

STRIFE IN THE RURAL IDYLL? THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTOCHTHONOUS AND IN-MIGRANTS IN SCENIC REGIONS OF SOUTH BAVARIA

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With 2 figures and 5 photos

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Summary: The notion of the rural idyll as a conception of a healthy life in a natural environment goes back to the eclogues of Theocritus and Virgil. Since the 1970s this idea has gained greater attention in the anglophone human-geographical literature. Representations of the idyll are regarded as a crucial motive for the influx of urban middle classes into exurban, scenic rural regions. This in-migration gives rise to conflicts between the autochthonous inhabitants and the in-migrants, however. Disputes arise over changing real estate prices and changing social values as well as diverging opinions on the need for countryside protection. These controversies have been examined by anglophone geographical researchers particularly from the perspective of the new inhabitants. On the basis of two examples in South Bavaria, namely the municipalities of Tegernsee and Bodolz/Lake Constance, this essay focuses on the point of view of the autochthonous population concerning the implications of the influx motivated by idyllic notions. The article thus offers a contrast to the anglophone empirical studies. A major finding of the essay is that conflicts in Southern Bavaria can be attributed to changes induced by the real estate market only.

Zusammenfassung: Die auf die Eklogen von Theokrit und Vergil zurückgehende Idee von der ländlichen Idylle als Vorstellung von einem Leben in gesunder Natur gewinnt seit den 1970er Jahren verstärkte Aufmerksamkeit in der anglophonen humangeografischen Forschung. Die Repräsentationen von der Idylle werden als entscheidendes Motiv für die Migration einer urbanen Mittelschicht in exurbane, landschaftlich hochattraktive ländliche Regionen angesehen. Aus diesem Zuzug resultieren Konflikte zwischen den autochthonen Bewohnern und den Migranten, die im Wesentlichen auf veränderte Immobilienpreise, einem sozialen Wertewandel sowie divergierender Auffassungen von der Schutzwürdigkeit der Landschaft basieren. In der anglophonen geografischen Forschung sind diese Kontroversen vor allem aus der Perspektive der Neubürger untersucht worden. Der Beitrag fokussiert demgegenüber anhand zweier Fallbeispiele in Südbayern, der Gemeinden Tegernsee und Bodolz/Bodensee, die Sicht der autochthonen Bevölkerung auf die Implikationen der vorwiegend idyllisch motivierten Migration. Als Ergebnis zeigt sich, dass Konflikte in Südbayern im Gegensatz zu den Resultaten bisheriger empirischer Studien lediglich aufgrund der induzierten Veränderungen des Immobilienmarkts existieren.

Keywords: rural areas, South Bavaria, rural idyll, community change, migration

1 Introduction

Only a short time after its emergence in the 19th century, the modern metropolis was already the focus of substantial criticism. The metropolis was seen as morbidiferous, socially, politically, and culturally precarious, and even evoked visions of the decline of the Occident (cf. SPENGLER 1922, 127). In contrast to this harsh criticism, life in the countryside was glorified as pure, healthy, and socially as well as culturally ordered (cf. REULECKE 1985, 140). The rural

area was considered an idyll and a “remedy against the total moratorium of everyday life” (MARQUARD 1995, 65) in the insalubrious metropolis. This image of an existence in unspoiled nature as the ideal way of life has existed in western cultural history since the eclogues of Theocritus and Virgil. Idylls and Arcadia are semantic subsumptions that draw on the linguistic usage of poetic and rhetorical texts since classical antiquity, combining all literary descriptions of nature from that period until the Renaissance (cf. HARD 1965, 37). Such representations of the ideal

landscape were systematically developed in the western history of ideas as an antipode to the unhealthy, socially rough city.

The intellectual concept of the idyll as a representation of an undisturbed environment can be found in the descriptions of the countryside in literature, the fine arts, and geography, and has exercised an influence on the settlement structures of Europe and the USA. Thus, NIETZSCHE considered himself in arcadia when viewing a mountain landscape, because the beauty of nature “forces one to shiver and into the mute adoration of the instant of their revelation” (1923, 337). California, for example, appears in the descriptions of older regional geographies as an overseas paradise, endowed with immensely fertile soils, a large wealth of relief forms and an ideal climate (cf. ANDREE 1856). Initial traces of such normative ideals of arcadian landscapes can be found in the settlement structures in early modern Europe with the introduction of pleasure gardens, which primarily served spiritual and physical recreation purposes. For the first time such cultural conceptions of an idyllic nature materialized in these gardens (cf. CROLL 1901). With the beginning of urbanization in the 18th century, a growing number of people began to actively seek rest and relaxation in an “unspoiled” natural environment or even settle there directly (cf. KOPPEN 2000, 303–305). This desire for life in the rural idyll as a motive for migration into scenic areas is still alive in today’s society.

For some time now the anglophone literature has observed socio-economic changes in the population structures in peripheral and scenic regions of the western hemisphere as a result of an influx of highly qualified, economically and financially strong sub-groups. A major social consequence of this migration is the emergence of conflicts between newcomers, who usually move from cities into the scenic regions, and the autochthons. On the one hand, the increased demand for property leads to a new increase in real estate prices and frequently, for the first time, to the development of a seller’s market for real estate. This possibly provokes social changes known as “rural gentrification” (cf. PHILLIPS 2002, 2005), “rural greentrification” (cf. PHILLIPS and SMITH 2001), “rural restructuring” (cf. HOGGART and PANIAGUA 2001; NELSON 2001) or “rural dilution” (cf. SMAILES 2002). On the other hand, autochthons and strangers relate differently to the countryside. New residents see the countryside as a resource for rest and recuperation. They want nature to be free from anthropogenic interference, while the autochthons understand their land as a property with a certain

economic value. The countryside is used by people to build on or for agrarian purposes. The conflicts arising out of the conflicting interests of autochthons and newcomers have been discussed in comprehensive empirical studies. A major criticism of these studies is that they were predominantly conceived from the perspective of new residents (cf. for example BOSSUET 2006; GHOSE 2004; MUNKEJORD 2006; NELSON 2001), and the autochthons’ opinions and attitudes are thus marginalized. Based on an empirical study made in South Bavaria, the aim of this essay is to establish the autochthonous inhabitants’ attitudes towards the social change in a region which, owing to its natural beauty, has become a target area for migration. The results are then set against results from the anglophone literature on conflicts between different groups of inhabitants in scenic regions with a view to determining whether these regions in Germany show similar conflicts. The data show that the conflicts described in the anglophone literature differ to a considerable extent from the situation in Southern Bavaria.

2 The semantics of the rural idyll

“The idylls – grandma’s apple pie, forget-me-not, and communitarianism – enjoyed a boom” (BECK 1996, 331). One of these popular representations to which the Munich sociologist refers, is the rural idyll. The term rural idyll is a classic topos of British rural studies in the context of scenic regions. The rural idyll evokes images of a slower, less hectic life-style in rural areas of great beauty where people follow the seasons rather than the capital markets, where they live in organic communities, where they have time for each other and possess an anthropological sense of place as defined by AUGÉ (cf. 1994, 63) and have an authentic social role. In this sense the rural idyll is a refuge from modernity. It is a representation and a purely mental concept that exists in western culture (cf. HALFACREE 2004, 289–290). This representation of the rural idyll is an important motive for the influx into rural areas of great natural beauty. The structure and situation of a rural area, be it a commuter belt or an intensively farmed lowland area, are of little relevance to the newcomers’ motives. It is the conception of an idealized rural lifestyle which is crucial in determining the actions and attitudes of people at the time of their arrival. The notion of the rural idyll is associated with hopes of peace, health, and security (cf. HOGGART and PANIAGUA 2001, 53). The rural idyll is like a bucolic arcadia – an idealized image linking

a delightful landscape with a matching lifestyle. It is, thus, an amalgam of mythical and empirical life (cf. SNELL 1945, 37).

This concept of a socially intact life close to nature and far from the imponderables and dangers of civilization is deeply rooted in the cultural history of Europe. The paintings and literature of the European renaissance “recently discovered” idyllic and bucolic motives and re-introduced them as an important figurative element into literature and art. The structure of the English *landscape* is one of the results of this artistic understanding of nature. Other examples are physical forms like the urban park, the garden city, or the suburb (cf. FAIRWEATHER and SWAFFIELD 1998, 113).

On the one hand, the rural idyll is literary semantics. On the other hand, it is a regionalization, i.e. a term and an image used in social communication in modern society to describe a region. A region does not require a physically definable territory for its manifestation to be compelling. But it is sufficient if in today’s society communication about the region exists (cf. HARD 1994, 54–55). The construction of the notion of the rural idyll as a natural habitat in scenic areas arises from the desire for health and quality of life which received world-wide attention after the Second World War (cf. VANCE, JR. 1972, 185). In terms of population figures, the influx into naturally attractive rural areas of the Middle Atlantic states, parts of the Rocky Mountains and the southwest of the USA, for example, clearly exceeded the drift from these areas since 1930 (cf. MELVIN 1931, 990). In this connection the idea of the rural idyll is represented as a regionalization without territory, which is nevertheless effective and powerful. Detached by certain territories, the idyll exists and develops self-dynamics. In the centre of this idea stands the idealization of actual and imagined regions whose localization, again, is contingent.

3 Empirical studies of social processes in idyllic regions

For a long time, the natural beauty of a region has had an influence on the settlement patterns of western society. In an early empirical study on this topic, the American geographer VANCE, JR. puts forward the thesis that since the end of the Second World War intellectual thought on “arcadia” has attracted world-wide attention. On the statistical basis of migration data from the USA he demonstrates the consequence of the idea of the rural idyll with regard

to American settlement structures. The American settlement pattern is depicted by VANCE, JR. as a triad of town centre, suburbia, and exurbia/arcadia (cf. VANCE, JR. 1972, 185). In this connection, Southern California has been considered the epitome of the idyllic landscape and subjected to a major influx of city dwellers from the large cities of the west and east coast since the mid-19th century (cf. BIRCH 1977). The first agricultural colony in California, which arose out of these imaginations of city dwellers, is Anaheim, founded in 1857 (cf. VANCE, JR. 1972, 199). The decision to move into peripheral rural regions of great natural beauty is based on a complex system of strategies (cf. WOOD 1981, 342). However, in contrast to usually normative, economically motivated suburbanization, the decision to move into the country is on the whole not due to an economically justifiable optimization of the housing location, but due to the migrants’ conception of a life in “healthy”, natural surroundings. This idyllic portrayal of nature is the crucial motive for moving to peripheral regions (cf. VANCE, JR. 1972, 200). The result of this intensified influx into remote rural regions is a parallelism of social processes between urban and scenic rural areas, e.g. gentrification or governance processes. Because of this parallelism, the selective influx differentiates the rural areas socially and strengthens socio-economic mismatches between the respective rural regions (cf. SMITH 2007, 276; HALFACREE 2007a).

In an empirical study, FAIRWEATHER and SWAFFIELD investigate how the idea of the rural idyll with its ideals and values affects the decisions of city dwellers to move into the countryside in today’s New Zealand. They provide clear evidence that the four motives – privacy and the possibility of self-fulfilment, the picturesque scenery and natural environment, the possibilities for recreation as well as the opportunity to bring children up in a natural environment – have a crucial influence on people’s choice of housing location (cf. FAIRWEATHER and SWAFFIELD 1998). In the New Zealand example, economic motives such as cost or distance to the workplace, which are crucial in the context of suburbanization (cf. MENZL 2007, 399–401), lag behind these idyllic motives (cf. FAIRWEATHER and SWAFFIELD 1998, 117–120).

CURRY et al. arrive at similar results in their study of complex population shifts in the rural areas of Australia. They attribute the observed population growth in certain rural regions to their natural attractiveness. In certain scenic areas, usually along coastlines, river banks, or in the mountains, a continuous influx of population is recorded. According

to the authors, the reason for this development is the natural beauty of these rural areas. These areas are selected as holiday resorts, for secondary residences, or for the permanent residence of city dwellers. CURRY et al. identify this process in Australia as part of a global pattern of restructuring found in rural areas. Here the rational decisions of many individuals condense into a commodification of the collective images of idyllic ideals in the form of property speculations and the formation of seller's markets for real estate in attractive settings (cf. CURRY et al. 2001, 109, 118–120).

In the case of the USA, empirical studies have identified a population growth in ex-urban areas since 1990 which is attributable to an intensified settlement of service enterprises and their employees in rural areas. Thus, between 1990 and 2000 the population growth rate in ex-urban regions amounted to 13.3% accompanied by a continuous decrease of effective agricultural area (cf. THEOBALD 2001, 544–553). NELSON assumes that the demographic and economic growth of the exurban scenic regions clearly exceeded the socio-economic growth of the metropolitan areas in the past 10–15 years (cf. 2001, 395). He recognizes in this prosperity a restructuring process of the rural areas through the in-migration of members of the upper and middle classes, whereby the attractive rural areas in the USA are transformed from a landscape of production into a landscape of consumption, in a similar way to the developments in the English landscape described by RAYMOND WILLIAMS (cf. 1973, 120–121) (Fig. 1).

In these country regions, the urbanization process brought on by social, economic, and cultural change kindles conflicts between the new residents and the autochthons. The conflicts start primarily due to diverging notions about the use of the land. The study by FORTMANN and WALKER on Nevada County in California exemplifies this. The inhabitants moving into the County often work in the service and information sector and commute to their jobs in nearby cities. The majority of in-migrants resident in Nevada County regard it as a retreat from the annoyances of city life, and see the land/countryside as a setting for recreation (cf. FORTMANN and WALKER 2003, 470–472). The new inhabitants usually occupy the most attractive properties in the municipalities and at the same time are politically active at a local level to promote the protection of the countryside. One reason for this is that they want to defend their normative conceptions of rural life. They also wish to protect the monetary value of their property (cf. GHOSE 2004, 537), which is now mutated to “posi-

tional goods” (cf. HIRSCH 1976, 27). As a direct consequence of this process, conflicts between socially remote groups emerge (cf. GHOSE 2004, 529).

Results of empirical work in Europe show comparable controversies. MUNKEJORD recognizes a similar antagonism between autochthons and newcomers in her study on diverging conceptions of rural life between these two groups in Finnmark, the northernmost province of Norway (cf. 2006). According to more recent English empirical studies, there are clear conflicts over symbolic conceptions of the rural idyll between autochthons and in-migrants (cf. HALFACREE 2007b, 131). The newcomers are seen as a threat to traditional village life, which draws particularly on the interaction between acquaintances (cf. CLOKE et al. 1997, 218). In rural England there prevails a process of mutual support of representations of the rural idyll and a special form of “English unity,” i.e. a normative and linear conception of identity, which rejects anyone not subscribing to that conception. Therefore, the normalization of the rural idyll leads to a substantial exclusion of otherness (cf. NEAL and WALTERS 2006, 178). These exclusion processes can lead to somatic and psychological illnesses due to social pressures arising from the stigmatization of in-migrants (cf. JACOBY and WATKINS 2007). Scenic regions in Southern France are similarly well investigated. Such regions in France are traditionally subject to high influxes from the metropolitan areas and the northern parts of the country (cf. DEAN 1988, 81). The main conclusion to be drawn from the different studies is that communication between autochthons and strangers hardly exists and, hence, conflicts and controversies are also rather rare. Nevertheless, when such conflicts do arise, their causes are usually rooted

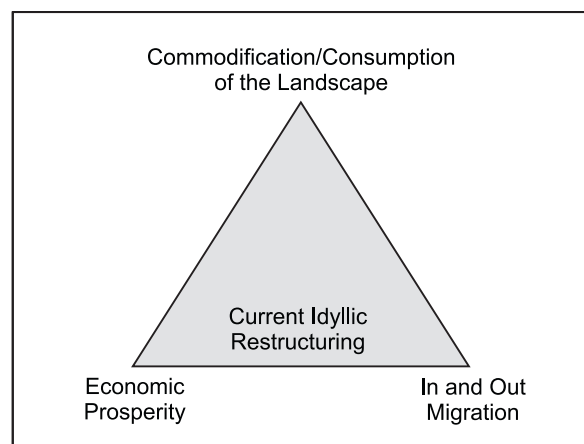


Fig. 1: Triad of the contemporary “idyllic” restructuring of scenic landscapes
Source: Own representation following NELSON (2001, 396)

in different political views on the protection of the endangered landscapes (cf. BOSSUET 2006; COURTOT 2005; DALIGAUX 2001). It can be concluded that all empirical studies attribute the conflicts between the old residents and the new inhabitants to on-going socio-economic changes in these scenic regions, both in North America and in Europe, although the evidence in the latter case is weaker. Far from being impartial, however, all the empirical studies focus on the opinions of the new inhabitants and marginalize those of the old residents. For this reason this essay undertakes in what follows a study for a selected scenic region in Germany, taking empirical data from the autochthons' perspective and explaining the situation in Southern Bavaria in the context of international comparative studies.

4 Method

A definition of scenic rural regions in Germany can be based on the categorization of rural areas by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR). According to the index of scenic and touristic value of the BBR, regions are classified as scenic where the index exhibits a value of 160 and more. One hundred is the average value for the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The index of scenic and touristic value represents a linkage of five indicators which are added up, standardized, and normalized at the federal average. In 2005 the following indicators were included in the index (related to districts): the length of roads and railway lines per hectare in 1995, the evaluation of the forests in 2000, the relief energy in 2003, lakes and rivers in 2000 and coastlines in 2003, as well as overnight tourist accommodation in 2001. The following regions were thus classified in 2005 as scenic rural areas in Germany: the North Sea and Baltic coastline, the Mecklenburg Lake District, the Harz and Rothaar Mountains, the Eifel and the Spessart as well as parts of the Black Forest, the Bavarian Forest and southern Bavaria (cf. BBR 2005, 209) (Fig. 2).

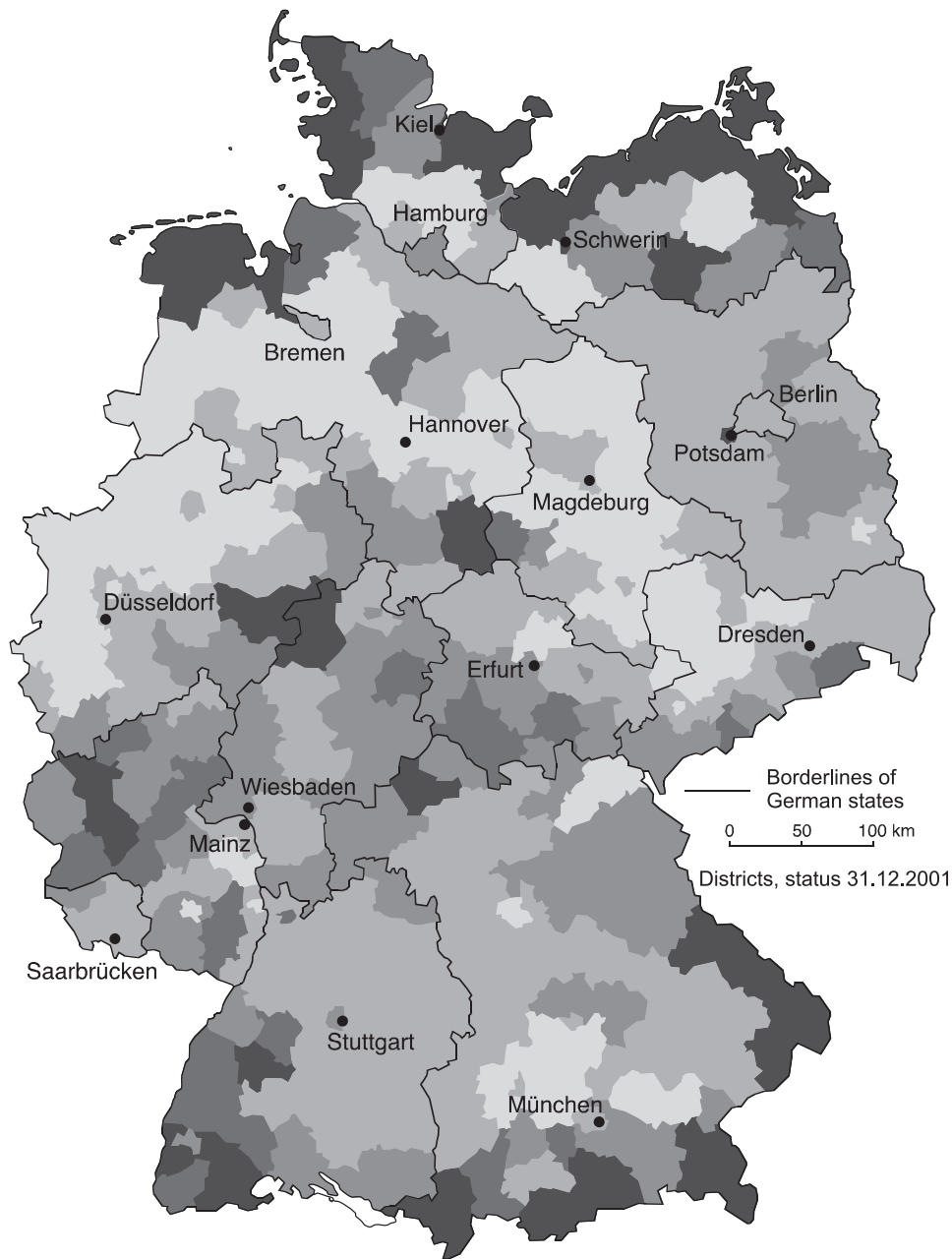
South Bavaria exhibits the strongest socio-economic dynamics among these highly attractive German regions. Population gains are recorded for South Bavaria as a result of an inner-German north-south migration trend. In certain districts in the region the unemployment rate is below 3% (cf. GOEDECKE 2001, 54). South Bavaria is characterized by a flexible authority, highly qualified employees, and a creative environment (cf. STEINBERG 2003, 102). In South Bavaria an enormous socio-economic

dynamic and a scenic rural area coincide, which is untypical for Germany. Thus, southern Bavaria exhibits similar structural features to other naturally attractive regions in the world which are also affected by population influx.

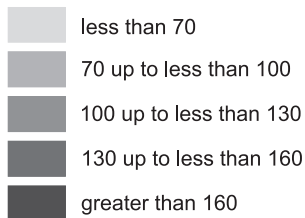
In order to select the municipalities for this investigation an explorative principal components analysis for the assortment of rural municipalities with urban characteristics was carried out using structural data compiled by the Bavarian State Office for Statistics and Data. On the basis of this data the municipalities Tegernsee/Stadt and Bodolz/Lake Constance were selected. Tegernsee/Stadt is situated in the district of Miesbach close to Lake Tegern. At the end of 2003 3,865 persons were registered as living in this municipality. Bodolz is situated in the Lindau/Lake Constance district directly on the shore of Lake Constance. Between 1970 and late 2003 the population of this municipality doubled from 1,550 to 3,078 inhabitants. The investigation of possibly existing conflict situations between in-migrants and autochthons in these two places was carried out by means of reflexive photography (cf. in summary DIRKSMEIER 2007). For this qualitative method, test persons are asked at the beginning of the research process to take photographs of common topics, which are subsequently discussed in an in-depth interview. By means of this method, the scientific observer is able to obtain "a picture" of the conceptions of the test persons. On this basis, the researcher is then able to question the interviewees more precisely and thus achieve more exact results. Altogether, eleven interviews with autochthons were carried out, i.e. inhabitants who had been living in their respective municipalities since birth or for at least 30 years. The test persons were selected using the maximum variation sampling method. This selection method includes a few test persons in the sample who clearly deviate from their social characteristics. The main aim of this sampling method is the ability to generalize the results (cf. KLEINING 1982, 236).

5 Outcomes

Three different topoi resulted in the evaluation of the discussions. These topoi also occur as genuine conflicts in the empirical studies in the literature mentioned above which, as already stated, excludes the perspectives of the autochthons. In the present case, the test persons are old residents of Bodolz/Lake Constance and Tegernsee. Common to all of them is, firstly, that they have a positive attitude



Index of touristic and scenic attractiveness



The index of touristic and scenic attractiveness is based on additive combination of the following standardized and rectified indicators:

- degree of fragmentation 1995
- estimated degree of afforestation 2000
- topographic variance 2003
- waterbodies and coastlines 2003
- tourist over night stays 2001

Fig. 2: Touristic and scenic attractiveness
Source: BBR 2005, 209

toward the landscape. A modification of the social structure is the second topic which emerges from the interviews with the autochthons. The third motive reflects changes on the property market, which have both social and monetary consequences and give rise to individual antagonisms.

5.1 The landscape/countryside as a property worth protecting

According to empirical studies of rural idylls environmentalism is a major topic of conflict between the autochthons and the new inhabitants (cf. FORTMANN and WALKER 2003; GHOSE 2004). Everyone has their own individual interpretation of the landscape, i.e. the environment they live in, and in each case, these interpretations are not easy to extrapolate for others. Therefore, the landscape stands for humans in a "distance in relation to objectivity" (SIMMEL 1957, 147). From the perspective of the autochthonous test persons, the countryside is an asset worthy of protection and a part of their own identity. The physical environment offers them opportunities for recreation and relaxation in direct proximity to their own residences. According to statements of those tested, these opportunities are used regularly.

"The positive thing is our landscape/scenery, our lake. And the possibilities one has there. As said, I am a mountain biker and do a lot of tours. Although I must select my routes completely according to the degree of difficulty now. Because at my age I must cut out some routes which I cannot cope with any more simply due to my bodily constitution, for example the Wallberg" (Louis Neureuther, 66, Tegernsee).

This topos of the way the landscape is seen deviates clearly from the empirical examples in the literature. These studies suggest that the main issue for the autochthons is the commodification of the landscape and reveal a substantial ground for conflict between both groups. On the other hand, the test persons in the present study appear to regard their physical environment in a similar way to that which is attributed only to the in-migrants in the anglophone literature. The high degree of familiarity of the Alps and the Lake Tegern and/or Lake Constance is part of their own identity. The autochthons, who usually lived their entire life in the municipality, regard life at the location and in the environment as a unit, which is part of their practice. Several of the interviewees are actively involved in organizations such as the German Alpine Association which promote or pub-

licise the preservation of the landscape. An extensive commodification of the area, e.g. through the classification of building land or the development of the transport infrastructure, generates resistance among the autochthons. Their behaviour is thus contrary to that described in the literature (cf. FORTMANN and WALKER 2003). The surrounding landscape is rather a part of their own identity, the place "to which one belongs."

"Because a plain has its beauty. It is not my homeland, but one has simply more sky. But I mean, of course the mountains are simply part of my life. I am a German Alpine Association chairman and we hike and go into the mountains a lot. This is for sure. So I would absolutely miss the water. The prejudice is simple, what should I do in a landscape where I do not belong, where I do not know what to do" (Bob Hinterbichler, 66, Tegernsee).

The answers from the test persons show that they are connected to the phenomenon of the landscape/scenery by long-term conceptions, interests and practices, which makes any change difficult to conceive (cf. KAUFMANN 2005, 125). They recognize in the condition of the landscape the same topoi which in the studies already mentioned in the international context are attributed exclusively to in-migrants. With the distinction between allochthonous/autochthonous in South Bavaria no differences can be observed regarding attitudes to and practices in the landscape. However, in the international studies it is exactly this distinction which is crucial and marks the conflict line diagnosed between the different groups. Differing attitudes towards their physical environment represent important conflicting opinions between old and new inhabitants in the empirical studies. The results of the study carried out here suggest that these attitudes can be ruled out as a possible motive for conflict in South Bavaria. Just like the new inhabitants, the autochthonous population regards the attractive scenery as worth protecting. From the test persons' point of view the use of the local environment is based primarily on its status as a recreation area and on its aesthetics.

5.2 Changes in the social structure of the municipalities

From the point of view of local government policy, the population growth in the municipalities of South Bavaria implies certain risks in terms of social structure. The population influx may lead to a loss of interaction and a parallel increase in anonymity in

the municipalities, which could give rise to a “sleepy” suburbia (cf. PELZER 2000, 51). However, from the test persons’ perspective in Tegernsee and Bodolz such a loss of interaction does not occur. Acts of social reciprocity take place particularly within the local clubs and associations, testifying that great importance is attached to interaction. At the same time, the older autochthons are frequently active in three to five associations (Photo 1).



Photo 1: Carnival parade in Tegernsee
Photo: Sepp Rietbinder, 70, Tegernsee

With the help of club activities local traditions, friendships, and acquaintances are maintained – as shown in the example of the carnival society.

“We already know a lot of people, but predominantly through clubs and societies. Practically impregnated, clubs and societies here are simply like social glue” (Günther Michael, 59, Bodolz).

Clubs and societies work as a selection mechanism which includes only in-migrants who are determined to adapt to the local traditions. For the test persons clubs serve as a form of communitarian organization for activities which are understood to be the private concerns of the members. The special significance of clubs and associations in Tegernsee and Bodolz is derived from the fact that club life connects not only the direct members, but also their relatives. The members thus use their clubs not only as service providers or representatives, but also as institutionalized private networks.

“Associations are really important. There are also many associations here that are to some extent very active and which are, I would say, predominantly indigenous ones. Yes, of course there are also associations in which other groups meet. These are the skiing clubs, sports clubs, the Alpine Association, the members of which are predominantly locals. Thus, the natives are glad to take up others, but then these are assimilated.

Yes, the associations have a character and an independent existence; they really play an important role. They attract children and the youngsters. There is the society for traditional costumes, where the children already learn dances at the age of twelve, folk dances, and so on and they become acquainted with the traditional costumes or with the customs. So, the associations are very important. Otherwise everything would fall apart. There would be no identity at all” (Bob Hinterbichler, 66, Tegernsee).

The caution exercised in admitting strangers into the local clubs and associations is the result of the inherent structure of club life and is not a regional characteristic of Southern Bavaria. A participant may not join an association in a subordinate position, but only as a full, legitimate member. At the same time, every occupied position in the association must be open to all members (cf. STICHWEH 2000, 22). Theoretically this internal structure makes a subliminal change of the associations and, hence, their identity and traditions possible. In order to rule out this possibility, the new members must adapt to the objectives of the association. Only after that they are accepted as legitimate members.

The results here also show that differentiations in the social structure of the households, e.g. the occurrence of single parents or employed women, do not lead to conflicts, as opposed to the empirical results shown in the anglophone literature (cf. from feminist perspective REDCLIFT and WHATMORE 1990, 191–192).

“We are a patchwork family. I have two children and my wife has two” (Louis Neureuther, 66, Tegernsee).

“If we want to boast, we do not say that we are patchwork” (Toni Neureuther, 61, Tegernsee).

The persons interviewed do have experience of, or at least accept ways of life beyond the two-generational family model. Social conflicts due to the occurrence of single households etc. are unknown in the municipalities. No normative conceptions of “correct” ways of life prevail or are actively enforced. All women of the sample are or were employed. Beyond that, one woman is active in the Bodolz parish council. In the context of the social structure, potential for conflict only exists in the greater influx of socially weaker agents into the municipalities. The classification of subsidized low-rent housing in Bodolz leads to social tensions which are solved by ignoring the socially weak in-migrants (Photo 2).

“That is actually declared by the social welfare office in Lindau. There are many foreigners still in it, sure, but there are also plenty of Bodolzer. The poorer classes live there more” (Franz Sotzheimer, 40, Bodolz).



Photo 2: Council flats in Bodolz/Lake Constance
Photo: Franz Sotzheimer, 40, Bodolz

In the case of the socially weak in-migrants and autochthons it becomes clear that their precarious social position transcends the allochthonous/autochthonous distinction and leads to specific coalitions between the other inhabitants in the social space of the villages, which is reflected in an avoidance strategy. In this case, entrance criteria for interaction processes in the municipalities are determined primarily by the socio-economic circumstances of the agents and not by length of residence there and/or size of the personal network in the villages (cf. CLOKE and THRIFT 1987, 322–323). Therefore the allochthonous/autochthonous distinction is particularly crucial in the case of similar social status.

5.3 Conflicts over real estate possession and real estate usage

Conflicts arising between autochthons and in-migrants exclusively concern real estate. The greater influx of people into the municipalities pushes up the demand for real estate and consequently the prices as well. Since most of the new residents belong to an economically strong subgroup, they can afford expensive property. The locals see them as a threat to their own ongoing or future plans for acquiring residential property (Photo 3).

The estate agent's office in Tegernsee serves as a symbol of the predatory competition for real estate in the scenic areas. At the same time there is such a sharp increase in real estate prices sharply in the municipalities that autochthons are just able to acquire affordable building land with the help of so-called "Einheimischenmodelle", house-building schemes that reserve certain rights to autochthons.

"Here in the village there were of course such things as 'Einheimischenmodelle', thanks to these schemes young families were able to buy building land. The municipality has marked off building land from different farmers who had to cede part of their land to the municipality" (Franz Sotzheimer, 40, Bodolz).

So-called "Einheimischenmodelle" are the only possibilities for the municipality to make life in the municipality affordable for young indigenous families by offering them inexpensive building land. Without such programmes such families would not be able to acquire building land on the free market (cf. PELZER 2000, 53). The problem of expensive housing in scenic regions is exacerbated by the structure of the property market. An average household spends about a quarter of its income on housing. However, in the light of rising real estate prices expenditure for housing grows in inverse proportion to the household income, i.e. a household with high income clearly spends proportionately less money for housing than poorer households (for persuasive



Photo 3: Real Estate agent in Tegernsee
Photo: Louis Neureuther, 66, Tegernsee



Photo 4: Temporary vacant house in Tegernsee
Photo: Bob Hinterbichler, 66, Tegernsee

empirical evidence cf. QUIGLEY and RAPHAEL 2004, 191–198). Thus, for autochthonous households with less income compared to in-migrant households buying real estate is a particularly heavy financial burden. The sense of financial uncertainty collectively felt by local families is a potential source of conflict between the different social groups.

From the point of view of the autochthons the influx of strangers is also problematic in another respect. Many of the new inhabitants use their houses and dwellings only periodically during the year, either as a secondary residence or as a holiday home. From the interviewees' perspective these sporadic visitors are provocative inasmuch as they use the entire infrastructure of the municipality without contributing to the costs.

“This situation is simply a burden for the place. Ask the mayor, that is what he says. The municipal administration has decided recently that owners of second homes must pay a tax here. These people have not contributed anything at all to the place so far. But when they are here for a week or longer, they

complain about the road not being cleared of snow. That means they use the whole infrastructure without paying one EURO for it” (Bob Hinterbichler, 66, Tegernsee).

Apart from the question of cost, an additional problem emerging is a substantial change in the overall appearance of the townscape. The temporarily inhabited houses lack the floral decorations traditionally used in Southern Bavaria and affect the traditional overall appearance of the locality. As one result the population becomes seemingly larger in the municipality, but without the additional bonus of increased social activities, like the establishment of new associations or residents' initiatives. From the point of view of the interviewees the municipalities in the scenic south of Bavaria have become more urbanised in terms of appearance and use, for instance through a larger traffic volume at the weekends or larger numbers of visitors in the countryside (Photo 4).

The new residents only live temporarily in the municipality and downgrade the traditional overall appearance of the municipality in South Bavaria to a purely superficial aesthetic facade by their attitudes and behaviour, giving rise to conflicts such as disputes between neighbours, as the following citation makes clear:

“They immediately go to war with all neighbours around them, because branches of their trees hang over the garden fence” (Sepp Rietbinder, 70, Tegernsee).

Beyond that, the autochthons are not inclined to meet the demands made of the municipality by in-migrants, which from the point of view of the old residents are exaggerated. The consequence of this constellation is the possibly intentional exclusion of these in-migrants, who the interviewees suspect are



Photo 5: Mansion of an in-migrant in Bodolz/Lake Constance
Photo: Franz Sotzheimer, 40, Bodolz

not interested in becoming integrated into the local social structures. They remain strangers at their secondary residence.

Beyond the two above-mentioned issues, conflicts also arise between the social groups concerning the possession of real estate and the commodification of tradition. The in-migrants realize their own somewhat ambitious architectural designs within the limits of their financial means in neighbourhoods characterized by regional and traditional architecture. The value of the properties is enhanced by their individuality (Photo 5).

The in-migrants occupy valuable, lavishly built properties in the municipality. In this way they realize their own normative conceptions of representative living at the same time without giving aesthetic consideration to local architectural tradition. The social psychologist ALEXANDER MITSCHERLICH identifies a fundamental problem of modern settlement development in this tendency. "The property owner is permitted to confound his dreams with his identity" (1996, 13). In doing this the new residents defy the handed-down notions of the autochthons concerning the "countryside". CLOKE and THRIFT see this as the reason for the frequently observed violence in the controversies between autochthons and in-migrants (cf. 1990, 177).

"The problem of 'real estate sharks' is an epidemic in Tegernsee. It really is an epidemic. The grown structures are torn down and replaced by all sorts of hideous frontages which could just as well stand in Wanne Eickel or in the Hasenberg in Munich, but have nothing to do with the Tegernsee valley. And that process is changing the landscape as well as the character of the place" (Louis Neureuther, 66, Tegernsee).

The conflict potential escalates with the construction of private homes or ostentatious representational residences by in-migrants. The commodification of the landscape by the real estate economy without regard to the social structures or structural traditions in the municipalities subsumes the three major antagonisms comprising the extreme rise in real estate prices, the only temporary use and partial vacancy of housing, as well as an architecture which is ill-adjusted to the local traditions. Therefore, with respect to real estate similar conflicts can be observed in South Bavaria to the types of conflict discussed in the empirical studies on other Western rural idylls. However, it can be assumed that divergences between the social classes are the real "causal agents" of the arguments here. In this case the attitudes and opinions of the interviewees can be seen

as an expression of the evolution of the settlement system (cf. for England YATES 1982, 201).

6 Conclusions

The results of the empirical study reveal a divergence from other studies in the literature. The divergence exists partially only in respect of one comparable constellation of conflicts between natives and in-migrants in South Bavaria, which also concerns an influx motivated by the scenic surroundings. The main topic of conflict in scenic areas identified in anglophone studies, that is, differing assessments of the value of landscape protection, particularly in North America (cf. FORTMANN and WALKER 2003; GHOSE 2004; NELSON 2001), could not be verified for Tegernsee and Bodolz. The autochthons in this region are sensitized to the value of the physical environment and they are frequently actively involved in ensuring its protection and care. Nor is a gradual change in the social structure, brought on by the increased influx of urban middle classes, as also discussed elsewhere in a German context (cf. PELZER 2000), an issue of concern from the point of view of the interviewees. They themselves have in many cases had experience with alternative life styles, and in this regard the interviewees recognize no problems.

However, antagonisms do exist with respect to land ownership and acquisition, as well as a commodification of traditions associated with this, e.g. in the form of certain modern architecture. The increase in land prices leads to defensive mechanisms such as the implementation of so-called "Einheimischenmodelle", which actually deny strangers the right to buy properties in certain locations. Neighbourhood conflicts concerning the maintenance of second homes may also be judicially relevant if in-migrants do not maintain their gardens to a normative standard. In this last point, the controversies between the two groups resemble those found in the anglophone literature. Here the local traditional notions of "rurality" clash with the material practices of the in-migrants (cf. HALFACREE 2004, 287–288). Thus, ultimately, the conflicts over properties and their use are symbolic conflicts over the "correct" image of South Bavaria.

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