



Figure 3. Up in the Air. Photo by M. Sander.

PART II

Leaving

Expatriate children often have biographies that involve several moves over the course of their young lives. Part II, “Leaving,” addresses retrospective accounts given by students on the circumstances of moving to Shanghai. It inquires into how expatriate youths perceive multiple relocations in general and considers what kind of challenges they face. Chapter 1 explores the youths’ narratives of leaving and their recollections of the processes that led to the decision to move to Shanghai. In this chapter, I argue that expatriate children have only limited agency in the familial decision-making as it concerns the move. Next, I investigate the idea of “best interest” that underlies many of the arguments for the move. While the parents’ feel they are making a decision which is in the “best interest” of the child and is mostly linked to future benefits, the children, in the here-and-now, constantly feel like they are living in a liminal space, where the last move has only just—or not even yet—been fully coped with, despite the next move already lying in wait. Chapter 2 is also connected to discussions about leaving and delineates the emotional challenges associated with moving to Shanghai. Based on the students’ commentaries, this chapter identifies their “culture shock,” reactions to an unfamiliar urban environment, new sensory impressions, and the lack of friends and extended family, as well as problems within the family, that are also related to the move. The different experiences of youths all make clear that the time of leaving and arriving—or what Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier, and Sheller (2003) call “uprootings”—are highly emotional. Part II, which is based on the youths’ retrospective narratives, provides a brief but essential background to the inquiries into the expatriate students’ daily practices in Shanghai that the following parts of this book, on arriving and living, explore in more depth.

CHAPTER 1

Retrospectives on the Decision to Move

I suggest that more could be done in migration studies to understand “the best interests of the child” by taking account of his or her own perspective (Dobson 2009, 355).

When talking about the move to Shanghai with students in group discussions or individual interviews, the expatriate youths described their experiences of the decision-making process that led to the move to Shanghai. When contemplating these retrospectives of the move, it becomes obvious that the moments of decision-making are remembered vividly.

1.1 To move or not to move: the decision-making process

By examining the children’s reflections upon the decision that was made months, or even years, prior to the interviews, it becomes clear that my interview partners reflected deeply upon their role in the process. Throughout our conversations, three narratives of the children’s involvement in the decision-making process became apparent: exclusion, inclusion through a set of choices, and negotiation. As I only conducted my research in Shanghai, of course only those voices of children whose families actually decided to move are included. Rejections of the opportunity to move to Shanghai, therefore, cannot be discussed.

Most of my young interview partners felt excluded from the decision-making process and describe the move to Shanghai as a non-negotiable announcement their parents made. Usually, the children did not want to move, but often felt they had no choice, as Emily’s story illustrates. Emily, age twelve, was born in her “home” country Malaysia, but left when she was still too young to retain any memories of growing up there. She arrived in Shanghai one and a half years prior to the interview and attends a British English-medium middle school. When I interview her with fellow students in a group discussion, she introduces herself by talking quickly and animatedly:

EMILY: I am Emily. I am from Malaysia. I am, I have never really lived or had any childhood in Malaysia. I moved when I was three and my brother was only six months old. I moved to Beijing, China, and I lived there for six years, six and a half years, close to seven. And then I moved to Thailand for eighteen months, which felt like a really long time.

She recalls her moving experiences as a set of events that would simply happen to her, leading up to a feeling of unfair exclusion when the recent move to Shanghai was announced.

EMILY: *So I kinda started to realize, that is not fair, mom; that is not fair that we have to move. And then, but then I had no choice. I had to follow my parents. So, I moved to Shanghai, and after Christmas would be my second year here. Erm, it's nice here, I will be disappointed if I do leave next year, but yeah.*

Karina, seventeen years old and attending “my” 11th grade class at the German school, shares a similar story. She is half-Czech, half-German, and came to Shanghai six months before the first interview. When we sit in the schoolyard, the voice recorder between us, Karina introduces herself by narrating her migration story as follows:

KARINA: *I am seventeen years old. I come from Prague. I was also born there and lived there for five years, I believe. After that, I moved to Germany and lived there for three years. Then I moved to [a city in Northern China], lived there for another three years. [...] Then I moved back to Prague, and now I am back in China.¹*

Karina recapitulates her immediate strong reaction to the announcement of the move to Shanghai: “I just screamed at my father.” I came across many such narratives of anger, yelling at, or not speaking to the parents for a couple of days in reaction to the sudden announcement of the move.

A few interviewees, however, such as Britta, a student from Norway, felt they had a say in the decision by discussing at least certain options about their participation in the move. When describing her first reactions to her father’s announcement, Britta, a seventeen-year-old girl who had just arrived in Shanghai a few months before the interview and attends an international British school, recalls how she could not believe it or take the idea of moving to China seriously at first.

BRITTA: *I wasn't that mad; I was more like I didn't think about it. I just said sure, we move to China. Not.*

However, when she started to realize that her parents were seriously considering the move, she found herself and her family on a short trip to China to explore the idea further. Such “look-and-see trips,” which are paid for by the employer, are common. Yet, taking the children along for

1 German original: KARINA: *Ich bin siebzehn Jahre alt. Ich komme aus Prag. Ich bin dort auch geboren, habe dort, glaube, fünf Jahre gelebt. Bin danach nach Deutschland gezogen. Habe dort drei Jahre gelebt. Bin dann nach [Stadt im Norden Chinas] gezogen, habe dort wieder drei Jahre gelebt. [...] Also wieder nach Prag gezogen und jetzt bin ich wieder in China.*

these trips is less common. Consequently, Britta considered herself lucky to have been able to get to know Shanghai before the final decision to relocate was made. Furthermore, she explains how her family explored alternative options:

BRITTA: *I could have stayed at my friend's house, lived with my best friend's family. But I chose to go anyway. So. Would be weird to just move in with her family when my family is just experiencing new stuff, and I am just like stuck in Norway.*

The opportunity to see what her life might look like in Shanghai and the option of staying in Europe with a friend made her feel included in the decision-making process and led to a positive curiosity and willingness to explore new things with her family: "They didn't just decide, they let us choose." Britta's case can be seen as what Ackers and Stalford (2004, 111) call the "Hobson's choice" or "children's menu approach." The children are presented with a "limited range of options" (ibid., 113), with these options typically falling "within parameters tightly defined by parents" (ibid.). Britta, for instance, was allowed to opt out of the move to Shanghai, but not allowed to influence her parents' decision.

Only seventeen-year-old Paul, whose story I discussed in the introduction, described how he successfully managed to negotiate the decision about a move, though in his case, it was the move away from and not to Shanghai. Paul grew up in Brazil and the United States and moved to Shanghai six years prior to the interview. At the time of the interview, he had just refused to move again, this time to Thailand. "I wasn't gonna move," he said. His father, nevertheless, went to Bangkok, while Paul and his mother stayed in Shanghai. Paul's initial reluctance to move to China, which, to reiterate his phrase, he had not "even googled before," played no role in his parents' decision.

In contrast to his lack of say in the matter and the fait accompli his father delivered ("Paul, we are moving to China.' Oh.") six years earlier, this time Paul managed to state his own opinion about the move to Thailand and make his point. When I ask him about the difference in these decision-making processes, he comments:

PAUL: *I am older now. Before I didn't really have a choice. And, erm, my parents also thought it was a good idea to stay here. Cause of my last year of school. You don't wanna move right before you are applying for colleges and stuff. And your grades are really shit. It's not so good.*

This time he influenced the decision-making process and the family found common ground when reasoning why staying in Shanghai was beneficial for his future. Interestingly, Paul had learned to employ a future-benefit and best-interest narrative to argue for his desire to stay, and his parents

accepted it. The next section further examines the common idea of best-interest that often underlies the parents' decision-making and family relationships.

1.2 Family relations and the idea of "best interest"

As my interview-partners' narratives of the moving process show, individual family members have different attitudes and interests regarding the move to Shanghai. While some children rebel against the decision, others trust their parents to know what is "best" for them. According to my young interview-partners' accounts of the decision to move, the idea of their parents acting in their "best interest" is also common. Teresa Hutchins's (2011) recent analysis of UK families' experiences with moving to Australia, showed that

family migration decision-making is based upon a process of negotiating individual influence and power within the family, often at different stages in the process. In the majority of families, children were active in their attempts to influence adults, just as adults attempted to influence children. In some cases the adults overrode the opinions of their children and in others the children were successful in having their voices heard and acted upon. In the majority of instances, parents justified their actions as being in the best interests of their children (Hutchins 2011, 1233).

The main difference between the experiences of Hutchins's informants moving to Australia, and the narratives explored in this ethnography, however, lies in the experience of Australia as a place of arrival and Shanghai as a place of transition. Parents' decisions to move are not only past events, but likely to be announced in the future, as well. When talking about moving again in the near future and the emotions this prospect causes, Allen, an eleven-year old American who had just arrived in Shanghai after his father had been transferred to China three months earlier, comments:

ALLEN: *Well, it doesn't make me feel scared. Because I know my parents know all of us very well and they will make the best decision for all of us.*

Hutchins (2011, 1233), however, has pointed out correctly that this idea of children's best interests is problematic and that "little is known about how 'best interests' are conceptualised, let alone operationalised, within families." Hutchins further argues that these varying conceptualizations of best interest are based on the "particular conception of childhood held by [...] parents" (2011, 1233). In the expatriate community in Shanghai, the underlying conceptions of childhood and adolescence often seem to be linked

to the idea of children as “adults in the making,” a viewpoint that is also influential in academic concepts, as already critiqued in the Introduction. My discussions with children, as well as interviews I conducted with adult expatriates in 2007,² show that expatriate parents in Shanghai justify the difficulties they impose on their children by stressing the—mainly future—benefits of transnational mobility. Parents are concerned with their children’s adult lives, sometimes even more than with their children’s current situation, as the family’s move to China suggests. These supposed benefits and the teenage students’ experiences with this future-oriented aspect of their lives are discussed in detail in Part IV, Chapter 1 and in Part III, Chapter 3 of this ethnography. Ackers and Stalford (2004, 111), researchers of European children’s rights, came across a similar narrative of the decision-making process in their studies of EU-internal migration—that of “future oriented consent,” where “parents expressed the view that, even though it was inappropriate to attempt to involve the child in the family decision at the point of migration, the child would, in the longer term, see the value of the move and reflect upon it positively” (Ackers and Stalford 2004, 111).

Hoping for this future consent of their children, expatriate parents often disregard their potential to play an active part in the decision to move. Hutchins (2011, 1233) assumes that “it is also possible that the different conceptions of childhood operate in parallel and that particular conceptions may be invoked at different times in order to support the interests of adults.” The powerful discourse of “best interest” is linked to ideas of preparing the developing child for the future and is often used to exclude children from the decision-making process. The concept of “best interest” therefore strongly influences expatriate families’ decisions to move abroad.

Excluded from the decision to relocate, the students I talked to remember being caught between the desire to stay with their friends in their familiar environment and the wish to be with their parents. In the midst of these contradictory feelings, children also have their own “best interest” considerations for their parents. Seventeen-year-old German student Lara explains:

LARA: *On the other hand I felt bad for my dad. [...] He wanted us to come along—as a family. And that was an issue that made me think. I mean, you can at least have a look at it. But, then there is not really a coming back option. But also, that a father wants his family to come with him.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes, that’s also understandable.*

2 The majority of adult expatriates I interviewed in 2007 were German women who accompanied their husbands on a work assignment (Sander 2008). The perspectives of the German mothers I interviewed complement the insights on family issues that I gained from the youths’ accounts. The women, however, are not related to any of the teenagers.

LARA: *He doesn't want to go alone. And again that was, I don't know, something that made me sad. I could not just abandon him. Because he is my father. He speaks up for me, he pays for school, buys me this and that. Yeah. Difficult.*³

Lara's narrative illustrates how the decision to move feels, for many of the youths, like being caught between their parents' will and their own. For intergenerational relations, this means that worries about the other exist on both sides. Often, guilt may also play a role and complicate family relationships. Karina, for instance, explained that her mother often felt guilty about taking her away from her friends. Twelve-year-old Emily from Malaysia describes how family relationships can become strained by the emotional turmoil that a decision to move causes:

EMILY: *I think that one of the worst things to do is to actually panic, because eventually you realize you have to move. You can't just stay there. Because, you know. Then, when I realized, you know, when my dad said we are moving, I said "Okay, if we are moving, will there be a chance that we ever move back here?" He said "Erm, I don't know." When you hear that "I don't know" or that tone where you just have no clue, you just know that you have to move. You can't say anything, because your parents would get, like, not upset, but kinda feeling, having second thoughts now. I don't want my parents not to move just because of me. But it's for my dad's job, so like, we just all have to move. As a family. We can't like stay here and my dad working there, and then coming back for Christmas, that doesn't make any sense. So we just have to move.*

Emily's narrative demonstrates well how children try to actively negotiate the relations within the family, reflect their own position, and consider their parents' needs. Her thoughts on moving go beyond her own wish to stay and explore moving's effects on family relationships and her parents' emotional well-being. She does not want her parents to worry about her or have "second thoughts" and comes to the conclusion that opposing the move is not an option. Emily's inquiries about the option to move back also show how children wish to have insights into their parents' plans and

3 German original: LARA: *Aber auf der anderen Seite, tat mir auch mein Vater wieder leid. [...] Und er wollte, dass wir mitgehen. Als Familie. Und das war wieder so ein Punkt, wo ich dachte: „Hmm.“ Ich mein, man kann das sich ja mal anschauen. Oder so. Aber, ein Zurück gibt es ja dann eigentlich nicht mehr. Aber auch allein, dass ein Vater möchte, dass seine Familie mitgeht. INTERVIEWER: Das kann man ja auch verstehen. LARA: Ja, er möchte da auch nicht alleine hin. Und das war das wieder. Also, weiß nicht, wo mich das dann wieder auch ein bisschen traurig gemacht hat. Wo ich ihn einfach nicht in Stich lassen kann. Weil, das ist mein Vater. Der setzt sich für mich ein, der zahlt für die Schule, zahlt mir das und das und das. Ja. Schwer.*

transparency about future moves. This might also be necessary for children to (re-)gain trust in their parents' decisions.⁴

1.3 Caught in limbo: fearing the next move

Uncertainties of what to expect are obviously inherent to a migration experience. The fear of suddenly moving elsewhere (and failing to "make it" there), however, seems particularly common within highly mobile families. Emily's description of her thoughts and past feelings surrounding the move to Shanghai show that moving can be overwhelming. She even speaks of panic over her inability to control the decision to move and her emotions. Likewise, all the narratives of the decision-making process show that the teenagers and children often confronted their parents with anger when the move to China was announced. From Emily's point of view, however, to panic is "one of the worst things to do." Her narrative shows that children have to cope with fears and that moving requires them to learn to manage their emotions. The fear of having to move again, against one's own will, however, remains present, even when the students turn the limbo-like state of moving, the experience of living in a liminal space, into something positive, as was the case for seventeen-year-old Giovanni, a German school student and part of "the boys," who noted: "You are only here for a temporary period. Like a long vacation."⁵ The implications of this state of limbo on negotiations of belonging and ideas of what constitutes home will be elaborated on further in Part III, Chapter 2.

The honest inclusion of children in the decision-making and moving process might help to reduce some of their fears and feelings of powerlessness. Britta from Norway, for example, was extremely happy to have been able to explore Shanghai before the move, which made it easier for her to cope with the fear of being unhappy in Shanghai. But it is not only uncertainty, but also unfamiliarity or even sensing their parents' stress that makes the experience frightening at first. The next chapter, consequently, takes a closer look at the emotional challenges that leaving entails from the perspective of expatriate students, while also drawing upon concepts which explore the anthropology of emotions.

4 For insights into adolescent boys' own ideas about what constitutes trusting their parents, see Jeffries's (2004) comparative qualitative study of African American, Latino, and Asian American boys from low-income families. Jeffries's study describes four themes of trust that young informants expressed in their narratives: obligation, sharing confidences, need fulfillment—both material and emotional—and reliability, the belief that parents are "always gonna be there." Interestingly, the author encountered differences in the conceptualization of trust between the different youths. Asian American boys, for instance, did not reference the theme of "always gonna be there," hinting at possible cultural differences.

5 German original: *Hier ist man nur vorübergehend. Wie lange Ferien.*

CHAPTER 2

The Emotional Challenges of Moving

The tyranny of distance and the particularities of place continue to unsettle agents with a putatively global reach. (Ley 2004, 157)

Cultural geographer David Ley describes how moving abroad can be unsettling, even for agents like the expatriate youths in this study who, in many cases, have moved several times across the globe. In Shanghai, the teenagers and I discussed their initial reactions to the decision to move, as well as the feelings that leaving, arriving, and adjusting caused. Examining their reactions to their parents' announcement of the move to Shanghai and the students' experiences of relocating, it becomes clear that their reflections during the interviews revolve around their emotions. This finding is in agreement with sociologist Christine Mattley's (2002, 365) argument that feeling and reflecting are not opposed to each other, but that emotions provoke and are also caused by reflection. Combining interactionist theories on emotion and temporality, Mattley points out four dimensions we should consider when thinking about the meaning of past emotions:

We often endeavor to understand present emotions, through referencing our past emotions and the usual assumption is that past emotions are given—that they are real. However, that is not necessarily the case. Again, drawing on Maines, Sugrue, and Katovich (1983), it is reasonable to suggest that moving backward, individuals may (1) symbolically reconstruct past emotion such that they have meaning for the present emotion, (2) note how past emotion structures and conditions emotions found in the present, (3) recognize the implied objective emotional past, and (4) create a mythical past emotion to explain the present one (Mattley 2002, 370).

When discussing past emotions with the teenagers, keeping Mattley's link between emotions and temporality in mind helps me recognize not only the students' past emotional difficulties but also their present and ongoing efforts to come to terms with their moving experiences. Interactionist theories prove to be well suited for explaining these feelings and the youths' ways of dealing with them because they have conceptualized emotions as emerging from social acts within groups. In our case, this emergence takes place not only within the family and among new friends in Shanghai, but also within the interview situations. "Emotions originate and develop in social relations" and are "sustained by group processes"

(Mattley 2002, 365). However, Mattley's interactionist approach needs to be expanded to include how emotions are experienced bodily. The anthropology of emotion addresses feelings from different angles. John Leavitt (1996) summarizes the discourse as a great divide between positions that explain emotions as being both bodily and universal, and those that argue for interpreting emotions as cultural categories that are used to communicate sociocultural messages. Consequently, Leavitt argues that emotions should be understood as both—as acts of communication and bodily experiences—and calls for conceptualizations and representations of emotions in ethnographic work that overcome this meaning/feeling divide. By treating students' re-interpretations of past emotions during the interviews as cognitive and communicative processes, I understand that the emotional events described are also felt bodily, sometimes even to a physically challenging degree.

The physical, cognitive, and communicative aspects of emotions that might arise due to international relocation become evident during all my group discussions and interviews. Eleven-year-old Allen from the USA, reflecting upon his last move to Mexico, uses the narrative of "culture shock" to explain this experience to his fellow students and myself. Sitting in his school's art room, he summarizes the implications of moving and the overwhelming emotions it brings along, telling me that he "pretty much got sick." Likewise, Britta, the seventeen-year-old girl from Norway who just arrived in Shanghai a few months before the interview, vividly remembers how strange Shanghai felt to her:

BRITTA: *Yeah, we were sitting. I just had such a sad image: we came, we were really jetlagged. We come to the hotel, it smells weird, we get this weird food, it is supposed to be toast and jam and they can't even make toast and jam. We were just like really depressed. We look out the window. It is raining; we can't even see the street. It is a cloud blocking our window. It was just like, I'm gonna live here.*

INTERVIEWER: <L>

BRITTA: *And after some days, it was like, clearing of the weather and it wasn't that bad and depressing. We saw nice apartments and everything, so <L> we are like, okay.*

Britta describes her discomfort upon arrival as not being able to see, and instead smelling and tasting the new environment. She relates emotions like "feeling depressed" to the new sensory experiences, the unfamiliarity and seeming unmanageability of the city. Other students, like seventeen-year-old Karina, also comment on how lonely they felt in the beginning or still feel when getting homesick. During an interview, the German-Czech teenager shares:

KARINA: *And with the move. I don't know. My mom feels terrible, in the beginning felt terribly guilty for taking me away from Prague, from all my friends. And I told her that it didn't really bother me that much. That's what I thought at least in the beginning, because we had moved so many times and I got used to it. I thought, okay, I will find new friends here, and I will keep in touch with the old ones. But now that I am here I think: "Crap! I am so far away." And in the first months I couldn't stay in touch, because Facebook didn't work, nothing. I don't know. I was so alone here. [...] On the other hand, you get used to it. I got pretty flexible. But still, this void when you are gone. You don't have anyone here. Though you know what to expect, but still, you really can't handle it in the beginning.*⁶

Like this chapter's introductory quote by David Ley (2004, 157) suggests, Karina's narrative shows that even having moved internationally before does not protect you from the inherent emotional turmoil of moving again. The new place and the distance from friends "unsettle[s] agents with a putatively global reach" (ibid.). Karina also shares how the moving experience strained her relationship with her mother. Moreover, her story addresses how the lack of connections to her friends made it difficult to cope with the emotional stress arising from the move.

Karina's classmate Bjorn, whose move from the German countryside to Shanghai I discussed in Part I, Chapter 4 of this ethnography, likewise recalls missing Germany and his friends in the beginning. However, one and a half years after his move, he remembers his strategy in coping with these difficulties as one of limiting his contact with his old friends.

BJORN: *The first months were difficult with Germany. Even if it sounds pathetic, the only way to get through that is to maintain as little contact as possible. The best is to not even use Facebook, but instead to write an email every few weeks; they reply again in a week. Then you also have something to talk about again. But you aren't so much involved. Because if you chat,*

6 German original: KARINA: *Und mit dem Umzug. Ich weiß nicht. Meine Mutter macht sich, die hat sich anfangs Vorwürfe gemacht, dass sie mich aus Prag rausgerissen hat. Von meinen ganzen Freunden. Und ich hab ihr eigentlich gesagt, dass es mir nicht wirklich viel ausmacht. Zumindes dachte ich mir das anfangs. Weil wir ja schon so oft umgezogen sind. Und ich mich daran gewöhnt hab. Da dacht ich mir: „Okay, ich find hier bestimmt neue Freunde und ich werde mit den alten in Kontakt bleiben.“ Aber, jetzt wo ich hier bin, denke ich mir: „Scheiße! Ich bin total weit weg.“ Und ich hatte in den ersten paar Monaten überhaupt keinen Kontakt mit denen gehabt. Weil Facebook nicht funktioniert hat und gar nichts. Ich weiß nicht, ich war hier so alleine. [...] Andererseits gewöhnt man sich dran. Ich bin jetzt eigentlich ziemlich flexibel geworden. Aber trotzdem, diese Leere wenn man weg ist. Man hat hier niemanden. Man weiß zwar schon, was einen erwartet. Aber trotzdem. Man kann damit anfangs wirklich nicht umgehen.*

time and again you kind of think that you were part of it and then it reminds you of the old days and that's really bad.

INTERVIEWER: *And then you miss your friends even more?*

BJORN: *Yes, and with the emails it actually worked well. I mean, they do their thing. I do mine. And when I return everything's gonna be fine, again.*

INTERVIEWER: *Hmm. So would you pass the same advice you received on to others? Stay in touch but...*

BJORN: *As little as possible. [...] [Better to write emails] than to try to Skype everyday, because then you are always sad when they don't have any time and you specifically spent your time on it. And then you think, I spent my time [on that] just for him. And then you remember: I don't have anyone to do anything with, anyway. Oh, over there everything was better anyway; people were much cooler.⁷*

Bjorn's retrospective on his first weeks in Shanghai shows how complex and contradictory missing your friends and loneliness upon arrival can be. He sought help by listening to others in Shanghai share their experiences, and eventually trusted that his friendships in Germany could endure the distance.

In summary, the expatriate youths discussed here often feel powerless about their parents' decision to move to China. Simultaneously, they have to deal with the liminality of their stay and the likelihood of a new move. "Culture shock," the lack of friends and family, and problems within the family that may be reenforced by the move, as well as an unfamiliar urban environment and new sensory experiences, all pose emotional challenges to them. Part III, "Arriving," explores the expatriate students' strategies and ways of managing these experiences and emotions of powerlessness, loneliness, and unfamiliarity upon their arrival in Shanghai.

7 German original: BJORN: *Die ersten Monate waren auch schwer mit Deutschland. Auch wenn's scheiße klingt. Die einzige Möglichkeit wie du das überstehst, ist so wenig Kontakt wie möglich mit denen zu halten. Am besten gar nicht Facebook, sondern einfach alle paar Wochen mal eine E-Mail schreiben, die antworten wieder in 'ner Woche. Dann hat man sich auch immer mal wieder was zu erzählen. Aber ist nicht so drin. Weil wenn man chattet, denkt man halt immer, man war so dabei und so und das erinnert einen dann an die alten Zeiten und das ist ganz schlimm.* INTERVIEWER: *Und dann vermisst man seine Freunde noch mehr?* BJORN: *Ja und so mit den E-Mails hat das eigentlich super geklappt. Ich meine, die machen ihr Ding, ich mach mein Ding. Und wenn ich dann zurückkomme ist auch wieder alles gut.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm. Also jemand anderem würdest du die gleiche Empfehlung geben, die dir gegeben wurde? Schon im Kontakt bleiben aber ...* BJORN: *Möglichst wenig. [...] [Besser E-Mails schreiben] als jeden Tag probieren zu skypen, weil dann ist man immer traurig wenn die mal keine Zeit haben und du hast dir frei genommen. Und dann denkst du ja: „Ich hab mir nur für den freigenommen.“ Und dann fällt dir ein: Ich hab hier aber niemanden mit dem ich sonst was gemacht hätte. Oh, drüben war eh alles viel besser, die Freunde waren ja viel cooler drauf.*