The Munich Oktoberfest

Generator and Vehicle of Bavarian Identity

by

Evelyn Edingshaus

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology

University of Canterbury 2007
To Munich and Bavaria

— Wherever I may be in this world,
I will always know where my home lies.
Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore how the Oktoberfest impacts on regional identity in Bavaria, with particular focus on its capital, Munich. Over the last decade, a conscious revival of Bavarian traditions at the event has become noticeable. This thesis investigates why there has been a revival of Bavarian characteristics at the Oktoberfest and seeks also to explain why this revival is occurring at this particular point in time.

My investigation of the revival of regional Bavarian identity was conducted with a qualitative approach and placed in the wider context of Germany and Europe. Using theories around ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1991), ‘communities’ boundaries’ (Cohen, 1985) and ‘invented traditions’ (Hobsbawm, 1983), I show that, alongside the historical and political background of Bavaria, wider trends and developments in the course of Europeanisation and globalisation have played a significant role in the increasing interest in and emphasis on Bavarian identity in Munich.

The research showed that the Oktoberfest offers the most prominent occasion for the Munich locals to display Bavarian traditions. Moreover, it serves as a ‘celebratory stage’ for the locals to reassert their identity, which is stressed as being distinct from the German nation. Also, the celebration of Bavarian tradition can be interpreted as people’s ‘return’ to their regional roots in their search for stability in a rapidly globalising world.
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge my supervisors, Carolyn Morris and Lyndon Fraser, for their input and, particularly towards the end of this thesis, for their support and motivation.

Biggest thanks go to my mum, who cared for me so wonderfully throughout my job at the Oktoberfest, who waited patiently every night for me with a warm meal, and who washed and ironed my beer drenched work clothes every day, which made surviving the Oktoberfest a lot easier.

I also want to thank all the people who contributed to this thesis by sharing their knowledge and expertise in the field of Bavarian traditions and the Oktoberfest, many of whom went to great lengths to make time for me in their busy schedules and put a lot of effort into helping me with my research.
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 8  
   1.1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 8  
   1.2. Rationale ......................................................................................................... 9  
   1.3. Aims of this thesis .......................................................................................... 11  
   1.4. Methodology and Research Process ................................................................ 13  
      1.4.1. Sources of information ............................................................................. 13  
         1.4.1.1. Written documents ............................................................................ 13  
         1.4.1.2. Unwritten information ....................................................................... 14  
      1.4.2. Fieldwork .................................................................................................. 16  
         1.4.2.1. The Waitressing Job ......................................................................... 19  
         1.4.2.2. A day at a beer tent ........................................................................... 22  
   1.4.3. Issues .......................................................................................................... 27  
   1.5. Outline of the thesis ....................................................................................... 28  

2 Theory ..................................................................................................................... 29  
   2.1. Introduction ..................................................................................................... 29  
   2.2. Theoretical Approaches .................................................................................. 30  
      2.2.1. Anderson’s Imagined Communities ......................................................... 30  
         2.2.1.1. The importance of language – A Scottish case study ....................... 33  
      2.2.2. Hobsbawm’s Invention of Tradition ......................................................... 35  
         2.2.2.1. Invented traditions in the context of nationalism ............................... 36  
   2.2.3. The Oktoberfest as a mass event – a psychological account ................... 37  
   2.2.4. Festivals as creators of community .............................................................. 38  
   2.2.5. Cohen: A community’s boundaries ............................................................. 41  
   2.3. Conclusion and Outlook .................................................................................. 42
3 Background of Bavaria and Germany ................................................................. 44
  3.1. The revival of regional identity in a European context .............................. 44
    3.1.1. The notion of homeland ...................................................................... 47
  3.2. Overview of the political history of Germany ........................................... 49
  3.3. National identity in Germany ................................................................... 52
    3.3.1. The negative image of Germany in the world and German stereotypes..... 54
    3.3.2. The changing (self-)image of Germany - Football World Cup 2006 .... 56
    3.3.3. The display of patriotism in Bavaria ..................................................... 59
  3.4. What makes Bavaria distinctive? ............................................................... 63
    3.4.1. Bavaria’s history ................................................................................... 65
    3.4.2. Bavarian ‘separatism’ .......................................................................... 66
    3.4.3. Bavarian identity ................................................................................... 69
  3.5. Conclusion and Outlook ............................................................................ 73

4 The Field Study – The Oktoberfest ................................................................. 74
  4.1. History of the Oktoberfest ......................................................................... 74
    4.1.1. The Oktoberfest today .......................................................................... 79
    4.1.2. The significance of the Oktoberfest ...................................................... 83
  4.2. Distinctions of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest – The Resurrection of Bavarian Traditions ................................................................. 85
    4.2.1. From ‘mass-piss-up’ to Bavarian festival ............................................ 86
    4.2.2. Beer at the Oktoberfest ......................................................................... 91
      4.2.2.1. Beer in Bavaria ............................................................................. 92
      4.2.2.2. The Oktoberfest beer .................................................................... 94
      4.2.2.3. The ‘right’ choice of beer and tent ............................................... 99
    4.2.3. Traditional clothes ................................................................................ 102
      4.2.3.1. Trachten as a statement of origin and identification ...................... 104
      4.2.3.2. The ‘authenticity issue’ ................................................................. 106
    4.2.4. Language ............................................................................................. 112
      4.2.4.1. Dialect in Munich and Bavaria ..................................................... 114
      4.2.4.2. Bavarian dialect at the Oktoberfest ............................................. 115
Appendix................................................................................................................. 126
Appendix 1: Videos and Oktoberfest music................................................................. 127
Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Consent Form...................................................... 128
Appendix 3: Brief overview of the political history of Germany............................... 130
Appendix 5: The Oktoberfest in numbers ................................................................. 134
Appendix 6: Brief overview of the history of beer in Bavaria................................. 136
Appendix 7: Brief overview of Tracht in Bavaria....................................................... 139
Appendix 8: Trachten events.................................................................................... 142
Appendix 9: The Oktoberfest Wheel....................................................................... 145

References.................................................................................................................. 146
1.1. Introduction

The man in the green apron looks apprehensive but focussed. In one hand, he grips a big wooden hammer; in the other, he holds a tap against a huge wooden barrel. The air is filled with cigarette smoke and anticipation. The tent is humming like a huge beehive. All eyes are on the man in the apron. A few moments before noon, the crowd starts counting down the seconds. The man swings the hammer and hits the tap into the barrel. The people hold their breath – how many hits will he need until the beer flows from the barrel? 1, 2, 3... "O'zapft ist!" ¹, he shouts into the microphone in front of his nose – the beer is flowing. Outside, twelve cannon booms reverberate through the city. Inside the tent, the roar of the crowd is deafening. After the man has poured the first couple of beers and handed them out to the assembly of important people around him, the music starts playing and the crowd is cheering, clapping, stomping and chanting. The beer is foaming in the glasses, and waitresses are now rushing back and forth between the bars and the tables. The symbolic opening of the first beer barrel by the Mayor of Munich marks the beginning of a celebration, which is unique in the world – the Munich Oktoberfest.

¹ *O'zapft ist* is the official announcement that the first beer barrel has been opened, which starts the beer supply and thus marks the official beginning of the Oktoberfest. Please refer to Appendix 1 and watch Video 1. It shows the arrival of the Mayor of Munich, Christian Ude (the man with the moustache and Lederhosen; the woman with the yellow shawl is his wife) at the *Schottenhamel* tent. The man arriving surrounded by police and bodyguards is the Prime Minister of Bavaria, Dr. Edmund Stoiber (white hair, dark suit; the woman in the bright blue dress is his wife). The girl in the black and yellow robe sitting on top of the beer barrel embodies the figure of the *Münchener Kindl*, the Munich Child. The linguistic roots for *Münch* are derived from the city originally being a community of monks. Thus, Munich’s city symbol is a small monk, in a black robe with golden hem, which are the colours of the city of Munich. This symbol was first used in 1239 in the city’s crest. By accident or misunderstanding, the small monk was taken for a child, and hence the name *Münchener Kindl*. For a closer view of the opening of the barrel itself, please watch Video 2. Also in Video 2, the canon booms, which resound through the entire city, are audible.
The Munich Oktoberfest is famous the world over. It not only means a very special event for the residents of the city of Munich but during a period of two and a half weeks, it attracts millions of tourists every year from all over the globe. It is famous because of its unparalleled beer consumption, and on the surface it seems like nothing more than a mass gathering of beer lovers. However, underneath the superficial impression of a ‘mass-piss-up’, one can detect, as this thesis will show, countless facets of social interactions that are indicative of developments and dynamics in wider society.

1.2. Rationale

All research begins with some kind of curiosity (Tolich et al., 2003; p.90).

Having worked as a waitress at the Oktoberfest for the past six years, I have been able to observe the social dynamics at the festival first hand, without my vision being blurred by vast amounts of strong Bavarian beer. Amidst the scenes of mass inebriation, I have noticed that people have been changing the way they celebrate the Oktoberfest. Although tourists are still flooding the city of Munich and the site of the Fest, the locals have begun to claim ‘their Fest’ back. More and more visible emphasis is being put on the production and display of the Bavarian character of the Fest. Most visible (for the outsider) is the re-discovery of traditional Bavarian clothes by the Oktoberfest visitors. The wearing of such clothes had declined after the Second World War, as they were perceived to symbolise cultural conservatism, and were also associated with National Socialism.

But then, around a decade ago, the locals began wearing clothes with folkloristic elements, and over the last few years, there has been a move towards wearing what are considered to be more traditional Bavarian clothes. Especially since the turn of the millennium, it has become so common to wear these traditional costumes to the Oktoberfest that even non-Bavarian visitors have started to dress in Bavarian clothes. By now, the emphasis on Bavarian traditions and heritage has become a central theme at the Oktoberfest. The increasing and deliberate display of ‘Bavarianness’ at the festival intrigued me, along with the passion of the people for Bavarian traditions, and,
more importantly, the speed at which this trend has been growing. Thus, I became interested in researching the Oktoberfest more closely. Throughout the course of the Honours paper *Anthropology of Food*, in which I investigated the role of beer in Bavaria and at the Oktoberfest, I began to develop a strong interest in my own Bavarian origins and why Bavarian people are (or at least assert that they are) different from the rest of the people in Germany. I became intrigued by the changes that I had noticed at the Oktoberfest, and so I decided to investigate this development in the context of academic research.

The topic of this thesis did not only suggest itself by the very fact that I am from Munich and an Oktoberfest waitress, but my background did make researching this topic possible in the first place. As a local, native German speaker and an Oktoberfest waitress, it was easy for me to gain access to the local people. My knowledge of German enabled me to employ German sources of information that would be difficult to obtain for English-speaking researchers. Above all, my job as an Oktoberfest waitress put me into the position of an observing participant, and gave me first-hand insights into the goings-on at the Oktoberfest. Researching the Oktoberfest in the course of an MA thesis within the given time-frame of a year seemed also manageable, as starting in March 2006, I had enough time to do all the necessary background research and preparations before travelling to Munich in July, where I conducted much of the research around the history and everyday practice of Bavarianness in Munich and Bavaria. In mid-September the Oktoberfest started and I could observe and study the occurrences at the Fest itself. This was also practicable because I would have travelled to Munich anyway, as I do every year, in order to work at the Oktoberfest. Staying with my family allowed me a relaxed and economic way of conducting an investigation.

Furthermore I was motivated to study the Oktoberfest because, despite the Oktoberfest being a mass festival offering a broad range of social phenomena that could be investigated, I could find very little prior research on the topic. I only found one work that specifically dealt with the Oktoberfest from a psychological point of view;\(^2\) however, no study (to my knowledge) has dealt with the Oktoberfest the way that I wanted to investigate it – in the context of global developments around national identity, the resurgence of traditions and search for community. Thus, I am sure that

\(^2\) Veiz, 2006.
my thesis is original in the sense that it combines the social phenomenon of the Oktoberfest with the theoretical framework of national identity and the phenomenon of rising global revival of local or regional traditions.

1.3. Aims of this thesis

This thesis sets out to investigate how the Oktoberfest impacts the identity of the people in Munich and Bavaria. As the Oktoberfest is an integral part of the lives of the people living in Munich, it is possible to take the Oktoberfest as a starting point for the analysis of processes in Munich and German society. Although much that happens at the Oktoberfest revolves around beer and its consumption, it offers a lot more to the observer than merely the spectacle of inebriation. Handelman (1998) argues that the way something is presented can be understood as a mirror of the social order; thus, the event of the Oktoberfest can be seen as functioning like a mirror, reflecting what is going on in ‘normal’ everyday society. Interpreting the Oktoberfest as a mirror of society raises the question: what is going on in this society?

By asking why people are celebrating the Oktoberfest the way they do, and why certain trends are manifesting at a particular point of time, it is possible to connect the phenomena that occur at the Fest with the wider contexts of Munich, Bavaria, Germany and also European developments. A core question, then, is why people are suddenly showing an interest in Bavarian traditions. In the course of the investigation for this thesis, I treated the resurgence of traditional clothing as a symptom of an underlying process, which led me to ask why people all of a sudden put so much emphasis on their Bavarianness. What has caused people to change their perception of the Oktoberfest and return to what are considered more ‘traditional’ ways of celebrating it? Why has this development occurred at this point in time? Does it match other developments in Bavaria, Germany, Europe or even globally? Do certain current happenings around Bavaria, Germany, Europe or the world have an effect on this development? Does it manifest outside the context of the Oktoberfest? How is
Bavarianness created? Which elements of tradition are employed to re-create Bavarianness and Bavarian identity?

Central to this thesis is the growing revival of local and regional traditions and the creation of traditions in Munich in particular, within the framework of modern society, which ultimately result in a stronger identification with the region of Bavaria. Several sources in literature suggest a global trend towards a revival of regional and local traditions as a counter-reaction to the faster and faster spinning wheels of globalisation.\(^3\) For the analysis of what is happening at the Oktoberfest I employ the theories around “invented traditions” by Hobsbawm (1983) and “imagined community” by Anderson (1991). Interestingly enough, both Hobsbawm and Anderson created their theories and coined these terms in the early 1980s and 1990s. This can be seen as an academic reaction to developments towards a return to traditions that has been taking place, as Macdonald (1997) and others suggest, over the last two and a half decades in Europe.

1.4. Methodology and Research Process

In order to explore the field of the production of Bavarianess at the Oktoberfest and in the wider context of everyday society, I chose a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth investigation of a small area, thus providing more ‘texture’ in the researched data than is possible with quantitative research (Tolich et al., 2003). As the core question of this thesis asks why people are returning to their Bavarian origins and why at this particular time, a qualitative approach to the matter seemed appropriate, as it allows for the consideration of personal involvement. Furthermore, as an inductive approach, it allows theory to be generated from observations as opposed to the testing of hypotheses in a quantitative research design. As I needed to investigate the changes at the Oktoberfest over the years, a formalised research questionnaire would not have provided the necessary detail and depth of the participants’ answers.

The fieldwork consisted of interviews and participant observation. This approach made possible the gathering of more detailed and in-depth information. Although a qualitative approach does not allow for precision in the way a quantitative analysis might, it is a useful way of discovering general patterns and continuities.

1.4.1. Sources of information

1.4.1.1. Written documents

For setting the context of the Oktoberfest, I started out with reading online articles on the history of Germany and Bavaria, reports and statistics about the Oktoberfest itself and current trends and events in Bavaria, Germany and also globally. During my stay in Munich from late-July until mid-October 2006, I collected written information in the Munich City Archives, which included letters, newspapers, pamphlets and posters, dating back as far as the late 19th century. I also gathered information from current newspapers and magazines. Written sources of information further included Internet sites, articles from (online) newspapers and magazines, books, videos, TV programmes and audio-CDs.
1.4.1.2. Unwritten information

My primary sources of unwritten information included semi-structured interviews and conversations with local people from Munich and more rural areas of Bavaria. I conducted eleven formal interviews with a total of sixteen participants. Two of these interviews were group interviews, and three were by telephone. Apart from the telephone conversations, the interviews took place at an arranged setting in a face-to-face situation. Depending on the interviewees’ availability, the duration of the interviews varied from a few minutes to over an hour. Before the interview, every participant read the Information Sheet, which outlined the intentions of the research, and signed the Consent Form, on which the interviewee could choose to remain anonymous or disclose his or her identity.⁴ All participants agreed for their names to appear in the thesis. The interviews were semi-structured with questions that focussed on the interviewees’ backgrounds. Most interviews developed into relaxed conversations, as I encouraged the participants to talk freely about their knowledge, their personal experience with the Oktoberfest, and Bavarian tradition. This was advantageous as people mentioned aspects that I had not considered and thus contributed to the scope of this thesis. The formal interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed. Each interviewee received a copy of the interview transcript in a prepaid, self-addressed envelope or via email, and was informed that changes to the document could be made within two weeks. However, none of the participants took this option.

Two interviews were held with people who were primarily engaged with the production of the Oktoberfest: the owner of the Hofbräu tent at the Oktoberfest, Günter Steinberg, and one of the representatives of the key organisers of the Oktoberfest at the Munich tourist department, Dr. Gabriele Papke. Furthermore, I conducted four interviews with people who were involved with the conservation, production and revival of Bavarian traditions outside the setting of the Oktoberfest in an everyday context: one of the leading ethnologists for Bavarian tradition and music at Munich university, Wolfgang Mayer; the head of the Association of Conservation of the Bavarian Language, Martin Bauer; a representative of the Association of Conservation of Bavarian Traditions, Dr. Erich Sepp; and the executive of the Bavarian Clubs for the Conservation of Traditional Clothes and Traditions, Otto Dufter. Although most people

⁴ For Information Sheet and Consent Form see Appendix 2.
were more than happy to assist with my research, some key informants that I would have liked to talk to were not available, including representatives of local Munich breweries, who I considered a vital source of information in regards to the beer advertising, which is strongly focussed on the ‘Bavarianness’ of the beer. Also, the organiser of famous ‘Oktoberfest-’ and other ‘Bavarian parties’ at a Munich night club rejected my request for an interview, and my attempts to be received in audience by Prince Luitpold of Bavaria, owner of a brewery and ardent advocate for a more traditional Oktoberfest were blocked by his secretary.

I conducted the other interviews with local people from Munich or more rural areas of Bavaria. The sample consisted of a selection of different age groups, religious persuasion, social background and occupation, which was also the case with the people I spoke to in informal conversations during my work at the Oktoberfest or other conversational situations. These included discussions with other waitresses at the Oktoberfest; regulars and other guests at my tables and around the tent; other workers at the Fest; and a retired police officer. Many conversations were initially not intended to contribute to this thesis, but nevertheless provided vital information for my purposes. The information gathered in conversations and from observations I made during my stay in Munich and throughout the course of my work at the Oktoberfest was noted down in the form of field notes.

As I have been working as an Oktoberfest waitress for a number of years, this thesis includes my observations not only from the Oktoberfest 2006 but also my experience from the previous years. The following is an account of what the fieldwork for this thesis consisted of, my work as an Oktoberfest waitress and what an average day at one of the beer tents looks like.
1.4.2. Fieldwork

Before describing my work as a waitress at the Oktoberfest, I want to outline the logistics of a beer tent, which will give the reader a better understanding of the goings-on at the tent. At the Oktoberfest, there are fourteen beer tents, all of which have more or less similar features. The tents are put up especially for the occasion. Although the ground where the festival is held (Theresienwiese) is mainly known for its use for the Oktoberfest, there are smaller festivals and circuses held at the site throughout the year. The construction of the tents begins two and a half months before the beginning of the Oktoberfest, and pulling them down afterwards takes around six weeks.

The first scaffoldings of the tents in July...

... and late August.

Inside the Schottenhamel tent.

A brass band is usually situated in the middle of the tent, kitchen and ‘beer stations’, where the beer is handed out to the waitresses, are located in the corners or along the sides of the tent. The tables and benches for the guests are in the middle of the tent, around the stage of the band. There is always a VIP-area, with reserved tables for very special guests. These areas are either along the sides of the tent or upstairs on the balconies at one or both ends of the tent. The Schottenhamel tent, where I work, is divided into three sections: two side naves and the centre nave. The tables of the side
naves are booked every day of the week. Half of the tables in the centre nave are reserved during the week and free over the weekend. Only the tables behind the band are unreserved at all times. As my tables are in the centre of the tent, they are booked during the week and unreserved on Saturdays and Sundays. Generally, the tables are reserved for four o’clock in the afternoon. Other guests can sit at the tables and eat and drink until the companies or private people, who have booked the tables, arrive. By the time the reservations have arrived, the tent is usually completely full. When the tent is on the verge of serious overcrowding, its doors are shut.

The logistics of the beer tents differ slightly from tent to tent. Although I have only worked at the Schottenhamel tent, I know from waitresses in other tents that the differences between the various tents are minor. Common to all is the regulation that the visitors cannot buy beer themselves but have to have a table and order their beers from a waitress. At the Schottenhamel, there are over 200 waiters and waitresses, with the majority of the waiting staff being female (thus, all catering staff will be referred to as ‘waitresses’ in this thesis).

![Image](image-url)

Left: The staff of the Pschorr tent in the late 19th century. Right: the waiters and waitresses of the Hofbräu tent 100 years later.

Every waitress has an allocated ‘service’, a cluster of tables, for which they are responsible. The tent is divided into sections of four tables, which are numbered. These numbers are also the respective waitresses’ numbers, carried on a metal badge pinned to the work outfit. The allocation of services to the respective waitresses takes place the day before the beginning of the Oktoberfest. The waitress job is commission-based, which means that everything sold to the customer is pre-paid by the waitress. The waitresses get the beers from five secluded areas, where the beer is poured, by handing over plastic tokens, which have to be bought in advance at the tent’s office for a sum 10% less than the official beer price. In 2006, the official beer price was €7.45, so I paid €6.76 per plastic beer token. After handing over the required amount of tokens,
the waitresses grab the beer orders and rush off to serve their guests. However, until the guests have paid, the beer is carried at the waitresses’ own risk; hence the grumpy look on every waitress’s face when she gets pushed or someone manages to pinch a Maß\(^5\) in the middle of the beer tent mayhem. The ‘pre-pay’ system also applies to the food. The tent offers a wide range of Bavarian dishes, such as pork knuckles, grilled chicken, sausages and Bavarian desserts. Whichever dish the guests have requested, the waitresses order at the kitchen’s cashier, pay for it and receive a receipt, which they then hand over at the kitchen window, and take the dish away a few minutes later. Again, the food is the waitresses’ own responsibility on the way to their guests. People are often curious about whether the rumours of the large amount of money made at the Oktoberfest are true. As the exact amount is a well-kept secret, I usually explain how the system works and that on average I carry 200 beers a day. I then leave it up to people’s imagination how much that makes at the end of each day. However, converting the final amount to an hourly rate for the 14h/day, the waitresses are definitely not overpaid considering the demanding nature of the job.

The waitresses’ outfit at the Schottenhamel tent is a traditional waitress outfit dating back to the 19\(^{th}\) century. It consists of a black skirt (black trousers for men), black shirt, a white apron (black vest for men), and a white cap that resembles a nurse’s outfit and usually provokes more or less intelligent comments from the guests. Only one other

---

\(^5\) The English term for the beer vessel is *Stein* (German for ‘stone’), which most likely derives from the reference to the old versions of the *Maßkrug*, which until the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century were made out of heavy ceramic, and was called *Steinkrug*.
tent has its waitresses dressed in this traditional waitress outfit. The waitresses of all other tents wear a standard Dirndl\(^6\) and apron, which incorporate the tent’s particular colours. The owner of the Hofbräu tent, Mr. Steinberg, explains:

*I think it goes without saying that the waitresses at the Oktoberfest [should] wear a Dirndl, I think it’s part of it, although the dress at the Schottenhamel tent, well, that’s traditional, too … but I think the Dirndl at the Oktoberfest are beautiful and we have a uniform Dirndl in black-white-yellow, that’s the Munich colours … it fits to the Oktoberfest and I think the Dirndl is also an important part of it … we like it and the guests like it because it’s homogenous and everybody can spot the waitress straight away (Int.5).*

The waitresses’ dress plays an important role in the creation and display of the Bavarian character of the Oktoberfest. The clothing of the staff that work in the ‘background’ of the tent, such as the kitchen staff and the workers at the beer stations, is thus predominantly functional for the job rather than being nice to look at.

1.4.2.1. The Waitressing Job

One of the few really important women in every man’s life is that lovely human being that serves him a cold beer at the right time.\(^7\)

---

\(^6\) *Dirndl* is the traditional Bavarian dress for women. The male beer-carrying staff wear *Lederhosen*. A more detail description of the traditional garments will be given in Chapter 4.

\(^7\) *Süddeutsche Zeitung München*, 2006; p.45.
onerous work and also I found that could not be bothered with the thousands of inebriated people. However, in 2001, I spotted an advertisement for the job of an Oktoberfest souvenir girl, selling mementos, t-shirts and hats at the Schottenhamel tent. I responded to the ad hoping to make a huge amount of money selling expensive souvenirs to drunken tourists – a concept that seemed pretty plausible at the time. However, after the first hour of the first day, I found I was not a great salesperson and the guests were not as gullible as I had hoped, and so I ended up making close to nothing. After the first day, I was desperate to get out of the job. Although I had been sure that I would never be able to work as an Oktoberfest waitress, my desperation was such that I thought nothing could be worse than selling useless knick-knacks and so, after a week of persistent enquiries at the tent’s office, I was finally employed. My first afternoon as a waitress was very exciting. I was very nervous, afraid that I would not be able to cope with carrying all those heavy beers for so long. I was shown how to arrange the handles of the glasses, so that they interlink and are easier to hold, was allocated a set of tables, and off I went. Throughout the course of the evening I could feel my arms getting tired and heavy but I was buzzing with excitement that I had stepped up to be an Oktoberfest waitress. And of course, more importantly, I did not have to try desperately to get people buy rubbish off me – rather they now were eagerly waiting for me to bring the next round of beers! The next day, I was expecting to wake up not being able to move a muscle but to my surprise I felt fine. However, I had never done any waiting before and so I struggled to keep track of who had ordered what, which caused a lot of chaos and long waiting periods for my thirsty, more-or-less understanding guests. I enjoyed the job nonetheless, also because I got on very well with the other waiters and waitresses, who helped me out and showed me the tricks of the trade. The next year, as I was still fairly new, I got a service located in a ‘quiet’ corner of the tent (that is, away from the music, where people do not dance on the benches as wildly as they do in the middle of the tent), which was a good spot to get used to the job. For the last four years, however, I have had a set of tables in the centre of the tent in front of the band. This service was at first challenging as it is the noisiest and ‘wildest’ part of the tent and the furthest away from the bar. However, after the first day I had found the quickest way to get the beers to my guests was by simply

---

8 A colleague, with her service right next to mine, and I calculated the distance we ran every day and came to the conclusion that on an average day, we cover a distance of 15 to 20 kilometres, just running forth and back carrying beer and food.
pushing through the crowd. Very quickly, I had a growing number of regulars coming back to my table, not only day after day but even annually.

The job as a waitress at the Munich Oktoberfest is as rewarding as it is demanding. Not everybody can handle it. Most of all, good health and stamina are needed to put up with two and a half weeks of carrying heavy beer jugs while pushing through a crowded tent and breathing thick cigarette smoke. In addition to that, physical strength is an advantage when dealing with difficult guests. Although security staff are helpful in removing troublesome guests, they usually have to deal with more than one incident at a time and take a while to arrive where they are needed. Also, working in a draughty tent while drenched in sweat and beer foam, combined with the stress that comes with the job usually results in a cold, cough and/or fever (which does not stop any waitress from working regardless). The lack of sunshine, fresh air and sleep adds to that. Apart from the physical side of the job, it is also psychologically demanding. The job requires a great deal of patience and strong nerves. As a main part of my money comes from tips, it is vital to stay friendly at all times despite any stress or hassle. Staying friendly while dealing with rude or rowdy guests, annoying sexual advances and irritating grabbing amidst the buzz of thousands of drinking people can sometimes be very difficult.

Before proceeding to the more formal part of my analysis, I want to describe the course of one day at a beer tent, from the morning right through to the finish. It is to give an idea of an average day. Although some days are better than others and some days are sheer hell. This which largely depends on the guests, my mood and health, and also on occasional issues that crop up with colleagues or superiors.

\*\ A recent study found that the air in a beer tent on an average day exceeds the legal limit of pollutants and particulate matter by six times. The researchers concluded that waitresses should actually be required to wear gas masks for their health and safety.
An average day starts between 8.30 and 8.45 am. Many waitresses arrive already in their work outfit, which saves time getting changed at the tent. Also, the job of an Oktoberfest waitress is regarded with a lot of respect by the Munich local people, and thus, I sometimes have the impression that many waitresses not only wear their outfits on the underground for time-saving reasons but also for status recognition. However, I do not like being identified as a waitress on the underground for fear of being robbed of my earnings, so I wear normal clothes to and from the tent.

With every passing day, the tent becomes more and more ‘gross’. The empty tent smells of the beer-soaked floorboards, stale cigarette smoke and other ‘party-left-over-smells’. This becomes particularly depressing when it is raining, and the only warm place in the draughty tent is in front of the kitchen window where a pig is roasting on a spit. This spot usually has a cluster of shivering waitresses around it until the tent fills with people and the work becomes busy.

Inside the tent, there is a small cloakroom for the waitresses, where we can leave our bags and jackets, and where we can sit down to have a break. At the cloakroom, a wide range of ‘comfort food’, such as chocolate and other sweets, sandwiches, coffee and sparkling wine is available. Before the first people are let into the tent, I need to give the benches and tables a good scrub. I also use the time to buy beer tokens and food vouchers and sort things out, which I will not be able to get round to once the tent
gets busy. At 9am, the first beers are poured, and food is available from 10am. If it is a quiet weekday, like a Monday, the tent stays relatively empty and quiet until 11am. This is usually a time to have breakfast or coffee, sit together and chat, or wander around the site of the Oktoberfest. Mondays to Thursdays are late-shift-days, which means that only a small number of all waitresses arrive at the tent in the morning. They are then allocated a large area of tables, which they will tend until midday, when the rest of the staff arrive and everybody takes over their respective service of four tables. If I have a late shift, I either catch up on some sleep or use the spare time to go for a private wander around the Oktoberfest.

On quieter weekdays, the tent starts to fill up with people around early noon. On ‘peak days’, however, like the weekends and also Fridays, people start queuing in front of the tent’s doors from as early as 7am onwards.

The Schottenhamel tent is one of the most popular amongst the young Munich people and attracts the longest queues. As the crowd at the front door is usually the largest, only the side doors are opened first – a vital insider tip for anybody who wants a table for the day! These doors are opened at 9am and what follows very much resembles a stampeding herd of cattle. As the only way to get a beer is through ordering one with a waitress, it is vital to secure a table. The lucky first charge towards the unreserved tables in the middle of the tent. Whoever makes it to a table first has the right to claim it, and hold it until the rest of his or her group has made their way into the tent. The rest of the tent is fully booked months in advance.
The lucky first ones who made it into the tent...

As I have had the same set of tables for the last four years, my regulars, who know the 'ropes' and usually make it into the tent amongst the first ones, know where to find me, and on the first day there is always a lot of catching up after a year of waiting for the next Oktoberfest.

On the first Saturday, as the Oktoberfest starts with the opening of the first beer barrel by the Mayor of Munich, no beer or food is served until after the Opening Ceremony at noon. Most people are aware of this and have prepared by having a big breakfast and bringing entertainment, such as newspapers or card games. Despite the waiting, they are excited and in a very good mood; they are all 'groomed up' in their Bavarian outfits and are looking forward to a beer- and fun-filled day. When the Mayor's "O'zapft is" sounds through the tent, the crowd – by now standing on the benches – is unstoppable. This is the moment when the stress begins for the waitresses. As the entire tent needs to be supplied with beer at once, the queues at the bars are long, and by the time all tables have been served, some have already finished their first Maß and need another one. However, over the years I have worked out a fast way of 'processing' my guests and I

10 At this point, it might be worthwhile watching Video 1 again.
usually have my tables ‘under control’ within an hour or so. The first Saturday is frantic, but for the rest of the time it usually only gets so busy in the evenings.

Over the course of each day, the tent’s mood gets merrier and merrier. Especially when the band starts playing at noon and after a long break at 4pm, the crowd goes wild. How much the music can influence the guests becomes apparent in the following quote:

>You can’t have a beer tent without the modern music [such as hits from the radio charts] anymore ... even if many people say that this kind of music is not appropriate for a beer tent ... but there are a lot of young people in the beer tent and you have to do them justice, too ... when you play older stuff [traditional Bavarian folk music], a few people sway along but when you play something with clapping and stomping, before you know it, everybody is standing on the benches and [the mood] is kicking off.\(^{11}\)

The latest from early afternoon onwards, the guests are ‘warmed up’ and for me, until they leave, there is a lot of hugging, photo-taking and “oh, you’re such a wonderful waitress” involved. The guests order round after round after round, and all I do for the rest of the evening is carry beers, wipe the tables, squeeze friends and other regulars in with booked guests, who at that stage do not mind sharing a table with strangers anymore, carry more beers, have a chat with guests and friends, have a quick break involving some sparkling wine, bring some more beer, settle arguments or have someone removed or throw them out myself, receive hugs and phone numbers from overly friendly guests, fight off boisterous advances, more beer, more table-wiping, more hugs. At 10.30pm the beer flow finishes for the day, and after the music has stopped, the lights are dimmed as an unmistakable message to the guests. I return the empty glasses to the bar, and once the guests have stepped off the benches, I start

\(^{11}\) Mayer-Simeth, 2002.
scrubbing the benches and tables. This cleaning process is generally interrupted by guests wanting a last hug and saying good-bye, wishing me a good night, and promising to be back soon. When I have finished cleaning, I make my way to the cloakroom to get my bag and jacket and change from my beer-foam-and-sweat-soaked work outfit into normal clothes.

Left: Returning the empty jugs to the bar. Right: scrubbing the benches after a long day.

At the end of the two and a half weeks, my feet are covered in blisters, and along my arms (which by then resemble Popeye’s) I have cuts, bruises and cigarette burns. Guests haunt my dreams, I cannot sit quiet for five minutes, and I am swearing to God that I am glad that it’s over, and that this was definitely my last year. And yet, like so many other workers, after a week of ‘normal’ life, I am already starting to miss the Oktoberfest and look forward to the next year. Usually this positive outlook is reinforced by a glimpse at my bank statement.
1.4.3. Issues

Being from Munich and having worked at the Oktoberfest for the last six years, I am very much writing this thesis from an insider’s point of view; however, as Macdonald (1997) states, it is “crucial to social anthropology ... not only [to try] to present the picture ‘from the inside’, but also [to try] to throw that picture into relief, highlighting cultural specificities which insiders – by the very fact that they are insiders – easily take for granted” (p.xviii).

As an insider with regards to the Oktoberfest and Bavarian culture, it was challenging to keep a neutral, observing position. However, because I have been living in New Zealand for over two years, I started seeing many things in Bavaria with new eyes, which helped me maintain a more detached point of view for the conduction and analysis of the fieldwork for this thesis. As pointed out by Turner:

[When we return from abroad] we find that the familiar has become exoticized; we see it with new eyes. The commonplace has become marvellous (in Manning, 1983; p.8).
1.5. Outline of the thesis

Having set the context in the fieldwork description above, Chapter Two constitutes the theoretical section of this thesis. For the analysis of the Oktoberfest and the revival of Bavarianness at the Fest, I employ the theoretical approaches of Hobsbawm (1983), Anderson (1991) and Cohen (1985). Hobsbawm concentrates on the “invention of tradition”, which he sees occur in times of rapid societal changes, and which offer stability by reference to the past. Anderson deals with “imagined communities”, in the creation of which he considers language as a main driving force. Cohen sees in “national symbols” the key creators of a community’s boundary.

As the core question of this thesis is how the Oktoberfest carries and reinforces Bavarian identity, the main body is divided in to two parts. In the first one, Chapter Three, I outline the factors that offer answers to the question as to why Bavarians re-emphasise their identity as different from Germany. In the investigation of the (re-) creation of Bavarian identity at the Oktoberfest, it is important to consider the wider societal context and history of Bavaria as part of contemporary Germany, and also Europe. Chapter Three outlines a variety of factors that play a significant role in the distinction of Bavaria from the rest of Germany and can thus be interpreted as factors that explain the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest over the last decade.

Chapter Four deals in greater detail with how Bavarianness is created at the Oktoberfest. Attention is drawn to the way in which the Munich locals define themselves as a distinct group from the rest of the visitors. In the course of the trend to be Bavarian at the Oktoberfest, people are becoming increasingly concerned with the ‘authenticity’ of their Bavarianness. In their presentation as Bavarians, the locals employ subtle as well as very visible means to portray ‘how Bavarian’ they are. In the creation of Bavarianness, three means of distinction appeared to be the most important: the choice of beer and beer tent and the consumption of the Bavarian beer and food; the traditional clothes; and the Bavarian dialect.

Chapter Five concludes the thesis. It gives a summary overview of the causes of the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest and the means of distinction, practised by the locals at the Oktoberfest. Furthermore, it contains an outlook on the creation of boundaries by communities, in which certain practices and the ‘definition’ of the authenticity of these is constantly debated.
2.1. Introduction

Having worked at the Oktoberfest for the last couple of years, I have not been able to help but notice that the visitors to the Fest are increasingly emphasising their ‘Bavarianness’, their love of Bavaria, and how much they appreciate the traditions at the Oktoberfest and around Bavaria in everyday life. Whereas Bavarian traditions had previously been stigmatised as conservative and ‘square’, they have now experienced a revival. I asked myself why ‘Bavarianness’ suddenly has gained such an importance, and also, why at this particular time. Thus, as Cohen (1985) suggests:

> Instead of asking, ‘what does it look like to us? What are its theoretical implications?’ we ask, ‘What does it appear to mean to its members?’ (Cohen, 1985; p.20).

Handelman (1998) states that “the event of presentation holds up a mirror to social order, selectively reflecting versions of the latter that largely are known, if in more dispersed and fragmented fashion” (Handelman, 1998; p.48). As has been mentioned, the event of the Oktoberfest serves as a mirror reflecting the ‘outside’ society and thus offering a way of observing large-scale trends and developments through the ‘small-scale prism’ of the Oktoberfest.

For the analysis of my fieldwork findings at the Oktoberfest, I chose the theories of Anderson (1991), Hobsbawm (1983) and Cohen (1985). These theorists focus on the creation of community – through “imagination”, “invented tradition” and “boundaries”. I employ these theoretical approaches in order to show how Bavarians, first and foremost the Munich locals, define themselves as Bavarians at the Oktoberfest: They imagine themselves as a community of Bavarians through invented traditions – the Oktoberfest, as will be shown, is an invented tradition itself – and with the aid of various means of drawing boundaries, such as the traditional clothes and the Bavarian dialect.

Furthermore, I seek to explain why people are flaunting their ‘Bavarianness’ at the Oktoberfest, and how this display draws on (invented) traditions as well as recreates and re-affirms them. Also, I investigate how the reference to traditions draws a distinction between Bavarians and other Germans, and how this presentation of
‘Bavarianness’ is an outcome, as well as the source, of the (imagined) Bavarian community. This concurs with the findings of Wilk (2002), who states:

While the economic role of the state has been challenged, national and subnational cultural expressions have not lost their power or attraction. Instead, like the nation, national culture is itself changing as new forms of cultural production, often highly self-conscious, performative, contentious, and highly charged with emotion and meaning, are appearing all over the world (Wilk, 2002; p.68).

Hobsbawm sees in the analysis of invented traditions a means of understanding and describing the ‘cultural background’ of a nation, and hence, the nation itself. Thus, by analysing the traditions around the Oktoberfest, I suggest that it will be possible to draw conclusions about Bavarian and German, and even European society.

2.2. Theoretical Approaches

2.2.1. Anderson’s Imagined Communities

In the discussion around people’s search for community, the works of Anderson (1991) become important. Anderson deals with the concept of language as a community-creating tool, which will be vital for this thesis, as the Bavarian dialect is a main criterion in the definition of who is considered Bavarian and who is not.

Anderson has coined the term “imagined community”. For him, the term ‘imagination’ implies the notion of creation of a community rather than merely a mental picture of it. The community is experienced by the people through a feeling of “deep horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1991; p.7). Anderson distinguishes nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1991; p.6).

The community is imagined because no member of a community will ever know each single one of his or her fellow members. Yet, although the members of a nation will most likely never meet all other members, they are conscious of a shared temporal dimension, in which all of the society’s members co-exist: “that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity … is the hallmark of modern nations” (Anderson, 1991; p.36). The community is imagined also as limited, as “even the largest … has finite … boundaries, beyond which lie other nations” (Anderson, 1991; p.7). ‘Nation’ is
furthermore imagined as *sovereign* because in the process of the emergence of the idea of nation especially after the French Revolution in the 18\(^{th}\) century, the legitimacy of structure and societal order through religion was questioned. As nations strived for their right of sovereignty, the modern nation has become a symbol of the freedom from this religious constraint. Anderson argues that religious communities and dynastic realms were the fore-running belief systems of nationalism, and held large groups of people together as a community, while offering certainty and meaning in everyday life. He offers the example of medieval Christianity, and the use of Latin as a universal language and mediating mechanism between the manifold and diverse groups that considered themselves part of the Christian world. This community-creating universal language started to decline towards the end of the 16\(^{th}\) century, and “the sacred communities ... were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized” (Anderson, 1991; p.19).

Anderson considers religion, dynastic monarchy and people’s perception of time as three “fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity” that had created community before the early modern times. All three underwent drastic transformation, which set the grounds for nationalism to develop and gain importance. Anderson calls the community created through religion a “sacred script community”. However, the significance of religion and Latin as the sacred language began to fade in the late Middle Ages. Apart from religion, Anderson considers dynastic monarchy another fundamental conception that constituted the centre of communities. In dynastic realms, society is naturally centred around a monarch, who stands above other human beings through ‘divine’ establishment. This hierarchy merged people into a community: Many culturally diverse groups of people were often ‘unified’ in one reign through marriage between their respective royals. However, with the decline of Latin as a universal language, and hence the questioning of Latin as the only ‘sacral’ language, came the decline of dynastic legitimacy of monarchy. Especially after the French Revolution in 1789, the legitimacy to rule had to be justified before the people.

The third conception that experienced radical change with the development of industrialism was people’s perception of time. Anderson considers the awareness of time as yet another important factor in the creation and maintenance of an imagined community. The perception of time has changed, according to Anderson, from a notion of *simultaneity*, in which the present was seen in relation to the arrival of the Messiah,
to a reading of time as a homogenous continuum that is measured by clocks and calendars:

The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history (Anderson, 1991; p.26).

As the members of a nation will most likely never meet all other members, they are conscious that they share a temporal dimension, in which all of the society’s members co-exist

According to Anderson, language as a nation-forming mechanism increased in importance with the 15th century development of the printed mass media as part of industrialisation, which transformed people into one homogenous “readership”. The invention of the printing machine played a vital role in the “vernacularisation” and hence secularisation of people’s perception of themselves and their world. He argues that the printed word creates a community of print-readers, which furthermore unifies people into a community of the same tongue. Moreover, Anderson states that the readership now can be ‘fed’ with notions of a common national history, promoting even further the feeling of community. For the experience of community, Anderson considers language as the main community-forming tool:

From the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood (Anderson, 1991; p.145). Through ... language, encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures are dreamed (Anderson, 1991; p.154).

Discussing language as a community-creating device, Anderson offers the further example of national anthems, which remind the individual of, and, at the same time makes him or her part of, a specific community:

No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely those moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: Unisonance. Singing ... provide[s] occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community (Anderson, 1991; p.145).
2.2.1.1. The importance of language – A Scottish case study

As has been outlined, Anderson places great importance on the role of language as a community-forming tool. He sees language as a most vital (temporally simultaneous) tie between the members of a nation. Macdonald (1997), Trevor-Roper (1983) and McDonald (1993) also suggest that language is very important in the global development of the re-creation of regional identities.

Macdonald (1997) has documented a revival of the Gaelic language in Scotland in the course of ‘rediscovering’ and reviving Scottish traditions. According to her, the interest in the Gaelic is growing, and the language is becoming a central aspect of distinguishing Scottish identity. She suggests that a “Gaelic renaissance” has emerged in Scotland since the 1980s, particularly in the Highlands, where people emphasise their Scottishness by reviving Gaelic as a spoken language.

Scotland serves as a prominent example of the process of re-recognition of local or regional traditions in the European context, not only with regard to the revival of the Gaelic language. Trevor-Roper (1983), McDonald (1993) and Macdonald (1997) have observed and documented developments in Scotland over recent decades, and found that the Gaelic language is being revived at Scottish schools and in everyday life situations as the decisive centrepiece of Scottishness. Furthermore, they found that the celebration of the Highland culture through symbolic icons, such as Tartan, whisky and bagpipes has become an important manifestation of the “Gaelic renaissance”. In the course of this renaissance, the few key characteristics of the Highland culture (the aforementioned Tartan, whisky, bagpipes) are often used as a pars pro toto for the whole of Scotland. Yet, Macdonald (1997) argues that “Gaeldom” in Scotland was never homogenous or cohesive. She describes her quest for “the ‘real Scotland’ – the wild, bekilted, mist-encircled Highland Scotland” (Macdonald, 1997; p. xvii). However, she has had to concede that this image was quite a romantic notion, hardly representative of the whole of Scotland.

---

12 Hobsbawm (1990) offers an alternative view on language revival and suggests that “the call of ethnicity or language provides no guidance to the future at all. It is merely a protest against the status quo or, more precisely, against ‘the others’ who threaten the ethnically defined group” (In Smith, 1995; p.9). An example of this would be the revival of Te Reo Maori in New Zealand in the 1980s. Smith (1993) also sheds a rather dark light on these attempts of language preservation, and argues that such “ethno-linguistic nationalism, as a reactionary response to the rapidity of global changes will soon wilt and fade in the face of the inexorable large-scale politico-economic movements of world history” (p.11).
In Scotland,

the overwhelming concern with a possibly ailing identity and culture in the Scottish context is sourced in particular by Scotland’s peculiar political and cultural position as a ‘stateless nation’ and the fact that this ‘nation’ consists of at least two historically and linguistically distinct ‘cultures’ (or nations) – Lowland and Highland (Macdonald, 1997; p.5).

The distinct features of the Highlands were a means of conveying difference, not only from the Lowlands, but most importantly from England. Hugh Trevor-Roper (1983) describes the development of the stereotypical Highlander in Scotland, and how the idiosyncrasies, such as the tartan and bagpipes, changed their meaning over time – from “signs of barbarism” (Trevor-Roper, 1983; p.15) to the representative symbols of Scotland today. The Highland culture as a distinct feature in Scottish national identity is, according to Trevor-Roper, entirely invented. The notion of the romantic Highland culture however celebrated and ‘longed for’ by Scottish people, is far from authentic. Further, Macdonald (1997) argues that in the trend of re-creating tradition, the “apparently ancient might be relatively recent, that the supposedly indigenous might be appropriated” (Macdonald, 1997; p.9). According to her, a certain longing for the ‘good old days’ can be found in every modern society, and she considers “this quest after the authentic – and the kinds of locations in which it is thought to be found” (Macdonald, 1997; p.3) in itself to be modern. Macdonald refers to “re-imagining” traditions as conveying “both the sense of ‘return’ – of resurrection – that is contained in ideas of cultural ‘renaissance’ and ‘revival’, as well as of the creativity of culture production” (Macdonald, 1997; p.xv). She concerns herself with the study of people’s negotiation between the “new” and the “old again” – creating something new within the boundaries of the old. The term “imagining” reflects that culture and identity are always subject to individual ways of perception and interpretation. This interpretation has to be reviewed and negotiated constantly, which is in itself influenced by previous interpretations.

The revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest can be interpreted as an example of the quest for traditions and the re-imagination of traditional features. The supposedly old features at the Oktoberfest are often relatively new occurrences, and it has to be considered that they are created in the context of a festival that is taking place in a modern city with manifold diverse cultural influences. However, the Fest offers a stage for the Munich locals to set themselves distinct (as Bavarians) from the rest of
Germany. Similar to Scotland, Bavarian idiosyncrasies such as beer and Lederhosen in front of an Alpine landscape have changed their meaning from representing rural conservatism to the ‘crucial’ centrepieces of Bavarianness. Only by possessing what are considered ‘authentic’ Bavarian attributes, can one become part of the community of Bavarians at the Fest. After beer and Lederhosen, the Bavarian dialect creates the community of ‘real’ Bavarians. The resurgence of Bavarian features and their new importance can be interpreted as ‘invented’ – a social phenomenon that will be dealt with in the following section.

2.2.2. Hobsbawm’s Invention of Tradition

The process of creating and re-imagining (supposedly) old traditions is what Hobsbawm (1983) calls the “invention of tradition”. The memory of actual or fictional events or heroes creates a “national identity”. When discussing traditions in this thesis, it is important to remember that, as Hobsbawm puts it, “traditions which appear ... to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented” (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.1). Furthermore he argues that the process of inventing traditions is a development of formalization and ritualization, which is defined by reference to the past and repetition.

Hobsbawm (1983) uses the term “invented tradition” to describe traditions that are “invented, constructed and formally instituted and emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity” (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.1). He defines the term “invented tradition” to mean “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature” (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.1), which “use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.12). However, he furthermore states that despite the invention of new traditions, these new traditions still do not figure as prominently as traditions did in pre-modern societies.

For Hobsbawm, the most vital elements in the creation of social cohesion are symbolically and emotionally highly charged symbols, such as flags, anthems and emblems:
The National Flag, the National Anthem and the National Emblem are the three symbols through which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty ... in themselves they reflect the entire background, thought and culture of a nation ... Indeed most of the occasions when people become conscious of citizenship as such remain associated with symbols and semi-ritual practices ... most of which are historically novel and largely invented: flags, images, ceremonies and music (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.11-12).

Hobsbawm distinguishes between three types of invented traditions. The first category of invented traditions defines social cohesion and membership for a particular community. The second establishes authority and institutions, and the third infuses the members with a specific belief system and set of behavioural patterns. He calls the creation of community through national symbols “social engineering” (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.13).

2.2.2.1. Invented traditions in the context of nationalism

In the process of social engineering, Hobsbawm regards invented traditions as an instrument of nationalism, striving to establish a nation. In this, he differentiates between two types of nationalism: the first aims to create a nation for a large enough population in its respective territory; in the second, a smaller ethnic and/or linguistic distinctive group claims its right to become independent from a larger state entity. The notion of nationalism mainly arose in the course of the industrialisation in Europe in the nineteenth century. However, Hobsbawm notices a revival of nationalism in the late twentieth century, which he sees not so much focussed on the political nationalism that served to form nations in the nineteenth century, but rather based on ethno-linguistic claims. He interprets the revival of this particular kind of nationalism as an attempt to get control of the modern world, in which nations’ boundaries are becoming less and less important (at least in an economic context), and in which people fear to lose their respective national identity.

Although social engineering is mainly initiated by the leaders of a nation, he suggests that in order to be successfully installed invented traditions need to “broadcast on a wavelength to which the public [is] ready to tune in” (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.236). Unless the people identify with an invented tradition, they will not make it an integral
part of their everyday practices. When studying the Oktoberfest, it becomes evident that people are not merely ‘accepting’ the return of more traditional features but are rather actively re-creating them. The trend to return to a more traditional way of celebrating the Oktoberfest might even be considered as having been initiated by the people themselves. Thus, the question arises as to why people are generating their own traditions. Why at this particular time and what might this development be indicative of? Hobsbawm argues that invented traditions occur:

more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns ... Such changes have been particularly significant in the past 200 years, and it is therefore reasonable to expect these instant formalizations of new traditions to cluster during this period (Hobsbawm, 1983; p.4-5).

As will be shown, the Oktoberfest can be considered an invented tradition itself, as it got established in the early 19th century, serving the purpose of creating a sense of community amongst the Bavarian people after Bavaria had been founded a kingdom in 1806. This can be seen as a “rapid transformation” of the Bavarian society at the time. The rapid transformations that have led to the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest today will be outlined in the next chapter.

2.2.3. The Oktoberfest as a mass event – a psychological account

The notion of rapid social transformations is also central to Veiz’s (2006) psychological investigation of the Oktoberfest as a mass phenomenon. She argues that the Oktoberfest is a manifestation of people’s inherent need for community, which is increasingly scarce in the globalised modern world. She believes that people have an innate desire to experience community in the context of a mass event, to feel part of a large group. In the mass environment of a beer tent, people can overcome all social and psychological barriers and feel equal with everybody else. Veiz sees the Oktoberfest as an “escape” from reality. In the celebrations of the Oktoberfest, in the beer tents as well as on the rollercoaster, people can break away from their real world, at least for a while. Thus, the Oktoberfest is “potentially addictive”. According to Veiz, the Oktoberfest is the visible manifestation of society’s search for more and more extreme means of finding pleasure:
The growing isolation and shortage of contact in big cities, the high
demands in the everyday of work, the increasing loss of family, religious
and spiritual community and the resulting psychological deficiency are all
causes of a growing inner emptiness, which is then consciously or
subconsciously compensated with any kind of consumption (Veiz, 2006;
p.170).

Out of the “growing emptiness”, people seek contact with other people and the
feeling of belonging to a community. Because of this, Veiz argues, society is likely to
develop towards celebrating in large mass events, regardless of the event’s
background, such as football matches, concerts, or beer festivals. As people often leave
their hometown, family and community in order to work in a bigger city, large cities
have become the melting pot for more or less lonely people, who seek contact with
others. This might be a possible explanation for the fact that almost three quarters of
the Oktoberfest visitors are Munich residents or from surrounding areas\(^{13}\), and why the
trend of re-acknowledging Bavarian traditions is especially strong and observable in
the city of Munich rather than in more rural regions of Bavaria.

2.2.4. Festivals as creators of community

Veiz’s analysis of the Oktoberfest as a mass phenomenon that allows people to
experience community outside the ‘real world’ corresponds with Falassi’s (1987)
argument that festivals present an opportunity for people to step out of their everyday
routine and behaviour patterns. He argues that festivals offer an occasion for people to
behave in a way that they normally would abstain from. Although Falassi argues that
festivals have changed over time, he believes that:

\[
\text{with all its modifications, festival has retained its primary importance in}
\text{all cultures, for the human social animal still does not have a more}
\text{significant way to feel in tune with his world than to partake in the special}
\text{reality of the Festival (Falassi, 1987; p.7).}
\]

This corresponds with Manning’s (1983) argument that:

\[
\text{throughout both the industrialized and developing nations, new}
\text{celebrations are being created and older ones revived on a scale that is}
\text{surely unmatched in human history (Manning, 1983; p.4).}
\]

\(^{13}\) Oktoberfestbefragung 2000. See Appendix 5.
Both Falassi (1987) and Manning (1983) describe the function of festivals as a community’s means of expressing its ‘domestic’ social relations as well as its identity in relation to the outside world:

Festival commonly means a … social occasion in which … participate … all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a worldview. Both the social function and the symbolic meaning of the festival are closely related to a series of overt values that the community recognizes as essential to its ideology and worldview, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and to its physical survival, which is ultimately what festival celebrates (Falassi, 1987; p.2).

Manning refers to celebrations as “cultural productions”, which in contrast to economic productions have become the basis for shared values in modern societies:

Cultural productions have become the generative basis of myths, lifestyles and even world views. Instead of social formations giving rise to symbolic expressions … it is now symbols that are creating social groups (Manning, 1983; p.6).

Manning (1983) describes the scenario of the Calgary Stampede, a Canadian festival where the image and traditions of the ‘Wild West’ are celebrated. The ‘Wild-West-cowboy’-image is deliberately created by reviving the image of the past and transporting it into the present or as the promoters of the festival put it on the official website: “Celebrating our Past, Creating our Future”. Manning points out that for the period of the celebration, the city of Calgary is encompassed by the Wild West way of life:

For ten days each July the city is given over to rodeos, barbecues, square dances, and cowboy parades. Residents are encouraged to wear western garb, on and off the job. City employees and many workers in the private sector are given time off to attend events (Manning, 1983; p.17).

Manning states that the Stampede is used to portray a rugged and romanticised representation of the West Canadians, as a stark contrast to the Eastern part of Canada, which stands for “federal power and sophistication” (Manning, 1983; p.18). He calls this the social process of “region against nation” (Manning, 1983; p.19):

---

Traditional feasts and festivals constitute, symbolically, a way of recalling the origins – whether mythical or historical – of a community of men. They are occasions when cultural and national identity can be reasserted and feelings of self-awareness and participation in common experiences reaffirmed (Manning, 1983; p.9).

Manning sees in this “a kind of ‘official ideology’ that obviates a social irony by creating a notion of the past and extending it into the present” (Manning, 1983; p.18). He states that a celebration is “an authentic account of social reality as much as a deliberate disfigurement of it” (Manning, 1983; p.22). He considers the authenticity of these cultural productions as a most important criterion:

As the modern world itself is seen as shallow and spurious, our most popular cultural productions (which, inter alia, are typically tourist attractions) are based on themes drawn from ... the historical past ... Modern peoples seek authenticity even in cultural productions which, in their own performance context, represent deliberate pretence ... Tourists are likely to [travel to celebrations] to encounter a pristine and genuine spirit of festivity that they believe has been ‘lost’ in their own society. Perhaps this is why ... so many of today’s tourists are ‘closet pilgrims’ (Manning, 1983; p.26).

Manning’s account of the Calgary Stampede bears remarkable resemblance to the city of Munich during the Oktoberfest. Bavarian tradition and the image of Bavaria are glamorised and romanticised at the Oktoberfest, referring back to the ‘good old times’ – whenever they might have been. Furthermore, the Oktoberfest acts as a means for Bavarians to set themselves distinct from the rest of the German nation. The Fest can thus be seen as an authentic account of the social reality in Bavaria, yet a conscious disfigurement of it. Bavarian traditions are emphasised to an extent that is not representative of authentic everyday life, at least in Munich. The discussion of authenticity has become more and more central, especially with regards to the traditional clothes that are becoming an integral part of the festivities. The authenticity of a ‘real’ Bavarian is furthermore ‘proven’ by having a Bavarian accent and consuming Bavarian food and beer (and consuming it in a particular way) and music. However, it is important to bear in mind that, as Wilk (2002) puts it:

A distinction [has to be drawn] between the habitual, daily, lived practices shared among a group of people, as one form of shared identity, and those explicit, self-conscious, symbolic, and performative displays that are often given the public label ‘national culture’ (Wilk, 2002; p.70).
The Oktoberfest can be interpreted as pretending to celebrate a ‘pristine’ form of Bavarianness, which does not exist in Bavarian, especially not in Munich’s everyday life. Yet, the Fest acts as a theatre for acting out the ‘invented Bavarianness’, presenting oneself to fellow Bavarians and other Germans and the rest of the world in a certain way. It almost seems like a staged folkloristic pantomime. However, the staging of Bavarianness also fulfils the purpose of reasserting the regional identity of the locals as Bavarians. The reassertion of the Bavarian community not only distinguishes the group from the rest of Germany but also ‘protects’ it in the development of loosening borders in the process of Europeanisation. The re-affirmation of a community’s boundaries will be dealt with in the following section.

2.2.5. Cohen: A community’s boundaries

Cohen (1985) sees in the industrialisation and urbanisation of our modern times “a multi-pronged assault on social encapsulation” (Cohen, 1985; p.44). In his definition of community, he considers the term “boundary” crucial. Although, as he states, boundaries between communities can be tangible – administrative, physical, religious or linguistic – they only become ‘valid’ if the members of the community perceive of the boundary as a border. In order to understand a community’s boundary, it is thus important to understand what meaning the members give to it. He suggests “that boundaries perceived by some may be utterly imperceptible to others” (Cohen, 1985; p.13):

As one goes ‘down’ the scale [from nation to region] so the ‘objective’ referents of the boundary become less and less clear, until they may be quite invisible to those outside. But also as you go ‘down’ this scale, they become more important to their members for they relate to increasingly intimate areas of their lives or refer to more substantial areas of their identities (Cohen, 1985; p.13).

Cohen argues that communities that feel under pressure to conform with other communities are more likely to reassert their boundaries, at least symbolically. “The symbolic expression and affirmation of boundary heightens people’s awareness of and sensitivity to their community” (Cohen, 1985; p.50). He sees the symbolic expression of a community becoming more and more vital in the decreasing importance of geographical and even social boundaries today. In their attachment to commonly
shared symbols, the members of a group experience their community as their reality. Cohen defines symbols as:

media through which individuals can experience and express their attachment to a society without compromising their individuality ... [and which can be bent] without such distortions becoming visible to other people who use the same symbol at the same time (Cohen, 1985; p.18).

The expression of a community’s boundary can take form in a ritual, which “confirms and strengthens social identity and people’s sense of social location: it is an important means through which people experience community” (Cohen, 1985; p.50).

The Oktoberfest can be seen as a symbol, representing an occasion to draw boundaries between Munich and rural Bavaria, and Bavaria and Germany. Furthermore, on a smaller level, various symbols of Bavarianness are employed at the Oktoberfest itself to create clear boundaries between the Munich locals, other Germans and foreign visitors.

2.3. Conclusion and Outlook

For the analysis of the fieldwork findings of my research, the theoretical approaches of Hobsbawm (1983), Anderson (1991) and Cohen (1985) are most important. The revival of Bavarianess at the Oktoberfest will be explained with the concepts of “invented traditions”, “imagined community” and a community’s means of asserting its boundaries.

Anderson’s (1991) concept of “imagined community” will serve to show how the Munich locals imagine themselves as a community of Bavarians in the context of the Oktoberfest. Anderson’s argument that language is a strong community-forming tool will be employed in the discussion around the Bavarian dialect, which is considered the most significant element in the distinction of a ‘real’ Bavarian.

Hobsbawm (1983) argues that even invented traditions feature a lot less in modern people’s lives than in older agrarian societies. This is an important aspect in the observations of people visiting the Oktoberfest, who present themselves as ‘genuine Bavarians’. It is important not to consider these traits as ‘purely authentic’ Bavarian traditions but rather invented in a modern context. What this goes to show
furthermore is that people in modern Munich society are more 'prone' to invent traditions, and the more rural areas of Bavaria are less inclined to invent or incorporate 'new traditions' as older traditions are still more prevalent and practised than in the large city of Munich. Furthermore, Hobsbawm considers symbolically and emotionally highly charged symbols, such as flags, anthems and emblems as most vital elements in the creation of social cohesion. At the Oktoberfest, these elements are essential parts in the creation of the Bavarian character of the Fest. Not so much the Bavarian flags but the Bavarian anthem and other songs played at the beer tents create a strong sense of community amongst the Bavarian visitors, who take part in singing along. Also, the traditional clothes worn to the festival can be considered as "emblems", rendering the local visitors a cohesive group.

As Hobsbawm sees invented traditions rise in the wake of a rapid social transformation, the Oktoberfest can be considered an invented tradition itself that became an established part of Munich life, after the profound changes brought about by the foundation of the kingdom of Bavaria in 1806. Moreover, the recent re-acknowledgement of Bavarian features at the Oktoberfest, first and foremost the trend of wearing traditional clothes, which is becoming a tradition in itself also has to be interpreted within the context of "rapid transformations" that occurred in Germany and Europe over the last two decades.

These rapid changes include the more recent history of Germany, most importantly the Nazi period and also the re-unification of West and East Germany in 1990. Also the processes of a creation of Europe as a boundary-free superstate can be seen as rapid changes in society. Cohen (1985) sees in the dissolution of borders a 'trigger', causing people to retreat back to their regional communities. These are then 'defended' against the outside through the employment of symbols, which are shared by this particular community. I will discuss three symbolic tools with which the Munich locals re-assert their community as Bavarians in the context of the Oktoberfest – the choice of beer, the traditional clothes and the Bavarian dialect.

In the following chapter, I outline the background information, which will be important for understanding the developments at the Oktoberfest. As Munich and Bavaria lie in the centre of Europe, it is important to consider European developments in the analysis, as well as the German context. Furthermore, the historical and political happenings within Germany and Bavaria play significant roles in the revival of the Bavarian character of the Oktoberfest and the emphasis on Bavarian identity.
3 Background of Bavaria and Germany

When studying the Oktoberfest more closely, the passionate emphasis on the Bavarian character of the festival, which has been increasing over the last decade, is striking. As will be shown, the emphasis of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest serves as a means of drawing distinctions between the people from Munich, other Bavarians and other Germans. The question arises as to why people are so eager to stress their origins as Bavarian. Researching the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest, it becomes obvious that this trend has only occurred in the last few years and the trend of wearing traditional clothes to the Oktoberfest has established itself rapidly since the new millennium.

When studying the Oktoberfest, it is important to include in the analysis the wider societal developments not only in Munich and Bavaria but on a larger scale also in Germany and even Europe. As today's society is shaped by globalisation, global trends and developments are decisive factors in the return to local and regional traditions. Throughout my research, I found a number of (rapid) changes that have occurred in Munich, Bavaria, Germany and Europe, which can be interpreted as explanatory factors for the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest. The emphasised identification with Bavaria, I found, is closely linked to a claim of distinction from, if not rejection of, the rest of Germany.

3.1. The revival of regional identity in a European context

For the exploration of the return to regional culture and tradition in Bavaria, it is important to take into account the developments within the wider context of Europe, as Germany is located in the centre of Europe and thus is directly affected by European affairs. Over the last couple of decades, Europe has been developing towards becoming one great all-encompassing state. This started with the foundation of the European Trade Union in the early 1950s, and reached a peak with the introduction of the Euro as a unifying currency in 2002. With distinctive cultural and national features seemingly disappearing, the fear of losing one’s own identity, for the sake of blending into the giant melting pot of Europe, is growing stronger. As a counter-movement to
the ‘swallowing’ into the ‘Über-state’ Europe, not only a number of nations, but many regions within these states, have begun to re-emphasise their roots and individuality.  

Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology; in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity (Morley et al., 1993, p.4).

Especially over the last two decades, a growing number of European nations can be seen to be returning to their particular traditions, re-recognising national or regional customs, and re-creating their identity in the context of the global and European development. As Wilk (2002) argues, the significance of the states' economic role has been weakened in the development of ‘Europeanisation’, and cultural productions are becoming increasingly important to people, which has resulted in a growing number of performative cultural representations. An article in the New York Times points out:

Throughout Western Europe ... battles are being fought as the pressure to integrate in what may become a European superstate and accept a borderless future in a globalized world stirs patriotic reactions in defence of the nation-state.  

---

A resurrection of patriotic tendencies seems to be a European, even a global phenomenon. In recent years, more and more emphasis has been put on the national rather than the international aspect of a country’s culture and identity.\(^{17}\) The return to national traditions can be seen as people’s self-conscious search for security, a reaction to the great unknown that the development of Europe imposes on its people, creating anxiety and concern about anonymity. Amidst the whirl of loosened borders and seemingly fading diversity between the European neighbours, the retention of national or regional identity appears to be the only constant offering stability and reliability. The resurgence and revival of (seemingly old) traditional values can be interpreted as people’s search for a smaller community:

The desire of many people to return to small-scale societies is undoubtedly part of a revulsion against the increasing cultural uniformity that has come with larger-scale modernizing societies (Knight, 1982; p.526).

Also Macdonald (1993) argues that:

While on the one hand it might seem that as borders become weaker – as people and goods traverse them more easily – there will be a consequent relaxing of the sense of allegiance to place and people, very often the reverse is actually the case (Macdonald, 1993; p.2).

In the return to small-scale regional identities, Bavaria is thus not unique. Although it has been suggested\(^{18}\) that most Germans would rather refer to themselves as European, only one of my (Bavarian) participants stated that he would identify with Europe rather than Germany:

*I would say Munich, Bavaria and Europe because the European culture area is very important to me, too* (Int.8).

For the other interviewees, regional identity was far more important than the national or European:

*It depends on where I am; when I was on holiday in Thailand, I said Germany … within Europe I definitely say I’m from Munich … but I would never say I’m from Europe that is completely out of the question* (Int.3).

\(^{17}\) DER SPIEGEL, 49/2004; Macdonald, 1993; Macdonald, 1997; Wilk, 2002.

\(^{18}\) The Economist, 4 Nov 2000.
I never said I was European … I was always proud to be from Munich (Int.5).

Europe was seen by some as a multi-cultural background, in front of which it was important for Bavaria to conserve its uniqueness:

We are European more than Germans … and we don’t want to retreat into some mountain valley … we want to be open to the world but we want to be able to keep our culture in the frame of a Europe of regions (Int.11).

3.1.1. The notion of homeland

In the context of “a world of expanding horizons and dissolving boundaries” (Morley et al., 1993; p.5), Morley et al. (1993) investigate the notion of “homeland”. They argue that in modern Europe, the proliferation of information and communication and mass migration is eroding the territorial boundaries of the nation-states: “Through the intermixture and hybridization of cultures, older certainties and foundations of identity are continuously … undermined” (Morley et al., 1993; p.5). Whereas in pre-modern times, people found their identity within a local context, modern post-industrial communities often do not offer a firm base of identity anymore:

There is an increasingly felt need for … attachment to particular territorial locations as ‘nodes of association and continuity, bounding cultures and communities’. There is a need to be ‘at home’ in the new and disorientating global space (Morley et al., 1993; p.5).

In people’s search for a replacement for their ‘lost’ homeland, Morley et al. argue that European society will “travel from the western Europe of nation-states via the Brussels superstate to the Europe of Heimats” (Morley et al., 1993; p.7). Morley et al. define Heimat as “the place where you were born, [however] the concept is not simply territorial, but rather invokes a “memory of origin” (Morley et al., 1993; p.10).

Heimat thus not only stands for the home country, but also implies community, the feeling of belonging to the community, safety and identification with a shared set of values, culture and history:

---

19 Heimat is the German word for homeland. In Bavaria, the term Heimat includes, apart from the landscape and regional features, the notion of Gemütlichkeit, a term that could be described with cosiness, contentment, relaxed atmosphere, and the feeling of community. It also includes a certain notion of ‘live and let live’, which was considered a typical Bavarian trait.
The word is always linked to strong feelings, mostly remembrances and longing. Heimat always evokes ... the feeling of something lost or very far away, something which one cannot easily find or find again ... it seems ... that one has a more precise idea of Heimat the further one is away from it (Edgar Reitz in Morley et al., 1993; p.7).

This was confirmed by one of my participants:

_When I moved away from Munich, I suddenly developed this Heimat-feeling and I developed a strong relation to Munich, my hometown, and also the Oktoberfest. The Oktoberfest has become amongst other things part of my identity, also because you automatically are associated with it wherever you go (Int. 3)._ 

Morley et al. consider Heimat a mythical bond that has its roots in the past. They interpret the attempt to conserve the ‘fundamentals’ of a particular culture or identity as a sustaining of cultural boundaries. Judt (2005) argues that in the course of ‘Europeanisation’ over the last two decades, people have turned to history as an anchor in modern Europe. He argues that what he calls “nostalgia” has been sparked by:

An escalating public fascination with the past ... encapsulating ... lost memories: history ... as an illustration of how very different things had once been (Judt, 2005; p.768).

He furthermore sees this nostalgia having “swept across ... Western [sic] Europe in the last years of the old century, giving rise to heritage industries ... reconstructions, re-enactments, and renovations” (Judt, 2005; p.769).

The revival of the Bavarian character of the Oktoberfest and its ‘rediscovery’ by the Munich locals can be interpreted as a consequence of a general European development towards a stronger focus on the regional identity. Thus, the resurgence of Bavarianness is not a unique occurrence but rather blends in with a number of ‘revival trends’ that have occurred throughout Europe over the last two decades. However, the case of the Oktoberfest is distinctive in the sense that not only European developments have led to a stronger focus on the regional aspect of it but also a number of ‘inner-German’ developments. The following part of this chapter outlines the history and political circumstances of Germany in particular, analysing their impact on Bavarian identity and the strong Bavarian connection with the region as opposed to identification with the German nation. Not only the political history, reaching back
over centuries, but most importantly, the recent Nazi history and German unification are significant factors in the emphasis on regional identity in Bavaria.

Furthermore, the term *Bavarian* will be distinguished in greater detail, explaining what and who is considered Bavarian and how Bavarian ‘separatism’ is lived out.

### 3.2. Overview of the political history of Germany

Geographically, Germany lies in the centre of Europe, surrounded by Poland and the Czech Republic to the East, Austria and Switzerland to the South, France, Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium to the West and Denmark to the North. Its location in the heart of Europe has, not only in recent times but also in earlier ages, resulted in Germany being a country of great diversity in languages, traditions, politics, and religious persuasions. The shape of the Federal Republic of Germany today\(^20\) is rather ‘young’. The most recent change to its borders took place in 1990, with the re-unification of Germany, when the territory of the German Democratic Republic was ‘added’ to the Federal Republic of West Germany.\(^21\)

Germany’s great regional diversity is striking. This is an outcome of a centuries-long division into hundreds of small and medium-sized principalities and duchies. Although these were once all part of the *Holy Roman Empire of German Nations*\(^22\), there was little understanding then of the concept of a common nation(-hood). This was largely because people seldom left their villages, which resulted in and also reinforced linguistic differences between the regions. The many small- and medium-sized states greatly differed not only in size (some had as few as 1000 inhabitants), but also in religious persuasion, currency and language. ‘Growing together’ was furthermore hindered by the constant bickering between the dukes and rulers of the small principalities, which often enough resulted in warfare.

\(^{20}\) After Russia, Germany is the most populous country in Europe with over 82 million people (Judd, 2005).

\(^{21}\) The re-unification marked the fourth change in mode of government for Germany in the twentieth century alone. The first change of government in the 20th century in Germany was the change from the Wilhelminian Empire into the Weimar Republic in 1918/1919; in 1933, the National Socialists ‘governed’ Germany in a dictatorship; in 1948, Germany was divided into a democratic and a socialist state, and finally united under a democratic government in 1990 (Minkenberg, 1993).

\(^{22}\) Please refer to Appendix 3 for a more detailed overview of the political history of Germany.
Thus, people had no clear notion of citizenship or nation-states, before the term *nationalism* evolved in the course of the 18th century.\(^{23}\) It is believed that nationalism gained momentum in the 18th and 19th centuries because the spread of literacy facilitated the use of the printing press as a means of propagating nationalist ideas, which reached a wider readership across local communities, which then also created a greater sense of nationhood and unity.\(^{24}\) However, the notion of one German nation is only little over two centuries old.

Furthermore, after the end of the Second World War in 1945, Germany lost large parts of its territory, and was split up between the Allies into four zones, with England, France, USA and Russia taking over governmental duties in their respective zones. In 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany was proclaimed, of which Bavaria became a part. However, it excluded the Eastern zone, which, still governed by Russia, was proclaimed the German Democratic Republic in the same year. For over 40 years, Germany was divided into two parts that could not have been more different: capitalism and freedom in the West vs. communism and oppression in the East. Although the Wall dividing the two ‘Germanys’ was torn down almost two decades ago, the split still exists in many people’s heads.

The German-German division from 1949 to 1990 is a decisive factor in the resurgence of traditional values in Bavaria and Munich in particular. The resurgence of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest started to increase shortly after the re-unification in 1990, in the mid-90s. With a high influx of East German ‘immigrants’ into Bavaria (and the rest of the former West Germany), the emphasis on Bavarianness can be interpreted as a strong statement of who is part of the ‘original Bavarian faction’, as re-unification brought a number of problems and did not run as smoothly as it had been wished for. The main problems surfaced around the annexation of the former socialist GDR onto a capitalist system. Not only did the change from socialism to capitalism produce many problems for the Eastern Germans, but also it brought great economic burdens for the well-off West:

\(^{23}\) Hobsbawm, 1990. Prior to that, the existing states were usually ruled by monarchs and territory was either conquered, or acquired through marriage or inheritance.
\(^{24}\) This also concurs with Anderson’s (1991) argument, see Chapter 2.
The absorption of the eastern Länder [federal states in Germany] into a unified Germany had cost the Federal Republic more than one thousand billion euros [roughly two thousand billion NZ$] in transfers and subsidies between 1991 and 2004. But far from catching up to the West, the eastern region of Germany by the late Nineties had actually begun to fall further behind (Judt, 2005; p.756).

Zeidenitz et al. (2005) argues similarly:

Before the 1990s all West Germans were passionately keen on the idea of the two Germanys coming together again. How, they asked themselves and each other, can we find fulfilment as a nation while the great German Geist (spirit) is divided by a concrete wall? … Now that unification is a fact, West Germans have their doubts … To many in the West, Eastern Germany seems a bottomless pit swallowing their Euros. At the same time, some in the eastern part feel that … their [state] has become a second class country for good (Zeidenitz et al., 2005; p.9-10).

Although most people in my research generally showed an open-minded attitude towards (formerly) East Germans, they considered them still as East Germans, a distinction which was largely pinned to the East German accent. Some of the interviewees hinted at the German-German aversion, however, none of them actually made a frank statement. The only open statements about their real feelings about East Germans by Bavarians I received was at the Oktoberfest, when at various occasions, guests inquired about my origins and were pleasantly re-assured when I said that I was Bavarian and not East German.

Thus we see that the historical division of Germany into many small-scale units and the split into two different states in the 20th century are important factors in people’s emphasis on regional identity.
3.3. National identity in Germany

The rejection of a national identity in Germany, I propose, also has its roots in the fact that Germans have little national self-confidence to start with – an issue with which contemporary Germany is intensely occupied. Due to the past, with its wars and war crimes, the creation of a new identity is stuck in a paradox: on the one hand, the preoccupation with the past is seen as a “narcissistic obsession”, while at the same time, the attempt to leave the past behind “arouses indignant accusations of marginalizing Nazi crimes, if not of revisionism”.\(^\text{25}\)

You try to be a patriot here, you love your country, you accept the heritage and then you discover you cannot love the heritage. So it is always a broken patriotism born of a broken history.\(^\text{26}\)

Surveys have shown that since the mid-90s, Germans have increasingly feared losing their identity amidst the gigantic construct of Europe.\(^\text{27}\) However, Germany still has a problem with the definition of nation and national identity. In a recent survey on national confidence, Germany ranked at the bottom, only just in front of Slovakia.\(^\text{28}\) The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche noted over a hundred years ago that this was a typically German phenomenon: “that the question of what is German will never die”.\(^\text{29}\) Although not an academic piece of work, the Xenophobe’s Guide to the Germans provides us with a rather accurate account of this uncertainty:

Viewed by some as a nation of square-jawed robots whose language sounds like something awful in the drains, whose cars out-perform all others and whose football team seldom loses, the Germans seem unassailable. But behind the façade, lies a nation distinctly uncertain about where it is, where it is going, even how it got there (Zeidenitz et al., 2005; p.5).

Due to the ‘difficult’ past, any emotional connection to the nation is regarded negatively. For most Germans, the discussion or the actual feelings of nationalism and patriotism are avoided, and any terminology referring to patriotic feelings towards the

\(^{25}\) TLS, the Times Literary Supplement, 17 June 2005.
\(^{27}\) SPIEGEL ONLINE, 23 Feb 2006.
\(^{28}\) DER SPIEGEL, 40/2000.
\(^{29}\) DER SPIEGEL, 40/2000. Nietzsche’s remark was right: what defines the German people is very nebulous. Even the origins of the very term German implies this dilemma: deutsch (German) derives from the gothic noun thiuda, meaning nothing more than “belonging to a people”, referring mainly to language as a main criterion (http://susli.e-technik.uni-ulm.de:80...s_b4_s0731.html).

52
home country is treated with great caution and suspicion. During the Nazi regime, the term ‘Heimat’ denoted the “race and territory”, or “blood and soil”, which led to not only the exclusion of those who did not belong according to this mentality, but worse – to their eradication (Morley et al., 1993). Especially in the post-war years, nationalism or representations of nationalistic or patriotic feelings were taboo in Germany. A famous statement by former German president in 1969, Gustav Heinemann, is symptomatic:

There are some difficult fatherlands, and Germany is one of them. I don’t love my fatherland; I love my wife.\(^{30}\)

The connection between patriotism/nationalism and the Nazi atrocities is still deeply ingrained in the German consciousness, even amongst young(er) generations: “For most post-Hitler Germans, nationalism remains a dirty word”.\(^{31}\) The comment by a football fan in a documentary during the Football World Cup 2006 in Germany is exemplary of the cautious display of patriotism:

\[I'm \textit{very hopeful that Germany will become world champion, and I want to show that. And the patriotism that we're allowed to live out during the World Cup without [being accused of] any political ulterior motive is of course really great.}\]

\(^{32}\)

Germany, of all European countries, seems to be the only one “that isn’t allowed to feel good about itself” (Ignatieff, 1993; p.83). The post-war (West-German) identity thus has been based on thriving economy and the constitution.\(^{33}\) Manifestation of the lack of identification with Germany can also be found in the fact that many Germans do not know the words to the national anthem, and on the few occasions when it is played, they refuse to sing along. The anthem has always been a very tricky issue: “barely half of all West Germans and less than a quarter of those in the former communist East can recite even its first line”.\(^{34}\)

---


\(^{31}\) The Economist, 4 Nov 2000.

\(^{32}\) http://www.spiegel.de/sptv/videonews/0,1518,archiv-2006-166,00.html.

\(^{33}\) The so-called \textit{Verfassungspatriotismus} implies devotion not to Germany but to its modern democratic values. The \textit{D-Mark-Nationalismus} means identification and pride in Germany’s strong economy (Ignatieff, 1993; Minkenberg, 1993; Igers, 1999; Rodden, 2001).

\(^{34}\) The Economist, 4 Nov 2000.
Although as we shall see, the legacy of post-war guilt is abating, particularly amongst young people, it still remains an important factor in the makeup of national identity.

3.3.1. The negative image of Germany in the world and German stereotypes

The negative self-concept of Germany is to some extent reflected in, and aggravated by international German stereotypes. The two World Wars and especially the legacy of National Socialism have scarred the image of Germany in the eyes of the world:

The Germans themselves are not so much fearful of foreigners as fearful of any foreign country getting a bad impression of them. No other nation has a stronger sense of the importance of getting along with others. Tolerance is not only a virtue, it’s a duty (Zeidenitz et al., 2005; p.5-6).

McDonald (1993) argues that in the course of nationalisms in the nineteenth century, stereotypes were a means of drawing and understanding differences between nations and cultures. This differentiation helped establish what one’s own nation and culture was, and also what it was not. Racial and linguistic differences, according to McDonald, were the most important signposts of this demarcation. Anderson (1991), again referring to language as the powerful creator of community, argues that nations set themselves apart from other nations by labelling the others with terms that “apply only to one specific nationality, and thus concede, in hatred, the adversary’s membership in a league of nations” (Anderson, 1991; p.149). As an example, he offers the terms “Huns”, “Frogs” and “Japs”, which were used in the Second World War to label Germans, French and Japanese. Stereotypes are cultural phenomena that are transmitted by media, word of mouth, education, history and jokes. However, as much as national stereotypes are entertaining, they do not describe reality. The ‘national character’ is a social construction and serves the maintenance of national

---

35 The term stereotype was first employed in the field of social science in 1922, from a word used to describe a device in the printing industry to reproduce countless copies. People create stereotypes of other people(s) they do not know through any direct experience, and whose culture they do not understand entirely or not at all. Stereotype can be considered “inaccurate representations” (McDonald, 1993; p.220). In psychology, the phenomenon of stereotypes is described as the pathological outcome of “cognitive mechanisms of information-processing, storage and retrieval [at an individual level]” (McDonald, 1993; p.221). Stereotyping can thus be seen as a generalisation, which serves to simplify the complexity of the world for the individual.

36 SPIEGEL ONLINE, 6 Oct 2005.
identity. The stereotypical representation of a community, according to Cohen (1985), makes the concept of a community’s boundary central to understanding the community itself, as people form their own self-perception by looking over the boundary and ‘defining’ themselves in relation to what is outside the boundary.

McDonald (1993) describes how in the late nineteenth century, the image of Germany changed from the “nation of ‘poets and thinkers’ [10] a mob of barbarous and brutish Huns” (McDonald, 1993; p.229). This image was mainly a result of the war between France and Prussia in 1870, and was then further ‘confirmed’ by the following two World Wars. Further adjectives that became popular to describe Germans were: “rigid ... brutal ... ruthlessly logical ... meticulously professional ... and boastful ... The reign of the efficient German bully had begun” (McDonald, 1993; p.230).

The stereotype of the Germans, McDonald (1993) states, is so difficult to correct or get rid of because of the historical ‘proof’, “which help[s] confirm old ideas of some innate ‘national character’” (McDonald, 1993; p.231). The British and Dutch media have been especially active in stressing the stereotype of the ‘Hun’, employing attributes like the Wehrmacht helmet or Hitler moustache to depict contemporary Germans. A number of examples of the expression of the stereotype of Germans are employed in English-speaking comedy, probably the most famous of all can be found in the British comedy Fawlty Towers by and with John Cleese, creator of the famous dialogue that has since been integrated into everyday (English) language: Don’t mention the War.

38 SPIEGEL ONLINE, 18 Feb 2003.
The dialogue arises between John Cleese in the character of the hotel owner Basil Fawlty and a German guest:

**Basil:** *Don’t mention the war. I mentioned it once, but I think I got away with it. So it’s all forgotten now and let’s hear no more about it. So that’s two egg mayonnaise, a prawn Goebbels, a Herman Goering and four Colditz salads... no, wait a minute... I got confused because everyone keeps mentioning the war.*

**German:** *Will you stop mentioning the war!?*

**Basil:** *You started it*

**German:** *We did not start it.*

**Basil:** *Yes, you did, you invaded Poland...*

Basil taking the orders, trying not to mention the war; his attempts to ‘cheer’ his German guests up by imitating Hitler.

Obviously, the stereotype of ‘the German’ is not a very favourable one, and identifying (positively) with Germany is still difficult.

3.3.2. The changing (self-)image of Germany - Football World Cup 2006

Although people remain self-conscious about Germany’s history, the dominance of Nazi history in people’s minds is slowly fading. The easing identification with Germany was helped by the Football World Cup 2006, which Germany hosted. The display of loyalty to the German team then was as much overwhelming as it was unexpected – not least by the Germans themselves. The event was the momentary peak of a development towards a less anxious relationship to the country. During the
Football World Cup, it seemed that being German all of a sudden was not only ‘ok’ again but it actually became fashionable:

The change in image over the past four weeks that has come with its spectacularly successful staging of the World Cup could be a lasting achievement and the crucial boost needed for Germany’s self-image and confidence.\textsuperscript{39}

During the month of the Football World Cup between June and July 2006, Germany witnessed a display of patriotism unprecedented since World War II. Whereas before the World Cup, the German tricolour flag was hardly to be seen (apart from flags around the parliament buildings in Berlin)\textsuperscript{40}, the sale of flags and other paraphernalia displaying the national colours skyrocketed during the event, even leading to a shortage. Germany’s President, Horst Köhler, was very pleased with the new positive and unworried use of the flag. His comment shows the controversy of Germans flying the flag:

\textit{I am happy that we stand to our flag, without making it a huge affair about nationalism.}\textsuperscript{41}

Younger generations of Germans especially confront their nation’s history with a more relaxed attitude, and this also became obvious during the Football World Cup:

The gradual dying out of the Nazi era generation – over 80 percent of Germans today were born after 1941 – has given the country a more detached view of its past … Several taboos have fallen in recent years.\textsuperscript{42}

Display of the tricolour during the Football World Cup in 2006.

\textsuperscript{39} SPIEGEL ONLINE - 10 July 2006.
\textsuperscript{40} SPIEGEL ONLINE, 21 Apr 2006.
\textsuperscript{41} SPIEGEL ONLINE - 21 Apr 2006.
\textsuperscript{42} SPIEGEL ONLINE - 9 July 2006.
\textsuperscript{42} SPIEGEL ONLINE, 6 Mar 2006.
As a young Munich local stated:

*I think that there is definitely a need for a national feeling or a desire for identification with one's own country, which has been suppressed in Germany for a very long time, and there is a development that you deal with it in a more relaxed way, and I think that this reduction of tension brings about a certain degree of relief because people are simply fed up ... you start thinking, slowly but surely we want to draw a line under our past, and I don't have anything to do with it and I don't want to be constantly reminded of it, although I still think that is important, too ... but it [patriotism shown during the World Cup] is good for Germany, definitely (Int.3).

Interestingly, most of the participants in my research, when asked about the World Cup and its impact, were of the opinion that the event of the World Cup did not have any effect on the Bavarian way of thinking or feeling separate from the rest of Germany:

*No, not at all, I don't think that had any effect. Well, you go along with it, because it's a huge event, and I'm a very big fan of football, so you watch the World Cup, because it's kind of important when the national team is playing but I think that the FC Bayern [local Munich football club] is far more important than the national team (Int.8).*

As the owner of the Hofbräu tent, Mr. Steinberg, put it:

*The Football World Cup has shown that people can display some sort of patriotism again, not only for Bavaria or Munich but for Germany, it showed that people have become more self-confident in Germany, but we Bavarians have always been confident when it came to Bavaria or Munich, and now we have stretched that confidence out to Germany (Int.5).*

This remark shows how much importance is given to the region, however, the important aspect for this thesis is that people are becoming more confident about displaying loyalty to their origins, be they German or Bavarian. The emphasised display of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest can be seen as an outcome of this.
3.3.3. The display of patriotism in Bavaria

The reaction against nationalism has increased people’s tendency to emphasise their regional rather than national origins. Some of the people I talked to mentioned that they felt much more comfortable identifying with Bavaria than with Germany. They stated that the stereotypes about Bavaria included beer, mountains and cows rather than uniforms, goose step marching and references to the Wars, which were seen as the attributes of the German stereotype. The following statement by a young woman at the Oktoberfest exemplifies this:

*I hate it, you know, when I say I’m from Germany, I know that I always get asked about the history ... it really annoys me, I can’t be bothered with that anymore ... You say you’re German and instantly, without fail, you will be drawn into a long conversation about the war, it’s so annoying!*

As Ignatieff (1993) states:

This remains the burden of being German: you still have to remind people that being proud of yourself doesn’t require you to hate others (Ignatieff, 1993; p.85).

In contrast to this, the identification with Bavaria was considered ‘easier’:

*When you identify with Bavaria that is a safer patriotism, for sure, it is harmless* (Int.3).

The Oktoberfest was considered to play an important role in the positive reputation of Munich and Bavaria:

*The Munich locals are proud of the Oktoberfest, that’s for sure, the question is why? Because they get associated with it, they get associated with it positively. Simple example: when you meet people on holiday and you say you’re from Germany, the first association by many people is the Nazi regime; but when you say you’re from Munich, the first association is the Oktoberfest (Int.3).*

*The Oktoberfest is a fantastic festival and works as a great business card of Bavaria in the world.*

Interestingly, the historical fact that Munich was actually the ‘Capital of the Movement’ and hub for the rise of the Nazis is seldom or never mentioned but rather, it

---

43 Bavaria’s Prime Minister, Dr. Edmund Stoiber, in Mayer-Simeth, 2002.
seems to have been replaced by the positive jolly image of beer-drinking Bavarians. This may be a result of an advertising campaign for the Oktoberfest in the 1950s, initiated by the municipality of Munich, which aimed at portraying a positive image of the city, and attracted large numbers of visitors. The fact that Munich is now mainly associated with the Oktoberfest rather than remembered as the ‘Capital of the Movement’ can thus be seen as the successful re-invention of Munich and Bavaria as a ‘positive place’ as opposed to the history- and stigma-laden German nation:

*I have travelled all around the world and when you said that you were from Munich, the faces started to light up and, beer, Oktoberfest, Hofbräuhaus, these are the next words that follow, in America, Japan, South Africa, everywhere* (Int.5).

Therefore, the identification with the region of Bavaria offers an easier alternative to being German. Furthermore, the Oktoberfest, due to its worldwide popularity and reputation, is an important signpost in people’s identity as Bavarians: Not only are people proud of ‘their’ famous Oktoberfest but furthermore, it allows them to identify with a rather positive reputation.

Although demonstrating patriotism remains a difficult issue for Germans, Bavarians love to stress their love for their Heimat. As outlined, Hobsbawm (1983) sees national flags or emblems as identity-creating symbols, making people aware of their belonging, and also reflecting their identification with the entire cultural background. The Bavarian flag is an important statement by Bavarians setting themselves apart from Germany. A prominent example of this is the winner of the Hawaiian Ironman in 2005, Faris al-Sultan. Being a half-Iranian Munich local, he demonstrated his strong connection with Bavaria and his hometown Munich, when he crossed the finish line, waving a Bavarian instead of a German flag.

The Bavarian flag figures prominently in the distinction between Bavaria and Germany. Bavaria is furthermore the only state in Germany that has its own anthem, and is not ‘afraid’ to play it proudly. As has been outlined, national anthems act as powerful tools in the imagination of community. This becomes obvious at the
Oktoberfest: On the second Sunday of the Fest, a concert with the bands from all beer tents is held, where amongst other Bavarian tunes, the Bavarian anthem is played. In 2006, when the Schottenhamel band ran through the programme at the tent before moving on to the site of the concert, they played the Bavarian anthem and I observed a number of young people in their traditional Bavarian garb standing up on the benches with their hands on their hearts, singing along. For most Germans, this would be unthinkable if the German anthem was played. However, these young men in Lederhosen looked like they almost felt obliged as ‘decent’ Bavarian citizens to stand up and passionately sing along to the anthem. When they sang, I did not have the impression that they were putting on a show, but rather, they were genuinely singing for their Heimat.

Some of my participants offered the explanation that Bavarians were so comfortable with identifying with their homeland because they had a stronger sense of community than other Germans.

*Heimat is where I feel at home * … that I love the place … Community and belonging together, I think that is different in Bavaria than in other regions … this sense of community is definitely stronger here [in Bavaria] (Int.9).

They thus thought that Bavarians were a more settled people as they were firmly rooted in their traditions, which gave them the necessary stability and sense of security in modern society. The sense of community between Bavarians was seen as ‘typically Bavarian’. One interviewee, a young woman from Munich, told me that when she looked for a room in a student town in rural Bavaria, she was chosen by the landlady, out of a large number of applicants, simply because she was from Munich, hence Bavarian, and the other applicants had been from other parts of Germany. The strong sense of community is even mentioned in an article on Bavaria in the *New York Times*:

---

44 See Video 4. At the Oktoberfest, the Bavarian anthem is only played at the occasion of the concert; however, there is another tune that is considered as the ‘secret anthem’ of Bavaria. The *Defileiermarsch*, considered THE Bavarian tune, is played at least a couple of times a day at every beer tent. Usually it is the first song that is played after the Opening Ceremony, and also the song that the band starts the day at noon, and the last song at night. See CD, song no. 1.

45 Another noticeable turn towards celebrating Bavarian patriotism has been the changed text to a popular song called *Viva Colonia* (CD, song no. 2), an Oktoberfest hit in 2004, which was changed into *Viva Bavaria* in 2005 and was also predominantly sung that way in 2006. Additionally, traditional Bavarian brass music has become more and more popular and has been played more frequently.
Even in this age of resurgent nationalism, there are few groups in Europe with a deeper sense of community or a more colourful manner of displaying it than the Bavarians.\textsuperscript{46}

Yet, as Morley \textit{et al.} (1993) argue, the term Heimat is an elusive one and that:

There can be no recovery of an authentic cultural homeland. In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration and Diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic (Morley \textit{et al.}, 1993; p.27).

Thus, it is important to consider that the notion of the ‘authentic Bavarian Heimat’ is rather an ideal than a reality, especially in Munich. This is also reflected at the Oktoberfest. Although people become ‘authentic’ Bavarians for one day, most return to their modern lives after their visit to the Fest. Also, the notion of Munich as an ‘authentically Bavarian’ city is a more romantic than real, as the city has always attracted many migrants from other parts of Bavaria, Germany and the rest of the world.

However, the emphasis on Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest can be seen as an expression of the longing for the ‘pure’ notion of Heimat. But it is doubtful whether the Oktoberfest would still have the same attraction if only Bavarians attended. As the ‘out-group’ is a vital component in the creation of a community’s identity, it is questionable whether Bavarians would celebrate their Bavarianness to such an extent if there were only ‘genuine’ Bavarians present.

The distinction between Bavarian and German is very important. However, in the discussion about Bavarian ‘separatism’ and the use of the term Bavarian, it is important to distinguish what is considered Bavarian in more detail. In the following section, I will identify \textit{what} Bavarian actually means and \textit{how} this separatism is lived out.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{New York Times}, 17 Oct 1992. This notion of community can be found in the beer advertisements, especially in the TV spots by Erdinger Weißbräu (Videos 5 and 6), which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.
3.4. What makes Bavaria distinctive?

“In the beginning was the Word”, it is written in the book Genesis. And this Word could only have been Bavaria (Jonas, 2002; p.124).

Bavaria today is often associated with particular stereotypes, such as mountains, cows and Lederhosen. However, these largely refer to Upper Bavaria, only one of seven districts within the political unit of the Free State of Bavaria.  

*This picture book-Bavaria, that’s actually only Munich and Upper Bavaria (Int.8).*

The Free State of Bavaria is divided into three distinct regions: Bavaria (Upper and Lower Bavaria – officially referred to as Ancient Bavaria – and the Palatinate), Franconia (Upper, Central and Lower Franconia), and Swabia. The city of Munich, located in the district of Upper Bavaria, is the capital of the Free State. All districts like to think of themselves as very distinct from each other, and the differences between the three regions of Ancient Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia are even emphasised.

---

47 The term Free State was ‘invented’ in the 19th century to signify a republic. Today, the term Free State of Bavaria is an expression of Bavaria’s longstanding independence. However, the status of a Free State does not include any privileges or special rights within the constitution of Germany.

48 The idyllic images above demonstrate how the stereotype of Bavaria is closely linked with religion. The idealised picture book images of Bavaria and of the Alpine landscape usually include the depiction of a church or chapel and/or a *Marterl*, a small wooden shrine displaying Jesus on the cross.

49 Please refer to Appendix 4.

50 A recent manifestation of this was a Bavarian-wide competition in October 2006, initiated by Bavaria’s main radio station. The competition aimed to find Bavaria’s best Bavarians. Over the period of a month, the listeners of the radio station could ring up and represent their region, competing against the other regions by answering questions about Bavaria. After the four weeks, ‘Bavaria’s best Bavarians’ were found: Lower Bavaria followed by Upper Franconia and the Palatinate. Upper Bavaria came fourth.
Although the political territory of Bavaria includes Franconia and Swabia, which have distinct characteristics, the Upper Bavarian image dominates the others by far. Not only tourists or foreigners associate Upper Bavarian stereotypes with the whole of Bavaria, but other Germans do, too. This can be seen as a result of Bavaria's thriving tourist industry, as most standard tourist programs include mainly sights in Upper Bavaria, of which the Oktoberfest is also part.

Of all three regions, Ancient Bavarians are the only ones who would strongly and undoubtedly consider themselves as Bavarian. Franconians and Swabians rather think of themselves as Franconian and Swabian before considering themselves as Bavarian.\footnote{This is comparable to Great Britain, where English people identify with Britain, in contrast to Scottish and Welsh, who identify as such before considering themselves as British (Knight, 1982).}

The Franconians' efforts to be recognised as Franconians are just as strong as the efforts of Bavarians to be recognised as Bavarians rather than Germans:

\begin{quote}
The Franconians are Bavarians, too, but they are above all Franconians, and then Bavarians, and here [in Munich], you're above all Bavarian, from Munich, Bavarian and then maybe German. Maybe German (Int.5).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Ah, the Franconians, well, actually, they don't really belong to Bavaria; they got "suburbanised" in 1806. They are a completely different breed altogether, you notice that immediately ... they always emphasise that they are not Bavarians but Franconians, and I always think, well, then that's your own fault if you want to exclude yourself from the elite group of the Bavarians (Int.9).
\end{quote}

The revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest is mainly based on the characteristics of Upper Bavaria, and thus, this thesis will only focus on the region of Munich and Upper Bavaria, and exclude the other two regions of Franconia and Swabia. Numerous studies could be undertaken of the composition and structure of the Free State of Bavaria with consideration given to all three provinces. However, this is
outside of the scope of the current thesis. Therefore, Franconians and Swabians will not be included in the term Bavarian in the following. Instead I will refer to the group of the Upper Bavarians simply as Bavarians, unless indicated otherwise.

In order to understand the importance of Bavarian ‘separatism’, we need briefly to overview Bavaria’s history, emphasising the longstanding political independence of this Free State.

3.4.1. Bavaria’s history

The early inhabitants of the Bavarian region evolved from a mixture of Germanics, Celts, and Romans who settled south of the Danube in the fifth century AD. The name ‘Bavaria’\(^{52}\) itself is believed to be derived from the Germanic *baio-warioz* meaning ‘Men from Baia’, and stems from the origin of the tribe’s core in Bohemia, *Boiohaemum*. The territory of today’s Bavaria has carried the name Bavaria since the 6th century AD: a manuscript dating back to 551, documents the name *Baiobari* for the first time. In 788 AD, Charles the Great integrated the territory into the realm of the Francs, but he granted Bavaria a certain degree of independence. From 1180 onwards, dukes from the *Wittelsbach* royal family, ruled Bavaria.

In 1866, during the *German War*, in which Bavaria fought alongside Austria against Prussia, Austria broke away from what was then called the German Alliance as a result of a defeat by Prussia. Prussia’s Prime Minister Bismarck punished Bavaria with regional and financial reparations, but offered political protection by the North German Union in return. Henceforth, Bavarian politics were more and more focussed towards Prussian politics. In 1870, Bavaria entered an alliance with Prussia in a war against France, and in November of the same year, it became part of the North German Union.

The Wittelsbach family ruled as kings until 7\(^{th}\) November 1918, when the leader of the Independent Social Democratic Party, Kurt Eisner, declared the Wittelsbach monarchy in Bavaria abolished, and on 9\(^{th}\) November 1918, the *Free State of Bavaria* was instituted.

\(^{52}\) The German name for Bavaria, *Bayern*, used to be spelled Baiern, until in 1825 King Ludwig I. introduced the ‘y’ from the Greek alphabet as an honour to his son Otto I., who became King of Greece, and who in return established the Bavarian national colours, white and blue, as the Greek national colours. Today, the spelling Baiern is used in the context of Bavarian language, whereas Bayern indicates a political or geographical context (Prinz, 1997).
After Germany’s capitulation after the Second World War on 8th May 1945, Bavaria was part of the US-American occupational zone. On the 1st of December 1946, a new constitution for the Free State of Bavaria was decided and approved by the Americans. The only article that was not permitted into the constitution was Bavaria’s right to refuse to join a newly-created German state. Bavaria was not to become an independent state, and that there would be no such thing as a Bavarian citizenship as opposed to the German citizenship.53

3.4.2. Bavarian ‘separatism’

Historically, the distinction between Germany and Bavaria has long been important for Bavarians. Few people outside Germany are aware of the significance of this difference, and for any non-German, or non-Bavarian for that matter, it is hard to understand how important this distinction is. As Cohen (1985) has outlined, the further one goes down the scale, the more imperceptible borders become to the outsider but at the same time, they become increasingly important for the inside communities. The importance of Bavarian distinctiveness is similar to how Canadians feel about being distinct from the USA; or New Zealanders from the Australians. Although Bavaria today is part of the political unit of the Federal Republic of Germany, there is little connection felt to the German nation by Bavarians. The story of one of my participants is indicative of this:

_We went to Hamburg this year because a good friend of my wife got married up there, because otherwise we would never think of going there, I mean it’s quite nice there, they have things to look at but you just don’t go there. And my wife told me to always say “Guten Tag”* 54 because it’s like when you go to Italy, you don’t say “Grüß Gott” but “Boun Giorno”, or anywhere else, you adapt to the language of the country, but I really struggled with that [saying “Guten Tag”] and in the end I found it so hard that I went back to saying “Grüß Gott”, and the people were always quite charmed, I think they like it when a Bavarian is up there, seemingly being lost (Int.8)._

---

53 The Bavarian citizenship is seen as a complementing addition to the German citizenship, as is the European citizenship. These complement but do not replace the national citizenship, thus, Bavarian citizens do not have a different passport to other Germans.

54 “Guten Tag” is the German idiom for “Good day”; however, Bavaria has its own expression for it (“Grüß Gott”), which identifies people immediately as Bavarian when they go to other places in Germany.
In the interviews and conversations of my fieldwork, it seemed that people only referred to Germany as place of origin in situations that required a broader focus, and 'Munich' or 'Bavaria' were not known to the other person in the conversation. However, most people told me that they had no actual feeling of connection to Germany at all. Although these Bavarians obviously had German passports, they felt no relation to the rest of Germany at all. Many even expressed that they thought Bavaria would be better off being independent from Germany:

_I am German but above all I'm Bavarian. And I would not mind at all if Bavaria became an independent state again_ (Int.6).

This view was mentioned quite a few times throughout my research, with a number of people being rather fond of the idea of Bavaria becoming independent from the rest of Germany. Especially the people I talked to in the informal context of the Oktoberfest stated how immensely proud they were of being Bavarian and how they would much rather have a Bavarian passport than a German one. Only one of my interview partners opposed the idea of Bavaria becoming independent from Germany, and dismissed it as irrational and not realistic. However, most participants were aware of the fact that Bavaria had been an independent region for many centuries as one of the oldest states in Europe, and only in the last century had been 'taken over' by the rest of Germany:

_Bavaria has been independent for roughly 1500 years now and ... such a political autonomy and continuity, no other tribe or region in Germany has got that_ (Int.8).

_This self-confidence ... everybody knows that Bavaria has existed for over 1000 years with royalties and kings, in the 19th century alone with all its kings and castles and buildings, which are appreciated and well-known everywhere, you learn that at school in history classes or through your family, you know the royal [background], which is ubiquitous in Munich ... and thus you get to bear a very distinct relation to the place_ (Int.10).

Hobsbawn (1983) argues that in the process of inventing traditions, history is often used as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion. Thus, by arguing that Bavaria had been an independent state for the last 1500 years, people reaffirmed the 'exclusiveness' of Bavaria, the solidity of the Bavarian community and also, their belonging to that group. This also concurs with Cohen's (1985) argument that communities which feel pressured to conform to others are more likely to reassert their
boundaries to the outside. This became most prominent when the Bavarian state was integrated into the larger construct of Germany in the late 19th century, and the image of the ‘hostile’ Northern Germany was created in the form of ‘the Prussian’ as the Bavarians’ archenemy.

Many interviewees argued that throughout history Bavaria had usually orientated itself towards the South, towards Austria and Italy rather than the North. This finds manifestation in the expression that Munich is ‘Italy’s most northern city’:\footnote{This can also be seen in the Bavarian language, which has incorporated many Italian words, such as “Ciao” for “Good bye”. Also, in the spread of the language group of the Bavarian dialect, which stretches out over Austria towards the Northern region of Italy, Tyrol, which used to be part of Austria; this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.}

\textit{It is a constant in Bavarian history, we have always turned towards Italy, also politically, always; towards Vienna on the same level and towards South, but never towards North; so before being in touch with the principality of Hesse, we more likely made politics with the King of Sicily (Int.8).}

\textit{The connection to the region [in Bavaria] is very strong … There is also this very strong relation towards the South in every Bavarian, I think it would be much easier for a Bavarian to move to Milan or settle somewhere in Northern Italy than moving to Frankfurt or Hamburg, which geographically might be closer or at least the same distance … We have difficulties with shifting north (Int.11).}

An example of the significant distinction between \textit{Bavarian} and \textit{German} can be found in the depiction and resulting perception of the current Pope Benedict XVI. Although a German citizen, he is mostly referred to as Bavarian, which became most visible when he visited Bavaria in September 2006. At his arrival at Munich airport, he was greeted by a delegation of the Bavarian \textit{Trachtenvereine}\footnote{Trachtenvereine are clubs that are focussed on the conservation of Bavarian customs and clothes. Please refer to Appendix 7.}, and wherever he went, Vatican and Bavarian flags were flown, but no German flags (see pictures next page). Even the police escort did not show the German tricolour black-red-gold. Some of my participants interpreted the obvious pride of the Bavarian people in having a Bavarian Pope as a result of the strong connection between Bavarian culture and Catholicism.
3.4.3. Bavarian identity

As much as Bavarians feel detached from the rest of Germany, they are also perceived by the rest of Germany as not being a part of Germany, as the following excerpts from two newspaper articles exemplify:

Even in a country of regional diversity, Bavaria’s strong, distinct identity sticks out to the point of irking many other Germans. Its churchgoers are mostly Roman Catholics, north Germany’s mostly Protestants. In the mid-19th century it vigorously opposed the rise of Prussia, and it retained a degree of sovereignty even after German unification in 1871. It had its own king until 1918, challenged the central government into the mid-1920s, and in 1949 its parliament voted – alone – against the new federal constitution.57

When foreigners think of Germany, they often imagine beer fests, lederhosen, and stout moustachioed men playing tubas. Yet such imagery is just as exotic to a north German or a Rhinelander; it is specifically Bavarian. The region’s fervent Catholicism, thick dialect, and pride in traditional garb … is often the source of incomprehension – if not bemusement – for non-Bavarians.58

The ‘separatist’ approach to identify with Bavaria rather than with the rest of Germany has resulted in other Germans perceiving of Bavarians as arrogant and, corresponding with the Bavarian feeling of being distinct, not as Germans but a different breed of people altogether.

*When I lived in Berlin, I was, well, stigmatised as a Bavarian … And I encountered quite a lot of animosities, which I found rather unjustified … In Berlin I was … considered shit because I was from Bavaria (Int.3).*

---

Other Germans often imagine Bavarians as ‘thick hicks’, roaming the lush forests of the Alps, downing gallons of strong beer, and communicating from one mountain peak to the next by yodelling.

Bavarian stereotypes: farms, cows, ‘funny costumes’ and lots and lots of beer.

The Bavarian stereotype is also employed in comical caricatures:

The distinctive traditional clothes play an important part in the creation of the ‘farmer image’ but also the Bavarian dialect, which is not only taken as an indicator of a rural background but even lack of education by speakers of ‘High German’.60 This very old stereotype dates back to the conflict between Prussia and Bavaria in the 19th century. Back then, Bavaria became a popular holiday destination, and the well-off people from the big industrial cities from the North, where it was very fashionable to socialise and talk a lot, were surprised to find people who did not share their passion for conversation and hence, the image of the ‘dumb country bumpkin’ was created:

*With a Bavarian you have to talk for one hour to find out that he’s intelligent, with a Prussian you have to talk for one hour to find out that he’s dumb ... because the Bavarian is simply a bit more taciturn* (Int.2).

In most interviews and conversations during my fieldwork, I noted strong resentment towards Northern Germans for the negative stereotypes they propagate. The emphasis on Bavarianness seemed to function not only as a means to set Bavaria apart

---

59 The strong relation to beer is particularly stressed in the comic pictures: the fact that Bavarians (supposedly) can drink without end is shown in the left picture, where two drinkers have just finished their Maßkrug; the picture in the middle refers to the ‘typically Bavarian’ beer carts; the image on the right depicts the people of Munich, flocking to the world famous Hofbräuhaus.

60 Int.2. Chapter 4 will deal with the Bavarian dialect in greater detail.
from the rest of Germany but more strongly as an opposition and protest against the image of the ‘thick folk’.

I get really furious when people come up with that image of the thick twit; I hate that because it is so wrong (Int.11).

I find, if someone comes to Bavaria and makes fun of Bavaria, he should be kicked out, that might sound cruel but honestly, why does he come here if he doesn’t feel integrated or thinks that he has to give us coaching (Int.9).

The stereotyping and stigmatisation of Bavarians by other Germans has led to Bavarians feeling even more different, and was seen by many of my interviewees as envy:

Yeah, I do believe that there is a certain degree of envy or jealousy because we are just so well off, not only economically (Int.9).

We have a friend in Rome, she works at the German embassy, and she is the only one from Munich or Bavaria there, and she told us that when the new Pope was elected, it was really bad, because, well in Bavaria, everybody was excited, regardless of the person [Joseph Ratzinger] but when such an important position is taken by a Bavarian, you just get excited about that; and she said that whilst the whole of Rome was celebrating the new Pope, the other Germans at the embassy couldn’t stop moaning, like “what do we want with him?” and although after all he’s a German, too, you could notice that they didn’t like it and you see again this jealousy, and in all their envy they couldn’t even celebrate that one of their own tongue had become Pope (Int.8).

The envy of other Germans was considered not only to be focussed on the well-off Bavarian economy but also the cultural background and the conservation of the rich traditional background, such as clothes and music:

Singers and musicians of other German states envy Bavarians for their conservation of the folk music, and outside Germany, what is usually considered as German culture is in fact Bavarian culture (Int.2).

As Bavaria with its distinct cultural features is often condescendingly smiled upon by other Germans, I interpret the celebration of and pride in the Bavarian heritage as a defiant reaction, a protest and at the same time a demonstration of indifference about what others are thinking of Bavaria:

They [Northern Germans] laughed about the dim country folk, these clichés, and that has resulted in a kind of defiant reaction, “we’re something special”. And we
have this conservation of traditions, on both sides, the state and the people. Why the other German states haven’t done anything, I don’t know but they don’t have the same interest and conscience for traditions [as Bavarians] (Int.2).

The traditional background of Bavaria and its presence in everyday life was considered another ‘typically Bavarian’ phenomenon in contrast to other parts of Germany:

I think that we Bavarians simply are more conscious of our traditions and also of our Heimat, if you ask someone from Hesse, they are not interested in that, they don’t have this sense for tradition as we do (Int.9).

I think there is a sort of envy-complex, why we can be the way we are, and the others don’t feel that sense of togetherness, not culturally and not religiously, they are not able to do that (Int.9).

The awareness of the cultural background can be interpreted as another community- and boundary-creating component in the Bavarian ‘separatism’. This is furthermore fostered by the defiant attitude as a result of the stigmatisation by other Germans.
3.5. Conclusion and Outlook

This chapter sought to outline various factors that play an important role in the strong emphasis on Bavarian characteristics, which find such prominent manifestation at the Oktoberfest.

With Europe developing towards becoming one all-encompassing state, people’s fear of losing their particular identity is growing. Thus, the revival of traditional features at the Oktoberfest can be interpreted as the locals’ search for their own roots in a globalised borderless Europe. Regional identity seems to offer more stability and security than national identity. This is also partly because German identity is not considered a desirable alternative to the Bavarian one. The reluctance to identify with the German nation can be interpreted as a defiant reaction to being made a part of Germany, and being associated with the shameful Nazi history. Also, the German reunification of 1990 plays an important role in the revival of Bavarianness: The emphasis on the Bavarian region serves as a reassertion of the group of Bavarians.

Within Germany, the strongly stressed distinction between Bavarians and other Germans seems a defiant reaction by Bavarians against the belittling stereotype of the ‘country bumpkin’. The community of the Bavarians seems to be strengthened by the ‘seeming need’ to stick together against the rest of Germany, which likes to poke fun at the Southerners.

As this chapter has outlined the factors that have led to the emphasis on Bavarian elements and the ‘separatist’ attitude of Bavarians, the following Chapter will deal with the Oktoberfest specifically, analysing the various ways in which the Munich locals create and reassert their community and create boundaries against the rest of the visitors at the Fest.
4. The Field Study – The Oktoberfest

4.1. History of the Oktoberfest

Before analysing the various ways in which the locals draw lines around their community as Bavarians, it is useful to give a brief overview of Bavaria and the Oktoberfest, in order to contextualise the setting, in which the marking of Bavarian boundaries take place.

Bavaria lies in the southeast of Germany (Map 1). Before it became a kingdom in 1806, Bavaria had been a sovereign principality, with its independence reaching as far back as 500 AD. The area marked in light green in Map 2 shows the territory of Bavaria before 1806, when Napoleon Bonaparte founded the kingdom of Bavaria in his mission to restructure Europe. In the process, the neighbouring principalities of Swabia and Franconia were annexed to the original territory of Bavaria, which has since been referred to as Ancient Bavaria.\(^61\) In 1806, Prince Maximilian IV Joseph was crowned King Maximilian I Joseph of Bavaria and Munich became the capital of the new kingdom. The rest of the realm was ‘province’ – a governmental design modelled on French centralism.\(^62\) The leaders of the newly created realm were aware of the fact that people would not easily adapt to the new form of government. Many political attempts were undertaken to create a sense of unity, such as a standardised compulsory schooling system that would ensure a uniform educational basis. But more importantly, an occasion was needed that would offer the people of the whole kingdom a chance to meet and get together. An opportunity came about four years after the foundation of the kingdom: the wedding of

---

\(^{61}\) The new borders are marked in dark green on the map. The black border marks the territory of the Free State of Bavaria today.

the Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria and Princess Therese of Sachsen-Hildburghausen on 12th October 1810.

The father of the groom, King Maximilian I Joseph of Bavaria, organised a five-day long celebration to honour the newly-wed couple. As the kingdom was constituted of a patchwork pattern of regions with very different history and background, the wedding and lavish festivities not only fulfilled the purpose of celebrating the union of a royal couple. It more importantly served to create a sense of unity among the people of the different regions and engender a feeling of identification with the new kingdom of Bavaria. The festivities included parades, music, food and drinks throughout the whole centre of Munich. On the fifth day of the celebrations, as a grand finale, a horse race was organised on a field on the outskirts of Munich.

In order to commemorate this spectacular event, the field was named Theresienwiese63 in honour of the bride, Therese. The festivities and the horse race were immensely popular with the people. King Maximilian I Joseph realised that unifying his Bavarian people was going to take more than just a five-day celebration, and hence, as the celebration had been a great success64, it was decided to repeat the festivities the following year. The repeated version of the original horse race took place

---

63 Wiese is the German word for meadow. Because of this, Bavarians simply call the Oktoberfest Wies'n. With the expansion of the city of Munich, the Theresienwiese, once on the outskirts, is now located near the city centre and covers an area of 26 hectares. It is solely used for the Oktoberfest and smaller fairs throughout the year.

64 An indication of how successful the Oktoberfest was from the very beginnings can be found in the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the reign of Max I. Joseph as King of Bavaria. As part of the festivities, a square in the inner city of Munich was decorated with large billboards displaying the king’s greatest achievements, which all his Bavarian citizen were thankful for. Acknowledged in this way were the introduction of compulsory schooling, promotion of art and architecture, reformations in the law system, and also the Oktoberfest (Erichsen et al., 2006).
on 12th October 1811, and additionally, an agricultural fair was organised, displaying the quality of pan-Bavarian agricultural products.\textsuperscript{65} The unifying motives of the Fest become obvious: the fair acted as a forum for the presentation of the agricultural achievements of the kingdom, and a sense of community was created through sharing and exchanging agricultural knowledge.

In 1850, the Oktoberfest as a unifying celebration of Bavarian nationhood received a boost: the 18-metre and 70 ton statue of the female figure Bavaria was unveiled. King Ludwig I had initiated numerous architectural projects in order to convey an image of shared identity to the people of Bavaria, and amongst other buildings, had ordered the statue. The Bavaria\textsuperscript{66} is located on the Western end of the Theresienwiese. Overlooking the site, she is a symbol of Bavarian patriotism and unity – a Bavarian ‘Statue of Liberty’. In 1853, the Ruhmeshalle, a hall surrounding the statue and displaying busts of famous people of Bavaria, was completed, rendering the statue a landmark of Bavarian unity.

Further evidence of the way in which the Oktoberfest was used as a tool to create a sense of community amongst the people of the new kingdom can be found in the parade of the Trachtenvereine and guilds and marksmen clubs (\textit{Trachten- und Schützenumzug})\textsuperscript{67}, which travels on a six kilometre route through the city to the venue of the Oktoberfest. This parade first took place in 1835, as an element of the

---

\textsuperscript{65} The agricultural fair, the \textit{Zentrallandwirtschaftsfest}, is still part of the Oktoberfest today, and takes place every four years.

\textsuperscript{66} The statue is clad in a bear fur, holding a wreath of oak leaves and a sword, and is flanked by a lion. These attributes are highly symbolic for the representation of the state of Bavaria: Bears used to be native to Bavaria’s fauna; oak trees are one of the most common trees in Germany; and the sword and the lion symbolise strength. Also, the lion serves as the symbol of Bavaria, referring back to Henry the Lion, mighty duke of Bavaria and founder of the city of Munich in 1158. Referring to the dimensions of the statue, it has become common to dub big staunch women ‘Bavaria’, which has a slightly derogatory connotation; however, it is not said without a certain degree of respect due to her size.

\textsuperscript{67} See Video 3.
celebrations for the silver wedding anniversary of Ludwig I and Therese. Over the years, it became an established part in the celebrations of the Oktoberfest, taking place on the first Sunday. Today, the parade is one of the main attractions of the Oktoberfest with around 600,000 spectators lining its route. Around 8,000 people take part in displaying their traditional costumes, covering a range from historical medieval outfits to more recent variations of regional clothing. The parade’s main purpose was, and still is, to demonstrate to the people – whether local or not – the rich and colourful heritage of Bavaria.

The parade displays costumes of different eras and regions and also different Bavarian trades.

---

68 www.festring.de.
69 Of the approximately 8,000 participants, 6,500 are from Bavaria, of which 2,500 are Munich locals (www.festring.de).
Until after the Second World War, the Oktoberfest was celebrated as a purely Bavarian festival. In the 1950s, the mayor of Munich at the time, Thomas Wimmer, initiated a campaign to advertise the Oktoberfest worldwide. This advertisement was designed to convey a positive image of Bavaria and to attract tourists and thus money to the region.\textsuperscript{70} This marked the beginning of the worldwide reputation and popularity of the Oktoberfest. The development towards a mass tourist spectacle started in the 1960s, when more and more Americans, Italians, and later Australians and New Zealanders visited the Oktoberfest. With the high influx of foreign visitors, the Oktoberfest soon lost its initial meaning of a signifier of regional unity. Only in recent years, through a conscious revival of Bavarian traditions, have the local people begun to claim their Oktoberfest back and turn it once more into a local event.

\textsuperscript{70} In 1952, an Oktoberfest-poster contest was held and the winning image was used to promote the Oktoberfest worldwide through distribution of posters and brochures. The English text on the international advertising brochures invited people as follows:

\textit{Oktoberfest in Munich}

\textit{For sixteen days, all Bavaria joins in the national festival, Europe's greatest people's fair on the Theresienwiese Fairground in Munich. In gay company, millions of visitors from all over the world, pass hours of light-hearted cheerfulness eating chickens off the spit, drinking festival beer to the accompaniment of mechanical organs and in the whirling, circling merry-go-rounds. For everybody who wants to take part in the international meeting of Bavarian Baroque joy or living, Munich's traditional Autumn call is intended: "Auf geht's auf d'Wies'n!"} (StadtA Mü, Oktoberfest Nr. 333).
4.1.1. The Oktoberfest today

The site of the Oktoberfest from above.

The Fest lasts from mid-September until the first weekend of October. For the last two decades, the Oktoberfest has attracted around six million visitors each year. Although its visitors come from all corners of the globe, roughly 75% of them are actually Bavarian, and almost half of that figure are Munich locals.\(^{71}\)

The layout of the Oktoberfest; satellite picture of the Oktoberfest.

The site of the Fest is structured around two main streets. Along the first street, *Wirtsbudenstrasse*, lie the beer tents. Parallel to it runs the *Schaustellerstrasse*, where most of the rollercoaster and other entertainments are located. Five smaller streets connect the two. Apart from the beer tents and rollercoaster, there are countless smaller and larger food stalls, offering grilled chicken, different sausages and other Bavarian delicacies, ginger bread, roasted almonds and candy floss; other stalls vend juices, spirits and cocktails. The Oktoberfest beer\(^{72}\), however, is solely available at the beer tents. A large number of stalls offer a wide range of T-shirts, balloons and other

\(^{71}\) Oktoberfestbefragung 2000. See Appendix 5.
\(^{72}\) The beer at the Oktoberfest is a specially brewed for the occasion, and is stronger than normal beer, a ‘tradition’ that was introduced in 1892.
souvenirs. There are fourteen beer tents of different sizes, with the biggest tent catering for 10,000 guests. The tents are run by six local breweries Augustiner, Hofbräu, Spaten, Paulaner, Hacker-Pschorr and Löwenbräu. The reason for only six breweries selling beer is the regulation that only breweries that brew their beer within the boundaries of the city of Munich are licensed to sell beer at the Oktoberfest. This guideline was introduced in order to put an end to the constant bickering between breweries over Oktoberfest licenses, because the Oktoberfest is not only a fun-fair organised for the amusement of the people – it is serious business, and it provides a massive annual boost for the region’s economy: During the two and a half weeks of the Oktoberfest, around six million litres of beer are consumed – an estimated 30% of the annual production of the Munich breweries.\footnote{www.bayerisches-bier.de.}

The financial spin-off of the Oktoberfest dramatically increased after the worldwide advertising campaign in the 1950s. With the tourists came more money and every year the amount of food and beer consumed and money spent at the Fest grew larger. Although the boom has slowed slightly in the last couple of years, the boost to Munich’s and Bavaria’s economy is extraordinary: On average, each Oktoberfest earns Munich almost one billion Euros (roughly 2 billion NZ$).\footnote{Oktoberfestbefragung 2000. See Appendix 5.} Around half of this sum is spent at the actual venue of the Oktoberfest itself. The other half is spent in and around Munich on accommodation, public transport, taxis, shops and restaurants. Furthermore, the Oktoberfest offers employment to 12,000 people, 1,600 of whom are waitresses at the beer tents.\footnote{www.br-online.de.}

How important the economic spin-off is can be seen in the change of date for the festivity, which first occurred in 1872. Although originally celebrated in mid-October, it was decided to shift the celebrations to mid-September to increase the chances of sunshine and mild temperatures, which as a result would attract more visitors.\footnote{StadtA Mü, Oktoberfest Nr. 333.} This also solves the mystery for many foreigners – the confusion of the name Oktoberfest with the actual date of the event, mid-September. The significance of the financial aspect of the Fest also shows in the decision not to cancel the Fest in 1892, even though Munich was struck by a cholera epidemic. During the two World Wars the Oktoberfest did not take place and in the immediate years after both wars, it was replaced by a smaller ‘autumn fair’. Since 1949, however, the Oktoberfest has been
staged annually. Although there have been no more epidemics or wars stopping the Fest, there were two incidents that led to consideration of calling the Oktoberfest off. On 26th September 1980, neo-Nazi Gundolf Köhler detonated a self-made explosive device of one and a half kilos of TNT at the main entrance gate of the Theresienwiese, killing himself and 12 other people and leaving 218 wounded. This carnage was the bloodiest event since the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949. **77** Although the authorities considered calling the Oktoberfest off, economic considerations persuaded them to implement a one-day break only, during which a commemoration ceremony was held.

![The Oktoberfest closed for one day in 1980; commemorative plaque.](image)

Similarly, following the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001, many people strongly opposed the celebrations of the Oktoberfest, which was about to take place only two weeks later. The main arguments were respect for the American victims and, even more importantly, concerns about the safety of the visitors to the event. The profitable nature of the Oktoberfest again won the argument. The Wies’n 2001 was a very quiet one, however. **78** The opening ceremony was omitted, and instead of the usual opening of the first beer barrel by the mayor, a minute of silence was held to commemorate the victims.

Today, the Munich Oktoberfest has become a brand name. According to a worldwide survey, conducted by the German Association of Tourism in 1999, the Oktoberfest has a 91% rate of recognition, a figure that is only matched with the renown of Adolf Hitler and the Berlin Wall. **79** Worldwide, there are now numerous versions of the Munich Oktoberfest. Some of the most famous ‘imitations’ are the Oktoberfest in Cincinnati (USA), Kitchener-Waterloo (Canada) and in Blumenau (Brazil). However, there is only one original, hence, the term Munich Oktoberfest is a registered trademark.

---

**77** The official version of the motive is that Gundolf Köhler was a solitary assassin, sexually frustrated and full of hatred for society. However, this version is still strongly doubted by many, yet new or further investigation of the case is unlikely (www.muenchen.de).

**78** The ‘quietness’ of the Oktoberfest can be seen in the relatively reduced beer and food consumption in the graphics next page.

**79** www.br-online.de.
Although it is difficult to describe the Oktoberfest in its gigantic dimensions, this outline has given the reader an overview of the facts and data around the Fest itself. Of central interest is the question of not only why, despite the masses of tourists who have become an integral part of the Fest, the Munich people are re-claiming ‘their’ festival, but more importantly, how this is done. In the following section, I will briefly give an account of the significance of the Oktoberfest to the locals, before going on to outline how the Munich locals reassert their Bavarian identity and draw boundaries between them as ‘insiders’ and the visitors as ‘outsiders’.

The graphics show the fluctuation in visitor numbers, and beer and food consumption.
4.1.2. The significance of the Oktoberfest

The Oktoberfest is an event that grips the whole city, which you cannot escape; you can't even withdraw from it if you reject it, because even if you reject it, you're involved (Int.3).

The Oktoberfest has an appeal that cannot be described. Something draws people to Munich every year, and they cannot say what it is that they are attracted to.

The Oktoberfest is a disease, you have to go there whether you like or not, when you're in Munich, you go to the Oktoberfest.80

Obviously, there are people who do not love the Oktoberfest as passionately, or who even oppose it, but the majority of the people I have spoken to are 'fans' of the Oktoberfest. Some even considered it to be the best part of living in Munich. None of them, however, could describe what it was that drew them to the Oktoberfest. They simply considered it to be an integral part of Munich life, which had always been there and would always be there:

Every decent Munich person complains about the Oktoberfest but the closer the time of the Oktoberfest comes ... you get this inner urge, you have to go there ... at least once (Int.1).

The Oktoberfest is like a fixed scheduled time; you go at least once or twice ... the Oktoberfest is an established part [of life in Munich]. Every Munich person, or at least almost everyone, sees to it that he can go at least once (Int.8).

The Oktoberfest is the only time of the year, apart from Christmas, when the Munich people who live somewhere else come back home to Munich; that's what they come back for and you catch up with your friends there (Int.3).

The Oktoberfest: an integral part of a childhood in Munich.

80 Mayer-Simeth, 2002.
But not only are visitors mysteriously drawn to the Fest, the people who work there are ‘Oktoberfest-addicts’, too. One of the waitresses I spoke to said that when she had to quit working there for a couple of years due to other commitments, she suffered every day for the duration of every Oktoberfest. Missing out on working at the Oktoberfest was finally so unbearable that she shifted her other commitments, and returned to working at the beer tent. Also the owner of the Hofbräu tent, Mr. Steinberg, emphasised that he would not want to miss a single Oktoberfest:

*It’s got a fascination to be present at the Oktoberfest. Anyone who has ever worked there … it’s like being on a high, you cannot say why but everybody is looking forward to the next year (Int.5).*

In the months leading up to the Fest, shops of all kinds, especially the Bavarian costume shops, advertise for the Oktoberfest, and radio and TV stations prepare their audience for the big event. The shops’ decoration resembles the preparation in the run-up to Christmas: windows and shop interior are decorated with plastic or cardboard beer jugs, *Brez’n* 81 and Bavarian flags. However, there is no active advertising of the Oktoberfest as such – the Munich people know when ‘it’s time again’. The marketing is more directed at the display of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest, such as the latest trendy Dirndl, and hair dressers have special offers for arranging women’s hair in traditional Bavarian fashion.

81 *Brez’n* are a typically Bavarian food, resembling a doughnut, baked dark brown and sprinkled with rock salt.
4.2. Distinctions of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest – The Resurrection of Bavarian Traditions

The extraordinary thing about the Oktoberfest is that it manages the balancing act between being a festival for the Munich people and an international mass event; that it remembers its roots and is open for new developments. The typical mixture of high-tech and tradition shapes the Festival of all Festivals and makes it so attractive.\textsuperscript{82}

Throughout the fieldwork for this thesis, three features crystallised as important factors in the revival of Bavarianness and symbols for the locals to (re-)assert their community. These are the choice of beer and tent, the traditional Bavarian clothes and the Bavarian dialect. The boundaries that these components draw vary in their ‘visibility’ to non-Bavarians or people outside of Munich. In the following, I will discuss each means of distinction with consideration to its ‘effectiveness’ as boundary-drawing and community-creating properties.

As beer is one of the main reasons for many people to visit the Oktoberfest, it is available to everybody, and thus, the distinction of what is perceived of as ‘authentically’ Bavarian through the means of beer is very subtle. For visitors from outside of Munich, the choice of tent is not important or they have no knowledge about which tent is ‘in’. However, amongst the locals, each tent has a distinct reputation, and thus, the choice of tent splits the visitors (from Munich) into various ‘categories of Bavarians’.

A more obvious emphasis on people’s Bavarianness is displayed through the wearing of the traditional clothes to the Oktoberfest. However, there are significant differences in the various styles of the traditional costumes, and these differences are more visible to Bavarians than non-Bavarian visitors. Also, as non-Bavarians have quickly picked up on the trend of wearing traditional clothes to the Oktoberfest, these costumes no longer (reliably) serve to distinguish Bavarians from non-Bavarians. Thus, another less visible, but nonetheless most important means of distinction has been found in the Bavarian language. As it is difficult to imitate an accent, speaking ‘proper’ Bavarian dialect is the ultimate and unmistakable proof of one’s origins.

\textsuperscript{82} Vorläufiger Schlussbericht Oktoberfest 2006.
Before discussing each of the three distinctions in greater detail, I will give a brief summary of the development of the Oktoberfest since the 1950s. This outline will show the development from the Oktoberfest as a Bavarian festival, to a tourist attraction and finally to a distinctively to a Munich celebration.

4.2.1. From ‘mass-piss-up’ to Bavarian festival

The Germans value customs and follow them assiduously. They love traditions and have plenty of them though the majority are of local rather than national origin. Most are a more or less elaborate ritual preparation for the consumption of enormous amounts of beer ... Their festivals ... typically consist of beer drinking, a religious ceremony, beer drinking, a parade, beer drinking, and be rounded off nicely with a glass or two of beer. The greatest of these [festivals], the Munich Beer Festival, Oktoberfest, is famous the world over. Over 16 days, locals and visitors down enough pints to keep a small country going all year, and make a serious dent in the chicken population. To keep them in the mood, there is much jovial arm-linking and singing of boomps-a-daisy German songs while swaying to and fro hoping not to fall over just yet. If you have ever longed to dress up in lederhosen and tunic or dirndl and frilly bodice, and bob about in a tide of large bosoms and bellies, the Oktoberfest is for you (Zeidenitz et al., 2005; p.42).

Although the Fest started off as a Bavarian festival, it has gradually changed into a purely Munich festival, especially after the advertising campaign that was launched in the 1950s by the Munich municipality. Visitors from Franconia and Swabia are now considered guests, but not part of the host group:

It is a world festival, and thus, if we pride ourselves in hosting a world festival, we cannot exclude the Franconians [laughs] (Int.9).

I think it is more of a Munich festival, well, we see the Swabians and the Franconians who come here more as guests not as hosts, but as guests, so I think that in people’s minds it is more of a Munich Festival, less of a Bavarian but more of a Munich festival; that’s how it’s developed in the last decades anyway (Int.5).

After the promotion in the 1950s, the Oktoberfest became an international success. By the 1980s, it was known as a touristy festival and attracted the stigma of a ‘mass-piss-up’, where rowdy and unruly foreigners drank themselves stupid, as this satirical description of the Oktoberfest in the Users’ Handbook to Munich exemplifies:
A culture shock, comparable with a journey in a time machine that takes you back 15,000 years, deep into the prehistoric stone age, where wild tribal rituals remain indecipherable to those who try to comprehend them with civilisatory measures (Grasberger, 2002; p.11).

Although the Oktoberfest is a celebration of joy and happiness, it also means two and a half weeks of unfettered madness that descends upon the capital of Bavaria. The number of visitors and the amount of alcohol consumed mean a major nuisance to normal everyday life in Munich. For the period of the Oktoberfest, special task force units are formed by the police and other security bodies. Police officers patrol the area of and around the Fest and the city, and a large number of highway units conduct alcohol checks around Munich. However, considering the huge amount of people visiting the Oktoberfest, the number of incidents is relatively small.\textsuperscript{83}

The critics of the Oktoberfest used to be mostly amongst older generations, who have witnessed the more traditional Oktoberfest, attended by more quiet-natured people. They bemoaned the fact that the Oktoberfest has changed from the traditionally tranquil afternoon at a beer tent – having a meal and a couple of beers whilst sitting together relaxed, and chatting – to a ‘mass piss-up’ with people standing on the benches, being pushed around having to shout through the blaring modern music. Some of these critics of the Oktoberfest likened it to the vulgar parties of Ballermann\textsuperscript{84}, a club in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, which became infamous for its binge-drinking German holiday-makers.

However, over the last decade or so, efforts have been made to render the Oktoberfest into a more ‘Bavarian’ festival again:

\begin{center}
\textit{The Oktoberfest must not be the scenery for a tourist advertisement, that means we must not try and fit in with what is “in” or fashionable at the moment, or what can be sold or could be sold abroad, but it is about what we want, it’s about us people from Munich, us Bavarians. Then people from abroad will most certainly keep on visiting, because that’s exactly what they want, the way we celebrate, and we don’t, as some people might think, have to make concessions to McDonald’s or the latest entertainment trends. It doesn’t fit, we don’t have to do that and we must not do that because that would ruin the festival.}\textsuperscript{85}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{83} Mayer-Simeth, 2002; Vorläufiger Abschlussbericht Oktoberfest 2006.

\textsuperscript{84} The name Ballermann was derived from the Spanish word for ‘beachfront’ (balneario), which was introduced in the 1990s as it was easier to pronounce for inebriated Germans. The scene at the Ballermann is unbearably embarrassing for any ‘normal’ German, and should be imagined worse than the scenes at Hokitika’s Wild Food Festival or New Year’s at Mt Manganui.

\textsuperscript{85} Mayer-Simeth, 2002.
It is a Bavarian national festival, from its origins, and we take care that we preserve its Bavarian character, because only through this, it does not become exchangeable. Obviously, there are trends that you get in the "normal world", that is clear, because the Fest shall live, it shouldn’t be a museum piece (Int.7).

In the course of the recent efforts to return to a more ‘traditionally Bavarian’ festival, amongst other things, regulations around the beer tent music have been introduced. With the growing proportion of tourists, the traditional beer tent music changed, especially during the 1980s, to a more modern repertoire, which resulted in a rather ‘un-Bavarian’, ‘touristy’, disco-like atmosphere in many of the tents. The brass bands that have been the main entertainment of the beer tents since 1898 now play a more or less wide range of Bavarian tunes as well as more modern songs. Furthermore, regulations around the noise level of the beer tent music were introduced in 2005. The new regulation targeted first and foremost the noise level of the music, which is now limited to 85dB. The new concept was intended to create a ‘quieter’ Oktoberfest – at least until the afternoon. It also requires that the bands play traditional Bavarian music throughout the day, and only in the early evening are they allowed to play popular music. This is to ensure that the beer tents change their image of big discothèques and become more attractive again for older generations and families. The change in the noise regulations was at first lamented by some tent owners, who feared a reduced turnover as a result of this more ‘decent’ music. However, the tents have not been any quieter or emptier than the previous years, either in 2005 or in 2006. Rather, the trend of playing more Bavarian music at a quieter volume has received a very positive response from the visitors, which can be seen in increased numbers of families and also older age groups who started to come back to the Fest, mainly visiting around midday and afternoon.

This rule to play quieter music from 12 to 4 on Mondays to Fridays; my son played with his band in the Ochsenbraterei [one of the smaller tents] and the result was that people drank less but there was a lot more food consumed, especially by pensioners and so on. So many more people came to visit because they went into the tents listened to the [quieter Bavarian] music and had something to eat. That is a very positive sign because if you turn the beer tent into a discothèque from the morning until night, that is just unbearable (Int. 2).

The evenings, however, are still dominated by the ‘party-visitors’. This mixture is seen as a very positive trend:
The volume regulation that we have introduced last year has found broad consent, you can communicate again in the beer tents, away from this disco-feeling, which is absolutely fine in the evening, everybody should have fun here, but we have to take care that there is still place for people over 50, over 60 to enjoy themselves (Int. 7).

With the trend of the revival of the Bavarian way of ‘Oktoberfesting’, more and more young people seem to share the view that the intoxication to the maximum is ‘out’ and one should celebrate in a more ‘Bavarian-like’ manner. Since the mid-90s the Munich people, especially the younger generations, have re-discovered the Oktoberfest for themselves. As the head of the tourist department, responsible for the Oktoberfest, told me:

The young people have re-discovered the Oktoberfest again (Int.7).

She had observed that in the 70s, visiting the Oktoberfest was considered ‘out’ and ‘unfashionable’ amongst the younger generations in Munich, which she interpreted as a result of the anti-establishment movement of the late 1960s. Only in the last ten to fifteen years, the number of young local visitors has been increasing. This was also confirmed by the owner of the Hofbräu tent, Mr. Steinberg:

You notice that in the last couple of years, the young people have re-discovered the Oktoberfest, which was not the case for many years, when they had different interests, like discothèques were more important, and now the young people have re-discovered the Oktoberfest and they also dress in Bavarian clothes again (Int.5).  

In my job, I have also observed that especially young people now wear their traditional Bavarian clothes to the Oktoberfest, and although they have partying on their minds, they party within the ‘boundaries’ of Bavarian tradition. Most of my guests, many of them regulars who have been coming back to my tables for the last four years, are in their early and mid-twenties, and a typical example of this group of young Oktoberfest visitors. They usually visit the beer tent at least five or six times throughout the period of the Oktoberfest, always wearing their Lederhosen and

---

86 This is in accordance with the findings from other interviews that I conducted. The people of the generations 35+ stated that they had always visited the Oktoberfest and it has always been an integral part of their lives, yet, they only visited it a very limited number of times. The people from the younger generations (< 30-35) also stated that they had always visited the Oktoberfest as children, but again, only very limited times. Over the last decade, however, the Oktoberfest had become more and more of an ‘obligation’, and now many of them were visiting the Fest as many times as possible.

87 The Oktoberfest survey conducted in 2000 found that over 30% of the Oktoberfest visitors are aged between 18 and 24, which is also the largest age group represented at the Fest, and around 60% of the Oktoberfest visitors are 30 years or under (Oktoberfestbefragung 2000). See Appendix 5.
Dirndl. Although they do drink a considerable amount of beer, they know how to have a fun evening without intoxicating themselves to excess. I like to think of them as a ‘new Oktoberfest generation’, who have managed to create an alternative way between the traditional quiet visit to the tent and the binge drinking orgy. They have picked the most enjoyable elements of both, moulding them into a special way of ‘Oktoberfesting’. The traditional elements that have been chosen are, first and foremost, the Bavarian outfits, sitting together, having a decent meal and taking it easy with the beer, appreciating good service by tipping well, and conducting themselves in a decent manner. New elements are standing and dancing on the benches and singing along, and queuing in the early hours of the morning in front of the tent’s doors to get a table for the day. As one of my regulars argued:

> Of course, the beer garden and how you drink there is the real Bavarian deal but you know, I can have that all year round, if I want that beer garden atmosphere, I don’t need to visit the Oktoberfest, I can have that better and cheaper in a normal beer garden; so when you go to the Oktoberfest, you have to go into the beer tent [as opposed to sitting in the beer garden section in front or around the tent] and stand on the benches and sing along and everything. Because it’s the Oktoberfest, it’s special, you don’t get that all year round.

Although the majority of my clientele belongs to the ‘new generation’ of beer tent visitors, I also have a broad range of other guests, who enjoy their visit to the Fest differently, such as older, more settled Bavarians, who usually pay a visit to the Fest around midday and leave in the early evening. As the Schottenhamel tent is known as the ‘insider tent’ for young Munich people, the number of tourists frequenting my tables is quite limited. However, it is important to bear in mind that there are fourteen different tents at the Oktoberfest, and, as will be shown, each tent has a different reputation and attracts different clientele.

The choice of the beer and beer tent is thus an important means for the locals to make a statement about their Bavarianness. The next section will deal with the boundary-creating and community-defining properties of the beer at the Oktoberfest.

---

88 One of my regulars contacted me a week before the Fest and asked if I wanted to join their group for a visit to a smaller festival outside of Munich. When I asked him whether he was going to wear his traditional garb, he replied that he could not because his traditional clothes were all allocated for every day of the Oktoberfest.
4.2.2. Beer at the Oktoberfest

One in three of the world’s breweries are in Germany. This alone should tell you what the Germans think about beer. Not so much a way of life, more the be-all and end-all of it.\(^8^9\)

Beer holds a central role at the Oktoberfest, and without it, the Oktoberfest would not be what it is today. Beer in Bavaria is traditional in its popularity, its meaning and the way it is produced. As Manning (1983) has pointed out how a few symbols stand for a whole range of cultural traditions, the beer-filled Maßkrug undoubtedly symbolises the Oktoberfest, which is also traditional at the Oktoberfest:

\begin{quote}
The vessel out of which you drink the beer at the Oktoberfest must stay the Maßkrug, you can’t all of a sudden serve the beer in half-size glasses, you get those all over the world, but the Maßkrug is unique for the Oktoberfest ... that is also part of the tradition (Int.5).
\end{quote}

But why is it that beer is so important in Bavaria? Any discussion of the Oktoberfest needs to include an analysis of the importance of the beer, as it is more than a drink to Bavarians. It is a vital part not only at the Oktoberfest, but also in the cultural background of Bavaria, as the following remark by one of my participants exemplifies:

\(^{8^9}\)Zeidenitz et al., 2005; p.46.
We had a visitor from Schleswig-Holstein [far North Germany], and she arrived round lunch time and she was totally shocked, she said “People drink beer at lunch time” and I said to her “Well, we’re in Bavaria here”. I mean I wouldn’t drink beer at lunch every day but at a Weißwurst\(^90\) breakfast, I certainly don’t drink tea or a coke; and this lady, she was completely gobsmacked “Oh my God, people over here drink beer at lunch time”, well, it was 11 or 12, that’s just normal, isn’t it? In Bavaria, beer is not alcohol, it’s a victual, and we are proud of that! (Int. 1).

The meaning of beer for Bavarians has long exceeded the mere nutritional role that it used to play in past centuries. Rather, beer and its consumption has become a means of expressing a distinct Bavarian identity, not only within the context of the Oktoberfest.

**4.2.2.1. Beer in Bavaria**

Bavarians are very proud of their long-standing history of beer brewing.\(^91\) Just as Guy (2002) noted that wine became the “centrepiece of Frenchness” in 19\(^{th}\) century France, in Bavaria the ‘golden liquid’ holds a very important and fundamental place in the local culture. People are aware of the image and meaning of beer – the “inside meaning” as Mintz (1985) calls it – which is so tightly connected with Bavaria’s traditions. Bavarian people are just as proud of their beer as are the Bavarian brewers: “Every single of one of the Bavarian breweries embodies a part of Bavaria’s cultural identity, a part of its economical history, [and] an often century-old tradition”.\(^92\)

The beer advertisement of one of Munich’s largest breweries reflects how a few highly charged symbols are employed to represent a whole cultural frame. The brand’s slogan reflects the pride taken in being an integral part of Bavarian life: “Löwenbräu – A beer like Bavaria”.\(^93\)

---

\(^{90}\) *Weißwurst* [white sausage] breakfast is a typical Bavarian dish that is usually served between 10 and 12 in the morning. It consists of white sausages with sweet mustard, a Brezn and a glass of beer.

\(^{91}\) Please refer to Appendix 6 for a more detailed overview of the history of beer in Bavaria.

\(^{92}\) [www.bayerisches-bier.de](http://www.bayerisches-bier.de).

\(^{93}\) Popular Bavarian leisure time activities, such as hiking or skiing are equally depicted as the obligatory visit to a beer garden in summer. Also, the pride of Bavarians in the beauty of their country finds expression. The traditional elements of Bavarian culture are represented by the beer cart and also by the church steeple, which refers to the close connection of Bavarian traditions to Catholic religion. The community-creating properties of beer can also be seen in the scenes that are depicting the inviting warm light coming from a ski hut and the table community at the Oktoberfest.
Considering the advertising billboards from a theoretical viewpoint, one could argue that the images illustrate the romantic notion of Heimat, which has been discussed by Morley et al. (1993). Especially in the pictures displaying the table at the Oktoberfest one can find the implied notions of community and sense of belonging, and also security, which are incorporated in the concept of Heimat.

How important the notion of Heimat is can be seen in the fact that there are several terms to express "at home" in the German language, which have no equivalent in English. In contrast to the Bavaria-centred advertising by Löwenbräu, the advertisements by another Bavarian brewery, Erdinger Weißbräu, focus on the role of Bavaria in an international context. Their slogan claims "At home in Bavaria, at home in the world", indicating that Bavaria is open and welcoming to the world, but also, more importantly, that Bavarians know where their roots lie, wherever they are in the world. The ads aim to display the beauty of the Bavarian landscape but also refer to the international reputation of Bavaria as the beer capital of the world.95

---

94 www.loewenbraeu.de.
95 See Video 5 and 6; another indicator of the intention to display the international popularity of Bavaria is the fact that the speaker in the ad is one of Bavaria’s most famous ‘icons’, former football star Franz Beckenbauer. In Video 6, he asks, referring to Bavaria, “Isn’t this wonderful that you can still find something like this: such a magnificent landscape, so much hospitality, and such a good beer. Could there possibly be anything more beautiful?”
4.2.2.2. The Oktoberfest beer

Beer can also be interpreted as a means for Bavarians to draw a distinction between Bavaria and Germany. An early manifestation of this occurred after the First World War and the foundation of the Weimar Republic, when Bavaria refused to join the Republic unless the Reinheitsgebot (Purity Law) became part of the Constitution.

Guy (2002) sees in the consumption of food and drink rituals of membership. This becomes evident in the beer tents of the Oktoberfest. As there is not much else to do in a beer tent than consume beer, obviously everybody present has come for the same reason. This creates a basis for more familiar interactions between the visitors straight away. Everybody who has made his or her way into one of the tents has entered it to drink, and thus instantly becomes a member of the beer-drinking community. Experiencing and being part of this seemingly authentic tradition is the sought-after sensation that Manning (1983) refers to when he states that most tourists today are actually “closet pilgrims” on the search for an indigeneity that they are missing in their own culture. As Veiz (2006) claims, the search for the sensation of experiencing community, however, is not exclusive to the tourists that flock to Munich for the Oktoberfest, but the Munich people themselves search for the sensation of community. Veiz argues that in modern times with an increasingly hectic lifestyle and the increasing anonymity of the big city, people seek community and companionship.

The community in a beer tent finds manifestation in the more familiar interactions of the visitors with other strangers. Although the trend of re-Bavarianisation at the Oktoberfest can be interpreted as the locals’ reclaiming ‘their’ festival, the colourful mixture of people seemed to be one of the attractions of the Oktoberfest for many of my participants:

*What I really love is the fact that you get to meet and talk to people from all over the world, in a really relaxed way* (Int.3).

The fact that in a beer tent, all nationalities sit side by side peacefully is regarded by many people as part of the Bavarian mentality, a warm and welcoming ‘live and let live’-attitude. The picture on the right exemplifies this: Bavarians sharing a
As a waitress I often witness how locals proudly explain to tourists the distinct features of Bavaria, and what is Bavarian and what is not. They usually start by "In Bavaria, you know, we say..., we do..., you need to say...". If the tourist is unlucky enough to confuse Bavaria with Germany, he or she receives a lecture on the important distinction.

The more familiar terms for interactions between German-speaking visitors find manifestation in the use of the informal word for 'you' (Du), rather than the formal one (Sie). The following excerpt from The Xenophobe’s Guide to the Germans demonstrates how important the distinction of the formal Sie is in everyday German interactions:

When meeting someone for the first time, address them as ‘Sie’ and continue to do so until the informal ‘du’ becomes absolutely unavoidable ... In business ... the Germans will remain on ‘Sie’ terms with colleagues even after decades of sharing an office, and a boss calling his secretary by her first name will be universally suspected of having an affair with her (p.27). Even when he or she has elbowed you out of the way, trodden on your feet, glared at you and is calling you a moron ... a German will always address you as ‘Sie’. It would be unforgivably rude to do otherwise (Zeidenitz et al., 2005; p.24).

The strict differentiation and the significance of the right use of words for addressing another person is a very important part of interactions in German everyday life. ‘Sie’ has to be used for addressing people senior to oneself or higher up in any hierarchical order. Yet, at the Oktoberfest, the use of the informal ‘Du’, normally a sign of disrespect if used to address someone who has not introduced himself is perfectly acceptable in the context of the beer tent. As Manning (1983) states, during festivals “hierarchy is replaced with egalitarianism, and social distance with warmth and camaraderie” (p.21). As a young woman from Munich confirmed:

You meet so many people and you meet them really quickly ... you "fraternise" with others instantly, you're on "Du" terms with everybody straight away, the "Sie" does not actually exist at the Oktoberfest (Int.3).

96 From my experience as a waitress, I can usually tell the guests’ nationality on the basis of certain characteristics. Thus, I assume these guests are Italians because no other nation wears the Oktoberfest felt hats more religiously.
The table community – a place to loosen boundaries as well as reaffirm them.

The more familiar interactions include not only the use of ‘Du’ amongst the German speaking visitors, but also the sharing of food and beer amongst the company of the table, and others in the tent. Not only the drinking can be interpreted as a ritual but even more so in the consumption of certain foods can be found notions of Bavarianness. Especially the eating of white sausages\(^\text{97}\) is an opportunity to show ‘how Bavarian’ one is. It is also the basis for countless attempts of Bavarians to teach their non-Bavarian table companions how to eat them according to the protocol. Furthermore, the consumption of the ‘traditional’ grilled chicken offers an opportunity to show non-Bavarians how it is ‘authentically’ consumed: with one’s fingers and not with knife and fork. The ‘wrong’ way of consuming those foods is often the source of loudly expressed amusement by Bavarians who either tend to teach the ‘philistine’ or simply tease them for eating the food ‘wrongly’.

Within the ‘ritual’ of drinking – the clinking together of the glasses, saying ‘Prost’ and drinking – is another means of portraying what was considered as the typically Bavarian attitude of ‘live and let live’ by many of my participants. The ‘Prost’ is animated by the band with the jingle “Ein

\(^{97}\) White sausages are boiled rather than grilled and have to be sucked out of the skin rather than being cut up and eaten with the skin, an action that would result in a lot of taunting from Bavarian table companions.
Prosit der Gemütlichkeit – oans, zwoa, drei, gsuffa!"98, which is virtually impossible to translate, meaning something like “Cheers to the Gemütlichkeit – one, two, three, down the hatch!” The phrase is in Bavarian dialect and probably the most famous tune at the Oktoberfest. When the band plays this jingle, virtually everybody in the tent takes their glass, holds it up in the air until the last word ‘gsuffa’ has been sung, and then everybody is clinking their glasses with everybody – not only at the same table but even reaching over to other tables and people standing in the aisles. Sometimes, when the band is not playing, people start the ‘Prosit’ themselves and it is most fascinating to see it spread from one table over the whole tent sometimes. If someone has finished their beer and has nothing left in his or her glass at the time of the ‘Prosit’, the fellow drinkers share from their beers and pour some into the empty glass, so that everybody can clink their glasses together. The tune is also usually one of the few things that tourists, who do not speak German, are taught by their fellow Bavarian/German drinkers, so that they can join in with the rest of the crowd.99

![Prosit der Gemütlichkeit](image)

Yet, despite the jolly drinking together, there are boundaries, similar to the distinction drawn around the consumption of food. The way the beer is consumed mainly distinguishes the locals from the English-speaking tourists: Bavarians and Germans in general do not necessarily drink less than the foreign visitors; however, they drink slower but more steadily. Especially British, Australian and New Zealand tourists practise a very different drinking pattern, such as downing a whole Maß in one go, and they generally drink more quickly. A possible explanation for the ‘wilder’ drinking behaviour of the tourists might be not only the widely practised binge-drinking in English-speaking countries but also that these visitors have obviously travelled to

---

98 See Video 1 and 2, the song that is played directly after the opening of the beer barrel; see CD, song no. 3.
99 The significance of the singing and language will be dealt with in greater detail shortly.
Munich for the Oktoberfest especially, thus, they ‘want to get their money’s worth’. This prompts them to drink more, and also be more likely to ‘misbehave’:

_They [the tourists] drink more, they make the most of it when they are here in Bavaria, where they get a Maß beer relatively cheaply, because these small glasses they have in England, they would pay four times more for a whole Maß over there, and over here they drink one after the other._\(^{100}\)

In contrast to this, the locals take it easier, sit down, have a chat, oftentimes they do not even start drinking straight away, but have some food first and only after some time do they order their first round of beers.

However, not only the way of consumption of the beer draws a boundary between the locals and the visitors, but also the ‘insider knowledge’ of the fourteen tents and their respective reputation. This will be central to the discussion of the next section.

---

\(^{100}\) Mayer-Simeth, 2002.
4.2.2.3. The ‘right’ choice of beer and tent

Not only can the way of consuming the beer and food be seen as a means of distinction, but so can the beer itself. As outlined, the 14 different tents at the Oktoberfest are run by only six local breweries, Augustiner, Hacker-Pschorr, Hofbräu, Löwenbräu, Paulaner and Spaten, which all differ in taste. To tourists or other Germans these differences might be unimportant or at least unnoticeable, but the ‘right’ choice of beer, which is tightly connected with the choice of the tent, is a vital factor in the creation of Bavarianness for the locals. Although many would probably not be able to tell the brand of beer by merely tasting it, different brands have certain associations. The reputation of the beer is closely linked to the character of the tent. Every single tent has a certain reputation, and thus, people take the choice of tent as an indicator for the visitor’s character and intentions. There are ‘party-tents’ and (supposedly) ‘quieter tents’, and depending on the general attitude of the visitor and the intentions for the visit, every tent attracts different people with different preferences and tendencies. As I have only worked at the Schottenhamel tent, I have to rely on what my guests and other waitresses have told me about the other tents.

Most Munich people would probably agree that Augustiner is the best beer. At the Oktoberfest, there is only one tent that pours Augustiner beer. This tent is largely regarded as the most traditional and ‘typically Munich’ tent. The majority of the clientele are older Munich locals and Bavarians (maybe it is they who give the tent the ‘typical’ character?). The music is largely Bavarian folk music\textsuperscript{101}, and thus, it is perceived as a quieter tent in comparison to others, also because (due to the more traditional music and older age groups present) people do not dance wildly on the benches as much. By visiting the Augustiner tent, people (unless they walk in by chance) portray their good taste in beer or their intention to enjoy a relaxed day at the Oktoberfest. However, the quieter character of this tent is also a main reason why many of my guests do not to visit the Augustiner tent, even though they would much prefer drinking that particular beer. The following comment of one of my regulars, when I asked him why he did not visit the Augustiner tent if he liked the beer better, is indicative of this attitude:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{footnote}
\footnotesize Please refer to Appendix 1 for a sample of music played at the Oktoberfest. Songs 5-9 are examples of the music that is predominantly played at the Augustiner tent. Songs 10-20 are famous Oktoberfest-hits, which are played everyday at the Schottenhamel tent.
\end{footnote}
\end{footnotesize}
Oh, come on, it's boring over there [Augustiner tent], although they have the nicest of all beers, but the atmosphere is boring, the music, everything, it's not as much fun as here [Schottenhamel tent]. So, you have to make a compromise, and in this case, I just have to put up with this stuff [Spaten beer].

This comment demonstrates that although my guest did not visit the Augustiner tent, he still indicated that he knew which were the ‘insider beer tents’, and thus demonstrated that he was a ‘real’ Bavarian, in full knowledge of beer and tent reputation.

On the very other end of the ‘tent scale’ stands the Hofbräu tent. The atmosphere here is very different to the Augustiner. It is often referred to as the ‘tourist tent’, as (although, according to the owner Mr. Steinberg, it is slowly changing) the majority of the clientele are Italians, Americans, Australians and New Zealanders. Due to the world-renowned name ‘Hofbräu’, this is the first port of call, especially for ‘Oktoberfest novices’. There are countless wild stories about the goings-on at the Hofbräu tent, and many of my guests commented that although they quite liked the beer, they considered the atmosphere (especially at night) too rowdy to be enjoyable. This is largely due to the very different way of drinking practised in English-speaking countries, where binge-drinking is regarded normal, as opposed to the more tranquil way of drinking in Bavaria. Also, many of my guests stated that although they liked meeting tourists, they would much rather celebrate the Oktoberfest in what they considered a ‘more Bavarian’ way, and the smaller number of tourists they met at the Schottenhamel tent seemed to suffice for them to get the ‘international flair’ that also seems to be part of the attraction of the Oktoberfest.

The two tents that are widely considered as the locals’ ‘insider’ tents are the Schottenhamel and the Hacker-Pschorr tent. Both attract mainly the young locals, although, especially around midday, they also receive many families and older age groups for lunch. The young people visiting both tents are usually dressed in their Bavarian outfits and both are also the tents that have the largest queue of people waiting to get in. According to many friends and guests, these two tents play the best music and have the best atmosphere for partying – but not too wildly. However, as a waitress I have to add that I find the atmosphere at the Schottenhamel tent quite wild at times, too, especially on the weekends, when people stampede in when the doors are opened at 9am, and immediately start chanting and stomping although the music does
not start until midday. However, this seems to be considered tamer than the partying of intoxicated tourists.

As this section has outlined, the consumption or at least the knowledge of the ‘right’ beer and the ‘right’ way of consuming beer and food can be interpreted as markers of differentiation between the different groups at the Oktoberfest. Also the larger framework of how people visit the Fest, that is, how they express themselves as Bavarians celebrating ‘their’ festival can be seen as a means of distinction between who is considered ‘Bavarian’ and who is considered a guest.

The beer at the Oktoberfest is one way of drawing small-scale distinctions between the visitors, the locals, other Bavarians, Germans and foreign tourists. Yet, as the beer is available to everybody, and the tents are open to all visitors, the boundary between the ‘real’ Bavarians and the visitors – drawn by the choice of beer and tent – is not as obvious. However, a very powerful and visible means of distinction for people to reassert the boundary between Bavarian and non-Bavarian finds its manifestation in the growing trend of wearing traditional Bavarian clothes to the Oktoberfest. The following section will discuss the traditional clothes in detail, outlining the origins and history as well as how their significance and meaning has changed from being symbols of conservatism to means of identification with Bavaria.

Despite beer-blurred vision, the boundaries between the locals and other visitors are still visible.
4.2.3. Traditional clothes

As the choice of beer and beer tent and the consumption of beer and food are a rather imperceptible means of drawing a boundary, a more visible way of conveying one’s Bavarianness is the wearing of the traditional clothes\(^{102}\), which has become increasingly popular since the mid-90s. The wearing of traditional clothes to the Oktoberfest is a recent tradition, which has only gained popularity in the last decade. Furthermore, the wearing of these garments for the majority of the Munich locals is mainly reserved for the occasion of the Oktoberfest, and some smaller fairs at the most. The trend first began in the mid-90s, and has since been increasing exponentially. As one of my work colleagues, who has been working at the Schottenhamel tent for the last fifteen years, observed:

\[\text{It was sometime around 10 years ago, when I noticed that all these young girls started rummaging in their mothers’ wardrobe and wore their mums’ old Dirndl. That was really noticeable (Int.8).}\]

In the past, traditional clothing was spurned due to its association with National Socialism. The Nazis used the Tracht for ideological purposes, seeing in it the “best weapon for the conservation of the German folk culture and for the distinction of the German race against foreign blood”\(^{103}\). Consequently, after the Second World War, Tracht was associated with the Nazi ideology\(^{104}\).

For decades, this connection resulted in most Munich city people rejecting traditional clothes. The wearing of Tracht mainly ‘survived’ in the rural regions of Bavaria. Thus, it was mostly the visitors from the rural areas of Bavaria who came to the Fest in their Tracht, creating the association of Tracht with rural background and conservatism:

\[\text{Before, it was the people from the countryside who came to the Fest for the agricultural fair, and that’s why you saw so much Tracht at the Fest back then. The Munich people wore their normal clothes (Int.10).}\]

---

\(^{102}\) The German term for traditional clothes is Tracht or Trachten. For a more detailed overview of the Bavarian Tracht, please refer to Appendix 7.


\(^{104}\) During the Nazi regime, the Trachtenvereine were integrated into the Nazi system, rendering their members automatically members of the Nazi party. After the Second World War, the Trachtenvereine were revived throughout Bavaria as self-determining clubs, and in 1948, around 500 Trachtenvereine with around 45,000 members existed. Today, there are around 1,000 Trachtenvereine counting 200,000 members (Int.6).
As a Munich resident, we never visited the Oktoberfest with something like that [Trachten], it was the Trachtenvereine that took part in the parade, and otherwise, you went in jeans or something old, because everything got dirty or God knows what happened … When I was young, it was only the elderly people [who wore Trachten] or the ones who came to the city from the countryside; they wore it to special occasions, like going out or visiting the city, and they still are, so when they come to the city, they wear their Tracht (Int.1).

Today it is easy to spot the Non-Bavarian/Non-Munich citizens because they are not wearing any kind of traditional garment. According to the media, the trend peaked in 2006, when more Dirndl and Lederhosen were seen than in any other year.105

You see so many more people wearing Tracht; before it was always more of a thing for the conservatives and somehow “uncool”, but now everybody is doing it and last year I almost felt awkward [without a traditional dress] (Int.3).

Once considered as ‘uncool’ and conservative, it is now regarded as not only fashionable but moreover as a strong symbol and vital means for portraying one’s belonging to Bavaria, especially at the Oktoberfest:

It could be that it’s just a fashion trend but it also indicates that people want to belong, have a feeling of Heimat again, that means to visit the Oktoberfest with friends, to celebrate together and the outfit is simply a part of that (Int.7).

Despite the growing popularity of the Tracht in Munich, people are beginning to rue the fact that the Tracht is primarily restricted to the Oktoberfest. A reader of a local newspaper was recently cited thus:

We should not only wear our Tracht to the Oktoberfest but also during the other seasons. Thus … we would develop and promote the feeling of belonging together.106

The sense of “belonging together” is created by the message that the Tracht emits – it is a powerful assertion of one’s origins and identification with one’s heritage. The following section will outline how strong a statement Tracht can be and also how clearly defined boundaries are being created around the wearing of it.

105 tz, 2/3 Oct 2006, p.5.
106 tz, 2/3 Oct 2006, p.5. A number of Trachten events have been initiated or revived over the last couple of years. Please refer to Appendix 8 for examples.
4.2.3.1. **Trachten as a statement of origin and identification**

The traditional clothes in Bavaria – Lederhosen and Dirndl – can be interpreted as ‘summarising symbols’, representing the cultural background of Bavaria. How much the Dirndl stands for Bavarian culture can be seen in the promotional campaign by Germany’s prestigious airline *Lufthansa*, that saw their air hostesses dressed in Dirndl instead of the formal air hostess uniforms during the whole month of September 2006.

![Lufthansa crew in Dirndl in September 2006.](image)

The wearer of these costumes thus declares: *I am Bavarian* or at least *I feel Bavarian*. The story of a guest, Larry, at my tables at the Oktoberfest offers an example of this symbolic message: his mother was Mexican, his father Bavarian, and he himself had been born and brought up in the United States. Although he is an American citizen and speaks not a word of German, when he visited the Oktoberfest for the first time, he got himself a whole ‘head-to-toe’ Trachten outfit. He explained that he was so proud to be at least half Bavarian that he wanted to celebrate this Bavarian festival accordingly and feel ‘in touch’ with his ancestry.

The message *I am Bavarian* is even stronger when Tracht is worn outside of the context of the Oktoberfest. An example of this is one of my interviewees, whose father is American and mother Bavarian. Her parents divorced when she was a child, and she stayed with her mother in Munich, where she has been living all her life. When she flew over to the US to visit her father for the first time, she wore a Dirndl on the flight, despite the fact that this garment is probably the least appropriate attire for a long-haul flight, and, even more extraordinarily, that she had never worn a Dirndl before:

> *When I was about to embark on my first visit to the USA, I went and bought myself a Dirndl, and then I squeezed myself into this thick cotton dress and went on the plane; I sweated like mad, it was tight and uncomfortable, but I touched American soil for the first time wearing my Dirndl* (Int.1).

The story of one of my interviewees’ daughters offers yet another example of the use of the Tracht as a statement of being Bavarian. The interviewees’ daughter is an
opera singer and performed at a premiere show in a different part of Germany, and for the after-show gala, she changed into a Dirndl:

_She sang at the opera in Stuttgart, and we were there, too, and afterwards there was a gala and reception and all, and for that she changed into her nice Dirndl, and everybody said, “oh, are you wearing your Dirndl for your parents?”_, and she replied, “I don’t need my parents for that, I’m from Munich, i.e. Bavaria, and we wear Dirndl”; and she’s wearing it with pride (Int.9).

Now, Tracht has become a powerful symbol of belonging and owning one has become almost obligatory for the _Münchner_. Even foreigners living permanently in Munich/Bavaria like to have a Bavarian costume in their wardrobe. A group of friends of mine are a classic example: all are British expatriates working for BMW, living permanently in Munich. Over the last couple of years, each has bought themselves a pair of Lederhosen or a Dirndl. All the same, foreigners wearing traditional clothes do not always find local approval:

_Gosh, awful! Why do they do that? They could wear something different. Ok, they have fun with it but somehow, it’s like they are wearing a harlequin outfit … If I went to China, I wouldn’t wear a Kimono [sic] although I think it’s a beautiful piece of garment_ (Int.1).

_You can spot them [the non-Bavarians who do not usually wear traditional clothes], it doesn’t fit, they can’t pull it off, you can see that in the way they carry themselves_ (Int.10).

![Not the stereotypical fair-skinned Bavarians.](image)

However, most people did not mind non-Bavarians wearing traditional garb. Some actually endorsed it and saw in this a sign of respect and willingness to adapt to the local way of celebrating the Oktoberfest, and Bavaria in general.

_In this they show that they identify positively [with Bavarian culture], so for me that is a positive signal, although I have to admit that it looks bizarre sometimes_ (Int.3).
One interviewee told me of an afternoon at the Oktoberfest with the company she worked for. The company had a number of international or non-Bavarian staff, who all bought themselves a costume for the visit at the Oktoberfest. Although they were mainly versions of Dirndl, which are considered ‘inauthentic’, the interviewee said:

‘They all said, OK, if it’s like that, that you wear traditional clothes to the Oktoberfest, we’ll get ourselves an outfit, too … And it looked good although I would never wear something like that ['inauthentic' Dirndl] but they liked it and I didn’t think anything of it. And I don’t think that any Bavarian would object that, I was actually quite happy because they looked good in it (Int.9).

The differentiation between what is considered ‘authentic’ Tracht and what is considered an ‘inauthentic’ version of Tracht has become increasingly important in the recent revival of traditional clothes at the Oktoberfest and in the distinction of what makes a ‘real’ Bavarian. The various degrees of ‘authenticity’ will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.2.3.2. The ‘authenticity issue’

Both Lederhosen and Dirndl can be worn with various degrees of ‘authenticity’. Generally, it can be said that the fewer ornaments and details the outfit has, the less ‘authentic’ it is. Members of a Trachtenverein dress according to the ‘prescribed’ way of combining elements. The guidelines of the Tracht in a club can be so meticulous that some even regulate the hair-do and ‘correct’ underwear. Being a member of a Trachtenverein is a very expensive undertaking, as most of the ‘authentic’ Tracht is handmade and can easily equal the value of a car. Non-members have more options in combining whatever they consider fashionable and/or can afford. Especially for women, there is a wide range of Dirndl-styles to choose from.
The styles vary from what is widely\textsuperscript{107} considered ‘nice’ Dirndl over ‘mediocre’ to cheap (-looking) alternatives, which are mainly worn by teenagers and are often combined with high heels or even running shoes. In contrast to these Dirndl, the ‘authentic’ or ‘decent’ Tracht can be worn to weddings or other festive occasions, whereas the cheaper Dirndl are exclusively reserved to be worn to the Oktoberfest. Hence, these Dirndl are often referred to as ‘Oktoberfest-’ or ‘party-Dirndl’ by people who have an interest in more ‘authentic’ Tracht, and who even do not consider these costumes as Tracht at all. Although many members of the Trachtenvereine do not endorse the altered looks of the traditional clothes, many acknowledge people for wearing this kind of clothes at all – if not the real thing, at least something that is related to it:

\textit{It's not really real Tracht, but I think it is positive because people say, well, this is a Bavarian festival, so we have to present ourselves as Bavarians} (Int.2).

Also the executive of the Bavarian Trachtenvereine stated:

\textit{I'm happy to see these [modern versions of Tracht], even if it's let's call it balderdash but still they [the people wearing these outfits] have that feeling that they dress according to the original meaning of the Oktoberfest, it was a traditional festival and people dressed up accordingly; the fact that kitschy clothes are worn today as well, Gosh, I think one has to tolerate that because I think that the real authentic Tracht is actually inappropriate for the Oktoberfest; these are worn to the parade on the first Sunday, where people can see which are the traditional clothes but inside a beer tent, that's not a traditional festival, traditionally Bavarian, anymore anyway, unfortunately} (Int.6).

Already in the few years of revival of traditional clothes at the Oktoberfest, the development has gone towards a call for more traditional styles of Tracht, and the general agreement in the media and also amongst many of my participants and guests seems to be that cheap or at least cheap-looking Trachten-variations are ‘out’ and one should wear the more ‘real’ Tracht because it was perceived of as more ‘authentically’ Bavarian. This might be also a defiant reaction to the impression that some Trachten-variations convey, that they are actually mocking the Tracht instead of appreciating it.

\textsuperscript{107} By the age group 20+ of my participants and also in the media.
A story of one of my work colleagues, who enjoys wearing his ‘authentic’ Tracht throughout the year, and who even celebrated his wedding in Tracht, exemplifies the standpoint that people should return to wearing ‘proper’ Tracht:

*I noticed that this year [in 2006] it was fashionable amongst teenager guys, roughly between 16 and 20, to wear the braces of their Lederhosen not properly but have them hang down, that seemed to be very cool at the moment. And I love it, you know, as a waiter I have this authority, and I saw one, who was standing close to my tables, and it really annoyed me [the fact that the young man wore the Lederhosen braces hanging down] and I walked up to him and said that he should dress properly and that this “cool thing” was not on, and without talking back he put his braces up and almost apologised. I hope that this spreads widely around his clique (Int.8).*

My work colleague mentioned that he had noticed a definite development away from the cheaper ‘party-Tracht’ towards the more ‘authentic’ Tracht. He based his opinion on the observations he made at the Oktoberfest, where he became aware of how the style of the Tracht had been changing over the years, from the mid-90s until today:

*It shows the power of the [‘real’] Tracht, that it outlives these fashion changes … that it drives these variations back and takes their place again (Int.8).*

One of the main reasons I found for people wearing the ‘modernised’ Oktoberfest-version of the Tracht was financial. Authentic costumes can be very expensive, and thus, for a night out at a beer tent, delicate garments are hardly appropriate. But more importantly, since many of the Oktoberfest visitors wear Tracht or Trachten-like outfits only to the Oktoberfest, the investment in a valuable Tracht for one occasion a year is not justifiable.

As Falassi (1987) states, festivals present an opportunity for people to do things they would not normally do. The Oktoberfest offers an occasion to dress in clothes one would not wear in other everyday life circumstances. This point was most criticised by more traditionally-minded people and/or of older age groups that I spoke to. These people said that they loved to wear their traditional clothes throughout the year, but not during the Oktoberfest, firstly not to get their expensive clothes dirty, but also because they felt that they were submitting to a trend, which they perceived as inauthentic. Wearing Trachten during the year was seen as ‘truly authentic’ rather than wearing them just for the Oktoberfest. As some of my subjects commented:
These Oktoberfest-Dirndl are absolutely awful ... And they don't wear Tracht throughout the year. For the Oktoberfest, people dress up like in carnival (Int.1).

I don't wear Tracht to the Oktoberfest ... because this is a fashion trend ... and for me as a local that is too emphasised, everybody is wearing it ... I wear my Tracht often but I don't wear it to the Oktoberfest ... If you ask a local Munich person whether they wear their Tracht, that is only those who succumb to the fashion trend, they are the young people and the foreigners and those who dare the adventure to wear something else than jeans ... I wear my Tracht to special occasions ... I can do that because it's totally accepted in Bavaria but I don't wear it to the Oktoberfest ...

My view on this is obviously a result of my age, the young people, they are always out to try different things and if something is fashionable, it becomes interesting for them to wear something different and then they look for that moment where they can wear it without feeling that they're making a fool out of themselves ... It is an Oktoberfest-fun, just like when you go to a party, you have to dress up in a certain way ... it's the same, it's part of the fun of the Oktoberfest and that's why they do it but whether that's really got to do something with Bavaria is questionable (Int.10).

These clothes are often like a fancy dress that you wear for carnival, you wear a costume, and when you visit the Oktoberfest, you also where a kind of costume, that is, something that is kind of like Lederhosen and Dirndl, but one has to differentiate between the population groups and ask who is wearing it because of real inner conviction and who only wears it because it's part of the event (Int.11).

A real Bavarian is someone who lives that [Bavarianness]. He or she wears the Tracht to family-dos or weddings or christenings or to church on Sundays or on other bank holidays (Int.4).

I only encountered a few younger people who shared the same view. Only one of my guests told me that he refused to wear his Lederhosen to the Oktoberfest, simply for the reason that he did not want to look like everybody else. Although he was a proud Munich citizen with a distinct Bavarian accent and identified himself with Bavaria, he said that his dislike of fashion trends was such that he could not bear to wear his Lederhosen to the Fest. This was surprising because he actually belonged to the age group (16 – 30) that usually wear their traditional garments most enthusiastically. However, the discussion around what style of Tracht is 'authentic' is not new. A Trachten magazine from 1921\textsuperscript{108} carried an article that dealt with the conservation of and the modern influences on the 'authentic' Tracht. Criticised was the fact that Bavarian costumes and customs were being turned into a folkloric masquerade and that Tracht was also worn by non-Bavarians. However, the author found that when one left the fashion trend aside, one would find:

\textsuperscript{108} Bayerische Gebirgs- und Volkstrachten-Zeitung, StadtA Mü, Oktoberfest, Nr. 259.
The real feeling, the delight in the beautiful ... Tracht, a Tracht that does not render its wearers into museum figures, but one that adapts to the people of today in full verve. Tracht expresses what moves the hearts and minds of a people.\(^{109}\)

Although it was lamented that the most popular and fashionable style of Tracht, the \textit{Gebirgstracht}, was taking over and was ‘wiping out’ other types of regional Tracht in Bavaria, the author saw in this “a real movement, [in the process of which] the fresh and vibrant forces out the old and outdated”.\(^{110}\) It is interesting to see that even nearly a hundred years ago, it was feared that the ‘authentic’ Tracht would be lost in the course of fashion hype, and that the original and diverse costumes would be replaced by something less authentic. The discussion, which occurred shortly after the First World War, can be seen as yet another ‘proof’ of Hobsbawn’s (1985) argument that invented traditions occur more frequently in a period of rapid transformation of society, which weakens or destroys existing social patterns. In the case of the discussion of 1921, the First World War had brought about “rapid transformation”, causing people to turn to the past as a frame of reference in a search for stability.

The debate around the authenticity of the Tracht and its variations in 1921 is thus surprisingly similar to the discussion of today. Members of the Trachtenvereine are especially concerned about the Tracht being combined with modern elements.\(^{111}\) Some of the factors behind this have been outlined in Chapter 3: The recent revival of the traditional clothes can be seen as a reaction to the loosened borders in the course of Europeanisation and globalisation, and also as a reaffirmation of the group of the Bavarians in the course of the German re-unification.

Another factor behind the re-discovery and re-appreciation of Tracht is the growing relaxation about Germany’s history of National Socialism, which, as noted, used the Tracht for its own purposes. One of my interviewees, who had celebrated his

\(^{109}\) \textit{Bayerische Gebirgs- und Volkstrachten-Zeitung}, StadtA Mü, Oktoberfest, Nr. 259.

\(^{110}\) \textit{Bayerische Gebirgs- und Volkstrachten-Zeitung}, StadtA Mü, Oktoberfest, Nr. 259.

\(^{111}\) The critics of this conservative standpoint, on the other hand, are of the opinion that Tracht has to live and conserving Tracht without allowing modern elements to be incorporated would turn the beautiful Tracht into a museum-like fossil.
wedding in Tracht, told me of a Jewish friend, who had had great reservations against
the Trachten-wedding for that reason. However, the stigma of National Socialism upon
the Tracht is fading, and in accordance with a growing confidence throughout
Germany, this has opened up the possibility of wearing Trachten with pride, especially
for the young. Significantly, only one of my interviewees actually mentioned the Nazi-
stigma of the Tracht.

The revival of Tracht is an invented tradition and a means to create stability
through the reference to the past. The trend of the revival of Bavarianness is most
observable in Munich, an industrial centre that attracts people from very different
origins. In more rural areas of Bavaria where tradition remains strong, the revival is
less observable. Here, Bavarian clothes act very much like an entry ticket into the local
community, as a participant from rural Southeast Bavaria remarked:

If there's a festivity in the village and you're not wearing the appropriate outfit,
you're actually not part of the community (Int.6).

The aim of this section was to illustrate the strong boundary-creating quality of
the Tracht. As noted, like the beer, traditional clothes are tools that are employed by
Bavarians to reassert the boundary between who are considered ‘real’ Bavarians and
the mass of the other visitors at the Oktoberfest. Furthermore, not only the wearing and
choice of style of one’s Tracht is categorised into various degrees of ‘authenticity’ but
also the frequency with which the traditional garments are worn. Overall, there is a
growing consent that what makes a ‘real’ Bavarian is not only the wearing of the more
‘authentic’ versions of Tracht but more importantly, that these clothes are worn with
pride to more occasions that just the Oktoberfest.

However, the criterion that crystallised as the ‘ultimate proof’ of one’s Bavarian
origins was language. This aspect will be discussed in the next section.
4.2.4. Language

Every language draws a circle around the people to which it belongs (Morley et al., 1993, p.13).

Morley et al.’s argument becomes visible in the graphics depicting the different dialect and language groups in Bavaria and Germany, highlighting how distinct the regions are. Map 1 and 2 show how clearly the boundaries within the political unit of Bavaria are defined between Swabia, Franconia, the Palatinate and Upper and Lower Bavaria. In Map 3 of today’s Germany, one can see clearly how distinct the three accents are as they belong to different language groups – Bavarian (blue), Franconian (green) and Alemannian (red). The blue shaded area shows the spread of the Bavarian language group, which covers the region of the Palatinate and Upper and Lower Bavaria. It also shows clearly the affinity of Bavarians to turn southward rather than towards the North, which has been mentioned by many of my interviewees, as the ‘zone’ of Bavarian language also includes Austria and parts of what today is Northern Italy. The accents of the Northern regions of Germany are widely regarded as ‘High German’, and
considered more or less ‘accent-free’. This is the version of German that is mainly spoken on radio and television.

Anderson (1991) argues that language is the most important tie between the members of a community, and also the most significant tool in creating community. The findings of my fieldwork concur with this argument and imply that language is the most decisive identifier of who belongs to the community of Bavarians and who does not. Most of the people I talked to considered language and dialect before all other Bavarian idiosyncrasies as the decisive criterion for being a ‘genuine’ Bavarian. A study in 1998 found that out of all German regions, Bavaria was by far the state with the highest percentage (72%) of people who spoke or could speak the regional dialect.\(^\text{112}\) How important the dialect is for the creation of Bavarian identity can be seen in the following quote by a young woman who was born and raised in Munich, and who moved to the region of the Palatinate for her university studies:

"I speak High German and I have grown up bilingual so to speak, which means I understand Bavarian, my passive Bavarian is very good, my active Bavarian is non-existing, and … in Regensburg [where the interviewee studies], where everything is a bit more rural and … provincial, very often I have to justify myself that I don’t speak Bavarian. When I say … I want to buy myself a Dirndl, people say, “Are you actually from Bavaria?” (Int.3)."

Shortly before I left for my fieldwork in 2006, I found out myself how much of a cultural background is transported through language, when a group of Germans sat down next to me in a bar in Christchurch. They all spoke ‘High German’, apart from one, who spoke what sounded to me as the most beautiful Bavarian I had heard in a long time. Although I usually steer clear of other Germans in New Zealand, I felt I had to talk to the Bavarian, who turned out to come from a town close to Munich. We immediately connected and overcame any reserve that would be normal in conversations between strangers because we talked about our distant Heimat, which seemed closer during conversation in Bavarian dialect.

\(^{112}\) Allensbacher Berichte, 1998, 22.
4.2.4.1. Dialect in Munich and Bavaria

The dying of our dialects has reached a shocking extent. However, there cannot be a Bavarian, Austrian, South-Tyrolean or Swiss identity without our language with all its richness in dialects. Only he who knows where he is from can confidently open up to others. Every intercultural dialog becomes mere chitchat if there is no confidence in one’s own culture.\textsuperscript{113}

With the growing influx of non-Bavarians into Munich as a result of increased mobility, local dialects are fading and are in acute danger of dying out. This is largely a result of the influx of other Germans and foreigners into the city, which has led to a specific Munich accent, which is pejoratively called \textit{Isar-Preußisch}\textsuperscript{114}, Isar-Prussian, by other Bavarians. The fact that \textit{Bayerisch} is fading in the multi-cultural melting pot of Munich is widely regretted:\textsuperscript{115}

\textit{We lose a lot, when the language is lost, a large part of our culture dies and we become exchangeable … the different regions’ languages are very very important, also in the European context (Int.11). The whole culture is transported over the language, this certain softness, this Gemütlichkeit … you can feel there is a sense of warmth there … not as upfront as Northern Germany. It’s typical for the mentality, although of course you have to see that there is no such thing as one mentality anymore, it’s mixed with … Swabians, Franconians, the Palatinate, and they all have certain characteristics but this Ancient Bavarian nature is still there, the mentality of “live and let live” but it’s of course in danger of extinction. What makes us so likable, this mentality of “live and let live”, this “Liberalitas Bavariae”, is actually becoming dangerous for us (Int.11).}

How much the Bavarian language is becoming more and more part of the general revival of Bavarianness can also be seen the growing number of films that are produced in Bavarian dialect – which was regarded most positively by the executive of the Association of Conservation of the Bavarian Language, Mr. Bauer. Morley \textit{et al.} (1993) see in the production of national or regional films the attempt not only to counteract the dominance of Hollywood culture but also to preserve and re-affirm

\textsuperscript{113} \url{www.bayerische-sprache.de}.

\textsuperscript{114} Grasberger, 2002. The river Isar runs through Munich, hence the association to Munich. As has been mentioned earlier, anything located north of the Danube is considered “not Bavarian”, hence Prussian.

\textsuperscript{115} As an attempt to conserve the language in 1995, a Bavarian dictionary, which documents the development of the Bavarian dialect, and also lists ancient traditions, was released. In 2006, the well-known publisher of dictionaries in Germany Langenscheidt even released a handy Oktoberfest dictionary, the \textit{Oktoberfest Wheel}, which not only provided translations between English and Bavarian but also between German and Bavarian. See Appendix 9. Although I saw large numbers of these ‘wheels’ at the local bookshops, I did not see a single one ‘in action’ at the Oktoberfest.
regional and national identity. Judt (2005) argues that regional dialects in the European countries are gaining importance in contrast to the national language, which is losing its significance in the rapid rise of English as the *lingua franca*:

In the course of the Nineties, major German firms ... made a virtue of necessity and established English as their corporate working language (Judt, 2005; p.759).

With the decline of the importance of German as a national language, it could hence be argued that the growing importance of Bavarian dialect acts as a means of distinction not only within Germany, and thus of reasserting the Bavarian community, but maybe even more importantly, as a means to ‘defend’ this community against the influences of European culture that seem to have become more and more pervasive over the last two decades.

### 4.2.4.2. Bavarian dialect at the Oktoberfest

Languages are by far the most important vehicle of cultural evolution and simultaneously the most important element of national and personal identity.\(^\text{116}\)

The Bavarian dialect at the Oktoberfest serves as a tool to identify the community of the local ‘insiders’, the ‘real’ Bavarians. Although Munich is a melting pot of people from very different backgrounds, and most people speak with no distinct Bavarian accent, there are some words that everybody knows and can pronounce ‘properly’, which serve like an entry ticket into the circle of selected people. Most prominent word of all and a *faux pas* if pronounced wrongly, is *Maß*, the crucial word for ordering a beer. The pronunciation draws a clear-cut line between Bavarians and non-Bavarians. Sometimes, non-Bavarians are diligently taught to pronounce it the right way, just like the ‘right’ eating habits, but sometimes they are even told off by their fellow drinking companions, who then turn around to me and say “Don’t worry, he doesn’t know better”. Interestingly, this ‘intolerance’ only applies to other Germans, however, foreign

\(^{116}\) Former German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, in [www.bayerische-sprache.de](http://www.bayerische-sprache.de).
tourists seem to be excluded from it. They rather offer a challenge to be taught the Bavarian pronunciation before another German teaches them a different accent.

Throughout my work at the Oktoberfest, I have seen many people try to fake a Bavarian accent, in order to appear to belong to the group of ‘real’ Bavarians. It is often quite amusing to observe the obvious attempts by some visitors and even co-workers, who are not familiar with the Bavarian accent, to imitate it. Especially young people from Munich try to stress the Bavarian accent to emphasise how Bavarian they are. Many of Munich’s young people are the children of immigrants or people from other parts of Germany, who have moved to Munich. As a young local Munich woman pointed out:

*Amongst my friends, they are all born in Munich but their parents weren’t, this is my case and I know very few people whose parents were actually born in Munich, that’s causing a mixture* (Int.3).

This aspect was also mentioned by the executive of the Association of Conservation of the Bavarian Language, Mr. Bauer. He considered the young people in Munich as his association’s “biggest building site”.

As has been outlined in Chapter 3, Bavarians are often stigmatised as country or mountain folk, thus, the Bavarian dialect has been for a long time (and still is to a certain degree) stigmatised as ‘country-bumpkin-talk’. Thus, many parents, especially in Munich, have been committed to raising their children speaking ‘proper’ German, so to spare their children any possible disadvantages at school or elsewhere. A Munich local in her mid-40s commented:

*My mum, she can’t speak any High German and so we always talk in Bavarian but with my children, I always talked normally [High German] because I didn’t want them to have problems at school because they talk dialect. So they understand dialect but they talk normally, and I’m very happy and I think it’s important that they have the choice* (Int.1).

Thus, most of the young people in Munich have been raised with what is widely considered ‘proper’ German at school and also on television, which is largely kept ‘accent-free’. Mr. Bauer’s concern was that the young people who had not ‘properly learnt’ Bavarian dialect would not pass it on to their children, which ultimately would result in the extinction of the dialect:
Unless some kind of counter-reaction to the Northern dialect happens amongst the young people, which we are still hoping for, in about 50 years if not less, the Bavarian language will only be spoken by a few in some remote regions, but in the cities, where there are universities, where life is happening, the Bavarian dialect will have died out, and that is a real shame (Int.11).

Many of my guests at the Oktoberfest belong to those who have not grown up with their parents ‘teaching’ them Bavarian accent. However, as language seems on a micro-level to be the most important distinction of ‘Bavarian’, speaking with a Bavarian accent, if not the ‘full-on’ dialect, is crucial for the creation of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest. Thus, many of my (especially younger) guests seem to actively acquire it at the Oktoberfest by listening to other people’s dialect and integrate it into their own language pattern. However, the affected accent often sounds awkward, lacking the fluidity of the ‘native speaker’s’ tongue:

*If I want to say something in real Bavarian dialect, I have to think a minute or two to really figure out how to say it and how to pronounce it. I can do it but it doesn’t come naturally, the full-on accent is always a very conscious effort and requires a lot of concentration* [Young Munich regular at my tables].

However, in the setting of the Oktoberfest, taking on an accent is easier than in everyday life. This is not only because the beer tents are a national melting pot, but also because it seems to be the right setting for it. Just as the Oktoberfest is the right place for wearing traditional outfits, it also offers the chance to ‘live out’ the Bavarian language without the perceived image of the ‘country-folk-talk’:

*It’s like the Trachten; once a year, people rummage through their closet and get out their Bavarian dress and wear it to the Oktoberfest. It’s the same with the Bavarian dialect, people don’t use it throughout the year and then at the Oktoberfest, they brush up on their Bavarian, because it’s part of it* (Int.11).

The degree to which the Bavarian accent plays a role in the creation of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest can be seen in the guests’ attitude towards the waitresses. Most of my guests are reassured that I am from Bavaria by the way I speak. Some tell me that they would find it unacceptable or at least inappropriate for an Oktoberfest waitress to speak with a North German, or even worse, East German
accent. When asked why, they replied that the Oktoberfest was a Bavarian affair and that a non-Bavarian accent was just not appropriate, or at least did not fit into the whole setting of a Bavarian celebration. At such a festival, the guests should be served by a Bavarian waitress – "we’re in Bavaria after all!"

At the Oktoberfest 2006, I caught myself deliberately talking in a strong Bavarian accent whenever I was dealing with guests from other parts of Germany. Although I had to repeat whatever I said at least once, I seemed to ‘refuse’ to talk (although perfectly capable of it) ‘proper’ accent-free German with them. Thus, my own subconsciousness was portraying my Bavarian origins and pride in the fact that the Oktoberfest is a Bavarian affair. Whatever the motive, speaking in Bavarian dialect is definitely a means of showing who are the ‘tangata whenua’ and who are the ‘manuhiri’.

The aforementioned ‘intolerance’ towards guests from other parts of Germany can sometimes physically separate them from the ‘Bavarian faction’. In 2006, a group of six Rhinelanders provoked considerable animosity as they claimed a whole table (that would usually seat 10-12 people) for themselves, and would not share it with anybody else. This goes completely against the Bavarian mentality of sharing tables and shuffling together in order to make space for other thirsty guests. Although they were only few, they gave me more trouble than a whole table full of Italians (who are considered the most troublesome guests at the Oktoberfest), and they ended up being kicked out of the tent. The guests at the other three tables of my service, however, ‘mentally united’ against the Rhinelanders and offered a lot of support and compassion towards me in my struggle with them. Interestingly, the (non-Bavarian) origins of the troublemakers seemed to suffice to justify despising them rather than the fact that they had been simply a bunch of bogan. After the Rhinelanders had gone, one guest commented:

*Stupid Rhinelanders, they should go back to where they belong, and not give you trouble; they are guests here [not only at the Oktoberfest but in Bavaria] and if*

---

117 Most of the waitresses are from Bavaria or Austria. Yet, a number of waitresses are from other parts of Germany, including East Germany; however, I was not able to find significant proof that their accent actually made a difference in their relationship with their guests.

118 As has been mentioned, only guests sitting at a table can order beer. People standing in the aisles are not to be served. This is an attempt to discourage people from wandering around the tent and blocking the aisles in case of an emergency (the aisles are blocked regardless of this strict rule). Thus, it is vital to have a seat at a table in order to get a beer.
they don’t know how to behave themselves, they shouldn’t come to Munich in the first place.

This reaction is mostly shown towards troublemakers from other parts of Germany rather than foreign tourists. Their misbehaviour is ameliorated by the fact that they are tourists, who are forgiven for their ignorance of local protocols.

The ‘effectiveness’ of language as a criterion of distinction between Bavarians and non-Bavarians at the Oktoberfest also manifests in the beer tent music. As most of the music that is played in the tents is intended to be sung along to, the first group to be ‘excluded’ are the non-German-speaking tourists. Unless the band plays an English song, such as the most famous Oktoberfest-hit Hey Baby\textsuperscript{119}, foreign tourists are the most obviously excluded group, although they usually sing along by chanting “lalala”, or try to learn the jingle ‘Ein Prosit der Gemütlichkeit’. However, other German visitors also experience a degree of exclusion from the Bavarians, as the Bavarian tunes are obviously not ‘their’ music, and some of the songs are in Bavarian dialect.

Thus, it can be seen that language acts as a community-creating as well as boundary-drawing tool. Although the subtle distinctions drawn by the choice of beer and tent and the more obvious sporting of Bavarian clothes are employed in the creation of a ‘typical Bavarian’ visit to the Oktoberfest, these elements are only partially effective in defining who truly is a Bavarian. The ultimate ‘proof’ of one’s true Bavarian origins is the Bavarian dialect.

\textsuperscript{119} See CD, song no. 4.
Conclusion

It's not only about the money ... it's a fascination ... anybody who has been to the Oktoberfest ... it is like a thrill, it's like somehow, you can't say why but everybody is looking forward to the next year ... It's very odd, it's somehow, I don't know, it's an ecstasy.\textsuperscript{120}

As the Oktoberfest makes up an integral part of life in Munich, and is also an important part in the locals' identification with their hometown and region, the main purpose of this thesis was to explore the place of the Oktoberfest in the identity of the Munich locals as Bavarians.

In analysing the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest, it is important to note that it is mainly the Munich locals who occupy themselves with the revival trend. With the high influx of non-Bavarian immigrants into the city, the 'revival trend' is more observable in Munich than in the more rural areas of Bavaria. In these rural regions, traditions and customs have survived the modernisation trends that are a result of Munich as a large city attracting migrants and workers from other parts of Germany and foreign countries.

The activities at the Oktoberfest offer the locals the opportunity to celebrate their city as the erstwhile centre of international attention. The feeling of hosting one of the most extraordinary festivals of the world and having the world as guests sit at the beer tents' tables, consuming what is essentially Bavarian culture, is a tonic for people's pride in their origins and heritage. Hosting a world get-together, where all nations are rubbing shoulders in peaceful harmony, is part of what makes the Oktoberfest so special.

Despite the great global mixture of people, however, the Oktoberfest also creates a stage for drawing and reaffirming clear boundaries between locals and visitors. The creation and definition of Bavarian solidarity takes various forms of expression. In the course of the fieldwork for this thesis, three elements 'crystallised' as the most prominent ways of identifying a 'real' Bavarian. These elements are the selection of

\textsuperscript{120} Int.5.
beer and Bavarian food – including the way it is consumed – which is closely connected to the choice of the beer tents; the wearing of traditional Bavarian clothes; and the use of Bavarian dialect. Part of the process of the locals reclaiming ‘their Oktoberfest’ is also the way in which it is celebrated. As the Oktoberfest had developed into a ‘touristy’ mass spectacle over the years, the more ‘relaxed’ way of celebrating the Fest is increasingly seen as the ‘authentic’ way of ‘Oktoberfesting’. In the discussion around Bavarian authenticity, there are considerable differences between age groups. Older generations generally regard a quieter visit to the Oktoberfest as ‘authentic’ and traditional, whereas younger generations see in the mixture of traditional and party elements the ‘true’ character of the Oktoberfest.

As I was intrigued why people are showing a rapidly increasing interest in Bavarian traditions, the core question of this thesis was, what has caused people to change their perception of the Oktoberfest and return to what are considered more ‘traditional’ ways of celebrating it? And why at this particular point of time? In order to investigate the reasons why the Munich locals have changed their way of celebrating the Oktoberfest, I connected the happenings at the Oktoberfest with developments in the wider contexts of Munich, Bavaria, Germany and also Europe.

As Bavaria is part of Germany, it is closely connected to its history and politics. Thus, Bavarians as Germans have been confronted with the ‘pan-German’ dilemma of a poor national identity, which is a result of the Nazi period and the disgrace that came with it. Bavarians are aware of their centuries-long political independence and their reluctance to identify with the German nation can be interpreted as a defiant reaction to being included within Germany’s shameful legacy. Furthermore, I suggest that Bavarians like to stress their origins as Bavarians as the stereotype of ‘the Bavarian’ is associated with Alpine landscape and jolly beer-drinking, whereas the association with Germany often connects to a darker past. I also see in the German re-unification of 1990 another facet in Bavarian ‘separatism’ and emphasis on the Bavarian region.

More recently, the development of a more relaxed relationship with the German nation has freed people from the constant constraint to keep patriotism and display of loyalty to the home country on a low level. During the hosting of the Football World Cup in June/July 2006, the world’s attention provided a much-needed lift for Germany’s ‘national confidence’. At this time, the display of the love of Bavaria
received yet another boost, as people now feel more at ease with demonstrating their patriotism.

The increasing interest in, and return to, regional traditions can also be interpreted as a result of Europe developing towards a great all-encompassing state over the last couple of decades. Amidst the Europeanisation and globalisation, people’s fear of losing their respective nation’s identity is growing. As a counter-movement to the moulding of the nations into the ‘Über-state’ of Europe, a number of regions within European nations have begun to re-emphasise their roots and individual idiosyncrasies. Thus, the revival of traditional features at the event of the Oktoberfest is not a unique occurrence.

In the revival of Bavarianness and its display at the Oktoberfest, it is noticeable that young people, especially, are engaging with it. They not only follow the recent revival of Bavarianness, but also celebrated most enthusiastically the Football World Cup 2006. I suggest that young people are particularly ‘prone’ to participate in the creation of a regional identity, as they do not have equally ‘settled’ roots as older generations and have been born into a globalised world where anything is (potentially) possible. This leaves them with a surplus of options, making it hard for them to choose and ‘design’ their own identity. Thus, I propose that young people are more inclined to revert to regional traits in their search for identity-creation, than older generations. This is reflected in the composition of Oktoberfest visitors, most of whom are under 35 years of age. The younger visitors wear their traditional garb more enthusiastically than their older counterparts, who wear their garb throughout the year. However, young people are bound to a more ‘modern’ life, and thus, they have created what has been labelled ‘Laptop and Lederhosen’ – a mixture of old traditions with a modern flair.

Another factor that plays a role in the younger people celebrating and openly identifying with Bavaria, is the fact that for a long time, the folklore and native elements of the Bavarian culture (first and foremost the traditional clothes) were associated with the Nazis, who made intensive use of these elements for their purposes. Thus, things that were even remotely associated with the difficult historical connection were spurned. However, the younger generations do not have these same associations, or if they do, it is to a lesser extent. Thus, they display symbols of nationalism, such as the German flag during the Football World Cup, without embarrassment.
There is insufficient evidence to determine whether the trend to acknowledge ‘more Bavarian’ traditions at the Oktoberfest is a passing fashion trend or whether it is a manifestation of people’s genuine identification with their region. I suggest that both options are possible. As the Oktoberfest attracts millions of tourists as well as locals, there may be as many attitudes and motives as there are visitors. However, I see in the revival of Bavarianness at the Oktoberfest an indication of a self-conscious search for stability through regional identification. Furthermore, there is a genuine expression of local pride in the festival, the city and the region. Thus, it seems, the trend is not a passing fad, but a genuine search for belonging to a community, which has a longevity greater than the period of the festival itself.

Although the Oktoberfest might appear as merely a gathering of beer lovers, its significance and meaning for the Munich locals should not be underestimated. By combining the theories around imagined communities (Anderson, 1991), invented traditions (Hobsbawm, 1983) and communities’ boundaries (Cohen, 1985), I have shown how the Munich locals create their identity as Bavarians at the Oktoberfest. The community of the locals is imagined through the festival, which itself can be seen as an invented tradition. Also, the various symbolic boundaries, such as the wearing of traditional clothes and the more subtle ways of distinction through choice of beer and dialect, define and simultaneously reinforce the sense of community amongst the Munich residents. Through this research, it has become obvious that in the ‘negotiation’ of the community-creating tools, the issue of authenticity plays a vital role. Unless the symbols and the way they are used appear ‘authentic’, they are not accepted as genuine by the community of the ‘real insiders’.

Through mere repetition, within a few years the Oktoberfest has advanced to the status of a “tradition” in the Munich calendar. It served as a stabilising tool for the citizens of the new kingdom of Bavaria, and also today, it creates a sense of stability for the Munich locals, reinforcing their identity as Bavarians.

In this, the festival of the Oktoberfest serves as a celebratory theatre that works in two ways: firstly, it serves as a ‘platform’ where a series of community-creating processes takes place; secondly, it serves as a stage where the created community can be put on display. Further research could reveal how the Munich locals negotiate, define and create their identity as Bavarians in everyday life, outside of the Oktoberfest.
context. Throughout my research, people hinted at their notion of Bavarian identity in an everyday milieu, however, this was outside of the scope of this thesis. But in the investigation around how communities invent and define themselves and how they draw boundaries around their imagined group – especially in the wake of growing revival of regional traditions in Europe – this would be a worthwhile exploration.

The Oktoberfest mirrors societal trends and it also reinforces them, offering a forum for living out local and regional traditions within the boundaries of a modern society. It thus acts as a motor and a vehicle not only for the revival and re-creation of Bavarian tradition, but as a bastion of Bavarian identity in a rapidly globalising world.
Appendix
Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Sheet

The Munich Oktoberfest
– Vehicle and Generator of Bavarian Identity

School of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Canterbury
Researcher: Evelyn Edingshaus

You are invited to participate in the master thesis The Munich Oktoberfest – Generator and Vehicle of Bavarian Identity. The aim of this thesis is to examine the Oktoberfest as a starting point of the global trend of returning to regional traditions and customs. In particular, this thesis will focus on the re-discovery and growing interest in Bavarian traditions in the context of Germany. Furthermore, the regional identity of Bavarians will be investigated in the context of the German national identity.

Your involvement in this project will involve a face-to-face interview of up to 60 minutes at a time of your choosing. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, including withdrawal of any information provided. The findings of this project may be published, but you are assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public without your consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, you can choose to use a pseudonym. Any identifying details will be removed from the final report and any publication based on this research.

The thesis is being carried out as a requirement for the Master of Arts degree at the University of Canterbury by Evelyn Edingshaus under the supervision of Carolyn Morris. Carolyn can be contacted at phone: 0064 - 3 - 364 26 49 or carolyn.morris@canterbury.ac.nz. She will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

Evelyn Edingshaus
Luzernenweg 3
80689 Munich
0173 – 446 96 46
The Munich Oktoberfest
– Vehicle and Generator of Bavarian Identity

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis, I agree to participate in the project, and I consent to the inclusion of information I will provide in the final version of the thesis. I understand that I will receive a copy of the interview transcript and have a week to modify it. The results could be included in a paper submitted for publication.

I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

I understand that anonymity will / will not be preserved.

Chosen pseudonym (if appropriate) ____________________________

Name ______________________________________________________

Signature ___________________________________________________

Date _______________________________________________________

Researcher:
Evelyn Edingshaus
Luzernenweg 3
80689 Munich
0173 - 446 96 46
Appendix 3: Brief overview of the political history of Germany

Before the 9th century AD, ‘Germany’ had been merely a region of different tribes, scattered principalities and duchies. However, in the 9th century, the region of today’s Germany became part of the vast realm of the Francs, ruled by Charles the Great. After he died, his empire was divided into three parts. In 843, ‘Germany’ was handed to his son Ludwig the German, member of the royal family of the Carolingians. In 962, ‘Germany’ became some sort of unified construct: Otto I. was crowned Emperor of the Roman Empire\(^{121}\), which – the term might be misleading – included the Germanic tribes and countless principalities. It had existed for centuries, and the membership in the German Empire was only slowly accepted. This was further hindered by geographical distance – the majority of the people lived in villages and seldom travelled further than a couple of kilometres. Thus, the communication between the regions and tribes was infrequent, which made the development of a sense of

\(^{121}\) In 1157, the title ‘Roman Empire’ was turned into ‘Holy Roman Empire’, and from the 16th century onwards, it was called the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation.
belonging together difficult. Furthermore, through intrigues and power struggles around the title of the Emperor, the real power over the regions remained with the dukes. Although the position of Emperor was the most powerful in the Reich, no emperor actually managed to seize the power from the dukes and unite the patchwork pattern of small states into a big one. Often enough, when a strong Emperor, who had managed to keep the different tribes together under his rule, died, the land declined back into civil wars and chaos. Unlike France, for example, the Holy Roman Empire did not exist of one nation state, but of many small and medium sized states, which greatly differed not only in size (some were as little as 1000 inhabitants), but also in religious persuasion, currency and language. The two Christian persuasions, Catholicism and Protestantism, were equally represented in the Empire, which resulted in numerous wars and battles between the different states. In 1555, it was decided that the people had to adapt to their respective monarch’s religion. The Counter-Reformation led to a war of the confessions, the 30-year war from 1618 to 1648, which was fought with great zeal, and resulted in territorial losses and wiped out almost 2/3 of the population.

In Germany, the 18th century saw the rise of Romanticism and with it evolved the idea of the Volk, a people unified in one nation, with its membership based on descent. However, not only hereditary origin but also shared culture and language were thought to create a bond between the people into one Volk. The territory of the Volk was the Heimat. These notions of a unified people by descent are still reflected in the regulations and laws around citizenship in Germany today, which base the criteria of German citizenship on the concept of ethnic descent, ius sanguinis, as the following newspaper article explains:

Its law of citizenship [is] based on ethnicity and lineage dating from the Kaiserreich, which extends to Germans who have lived for centuries in Romania or the Volga Basin, but not Turkish migrant workers of the third generation.

Also Ignatieff (1993) points out this paradox:

---

122 At times, there were around 500 different currencies, which was not too much of a hindrance, as people traded with goods rather than money. However, with the development of the industrialisation, one common currency became vital (DER SPIEGEL 32/2006).
It seems absurd that a Turk born and brought up in Germany should be unable to become a citizen, while a German from Siberia, with no history of residence in the country and little language competence, should be entitled to citizenship (Ignatieff, 1993; p.101).

However, it remains questionable whether there is such a thing as ‘the Volk’ at all. Germany has always been a country with a high influx of immigrants. Its population is the result of a mixture of different tribes that once wandered through Europe. Consequently, it could be argued that there is no such thing as ‘the Volk’.

The *Holy Roman Empire of German Nations* was dissolved in August 1806, when Napoleon defeated the two mightiest states of the Empire, Prussia and Austria. After the people of Germany united under one banner during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-71, Prussia’s Prime Minister Bismarck proclaimed a united (Second) German Empire (*Wilhelminian Empire*) in March 1871.

In 1918, after the First World War, the Wilhelminian Empire ended with the proclamation of the democratic Weimar Republic. Between 1919 and 1933, 20 different parties were in charge of the Republic’s government. The aftermath of the defeat in First World War had left the country in a poor and degenerated state, and during the Weimar Republic, Bavaria became the setting for the establishment of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, which soon came under the lead of Adolf Hitler. In April 1933, the political and legal ‘unification’ of Germany by the National Socialists (Nazis) stripped Bavaria of its political independence. Many of the leading people of the Nazi party came from Bavaria (e.g. Hermann Göring and Heinrich Himmler), and Munich became the ‘Capital of the Movement’. Hitler promised the German people a return to the old glory of the German Empire, after the Holy Roman and the Wilhelminian Empire had failed, this ‘Third Reich’ would last for at least a thousand years. Then, under his lead, Germany wrote the darkest chapter of its history.

---

125 Therefore, it is surprising that a *Rassenideologie*, the ideology of genealogy, justified with ‘scientific’ proof introduced by the Nazis, emerged in Germany – a country of a centuries-old mixture of people. This possibly occurred precisely for the purpose of unifying the concoction of people that constituted the German nation. Today, the high quota of foreigners is German society: around 8 million people in Germany are of foreign descent, making up around nine percent of the overall population. The majority of foreigners are of Turkish descent, many of whom have lived in Germany for more than two generations. The high quota of foreigners is a result of Germany’s politics in the 1950s, when West Germany experienced an enormous economic post-War boom and urgently needed workers to fill the gaps the war had left in the able-bodied work force. Hence, workers mainly from Turkey, Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia were ‘invited’ to work in Germany as ‘guest workers’. However, Germany failed to introduce and practise a proper integration policy and so, many of the ‘guest workers’ and their families are still less than well-integrated into German society.
Franconia is divided into the districts of Upper, Central and Lower Franconia. Franconians are said to perceive of themselves as quite a different people from Ancient Bavarians. They are said to think of themselves as the ‘better Bavarians’, and strongly oppose the fact that the State of Bavaria is usually associated with the idiosyncrasies of Upper Bavaria. Although Franconia produces a large proportion of the hops needed for Bavaria’s beer production, they also take pride in their viticulture. The Franconians’ loyalty to their wines could also be a quiet opposition to the dominating beer cult in Ancient Bavaria. The district of Swabia is correctly called Bavarian-Swabia, as it is part of the region of Swabia that extends into the neighbouring State of Baden-Württemberg. The term Swabian mostly defines speakers of this very distinct accent. The coat of arms shows visibly the connection of the State of Bavaria with its tribes: the golden lion on black ground represents the Palatinate, the red and white peaks symbolise Franconia, and the blue panther on white ground represents Ancient Bavaria. The three black lions on golden ground stand for Swabia. The white and blue diamonds in the middle constitute the flag that has been representing Bavaria since 1247. The crown that is roofing the different symbols stands for the royal crown of the Bavarian kings, which since 1946 represents the ‘Crown of the People’ – a symbol of the democratic government of the Free State (Prinz, 1997).
Appendix 5: The Oktoberfest in numbers

Money spent during the Oktoberfest:

- 301 Mio € Übernachtungen
- 448 Mio € Ausgaben auf dem Fest
- 205 Mio € Verpflegung, Einkäufe etc.

450 million Euros are spent at the actual site of the Fest, 300 million Euros are spent on accommodation, and over 200 million Euros are spent on shopping.

Composition of the visitors:

- Almost 45% of the visitors of the Oktoberfest are Munich locals; 14.7% from around Munich; 12% from the rest of Bavaria; 12.7% from other parts of Germany and around 16% from foreign countries.

Number of visitors to the Oktoberfest since 1980:

- The number of visitors has fluctuated over the years, with peak years including 1988, 1993, 1996, and 2004, all above 8 million.
- The lowest years were around 4.5 million, such as 1990 and 2001.
Visitors in age groups:

The majority of the visitors are aged between 18 and 24; the next largest group are visitors between 30 and 44.

The Oktoberfest as the most important occasion to come to Munich:

Over 70% of the visitors from outside of Munich come to the city for the Oktoberfest only; only 15% also come to see their family or friends.
Appendix 6: Brief overview of the history of beer in Bavaria

The association of beer with Bavaria is world-renowned – not without good reason: Bavaria has the highest density of breweries per capita in the world. In 2003, 616 small and large breweries were operating in Bavaria alone – 44% of all breweries in the entire European Union – with an annual production of around 22 million hectolitres of 40 different kinds of beer and around 4,000 beer brands. Four out of five German beer brands are brewed in Bavaria. Furthermore, the average beer consumption of the Bavarian population of 18+ lies at around 215-220 litres per year. The Bavarian beer consumption is 40% higher than the average German beer consumption, a large part of which is the annual consumption of six million litres of beer at the Oktoberfest.

The oldest ‘beer vessels’ in Germany were discovered in Kulmbach, Bavaria, and are dated back to 800 BC, documenting beer as an integral part in the Teutonic diet as well as their festivities. Over 2000 years ago, the Roman writer Tacitus was amazed by the quantities of beer that were consumed by the Germanic tribes that he documented in his work Germania. He noted that if the Germanic people had an unlimited supply of beer and could drink as much as they wanted, it would be more detrimental to them than the weapons of the Roman army.

On the 23rd of April 1516, Duke Wilhelm IV and his brother Ludwig X, who ruled Bavaria together, introduced the Reinheitsgebot (‘Purity Law’), the law that allowed only hops, barley malt and water to be used in the brewing process. After the First World War and the foundation of the Weimar Republic, Bavaria refused to join the republic unless the Reinheitsgebot remained set in the Constitution. After the Second World War, a German purity law was established in the German Constitution in March 1952.

126 www.bayerisches-bier.de
127 www.bayerisches-bier.de.
128 Süddeutsche Zeitung, 30 Sep 2006, p.57.
129 Since 1994, the 23rd of April is celebrated as the ‘Day of the German Beer’.
130 After the discovery that yeast made the brewing process more predictable, it was included in the Reinheitsgebot as well. Before, the brewers relied on natural yeast in the air or the wood of the beer barrels to ferment the liquid into beer. The inclusion of yeast into the brewing process allowed a more predictable and controllable outcome of the fermentation. However, that was the only change that has been made to the regulation until today (www.bayernservice.de/Bier.htm).
The art of beer brewing had developed mainly in monasteries from the 8th century onwards. Beer constituted a vital part of the monks’ diet. According to the proverb “Liquida non frangunt ienum” (Liquids do not break the fasting), the monks were allowed to drink beer during Lent (February to Easter). It was a very nutritious way of compensating the smaller calorie intake during the fast. Some monasteries allowed their monks up to five (!) litres a day.\textsuperscript{131} The tradition of brewing especially strong beer for the time of lent is still being practised today. Out of this tradition grew the celebration of the \textit{Nockherberg}, a night in March, when selected comedians poke fun at the Bavarian and German politicians and the political events of the past year.\textsuperscript{132}

The monks’ knowledge of brewing advanced to such high quality that beer from the monasteries became very popular, not only in Bavaria but also in the other German counties and principalities. The monks brewed beer not only for themselves but also gave it to travellers and people in need for free. Soon enough, the monasteries realised the lucrative character of beer and began selling it. The Bavarian dukes, however, prohibited the production or sale of beer, unless the right to brew beer was granted, and a considerable amount of tax was paid in return. An example of this power struggle is the world’s oldest brewery, \textit{Weihenstephan}\textsuperscript{133}, located in Aying, south of Munich, which is still in operation today. Saint Korbinius had founded the Benedictine monastery in 725 AD, and started brewing beer. However, the monastery was restricted to brewing beer for its own consumption only. The right to sell beer was granted only 300 years later. The pride and appreciation of the century-old tradition of beer brewing is nicely reflected in the advertisements of the Weihenstephan brewery (see pictures below).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{beer_brewing.jpg}
\caption{Advertisements of the Weihenstephan brewery.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{131} \url{www.loewenbraeu.de}.
\textsuperscript{132} This night is a tradition, which started out of a celebration by the \textit{Paulaner} monks in Munich, who were granted the right to sell their \textit{Starkbier} all year round. Karl Theodor, sovereign of Bavaria, had granted the convent this right in 1780 and was invited to the first celebration. He was asked to pour the first beer, out of which grew a tradition that the very first beer at the Nockherberg is reserved for the sovereign of Bavaria. Today, the first beer is handed to the Minister President of Bavaria. Out of this ceremonial act might have also evolved the traditional Oktoberfest opening ceremony, in which the Mayor of Munich opens the first beer barrel and hands the first beer to the Bavarian Prime Minister.
\textsuperscript{133} Today, the brewery Weihenstephan has also got a polytechnic department for studying the art of brewery – the only one in Germany.
The quality reputation of a beer that has been brewed by a Bavarian monastery is still valued today. This is demonstrated by a verdict passed by a Bavarian court in 2000, according to which a brewery can only call itself ‘monastery brewery’ if it can genuinely trace its origins back to a traditional monastic brewing operation. This is to avoid ‘fake’ monastery breweries taking unfair advantage of the monasteries’ good reputation. Furthermore, not only the expression ‘monastery brewery’ is a protected trademark but also the term ‘Bavarian beer’. In 2001, the European Union passed a verdict that the term ‘Bavarian beer’ can only be used for products genuinely brewed in Bavaria according to the Reinheitsgebot. Moreover, only recently, in 2004, the Bavarian minister for agriculture, Josef Miller, submitted a request to protect the term ‘Bavarian beer’ worldwide. He claimed that in Canada and South America, a large brewery called its product Bavaria. The worldwide protection of the term ‘Bavarian beer’, which stands for high quality, should thus ensure that only quality beer from Bavaria brewed according to the Reinheitsgebot is marketed as such. This can be seen as an attempt to obtain power over the global beer market or at least preserve the powerful status that Bavarian beer holds on the global market.

The anxious protection of Bavarian beer has not only economic reasons, but is also tied to notions of Bavarian identity. How important beer is ideologically can be seen in the discussion around the Reinheitsgebot in more recent times: Until 1987, the German purity law had not only regulated the brewing process in German breweries, but also prohibited the sale of foreign products, that were not brewed according to the German Reinheitsgebot, as ‘beer’. First attempts by the European Union to assimilate German beer purity standards to the rest of Europe were made in the 1970s, but without success. In 1982, the European Union Commission opened proceedings against Germany, as the strict adherence to the German Reinheitsgebot was perceived of as an obstruction to the free trade among the members of the European Union. In March 1987, the European Court passed the verdict that the beer products of other European countries were to be sold in an equal manner, regardless as to whether they had been brewed according to the standards of the purity law or not. However, the foreign products had to list the added ingredients on the product label. Yet, the share of foreign beers on the German beer market has remained minuscule.

Appendix 7: Brief overview of Tracht in Bavaria

The first ‘craze’ about Tracht emerged in the course of the 19th century, first at the royal court in Bavaria, and it quickly spread throughout the whole population. The preservation of traditions and especially traditional garments was paramount to King Maximilian I Joseph. As outlined, the kingdom of Bavaria had been founded by Napoleon, who had defeated the territory of Bavaria in his war against Austria, of which Bavaria had been an ally. Between 1813 and 1815, regional clothes (rather than the latest trends from Paris) became fashionable, as wearing typically Bavarian clothes was considered a means to express resentment against the French occupation. However, the wearing of the regional clothes functioned in yet another way. It was considered a means for the citizens of the kingdom, which had only been founded in 1806, to identify with their new state, and thus serving the same purpose as the Oktoberfest, which was established in 1810. From the second half of the 19th century onwards, the royal family of Bavaria promoted and sponsored all efforts to preserve Bavarian culture. Simultaneously with the efforts of the kingdom’s leaders, the people themselves developed an interest in conserving their traditions and clothes, and so, in the 1880s, clubs were founded (Trachtenvereine), which were dedicated to the conservation of Bavarian costumes and traditional heritage. The guidelines for what the people’s Tracht should look like were taken from votive pictures and commemorative plaques in churches of pilgrimage.

Left: commemorative plaques. Centre and right: paintings of rural people’s garments.
The term for traditional clothes Tracht derives from the German word 'to wear' (tragen), and until the foundation of the Trachtenvereine, it only indicated a set of everyday clothes. However, with the growing interest in the 'authentic' regional clothes in the 19th century, the term's meaning shifted from practical to special. Also the garments themselves changed from ordinary functional everyday clothes to costumes that were richly decorated and worn to special occasions only.

Although for outsiders the various kinds of Bavarian Tracht may look all the same, there are significant differences between them. The Tracht can be seen as yet another means for the differentiation between Ancient Bavaria,Franconia and Swabia. Furthermore, within the three regions, there are considerable differences in the styles of the respective Tracht as the following pictures illustrate.
Amidst all traditional Bavarian garments, the Upper Bavarian Tracht stands out as probably the most famous one. Not only within Germany but also world-wide Bavaria is automatically associated with Lederhosen and Dirndl. Furthermore, the Upper Bavarian style of Tracht can be worn to more casual occasions, such as a visit to a beer garden, whereas the Tracht of Franconia, Swabia and the Palatinate is reserved for specific ‘Trachten-occasions’ only. The traditional Upper Bavarian outfit for men is a pair of Lederhosen, trousers made of leather, which used to be worn mainly by hunters, as this is a very tough garment that is virtually ‘undestroyable’. With it are worn braces, shirt, vest, jacket, socks and shoes, hat and ornaments, all depending on the respective region within Upper Bavaria. The traditional outfit for women is the Dirndl, a costume that consist of dress, apron, blouse, hat and ornaments, which again depend on the region of the wearer.

Embroidery on a pair of Lederhosen; a Charivari, a chain attached to the front of the Lederhose, with coins and hunt trophies, such as animal fangs and claws; matching socks for the Lederhosen.

The matching hat is an important part of the ‘real’ Tracht.
Dirndl also have a wide range of 'attachable' accessories; a matching hat or 'proper' hair-do are also part of the 'real' Tracht.

Even the 'wee ones' get dressed up.
Appendix 8: Trachten events

There is an increasing 'demand' for Trachten occasions, and a number of events have been created or revived in Munich, to which people can wear their Bavarian costumes. An example of a newly created occasion is the Nacht der Tracht – the night of the traditional costumes – which has been celebrated for the last four years. This event was initiated in 2002 by the owner of the Schottenhamel tent and other Oktoberfest fans, who wanted to bridge the time between the yearly Oktoberfest and have a chance to sport their traditional costumes. Although this event is not designed for the average Munich citizen (VIPs only!), it shows that the Tracht has become more important. The following quote exemplifies how essential the role of the Tracht is in the context of setting Bavaria off as distinct:

It [Tracht] has a different significance now ... although still today, my wife who prefers to wear Dirndl, when she goes for a walk, Japanese tourists want to take a photo of her. This happened to me, too, when I was wearing my Lederhosen ... but in general, the signification of the Tracht has gained importance in the public life and Mr. Stoiber [Bavaria's Prime Minister] wears his Tracht, he is a role model. Mr. Wowereit [Mayor of Berlin] would never wear anything like that, he's wearing global clothes; that's what distinguishes Bavaria, that we are stubborn and say that we don't want to be forced into this global thing (Int. 2).

Another example of an occasion for wearing Tracht is the Kocherlball. Its origins go back to the 19th century, when the butlers, maids, cooks and other servants of the well-off Munich citizens gathered every Sunday morning during the summer months, in order to get the chance to mingle, socialise and dance together until the rich would return from church, and want their breakfast. In 1904, Munich authorities prohibited the morning festivities, as they considered the staff party as unruly. However, in 1989, the festivities were re-introduced and ever since, on the third Sunday in July, people start pouring to the venue at the Chinese Tower in the English Garden, Munich's inner city park, from 4am onwards, in order to get the chance of a table. Breakfast, dancing and also beer are enjoyed until early noon or even longer. Up until the mid-90s, this ball was a rather small-scale festivity, however, over the last decade, it has grown steadily, and meanwhile it attracts around 15,000 people, not only from Munich but
from all over Germany. Again, this shows clearly the search for occasions where genuine or seemingly genuine tradition can be lived out or at least experienced first-hand, which has been discussed by Manning (1983).

15,000 visitors at the Kocherlball 2006.
Appendix 9: The Oktoberfest Wheel

Langenscheidt
Wiesn-Rad
Bairisch - Hochdeutsch

Was heißt denn ...?

München

Langenscheidt
Wiesn Wheel
Bavarian - English

What does ... mean?

Münich
References


146


Magazine and newspaper articles:


DER SPIEGEL 34/1992 - 17 Aug 1992 *Im Fremden das Eigene hassen?*

DER SPIEGEL 40/2000 - 30 Sep 2000 *Was ist deutsch?*

DER SPIEGEL 49/2004 - 29 Nov 2004 *Patriotische Bauchschermerzen.*


DER SPIEGEL 32/2006 - 7 Aug 2006 *Am Anfang war das Reich.*


*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30 Sep 2006, p.57. *Und warum machen die das?*


Online articles:


http://www.sz-online.de/special/wm2006/artikel.asp?id=1188212.

http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,49565,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 10 Dec 2002, „We want to beat you Fritz!“
http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/wunderbar/0,1518,226453,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 18 Feb 2003, Hitler, immer wieder Hitler. 
http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/schule/0,1518,236583,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 23 Dec 2004, Germany’s New Normality. 
http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,334198-2,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 19 July 2005, „Hauptsach, es ist koa Preiß“.
http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/wunderbar/0,1518,363090,00.html.

http://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/mensch/0,1518,378476,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 23 Feb 2006, „Wir können keine Mauern um Europa bauen“. 
http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/0,1518,402117,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 6 Mar 2006, Hitler Farce Breaks German Taboos. 
http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,404573,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 21 Apr 2006, Just don’t Fly the Flag. 
http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,411948,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 18 June 2006, Hilfe, die Fahnen gehen aus. 
http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,422014,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 5 July 2006, Heiter so, Deutschland! 
http://www.spiegel.de/politik/debatte/0,1518,425159,00.html.

SPIEGEL ONLINE - 5 July 2006, Germany’s New Attitude. 
http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425267,00.html.
Surveys:


Oktoberfestbefragung 2000; www.muenchen.de.

Vorläufiger Schlussbericht Oktoberfest 2006; www.muenchen.de.

Audio-CD:


Videos:

http://www.spiegel.de/sptv/videonews/0,1518,archiv-2006-166,00.html.
Websites:

http://www.worldandi.com/newhome/public/2004/march/mtpub2.asp (15.3.06)
www.kommwiss.fu-berlin.de/.../infowiss/voelz/lehre/ws2002_03_humor/
Pauschales_Lachen_Hausarbeit.V1.0.doc (15.3.06)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_%28social_science%29 (15.3.06)
http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutschland (15.3.06)
www.ganz-muenchen.de/oktoberfest.html (17.3.06)
www.wiesnteam.de (17.3.06)
www.oktoberfestportal.de (17.3.06)
www.oktoberfest2005.de/ (17.3.06)
http://people.freenet.de/boarisch/ (17.3.06)
www.oktoberfest.de (22.3.06)
http://calgarystampede.com (23.3.06)
www.sueddeutsche.de (30.3.06)
www.schoessler.bayern.de (30.3.06)
www.hdbg.de (30.3.06)
www.koenig-ludwig.org (30.3.06)
www.bayernservice.de (30.3.06)
www.ifd-allensbach.de (30.3.06)
www.muenchen.de (30.3.06)
www.bsb-muenchen.de (30.3.06)
www.trachtenvereine.de (30.3.06)
www.br-online.de (31.3.06)
www.findarticles.com (6.4.06)
www.oktoberfest-tv.de (7.4.06)
www.oktoberfest.ca (10.4.06)
www.oktoberfest-zinzinnati.com (10.4.06)
www.oktoberfest.org (10.4.06)
www.festring.de (10.4.06)
www.nationalismproject.org (11.4.06)
http://fifaworldcup.yahoo.com/06/de/ (12.4.06)
http://wm2006.deutschland.de (12.4.06)
http://geschichte_der_stadt_muenchen.know-library.net (15.5.06)
www.bayerisches-bier.de (15.5.06)
www.loewenbraeu.de (15.5.06)
http://www.ammersee-region.de/buergerbegehren-oktoberfest.php (18.5.06)
http://www.bavariapix.de (18.5.06)
http://susi.e-technik.uni-ulm.de:80...s_b4_s0731.html (16.6.06)
http://www.ganz-muenchen.de/freizeitfitness/partys/2005/04/ nacht_der_tracht_loewenbraeukeller.html (22.6.06)
http://fifaworldcup.yahoo.com/06/en/d/video.html (29.6.06)
www.bayerische-sprache.de (29.10.06)
http://www.br-online.de/oktoberfest/oktoberfest-aktuell/index.xml_ (29.10.06)
www.erdinger.de (10.4.2007)