The London School of Economics and Political Science

Making *Heimat* in the modern world:

State, Catholicism, and nature in a Bavarian village community

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic study of '*Heimat*' (home) in a Bavarian village, and how *Heimat* is made in relationship with the German nation-state, the Catholic church, and the experience of nature. At a time when the village has lost its previous political and economic significance, local efforts to make *Heimat* have become vital to regenerate the village community.

Major economic and political changes since World War II have led to substantial changes in the village, especially the decline of 'big families' and rise of local associations (*Vereine*) as the main organisational force. Against this historical backdrop, local identities emerge in the tensions and entanglements between state formation and local practice. The political reality of *Heimat* is defined by the ways in which villagers reveal and bridge oppositions between official and vernacular discourses. Aside from government and state, Catholicism also plays an indispensable role in articulating senses of community in *Heimat*. The ethics and organisational forms of the Catholic Church offer alternative ideals and institutions to secular ones; they can also provide connections between state and village. Furthermore, villagers' experience of *Heimat* at present are crucially expressed in the local idea of 'returning to nature to heal society's illnesses.' This local idiom incorporates contradictory characteristics, as a metaphor of villagers' investments in and hopes for *Heimat* itself, and with exclusionist connotations. Nature in this sense is both a source of morality for a society deemed lacking and ultimately beyond human morality, for only nature that is essentially different from human society has the power to heal. The unreachability of this idea of nature is its very strength. *Heimat*, similarly, operates based on a core paradox: to maintain *Heimat*, villagers tend to externalise the inherent problems of *Heimat* to an imagined opposition between the 'traditional village' (as *Heimat*) and the 'modern city' (as its ultimate 'other', with ethnic diversity). But an analysis of the local dialectical understandings of modern time and the corresponding meanings of *Heimat* reveal that *Heimat* is essentially a product of modernity.

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Note on style

When a German or Bavarian word is referred to for the first time, I will give its English translation in brackets, and use this English translation from then on, unless the German or Bavarian word is common in the English context. The names of local places and people in this thesis are pseudonyms, to protect the anonymity of my interlocutors.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Raising the question: *Heimat*

At dusk, the warm yellow rays of the setting sun cast their light on the white walls and orange roofs of the small village of Blumendorf. The village is quiet, with few passers-by, and only gorgeous flowers in the small gardens in front of each house trembling gently in the breeze. Rainhard Kroetz drives his BMW from the north side of the village, passes the church and parks it in the garage in the courtyard of his house. He quickly gets out of the car and hurries across the lane into a large three-storey building with a barn just opposite his house. Outside the building hangs a beautiful iron and wooden sign which reads '*Gasthof Kroetz*' (The Kroetz Guesthouse, or Inn). Rainhard, a sturdy, tall, grey-haired man in his late fifties, is the owner of this village guesthouse (or rather village inn, as the guesthouse is currently closed to overnight visitors and only the pub on the first floor and the dining hall on the second floor are still in operation), which is his ancestral business. Because of the decline in customers and lack of income, Rainhard has another job as a caretaker in Munich, and he only opens the Kroetz Guesthouse on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings to receive guests, the vast majority of whom are from the village.

Rainhard walks through the front door of the inn. At the right-hand side of the narrow, dark corridor is the kitchen, where his wife is already busy preparing meals for guests who will be arriving later. At the end of the corridor is a warm, orange-toned pub decorated in typical Bavarian style: the ceiling and walls are panelled in solid wood; eight heavy wooden tables are covered with red-and-white checked tablecloths, on which are placed small vases of flowers picked from Rainhard's own garden; a wooden cross hangs in the middle of the wall and a carved wooden statue of Virgin Mary is in the upper right corner. A more obvious decoration besides this, however, is a beautifully carved wooden sign hanging down from the ceiling, surrounded by ironwork and inscribed with a line: *Zur fröhlichen Runde* (To the cheerful round [of drinks]). On a shelf behind the bar are some of the regulars' own glasses with lids, and while most customers use the pub's glassware, some still follow the old tradition of storing their own glasses in the pub and drinking from them when they arrive. Around six or seven o'clock in the evening, customers gradually arrive. They are members of the village *Schützenverein* (shooting association), who meet once a week on Friday nights and usually stay in the pub until midnight drinking and chatting. They are all Rainhard's acquaintances, greeting him in Bavarian as they stroll over to their usual seats. Without them ordering anything, Rainhard puts their usual favourite drinks in front of them. He skilfully navigates through the crowd, serving wine, collecting finished glasses, and drawing a line on the coaster to record how many drinks the customer has had. He wears a smile, is as hospitable as always, and yet his composure radiates a sense of power.

Although the inn is bustling, Rainhard is well aware of the problems facing the village and often feels a sense of crisis. Nowadays, there are hardly any farmers left and there are few other jobs available, so most of the villagers work in neighbouring towns and cities. More and more young people are leaving the village to settle elsewhere, while increasing numbers of in-migrants are moving to this small village not far from Munich: because the price of land and housing is so high in the city, they choose to buy property in the surrounding villages where prices are relatively cheaper. Rainhard once told me that he fears one day the village will cease to exist. Thus, he consciously strives to maintain the village community and what he sees as its traditional way of life. For instance, he decided to keep the Kroetz Guesthouse running because, he said, ‘if I close, people and [local] associations [*Vereine*] won’t have a place to go’, although the business is actually not profitable and he needs to commute to Munich for another job. Many villagers who go to the inn to drink, participate in local associations, and organise village events do so quite deliberately, like Rainhard, even if sometimes it is inconvenient for them.

Although the village has lost its previous political and economic significance and most villagers work in cities nearby, villagers still strive to maintain a village community through participating in local *Vereine* (associations), organising village events, and adhering to a rural identity. This apparent paradox of village community, common to many places in rural Bavaria, is the core topic of this thesis. To study this phenomenon, I conducted participant-observation fieldwork from November 2016 to September 2018 in a Bavarian village, which I call ‘Blumendorf’. It is a medium-sized village with around 700 inhabitants, located around forty kilometres from the centre of Munich.

Although few scholars have addressed this phenomenon directly, many studies in and of Germany have touched upon it from different angles. Merlan’s (2004) one-year fieldwork in 1999 in a Bavarian village (which is around sixty kilometres southeast of Munich and has about 400 inhabitants) proved to be very enlightening for my research. It almost provides a record of what my fieldwork site might have looked like around twenty years ago, and upon comparison with these ‘past’ occurrences and with Merlan’s analytical angle to interpret them, I further confirm the significance of this phenomenon and its underlying cultural meanings which my thesis strives to elaborate. Merlan (2004: 124) focused on family dairy farming and recognised the fact that although this form of local economy is undoubtedly declining, there have been considerable local, regional, and state-level efforts to protect it. Rather than economic viability, these efforts are more motivated by ‘values and particular practical-symbolic forms understood to have originated historically in association with agrarian production’ (Merlan 2004: 124). However, Merlan (2004) spent more effort analysing specific policies and frameworks such as the ‘*Einheimischenmodelle*[1]’ (Indigenous Models) designed to preserve local farms, land and ways of life, while explaining only in quite general terms the underlying motivation, which were the values of agriculture and landscape and the social and environmental role of farmers.

However, situations in my fieldwork site reveal the determining significance of these values and the real aim of their accompanying practices – maintaining the village community itself. When Merlan did her research in 1999, there were twenty-three active farms in dairy and meat production in a village of around 400 people, and about one-fourth of the village population was directly involved in agrarian production (Merlan 2004: 128). In the village of Blumendorf that I studied in 2017 and 2018, which is located in the same Upper Bavaria region and includes about 700 inhabitants, there are only two small dairy farms left in the village. Since one of the dairy farms is owned by the inn host Rainhard who mainly works in the inn and in Munich, in fact in Blumendorf today only one family relies solely on agriculture and dairy for their income. More specifically, this family consists of only one man in his fifties and his elderly mother. Other families seldom engage in agrarian production. This picture confirms the continuous decline of small-scale agrarian activity in this area especially since the 1970s, as Merlan (2004: 124) also sets out, but what seems counterintuitive in my fieldwork site now is that this confirmed decline (almost to the level of extinction) does not affect the form and intensity of villagers' continuous efforts and enthusiasm to 'preserve' things related to farming. Almost all the public policies, local practices, consciousness and sentiments towards preservation that Merlan (2004) observed around twenty years ago in a different village still exist in Blumendorf now. For instance, the legal instrument of Indigenous Models, which shapes the transformation of farmland in favour of native local people, is sustained in Blumendorf. The buildings of the previous basic farming unit – the *Bauernhof* (farmhouse) – are still carefully conserved, even though no more animals are kept in the barns. Villagers still talk proudly of their rural identity, even though they work in cities nearby as technicians, salespeople, secretaries, and bank staff, etc. They consciously contribute to the continuity of a previous form of life, even when it is not necessary or convenient for them, just like the inn host Rainhard's persistence in keeping the village inn running when the shrinking profits from the business were no longer sufficient to sustain his family.

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[1] ‘*Einheimisch*’ is defined as ‘native, indigenous, endemic, domestic, home-bred, home-made’ in New Cassell’s Dictionary 1958 (Merlan 2004: 124). The Indigenous Models in Bavaria strive to regulate mobilisation of landholding and structure it to the benefit of those recognised by the Models as *einheimisch* (indigenous) (Merlan 2004: 131-132). Each *Gemeinde* (town) in Bavaria can make its own version of an Indigenous Model. In Gemeinde Imhof to which the village of Blumendorf belongs, the local Indigenous Model stated that only people who have lived in the town for more than eight years can buy land to build houses there.

This indicates that it is in fact contingent, rather than essential, that farming sits as the objective of preservation. The minimal presence of farming in the village proves to have little impact on the motivation to preserve it. It is then reasonable to ask what exactly local people are trying to preserve and what are the meanings of this preservation. This is the central question of my thesis. It is quite apparent that they are preserving a form of life of the village community itself, just as Merlan (2004: 133) mentioned before switching to other topics, by referring to the 'preservation of some of those aspects of social organization – village character, the farmhouses that constitute the village, the landscape – that are held to be integral to the regional form of life'.

But what is ‘a form of life of the village community itself’? It may be worthwhile to begin by briefly examining local understandings of village community. When local people refer to their own village, especially in an intimate and loving manner, they will usually use the term ‘*Heimat*’. *Heimat* is an idea shared by many German-speaking societies, but it is quite difficult to translate into English. Usually it is translated as ‘home’, ‘hometown’, or ‘homeland’, but through the analysis in this thesis we will realise that none of these words in the English sense capture accurately the meaning of *Heimat*. The term is so widely used in German people’s daily life under a variety of circumstances, that just as Blickle (2004: 1) observed, ‘as long as no one asks what Heimat is, German speakers think they know. But as soon as someone asks, the difficulties begin’. Meanwhile, *Heimat* is also a highly sensitive term due to its strongly exclusionist connotations in Nazi Germany: *Heimat* not only refers to solidarity and inclusion, but also implies the exclusion of people considered to be outside of *Heimat* (for instance, in the Nazi era, Jewish people, foreigners, and disabled people). Therefore, the term has been studied intensively in academia. A glimpse of the ideational and historical backgrounds of the formation of this concept of *Heimat* and its various meanings remind us that a ‘village community’ is not a simple idea in Bavaria or in Germany at large. In this introductory chapter, we will first delve into the development of the idea of *Heimat* in intellectual history, and then carve out a path to investigate the social and cultural phenomena related to *Heimat* through anthropological studies of placemaking. After introducing background information about my fieldwork site through a framework of different ‘places’ and the process of centring in the village, I will present the theoretical framework of the whole thesis and its dialogue with previous anthropological literature. Explanations of my methodology and fieldwork experiences follow the theoretical framework, and at the end of the chapter I will provide a preview of each chapter of the thesis.

The relevance of *Heimat* in intellectual history

According to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (1877: 864-866), the word *Heimat* comes from Old German, and it could be found in numerous German dialects from the fifteenth century. But until the eighteenth century, the word was rarely used by elites who thought their speech represented the German language. In the 1890s, as part of an effort to rehabilitate ancient and rustic vocabulary in German, Romanticist writers proposed adopting the word *Heimat* and began to incorporate it into their own vocabulary. Karl Phillip Moritz, for example, wrote that this 'solemn expression', together with the word '*Vaterland*' (fatherland), presents a picture of 'homey tranquillity and happiness' that is contained 'in the beautiful sound of the German word *heim*' (Maurer & Stroh 1959: 294). These writers who promoted the use of the term *Heimat* were convinced that the German language was the expression of the German people and heralded the formation of the German nation-state. Their German was not the language spoken daily in small villages and towns, but a public language for Germans who embraced change and saw a future as a unified nation-state (Applegate 1990: 7). Besides, at the end of the eighteenth century, Herder's concepts of '*Volk*' (people) and '*Nationalgeist*' (national spirit) were closely related to the creation of the modern concept of *Heimat* (Blickle 2004: 51-52). These ideas have mapped out a field that connects the way people interact with each other and with local cultural traditions to place, climate, vegetation, language, etc. (Eigler 2012: 31).

From the beginning, *Heimat* was intrinsically intertwined with the emergence of the German nation-state. In the nineteenth century, *Heimat* re-entered popular discourse during a time when previous German political structures were disintegrating. On the external front, the power of Napoleon dismantled the fragile balance maintained by the Holy Roman Empire among the numerous polities in Central Europe. In terms of internal forces, there were successive conflicts between the reformed, centralised, rationalised state and the various village communities. *Heimat* acquired most of its modern meaning as the General Estate attempted to understand and reshape German local identity (Applegate 1990: 7). At the time of German unification in 1871, the concept of *Heimat* helped people to understand the abstract nation-state on the basis of concrete local identities (Von Moltke 2005: 9). Bismarck himself, very well aware of the difficulties of imposing Prussian culture on other parts of Germany, proposed to 'absorb … German individualities without nullifying them' (Schmitt 1985: 41).

But this 'tolerance' of internal differences is not applied to Germany's external relations (with foreign countries, and groups perceived as other). When Germany exerted its expansionist ambitions as a newly established, powerful nation-state, driving the whole of Europe (and the world) into the turbulent First and Second World Wars, it adopted exclusionary policies of persecution and forced resettlement against the already subjugated peoples of the areas it temporarily occupied. (These were especially salient and outrageous under Nazi Germany, for example in Poland, see Moeller 2001: 8.) These were the antithesis of German domestic policies targeted at maintaining regional varieties, which rather aimed to nullify others both culturally and physically. More notoriously, Nazi Germany also committed genocide against what was then considered the ultimate other within Germany – Jewish people. Between 1941 and 1945, through a series of brutal and systematic methods – mass shootings, gas chambers, and extermination through extreme labour in concentration camps etc. – some six million Jews (about two-thirds of the Jewish population in Europe at that time) were cruelly killed during the Holocaust (Holocaust Encyclopedia 2017 & 2018). This evil was deliberately planned and ruthlessly executed, backed up by a system of thought of which *Heimat* was an integral part. According to this, Jewish people both lacked and were denied the right to have *Heimat*, so that even though they could be German citizens, they were refused – by genocidal means – the possibility of making Germany their home too (see Schultheis 2020).

If one assumes that the difference between German internal and external policies is merely an accidental rupture, one fails to understand an internal flaw in the concept of *Heimat*. It is more accurate to consider the distinction between German internal and external policies as connected, as a continuity reflected in the contradictory nature of the concept of *Heimat* from the very beginning of its construction: it was effective in forging unification and solidarity among the small German principalities in a somewhat universalistic way transcending local particularities; but at the same time, precisely because of the need to construct solidarity in the midst of internal and external problems, it relied excessively on the concept of *Volk*, which was based on German culture and language. This united the population perceived as German *Volk*, while then constructing a boundary between self and other, excluding those (perceived to be) other than the German *Volk.* We will later discuss in more detail the relationship between Heimat, *Volk* and nature. To some extent, the new German nation-state was built on the basis of the exclusion of its other, which already predicted a later, nationalist spin on the idea of *Heimat* and its disastrous consequences in the National Socialist period. The historian Von Saldern (2004: 343), after investigating the radio broadcasts from Weimar to Nazi Germany, also confirmed this kind of continuity from an empirical angle, arguing that '[a]lthough the ontological concept of Volksstamm and Heimat culture was not necessarily racist, a racist tone could already be heard in the Weimar period among right-wing elements committed to racial ideas. In the new era of NS-dictatorship, however, racist ideas became extremely radicalized and were made the basis of policies and actions.'

Due to the ambivalence of *Heimat*, there are different theoretical orientations in contemporary analyses of *Heimat* that focus on either internal or external phenomena in Germany. Theories focusing more on internal phenomena have tried to capture the relationship between *Heimat*, locality, and the nation-state, i.e., investigate how the concept of *Heimat* attempts to bridge Germany's internal divisions and build a unified national solidarity. Celia Applegate (1990: 5-6) sees *Heimat* as a mediator or intermediary between the local and the national; Alon Confino (1997: 98) goes further, arguing that the German Reich ensured that the idea of *Heimat* was transformed into 'an actual representation of the nation' and *Heimat* became a 'local metaphor' for the nation-state. Thus, for example, the unique local life expressed in *Heimat* local histories, postcards and *Heimat* museums sprouting up all over Germany began to serve not only as a medium between state and locality, but also as a metaphor and collective memory of the young German nation-state. In this process, local and national manifestations became interchangeable, forming the basis of an 'imagined community' in German minds. This is not to say that the uniqueness of local identity has been completely erased or relegated to the concept of nation-state or *Volk* (people). Rather, *Heimat* facilitates the formation of a dual conception of the local – with both a concrete empirical dimension and a more abstract metaphorical function. Confino (1997: 107) argues that those who disseminate *Heimat* ideas 'shared the belief in the singularity of local identity and in the capacity of the Heimat idea to represent the singularity and to reconcile it with a notion of Germanness'.

This kind of approach, however, ignores the fact that those who are perceived as outside 'Germanness' – both German citizens, who are still implicitly seen as the other, and foreign citizens – have quite different experiences of *Heimat.* In 2018, when Germany merged its Ministry of the Interior and the Construction Department into the *Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat* (Ministry of the Interior, Construction and *Heimat*), the word *Heimat* caused a great deal of controversy: while many commentators saw it as a move to win back voters from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, many more worried that *Heimat*, a term once used extensively by the Nazis, would revive exclusionist nationalism and cause marginalisation and division (see Escritt 2018). More importantly, the new ministry could normalise the term *Heimat* which was deeply associated with fascist and racist ideology during the Nazi era. Due to this growing concern, Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah (2019) invited twelve authors to write from angles of sexual orientation, work, language, and race etc., about their current experiences of life in Germany where they were still marginalised, discriminated against or exploited by the mainstream ideas of *Heimat* and their exclusionist connotations. As the title of their book reveals, 'your *Heimat*' can be 'my nightmare'.

Thus, a study of *Heimat* cannot ignore how it explicitly and implicitly delineates the boundary between self and other, i.e., who is entitled to *Heimat* and who is not; and how this boundary reached an aggressive peak in the Nazi interpretation of *Heimat*. In Norbert Elias's (1992) analysis of the characteristics of German development towards the modern nation-state, he emphasised that there were no natural borders between the then Germanic and German-speaking tribes and people hostile to them who spoke other languages – for example, people speaking Latin-derived languages to their west and south, and Slavic speakers to their east. This made the Germanic tribes insecure, fearing their subjugation and assimilation, and they therefore needed to build a strong solidarity in terms of language, culture and martial spirit, which was the basis of the idea of *Volk*. During the establishment of the German nation-state, this form of solidarity was transformed into ideas of *Heimat* which also emphasised language and culture, while retaining the initial rejection and hostility towards people who did not speak the language or have that culture (see Blickle 2004: 50). Here we can also see that the exclusionary nature of the concept of *Volk* has been integral to *Heimat* from the inception of this idea. This emphasis on identity runs throughout the concept of *Heimat*, and was presented in a very aggressive, disastrous, and violently xenophobic way in Nazi Germany. Hitler's '*Blut und Boden*' (Blood and Soil) ideology and the idea of cultural preservation defined *Heimat* as a racially pure community: under this definition Jewish people and some others (e.g., homosexuals) were considered *Heimatlos* (without a Heimat) and therefore should not exist in the *Heimat* (see Schultheis 2020).

Furthermore, what are glossed under the term of 'culture' emphasised in the idea of *Heimat* may indicate something more specific and more problematic from contemporary perspectives: religious orientations and race. The early implications of *Heimat* present a highly Christian undertone. For instance, Johannes Geiler von Keisersberg wrote in his 1494 treatise that 'death guides you to the Heimat [here spelled *heinmut*] of your fatherland, to eternal salvation' (Blickle 2004: x). Blickle (2004: x) explained that 'fatherland' here refers to the land of the Christian God, and since eternal salvation is realised in the *Heimat* of the fatherland, it could mean either that *Heimat* is 'a higher refuge of that fatherland', or that *Heimat* and fatherland are 'one and the same'. However, in current daily discourse, the religious meanings of *Heimat* are considerably weakened. Compared with the numerous research studies of *Heimat* from the perspective of the nation-state, there have been few attempts to investigate *Heimat* from a religious angle. But this does not mean the retreat of religion from down-to-earth social practices in and of *Heimat*; at least in Bavarian villages now, churches and religious associations still play a significant role to maintain the village community and organise everyday activities. Meanwhile, villagers' daily life is in fact significantly shaped by the Catholic calendar, regulated and rhythmised by its numerous holidays and celebrations. It is an influence that is hard to avoid, a nature and rhythm of life that is ubiquitous in the village, unlike for example the Catholic festivals such as *Fronleichnam* (Corpus Christi) which are salient but do not require everyone’s participation. Therefore, it is not only that the original meaning of *Heimat* carries significant Christian connotations, but also that daily practices in *Heimat* are shaped by the Catholic calendar; it is thus understandable that this version of *Heimat* does not offer strong affinity for people of other religions, or of no religion, and that it is ambiguous and ambivalent whether non-Catholic Christians are part of *Heimat*. This is the implicit exclusivity of *Heimat* in terms of religion.

Another salient phenomenon – that villagers readily show their passion for the nature in and around their *Heimat* and state the inseparability of nature and *Heimat* – is also related to the ‘seeming retreat’ of religion. Blickle (2004: ix) considered it to be a ‘replacement, literally and metaphorically, of the crucifix above the kitchen table with representations of nature’, which has been happening from as early as the eighteenth century in German-speaking societies. Meanwhile, the idea of nature was indispensable for the formation of the German nation-state. To a certain extent, the German nation-state is imagined through nature (Lekan 2004; Wilson 2012), and in this sense as well, *Heimat* is delicately paralleled with nature. Facing intense ontological anxieties caused by rapid industrialisation and the modernisation process in the period in Germany when the idea of *Heimat* was forming, ‘Heimat became one goal of the subject’s inner longing for identification with a supposedly originary nature or landscape’ (Blickle 2004: 20). The concept of nature is basic to the conceptualisation of *Heimat*, and both acquire a moral dimension in that ‘through Heimat’s perceived naturalness, to celebrate one’s Heimat becomes – among many other things – an act of celebrating one’s own good moral qualities’ (Blickle 2004: 20). This celebration, moreover, makes ‘nature’ – as a source of good morality – a mode of self-healing for *Heimat* that it can return to whenever it appears to ‘sicken’.

However, such discourses do not touch on the other side of nature and *Heimat* when it comes to the self-other relationship, namely, the close connection between the concept of nature and the theories of *Volk* and race. This connection is most strongly shown in the '*Blut und Boden*' (blood and soil) ideology of the Nazi period. This racist ideology stressed a unification of a racially defined national body ('blood') and its (rural) settlement area ('soil'), so that only the so-called Aryan race (and the Germanic people as its exemplar) may live on German soil; besides, this ideology considers rural life to be purer than the degenerate urban existence (see Lane & Rupp 1978). It is important to note that the concept of *Volk* arose in many European countries and led to far-right and fascist movements elsewhere, for example in Italy and the UK. Although it did not translate into such an extreme system as German National Socialism, it is sufficient to see the destructive nature of the concept of a closed group of racialised people who are entitled to a place excluding others. Such destructive influences often linger and can be found in the present day. Uli Linke (1999) found such ideology continued in ideas and practices surrounding the body in Germany after World War II, for instance, in '*Körperwelten*' (Body Worlds), an exhibit of human anatomy. The plastinated corpses on exhibition were aestheticised and eternalised to 'suppress evocations of violence, victimhood, or history' (Linke 1999: 10), but retained inscribed traces of the German national body which values whiteness, heroic masculinity, and 'a racialist conception of womanhood' (Linke 1999: 12) – emphasising female reproduction and devaluing the female body as pathological.

Anthropologists studying kinship have long pointed out the problems with the idea of closed and racialised groups, and strived to correct it in various ways. For instance, Carsten (2013: 246) while commending Sahlins' innovative and optimistic understanding of kinship as 'a mutuality of being', also paid attention to the negative and exclusionary aspects of kinship which lie largely in its emphases on blood and nature. Feeley-Harnik (2019) analysed further how in conventional European understandings, the exclusionary aspects of identity and descent have been founded in discourses of either ‘blood’ or ‘soil’. Wilson (2016) went further to sort out the transition of kinship studies from a paradigm of bio-essentialism focusing on biology, genealogy and reproduction, to a critique of bio-essentialism and a shift to ‘relatedness’ as the way to understand kinship. He strived to truly overcome the exclusionary elements embodied in bio-essentialism through integrating the biological and social features of kinship.

Meanwhile, the exclusionary elements embodied in the idea of nature are often concealed in seemingly neutral daily discourses. For instance, there is a popular discourse of ‘returning to nature to heal society’s illnesses’ in Blumendorf and in Germany at large which we will discuss extensively in chapter 5. Through analysing the metaphor of disease and connotations of nature with healing power embodied in this discourse, we can discern the sense of exclusionism mentioned above. Uli Linke (1999) studying German understandings and practices surrounding the body, nature and race etc. after Nazi Germany, revealed that cleanliness and physical health are connected with political stability and morality, while ‘diseases’ point to what is taboo and contaminated in society (Linke 1999: 12-13). The ‘diseases’ that may cause *Heimat* to ‘sicken’, as mentioned above, are to a large extent associated with the city, precisely where there are many immigrants and people of other races, and ‘[b]lood, and the fear of contagion, emerge as organizing tropes in West Germany’s public debates about refugees and immigration’ (Linke 1999: 24). Therefore, a certain degree of rejection of these people considered as other is embodied in the German social discourse of ‘returning to nature to heal society’s illnesses’. Linke (1999: 24) argues that in practices of ‘returning to nature’, for instance naturism or nudism, there is a sense of racial aesthetics of whiteness, and ‘returning to nature’ then implies ‘returning to whiteness’. During the National Socialist period, such ideas were more saliently shown on the platform of the body: when contrasting the terrain of nature (including human nudity) with the terrain of the city (representing bodily ills, immorality and all the other problems of modernity), the image of the white body in prevailing naturist practices equated whiteness with good qualities and morality, while other skin colours were equated with illness and corruption, and also contrasted with each other; besides, whiteness was presented as a representation of the German state (see Linke 1999: 46). As nature is an integral part of *Heimat*, the racial exclusivity in the notion of nature also highlights the fact that *Heimat* contains a racialised dimension to the distinction between self and the other.

Therefore, *Heimat* as an idea both embodies a distinctive 'mediating', 'in-between' connotation internally, and a division, implicit or explicit, between self and the other. It indicates not only an interconnection between a locality and the state, and an intertwining among state, religion and nature manifested in a locality, but also at the same time, in the fields of state, religion, and nature there are also some kinds of 'otherness' that cannot be included, referring to a specific self-other relationship that is also essential for *Heimat*.

***Heimat* and the anthropology of placemaking**

While the intellectual history of the concept of *Heimat* itself is not the direct topic of this thesis, due to the mediating characteristic of this idea, *Heimat* can act as a binding agent throughout the arguments of this thesis. We can see from the above analyses that the idea of *Heimat* mediates between the relationships of locality and nation-state, of religion and state, and of nature and culture – these sets of relationships are to a large extent also the centre of Blumendorfers' efforts to make and remake their community. My ethnography carves out an anthropological approach to phenomena surrounding ideas and practices of *Heimat*, differing from the above intellectual and historical approach to the concept. The anthropological approach is concerned more with social manifestations of *Heimat*, and interpreting how various contexts of people's daily lives relate to each other and create the kind of *Heimat* they might mean when referring to this somewhat ambiguous concept.

To understand this, anthropological discussions of placemaking prove to be very enlightening, as we will analyse below. On the one hand, the close association between *Heimat* and place is reflected in the fact that it shows how a local place is coexistent with 'wider forces', be they political, religious or cultural; while on the other hand, the very idea of *Heimat* expresses 'a malleable "system of sentiments" that called for attachment to place amid the displacement of modernity' (Lekan 2004: 8). Beginning in the late twentieth century, placemaking attracted attention in anthropological circles as an important concept, which both draws our attention to the fact that *Heimat* is also 'made', and also opens up a space where we can find specific ways to study the coexistence of state, religion and nature in a village community.

In the initial stages of anthropology, scholars were more concerned with relatively isolated places in contrast with the industrialised West, just as Malinowski's (2005: 3) famous introductory lines in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* indicate: '[i]magine yourself suddenly set down … alone on a tropical beach close to a native village', which quickly brings us to an (exotic) local place. But as the discipline developed, particularly under the influence of post-colonial critique and the study of the post-industrial West, recent anthropology has provided significantly varied interpretations of place. Place is no longer perceived as just a physical space, but rather infused with people's care and symbolic meanings, being an indispensable part of social and cultural lives and sometimes even an 'actor' that can shape people's identities and relationships (Filippucci 2016). This interaction between people and place is essential for the idea of placemaking. This is particularly evident in the study of landscape, which was often considered to be physical, natural scenery in the past. Although Cosgrove and other scholars (e.g. Cosgrove 1985; Daniels & Cosgrove 1988) noted that in the European tradition landscape usually refers to a painted (rural) view which indicates, as Hirsch (1995: 2) interpreted, a separation between people as viewers and space as the view, subsequent scholars, including Hirsch, have greatly expanded and revisited the understanding of landscape and place by re-examining the meaning of landscape.

For instance, Bender (1993), through her study of Stonehenge, suggests that the same landscape can be given different values and meanings by different groups of people. Landscape can thus become a central element in the competition of political identities, being deeply involved in people's social lives. Jarman's (1993) investigation of Belfast in the period of the Northern Irish conflict showed first how the warring groups made barriers, and then how those barriers reinforced the divisions between groups and became the focal points of their violent actions. His understanding of landscape is thus further enhanced by the fact that it is not only imbued with cultural connotations, but also feeds back into and influences social life, creating a kind of feedback loop between people and space. Ingold's (1995) notion of 'dwelling' further suggests that the transformation of place by human beings already implies a symbiosis of people and space, so there is no such thing as self-contained individuals transforming an 'objective' physical world, but rather 'dwelling' – the two interacting to form the same system, so that 'shaping physically' is itself already infused with meaning. In a similar vein, Hirsch (1995: 4-5) argues that landscape understood as physical surroundings is a product of the particular culture of the modern West, and that a more appropriate way of understanding landscapes suitable for multiple cultures would be to understand them as a relationship between 'two poles of existence' through which people navigate and negotiate daily practices. At the same time, Hirsch is also more concerned with the impact of place on people, understanding landscape as a means by which people mentally locate themselves in the world, a ‘cultural process’ (Hirsch 1995: 5).

Many scholars have applied this new understanding of landscape to the study of European settings. For instance, as Filippucci (2016) noted, William Christian (1972) when studying the relationship between person and God in a Spanish valley stressed the importance of shrines and their location in the landscape: shrines function as ‘control points at which the people attempt to influence the penetration of foreign material into their countryside’. In this way, Christian emphasised that landscape and places are not the inert background of social life, but rather an inherent part of society through which the relationships among people, and between people and the powers they consider higher than themselves are interpreted. Sandra Ott’s (1981) interesting case of a French Basque community in Soule showed how the geographical location of neighbours is infused with cultural connotations – every household has three most important ‘first neighbours’ located to its right and left, and through these locations they form a circular social system within the village. Filippucci (2020: 391) also works through the connotation of commemoration of the ‘death for France’ that the people of Verdun gave to their destroyed landscape after World War I, and how landscapes with this connotation can in turn limit the kind of memory one can produce – people’s memory is confined by ‘a memorial landscape dedicated to heroic military death for the nation’, to show how people make places and how places in turn also make people.

My research takes up the above understanding of the relationship between people and place and attempts to explore from a similar perspective how people make their

Heimat in a Bavarian rural place. Meanwhile, in the process of mutual making between people and places, some wider forces beyond local places are important mediums and vehicles, as people often engage with their local places based on, for example, religious faith or national identity, which also suggests that a locality is never a confined place, but rather interconnected with all these wider forces. Revealing the relationship of a Bavarian local place with wider forces like nation-state, religion and comprehensions of nature is my specific way of studying place-making. This perspective has also been inspired by other studies that have examined this issue in European settings. For example, Christian's (1972) study demonstrates that it is impossible to understand place independently of its association with wider forces, in his case religious. People's understanding of their surrounding landscape corresponds to their relationship with divine figures in their religious faith, which is reflected in shrines as 'territories of grace' (Christian 1972: 44-45) influencing people's intensity of identity with the place. The close association between local place and religion is a phenomenon often found by scholars studying European rural settings, similarly in Pina-Cabral's (1986) study of the rural areas of Alto Minho in Portugal. He found that the local understandings of their rural landscape, household structure and social relationships are all co-constructed with the understanding of oppositions and intermingling between humans and divine beings, and between life and death. When Filippucci (1997) studied Bassano in Italy, she also found that even the local people's efforts to preserve local tradition had connotations beyond the local place, i.e. the intention to become a model city for Italy and Europe through the preservation of traditional buildings and customs. This shows that a place is both self-contained and inextricably connected with wider contexts.

As our understanding of *Heimat* moves beyond the local, the meaning behind those 'local phenomena' that at first seem somewhat surprising and ambiguous begins to emerge. When we first encounter phenomena and discourse like 'preservation of a village community', it is easy to think that they embody a narrow local protectionism. While I cannot claim that villagers in Blumendorf are completely free of a local protectionist mentality, there are much richer and deeper meanings behind this practice of preservation. At the same time, the villagers' understanding of *Heimat* enriches the concept, which in itself is quite flexible, and this thesis provides a case of how a Bavarian village practices and enriches the idea of *Heimat* as well. To a certain extent, the 'in-betweenness' embodied in *Heimat* is also an indication of this thesis's approach of intermingling and mediation. While it is likely that people do not consciously refer to these complex meanings when they speak of *Heimat* in their daily lives, combing the generation and meaning of the concept of *Heimat* points in a very constructive direction towards understanding the core issues of this thesis.

Upon recognising the interlinkage between place and wider worlds, and focusing on the process of place-formation, I would like to stress the internal layers of place and investigate 'different places' in a village formed around the themes of state, religion and nature mentioned above, which exist in one space and time but embody different understandings of the place and its centre through their respective centring processes. Their respective centring processes cannot exist without each other, but are interdependent, inter-generative and coexistent. Only the entirety thus formed is a true locality, a village community, and in the German context, a *Heimat*. At the same time, I will also emphasise a place that is often neglected or even suppressed in everyday practice, i.e., the excluded 'other' of *Heimat* that is ever-present yet not manifestly present on the surface, or at most expressed in a roundabout way. From these analytical angles I will next introduce the village community which was my fieldwork site.

Background information on the fieldwork site: the process of centring and different ‘places’

As already partially described above, Blumendorf is located in the economic belt of Munich, around forty kilometres away from the city centre. Its residential area (mainly houses excluding agricultural land) occupies around 0.2 square kilometres of land, with around 700 inhabitants. The history of this village dates back to the Middle Ages and it has gradually expanded from its original eight main families to its present size. Blumendorf’s main industries until the mid-twentieth century were agriculture, dairy farming and brewing, and the village also had its own shop, bank, post office, etc., allowing it to be somewhat self-sufficient. These amenities have slowly and significantly changed as the global economic system and state administration have become more entrenched in the village. There are no longer any shops or banks, and there are only two farming households left in the village. Basically, the village is no longer able to provide work for people and most of the villagers nowadays have different urban occupations outside Blumendorf. In terms of religion, around seventy percent of the villagers are Catholic, with the majority of the remainder not practising any religion, and only a very small minority of Protestants and members of other faiths. Before the 1970s, the political leader of the village was the village head, but this administrative unit was abolished around 1978, and administrative power was centralised at the town level. At present, the main political and organisational tasks of the village are carried out by the various local associations, which are currently the most noteworthy organisational form, building and maintaining a sense of *Heimat*. We will focus on this process in Chapter Two. In this section, we will first focus on Blumendorf by introducing the activities of local associations and the different centres and places within the village.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening, from about 6 pm, waves of laughter emerged from the village inn. Orange lights shone through its windows that are decorated with red-and-white striped curtains. These are times when associations hold their regular gatherings. On Monday evenings, around twenty middle-aged men from the *Stiefelclub*[2] ('Boots Club') will gather at the inn, having dinner (the menu consists of typical Bavarian food such as roast pork, schnitzel and liver-cheese meatloaf etc.), drinking beer and chatting, usually until after midnight. Most of them are childhood friends, so when they share funny anecdotes, crack jokes, complain about politics, or play Bavarian card games, there is a sense of cheerful intimacy. The inn host serves beer swiftly, knowing everyone's favourites. Because he is himself a member of the Boots Club, he sometimes sits down and joins in. But generally, no one is at the centre of the conversation; rather, different people initiate topics here and there, and several groups of people may be talking about different things at the same time. On Wednesday evenings, there is the *Stammtisch*[3] (regulars' table) of old men in their seventies and eighties. Usually around fifteen or twenty men will come, many of whom are members of the *Veteranenverein* (veterans' association). They are like an older version of the Boots Club, except that some men are so old that they only drink beer quietly, neither talking too much nor listening attentively to what others are saying. However, they still come every Wednesday, come rain or come shine.

The largest association in the village, the shooting association holds its weekly gathering on Friday nights, which then become the most joyful and lively nights at the inn. Not only men, but also around ten women and ten teenagers who are active members of the shooting association often join the gathering, adding to the vibrant atmosphere. Around seventy or eighty members in total go back and forth between the shooting-practice room and the pub, making a stop sometimes at the door of the inn to smoke. Along the way, they greet each other, laugh and chat loudly in Bavarian dialect. These are also the busiest nights for the host, and usually his wife and children will help him serve the Friday guests. Although people seldom hug or have other physical contact, the general ambience of intimacy, cordiality and enthusiasm draws people close together. A fusion of conversation, warm orange lights, warmth from the old-fashioned stove and the aroma of the food contributes to the ambience.

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[2] The *Stiefelclub* ('Boots Club') was organised by a group of young men to promote their 'social life' in 1978. They once held football tournaments (now since they are in their 50s and 60s, these have come to an end) and excursions, and drink beer together once a week in the village inn.

[3] *Stammtisch* refers to an informal gathering held on a regular basis at an inn or bar, usually at the same table.

These 'social interactions, their bodily and emotional force' (Feuchtwang 2004: 5) significantly define the characteristics of the inn itself and give it a special quality of intimacy. The regular gatherings of associations in the inn are thus exactly the processes that make or appropriate homogeneous space 'into a focused and identified place' (Feuchtwang 2004: 5). The place made is not only the inn, but also the village as a whole when an important 'centre' of the village is fashioned. This centring process concerns more than the physical territory or a concentration of social activities. It acts as a centripetal force for people's psychology, cognition and everyday ethics as well. What association members dedicate to activities in the inn is also their understandings of community, political life and their value system. On the one hand these understandings form the basis of the values of associations, and on the other hand people's social interactions reformulate their understandings to something more and more akin to these values. Thus, for the association members, the inn and the village are no longer merely territorial sites, but rather are merged with these experiences and values, and further become a place where they are reinforced and reproduced.

At the same time, place-making is often unstable. Besides the fact that the location and meaning of the 'centre' is constantly changing (no matter how slowly), rarely is it possible that everyone shares the similar experiences and values needed to make the 'same place'. As Gupta and Ferguson (1997) pointed out, people living in the same region may attribute different landmarks, homing references and centres to the same territorial space, based on their distinct daily experiences and ideas. In Blumendorf, roughly three groups of people, other than the association members, who may make different places need to be discussed: the in-migrants who have moved in recent years to Blumendorf, the active members of the Catholic church and Catholic organisations, and some locals who were in conflict with the inn host.

Firstly, in-migrants usually live in one of the two 'new neighbourhoods' to the west of Blumendorf, which occupy around one fifth of the land in this village. The first 'new neighbourhood' was built about thirty years ago under the Indigenous Model. Therefore, the first newcomers were actually local people who had lived in Imhof[4] or other places nearby. Many of them were classmates with Blumendorfers attending primary and middle schools together in Imhof. The second 'new neighbourhood' was built ten or fifteen years ago, half under the local model and half not (because this model was challenged by the EU in 2006/2007). At that time, the new arrivals were a more diverse group: there were people from northern and eastern Germany, the family of a Togolese husband with a wife from east Germany and a Serbian family, etc. These in-migrants are no richer than old families in Blumendorf. Some of them have participated in village life, joining associations or organising their own *Stammtisch* at the inn. However, the vast majority of in-migrants do not participate in the associations or any other village activities. Therefore, even though native villagers also work in cities as the in-migrants do, they think in-migrants are different, 'city people'. From another perspective, no matter whether in-migrants intend this or not, their way of existence in the village does not contribute to the centring process of the village inn. Rather, they reveal an underlying possibility that has always existed, i.e., that 'the city' or their workplace looms as the 'centre' for residents of the village.

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[4] Imhof is the pseudonym I give to the municipality to which Blumendorf belongs.

At the same time, the relationship between native villagers and in-migrants highlights a 'place' that is often hidden and suppressed in everyday village life – that is, *Heimat* has its 'other' and the space of the other's presence is excluded and denied in the village. This exclusion is circuitous: while native villagers mainly complain that in-migrants are 'city people' who do not come to local association activities, they hide the more politically incorrect connotations of the term 'city people': other races, ethnicity, believers of other religions, immigrants and refugees etc., are present in the city, whose complexity puts pressure on *Heimat* which strives for racial and religious simplicity. We will provide more ethnographic evidence later. In-migrants in Blumendorf often do come from different ethnic, national, educational and religious backgrounds, and the sense of exclusion that comes with difference implicitly prevents deeper contact between native villagers and in-migrants. In this sense, firstly, the alienation felt by the in-migrants already makes it difficult for them to actively participate in local associations and activities in the inn; secondly, if a large number of in-migrants did go to the inn, it would also, I am afraid, create a greater sense of rejection among native villagers. An exclusivity that was present at the beginning of the emergence of *Heimat*, and which became extreme during the National Socialist period, is still present in Bavarian villages, but hidden more in the rhetoric of a 'city-village antagonism'.

Exclusionary ideologies and practices may not be immediately apparent and identifiable in people's daily life currently, as the sociologist Cynthia Miller-Idriss

(2018) explained when she investigated the right-wing movement in Germany. She argues that the extreme is going mainstream in Germany (and Europe at large), not only in numbers, but also in methods, such as through clothing brands with styles, qualities, and marketing policies quite similar to mainstream brands but conveying (often oblique) rightist messages through slogans printed on the clothing. This makes it ‘difficult to recognize far-right young people in time to intervene’ (Miller-Idriss 2018: 8). The continuous existence of far-right ideas in Germany, despite decades of education after the World War II to attack them, is inextricably linked with certain narrative shifts which have hindered deeper reflection on these exclusionary ideologies. For example, the historian Robert Moeller (2001) after studying numerous German government documents, newspaper accounts, and oral histories etc. found that, against earlier understandings that postwar Germans mainly ‘forgot’ or kept silent about the Nazi past, they in fact selectively remembered crimes committed against Germans and drew parallels between these crimes and those committed by Germans against Jews. For instance, after World War II the Federal Republic of Germany recognised May 8th, 1945 as a day of both ‘liberation and destruction’ (Moeller 2001: 2) – liberation in the sense that German people were also liberated from Nazi tyranny, and destruction in the sense of the subsequent expulsion and oppression of East Germans and the division of Germany. A public opinion poll conducted by the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* in 1995 showed that 36 percent of all respondents thought that ‘the expulsion of the Germans from the east [was] just as great a crime against humanity as the Holocaust [was] against the Jews’ (Moeller 2001: 2). But this juxtaposition of forms of terror blurred the focus, allowing people to escape into the role of ‘victims’ rather than sufficiently recognising their own faults and correcting them. Furthermore, in this juxtaposition there was a distinction between German victims (e.g. Germans who suffered from expulsion, bombing, and inflationary war financing etc.) and victims of Germans (e.g. Jews), and an implicit recognition that the former belong to the West German imagined community but the latter do not, which reproduced some of the barriers that had separated ‘Germans who were part of the National Socialist Volksgemeinschaft from those who were excluded’ (Moeller 2001: 7).

The (racial) exclusion embedded in the concept of *Heimat*, which has endured due to insufficient reflection, is rarely discussed in the Bavarian village of Blumendorf today. Villagers still largely use the word *Heimat* in a ‘classical’ sense, i.e,. to refer to an idealised, pure, warm-hearted village community. In fact, villagers try not to touch on any of the history of the Nazi period. Once, when someone in the local inn inappropriately mentioned that the following day was Hitler’s birthday, the others did not reply, were silent, or looked meaningfully at the person who said it. When, at an elderly villager’s home I saw an old photograph of her father in a Nazi uniform, it was also clear that she was reluctant to go into the subject or talk about the photograph. While ignoring this subject and the National Socialist history implies an awareness of the evils of this history and the guilt that comes with it as a result of post-war education, silence can also imply other complex meanings: disbelief, or the sense that it is politically correct to avoid the issue. More severely, a lack of reflection on historical wrongs leaves the sense of racial exclusivity in the concept of *Heimat* unamended, ready to be exposed in other, more or less hidden ways when circumstances permit – for example, the rejection of in-migrants’ differences in skin colour and cultural background is transformed into a rejection of the geographic location of the ‘city’.

Secondly, the village as a place shaped by active members of religious organisations is centred on the Catholic church. It is a religious place characterised by the experiences of religious festivals and values of Catholic ethics. Beyond the centre –

the village church and the *Pfarrheim*[5] (Parish Home) next to it – this place spreads out to the *Wegkreuz* (wayside crosses) that are scattered throughout the village and in the outer fields, and finally extends to most households in the form of a crucifix, icon of Christ and/or Madonna. When there is a Catholic festival such as the *Fronleichnam* (Corpus Christi), after the church service, the priest will lead a procession to each wayside cross in the village and pray there before returning to the church. After the ceremony, people may go back home and pray in front of their domestic crucifix or a religious image. The Catholic church, church organisations and the religious place centred on the church are constantly in both connection and conflict with the folk activities, associations and the place centred on the inn from past to present. For instance, in the Corpus Christi procession, association members follow directly after the priest and altar boys, holding the banners of their respective associations. The annual ceremonies and other important occasions for the associations will start with a ritual in the church, led by the priest who will bless the associations and the local community.

Thirdly, some people in the village have a direct conflict of interest with the inn and the host, and therefore they neither go to the inn nor participate in associations. They do not identify with the inn as the centre of the village, but more or less strive to shape another ‘centre’. The Nagler family is typical in this matter. They used to run another inn in Blumendorf, which meant there were two inns competing in a small village. In the end, the Nagler family inn was failing and they closed it to focus on another family business, transporting milk. However, the relationship between the Nagler and Kroetz families had deteriorated, and even today it is unusual to see a

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[5] The *Pfarrheim* is a small house built next to the church, replacing the previous vicarage after the priest moved out of Blumendorf (the old vicarage was purchased and renovated by a local family and they now live there). The meeting room of the parish council and the parish office are also in the *Pfarrheim*.

Nagler drinking at the Kroetz Guesthouse. Besides, a young man called Andreas Nagler brews beer in his garage as a hobby. He sells it when there is a folk festival nearby. For example, every year on the day of the *Starkbierfest* (strong beer festival) and on the German Father's Day, he will set up a small tent and put some long tables and chairs in front of the garage, selling beer and grilled fish to villagers. He attracts many customers, just like a small inn, but members of the Kroetz family are rarely among them. A further example of the rivalry is that in front of the Kroetz Guesthouse there is a *Maibaum* (maypole), and the Naglers also put up a smaller one in front of their garage. It is really very small, like a slender stick, but with all the decorations of an ordinary maypole. Although the Naglers may try to compete with the Kroetz family to establish another centre of the place, their understandings of the place remain similar and the values of the place they uphold are also quite alike.

Lastly, to fulfil the characteristics of the village as a place, it should also be noted that a village is an open ground without distinct boundaries. Even though there are landmarks, the boundaries of a village are not clear-cut as on a map. Together with the influence of the village, its 'boundaries' gradually spread out and permeate into further places until no trace can be found. The influence of a village usually presents in two aspects: firstly, the places from which people come when there is a ceremony in the village, and secondly, the places outside the village to which villagers usually go. Concerning the latter, Blumendorfers enjoy a high level of mobility, with cars, sufficient funds, and citizenship status to travel way beyond their village to towns, cities and holiday resorts popular with Bavarians, such as Austria and Italy.

Literature review and theoretical framework

To answer the research question why Bavarian villagers continue to preserve their village community and make their *Heimat* when the village has lost its previous political and economic significance, what they mean by preservation and the characteristics of *Heimat*, I present the following theoretical framework which also forms a dialogue with previous anthropological studies. From the above discussion of the concept of *Heimat*, we have identified the mediating characteristics of *Heimat*, and this theoretical framework is based on its mediation between three pairs of seeming opposites (i.e. between state and locality, between religion and state, and between nature and culture), revealing their *de facto* dialectical relationships.

State versus locality

When Blumendorfers use the term '*Heimat*' to refer to the village community they strive to preserve, the political reality of this community is that its own political autonomy has been greatly diminished. For example, it does not have its own administrative authority (i.e. village head), post office, bank or grocery shop, which would increase its independence, and it is mainly governed by the administrative unit of the town, which represents the state administrative system at the grassroots level. The permeation of state to locality can be seen from this fact, and although it does not cancel out the characteristics of locality itself, neither is it possible to remove the influence of the state from the locality; the intermingling of the two is a reality. To handle the relationship between the newly emerged German nation-state and its diverse local cultures was, as mentioned above, the central motivation for the emergence of the concept of *Heimat*, which from the very beginning represented a mediation or intersection of state and locality.

It is not easy to properly understand this state-locality intersection, and previous studies have tended to either emphasise the distinction between the two at the expense of integration, or to emphasise the integration between the two at the expense of distinction. The emphasis on distinction is often based on an objectified, abstract understanding of the state, as Abrams (1988) points out, showing how people form a false impression of the concreteness of the state as a result of politically organised subjection. When the state is understood as a concrete entity, there is sometimes an implicit tendency to emphasise state effects on localities, especially negative ones, when doing specific ethnographic research (see Sider 2006). The emphasis on integration, on the other hand, is more dominant in anthropology, where scholars have highlighted the actual blurring of boundaries of the presumed entity of the state in everyday practice. In doing so, they question the viability of this abstraction and objectification that distinguishes the state from local circumstances. This blurring of boundaries sometimes manifests itself in the familiarity between people and local officials as representatives of the state (see Das & Poole 2004), sometimes in the desire of local forces (sometimes illegitimate) to take over the role of the state (see Gupta 1995, Aretxaga 2003: 396), and sometimes when state duties such as health care and policing are taken on by private companies (see Aretxaga 2003: 398), to name but a few examples.

My ethnography of Blumendorf, however, shows a more nuanced picture in terms of state-locality relationships: some moments that show the close integration of state forces and local situations themselves contain elements that show distinction or even opposition between the two; the fissure between state and locality does not generally lead to a rupture or overturn of the whole system, but rather holds the potential for further integration and harmony; and it is the recurrent oscillation between integration and differentiation that forms the overall pattern of the state-locality relationship. I mainly use Herzfeld's (2005: 3) concept of cultural intimacy[6] to further analyse these subtle phenomena in my fieldwork site, both answering the research question about the political characteristics of *Heimat* in terms of the state-locality relationship and attempting to use a Bavarian case to reinforce and advance a more nuanced understanding of that relationship. Previous studies have explored state-locality entanglements through ethnographic research in other parts of the world. For example, Filippucci (1997) discussed the intention of people in Bassano, Italy to be 'lifted out of its provincialism' through the protection of traditions rather than being caught up in localism, in which case the nature of locality as both self-contained and symbiotic with wider contexts is evident. The case of Bavaria is similar but reveals a tighter relationship between state and locality, exposed not least in tradition itself being reinvented and regulated by the modern state.

The event I observed in Blumendorf that most exemplified the state-locality relationship was the local 'traditional festival' of putting up the maypole. This is actually a reinvented tradition, since both the shape of the maypole and the flow of the event are highly standardised and regulated by the state. People's participation in and acceptance of this new 'tradition' reflects the intersection of state forces and local practices, but the passion that sometimes erupts in the process unveils the fissure between state and locality. The state's efforts to reinvent local traditions aim to make them symbols of the state's quintessence, but the real power of traditions is attacked as backwardness and stripped away so that local people do not have too strong an attachment to them; the passion expressed at the maypole festival reveals these efforts of the state through against them, both consciously and unconsciously. In Blumendorf, this passion resorts to the very stereotypes of Bavaria that outsiders deem to be embarrassing – roughness, traditionalism, and conservatism etc. Here we see the concept of cultural intimacy expressed, where ‘aspects of a cultural identity’ that are seen as embarrassing by outsiders are cherished by people within a group as ‘assurance of common sociality’ (Herzfeld 2005: 3), and this unanticipated passion for the maypole festival can express a ‘creative irreverence’ (Herzfeld 2005: 3) towards state influences, thus highlighting the fissure between state and locality which is ever-present yet sometimes out of sight.

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[6] Herzfeld (2005: 3) defines 'cultural intimacy' as 'the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality, the familiarity with the bases of power that may at one moment assure the disenfranchised a degree of creative irreverence and at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation'.

However, the case of Blumendorf also takes the theory of cultural intimacy a step further, and in so doing moves on to the next point I wish to address. It is important to note that it was not only state officials in Blumendorf who were embarrassed by this kind of passion, but also the villagers themselves. This means that certain ‘aspects of a cultural identity’ are not only ‘a source of external embarrassment’ (Herzfeld 2005: 2), but also a source of ‘internal’ embarrassment, which blurs the line between the so-called external and internal. On the one hand, this shows that the members of a local group are an indispensable part and representation of the penetration of state influences into a locality; on the other hand, it shows that while the fissure between state and locality is shown through embarrassment, the close interplay between them is once again revealed, and it is difficult to distinguish between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ simply by the fact that this group of people are state representatives and that group are local people. Further, this ‘creative irreverence’ towards state forces does not have a revolutionary potential nor does it intend to overturn the whole system, but the same group of people who show creative irreverence under the right conditions might become the most loyal supporters of the state. Herzfeld (2005: 3) describes how such instances ‘at one moment assure the disenfranchised a degree of creative irreverence', while 'at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation'. I build on this by discussing other ethnographic examples from Blumendorf such as the *Bürgerversammlung* (citizens' meeting), expressions of political cynicism, the *Starkbierfest* (strong beer festival) in addition to the maypole festival, to make clear that what cultural intimacy really expresses is the back-and-forth oscillation between the intersection and fissure of state and locality, in which we always find hints of the other status, constantly triggering each other. This is the real entanglement between state and locality.

Hence, when the village is losing its previous political significance, one does not give up preserving *Heimat*, because *Heimat* itself is not merely representative of the characteristics of the village itself, nor does it presuppose that the village needs to maintain its political significance intact. What *Heimat* represents is an (ideal) balance between locality and the state power that affects it. Therefore, the more it seems that the balance is tilted in one direction or the other, the more people try to return to the ideal equilibrium, which is manifested in a constant endeavour to preserve their *Heimat*.

Religion versus state

In a predominantly Catholic region like Bavaria the concept of *Heimat* had religious connotations from the very beginning, as mentioned above, and imagery involving *Heimat* generally features a religious element such as a church. But just as the village is gradually losing its previous political significance, the importance of religion is also waning based on some statistical facts, such as decreasing church attendance. Nonetheless, as with the above-mentioned attitudes to political circumstances, villagers have neither became overly anxious about these phenomena nor abandoned routine religious practice as a move to preserve the religious aspect of *Heimat*. This prompts me to explore what the religious aspects of *Heimat* mean and where they lie in relation to religion and the forces that contribute to its seeming decline.

The principal academic area I engage with in this section is the discourse on secularisation which concentrates on exploring the status of religion in the modern world. The classic secularisation thesis consists of four steps, from religion being confined to only one of the differentiated social domains of modern society, to its being pushed out of the public domain, then reduced to only one of the options people can choose or reject and finally to the conclusion that religion is destined to decline (see Wilson 1966; Bruce 1996 & 2002). Anthropologists have addressed the problems of this secularisation thesis from the following perspectives.

Firstly, secularism is a culturally specific arrangement for politics and religion. First, it does not necessarily apply to other cultures and possibly oppresses religions in other cultures (see Connolly 1999, Asad 2003, Mahmood 2006). Second, different societies may form different patterns of secularism, i.e., multiple secularisms exist. For instance, Özyürek (2009) argues that in Turkey the adoption of secularism is intended to regulate religious communities, rather than granting them freedom, because the Turkish nation-state has its own historical particularities which mean that it must maintain centralisation in the face of its numerous different religions and cultures.

Secondly, the vision of secularisation does not correspond to many factual situations. For example, in what is considered more secular Europe there are ‘continued Christian valences’ (Cannell 2010: 87), where people either continue religious practices, although they do not describe them as ‘religion’ (see e.g. Luhrmann 1989;

Pike 2001) or use the word ‘spiritual’ to describe religious experience (see Heelas et al. 2004; Heelas 2008). In Cannell’s (2011) study of English kinship, people denied belief in ghosts and deities, but often admitted they believed that their deceased loved ones were somehow still with them. This suggests that although secularist discourses might influence social practices and people would tend not to use overly religious discourse, their deeper religious and spiritual experiences may not have changed so much, at least not as much as the secularisation thesis claims.

Thirdly, there are inherent problems with the secularisation thesis itself. For example, Casanova (1994: 7) argued that the four steps of the secularisation thesis mentioned above are not all valid and do not necessarily follow from each other, for example, the first step of differentiation of social domains may be a fact, but the second step of religion being pushed out of the public domain does not necessarily occur and therefore does not inevitably lead to the decline of religion. From another perspective, Özyürek (2006) also suggests that the so-called private and public can also be transformed into each other: when the new neoliberal politics enters the domain of the ‘private’ (i.e. influences people’s intimate lives), it in fact goes public by gaining greater social influence, and when political Islam becomes public, it also acquires more power in people’s private lives. Cannell (2013; 2019) also refuted the argument that religion is just one social domain separate from others, elaborating the interpenetration of kinship and religion in America and in the UK. For instance, her study of the Latter-Day Saints (Cannell 2013: 232) shows that they interpret religious meanings through kinship terms and vice versa, for instance, salvation means meeting family members again in the afterlife, relatives are determined in premortal life, marriage is sanctification, etc. Furthermore, in apparently secular contexts, when religious frameworks are downplayed, kinship often takes on the sanctity that people need in life and can be used to explain ineffable meaning when religion is not allowed to do so (Cannell 2013: 235). Similarly, Robert Orsi (2005) argued that Catholic persons are an integral part of the kinship system, supporting the *de facto* intermingling of kinship and religion. In a study of shrines in a Spanish valley, William Christian (1972) discovered at least two main reasons for people to undertake a pilgrimage:, one was for their family members, and the other to make and remake their community, thus linking religion with the maintenance of kinship and community.

My research takes up the rationale of the above studies and presents a Bavarian case against the secularisation thesis while also attempting to further deepen reflections on it. Firstly, through an extended case study of how one pious lady in Blumendorf cares for her severely ill husband and their eight children, I argue that she and her family are both practicing their kinship ties through the ethos of Catholicism and practicing Catholic beliefs by taking care of family members. This case of lived Catholicism demonstrates the intermingling of kinship and religion. Secondly, I further explore the adaptation of religion (in this case, Catholicism) in modern society through other aspects related to village communities that are addressed in this case study. In Blumendorf, Catholicism is not only able to shape ethical lifeworlds that are different from what the state would choose, but also establishes its own organisational forms in collaboration with local associations, which challenges the secularist assumption that the social significance and influence of religion are fading. Finally, I also try to point out that some of the phenomena that might be identified by the secularisation thesis as the decline of Catholicism are instead demonstrations of its adaptability to new situations and the intersection between Catholicism and the state. In Blumendorf, for example, the *Pfarrgemeinderat* (parish council) has a similar character to state bureaucratic institutions, and the characteristics of the head of the parish council are very much like those of a secretary working in a bureaucratic institution. As well as reflecting on the secularisation thesis, this point also provides a new way of thinking about the general discussion of religion-state interconnections. Previous studies, such as Christian's (1972, 1996) study of Marian visionaries and other religious phenomena in the Spanish countryside, have shown how political situations are expressed in terms of religion – for example, the kinds of visionaries that some locals saw were influenced by the establishment of the anticlerical Second Spanish Republic at the time, and some seers said that the Virgin Mary told people to overthrow the Republic (Christian 1996: 6). But my research also suggests that religious practices may manifest themselves in the form of a secular administration. The adaptability of Catholicism means that religion is still significant in Bavarian public life, and the local people and government use Catholicism as an important symbol of their regional identity, just as Christian (1972) argued that Catholicism was still important for Spanish identity. This is further evidence of the indissoluble tie between religion and politics in the Bavarian local context.

From the above analyses we can see that in Blumendorf, the religious and political aspects of *Heimat* both obtain their respective autonomous power and organisation, and are intertwined. Catholicism and its institutions establish their own organisational forms and ethical lifeworlds in symbiosis with local associations and so on, in order to face the new problems that have arisen since the modernisation of the countryside, demonstrating an adaptation to modernity. Some examples of what might be interpreted by secularisation theories as the 'decline' of religion are, on the contrary, manifestations of this adaptation. At the same time, since the current practices and efforts of all religious participants – whether the priest, members of religious associations, or ordinary believers – are precisely what enable Catholicism, the predominant religious aspect of *Heimat*, to face and adapt to the new problems that modernity brings to the countryside, when these problems manifest themselves (for example, in falling church attendance), people act by calmly continuing the same activities as before and keeping on the practices of making *Heimat*, without interruption. The act of making is itself the hope for a solution.

Nature versus culture

Although the substantive decline of religion in Blumendorf has been denied, it is true that religion is less conspicuous than before, and it is rarely mentioned when people talk about spiritual pleasures and pursuits; on the contrary, another element often comes up, almost as a spiritual symbol: nature. The love of nature is a prominent phenomenon in Bavaria and in Germany as a whole. People talk enthusiastically about a walk in the woods, a hike in the mountains, a paddle on the lake and other activities and experiences that express their love for nature and their landscape. Evidence from Blumendorf reveals complex cultural reasons behind these phenomena, and a particular understanding of the relationship between nature and culture that both distinguishes and integrates them: we will focus on this later. At the same time, because of this relationship, nature becomes something of a metaphor for *Heimat* itself, and participating in these experiences and understandings of nature becomes a crucial part of making *Heimat*.

What Strathern (1980; 1992) revealed in her seminal research on nature and English kinship – that English people make kinship through metaphors which combine elements from nature and elements from culture – demonstrated two points: firstly, nature is in fact a historical and cultural category, and the contrasts between nature and culture are created in particular societies; secondly, people nonetheless take what is made as real. My research in a different context also showed that local people create nature as a cultural category through daily practices, and their belief in the authenticity of this nature grants it its important social effects. In order to explain clearly the characteristics of this Bavarian understanding of nature and the meaning of its making, I need to draw on previous research on the relationship between nature and culture.

Anthropological studies of landscape and place have addressed the relationship between nature and culture. Early studies of landscape (before the 1990s) generally understood the natural environment as a biophysical entity distinct from human society (see Steward 1955; Geertz 1963; Rappaport 1968), but this line of thinking is increasingly under fire, because it falsely distinguishes humans from the natural environment in which they live and implicitly or explicitly assumes that humans are above nature and can control it (Lounela et al. 2019: 14). Besides, the idea of distinction between nature and culture also has a negative impact on local people's ideas of and practices in nature in societies which hold different perceptions of the natural environment, due to the fact that it often is a discourse embodying more power (see Lounela 2019; Mölkänen 2019). Therefore, anthropologists have tried to find concepts that can better explain the relationship between nature and culture, amongst which that of 'place' is important. Many scholars have hoped to find a theoretical path beyond the dualism between nature and culture through the discussion of this concept of place (e.g. Strathern 1980; Philippe & Pálsson 1996; Ingold 1993 & 2000, Tsing 2015). Among these are Ingold's (1993, 2000) insight that humans and environments are in all cases constantly becoming each other, and Tsing's (2015) discovering, in environments that have been destroyed by humans, traces of coexistence of humans, other species and things, i.e. the promise of reunion between nature and culture even where they seem most torn apart. The fusion of nature and culture in ideas and practices seems to be more clearly evident in non-Western societies and has become the focus of anthropological research, arguing that this fusion is closer to reality than the distinction of nature and culture (see Descola 2013 & 2014; Abram 2014; Howell 2014).

There has been a tendency to view the fusion of nature and culture as reality, and a certain distinction between them as a false construction in people's minds (especially referring to Western ideas). My research in Blumendorf, however, suggests the coexistence of both ideas: that nature and culture are both intermingled and distinct, and both ideas correspond to social facts and give rise to new facts; furthermore, the social relevance and strength of this local idea of nature lie in exactly the seemingly contradictory expectation that nature must be separated from and combined with culture at the same time. Specifically, when social problems arise in Bavaria, particularly the loss of population in the countryside, or the deterioration of the quality of city life due to modernisation processes, a special discourse emerges around 'returning to nature to heal society's sickness' accompanied by corresponding practices such as hiking, camping, nudism and other means of 'immersion into nature'. In this particular cultural phenomenon people believe that nature has a healing power to solve these problems of modern society. This 'healing power' is based on the premise that social problems, nature and the human mind and body are intertwined and mutually influence each other, and only in this way can social problems be understood as the physical and mental illness of people (and the state itself; the cause of the illness is a problematic relationship between man and nature, and only a return to an 'original' healthy relationship with nature can heal it. At the same time, for the healing power of nature to be valid there is another contradictory premise to be met: nature must be pure, untainted by human society and beyond human morality. This seeming contradiction is, paradoxically the reason why this concept of nature can really have social effects, i.e. it can host all social phenomena and form a closed loop in which, when social problems emerge, people turn again and again to view nature as interpenetrating with society, attempting to return to nature in order to solve their problems. When this fails, as it often does, people revert to viewing nature as transcending and ‘untainted’ by society, and so instead refine their practices, trying to make them ‘purer’, closer to that view of nature. An exploration of this Bavarian understanding of nature may point to a dimension that has been neglected in previous anthropological studies of the nature-culture relationship, the more crucial aspect of this neglect being insufficient attention to the complexity of the idea of ‘distinction between nature and culture’ in Western societies. It is possible that distinction and fusion are two sides of the same coin, and together they form a deep connection with social reality, rather than being divorced from it.

In contrast to the two sections above, local ideas and practices associated with nature do not merely constitute the ‘natural aspect’ of *Heimat*, but rather, there is a deep co-construction between this local idea of nature and the idea of *Heimat* itself. Both concepts are decontextualised from their original meanings and then recontextualised into new meaning frameworks (‘nature’ becomes ‘pure’; *Heimat* becomes a symbol of the national quintessence). Nature becomes a metaphor of *Heimat*. At the same time, the relationship between the two seemingly contradictory dimensions of nature also gives a more comprehensive answer to my central research question, which is why people (perhaps more engagingly) try to make and remake their village community and their *Heimat* when the village is in fact no longer the focus of their lives: like the concept of nature, the concept of *Heimat* consists of an ideal; and when problems arise at the level of actual practices, people infer that the problems lie in the practices being insufficiently thorough, insufficiently meeting the expectations of the ideal of *Heimat*; therefore to resolve the problems one would continue along the path set by this ideal, without abandoning previous actions or changing direction as long as the whole system does not collapse.

German modernity

In addition to possible contributions to each specific area of anthropological research outlined above, my study as a whole also seeks to engage with the anthropology of modernity, striving to make contributions to anthropological studies with a wider scope. Modernity is arguably one of the fundamental concerns of anthropology and has been manifested in two main ways since the formation of the modern discipline in the early twentieth century. One is the study of (largely) 'non-Western' societies and cultures (e.g. Adelkhah 2000, Silverstein 2011), especially in the early years of the discipline when 'non-Western' often implied 'unmodern', and this study of 'unmodern societies' often involved an attempt to understand Western and modern societies in comparison. The second is a reflection and critique of the theory of modernity itself, analysing it as a product interaction among particular Western cultures, knowledge and institutions. For example, as Cannell (2019: 717) puts it, the influential readings of Weber's view of modernity as inevitable and characterised by single-form, single-direction development – i.e., a direction (drawn from the historical experience of the West) towards which both Western and non-Western societies are moving – depend too much on a Christian, or more specifically, Protestant perspective. Taylor (1995) divided theories of modernity into two categories, one being 'acultural', stressing a universalist understanding of modernity as what the world really is or will be if, through science, we can rid illusions from truth; the other is the 'cultural' approach which regards modernity as a kind of new culture with its own worldviews. Theories of modernity do not necessarily correspond to real situations (e.g. Latour 1993), nor do they necessarily apply to other societies and cultures (e.g. Mitchell 2000), so the different patterns of modernity developed in different societies can constitute 'multiple modernities' (Hefner 1998).

Regardless of which of the above approaches is involved, when it comes to the relationship between non-Western societies and modernity, a common path of analysis is to observe how the subjectivities and social forms in these societies change or remain unchanged under the influence of external forces brought about by phenomena summarised as ‘modernity’. However, this presupposes that non-Western societies are the affected and passive parties. Some studies started to emphasise the active reflection and construction of modernity in non-Western societies. Sahlins (1999: ix), for example, in his study of Highland New Guinea, found that instead of being despondent in the face of the impact and cultural usurpation brought about by European people, the locals adopted ‘a forward action on modernity’ and believed they could harness the good things which Europeans brought for their own use: for example, Sahlins cites Nihill’s (1989) study which finds that a neo-Melanesian term ‘develop-man’ is used for ‘development’, meaning the use of foreign wealth to subsidise kinship and other activities considered to be closely related to human existence.

However, this kind of understanding and reappraisal of non-Western societies is less often applied to societies traditionally considered to be in the ‘West’ like Germany. This makes the rich diversity within the so-called Western-dominated modernity oversimplified from the beginning, if one fails to observe that there is also a ‘passive affectedness’ within it and active construction in response to the impact. Germany, because of its own history, was under pressure on at least two fronts from the beginning of the establishment of the German nation-state: one was the need to emphasise its own subjectivity under pressure from a strong France that had developed a nation-state and its idea of a modern and universalist ‘civilisation’, and to build a different kind of universalism; the second was the need to unify and modernise the small, diverse local principalities and local powers in their own right. In a way, German modernity is a reaction to French modernity, but it is neither an acceptance nor a total rejection of French modernity, rather an active construction of a different path and discourse of modernity based on its own situation. This German modernity seeks to combine bottom-up (from local characteristics) and top-down (from a universalistic ideal) paths; it creates an intermediate level between ideas and particularities, which some scholars think is lacking in the idea-oriented French version of modernity. From my perspective, the concept of *Heimat*, which runs through ideas and particularities, as well as the various polarities mentioned above, is archetypal of German modernity. And Bavaria, as a powerful region with strong local characteristics different from Prussia in the Prussian-led German nation-state, shows the mediating character of *Heimat* even more clearly.

Fieldwork experiences and methodology

I will first introduce my fieldwork experiences and methodology through my own step-by-step view of Blumendorf when I first arrived in the village. When I decided to research a village near Munich, I happened to come across an advertisement from my future landlord, who wanted to rent out a bedroom in their home where the tenant could share the kitchen and bathroom with the landlord’s family. This was a very good situation for my research, as I could have close contact with my landlord’s family because we shared a common space, but also maintain a certain degree of independence as a researcher because I would have a separate room and pay rent. I decided then to rent the room for three months and see what Blumendorf was like. As it turned out, this village, with its diversity in dimensions of tradition and modernity and the hospitality of its inhabitants, proved to be a good choice for my research and I renewed my lease with the landlord.

The first time I met my landlord Albert Baumann was when he picked me up from Munich. He drove a black VW five-seater with a relatively large trunk which easily took all my luggage. He was nearly sixty years old, chubby with rough skin from a long history of smoking, but he is bright and cheerful, and his friendliness and sense of humour diffused the feeling of distance on first meeting. On the drive back to Blumendorf he told me a lot about the village and his family. He works at home, doing work on computer hardware and sometimes driving to repair equipment for customers. His wife, Marlene, is a teacher in a nearby town. They have three children and rent out their eldest son's room because he has gone off to university in Austria.

After getting off the highway, we drove onto a winding two-lane country road, with fields stretching out on either side; at the end of the fields, there were forests and distant mountains to be seen, and the view was wide open. It was winter when I arrived, the fields were covered with a thin layer of snow, and in the year and a half that followed, I saw the fields green with wheat and golden with beautiful canola flowers. The country road was in good condition, there were few other cars, and Albert cheerfully sped up to 120km/h with a kick of throttle. When I could see the church spire from afar, it was time for Albert to prepare to slow down, as the road was about to pass through a village. The boundary between the village and the fields is not obvious, except for a yellow sign at the entrance to the village, giving the name of the village and the *Gemeinde* (town) or *Markt* (market town) and the *Landkreis* (county) to which it belongs.

After passing through a few villages, I saw a yellow sign with the names Blumendorf, Gemeinde Imhof and Landkreis Erk. Rows of beautiful houses of various sizes and colours came into view, with walls mostly painted in light colours such as white or beige, roofs mostly orange-brown. Some large farmhouses also had wooden barns. Entering Blumendorf from the northern uphill road, one can reach the village church by a minute or two's walk. The whitewashed, orange-tiled, ink-green-topped church looks subdued against the bright, clear blue sky, in harmony with the hues of the surrounding village houses. Walking a minute or two further south along the main village road in front of the church, one can see the village inn, the Kroetz Guesthouse. It is a creamy-white masonry building with three floors and covers an area of about 1200 square metres, making it a large and conspicuous building in the village. It has two connected parts. On the first floor of its south section there are a kitchen and a pub, on the second floor there is a banqueting hall used for ceremonies, and the third floor used to be guest rooms, but nowadays since the inn no longer functions as a local hotel, the daughter of the inn host lives there. The north section of the inn is a barn which housed about forty cattle, a small butcher shop that opened every two weeks, and an air rifle shooting room for members of the local shooting association to practice. The creamy-white walls, orange tile roof, and dark green window frames of the inn all match the colour scheme of the church. After living in Blumendorf for some time, I increasingly realised that although both the church and the inn are geographically located to the north of the village, in fact they together form its 'centre': first, the early physical centre of Blumendorf, which was established in the fifteenth century, was indeed the church and the inn, and the roads and buildings to the south of them were gradually developed later; second, almost all the important political, cultural and economic activities of the village revolve around the inn and the church, therefore, these two are the well-deserved 'centre of importance'. Nowadays, the most salient daily activities that contribute to the 'centre-generating process' in Blumendorf are the activities of local associations.

My step-by-step process of participating in activities of the local associations also basically marks different and progressive phases of my fieldwork. My first, more superficial encounters with the village were mainly geared towards two social activities. Because I was staying with Albert’s family, I gradually met their friends in the village, who often visited or drove together to nearby towns, mountains, and lakes, etc. Secondly, I walked around as much of the village as possible, observing the appearance of its roads, houses, farmhouses, gardens and so on, as well as its surrounding natural environment of fields and forests. When I wandered around the village like this during my first days in Blumendorf, I often marvelled at how quiet it was, how few pedestrians I encountered on the roads: it was like an uninhabited, fairy-tale world. Little did I know that while I was observing the appearance of the village, people were also observing me. After a few months when I got to know more people, they laughed and told me how they had seen me wandering around the village when I first arrived, stopping to take pictures at places I thought were unique (for example, the village maypole), and so on. Without my planning it, I think this initial contact with Blumendorfers was helpful for me to delve further into the fieldwork site as it gave the villagers more opportunity to observe me, more autonomy and power to digest the continuous presence of a stranger. Besides, since I was living under the same roof as my landlord’s family, cooking and eating together, drinking and talking with their friends who were visiting, watching movies together and so on, I gradually became less of a complete stranger in the village, for I had gained a reference point as ‘the guest who lives with the Baumanns’. This all laid a good foundation for me to build friendly and close relationships with others in the village and to better participate in village activities in the future.

Whether it was my meeting more people through Albert’s family or my own travels around the village, it did not take long for me to identify the real core and public space of the village, where I should focus my research next: the venue was the village inn and the organization was the local associations that meet there every week. As mentioned above, the village inn is one of the most conspicuous buildings in the village and the only one with a public function apart from the church and the Parish Home, which is why I noticed it immediately. It is closed for most of the day, but Albert told me that it is open every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening. Albert's family and their friends meet at the inn every month at their own *Stammtisch*. He also told me that the local associations in the village also hold their weekly *Stammtisch* in the village inn, which is also the main meeting place for others in the village and for public events, including birthday parties, weddings, funerals, etc.

I became interested in the village inn and local associations as I perceived their importance in the communal nature of the village. Thus in what I can define as the 'second phase' of my fieldwork, I was mainly involved in observing as many activities as possible that took place at the village inn, as well as a wide variety of other activities of local associations (some taking place at the village inn, others elsewhere). On Monday evenings I would take part in the *Stammtisch* of the Boots Club, on Wednesday evenings I attended another *Stammtisch* of the veterans' association, and on Friday evenings I went to the *Stammtisch* of the shooting association. This participant observation resulted in something which surprised me and the villagers alike. On my part, I found attending their *Stammtisch* surprisingly easy and welcoming. These were gatherings of specific groups of people, but they did not reject the fact that I, as an outsider, was sitting among them, talking and drinking beer. Later, when I expressed my wish to join the shooting association, I was immediately accepted and was registered as a member after paying a fee of fifteen euros. Villagers were impressed by the fact that I went to *Stammtisch* almost every night when the inn was open, although to a certain degree they found it funny, as people usually would not do it. But it also made them happy that a foreigner was showing an interest in their activities and culture, a sentiment I could understand better later on when I learned of their sense of crisis about their village traditions (on which we will focus in Chapter Six). My regular weekly presence also makes my existence routine and solid, laying the foundation for further mutual trust. Regular presence in the public space of the fieldwork site is an important methodological point I have learned and is an important part of being productive in the early stages of participant observation. Based on the local associations and people I met there, my participation extended to other activities in other parts of the village, in other villages, in other towns, in the surrounding landscape, etc., such as a shooting competition and excursions to mountains and lakes.

After a while I started to realise that I often met the same people at different events and that there were many households in Blumendorf that I had never encountered. I realised that some people would basically not go to the village inn or to local associations and I needed to get to know these people in other ways so that I could have a more comprehensive understanding of the village. I took the seemingly clumsy approach of knocking on doors, introducing myself and my research project, asking if they were interested in an interview, and scheduling an time with them if I could. However, this clumsy method allowed me to get in touch with people I would not have had access to with my previous participant observation, such as people who had moved to the village from other parts of Germany or from abroad, widows, people who go to work in the city early and come back to Blumendorf at night to sleep, and so on, and to learn about their views on the village they live in, and on *Heimat*. By getting to know them I also became more aware of the possibility that people in Blumendorf could have parallel lifeworlds with few intersections, and this helped me to understand more deeply the reality that the discourse of *Heimat* faces, and the richness of the meanings it constructs.

These kinds of parallel lifeworlds also prompted me to think about my own subjectivity in the village and how villagers viewed me. It is true that I come from a different country, culture, and ethnic and racial background, but I seemed to be less bound by ‘invisible walls’ than in-migrants in the village. In retrospect, this might have been determined by a number of factors: in addition to my active involvement in most of the villagers’ activities as a researcher, it was also because my specific background – as a Chinese studying for a PhD in the UK – might mean something more ambiguous to villagers. It is also important to note that, because of my non-European background, the locals felt more comfortable not mentioning Germany’s dark history during the two World Wars, instead emphasising all their warm ideals about *Heimat* – without worrying too much about me interrupting and questioning this emphasis. Since I adopted a methodology that allows people to say what they feel is important and what they really want to say, without forcefully steering the conversation in other directions, in some cases, such as when an old lady did not want to talk about the picture of her father in the uniform of the Third Reich, I accepted that villagers might choose to change the subject. This sense of comfort allowed me to gather the villagers’ ideal understanding of *Heimat*, one that originates before the dark period in German history, is forever tainted by it, and is somehow involved in covering it up, but which undoubtedly reveals a continuing theme and core of local culture.

Having met more and more people and become more and more deeply involved in their daily lives, my scope of activity expanded with them far beyond the physical borders of Blumendorf. Because of the excellent transport links – smooth roads and motorways linking villages and towns, the fact that almost every household has a car and the relatively affluent living conditions, villagers often go to, for instance, neighbouring villages for mass, neighbouring towns for concerts, Munich for circus shows or for the Octoberfest, the famous mountains and lakes further afield for excursions, or travel abroad to Italy, Austria, France, etc. This prompted me to think about what the object of my research really was. Was it what happens in the village framed by the outline of Blumendorf on the map? The causes and consequences of these events and their cultural implications transcend the physical boundaries of the village, which is necessarily interlinked with forces beyond its boundaries. Was it all the activities of Blumendorfers, regardless of whether they crossed the boundaries of the village or not? Without the context of village life, the significance of their activities would also lose an important point of reference. It is true that when you do research in a village it is more obvious that the various aspects of villagers' lives are closely intertwined, not only because you can know almost everyone in the village, but also because their family life, religious life, political life, economic life and so on are more integrated, and a single change can affect everything else. The village is still a relatively more compact whole than a town or a city, although it is not without its fissures and fragments, and it is impossible to cut off its contact with the outside world. My research object is therefore both this village and not this village – as Geertz (1973: 22) says, '[a]nthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighborhoods ...); they study in villages' – and in the village, my real object of study was how the villagers make their village community, their *Heimat*, in the midst of the external influences on the village, in the fractures and fragments of the village itself, through persistent practices from day to day.

Preview of thesis chapters

The main objective of this thesis is to answer the research question: when Bavarian villages have become increasingly difficult to self-sustain politically and economically due to the permeation of the state administrative system and global market economy, and when most villagers have become employees in neighbouring towns and cities rather than farmers, why do villagers still try to maintain a village community and a rural identity? Through an ethnographic study of Blumendorf, a Bavarian village near Munich, I found that villagers' ideas and practices of making *Heimat* in comparison and connection with the German nation-state, the Catholic church and their experience in nature, are the key motivation for them to maintain and regenerate the village community.

Chapter Two lays out the historical background to the thesis. I begin by detailing a recent incident in which a big household in Blumendorf sold land on which standardised houses would be constructed for rent to people from outside the village, from which I analyse the current loose relationship between big households and the village. I then look at the meaning and importance of *Hausname* (house name) in the past, and its decline in the present, to retrace the relocation of the big households from their central position in the political, economic, ethical and religious life of the village, as its unifying force, to a much less important position in the present. The changes within big households are a microcosm of the changes in the village as a whole, caused mainly by the continuous permeation of the state administrative system and the global market economy after the Second World War. When the big households declined politically and economically, it was the local associations that took on the task of organising the village.

Chapter Three focuses on the relationship between state and locality in *Heimat*. By describing the whole-village *Maibaum* (maypole) festival and other related events, I adopt Herzfeld's (2005) concept of 'cultural intimacy' and elaborate it further into three steps to analyse three important moments in the maypole festival which reveal an intermingling of state and locality. The first moment was when the maypole was stolen by people from another village (as a 'ritual' in this festival) and the attitude of Blumendorfers towards the festival shifted from semi-seriousness to real seriousness. 'Semi-seriousness' reveals both acceptance of and resistance to this reinvented tradition by the state, whereas 'real seriousness' reveals a fissure between locality and state in their seeming harmony, for strong attachment to the maypole festival and the locality was supposed to have been undermined when the state started to regulate the festival. The second moment was when the people who stole the maypole showed an unexpected passion for the festival, which embarrassed both Blumendorfers and the town mayor as state representative. Apart from their display of passion, the actions of these 'maypole thieves' were perfectly in keeping with the requirements of this standardised festival. This reflects the fact that although the unexpected display of passion demonstrated (the failure of) the state's efforts to suppress local attachments and emotions, that is, demonstrates the fissure between state and locality, it cannot overturn the whole system, but rather facilitates the penetration of state into locality and the further intermingling of the two. The third moment was when Blumendorfers performed conformity with state expectations, while privately expressing their perennial political cynicism towards state power. This reveals a dialectical back and forth between harmony and fissure in the relationship between the state and the locality.

Chapter Four deals with the relationship between religion and the state. Through an extended case study of how a pious lady in Blumendorf looks after her ill husband and eight children, I firstly explain that this family is living out a Catholic ethos through practicing kinship ties, and vice versa. This supports Cannell's (2013, 2019) argument that religion and kinship are not separate domains as the classic secularisation thesis claims. I push forward the criticism of secularisation theories by analysing other elements in this extended case study, for instance, how the church and its religious associations organised donations for this family. This reveals that other than state organisations, Catholicism still wields significant organisational power to influence the daily lives of villagers. Furthermore, this lady's choice to look after her husband at home due to her faith, regardless of all the practical difficulties, and the fact that the majority of villagers sympathised with this decision, reveal that there also existed a lively Catholic ethical lifeworld in the village. All these examples show that Catholicism is still active and influential with organisational power in this Bavarian village, contrary to the postulations of secularisation theorists.

Chapter Five concerns the nature-culture relationship in *Heimat*. The forest is an important and special entity for Bavarian villagers, not only because people often go for walks in the forest to 'immerse themselves in nature', but also because there is a special discourse around the forest and nature, namely, 'return to nature to heal society's illnesses', which shows a particular Bavarian understanding of the nature-culture relationship, and an implicit exclusionist connotation. This understanding begins with the recognition that nature and culture are necessarily mutually influential and mutually constitutive, both in the direct, instinctual, even mythical perception of unity with nature when one immerses oneself into nature, and in the fact that the forest itself is shaped by Bavarian politics and culture as a national symbol and is carefully tended. The premise of 'access' to nature to 'heal society's illnesses' is that nature and culture can influence each other, but at the same time, this understanding also requires that nature be a 'pure nature' that transcends all cultural influences, as only such a nature has the power to heal society. These two understandings may seem contradictory, but their unity and their tensions are what allow this local idea of nature to inspire 'naturist movements' (Williams 2007) in times of social crisis, and to confront social problems with actions that strive to bring people closer and closer to 'pure nature'. But this 'pure nature' also embodies an underlying meaning of 'pure racial condition', which leads to discrimination rather than solving social problems in many cases.

Chapters Six and Seven shift the perspective slightly, discussing the characteristics of *Heimat* as a whole in terms of its relationship to its 'other' and to the sense of time. Most of the locals consider *Heimat* to be a village in general, and say that '*Heimat* cannot be a city', and therefore the city is Heimat's main other. The attitude of Blumendorfers towards the city is reflected in their attitude towards the in-migrants who live in the village: although these in-migrants come from surrounding villages, towns, cities, eastern and northern Germany, and even foreign countries, native villagers consider them all to be city people and set up an imagined distinction between themselves and the in-migrants. There is also an implicit exclusionist meaning of the city as embodying ethnic diversity threatening the simplicity of *Heimat*. Whether in-migrants can become somewhat 'native' depends precisely on their ability to participate in activities associated with making *Heimat,* i.e., for the moment, in the *Stammtisch* and activities of local associations. This imagined other is important to the existence of *Heimat* because the internal problems of *Heimat* are externalised to this imagined other, under the gaze of which *Heimat* can maintain its inherent coherence.

Chapter Seven explores the triple understandings of *Heimat*, which correspond to a dialectical understanding of the triple view of time that constitutes a complex modern sense of time, and reveal that *Heimat* is essentially a modern product. There is a tendency in local young people's life trajectories to move away from home, and they are becoming less interested in village activities, reflecting an attitude that considers *Heimat* to be 'backward', corresponding to a progressive, lineal view of time. At the same time, however, villagers (and sometimes young people themselves) express optimism about the tendency of young people leaving the village, believing that they will eventually return, which reflects an understanding of *Heimat* as something eternal and original, with a corresponding view of time as immutable. Finally, villagers oscillate between the two previous two attitudes, and the young people's relationship with their homeland is often one of leaving and returning, which reveals a kind of entanglement of both separation and integration, reflecting a dialectic between 'progressive time' and 'eternal time', and between temporality and immutability, which is a more comprehensive form of both *Heimat* and modern time.

CHAPTER TWO THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE VILLAGE: HOUSE, LAND, *VEREIN* (ASSOCIATION)

The land-sale incident

Life in Blumendorf goes by cheerfully and quietly most of the time, with occasional exceptions such as a conversation my landlady Marlene started early one summer morning, while we were having breakfast together in the kitchen. She stirred her cereal and was silent for a while, trying to find the right words. ‘Have you scheduled another interview with the mayor of Imhof?’ she began, knowing that I had interviewed the mayor a month earlier. I was a bit surprised and said, ‘Not yet. Honestly, I am not certain whether he will find another two hours for me or not. He seems to be quite busy.’ ‘Oh well,’ Marlene replied, ‘I was hoping, if you meet him again, perhaps you could talk to him about the new homes being built in Blumendorf and see how he replies.’ Curious to know more, I asked her what was happening.

It turned out that a large area of farmland in north-west Blumendorf had gone through an evaluation process at the Imhof town hall and been converted from farmland to building land. It meant that the land – currently fields of wheat, cauliflower and grass covering an area almost as large as the current town of Blumendorf – could be sold to construction companies or individuals to build new houses. There were rumours that a construction company in Munich had already bought it and planned to build around seventy standardised houses for rent, which was almost as many as the houses then in Blumendorf. Marlene had three carefully-considered criticisms of the ‘new homes’ which would actually be constructed next to her house. Firstly, she had heard that the new homes might not have supporting facilities such as a kindergarten and children's playground. With so many newcomers, the kindergarten where most children in Blumendorf go would suffer from a shortage of places. Secondly, the terrain of the newly sold land is higher and when the new households used groundwater, the water might collect in the place where her house is located. Thirdly, since the new building land is close to a creek, building houses and using underground water might make it hard for the creek-side trees to take root. What she did not say, but I knew from observing her habits, is that the new homes would also occupy land where Marlene liked to walk and they would block the beautiful view of vast fields and distant forest from her house which sits at the northern edge of the village.

That evening, the local shooting association met at their *Stammtisch* at the village inn. I went over and tried to ask them about the new houses: 'I heard around seventy new houses are being built in Blumendorf?'. Unexpectedly, people looked surprised. When the inn host, Rainhard Kroetz came over to serve our beer, his neighbour Bertl Roggenbrot hurriedly asked whether it was true. Rainhard sat down with us, and with a serious and defensive expression, confirmed the news.

For a time, the atmosphere was one of resentment and sorrow. On this cool summer night, the excitement of the regular gathering had already receded. Many of the customers had left the Kroetz Guesthouse, and only seven or eight people remained, sitting around the long table outside which was illuminated by a wall lamp. The surrounding houses were hidden in darkness, and the lights from several windows were not as bright as the stars and the moon. Bertl started to curse and exchanged a few words with Rainhard in Bavarian. Others listened silently, only speaking up from time to time. They appeared frustrated that they had not known about such an important issue until now, and if I had not asked, they still would not know. Rainhard then mentioned that the Steiner family was also planning to sell their land, so at least two ‘new neighbourhoods’ were being built in Blumendorf in the near future: a large one to the north-west of the village and a smaller one to the south of it.

I asked who owned the land that would form the large new neighbourhood of seventy houses. Rainhard replied that the Habermayer family owned most of it, and the rest belonged to the Nagler family and his own family. Later, I learnt from other people that Rainhard Kroetz in fact sat on a committee in Imhof which the town government consulted on decisions concerning changes of land use. This was why Rainhard had not told other people, at least those at the inn, about the decision of the committee to turn the farmland into building land, or his own decision to sell part of his land. It was no wonder, then, he had looked defensive earlier. Bertl, being a friend and neighbour of Rainhard, was sad that night, probably because Rainhard had failed to inform him, and Bertl himself is always against building new homes. On many other occasions, this group of people, including Rainhard, expressed their anxiety that Blumendorf might not exist in the future due to the arrival of more and more newcomers who do not care to participate in village activities and uphold the village community.

However, Bertl did not argue with Rainhard, but rather criticised harshly the Imhof government and the potential newcomers. He scoffed that knowing the inefficiency of the government, it could take decades to finally build the new homes. When I asked whether these new homes would bring any benefits to Blumendorf, Bertl also responded indignantly: ‘Nothing, these people only bring more dirty water and wastewater here.’ Old Selig Laubmeier was also at the inn and he tried to explain to me what was happening, with his usual gentle, sad smile. He said that villagers would have different opinions on such things. When the differences were relatively large, they would not argue with each other but remain silent.

I asked whether, if Blumendorfers disagreed with the decision of the Imhof government, they could communicate this? They answered with wry smiles that such communications are most often slow and ineffective. There was a sense of political cynicism in their expressions and attitudes, which I noticed many times on other occasions among certain people, especially the members of the Boots Club, most of whom are from big old households in Blumendorf, such as the Laubmeier family to which many previous village heads belong. The big households have gradually lost their power with changes to the economic system and especially after the communal reforms of the 1970s. Among them perhaps the most powerful now is the inn host Rainhard Kroetz , but his form of power, such as sitting on a consulting committee for the Imhof government, is much more indirect compared with the previous 'big household' politics in the village which decided many local issues. The current system resembles a delicate balance between state power and local power, but state government clearly predominates. Households and individuals own the land, but the state plans and controls its use. Local consulting committee members, who are usually heads of big households and/or association leaders, can influence policies concerning local issues through their connections, but they do not have decisive political power which is firmly held in the hands of government.

From my interview with Mr Forster, the mayor of Imhof several months before, I knew that as the head of the Imhof government his vision for the region was different from that of the villagers. Since Blumendorf is located within the economic belt of Munich, the price of land has soared in the past few decades and there is a trend for Munich citizens to buy land and homes outside Munich in villages like Blumendorf. The mayor needs more rich taxpayers, so that with more funds he can improve infrastructure and support local industries. Lack of industry and jobs has already led to an outflow from this area of young and middle-aged people who are also important taxpayers. Therefore, Mr Forster finds it important for the survival of local communities to boost the local economy by many means, including a carefully considered plan to sell certain farmland and invite more rich taxpayers to live here. Paradoxically, while villagers worry that new homes and residents endanger the existence of the local community, the mayor considers newcomers to be a way to ensure its survival.

The land-sale incident, and the different reactions of people with different identities surrounding it, illustrates the current political and economic circumstances of this village community. They are inevitably influenced by the increasing economic trend that sees land as profitable capital and promotes the growth of industries and modern administrative methods that may deliberately or accidentally squeeze out previous forms of economy and the village way of life. This is even more obvious in Blumendorf, which is in the economic belt of Munich, than in other Bavarian villages located closer to the mountains. As things stand, villagers who have grievances against the land sale do not seem to have an effective way of fighting such a process, and the political organisation of the village seems to be loosely structured. But a deeper study reveals (as we shall see below) that, firstly, there is in fact an important, but sometimes covert system of political organisation within the village, namely the local associations; and secondly, that this was not the case in the past as the political organisation of the village has evolved from being dominated by big households to being dominated by associations. In this chapter we are mainly concerned with the above-mentioned economic and political transformations of the village, which serve as the historical background to the whole thesis and against which we can better comprehend the emergence, meanings and major institutional embodiments of the idea of *Heimat*. Before delving into historical facts, we first need to clarify an important piece of the jigsaw of the land-sale incident that was not fully explained above; namely, in this intricate picture what are the current positions and attitudes of the big households (who are also the major players in the incident)?

A current ‘big household’

Several days after hearing about the ongoing land-sale, I went to visit the Habermayer family who are the largest landowners in Blumendorf and were selling the biggest parcel of land. I met Magdalena Habermayer, the heiress and owner of the biggest house with the biggest garden in Blumendorf. Although she is the youngest daughter of her family with two older sisters, she inherited the house from her father Tobias Lindtner. The house with numerous rooms is apparently too big for her, her husband Fabian and their eighteen-year-old daughter Resi: they can decide to sleep in whichever bedroom they want, but Magdalena’s favourite is the attic which consists of one large living and dining room, her bedroom and her daughter’s bedroom. In this warm and somewhat stuffy space, we talked about her experience, her family and the decision to sell land. On her long wooden dining table, there was a vase filled with red and rose-pink flowers, half-withered. Outside of the house, the sky was gradually darkening and through the dormer window one could see a magnificent sunset glow.

Magdalena is around fifty years old. She used to be a secretary for a law firm in Munich, but now works at home for her family factory that constructs building materials (her husband also works for this factory). The factory is not in Blumendorf so Magdalena works remotely on the administration. Magdalena’s late father Tobias was a farmer and leader of the Blumendorf huntsmen, and her late mother was a refugee from Czechoslovakia. Tobias was an important figure in the village, and besides being the head huntsman, he also participated in the major associations in

Blumendorf such as the shooting association and the veterans' association. But Magdalena herself does not participate in any associations or attend church, despite being Catholic: she seems to have a very loose connection with the village.

Before the 1980s the family made a living from a herd of around twenty cows, farming, and managing their own forest. Due to the decreasing price of dairy and agricultural products influenced by the global market, many households including the Lindtners gave up farming. With the boom in industry and technology in this region and state-standardised education, more and more farmers like Magdalena and her sisters became industrial workers, technical staff, office employees, etc. As a result of these changes, land was no longer a source of subsistence and status for households, but rather a major capital asset with dramatically increasing prices.

Magdalena told me that the first time her family sold land was in the 1980s. At that time her family's intention was not merely to sell land, but rather their original aim was to build houses for the two elder daughters when they got married. Previously, households could decide where and how to build houses on their own land, but in the 1980s the government in Imhof was already in charge of planning and deciding the purpose of all lands in this region. The Imhof government reached an agreement with Tobias Lindtner that if he would like to build houses on his land, he could sell a part of his land to them and in this way the government would approve the change of use from farmland to building land. Imhof was trying to develop itself at that time through buying land and selling it to Imhof natives through the Indigenous Model. Tobias Lindtner agreed, and the 'first new neighbourhood' with around ten houses was constructed in Blumendorf, attracting newcomers from the region of Imhof. The two houses for Tobias's two daughters are also located there.

The second time the family sold land was in the 1990s and 2000s. Magdalena was already married to Fabian Habermayer and it was their decision to sell land, because they needed the initial capital to construct their factory. Fabian was born in a farming family in Imhof, but he is not physically strong enough to make a living from the land and forest Magdalena inherited. This time, around twenty houses were built on the land they sold at the north edge of Blumendorf, creating the 'second new neighbourhood'. Half of the land was sold to the Imhof government and people in this region bought it under the Indigenous Model; another half was sold to individuals, so people from eastern and northern Germany and other foreign countries also came to live here.

This latest sale – the family's third – was somewhat special, because they had sold almost all their remaining farmland. Magdalena gave me a detailed account of how she looked for buyers online, but she did not talk much about why she wanted to sell the land. Then, at the end of our conversation, she suddenly started saying that nowadays in Germany young people tend not to care for elderly parents at home as they used to do in the past, and many old people need to go to expensive nursing homes. She considered it a bad trend and did not see nursing homes as good places because people have to live with strangers. Her only daughter Resi is still too young to make decisions on how to look after her parents later, but from her upbringing it is quite certain that she may not settle in Blumendorf in the future. When Resi was a teenager she received the best education in this region, went to the best schools and already had many experiences of studying and living abroad. She is now thinking of taking an internship in New York before deciding which university to apply to later. It is quite possible that she will end up studying, working and living elsewhere than in Blumendorf. I think it is a reasonable conjecture that anxiety over retirement, the trajectory of their offspring, and the lengthy bureaucratic process of changing land use may together have prompted Magdalena and Fabian to transform almost all of their farmland into building land at this time, raising enough money (more than enough in fact) once and for all to live elsewhere in future. But such a decision to sell the land is not in line with the traditional expectations of the villagers for such a big household. It ignites disappointment, resentment and ridicule in the village community. However, the Habermayer family nowadays does not participate in associations, other village activities, or attend church services, which means that the focus of their daily life is no longer closely connected to the village community. Therefore, they can to some extent choose to ignore these repercussions, though this kind of ignoring or 'shunning' itself embodies some sense of shame. We will understand this better through elaborating in the following sections on the positions and functions of big households in the village in the past.

Big households: previous relationships

This case of proposed new housing not only reveals the current intricate relationships between ordinary villagers, association members, an inn host, and big households, but also touches upon connections between the village and the wider political and economic worlds. These relationships are constantly changing, and only through an understanding of what the village used to be can we better comprehend the current situation. Through comparing current relationships with historical ones, we can dissect how political power, economic power and people were gradually leaving the village, and how the organisational form of the village was transformed.

I was torn between using the term 'household' or 'family' to describe families like the Habermayers who used to (and still do) have more significant power, more land, larger houses, etc. than others in the village. I eventually chose 'household' for the following reasons. Although many of the former big households have become, like the Habermayers, only small nuclear families, the historical position and role of these households in the village, as well as other villagers' recognition and expectations of them until now, are inseparable from their big houses. When Sabean (1990: 88) examines Neckarhausen, a village in Württemberg, South Germany, through court records and other village records, he also recognises that the German word *Haus* (house) and its verb form *hausen* involve a connotation greater than what we now call 'family'. Claude Karnoouh argued that the term 'family' only began to take the place of 'house' from the eighteenth century onwards, largely due to the rise of bourgeois domestic groups, which were generally smaller and less complicated than the groups formed by aristocrats for which the term 'house' usually stood (Sabean 1990: 92). This phenomenon also exists in other parts of Europe, for example in Portugal, where the bourgeoisie often use the word *família* (family) meaning 'family', while the rural population uses the word *casa* meaning 'house'. The former refers to the nuclear family, while the latter also includes all co-residents living in a household (Pina-Cabral 1986: 37), and further refers to 'a compound of land, buildings, animals, people, absent relatives, and even the dead of the household' (Pina-Cabral 1986: 38).

Indeed, the situation in Blumendorf shows that big households not only once had more complex components than the modern family, but also held a special power and responsibility in the village that could integrate the village community politically and economically. Until the mid-twentieth century, big households in Bavaria were usually units for agriculture, with their own barns and farms. In addition to nuclear families, there were often members of the extended family (grandparents, siblings and sometimes other distant relatives), as well as farmhands and/or maids living together under the same roof. For instance, an old lady in her seventies was a maid for a big household in Blumendorf when she was young. The local *Hausname* (house-name) system demonstrates the acknowledgement of these people living in the same house as a comprehensive whole. The houses that landowners constructed have their own names which are usually different from the landowners' family names. Everyone living in this house, whether through marriage, inheritance, employment, or house-buying, belonged to the house and would be called its respective house-name. Old house-names were and to a certain extent still are sources of pride. Even when the house-based system is gradually fading as fewer and fewer young people care to inherit house-names, and more and more big households themselves, such as the Habermayers, are growing indifferent to the values and responsibilities of big households, there are still people in Blumendorf who take their house-names as a source of pride. One night in the inn when I asked about the house-based system, several people belonging to big households stood with their chests out and eyes bright as they told me their house-names one by one. They also usually address each other by their respective house-names, not their given names or family names. Since Bavarian farmers were not tenants but landowners, their status and mindset are a bit like that of the petty nobility. If they were rich, they also used to employ farmhands. This has to do with the fact that in the nineteenth century the Oberbayern (Upper Bavaria) peasantry were yeoman smallholders. From 1803, feudal peasant relations were replaced by peasant farming, due to the so-called 'secularisation' of church property. Farmers thus obtained ownership of the land and properties that they had worked for generations, and only needed to fulfil certain obligations to the church and pay tithes (Merlan 2004: 128).

In addition to connecting members of a household, the house-name also reveals that big households connect land, house, its geographical area and people living there into a compact whole, which acts as a mental map for villagers. Under rare circumstances when a house is sold, the new family will be called by the old house-name, and villagers will quickly orient the new family spatially and psychologically. For example, Erna Meyer, a lady whose family bought one of the oldest houses in

Blumendorf, once told me that when her family first moved to the village and introduced themselves to others as living at 'Huber' (their house-name), people smiled and nodded, 'Oh, oh, you live at the Huber!' It seemed to bring strangers in the village together more quickly.

Besides, these households as compact wholes also interconnected into a network, often through kinship relationships, because they usually sought another family with a similar size of house and land for a well-matched marriage. Such a network also largely facilitates the exercise of power by big households in the village. Indeed, political power in the village was held in the hands of big households, and they could directly decide local issues. For instance, several decades ago the Haitzer family, as the biggest family in the village, insisted that the village school should be built just in front of their house, so their children could easily go to the school. In the previous village power network, there were three most powerful men, representing three different forces: the village head, the priest, and the school headmaster. The latter two were usually not native to the village and were sent there by outside institutions, but the village head was native, and almost always from a big household. For instance, in Blumendorf before the 1970s, many village heads were members of one single household: Laubmeier.

Much research on the house has focused on the power of big households, and to some extent this has been strongly emphasised. For instance, Brunner's (1968) research on *Herrschaft* (lordship) indicates that these rural elites used the idea of and practices surrounding the 'house' for the ideological domination of the poor. A picture of the 'good householder' is 'the large, aggressive peasant proprietor, ever ready to throw his weight around and find support among the magistrates for his domination' (Sabean 1990: 94). However, I would argue that this is an incomplete picture of the relationship between big households and other families in the village, with a one-sided understanding of ‘domination’. Although it is true that wealthier rural elites own bigger houses and house-names, and there is indeed a power disparity between them and poorer, smaller households, they also need to undertake responsibilities in the village: for instance, taking care of weaker households and maintaining village cohesion, etc. It was recorded in the Blumendorf village chronicle that the same Haitzer family that asked for the school to be built in front of their house also bought the first threshing machine in the village: they let other households use the machine for free and would give them more end-product than the raw millet they originally brought.

In addition to political power, big households also held significant economic strength through the practice of agriculture on their extensive lands; indeed, this was one source of their political power. At that time, the major productive economic activity was to farm the land or raise stock, which gave an advantage to big households who could best combine land, house and people together and owned vast land. The goals of production, especially between the end of feudalism in the nineteenth century and the beginning of mechanisation in the twentieth century when these kinds of households most thrived, were mainly to maintain the subsistence and function of the households, with trade only as an auxiliary. Economists like Karl Bücher (1912: 88-89) theorised a kind of economic form not based on exchange, and *oikos* (house) husbandry, which is a notion Bücher also revived, exactly coincides with this. Existing extensively in the so-called pre-capitalist historical period, it was a kind of ‘domestic economy’ in which household members produced together mainly for their own consumption, which made the house autonomous. This economic system physically and substantially interconnected the dwelling place and the people working in and for it. In the words of Pina-Cabral (1986: 38) who observed similar situations in the Portuguese village, the house economy linked spheres of the economic and the familial, which made the household not just a ‘unit of reproduction and consumption’ like the bourgeois family, but also a ‘unit of production and property’.

However, while this observation is sharp, houses were not entirely disconnected from wider exchange and the wider economic system. Even in the past, only a minority of households were able to be self-sufficient. Statistics show that in the eighteenth century in Central Europe, at least sixty per cent of households did not have enough land to support themselves, so they would work for other larger households (Henning 1969). Some family members would also at some point leave their home and start some petty business, labour, or even beg (Rebel 1983: 50). It also means that the economic situation of those larger households was related to and influenced by the situations of other families too. As Sabean (1990: 97) summarises, ‘[s]easonality of employment, insecurity of the labor market, and forced idleness all sent members of a family in different directions and caused them to create temporary and permanent alliances with outsiders.’

Big households, in addition to once being able to integrate villages politically and economically as described above, also had close ties to local churches. Compared to eastern Germany, the churches in Bavaria had more social and political influence than landed nobility, even though after ‘secularisation’ the churches were no longer the direct biggest landlord for smallholders (Merlan 2004: 128). Part of the influence of the church arose from its connection with big households. The layout of the churches shows the connection that existed and still exists. In Blumendorf, every local family has a collective gravestone in the *Friedhof* (graveyard) outside the church, and in the case of big households this is often beautifully decorated. In front of each gravestone there is often a small plot of land, which is tended by family members like a little garden with colourful flowers and plants, and many of them have candles lit at the front. After each church service, members of these families, if they wish, go to their tombstones for a silent remembrance of the deceased and to tend to the flowers and plants. Next to the church, there is a chapel of rest where the body of a deceased member of the village family will be brought before burial for the family and the rest of the village to mourn. Funerals will also be held in the church by the priest.

Some households have hereditary positions in the church. For example, there is a household in Blumendorf who live next to the church and have traditionally undertaken the responsibilities of church sexton, cleaning the church, providing flowers and so on. Furthermore, in the church, big households used to have reserved seats at the front, with their family names engraved on the back. Although this is no longer the case in Blumendorf, the practice is remembered.

Another indication of the close connection between the church and households is that, as Merlan (2004: 129) noted in other Bavarian villages, some churches would record the *Hausgeschichte* (house history) of particular houses and their sequence of ownership. More generally, churches would keep a record of marriages and the genealogy of all families in the parish. Although this duty is now mainly undertaken by the government, many churches keep up the tradition, and this is the case in Blumendorf, where to this day these records are kept in the Parish Home – a little white house next to the church where the parish council meet and work, and a local staff member is responsible for managing and updating records.

Transformations of the village: the state and the global capitalist economy

This economic and political formation, with big households at the centre, gradually underwent a major transformation from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries onwards. There were two main intertwined drivers of change: firstly, the shift to industrialisation and the global market economy, and its impact on the village; and secondly, the penetration of modern forms of state organisation into the rural area.

The constant permeation of the market economy, on the one hand promoted the centralisation and industrialisation of agricultural and livestock production, making small-scale house-based farming less and less sustainable. On the other hand, Bavaria transformed from an agriculture-based to an industry-based state, with Munich as a fast-growing industrial and technological centre of automobile manufacture, engineering, electronics, and biotechnology etc. Therefore, firstly, land prices soared in the Munich economic belt area in which Blumendorf is located, making land highly valuable capital. Secondly, with the help of state standardised education, almost everyone nowadays in Blumendorf works in the cities as industrial workers, technicians and company clerks etc., with only two households continuing farming. People in their fifties and sixties now are the first generation that encountered massive changes of jobs in the village, and their fathers were mostly still farmers.

To elaborate on the first point, the industrialisation of agriculture increased production capacity, and the development of the global market complemented this, allowing local products to be sold elsewhere on the one hand, and on the other making it necessary for them to compete with production elsewhere. After World War II, the boom of the capitalist economy led to two influences: firstly, villagers specialised more in dairy and meat production, moving further away from the previously diverse subsistence farming; and secondly, the village economy became more dependent on ‘mechanisms of commodity pricing, purchasing, and pooling’ (Merlan 2004: 129), relying more on purchasing goods through currency exchange and buying from large wholesalers established in nearby towns, rather than small village shops. In the late 1960s, the requirements from the (then) European Economic Community (EEC) also accelerated structural change in farming. For instance, the 1968 Mansholt Plan promoted the development of large-scale agribusiness. At both the EEC and national levels there were calls for a policy of market-determined pricing (Merlan 2004: 129). But market-determined pricing brings down the price of local livestock products. For example, northern Germany and other countries in the global capital market that took the lead in achieving large-scale industrial dairy farming produced large amounts of milk, which depressed the market price, making it impossible for Bavarian households to maintain their livelihood with as many cows as they had in the past. Falling prices made it necessary to expand production. In Blumendorf and other surrounding villages, previously, around six to a dozen cows could sustain a nuclear family, but nowadays it requires more than forty, and some households have more than a hundred (although compared with the hundreds or thousands of cows in a dairy herd in northern Germany, this is still small-scale). This scale requires households to have more land, money, and manpower to complete the transformation. Most households without these resources simply abandoned dairy farming, while at the same time a problem of overproduction arose. In 1984 milk quotas were established to tackle overproduction, but nonetheless certain farmers were pushed to quit milk production (Merlan 2004: 129).

During this historical change, the differences between the original house-based economy and ecology and this new form of economy continued to emerge. As can be seen from the analysis in the previous section, the house is by no means just a building, but a combination of person, kinship, land, and economy. Ingold (2000) also suggested that body: house: landscape and organism: dwelling: environment are analogous, emphasising the close symbiosis between the house and its landscape as an organic body. However, the key to the global capitalist economy is to break the close symbiosis between people and land, so that both can be turned into capital that can flow 'freely'. The metaphor of the house with its connotation of connection is 'body', i.e., a different way of organising than modern corporations, at the economic level aiming at balance and survival rather than increase and profit (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 5). If the house could not be integrated into a wider corporation as a mode of production, it would be marginalised (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 42).

At the same time, the newly formed modern nation-state needed to gain relatively firm control and influence over its grassroots; thus, new forms of organisation also permeated into local villages. There was a constant interplay between external forces and the villages, such as the transformation of the villages and the peasants by the elite, led by civil servants, clergymen, country noblemen, etc., which had begun before the nineteenth century. An example of this was Nikolaus Beckmann's notorious plan to 'civilise' the peasants in 1786, which aimed to turn the countryside into the backyard of the city, and to make the countryside fit the aesthetic and holiday needs of the burghers (Schulte 1994: 1). Therefore, the rural environment and landscape needed to become more hygienic: for instance, animal dung should no longer pile up in front of the house, and the lifestyle of the peasants should become more civilised, so that large families should not sleep in the same room. Teachers and priests were the main driving force behind the change in rural habits, and the plan was to make the peasant into a civilized 'landscape gardener' (Schulte 1994: 2).

The demands of the German nation-state on villages also point to the direction to integrate villages into the organic whole of the nation-state, making them grassroots elements that meet its goals and needs. In order to achieve this, the autonomy of the village itself had to be weakened to some extent. For example, the policy that had an important impact on villages and local households in the 1970s was *Eingemeindung* (incorporation) or 'administrative rationalization' (Merlan 2004: 130), which abolished administrative units at the village level and concentrated them at the town level, and merged some natural villages. This resulted in the abolition of all village heads who as mentioned above were usually from big households: this meant a significant loss of power for the big households themselves. It became difficult for the village to be united by big households, as representatives of local power, in order to fight some government policies. In Blumendorf, there is an often-mentioned case that when there were still village mayors, the town wanted to build a canal that ran through many villages, but some villagers did not agree, or had disagreements with other villagers, and so the canal was never built. Now that the village-level administrative units have been abolished, the implementation of such plans originating from the towns is much easier and more efficient, which was one of the purposes of *Eingemeindung*.

Changes in understanding and practice of land use are significantly related to the above changes in economic and political circumstances that have affected villages and big households. Although individuals have ownership of the land, the state gradually grasped the power to plan the purpose of the land. As shown by the first attempt of the Habermayer/ Lindtner family to sell land, the Imhof government in fact controls whether the family can build houses on their own land for their daughters. Using as leverage its power to examine and approve the transformation of farmland to building land, the government successfully bought the land from the Habermayer family and let other people build houses on it, developing the land to a direction more in line with government planning. The process of land purpose transformation reveals that political power no longer lies within the village. Even though some members of big households (usually leaders of local associations and the inn owner) can sit on a consulting committee for the government to consult whether to change local land use, this committee is only a method for the government to understand public opinion, and does not necessarily consist of big household members. After the *Eingemeindung*, together with the disappearance of the village head, community hall, post office, and bank, etc., big households also substantially lost their power. Political power transferred to the Imhof government which functions as a link in the whole state administrative system.

As discussed above, when the big households had to abandon farming and started to seek other occupations, and when the land became valuable starting capital, there was an inclination within big households themselves to sever their connections with the land. This was true in the second attempt by the Habermayer family to sell their land, when they wanted to use the money as the starting capital for their factory. These new occupations, like the Habermayer factory, may have nothing to do with the village anymore. Therefore, after the transformations, the motives, principles, and goals of economic production left the village and the big households. When big households have lost almost all their political power and when economic activities have little to do with the village, the ethical status of big households is also significantly undermined and the ethical tie between big households and the village is weakened. On the one hand, although there are still big households that care for the whole village, the idea that the village is irrelevant to their economic decisions and activities is also considered legitimate: the actions and attitudes of Magdalena Habermayer and the inn owner towards the most recent land-sale in Blumendorf are quite telling on this point. On the other hand, even though smaller households still have a habitual dependence on big households, they cannot find the right words to criticise them when their expectations fall through. This was evident in Bertl Roggenbrot’s reaction on learning that the inn owner had told no one about the land sale: he started to scold the government rather than the inn owner; the silence of other people at the inn and Sepp Laubmeier’s explanation of the silence are further evidence.

In summary, through symbolising everything as capital, including land and people, capitalism transforms the goal of production from subsistence to capital accumulation. The modern state plans the direction of development of the nation and influences the direction of capital accumulation, achieving these plans efficiently through extending its administrative reach to the most basic level. In practice, both capitalism and the modern nation-state need to redeploy resources: planning and controlling land use; making people flow as labourers to the industries they need; making houses either into capital that can increase in value or simply into places for people to live. In this way, the interconnections of land, house and people are scattered, and reorganised based on the logic of capitalism and administration rather than the logic of the house-based system. The core, meaning and direction of development of the new system are no longer focused on the locality itself, but rather in principle are beyond locality and scale out infinitely.

Community preservation: from big households to associations

We should also notice that Bavaria is a region that constantly strives to counterbalance this ‘scaling out’ effect, and is hence often categorised as one of the most conservative areas in Germany. This counterbalance is multifaceted and there are multiple driving forces behind it.

Firstly, the Bavarian state, its representative institutions and personnel themselves compromise with the local and create a mix of state and locality. One of the reasons why Bavarian dairy farming is still not as large-scale and standardised an industry as in northern Germany or other parts of the world is the positioning of local agriculture in Bavaria. Following the Common Agricultural Policy of the German Federal government and the European Economic Community and subsequent over-production in the 1980s, new policies stressed the multifunctionality of agriculture, such as environmental protection and maintaining the cultural landscape. The latter is especially relevant in Bavaria since family dairy farms are still considered the very ‘essence’ of Bavarian tradition or identity. Although paradoxically this idea also hinders the development of smaller farms – people think that only traditional milk production is the right thing for a ‘proper’ and ‘real’ farmer to do and are therefore reluctant to do the kind of business that can keep smaller farms viable, such as ecological farming – it does encourage the government to adopt policies that protect agriculture. To ensure the subsistence of family-run dairy farms, or in fact, to weaken to a certain extent the impact of the global capitalist market, the Bavarian government has launched substantial agricultural subsidies which constitute thirty to fifty per cent of farmers’ income in many places.

Government regulations have also sought to make land as immobile as possible. In the Nazi period, the *Reichserbhofgesetz* (the State Hereditary Farm Law) prohibited the buying and selling of farms, confining their inheritance within the family (Haushofer 1972: 299-301). After the war, this law was repealed, but there are still regulations to make land relatively immobile. Blumendorf’s situation in this regard is similar to that of another Bavarian village studied by Merlan (2004), where selling land was not the first choice of the villagers when they were unable to sustain agriculture. Merlan

(2004: 129) thinks that the reason for it in her fieldwork site is the institutional arrangements which reproduce land ownership and inheritance at the level of the family, and control the sale and purchase of land. For instance, there is a strict distinction between agricultural areas (*landwirtschaftliche Flächen*) and non-agricultural land and changing this status would require a complex procedure (Merlan 2004: 131). This is also the case in Blumendorf, as we have already discussed above.

From the above analyses we can see that, undoubtedly, the combination of global capitalist trends and state projects transformed local places (with the disappearance of many family farms) and incorporated a multi-layered and interwoven sense of local being into a more abstract territory of commodity and sovereignty (Scott 1998). However, we should also notice the complexities of state projects. Modern states strive to manage a transnational economy, which requires 'powers of territorial sovereignty to protect a local instance of the global capitalist economy' (Feuchtwang 2004: 14). This concern for the local often gives state projects another characteristic to 'cultivate a sense of the local that is not subversive but is a point of negotiation and manoeuvre for other senses and stories of place than those of the state and its locations' (Feuchtwang 2004: 20). Therefore, other than regulation and simplification, state projects also recreate a mix and compromise with the local and are not always fully in line with the abstraction and commodification process of capitalism.

Secondly, villagers tried in practice to maintain a path of their own between state and capital. Despite the *Eingemeindung* of the 1970s, local forces continue to promote the stipulations that the names of villages remain the same, that they do not merge geospatially with neighbouring towns, and, more importantly, that each village retains its own original structure of associations (Merlan 2004: 130). While place-making in Blumendorf is 'a negotiation with and a reappropriation of state and capitalist territorialisations' (Feuchtwang 2004: 14), other ways of making places with local ideas consciously or unconsciously counterbalancing the state or capitalist territorialisation are also significant. To a certain extent, Blumendorfers do not want to consider their cows as a commodity, but by giving the cows names and reading their 'ideas' and 'emotions' form a more personal and intimate relationship with them. Therefore, the cowshed becomes a place where the state, capitalism and local ideologies compete to reach a compromise or mix. In this interlinkage, associations – in this case, the *Bauernverband* (the Farmers' Union) – play a role in embodying and maintaining the 'status quo', as the agricultural association both protects the rights of the farmers and links them to the conservative party and big agricultural business. And the status quo may become a new 'tradition'. Since the price of Bavarian dairy products cannot compete with the world market prices, there are also debates as to whether Bavarian dairy farms should switch to ecological farming. This has met with heavy resistance from the Bavarian farming community. In Blumendorf, besides the argument that this would raise costs, there are also narratives that it is not the 'traditional' way to run dairy farms or that (surprisingly) ecological farming is a 'backward' way to do agriculture with all the organic materials.

Associations occupy an important place in the new form of village brought about by such changes, checks and balances. After the big households, associations have become the most important force and form of organisation linking the village community, representing the village in its weakened political and economic power, and even becoming the most important 'partner' for the church to exert influence over the village. We can argue that associations nowadays are one of the most, if not *the* most important organisations in the village to undertake the idea and practices of *Heimat*. Applegate (1990: 115) also came to this conclusion from her study of Pfalz in Germany, regarding local associations as carriers of the idea of *Heimat* which also turn *Heimat* into a spatial concept mediating between the local and the national.

Therefore, in the following chapters, together with our analyses of the meanings of *Heimat*, we will also elaborate on the specific forms and roles that associations play at various levels in the village. In this section we will start with a general overview of the associations in Blumendorf, their roles, and the history and significance of the emergence of associations as an organisational form.

The term '*Verein*' (association) refers in a narrow sense to a registered voluntary association under German law which can legally function as a corporate body (*eingetragener Verein*, or 'e.V.'), but the word itself also refers to any sort of organisation in which individuals engage in a specific common action. We shall see that in the village, besides e.V., there are many other organisations or groups with similar organisational forms or purposes. If we consider the 'association' in this broader sense, it is noticeable that almost all villagers participate in certain ones.

The following e.V.s are active in Blumendorf:

1) *Schützenverein* (shooting association): founded in 1924 with more than 200 members. They practice the sports of air rifle and air pistol shooting;

2) *Feuerwehr* (fire brigade): founded in 1876 with around 60 active members. If there is a fire or any accident in the village, members of fire brigade provide a rapid response;

3) *Veteranenverein* (veterans' association): men who have completed compulsory military service in Bavaria;

4) *Dirndlschaft* (Dirndl community): founded in 2014 with 46 members. Young women wear traditional Bavarian dresses called *Dirndl* and participate in or organise festivals and parties.

Other e.V.s that Blumendorfers participate in but whose headquarters are not in Blumendorf include:

1) *Landwirtschaftsverein* (agricultural association): Farmers join this association to protect their benefits.

2) *Trachtenverein* (traditional costume association): founded in 1947 with around 200 members. Members wear traditional Bavarian clothes (such as leather trousers, *Dirndl* and so on) and learn traditional folk dances such as *Schuhplattler*. These associations are very common in other Bavarian villages.

Besides these e.V.s, there are many other associations in the broader sense in Blumendorf. They are not registered, but share similar organisational forms and structures with the e.V. For instance, the *Stiefelclub* ('Boots Club') was organised in 1978 by a group of young men to promote their 'social life'. They held football tournaments (now since they are in their fifties and sixties, these have come to an end) and excursions, and drink beer together once a week in the village inn. Besides, religious organisations – such as the church choir – are also viewed as associations by some villagers. However, perspectives differ on this issue, as some people also think that associations should be voluntary, and it is difficult to say whether church organisations are voluntary according to their histories and ideas. Furthermore, there are small-scale gatherings of friends called *Stammtisch*, for which people reserve a table in the village inn and go there regularly (usually once a week or once a month). Other than socialising to maintain friendly contacts such as drinking in the inn or holding birthday parties at home, *Stammtisch* do not have a specific activity like the shooting association or the fire brigade: to a certain extent, the 'Boots Club' is somewhere in between the *Stammtisch* and the e.V.

The emergence of associations as an organisational form in general can be dated to the eighteenth century, and many historians describe the voluntary associations in Germany as institutional novelties founded or influenced by Enlightenment philosophers (Eidson 1990: 365). They were by no means adopted by only one political force. After the unification of Germany in 1871, at least the national-liberal parties, the churches and the socialist parties have all established or significantly influenced local associations. Their political wrangling was clearly shown in the ups and downs of local associations. Indeed, small towns and villages as the most basic level were at that time permeated with political rhetoric and sentiments, and associations were also mobilised as the basic institutional structure to achieve political goals. People would make emotional speeches in the inn, supporting Germany, the Kaiser, and the strengthening of the army, etc., or the priest might speak during church services of brotherhood and belief in a strong and liberal Germany (Heilbronner 1998: 447). Speeches with such explicit political connotations are rarely heard in the village nowadays, either in the church or the inn.

Concomitantly, associations seem to be more and more detached from politics in the village. For instance, there are no associations with explicit political connotations now in Blumendorf. Instead, there are many hobby associations, such as football, fishing, mountain climbing, shooting, etc. Both the fire brigade and shooting association which carried responsibilities for self-governance and self-defence of the village in the past nowadays emphasise that they are *freiwillig* (voluntary) and then more of a choice-based hobby club. Therefore, although undoubtedly the associations are the public space, where people interact with each other and form a sense of community, it is also recognisable that they cannot easily act as a force influencing real politics.

This being said, however, we should not be deluded by the seemingly ‘pure local’ and ‘apolitical’ nature of associations. Although the village associations are now formally voluntary hobby groups, basically concerned with local affairs of the village, and seem to be only local organisations, if we look at their organisational structure, it is apparent that they are in fact standardised organisations directed top-down from the centre of the state to specific localities. The leading associations in Blumendorf – the shooting association, the fire brigade, and the veterans’ association – all have regional parent organisations, such as the *Schützengau* (shooting region), and general assemblies at the level of the Bavarian state or the whole of Germany. From time to time, the higher regional organisations arrange events in which their subordinate organisations in each village participate, such as the shooting association’s regional competitions, and supervise the activities of lower-level organisations, especially the election of their leaders. Therefore, the associations combine the locality with nation-state and reflect their relationships in both the past and present.

Conclusion

In this chapter, by describing a sale of land during my stay in Blumendorf, I analysed the current political and economic circumstances in the village and compared them with past situations to reveal the transformations of the village mainly in the past century. I used the shift in organisational forces from big households to local associations as a central thread to link the main political and economic changes in the village. The political changes are mainly the continuing permeation of state administration into localities and its gradual replacing of local political autonomy. The economic changes are principally the influences of a global capitalist economy which tends to sever the interconnections between land, house and people, capitalise land and manpower, and make them accumulate in a direction beyond the locality.

Specifically, big households in Bavaria used to integrate house, land, and people living in their house and working on their land (usually extended family, farmhands and maids), which is indicated in the local house-name system under which all living in the same house adopt the same name. The economic advantages that big households had in the agricultural era and the network of big households through marriage and kinship made them the greatest political power in the village, which was embodied in the fact that the past village heads were basically from big households. The *Eingemeindung* or administrative rationalisation in the 1970s marked a significant transition point in the village when all the village-level administrative units such as the village head were abolished, and administrative power was concentrated in the upper level, in towns. However, political and economic changes in the village had already started in the late nineteenth century and are still ongoing. Centralisation and industrialisation of agriculture brought about by the market economy contributed to the decline of small-scale house-based farming and broke the symbiosis of house, land, and people. The newly formed German nation-state also strived to control its grassroots and constantly reached out to the village with its tentacles of power, of which the *Eingemeindung* is an example. The outcome was that big households due to a loss of political and economic power could no longer act as the major organisational force to integrate the whole village, with local associations emerging as their replacement. The Catholic church in the village has also moved from working closely with big households to working closely with local associations.

This is, of course, only the big picture, but when we look at the more detailed and micro-practices, we see that on the one hand local resistance has always existed, and on the other hand both wider and local forces have actually interacted with and permeated each other, forming a kind of mixture. For instance, the Bavarian state launched significant policies to protect agriculture and counterbalance the ‘scaling out’ of meanings and development beyond localities, while local people also adhered to their own practices and constantly negotiated with the influences of state and capital. Reaching this ‘mediation’ is the key to what *Heimat* is all about, and it requires local people’s constant endeavour, which I recognise as an endeavour to make a *Heimat* as close to this mediating ideal as possible. In subsequent chapters I will explain these mediating practices in terms of the in-betweenness of five seemingly opposing relationships, namely, locality and state, state and church, nature and culture, self and other, temporality and immutability.

CHAPTER THREE PUTTING UP THE *MAIBAUM* (MAYPOLE): *HEIMAT* BETWEEN STATE AND LOCALITY

The *Maibaum* (maypole) and its polysemy

On the damp morning of 31st March 2018, around thirty middle-aged men gathered in the forest near Blumendorf. They were busily cutting down a tall spruce which had been selected and marked many days before. After the tree fell, they cut off branches and removed the bark, put several round sticks under the trunk to reduce resistance, and slowly dragged it with a tractor out of the forest. Someone’s black hound ran happily around the men, barking. Several young people from Blumendorf watched curiously, like me, and filmed the process using their smartphones. When the spruce trunk reached the main road, the villagers managed to load it on two tractors, each one holding an end of the trunk, and drove it back to Blumendorf. Everyone else started up their Fiats, Volkswagens, and BMW cars parked on the side of the road and followed the spruce trunk back to the village.

This spruce trunk was then stored for a month in a big barn close to the local inn, and after being elaborately decorated, was erected in the central square of the village on 1st May. A grand festival followed and people dressed in traditional Bavarian costumes danced to folk music and drank beer. The spruce trunk was now the village *Maibaum* (maypole) and this was the Bavarian festival of *Maibaum Aufstellung* (‘putting up the maypole’). It is one of the most important whole-village events in Blumendorf, and one in which I found the villagers’ pride in and efforts to uphold their *Heimat* almost reached a climax. *Heimat* may be a romanticised image of the village, but it is not a void concept and there are significant social practices surrounding it such as the maypole festival. Therefore, putting up the maypole serves as an important entry point for us to delve into the idea of *Heimat* which predominantly holds a village community together. In this one-month festival, the interpenetration of the state and locality recurs as a theme of *Heimat*, and this will be our key analysis in this chapter.

In Bavaria, a maypole is usually made from a spruce trunk which is around 25 metres high and weighs about two tons. On 1st May every four or five years, it is erected on a central open site in a village or town. 'Putting up the maypole' and maypole dances used to be widespread across the whole of Europe, but nowadays only in certain places are they still salient, such as in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland and Scandinavia. The origin of the maypole is still contestable. Several documents record that as early as the thirteenth century there were already practices relating to the maypole: according to Caesarius von Heisterbach, a maypole installation was documented in Aachen in 1224. From 1520, in Franken and Schwaben there was a custom of putting up a maypole in the village square. An illustration from Starnbergs von Hans Donauer of 1585 shows a slender, bare maypole very like contemporary ones (Laturell 1997: 184).

From the maypole's appearance and customs surrounding it, it is apparent that the symbolic meanings have undergone significant changes in time. In Bavaria, at the top of the maypole there hangs horizontally a wreath made of spruce leaves through which the tip of the maypole passes, showing phallic symbolism. This points to Germanic pagan traditions which celebrated fertility and worshipped forest deities. In 1657, the maypole custom was banned for the first time: a police order in Oberpfalz prohibited it as a 'filthy, un-Christian thing' ('unflätig, unchristlich Ding'). Even the Codex Maximilianeus Bavaricus Civilis interdicted the maypole as a custom serving ‘nothing but mere citizenry and peasantry’ (‘nichts als bloßer Bürger- und Bauernlust’) (Steub 1860: 63). Only in 1827 did King Ludwig I officially permit the maypole in a moral-police regulation (‘sittenpolizeilichen Verordnung’), claiming that it was ‘in itself innocuous and well-to-treat pleasures’ of the peasantry (Döllinger 1839: 1421 § 1120).

On the other hand, Christian churches also gradually adopted this pagan practice, transforming the maypole into a *Kirchweihbaum* (‘tree for the anniversary of a church consecration’) in certain places. The decorations and rituals associated with the maypole stayed largely the same but putting up the maypole became a significant part of the annual celebration of the *Kirchweih* (consecration day of the church). This granted the maypole parallel meanings. Even though in most parts of Bavaria nowadays, the consecration day of a church and the festivals surrounding it are considerably less celebrated, a link between Catholicism and the maypole still exists. For instance, the fixed date for putting up the maypole is 1st May which is the feast day of Saint Walpurga and also marks the beginning of May devotions to the blessed virgin Mary.

Besides, perhaps more important and relevant nowadays, the symbolic meaning of the maypole, and even its appearance are much more shaped by the state in Bavaria today. While in places closer to the German-Austria border the maypole is almost a bare trunk, in old Bavaria (Oberbayern, Niederbayern and Oberpfalz) it is exquisitely decorated. After the bark is removed, the major part of the tree-trunk is painted with patterns of blue and white (the colour of the Bavarian flag) in a spiral of rising stripes, only leaving the bottom with exactly the pattern of the Bavarian flag – blue and white lozenges. Below the wreath, symmetrically arranged metal plates are installed, depicting the major industries and activities which existed in this region in the past, such as beer brewing or woodwork. The plates form a trapezoid, so that the maypole still mimics the shape of a tree. The final product is highly standardised in different villages and towns, and the message it sends out is quite clear: the maypole represents the village, the village is characterised by images of its past (as shown on the metal plates), and the village belongs to the state of Bavaria. You can see from a distance that the maypole stands tall in the village, almost like a totem.

The process of the one-month maypole celebration is also considerably standardised among different villages in Bavaria, revealing an underlying unity. After cutting down the spruce tree and transporting it back to village, as a ritual, villagers need to watch it day and night for the whole month of April to prevent it from being stolen. People from other villages nearby try to steal the maypole as an exciting part of the one-month festival, making all the more fun for villagers who watch and protect their maypole against the *Maibaumdiebe* (maypole thieves). If the maypole is successfully stolen, villagers need to negotiate a ransom (*Einlösung*) for its return: this usually takes the form of many litres of beer. The maypole will then be returned and the ‘thieves’ will help to erect it on May Day. If the maypole is not stolen, it proves that the villagers have protected it well with excellent organisational skills and cooperation, but it also reduces the fun of the festival. If the maypole is stolen too early, there is a sense of shame, for it means that the festival is poorly organised, and villagers paid little attention to their maypole. In the end, it is all about timing: it is better that the maypole is stolen around mid-April.

On May Day, the fully decorated maypole will be transported by carriage across the village, followed by a brass band and a procession of members of important associations in the village. Both people in the procession and those watching it usually put on their Bavarian costumes. After the maypole is transported to the site where it will be erected, usually an open area close to the local inn, around thirty men hoist it up with pairs of poles and supports of different lengths (two poles are tied together by strong ropes, so that the maypole can be placed on the ropes). On someone's signal, each person holds a pole and they work together to raise the horizontal maypole up a little bit. When the maypole is raised higher, they will change the shorter poles for longer ones and continue the process until the maypole is vertical and attached to an iron bracket on the ground. The whole process usually lasts more than two hours with many breaks for beer, and sometimes watching the traditional *Schuhplattler* danced at the same time near the maypole.

After the maypole has been put up, the mayor of the town will usually give a speech commending the village community for their solidarity and efforts to successfully erect the maypole. The efforts of the state to 'adopt' this festival and define its meanings reveal themselves more clearly in such a speech. However, local people are also constantly negotiating their own understandings of the festival throughout the process, revealing an entangling of state and local meanings. One day, when I asked Blumendorfers in the inn what was the meaning of the maypole, they all expressed their own views, which were not necessarily related to the messages the state tries to deliver. Some people thought that the maypole is about celebrating the spring. Some explicitly detached religious connotations from the festival, saying that it is just a folk festival for people to get together and have fun. The leader of the Boots Club, Wast Leitner, suddenly said that the maypole represents 'freedom', which aroused interest not only from me but also from other villagers. When they asked him why, Wast explained that the maypole was a symbol of fighting for freedom when Napoleon attacked Bavaria. His version might be closer to the messages the German nation-state prefers to send out through the maypole, referring to one of the most significant events leading to the formation of the German nation-state. However, it is a far less common understanding in the village, and the meaning of the maypole remains polysemic.

As Herzfeld (2005: 14) tried to express in the term ‘disemia’, there is ‘formal or coded tension between official self-presentation and what goes on in the privacy of collective introspection’. Even though the examples Herzfeld and other authors provide to elaborate this point usually focus on societies where relationships of domination are more salient and the weaker side ‘conceals’ its identity, such as the relationship between native Americans and the state (Spicer 1992: 32), in places where power relationships are more balanced, such as Bavaria, this kind of ‘disemia’ also prevails. It reveals how the locality implicitly and explicitly resists state influences. However, social phenomena surrounding the maypole in Blumendorf also indicate that this ‘resistance’ does not posit a fracture between locality and state, but sometimes rather exposes their close interpenetrations. This coincides with a sense of ‘dynamism’ which Herzfeld (2005: 14) also strives to stress in the notion of ‘disemia’, regardless of the ‘formal’ aspect of the tensions.

This chapter will not only discuss Herzfeld’s concept of ‘disemia’, but more importantly his concept of ‘cultural intimacy’ to which ‘disemia’ leads, and through which I will analyse how state and locality, official and vernacular discourses interpenetrate in Bavarian rural areas. These forces together form the political reality of *Heimat*. Cultural intimacy in Herzfeld’s own words (2005: 3) is:

> ‘the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality, the familiarity with the bases of power that may at one moment assure the disenfranchised a degree of creative irreverence and at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation’.

We will focus on this concept and its implications later in this chapter, as it will help us understand the ethnography of ‘putting up the maypole’ in Blumendorf, while revealing the relationship between state and locality in Bavaria: the state both integrates local practices and cultures and rejects some of these elements as ‘backwardness’; while local people both accept and become part of state culture, and also maintain their own identity and way of life, resisting the penetration of state influences. The two are both a whole and often show cracks, but the cracks do not generally have the revolutionary power to overthrow the whole system. Before delving into events in Blumendorf, we first need to trace how anthropological research has investigated the relationship between the state and locality, so as to understand the background and meaning of the concept of ‘cultural intimacy’.

The relationship between the state and locality in anthropology

The impacts of the state on local places, especially negative impacts, have been well studied in anthropology. For instance, Sider (2006: 255) in his studies of layoffs in Newfoundland in Canada elaborates how a combination of state policies and capitalist movements ‘hollowed out’ local industries, wealth and population and created unequal localities. This kind of approach emphasises a separation between state endeavours and specific localities and stresses the potential and realised harms the state brought to localities, which may also serve in further arguments supporting the resistance of a locality to interventions by the state.

This separation is based on certain assumptions, of which one significant factor is the objectification and personification of the state in everyday and scholastic discourses. As Abrams (1988) has long pointed out, processes of politically organised subjection in capitalist societies produce a misplaced sense of the concreteness of ‘the state’, which in turn enforces a mutual reinforcement with everyday experiences and discourses. Alonso (1994) extends the argument further when analysing Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. She illuminates how cultural inscription removes hegemonic meanings from their immediate circumstances and endows them with a misplaced concreteness through, for instance, spatialisation of time and symbolic organisation of social spaces (Alonso 1994: 381).

However, this picture of an objectified, separable ‘state entity’ is often blurred by down-to-earth practices. At the local level, a sense of intimacy often exists when people encounter ‘the state’, as it is embodied in familiar local officials and revealed through daily practices (Das & Poole 2004). This intimacy points to an ambiguous and ambivalent field in which the boundaries that the concept of ‘state’ seeks to maintain are breached, revealing an entangled relationship between the state and other elements of locality. It is often in the ‘grey areas’ that one finds this relationship most clearly, for instance, corruption (e.g., Gupta 1995) or when ‘illegal forces’ also compete to perform as a state, such as in the remote areas of Colombia where the military, guerrilla fighters and drug lords compete for this (Aretxaga 2003: 396). But in some more ‘normal’ areas one can also find traces of this intermingling of state and locality, for example, when things that are conceptually considered to be state duties, such as health care, education, and policing interventions etc., are contracted to private companies (Aretxaga 2003: 398). These all remind us that the boundary between ‘state’ and others is not that tenable. Brown (1995: 174) stated the point clearly: ‘despite the almost unavoidable tendency to speak of the state as an “it” the domain we call the state is not a thing, system or subject, but a significantly unbounded terrain of powers and techniques, an ensemble of discourses, rules and practices cohabiting in limiting, tension ridden, often contradictory relation to each other'. This blurring often denotes a mutual formation by the state and other forces that used to be externalised from it.

However, even acknowledging this mutual formation of state and locality, we still cannot deny that they are not identical and there is a sense of 'fissure' between them, if not in the sense of categorical distinctions. It is precisely the existence of this space that has enabled anthropologists to redirect their research to the multiple effects through which the state can be recognised (Trouillot 2001: 126), after recognising the state as 'an open field with multiple boundaries and no institutional or geographical fixity' (Aretxaga 2003: 398). The existence of different effects is precisely what exhibits the existence of the 'fissure'. Very often the 'fissure' is shown in unequal power relations. This delicate tension between cohesion and conflict creates space for intellectual analyses both in the direction of integration of state and locality and in the direction of contention between them. For instance, Gramsci's (1971: 263) expanded definition of the state equates it with political society and portrays civil society as the 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion'. Alonso (1994: 381) argues that civil society in this sense is considered the site where hegemony is produced, therefore making it impossible to theorise either 'the process of penetration of civil society by agencies of government' or 'what is special about non-governmental forms of control' (Cain 1983: 101; Eagleton 1991: 112-113). In this way of understanding the state, the demarcation between state and locality becomes very blurred. On the other hand, Roseberry (1994: 357) emphasises the 'fissure' between state and localities by stating that the power of the state 'rests not so much on the consent of its subjects but with the state's regulative and coercive forms and agencies, which define and create certain kinds of subjects and identities'.

All these intricacies, I would argue, are most delicately captured in Herzfeld's (2005) framework of 'cultural intimacy'. Herzfeld identifies an aspect of cultural identity which is often experienced but not sufficiently theorised – in some communities, people exhibit characteristics that seem a little embarrassing to those outside the circle, but are the ways in which these circles identify their own people. Herzfeld grasps the point at which the orientations in this complex relationship between locality and state intersect: in their insistence on the characteristics felt embarrassing by those outsiders (often 'representatives' of the state, such as civil servants, or people who share the ideas that the state promotes), these particular communities (often a certain range of local people) seem to maintain a state of both integration with and isolation from the state. They are familiar with the bases of power and representatives of the state at the grassroots level, getting involved with these people and these forces, and might even be a necessary part of how power can function at the grassroots level. But in another moment, the estrangement between the two sides is revealed in the occasional appearance of 'creative irreverence' from the disenfranchised and 'intimidation' by state power. However, since 'creative irreverence' and 'intimidation' can be strengthened simultaneously by acts of familiarity with power, and since neither side strives for a 'revolution' that would change the entire relationship, we are reminded once again that state and locality are in practice a whole without an ideological or categorical divide.

Writing surrounding the concept of 'cultural intimacy' has extended this theory to other geographical areas and other organisational forms, and enriched it in different ways. For instance, Jung (2010) when studying the Bulgarian consumer-rights activists recognised that in the context of global inequality, the theory of cultural intimacy reveals a limited understanding of agency. Rather, she proposed the analytical category of 'complaisance' to illustrate a model of agency in which people's reluctance to abide by Western values can be revealed. She stressed the other side of the story in the global context which the theory of cultural intimacy has somewhat ignored: the reproduction of power hierarchies. Johnson's (2010) study of the Kelantanese Thai community on the borders of Malaysia and Thailand shows that in the borderlands where different nation-states intersect, and where different nationalisms interact with each other, people establish social identity through culturally intimate processes. On the other hand, Neofotistos (2010) reminds us of situations when people refuse to form a community through cultural intimacy. In her study of heterosexual romance between Orthodox Macedonians and Muslim Albanians (the two largest communities in the Republic of Macedonia), she discovered that Albanian men who have romantic relationships with Macedonian women are disinclined to form a community through a sense of cultural intimacy with Macedonian men occupying higher positions in the state apparatus. From my perspective, these studies in different contexts have observed different aspects of the theoretical framework of 'cultural intimacy' whose level of intensity is contextually determined. For instance, in the context of global inequality, power hierarchies are a stronger factor; and cultural intimacy may or may not work in more complex situations, such as borderlands where multiple nation-states converge, or where multiple ethnicities are mixed. Along this line of dialogue, in addition to contributing a Bavarian case to the theory of cultural intimacy, my research also attempts to advance this theory and further clarify the relationship between state and locality.

Like Crete in Herzfeld's (1988, 2005) study, Bavaria is also a place within the 'West' but is considered too traditional to be truly 'Western', which also indicates the ambiguity of the very concept of 'West'. But unlike Crete, the distinctions between state officials and non-state actors (often acquaintances), and between national ideologies and intimate daily practices are much less obvious, which makes this Bavarian case all the more appropriate for digging further into the ambiguous relationship between state and locality. In addition, Bavaria has some deeper characteristics of its own, which I would like to contrast with the situation in Bassano, Italy, studied by Filippucci (1997), in order to reveal more clearly the Bavarian characteristics. Like towns and villages in Bavaria, Bassano underwent an important socio-economic transformation after World War II, with a number of small factories, modern houses and migrants appearing on the outskirts of the traditional town. But from around the 1980s onwards, the locals began to place great importance on their urban historic centre, valuing the old, 'original' traditions. They started to strip the houses of their modern finishes to reveal their original masonry and discussed the construction of underground parking lots to remove cars from the urban historic centre. They also regarded the newly emerged small factories as 'an offshoot of pre-existing local family forms (notably, the 'peasant extended family')' (Filippucci 1997: 51), which indicates that, from their perspective, 'old traditions' mainly refer to this kind of family form. This is different from the Bavarian case which we have already discussed in the previous chapter: *Heimat* as an attributed 'tradition' is not the previous family form, but a new form basically embodied in local associations. Therefore, although both the Bavarian and Italian situations agree that 'locality' is represented as 'as a set of social arrangements and cultural orientations that have endured despite modernization … providing a resilient focus of identity' (Filippucci 1997: 51), what these 'social arrangements and cultural orientations' specifically mean reveals the different modernisation processes and histories of German and Italian societies. Orsi's (2010) research on Catholic practices in the Italian American diaspora is also revealing on this point. When he strived to discover a comprehensive moral world as an underlying motif of lived religion, the popular Italian value of 'domus' (meaning both building and family) that he emphasised (Orsi 2020: lxiii) is also significantly different from *Heimat,* which refers to the hometown in fact transformed in the process of modernisation and the longing for the 'original' ideal hometown: it does not refer to specific families or family ethics as 'domus' does.

However, it would be a miscalculation to interpret these practices and ideas, which are apparently very much concerned with locality, whether in Bavaria or in Italy, as localism, because they often have views and aims that go beyond locality itself. In Filippucci's (1997: 48) example, an important motive for those who want to make the streets of the urban historic centre car-free is the belief that this will increase the town's cultural capital, enabling it to be 'lifted out of its provincialism', competing with other towns in Italy and even Europe. The relationship between locality and nation that Filippucci draws from these ethnographies is also very illuminating for my understanding of Bavarian villages. In the above case, since the locality is both self-contained and open to the broader world, it can be understood as 'a refraction of a broader context, it stands for a specificity that is not antithetical to generality but integral to it: "we manifest a greater we"' (Filippucci 1997: 56). From this perspective, locality is not entirely antithetical to nation, as what localistic and nationalistic rhetoric defines as 'stable, neatly opposed and bounded concepts' (Filippucci 1997: 56), but rather, they are 'mutually constituted, dialectically related bundles of connected ideas' (Filippucci 1997: 43). This and the previous paragraph explain what my study interprets as the expression of *Heimat* (origin/tradition) and the substance of *Heimat* (analogous to the nation), and I intend to explain the latter more clearly in this chapter.

My argument is that the interpenetration and co-existence of state and localities are exactly revealed in the uneasy entanglements: in the very moment of harmony, we find mutual resistance; and in the very moment of resistance, we find potentialities and realisations of mutual formation; but in turn, this mutuality provokes discontent and a thirst for distinction, which opens up a continuous cycle. Rather than a black or white integration or discord between the state and the local, it is the unsettled entwining that ensures and defines their co-existence. These relationships are shown in the maypole festival in Blumendorf. We need to pay special attention to at least three important moments.

Semi-seriousness: stealing the maypole

Firstly, we should focus on the practice of stealing the maypole. In modern law, theft is a crime, but in many societies and cultures in the past and present, it can be an ambivalent practice significant for forming social relationships. An excellent example is in Herzfeld's (1988) ethnography *The Poetics of Manhood: Context and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village*, which describes Cretan shepherds' practices of stealing sheep from one another as a way to assert their masculinity and form 'friendship' or 'spiritual kinship' (Herzfeld 1988: 166, 174) between the thief and his victim. A sly raid and recounting of it can also increase the prestige of the thief within the community. Through an intermediary and a series of conventional negotiations, a potential confrontation will be resolved to a permanent alliance, forming new social relationships and social cohesion. However, since the Cretan shepherds tend to be outside Greek political life, they arouse not only admiration from other Greeks for their traditional practices and virtues, but also condemnation for being animal thieves under modern law (Haft 1996: 29).

Likewise, stealing, negotiating, returning and putting up the maypole together present a similar process of forming social relationships. However, stealing the maypole is quite different from stealing sheep in that it has already become a highly standardised ritual. Nothing is 'outside of the law'. This once potentially hostile and competitive practice has been tamed and standardised as a funny and exciting part of the 'tradition'. The theft of the maypole is thus expected as a performance and functions as a semi-serious motivation for people to watch the maypole day and night, to get together and form a community. However, this ‘semi-seriousness’ stands uneasily on the middle ground between ‘real seriousness’ and ‘indifference’ into which it can slide more easily than expected.

The indifference is revealed in Blumendorfers’ occasional lack of passion for the whole event, especially young people’s general indifference to it. Throughout the festival, it was people in their late forties to sixties who cut down, transported, watched, decorated and erected the maypole, including organising activities throughout April and on 1st May. Most young people only showed up when there were parties organised. When occasionally two or three young people were present, for instance, when people were transporting the spruce trunk from the forest back to the village, they were watching it with curiosity, just as I did, and took photographs using their smart phones. Once I asked Ina, a young adult living next door, about her attitude toward the maypole festival. Drinking lemonade and happy to have a break from her university exam preparations to talk with me, she responded with a smile that she thought the festival was the responsibility of her parents’ generation. Indeed, the activities and ambience of the maypole festival seem to be far away from her life in which she is concerned with her education and friends in the school, vocational exams and further career plans in Munich. Her situation and attitude are quite common among young people. Taking into consideration too that many of them study or work elsewhere and cannot return to participate in the maypole festival, the low participation rate of young people is not so surprising.

But some of the factors contributing to the sense of detachment of young people from the event also exist generally among Blumendorfers. The transformation of occupations that we discussed in the previous chapter also makes it difficult for

Blumendorfers to watch the maypole day and night, when they must work full-time in towns and cities nearby. Given this, it is impressive that some people display an enthusiasm for this festival which may conflict with their day-time work. Many people expressed pride in this ‘maypole tradition’ and in their village community by explaining certain rules of the maypole festival that explicitly extol community identity. For instance, Gerti – who is married into an old family in Blumendorf, is an active member of the shooting association and works in Erk as an architect – once told me that if I saw the maypole thieves before the maypole had been carried over the border of Blumendorf, I could put my hand on the maypole and say ‘this is our maypole’, then it would be considered not to have been stolen. On the other hand, an implicit ‘lack of passion’ also permeates people’s behaviour, talk and certain nuanced expressions, revealing that for them this is just a ‘show’. For instance, on 1st May 2018 when the men were putting up the maypole and I was queuing with others to buy some roast pork to eat as I sat, the inn host’s brother-in-law, who was in the queue ahead of me, turned around and said with a shrug, ‘You know, this is just theatre for everyone to see, they could actually put up the maypole much quicker but that would end the show.’ However, what revealed this implicit sense of indifference most saliently in Blumendorf is what happened before the maypole was stolen.

After the spruce trunk was cut down and transported to the barn of the Kroetz Guesthouse, I noticed a piece of calendar paper pasted on the wall of the *Maibaumstüberl* (‘maypole parlour’) which is a small cottage where around a dozen people can sit and drink beer together when guarding the maypole. People would voluntarily write down their names and available dates to watch the maypole. The watch should start once the maypole has arrived at the barn, however on 31st March, I noticed that there were only a few names under a handful of dates on the list. When people started to leave the barn, I caught up with Sepp Eisenbarth, son of a farmer living nearby, and asked him how the maypole watch was going to work. He smiled gently and answered, '*Lass es laufen* [let it go by itself]', as if he was not worried and believed that it would work one way or another in the end. However, after only two nights, on the morning of 2nd April the maypole was stolen by young men from Lemberg, because that morning no one was in the barn to watch it. It was an easy target for the Lembergers who had failed to steal a maypole from another village the night before.

Faced with this crisis, the previous sense of indifference changed into real seriousness. The first Blumendorfers to react were the members of associations. On the night of 2nd April, almost everyone from the Boots Club (including the leader of the shooting association) gathered at the maypole parlour to discuss the current situation and how to handle it. They had temporarily taken charge. The atmosphere was intense, filled with a sense of anxiety about 'how they stole our maypole'. It was very like the atmosphere when people at the 'regulars' table' found out about the new neighbourhoods that were going to be built in Blumendorf. But unlike the incident with the new neighbourhoods, when they were left helpless and indignant, powerless to form effective strategies, recovering the maypole was within their power and responsibility.

They recognised that the 'crisis' revealed a lack of organisation at an earlier stage, so the discussion focused on assigning responsibilities, arranging various events and motivating people to participate. It then became clear that the main organisational force in the village nowadays is the associations. Since the maypole would be returned after one week (through a series of negotiations with the Lembergers, considering how many bottles of beer Blumendorfers should give them as the ransom), guard duties for the remaining three weeks were assigned to three important associations in Blumendorf respectively – namely, the Boots Club, shooting association, and fire brigade. The leaders of the Boots Club (Wast Leitner) and shooting association (Nobert Schreiner) were present at this evening meeting, and would organise the members of their respective associations to guard the maypole day and night once it was returned.

‘We should also organise parties, barbecues, white sausage breakfasts, whatever may draw people to come!’ Fred, a member of the Boots Club, shouted excitedly and fretfully in the evening meeting. The shame of this early theft and poor organisation has aroused some really serious emotions around the maypole festival in Blumendorf. But the Lembergers were possibly even more serious. On the morning of 6th April, the Lembergers returned the maypole to Blumendorf after securing a large ransom. Their yodelling could be heard from far away when they transported the maypole back using small tractors. These were young men in their full traditional Bavarian costumes (leather trousers, jacket, long socks and hat decorated with feather and badges), contrasting with the middle-aged Blumendorfers waiting for them in their casual clothes. Watching these young men who were almost exemplary of the ‘traditions’ Blumendorfers had proudly introduced to me many times, the villagers were however sensibly aloof. When the Lembergers took their victory picture in front of the maypole, laughing and yodelling again, the Blumendorfers quietly kept their distance. Besides a sense of defeat, there was also a special sense of ‘embarrassment’ that became more obvious on May Day, when the may pole was erected.

Creative irreverence and embarrassment

As explained above, after putting up the maypole on 1st May, the mayor of the town will give a speech, and this is what happened in Blumendorf. After the mayor of

Imhof Mr Forster finished his speech commending the village community's contribution to their *Heimat* through successfully organising the maypole festival, the young men from Lemberg also went up on the stage. They spoke of their excitement and pride to be there, and then began shouting out slogans. It was an impressive and interesting moment with a hint of awkwardness, when both the mayor and Blumendorfers applauded the Lembergers with embarrassed smiles. For instance, Michael Geisler had a smile that was at the same time awkward, congratulatory, and cynical, as if he felt that his village was defeated but on an issue whose significance was ambiguous. He praised the Lembergers' spirit, but also found it a little bit funny.

When Herzfeld (2005: 3) explained his central idea of 'cultural intimacy', he also described 'creative irreverence' as a kind of power or agency the disenfranchised can obtain in cultural intimacy. To a certain extent, the Lembergers' passion is a sort of perhaps unintentional creative irreverence. They touch upon traits of roughness and traditionalism as the content of their cultural intimacy which is mocked by outsiders as stereotypical of Bavaria. What is special here is that quite often 'insiders' also mock or feel uncomfortable towards these traits, as shown by the Blumendorfers' aloofness to the Lembergers' yodelling, costumes and shouts. The underlying social dynamics of Bavaria mean that 'Bavarian traits' are always a source of both pride and embarrassment. Sometimes if I became inattentive (mostly due to tiredness) while at the inn in Blumendorf, people would make a point of explaining to me that they would not drink too much beer or that the drunk man in the corner would not be rude: they assumed that I was worried about these, and thus showed their awareness of the stereotypes against them while carefully dodging the perennial embarrassment.

One of the significant reasons for the two-fold cultural feelings towards Bavarian traits is that in the state-led process of standardising, reinventing and advocating local practices and traditions, these traits are both symbolised as the identity of Bavaria and undermined as uncontrollable or backward forces that need to be tamed. The passion displayed by the Lembergers was thus irreverent to the state's efforts to quieten down strong emotional attachments to these local events. It penetrated delicately, though within the boundary of social norms, the state's expectation that local subjects should conform to its norms. They brought alive what the state tries to confine within the bounds of 'tradition', 'performance' or 'representation of the village', all of which are highly celebrated but expected to have no real strength. The deeper structure of the perennial embarrassment thus becomes clearer, as Herzfeld (2005: 7) elaborated: all these past practices have been dismissed and discredited as backwardness, but they are also appropriated by the state as embodying the national quintessence. To a certain extent, *Heimat* itself can be considered a kind of embarrassment.

However, creative irreverence never represents a revolutionary force, but rather shows how the nation-state and local practices are combined. The passion Lembergers exhibited did not cross the line of intruding, and most other times, they acted according to social norms, be it to drink beer together with other people or to help put up the maypole as expected. Their emphasis on traditional costumes and practices shares a common ground with that of the state: both are engaged with nostalgia towards the past and the symbolism of purity, which for the state promotes ideas of nationhood. In crucial moments, this common ground can make 'local patriots in wartime out of citizens who in times of peace show rich inventiveness in tweaking the nose of the state' (Herzfeld 2005: 8). Besides, as Herzfeld (2005: 4) proposes, 'the formal operations of national states depend on coexistence – usually inconvenient, always uneasy – with various realizations of cultural intimacy': cultural intimacy with its concomitant creative irreverence is a necessary effect in a locality when the state strives to realise its ideas and practices. Even when people criticise the state, they reproduce a standardised view of it, contributing to a reified vision of the state as a monolithic and autonomous agent which it in fact is not (Herzfeld 2005: 9-10).

Creative agency and cynicism

The monolithic nation is a common image within popular theories of nationalism which usually also assume that nationalism represents an imposition of elite perspectives on local cultural worlds (e.g., Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983). However, this view overlooks the microscopic interactions on the local level in which local people also interpret, modify, digest or distort nationalist ideas. Besides, even though the vitality of local practices can be disruptive to the official state, they are often also the ironic condition for the continuation of that state (Herzfeld 2005: 5). We have already seen in the previous section concerning creative irreverence how local practices can be 'disruptive'. I will now provide examples of how they can also ensure the continuation of the state.

After the maypole was put up in Blumendorf, the local newspaper interviewed Nobert Schreiner who is the leader of shooting association and one of the main organisers of the maypole festival. The newspaper report started in an interesting way: 'How many people will commend a thief? But during the maypole festival in Blumendorf, Nobert Schreiner commended the "thieves" who stole their maypole. He said only in this way will the tradition continue." This comment on the one hand connects Blumendorf to 'tradition' and deflects any potential criticism that Blumendorf has lost something because failed to guard the maypole. On the other hand, it incorporates the passion of the Lembergers into a harmless 'tradition', which interestingly continues the efforts by the nation-state to moderate such behaviour.

Harmonising potential conflict between the locality and the nation is an important practice in guaranteeing the continuity of the state. It is achieved through multiple policies, practices and ideas which promote a mutual permeation between the locality and the nation. For instance, the Bavarian government takes on the position of protecting local communities through substantial subsidies for famers (providing as much as half the farmers' income) and the Indigenous Model which only permits local people to buy and live on local land, etc. The locality also supports the nation, or at least refrains from challenging its government in public. This is a very delicate restraint, combining reverence, cynicism, and intimacy, as local government staff are often also acquaintances. The theory of cultural intimacy mainly focuses on 'breaking rules together', as Neofotistos (2010: 232) summarised: '[t]he interaction between state officials and non-state actors, their mutual connivance at the violation of rules ensuring the orderly running of the state, and the ensuing foisting of idioms of commonality over state formalism are at the heart of cultural intimacy'. But I would like to emphasise that state officials and non-state actors also tacitly 'perform order', which is another, indispensable aspect of cultural intimacy. In Blumendorf, this delicacy was very evident in the *Bürgerversammlung* (citizens' meeting), an event held once a year for the mayor to brief citizens on what the government has done that year and respond to questions and requirements. After the meeting in Imhof, it is repeated in Blumendorf, because the previous *Gemeinderat* (local council) was located in Blumendorf before the communal reform of the 1970s. The meeting is usually held in the big dining hall on the second floor of the village inn, and around 160 people participated in the one I attended.

Most of the time from 7pm to around 11pm that evening, the mayor of Imhof Mr Forster, and other officials from the Imhof and Erk governments gave PowerPoint presentations and speeches concerning the fiscal data for the region that year, what the government had done and how much money had been spent, the general problems of the region and some current issues. On several slides, Mr Forster referred to the two new neighbourhoods to be built in Blumendorf which we discussed extensively in the previous chapter. He thanked the Steiner family and others who helped in this process through, for instance, agreeing to the government planning and selling land. People listened to all these presentations quite quietly without much discussion. There was only the occasional sound of cutlery as people ate their dinner of roast pork, schnitzel, or sausages provided by the inn. The inn host was busy serving people beer and dinner, showing no emotion as if he were completely detached from the situation. I saw Bertl Roggenbrot sitting among the people, listening attentively with arms crossed over his chest. From his expression I could tell that he was not convinced, but I was also almost certain that he would not speak up, not least because he is one of those people who cannot speak too eloquently in public.

Amid this tactical ‘harmony’, my landlady Marlene Baumann rang a note of dissonance. As someone born at a farm in Oberfranken (another district in Bavaria) who moved with her family around twenty years ago to live at Blumendorf in Oberbayern, Marlene’s characteristics and way of doing things make her a semi-outsider in Blumendorf. She well knows the rules of a rural community, but she is sometimes too insistent and crosses certain implicit lines. Concerning the land sale, Marlene had earned herself a reputation as ‘not very sensible’ after a *Stammtisch* at which she persistently chased up people who have sold land to talk about the sale and the problems the new homes might bring her. Some villagers also thought that her concerns about the water silting up around her house were ridiculous. During a break in the citizens’ meeting, Marlene went to talk with her neighbour Sepp Eisenbarth and again brought up the issue of the new homes. She mentioned that Sepp also lives in the area where water may collect due to new residents using their groundwater and gave an example of her friend whose basement is always damp and how annoying that is. Sepp said that he sympathised with the issue, but appeared unenthusiastic. Like many other people in the hall, Sepp was not very keen on all these political issues and was cynical about their outcomes.

Towards the end of the citizens' meeting, Mr Forster opened the floor for five or six questions from the audiences. A few people brought up clearly framed questions without any follow-up or discussion. Marlene was again the only exception. She in fact interrupted Mr Forster's answers (which almost always claimed that the problems someone had mentioned were difficult to handle) and added her own follow-up questions. Mr Forster to a certain extent ignored her and continued his own answer. He always addressed Marlene as 'Mrs Baumann', while calling others in the audience by their first names: in fact, Mr Forster knows most people in Blumendorf by name. In this situation, Marlene's husband Albert helped her by adding another follow-up question concerning the new neighbourhood issue. But that was it, no more questions or discussions followed, and soon the citizens' meeting came to an end.

As we see in this case, during the process of state formation and constant permeation of state influences into the locality, there were and still are conflicts between the locality and nation state that underlie people's silence and are exposed in Marlene's public objection; and when Merkl (2012: 2) studied characteristics of German small towns and villages, he stressed the numerous protests against the communal reform (precisely the *Eingemeindung* we discussed in the previous chapter) in 1970s Bavaria. However, these conflicts also dissipate, or seemingly dissipate, faster than expected, into silence or obscurity over time. For instance, when people were unable to prevent the 1970s communal reform and after it was accomplished, a phenomenon appeared as Merkl's (2012: 2) describes: 'Yet, once the changes in status and territory had been completed and new sets of officials elected, a curious, amnesic peace settled in among the antagonists. With the exception of the older generation that still remembered the past and the officeholders whose positions had disappeared, the succeeding generations seemed to accept the new status quo.' In the Blumendorf citizens' meeting, the 'harmony' performed jointly by the mayor and villagers was another such example.

The citizens' meeting shows local efforts to make potential conflict between locality and nation recede from the foreground, and only people who are less incorporated in the whole situation, such as Marlene, would be 'careless' enough to let conflicts appear. However, conflicts always exist, and most often express themselves through 'cynicism' in Blumendorf. After learning about the new neighbourhoods being built, and on many other occasions, Blumendorfers cynically commented, 'It is no use communicating with Imhof' and 'We just don't believe that politics will have a good outcome' and so on. During the maypole festival, the embarrassed smiles of Michael and many others also showed a sense of cynicism that arose that because the Lembergers presented something that Blumendorfers lack, know they lack and do not want to know they lack because it is difficult to change the situation. Indeed, even though many active members of the Blumendorf community constantly presented their pride in their *Heimat* and explained their traditions to me, they were also well aware that they lack any real power or organisational forms to grasp this fading way of life and realise the ideal of *Heimat*. The citizens' meeting also showed that through performativity villagers helped the system to complete its own performance of 'communicating with citizens and answering their questions', even though villagers know very well that it often does not work so well. This is exactly cynicism in Žižek's (1989: 27-30) sense that people are cognitively cynical but still do the behaviours. This cynicism reveals people's implicit and explicit discontent toward local circumstances influenced by the state, and an inclination to keep a distance from it even in the moment of ‘making up’ for the state.

The political satire performed during the local *Starkbierfest* (strong beer festival) may have epitomised this cynicism. This is a traditional festival in Bavaria during Lent, and there is a big show in Nockherberg in Munich in which actors dress as Chancellor Angela Merkel, other important political figures and party leaders, and perform political satire on stage, singing and dancing, often satirising some bad policies of the year. Those political leaders who are performed often sit among the audience, and the camera sometimes catches not only their laughter but also their awkward, polite smiles. In local regions and villages, people may also hold smaller satirical plays, varying from village to village, in which the actors also perform embarrassing stories and refer to the embarrassing policies of local officials. This kind of satire in a way cements the relationship of state and locality that I have explored in this chapter, becoming a metaphor for their interpenetration: in the joyous play, there are occasional sparks of serious criticism which make political figures embarrassed; but they do not dwell for long, and are soon overshadowed by amusing plots and humour which ignite hearty laughter from audiences; then, neither criticism nor laughter can dissolve each other, and in both sides there are the seeds of the other – in criticism there are elements of laughter, and in laughter real grievances exist all along. This subtle relationship is fixed by the satirical play itself, year after year.

Conclusion

Through three important moments in the Blumendorf maypole festival and other relevant ethnographies, this chapter strived to analyse how local people and authorities establish the political aspect of *Heimat* as an interpenetration of state and locality. Herzfeld’s (2005) concept of cultural intimacy is significantly helpful in this process. I elaborate the interlinkage of state and locality, which the concept of cultural intimacy attempts to describe, further into three steps, which are expressed in the three important moments of the maypole festival: firstly, there is a fissure in the harmony of state and locality; secondly, there are also potentialities in their fissure to restore harmony; and lastly, the relationship between the two does not stop cycling between harmony and fissure, and this defines their entanglements.

The first moment was the premature theft of the village maypole by people from Lemberg that triggered a change in the whole atmosphere in Blumendorf from semi-seriousness to real seriousness about the festival. The semi-seriousness of the maypole festival shows that the focus of life for villagers (especially young people) is no longer on the village, and that after the festival was standardised by the state, people more or less knew that it was just a show. But the shame of the maypole being stolen too early inspired Blumendorfers’ serious engagement with the festival and more careful watch of the maypole. During the process, it was the local associations that played a decisive and pivotal role in organisation and leadership. This transformation from semi-seriousness to seriousness reveals that: when the state through standardising and regulating local traditions permeates its influences into its grassroot localities, local people’s semi-seriousness shows an intermediate state of both acceptance and rejection of the new status quo; while the fissure between state expectations and local practices in seeming harmony can be seen even more clearly when the attitude of indifference embodied in semi-seriousness is revealed and when semi-seriousness tips over into real seriousness.

The second moment was when the Lembergers who stole the maypole expressed passion for the festival in a way beyond the expectations of Blumendorfers and the state authority (in this case, the first mayor of the town) and both Blumendorfers and the state authority showed sensible embarrassment. I analyse this phenomenon using the concept of 'creative irreverence', another of Herzfeld's (2005) concepts implicit in his 'cultural intimacy' that demonstrates the power of the disenfranchised who share cultural intimacy. The state efforts to standardise and reinvent local traditional festivals aim at both making them symbols of the national quintessence and confining people's real passion and attachment to them and their locality, sometimes through defining certain elements of the festival and of people's emotions as backward. The passion displayed by the Lembergers during the maypole festival to a certain extent exceeded this expectation, and was thus a kind of 'creative irreverence' against the state's efforts towards confinement. However, this kind of creative irreverence does not refer to any sense of revolution or overturn of the whole system, rather, it is a necessary effect of the state trying to realise its ideas. Besides, by taking the state as a (perhaps unconscious) object of irreverence, one also reinforces the perspective of understanding the state as a monolithic agent which is a necessary step in the formation of a modern state. It may be apparent from the above analyses that when state and locality exhibit fissure, this fissure also contains the impetus and possibility to move further towards a fusion of the two.

Finally, I argue that the relationship between state and locality is in fact a circular dialectic between harmony and fissure, based on how villagers consciously adopted official discourse and maintained harmony between state and locality at the maypole festival and the citizens' meeting, and how local people nonetheless continued to express a kind of cynicism towards this process. It is only through this circular dialectic that state and locality can be a whole, each having its own characteristics and yet intertwined. Such a whole constitutes the political shape of *Heimat*, which is made by local people and state representatives together. Specifically, and as the third important moment, after the maypole festival Blumendorfers praised the Lembergers for stealing the maypole, applauding it as contributing to the continuity of the tradition. This discourse both rationalised their own ‘failure’ to look after the maypole as ‘tradition’ and diminished the Lembergers’ passion as mere ‘tradition’, which is exactly the goal of the state. Therefore, vernacular discourse in certain circumstances can unite with official discourse and have the same function. This local effort to maintain harmony with state representatives was even more evident at the citizens’ meeting, where villagers and the mayor together ‘performed’ the meeting without raising or addressing any sharp issues, and together tried to prevent the sharp issues from being brought to the surface by a few people who were insensitive to this performance of harmony. Nonetheless, a sense of political cynicism still permeates in Blumendorf, even when performing harmony, which indicates that vernacular discourse and a locality are not after all identical with official discourse and the state.

CHAPTER FOUR CATHOLIC LOVE AND STATE WELFARE: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR EFFORTS TO SHAPE *HEIMAT*

Catholic *Heimat* and the secularisation problem

In Bavaria, as two-thirds of the population are Catholic (Buse 2005) and most villages including Blumendorf have Catholic churches, Catholicism and the Catholic church seem to be an indispensable part of the *Heimat* people uphold. Many of the old 'Heimat postcards' of this region collected by one Blumendorfer depict the church at the centre of the village. In most *Heimat* films, the church is an important backdrop to the story or an inherent part of the plot. For instance, the film *Waldwinter* begins with an idyllic landscape replete with deer and a wooden church, immediately evoking a sense of the *Heimat* as a space of nature and religion (Von Moltke 2005: 136). However, there is a lingering question of whether Catholicism belongs only to the past and is thus petrified in a romanticised image of *Heimat*, or still functions and is an organising force within the community.

Some local Bavarian stories based on historical facts are pretty telling in this respect, revealing struggles between religious and state institutions. For instance, '*Die Alte Trompete in Es*' by Ludwig Steub (1849) recounts a conflict between a parish priest and a couple in the parish in the first half of the nineteenth century. When the priest threatened to keep the family from entering the church, the family fought the order by going to court. The parish priest and the *Landgericht* (magistrate), occupying nascent positions of the period, competed with each other overtly and covertly, and this insecurity about whether the church could fully rule the rural community created a defensive peremptoriness on the part of the priest in the story. Contemporary statistics also suggest that Catholicism is significantly weakened in the village now compared with the past. Certain aspects of the church, be it organisational modes or moral positions, have already vanished and might justifiably be described as merely an image of the past. Decreasing church participation and the shrinking number of priests led to a parish reform from the 1970s onwards which incorporated smaller parishes into larger ones. The priest responsible for the larger parish would then live in the town and lead services in several churches belonging to the previous smaller parishes. Therefore, the Mass may be on Sunday mornings in some churches and another time (e.g., Saturday evenings) in others. Besides, the most frequent churchgoers nowadays are older people, with the church being less appealing to young people. Furthermore, faced with new social situations, the church generally turns a blind eye to practices once condemned as against Catholic doctrine, such as divorce and remarriage.

The secularisation thesis, which can be traced back to Durkheim (2001) and Weber's (1963; 1992) research on the relationship between modernity and the decline of religions in the West, interpreted these phenomena as a decline in religion. In sociology, many authors such as Luckmann (1970), Berger (1990), Parsons (1960) and Luhmann (1982) interpreted Durkheim and Weber's theories and laid the foundation of the classic secularisation thesis. This thesis gradually became more radical in Bryan Wilson (1966) and Steve Bruce's (1996 & 2002) later formulations which to a certain extent achieved a consensus among sociologists for over four decades (Cannell 2010: 86). Based on this secularisation thesis, religion is destined to enter an irresistible decline due to the inevitable direction of modernisation. There are four coherent parts of this theory which proceeds step by step. Firstly, modern society witnesses a process of differentiation of social domains, with religion objectified and confined into only one of a variety of distinct domains, in parallel with the domains of politics and economics. Secondly, secular forces, especially the state, gradually push religion out of the public sphere until it is only found in private and intimate places such as the home. Thirdly, exactly because religion becomes just one of several domains and especially one that cannot exist in public, it is reduced to a mere option which people can choose or reject. Fourthly, secularisation theory believes that people are increasingly disinclined to choose religion and thus predicts the extinguishing of religion (Bruce 1996 & 2002; Cannell 2010; Casanova 1994). Some scholars also recognise the political and ethical benefits of a secularist vision, for instance, although Charles Taylor (2007) investigated the phenomenology of the ‘secular’ and interpreted it as historically constructed, he also argued that a secular regime guarantees citizens equal relationship with the state, and freedom from domination by sub-religious communities, which can prevent violence and inequality (Taylor 1998). Secularism thus is considered as a prerequisite for modernity and liberal democracy.

However, there has been much criticism of both the political and ethical benefits of the secularisation thesis, and of the theory itself. For the former, scholars studying the impact of secularisation on Islamic societies and cultures, such as Talal Asad (2003), have argued that secularism is a special kind of liberal governance, using ‘self-discipline’, ‘participation’, ‘law’, and ‘economy’ as elements of political strategy, and which does not advance social toleration. Saba Mahmood (2006: 326-327), on the other hand, examined the religious connotations of secularisation itself, i.e., to complete secularisation, the nation-state itself must become a ‘theologian’ in order to change the form, subjectivities, and epistemology that were originally shaped by religion. All these point to the fact that secularism itself is the product of a specific religious-cultural context, which is still closely connected to its own religious soil just as it is ‘cut off from it’, and this particular religious-political combination is not that friendly to other religious, political and cultural forms. As William E. Connolly (1999) argues, secularism excludes or assimilates religious minorities, hindering the achievement of pluralistic existence which is based on people recognising their differences from others and those within themselves.

Critiques have also centred around the theoretical problems of secularism itself and its discrepancies with reality. Scholars first proposed a range of social phenomena that are different from those predicted by secularisation theories, or which cannot be justified using the secularisation thesis. For instance, Davie (1994) suggests that a low attendance rate at churches does not indicate that people are religiously indifferent. In Europe, which was previously considered more ‘secular’, ‘continued Christian valences’ (Cannell 2010: 87) still exist substantially, which raises the question of whether secularisation thesis arbitrarily neglects certain phenomena. For instance, even though people sometimes do not use the term ‘religion’, they continue ‘religious’ practices (e.g., Luhrmann 1989; Pike 2001) or use the term ‘spiritual’ to describe their religious experiences (Heelas et al. 2004; Heelas 2008). Besides, Martin (2005) also extends the empirical horizon to the global, pointing out that there are different forms of secularisation or counter-secularisation in different global contexts, so the claim that Western Europe has been secularised or that the world is moving in this one direction of secularisation embodies arbitrariness. Further, he argues against the idea that secularism is tied up with modernity, arguing that modernity can also have religious forms. This is where we get into a discussion of the theoretical issues concerning the secularisation thesis itself. Casanova (1994: 7) insightfully proposes that not all the premises of the classic secularisation theory are tenable and they are not intrinsically related to each other. For example, ‘differentiation of social domains’ may be a historical fact, but ‘pushing religion out of the public sphere’ is not a necessary phenomenon, and hence the eventual decline of religion does not conform to the facts. Also, the decline of religion may be happening in some places and at some times, but it is not necessarily a result of differentiation, because many churches that quickly embraced disestablishment were instead able to find ways to engage with public discourse more quickly, and may have gained more popular support. To a certain extent, situations in my fieldwork site also reflect this point.

Further, through her numerous studies of secularism in Turkey, Özyürek showed not only the complex relationship between religion and politics in different political contexts and moments, which cannot be grasped by classic secularisation theory, but also a dialectic between the private and public: entering the private domain may instead mean going public, and vice versa. In Özyürek's (2006) book *Nostalgia for the modern*, the case of Turkey proves that entering the private domain sometimes leads to greater social influence. Although in her study it is politics (a new understanding and practice of state and politics influenced by neoliberalism) that enters the realm of the 'private' and religion (political Islam) that enters the realm of the public, this complication suggests that secularism's understanding of the relationship between the private and the public is one-sided. Another article (Özyürek 2009), on Turkish Christians, illustrates precisely the second orientation corresponding to 'politics going private': religion 'goes public' when Turkish Christians choose to combine Christianity and Turkish nationalism and appear more assertively in the public domain. But this effort was strongly resisted by the Turkish secularist nationalists, who thought it would undermine Turkishness, that is, that one could not be both Christian and Turk. This reveals 'the tacit links between religion and nationalism as well as secularism and etatism in contemporary Turkey' (Özyürek 2009: 400).

This complex situation in Turkey is related to its own political and social history. Because the Turkish nation-state had to deal with a large state of different religions and cultures, which required centralisation, the adoption of secularism was not to allow the religious communities to develop on their own, but to hold the regulating power over them in the hands of the state. Thus, Turkish state secularism has little to do with tolerance, democracy, freedom, etc., and is quite hostile to international religious movements such as Islamic fundamentalism and evangelical Christianity (Özyürek 2009: 401). Likewise, the classical secularisation theory also grew out of its own historical situations, no matter how much it aims to be ‘universal’. The contents of secularism differ from place to place: French secularism emphasises that the state should protect individuals from religion; American secularism stresses that religions should be protected from the state (and vice versa); Turkish secularism is close to the French mode, but differs in that the state educates citizens with some understanding of Islam (Özyürek 2009: 401).

My research continues this line of reflection on secularism and investigates the specific characteristics of secularism in Germany, showing the connection between religion and politics in a Bavarian village. There exist parallel ethical lifeworlds and organisations in rural Bavaria, driven by both Catholic and secular forces, and this contests the secularisation thesis from the following perspectives. When highlighting that religion becomes only one of several distinct domains and leaves the public sphere, this secularisation theory only focuses on the decline of previous religious institutions, overlooking the mechanism by which religion interconnects with society on a more basic level. This mechanism can still generate ethical lifeworlds that do not reduce religious life to only ‘one of the options’, revealing the complexities of daily life. Besides, in foreseeing a trend towards the decline of religion, the secularisation theory neglects a more complex historical picture: the church participates in the modernisation process, or in other words, the state and the church are equally important players in modern transformations. The reason why the three premises in classic secularisation theory lack intrinsic relevance, as Casanova says, is related to the fact that they compartmentalise this comprehensive picture and extract elements according to the likes of their own theory. Only through revealing the system which links religion, state and locality – a system ignored by the secularisation theory – and the entanglements of religious and secular values, institutions, and authorities that secularist arguments hesitate to acknowledge, can we better articulate how secularisation discourses misunderstand or oversimplify local situations. I will elaborate the above points through an extensive case study of the flow of movement of individual actors and forces in everyday life in Blumendorf. It will become clearer that the 'decline' of religion with all its supporting phenomena (such as the decreasing church participation rate) might better be understood as changes of operation in this religion-state-locality system, rather than the elimination of one of its dimensions.

Claudia Seiler and her husband's illness

In the first few months of my fieldwork, after establishing a routine of joining in association activities at the village inn and making some friends, one evening I visited Erna Meyer in her big house at the edge of the village. Erna was one of the people who were also interested in my research itself, and our random chat and some discussion of my research led to a certain topic. 'I haven't been able to meet many women in the village, you know, and it seems that not so many of them go to the inn?' I told Erna. 'Yes indeed! But let me see…' Erna stood up, and went over to fetch her phone. 'Perhaps you should go to the church choir! And I know one woman who is in the choir and is really kind. Do you want me to contact her for you?'

That was the first time I heard of Claudia Seiler. Erna's phone call introduced us, and we arranged to meet the following Tuesday before the church choir rehearsal. Before meeting Claudia, I learnt from my landlady Marlene that the Seiler family is quite special in Blumendorf. 'She has eight children, that's really a lot! My three children have already kept me so busy; I can't image how she managed,' Marlene said, while marinating the duck and putting it in the oven. 'And they are such a pious family. I heard they are from a Catholic sect that really honours the authority of the priest,' Marlene said, poker-faced, although her eyes betrayed her enthusiasm for gossip: 'Do you know her husband is paralysed in a vegetative state?' Seeing my surprise, Marlene continued, 'Yes, that was really difficult, it happened ten years ago. I remember people donated for her family. We all donated for her … Do you remember Lugg's band played in a charity party for the Seilers?' Marlene raised her voice when she saw her husband Albert walking into the kitchen. From talking with them, I gradually learnt about the Seiler family.

Claudia Seiler is fifty-three years old now and she moved with her husband from Imhof to Blumendorf about thirty years ago. The family has eight children aged from fourteen to twenty-eight years old, sharply different from most village households nowadays that have two to three children. Claudia gave birth to all her children within fifteen or sixteen years of her marriage, which means that she basically became pregnant again not long after each baby was born. The Seilers are also famous for their pious Catholic commitments. They go to the church every Sunday, participate in the church choir and other religious associations such as the *Ministranten* (altar boys) and the *Katholischer Pfadfinder* (Catholic scouts), observe almost every Catholic festival and display more icons of Jesus Christ and Mary than other villagers in their house. They seem to resemble an ideal picture of the rural household of the past, which many families who have lived in Blumendorf for generations no longer represent. But another important part of the Seiler family story was the sudden illness of Claudia's husband Alois Seiler and the crisis it caused. In 2007, Alois felt an acute pain in his appendix and went to the hospital; he fell into a coma before his operation and a day later he was left with visceral and brain damage. Alois has been in a persistent vegetative state ever since. At the time of his illness, the eight children of the family were aged between three and seventeen years old, and Claudia was a housewife with no other income.

I could imagine the disaster and difficulties Claudia had faced over the previous ten years and expected to meet a somewhat unsmiling person showing traces of years of stress. On Tuesday at around 6:40pm, before the church choir rehearsal at 7pm I waited for Claudia at the crossroad linking the 'first new neighbourhood' (where Claudia lives) and the 'second new neighbourhood' (where I live) in Blumendorf. On this bright, quiet evening typical of this little village in the spring, a sturdy woman of medium height, with bright eyes and short blonde hair walked towards me. Smiling genially, she greeted me loudly in Bavarian – '*Grüß Gott*[7]!' – and shook my hand firmly. During the ten-minute walk to the church, we talked about her family, my family, and my research, and even exchanged some gossip about Erna. By the time we arrived at the church, I already felt we were friends, because she conveyed such human warmth when we were talking. She liked to pour out her own situation and listened to others wholeheartedly. After meeting her regularly on Tuesdays at the church choir and visiting her many times at home, I gradually learned about the impact of Alois's illness on Claudia's life and how the village community helped a pious person to deal with a personal crisis.

Once after a church choir rehearsal, Claudia drove me back to my landlord's house (it was only a ten-minute walk from the church, but many Blumendorfers prefer to drive a car wherever they go). In the cool dark summer night, she parked her car in an open space near my landlord's house and continued talking animatedly. The car formed an intimate safe space and she seemed reluctant to end the conversation. After a while, she started talking about her difficulties after Alois was ill. In a soft voice, she told me that she has lived predominantly a family life after marrying in her early 20s and she had an excellent relationship with her husband, ‘telling each other everything’. She felt satisfied to stay at home and look after her children, and did not feel the need to participate in other social activities at that time, because Alois was her better half, and her family life used to be everything to her. But then came Alois’s sudden illness and she was left alone to look after both Alois and the children. She had to drive the car alone, park it alone, and buy groceries alone – and Alois did not recognise her anymore. She said the most difficult time actually was after two years, when she finally realised and accepted that this was it, the current status would last and Alois would no longer recover: she had no more hopes or illusions. She told me this with tears in her eyes and it was an intense moment.

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[7] The literal meaning of '*Grüß Gott'* is '(may) God bless (you)', which is a common greeting in southern Germany and Austria.

But for most of the time, Claudia is a happy person, joining both religious and non-religious associations and organising parties for her fellow villagers. Once in her living room together we made paper crafts as decoration gifts for another villager’s birthday party, which Claudia had been preparing for a long time. Alois stayed in his room adjacent to the living room and occasionally shouted something unintelligible. Claudia sometimes walked into Alois’s room to see if there was anything he needed, and sometimes she pushed Alois’s wheelchair out and let him watch us working. Contrary to my expectations, the atmosphere was not heavy in Alois’s presence, which might have had something to do with the lively orange decorations in the house, with vivid icons of Virgin Mary and Baby Christ on the walls, Claudia’s cheerful and relaxed manner and her natural way of speaking to Alois as if he could understand perfectly.

Our conversation while making the decorations turned to Claudia’s understanding of faith. She said quite seriously, ‘Faith for me is like the path of life. My parents are Catholics and I learned to love God with them. Faith is the most important thing for me. People can enjoy many things and make many things, but the most important is to be always in harmony with God in your heart. … **God is love**. God wants people to live in such a way that we remain at peace. **Then we’re happy** [**or lucky, *glücklich***] **and content** [***zufrieden***] … My experience is that God is not strict, not at all, God is love. Some people say, “We have to do this, we have to do that”, no, alas, we don’t have to do anything at all!’

‘Has your faith helped you since Alois became ill?’ I asked.

‘Absolutely. I trust that **dear God** [***Lieber Gott***] wants to make everything the best it can be. God plans it from eternity. People’s lives are really short, we might live eighty years, or a hundred, or sometimes only thirty. No one knows how long he will live … We don’t know ‘why’ or ‘how come’. My children are all well-behaved. We don’t know, if Alois was healthy, how the children would be. You know? People do not know. **So we must keep together and help each other**. I am there for my children, and my children help me too. Then we are again very happy/lucky [glücklich].

‘… And it is really lucky that Alois can stay at home with us. We make things positive. It is difficult, there’s no doubt, but there are other difficulties for other families, and sometimes the family collapses, then everything is awful. This [she means the situation in her family] is also blessed. This is also from God. God only wills the best. Man cannot find a good solution by his own power. People get discontented, angry, or jealous of others, I don’t know. Anyone can have an unforeseen crisis. **I think people can be content through faith. Just be content.**

‘… It is normal that everyone thinks about the future. But we shouldn’t be preoccupied with “what will the future bring?”, or be pessimistic … God doesn’t want me to worry about whether Alois will always be with us at home, or maybe he will have to go into a care facility sometime. God doesn’t want me to think about it, or to get stressed about whether I will be healthy. If I am not healthy, then there are other possibilities. Then we will see. Do you know? I do not need to know what will happen in four weeks. Trusting in God, I feel serenity.’

In the end, Claudia also reflected on the friends she made in Blumendorf after Alois’s illness and the associations and activities she participated in: ‘I hadn’t thought of the possibilities of having fun with friends in the village. They have helped me and supported me. This is wonderful. Many things came that I had not wished for. Sometimes life can be different, but not bad either!’

However, to be able to remain optimistic in a traumatic crisis, Claudia needed not only her faith, but also substantial financial support. The treatment for Alois at the hospital directly after his coma cost around 8,000 euro a month. Since Claudia herself had not worked before then, besides some savings, their family funds at that time were limited to the sickness insurance from Alois’s previous job, which according to Claudia was not much; and around 1,600 euro in *Kindergeld* (children’s allowance, around 200 euro per month per child) from the government. Alois had a life insurance policy which applied only in the case of death. Claudia said that they were ineligible for social welfare, which is targetted at homeless people. She thought at the time that it was unimaginable to sell the house, since she has eight children. Going through this kind of reasoning indicated her urgent need of cash back then.

Claudia's first appeal for help was to the local priest whom she knows very well. Initially the priest gave her the money for three months' treatment for Alois, costing 24,000 euro, while they waited to see how his condition would develop. The priest also told the parish council about Claudia's difficulties, and they then mobilised other local associations and the local newspaper to help. The local newspaper reported the difficulties of the Seiler family and Claudia's wish to look after Alois at home. Many individuals, associations and companies in the region started to donate.

Claudia said they received large sums of money in donations. The church opened a bank account for her family, and these funds supported Alois's treatment and the family's livelihood for seven or eight years. Claudia mentioned two large donations from Blumendorf and other communities nearby: in Blumendorf, a wine-tasting feast was held with a local band (Lugg's band) performing, and all the money collected – around 10,000 euros – was given to Claudia's family; in the county of Erk (the county to which Blumendorf belongs), the millionnaire cousin of Anna Haitzer, who lives in an adjacent village to Blumendorf, held a charity birthday party raising more than 20,000 euros.

I asked many villagers why they donated to the Seilers at that time. People said it was because they knew the family situation well (some personally, some from their friends and relatives), sympathised with their difficulties, understood Claudia's decision to look after Alois at home and felt the need to support 'a part of their community'. Besides, when more people started to donate, others around them were aroused to do the same. The Seiler family's status as good and active Catholics also stimulated help from the Catholic community in the village which to a large extent overlapped with the village community itself, or at least was in harmony with its less religious members. Shared belief, experience and information also more easily generated empathy, which in turn acted as a strong emotional motivation behind collective actions of help.

The combination of religion and kinship

A significant characteristic of the way Claudia dealt with her family crisis and her daily practices is that she seems to live her Catholic faith through kinship ties and, vice versa, practice her kinship relations under the guidance of Catholicism. Before Alois became ill, Claudia fulfilled the demands of the Catholic church concerning conjugal love and parenthood, and the devotion she displayed in bearing eight children surprised many in the village. After Alois's illness, she relieved her anxiety and stress by trusting in God. She also confirmed that she was on the right path, set for her by God, by raising her children well and building mutually supportive relationships with them. In particular, the motivation behind her insistence on taking care of Alois at home was a combination of religious faith and *Heimat* sentiments, ascribing religious values to human intimacy and familiarity; the community formed under the guidance of these values is to be achieved above all through kinship practices. In Claudia's home, too, there is much evidence of kinship relations and religious faith mutually expressing each other. For example, she named all of her children after Catholic saints, and on the wall in her dining room hang portraits of the eight saints corresponding to her eight children. Kinship and religion are thus interconnected in Claudia's case.

In previous anthropological studies, discussions of secularisation and religion seem to have had little intersection in general with discussions of the place of kinship in modern society. But as McKinnon and Cannell (2013: 28-29) perceptively observe, when the discussion involves 'family', the 'private' or 'domestic' (e.g. Casanova 1994: 41-43), the former discussion of religion has inadvertently touched on the latter discussion of kinship. In the vision of modernity theories, religion and kinship have some similarities in that they are both considered to be subordinated domains, under the domination of other domains such as economics (McKinnon & Cannell 2013: 29). The two are frequently combined, as Lambek (2013) notes that kinship is often combined with religious acts or rituals (e.g. marriage or birth of children) and in this way mutually promotes kinship and religious ties.

Most theories of modernity present assumptions of kinship similar to that of religion, namely, in modern societies kinship is confined to the domestic domain, is secularised, and is losing its organising force in the modern political and economic systems. Religion and kinship are each considered 'pre-modern' and 'primitive', and the combination of the two even more so, especially when the combination manifests something incompatible with the laws and customs of the modern state. For example, the religious values of kinship through plural marriage that American Latter-Day Saints uphold in Cannell's (2013) study have been constantly under pressure from the US legal system and public opinion. This co-construction of kinship and religion is often considered to be characteristic of 'pre-modern' kin-based societies where kinship underpins political, economic, religious and other social relations (McKinnon & Cannell 2013: 4), with organising force; whereas in 'modern' state-based societies, kinship functions only in the domestic domain, with few political or economic functions, while politics and the economy become other distinct domains (McKinnon & Cannell 2013: 5).

However, some research has shown that kinship is not confined to the domestic domain in modern society and, further, that kinship has a nature that transcends domains. For example, Lambek (2013), in his study of the relationship between kinship and the state, argues that kinship is not a subordinated domain under the jurisdiction of the state, but deeply embedded in state actions and part of what the state is. For instance, the state is constituted through authorising means by which kinship ties are constructed, such as through the birth certificate. Furthermore, the nature of kinship goes beyond the state's grasp, with its immoderate and unmodern characteristics revealed in kinship's 'surfeit of meaning, feeling, and presence' (Lambek 2013: 255), its excess of who can count as kin and of demanding care and love.

Therefore, while some institutional changes in the organisation of modern life can be used to support the existence of some of the above mentioned distinctions between pre-modern and modern societies, '*myths* of modernity', as McKinnon and Cannell (2013: 8) argued, also contribute significantly to this distinction. Namely, our perception of the world is influenced by the idea of what the modern world is. Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the more we learn that kinship in modern society is confined to the domestic domain without organising powers in wider politics and the economy, the more we find, emphasise and believe in phenomena that fit with this idea when we look at real-life kinship. Thus, even though much of the nature of kinship and religion transcends the limits of the private domain and of domains themselves, people are influenced by the notion that they operate only in the private domain. The implications of this notion relate not only to the rigid understandings of kinship and religion, but also to various aspects of social life. The important essay *The Gift* by Marcel Mauss (1990), for example, also speaks of the distinction in terms of economy made by the West, when studying the relationship between gift and commodity. Jonathan Parry (1986) explained this very eloquently, saying that Mauss did not mean that 'primitive' peoples' way of exchanging gifts, or that the 'spirit of the gift' is superstitious: on the contrary, he meant that this idea of distinguishing 'gifts' from 'commodities' is itself a product of the late capitalist era of Western society. It is on the basis of this idea that people consider the ways in which other societies exchange gifts and commodities interchangeably to be superstitious, magical or pre-modern. Perhaps Bruno Latour (1993) summed it up best when he argued that making categories, and keeping the boundaries between them clear, is the insistent attempt of modernity.

Claudia's case shows the deep co-construction of kinship and religion in a modern village and illustrates how this co-construction transcends the domestic domain and mobilises the village community politically and economically, refuting both the above assumptions about kinship and the assumptions of secularisation theories about religion. As we will see in the following sections, this combination of kinship and religion also has significant political and economic impacts, generating its own ethical life-worlds and organisational forms, differing from secular forces and even being manifested in so-called 'secular' ways.

The ethics of Catholic love and the ethics of state welfare: two different kinds of freedom

Claudia’s case also reveals the present importance of Catholicism both in personal life and village community in Blumendorf. In a personal crisis, Claudia’s choices and attitudes reveal the presence of many important Catholic ethics and values. What helped Claudia to gradually step out of suffering and crisis was her faith in God, whom she trusts has everything well planned for the best. This faith helped her concentrate on the present without being too desperate or anxious about the future. Through believing in man’s incompetence to either explore reasons for past events or contemplate the future, Claudia paradoxically gained strength to deal positively with her current circumstances. The sense of loss and unfairness was balanced by the good things that happened because people dealt positively with the crisis. Negative emotions, or in Claudia’s terms ‘discontent, anger, or jealousy’, were checked by stressing that ‘God is love’ and believing that ‘God only wills the best’. In the end, the serenity people felt is what Claudia would term ‘contentedness’. In these thoughts and attitudes are embodied important Catholic ethics and values: faith, hope and love.

These ethics are also essential for fulfilling Claudia’s own personhood and freedom. Personhood lies at the centre of the Catholic ethics of love, whose meaning is interpreted through the philosopher Buber’s (1958) theory of ‘I-Thou’ relationship. Contemporary Catholic theologian Rahner (1971: 13) offers a concise summary of this theory, which states that the human world is interpersonal, and a person is ‘from the very first moment of his existence and throughout, the being that achieves a relationship with itself precisely by achieving a relationship with the “other,” in the first instance the other creatures, the “Thou”’. The other is a necessary mediation of a person to herself and the person ultimately finds herself by losing herself in the love for another person (Rahner 1978: 240). Claudia's relationship with Alois, at least from Claudia's accounts, strived for and perhaps achieved this kind of losing oneself in the love of another person. For people with liberal values this might not seem to be a life of freedom, but according to the Catholic ethics of love, every true moral act involves 'the full exercise of free self-disposal' (Rahner 1969: 239) which is 'the capacity of the one subject to decide about himself in his single totality' (Rahner 1978: 94). Here we see an example, similar to the Egyptian women studied by Mahmood (2005), of how to demonstrate human agency in a situation that does not appear to embody 'freedom' from liberalistic and individualistic perspectives, exhibiting another understanding of freedom. This is also one of the themes tackled by the anthropology of virtue ethics, that is, 'how to introduce some notion of "freedom" (to momentarily adopt Laidlaw's terminology) even while continuing to investigate how societal norms and bodily practices powerfully shape moral becoming' (Mattingly & Throop 2018: 481). From the genuine delight Claudia expressed when talking about her earlier life, I would argue that she experienced fulfilment rather than confinement in exerting this 'freedom of self-disposal'.

Furthermore, we must not forget that 'God' is indispensable for this kind of 'love' and 'freedom of self-disposal', i.e., it is essentially a religious ethic, and it is only with God that this ethic can be extended from 'personhood' to 'community' as the other side of the same coin. As we can see above, Claudia has expressed many times that 'God is love' and often used phrases like 'dear God' (*lieber Gott*) to address God. Besides commenting that 'Some people say, "we have to do this, we have to do that", no, alas, we don't have to do anything at all', Claudia also once lamented that nowadays people only consider going to the church as a 'duty' (*Pflicht*). This coincides with Rahner's (1969: 244-245) personalist approach to understanding love not as a duty or heartless observance of commandments, but rather as perceived through mutuality and communion. This mutuality is first and foremost in the divine-human relationship in which God becomes a 'partner' in a personal relationship with man, fulfilling a shift from law and obligation to interpersonal love. It also leads to the idea that the formal object of every human act of love is then God, whether the subject explicitly recognises it or not (Rahner 1978). This radical experience of God, in which every act of love is a mediation of the love for God, as another theologian Josef Fuchs (1970: 24) explained, 'can be made only in an always already going-out into the world which, understood as the whole of man, is primarily the people with whom he lives'. Although loving all human beings is important, more attention is then given to the more intimate relations with traits of trust and openness, rather than more anonymous relations with traits of commutative justice (Pope 1991: 260).

This helps us to understand Claudia's insistence on taking care of Alois herself in a familiar environment with other familiar people. Claudia expressed many times to me how nice it was that Alois could stay at home and that she thought at the time and still thinks that Alois would recover better with his loved ones and in his familiar environment. The local newspaper reported on Claudia's family several times after Alois's illness, and it stressed and very much empathised with Claudia's decision and reasoning concerning the importance of familiarity and intimacy for Alois's recovery. Through donations, local people also confirmed their understanding and support for Claudia's decision.

However, it was not an easy decision, and it took a toll on Claudia's finances and energy, especially since she had eight children to look after. Her decision was also essentially a rejection of an alternative solution: the welfare arranged by the state. There are free care centres that Alois could go to, and with his health insurance and the allowances for his eight children, even if Claudia was a fulltime housewife, the family could still make ends meet. However, Claudia rejected certain aspects of this arrangement and insisted on looking after Alois by herself at home, even though this meant employing much more expensive professional caregivers to regularly come to their house while looking after the eight children by herself at the same time. We need to note that welfare is not just benefits – if so, there would be no need for Claudia or anyone else to refuse it – but is also, as White (2010: 19) argues, 'centrally an expression of certain ethical ideals'. Claudia's case also hints that the existing Catholic ethical world in the village is not fully compatible with the ethical implications the state promotes through its welfare system. The 'permeation' of the state in the village meets certain limitations.

What are the ethical implications of the German welfare system? To understand them, we need to first go back in history. Germany is almost universally recognised as the first welfare state, beginning from the proclamation of the Imperial Message delivered by Bismarck in 1881 and the legislation on sickness insurance in 1883, as a means to bind workers to the newly established German state and to deal with challenges in the rapid process of industrialisation and urbanisation. It was built around 'a longstanding and loosely Hegelian commitment to a corporate social role for the state, a paternalistic concern among the governing elite for the well-being of the general population, and a long-standing practice of support for workers provided through a framework of occupational guilds' (Pierson & Leimgruber 2010: 35). Although its shade of statism is clear, the Bismarckian reform focuses very much on strengthening the occupational organisations (*berufliche Genossenschaften*) and municipal institutions (*Ortskassen*), making the German welfare state more de-centralised than is generally presupposed (Pierson & Leimgruber 2010: 36). This welfare system showed resilience and survived the turbulent decades after its establishment. During the 1950s and 1960s, a restored Bismarckian welfare order was associated with 'social market economy' guided by Christian democracy and social democracy (Pierson & Leimgruber 2010: 42-43). Although very much sceptical towards the *laissez faire* claims of English liberalism, the German welfare state shows characteristics of all three general 'typologies' of the so-called 'liberal', 'conservative', and 'social democratic' welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Although different ideological traditions have their preferred topics, the concepts of 'need', 'equality' and 'liberty' are all important focuses of discussion in the above three types of welfare state. Very often the welfare states are understood as mechanisms to fulfil people's basic needs (White 2010: 20), especially in the liberal welfare state tradition. Satisfaction of these needs is essential for people's well-being. But then how is 'well-being' understood? Amartya Sen's (1992) influential book *Inequality reexamined* defines well-being as constituted by 'functionings' which can vary from 'being adequately nourished, being in good health, avoiding escapable morbidity and premature mortality, etc., to more complex achievements such as being happy, having self-respect, taking part in the life of the community, and so on' (Sen 1992: 39). To achieve these functionings people need to have capabilities which '[reflect] the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another' (Sen 1992: 40). To fulfil people's basic needs are then to ensure that people obtain necessary capabilities.

To a certain extent, 'well-being', 'functionings' and 'capabilities' are tied up together and encompass almost all possible contents. They are thus not attached to or framed for any one element, or any one specific ideal of the good life. But they still presuppose a kind of ethical ideal which reveals itself exactly in a form which may 'encompass almost all possible contents'. This ethics is 'freedom' in the sense of free choice. People should be free to choose any one element of the good life and the state should ensure that they are capable to do so. The discussions of 'liberty' which are also in the liberal welfare state tradition are also phrased around this ethics of freedom: ideas of 'negative liberty' (Berlin 1969) espouse retrenchment of the welfare state, for its structures of coercive ‘redistribution’ harm negative liberty which is to be free from others’ interference; while ideas of ‘positive liberty’ (Berlin 1969) argue that liberty enables people to develop themselves and the state’s responsibility is to provide necessary resources for citizens’ development, which is also essential for achieving negative liberty (White 2010: 27-29). This ethical ideal of liberty or freedom is special in the sense that it presupposes a kind of individual that can be separated from his embedded features in his lifeworld (which are framed as his ‘capabilities’), can himself decide the content of ‘goodness’ even when he is short of certain capabilities necessary for ‘goodness’, and thus can make it his goal to achieve these capabilities. This ultimate power of free choice and free endeavour of an abstract individual is the basis for envisioning a just community whose content is also at the disposal of the respective individuals.

The conservative and social democratic traditions of the welfare state also share this basic understanding of individual and community, with just one additional emphasis on equality: that is, the state needs to create equal opportunities and just environments, so that individuals ‘regardless of features such as class background, race, ethnicity, or gender’ can ‘develop their natural abilities’ (White 2010: 24). A just community is thus correspondingly defined through ‘equality’ as one with equality of status and absence of domination (Anderson 1999). Concrete policies of the welfare state are constructed based on these understandings of individual and community, and like any influential policies, they interact with social realities and constantly mould individuals and communities to be more akin to these understandings.

These understandings and ethics of individual and community are quite different from the Catholic ethics of love explained above. Firstly, state ethics of care emphasises independent individuals, whereas Catholic ethics of love stresses the ‘I-thou relationship' as essential for the self. Secondly, Catholic ethics of love predetermines the content of goodness and understands people's freedom as being able to achieve this specific goodness, i.e., as the 'freedom of self-disposal'; whereas ethics of the welfare state do not determine the content of goodness and grants individuals capabilities to exert their 'freedom of choice' to self-determine which goodness they want to achieve. Thirdly, on the basis of different understandings of personhood and freedom, the communities that Catholic and state efforts strive to build are also different. The former prioritises 'companionship' and 'symbiosis' between the members of the community – for example, if the patient can be cared for by his own family in his own *Heimat*, it is ethically better; while the latter places more emphasis on the kind of community which can support individual welfare, and if care centres and professional caretakers can be more beneficial to individual patients' recovery, then this would be a better choice. The two different kinds of ethics, understandings of personhood and freedom, and ideals of community which are shaped respectively by religion and state, both play a significant role in the daily lives of villagers. Sometimes they somewhat contradict each other, as in Claudia's case, prompting people to choose between them. But they also sometimes complement and shape each other, as we will discuss later. But in any case, this example shows the actual vitality of Catholicism in a contemporary Bavarian village, which can respond to problems encountered by the villagers, and to a certain extent shape their values and lifeworld.

Religious and non-religious associations

An ability to mobilise political and social forces is one of the premises by which the Catholic church may respond to practical problems in villagers' daily lives. In the case of Claudia, we can see exactly this kind of mobilisation in the donations initiated by the local priest, and also that local associations play an important role in this process. Claudia's choices, and the fact that many villagers understand and support her prove not only that this kind of Catholic ethics exists and shapes people's daily experiences, but also a community maintaining Catholic ethics functions in Blumendorf. In a personal crisis, the priest steps up to help economically and is able to motivate religious and non-religious associations to help, which is significant for the persons concerned to feel that they are in a community which will look after them. It also reinforces their faith and piety in Catholicism. In this way, the Catholic church actively forms people's understandings and practices of *Heimat*, rather than being a static image of it. The close ties between the Catholic church and the local associations contributed to the formation of this community. At the same time, to understand the relationship between these two, we also need to emphasise the influence of the third indispensable factor – the state – and the relationship between these three needs to be studied simultaneously: that is the main focus of this section. It can also further help us to understand contemporary state-church relations in Bavaria from the angle of social and political organisations.

We have examined the ethical implications of Catholic practices in Blumendorf, which might have already embodied significant political meanings. The anthropology of ethics has had a heated debate over the relationship between ethics and politics. Earlier studies in the ethical turn of anthropology strived to distinguish ethics from not only normative social values but also the political realm (see Robbins 2013). Scholars proposed that ethics can be explained without referring to economic or political structures (e.g., Laidlaw 2002; Dyring et al. 2018: 17-18), as a field of freedom represented by conscious reflection on and against the social norms (Laidlaw 2014), thus making the field of ethics analytically distinct from the social and the political. However, promoters of ordinary ethics try to bridge this fissure through advocating a kind of ethics that is 'both broadly shared in a relatively untroubled way and yet calls on some notion of reflexivity' (Mattingly & Throop 2018: 479), and an understanding of ordinary life not 'as the residual category of routine and repetition' (Das 2015: 54) but as 'taut with moments of world-making and world-annihilating encounters' (Das 2015: 54). Other works also try to find the interplay between morality and politics, whether from exploring diverse genealogical traditions to discover more intimate relationships between ethics, power, and politics, such as Mahmood's (2005) study of Egyptian women's differing understandings and practices of agency and freedom, or from stressing that moral imperatives can also mutually motivate political regimes as Ticktin (2006, 2011) and Fassin (2008, 2011) suggested when studying humanitarianism and politics of care. Therefore, it is not only that ethics itself indicates wider worlds, but also that ethics is often accompanied and indeed promoted by corresponding organisational forces. We will now explore the organisational forms that correspond to the religious and secular ethics mentioned in the above section.

At first sight, some of the associations in the village are directly linked with the church, such as the parish council and the church choir, while others do not present an obvious relationship, such as the shooting association and the fire brigade. When I asked members of these latter associations, they also stressed that their associations have no religious underpinnings. However, if we delve into their functions in village events (including religious festivals) and the ethical code underlying people's interactions, we may find that their relationship with the church and Catholic ideas is also significant.

I will first provide a general description of the activities of major religious associations surrounding the church, and then proceed to analyse the relationship between other associations and the church. The *Pfarrgemeinderat* (parish council), *Kirchenchor* (church choir), *Pfadfinder* (scouts) and *Katholische Landjugendbewegung* (Catholic rural youth movement) are the main religious associations in Blumendorf. The parish council works like a mild bureaucratic system. Its members are elected from Blumendorf and two of its neighbouring villages which together form a parish. Some leaders of important Catholic associations, such as the Catholic rural youth movement, will automatically join the council if the leaders are not elected as members. The council has a hierarchy of first chairperson, second chairperson and people who oversee certain issues, such as repairs to the church. Every quarter the parish council will hold a general meeting in Blumendorf to summarise what they have done and discuss plans for the next quarter. The priest will also join the meeting, although not necessarily chair it. After the parish reform of the 1970s which we explained at the beginning of this chapter, and since the priest no longer lives in Blumendorf, to a certain extent the parish council has become more of an everyday embodiment of the Catholic institutions in the village. The parish council regulates the parish office, the maintenance team responsible for repairing the church building and properties, the family who grow and provide flowers for the church, and a group of women who make handicrafts to sell at bazaars during Easter and Christmas, etc.

The church choir consists of around fifteen men and fifteen women, almost all in their fifties, sixties or seventies. There are only three young people who participate in the church choir, two of whom are Claudia’s son and daughter. These members are separated into soprano, alto, tenor and bass sections based on the quality of their voice, and they practice on Tuesday nights in the church organ loft. All the music, from Latin hymns to Bavarian religious folk songs, is selected by the choir director who is also the organist. The present choir director is Selig Laubmeier who is already 75 years old. He comes from an important old family in Blumendorf which operates a family business as building contractors. The last mayor of Blumendorf before the communal reform was Selig Laubmeier's father. Selig was also a building contractor by profession, but he learned to play the pipe organ in a monastery school when he was young, so when the previous choir director died, Selig took over because no one else could play the organ. However, since he is much more amateur than the previous director, I often heard the choir members complain about him in a joking manner. Nonetheless, the director maintains a position of authority, and he organises collective activities for members of the choir, such as barbecues in his garden or a celebration for a member who recently had a baby. The choir not only sings in the church at Blumendorf but also in churches in other villages nearby, mostly when there is a funeral, after which every choir member will be invited to the local inn for a meal.

Perhaps the most popular Catholic association for children in the village is the Catholic scouts. It is separated into groups for boys and girls, and then further separated into two age groups – under-11s and 11-18s. When members reach the age of eighteen, they can continue as scout leaders. The scouts meet every week for about an hour and a half, usually on Friday afternoons when they find an open space, sometimes in the forest, sometimes in a field or a farm, and pitch a tent. They then learn some survival skills, such as building campfires and learning to tie various knots, etc. They also learn Morse Code and semaphore which have a clear military connotation. The things boys and girls learn are also sometimes quite different. For instance, girls may learn to build a simple cooktop and learn cooking. Before they start their activities, the priest leads them in prayer. Usually once a year, there is an overall ceremony for all the scouts, when they set up a huge tent and accomplish a task together. The priest will be invited to provide a Mass for them during the ceremony.

The Catholic rural youth movement targets young adults from eighteen to their early twenties. It is in fact a state-wide association in Bavaria with bases at village, town and county levels up until the general committee for the whole of Bavaria. Every local association belongs both to the local church (as the youth organisation of the local church) and to its own general committee. The board of leaders of the Catholic rural youth movement are elected by all its members. In Blumendorf, this association has around forty members and many of them are brothers and sisters, indicating family influence in joining the association. They have a meeting room and a basement lounge in the Parish Home as their fixed activity centre. Their regular meeting is on Wednesday nights from 8pm to 10pm, when they discuss activity plans or simply hanging out together. They organised or co-organised many religious and non-religious activities during my time in Blumendorf, such as the *Maiandacht* (May devotions to Mary), a basement party for the community, and their own 70th anniversary celebration.

It is clear from the above that the network of religious associations touches on many aspects of everyday life for villagers from childhood to adulthood. But this is not the whole picture; we also need to pay attention to the relationship between other seemingly non-religious associations and the church, and the relationship between religious and non-religious associations. As for the associations not explicitly linked with the church, we can explore their implicit connections from at least three perspectives. Firstly, important associations such as the shooting association, fire brigade and veterans' association usually have an annual opening ceremony which will start with a church service. After the priest blesses the association and the local community, the association members in their full uniform and holding their banner will process through the village, ending up in the inn where they drink and chat. The annual ceremony takes place on the name day of the patron saint of the association. Secondly, these associations play an important part in the important religious festivals with a procession after the church service, such as the Corpus Christi. Members in full uniform join the procession, carrying their respective banners directly behind the banners of the church. They proceed together around the central neighbourhood of the village, stopping at each wayside cross. It almost explicitly demonstrates the joint efforts or shared importance of the church and the associations in upholding the values of the village community. Thirdly, during one of the Catholic 'rite of passage' rituals – the funeral – associations that the deceased has joined in his or her life play an important role. Usually, several members of the respective associations will hold their banners and stand in the front of the church during the service. Afterwards, they lower the banners three times in front of the deceased's grave. This also shows that the village associations are considered an indispensable part of one's life and identity.

Although the non-religious associations in the village are inextricably linked to religion as mentioned above, they, or rather religious and non-religious associations, and the respectively religious and political forces behind them, also have a history of competition. This reflects the fact that there has been competition between Catholicism and the state to shape local society, as they exist side by side in the village. It is worth noting that although Claudia and her children are very active in village activities, especially religious ones, they do not often go to the inn or participate in more secular associations. Claudia only goes to the inn when the whole church choir is invited to have a meal there, for instance, after singing for a funeral in the church. Besides being altar boys and joining Catholic scouts when they were young, Claudia's adult sons nowadays are active members of the church and religious associations such as the church choir, but they do not participate in the shooting association or regulars' tables at the inn. Members of shooting association also sometimes stress that their associations have no religious underpinnings. The relationship between 'religious community' and 'village community' is very close and overlapping, but there are delicate fissures which contribute to multiple types of community engagement in the village.

A history of associations competing with each other, with forces of the state and the church behind them, might contribute to the historical sentiment of this demarcation. The period of German Empire (1871-1918) witnessed a high integration of church and state affairs. They cooperated and competed in various fields and at various institutional levels (Smith 2011: 457). Most local notables in Bavaria were close to the national-liberal parties and they established associations for social, sporting and musical activities. The national-liberal notables and associations considered the Ultramontane (in the 1870s) and the Social-Democratic Party members (in the 1890s) to be 'enemies of the Reich' (Heilbronner 1998: 446). The *Kulturkampf*[8] also helped the struggle against the Catholic Church and established the cultural hegemony of the National-Liberal Party. In places where Ultramontanism was weak, such as the South Baden region, the Allgäu, and Upper Bavaria in Southern Germany, associations recruited supporters, supported the National-Liberal Party in local and national elections, and organised national festivities such as the *Sedanfest* (celebrating the victory over France in the battle of Sedan in 1870) (Heilbronner 1998: 451). On the other hand, the national-liberal associations also suffered a setback in some other places, such as the Rhineland, where political forces other than the National-Liberal Party thrived. Some political forces were closely linked with Catholicism, of which the most significant is the *Zentrum* (Centre Party)[9]. The local council controlled by the Centre Party discriminated against pro-national-liberalist associations. In this context, there were also pro-Church associations established, which had the same name as, and directly rivalled the national-liberal associations. For instance, in the 1870s, there was a *St Sebastianus Schützenverein* (Saint Sebastian shooting association) established in Düsseldorf which competed with the old national-liberalism shooting association there (Heilbronner 1998: 451-452).

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[8] This refers to the 'culture struggle' between the German imperial government and the Roman Catholic Church from around 1872 to 1886. Some of the major struggles were over the control of educational and ecclesiastical appointments.

[9] The Centre Party is both clerical and lay. Many clergy have acted as the Centre Party's parliamentary deputies and 20-25% of its functionaries in the countryside were pastors (Anderson 1995: 667).

This is only a brief snapshot of the long-term struggles between religious and non-religious associations in Germany from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. On this basis, however, I would argue that these struggles in fact demonstrate a close interconnection between religion and politics, or the church and the state, at the most local level. To a certain extent, it also explains an idea in Bavaria that the combination of a church and an inn is the essential core of a village – due to the numerous associations that meet in the inn, it is more than just a place to drink beer. Many people in Blumendorf recommended I should taste the food in another inn nearby, where the 'village' consists *only* of a church and an inn. According to the local history of Blumendorf, in 1909 the church gave part of its land to a family named Rueckerl to build the inn (at that time, it was known as '*Gasthof Rueckerl*'). The recorded reason in this local document is that 'the priest believed that a church and an inn simply belong to each other'[10]. As further evidence of the close relation between church and inn, there is also one salient characteristic of the German Catholic priest: '[a]lthough ascetic himself, he was affable, celebrated for remarks made in pubs, and "not at all disinclined to merriment"' (Anderson 1995: 660). The Catholic church has long strived to manifest itself in almost all aspects of daily life in the village through a 'dense network of devotional practices, voluntary associations, and sociability'

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[10] '*Im Jahre 1909 wurde auf Initiative von Pfarrer in der Überzeugung, das eine Kirche und ein Gasthof einfach zusammengehören würden eine Wirtschaft ins Leben gerufen*.'

(Anderson 1995: 660), and the characteristics of the priest described above is most suitable for this dense network.

The interconnections of religion and state

In the competition between religious and secular forces shown above, we can already discern an inextricable connection between them. Some studies of other parts of Europe, such as William Christian's (1972, 1996) study of the Spanish countryside at the beginning of the twentieth century have also explored this connection carefully. Although Blumendorf is very different from Christian's research sites both in terms of space and time, his work proved to be enlightening for my research, especially since he also focuses on rural communities that are undergoing changes. Describing Spanish villagers who saw visions of the Virgin Mary, Christian (1996: 6) stressed it was not only faith, but also the 'social and political situation of Spain and the Basque Country [that] encouraged Catholics to believe the seers'. What kind of vision people saw was also subtly influenced by the political and religious environment of the time, such as the large number of apparitions that took place when the anticlerical Second Spanish Republic was first established, and it is not surprising then that there were seers who said they saw the Virgin Mary asking people to overthrow the Republic. The act of many people accompanying the seers to the apparition site also implied a kind of resistance to the then circumstances of the local community – a Basque-speaking rural community under the threat of new industry and immigration from non-Basques, whose sentiments were captured and used by the local right-wing press. However, both lay and clerical authority in the Spanish village questioned the authenticity of the visions, since the direct connection between ordinary villagers and the God represented by the vision threatened their authority.

As can be seen from the above, the connection Christian finds between religious and political forces focuses more on the thoughts, choices, and actions of local people, showing the intertwining and coexistence of the two forces in everyday life, which is also what I have tried to highlight in the previous two sections. In this section I want to go further and explore whether religious institutions themselves have, or can have, some of the characteristics that secularist theories have identified as belonging to secular or state organisations. These characteristics, as well as the influence of religious institutions on participants when holding village-wide events, give them the ability to channel state ideas into the village community. The previous two sections are devoted to proving that the secularist presumption that the social power of religion wanes is imprecise, while this section challenges the secularist claim concerning the separation of religion and politics.

Besides motivating associations, the church also makes its presence felt in Blumendorf, very much like an association. We can take the parish council as an example. Since the priest no longer lives in the village, the everyday presence of the church is in fact the parish council whose members are elected from villagers in this area. They live locally and hold a general meeting every quarter to discuss issues in the parish.

In a parish council meeting I attended one Wednesday evening, members gathered around a table in the parish house in Blumendorf. It is a modern meeting room with few decorations, only a few black-and-white photos of the old parish house hanging on the wall and a crucifix and a photo of the previous pope from Bavaria showing the Catholic character of this room. I first went to meet Annamirl Bohm, vice president of the council at her house, and we walked together to the meeting. As she had already talked with other members beforehand about my participation in the meeting, and as I had already met many of them on other occasions (‘you always meet the same people everywhere here’ as some villagers told me with a laugh), she introduced me in an informal and cheerful way. People smiled and nodded at me, inviting me to sit anywhere I wanted. It was obvious, however, that one side of the round table was ‘the host’s place’ where the priest and the president of the parish council sit. Other people sat around them in no obvious hierarchical order.

I sat, and after a few minutes when everyone had arrived, the meeting began. There are twelve members of the parish council in Blumendorf, seven men and five women. Most of them are over fifty years old, with only one or two in their thirties and forties. Most of these people are from old families, and some are from families that moved from the surrounding villages to Blumendorf more than thirty years ago. They spoke Bavarian dialect during the whole meeting. At first, the chairperson (an old man from an adjacent village) summarised the work they had done in the past three months, mentioning certain community activities they had organised and expressing gratitude for everyone’s efforts, especially the association leaders who organised the activities. Afterwards, people who oversee different issues summarised their respective work. Then everyone discussed and designed their work plan for the next three months. The priest joined the conversation now and then but was not leading the discussions. During the meeting I could not help but think back to others I had attended with other associations, such as when the shooting association discussed their plans for the next year’s activities, or when the Boots Club discussed the next steps for assigning tasks to local associations after the maypole was stolen; I found that the parish council meeting had a similar process and atmosphere. The work and temperament of Annamirl Bohm as an important organiser of religious events in Blumendorf are also very similar to that of an association secretary. There is a role similar to this in each of the larger village associations, such as Evi Schreiner of the shooting association who organised women to volunteer to make cakes, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Every year the parish council organises two important bazaars, one of which is during the Easter holiday and one at Christmastime. In addition to setting up the bazaar site in front of the church, selling handicrafts made by women from Blumendorf (whom she had mobilised to make them), Annamirl also made many handicrafts by herself. For instance, she made around fifty Easter candles in 2018. She keeps minutes of the important meetings of the parish council, her emails with the priest, and photos and videos of events. During important religious festivals, the leading role of the parish council to organise the whole village becomes more salient. Such festivals included the *Primiz* (the first mass that a new priest hosts) in June 2016 which celebrated the ordination of Sebastian Potsch (a native Blumendorfer) as a new priest. About six months before the *Primiz*, the parish council began to meet with important people in the village, such as the inn host and leaders of associations. They held several meetings to discuss how to arrange the whole event, how much money and what kind of items and services were needed. Annamirl also kept in regular contact with the priest through emails about important issues. In the end, Annamirl made a flow chart and a fund statement.

When Napolitano (2016: 10) studied the Catholic Latin Americans migrating to Rome, she discovered that Catholicism can produce similar personalities to those produced by the modern economy and state. In her case, the moral voluntarism that the Church promotes elicits a personality that fits right in with the neoliberal moral subjects needed by post-Fordist economies. The example of Annamirl Bohm proves that local religious figures can also have the characteristics of anyone who is capable of doing a bureaucratic job. This is not only, as Napolitano (2016: 10) says, embodying the Catholic ‘complexio oppositorum’ – i.e., the ability to absorb or embrace antithesis – but also the blurring lines between so-called religious and secular characteristics.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter provides an example of co-existence of Catholic and secular forces in a rural area of the heartland of Europe. There exist parallel ethical lifeworlds and organisations driven by both Catholic and secular forces in rural Bavaria, and this contests the secularisation thesis from the following perspectives. When highlighting that religion becomes only one of the distinct domains and leaves the public sphere, secularisation theory focuses on the decline of previous religious institutions, but overlooks the mechanism by which religion interconnects with society on a basic level. This mechanism can still generate ethical lifeworlds that do not reduce religious life to only ‘one of the options’, revealing the complexities of daily life with ethical concerns which are difficult to change. Besides, in foreseeing a trend towards the decline of religion, the secularisation theory neglects a more complex historical picture: the church participates in the modernisation process, or in other words, the state and the church are equally important players in modern transformations.

This religion-state-locality system, ignored by secularisation theories, means that although contentions always exist among them from the past to the present, and often religion and state compete for a dominant influence over the locality, they are still linked in significant ways, as they each translate their will into the other. For instance, religion can both articulate a feeling of community against the state and become the vessel for implementing state ideas within the community. The state can also do the same. Facing the challenges of a modernised world and the permeation of a nation-state's administrative power, the Catholic church also actively engages with *Heimat*, and through methods similar to those of the state, infuses Catholic ethics into *Heimat* practices and ideas. The church is no longer explicitly involved in village politics, but it still finds a way to retain a close connection with the village community (or in other words, continue acting as the adhesive force for the local community), which guarantees the continuity of Catholicism in the village as far as possible. Besides the church's considerable labour to ensure continuity (e.g., the repeated rituals in church services and festivals which refer to the original, transcendent truth), I also emphasised its pattern of cooperation with local associations which played a vital role in this context. The 'decline' of religion with all its supporting phenomena (such as the decreasing church participation rate) might better be understood as changes of operation in this religion-state-locality system, rather than an elimination of one of its dimensions.

CHAPTER FIVE CAN NATURE HEAL SOCIETY? PARALLELS BETWEEN IDEAS OF NATURE AND *HEIMAT*

Picking mushrooms in fairy-tale forests

One morning in September, Erna Meyer invited me to pick mushrooms in the forest near Blumendorf with her and her eleven-year-old daughter Gitti. When the rain brushes the forest in autumn, white shaggy parasols, yellow chanterelles, brown maron mushrooms and porcini all emerge through the thick moss on the forest floor. It is a beautiful scene, the tall, upright spruces almost obscuring the sky, yet light filters through the gaps between the trees, casting rows and columns of light. The ground is covered with soft green moss, and if you stand in bare feet, you can feel that it is neither too wet nor too dry, but soft and comfortable. There are few insects, snakes or other small animals on the ground, only clusters of mushrooms bringing a fragrance to the air. Walking through this tranquil forest is like strolling in an isolated wonderland, but it is actually very close to the village, only two or three minutes' walk from the northern edge of Blumendorf, and one can enter this protected forest after walking through a wheat field. Local people told me that the forest cannot be cut down, turned into farmland or built over. Picking mushrooms in the forest is a popular local activity, and in autumn I often saw people heading to the forest with baskets. 'We need to go there early, otherwise there won't be many mushrooms left', as Erna said. These mushrooms are not precious species, and while some people pick them to sell to restaurants, most pick them just for themselves, their friends and family to eat. Besides, though wild mushrooms are indeed delicious, I noticed that people above all enjoy the experience of walking and picking mushrooms in the forest.

I met Erna first in her big kitchen which has a typical Bavarian wooden table and benches, cupboards in antique styles, hand-made wooden decorations and fresh flowers, and a whole set of modern kitchenware. Her four cats constantly went in and out through the door linking the kitchen to the garden, where the family keep rabbits and chickens. The Meyer family bought one of the oldest houses in this region; it sits on the edge of Blumendorf, separated by a wheat field from the main residential part of the village. The family is well known for their 'natural' way of life, growing vegetables and raising chickens for eggs, and some Blumendorfers told me that the two daughters of the family are also quite different from other children: 'they are freer, like birds'. In fact, 'nature' is an important idea and value for Erna, and she organises her family's daily life according to it, from what to eat to what to use. She cares deeply about environmental issues and sent me news and links concerning environmental problems and petitions. Her passion coincides with her being a member of the Green Party. 'In nature we can have a healthy body and a healthy mind,' Erna told me.

Going into the forest that morning to pick mushrooms was also about 'immersing ourselves in nature'. Erna took two baskets, pocketknives and a book showing how to distinguish poisonous mushrooms from edible ones, and we set off to the forest. Gitti was happy and excited, running back and forth along the way. It felt exceedingly comfortable in the forest, with soft moss, fresh air and hardly any insects or other animals. After a short search we spotted a group of brown maron mushrooms (the most common type in the forest) and used the pocketknives to cut and harvest them. I felt a sense of delight as we walked through the forest and harvested more and more mushrooms, especially the rarer and more delicious white shaggy parasols and porcini. The experience reminded me of the vivid descriptions of picking mushrooms in Tsing's article (2012: 141-142), for instance, the 'air smells fresh with ozone, sap, and leaf litter' and she observes 'orange folds of chanterelles pushing through the dark wet or the warm muffins of king boletes popping up through crumbly earth'. Just as Tsing (2012: 141) recognises in mushrooms a form of interspecies life and intimacy sitting at the 'unruly edges' of the capitalist world, within the 'seams of imperial space', the mushrooms, forests and mushroom-picking activities in Bavaria also reveal both a disciplinary ideal and a form of life not fully ruled by it.

If we look closely, we may discover that forests in Bavaria are not really 'natural'. They are under intensive care and management, usually with monocultures of one kind of tree (in my fieldwork site, spruce), very few insects or animals. As Wilson (2012: 11) stressed, 'Germany's forests were orderly, managed spaces – a far cry from the mythical primeval forest (*Urwald*) of the Teutons'. But here the forest also elicits a kind of perplexity, for two contradictory impulses are embodied: the aim is that trees should grow freely and be left as they are; but they should also be carefully monitored so as not to present any real dangers to people. It is no wonder that people feel quite comfortable in 'nature', enjoying a combination of wildness and safety. This is in fact cultured and tamed nature, but cultured in such a way as to mimic real nature itself. Therefore, I felt like I was in a fairy-tale forest: neither an overly man-made artefact nor the real world.

Research on nature and forests has often made the point that forests and other seemingly natural scenes are in fact socially and historically constructed and regulated to serve certain political purposes. For instance, different patterns of forestry in Southeast Asia at different times have exhibited the major political influences of the period, whether scientific management to cultivate timber to supply imperial expansion during the period of colonisation, or the post-colonial move to plant multiple species under the banner of 'sustainable development', even though these exotic tree plantations have fewer local uses (Greenough & Tsing 2003). More applicable to Blumendorf is Scott’s (1998) research which sees state formation and state techniques of government in German forest management. He argues that the invention of scientific forestry in Prussia and Saxony in the late eighteenth century, and the ‘simplification, legibility, and manipulation’ (Scott 1998: 11) used in forest management, are a model of how the modern state produces schematic knowledge and control. As Wilson (2012: 11) concludes, ‘James Scott uses German forestry as the prototypical example of the “high modernist” approach to the environment’.

Not only is state governmentality embodied in the forests, but they are also closely related to the formation of the German nation-state and German identity itself. As early as 1852, German ethnologist Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1867: 49-50) already linked forests with the German people and the German national essence, saying ‘[w]e must preserve the forests, not simply so that the oven is not cold in winter, but also in order that the pulse of German folk life continues to beat warmly and cheerfully, in order that Germany remains German’. Under the influence of such ideas, a category of the ‘German forest’ emerged out of the diverse landscape of trees in Germany (Wilson 2012: 3). The selection of forests as a national symbol also has cultural and historical bases: from Tacitus’s *Germania*, to Heinrich von Kleist’s play about the ancient Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in which Germanic hero Arminius ambushed three Roman legions in the forest, and Caspar David Friedrich’s painting depicting a French soldier getting lost in the forest, forests served as a significant symbol, representing German strength, resolution and independence against its physical and abstract enemies, be they French invaders, Napoleon’s occupation, the French Enlightenment, or the depredations of capitalism perceived as a foreign ‘invader’ in the German countryside (Wilson 2012: 4).

These works were also attempts by the German educated bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum*) to invest national meanings in the forests (and other symbols of nature) that continued throughout the nineteenth century, particularly around the time of the unification of Germany in 1871, and with varying degrees of intensity to the present day. This effort also points to a 'new nationalism' (Wilson 2012: 18) that attempts to base political loyalty on landscape and nature rather than the traditional bases – royal houses and established churches. For this end 'nature' has many advantages: firstly, it can provide malleable symbols (such as the forest) which encompass the whole nation, to which everyone can relate and thus transcend Germany's myriad political divisions; secondly, it can turn the abstract concept of the 'nation' into the concrete, tangible experience of nature that everyone can enjoy (Wilson 2012: 19). Perhaps the reader has already noticed that the way 'nature' is transformed into a political and national symbol is quite similar to the way '*Heimat*' becomes a mediator between nation and locality, and that in the end nature and *Heimat* embody similar characteristics. We will come back to this point later in this chapter. Thus, a walk in the forest, or a hike to the mountains have the potential to renew a sense of pride and identity in both *Heimat* and the nation. When I went hiking with villagers in the mountains and forests surrounding Blumendorf, people often talked about the important battles that took place there, especially when passing monuments erected to commemorate them, which make the connection between nature, locality, national geography and history. In this sense, nature, landscape, and forests become a metaphor for the nation itself.

Immersion into nature: Romanticist influences

In addition to experiences closely related to the nation-state, I also found that villagers express another kind of sentiment towards the forest. People often say that they like to ‘immerse themselves’ in the forest, that the forest makes them ‘feel refreshed’ or ‘healthier’, and these are the most frequently mentioned reasons for the locals to go for walks or pick mushrooms. ‘Health’ is a word that comes up a lot, as Erna mentioned when she invited me to go mushroom-picking with her: not only does the fresh, oxygen-rich air of the forest keep you physically healthy, but being close to nature also keeps you mentally well – more peaceful, serene, and unencumbered by your own desires and increasingly fast-paced work. Even society as a whole can become ‘healthier’ as a result, as the men drinking and chatting in the inn once concluded when I mentioned mushroom picking during one *Stammtisch*: as more and more individuals gain a healthier body and mind through getting closer to nature, society will no longer be grasped by a pathological pursuit of money, development, and the constant desire for more. Whether indeed driven by these ideas or not, Erna did find great joy and relaxation in picking mushrooms, and her youngest daughter Gitti clearly exhibited ‘immersion’ in the forest, as she ran and bounced around, barely talking to us, and immersed in her own world. Sometimes she ran under a tree, sometimes she would press her body against the mossy ground in search of mushrooms behind a rock or under a broken wooden stump; when she found them, she would cry with joy, but when she did not, she was just as happy. It seemed that she enjoyed the experience more than whether she could find mushrooms as her ‘trophy’. Then Gitti started to chant a melody she improvised with a repeating lyric: ‘Gitti and the *Schwammerl*’ (i.e., ‘mushroom’ in Bavarian dialect). She ran and jumped around happily as she sang, not consciously focusing on the singing or any potential meanings of the song, but expressing an overall experience of joy. The sensations of smell, touch, sight, and feelings of pleasure were all mingled in this expression, making no specific boundaries between ‘I’ and ‘nature’. This can be the kind of moment when things a person has learned of the demarcation between ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’ withdraws to the backyard of consciousness. In this sense, ‘I’ am the *Schwammerl* and the *Schwammerl* is me. The word ‘*Schwammerl*’, in the Bayern dialect that is Gitti’s native language, adds to the intimacy and sensuality that Gitti expressed.

This kind of ‘immersion’ reminds me of Tsing’s (2015: vii-viii) interpretation of the ‘interspecies entanglement’ which forms ‘“third nature,” that is, what manages to live despite capitalism’. Tsing draws in the capitalist world as the backdrop, which can also be taken as the background to Bavarian villagers picking mushrooms and Gitti's song, but there are also significant differences between them. A more superficial difference is that mushrooms in Bavaria and the acts of people picking them do not embody the same capitalist commercial connotations as the picking of matsutake mushrooms studied by Tsing (2015). The matsutake mushrooms are rare, of high economic value and relatively difficult to find as they hidden underground, whereas mushrooms in Bavarian forests are relatively common and readily available species that are less often picked for sale (even when sold they are inexpensive) and mostly eaten at home. A more important difference is that in terms of the relationship between man and nature as expressed by both, the Bavarian villagers have a relatively complete and mature discourse, such as the statement that ‘immersion in nature leads to the health of body, mind and even society’, and a very conscious and deliberate corresponding practice. But the kind of ‘entanglement’ described by Tsing is not a principle, nor a settled discourse, but ‘an over-the-top bounty; a temptation to explore; and always too many’ which ‘tangle with and interrupt each other – mimicking the patchiness of the world’ (Tsing 2015: viii). To convey this, Tsing needed to find a new way of writing, building ‘an open-ended assemblage, not a logical machine’ through short chapters that resemble mushrooms that spring up after the rain, and which point through gesturing to ‘the so-much-more out there’ (Tsing 2015: viii). Therefore, the relationship between the capitalist world and the kind of ‘immersion’ in nature, as expressed and expected by Bavarian villagers, is different from what Tsing calls ‘interspecies entanglement’. The former indicates a kind of principle responding to the problems of the capitalist world, while Tsing's (2015: viii) 'entanglement' is more akin to an ever-present element in the capitalist world which it can never fully strangle, and which I would define as an 'immanent perennial presence'.

Therefore, to comprehend Bavarian local people's understanding of nature, we need to pay more attention to the above discourses which closely interlink nature, body, mind, society and health, and explore the historical and theoretical sources of the ideas which underlie them. When nature becomes the stated source of health for people's body, mind, and society, an idea is revealed that places nature above the latter factors. This is very different from post-Enlightenment ideas that place a high value on human rationality and agency, and suggest that through these humans can control nature. The upholding and respect for nature itself as something not to be manipulated and exploited by human endeavours, has long been cherished in German Romanticist thought. Stone (2014: 49) articulates the Romanticist understanding of nature as being that 'human beings are dependent on nature because nature is an all-encompassing whole which develops into manifold articulations, including humankind, which as such is merely one part of the natural world'. Countering German Idealist thought, Romanticists such as Schlegel (1958, 1991) and Novalis (1960; 2007) equate nature itself with the Absolute and the world which not only contains human beings (including human reason), but also profoundly exceeds them. Unlike the Idealists, Romanticists do not think that human reason can fully comprehend nature as a whole, nor can human efforts transform nature. However, this understanding leads to a result that 'in thus accepting that we depend on and are part of nature, we are to accept that nature is a whole greater than us … nature is and must remain other to and profoundly unlike us' (Stone 2014: 42-43), which seems to embody a paradox that nature both generates human being and everything else (and is thus linked with them) and fundamentally transcends them (and so severs ties). After knowing the Romanticist understanding of nature, we can find that much research on nature is in fact based on a rationalist understanding, whether agreeing with it or arguing against it. For instance, Tsing's (2015: vii) criticism of the rationalist understanding of nature is clear, as she argues that '[e]ver since the enlightenment, western philosophers have shown us a Nature that is grand and universal but also passive and mechanical. Nature was a backdrop and resource for the moral intentionality of Man, which could tame and master Nature'. However, her way of putting it is as though the rationalist understanding was the only 'western' understanding of nature, without exploring sufficiently other western trails of thoughts on nature such as the Romanticists'.

The Romanticist approach and its characteristics as a counter movement against Enlightenment values have ignited disparate comments from historians. Some, such as Hans Kohn (1960) and George Mosse (1985), embraced a position valuing Enlightenment over Romanticism and criticised the latter's understanding of nature as a desire to 'escape from reality into a dream world where time stood still, a world that pointed back to the past rather than forward to the future', which results in a naïve romantic belief in the 'healing power of nature, symbolizing the genuine and the immutable, [which] could serve to reinforce human control over a world forever on the brink of chaos' (Mosse 1985: 112, 137). However, the importance and social significance of Romanticism have also been recognised by some historians. For instance, Blanning (2012: 17) records that many intellectuals from the eighteenth century onwards were unconvinced of 'the elevation of reason to sole eminence', thinking that 'the scientific method could explain everything but understand nothing'. These intellectuals' views, and the social phenomena, influenced by Romanticism, that coexist with them, led Blanning (2012: xvi) to argue that Romanticism 'brought about a cultural revolution comparable in its radicalism and effects with the roughly contemporary American, French, and Industrial Revolutions', having far-reaching impacts on social development. In a world largely convinced by rationality after the Enlightenment, Romanticism 'did not simply wish to go back to the institutions and values of the past but looked for alternatives. It was into this transcendental vacuum that the Romantics moved' (Blanning 2012: xvi). In a significant way, Blumendorfers' idea of nature is influenced by Romanticist understandings, which is not only reflected in local discourses, but also in practices and organisational forms. We will elaborate the latter in the next section.

German naturism

Picking mushrooms in the forest is just one of a variety of activities by which Blumendorfers like to get close to nature. People often go to climb mountains, hike, camp or simply have a daily walk in the forest and are proud of their beautiful nature and landscape. In nearby towns and villages, though not in Blumendorf, there are associations specifically for mountain climbing or fishing etc., in which many Blumendorfers participated. Engaging with nature is also an indispensable element of the Catholic scouts in Blumendorf. As a Catholic association which aims to cultivate children's character and religious commitments, when they meet every Friday afternoon, they usually choose a site as close to nature as possible, for instance, the forest or a field. They then learn skills of survival in the wild, such as pitching tents and building campfires. In the village, people love to participate in activities in nature, and this might be one of the most significant similarities among them across their different ages, occupations, and political orientations.

Throughout modern German history, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many similar associations have strived to bring German people closer to nature, underpinned by a variety of social forces, be it conservative, socialist or religious. These associations routinely organised activities like hiking, camping, and nudist activities, and when there were serious social problems, particularly in Imperial, Weimar and Nazi Germany from 1900 to 1940, these activities enjoyed surges in popularity, becoming actual social movements (Williams 2007: 2-4). For instance, recognising the disastrous consequences of the First World War and the monotony of work as the production of human beings disturbed both internally and externally, in 1924 Adolf Koch founded the Koch School which organised workers and their children to exercise in the nude. They perceived Nudism to be ‘a way for the working class to turn to nature for strength and inspiration’ (Williams 2007: 1). During warmer months, they would also set up nudist camps near forests. This programme gained support from Social Democratic parliamentarians, educators and physicians and attracted several thousand members by 1930 (Williams 2007: 1).

There was also the famous *Lebensreform* (life reform) movement from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries: its ‘most holy duty’ was to convert ‘mistaken fellow creatures’ (Krabbe 1974: 159). Life reformers strived to ‘improve urban-industrial society by exposing the body to more “natural” ways of living, which ranged from vegetarianism, abstinence from alcohol and nicotine, dress reform, and nudism to natural healing through sunlight, water, and fresh air (*Naturheilkunde*) and the building of rural communes and “garden cities”’ (Williams 2007: 11). This movement enjoyed high popularity. For instance, membership of the German League of Associations for Natural Living and Healing grew from 19,000 in 1889 to 148,000 in 1913 (Williams 2007: 11). They understood ‘sickness’ as holistic, a combination of body, mind and spirit, so that ‘[s]ickness was caused by the disrupted relation of the individual to nature brought by industrialization and urbanization’ (Williams 2007: 12). The life reform movement was attractive to conservatives, liberals and socialists alike, thus seemingly it was believed that this concept of the healing power of nature could resolve whatever problems respective forces recognised in society. In these movements, leaders and spokespersons developed an ideal narrative of turning to nature. This usually started with a detailed analysis of a particular social crisis or crises; then it advocated ideal ways to turn to nature; and in the end, it concluded with a vision of improvement for the individual, the organisation and ultimately for the whole nation (Williams 2007: 15).

Williams (2007: 2) calls the new ideology that galvanised these movements 'naturism'. It is in fact an ideology that concerns the social and cultural crisis which derived from industrialisation and urbanisation, rather than ecological problems, but by drawing comparison with ideas and practices concerning ecology, especially environmentalism, we can better understand the meanings of naturism in a German locality. There are many similarities between the two, but for each similarity there are also subtle yet significant differences. Environmentalism is an overarching response to the problems exposed in 'modern, technologically driven development', which is both a worldview, a 'discursive construction of nature and agency', and activism (Berglund 2018: 1). In this regard naturism is the same. As Williams (2007: 2) states, '[n]aturist movements believed that Germany was beset by a number of crises, including the threat of urban living conditions to the body, psyche, moral character, and political consciousness; the capitalist exploitation of industrial workers; the moral and sexual waywardness of adolescents, particularly young males.' However, environmentalism and naturism respond to these modern problems in different ways, and the specific worldviews and discourses they shape are different. Environmentalism is fundamentally based on a 'concern over the impacts of human activity on the nonhuman world' (Berglund 2018: 1). Although this element is also present in naturist movements (especially when there are anxieties and actions about the 'illness of society', including environmental degradation), it is not its predominant characteristic. The predominant emphasis is on the realisation that nature is powerful and unalterable by human society, and that nature is an original resource to which people can return for spiritual renewal and thus change society, so emphasising the impact of nature on human activity.

The above differences were shown quite clearly during a hiking excursion organised by the local shooting association. The shooting association organises larger group events almost every season that people sign up for voluntarily, and most of these events have something to do with getting close to the surrounding nature. Hiking and camping in the nearby mountains are a popular option. Once I joined such an excursion to a famous mountain nearby. Driving there on a hired bus, people laughed loudly and chatted, singing songs together from time to time, which was quite enjoyable. The villager sitting next to me chatted with me all the way about the famous mountains and beautiful scenery around us, not hesitating to express her love for the beautiful nature of her *Heimat*. People brought a lot of *Semmel*[11], *Leberkäse*[12], drinks and beers from the village inn and found an empty lot to stop at for a picnic in the middle of the journey. Like many others standing around as we chatted, ate and drank, I held a *Leberkässemmel* (a sandwich of *Leberkäse* in *Semmel*) in one hand and *Apfelschorle* (apple spritzer) in another. At that time, I could not yet distinguish between these local nature-lovers and the environmentalists, so I asked their opinions about a recently built motorway in the area. I had heard that this motorway cut through some farmland and might pollute its surrounding environment which aroused dissatisfaction and resistance among farmers living close to it. However, contrary to my expectation, most people responded in a kind of ‘not in my backyard’ style, believing that the motorway was relatively far away from their own village and its pollution would be less likely to affect their lives; meanwhile, having a motorway would make transportation easier which benefits Blumendorf as well, so they accepted and even welcomed its construction. Their attitudes reflected that their care and concern for their hometown are greater than for nature itself. This was also apparent on another occasion when I talked with the only full-time farmer in Blumendorf about bio-agriculture, a pesticide-free and presumably more environmentally friendly way of farming. He rejected the idea, believing that it was not modern and inefficient, and he himself was not keen to adopt it. When Berglund (2001: 320-332) studied an environmentalist group protesting against toxic water in a small town on the border of the former East and West Germany, she also noticed that other local associations did not like this environmentalist group very much, seeing it as too extreme, too inclined towards change, distrustful and opposing the government, etc. Indeed, associations embody almost exactly the opposite of these characteristics. Erna, who was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, once told me that her membership of the Green Party meant she was marginalised to a certain degree in the village, though her love of nature is shared by other villagers.

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[11] A *Semmel* is a kind of hard roll very popular in southern Germany for breakfast, brunch and snacks.

[12] *Leberkäse*, literally meaning ‘liver cheese’, is a specialty bread-shaped sausage in southern Germany, made of ground corned beef, pork and bacon baked into a meatloaf.

So far, we have considered two ways to understand nature: it is both a symbol that contributes significantly to the formation of a German national identity and demonstrates a nation's governance (as explained in the first section of this chapter), and a 'source of healing' when this identity and governance face problems (as explained in the second section). Therefore, nature forms a delicate 'system' that can effectively generate, revise, and reproduce itself. People's attitudes towards forests in times of social crisis can serve as a good example. When the German nation-state was doing well, such as between the 1850s and 1860s when the economy boomed, there was little emphasis on forests, but when certain crises appeared, there was a clear trend and movement to unify identity through the 'forest'. For instance, the economic crash of 1873 and a massive socialist movement aroused fear of national disorder and degeneration, and many politicians, historians, geographers, poets, painters, nature preservationists and others turned to the ‘German forest’ for answers to the country’s pressing problems (Wilson 2012: 4-5). Most discourse unified German identity under a common respect for and attachment to the forest, while under the influence of capitalism the forest was left in a precarious situation, as some landowners and the state exploited timber for profit. The loss of the forest was considered to be at the expense of the nation, ‘whether environmental (greater erosion and flooding), medical (less clean air and declining opportunities for healthy recreation, especially for the urban populace), social (fewer sources of income and resources for peasants), economic (dwindling sources of wood at a time of rampant worldwide consumption), cultural (less opportunity for artistic inspiration and scientific investigation), or political (waning attachment to the region [Heimat] and the nation)’ (Wilson 2012: 5). Therefore, if Germany wanted to continue to be successful, it must protect the forest in the face of capitalism (Wilson 2012: 5).

Furthermore, the parallelism between this two-fold understanding of nature and the idea of *Heimat* are also becoming more obvious. The concept of nature as a source of healing for society (i.e., making society ‘healthier’) rests on the premise of society’s ‘sickness’ with the problems of modernity. Among them, a significant problem, or even *the* problem that encompasses all other issues is ‘the decline in popular devotion to the regional and national “homeland” (Heimat)’ (Williams 2007: 2). Therefore, naturism is also essentially related to *Heimat*, as a way to deal with the problems in and of *Heimat* through reorienting people to nature. Besides, just as there is a nationalist discourse embedded in the idea of *Heimat*, the problems of *Heimat* were also phrased as crises for the nation caused by war, revolution, everyday social instabilities and other longer-term instabilities both real and imagined, from which a people has to ‘pull itself back together’ through ‘making and unmaking of the German nation’ (Jarausch & Geyer 2003: 12). Some naturists also tended to link rural landscape with national identity (Williams 2007: 3). Besides, *Heimat* also embodies two-fold meanings – it is both an indispensable link in the formation of the German modern nation-state and a way to solve the problems of modernity. As such, the concepts of nature and *Heimat* in the German context echo each other, forming a kind of parallel metaphor according to which nature heals the problems of society and culture, just in the same way in which *Heimat* solves the problems of modernity.

The 'contradictory' relationships between nature and society, and the parallelism between nature and *Heimat*

The 'system' that generates, revises, and reproduces itself, and the idea of 'returning to nature to heal society's illness' analysed in the above three sections also demonstrates a special local understanding of the relationship between nature and society (or culture). Obtaining this kind of understanding is also the prerequisite of the effectiveness of this 'system' and 'the healing power of nature'. Through analysis, we discern that two seemingly contradictory relationships between nature and society are embodied in this local understanding.

Firstly, an intermingling of nature and society is revealed. A significant understanding underlying the 'healing power of nature' is the interpenetration of social problems, nature, and people's bodies and minds. Only in this way can social problems be framed as an illness of human (and national) body and mind, caused by disrupted relationships between people and nature and in due course healed by restoring an appropriate relationship between them. When studying landscape, Lounela, Berglund and Kallinen (2019: 14) observed two approaches that highlight and investigate the intermingling of nature and society: political and phenomenological. The political approach focuses on how landscapes are shaped by political and economic forces in particular political histories, and how in turn landscapes also shaped particular social conditions. Viewing the German forest as a form of landscape intertwined with the German nation-state, as in the first section, is observing the relationship between nature and culture through this political approach. The other, phenomenological approach is mainly built on the concept of 'dwelling' in Ingold's (2000) highly influential anthropology of nature, which understands environments as the products of human and nonhuman entanglements. 'Dwelling' highlights immersion in the flow of everyday life, which is a proposition quite similar to Blumendorfers' 'immersion in nature' as a way to be 'healed' by nature. In recognition of the mutual generation of nature and culture, and landscape as 'neither social nor natural but socionatural' (Lounela et al. 2019: 9), differing from the political approach, the phenomenological approach stresses 'sensorial experience, materiality and language' (Lounela et al. 2019: 14). To establish a relatively comprehensive picture of the combination of nature and society underlying Blumendorfers' understanding of the 'healing power of nature', one needs to take different aspects of these two approaches together.

However, if we further analyse local ideas and practices concerning nature, we find that it also contains, paradoxically, an idea of 'pure nature' which needs to be unaffected (and therefore, not 'tainted') by human society. Nature with 'healing power' must be pure, which is essentially distinct from human society and beyond human morality. We will now focus on this point which has not been adequately discussed above.

Unlike the Chewong in the Malaysian rainforest (Howell 2014: 101) who think that 'frogs – as well as many other non-human beings and objects in their forest environment – have consciousness (ruwai) which makes them persons and subjects', Blumendorfers seldom talked about animals and plants in this way. Even Gitti's chanting while picking mushrooms was not a conscious discourse of non-human beings obtaining the characteristics of subjects, but rather closer to a subconscious, almost mystical identification of self and non-human beings. In local common discourse, the distinction between non-human beings and humans is still quite obvious in most circumstances, such as the mushroom book that lists characteristics of different mushrooms and organises them, treating them like objects and nature a domain of objects. In naturist movements like the socialist Koch school, ‘nature’ is considered to contain ‘no class hierarchy’ (Williams 2007: 2), which no doubt expresses their ideal of social relations. However, simultaneously, a nature with ‘no class hierarchy’ also denotes something opposite to and uninfluenced by people’s social experiences. Besides, in the naturist movements even though the human body is considered natural, nature is seen as non-human (Williams 2007: 2). These ideas present a kind of realism that sees nature as ‘essentially a “real entity” … substantially separate from social practices and human experience’ (Macnaghten & Urry 1998: I). or as Descola (2013: xv) very precisely summarised in his landmark book *Beyond Nature and Culture*, nature is understood as ‘a unifying arrangement of things, however disparate, … a domain of objects that were subject to autonomous laws that formed a background against which the arbitrariness of human activities could exert its many-faceted fascination’.

To understand this idea that separates nature and culture, we should pay special attention to what I have described as the ‘fairy-tale forest’ in Bavaria, that is those acts of ‘mimicking’ real nature to create a cultured nature which both resembles the ‘wildness’ of real nature and is tamed to ensure safety. ‘Imitating nature’ happens in many different societies, especially when people create gardens. Through comparison with other activities to imitate nature in other societies, we can better comprehend the specific characteristics of the Bavarian actions. For instance, the Japanese Karesansui garden, or ‘Dry Landscape garden’, is iconic in its exquisite imitation of nature in microcosmic form rather than incorporating actual natural elements (McKellar & Deane 2015). In this kind of garden, raked white gravel represents water and rocks with artistic shapes represent mountains or other natural forms. Rigorous human efforts stay in the foreground and the 'nature' Karesansui garden imitates is an ideal of harmony between the 'beauty of natural accident' and 'perfection of man-made type' (Nitschke 1993: 11). However, by comparison, even though the Bavarian forests and gardens are also rigorously managed, the 'nature' they try to imitate reveals another ideal, which is that 'nature should be nature itself without human traces': this explains the appearance of 'wildness' in well-tended forests. The human efforts to take care of the forests and cultivate them in a way coinciding with people's understandings of what 'nature itself' should be thus stay in the background in this case. The contrast between Bavarian forests and Japanese Karesansui gardens creates a very illuminating mirror image of two different understandings of nature. We first need to recognise that both gardens and forests are well-tended, invested with heavy human efforts, and not left to grow 'naturally' all by themselves. However, the different forms they eventually take are modelled after different understandings of nature. For the Japanese, nature is essentially intertwined with human efforts. As these efforts become more and more perfect, so does nature, and they do not embody fundamental differences. But for the Bavarian Germans, nature is essentially different from human efforts, and if something becomes more natural, it becomes further removed from human influences, or at least appears so. Therefore, in the forests which Bavarians consider one of the most significant representations of nature, one needs to consciously or unconsciously hide human traces and the human efforts that maintain order and safety.

We need to analyse in detail how this pure and abstract nature, which is conceptually cut off from society, came to be, and how in its formation and characteristics it is profoundly co-constructed with the concept of *Heimat*. First, it is important to stress that, when hiding human efforts, one is in fact mimicking nature (as in what grows in the natural world without human interference). If the object of mimicry is ‘nature itself’, then one first needs an understanding of nature as a whole which is the foundation of the act of mimicry. Even though a particular act of mimicry may focus on a particular object, in this underlying overall understanding of nature it in fact solidifies the particularities and makes what was previously inseparable from human experiences a separable entity, which is exactly ‘nature itself as a whole’. This understanding also needs to abstract from the entity of nature a concept of nature with its own principles, so as to guide the act of mimicry. The abstraction of a concept of nature consists of two steps: decontextualisation and recontextualisation. Abstraction is a process and ‘[o]ne aspect of this process is removing an object from the context in which it had existed previously’ (Carrier 2004: 11). This decontextualisation is followed by a recontextualisation which places the object in another context. Different human practices and experiences are incorporated in the different contexts (Carrier 2004: 11-12). The experience of intermingling nature and culture is closely related to the context of concrete particularities of nature which are essentially inseparable from other human/social/cultural experiences, whereas the experience of distinction of nature and culture refers to the context of solidified and abstracted nature. In this way, the process of ‘abstraction of particularities’ pulls ‘nature’ out of its previous concrete context and accompanying experiences, and places it in another realm of meaning and context of experience. Lastly, even though ‘nature’ is recontextualised, the process will reverse it as though ‘nature’ itself has all these meanings, namely, social relations and cultural meanings are ‘first ascribed to nature, then “derived” from it’ (Burke 1965: 278n).

To a large extent, this process very much resembles what the concept of ‘*Heimat*’ has gone through. Coinciding with Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s (1983) recognition of the modern origins of ‘traditions’ in their discussions of the invention of tradition, '*Heimat*' functions as an invented tradition which 'originated in a period of rapid social transformation' and represents 'post-traditional ways of constructing usable pasts for a modern present' (Von Moltke 2005: 14). The idea of *Heimat* emerged in the period of the founding of German nation in 1871 and reflected an effort to 'negotiate the abstract concept of the nation in terms of spatial presence' through 'a particular conceptualization of local space, which can then be related in various ways to a larger whole' (Von Moltke 2005: 10). How is this conceptualisation realised? In Confino's (1997: 98, 107) understanding, *Heimat* is a 'local metaphor' for the nation which forms an imagined community in people's minds and attempts to 'transform the impersonal nation into something manageable, intimate, and "small"' (Confino 1997: 133). The particularities of local life are represented in numerous *Heimat* museums, films, postcards, and histories across the nation and in this process the representations of locality and nation become interchangeable. People will thus perceive the local with a double view which presents both 'a concrete experiential dimension and a more abstract metaphorical function' (Von Moltke 2005: 9).

Like the concept of nature, this double-viewed *Heimat* is achieved through the process of decontextualisation and recontextualisation. Boa and Palfreyman (2000: 3-5) summarise the process as the mythification of *Heimat*, especially in the period from the First World War to the Third Reich when *Heimat* and nation became closely interlinked. Firstly, *Heimat* was decontextualised from real particularities of localities and became an abstract concept. Then certain symbols, such as 'peasants' or 'the soil', replaced the particularities and filled this abstract concept. Lastly, these symbols were elevated to be representatives of the national identity, so that for instance, the peasants are 'not actual peasants but a vacuously ideal peasant spirit of the German race' (Boa & Palfreyman 2000: 4) and '[t]o be a peasant is an inner disposition, not a mode of employment' (Boa & Palfreyman 2000: 5). From another angle, it is also possible to fill this concept of *Heimat* with other symbols or national meanings such as patriotism.

The structural echoing between nature and *Heimat* is further supplemented by the similarity of their symbolic meanings, which further supports the special affinity between these two concepts. *Heimat* is ‘generally associated with the mother and in metaphorical extension with the maternal earth’ (Boa & Palfreyman 2000: 26). *Heimat* and nature both embody feminine symbolic connotations, which became increasingly significant in social life especially when after the Second World War the patricentric symbol of political authority ended in Germany – Borneman (2004) termed this the ‘death of the father’. In many *Heimat* films after the Second World War, *Heimat* was almost equated with beautiful scenery, especially the Alps, and these natural landscapes bore the kind of regional and national identity which was no longer so legitimate (Boa & Palfreyman 2000: 11). In the 1970s and 1980s, the protection of *Heimat* was also closely linked with environmentalism, as protecting nature resembles protecting *Heimat* (Boa & Palfreyman 2000: 21-22).

Just as the concept of *Heimat* contains both locality – that actually interacts with and mutually alters each other’s real existences with external forces – and the abstract idea of ‘how locality should be’ that transcends these real existences (and the latter is intended to promote a deeper interaction of locality with external forces, and mitigates the conflicts that such depths may entail), the concept of nature also encompasses the nature that is actually symbiotic with human society and culture (the political and phenomenological approach to this symbiotic relationship has been discussed earlier), and the idea of ‘pure nature’ that transcends this real symbiosis and is conceptually unrelated to human society and culture. Similarly, when conflicts arise in the symbiotic relationship between nature and culture – the problems are often attributed to society or culture – the idea of ‘pure nature’ also refers to a way out of these conflicts: ‘return to (pure) nature to heal the illnesses of society’. Ultimately, the ‘healing power’ of nature can only exist when these two seemingly paradoxical characteristics of nature are combined: only when human society is part of nature and when there exists an interpenetration of social problems, nature, people’s bodies and minds, can nature obtain the ‘access’ needed to heal society; and only when nature is profoundly greater and other than human society, can it have the ‘power’ to heal any problems. This explains people’s relationship with nature as both close (frequently going into nature to become healthier both in body and mind) and distant (nature is an objective entity distinct from human society/culture), as is also shown in the vignette about mushroom picking.

Anthropological studies of nature

In anthropological studies, the coexistence of a nature-culture combination and a nature-culture distinction in a society, as argued in the previous section, has received comparatively little attention. This is not to say that when studying understandings of nature and culture, anthropologists have not paid attention to these two seemingly contradictory phenomena and ideas, but they mostly recognise them as realities of the intermingling of nature and culture and the artificial distinction between them in people’s minds.

There is a large body of literature exploring landscape that addresses the discussion of the relationship between nature and culture. Before the 1990s, researchers usually postulated ecosystems as biophysical entities that are different from human society (though they interact with each other), and the environment as an ecosystem that humans need to adapt to (e.g., Steward 1955; Geertz 1963; Rappaport 1968). The understanding of nature embodied here is ‘an autonomous object separable from humanity and on which the human spectator can project meanings’ (Lounela et al. 2019: 19). Descola (2013: 61) argues that this understanding of nature is inseparable from ‘movement to mathematize space’ which was ‘promoted by geometry, physics, and optics’. But this perspective, which distinguishes between nature and society, has been questioned. Lounela, Berglund and Kallinen (2019: 14) summarises this criticism clearly in that ‘the distinction or dualism of people and nature becomes a problem, since it leads to the clearly flawed argument that humans determine and are separated from the material characteristics of landscape’. Lounela (2019) in her own research shows how this ‘problem’ disturbed rural Indonesia: administrative mapmaking is intentionally or unintentionally erasing local people’s memories of the social meanings of their landscape. Similarly, Mölkänen (2019) studied the comprehension of a Malagasy rainforest by conservation scientists and agencies, who seemed to understand it as an abstract entity, with engendered species, which was very different from local people’s understanding.

Many anthropologists started to emphasise the concept of ‘place’ in an attempt to find the nexus between nature and culture, such as the indispensable role of ‘place’ in the formation of meaningful genealogies and topologies (e.g., Hirsch & O’Hanlon 1995; Feld & Basso 1996; Fox 2006). There are also anthropologists trying to overcome the dualism between nature and culture, finding the place of the human in nature (e.g., Strathern 1980; Philippe & Pálsson 1996; Ingold 2000). Ingold is an important figure in this way of thinking, understanding landscape and the human organism as constantly becoming part of each other, and strongly arguing against seeing humans as transcending or controlling their environments. Ingold criticises European modernity which considers nature as separated from human society, manageable and to be transformed (see Ingold 1993, 2000). Rather, he stresses ‘the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment' (Ingold 2000: 347). Another important figure supporting this view, Tsing (2015: 18-19) attributed human control over, and even destruction of landscape and nature to early modern capitalism. Then, she discovered in the ruins of destroyed landscape the traces of interdependence and coexistence of humans, other species, and nonhuman beings. The assemblages formed in this process form the basis of future landscapes (Tsing 2015: 29). In this way, in the ruins left by capitalism which separates nature and society, there is also hope for their reunion. Latour (2005) also applied the idiom of assemblages, and the Actor Network Theory, to take non-humans as actors rather than passive objects that can only carry meanings human beings projected on them.

Studies of the relationship between nature and culture in non-Western cultures have led anthropologists to recognise that the distinction between nature and human, society or culture is a peculiar Western understanding, whereas in other cultures there is more emphasis on the fusion of the two, and anthropologists tend to think that this 'fusion' is closer to the facts. For instance, Signe Howell (2014) observed that the attribution of consciousness to non-humans exists in many parts of the world, which reveals again the underlying intermingling of nature and culture even in places where people emphasise the division in their minds. Abram's (2014) project emphasises human embodiment and emplacement – our belonging in our animal bodies and social communities. He thinks that from our bodies and our earthedness we can see reality, and this challenges the 'nature/culture' dichotomy. He stresses that an 'objective' position outside of the flux of things, experience and relations is a delusion. Williams' (1980: 67-85) account of the strengthening of an abstract and idealist notion of nature through the Industrial Revolution indicated that this notion is historically constructed, and related to the ideologies of the bourgeoisie who retreated from cities to country estates. Based on a more comprehensive study of other societies and cultures, Descola (2013) analysed four different understandings of the nature-culture relationship (analogism, animism, totemism, and naturalism), of which naturalism, the one that distinguishes between nature and culture, is only one. Although this division may have contributed to ‘the accomplishment of modernity, it has now outlived its moral and epistemological efficiency’ (Descola 2014: 91).

However, I have some reservations about the tendency shown, explicitly or implicitly by the above studies to think that the fusion between nature and culture is closer to truth than the distinction between them. It may be true, as Descola (2013: xix) said, ‘that frontier [between nature and culture] was hardly any clearer among ourselves, despite all the epistemological apparatus mobilized to ensure that it was impermeable’, but we should pay some more attention to the ‘epistemological apparatus’ which is an indispensable part of a culture. The distinction exists in people’s minds and to a certain extent guides their actions and influences their social experiences, which should also be taken seriously as a social fact. The understanding of ‘objective’ nature is also culturally specific, revealing the characteristics of Bavarian society in my research. Besides, the Bavarian understanding also presents a special combination of both connection and division of nature and culture. Connection and division must exist simultaneously, as this is essential for the ‘healing’ effect of nature on culture.

Unreachability as strength and disaster

Yet, can the important motivation and goal behind this local view of nature – healing the ‘sickness’ of society – really be achieved? From what I have observed in my fieldwork and from the historical facts, I think the answer is both yes and no. In my experiences of accompanying Blumendorfers to forests and mountains, I myself felt a sense of refreshment after several hours walking along mountain paths, by ancient trees and crystal creeks. People could indeed feel ‘happier and healthier’ after immersing themselves in nature, as they told me with sparkling eyes, and this seems to ‘heal’ their tiredness and boredom with a repetitive daily routine. However, when serious social problems emerged and the rhetoric and practices of ‘returning to nature to heal the problems of society’ arose, in historical records we quite often witness their failure to achieve the desired effects.

In the naturist movements mentioned above which reached their peak before the Second World War, even though during their meetings there were also projects to discuss political problems or raise class consciousness (such as the socialist Life Reform), they did not address social problems directly. Rather, they pinned high hopes on an automatic renewal or healing of people, organisations, and the nation as a whole if they could be immersed into nature. However, if there is a financial crisis, hiking in the mountains may not be able to solve it. Besides, different political forces all adopted this rhetoric and practice of ‘bodily and mental renewal in nature’ and it was not difficult to exclude and strangle similar practices from antagonistic political forces if one political force prevailed. In history, we saw the outlawing of socialist hiking and nudism by the National Socialists.

At the same time, this ‘failure’ also points to an implicit connotation of nature (although it has a salient history), which also reveals a biased understanding of the nature of social problems and solutions. This has been most evident in the right-wing ideologues in German history, who have used a ‘pseudo-scientific biological determinism’ (Werther & Hurd 2013: 16) to closely link people and territory: it argues that people or *Volk* have been symbiotic with the natural environment in which they live (including its land and animals, etc.) for hundreds and thousands of years, and that they are mutually generative and inseparable. Therefore, *Volk* is ‘the expression of an “eco-niche”, the places, nations, and cultures to which they naturally belong’ (Olsen 1999: 6). This suggests that if the Germans as a people are to thrive, they also need to let German natural environments thrive. Meanwhile, it also leads to the exclusionary idea that only Germans (with their specific racial and cultural background) belong to the German land. Much of the rhetoric around protecting nature is in fact xenophobic, attributing problems that seem to ‘threaten’ nature and *Heimat* to international capitalism and immigration. For instance, the far-right *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland* (National Democratic Party of Germany) quite explicitly equated the protection of the environment with the protection of *Heimat*, and presented the German landscape and environment as ‘threatened’ by, for instance, housing for asylum-seekers whose low prices are ‘exterminating’ local dairy farmers (Werther & Hurd 2013: 16). Even in their opposition to the introduction of genetically modified crops, they used the analogy that if such crops were allowed gradually to increase, they would one day become too numerous and uncontrolled, just like immigrants coming to Germany. Such an analogy reveals the permeating mentality juxtaposing nature with *Heimat* and *Volk*, and the problems of nature with the problems of *Heimat* identified as coming from foreign people (Werther & Hurd 2013: 16).

This exclusionary mentality implicit in nature inevitably influences current ideas and practices concerning belonging in Blumendorf. It is important to note that like Germany itself, the village of Blumendorf is not ethnically and culturally homogenous, but has some in-migrants from other countries, ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds. But they basically live in an area northwest of Blumendorf and there is little interaction between them and the native villagers. There are invisible boundaries between the native villagers and in-migrants, which we will discuss in detail in the next chapter. In the native villagers’ rhetoric of rejecting in-migrants, the incompatibility of in-migrants with the ‘nature’ of the village is often mentioned, in statements such as ‘[t]hey cannot stand the smell of cow dung’. It is worth noting here, however, that there are actually very few cows or cow dung in Blumendorf these days, so there can be few people with reason to complain that they ‘cannot stand the smell of cow dung’. This kind of rhetoric in fact mobilised an idealised notion of rural nature with all its connotations of representing this group of people, this kind of *Volk* and *Heimat*. In this way, ‘nature’ is mobilised as a marker of belonging and people deemed not to belong are described as incompatible with nature and thus incompatible with *Heimat* itself. At present, this exclusion of in-migrants is often hidden in the rhetoric of ‘city versus village’, where all in-migrants are considered to be ‘city people’, when in fact ‘city’ entails the connotations of degeneration, unnaturalness, and ethnic and cultural diversity – the opposite of *Heimat*. We will explore this issue more in the next chapter.

When an inescapable part of the concepts of nature and *Heimat* is racially and politically exclusionary, and this implicitly continues today, when social problems are thought to stem in large part from a lack of purity in race and culture, ‘returning to nature’ as a solution therefore also implies ‘returning to a pure racial condition’. But this understanding and solution is discriminatory against people of other races, ethnicity, and immigration or refugee backgrounds, and does not solve any real social problems, but rather exacerbates them. This is one of the reasons why ‘returning to nature to heal the illness of society’ is unattainable.

However, these seeming ‘failures’ do not seem to have affected people’s conception of nature, and they still believe in its healing power. In people’s minds and social practices, unsolved social problems serve more as a motivation to pursue ever purer ‘nature’, as the failure of ‘healing’ is attributed to insufficient purity, rather than hindering belief in the healing powers of nature. Thus, naturist movements resurged many times before the two world wars and will likely do so again if circumstances permit. This phenomenon makes it necessary to look more deeply into the internal structure and meaning of this idea of nature, and decipher what gives it more power precisely when it seems to 'fail', i.e., when it fails to fit the reality of the situation.

As already shown but not yet sufficiently discussed above, the idea of the 'healing power of nature' is inherently contradictory. Only when nature incorporates human society and culture, can it have the 'access' needed to heal social problems; and only when nature is pure and uninfluenced by social ills, as something utterly greater and other than human culture, can it obtain the 'power' to do its work. These two aspects are necessarily combined in the concept of the 'healing power of nature'. The emergence of the concept of this kind of nature and the emergence of the idea of nature with a healing capacity are the same process. However, when it has gone through this process, the ties between nature and culture are severed, which essentially means that nature cannot influence culture, let alone heal it. Therefore, the idea of 'healing' is inherently unreachable, presenting more characteristics of a myth, an ungrounded belief in the ties between nature and culture, which is grounded on a necessary severing of those ties.

However, unreachability becomes the very strength of this idea. To understand this, we first need to introduce and discuss the concepts of Strathern's (1992) 'merographic connections' and Franklin's (2013) 'analogical return'. When studying English kinship, Strathern (1992: 76) raised the idea of 'merographic connections' which are intended to integrate different domains embodied in kinship, i.e. its social 'part' and its biological 'part'. This co-mingling will find a new 'logic of totality', in Strathern's (1992: 76) words, which 'is not necessarily to be found in the logic of the parts but in the principles and forces that exist beyond the parts'. Franklin (2013: 6) applied Strathern's ideas in her studies of reproductive models and bioscience, and further promoted a notion of 'analogical return' which stresses that new reproductive technologies are 'a phenomenon that involves not only the "borrowing" of analogies in one direction ("just like nature"), but also their ability to "travel back" ("just like technology")'. In other words, this concept emphasises the mutual modelling and mutual shaping of nature and human efforts.

Although the Bavarian understanding of nature I studied focuses mainly on environments and landscape, rather than the human body, the above two concepts are useful to further decipher the relationship between nature and society which it embodies. The dimension of connections between nature and society in local ideas and practices can be explained quite well by the concept of 'analogical return', but the other dimension as explained in previous sections – the division of nature and society – apparently refutes this concept: there will not be 'travelling analogies' (Franklin 2013: 1) back and forth between nature and society in this sense. This effectively divides nature into two, which occupy the two dimensions of the concept of 'merographic connections', i.e., parts and whole. Thus, the domains and connections of domains referred to in 'merographic connections' are both implemented by the Bavarian idea of nature, i.e., nature embodies both 'distinction' and 'fusion', so the more nature fails to achieve its promise of fusion because of its property of distinction, the more people tend to return to nature, because of its property of fusion, to seek again solutions and healing. This is exactly what I mean by its unreachability becoming its very strength.

The Romanticist complication of the concept of 'nature' also reveals this point: '[i]f finite things are to differ from nature but also be contained within it, then nature must be self-differentiating, coming out of its unity into differences and then re-uniting them into the higher-level unity of a system' (Stone 2014: 49-50). To a large extent, the social practices in Bavaria can also be understood as achieving this kind of complication: people's actions prove that they believe nature must save society, while historical facts prove that it cannot do so; and the constant back and forth between these two reveals all the meanings. Hence, 'healing through nature' is an eternal goal which must not be achieved but must always motivate aspirations to achieve.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed a particular Bavarian understanding of the relationship between nature and culture by considering the activities by which Blumendorfers seek to get close to nature (especially the forest) and the local discourse of 'returning to nature to heal society's illness.' In this understanding, there is a seeming contradiction, as nature is both intermingled with culture and separated from it.

With regard to the intermingling of nature and culture, I firstly observed that local forests are not really 'natural', but rather under intensive management to maintain both the appearance of wilderness and their safety and order, producing a kind of cultured nature. From a political perspective, such cultured forests also become a symbol of the German nation-state. Managing and regulating the forests show how the state functions. Secondly, I noticed local experiences of immersion into nature, and the key place of this kind of experience in the German naturist movements. This immersion blurs the boundary between 'I' as subject and 'nature' as object. The intermingling of nature and culture from these two perspectives is one of the premises on which the local discourse of 'returning to nature to heal society's illness' is founded: only when social problems, nature, people’s bodies and minds are all interconnected, can nature have the ‘access’ it needs to heal society.

Concerning the division between nature and culture, I noted that local forests characteristically ‘mimic real nature’ (i.e. the trees are tended so as to give the appearance of being untended), which embodies an idea of ‘pure nature’ as unaffected by human society. This kind of pureness is the source of nature’s ‘healing power’, since only when nature is profoundly greater and other than human society, can it attain the power to heal social problems. Therefore, the division between nature and culture revealed by ‘pure nature’ is another premise on which the local discourse of ‘returning to nature to heal society’s illness’ is founded.

The very strength of the idea of nature as healer lies in this seeming contradiction. When there are social crises, people return to nature to seek resolution, and when this search fails, people adjust their activities to become ever ‘purer’, to be as close to ‘pure nature’ as possible. There are two dimensions of nature in the Bavarian understanding which reflect this strength: one is the dimension of reality, where nature is symbiotic with society and culture; the other is the dimension of concept, which transcends this real symbiosis and becomes an eternal goal. The characteristics of this kind of nature and the process of its formation are similar to that of the idea of *Heimat*, forming a parallel metaphor according to which nature heals society’s problems, just as *Heimat* heals the problems of modernity.

CHAPTER SIX THE ‘CITY’ AS A NECESSARY OTHER: THE MAINTENANCE OF *HEIMAT*

Boundaries and confrontations between ‘native villagers’ and ‘city people’

The location of Blumendorf presents an agreeable balance between remoteness and convenience. Walking in the village and seeing colourful houses, barns (though there are only two), adjacent vast fields and forests, one obtains the feeling of serenity which comes from living in remote countryside. I still remember when a German friend drove me back to Blumendorf from a town in another Bavarian district, and exclaimed, ‘Now I am really in the countryside!’, even though he knew he was approaching his destination, Munich. Blumendorf sits within the economic belt of Munich and it only takes around forty minutes to drive from Blumendorf to the centre of the city if there are no traffic jams. As most families in the village own cars, they can and do easily commute between Blumendorf and Munich or other major cities, towns, and villages nearby. Numerous times I went with villagers to festivals in other villages, bars in towns and concerts in cities. People enjoy high mobility, and do not feel especially limited by spatial boundaries. However, I soon figured out that there are instead significant boundaries in people’s minds.

Once when I went back to Blumendorf having attended a festival in Munich with other villagers, my landlord Albert commented sarcastically on the ‘city people’, saying that ‘when you look around in the underground, you will find city people out there, going crazy’. It was a bit surprising that Albert drew an implicit boundary between himself and the ‘city people out there’, because although he now lives in

Blumendorf and was born in another Bavarian village, he used to live and work in Munich and still often drives there for his work. In Blumendorf, I often heard similar mockery and disparagement of the 'city' and 'city people', although in fact, this was most frequently targeted against the (often ex-urban) in-migrants living in the village, people who are still considered to be 'city people' – outsiders by contrast with the '*Einheimischen*' (natives or local people). However, these terms are very fuzzy. For instance, Albert, someone who moved from Munich to Blumendorf considers himself more on the side of *Einheimischen*, and I never heard other Blumendorfers describe him as a 'city person'. The inn host Rainhard once commended Albert to me as 'very well integrated in the village', although in this way he also implicitly stated that Albert is different from someone born in Blumendorf. When I found out more about people described by Blumendorfers as 'city people', I learned that they have diverse backgrounds, and some in fact moved from other villages or even other countries to Blumendorf. It seems that the terms *Einheimischen* and 'city people' denote people who are considered to be insiders or outsiders, which do not always coincide with their literal meanings. Notably, however, this division of insiders and outsiders is based on a rhetoric of the village-city dichotomy. For the convenience of description in this chapter, I refer to people who were born in Blumendorf as the 'native villagers' and everyone who moved from elsewhere to Blumendorf as 'in-migrants', while I shall describe specifically the subtle differences between and within these categories.

The most frequent complaints I heard from native villagers against in-migrants might reveal the reasons why they are still considered to be outsiders: 'They do not participate in association activities, in fact any activities, and we don't even know how old their children are!' Remarkably, many native villagers almost automatically ascribe the in-migrants' failure to participate in village activities to their indifference, disdain, or hostility towards village culture due to their 'city background'. 'They are city people. They cannot stand the smell of cow dung or the sound of a church bell,' some native villagers said mockingly, responding to perceived unfriendliness with their own derision towards the in-migrants.

One night when I joined a *Stammtisch* at the inn, the sense of derision appeared quite obviously once again. It was a warm summer night, and everyone was chatting and drinking beer in the yard outside the inn. Suddenly, the shutters of a house nearby were closed noisily. Bertl Roggenbrot started to sneer with an expression of contempt: ‘Oh come on!’ Others shook their heads in sympathy, and when Rainhard served our beer, he also looked disapproving. I asked people what happened and gradually collected the story. The Neumann family who live in that house are renters from Munich who have lived in the village for around five years, commuting daily to the city. Most people do not know them at all because they never go to the inn or join other village activities. But one night, when people were drinking outside the inn after 10pm, the Neumanns were annoyed by the noise and called the police, who soon arrived, to the surprise of everyone in the inn. While it may be common in Munich to call the police when your neighbour is making too much noise at night, in the village, the expected reaction is to first communicate directly with your neighbour. Calling the police is too stand-offish and intrusive for villagers. Since the local policemen were also acquaintances, the inn host soon figured out that it was the Neumann family who had complained. The consequence for the inn host was also quite severe, as if he failed to control the noise of his guests in future, probably by forbidding them to drink outside, his license might be revoked.

This incident ignited among native villagers the aversion to in-migrants which had accumulated over many years. Starting with the inn host and lead by the village Boots Club, people began to ostracise the Neumann family. They even talked with the brother of the Neumanns’ landlord (since the landlord himself does not live in

Blumendorf), hoping that he could pressure his brother to stop renting the house to the family. However, although calling the police could have seriously harmed the inn host, ostracisation had little impact on the Neumanns, since they seldom interact with villagers. The landlord's brother was also reluctant to get involved, saying that his brother cares little who rents the house. So, the situation reached an uncomfortable 'truce' with the decision that people must lower their voices when they sat outside the inn on summer nights; the Neumann family did not call the police again but would close their shutters, sometimes loudly.

The problem of the village-city dichotomy

The emphasis on the division between village and city not only in a spatial sense, but also most often with cultural, social and moral connotations, might be one of the most salient characteristics of modern societies witnessing massive urban formations. Although understandings and practices surrounding this division vary significantly in different social contexts, the emphasis itself exists extensively in local people's accounts and lingers for a much longer time than expected. For instance, in Bell's (1994) ethnography of the pseudonymous village 'Childerley' sitting within the London commuter belt, (and thus like Blumendorf which is close to Munich), he describes the implicit boundaries in people's minds which divide '"local" residents' and 'ex-urban in-migrants' (Woods 2011: 185). In Bell's (1994: 101) words:

> 'The residents refer to themselves as true villagers, country cousins, country bumpkins, locals, country girls, countrymen bred and born, Hampshire hogs, salt of the earth, real countrywomen, village people – as well as what I have adopted as the broadest term, country people. Others they describe as city dwellers, bloody townies, Londoners, yuppies, city slickers, city-ites, outsiders, foreigners,

> day-trippers, town people, as well as city people ... The phrase city people, in the views of most Childerleyans, fits many current residents of the village.'

In social scientists' earlier efforts, the assumptions and criticisms of the village-city division were a non-negligible intellectual calibration to understand the countryside. Rural sociologists and rural geographers, drawing on their understandings of Tönnies' (2001) famous distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), proposed a 'taxonomy of settlement patterns' (Newby 1977: 95) in which rural patterns were more akin to practices of the *Gemeinschaft* (Panelli 2006). Sociologists such as Wirth (1938) and Redfield (1941) through identifying the causes of cultural differences between village and city also reinforced the dichotomisation of rural community versus urban society. Besides, in the past century, almost a generation of anthropological studies of how country people adapt to city life and how urban values and practices influenced rural places (Uzzell 1979: 333) were also based on this demarcation between village and city.

There are certain limitations of the above studies, and as early as 1979 Uzzell (1979: 333) called scholars' attention to the conceptual fallacies of the 'rural-urban dichotomy': it applies a spatial metaphor to denote cultural differences, further traces the cause of cultural characteristics to spatial distribution, and assumes that spatial boundaries coincide with social boundaries, etc. Besides, numerous studies of 'urbanisation' and 'counter-urbanisation' explain the increasing flows of people, objects and ideas between village and city as propelled by the needs and circumstances of the city (e.g. Berry 1976; Kontuly 1998; Meijering et al. 2007; Mitchell 2004; Stockdale 2004; Woods 2011). The city seems to sit predominantly in the centre, as Uzzell (1979: 347) argued, '[t]he very term *urbanization* is a class-biased obfuscation'.

Contemporary anthropological studies strive to remedy these deficiencies, not only through emphasising the agency of local people in villages, but also understanding the rural and the urban as 'a continuum irreducible to the polarity of one or the other term' (Chio 2017a: 362). Even though the contrast between village and city might be detected instinctively, it is more important to reveal the underlying social, political, cultural and economic contract between them, which is a fundamental relationality of rural and urban (Chio 2017a: 363). As Finnis's (2017: 383) ethnographic example of circular migrants in Paraguay illustrates, the lives of the community are shaped by an intertwined reliance on both rural and urban conditions so that the 'urban spaces are critical for the maintenance of a rural present' and vice versa. Furthermore, the relationality between village and city is not just spatial, but involves 'larger social, economic and ideological formations interlocked with those spaces' (Stasch 2017: 443). For instance, in Chio's (2017b) studies of a Miao village in China, the co-constitutive relation between rural and urban also denotes relations between ideological constructs of the 'traditional' and the 'modern', and of 'ethnic minority' and 'mainstream majority' in people's minds.

Only when we shift our focus from division to the interdependence of the rural and the urban, can we re-evaluate the 'varied complexes of institutions, ideas, categories, rules, value orientations, reflexive sensibilities about practice and other sites of order in human existence' (Stasch 2017: 441) that go not only beyond spatial boundaries, but also beyond a metaphor of progressive history 'from an archaic rural past to a modern urban future' (Stasch 2017: 441) which is based on this spatial boundary. People inherit these historically particular and ever-adjusting 'varied complexes' to make sense of their daily lives. From this perspective, even local people's own emphasis on the 'village-city dichotomy' – which contributes to the persistence of this tempting dichotomy regardless of all the academic battles against it – is part of their daily life which derives its meanings from those 'varied complexes'. For anthropologists, it might be even more significant to focus on 'the constitution of the categories [of the rural and the urban] as experienced realities' (Chio 2017: 362), and to delve into the 'varied complexes' in specific fieldwork contexts which are essential to understanding local people's daily experiences.

In this chapter, we will focus on the 'varied complexes' and interlinkage of categories in the Bavarian countryside and how they are deeply linked with efforts to maintain their *Heimat*. In the case of Blumendorf, we need to take seriously into consideration the voices of both native villagers and in-migrants, in order to understand the underlying social dynamics and meanings of the rural-urban division in their discourse. In the case of native villagers, complaints against in-migrants reveal a feeling of threat to their *Heimat* which they ascribe to the 'malevolence' of in-migrants who represent a relatively new phenomenon in the village; the native villagers then try to protect or maintain their *Heimat* through ostracisation. What, however, do the in-migrants really think, why do they not participate in village activities, and what exactly is causing the feeling of threat?

Before delving into these questions, we first need to introduce more of the situation in Blumendorf and rethink the over-simplified picture of a boundary between 'native villagers' and 'in-migrants'.

Ambiguous boundaries: people in-between

As we have explained in previous chapters, the core of native villagers or people who consider themselves native villagers are the offspring of a group of ‘old families’ in Blumendorf. In the nineteenth century, there were eight ‘old families’ in Blumendorf who tended to inter-marry. These families still play a significant role in village life, with the association leaders, inn host, car dealer, and all the past village heads from 1808 to 1979 coming from their number. As I participated in the major festivals, church activities and weekly *Stammtisch*, I frequently meet people from these families. Spatially speaking, old families usually occupy the ‘central part’, or old part of Blumendorf – the houses alongside the main road (*Eichenstraße*) which are also close to the church and the inn.

However, the term ‘native villager’ is quite elastic. Over the past centuries, other people have constantly come to live in Blumendorf, and families that have lived in Blumendorf for more than two generations are also considered unquestionably native villagers even though they do not come from the old families. People who moved to live in the village relatively recently can easily be regarded as native villagers as well, if they actively participate in village activities (whether secular or religious) and especially if they have relatives in the region. For instance, Fred was born in a town nearby, his wife was born in a neighbouring village, and around ten years ago they moved to live in Blumendorf. Since Fred became an active member of the Boots Club and joins their regular gathering almost every week, and his wife is an active member of the shooting association, they are considered to be native villagers. Likewise, Claudia Seiler and her family have quite stable status as native villagers, not only because both Claudia and her husband Alois have family roots and many relatives in this region, but also more importantly due to Claudia's active participation in religious and non-religious activities in Blumendorf after Alois fell ill.

We have already touched upon the potential merging of the two categories of 'native villagers' and 'in-migrants'. Both Fred's family and Claudia's family might well be considered 'in-migrants' if they had kept a distance from village activities. In fact, Claudia's family lives in the 'first new neighbourhood' of Blumendorf – the first piece of land that was sold for housing to people from outside the village – and some of her neighbours are still considered 'in-migrants' or outsiders.

If we consider 'native villagers' and 'in-migrants' not as distinct categories, but rather as two polarities of a spectrum of identity in the village, there are indeed many people who sit in between the two. Besides people like Fred and Claudia who are in-migrants but regarded as full native villagers, there are also in-migrants commended as 'very well integrated in the village', indicating that they are not considered to be in-migrants in the sense of outsiders, but are not completely regarded as native villagers either. I have already mentioned my host Albert's family as fitting into this classification. Albert was born in another village in Niederbayern (lower Bavaria) and his wife Marlene was born in a village in Franken in Bavaria. After working in Munich for some years, they moved to Blumendorf around twenty years ago because they planned to have children, but bigger apartments in Munich were just too expensive. Being socially active, they have come to know many people in Blumendorf, formed their own friendship group of around fifteen men and women in their forties and fifties, and hold their own monthly *Stammtisch* at the inn. However, as I recall, these people rarely took part in other more 'traditional' or religious whole-village events, such as putting up the maypole or the Corpus Christi procession. It seems that a combination of participation in village activities, family roots in the region and length of time living in the village all determine whether someone is regarded more as insider or outsider, but level of participation in activities weighs most heavily in consideration. This also applies to Hank who is seen by native villagers as an exemplar of in-migrants integrating well in the village. He moved to Blumendorf from Munich with his wife and children fifteen years ago, before which he and his parents always lived in Munich. Hank told me he was especially attracted by people's relationships in Blumendorf (for instance, when walking across the village, people always greet each other, regardless of whether they are friends or strangers), which helped him to make the final decision to live here when his apartment in Munich became too small for his children. He actively participated in the shooting association (he taught me air-rifle shooting when I first arrived) and acted as the photographer during the yearly ceremony of the association. However, Hank rarely attends the shooting association's Friday evening *Stammtisch*.

There are also newly arrived in-migrants who strive to understand and comply with the unspoken 'village rules'. Only one farmhouse previously belonging to an old Blumendorf family (the Walburg family) has been sold: all the other old houses are still owned by old families. The previous buyer of the Walburg house was a French celebrity who could not get along with the villagers, so sold the house and moved away. The current owners are a rich couple from Munich called Achin and Gabi: they are in their forties. During one conversation I had with them, they expressed that they would like to get along well with their neighbours, but feel the need to proceed cautiously according to the 'local rules', as they perceive them. Perhaps they were too cautious. They said they planned to invite the neighbours for a barbecue, but then learned from other people that several of their neighbours do not get along, so they postponed the party to avoid doing it improperly. Perhaps their only friend now in Blumendorf is a native villager called Gerhard Ganss.

Before introducing Gerhard, we first need to elucidate the conditions of the 'native villagers.' As mentioned in previous chapters, since Blumendorf, like many Bavarian villages, has already lost its political and economic significance and is deeply incorporated in the state administrative system and global capitalist economy, almost every villager now works in a city or town nearby. Some native villagers (including members of old families such as Magdalena Habermayer whom we talked about in Chapter Two) rarely participate in village activities but are not considered outsiders, only 'unpleasant (*ungemütlich*)'. Since native villagers also work in cities, they in fact have good knowledge of the lifestyle and certain rules in the cities, such as keeping quiet after 10pm and the general practice of calling the police concerning noise. A more specific example is Gerhard Ganss mentioned above. He was born in Blumendorf, works in Munich as the manager of an organic supermarket, is familiar with the narratives and lifestyles of both the village and the city, and has friends from both sides.

In fact, Gerhard gave me the impression that he is keen to make friends with every new face in Blumendorf, and if there is one person that most in-migrants know, it is he. The first time I met Gerhard, he was drinking a glass of wine alone under a tree at someone's birthday party. He is a bald and sturdy middle-aged man, with bushy black brows and black eyes that often shine with a cunning expression. He took the initiative to talk to me, saying that he knew I was doing research and invited me to his house for a barbecue the following week with several of his other friends. He stressed that we would drink wine rather than beer, highlighting his knowledge of wine which he prefers to the more usual local drink.

The following week, I went to his home, the former *Pfarrhaus* (vicarage) that Gerhard's family bought from the priest when he left Blumendorf in the late 1970s. The family renovated the big house in a beautiful modern style with a neat lawn and outdoor barbecue area. The other friends he invited live in villages and cities nearby, and some of them were apparently rich, driving roadsters to the party. They were all interested in exquisite cuisine and met each other in a cooking club organised by Gerhard and a professional cook from another village. The barbecue Gerhard provided was indeed impressive and he proudly presented us with excellent steak, exquisite wine, and professional cuisine. I had attended barbecues at other people's houses in Blumendorf, but the ambience and style were obviously different.

Some months later, Gerhard again invited me to his house, this time for a fine three-course Italian dinner, where I met Dana, whom I later learned was a member of the Neumann family. This explained why, as we talked over the meal, she complained so much about the village inn. At the time, Gerhard simply smiled as he poured Dana another glass of wine and adeptly diverted the conversation to a concert that Dana was also interested in. However, Gerhard is an active participant in the shooting association and goes to its Friday *Stammtisch* at the inn, albeit infrequently. He was one of the main organisers of the maypole festival. During the month of activities surrounding the maypole, he oversaw the cutting and transporting of the tree trunk, joined several meetings with other organisers concerning what to do next, dressed in traditional Bavarian costume and spoke Bavarian dialect. This was the same person who cooked Italian and French cuisine and talked about all sorts of wine in standard German as if enumerating his family valuables.

Why in-migrants do not participate in village activities

Although many cases indicate that in-migrants and native villagers do mingle with each other, it is true that the majority of in-migrants rarely, if ever participate in village activities and associations. This is one of the most significant factors that make villagers feel uncomfortable towards the in-migrants, but why is it so? Through understanding the in-migrants' own experiences and perspectives, we might be able to grasp the various reasons behind their habits and situation in the village.

Once I went to visit Julia, a young mother who had recently moved from Munich to live in Blumendorf. She is the daughter-in-law of Magdalena Habermayer's sister. When she had her third child, her family's apartment in Munich appeared too small for three children, so they moved to her parents-in-law's house. Julia might very well coincide with the villagers' archetypical descriptions of 'newcomers' or 'city-dwellers' who never participate in anything in the village. After I knocked on her door, Julia – an energetic brown woman with dark hair, bright eyes and a big smile – opened the door. She held her baby boy in her arm and a toddler girl stood beside her. When we sat and chatted in the living room, Julia seemed to be very happy to have a visitor and started to tell me how bored she felt in the village. Her husband goes to work in Munich every weekday, leaving her alone at home to take care of the children. Besides, 'it seems that nothing happens here!' as Julia complained, telling me how much she missed the numerous pubs and cafes in Munich. I told her about the inn and associations, and she seemed surprised. Even though she had lived in Blumendorf for some time, she genuinely knew little about the village social life, and in this respect Julia was certainly not alone. For many in-migrants who have lived in Blumendorf even for years, the information I could give them about the inn and associations was new, and they expressed interest in checking them out when I described their activities. Although this proves that living in the same village does not necessarily mean acquiring similar knowledge and experiences of the same social landscape, it is not due to any hostility between ‘city-dwellers’ and ‘villagers’ as often imagined by native villagers. Rather, it relates more to the habits and customs of in-migrants’ previous daily experiences, which are the inertial side of life that both enables and limits one’s existence.

Besides, there are also in-migrants who are more occupied by global causes, thus showing less interest in village activities that they deem to be ‘local’. For instance, Ami, who bought half of a house in Blumendorf and transformed it into an apartment, once illustrated this point clearly. I came to know Ami due to my ‘cold visit’ to the house which she shared with another lady. I was walking past her house when I remembered that I had never met the residents living there, so I nerved myself to ring the doorbell. Ami, a keen-witted middle-aged woman with short blond hair opened the door. During our several chats afterwards, she showed her passion for nature and environmental protection. Divorced, with no children, she works as an engineer in Munich and bought half of the house several years ago, finding it much cheaper than apartments in Munich. She goes to visit her parents once a week and devotes her spare time to mountain climbing and caring for environmental issues: she talked a lot about global warming and carbon emission and expressed her strong feeling of being connected with every creature in the world. Like Julia, Ami knew nothing about the village associations or their activities at the inn until I described them, but unlike her she showed little interest and casually responded, ‘They focus on local things, right?’

However, there are also in-migrants who do know about the associations and activities in the village but choose not to participate. Their views are best summarised by a Togolese man, Edem, who lives in the ‘second new neighbourhood’ with his east

German wife and their two daughters. I would often see his daughters playing at the playground near their house or riding bicycles on village streets, but I had never met Edem before I visited his home. I was chatting and drinking coffee with his wife Laura one evening, when Edem returned home, travel-stained. He is well-built for his middle age, has a round face and eyes shining with intelligence. Though tired, he was curious to join our conversation. When I asked him whether he had thought of participating in association activities in the inn, he laughed and shrugged, saying, ‘I have two jobs in Munich [he is a taxi driver and newspaper transporter]. I can’t even go back to Blumendorf every day. Whenever I come back, I am too tired to go out and just want to stay at home with my family. I know there is an inn and there is a car dealer here, but they provide few job opportunities and only to their own relatives. What’s that to do with me? I don’t need anything from them, and they don’t need anything from me. For the twelve years I’ve lived here every day is like this. I don’t think there will be changes in the future even when my hairs all grow grey.’ Edem’s words quite frankly summarised the political-economic relationship which many in-migrants, in fact many native villagers have with the village. The village can hardly provide any economic means of subsistence or political power to its residents nowadays. It is not too surprising that the residents may tend not to place the village at the centre of their work and life. What is surprising, or significant for us to pay attention to, is actually the efforts made by a core group of ‘native villagers’ and association members to hold village life and village culture at the centre. Their motivations are predominantly ‘cultural’: upholding the values of ‘*Heimat*’ themselves and acting the values out through maintaining a *Heimat* which fits those values. However, only people who have been immersed in this culture and values, such as the Boots Club and other association members who grew up together in this kind of *Heimat*, are able to put this maintenance and centring into practice. For the majority of in-migrants, this might not be a sensible and appealing cause.

There are other, completely different reasons why in-migrants may choose not to participate in village activities. For instance, their heart's *Heimat* might not be Blumendorf. Franz Fischer, whose family runs an artist brokerage firm at home in Blumendorf, quite explicitly elaborated this point. His wife Silvia is running the firm, and Franz has no stable jobs but works here and there in small cities nearby, sometimes only one day per week. The Fischers are both in their forties and have no children. Franz usually looks taciturn and gloomy, but once, after we talked about his life history for a while, he became much more alert and voluble. He spent much time cherishing the memory of his hometown, which is another Bavarian village quite far from Blumendorf. He remembered his childhood friends, all the activities and associations they joined there, and how he met his wife who came from another village near his hometown. He left his hometown with his wife who wanted a more promising career, and after some twists and turns they finally settled in Blumendorf, a village that seems quite unfamiliar to Franz. When I asked what he thought about the associations in Blumendorf, he replied that he did not want to join any, because he knows no one in the village and did not grow up together with these people. When I asked the somewhat awkward question, 'What is most important in your life?', he paused for a while, and answered softly, 'My wife'. In all my chats and interviews with Blumendorfers, he was the only one who answered this question with the name of a person, while others usually highlighted a certain value, such as 'satisfaction', 'peace of mind' or 'family values' etc. Taking into consideration how his descriptions of his wife were deeply intertwined with his reminiscences of his hometown, it might not be an over-interpretation to say that Franz's wife embodies all the past life in his hometown where he met her. His emotional attachment to his hometown, which he strongly considers to be his '*Heimat*', is palpable, and Blumendorf in this sense is not his *Heimat*.

The feeling of threat and the inherent contradictions of *Heimat*

The situations and accounts I have outlined indicate that although there are differences between in-migrants and native villagers, these differences are not distinct and the boundary between them is in fact ambiguous. Likewise, although one cannot claim that absolutely no in-migrants despise villagers and village life (to a certain extent, Dana Neumann comes close to this tendency), this is by no means the predominant or prevailing reason why many in-migrants do not participate in village activities. Therefore, it is worthwhile to ask why native villagers usually perceive this phenomenon as due to hostility from the in-migrants towards native villagers.

An easy answer to this question is that native villagers have few chances to speak with in-migrants and consider them strangers, to whom it is relatively easy to ascribe ill-intent. However, this explanation is not context-based and falls short of illuminating the specific circumstances in this Bavarian village. A variety of places may experience a similar phenomenon, but the underlying social dynamics that lead to it vary significantly. For instance, in the English village – Elmdon – that Strathern (1981) studied, class differences are the main factors distinguishing between native villagers and in-migrants and contributing to their mutual suspicion. In another English village – Childerley – in Bell's (1994: 85-87) book, the high moral esteem accredited to 'country people' plays a predominant role in distinguishing the morally higher 'country people' from people outside of this category, who are then considered to be 'city people'. However, Blumendorf is quite different from these two villages, even though to a certain extent, in-migrants are considered 'strangers' by native villagers in all three villages.

In Blumendorf, class difference is not a palpable factor in daily life. People do not often talk about class as a significant indicator of social classification, and the economic power of native villagers and in-migrants is fairly balanced. To be more precise, native villagers are often economically better-off, because their work in the cities is no worse than that of in-migrants, and they also own land which is a very expensive asset in the regions surrounding Munich. There was one incident indicating how Blumendorfers resist any sense of superiority based on class and/or wealth. As mentioned above, the Walburg family sold its old farmhouse, the only such sale of an old house in Blumendorf. Mr Walburg sold this family house around ten years ago, not because he needed money, but because he was divorced and no longer wished to live in Blumendorf. Others said it was really a pity, because usually people do not sell family houses which are full of memories. The first buyers were French and very rich. The mother of the new owner was a famous French singer, and when she held a birthday party, many celebrities came driving Rolls-Royce and Porsche sports cars etc., which was a bit 'too much' for villagers. The new owner was also an arrogant person who could not get along well with villagers in Blumendorf. 'She thought she was the boss because she has money, but it doesn't work this way in Blumendorf,' some Blumendorfers told me. In the end, the French family no longer felt comfortable living in the village and they sold the house.

The moral status of 'country people' and 'city people' is also much more ambiguous in Blumendorfers' discourse. There are differences between them, but they are not necessarily related to their respective moral status. If we analyse statements by villagers, such as 'they [the "city people"] cannot stand the smell of cow dung or the sound of the church bell', they are emphasising the incompatibility of in-migrants rather than claiming that being able to live in an environment with cows and church is morally superior. Besides, the nostalgia usually associated with longing for a past, morally better rural life, as so explicitly expressed by people in Childerley (Bell 1994), is not a prevailing sentiment in Blumendorf.

During one weekly *Stammtisch* of elderly people at the inn, I asked the old men (most over seventy years old) whether they feel nostalgia for village life in the past. Most of them shook their heads and Mr Eisenbarth said, ‘Nostalgia? … No, not at all, life in the past was hard.’ Mr Eisenbarth lives in another village adjacent to Blumendorf. He was an administrative officer at the Imhof Town Hall when he was younger, and owns one of the largest dairy farms in the region with more than a hundred cows. I had visited his highly modernised and mechanised farm before, and thus got the sense of his response. The machines for milking and transporting fodder make it possible for his family to manage the farm without hiring more helpers, which was unimaginable in the past for a dairy farm of this size[13]. On another occasion when I had an afternoon coffee with Idna Nagler, a daughter-in-law of an old family in Blumendorf, she also expressed that she is not nostalgic for the past and described past hardships. She told me how she needed to get up very early and work all day in the family dairy farm, and how hard it was to carry the heavy buckets full of milk. As former farmers and dairy workers, older Blumendorfers seldom narrated their yearnings for the past rural life, nor did they show an inclination to continue doing some petty agricultural work in their leisure time.

Therefore, although the village has significantly changed in time, and although the idea of *Heimat* seemingly embodies many traits of a past village, the real past is not where people's emotional attachment lies. Their efforts to maintain the *Heimat* constantly focus on the present, and more specifically, on whether a good community is being constructed through all the associations and activities in the moment. Furthermore, if we revisit the idea of *Heimat*, we may discover that the 'traits of a past village' which it refers to, such as mutual help and communal life etc., are in fact principles of what a good *Heimat* should be. They do not necessarily coincide with past existences, and of all the examples of mutual help and communal life people can enumerate in the past village, it is possible to provide equally many examples that do not conform with it. This resembles the ideal of 'the past' in German romanticism, in which it 'was not a return to the past, for the past of which it talked had hardly anything in common with the past reality; it was a poetic dream which transfigured the past into a golden age' (Kohn 1950: 447). The aim is then to practise and realise these principles in the moment through constant efforts of *Heimat*-making. This explains villagers' weak attachment to their actual past life but strong attachment to these principles or traits embodying an abstract and romanticised 'past'. It also explains why the ideal of a good village still appeals to people and entices them to invest effort into making this kind of village, when the real village life has already significantly changed. As long as the principles are realised, the good village then exists. Thus the 'past' (as these principles) can be forever present, and people do not need to be nostalgic.

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[13] Although, undoubtedly, even in the past dairy farms did not need to reach this size. The global market brought in cheaper dairy products from other countries, which also lowered milk prices in Bavaria. Therefore, farmers had to choose between either expanding production or giving up dairy farming as a way of subsistence altogether. Most Blumendorfers chose the latter.

In Blumendorf, as we have seen in previous chapters, the very core of *Heimat*-making is exactly all the association activities in the village. They are both the means and ends, which are essential for realising principles of a good *Heimat* and for the existence of *Heimat*. Therefore, if in-migrants do not participate in such activities, this might be seen as a threat to the existence of *Heimat*. This is the first layer of the meaning of 'threat' in this context. The first time I went to the village inn and talked with inn host Rainhard, he clearly expressed this feeling of threat: 'We fear that one day Blumendorf will no longer exist, because more and more city people will come, and they do not care about village activities at all.'

Moreover, the underlying reasons that in-migrants gave for not participating in village activities also reveal deeper uneasiness with *Heimat* itself. The inherent contradictions in the ideas and practices of *Heimat* are exposed by in-migrants' responsive acts and words, which comprises the 'threat' in a socio-cultural sense. For instance, the problems the Togolese man Edem emphasised are exactly the reality the idea of *Heimat* was built on and was trying to 'repair': the village has diminished and lost its economic and political significance, which cannot naturally hold people together. Logically, the idea of '*Heimat*' could not override this basic reality, for it is the foundation of its own existence. In practice, it cannot and does not aim to stop the diminishing process of the village or restore the previous village, but rather to build a new community out of the ruins. To a certain extent, *Heimat* depends on 'the lack of *Heimat*' and is 'constituted by its absence' (Von Moltke 2005: 5). As Von Moltke's analyses of *Heimat* film illustrates, *Heimat* 'functions in two ways simultaneously: on the one hand, it affords a colorful flight from a reality deemed lacking into an apparently unrelated fantasy world; on the other hand, it serves as a metaphoric displacement of that reality, whose lack remains legible at different levels' (Von Moltke 2005: 5). This is the fundamental contradiction of the idea of '*Heimat*'.

The case of Ami, who cares about universal environmental problems more than 'local' issues in *Heimat*, reveals the contradiction between 'particularities/localities' and 'universalities' in the idea of *Heimat*. In Von Moltke's (2005: 10) quotation from Oskar Köhler's *Staatslexikon* Volume 4, the dictionary explains that 'the world of Heimat is necessarily small, for only then can it be experienced completely and be open to that complete familiarity in which humans can take comfort in being at home [*beheimatet*]'. The geographical scope of *Heimat* is then necessarily limited for people to be able to experience it as familiar, intimate and 'personally lived space' (Stavenhagen 1948: 45). However, from the emergence of the idea of *Heimat*, it also essentially 'involves a particular conceptualization of local space, which can then be related in various ways to a larger whole' (Von Moltke 2005: 10). Ideas of *Heimat* became significant in Germany when the political structure of German states was disintegrating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Larger states needed to deal not only with Napoleon, but also their baffling internal diversities. During the efforts by the German states to understand and reshape their localities, the ideas of *Heimat* emerged with its modern connotation (Applegate 1990: 7). Whether we understand this connotation as a mediator between the local and the national (e.g. Applegate 1990), or as a local metaphor for the national (e.g. Confino 1997), the endeavour of *Heimat* is to emphasise both and mingle them. However, it is an exceedingly difficult goal to achieve. In Ami's perception of *Heimat*, its provincial elements are incompatible with Ami's universalistic concerns or, from another perspective, Ami presents another kind of 'universality' that the idea of *Heimat* has not yet strived to incorporate.

What Franz Fischer's attitude reveals is the existence of multiple '*Heimaten*' and the conflicts between them. Since *Heimat* denotes a certain locality, different people can identify with different *Heimat* and thus have conflicts of ideas and emotional attachments if they live in the same place. However, this is not to say that people cannot form a 'second *Heimat*', but it is often a laborious process and the possibility of failure always exists[14].

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[14] Many *Heimat* films about displaced people, such as *Grün ist die Heide* (Von Moltke 2005: 4-5), show this laborious process to form a second *Heimat*.

The ‘city’ as a necessary other

There is still at least one question left to answer: why is the feeling of threat formulated in the rhetoric of a ‘city v. village’ dichotomy as in Blumendorfers’ narratives? Given the fact that many in-migrants do not actually come from cities, it is not sufficient to explain that native villagers simply take in-migrants’ previous residence as the ‘source of evil’. Rather, taking into consideration villagers’ frequent descriptions of the ‘city’ as ‘hectic’, ‘crowded’ and ‘addled’ etc., it is reasonable to contemplate the relationship between this rhetoric of ‘city v. village’ and the special connotations the ‘city’ gained during modernisation and industrialisation processes in Germany, which was contemporaneous with the emergence of *Heimat* ideas. An ambivalence toward urban life prevailed in German culture from the late nineteenth century onwards. Sometimes city life is seen as threatening the sense of empathy among people, and sometimes it is also considered liberating (Williams 2007: 8). This is no surprise, since from the unification of Germany in 1871, the country has experienced a rapid process of industrialisation with cities as the centre of both economic growth and declining living conditions (Williams 2007: 9). The social problems in cities, such as crowded living conditions, were deemed a cultural and political problem, as understood by the housing reformer Dr. Von Mangoldt who argued that ‘“being housed like animals” was endangering the physical and moral health of the urban poor…was hurting the power of the nation vis-à-vis its competitors by reducing the birth rate and increasing infant mortality … Moreover, the lower classes’ love of the *Heimat* and loyalty to the German state were waning’ (Williams 2007: 10).

Although the living conditions of cities have significantly improved through time, the idea remains that the city is the opposite of *Heimat* and may threaten people’s attachment to it, as is also indicated in the last quote above. Many Blumendorfers told me explicitly that ‘a city cannot be a *Heimat*’, and there is a strong sense from villagers that there is always an ‘other’ to *Heimat*; this idea coincides with some academic understandings of *Heimat* which emphasise an ‘otherness’ against which *Heimat* needs to be defined. For instance, Von Moltke (2005: 10) quoted Oskar Köhler’s *Staatslexikon* in saying that *Heimat* is where people ‘privilege a small world, which nonetheless encompasses a totality of life [*Lebensganzheit*], and where they perceive any other world as a more or less hostile “foreign territory” [*Fremde*]’. In the context of Blumendorf, this ‘hostile “foreign territory”’ is the city, not the real cities deeply connected with villagers, but an imagined ‘city’ as an ultimate ‘other’ to *Heimat*. To a certain extent, all the internal problems of *Heimat* revealed by in-migrants’ indifference to village activities are externalised to this imagined contradiction between *Heimat* and its ultimate opposition – the city.

Meanwhile, the negative connotations of modernity carried by the city (a ‘hectic’, ‘crowded’ and ‘addled’place) have another important but often unspoken meaning: the city is often a place where different ethnic groups are mixed, with many people from different social, cultural or religious backgrounds. Their presence puts pressure on the ethnically and culturally more homogeneous *Heimat*. This mixture of heterogeneous elements seems to ‘threaten’ the existence of a unitary, ‘pure’ *Heimat* – even if, as in the case of Blumendorf, it is in fact not ethnically homogeneous. Therefore, the inn host’s fear that ‘one day Blumendorf will no longer exist, because more and more city people will come’ also has this sense of rejection of the mixing of heterogeneous elements. However, such a view is not expressed directly in daily discourse (perhaps due to post-World War II education and political correctness), but rather hidden in the concept of ‘city’, so it is only perceptible following careful analysis of specific phenomena. For instance, the in-migrants in Blumendorf who are more or less accepted as insiders by the native villagers are all white people from

Germany. A Serbian family who had lived in Blumendorf for many years once told me that when they first moved to the village, they used to invite their neighbours over for dinner, but no one had ever invited them back and their relationship with their neighbours was now indifferent.

However, this process of externalisation and opposition from another angle also heightens the interdependence of the supposed 'oppositional parties.' Both the native villagers and in-migrants are in fact making the place of *Heimat*, and there is always an important interrelationship between place-makings. They refer to each other, as Appadurai stressed (1996: 182), since place-making always refers to somewhere else and to the others who do not belong here. When the native villagers, especially the association members and the inn host strongly expressed and insisted on their 'traditions', it is the other in-migrants or 'outsiders' that are in their minds. On the one hand, this adherence to one's place and identity forms what Appadurai (1996: 182) calls 'the sense of inertia on which locality, as a structure of feeling, centrally relies'; on the other, it shows that place-making is always a relational process. The process of building a high wall between two parties in turn enables their respective existence, and this artificial barrier is to negate and cover up the connections between them.

Having elucidated this, and perhaps exactly because of the artificial nature of the village-city dichotomy, the mental boundary between them is nonetheless strictly and carefully maintained with great effort. This has been shown in the instances of Albert and Hank who were still not considered 'full native villagers' even after living in Blumendorf for decades and participating in association activities. Another very interesting case is that of Gerhard Ganss. Once I met him at the maypole festival when he was dressed in full Bavarian costume, drinking beer with fellow villagers, and he was palpably awkward and tried to minimise talking with me. Thinking back, I remember that Gerhard would never meet ‘village people’ and ‘city people’ at the same time but tried to maintain the implicit and explicit boundary between them. To a certain extent, this boundary helps people to cope with the inherent contradictions of *Heimat*, for under the gaze of an imagined other and in the constant resistance to the imagined other, *Heimat* can maintain its continuous cohesion.

CHAPTER SEVEN TEMPORALITY AND IMMUTABILITY: TRIPLE *HEIMAT* AND TRIPLE MODERN TIME

Anxiety and its ‘disappearance’

In the final chapter, let us first go back to where it all started: the land-sale incident described in Chapter Two. Notwithstanding all the anxieties caused by this incident, one thing I did not expect was how rapidly the general sense of crisis would fade away. After a few days of intensive discussions of the new land being sold and new neighbourhood being built, people seemed to lose interest in these issues. Whether in the inn or on the village streets, conversations no longer focused on the land-sale, but instead went back to domestic trivia and other local news. Ordinary daily lives and sentiments were restored, and people continued to pour their energy into normal association activities, gatherings, village events and so on. However, I was still in crisis mode (and felt sad at the prospect that ‘Blumendorf may no longer exist in the future’ as the inn host told me), so I persisted in talking about the issue with Blumendorfers. Paradoxically, to a certain extent, they turned to ‘console’ me with the reasoning which they must have used to comfort themselves too.

Some told me that ‘the changes may be moderate, after all the core neighbourhoods of Blumendorf will not change’, even though this countered their previous anxiety that the new neighbourhood threatened to be as big as the whole of Blumendorf. Some tried to persuade me that there might be more positive outcomes, for instance, young people in Blumendorf could buy land and build houses in the new neighbourhood. Moreover, many people commented with a cynical smile that the bureaucratic system is inefficient, and it could take years for the new neighbourhood to be built. (Sure enough, after several months I learned that there are problems concerning how the roads of the new neighbourhood should be built, and the people concerned are going through a protracted negotiation.) Even my landlady Marlene, after several failed attempts to mobilise people against the building of the new neighbourhood, recovered her calm, and dispassionately explained to me, ‘It may be beneficial for the village too – maybe more people [new residents] will go to the inn’.

Analysing such discourse, other than possible cynicism (since there are indeed limited means by which villagers might counter the decision to build a new neighbourhood), I also recognise an effort to draw people from the state of anxiety back to the continuity of daily life. Anxiety highlights a disruptive element to this daily life which itself focuses on maintaining ‘continuity’. Anthropological studies of people’s reactions to moments of crisis have often noted how such disruptive features affect local perceptions of time, but I need to point out in contrast to these studies how the case of Blumendorf case presents certain differences. In Knight’s (2016) research on Greece after its 2009 economic crisis, he stressed that ordinary Greeks experienced a complicated mixture of multiple pasts and (destroyed) futures; while in his study which also concerns Greece, Streinzer (2016) observed that the more optimistic side of this crisis is exactly how people constantly try to anchor their life in this temporal vertigo through relational labour to sustain their households. However, the crisis and efforts to sustain continuity in Blumendorf are very different from the Greek case. Although the land-sale incident was an unexpected event, it was not like other major economic and political crises that cause serious social ruptures, but rather more like a constant shadow of the modern condition, emerging from time to time on the surface of daily life in the form of events.

The effort of people to return to the continuity of ordinary daily life in this sense is not a new and special action of ‘self-help’ in the face of unprecedented special circumstances, but the normal operation of a functioning village. To explain this point, we may make a comparison with Gow’s (2006) elaboration of how the Piro people seemed to forget being converted to Christianity. Gow shows how, when confronted with Christianity, the Piro people understand and practice it through their own shamanism, with the result that they appear to ‘forget’ their own conversion to Christianity. This reflects the way the original culture both changes and maintains continuity when confronted with a foreign culture. The difference with Blumendorfers is that although their ‘forgetting the crisis’ is also a way of both changing and maintaining continuity in the face of ‘external challenges’ (there is more emphasis on maintaining continuity in this example), the approach itself was developed in long-term coexistence with similar challenges. Furthermore, it would be less accurate to define these challenges as ‘external’: they may appear to come from outside the village, but the current shape of the village itself has been formed through long-term interaction with them, and the response to these ‘external challenges’ is an integral part of that shape.

Therefore, anxiety over disruption and efforts to maintain continuity form a coherent whole. The efforts to maintain continuity are evident not only in the discourse we mentioned above, but also in the actions of local associations which, as one of the most significant parts of village daily life, not only hold regular gatherings, but also maintain consistent documentation. Almost all the important associations in Blumendorf have both paper documents and online registers of their founding histories, leaders and central members both past and present, and significant events. Pictures, posters, leaflets, and media coverage are collected and documented, not only to preserve memories, but also as an emblem of something persisting from past to present, and expectantly also into the future – a promise of continuity in time. In this chapter, we will start from understanding this endeavour for continuity in Blumendorf, as a basis on which to analyse Blumendorfers' dialectical comprehension of time and of *Heimat*.

Continuity versus emergence, and 'tight multitemporality'

In anthropological studies, researchers have noticed a similarly strong emphasis on continuity in social life in other parts of Germany. A relatively extreme case study comes from Ringel's (2014) research on Hoyerswerda, the fastest-shrinking city in Saxony which belonged to the former GDR. In the face of decline caused by privatisation and outsourcing, people in Hoyerswerda are preoccupied by the continuous and steady work of achieving funds for associations and restoring their buildings. Due to their East German history, many of the 'traditions' they uphold now are in fact new inventions. They are aware of this but nonetheless intend to recognise them as traditions and take them into the future. All of these are endeavours to overcome the process of decay.

Although Hoyerswerda presents characteristics of post-socialist societies, its people's endeavour for continuity is not just about survival, nor can it be easily categorised as a post-socialist sense of 'everlasting present' (Baxstrom 2012) or 'enforced presentism' (Guyer 2007). Rather, through analysing circumstances in Blumendorf and in Hoyerswerda, I observed significant similarities between them. The two conflicting features that Ringel (2014: 54) recognises in Hoyerswerda, i.e., 'an unexpected return to surprisingly "conservative" modernist and – at the same time – counter-intuitively progressive understandings of time and the future', also exist in Blumendorf. Besides, just like Hoyerswerda people, Blumendorfers through endeavours towards continuity in fact maintain a vigilant anticipation of the future which confirms their own agency. This agency nonetheless ‘demands the impossible: it transcends the present by striving to make this very present practically endure against all odds’ (Ringel 2014: 54). In this chapter, I will elaborate these phenomena in Blumendorf and the contributions they may make to anthropological understandings of time. As Agamben (1993: 91) states that ‘every culture is first and foremost a particular experience of time’, this chapter through analysing time also tries to elucidate the underlying complicated experiences and understandings of *Heimat* which generate these experiences of time.

We should note that, compared to ‘continuity’, the predominant model of time in contemporary anthropology usually recognises its ‘becoming’ and ‘politically productive’ potential (Bear 2014: 21). More specifically, it mainly focuses on two different orientations of ‘becoming’, i.e., ‘emergence’ and ‘uncertainties’. Different thinkers have addressed the issue of ‘emergence’ from various perspectives. For instance, Appadurai (2002: 34) considers the ‘imagination as social practice’ as a ‘collective tool for the transformation of the real, for the creation of multiple horizons of possibility’. Jameson (2005: 416) emphasises utopian writing as an ‘imperative to imagine … radical alternatives.’ The new and the emergent hold some promise for change and liberation from any form of predetermination, which usually refers to solidified social structures and their accompanying solidified understanding of time. Agamben (1993: 104) recognises this kind of change and liberation in the moment of ‘pleasure’ and the ‘history’ which is the true site of pleasure and which ‘is neither precise, continuous time nor eternity’. Bourdieu’s proposal to expand the limits of ‘the possible’ (Gell 1992: 266-7) also prompted many scholars to explore this particular kind of change and freedom.

Besides this more positive sense of emergence, another older kind of 'uncertainty' accompanying modernity from the beginning is also an important topic for an anthropology of time. Current studies usually characterise the 'present' in capitalist, neoliberal and global time as a compression of time and space, speed, or uncertainty (e.g. Comaroff, Comaroff & Weller 2001; Harvey 1989; Hope 2006; Mains 2007; Tomlinson 2007). 'Futures' are then correspondingly understood as radically uncertain, problematic and hollowed (e.g. Guyer 2007; Hell & Schonle 2010; Piot 2010; Rosenberg & Harding 2005; Wallman 1992). The underlying reasons for these approaches can be traced back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when a sense of uncertainty arose over the relationship between human experiences of time and abstract measures of time (Bear 2014: 9). The abstract reckoning of time works for capitalism to provide a universal measure of value in labour, exchange, and debt etc., which is one of the most predominant experiences of modern time (Bear 2014: 7). However, it usually contradicts concrete experiences and social rhythms (Glennie 2009; Innis 2004; Landes 2000; Marx 1992; Postone 1993).

However, as Bear (2014: 4) has already pointed out, there are limitations to these approaches, and there needs to be a rethinking of modern time. For instance, against Agamben's (1993) optimistic perspective of the liberation potential of the emergent now-time, Negri (2003) points out that this kind of emergence cannot guarantee new politics or insights, and it can be absorbed into the routinised social time of both production and administration. Indeed, whether stressing 'emergence as liberation' or 'uncertainty as problem', from my perspective they are both based on a confined understanding of modern time as either solidified (so that there is a need for liberation) or abstract (so that no matter whether at present or in the future, there is always space for uncontrolled concrete experiences which may be summarised as uncertainty). But as Ringel (2014: 63) asked pertinently, in relation to German local practices, what if the practices aim for 'the predetermination of the future, not the past'? This means firstly that it is possible the 'future' can be predetermined and 'change' is not just in the sense of emergence as previous studies of emergent time may presuppose. Secondly, it means that it is possible 'predetermination' is not abstract, but constantly practiced and performed in daily experiences. This opens a space from which to observe the resilience and permeation of modern time and modernity, which from the beginning may have already incorporated some of the phenomena that the theories of 'emergence' and 'uncertainty' highlighted.

Before substantiating these points with ethnographies of Blumendorf, I will continue to use Ringel's (2014) example of Hoyerswerda and its similarities with Blumendorf to point in the direction of our discussions. The project of continuity in Hoyerswerda elaborated by Ringel (2014) resembles a similar endeavour in Blumendorf, and both aim for the 'permanence' of their communities through participating in association activities which represent 'traditions'. In many cases the 'traditions' are in fact new and invented, coinciding well with Hobsbawm and Ranger's arguments in their seminal book *The invention of tradition* (1983), and rather than cherishing the 'past', they instead illuminate more of an endeavour to ensure a continuity of time. The indications of decay or disruption are the real 'enemies' of this sense of continuity, which explains people's efforts to 'turn away' from anxieties as in Blumendorf or from the fact of decline as in Hoyerswerda.

These people's practices of continuity do not incorporate an understanding of time as a millennial, new future, but they are equally politically productive and include sufficient changes. Countering current theories of new millennial hope, becoming, and neoliberal futures, the case of Hoyerswerda (and that of Blumendorf) presents a modern pursuit of continuity and permanence (Bear 2014: 22). These small practices of endurance in fact gradually build material futures, which invite anthropology to rethink whether effective change occurs only in the sense of ‘emergence’. Besides, the futures they strive to build do not coincide with the dominant understanding of a temporal order from post-industrial decline to neoliberal globalisation (Ringel 2014: 54). Although seemingly they justify their practices as ‘traditions’, they in fact show a kind of creative agency to shape a future in the face of uncertainty and decline. These acts of agency can be understood in a way similar to the ethics and agency of women in Egypt’s pious movement in Mahmood’s (2001; 2005) study, or Berlant’s (2007: 759) redefinition of agency as an ‘activity of maintenance, not making’. As Harris (1996; 2004) has already argued, upholding tradition and continuity does not mean that people are necessarily dominated by ideology, nor necessarily conservative, but rather may point to hopeful practices of an alternative future. These are also often consistent, everyday concrete practices which link recurrent events in the present not only to somewhat invented ‘past histories’, but also to the desired succession. In this way, everyday practices give ‘relevance and meaning to an event in the present by granting it the quality of endurance’ (Ringel 2014: 55).

However, what Ringel did not analyse further, and what I also strive to elucidate in this chapter, is the different layers of temporality and immutability in these practices of continuity, which is one significant way to consider ‘the complexity of the mixed, layered chronotopes of modern time’ (Bear 2014: 7). Blumendorfers’ experiences and discourses of time and future, especially discourse concerning young people as the indicator of the future, show the depth of the practices of continuity, not as a static status or an undivided endeavour, but rather as a dialectic of temporality and immutability.

The previous anthropological study of multitemporality (Serres 1982) still implicitly reproduces the insights highlighted above through the approaches of ‘emergence’ and ‘uncertainties’, and the phenomena it observes and emphasises share similarities with those emphasised by both approaches. Firstly, explorations of multitemporality focus on the somewhat chaotic situation after a crisis and the potential alternative times that may arise when trying to maintain order. For instance, Porter (2016) when studying revolutionary ethics in a political crisis in Yemen noticed a new temporal agency emerging which works for a different version of the future and also provides a new understanding of temporal ruptures. This is actually consistent with the nature of phenomena described by the ‘uncertainties’ approach, that is resistance to or reaction against a strong system. Secondly, other studies of multitemporality have focused on alternative times which do not emerge from crisis, but from other situations outside the mainstream. For example, Bowles (2016) paid special attention to boat-dwellers’ experiences of time in London, where the flexibility of an itinerant life posits significant differences from the lifestyle of others in the city. Moroşanu (2016) focused on the temporal orders inside country cottages in East Anglia, where people’s efforts to maintain character houses established a sense of multitemporality, connecting with past traditions and delaying a future of, for instance, energy efficiency. These phenomena of creativity, imagination, liberation, etc., which are different from the mainstream forms of life, also remind us of the nature of the phenomena highlighted through the approach of ‘emergence’. Bear’s (2014) study of India to a certain extent is a combination of these two ways of revealing multitemporality, i.e., she observes the coexistence and interplay between the emergent, transcending sense of temporal order brought about by worship of deities, and the uncertainties brought about by decaying factories and industries. In her own words:

> ‘What drew the large crowds was the portrayal of cosmogony alongside a past of economic decay and a thwarted future, all in one place. Laid out in space juxtaposed with each other, these times could be simultaneously manifest. At the heart of the *pandal* [a mixture of stages, temples, and homes to worship the

> goddess Durga], the time of cosmogony could overcome with its *annondo* [joy] the sense of loss manifest in the images of ruined and lost future factories. In this timespace, crowds of citizens drew on representations of sacred and economic time in order to give shape to the uncontrollable event that had just occurred.' (Bear 2014: 5)

The comingling of these two senses of time is what Bear (2014: 5) regards as 'diversity of the chronotopes' or 'multiple temporal rhythms.'

What these 'multiple temporal rhythms' and the above studies of multitemporality reveal is a 'weaker' combination of different temporalities, or diverse experiences of time, which are often accidentally connected and do not logically fit together very closely. But what I have observed in my fieldwork is what I could call a 'tight multitemporality', where different experiences of time complement each other, laying the groundwork for each other's existence and forming an inseparable whole. The formation of this sense of time is a modern product, which gives us a deeper understanding that modern time is actually a very tight multitemporality and cannot be easily labelled as a simple abstract time. I will start by presenting my conclusions and then address them in the subsequent sections. The multitemporality of modern time revealed in Blumendorf is as follows:

- The first layer presents an understanding of time as the immutable origin or quintessence (immutability), and an understanding of time as progressive, linear and constantly moving forward (temporality);
- The second layer concerns the relationship between the above two. The existence of different representations of time consists of a kind of temporality, but their close interlinkage also forms a new immutable dialectic as a constant unfolding of the conflicts and connections between the two representations of time.

We will go into ethnographic detail now to illuminate these points.

‘Backward’ *Heimat* and progressive time

Eighteen-year-old Resi Habermayer had just hosted her birthday party in her family house – as we learned in Chapter Two, this is the biggest and one of the oldest houses in Blumendorf. Half of the house used to be a wooden stock barn, and the white paint of the other half is already mottled. The house is decorated with balloons and coloured ribbons for Resi’s birthday, making an interesting contrast with its old exterior. Resi tied her brown hair into a ponytail and looked even more energetic than usual. We had a short talk in the garden, sipping lemonade together, while Resi excitedly shared with me her experience of a school exchange trip to Hangzhou, China.

‘We had this programme at school and I went to live in a Chinese girl’s home and she went to live in my home. It was really interesting! Her family has many big modern apartments in Hangzhou. It’s a beautiful city and an exciting experience!’ Resi said with sparkling eyes. Resi’s mother, Magdalena, joined our conversation at this point and told me that the Chinese girl who lived in their home was very cute. ‘She was quite afraid of our dogs though,’ Magdalena smiled, adding that the two girls then had a good relationship and often wrote to each other. Not long ago the Chinese girl invited Resi to travel to Hangzhou again.

Resi’s experience could not be considered common in Blumendorf, and she was the only student I heard of in Blumendorf who had participated in this kind of exchange programme. In fact, she went to the best *Gymnasium* (high school) in the region, which was unusual in being able to organise this kind of trip, and her family was rich enough to provide the fees. In the German educational system, after four years of *Grundschule* (elementary school), at the age of nine the pupils are segregated into one of the three kinds of secondary school: *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, and *Gymnasium*, based on their academic performance and their parents' choice (as well as the family's financial situation). The difference between these three is that the *Hauptschule* has the lowest entry requirements, and although it teaches the same subjects as other schools (but at a slower pace) and some vocational courses, after graduation its students mainly go to vocational schools with apprenticeship training. The *Realschule* has higher admission requirements than the *Hauptschule*, and after graduation the students mainly go to (better) vocational schools, or if they earn good scores in *Realschule* they can transfer to a *Gymnasium*. The *Gymnasium* has the highest entry requirements and focuses on academic subjects such as German, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history, philosophy, social studies, foreign languages, etc., with students usually going to university after graduation. Going to different schools is crucial to students' future studies and career trajectories, and also lays the foundation for future social divisions in the village, where children who go to different schools will have very different classmates, colleagues and career paths. This choice of a certain school at the age of nine reflects not only the student's ability to learn in different areas, but also the economic status and educational background of his or her parents. About half of the kids in Blumendorf went to nearby *Gymnasien*, and Resi went to the best of them.

However, Resi's general experiences of living in Blumendorf but going to school in towns or cities nearby were shared with other youngsters in Blumendorf. Early each weekday morning, children (mostly middle- and high-school, but also elementary-school students) leave their homes and walk towards the only bus stop in Blumendorf, carrying their big schoolbags and seldom speaking with each other along the way. In winter, they wait in the cold and dark for the school bus to pick them up at around 7 am. There is only one school bus that goes through all the villages picking up students and taking them to the school in Erk. If the students miss this bus, their parents need to drive them to school. My landlord Albert once joked that ‘I am like a taxi driver’ when his youngest son Johannes missed the school bus. After 3 pm when classes are over, students take the school bus back home. However, just as I noticed that these kids rarely talk with each other when they wait for the bus, I seldom saw them playing together after school. This does not mean that there is no contact at all, for instance, the kid next door sometimes comes over to play table tennis with Johannes, but most of the time Johannes enjoys staying at home alone playing computer games.

I think for most youngsters in Blumendorf, although going to different schools posits significantly different experiences, their general childhood and adolescent experiences of living in the village and going to schools in towns and cities can be considered quite homogeneous: for instance, almost all use the school bus and make friends at school. However, among themselves they seem a bit distant from each other, at least not sharing their lives in the village as intimately as their parents’ generation. At least two factors contributed to this distance. Firstly, their main circle of friends were classmates from outside the village. Secondly, the difference in current and future social conditions due to different schooling may make youngsters feel less close to each other and even a bit awkward. I still remember how Nobert Schreiner, the head of the shooting association, affectionately pointed to other people in the inn during one gathering and told me, ‘We have known each other since we were kids, and we grew up together.’ By contrast, one day I was invited to a party by Johannes’s sister Theresa. She drove me to a pub in Erk, not the village inn (‘There isn’t much fun there in the inn,’ as she told me), and once we arrived, I realised that none of her friends were from Blumendorf.

Of all the factors that contribute to these phenomena, modern, standardised education plays a significant role. Older people in Blumendorf told me that education before the communal reform in 1978 was drastically different. At that time, there was a village school in Blumendorf which had only one teacher who was also the headmaster. As someone 'intellectual', the school headmaster was one of the three most powerful persons in the village, the other two being the village head and the priest. Kids in Blumendorf from Grade One to Grade Eight would study in one classroom and learn the same curriculum from this teacher. It is not surprising that they then only learned basic subjects, such as German reading and writing, basic mathematics, etc. It was expected that after this schooling they would go back to live similar lives to their parents, as peasants, craftsmen, inn host, etc.

However, things gradually changed, concordant with the decline of small-household agriculture and stock farming, the shift of jobs from the countryside to the city, and the expansion of higher education in post-war Germany. The shutting down of the village school after 1978 made drastic changes in the educational field palpable. The school bus started to collect village children and took them all to the primary and junior high school in Imhof. It was a new, and perhaps also unfavourable environment for village children. Claudia Seiler, someone born in Imhof who experienced the arrival of new students from surrounding villages to her primary school in Imhof, once told me with a nostalgic smile that the Imhof students used to look down on those village kids, and she never imagined that she would go on to live most of her life in the village of Blumendorf. In the new schools, village kids were also incorporated into the modern educational system and learned standardised subjects like students everywhere in Bavaria, such as geography, history, physics, chemistry, mathematics, German language and foreign languages, etc. These are subjects important for citizens of a modern state but have less to do with village life and in fact prepare students for urban living. Corbett's (2007) study of education in coastal Nova Scotia in Canada supports this observation, arguing that rural youth are 'learning to leave' through accumulating educational mobility capital which distances them from their home communities. These characteristics of modern education have been observed in other significantly different contexts. For instance, in Benei's (2011: 269-271) study in India, school subjects, especially language and history, inspire a powerful sense of belonging to the nation. Within the school, both teachers and students as citizens negotiate their own responses to attempts by the state to form citizenship and nationalism, and in turn accomplish these same objectives. Very similar to technology, education may also cultivate 'a new appreciation of the urban, industrialised world' (Benei 2011: 269), and a kind of intimacy towards the industrialised nation.

Therefore, even though the students may not intend to do so, their daily experiences at school to a certain extent are dragging them away from village life and influencing their visions of their own trajectories. We may go back to the example of Resi Habermayer. Since she had just graduated from high school, I asked what her plan for the future was, and she said she would take an internship in New York. During the internship she would think about which university to apply to, and she said it was very likely to be in the US. When I asked whether she could think of herself settling in Blumendorf later in her life, she smiled and answered, 'I don't know...' Indeed, her connection with Blumendorf seems to be loose. Her close friends do not live in Blumendorf, she has not participated in any associations and does not usually join in village activities. Some of the characteristics of village life also seem to be far away from her lifeworld. When I talked about the *Dirndlschaft* (association of Bavarian traditional dress) for girls in Blumendorf, Resi gave a hearty laugh and said, 'I think that's outdated [*veraltet*] … wearing *Dirndl*!'

The trend of young people gradually leaving the village began long ago. Like their parents, after graduation from high school almost all young people need to find a job in the towns and cities nearby, or even further away in other countries. Unlike their parents' generation, most young people choose to live in the place where they work and only go back to Blumendorf occasionally during holidays. For instance, since Theresa, my landlord's daughter, found a job as a policewoman in Munich, she has lived in a rented apartment with her boyfriend in the city. She did not return to her parents' home in over three months.

This trend is an undeniable fact, and even though people strive to make anxiety 'disappear' as we showed at the beginning of this chapter, there is an undercurrent of persistent anxiety that resurfaces every now and then when certain circumstances arise. Blumendorfers usually project this anxiety through complaining about young people 'always playing computer games at home'. Interestingly, they seldom complain about young people not participating in associations, as they do about newcomers, even though it is a fact that only a few young people ever take part in association activities, and they are scattered across several associations. However, in their daily discourse people focus on the brighter side, i.e., there are indeed young people who participate and are even active organisers of events, such as the daughter of the inn host who organised the *Dirndlschaft* for young women. As for the more pessimistic facts, most often people either remain silent, or endeavour quietly to attract more young people to the associations. For instance, in the shooting association's annual ceremony, there is always a prize especially reserved for young members: 'Young Shooting King' or 'Young Shooting Queen'. We will talk more about this phenomenon of 'focusing on the brighter side' in the next section.

The trajectories of most young people in Blumendorf and their delicate relationship with their *Heimat* reveal a social dynamic generating the experience of linear progressive time. Even though people seldom talk about *Heimat* as something outdated or 'backward', their educational and occupational experience and the general circumstances of global market economy all in fact draw them away from their *Heimat* and push them into the currents of a 'more modern world'. The trend *de facto* defines *Heimat* as something 'backward', pre-modern or even anti-modern, and not as a desirable destination either in the spatial or the temporal sense.

Eternal *Heimat* and immutable time

However, in this section we also need to turn to the other side of the coin which has already been apparent in previous sections. Against the background of *Heimat* being implicitly defined as 'backward' in a linear progressive understanding of time and the trend to move away from it, which are revealed in both the land-sale incident and the departure of young people from the village, villagers also persistently stick to maintaining *Heimat* and adopt an 'optimistic' discourse to analyse the situation. For instance, they would endeavour as much as possible to encourage young people to participate in village life. But if they failed, they could also swiftly adopt an 'optimistic' narrative, focusing on the instances of young people who do participate (as we mentioned earlier) or a belief in a bright future in which young people will eventually return to village life. This is almost a belief that *Heimat* will never fail and will always exist.

For instance, thirteen-year-old Johannes, my landlord's youngest son, is one of those youngsters who much prefer to stay at home and (literally) play computer games. His mother Marlene tries to push him to join in with shooting association activities which he was interested in when he was younger. Especially after I also joined the shooting association, almost every Friday night when I prepared to go to the inn, Marlene would encourage Johannes to go with me, but he always refused. On the Friday before Easter, when I returned from the special shooting night organised for the Easter holiday and brought back the Easter eggs I had won as ‘prizes’ for shooting, Marlene especially directed Johannes’s attention to the colourful (and delicious) Easter eggs hoping to persuade him to attend the event. However, Johannes showed no interest and soon left the kitchen. In this situation, however, Marlene showed no frustration. Both she and her husband Albert continue to take Johannes to village activities whenever possible. When we sometimes talked about their son, Marlene and Albert liked to emphasise how he was immersed in village life as a child. Many times I heard stories of how Johannes loved the tractors in the fields and the farmers gave him rides, or how he learned archery from another villager.

Marlene and Albert’s practices and sentiments are not unique in Blumendorf. I often encountered similar approaches towards and discourse about young people, including among members of old families who are usually the most sensitive and anxious about changes in Blumendorf. For instance, once I visited Gertraud and Michael Huber, a couple living in an old house at the north-eastern edge of Blumendorf who belong to a well-known old family. When we talked about young people, they stated optimistically that young people are not leaving the village. ‘But most young people nowadays work in the cities, do you think they will settle there, rather than in the village?’ I asked. ‘Oh no, no, they will eventually return to the village,’ answered Gertraud, with a gentle smile, ‘Otherwise where will they go? It’s so expensive to buy an apartment in the city[15]. They'll eventually return. They can build new houses on their family's land or inherit their parents' houses.'

'Or buy a house in the new neighbourhood!' Michael interposed, and then he looked at his wife and winked. This was indeed the reason why this couple approved of building the new neighbourhood, for it would provide houses for young people from Blumendorf.

They thought that there was no difference between their generation (both Gertraud and Michael are in their early fifties) and the younger generation, saying that 'they [young people] also join village events actively with older people!' When I could not resist mentioning that most young people rarely go to the inn, Gertraud explained it in the following way: around thirty years ago, young people often organised parties at the inn and stayed up late into the early hours, but the inn host Rainhard Kroetz thought it was too much for him because he was trying to find another job in Munich (he indeed also works as a caretaker in Munich now), and for that reason young people no longer organise activities at the inn. However, from my perspective, around thirty years ago Rainhard Kroetz himself was in his late twenties or early thirties and the explanation Gertraud gave in fact portrayed the trend for young people to leave the village to find jobs elsewhere. Even though Rainhard Kroetz continues opening the inn for association activities, he also needed to find a job in the city to earn a living.

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[15] This is true, and it explains a certain 'counter-urbanisation' phenomenon: some people from Munich move to live in Blumendorf. However, interestingly, I know the reaction of many young Blumendorfers to the high price of real estate in the city is to buy or rent an apartment in one of the relatively cheaper towns nearby, rather than returning to the village. Maria's optimistic vision of young people returning is not yet evidenced by current cases.

This said, it would be too hasty to conclude that the kind of optimism expressed by Gertraud and Michael is utterly ungrounded. I did meet some young people who lead a similar life to their parents' generation, sometimes at the inn, and sometimes when I visited their families. Here, the significant role of education is confirmed once again: most young people I know who reproduced their parents' lifestyle have a relatively lower level of education, and many did not go to university after high school. However, these young people are indeed in the minority and come from just a few families in Blumendorf.

When the prevalence of an optimistic discourse is mismatched with the ratio of evidential cases, it already suggests that this discourse might be a rhetoric with an (perhaps unconscious) ideational framework. What best reveals the existence of this rhetoric is a 'failed' interview I conducted with Barbara Kroetz, the initiator of the *Dirndlschaft* in Blumendorf and daughter of the inn host Rainhard Kroetz. The interview 'failed' in a way that it is almost 'perfect' – Barbara tried to answer every question perfectly. As someone just graduated from university who had found a job in a Munich insurance company, Barbara is different from many of her peers in that she still lives in Blumendorf (in one of the many vacant rooms at the inn) and helps her father serve beer to guests every Friday night.

Barbara and I had arranged to meet in the ground-floor pub area of the inn. It was a quiet afternoon, and no one else was around except Rainhard Kroetz washing beer glasses behind the counter. In retrospect, this was not an ideal setting: even though Barbara and I sat in one corner of the pub, it was still quite likely that Rainhard could hear what we were saying. Barbara looked a bit nervous and when she started to talk, I could feel that she was searching for the most 'appropriate' words. After chatting about her experiences at school and at work, I asked about the relationship of young people to the village of Blumendorf. She blurted out, ‘Very good! Young people care very much about Blumendorf and have a strong attachment to their *Heimat*.’ When I asked her the question about what is most important in her life, she thought for a while and answered, ‘family’. This was one of the most popular answers Blumendorfers gave to this question, and exactly the same as her father’s answer. When we started to talk about the *Dirndlschaft* she organised, Barbara explained her motivation to organise it as ‘to pass on the tradition’. But when I asked what she thought was the tradition, she faltered a bit and glanced at her father as if searching for hints of a correct answer.

Although this interview might have failed to open Barbara up, the successful part of it was that it proved the existence of a possible correct or perfect answer which Barbara strived to present. A possible ‘perfect answer’ also reveals the existence of an idea or ideal of what things should be, and in this case, points to the concept of the continuation of tradition and *Heimat* itself. In this sense, the optimistic discourses, especially concerning young people’s relationship with *Heimat*, can be understood both as a production of the ideal of continuation and as an effort to maintain this ideal against all odds (e.g. against the facts of young people gradually becoming detached from the village). These optimistic discourses not only motivate practices, but also permeate people’s perceptions, helping them to recognise the brighter side of the evidence and hold onto them. This mechanism can help people overcome anxiety more quickly and devote themselves again to endeavours for continuation, as shown by the ethnography we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. From a temporal perspective, this mechanism withstands – almost to the utmost extent – the process of decay through which people recognise past, present and future. Rather, it weaves the sense of past, present and future together into a homogenous endeavour for something ideal and eternal: the presence and continuation of *Heimat*. Time in this sense becomes immutable and homogeneous.

Just as the endeavour underlying this immutable sense of time is to achieve the continuation of *Heimat*, the generation of this temporal experience is also essentially linked with an aspect of *Heimat* understood and practised as the origin, the eternal presence and the ideal destination of German society. Historically, it was between the unification of Germany in 1871 and the First World War that German people developed the idea of *Heimat* out of their multitudinous regional pasts, traditions and landscapes – an idea making them believe that they ‘share an immemorial past’ (Confino 1993: 42). The effect is that Germans, through relating to their localities, can also relate with their nation, and become local patriots and national patriots at the same time. To achieve this, historians sought an idea of Germanness in the Second Empire which could function as ‘a national framework for symbolic diversity, a representation of German nationhood based on the metaphor of whole and parts, a concept for understanding the German way of life as comprising the various ways of life that existed in the nation’ (Confino1993: 49). This idea needs to be both indistinct (meaning different things for different people) and abstract (having the ability to collapse differences into similarities) (Confino 1993: 50): the idea of *Heimat* meets both of these requirements.

After 1880s, *Heimat* represented ‘the ultimate German community – real and imagined, tangible and symbolic, local and national – of people who had a particular relationship to one another, sharing a past and a future’ (Confino 1993: 50). This idea of *Heimat* acquires the characteristic of ‘eternity’ in three interlinked senses. Firstly, *Heimat* is considered to be something passed on from ancient times, as the ‘origin’. As Wilhelm Seytter (1904: 4-5) explained in his *Heimat* book about Stuttgart, ‘Heimat studies … enter affectionately into people’s simple and daily life, down from the ivory tower of scholarship into the valleys and meadow of civil, family, and even personal life. … Heimat is not a prosaic system of concepts, and Heimat studies are not a logical theory. Heimat has been given to us by the disposition of our ancestors’. Secondly, even though local practices change all the time, the idea of *Heimat* does not; the presence and existence of *Heimat* in any locality are in fact unquestionable on an ideational level, no matter what particular aspect of a local community is fading or secure. Thirdly, exactly due to the tension between eternal presence and actual fading, this unchanged *Heimat* (as the origin) also becomes an ideal goal for whose realisation people constantly strive.

The dialectic of progressive time and eternal time

The above sections elaborated two different representations of time in Blumendorf which seem to contradict each other. Many anthropologists studying modern time have noted this phenomenon, for instance, Bear (2014: 6) argued that ‘modern time is characterized by unprecedented doubt about, and conflict in, representations of time’ (Bear 2014: 6) and reminded us to pay attention to ‘labour in/of time’ which form these representations. However, do different representations of modern time merely present a clear and simple ‘conflict’? This section delves into the relationship of different representations of time in Blumendorf which may also deepen anthropological understandings of modern time with essentially various representations often glossed as ‘temporality’ (Bear 2014: 18). I would argue that rather than conflict, different representations of time may as well form intertwining connections with each other, and seemingly incommensurable social rhythms can also form an inherent synchronicity.

Concerning connections, Bear (2014) has in fact promoted a kind of loose connection of different representations of time in her study of the Durga Puja festival in India. Through analysing this ‘loose connection’, I can better put forward my argument for an understanding of ‘tight connection’. Bear (2014: 4-5) recorded a moment in Kolkata when the ‘sacred time’ (a time of cosmogony generated by the festival celebrating the annual return of the goddess Durga who brings joy and productive order) and ‘economic time’ (a time of past economic decay and a thwarted future due to the city’s circumstances in the neoliberal market economy) met in the Durga Puja festival. The characteristics of ‘economic time’ very much coincide with our previous discussions of progressive time, and ‘sacred time’ refers to a pre-modern ‘cosmogony’ (Bear 2014: 5) – a kind of pre-modern understanding of origin and order. Bear (2014: 4-5) shows the coexistence of these two representations of time and the potentiality of sacred time to overcome the sense of uncertainty generated by economic time. Thus, she first supported the ‘diversity of chronotopes’ or ‘the multiple temporal rhythms’ (Bear 2014: 5) existing in the modern time, and secondly proposed to understand their relationship as ‘dynamic simultaneity’ (Bear 2014: 6) in which one may overcome the other temporarily through an implicit competition.

Even though this approach may explain the specific situation in India where its deity cosmogony might not be too closely related to the temporal logic behind the global capitalist economy, when it comes to Blumendorf or Bavaria at large, we require an understanding which acknowledges a much closer tie between the representations of progressive time and eternal time: the two representations converge in one prevailing idea of *Heimat* and through identifying with one representation one cannot fully ignore the implicit existence of the other. Furthermore, these two representations depend on each other. Without *Heimat* represented as an imagined origin or ‘past’ which in fact acts as an ideal goal for society, progressive time may lose a significant part of its objective, and without the momentum generated through an ever-progressing endeavour, eternal time may lose an important motivation to move forward. The two seemingly contradictory representations of time and their corresponding understandings of *Heimat* thus in fact form a dialectic: a constant unfolding moving back and forth between these two, which forms a new representation of an immutable, logical time. Time in *Heimat* then holds an inherent conflict, which is what in fact pushes time 'forward'. Modern time is thus an immutable 'no time' in which the passage of time is embodied in a cyclical, logical process, in the dialectic of conflict and peace. We seem to constantly move forward, but we in fact stay in the same place. This dialectic whole is the third representation of time, and also has its corresponding, more comprehensive understanding of *Heimat*. Now, we have elaborated two sets of temporality and immutability, the first being progressive time (i.e. temporality) and eternal time (i.e. immutability); and the second, the existence of the previous two 'conflicting' representations of time (i.e. temporality) and the dialectic whole (i.e. immutability).

All of this might look quite theoretical, which needs to be further explained through ethnographic examples. In Chapter Four we introduced Claudia Seiler, the pious lady with eight children, whose husband fell seriously ill. The Seiler family, including the children whose ages ranged from fourteen to twenty-eight years old during my fieldwork, is largely considered by other villagers as an exemplar of village values. Two significant reasons for this are that, firstly, they are pious people and actively participate in many religious organisations such as the scouts and the altar boys' team. Secondly, they join village associations such as the fire brigade and help hold public events in Blumendorf. I remember how villagers commended the Seiler youngsters as 'positive and active', 'helping a lot in events' and 'reliable when needed', etc. However, after visiting this household more and developing a closer relationship with the family, I found more nuanced hues to this general picture. The young Seiler men speak Bavarian dialect and wear traditional leather trousers, but consciously speak the dialect in a ‘cool’ way and their trousers have a modern cut. It is indeed noticeable that they sometimes perform a city-elite style of masculinity, which may have something to do with their jobs, as they work as a banker, salesman and technician in towns and cities nearby, which are usual career choices for young people in Blumendorf.

The eldest son, twenty-eight-year-old Thomas Seiler especially fits this pattern. Thomas works in a bank in Imhof, and he recently got married to a young lady who just graduated from a university in Munich. Most of the time Thomas is rather quiet, but he is not shy; rather, he tries to present a composed image. He pays much attention to his handsome appearance, wearing spotless suits or cleverly cut leather trousers. After getting married, he moved to a rented apartment in Munich with his wife, just as many young people in Blumendorf would do. However, Thomas seems to have missed Blumendorf and I often saw him at his parents’ house, with or without his wife. One day, when the Seiler family, including Thomas, went to climb a mountain nearby (I went with them), in the fresh breeze and delightful scenery Thomas opened up and offered a critique of life in Munich: it was too ‘crowded’, ‘hectic’ and ‘expensive’, and he was always missing the village.

Therefore, not surprisingly, when the tenancy term of his apartment in Munich ended, Thomas tried to find a new place for his family to live near Blumendorf. Here, an interesting situation arose when two options were laid on Thomas’s table. Both Christoph, a long-term friend of Claudia with a house in the centre of Blumendorf, and Erna Meyer, whose house (as we know from Chapter Four) is located on the edge of the village, were looking for a tenant. Thomas was very reluctant to rent

Christoph's house, because the location was 'too much surrounded by acquaintances.' What he meant was that he might become enmeshed in neighbourhood affairs and gossip, losing certain freedom to do what he wants. Despite loving *Heimat* he was nonetheless critical of this 'untamed' side of village life. Therefore, in the end, Thomas chose to rent Erna's house which was both close enough to *Heimat* and at a balanced distance from any social involvement which might draw Thomas in further than he desired. This choice and the circumstances which it entailed may serve as a metaphor for Thomas's relationship with his *Heimat* and with the two representations of time we mentioned earlier. At the same time, he identified with, and kept a critical distance from both, constantly moving back and forth between 'progressive time' and 'eternal time', which is represented either by physical commuting between Munich and Blumendorf, or by temporal dwelling at a 'point in-between'.

CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to answer its central research question – what are the *Heimat* and the village community that local people try to preserve and what does it mean to preserve them? – through a comprehensive theoretical framework linking the dimensions of state, religion and nature in *Heimat*. It then goes on to deepen understandings of *Heimat* as a whole by exploring the relationship between *Heimat* and its 'other', and between *Heimat* and modern time.

Beginning with the incident of a land sale that took place in Blumendorf, I strive both to illustrate the relationships between current forces in the village – ordinary villagers, association members, inn host, big families etc. – and to show the transformations of the organisational form of the village through comparing these current relationships with historical ones. One of the most important changes was the gradual weakening of the political, economic, and cultural significance of the big family, which gradually gave way to the associations, which have become the most important organisers of collective village life. Simultaneous with this process was a deeper penetration of state power into the grassroots of the village, whose iconic event was the community reform in 1970s which cancelled the administrative authority of the village head (who was usually a member of a big family). This penetration of state power is also greatly aided by the influence of local associations. Besides, the globalised capitalist mode of production has gradually changed the shape of village economic life and the meaning of land, revealed in the decline in family-based livestock farming and the migration of villagers to the cities in search of work. These are exactly the contemporary contexts and pressures that the villagers are facing when they strive to preserve their village community. When the village lost its previous economic and political significance, associational life became the main form of village life. People's efforts to preserve the village community thus also mainly focus on participating in association gatherings and village events (often organised by the local associations).

A sense of belonging to and identification with their *Heimat* significantly motivates villagers' investment in village life. To understand this kind of local identity, I mainly resort to Michael Herzfeld's (2005) concept of 'cultural intimacy' which can best explain the intertwining of state formation and local practices. Herzfeld (2005: 3) defines 'cultural intimacy' as 'the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality, the familiarity with the bases of power that may at one moment assure the disenfranchised a degree of creative irreverence and at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation'. Just as the emergence of the idea of *Heimat* is closely linked with the rise of the German nation-state, villagers' experience, practice, and performance of identity are not simply focused on and confined in the locality, but rather from the beginning were in nuanced communication with the state and its representative discourses and staff. The result of this kind of communication is that the boundary between official and vernacular discourses becomes ambiguous – sometimes it emerges and sometimes it submerges, according to circumstances. This ultimate ambiguous, delicate, continuously changing whole is the political reality out of which *Heimat* and its accompanying experiences of belonging are made and remade.

Anthropological studies of the relationship between state and locality have undergone a shift from focusing on separation to focusing on integration. The studies of nationalism from Ernest Gellner (1997), Benedict Anderson (1983) to Michael Herzfeld (2016) etc. tackle from the beginning a central question of the relationship between locality and the nation-state, between the most intimate daily experiences and the most abstract nation-state ideology. One desired effect of nationalism is the objectification and personification of the state. This is achieved through techniques such as organised subjection in capitalist societies, spatialisation of time and symbolic organisation of social spaces, etc. (see Abrams 1988; Alonso 1994: 381), which create a misplaced sense of the concreteness of ‘the state’ forming the foundation of the separation between state and locality. Many anthropologists, however, have observed phenomena in everyday practice that attest to the substantial interpenetrating of the two. No matter whether in ‘grey areas’ such as corruption (see Gupta 1995), or in more normal, every-day areas such as outsourcing health care services to private companies (see Aretxaga 2003: 398), we see a blurring of the boundary of the ‘state’ which permeates into everything around it and generates a sense of intimacy between state representatives and people encountering them. This kind of intimacy reveals an ambiguous and ambivalent field which essentially still exists and will always exist, no matter how much the idea and ideal of nation-state attempts to transcend it and become an independent, objectified entity, or how much it tries to externalise local forces which are in fact mutually formative with the state. Situations at Blumendorf also reflect this kind of ambiguous field, most explicitly in one of its most important whole-village events –putting up the maypole. The process of this event and the decoration of the maypole are both highly standardised by the Bavarian state, which indicates the nature of the village event as reinvented by the state, and the permeation of state ideas and forces into the locality. On the day that the maypole is erected, the town mayor as representative of the state gives a speech which is usually well received by villagers. This phenomenon together with the careful observation by villagers of rituals associated with the event reveal a sense of intimacy between them and the state representatives and forces.

However, this ambiguous field is not a complete fusion of state and locality. People often observe a sense of ‘fissure’ between them which most often implies lasting unequal power relations during and after the process of state formation. People usually participate ‘semi-seriously’ in the process of putting up the maypole at Blumendorf. If some express a stronger than usual emotional attachment to the event or to the ‘tradition’, it will elicit a sense of embarrassment among local people, revealing that tradition is both a source of pride and a source of embarrassment. This uneasy stance is generated in the process of state-formation in which absorbing and standardising local practices are necessary steps. In this process, local tradition is both symbolised as national quintessence and undermined as backward and wild and thus needing to be tamed. Unexpected passion for these traditions exposes both the incompleteness of the taming process, and the power tilt of the state over locality in the state-formation process. This kind of passion towards tradition consciously and unconsciously becomes what Herzfeld (2005: 3) explained as ‘creative irreverence’ – in practices of cultural intimacy, the disenfranchised obtain a kind of agency through not revering mainstream discourses and expectations.

There has been a series of follow-up theoretical discussions on the theory of cultural intimacy, focused on examining whether this theory is applicable to geographical areas other than Crete (the fieldwork site where Herzfeld developed his theory of cultural intimacy) and what new additions some new context can add to cultural intimacy. For instance, Jung (2010) investigated cultural intimacy in the context of global inequality, criticising it as over-emphasising intimacy but overlooking the reproduction of power hierarchies. For instance, Johnson (2010) when studying the borderland of Malaysia and Thailand, explored how people form a sense of identity through cultural intimacy when more than one nation-state and idea of nationalism coexist.

However, in addition to proving that the theory of cultural intimacy is also applicable to the Bavarian context, my research mainly strives to push the theory itself a step further, making its argumentative direction and potentialities more explicit. Situations in Blumendorf lead us to see that, in addition to the affinity between state and locality and the fissure exhibited through embarrassment mentioned above, state and locality have at least two more steps of entanglement. One is that, even if fissure exists, when locals come into contact with state representatives, such as during the citizens' meeting, they tend to perform a harmonious appearance together with the town mayor, no matter how many grievances and complaints about his policy they may have among themselves.

Secondly, although harmony is performed, distinctions, conflicts, and complaints do not really disappear: people express them in political cynicism and gain a sense of power through ironic parody which objectively contributes to the solidification of these unequal power relations. The four steps above represent the full picture of the intertwining relationship between state and locality: in the moment of harmony, we find mutual resistance; and in the moment of resistance, we find potentialities of mutual formation; but in turn, discontent accompanying the formations still seeks a distinction, which opens up a continuous cycle. Rather than a black or white integration or discord between the state and the local, it is the unsettled entwining that ensures and defines their co-existence. The theory of cultural intimacy helps us get started in this relationship, and analysis of it helps us further our understanding of the potentiality of cultural intimacy, advancing what it can explicitly discuss.

Besides politics, religion is also a factor in *Heimat* that we cannot ignore, but what are the relationships between them? Most of the religious people in Blumendorf are Catholic, and it seems that people's enthusiasm for religious activities in the village is in decline: weekly church attendance is falling and most of the congregation are over fifty years old; the number of priests is going down; some religious festivals are waning or even disappearing; and the church tolerates more practices violating Catholic teaching (for instance, divorce). These phenomena seemingly conform to what classical secularisation theories (e.g. Berger 1990; Bruce 1996 & 2002; Luckmann 1970; Luhmann 1982; Parsons 1960; Wilson 1966) described as a decline of religion. Firstly, the differentiation of social domains in modern society leads to religion becoming only one of the domains. Secondly, religion is gradually pushed out of the public sphere. Thirdly, since religion becomes a domain that can only exist in the private sphere, it is reduced to an option that people can choose or reject. Lastly, religion is destined to decline since people are increasingly unwilling to accept it.

However, although secularisation theories captured certain social phenomena, they are highly selective, rather than comprehending a full picture. For instance, Martin (2005) noted Christian valences in Western Europe which are perceived as ‘secular’ by these theories. Besides, the conclusions they draw is often not justified by the phenomena they cite, revealing a kind of ‘belief’ rather than argumentation. For instance, Davie (1994) has questioned whether there is a necessary link between church attendance and the decline or otherwise of religion. Furthermore, the four steps of the classical secularisation theory outlined in the previous paragraph have no inherent connection and do not all hold up. For instance, ‘differentiation of social domains’ may be a fact, but ‘privatisation of religion’ would not necessarily happen (see Casanova 1994: 7). My research continues these criticisms of secularisation theories, focusing on an extensive case study of how Claudia, a pious Blumendorfer and the whole village dealt with a crisis in her family. Besides providing a Bavarian example refuting the secularisation theories, more importantly I intend to draw together dimensions of religion, state and the locality to examine how they work closely together to form a local community. This whole picture connecting politics and religion is exactly what secularisation theorists compartmentalised, selecting elements beneficial for their own theories.

Before elaborating on the working together of religion and politics, I need to first adopt a ‘divisive’ perspective and highlight the still significant role of Catholic ethics and institution in dealing with crisis, influencing people’s ideas and behaviour, and forming a local community in Blumendorf. A well-known pious family in the village experienced a crisis around ten years ago: Claudia’s husband went to hospital with acute appendicitis, but he waited too long in the emergency waiting room and fell into a coma. Due to lack of oxygen to his brain, he ended up in a persistent vegetative state. Claudia’s decision to take care of her husband at home despite financial difficulties, rather than sending him to a care centre was endorsed by the villagers. Encouraged by the priest and religious associations, villagers donated money to help the family through their financial difficulties. There are many facets to this event, and my research also looked at other aspects of Claudia’s life and the religious life of the village.

Claudia’s faith in God motivated her to look after her husband at home and helped her gradually step out of suffering and crisis. This faith and these practices reveal the underlying ethical world of Catholicism, in which personhood and freedom are two important points. In the Catholic ethics of love, a person finds herself by losing herself in love for another person (Rahner 1978: 240). Against liberal understandings, this indicates a kind of freedom of self-disposal – ‘the capacity of the one subject to decide about himself in his single totality’ (Rahner 1978: 94). Claudia’s dedication to her husband and family (prior to her husband's illness, she lived almost exclusively in the home, had little social life, was a full-time housewife, and had eight children) and the sense of fulfilment rather than confinement she expresses reveal this kind of personhood and freedom of self-disposal. Besides, the indispensable dimension of ‘God’ extends this personhood to a community that is the other side of the same coin. The formal object of love is first and foremost God, and every act of love mediates love for God. Only in ‘an always already going-out into the world’ can one realise this radical experience of God, and the world ‘is primarily the people with whom he lives’ (Fuchs 1970: 246). Accordingly, Claudia insisted on looking after her husband at home as a familiar environment among people he knows. This is different from the ethical ideal of individualism and freedom of choice underlying the state welfare system. Claudia’s rejection of certain arrangements of the welfare system, such as sending her husband to a care centre, suggests that elements of the existing Catholic ethical world in the village are incompatible with the ethical assumptions of the state, and so the ‘permeation’ of the state into the village is limited.

When operation of this religion-state-locality system changed as mentioned above, a new spiritual symbol emerged in the village: nature. It both takes over the previous conspicuous role of religion – e.g. replacing many religious signs with natural ones – and functions as a metaphor for the state. Of all the ways and practices by which villagers relate to nature, the most prominent is their relations with the forest, revealed in a variety of activities such as picking mushrooms. In these activities, and also other organised activities related to nature (hiking, camping, nudist practices, etc.) which used to form ‘naturist movements’ (Williams 2007), one of the most significant ideas and underlying motivations is to ‘return to nature to heal society’s illness.’ Many anthropologists studying nature, such as Strathern (1992), Descola (2013), and Tsing (2015) etc., support the idea that the distinction between nature and culture is artificial and they are essentially inter-generative and intertwined. This intertwining also applies to Blumendorfers’ relationship with nature; however, I need to emphasise that underlying local people’s idea of ‘returning to nature to heal society’s illness’, underlying the apparent intimacy between human/society and nature this idea provides, there is an important premise that nature must be ‘pure’. Only innocent and pure nature – which is essentially distinct from human society – can always be morally upright and become a constant source of ‘morality’ for a society deemed lacking. ‘Nature’ in this sense incorporates contradictory characteristics in that it embodies both morality and amorality – everything unrelated to human issues. However, the strength of the belief that nature can heal society’s illness lies exactly in this contradiction, and in the essential unreachability of this belief itself. Besides, in the Bavarian context, the way villagers relate to nature to a large extent resembles the way they relate to *Heimat*, so that nature becomes the ultimate metaphor for *Heimat*. This Bavarian case reminds us that although previous anthropological studies rightly proved that nature cannot be separated from culture/society, the specific ways that they are kept ‘separated’ in certain societies reveal distinct characteristics of each specific society, which we should also pay sufficient attention to if we would like to understand society more broadly.

If we shift the prism a little, in order to understand *Heimat* as a whole, the first salient phenomenon is that it needs a necessary ‘other’ for its sustainability. Blumendorfers mainly distinguish ‘insiders’ from ‘outsiders’ based on whether they participate in local association activities, therefore in-migrants in this village who rarely join village activities become the archetypical outsiders. Notably, villagers mobilise the rhetoric of ‘village versus city’, labelling outsiders as ‘city people’ even when they moved from other villages or even foreign countries to this village. The distinction between village and city is one of the most important inventions of modernity, but contemporary anthropologists (e.g. Chio 2017; Finnis 2017; Stasch 2017) strive to reveal the intermingling and mutual formation of these two categories. The existence of people sitting in between these two categories in Blumendorf also proves this point ethnographically. Besides, it is not necessarily due to hostility towards the village from people who used to live in the city that these in-migrants do not participate in village activities, although villagers are inclined to perceive it that way and sense a threat to their *Heimat*. Firstly, failure to participate itself threatens efforts to create *Heimat* which focus on the present, on whether a good community is being constructed through village (mostly association) activities in the moment. Secondly, when village activities become unattractive to in-migrants due to the loss of political and economic significance of the village itself, it reveals a fundamental contradiction of *Heimat*: it is built on the reality of diminishing villages, with the aim not to restore the previous village but rather to build a new community out of its ruins, thus *Heimat* is 'constituted by its absence' (Von Moltke 2005: 5). These internal problems of *Heimat* are externalised to an imagined contradiction between *Heimat* and its ultimate 'other', which is 'the city' as a representation of modernity with all its formal rationality.

Although the 'other' of *Heimat* is posited as the modern city, *Heimat* itself is also a modern product, revealed in villagers' dialectical comprehensions of *Heimat* and time. The first layer is that the trajectories of most young people in Blumendorf who gradually leave their hometown reveal social dynamics that tend to produce an experience of progressive time. Although people seldom talk explicitly about *Heimat* as outdated or 'backward', their educational and career experiences, and the overall context of a global market economy, are *de facto* dragging them away from their hometown and pushing them into the tides of a 'more modern world'. These trends in fact define *Heimat* as something backward, pre-modern or even anti-modern, which is not an ideal destination either spatially or temporally speaking.

The second layer of this dialectical comprehension is that people in Blumendorf often apply optimistic discourses to explain the fact of young people gradually leaving the village, which prompts people to focus more on the brighter side of the evidence, overcome their anxiety faster and concentrate again on the constant effort to preserve their village community. From a perspective of time, this mechanism almost to the utmost extent withstands a sense of decay in people’s recognition of past, present, and future. On the contrary, it weaves people’s sense of past, present, and future together, becoming a homogeneous effort to achieve something ideal and eternal: the presence and continuity of *Heimat*. In this sense, time becomes immutable and homogenous. The kind of experience of time is also generated from a layer of *Heimat* understood and practised as the origin, eternal presence, and ideal destination of German society.

The third layer is that the above two seemingly contradictory representations of time and their respective understandings of *Heimat* form a dialectic: moving constantly back and forth between these two and forming a new, immutable, logical time. This time in *Heimat* is thus inherently conflicted, which itself pushes time ‘forward’. Modern time in this sense is an immutable ‘no time’ in which the passage of time is embodied in a cyclical logical process, a dialectic of conflict and peace. This dialectic whole is the third representation of time and its corresponding more comprehensive understanding of *Heimat*.

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