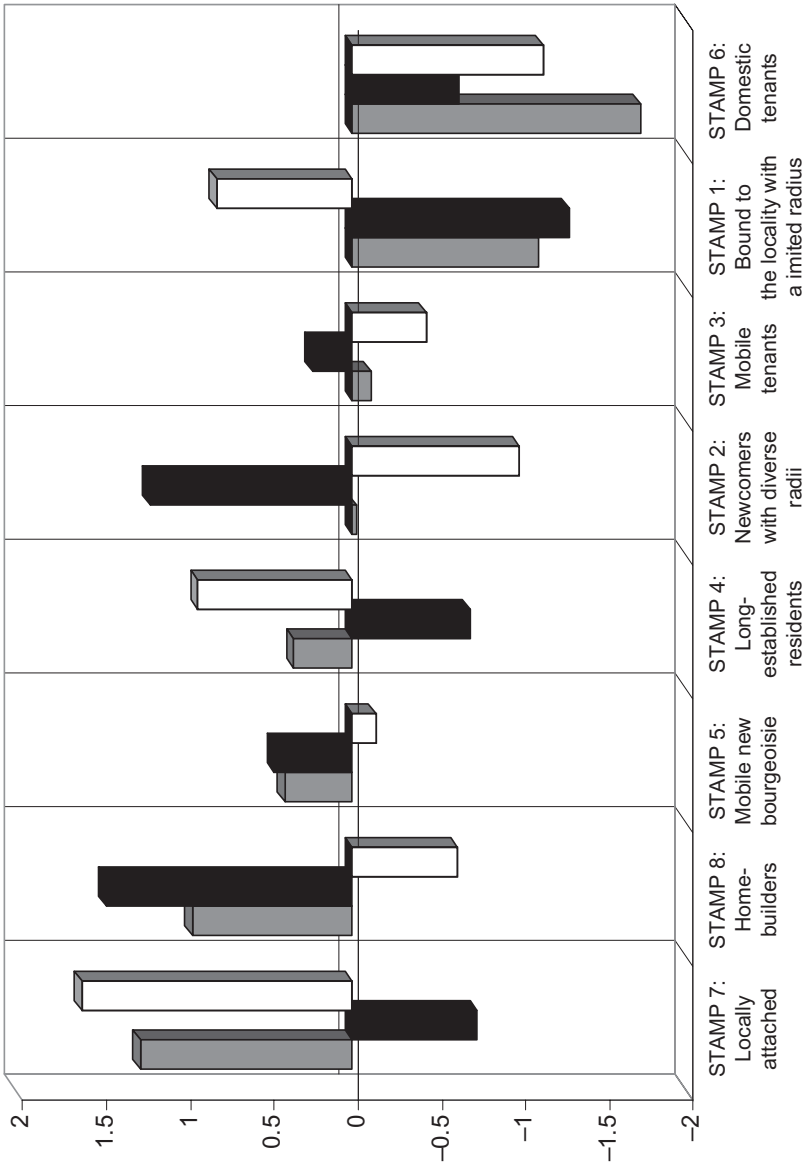
Figure 6: *The 'dream house', a detached house in the countryside – preferences according to STAMPs*
Key: ■, detached house in then countryside; ■, detached house; □, in the countryside

in which agriculture ceased in the 1950s and 1960s, have been at the forefront of this lifestyle in the process of suburbanisation (see also Becker 1997, pp. 148–150). It is for this reason that a greater proportion of 'established citizens' can still be found today in the locations which are convenient for transport, whereas those situated inconveniently and with significant continuing agriculture have a larger proportion of the groups of sociable individuals who are rooted in the locality and of deprived and domestic individuals (Becker 1997, pp. 150–152). The cultural autonomy of the village (Brüggemann and Riehle 1986, 1987) still manifests itself in the way in which newcomers are subjected to a clear pressure to conform to the local customs and practices. The degree of inclusion within the local social structures is therefore an immediate function of the degree of conformity. In areas which are convenient for transport, and which have seen an explosive population growth, this mechanism has lost its integrative effect. The lifestyles of the 'retiring and family-centred' (LS 8), and of the self-focused and searching individuals (LS 5), are not geared towards integration within a local social network. Independent living arrangements as homeowners are important to them and they accept the fact that they must live in the country to this end, although they feel greater affinity with urban locations. The existing mobility infrastructure makes it possible to overcome with greater ease the spatial distance between the town and the country.

These results force us to reconsider our assumption that urban sprawl is driven by a desire for the 'good life in the country' that is independent of lifestyle in general. This desire might be applicable to the self-concepts of those who are really bound to rural life (LS 4, 6 and 7). 'Established citizens' (LS 2) might also use these semantics to explain why they move to the suburbs. However, we cannot assume that this desire is a common motive or mentality. At the least, this is not the greatest wish of those who live the lifestyle of the 'self-focused and searching' (LS 5) and of the 'retiring and family-centred' (LS 8).

The doubt about the influence of a general, socio-psychological force has brought about the search for a new hypothesis that can explain urban sprawl in Germany. According to environmental organisations, the current structure of financing of communities and municipalities is mainly responsible for growing settlements, use of land and, therefore, urban sprawl (see, for example, Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. 2006; Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V. 2006). This claim is quite reasonable. By taking a look at a community's main source of revenue, a considerable amount comes from municipal fees, the redistribution of revenue between the federal states and communities, as well as property tax, land transfer tax, trade tax and a 15 per cent share of their inhabitants' income tax (Rehm and Matern-Rehm 2003; Scherf and Hofmann 2003). The last four sources of income show that a community's revenue increases or decreases depending on its number of inhabitants, businesses and developed plots. It can be concluded that a community can increase its revenue by providing plots of land for interested families and businesses.

Our analysis supports the assumption that households with the lifestyle of the 'retiring and family-centred' (LS 8) are enticed by the lower construction costs in the suburbs. If, for some reason, the community's financing structure should change causing construction costs to go up, 15 per cent of the households of our

sample would lose their motive to move to the suburbs.[3] However, more research is needed in order to investigate the process of suburbanisation in Germany in the context of the decline in populations in city and village centres. A survey to ascertain under what conditions this lifestyle correlates with a preference for residence in the centre of the cities, rather than in the suburbanised areas, could be highly informative.

Finally, we would like to comment on our research approach. The results of our analyses and the conclusions show, in our opinion, how useful the lifestyle approach can be to investigate social transformation processes on the basis of their social structures. In conjunction with the STAMP-concept, the practice of people in their spatial dynamics becomes depictable. The combination of the lifestyle concept and STAMP concept has quite a lot of potential. It is especially suited for interdisciplinary problems, and enables the researcher to form models that can produce statements about different life practice. The lifestyle concept can be specified for various sets of questions, e.g. use of mobility, prognosis for settlements, energy consumption, but it still needs to be clarified in a diachronic perspective. So far, there have only been a few studies that have focused on whether a person's lifestyle changes or stays constant during the course of a lifetime.

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Notes

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[1] 'City air is liberating' (*Stadtluft macht frei*) is a German saying still used today. It is derived from the Middle Ages and is a shortened form of a law according to which a serf who had left his lord to try his luck in a city as a merchant or craftsman was a free man after one year and one day. His lord lost all rights and could not require him to come back.
[2] The differentiation of the terms, 'society' and 'community', appeared for the first time in Schleiermacher's '*Theory of sociable behaviour*' from 1799; even though Tönnies' terms are used in the opposite way (Schleiermacher 1984). Schleiermacher used the term 'society' for gatherings during which people could experiment and openly meet other people without observing the rules of proprieties. Therefore, 'society' is separated from 'community' which conveys the sense of purpose (see Hinrichs 1974; Riedel 1975).
[3] The searching and self-oriented individuals (5), who also live in the suburbs, do not usually own property especially, young people with low incomes.

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