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Constructing a Home

Heimat as an Expression of Privilege, Belonging,
Exclusion and Identity

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Walter Leimgruber

Constructing a Home

Heimat as an Expression of Privilege, Belonging, Exclusion and Identity¹

Abstract: The German term *Heimat* originally meant tangible things, such as a house, property and related rights. Those who did not have them, often had to leave their place of origin and earn their livelihood in an itinerant way. A romanticized image of home originated with the arrival of the Romantic period and industrialization, which brought more and more people to places far from their areas of origin. The nation states offered a new form of home (*Heimat*) to people who possessed the necessary emblematic qualities, such as a common language and history: Belonging to a national community.

The workers, often portrayed as “rootless fellows,” sought their homeland in their solidarity and achieved better protection and social integration with the development of the welfare state. After the Second World War, society was, therefore, more inclusive than ever, and many could fulfill their dream of belonging.

At the same time, an increasing number of people were migrating to other countries to make a living. They often suffered from homesickness or experienced feelings of fragmentation between their new center of life and their place of origin.

Today, large parts of society are ‘migrantized,’ in the sense of alienation from their original feelings of belonging, feel challenged by social developments with their changing images of role, generation, gender and family, their demographic turmoil, and their challenges concerning mobilities, identities, environment and labor market. After a period of increasing prosperity and the expansion of the welfare state, they see their social position as endangered. They seek a *Heimat* that has never existed like this in reality and see it as something past and not a goal to strive for.

Keywords: *Heimat*, home, homeland, exclusion, migration, house, construction, belonging

- 1 This text is one of the closing lectures of the SIEF conference. It tries to summarize essential aspects of the conference topic ‘dwelling’ by taking the concrete and symbolic notion of the house, the home, and outlining the social, legal, economic and ideological developments emanating from this concept towards the concept of *Heimat*. This also gives one the opportunity to think primarily about the development of the research in this area. The text, therefore, does not present an analysis of specific data material based on my own research but attempts to bundle the topics mentioned into a thesis-like overview, as it corresponds to a concluding lecture. Therefore, the language is oriented to the style of a lecture. The presentation is summarizing by necessity, it is not about the detailed discussion of the many individual topics, which, of course, could all be deepened in a differentiated manner, which is not aimed at here, in favor of the overall picture.



Figure 1: Farmhouse and surroundings in Appenzell (Switzerland). Painting in the style of the so-called peasant or herdsmen art (*Sennntumsmalerei*), a naive painting style showing alpine farmhouses, landscapes and animals

***Heimat*: house, property, rights**

A special expression, *Hemet*, is still used in some German and Swiss dialects, such as the Appenzell dialect. It denotes the close connection between house, property and home territory. *Hemet* or 'homestead' means the house one owns and in which one lives. Perhaps one has built it oneself or inherited it, one takes care of, renovates and modernizes it. According to traditional images and imaginations, one tends to think of a farmhouse, since most of the population previously earned their living working as farmers. Of course, the whole existence depends on the fact that one calls a "Hemet" one's own, and one can cultivate it (Bastian 1995: 98–100; Bausinger 1984; Gotthelf 1854: 19; Korfkamp 2006: 19–25). (Figure 1)

In German, the very multi-faceted and abstract term *Heimat* (homeland) has emerged from this concept, which stresses precisely these complex connections between house, property and economic existence, and which also describes them as social and emotional realities (Bastian 1995; Greverus 1972). The term also encompasses love for one's birthplace and home region, for the countryside and the people there, their language and way of life, but, on a more abstract level, it also includes love of belonging, especially to the nation state. The German concept of

Heimat, therefore, carries many connotations which do not appear in the French term *patrie* or the English word 'homeland' (some newer publications dealing with *Heimat*: Binder 2008; Costadura and Ries 2016; Egger 2014; Gebhard, Geisler, and Schröter 2007; Hemel and Manemann 2017; Klose, Lindner, and Seifert 2012; Morley 2000; Rathgeb 2016; Schilling 2010; Schlink 2011; Seiffert 2010; Stapferhaus 2017; Türcke 2007).

Regarding this complex concept and the associated multilayered connotations to the terms house, dwelling and construction, I describe these latter categories not only as concrete objects and as activities, but also as images for all possible kinds of allegiance and the creation of a sense of belonging. There is a close connection with dwelling and I try to link the theme of the SIEF conference with the *Heimat* concept that was so important for German-speaking *Volkskunde*. The contribution goes deeper into some of the many topics of the congress with a historical perspective, which I sometimes missed during the conference. In addition, I connect the microlevel usually focused on in our research with the macrolevel of general developments. My perspective is that of the wealthy European or Western countries.

Having a home, doing a specific job, owning property and being part of a community, all belong together as integral parts of the originally narrower concept of *Hemet*. There is an inherent unity to building and maintaining a house, earning one's living, being socially integrated and having emotional security (Korfkamp 2006: 28–30). This is also demonstrated by the fact that those children who cannot take over this *Hemet* in its strict sense – the family farm – must also leave the homeland in its wider sense – i.e the village or the valley. The offspring of farmers who did not inherit the farm, had to earn their living elsewhere, as farm hands, servants, artisans or workers. They became uprooted because their home, the family farm, their means of support, farm labor, and their place of attachment, the village, all collapsed: The loss of one entailed the loss of the other components as well. Those who never possessed a *Hemet* were, in any case, badly off, as without a farm it was not possible to live well in the villages. They were farmhands or maids, day laborers or landless peasants, who were tolerated as long as they could feed themselves but held no property.

Not only property, but also rights were linked to the house, such as the right to graze cattle on common land or on the alpine pastures; having a say in village affairs or the right to receive welfare support was granted only to propertied citizens (Bastian 1995: 101–105). If one lost one's rights as a citizen, one also lost the right to remain and one's local existence. Such a loss could occur very quickly through an unfortunate marriage, an illegitimate child, a change of religious confession or due to some small transgression. Therefore, there were always plenty of people on the move who earned their living nomadically, as beggars, peddlers, craftsmen or mercenaries, later also as factory workers (Meier and Wolfensberger 1998).



Figure 2: Poorhouse, 19th century

Heimat, with its focus on the unity of house, income and rights, reflects the dream of the original nature of life, the dream of an existence without alienation. The possibility of building and dwelling always means, in this sense, both the right to own property and distancing oneself from those without property, many of them homeless. (Figure 2)

For most of history, rights were tied to property. The Swiss Confederation, founded in 1848, was an early example of a democratic state which viewed everyone as having equal rights and, therefore, for the first time, no longer tied rights to property: It soon issued new laws for the homeless, i.e., for the people without the citizens' rights granted by a local community. They were assigned to a community, which had to grant them citizenship (Gasser, Meier, and Wolfensberger 1998). The idea was logical: Everyone should have a home, a roof over their heads, even if it was only the local poor house. But being able to make a living was not possible in many of these communities and, hence, these people soon moved away again. *Heimat*, therefore, continued to remain a privilege to which not everyone was entitled. Consequently, in accordance with the bourgeois ideology of a settled existence, efforts were made to force the homeless to settle down. Their way of life was made more difficult using all possible means, above all by taking away their children to assimilate the latter within 'respectable' bourgeois society (Leimgruber, Meier, and Sablonier 1998). This bourgeois ideal of a settled existence also expressed itself in the new strict differentiation between public and private, in the cult of the family, understood as a nuclear family, and in the new division of labor between the sexes: Women were the keepers of the house, who cooked in the kitchen and waited atten-



Figure 3: Family idyll

tively upon their husbands. The latter could rest and replenish themselves at home, in preparation for the task of representing the family externally in the wider world (Frevert 1988; Tanner 1995: 159–280). (Figure 3)

After the Romantic period, an additional layer was placed upon the notion of *Heimat*. This was now described sentimentally and became the subject of songs. Poets created an image of the home, especially the place and house of one's birth, using the most decorous words, and artists painted them in the most loving of colors. The more people left their homes to eat unfamiliar bread, due to the increasing urbanization and industrialization of society, the more intensively the idea of home (*Heimat*) was viewed as a lost idyll (Korfkamp 2006: 38–42).

The highpoint of industrialization, with its radical discontinuities, was also the heyday for the foundation of local cultural associations and clubs (*Heimatvereine*), the emergence of the movement for preserving local traditions and historic buildings, and, last but not least, the establishment of the academic discipline of *Volkskunde*, which was also focused primarily on a world that was rapidly disappearing (Bastian 1995: 121–125; Burckhardt-Seebass 1997; Korfkamp 2006: 45–52).



Figure 4: House from an Albanian homeowners' catalog

Nation and migration

In another understanding of the term, “Heimat” describes the social network, familiarity with the people, their language and their traditions. If you travel somewhere else, you become a foreigner, and you have to acquire from scratch all those things that you grew up with at home and internalized instinctively. This is a laborious process which causes people to long for their homeland. Only if this process of integration is successful, does one, with time, also start to feel at home in the new location. However, one is frequently plagued by homesickness, especially if you encounter difficulties in the new environment (Buncke 2009; Greverus 1965; Hofer 1688). Swiss mercenaries in French service were allegedly banned from yodeling, singing the *ranz de vaches*, the *kuhreihen* of the alpine herdsman, because it made them melancholy and caused them to desert. Consequently, homesickness was known as “the Swiss disease” (Blickle 2002: 67–71). Even in the twentieth century, the famous philosopher Karl Jaspers described in his dissertation, *Homesickness and Crime*, how, for example, young women who worked far away from home in households looking after other people’s children, committed the worst possible crimes, such as killing the children in their care or setting fire to the employers’ houses, just so they could return home quickly (Jaspers 1909).

A sense of being torn apart develops from the conflict between migrants’ old home and their life’s new focal point, such that they are torn between the values of ‘here’ and ‘there,’ between the contrasting social systems and cultural expectations,



Figure 5: Unfinished house, Kosovo

and the respective gender, family and neighborhood lifestyles (Bausinger, Braun, and Schwedt 1963: 174–205; Bohleber 2016; Bolleter 2005; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Scheer 2014). There have always been, however, groups of migrants and mobiles who can connect the different worlds in which they live well, where the ‘home’ or the *Heimat* is not a place, but several places or even no longer localized, but made up of social networks, cultural practices and emotional ties that are multi-local or entirely location-independent (Binder 2008, 2010; Egger). Nevertheless, many begin to build a house in their native land as a sign of their intention to return or their attachment, but also as a status symbol, as a clear indication that they have made it. (Figure 4) Building and dwelling serve here again as the consolidation of a social position, but now no longer in the actual focal point of their life, but rather in the emotional one (Löfgren and Bendix 2008).

If the migrants then return to their land of origin, they very often discover that their homeland has become alien to them. It has changed, as societies are irrevocably changing, despite all the commitments to tradition. The image of home which the migrants have stored in their heads is the image of a world as it was decades earlier. However, the migrants themselves have also changed, adopted much of their new environment, without realizing that this has become constantly more familiar to them and that it has become their home (Helfer Herrera Erazo 2005).

Many migrants spend their entire lives building their house, without ever completing it. For, in the meantime, another generation has come along, their children, who do not want to return, as they feel at home in their new location and are building their future there (Berg 2008). If at all, the house in the old homeland serves only as a holiday home.



Figure 6: Roma house in Hunedoara, Romania

Political and social changes also cause many houses never to be completed. (Figure 5) As a result, there are countless incomplete houses dotting the countryside in southern Europe. Skeletons made of concrete, steel and brick soar into the sky, monuments to construction which can no longer provide a home to the people. The half-constructed home becomes a symbol for the loss of place, a kind of no-place of the mobile society. If you drive through the Balkans, you find these dreams everywhere set in the concrete of home-ownership, property, security and status, sometimes real fairy-tale castles with round turrets and giant walls around the perimeter, but often in an unfinished state, maybe with just one room completed, so that it can be used for just a few weeks in the summer (Miller 2008). (Figure 6)

This dream too often meant that migrants did not build their own house at the new location, neither in the practical nor in the metaphorical sense, but that the family focused on the time of their glorious return rather than on the present. What remains is wasted capital – in an economic, social and emotional sense.

In the period after the 1950s, it was mainly in the biographies of migrants that these feelings of divided loyalty and alienation were expressed, while settled society still appeared to be stable and well-founded, and built on solid norms. This has changed fundamentally in the recent past. In this sense, the last decades have transformed the whole of society into something like migrants; it has become



Figure 7: Trailer

‘migrantized’ on an emotional level. The processes which dissolved boundaries also appear to have made the experiences and sensations of the loss of homeland, divided loyalty, the loss of social integration and stability ever-present. Non-mobile people are suffering from the dissolution of social, cultural, gender and economic boundaries once viewed as fixed.

More and more people feel threatened with losing their homeland (*Heimat*) in recent years. Why? After completing the great transition from an agricultural to an industrial society and after creating a high standard of living for a large part of the population following many catastrophes, another change threatens again to lift this society off its hinges: Globalization, digitalization and all those processes which cause the production of goods, the media, the transport system, capital, and also ideas and, ultimately, people to be in motion on a global scale and circulate.

An initial peak in this crisis mood, which appears to be gripping ever more people in wealthy countries, involving the actual loss of their own home, was experienced with the financial crisis in the US that ensured that hundreds of thousands had their houses repossessed, frequently also lost their jobs and had to start over completely from scratch. (Figure 7)



Figure 8: Family picnic

The bulk of the middle class, primarily the lower middle class, is threatened with decline or views itself as in decline. (Large parts of western society are included in the somewhat vague term middle class.) People see themselves as threatened, even when no negative developments have yet occurred, neither having lost their jobs nor their housing. It is much more the fear of losing everything which dominates the mood; and, at the same time, also political attitudes. Globalization, it seems, is pulling people's houses out from under them, while they are still sitting in them. This threatens to change society and politics fundamentally in the countries of the West.

How can this strong reaction be explained? The generations since the time of the Second World War have experienced an unprecedented degree of prosperity and security. After 1945, during the phase of the economic boom, things moved in only one direction: upwards. Almost everybody fulfilled the dream of bettering themselves, thanks not only to the basic economic data, but also to the many migrants, who, at the same time, propped up the position of the native population by taking the poorly paid jobs and positions of lower social status. The migrants also saw the possibility of improving themselves, despite their low status. They could afford to spend more money and opportunities were open to their children, which would never have been possible in their countries of origin.

All this was secured by an increasingly developed welfare state, which also guaranteed people a roof over their heads, even if, nevertheless, something should go wrong (Leimgruber 2000).

Rootlessness

The duo of social security and progressive prosperity, symbolized in many material goods by the house (Bourdieu 2006; Hnilica and Timm 2017) and the car as new mobile home in the center (Stapferhaus 2002) (Figure 8), has been anchored in people's minds in a relatively short historical period in such a way that the realization that both are fundamentally questioned leads to the aforementioned strong fears and reactions: Will my job still be there tomorrow, or will it be relocated to a country with lower wages? Will it be replaced by a computer or a robot? Do I have to become mobile myself to follow the available jobs that exist somewhere in the world? Can I withstand the competition of those people who come here as cheap and/or well-educated migrants?

The fears are all concerned with the loss of *Hemet* in its original sense, as something which protects one, which is closely linked to work, which gives people their social network and creates identity and belonging, as I described it at the start.

There is an earlier period when many complaints were heard about the loss of home and the feeling of alienation, and that was during the industrial revolution, which brought people into the cities and the factories. It was the newly formed nation state in the nineteenth century which offered people a more abstract kind of home, that of belonging to a nation (Blickle 2002, 25–59; Korfkamp 2006: 42–44; Türcke 2006: 31–46). (Figure 9) The writings and speeches of this epoch mention repeatedly the construction of a national house, again and again precisely those elements were invoked which can be found in the concept of *Hemet*: Work, property, belonging, yet all on a more abstract level, the property of the community, the creation of prosperity for all, belonging not to a modest community the size of a village, but to the “imagined community” of a nation, a people, work no longer as shaping nature with your own hands or as a craftsman but as an industrial laborer in a factory (Anderson 1983). (Figure 10)

Marxism saw an alienation of the people in the capitalist means of production, because work was no longer integral and autonomous but rather fragmented and determined by others. Yet, despite these massive changes, the construction of a “national house” gave people a kind of home – with all its problematic consequences that history has shown us (Bollinger 2009). The originally small *Hemet* received a bigger sister in the nation, which was lauded equally enthusiastically, while, simultaneously, all the negative aspects were passed over and everyone was excluded who allegedly did not belong there, who could not present the emblematic elements of belonging to the community – such as those without a homestead in earlier times.

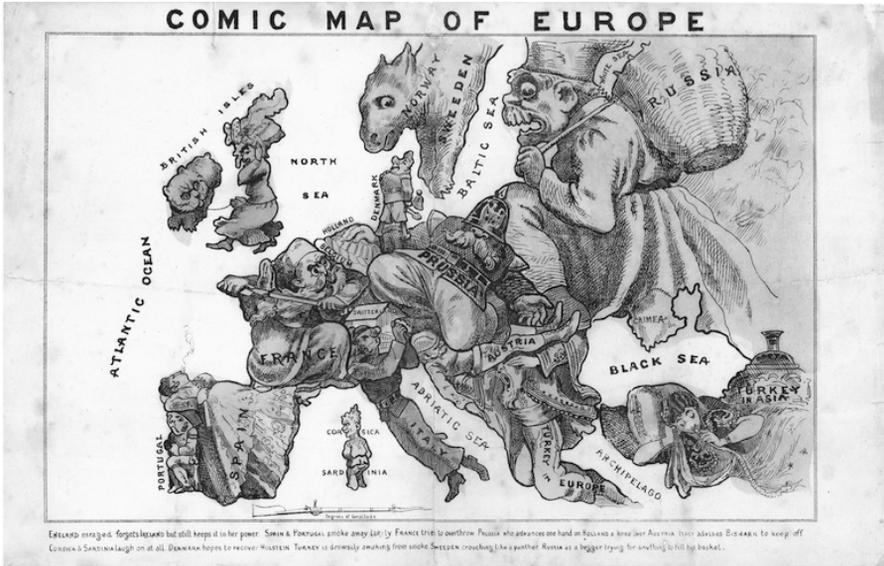


Figure 9: Paul Hadol's comic map of Europe, with Switzerland as a chalet

The new masses of workers were also frequently counted among those who did not belong, categorized as “rootless laborers” (Lehnert 2017; Riehl 1866: 288). The nation state had problems initially with these creations of the industrial revolution, seeing them as fellow inhabitants of the national house only with strong reservations, viewing them rather as lodgers in the basement who shared a bed between shifts.

In reality, this group fought for international solidarity, resisted the national ideal and celebrated a different form of group loyalty, that of class. This again created a new kind of homeland (*Heimat*), that of membership and solidarity in a socialist community (Bastian 1995: 125–127). Despite the revolutions which shook the world during the first half of the twentieth century, this new global homeland (*Heimat*) of the proletariat in the form of a solidary, egalitarian classless society was never really achieved; it remained a dream. However, on the level of the nation state, an additional room was added to the house of belonging, the room of the welfare state (Frykman et al. 2009; Löfgren 2013) The workers fought for their share of the general prosperity steadily, over time. Social legislation was passed which protected them from sickness, accidents and unemployment, and, ultimately, also helped to secure their lives with pensions and welfare support if they were no longer able to work. The edifice of security – symbolized, for example, in the concept of the *Folkhemmet* in Sweden – became ever larger and more comprehensive (Metz 2008; Ritter 2010).



Figure 10: Working women

With the welfare state also came the demand that everyone had to contribute to the construction of the shared house and that everyone should profit from it. The community centers (*Volkshäuser*) founded by unions and parties of the left that were established in many places, which were intended primarily to provide the previously 'homeless' workers with a kind of surrogate home are symbolic of this (Scascighini 1989). (Figure 11)



Figure 11: Community Center (*Volkshaus*) in Zurich and the offices of the social welfare administration of the city, a popular place for demonstrations and also for celebrations: the champions party of the Football Club Zurich (FCZ, the club with a proletarian background)



Figure 12: New houses in the agglomeration

The welfare state erected a protective roof over people's heads, an umbrella against all the hardships of life – at least against all those that laws and money can prevent. This success also made it possible for many to fulfill the dream of owning their own small house, i.e., belonging to the class of property owners. Never before in history had so many people participated in the general prosperity, could so many afford their own house and achieve a sense of belonging. (Figure 12)

Modern society, therefore, has led people further and further away from building and living in their original house, but has created surrogates for them which have meant that people no longer felt so excluded as the 'homeless' (*Heimatlose*) of the premodern era.

Yet, for some time now, this complex building is showing ever larger cracks and signs of damage. In addition, a lot of people admit that many of its fundamental principles of construction need to be redesigned. It no longer appears to be the construction in which they grew up. What are its vulnerabilities and specific reconstruction needs?

Construction sites

The *first* construction site or trouble spot is change at the workplace (Sweet and Meiksins 2017; Williams et al. 2013). The interdependency on the level of capital, knowledge, goods, people, technological progress and the financial power of individual companies are all causing the global economy to move in a new direction.



Figure 13: Construction site

Jobs are being relocated or disappearing rapidly because they are being replaced by automation. Gigantic processes of redistribution can be viewed equally as gigantic crises, as became apparent during the financial crisis and the crisis of the Euro. Large numbers of people can suddenly lose their house and their livelihood because the financial industry has made a bad decision, masses can suddenly lose their jobs because industry has relocated its production and loads of people suddenly find themselves sitting in a rust belt without any prospect of work at all.

Change is uprooting many by not only robbing them of their security, but also of their status, the status of an industrial worker, who once went proudly to the factory and is now surviving with two jobs grilling burgers, without any pride, without any social security. On the other hand, the trend toward a service- and knowledge-based society also means that the demands of many occupations are increasing: More and higher qualifications, network thinking, flexibility and creativity are sought. Recognition of your own current performance is constantly undermined by slogans which always demand one thing: Become faster, better, more innovative, outdo yourself and think outside the box.

Trouble spot or construction site number *two* is change in the sphere of migration (Dickinson 2017). The number of people on the move is growing, and the forms of migration and mobility are becoming increasingly heterogeneous. This also has an impact on the composition of society, which is becoming ever more diverse. I take as an example the numbers for Switzerland: Roughly one quarter of the population is comprised of people with a foreign passport, more than one-third has a so-called migration background (parents coming from another country), more than 40% of marriages are binational and about half of the population has at least one grandpar-



Figure 14:
Jörg Müller: Every Year We Hear the Jackhammer, or: Modified Landscapes

ent from abroad (Bundesamt für Statistik; binational.ch). In addition, almost half of current immigrants are so-called highly qualified, possessing higher education certificates, so that groups are increasingly seeing themselves as endangered that felt in no way threatened by the immigration that took place in the 1960s or 80s. The world seems to be even less well-prepared for the additional challenge of refugees who are on the move due to force of circumstances. More than 60 million people can be counted in this group today. Estimates indicate that this number could increase to 200 million due to additional causes of flight, such as the consequences of climate change (Zetter 2014). All possible solutions to the question of growing mobility are under discussion, from opening up the house for everybody, i.e., an open border policy, to that of sealing it off completely, constructing new walls, but no consensus has emerged. On the contrary, disagreement over these questions has proved increasingly divisive within societies.

The *third* trouble spot is how humanity, and here is meant, above all, the wealthy part of it, treat the environment at every level from the micro to the macro (Baker 2016; Robbins, Hintz, and Moore 2014). It is demanded that humanity rethinks its use of space, energy and resources in the sphere of living and housing situations. A lot of people leave behind them an ecological footprint many times larger than the earth can support. At the level of the places where they live, they are affected by what Hermann Lübke has called a “loss of familiarity” (*Vertrautheitsschwund*) (Lübke 2003: 57). (Figure 14)

Those things which were familiar to us yesterday, as they had always been the same, such as the aspect of a village or the neighborhood of a town, have today been torn down, renovated, modernized or replaced by new construction. This loss of familiarity grows in proportion to the rapidity of economic and social change. New models of living together, the creation of a sense of home (*Heimat*) even in settlements inhabited by highly mobile people, stand next to rapid structural changes which destroy integrally grown units, drive out certain groups in favor of others and, all too often, result in what in Switzerland is called agglomeration: An indefinable hodge-podge of settlements, neither city nor village, amorphous no-places (NZZ Folio 2012; Werk, Bauen und Wohnen 2014). On the global level, climate change threatens to become a giant catastrophe for the entire building of the earth. If humanity does not fight against it on all levels, it has to speed up dwelling in outer space.

The *fourth* construction site is the change in our biography and in social structures resulting from that (Butterwegge 2014; Esping Andersen 2004, 2008; Obinger et al. 2011). With the development of modern society, the life course perspective has become more and more dominant in how society sees individuals. In this perspective, life looks like a program which is essentially split into three segments: Childhood and youth, establishing a family and working career, then taking your pension and retirement. The idea of these three stages is still very dominant and determines the

education system, career planning and pension policy. What human beings acquire or fail to acquire in the first phase, largely determines the second phase, and if they have problems in this phase, that also impacts the third phase. Integration within working life is central; it decides where somebody belongs, his/her possibilities and influences all the elements of our lives considerably. In accordance with this structuring of our biography as a 'normal life course,' the modern nuclear family is still viewed as the normal case.

These are the constants that have shaped our social structure for many decades. However, for some time one has recognized new variables which will determine the future decisively: Among these is primarily the increased ageing of society. By 2030, there will be a shortage of millions of workers in Europe. In 1960, there were five wage earners for every pensioner, today there are three, and in 2050, there will be only barely two. The generation of people over 80 is doubling every 20 years (Statista, Anzahl der Erwerbstätigen pro Rentner; Statistik Baselland 2011: 12). The European average rate of migration would have to multiply to reverse the expected demographic decline over the coming decades (Coleman 2008; Eidg. Kommission für Migrationsfragen 2013: 20–22).

In this situation, the welfare state also increasingly loses its ability to serve as a protective house. It is still functioning in a lot of places but, even here, the cracks cannot be overlooked. Most young people today no longer believe that the pension system will still be functioning when it is their turn to retire.

The establishment of the welfare state has satisfied many goals of the working-class population and a broad public. But now that the new questions and problems have arisen on all the construction sites mentioned above, a large part of the working class are switching from the ranks of the Left, which created the welfare state, to those of the Right, because it promises to protect them against globalization and, therefore, against those perceived as competitors and a threat, the migrants. In the opinion of a lot of people, migrants and the mobile population benefit from all the social welfare institutions to which they never contributed – at the expense of the indigenous working population (Häusermann 2017).

The third significant social change is the emancipation of women (Nadai and Nollert 2015). In addition to many other important effects, increasingly more women will work and, in practice, this will be full-time. They will try harder not to have any gaps in their careers which might cause their pensions to become inadequate, as such gaps will impact retirement provisions ever more seriously. This also means that the traditional care of children or elderly people within the family will continue to decline.

The fourth trend concerns the formation of families and is related to the third one: The tendency is for there to be a higher correspondence in the educational level within marriages, for families to be formed later, reduced rates of fertility, higher

rates of divorce and an increase in atypical families, which, in many cases, are also economically more vulnerable. The classic model of families with just one breadwinner will gradually disappear (Esping-Andersen 2008: 237).

The *fifth* construction site is the search for a new identity in an age of complete flexibility (Götz 2011; Jenkins 2014; Keupp et al. 2008). No society has overcome the constricting boundaries of belonging and collective identity more than modern Western society. The hard shell of belonging which locked the individuals into social, sexual, religious or local patterns has been increasingly dissolved through long-running struggles. But now a lot of people are missing the protection that such a firm structure, such a shell offers.

Western society has made social layers easier to penetrate, has opened many different perspectives, it accepts kinds of behavior which previously had been taboo, for example, in the areas of love and sexual relationships. Everyone can achieve everything, everyone can love everyone, everyone can live together in all different kinds of relationships are the messages most members of this society get from marketing, role models, self-help literature, education and many political organizations.

Previously, identity was viewed as the core of our personality, as the unchanging element within ourselves. Today, identity is represented less and less as a monolithic, unchanging entity and seen more and more as an ongoing process of construction and adaptation. In modern societies this means there is an endless confrontation with every possible draft identity that questions one's own perspective and demands either reaffirmation or repositioning.

In this sense, identity becomes an unceasing task, understood as a 'work in progress.' It divides itself into separate part-identities, organized according to context, becoming a "patchwork" or "bricolage" identity (Eickelpasch and Rademacher 2013; Hall and du Gay 2011). Zygmunt Bauman spoke of fluid identities, characterized by fragmentation, which make our personalities seem like tourists or vagabonds (Bauman 2001, 2011).

Cultural identity as an ongoing process, therefore, means the constant ability to adapt our 'maps of meaning' and our cultural inheritance to the actual conditions of life.

The construction of a cultural identity, thereby, becomes a lifelong task. This may cause individuals to be placed under excessive stress, which today is a not insignificant factor in the production of all kinds of new fundamentalisms. These give the respective individuals the (supposed) security of an absolutely unquestionable allegiance – regardless of whether it consists of religious, ethnic, national or other forms of loyalty.

The various structures and shells – meant in a metaphorical sense – of individuals and society are all under reconstruction, appear to be cracking, in need of repair, even in danger of collapse: The life course, identity, the role of the sexes and



Figure 15: Winter evening. Peasant painting from Appenzell

of the family, social and work status, the use of space and the environment, and membership of the nation and the welfare state. The protective sheaths are crooked, load-bearing walls are removed, without a new construction becoming visible that seems trustworthy to us.

Homelessness

Globalization is making many people homeless, literally, by forcing so many to move, and metaphorically, by taking many of the basic elements of our security from them.

Therefore, the urge for new less problematic housing, for a secure home, becomes ever greater. The result of this search for a secure home has been the success of populists everywhere (Jörke and Selk 2017; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Priester 2007). They seize upon these fears and cultivate them. They conjure up a world which never existed in this form, a house in which everybody belongs perfectly, as can be seen in the idealized paintings of farmhouses in the Appenzell region. (Figure 15) Those people who had to leave their *Hemet* at that time, in the idyllic past of the populists, who had to migrate because there was not a livelihood for everyone, they are not even visible on the idyllic painting, they, so to speak, walked right out of the figure. Today, many people dream of such an idyllic world without foreigners, without fears, without abrupt changes, with a clearly defined sense of belonging.

The measures which the populists propose to achieve this goal are not going to work. When the world was turned on its head by industrialization and urbanization in the nineteenth century, like today, there were also people who wanted to stop the process and demanded a return to the good old days of craftwork and labor at



Figure 16:
Futuristic house

home. They set factories on fire to destroy the hated machines which were taking their jobs. The result is well known. It will be similar for all those today who want to return to a house that is completely fenced off. The walls, fences and policies of exclusion are no more able to stop the globalization than the burning of factories stopped the industrialization in the 19th century.

The feelings of these people, who at that time were called 'Luddites,' *Maschinenstürmer* in the German-speaking regions, are understandable and can be explained (Bailey 1998; Biagini and Carnino 2010; Jones 2006; Spehr 2000). If they had achieved their backward-looking demands, Europe would have returned to the Ancien Régime, back to the period of princes and estates, and not made the breakthrough into the prosperity of the industrial society and democracy.

Yet, the populists are also so strong because nobody else offers a vision which gives people courage and looks to the future. The Liberals still support globalization, open borders, and free trade, without taking the people's fear of loss at all seriously. The Left has lost many of their voters to the populists because it continues to cling to the national welfare state politics, which was really successful for a long time. It lacks the insight that social policy and solidarity need to be reinvented in the new

world of globalization. The Conservatives appeal to a diffuse Christianity which, in a largely secular world, has lost much of its attraction.

It makes sense to assess all the ongoing changes critically. But it makes little sense to try to stop them – especially not by propagating a state of affairs that never actually existed. The task is not to stop globalization, but to shape it in such a way as to create a house that gives people a sense of belonging and of ‘home’ (*Heimat*). (Figure 16) But how can a house be built that rests firmly on the foundations of globalization? This will be no easy task and the first step is to agree on the principles of its construction.

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