

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Hrsg.)

Typisch Stadt, typisch Land?

Analysen und Perspektiven für Kommunen
im demografischen Wandel

Summary

A shortage of skilled workers, too few providers of nursing care, shrinking cities and towns – those are just a few aspects of demographic change that will continue to pose major challenges for municipalities in the future. Developing intra- and inter-communal strategies based on municipal data is a key part of both sustainable, needs-based planning and evidence-based community management.

Planning and adapting local infrastructure while ensuring the availability of public services is a major task for public administrators and politicians. That is why municipal data should be used to a greater degree during planning processes, and decisions should be based on empiric findings. Demographic classifications can support these processes. They can also identify which fields of activity will play a role – and how – in the future of our cities and towns.

The new demographic classification system shows that demographic developments are no longer tied to the population's socio-economic status or situation. While the factors “socio-demographic status” and “urbanity/business location” played a key role in previous classifications in terms of structure and type, “socio-economics” – i. e. purchasing power and the share of the population qualifying for social assistance – is now included as an independent indicator. The resulting 11 demographic types account for some 73 million people in Germany.

Every city and town is different, and the challenges that the different demographic types face mean that their focus must vary when it comes to issues such as infrastructure and public services, migration and integration, competitiveness and digitalization, and forms of cooperation. Yet thanks to the classification by type, demographic developments and social and economic conditions can be compared within groups. Similar potentials and action plans can thus be identified for similar municipalities of the same demographic type.

In addition to community-level planning, the demographic types can be used for planning and analysis at the cross-regional level. Three practical examples show the role they can play in supporting municipalities and shaping demographic change. The examples cover multigenerational housing, strategy development for public libraries, and the analysis of services available to seniors in cities and towns.

The updated demographic types together with our analyses and recommendations increase the transparency of demographic, economic and social developments. The Wegweiser Kommune (Community Roadmap) portal offers a wide range of (open) data on socio-demographic developments that communities can use for their planning and management processes.