Abstract
The term “Heimat” has a special connotation in German language. Initially used purely normatively for a place where individuals have legal affiliation, the term was conservatively charged backward during the 18th century, describing a world that seemed to disappear in the age of industrialization. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the term was charged in a national-liberal discourse to a pair of opposites: the others and we. Although discredited by its use in the Nazi era, the term experienced a national-conservative renaissance during 1950s, because even though the left has never got used to the term, in the 1968s movement, attempts have been made to establish a left “Heimat”-concept as a grassroots movement. Since the renaissance of right-wing political movements, the term has been politically addressed in a strongly exclusionary connotation, especially towards migrants. This contribution tries to plead for an including “Heimat” concept; indicating that people can live simultaneously with and in different cultures, loyalties, biographies, languages which proves to be a rather unspectacular everyday practice.

Keywords: Homeland, identity, territory, migration, right-wing political movements.

Öz
Her ne kadar Nazi dönemindeki kullanımı dolayısyla itibarsızlaşmış olsa da, terim 1950’ler boyunca ulusal muhafazakâr bir canlanışı deneyimlemiştir; çünkü her ne kadar sol daha önce terimi asla kanıtsız kılınamış olsa da, 1968 hareketi içerisinde bir sol “Heimat”ın taban hareketi olarak kurulması için teşebbüslerde bulunulmuş ve Sağ siyasal hareketlerin canlanışından bu yana terim özellikle göçmenlere karşı fazlasıyla dışlayıcı bir siyasal çağrışım içerisinde dile getirilmiştir. Bu makale, aslında gündelik alelade bir pratik olduğu ortaya çıkmış olan, insanların farklı kültürler, bağlılıklar, biyografiler, dillerle beraber ve onların içinde eşanlı olarak yaşayışına işaret eden, kapsayıcı bir “Heimat” kavramının savunusu için bir girişimdir.

Anahtar Sözcüklər: anavatan, kimlik, yöre, göç, sağ siyasal hareketler

Giriş
The concept of “Heimat” (‘homeland’), most recently a popular conservative narrative, is increasingly becoming once again a political concept in the German-speaking area, not only among conservatives but also on the right and the political left.1 This article seeks to sketch the repoliticization of the concept of “Heimat” and to shed light on its importance in a post-migrant society.

The Austrian presidential election of 2016 not only revealed surprising changes in the established party structure (none of the candidates of the then government coalition of Social Democrats [SPÖ] and the People’s Party [ÖVP] made it to the first round); furthermore, with the second round of the runoff, it led to a unique situation in the political history of the Second Republic. A candidate – although he drew attention – whom many did not expect to win, and who is now Federal President, Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen, a former member of the Green Party, in his poster campaign, focused on the topic “Heimat”. Many believed that was an attempt to fish for voters in the waters of the right-wing camp, since so much pronounced “love for the Heimat” could customarily be found only on the placards of the People’s Party or the Freedom Party (FPÖ). As the candidate, Alexander Van der Bellen, in an interview with the “Tiroler Tageszeitung” before the second runoff, stated that, for him “this was bound up with the obligation that everyone in the Heimat of Austria feeling fine.”2 The visualization of “Heimat” in the poster campaign by Alexander Van der Bellen featured a photo of him against the background of a scenic natural landscape. One of the election posters was showing him against the backdrop of the Kaunertal Valley Mts. (his personal “Heimat”). An earlier placard in the election campaign framed the candidate within the scenery of a hilly landscape east of Austria. The other settings showed Van der Bellen as a “statesman,” staged standing before the national-colors red-white-red background.3
Aside from the predictable and transparent “indignation” of the right-wing parties, particularly the FPÖ, and the largely unreflective reportage in the Austrian tabloid press, astonishingly few articles in the Austria media landscape dealt with this phenomenon. Such as that by Anton Holzer in the daily “Die Presse” in his biographically attuned piece “Versuch einer Klärung” (‘An Attempt to Clarify’). The political newsweekly “Profil” dealt with the topic in the form of an interview with the presidential candidate. The foreign press struck a chord somewhat more pointed, such as the German weekly “Die Zeit”, in a report titled: “An der Heimat-Front. Wie der grüne Kandidat Van der Bellen das Volk umwirbt, um doch noch Präsident in Wien zu werden” (‘On the Home Front. How the Green Candidate Van der Bellen Woes the People to Become President After All in Vienna), or in a blog in the online edition of the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (FAZ). Likewise, on the domestic Green front, in the “political Heimat” of Alexander Van der Bellen, his reference to “Heimat” was certainly viewed with criticism.

However, the question we should ask is: what is “Heimat”? What does it stand for? Moreover, who has one (and who has none)? That is an old question and was already in 1971 posed by playwright Max Frisch, when during a stay in the US he put together some questionnaires, including one comprising 25 questions about “Heimat” (Frisch, 1972: 382-385). Before that, Carl Jakob Burckhardt had entitled his words of thanks, upon receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 1954, by the simple lexeme “Heimat” (Burckhardt, 1955). Against the backdrop of a very different biographical experience, Jean Amery had written an essay in 1966 “Wieviel Heimat braucht der Mensch?” (‘How Much Homeland Does a Human Being Need?’) (Amery, 1977: 74-101).

The Meaning of “Heimat”

Up until the mid-19th century, the term “Heimat” was principally used in a legal and geographic sense (Bastian, 1995). It acquired a meaning in connection with pension law and social support obligation, to the extent that the pre-modern state recognized, along with citizenship, a “Heimatrecht”, the right to a home (Heindl-Langer and Saurer, 2000; Pasiczynskyj, 1948; Bastian, 1995: 101-105). Associated with this was the granting of the guarantee of the stay of an individual, bound up with state’s social benefit commitments. In the modern state, the right to have freedom of movement and the principle of the social welfare state supplanted these guarantees.
Repoliticizing the Concept of “Heimat” in the German-Speaking Area Since the 1980s

The antipode to “Heimat” was “misery” in the sense of “wasteland,” a “void,” “being abroad.” In the Christian conception, the entire world was “misery,” which is why God “takes home” (“heimholen”) the dead. In the 18th century, the composite “Heimweh” (homesickness) appears. This is described as the “longing for home” that easily befalls “younger persons.” “It was probably assumed earlier on that this sickness mainly infects ... the Swiss.” With reference to “Zedler’s General Encyclopedia” of 1735, it is noted that homesickness is a phenomenon among Swiss soldiers, who “cannot tolerate the impure, stuffy air of the flatter regions,” since they are “used to the pure air of high mountains” (Bächtold-Stäubli and Hoffmann-Krayer, 1931). Homesickness, also termed melancholy or nostalgia, was described in the 19th century as a “Swiss sickness” (Châtelain, 1860).

Since 2003 the German-language online encyclopedia Wikipedia has had an entry “Heimat” (initially only rudimentary), from 2004 extensively expanded and enhanced). The entry also encompasses “criticism” of “Heimat” as well as its rejection and utilization for other purposes, also political.

The German word “Heimat” exhibits a long and specific conceptual history, in whose course the normative use morphed into an emotionally loaded and ideological one. As a result, many concluded, like Carl Jakob Burckhardt in his words of thanks noted above, that the word was non-translatable, indeed distinctively German, and could be accurately translated into other languages only with difficulty, or not at all (a reason why it was borrowed instead as a ‘loan word’ in some languages). Hermann Bausinger has noted that in his translation “it is less the general feelings of the personal acquirement of a locality or landscape” that were lost when translated. Rather the loss was a portion of its semantic: the “specific coloring of these feelings” (Bausinger, 2000: 72).

Heimat as a Counterporject to the Universalism of Modernity
At the end of the 18th century, the concept of Heimat was ideologically recharged. On the one hand, by German Romanticism with its idealization of the rural, of the peasant’s world and the pre-industrial idyll, on the other, in the 19th century by an initially positively connoted (“beautiful nature”), bourgeois-utopian concept of “Heimat”. This was supplanted from the mid-19th century within the emergent “völkisch”-political disposition of the liberal bourgeois middle class by a “national-political-utopian concept of Heimat” (Bastian, 1995: 121-125, 180-183; Langewiesche, 1995). Segments of the political Liberals transmuted into Nationalist Liberals and sought salvation...
in a Germanification of the “Heimat”, one in which the “people” (“Volk”) was transfigured into an ideal and idyll. An ideological-scientific trailblazer of this was Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (Riehl, 1851; Riehl, 1855). In his thinking, “the peasant” was elevated to the national symbol of virtue, who was not a “degenerated human being,” since he was still living in a patriarchal order (Bastian, 1995: 123). Concepts of “Heimatkunde” (local history and folklore), “Heimat” protection and “Heimat” research linked up with these ideological prerequisites around 1900, as a conservative reaction to modernity (Bußjäger, 2007; Bußjäger/Valandro, 2000; Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde, 1995).

National Socialism did not develop its own cohesive ideology. For that reason, Nazism co-opted the “Heimat” movement, reinterpreting it for its own ends (Valandro, 2007: 35-46; Bastian, 1995: 131-136; Projekt Ideologie-Theorie, 1980). The labor movement and the left did not embrace the concept of “Heimat” or indeed rejected it as a more-or-less offensive “Heimatomania.” Their “Heimat” was global, the world, in the sense of “ubi bene, ibi patria” (“Where I feel fine, that’s my fatherland”).

Largely forgotten is that leftist intellectuals in the first half of the 20th century also dealt with the concept of “Heimat”. Kurt Tucholsky concluded his book “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” (1929) with a chapter titled “Heimat”, where he commented on the co-opting of Germany by the political right. He countered politically motivated patriotism by holding up the ideal of “love for the Heimat” (Tucholsky, 1985: 312-314).

Ernst Bloch made decided use of the concept of Heimat in his philosophical works. He fulminated against it in the concluding section of the main work “Prinzip Hoffnung”, written in 1938 and 1947 in exile in the US, where he saw “Heimat” as something that emerges in the world, “something which shines into the childhood of all and in which no one has yet been” (Bloch, 1995). For Bloch, “Heimat” had a philosophical dimension and a historical relation. In his eyes it was “being-at-home,” even if he stressed that “Heimat (…) is however for the most part understood differently, very bourgeois-narrow-minded, where once more we have something terrible in it, as in the case of the Nazis, there after all also infused with blood and soil.” On the other hand, “Heimat” for Bloch is a philosophical concept counterposed to alienation. But this in his view is not the backward longing for the past, as it is often described in emigrant literature (Bloch, 1977: 206-207).
Bloch sees “Heimat” as a code word for the successful intermediation between subject and object. In his view, “Heimat” does not mean origin but rather “Utopikum,” because “Heimat” encompasses the world as a whole. In addition, “Heimat” for Bloch is something “impartable by process” (Bloch, 1975: 60). In his work published in Swiss exile in 1935, “Erbschaft dieser Zeit”, Bloch analyzed the precarious consequences that arise when the concept of “Heimat” is interpreted from a vantage looking backward. As he saw it, a society denies the process of history if it tries to dissolve the relation of tension between “Heimat” and ‘what is foreign’ by means of clear-cut stipulations slanted toward one side of the binarism. Since reality does not correspond with such a society’s conceptions, it tends to cling to false promises of salvation, rendered recognizable in a state of awareness gazing to the past – over against real and actual social development (Bloch, 1985). In a conversation, Bloch unmasked the idealized transfiguration of the past (“earlier everything was better”) that the Nazis exploited to win people over to their goals. In Bloch’s eyes, the terms of right-wing discourse (“Volk”, “Nation”, “Führer”, “Blut und Boden” [blood and soil], “Rückkehr zur Natur” [return to nature]) were “concepts falsely rendered clear and distinct.” (Bloch, 1977: 200). Since they had no ‘semantic loading’ in the political vocabulary, it was possible to “exploit them for fascist purposes.” (Bloch, 1977: 200). In this way these slogans were freed up for the entry of National Socialism onto the political stage, which is why Bloch critiqued the communists of that period, saying they were wrong not to have seized upon these slogans themselves in order to utilize their power of attraction (Bloch, 1977: 203).

In her essay “We refugees” (1943, published in German 1968), Hannah Arendt sees “Heimat” likewise as a “process”: “We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings.” “Our identity is changed so frequently that nobody can find out who we actually are.” “And that means the rupture of our private lives” (Arendt, 2006). Arendt wrote elsewhere “being human means the right to have rights” and thus the right to “Heimat” as an absolute human right (in Arendt’s words “the right never to be deprived of his citizenship, the right never to be excluded from the rights granted by his community”) (Arendt, 2001: 614; Arendt, 1981: 158).

Old and New “Heimat” after 1945

After 1945, the concept of “Heimat” initially continued to be held in disrepute. Martin Walser postulated in his essay “Heimatkunde” (1967), with a slight wink of the eye: “Heimat appears principally to exist in southern Germany”
(and alluded to the Tyrolean hat-linked “Heimat” of the intellectual), nonetheless aptly noting: “Heimat that is certainly the most beautiful term for backwardness” (Walser, 1968: 40). By contrast, in conservative-nationalist circles, the concept remained in uncritical use.

In December 1970 on Hessian Radio in the series “Hauptworte – Hauptsachen,” directed by Alexander Mitscherlich, a discussion developed on the concepts of “Heimat” and “nation,” in which Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Eugen Lemberg and Norbert Blüm participated. The participants were unanimous, and the discussion director noted in conclusion, that the “old Heimat in this sense” no longer existed: “it evidently has vanished from history.” The further summing up also was more along negative lines when concern was voiced that people were being passively exposed to future decisions and developments (Mitscherlich and Kalow, 1971: 54-55).

In 1979, the weekly “Der Spiegel” observed that the concept of “Heimat” was experiencing a surprising reinvigoration springing from a sense of opposition. A piece titled “Heimat – unter grüner Flagge” (“Heimat” – Under a Green Banner) discussed the new “Heimat” movement, strung between “anarchism and vegetarianism, anti-nuclear movement and rural commune, tea parlor and junk shop.” With reference to the Frankfurt-based ethnologist and cultural anthropologist Ina-Maria Greverus, it was postulated there that “environmentalist, protest and alternative groups” were bonded together emotionally by the “quest for Heimat.”

The “New Left,” strengthened from 1968 politically in the German Federal Republic, sought to achieve a “reconquest of Heimat.” “Heimat” was no longer perceived as something in the past, looking backward, geared to preservation – but rather as oriented proactively to the future. An “emancipatory concept of Heimat” emerged, one which was also mindful of migrants (“GastarbeiterInnen” [foreign workers]). Historiography on workers discovered the workers’ milieu as “Heimat”, yet more in emotional than spatial terms (Tenfelde, 1986). Michael Vester encapsulated this feeling in the title of his essay dealing with workers’ culture: “Was dem Bürger sein Goethe, ist dem Arbeiter seine Solidarität” [What Goethe is for the bourgeois, solidarity is for the worker] (Vesper, 1976: 62-72).

In literature as well, the proletarian “Heimat” was described as a counter-locality to the bourgeois-middle class notion of “Heimat”, as reflected in the works of Max von der Gruen.
The scholarly academic treatment of the topic was underpinned by the movement “history from below,” which in the 1970s had emanated from the Scandinavian history workshop movement around Sven Lindqvist. It animated and prompted people to research their local and personal history – and under the motto “Grabe, wo du stehst” (“Dig where you’re standing,” “Gräv där du står”), to find their “Heimat.” (Lindqvist, 1978).

Using the catchwords “experienced history,” “oral history,” “history from below,” a new approach was crafted in looking at “culture, no longer geared to encompassing high culture only – but now also the “other” culture, in the sense of a new “folk culture.”

Programmatic for a “modern,” critical regional history to replace the “old” “Heimat” history was the volume edited by Gerd Zang “Provinzialisierung einer Region” with its reflection on a “critical regional history” as an “anti-centralistic perspective” in contrast with the historical lenses turned solely on the centers of power (Zang, 1978: 465-538).

Beholden to this essay, authors, folklorists and sociologists dealt with the topic, “The Future of Heimat” invited by the Department of Culture of the Burgenland State Government on the 60th anniversary of the creation of the Austrian federal state Burgenland. In his foreword, Gerald Mader, the then head of the Section on Social Needs, Health and Culture in the Burgenland state administration, noted that “a free, humane understanding of Heimat (…) was on the advance” and gave “Heimat” a positive connotation, referring to Ernst Bloch (Mader, 1981: 7-10, Knoch, 2001). The Vienna-based folklore scholar Helmut Paul Fielhauer, employing the provocative title “Heimatmuseum anzünden?” [Setting Fire to the “Heimat-Museum?”], addressed the difficulties inherent in dealing with this educational institution, and pleaded for not setting it ablaze – but instead to change it in the sense of a critical “Heimat” and regional history (Fielhauer, 1981: 65-89). The writer Peter Turrini dealt in his chapter with the written version of the “Alpensaga”. The “Alpensaga” was a six-part television drama written by Peter Turrini and Wilhelm Pevny. It was filmed in the years 1976-1980, directed by Dieter Berner, and deals with the problems of the rural population in the years 1900-1945. The TV drama broke with the cliché-ridden presentation of rural life as had been portrayed in the traditional “Heimat” films. The two authors were concerned with providing a critical presentation of the impacts of the political crisis during the first half of the 20th century on a small village in the state of Upper Austria (Turrini and Pevny,1980; Birbaumer, 2013: 218-225).

In a talk delivered in 1979 titled “Volkskultur,” Peter Turrini mocked the uncritical and affirmative approach
in dealing with “Volkskultur” commonplace within Austrian political ranks, including the Social Democrats, who otherwise presented themselves as quite progressive: “Why don’t Socialist Party politicians, who so often assert how progressive they are, ever appear together with a critically-minded songwriter who has something to say or sing about in reference to today’s realities – also in Carinthia? They cuddle and adulate everything that has the ambience of a Tyrolean hat and its chamois hair tuft, and keep at a distance when real alternatives crop up […]” (Turrini, 1986: 64-65, here p. 65).  

Nearly all Austrian contemporary literary writers (such as Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, Franz Innerhofer, Elfride Jelinek, Werner Kofler, Friederike Mayröcker and many others) seek to address and grapple with “Heimat”, in part also in the form of an “anti-Heimat literature” (Schmidt-Dengler, 1995; Peinbauer, 2008). Already in 1973, Alois Brandstetter collected “new Heimat stories” in an anthology (Brandstetter, 1973). The Styrian writer Reinhard P. Gruber dealt with “Heimat” and “Heimat”-literature ironically and satirically in his works beginning from that same year on (Gruber, 1973; Gruber, 1985; Gruber, 2000).  

In the satirical film short film “Untergang des Alpenlandes Part One” (1974), ostensible clichés of the classic “Heimat”-film are de-familiarized, alienated in a kind of “Tyrolean tale of the creation of the world” as a frame action (with allusions to the biblical Story of Creation in Genesis). The composer and musician Werner Pirchner and the filmmaker and cinematographer Christian Berger authored the scenario. The film is a loose series of images to musical pieces drawn from the LP “Ein halbes Doppelalbum” (WPV 1, 1973) by Werner Pirchner.  

In the four-part “Piefke Saga” created between 1990 and 1993, for which Felix Mitterer wrote the screenplay, there is an ironic, at points even sarcastic treatment of a customary cliché of the traditional “Heimat”-film, namely the occasional tension-ridden relation between the locals and the “guests,” in the main German tourists.  

“Heimat” is also the title of a cinematic trilogy by author and director Edgar Reitz. The three main localities of action are fictitious (the village smithy in the village “Schabbach” in Hunsrück, the “Fuchsbau Villa” in Munich-Schwabing and the so-called “Günderrode house” in Oberwesel in the vicinity of the slate rock cliffs of Loreley on the Rhine). The author/director wished to present an “unvarnished” true chronicle of the “simple life” in the 20th century. In
2012 Reitz shot a film akin to the “Heimat”-trilogy, titled “Die andere Heimat – Chronik einer Sehnsucht” [The Other “Heimat”. Chronicle of a Longing], which focused on the emigration of many residents from Hunsrück to Brazil in the mid-19th century. The central focus is again the Simon village smithy from the first three “Heimat”-series, but the story is set in the year 1840 (Reitz, 2013a; Reitz, 2013b).

In 1988 Hans Magnus Enzensberger criticized the rhetoric of the “right” in an essay on the political and social situation in Germany:

> It always pampers the same anxieties. Since time immemorial, it has evoked the decline of the West and the loss of the center. The party of the bulldozers regularly laments the decay of values, the party of corruption bewails the moral neglect, the party of the philistines the destruction of culture. (…) They assiduously warn us of being swamped by foreigners and infiltration, and harass us with talk about problems of identity and loss of orientation, with which society is purportedly grappling. The Republic keeps its ears shut. (Enzensberger, 1992: 252)

Today one wonders what “right” Enzensberger had in mind back in 1988. Probably not the “right” that today lays claim to the center ground and celebrates election victories using precisely this same rhetoric. Nevertheless, Enzensberger also criticized the left at that time as well, accusing it of never having taken the individual seriously, and of having turned aside from those people who did not behave the way the left wanted.

Why in the 1990s did “Heimat,” “region” increasingly disappear from awareness and the discourse about it drift toward the political “right”? Why were the “Heimat-museums” neither set ablaze nor changed (at least not all)?

The “Europe of the regions” became a narrative of the “right,” by which they understand the Europe of the “fatherlands”: nationalistic and separated by “cultural values,” standing one next to the other.

For Ernst Bloch, the human “feeling of being at home” (“Beheimatung”), which he viewed as a social practice of collective emancipation, was always counterposed by the danger of escapism (the flight from reality), which posed a compulsive preservation of “Heimat” over against the experiences of social crisis and alienation that we also are beset by today. Contrasting with that he perceived a rationalistic, short-circuited universalism, “which places a feeling of ‘Heimat’ and desire for ‘Heimat’ under general suspicion.”42 “Right-wing” consciousness of “Heimat” thus serves to conceal economic, social and culture
upheavals in society. In Bloch’s view, those upheavals should necessarily be analyzed in greater depth – rather than merely by critique of ideology.

The political use of “Heimat” is today controversial. Helmut Moser noted already in 1995 what its analysis requires: “‘Heimat,’ as a determinant of action and political construction, will only permit its own analysis through the lens of a theoretical and empirical mode of understanding” (Moser, 1995: 13-19, here p.18).

Christoph Türcke thinks there is no reasonable reason to “delete the word ‘Heimat’ from the German language as long as the feeling that calls itself ‘homesickness’ is still alive among children small and large” (Türcke, 2006: 8).

Previously, thinking about “Heimat” took place in a more traditional framework of the formation of identity and a temporal and spatial relation. In the era of “nomadicity,” “mobility” and flexibility, “Heimat” has to be rethought anew, given the relation between the global and local, also in the sense of a “virtual Heimat” (Flusser, 1990; Baumann, 2000). It thus remains an open question as to whether Bernhard Schlink’s dictum at the end of his essay “Heimat als Utopie” can be maintained in the 21st century: namely that places of birth, of childhood will always remain spaces with “with which the feeling of Heimat, memory of Heimat and longing for Heimat will above all be connected” (Schlink, 2000: 50).

In June 1999, the German newsweekly “Der Spiegel” published a special issue titled “Sehnsucht nach Heimat” [Longing for Heimat]. It contained the findings of a survey on the question “What do you associate with ‘Heimat’?” According to this survey, 31% of the respondents associated “Heimat” with place of residence, 27% with their place of birth, 25% with their family, 11% with their country (probably Germany) and 6% with friends. Thirteen years later, in 2012, the magazine did a similar special issue on the topic of “Heimat”, centered on the question: “How have the feelings of ‘Heimat’ of the Germans changed?” This time there was no comprehensive survey; rather the report is based on interviews with 12 individuals in six localities in Germany. With no more exact indication of the survey context, it is however noted that “only twelve per cent of the Germans [see] their ‘Heimat’ initially in their fatherland.” One of the respondents, a female student living in Berlin, with a German passport and parents stemming from Turkey, gave the place of her “Heimat” as her own small room – in which, as reproduced in the report, there...
are two photos of Istanbul hanging on the wall. For several of the respondents, something novel now as “Heimat” is the Internet.  

These surveys display an interesting disparity that it is worth following up. Accordingly, “Heimat”, if this concept still plays a role at all for the individual asked, is a phenomenon highly personal, individual. It is embedded in the local environment, in the family, with which the place of birth and/or place of residence is interconnected. Contrasting with this is the almost inflationary collective use of “Heimat” by right-wing political parties seeking to construct a feeling of “we” by foregrounding “Heimat,” a sentiment that perhaps distances itself from those who are by origin migrants. In that connection, “Heimat” is always related to the nation-state, which is characterized as “Heimatland” or “Vaterland.” Contrasting with this communicatively loaded usage of the concept is the finding that for only 11% of the respondents is the nation-state territory as a whole in fact perceived as their “Heimat.”

Nevertheless, the concept of “Heimat” has both an individual and a collective meaning, as Timo Heimerdinger has pointed out (Heimerdinger, 2018). Recently in the German-speaking area, one can observe once again a predominance of its collective use, particularly in right-wing political discourse, where discourse foregrounds a “we” that possesses a quasi-naturally given right to “Heimat.”

Above all, parties on the right side of the spectrum employ the concept of “Heimat” politically. In Austria the FPÖ, which in its logo refers to itself as “the social ‘Heimat’ party.” In Switzerland it is the Swiss People’s Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP), which in its logo includes the addition “the party of the middle class.” Both parties proclaim a feeling of “we” that remains indefinite on one hand, while on the other suggesting to voters and sympathizers that they have a claim to “Heimat.” In the SVP Party Manifesto 2019-2023, with its motto “Free and secure. I want it, I’m voting for it,” “Heimat” is mentioned twenty-seven times. In the chapter “We are Heimat,” Switzerland is referred to as “our Heimat,” which begins “in the small: in the family, the neighborhood, the quarter, the village.” The Manifesto states that “Heimat” grows “from the bottom up” and is “familiarity” and “what we miss when away from home.” However, “Switzerland is [also] Heimat for all those who commit themselves to Swiss values and live by them.” The chapter ends in a “statement of commitment to the Swiss Heimat,” in which each person takes care to move the “Heimat and its history to the center of [personal] concern.” Yet a “new Heimat” is also offered to all who migrate
into Switzerland, if they seek to conform – and contradictively, the opposite is stated, namely “that whoever does not wish to commit themselves to the Swiss values, is free to seek out another ‘Heimat.’”

In comparison with the FPÖ and SVP, other right-wing parties in the German-speaking area, such as the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), utilize the concept of “Heimat” in a less excessive and ambivalent way. On one hand, it is proposed in the long version of the AfD Basic Program, in the section “Reform the United Nations”, that the party will do its utmost to “avoid the loss of ‘Heimat’ by population groups,” and it is postulated that it is “in the German interest when people living in the developing countries gain a perspective for a dignified life in their ‘Heimat.’” On the other, there is the unmistakable demand that “every immigrant […] [has] an unconditional debt to be discharged for integration; he [must] adapt to his new ‘Heimat’, not the other way around.” However, it is also proclaimed that the creation of “residential property [generates] and promotes ties to the ‘Heimat’.”

In the last election to the European Parliament, the AfD linked with FPÖ in Austria under the motto “Europe of the homelands [‘Heimatländer’] – AfD meets FPÖ”; in the corresponding proclamation poster, the related event was advertised with “Europa der Vaterländer [Europe of the fatherlands].” The reason for this parallelism in conception is not readily clear to outsiders.

In its Election Party Manifesto for the Bundestag general election in Germany 2017, the AfD called for a “debt to be discharged” by newcomers into the country, whether a “migrant or immigrant, to whom we grant permanent residence status, […] to conform to their new ‘Heimat’ and the German dominant culture, not the other way around.” Also stated is that it is to be expected that “German citizenship by naturalization […] may only be obtained by someone about whom there are no doubts regarding his permanent successful assimilation and loyalty to his new ‘Heimat’.” Here too it is demanded that migrants, if convicted, serve their prison sentence as far as possible in their home (“Heimat”) countries. In the chapter on “Foreign Policy and Security Policy” is explained that for strengthening the military conscription system, appropriate is the development of “Heimat” protection forces or a militia system patterned on the Swiss model, with a short required term of active service.

The European Elections Party Manifesto of the AfD 2019 addresses “Heimat” likewise only in the already familiar contexts.

**Does “Heimat” have a future?**

So is “Heimat” merely remembrance of childhood, as Heinrich Böll commented, or the place where a person would like at life’s end to die, as
Carl Zuckmayer observed? (Böll, 1985: 95-98; Zuckmayer, 1969). Or perhaps no place at all, but rather a ‘condition’ in the sense of Marcel Proust’s iconic madeleine in “Swann’s Way”, which brings to mind for him once more the plentitude of his childhood experiences, with all its images, sounds, tastes and smells?

And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) which we do not suspect. And as for that object, it depends on chance whether we come upon it or not before we ourselves must die. (Proust, 1922: 47)

The authors who have dealt in recent years with the concept of “Heimat” concur that the concept is in need of a redefinition. “Heimat” should no longer be conceived as a “bombastic superstructure,” as a political program – but rather as something that everyone has, and indeed every individual for him- or herself. Understood in this way, “Heimat” does not demarcate and create boundaries – instead it includes others, becoming a “a place open to conflict“, where disputed matters are brought out in the open. Understood through this prism, as Timo Heimerdinger observes, “Heimat” appears “from this perspective, as a category that must always be determined new, one which places the human being front and center, with his manifold efforts to produce belonging, and does not celebrate canonized ensembles of scenic, linguistic or territorial figurations” (Heimerdinger, 2018: 211). In this way, “Heimat” could be shared, and several hybrid “Heimat” (in a multiple sense) for a single individual would simultaneously be possible (Hüppauf, 2007: 109-140; 134-138; Egger, 2014: 298-302; Schmitt-Roschmann, 2010: 184-191; Zöller, 2015: 222-225; Yildiz/Hill, 2015; Yildiz/Hill, 2017).

**FOOTNOTE**

1 Despite the view often expressed nowadays, even by political representatives, that the categories “right” and “left” are out-of-date, I nonetheless make use of them here. See Bobbio (1996).

3 The campaign page of Alexander Van der Bellen inter alia with the slogan “Heimat braucht Zusammenhalt” (‘Homeland needs solidarity’) and poster themes: www.vanderbellen.at/kampagne/ (Accessed: 26 June 2017), is no longer online (Access attempted: 13 July 2019). The URL leads now to a page that introduces him as incumbent Federal President.


10 Representative of many voices is the then Vienna National Council deputy Albert Steinhauser in his blog titled “Wahlen zum Bundespräsidenten: Wie ich Van der Bellen sehe, albertsteinhauser.at/2016/04/05/wahlen-zum-bundespraesidenten-wie-ich-van-der-bellen-sehe/ (Accessed: 13 July 2019). The first draft of this article sprang in significant measure from such skepticism among the “left Greens” . Among the Greens, there would appear to be, in the attitude toward the use of the term Heimat, a gradient West-East, urban-rural and functionaries-base.

11 This questionnaire, in full and a shorter version, can be often found in the Internet and was included and dealt with in educational teaching and study materials on the topic of “Heimat”. See, for example, Flucht vor der Heimat – ewige Trauer oder Aufbruch zu neuen Ufern?. Leidfaden. Fachmagazin für Krisen, Leid, Trauer, 5. Jhg., 3 (2016), www.vr-elibrary.de/toc/leid/5/3 abrufbar (Accessed: 26 June 2017).

13 For Austria see “Heimatgesetz” vom 3.12.1863 (R.G.Bl. 105).

14 See Kluge (1883), p. 212 on “Einöde, p. 216 on “elend”.


16 This publication was accepted as an inaugural diss. at the Faculty of Medicine of the Univ. of Würzburg and it goes back to the dissertation of Harder (1688).


18 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

19 Many reprints of this four-volume edition have been published down into the 20th century. Riehl is not well known in English-speaking countries, not in yourself in “Folklore Studies”. George Eliot published an essay on Riehl in 1884: p. 229-289. Above Riehl and his influence to the “Third Reich” see Mosse (1994).


22 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

23 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

24 Translated by the translator of the contribution. Arendts essay was first published in German in 2016. See Arendt (2016).


On the Generation ’68, see Busche (2003).


Translated into German Lindqvist (1984) and Lindqvist (1989). For the historical-scientific classification, see Leo and Maubach (2013).


Translated by the translator of the contribution.


The film was first aired in the ORF TV series “Impulse” on 17 Nov. 1974.
36 On Werner Pirchner, see Costa (1987).

37 Directed by Wilfried Dotzel (episodes 1-3) and Werner Masten (episode 4). The complete “Saga” is available on two DVDs. For the script see Mitterer (1991). To the literary beginning of this perception relationship see Hackl (2004), there also on “Piecke-Saga”, pp. 167-173.


39 The movie is available on two DVDs.

40 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

41 Enzensberger (1992), various points in the essay.


43 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

44 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

45 Translated by the translator of the contribution.


49 For the right-wing-use of “Heimat” see Hammer, D. (2017).


52 Frei und sicher. Ich will’s Ich wähl’s. Parteiprogramm 2019 bis 2023, Bern, no date, p. 5.

53 Ibid., p. 6.

54 Ibid., p. 7.

55 Alternative für Deutschland (2016): pp. 58, 63, 125, 187. Translated by the translator of the contribution. The program is online: https://wwwafd.de/grundsatzprogramm (Accessed: 13 July 2019).

56 AfD-Kreisverband Pforzheim/Enzkreis organized the main event on 3 May 2019. Principal speakers were Dr. Alice Weidel MdB (head of the AfD faction in the German Bundestag), Prof. Dr. Jörg Meuthen, EU deputy (federal spokesperson of the AfD and top candidate for the elections to the EU parliament) and National Council deputy Mag. Johann Gudenus (speaker of the FPÖ in the Austrian NC). See https://wwwafd.de/wahlkampfveranstaltung-europa-der-heimatlaender-afd-trifft-fpoe/ (Accessed: 13 July 2019).


58 Ibid., pp. 27, 32.


61 Translated by the translator of the contribution.

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