



## *Linguistic patterns and frames in the context of the concept “wall in minds”*

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**ABSTRACT:** For more than 30 years, the inner-German border as a physical border between the GDR and FRG no longer existed. From a linguistic perspective, unification can be assumed. The linguistic differences between the former East and West Germans are smaller than those between the different German dialect speakers. However, categories such as Ossi, East German or Wessi, West German can still be found today, although the terms for the inhabitants of the GDR (Ossi, Ostdeutsch, Ostler etc.) are more productive. The physical inner-German border seems to turn into a wall in people's minds. This article takes up the current discourse and asks about the underlying patterns and frames that constitute this mental border or enable its reconstruction. Autobiographical narrative interviews with people of two age groups who grew up or were socialised at the former inner-German border serve as a basis.

**KEY WORDS:** wall in minds, border, frame semantics, corpus analysis



## INTRODUCTION

On 3 October 2020, the Germans celebrated 30 years of German unity ('Deutsche Einheit'). The question arises: Can we really talk about German unity or does the border still exist in the minds of Germans? According to a study by the Berlin research agency *Pollytix*, in which 50 East and West Germans were interviewed in one-hour sessions, 30 years after reunification there is no united Germany (Weinzierl 52). Around 59 percent of East Germans, for example, think that they are treated like second class citizens (Weinzierl 52). Due to the current developments (AfD [political right-wing party] etc.) and their constant thematisation in the media, the concept of the 'wall in minds' seems to be further strengthened. This concept, which originated from the particular historical situation, can be connected with the developments of the AfD, as this party is particularly popular in the *Neue Bundesländer* ('new federal states') and finds support from citizens there, while the number of voters in the *Alte Bundesländer* ('old federal states') is rather low. The constant thematisation in the media of the AfD's presence and popularity in East Germany on the one hand and the low voter turnout in West Germany on the other reinforces the idea among citizens of the two former states and the fact that they have apparently not yet been reunited (polls and forecasts for the 2021 federal election).<sup>1</sup>

In the present article, the concept 'wall in minds' (e.g., Palliwoda, *Konzept; Sauermilch*) becomes the focus of interest. This concept is based on the two former German states and the border that actually existed until 1989. After the fall of the wall in autumn 1989, this physical wall gave way to a mental wall, which had already developed during the political division of Germany and became stronger with the building of the anti-fascist protective wall ('Antifaschistischer Schutzwall') in August 1961. This has led to the research question with which linguistic patterns the inhabitants of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) express their experiences and memories of both the opening of the border and the time afterwards and whether they have similar thoughts about.

In order to be able to analyse the linguistic patterns and to reconstruct individual token frames from them, a corpus was compiled from data of autobiographical narrative interviews with women of two age groups who were socialised at the former inner-German border. By analysing and evaluating these data, the aim is to find out whether the interviewees have different conceptions when talking about the former inner-German border, about the opening of the border in 1989 or about their experiences and impressions in the time after that. Furthermore, the aim is to determine whether different aspects are brought into focus. The specific questions are:

1. Do East Germans and West Germans report differently on the border opening and the time afterwards; do former West Germans reporting more from an

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.bundestagswahl-2021.de/umfragen/](http://www.bundestagswahl-2021.de/umfragen/). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.



observational perspective and former East Germans more from a participant perspective?<sup>2</sup>

2. Is this event more likely to be assessed as positive or negative by the interviewees? Do East Germans report both positive and negative circumstances, consequences, whereas West Germans tend to highlight the positive aspects?

In order to answer these questions, this article is structured as follows. In a first step the concept of the 'wall in minds' is illustrated in the chapter REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE 'WALL IN MINDS', followed by a description of the research design and analysing methods (chapter RESEARCH DESIGN & ANALYSING METHODS). This included the description of the data basis (chapter DATA BASIS) and the analysing methods (chapter ANALYSING METHODS) including a short description of frame semantic analysis (chapter Linguistic Patterns and Frame Semantics). The chapter RESULTS then presents the results. First, a frame analysis is made in order to show the conceptualisation potential of the term *Grenzöffnung* ('border opening') for eight female interviewees (chapter FRAME SEMANTICS). Subsequently, with the help of a corpus analysis, it will be found out whether certain words (lexical units, explicit predications/filler values), which could be analysed by means of the frame semantic analyse, are used by the different groups in the same way or to different extents (chapter CORPUS ANALYSIS). The article is rounded off with a conclusion and outlook (chapter CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK), in which the results are summarised and considerations for subsequent investigations are made.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE 'WALL IN MINDS'

The victory of the Allies and the Red Army over the German fascists in May 1945, the separation of Germany and the founding of the two German states in 1949 furthered the concept of the 'wall in minds'. With the building of the anti-fascist protective wall ('Antifaschistischer Schutzwall') in August 1961, which separated the former FRG from the former GDR, the wall became even stronger in people's minds (e.g. Palliwoda, Konzept). This concept refers to the distinction between the two German states at that time and the real existing border, which, however, no longer exists since November 1989. The physical wall has given way to a mental one. Since the existence of the two former German states and especially since the existence of this impermeable border—at least for the citizens from the former East—from August 1961 onwards, the question has been discussed whether two different standard varieties of German have developed as a result of the building of the wall and the associated separation of the

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<sup>2</sup> Observational perspective means that West Germans talk about East Germans and their actions after the border opening rather than about their own. Whereas the East Germans may take a participant perspective, since they talk about themselves and rather address their own experiences and changes in their lives after the border opening.



states, i.e., whether East German and West German have steadily diverged (inter alia Hellmann *Band*, Plewnia). From an objective, linguistic point of view, this question can now be answered in the negative—with regard to syntax, lexis, stylistic norms ((inter alia Hellmann, *Band* 17). Although there are/were no clearly distinguishable independent standard varieties in East and West Germany (with regard of language system), but rather different communication styles. These differences between East and West German are smaller than those between the different dialects (Hellmann, *Wortschatzvergleich* 16), however, statements by interviewees can be found again and again, but they address the differences in language between the former East and West. Furthermore, attributions can be found especially those for the former East such as *Ossi* ('Easterner'), *Ostdeutsch* ('East German') and *ossisch* ('ossic'), while designations for the former West occur only rarely or not at all (inter alia Reiher 2; Roth, *Normal Null* 79–87). Studies show that there is an East/East German concept, but no West/West German concept (inter alia Anders, *et al.*; Kehrein; Lameli; Plewnia). In this way, the former East is presented as different and perceived as "marked". In contrast, the former West is set as "normal" (Reiher 2). Therefore, the *wall* cannot yet be considered torn down:

The 'wall in the mind' as not at all torn down [...]. But this is not least a 'wall of discourse'. Its foundation is a set of perception-controlling and semantic concepts and of linguistic forms of expression assigned to them, with which 'the East' is set against 'the West' and characterised in a very specific way (translated from Roth, *Gewohnheiten* 117).

That this concept still exists in part (inter alia Dailey-O'Cain; Kennetz) and is also unconsciously present can be shown by various studies (inter alia Palliwoda, *Konzept*; Palliwoda, *Absicht*).

The initial situation and the implementation of the unification of the two former German states also play an important role in reinforcing and solidifying the concept of the 'wall in minds'. This initial situation was not optimal and therefore also favoured prejudices and stereotypes towards the former East and West as well as towards their inhabitants. Even though the euphoria at the beginning of unification was very great, it flattened out in the following years (inter alia Mummendey & Kessler 277). After the initial euphoria, the dissolution of the GDR and thus the unification of the German states, the differences became noticeable and perceptible especially for the inhabitants of the former East. The *Neue Bundesländer* ('new federal states') adopted the West German system at all levels. The previously known structures and value systems, the social, political, societal and economic orientations had to be adapted to those of the *Alte Bundesländer* ('old federal states') (inter alia Heitmeyer 13; Kaase 121). The new communication landscape after the fall of the German wall was also influenced by the West and took up its terminology and guidelines. The former West was set as the "normal case" (inter alia Radeiski & Antos 55), on which everything else was oriented and which was used as a template (East Germany as the "marked size" Reiher 2). This different initial situation led, among other things, to unemployment, wage differentials in the *Neue Bundesländer* and to citizens of the former GDR feeling like second class citizens (inter alia Mummendey & Kessler 278). Biographies and life plans, especially of



people who had grown up and been socialised in the former East, broke down because the old life and system structures no longer existed. For West Germans, on the other hand, there were hardly any changes; all the structures and systems that existed until then continued to exist (Kaase 121). The different conditions are still noticeable today, 30 years after the fall of the wall (different pensions, salaries etc.). In this way, the mental wall is still there, although perhaps not as strong as before, and still makes the differences between East and West visible and promotes discontent. Current developments (PEGIDA (right-wing political demonstrations), AfD etc.) and their constant media coverage further reinforce the concept of the wall between the former East and West (chapter INTRODUCTION).

## RESEARCH DESIGN & ANALYSING METHODS

### DATA BASIS

For the present paper we focused on interview passages of eight female persons of two age groups from four locations (source 1). These interviews come from interview data from a total of 29 interviews, which are as a whole part of a project<sup>3</sup>, which is currently in the stage of development. Only the data collection could be completed.<sup>4</sup> The rough aim of the project is to find out, if there any linguistic patterns and linguistic construction, when people talking about borders and in particular when people talking about the former inner-German border. These 29 interviews were conducted between 2013 to 2014 by Palliwoda in four locations on the former inner-German border (Salem (Schleswig-Holstein/former FRG), Thandorf (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania/former GDR), Wanfried (Hesse/former FRG) and Struth (Thuringia/former GDR) (figure 1).

The interviewees could be divided in two different age groups (AG<sup>5</sup>): The older one (AG 1) includes persons who were socialised when the two former German states were founded and were thus born between 1936 and 1944. The younger age group (AG 2) includes persons who were socialised when the two former German states existed and when the former inner-German border was opened. They were born between 1977 and 1981. Furthermore, the number of interviewees is distributed relatively equally between the two sexes.

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<sup>3</sup> A project and work plan are currently being developed for the project in order to be able to raise funds to carry out the data preparation and analysis, working title: *Sprachliche Konstruktionen – Reden über Grenzen* ('Linguistic constructions – Talking about borders').

<sup>4</sup> The other part of the project data are audio files and transcripts of the Projekt *Untersuchungen zur Sprachsituation im thüringisch-bayerischen Grenzgebiet (SPRIG)* (Studies on the language situation in the Thuringian-Bavarian border region) funded by the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG*).

<sup>5</sup> Later, the abbreviation AG is used for age group.

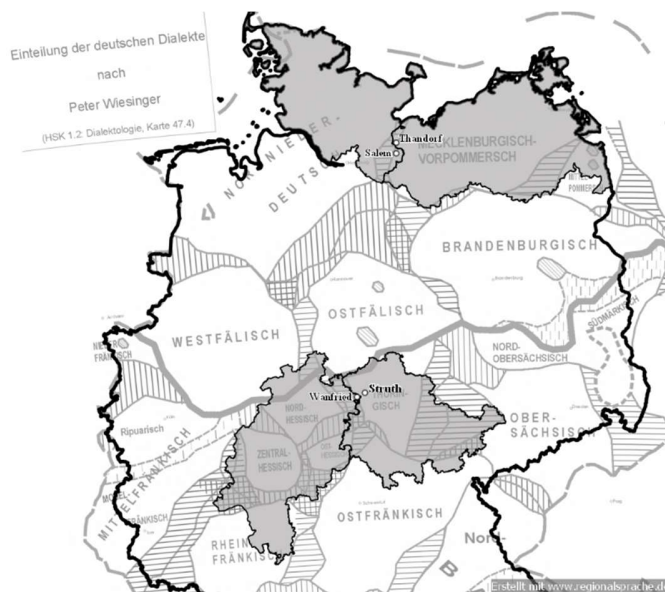


Fig. 1: Locations and dialect regions.

The interview of itself consists of three parts: an autobiographical narrative interview<sup>6</sup>, a draw-a-map task<sup>7</sup> and a perception task<sup>8</sup>. For this paper we analysed the narratives about the border opening of the autobiographical narrative interviews of eight female persons (source 1).

	INTERVIEWEE (I)	YEAR OF BIRTH	PLACE OF RESIDENCE
AG 1	06	1938	Wanfried (west)
	10	1939	Struth (east)
	17	1944	Salem (west)
	28	1938	Thandorf (east)
	INTERVIEWEE (II)	YEAR OF BIRTH	PLACE OF RESIDENCE
AG 2	01	1977	Wanfried (west)
	12	1977	Struth (east)
	22	1974	Salem (west)
	23	1981	Thandorf (east)

Source 1: Interviewed persons.

<sup>6</sup> The Persons were asked to talk about their lives at the former inner-German border and their memories of the border opening. If they did not talk about the border opening of their own, the interviewer asked for it: "Wie haben Sie die Grenzöffnung erlebt?" (*How did you experience the opening of the border?*) and "Welche Erinnerungen haben Sie daran?" (*What memories do they have of this event?*).

<sup>7</sup> The persons were asked to draw and to describe their linguistic environment on a geographical map: "Wo sprechen die Menschen gleich und wo sprechen sie anders?" (*Where do the people speak equal and where do they speak different?*) (for more information about this method, see e.g. Palliwoda, *Konzept* 25).

<sup>8</sup> The persons were asked to locate everyday speech samples of German on a map of Germany.



## ANALYSING METHODS

These eight passages of the autobiographical narrative interviews first had to be prepared for the analysis. After cutting out the thematically relevant (chapter DATA BASIS), a first pre-transcription was performed with a tool of the Bavarian Archive for Speech Signals (BAS)<sup>9</sup>, the ASR<sup>10</sup> (automatic orthographic transcription using automatic speech recognition). These automatically generated transcripts were checked by the authors for completeness, accuracy and corrected and adapted if necessary. In the same step a literary transcription of the interviews was made. The literary transcription in this case followed only a few conventions, since a detailed transcript, e.g., according to GAT 2<sup>11</sup>, was not necessary for the analysis aimed at here. Nevertheless, a few transcription conventions were considered, such as consistent use of lower case, no use of punctuation marks, transcription as close as possible to the pronunciation and retention of regional/common language characteristics. Based on the literary transcription, the further analysis steps could be carried out.

In addition, the transcripts were tokenised, classified by word type and categorised by lemma. The tokenisation, classification of word types and lemmatisation was done automatically using the TreeTagger<sup>12</sup> and a Windows interface.<sup>13</sup> For a first insight and overview there has not yet been an intensive examination of the automatic word type assignment in context, but only a rough, rudimentary correction of errors or an addition of word types in case of missing information. The tokenisation, classification of word types and lemmatisation is based on the German Part-of-Speech Tagset STTS<sup>14</sup> (Schiller, *et al.*) and its further development STTS 2.0 (Westpfahl, *et al.*) for spoken language.

For the further corpus-analytical preparation and evaluation of the empirical material (e.g., the KWIC analysis<sup>15</sup>), AntConc<sup>16</sup> on the one hand and MAXQDA<sup>17</sup> on the other were used, because the different programmes offer different possibilities of data evaluation and preparation.

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://clarin.phonetik.uni-muenchen.de/BASWebServices/interface>. Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>10</sup> See also [www.bas.uni-muenchen.de/Bas/BasServiceeng.html](http://www.bas.uni-muenchen.de/Bas/BasServiceeng.html). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>11</sup> For more information see [www.gespraechsforschung-ozs.de/heft2009/px-gat2.pdf](http://www.gespraechsforschung-ozs.de/heft2009/px-gat2.pdf). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>12</sup> See [www.cis.uni-muenchen.de/~schmid/tools/TreeTagger/](http://www.cis.uni-muenchen.de/~schmid/tools/TreeTagger/). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/~oduibhin/oideasra/interfaces/winttinterface.htm](http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/~oduibhin/oideasra/interfaces/winttinterface.htm). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>14</sup> See [www.cis.uni-muenchen.de/~schmid/tools/TreeTagger/data/STTS-Tagset.pdf](http://www.cis.uni-muenchen.de/~schmid/tools/TreeTagger/data/STTS-Tagset.pdf). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Keyword in Context analyses.

<sup>16</sup> AntConc is "a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis", see [www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/](http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>17</sup> MAXQDA is a software programme for qualitative and mixed methods research, cf. [www.maxqda.de/was-ist-maxqda](http://www.maxqda.de/was-ist-maxqda).



For the frame semantic analysis so-called concept maps were created. These concept maps were generated with the help of the free software Cmap<sup>18</sup>, which enabled the graphical representation of the maps as frames. The layout of the maps is already predefined here, as each filler value (called 'concept' in Cmap) is automatically connected to the next filler value ('concept') via a frame element (called 'proposition' in Cmap). The concept maps created in this way can then be saved in PDF format.

The frame semantic analysis was carried out as follows: The interview transcripts were analysed with regard to the interviewees statements on the event *Border opening* ('Grenzöffnung') and analysed with reference to the constitutional relations and characteristics of the matrix frame Event according to Konecny (335–340). It can be assumed that the matrix frame Event (Konecny 335–340) inherits its FEs, i.e. the potential questions that arise in relation to the expression *Event*, to the sub-frame or subordinate frame Border opening. The FEs of the matrix frame Event thus represent a kind of skeleton with which the knowledge of meaning for the expression *Border opening* can be developed within the corpus (Konecny 283). For this purpose, the extensive catalogue of questions of the Event-frame by Konecny (335–340) is adapted to the specifics of the sub-frame Border opening and a so-called *minimal frame* is created.

## LINGUISTIC PATTERNS AND FRAME SEMANTICS remove numbering

Frame Semantics analyse how linguistic structures activate frames and what role once activated frames, which also draw on non-linguistic knowledge, play in processes of interpretation and understanding.<sup>19</sup> (translated from Fraas, *Frames* 270)

It is based on the assumption that knowledge structures are organised in cognitive frames and are evoked by linguistic structures (words and phrases) (Fraas, *Frames* 268), the so-called Lexical Units (LUs) (or Frame Evoking Elements (FEs)) in FrameNet<sup>20</sup> terminology (FrameNet, *What*). The aim is to find out what frames and frame structures are invoked by the LUs *Border*<sup>21</sup> ('Grenze'), *Border opening* ('Grenzöffnung') or *Wende* ('political turn') etc. in people's minds and, in a second step, to reconstruct the frame border opening.

Minsky summarises these model-theoretic considerations as follows:

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<sup>18</sup> See [cmap.ihmc.us](http://cmap.ihmc.us). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>19</sup> "Frame-Semantik untersucht, wie sprachliche Formen Frames aktivieren und welche Rolle einmal aktivierte Frames, die auch immer auf nicht sprachliches Wissen zurückgreifen, im Rahmen von Interpretations- und Verstehensprozessen spielen" (Fraas, *Frames* 270).

<sup>20</sup> "The FrameNet project is building a lexical database of English that is both human- and machine-readable, based on annotating examples of how words are used in actual texts" (FrameNet, *About*). For more information check out the project homepage [framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/](http://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>21</sup> The following notation is used to distinguish between the structural elements of a frame: The frame-name itself is displayed in (Courier New) itself, the *LU* in italics, the FEs in small caps and the "filler" are places in quotations marks.





[W]hen one encounters a new situation (or makes a substantial change in one's view of the present problem) one selects from memory a structure called a frame. This is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary. A frame is a data structure for representing a stereotyped situation [...]. (Minsky, *Framework* 212)

Besides the fact, that "every word evokes a frame" (Lakoff 1), Frames also have a dynamic slot-filler-structure. Minsky (*Society* 245) describes it as "a sort of skeleton, somewhat like an application form with many blanks or slots to be filled". Slots or Frame Elements (FEs) represent the predication potential of a frame or in other words, they correspond to the potential questions that can be asked to the LU (Ziem, *Frames* 264). The LU *Border* could for example raise the questions: *Where is the border? What kind of border is it? or Who is affected by it?* The following FEs could be derived: SPACE, BOUNDARY, PERSON and filled with explicit or implicit predications. While explicit predications (so-called *fillers*) are "explicitly coded in the linguistic signal" (Fillmore 75) and are for example given directly in the text (Ziem, *Frames* 228), implicit predications (so-called *default values*) are knowledge elements, called up on the long-term memory (Ziem, *Frames* 228). Default values are typical expected assumptions that are based on experience, conventions etc. and correspond to our semantic prototypes.

Frames enable an analytical access to linguistic structures of meaning. They are anchored in the cognitive system on the one hand and influenced by social interaction on the other. Accordingly, Johnstone (239) defines frames as

mental templates of appropriate behavior for common situations, acquired through socialization and experience and fine-tuned by the individual on the basis on what worked in the past and/or what others report as useful. Thus, they are both individual and social.

In this paper, frames are defined as patterns that represent the contextualisation potential of concepts. By using questions, the so-called FEs, the contextualisation of the concept within the frame is carried out. The answers to these questions can be called up explicitly as concrete fillers in the text or implicitly as default values from long-term memory. Those expressions that evoke a frame are called LUs. This can be any words from any word classes (Ziem, *Frames* 252). Compared to nouns or verbs, the reference potential of function words is reduced to a minimum (Ziem, *Frames* 252). The noun (or autosemanticum) *Border* refers to a concrete thing or event, which is why Ziem (*Frames* 256) sees nouns as a prototypical case.

Frames and their structural constituents are of a conceptual nature. They do not form isolated units but are segments of networks. This means that each filler or default value forms its own scheme or frame with its own fillers and default values (Ziem, *Frames* 231). For example, in the *Border*-frame the filler "political border" could occupy the FE TYPE OF BORDER. This filler "political border" is itself a frame and inherits the slot structure of the superordinate *Border*-frame.

Now what distinguishes a frame from a concept? Frames are defined as "collections of concepts" (translated from Busse 540), as "conceptual units" (translated



from Ziem, *Wortbedeutungen* 25), “frameworks of concepts” (Fillmore 123) or “global patterns [...] about some central concepts” (Beaugrande & Dressler 90). Accordingly, concepts are organised or categorised in frames. They can be used to display and analyse the contextualisation potential of concepts (Fraas, *Gebrauch* 40).

Superordinated frames are always more abstract than their subordinate frames. This means that the child frame or subordinate frame, on the one hand, inherits all the attributes of the parent frame or superordinate frame and, on the other hand, can add new attributes (Busse 630). This is related to the fact that frames are organised hierarchically (Ziem, *Frames* 231–232). A scheme (that is, a frame) is always more abstract than its instances (that is, fillers and default values).

Frames are very well suited as instruments of semantic analysis (Ziem, *Frames* 247). A corpus serves as a basis to specify the frame. First the LU, that evokes the frame has to be identified. In speech act theory, LU would correspond to the concept of reference (Ziem, *Frames* 287). Within the context of our project the LU is *Border opening* (‘Grenzöffnung’). In a second step, it must be clarified which predications for the entity *Border opening* are contained in the text. These form the fillers in the frame and must be categorised according to the question to which they provide an answer. Thus, the predication potential of the frame, i.e. its slot structure, can be displayed. In this way, individual token frames for the entity *Border opening*, which are based on explicit fillers, can be reconstructed. The meaning horizons or interpretation patterns of boundaries within the individual texts can thus be frame semantically reconstructed. A comparison of the structure of the individual token frames can highlight the prominent fillers as well as the most frequently occurring slots. On this basis, linguistic patterns as well as stereotypes regarding to the construct *Border opening* can be derived (Fraas, *Frames* 272–276).

## RESULTS

### FRAME SEMANTICS

What meaning does the term *Border opening* have for the interviewees in the present analysis? To explain this question, a total of eight token frames (chapter ANALYSING METHODS) were developed, which reconstruct the individual meaning of the expression *Border opening* of the interviewees. The following questions can be derived (according to Konerding 335–336):

- What are the preconditions for the opening of the border? (FE: PRECONDITIONS)
- Which interaction partners are involved in the border opening event? (FE: PERSON)
- What are the characteristics of the border opening event? (FE: CIRCUMSTANCES)
- What follows the opening of the border? (FE: CONSEQUENCES)
- What are the main sub-events of the border opening event? (FE: EVENT)
- By which relevant characteristics or conditions are the respective actors characterised? (FE: EMOTION)



The following question was reconstructed on the basis of the interviewees explicit evaluations of the *border opening* event:

How is the event of the *border opening* evaluated? (FE: EVALUATION)

PRECONDITIONS (1) for the event *border opening* included the 'Mauerbau' (building of the physical wall) ("closing the border", I 01) or the German separation ("border [...] it was simply closed", I 06). Overall, this FE is not often communicated by the participants, as only a few explicit filler values could be identified that provide an answer to the question: *What are the preconditions for the opening of the border?*

The interviewees go into more detail about the interaction partners (FE PERSON) of the *border opening* event. For example, there are reports of "masses of people" (I 06) or that "many Wessis" were standing by the road. In addition, reference is also made to actors with a specific function, e.g., the "fire brigade", who are on "driving duty" (I 06) or the "brass band" (I 06).

The FE CIRCUMSTANCES is further subdivided into LOCAL, TEMPORAL and MODAL CIRCUMSTANCES, which determine the event. Due to the differentiated nature of the concrete filler values that count into this predictor class, finer "granulation" (Ziem, *Frames* 279) is necessary. In the interviews, for example, specific border locations ("Heldra", I 01) or the respective border crossing points ("Mustin border crossing point", I 22) are discussed. In addition, the interviewees also refer to the distance of their place of residence from the border ("as the crow flies only a few metres", I 01). If filler values occur more frequently, they can develop into standard values, i.e., for the present FE CIRCUMSTANCES (LOCAL). The following implicit predications (default values): *Border crossing point*, *Border location*, *Distance to the border* and *Others* can be derived from the statements of the interviewees (see above). With regard to the TEMPORAL CIRCUMSTANCES, many interviewees refer to the year "1989" and the month "November". Some of them also describe the concrete time of day when they first heard about the event ("woken up at night, not really realised", I 12). The FE MODAL CIRCUMSTANCES is very well represented too, both quantitatively (many answers were given) and qualitatively (many different aspects were taken up). The interviewees talk in detail about the welcoming of the inhabitants of the other side of the border ("cars were knocked", I 22; "sweets were thrown into cars", I 23), about the transport to and across the border ("quaintly long queue of cars", I 01; "hitchhiking", I 22) and about the activities that took place during the opening of the border ("we hosted them", I 06; "an endless exchange", I 17). Three interviewees also give reasons why they took part in the opening of the border or what the reason for their 'visit to the other side' was (like financial incentives).

The CONSEQUENCES that the opening of the border has had on the interviewees and on the people in general are also discussed in great detail. Freedom to travel is mentioned by both West Germans and East Germans. In addition, the East Germans mention the new consumption possibilities in West German supermarkets on the one hand, but on the other hand also the former advantages of life in the GDR that no longer exist for them. The descriptions of the consumption possibilities illustrate very well the different perspectives of the East and West German interviewees. For example, the East



Germans respond to the new shopping opportunities and the great variety of goods, which did not exist in the GDR's 'Mangelwirtschaft' (economy of scarcity), whereas the West Germans report on the East Germans desire to shop and the resulting empty shelves in West German supermarkets.

Another aspect that both East and West German interviewees address is the so-called *welcome money* ('Begrüßungsgeld'). This was paid once to the East Germans on their entry into the FRG from federal budget funds. Accordingly, the interviewees from the West merely point out that this money was available to the East Germans, whereas the East German interviewees also mention where they received the money or for what purpose they used it.

The perspectives of the two groups are similar when it comes to the topic of *modernisation*: Here, too, the West Germans tend to be more of an observer's perspective and tell how they experienced the redevelopment and renovation measures in the East German towns and villages. The East German interviewees, on the other hand, report on how they have renovated their houses and brought them up to West German standards. They also mention that now (after the opening of the border) shops that they only knew from West Germany are also settling in the former East German regions ("that then these shops that are over there also came here", I 12).

In addition, the East Germans report on the losses they suffered as a result of the opening of the border and the resulting dissolution of the GDR. For example, they talk about the better care facilities in the GDR ("Hort [public childcare after school] this is only half an hour, which is not enough", I 12) or the better solidarity in earlier times ("people do not care about each other", I 23). The West Germans do not report on such negative effects, since the West did not experience such far-reaching changes as in the East.

Both the EMOTION and the EVALUATION associated with the opening of the border are overwhelmingly positive. The most common feeling associated with the opening of the border is joy ("great feeling", I 06; "really nice", I 10; "was something really great", I 12; "simply amazing", I 17; "fantastic", I 22; "THE great event", I 23; "a celebration", I 28). Since this emotion was mentioned by all interviewees, it can be assumed as a default value, i.e., it is firmly connected with the event of the border opening without having to refer to it explicitly. Furthermore, the event seems to be predominantly associated with positive feelings.

Summing up the structure of the border opening-frame, on the one hand the solidification of individual filler values (high token frequency) and on the other hand the solidification of certain FE (high type frequency) can be determined:

Seven interviewees link the concrete filler values "1989" (five times) or "November" (two times) with the border opening, which can be assumed as default values for the FE CIRCUMSTANCES (TEMPORAL). In addition, four interviewees report of "many people" (FE CIRCUMSTANCES MODAL) who were "on the street" (FE CIRCUMSTANCES LOCAL) when the border was opened. The predominant emotion associated with the event of the opening of the border is "joy". These four concrete filler values occur relatively frequently for most interviewees and can be regarded as default values. In



other words, these values represent implicit predictions that language users assume without the need for an explanation (Ziem, *Frames* 294).

It is noticeable that for the FEs CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSEQUENCES, EMOTION and EVALUATION considerably more filler values could be determined in the interview transcripts than for the FEs PRECONDITIONS, PERSON and EVENT. The interviewees more often describe the specific circumstances of the opening of the border, its consequences as well as their feelings and evaluations, which is why these FEs solidify and their cognitive presence increases. In terms of the present corpus, this means that questions about the circumstances and consequences of the opening of the border as well as the interviewees' own emotions and evaluations of the event are mentioned often by the interviewees.

The eight token frames, which were reconstructed from the interview transcripts of the respective interviewees, were bundled in a type-frame (figure 2).

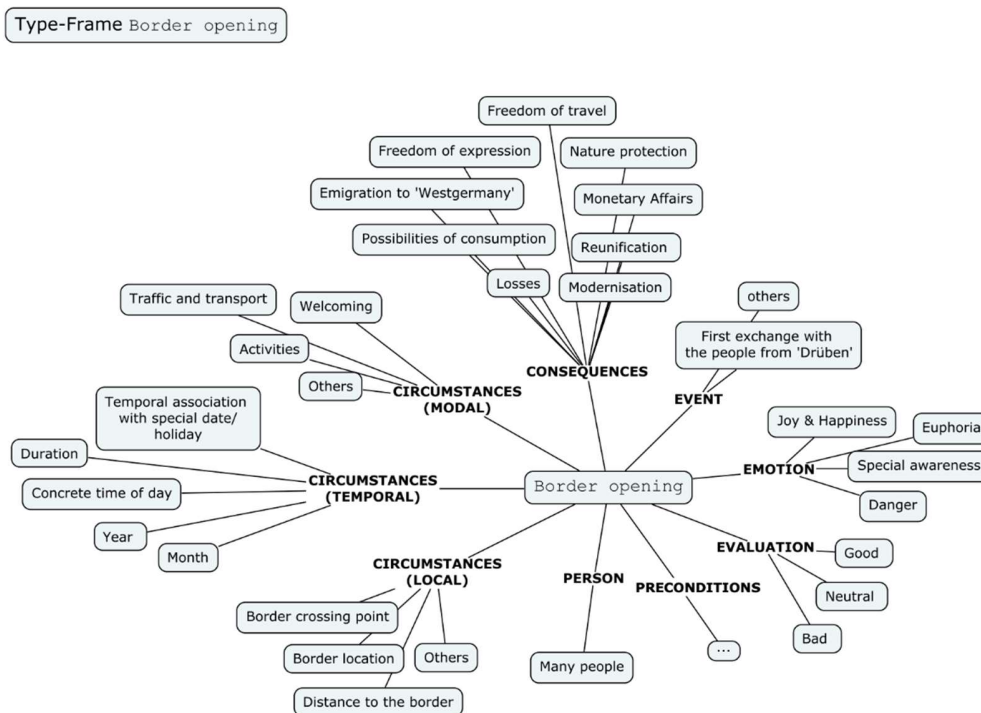


Fig. 2: Type-Frame Border opening.

While a token frame can be assigned to a concrete empirical referent and is specific to that referent, type frames are supra-individual and function as a "superordinate 'pattern'" (Busse 617). The type-frame Border opening consists of the nine FEs PERSON, CIRCUMSTANCES (LOCAL), CIRCUMSTANCES (TEMPORAL), CIRCUMSTANCES (MODAL), PRECONDITIONS, CONSEQUENCES, EVENT, EVALUATION and EMOTION. The concrete filler values of the token frames (see above) could be combined to the default values shown in figure 2.



CORPUS ANALYSIS—CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

Talking about the border and here in particular about the *Border opening* between the two former German states can be structured in very different ways and focuses on different aspects depending on the person being interviewed. Due to the subject, however, there are also certain contents, which are mentioned by all interviewees.

Based on the results of the frame analysis (chapter FRAME SEMANTICS), certain concrete filler values/words will be analysed in more detail in relation to the corresponding FEs in the corpus, namely whether certain words/word forms are used in the same way and/or differently by the different groups (East German/West German and older/younger persons). For this purpose, the occurrence and frequency of the words/word forms in the corpus will be examined and compared in relation to the different groups. In particular, the following words/word forms are considered:

“Grenze” (‘border’), “Grenzöffnung” (‘border opening’), “Wende” (‘political turn’);  
“Begrüßungsgeld” (‘welcome money’), “Reisen” (‘traveling’), “Besuch” (‘visit’);  
“froh” (‘glad’), “glücklich” (‘happy’), “gut” (‘good’), “schön” (‘beautiful’)

The following rough hypotheses are to be tested:

1. East Germans and West Germans report differently on the border opening and the time afterwards; former West Germans reporting more from an observational perspective and former East Germans more from a participant perspective;
2. East Germans report both positive and negative circumstances, consequences, whereas West Germans tend to highlight the positive aspects.

With the help of the word type classification (chapter DATA BASIS) we could find out, that in the group of the nouns (appellatives), most of the tokens could be assigned to the lemma “Jahr” (‘year’) and this supports the statements from the frame analysis that especially year dates can be assumed as standard values within the present corpus and with regard to the frame border opening. Furthermore, it could be found within the group of appellative many lemmas which indicate kinship relations (“Mutter, Vater, Sohn, Familie, Cousin, Schwester” ‘mother, father, son, family, cousin, sister’ etc.). The interviewees reported on their childhood and on life events that took place in certain years. The biographies are thus linked to years and persons. In the further course the lexical units (LU) “Grenze” (‘border’), “Grenzöffnung” (‘border opening’) and “Wende” (‘political turn’) were analysed. A closer look at the LU “Grenze”, which occupy the second position in the group of appellative if one takes together all lemmas and their word forms (e.g., “Grenze/Grenzen” (‘border/borders’)) and compounds (e.g., “Grenzkontrolle, Grenzgebiet” (‘border control, border area’)). These tokens are used



more often by the former West German interviewees (source 2, 47 tokens) than by the former East German interviewees (source 2, 39 tokens).

Belonging	I	AG		total
		1	2	
<b>east</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>39</b>
	10	15		15
	12		4	4
	23		12	12
	28	8		8
<b>west</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>
	01		8	8
	06	19		19
	17	20		20
<b>total</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>86</b>

Source 2: Distribution to query "Grenze" ('border').

Moreover, those tokens seem to be used by the older interviewees (source 2, AG 1, 62 tokens) rather than the younger (source 2, AG 2, 24 tokens). This circumstance could be explained by the different presence of the border in the different life histories, since AG 1 was confronted with the division of the two German states for a longer period of time than AG 2 and was thus shaped by it. A more detailed analysis of the material concerning the lemma "Grenze" in connection with *open/opening* (search query: \*grenz\* öffn\*) shows that the word combination is not used by all interviewees but is used increasingly by people from the former West (source 3).

Belonging	I	AG		total
		1	2	
<b>east</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>5</b>
	10	4		4
	28	1		1
<b>west</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>
	01		1	1
	06	6		6
	17	3		3
<b>total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>

Source 3: Distribution to query \*grenz\* öffn\*.

For comparison, the corpus was also researched after the Lemma "Wende" ('political turn') and its word forms (source 4).



Belonging	I	AG		total
		1	2	
<b>east</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>
	10	10		10
	12		1	1
	23		2	2
	28	6		6
<b>west</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
	17	1		1
<b>total</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>

Source 4: Distribution to query “Wende” (‘political turn’).

It is interesting to note that this lemma and its word forms are used by all East German interviewees in the present corpus and only one interviewee of the West German interviewees uses a word form of “Wende” (source 4). It can thus be concluded for the present corpus that word associations with *border* and *opening/opening* tend to be used more by interviewees from the former West when reporting on the event of the border opening. The lemma “Wende”, on the other hand, seems to be used more by interviewees from the former East. This difference in distribution could be explained very banally by the fact that the border opening between the two former states has brought about a significant change in the lives of former East Germans in particular, a turning point (chapter REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE ‘WALL IN MINDS’).

One of the sub-frame elements of the FE CONSEQUENCES (chapter FRAME SEMANTICS) was the theme of the *welcome money* (‘Begrüßungsgeld’) that the inhabitants of the former East had received or could collect. Due to the different starting positions—the East Germans received welcome money, the West Germans did not—it can be assumed that this event is also reported differently by the different groups in the context of the border opening.

Belonging	I	AG		total
		1	2	
<b>east</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
	10	5		5
	12		1	1
	23		1	1
	28	1		1
<b>west</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
	01		2	2
	06	1		1
<b>total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>

Source 5: Distribution on the subject of “Begrüßungsgeld” (‘welcome money’).





The welcome money is the theme of all East German interviewees within the narratives about the opening of the border. Among the West German interviewees, there is only one older and one younger person (source 5), one of these two interviewees uses the expression “Besuchergeld” (‘visitor money’) and “Mark” (I 01) and the other, like most East German interviewees, “Begrüßungsgeld” (‘welcome money’) (I 06). From the context it is also clear that the East German interviewees tend to report in a participant perspective, insofar as they received the money (“gekriegt” (‘got it’, I 10; I 28), “abgeholt” (‘picked up’, I 23). This perspective could be explained by the fact that these circumstances were particularly formative for the inhabitants of the former East Germany and had an impact on their life situation.

A further theme that is represented by further FEs (CONSEQUENCES) in the interviewees narratives is *travel*. Although the topic had a particularly strong impact on people from the former East Germany and is also addressed in reports and documentaries, not all persons in the present corpus mentioned this topic (search query \*reis\* ‘travel’) (source 6).

<b>Belonging</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>AG 1</b>	<b>total</b>
<b>east</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
	10	4	4
	28	3	3
<b>west</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
	06	2	2
<b>total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>

Source 6: Distribution on the subject of “Reisen” (‘traveling’).

A total of nine tokens can be identified in the corpus that correspond to the search query. Moreover, these can only be found in the older and mostly East German interviewees (source 6). For these interviewees in particular, the issue had a major impact: The border opening allowed these interviewees to travel freely again, which was already possible for West Germans. A look at the data confirms that the narratives are mainly about the possibility of travel after the border opening. It is also discussed that the possibility existed, but that there was not always time for it.

Another theme was “besuch” (‘visit’). The query of “besuch” (‘visit’, search query \*besuch\* ‘visit’) seems also to be an important component in this context (source 7).



Belonging	I	AG		total
		1	2	
<b>east</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>
	10	2		2
	12		1	1
	23		4	4
	28	4		4
<b>west</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>
	01		3	3
	06	1		1
	17	8		8
<b>total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>

Source 7: Distribution to query \*besuch\* ('visit').

The topic is addressed by both groups, with all four interviewees in the East German group talking about it. In the West German group, no entry could be found for one interviewee. It is clear from the data that the composites related to this query also reveal composites such as "Besucherantrag" ('visitor application'). Moreover, it seems that visits are particularly relevant to events that took place before the border opening. Interestingly, both groups report similarly on this topic that it was not possible to visit each other during this time. The topic of visitation therefore seems to be important or formative for both groups, both East Germans and West Germans no longer receive visits from neighbouring divided Germany.

Finally, the following questions should be answered: Is this event more likely to be assessed as positive or negative by the interviewees? Are there any differences between the two groups of the former East and West Germany?

When looking at the adjectives that occur within the corpus, there are many lemmas with positive connotations (a total of 295). The adjectives/lemmas "gut" ('good') and "schön" ('beautiful') are used the most in this corpus ("gut" 123 tokens; "schön" 92 tokens). If one compares the lemmas of this group with negative connotations, they are much less frequently represented with a total of 52 tokens. This first rough count leads to the assumption that the event of the *border opening* is generally perceived as a positive event and this result supports the statement from the frame semantic analysis. A closer look at the occurrence of "gut" ("good") in context reveals that in fact only a few tokens can be found that are related to the border opening and predominantly are used by the older West Germans. In a further step, some other positively connoted tokens/word forms (source 8) were examined.



token/word form	Belonging	I	AG		total
			1	2	
"froh" ('glad')			2		2
	west		2		2
		06	2		2
"glücklich" ('happy')			5		5
	east		1		1
		17	1		1
	west		4		4
		06	4		4
"gut" ('good')			4	1	5
	west		4	1	5
		01		1	1
		06	1		1
		17	3		3
"schön" ('beautiful')			14	6	20
	east		2	4	6
		10	1		1
		12		4	4
		28	1		1
	west		12	2	14
		06	12		12
		22		2	2
<b>total</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>

Source 8: Distribution of lemmas with positive connotations in the context of the event of the border opening.

A total of seven tokens can be identified among the persons from the former East and 25 among the persons from the former West who, in the context of the border opening, rated the event or certain consequences that resulted from the border opening as positive and provided it with positive words. Moreover, these are mainly from the older interviewees. The word forms "froh" ('glad') and "gut" ('good') are predominantly used by AG 1 of the West German persons and word forms of "schön" ('beautiful') seem to have been used by the majority of the persons of AG 1 from the former East. In this respect, forms of "glücklich" ('happy') are used similarly by both groups (source 8). A first rough insight into the data thus leads to the assumption that the persons from the former West Germany report more positively about the event and its aftermath than the East Germans.

The two hypotheses put forward (see above) can therefore be partially confirmed by this first rough analysis: In the context of the narratives about the *border opening*, the two different groups (East and West) report from different perspectives. It turns out that



East Germans tend to report on the event in a participant perspective and West Germans in an observational (analyses of “Begrüßungsgeld” (‘welcome money’) in source 5 and “Reisen” (‘traveling’) in source 6). The fact that the event of the *border opening* appears to have been a defining event, especially for East Germans, in which they participated directly and which meant changes in their living conditions, is also evident from the use of the word form “Wende” (‘political turn’), which is used in the present corpus mainly by these people in their narratives (source 4). With regard to the positive and negative narratives a first conclusion can be drawn from the rough survey that the West German interviewees on the whole use more positively connotated word forms in their narratives about the event than the East German interviewees (source 8).

## CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The research question asked at the beginning: ‘Is there still a border in people’s minds more than 30 years after the fall of the German Wall?’ can be answered both from a frame semantic and a corpus-based perspective.

In the reconstructed frames of both the East German and the West German interviewees, the *border opening* event is predominantly associated with the feeling of joy. However, it is striking that the East German interviewees do not only refer to the pleasant experiences, but also to their disappointment, negative stories and perhaps unfulfilled expectations. Whereas such statements are not found among the West Germans. In addition, the narratives in both groups focus on contacts with the people who have come together at the border. Another aspect that is strongly linked to the event of the *border opening* is the so-called ‘welcome money’ (“Begrüßungsgeld”). The East German interviewees report in detail where they received the money and what they bought with it. In the stories of the West German interviewees, however, the welcome money plays only a minor role, as they were exempt from this. With regard to the question asked at the beginning about the border in people’s minds, it can be said from the frame semantic point of view that:

1. The event of the *border opening* on both sides includes both the FE EMOTION and the FE PERSON and the filler values “joy” and “many people” can be assumed as default values.
2. Different perspectives become clear. The West German and East German interviewees show a group-specific view of the event.

From the corpus-based analysis, the results of the frame semantic analysis can also be supported in that the event of the opening of the border is linked to positively connotated word forms and persons (occurrence of kinship terms), which were characteristic for the event, its circumstances and consequences. With regard to the positively connotated word forms, however, West Germans seem to interpret this event



as particularly positive, because most positively connoted word forms can be found among West German female persons.

In addition, different perspectives can be seen in this corpus, and there are tendencies for the interviewees to tell about the event from different perspectives. The East German interviewees, for example, reported more in a participant way, i.e. directly involved in the events and consequences. This can be seen in the analyses of the lemmas "Begrüßungsgeld" ('welcome money') and "Reisen" ('travel'). For example, they reported that they had received the welcome money or were able to make trips. The fact that they were directly affected and involved in the circumstances and consequences, and that these had a greater impact on their living conditions than was the case with West Germans, also seems to be evident in the use of the lemma "Wende" ('political turn'). The majority of the older, East German interviewees in this corpus use the word "Wende" ('political turn'). This can be explained by the fact that the border opening actually brought about a change in their lives (politically, economically and socially). The West German interviewees, on the other hand, tend to take an observational perspective and report that there was the welcome money and that the East Germans were able to travel again.

The results of the various analyses give rise to further questions which will be taken up in later analyses, for example:

1. How exactly is the participating and observing perspective in the narratives about the border opening?
2. How exactly are the different positively connoted word forms used in context? Are West Germans rather happy that it has come about in this way and find it so good? What exactly is the situation with East Germans, and what exactly is perceived as beautiful in this context? What are they happy about and have been happy about?

In addition, the present results are to be compared with other corpora (e.g., with the *Berlin Wendekorpus* (BW)<sup>22</sup> or the data material from the DFG project *Studies on the Language Situation in the Thuringian-Bavarian Border Region* (SPRIG)<sup>23</sup> in order to be able to corroborate the existing results or, if necessary, to determine differences in the various border regions.

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<sup>22</sup> For further information, See [agd.ids-mannheim.de/BW--\\_extern.shtml](http://agd.ids-mannheim.de/BW--_extern.shtml). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.

<sup>23</sup> For further information, See [www.phil.uni-passau.de/deutsche-sprachwissenschaft/forschung/dfg-projekt-sprig/](http://www.phil.uni-passau.de/deutsche-sprachwissenschaft/forschung/dfg-projekt-sprig/). Accessed 17 Mar. 2021.



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